

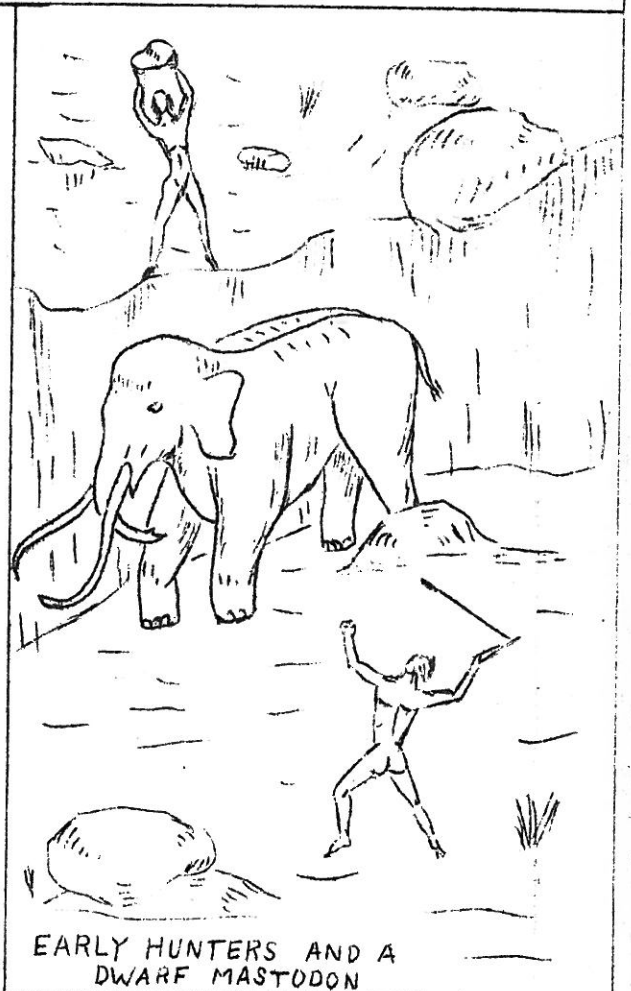
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During World War II, many aerial photographs were made of the Po Valley in northern Italy for military purposes. On some of these, taken in the early spring, there were some curious rectangular patterns, which covered large areas of the lowlands near the mouth of the Po River. It was at first thought that these might have military significance as underground storage facilities. It soon proved, however, that this was not the case. Many months later, when investigators arrived at the scene, no trace of the patterns could be found at all. The puzzle remained unsolved until the end of the war, when an archaeologist saw some of the old photographs. He speculated that the rectangular patterns might be the outlines of houses long since weathered away, but leaving a trace of their presence in the soil which affected the early spring growth of the grass in the area.

Aerial reconnaissance of the area revealed nothing during the summer, but when flights were made the next spring, there, faint but unmistakable, were the patterns. Maps were made from the aerial photographs which would relate the squares to recognizable landmarks, and an expedition set out.

In the field, the large area of rectangles proved not to be a town at all, but a cemetery. It was a large area of tombs. When the tombs were opened, it proved that most of them had been looted, but enough evidence remained to show that these were tombs of the Etruscans. The Etruscans preceded the Romans in Italy, and had a high degree of civilization for their time, but there is much that is not known about them. As more tombs were excavated, there were discovered many murals and frescoes on the walls of these tombs. The pictures furnished much information about the life of the Etruscans, and were probably the most important part of the archaeological find. The work was discouraging because so many of the tombs had been looted, and because only a few had murals that were sufficiently well preserved to be worth while. The tombs were well buried and the soil conditions made excavation laborious.

The problem of investigating the tombs was solved in a unique way. Two-and-a-half inch holes were bored through the overlying ground and into the tombs. The holes were cased with silver casings. Then a specially designed camera and electric flash unit was lowered through the casing into the interior of the tomb, and flash pictures made of the entire interior of the structure. Upon development, the pictures would reveal if the tomb had been looted, and whether or not it had murals. If the tomb seemed worthwhile, and informative enough, an excavation would be made. The places to drill were located from the aerial photographs, of course.

