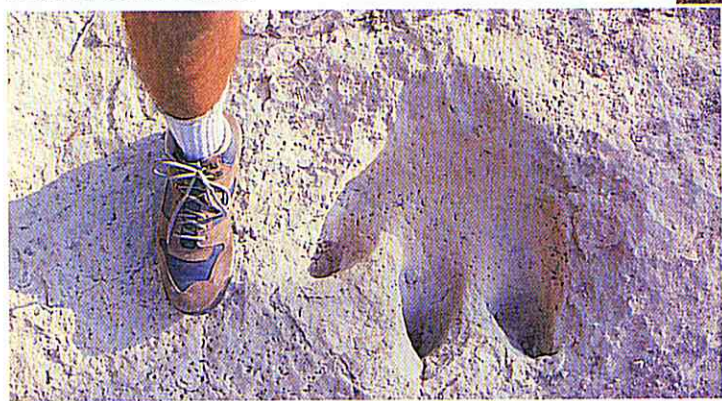




Figure 6 The original soft parts of this mosquito have been preserved in amber for millions of years.

Figure 7 Tracks made in soft mud, and now preserved in solid rock, can provide information about animal size, speed, and behavior.

The dinosaur track below is from the Glen Rose Formation in north-central Texas.



The tracks to the right are located on a Navajo reservation in Arizona.

Original Remains Sometimes conditions allow original soft parts of organisms to be preserved for thousands or millions of years. For example, insects can be trapped in amber, a hardened form of sticky tree resin. The amber surrounds and protects the original material of the insect's exoskeleton from destruction, as shown in **Figure 6**. Some organisms, such as the mammoth, have been found preserved in frozen ground in Siberia. Original remains also have been found in natural tar deposits, such as the La Brea tar pits in California.

Trace Fossils Do you have a handprint in plaster that you made when you were in kindergarten? If so, it's a record that tells something about you. From it, others can guess your size and maybe your weight at that age. Animals walking on Earth long ago left similar tracks, such as those in **Figure 7**. Trace fossils are fossilized tracks and other evidence of the activity of organisms. In some cases, tracks can tell you more about how an organism lived than any other type of fossil. For example, from a set of tracks at Davenport Ranch, Texas, you might be able to learn something about the social life of sauropods, which were large, plant-eating dinosaurs. The largest tracks of the herd are on the outer edges and the smallest are on the inside. These tracks led some scientists to hypothesize that adult sauropods surrounded their young as they traveled—perhaps to protect them from predators. A nearby set of tracks might mean that another type of dinosaur, an allosaur, was stalking the herd.

