

THE WYOMING ARCHAEOLOGIST

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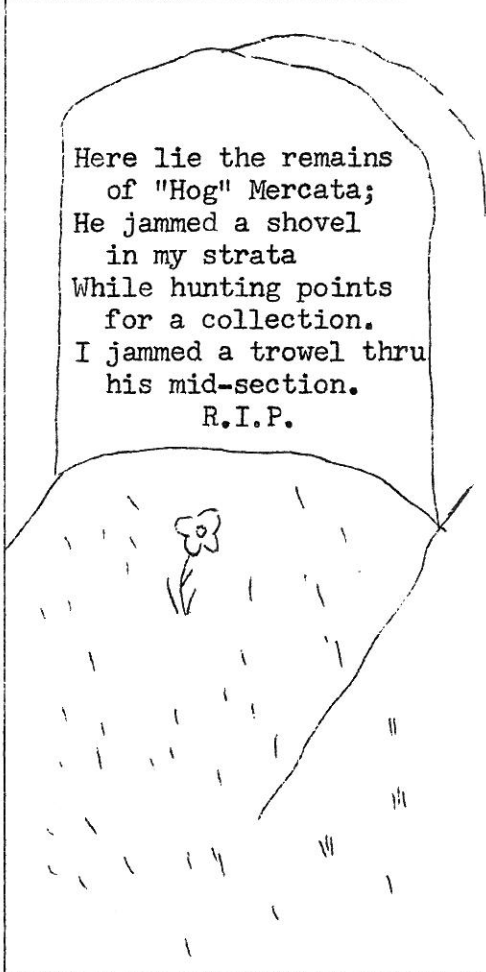
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Here lie the remains
of "Hog" Mercata;
He jammed a shovel
in my strata
While hunting points
for a collection.
I jammed a trowel thru
his mid-section.
R.I.P.

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AMATEURS IN ENGLAND

Reuters News Agency in Southampton, England, reports that a group of amateur archaeologists have spent the last twelve months excavating a lime burning pit dating from the Early Bronze Age. Limestone was burned into a form suitable for use in mortar needed for the expansion of a nearby town occupied by the Normans. The time was probably about 1300 A.D. The hard-working amateurs have moved about 300 tons of earth during the last year. Large quantities of pottery were found at the site, and a great many items dating from later times were also recovered.

MAGIC MOUNTAIN SITE BEING WORKED

A group of archaeologists sponsored by the Peabody Museum of Harvard University have been digging at Magic Mountain west of Denver this summer. The group is composed mostly of young students from eastern universities. The group ranges in age from 16 to 23 years.

On August 20th, the excavation had gotten to a depth of 15 feet, and a shadoof had been rigged to help move the dirt. The name shadoof is of Egyptian origin, and is the name given to a device originally used for raising irrigation or drinking water from wells or canals. It consists of a pole or column about 15 feet high on top of which is pivoted a cross beam. The beam is usually pivoted nearer one end than the other. A weight of stones is used to balance the beam and the bucket which hangs from the long end. The bucket can be lowered into the excavation to be filled, and then lifted and swung to one side by means of the shadoof. While quite primitive, the device is cheap and quite effective.

The young archaeologists believe that the lower levels at the site are about 5000 years old. The site is a sort of rockshelter formed by the outcrop of a steeply dipping rock formation.

MORE ROCKSHELTERS DISCOVERED

Glenn Sweem, Bob Frison, Steve Dill, and Don Grey did some looking in the Middle Fork area as a sidelight to a trip to the JO 301 site to gather dendrochronological materials. They visited a group of rockshelters reported by Buss Schultz, foreman of the Blue Creek Ranch, and new member of the Wyoming Archaeological Society. The site appears to be a good one and will furnish a lot of digging in the future. It is beginning to appear that the general area of this summer's work is a really tremendous Middle Period site. The McKean Complex seems to be well represented in these new sites. Mr. Schultz also reports some petroglyph sites in the nearby area, and two caves of appreciable size. The petroglyphs and caves have not yet been visited by the officers, but they sound good.

