

THE

WYOMING

ARCHAEOLOGIST

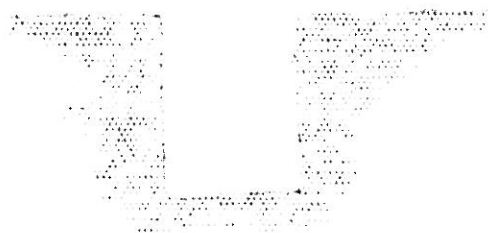
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The aging of an undisturbed pit.



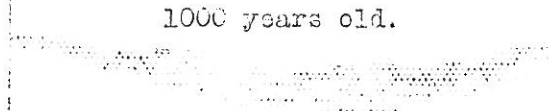
The new pit.



50 years old.



200 years old.



1000 years old.

Probably spring fever has something to do with the editorial tone of this particular issue, but your editor is looking forward to the forthcoming season, and at the same time is looking backward to several years of varied association with the field of archaeology.

It is doubtful that any young person who has read of the exploits of adventurers in far parts of the globe has ever really gotten his feet on the ground again. A warm spring day is all that is needed to start the wheels of imagination grinding out even more exciting adventures than any that have been read in books. It is a pitiful imagination indeed that cannot in the heyday of its youthful vigour conquer several new lands, find countless buried treasures, and dispatch to limbo a quantity of blackhearted villains in the course of a spring afternoon.

Teachers, parents and employers all tell us that we must curb such flights of imagination if we are to grow to adulthood and come to any sort of good end. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps it would be better to say that imagination should be brought to bear on more productive things, although, as I think on it, it seems to me that Sam Clemens and Robert Stephenson seem to have done well with the more fanciful variety. I think that what really happens in most cases is that the day-dreamer one day finds himself confronted with an adventure of a slightly different sort, and before he can do anything about it, has his imagination irretrievably captured by an adventure of the intellect.

Once captured by a really worthwhile problem, the mind and imagination are never again wholly the property of the person in whose brain they reside. Part of the mind now belongs to the problem, and unless the problem is one of those trivial things that can be completely solved in a lifetime, the person is doomed to go through life with a partially preoccupied mind. He may bump into doors as he walks about with a book before his face, and some observers may call him absent-minded. This is unfair. His mind isn't absent -- it is simply concerned with more important things than personal safety or mundane pedestrian navigation.

All sorts of questions may capture the mind of a person who lets his mind stray unguarded into new fields. Even the simplest sort of curiosity can lead to a fatal ambush. Have you ever wondered why the sky is blue? Be careful! You are in danger of becoming fascinated with physical science if you pursue the question. Have you ever wondered about that arrow-head you picked up? Proceed with caution if you would keep your peace of mind. Should your curiosity ever lead you into a serious question, you will be lost. You will be fated to follow a will-o'-the-wisp through ever more complex turns of questioning. You will find yourself studying paleontology, geology, comparative anatomy, strange languages, art, mineralogy, anthropology, radiology and a whole battery of strange-sounding disciplines. You will, in short, be in serious danger of becoming an amateur archaeologist.

If you do some serious studying then, you may find yourself developing a degree of snobbery. A certain amount of snobbery is entirely beneficial if it doesn't lead to cerebral edema. Swelling of the head usually has the effect of preventing the ingress of further knowledge, and this leads to mental stagnation and complete loss of imagination, coupled with sever impairment of the ability to laugh at one's self.

A certain degree of snobbery is essential in most things. A certain pride in achievement is probably justifiable in most cases. The serious student in the field feels a pitying contempt for the collector who buys artifacts for a collection to be looked at with uncomprehending eyes... and unless he feels a searing hatred for the pseudo-amateur archaeologist who has read a picture book on artifact types and expounds nonsensical theories to the less-well informed, the student has certainly lost some of the imagination which led him to slash pirates to ribbons on a spring afternoon. But when the student begins to feel very discouraged about his own knowledge of the subject, he is then on the verge of making some real progress. When his vista has expanded to the point where he can perceive his own ignorance, he may be able to move forward.

