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ADDITIONAL WORK AT TRAPPER CREEK

The Sheridan Chapter of the Wyoming Archaeological Society held its June meeting at the Trapper Creek site and did some additional work there.

Additional excavation was done in the small rockshelter at the site, and two additional exploratory pits were made in the camp area near the east end of the site. Additional work was done in connection with the many pictographs at the site. The site was surveyed, and a map will be made as soon as feasible.

Mr. Louis Allen, Richard Martinsen, and Don Grey spent Saturday June 3, at the site surveying. A few additional petroglyphs were noted in a small gully just east of the site proper, but these did not merit mapping.

On June 4, the Sheridan chapter met at the site, along with six members of the Sheridan High School Archaeology Club. Picnic lunches were taken, and a good day's work was done.

Excavation in the rockshelter extended the previous five-foot square across the entire back of the shelter. Additional petroglyphs were found below the soil level, and additional cultural material was produced from the single cultural level.

Cultural material recovered from the cultural level included a 1944 penny from the six inch level, a .38-55 cartridge case from the 15 inch level, and some additional materials from the prehistoric cultural material at the 39 to 44 inch level. The prehistoric materials included some additional unnotched arrow points, and a tool made from a piece of deer antler. This tool consisted of a V-shaped fork formed from two small tines, with the main branch cut off about a half inch from the fork. This main branch had been cut by scoring with a stone tool on either side and breaking. The tips of the tines were worn round, but it could not be determined if this was due to natural wear or to some human usage.

Near the east end of the site there is an erosional remnant, or small terrace, which is possibly a local representation of the Moorcroft terrace. Around the edge of this terrace may be seen a very dark layer with a great deal of charcoal, and a number of hearths, some of which involve a number of stones.

A deep six foot square was dug in this terrace area by Dr. Bentzen with a group of screeners. This square was eventually dug to a depth of about eight feet. A heavy dark layer near the surface seemed to correlate with that visible around the edges of the terrace. This layer produced no cultural material, and may represent a grass fire. A similar dark layer occurs near the surface in the rockshelter, and this is known to date from historical times, because a .38-55 cartridge was found at its lower boundary. It may be that an historical check will reveal some knowledge of a fire in that area.

A single productive cultural level was found in the pit at a depth of about 45 inches. This layer seemed to be culturally homogeneous, producing a single type of point. This point is a small, corner notched triangular point. Some additional charcoal dispersions were noted at various depths all the way to the bottom, but no artifacts were produced. It is likely, however, that additional work at the site may reveal additional cultural material.

The fact that the cultural materials produced from the two portions of the site differ in type necessitates additional work to determine the relationship

and relative ages of the two cultures. There is some reason to believe that the unnotched point is related to some of the petroglyphs at the site, since several worn stones were found in the cultural level in the rockshelter. The manner of wearing of these stones suggests that they may have been used to incise the petroglyphs in the sandstone. Whether a similar association of the corner-notched points with some of the petroglyphs can be made is yet to be determined. It is apparent that there are petroglyphs of different ages at the site, since there are some overlapping figures, and some apparent differences in the weathering, and hence, by inference, in the ages of the figures. It would indeed be an important contribution if the two cultural levels could be related to some of the petroglyphs at the site.

Additional work must be done at the Trapper Creek site in order to determine the answers to some of the questions raised thus far. An interesting possible cultural affiliation is with the Fremont Complex of the Northern Periphery. The shielded figures, horned headdresses, and unnotched points are all associated in places with the Fremont Complex. Whether the Fremont Complex extended to this area is questionable, but it is quite possible that there may be some affiliation. Those interested in the Fremont Complex are urged to read Wormington: A Reappraisal of the Fremont Culture, obtainable from the Denver Museum of Natural History.

