

Creation Science Rebuttals
Long Age Puzzle of Thin Ice at the Edge
of the Laurentide Ice Sheet
Claim published in TJ, V18, I2
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The Laurentide Ice Sheet covered the continent of North America during the recent ice age that ended about 11,000 years ago. It is the subject of an article in the creationist journal TJ, and this article was featured as the daily feature at Creation Ministries International (CMI) on 21 March 2006¹

In this article the author Michael Oard contends that the thin ice at the edge of the ice sheet presents a problem to the old earth interpretation. The main problem is that carbon dating implies that the Des Moines Lobe (DML) of this ice sheet moved southward at a rate of 1,700 meters per year, which is a very high velocity for a glacier. He says that since radiocarbon dating is held in such high esteem, old earth geologists had to come up with an explanation of how this ice moved this fast. Two scientists, Hooyer and Iverson, did just that in a study in 2002.

Oard brings up some apparently valid points which should be considered. It should be noted that we are talking about an ice sheet, and not a glacier. Ice sheets do move from compression of the ice, but usually at a much slower pace than glaciers. There is no consensus among geologists concerning the movement of the DML, and no doubt more research will need to be done. Thus, Oard is picking one study to critique...a study which does not represent the final answer, nor necessarily the majority opinion, of old earth geologists. It is a preliminary study, and more will follow to solve this issue.

In the end Oard says "A thinner edge for the Laurentide Ice Sheet supports the creationist model of the Ice Age in which the ice sheets *grew more or less in place.*" It also supports the old earth viewpoint that these ice sheets grew in place. In addition, to assume that this Ice Sheet raced down from Canada at 1,700 meters per year is a bit of an oversimplification. Readers should realize that although the 1,700 meter per year figure is considered a possibility, geologists still recognize that most of the ice forming the ice sheet accumulated over the sheet, and not further north. It's not as if they picked some

starting point in Canada 500 kilometers to the north, and it started moving from there at this rate. As this ice sheet grew, it grew in place. Even after it reached sufficient mass to start flowing, it was still accumulating in place, on top of the moving ice. Considering the whole, it is a complicated system, and should not be oversimplified.

Conclusion

One final thought...no matter which view is right, slow-moving, in place ice sheets, or 1,700 meters per year movement, neither have anything to do with proving the earth is young. Both are seen in the context of an old earth, and Oard still has the problem of multiple ice ages. He has tried to explain these away, but without success.

¹ Oard, Michael, Long-age puzzle of thin ice at the edge of the Laurentide Ice Sheet, TJ 18(2): August 2004. Available online at answersingenesis.org/tj/v18/i2/icesheet.asp, and at CMI at <http://www.creationontheweb.com/content/view/1574/>.