How does the educational program of an amateur archaeologist progress? If he is truly an amateur, he will lay out a study program for himself. He will ask a professional for suggestions as to how and what he should study if this is possible. He will ask questions, and he will beg for a chance to spend some time on digs with a professional in order to learn some ropes. Most of all, he will not only learn field techniques, but he will develop some broad pictures of the many disciplines connected with the field, and try to learn what the end product of archaeological research must be. The student may be surprised to learn that the recovery of cultural materials, and their dating, is not the end of archaeological research. Not until a reconstruction of the ways of life of the ancient peoples can be made and fitted into broad geographical, temporal, and ethnological patterns is the job nearing completion.

In the beginning of his intellectual growth, the student may find himself in a position to ask a professional archaeologist some questions. If he is so lucky, he should utilize his opportunity well. Too often the student presumes too much. Rather than appear completely ignorant of the subject, which he is, the student may ask the professional a specific question, such as, "Can you tell me of a good book on identifying artifacts?" Now this question may be slightly better than none at all, but it is certainly the wrong one if he intends to learn something about archaeology. The student is assuming that artifacts have something to do with archaeology. His first question should be "Would you please tell me how I could learn something of archaeology?" Chances are that the professional will not point him to a book on artifacts, or bones, or pottery, or pictographs, but rather to an elementary textbook on general anthropology. This may be followed by some general books on archaeology in order to give the student an overall view of the subject. Once the broad outlines of the subject are known, the details of methods and particular subject matter can be worked out.

Why should anyone want to subject himself to all that reading and study? Wouldn't it be much simpler just to collect the artifacts and leave the study to someone else? Who wants to subject himself to several years of rather intensive study, and then break his back working with a brush and trowel when he could just shovel dirt through a screen and pick up the artifacts? Why bother making careful measurements and notes?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that no one inhabits this world alone. Each of us has an obligation to his neighbors. Each of us must recognize the rights of others if we are to have any hope of living like rational beings rather than animals. An archaeological site does not, in the largest sense, belong to the finder, nor to the owner of the land on

which it is located. It belongs to all of the people of the world who may now, or any time in the future, benefit from the information which it contains. No one has the right, in any but the narrowest sense, to remove part of the content of a site and destroy the rest. The pot hunter who collects artifacts and destroys information is guilty of robbing his neighbors and the forthcoming generations of his own offspring. Why study? To the curious individual, it is a privilege. To the person who would be an archaeologist, it is a necessity. To anyone who would work in an archaeological site, it is an obligation.

No one who has the necessary qualities of curiosity and ambition to become an archaeologist, needs an answer to the question "Why study?" He will be an archaeologist in spite of everything. Anyone who hasn't the intense drive to study the field seriously should be discouraged from entering it, even in the amateur sense of an avocation. Those people who enter the field must love archaeology above all else. They must be, literally, amateurs.

A SHORT VIST WITH DR. TROWELL

I recently dropped in to ask Dr. Brush N. Trowell, the noted anthropologist, a question about pottery nomenclature and I was attracted by a new decoration on the wall of his study. It appeared to be a picture about three feet square depicting a prehistoric ceremonial design. It was done in three colors, and was quite attractive. As I got sufficiently close to the framework, I could see that the picture was a sand painting actually done in sand grains. I asked the professor if he had done the work himself, and was immediately discomfited by his chilly look.

"That painting was made by an Indian artist about 1500 years ago," he stated.

I asked how he had been able to recover such a delicate artifact in a perfect state of preservation.

"By careful work, naturally. I don't do my work with a shovel, you know," he stated loftily. "I was very carefully excavating a square in a cave site recently, keeping my working surface parallel with the natural strata, when I noted a slight change in the apparent color of the sandy earth in which I was working. The color shift was due to an underlying layer of colored sand which I had not yet quite reached. I proceeded with extreme caution, finally operating with magnifying glass and tweezers, until I had exposed the entire surface of the painting which you see. Then I sprayed the whole thing with a fixative, and, while the fixative was still plastic, I sprinkled dry plaster over the surface. When the whole thing had hardened, I backed it with burlap strips soaked in plaster, and then lifted off a replica of the painting, which of course was reversed. I simply transferred it to another backing by essentially the same process, and I then had a copy of the original, or rather I had the original itself, as made by the artist, with every grain of sand in place."

I knew that the professor did very little collecting himself, and I asked if he planned to transfer the sand painting to a museum. He replied that he had already given the painting to several museums. The statement puzzled me. "Didn't any of them want it?" I asked.