MORE WORK AT THE SISTERS HILL SITE

Dr. Agogino has promoted some funds for additional research at the Sisters Hill site. Some of the funds will be used to hire dirt moving equipment to remove the overburden from an appreciable area of the site, and also to clean a stratigraphic face for study by geologist Vance Haynes, who plans to accompany Dr. Agogino to the site over the Fourth of July holiday.

A radiocarbon date of 9600 years BP was obtained for the site this winter. The cultural material thus far recovered has been Hell Gap type. Further work at the site may reveal additional cultural levels.

SWORD BLADE MYSTERY

Mr. Archie Leland, of Dayton, Wyoming, found a sword blade in his garden while digging a flower bed. The sword blade was found at a depth of about 16 inches, and rested on old gravels of the Tongue River. Many other metal items of recent manufacture were found at slightly lesser depths. The age and source of the blade are a mystery at the present time, but it is hoped that some information about its origins might be obtained in the near future. A complete description of the blade and its markings have been sent to several persons and institutions to see if something can be learned about it. The Armeria Real (Royal Armory) in Spain has been written to to learn if the blade might be of European origin. When news is available, more will be published.

SHERIDAN CHAPTER EXHIBITION PLANS

The Sheridan Chapter has set a date of July 29 for its exhibition of archaeological materials. Members working on dioramas are urged to complete them by that time. Tentative arrangements have been made for a showroom at a vacant store on Main Street, and it is hoped that a large number of people will be served.

A number of dioramas will be displayed, as well as exhibits of general archaeological interest. The purpose of the display is to acquaint the general public with the principles and aims of archaeology, and to help promote interest in a museum for Sheridan County. It is also hoped that some funds may be raised to help with publication and other expenses of the society.

MONTANA PICTOGRAPH SITE VISITED

An excellent pictograph site north of Decker, Montana, was visited by Glenn Sweem and Don Grey. Several photographs of the figures were taken, and a number of observations were undertaken. The site is badly vandalized in only a few spots, and some of the pictures are virtually undisturbed. Some of the shield-bearing figures with solidly pecked legs appear very similar to those often associated with the Fremont Complex in the Northern Periphery. Some of the pictographs at the site appear to be much older than others, and a number of interesting traits run through the figures. Further investigation will be made, perhaps during the winter when mountain sites are inaccessible.

FORTIFIED HILLTOP EXAMINED

Glenn Sweem and Don Grey spent a profitable afternoon at what appears to be a fortified hilltop in the vicinity of Piney Creek. A number of rock structures of various sizes are found at strategic points on the hilltop, and these appear to be ideally arranged for defense of the small area of the top.

The hilltop is quite steep and fairly inaccessible from two sides. The other two sides offer access, although one is quite exposed and rather steep. One of the sides gains access to the hilltop via a long ridge, and would form the logical route for an attacking party. The stone structures are so arranged as to furnish maximum protection against an attack from this direction. Several structures are located along the ridge and appear to have been first-line defenses from which defenders could fall back to the more strongly fortified area among some rocky outcrops high on a limb of the hill.

Among the structures is a large rectangular structure which is located in a depression among the rock outcrops. This structure would afford protection for several people, but only on one side does it afford a view of adjacent territory. As a fortification, it commands very little area. It is tempting to hypothesize that the defending group included a number of sick or weak individuals--perhaps women and children--and that the large structure was intended as a shelter for these people while the outer structures were manned by the fighting men.

No water or food is to be found atop the hill, and a siege would certainly have conquered the defenders. In all probability, a wandering group of persons was pursued by some attackers, and sought refuge on the hilltop. The fortifications were built during, or in anticipation of, an attack. Whether the battle was ever joined on the hilltop is not certain, since no artifacts have been found in an intensive search of the area.

If indeed the hypothesis of a pursued band of people taking refuge on the hilltop is correct, it is almost necessitated by the topography that these parties much have been moving generally southward, or that the defenders had a long lead on their pursuers, or they would not have been able to ascend the hilltop. The south and west sides are almost inaccessible. To the north of the site a number

of miles, another fortified hilltop is known. There is a general similarity between the two sites, but no specific cultural affiliation. Neither site has produced identifiable cultural materials. Neither of the sites appears to be very old, perhaps a few hundred years at the most.