The rockshelters have been assigned numbers, and are designated as the Schultz Sites in honor of the discoverer. Our hats are off to this active new member of the society. May we have many more like him.

TINKERS AND TAILORS

We haven't yet had use for a tinker at one of our digs, but a tailor who is expert at knee patches might be in order. Certainly, however, we do have use for many specialized skills in helping recover the information from our digs. Far from the least of these skills is that of the surveyor.

A special vote of thanks must go to Louis Allen of the engineering department at Sheridan College, Louis surveyed and drew the maps for the Kaufmann Cave dig, and Sites JO 301, JO 302, and JO 303. He also surveyed and mapped the Powers and Ostrom Sites on which work is not yet complete.

These operations require a great deal of time, and Louis has given unstintingly of his, even before he became a member of the Society. Had it been necessary to hire these services, the Archaeological Society would have been hard put to afford the work.

Bill Jackson, of the botany department at Sheridan College, is now taking up a study of pollens, and we hope that we may prevail upon him to make pollen studies of the soil samples from a couple of our digs. Such information would be very valuable in interpreting environmental conditions during prehistoric times.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY - - PART II

Part I of this series dealt with the general relationship of archaeology to the other anthropological sciences. In this part, a brief outline of the archaeology of the Americas will be given. The broad areas and the lack of extensive archaeological investigation in the New World prevent a detailed picture, but some broad outlines can be given.

Archaeologists are quite certain that man migrated to the New World from Asia across the Bering Straits. The time of the first migration, the number of migrations, and even the time of the last migration, are still not known (See June issue: Bering--Highway to America). The first migration may have taken place as much as 40,000 years ago or even more. As these first men crossed into America, the inland regions were probably covered with great ice sheets, while narrow coastal regions may have been free of ice and even relatively warm. Recent evidence indicates that the center of the Wisconsin glaciation may have shifted from West to East across Canada, and it is possible that inland routes may have existed during that time.

It was probably a matter of several thousand years between man's entry into North America and his arrival in the United States. Finds of what appears to be very early men in South America indicates that man may have gotten to the southern tip of Chile as long as 9,000 years ago. Much work needs to be done in South America before any complete picture of these migrations will be available. The Lewisville site in Texas would indicate that man may have been in the southern United States as long as 37,000 years ago. Other sites need to be developed to corroborate this,

and of course it is necessary to learn by what route man came to that spot. Nothing is known of the type or types of men that first came to Texas, although there is some reason to believe that Midland Man is of that age, and that he was pretty much like the modern Indian. The reader is urged to consult Wormington's Ancient Man in North America for more detailed discussion of these and other finds.

Briefly, it can be stated that there have been no finds of human remains in such circumstances that they could incontrovertibly be related to the earliest migrants to America. In each case there has been some question about the relation of the finds to their surroundings that makes unanimous agreement about the age impossible. In some cases, original discoveries were made by amateurs who proceeded to excavate without adequate knowledge, and thereby made accurate dating impossible. In other cases excavating crews for construction jobs uncovered the finds, badly disturbing them in the process. In other cases the work was carefully done, but geological or other circumstances did not provide a clear record.

Later periods of occupation have, of course, better documentation. Finds are more plentiful and better preserved. Some broad pictures of living conditions can be made. In the Great Plains area, we have of course the three major periods--Early, Middle, and Late. In the eastern United States, the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, Burial Mound, and Ceremonial Mound cultures occupy definite time-spans and cultural patterns. In some cases, definite parallels between the areas can be drawn. It seems likely that further subdivision of the Great Plains chronology will result as more definite information becomes available. The Southwest also has its own chronology, but this is fast being related to the Great Plains sequence, the Fremont Culture being a typical connecting link between the two.

