Cretaceous Oyster Fossils

Phyllum: Mollusca
Class: Bivalvia - Bivalves - Pelecypoda
Order: Ostreoida
Family: Gryphaeidae
Genus: Texigryphaea, Gryphea, Exogyra

The Cretaceous period is one of three periods in the Mesozoic era. It was in the Mesozoic era that reptiles and dinosaurs flourished. Dinosaurs may have lived near where these fossils were found.

The phylum Mollusca (mollusks) includes water and land dwelling invertebrates. Pelecypoda is one of five classes of the phylum Mollusca. Clams, mussels, oysters and scallops are **pelecypods**. When the oysters were alive, the hard exoskeletons got longer and thicker over time as the animals grew. The shells were composed of minerals, mostly calcium carbonate. After death, the oyster shells became fossilized under soft muds which later transformed into shale and limestone. This specimen of Cretaceous oyster fossil lived approximately 100 million years ago on the bottom of a shallow sea covering North Texas, where the Grand Prairie meets the North-Central Plains.

Fun Fossil Hunting Fact: Oysters have two valves that enclose the soft parts of the animal. When collectors find oyster fossils, there is usually only one valve because the valves open up and separate when the animal dies.

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