While the entire picture is one of speculation at the present time, it is hoped that further investigations will afford some dates and perhaps some cultural associations for the structures, and possibly a definitive inference of function. The site will be fairly accessible in some portions of the winter, and may be worked this winter. It is one about half a dozen fortified sites which are known at the present time, and a great deal more information is needed about these sites. Perhaps when a number of them have been studied in detail, some inferences can be made.

RADIOCARBON PROGRESS REPORT

The radiocarbon laboratory is currently being rebuilt to improve the efficiency of operation, and to incorporate a number of modifications and improvements. A new combustion train has cut the sample combustion time from almost two hours to less than ten minutes. The sample is now heated to combustion temperature by an internal electric arc rather than by heating the combustion tube externally. Other improvements in the construction of the counting tube and its shielding counters have made the system more compact and reliable. It is hoped to have the apparatus rebuilt and operating again by the first week of August. Almost two dozen samples were checked with the original form of the apparatus, and the dates seemed to agree well with the archaeological context of the samples.

SHERIDAN CHAPTER REPORT

A special meeting of the Sheridan chapter was called at Mrs. Hila Gilbert's house. Fourteen members were present, and three guests from the Sheridan High School Archaeology Club also attended.

The principal item of business at the meeting was the approaching archaeological exhibition to be given late in July. A number of details were discussed, and a number of arrangements were made.

Glenn Sweem showed some slides of a pictograph site in Montana and some other recent archaeological investigations.

Mrs. Gilbert served refreshments.

CCDY CHAPTER REPORT

No report was submitted by publication time.

CASPER CHAPTER REPORT

The June meeting of the Casper chapter was held on the 18th of June at the Lee Site north of Midwest. Ten members were present with six guests. Work at the site was continued, with excavation being confined mainly to the area beneath the overhang of the rockshelter.

Twenty-five artifacts were recovered during the day, including a fine drill and a nice bone awl. Two unidentified bone artifacts were found, along with three scrapers and 4 knives.

Some pothunters had been active at the site since the previous work had been done.

A chapter picnic was planned for some time in July.

HIGHWAY SALVAGE AGREEMENT FALLS THROUGH

Bob Brown forwarded a letter from President Humphrey of the University of Wyoming in which it is stated that the University has declined to be a party to an archaeological salvage agreement with the state Highway Department.

The reason cited for the failure of the agreement is that the "University has no funds approved by the Legislature for the Highway Salvage Agreement." It is to be regretted indeed that the agreement has failed for the lack of a relatively small amount of money. The University's financial expenditure in connection with such an agreement would be almost miniscule, with federal funds supplying essentially all the necessary operating funds for salvage work.

It is hoped that some sort of agreement can be made soon.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

Member Eugene Galloway is working with the Smithsonian Institution group at the type site of the Agate Basin complex in eastern Wyoming. He reports that the site has been badly vandalized by pothunters, but that it is quite large and it is possible that much additional information will yet be recovered. They discovered two or three portions of projectile points in the waste dirt left by the pothunters' activities. Not only were the pothunters poor archaeologists, but they were pretty poor pothunters, too.

The New York Public Library has been added to the list of regular recipients of the Wyoming Archaeologist.

The half-annual Plains Conference for Archaeology will be held in Pierre, South Dakota, this year. At the time of this writing, the date was not known.

Contributions to the Mulloy Scholarship Fund will always be welcome. Two applicants are currently being screened by the department of anthropology at the University of Wyoming. They are a young lady from Rawlins, and a young man from Afton. Both have good high school grade averages.

The summer is moving along, and the soul stirs with the call of the wild. See you out yonder.

EMBERS OUT!