"Of course they did. They thought it was a fine piece," he replied testily. He smiled at my perplexed frown. "Use your head, boy. This painting is only a couple of sand grains thick. The original was nearly an eighth of an inch thick on the average. I was able to make ten copies by the process I mentioned -- every one of them an original."

The old professor then took the occasion to deliver one of his lectures on careful techniques in the field, and I'll have to admit, he gave me something to think about. Not many people would have discovered the painting. Since that night I've had a couple of nightmares about beautiful sand paintings that I may have overlooked by excavating less carefully than I should. Suppose one of those exploratory trenches had -- --? Brrr!

SOCIAL CUSTOMS ON THE PLAINS

The type of life followed by a group of people often dictates the type of social and family structure that exists within the group. An outstanding example of this is the life of the nomadic hunters that existed in the plains area of the United States at the time of arrival of the Europeans.

As European populations increased in the eastern woodlands of the United States, many of the Amerindian peoples were forced westward onto the Great Plains, and were forced to change to a nomadic, hunting type of life. It is interesting to note that all the groups of plains hunters, from various origins, had similar social structures in many respects, and that this social structure was usually quite different from the woodland or pueblo types of social structure.

The life of the nomadic hunter was very literally built around a bison economy. The bison furnished house, food, clothing, bedding, tools, containers, rope, thread, ceremonial objects and toys. Other game animals furnished some materials, but bison formed the central portions of the economy.

The principal duty of the men of the group was that of hunting the bison, and incidentally, fighting off other men that encroached on favorite hunting ground, or perhaps trying to encroach on someone else's favorite hunting grounds. The man's life was hazardous and demanding. Weaklings didn't last long, and the plains tribes became tall and strong.

The primary duties of the women were those of preparing the game brought home by the men-folk, drying and storing food against leaner times, preparing the hides and making lodges, clothing and other items from them. It was also the duty of the women to augment the diet with roots, berries and nuts in season.

Broadly speaking, the work of the men was hazardous and strenuous, while that of the women was vastly time-consuming. These two factors led to the common practice of polygyny. Because men-folk were often killed, there was often an excess of women. Because the total processing of the bison killed by a single hunter was enough to keep several women busy, the situation lent itself naturally to multiple-wife families.

Usually, a young man who had established himself would obtain a single wife after presenting presents to her father. As her family and her duties increased, the man might marry her younger sister or some other woman who was compatible to both husband and wife. The added help greatly smoothed the work of the household. It was often considered mandatory for a man to marry and care for his brothers' widows in the

event of mishap.

The lodge, and the household goods, usually belonged to the women. They were the rulers at home, although their entire function was directed toward furnishing a good home for a good hunter. If the man wasn't a good provider, the wives could divorce him.

Several families living together formed a band. The band was usually led by the most able and respected man in the group. The members of the band might or might not be part of the same clan, that is, descended from a common ancestry. The line of descent of a clan might be either maternal or paternal. Clan members were not permitted to marry among themselves as a rule.

Several bands of people who spoke the same language and had similar customs constituted a tribe. When food was sufficiently abundant, the tribe might congregate for a time during some part of the summer, and exchange stories of the past year. The gathering of the tribe was an occasion for celebration generally. Religious ceremonies, dances, horse-racing, story-telling, gambling, and general merry-making occupied the days and nights.

Very important among the social structures of these peoples were the secret societies among the men. Each of these groups had some specific function, such as the policing of the campgrounds during the summer hunts, or the handling of certain ceremonies during religious celebrations. It was a matter of great prestige to belong to these societies, and young men often worked hard to qualify for membership.

The shamans were a powerful group, and wielded much weight in the councils. While they knew something about herb medicine, most of their cures depended on psychological effect. They were sometimes startlingly effective in the cure of psychosomatic ailments. From most early accounts, their techniques of asepsis and antisepsis showed a complete lack of concept of infection and contagion, except by spirits. In this regard, however, they were not more than a hundred years behind the Europeans.

