

# Mary & Louis Leakey



Le site d'Olduvai est associé au couple Leakey (Louis & Mary)

The years 1935 to 1959, Mary and Louis Leakey spent at Olduvai Gorge, yielded many stone tools from primitive stone-chopping instruments to multi-purpose hand axes. These finds came from Stone Age cultures dated as far back as 100,000 to two million years ago.

The Leakey unearthed a *Proconsul africanus* skull on Rusinga Island, in October of 1948. This skull was the first skull of a fossil ape ever to be found and, to this day, only three specimens of these apes are known.

Their next discovery, in 1959, was a 1.75 million-year-old *Australopithecus boisei* skull. They also found a less robust *Homo habilis* skull and bones of a hand.

After reconstructing the hand, it was proven the hand was capable of precise manipulation. Many more remains were found at this site. In 1965 the husband and wife team uncovered a *Homo erectus* skull, dated at one million years old.

After Mary's husband died, on October 1, 1972, Mary Leakey continued her work at Olduvai and Laetoli. It was here, at the Laetoli site, that she discovered *Homo* fossils that were more than 3.75 million-years-old. She also discovered fifteen new species and one new genus.

From 1976 to 1981 Mary and her staff worked to uncover the Laetoli hominid footprint trail which was left in volcanic ashes some 3.6 million years ago.

The years that followed this discovery were filled with research at Olduvai and Laetoli, the follow-up work to discoveries and preparing publications.

*Mary died on December 9, 1996 at the age of 83*