The chronology of events in the great pyramid and city building cultures of Central America can be directly related to recorded history through the writings of the Maya. The earliest recorded date here goes to 291 B.C. by the Spinden Correlation. It is now believed that some large cities existed prior to that time. The Maya evidently got their cultural heritage from the Toltecs, whose origins are not known. It seems likely that there may be a remote common connection between the civilizations of Central America, and those of South America near Lake Titicaca. Very probably the connection is a very early one. There may be a remote connection with the mound-building peoples of southern and eastern United States. This latter connection is probably due to cultural diffusion rather than any migration of a people.

Once the Americas became populated, there was much interchange of cultural concepts and materials over long periods of time, and much work will be needed to unravel these shifting patterns.

There are large gaps in the basic framework of American archaeology, as well as in the details of ethnic interplay. Two examples of basic deficiencies are: First, when did man reach America, and how many migrations took place? Second, by what routes and when did man migrate south, all the way to the tip of South America, and how long did the trip require?

Speaking of the local scene, two interesting problems exist. First, when did man arrive here, and from where? Second, where were the people of the Great Plains during the hiatus between the Early and Late Periods? It seems likely that the Wyoming Archaeological Society has shed some light on that last question this summer, and in the course of the next two or three years ought to go a long way toward filling in that gap.

Suffice it to say that archaeology has a long way to go in America, that it is a rich field, and that anyone who is seriously interested enough to learn the proper techniques can make real contributions.

GALLOWAY EXCAVATES BURIAL

Eugene Galloway reports that he has excavated a productive burial on Powder River. The burial contained an adult whose age is estimated at 40 years or perhaps a little more, and a foetal or early post-natal infant.

Some 31 stone artifacts, consisting of 23 points, one knife, one large point or hafted knife, and some other items. In addition to the stone artifacts, some 72 bone beads and 2 beads of Unio shell were found.

The points were all corner-notched, and indicate that the burial may have some antiquity.

Eugene also visited Agate Basin with Dr. Agogino recently, and found a typical Agate Basin point.

A complete written report with drawings and photographs has been prepared by Eugene on the UM Cave site, and it is planned to include this in the memoir which will be published this winter.

Eugene is currently taking two courses under Dr. Agogino. We'll be looking forward to more good work by Eugene next summer.

SITE REPORTS FILED.

A check of site reports on file by the Sheridan chapter indicates a goodly number of reports, but a disappointing number of reporters. If one would believe the evidence of the site reports, only Glenn Sweem, Dr. Bentzen, Don Grey, Thelma Condit, or Margaret Powers ever do any looking for sites. These are the only Sheridan names that we noticed in the files. The first three people have filed some thirty or so reports.

Every time we hear a bunch of archaeologists get together, we hear them tell of the fine sites that they know about, but we somehow never see any site reports on them. We can imagine the cry that would be raised if someone else filed a report on their site, and got official credit for it though. But they'd have only themselves to blame.

If in the future we ever have a chance of getting funds for archaeological research, we'd have to show that we have been making every effort to discover and protect sites. A good site report file would show just that. If you'd like to get paid for doing what you like best, think it over.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

How about sending in some news items for the Archaeologist? We could use all sorts of clippings and notes about activities in our field.

Glenn Sweem gets a vote of thanks for the displays at the annual banquet. He's a real hard-working president. And while we're handing out bouquets, how about one for Elaine Hilman? She did a lot of work getting things ready for that banquet, and we think it was a tremendous job. Many thanks, Elaine.

Glenn Sweem, Louis Allen, and Don Grey persued a wild goose into the wilds of the North Fork of Powder Riger a couple of weeks ago. They were after some giant Indians reported in the area, but they turned out to be disappointingly normal-sized. All these leads have to be run down, though. Never can tell when one might be the McCoy. Anyway, Don found a point, - - and then lost it. But the sunshine and fresh air were nice.

Oops! We forgot to say that Ray Bentzen chased the wild goose, too.

EMBERS OUT