The customs of the plains hunter were very well adapted to, and partly derived from, his way of life. Europeans who criticized his "immoral" polygyny or other customs were simply showing a complete lack of understanding of the way in which cultural patterns develop.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The recent tragic incident at Wayland, Massachusetts, has clearly indicated how easily the actions of a few individuals can bring chagrin and embarrassment to an amateur archaeological society. The amateur society is particularly susceptible because it exists only on its merits in the first place; it intrudes into a field where it can easily do irreparable damage with even the most well-intentioned blundering. Only through exceptional care and control of the actions of its members can such a society continue to function. Only to the extent that it serves professional standards and ideals should it be allowed to function. In order to assure such standards among our members, it is proposed that an addition to the constitution be made which provides for the expulsion of

members whose activities are unbecoming to amateur archaeologists.

It is proposed that each chapter at its regular meeting discuss such a law, and send its proposals to the State Secretary. The suggestions will be compiled and returned to the individual chapters for final voting.

As a suggested point of departure, the editor puts forth the following as his own ideas. Modifications may well be in order, and each chapter is urged to make its own suggestions.

The state executive committee may, for reasons of conduct inappropriate to an archaeologist, revoke the membership of any member of the Wyoming Archaeological Society. Such reasons may include:

- A. The conduct of any excavation by methods inappropriate to a professional archaeologist.
- B. Failure to keep complete records of all work done and information recovered through excavation.
- C. Failure to make public the records of a site upon completion of the investigation and within a reasonable length of time.
- D. Misrepresentation of membership in, or official relationship to, the Wyoming Archaeological Society.
- E. The sale of artifacts from, or information about, any archaeological site for personal gain.
- F. Aiding and abetting, by word or action, any persons who loot, damage or destroy archaeological sites for any reason whatsoever.
- G. Any conduct which is contrary to the stated intents and purposes of this society.

WORK PROGRESSES AT THE LEE SITE

The Casper chapter, working at the Lee Site, has made sufficient progress to indicate that the site will be a very good one from the standpoint of information. A few artifacts have been recovered, some hearths and fireplaces have been located, and quantities of bones have been uncovered. The strata are well-defined, and it seems that a good deal of important relationship between the Late Period and Late Middle Period Lithic industries should eventually be produced. Work during the first two weeks of excavation has centered upon the development of a five-foot-wide exploratory trench about 60 feet long, extending from the back wall of the rockshelter to the wall of the gully. The trench is now extended to a depth of about 30 inches over most of its length. This represents about 50 tons of dirt. The total depth of deposit is about fifteen feet, so there will be work to do for some time.

(NOTE: The Sheridan members will meet at the Big Boy Drive-in at 6:30 AM, June 5th, for a field trip to the Lee Site near Midwest.)

Near the back of the rockshelter were found parts of two skeletons of yearling bovine or bison. These bones were partly articulated, which may well indicate that the animals died on the spot. The bones were partly burned, but this appears to be due to the accidental intrusion of a firepit into the layer which contained them. In a dark charcoal and ash layer just above the bones, there occurs a layer with fragments of glass, indicating an historical date. An attempt is being made by Don Grey to make an identification on these bones so that it can be decided whether the layer they contain is historical or earlier.

Artifacts produced from the site to date include a bone awl, several projectile points, including a triangular, un-notched variety, and some scrapers, blades, and stone awls. Among the stone awls is a peculiar type of red quartzite with a "twisted" blade. A bone tool of unknown use has been found which resembles the base of a projectile point but which has very small notches. It may be a sinew scraper. Another bone tool may be a chipping tool.

The site will bear watching in the weeks to come, and readers will be kept posted on progress.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

From time to time a few specialized terms will be defined in a glossary. These terms will usually be taken from articles in the *Archaeologist*.

- Amerindian:** Since the name Indian is a misnomer as applied to the natives of the western hemisphere, the term Amerindian has been proposed as a substitute for the American Indian.
- Anthropology:** The study of man. Includes physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology of which archaeology is a part.
- Band:** A group of families joined together, headed by a chosen leader, forming a subgroup of a tribe.
- Clan:** A group of people of common ancestry.
- Shaman:** Commonly called a medicine-man. A figure believed to have mysterious powers for curing disease, predicting the future, and controlling events through intercession with spirits.
- Tribe:** A group of people sharing a common language and social structure, but which may not exist as a single entity at all times. Usually composed of many bands.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

Bob Brown has donated ten dollars to the William Mulloy Memorial Scholarship Fund, which this year has been awarded to Gene Smith of Cody. In case you're curious, a man doesn't have to be deceased to have a memorial fund established in his name.

EMBERS OUT