The technique is proving apparently successful, and many color pictures of the beautifully made frescoes are now on file. Some of those 2500 year old murals are as bright and fresh as the day they were made.

Leave it up to an archaeologist to turn a postage upside down and look into the ground with it.

DON GREY SIBAKE

Don spoke at the Gatchell Memorial Museum in Buffalo to the Johnson County chapter of the Wyoming Historical Society the other night. Don said the sight of those beautiful frescoes made him think wistfully of what could be done with some of our archaeological sites and materials.

The latest issue of the National Geographic magazine tells a poignant story of the tragedy of the pueblos. We do not refer to the circumstances which drove the pueblo builders from their homes, but rather to the destruction and exploitation of the pueblo ruins which cost us so much in data of the past. For many years after the discovery of these ruins, pot-hunters dug for salable relics without preserving a single scrap of the valuable record which they represented. The story is told of a banker who hired or "grubstaked" pot-hunters to recover relics that could be sold. The amount of destruction was enormous. It is one of the saddest pages in all archaeological history. Let us each one resolve to prevent that happening today. File site reports so that steps may be taken to protect valuable archaeological sites from the pot-hunter and random collector.

A NEW NOTE ON THE MEDICINE WHEEL

Elsa Spear Byron recently sent us a copy of a newspaper clipping from the SHERIDAN ENTERPRISE of January 25, 1896. The copy, as submitted, is reproduced below.

"A nephew of old Chief Black Hawk led his warriors west in 1843--crossed the Big Horns between Cloud Peak and High Sky (Bald Mountain). Pitched their camp above Stinking Water Canyon (Shoshone). Here the Great Spirit gave them an abundance of game, and according to Indian traditions it was summer all the year around with no snow--(1844). In 1845 Crow Chief Creep Gall and council built an altar on High Sky--placed the bloody hatchet thereon--never to be buried any more---This same summer Creep Gall built a Medicine House upon Medicine Mountain."

The date agrees pretty well with the findings of the Society in its investigation of the Wheel. The Medicine House may be the small house referred to in the Stockwell map held by the Forest Service.

Don Grey checked the winter of no snow against the tree-ring record used in dating the Wheel. He felt that if there had been a light winter, the spring growth of the trees should have been light due to lack of ground moisture. The record shows a small growth ring in 1843, but not 1844. The ring is not so small as to be unusual, but is small compared to those for several years on either side. No conclusion could be reached from the information at hand.

DR. LEAKEY'S OLD MAN

Dr. Louis B. Leakey, British anthropologist, has unearthed what may be the oldest "unquestionable man" found to date. The find was made in Northern Tanganyika, southwest of Lake Victoria. The area has long been noted for its abundant fossils of early man and his relatives. Dr. Leakey's find has been dated at over 600,000 years old by radio-potassium methods. The fossil was some 300 feet below ground level in the wall of a deep gully, nearly all the skull and a shinbone have been recovered. Several stone artifacts, and some small animal bones were found with the human bones, indicating that the man might have been "at home" when he died. The bones are believed to be those of a youth of about 18 years, and a real low-brow.

As field crews return from their work in the Near East, news releases are beginning to tell the story of their finds.

Dr. Nelson Glueck, of Hebrew Union College, noted archaeologist of the near Biblical lands, reports finding an east west highway linking the Mediterranean Sea with the King's Highway. The latter is mentioned in the Bible several times, and is a main north-south route from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. Pottery and artifacts have dated the use of the cross route. Dr. Glueck has been greatly interested in following the route of the Exodus, and has outlined nearly all its major pathways.

The University of Pennsylvania group this summer was digging at Gibeon, and spent much of their time in an ancient winery. Unfortunately, the establishment has been out of business for some 2600 years. Dr. Pritchard, who headed the expedition explained that the storage cellars were stone lined pits in the ground, with a small slab-covered opening in the top through which the ten-gallon pottery vessels could be lowered for storage. With the lid in place, the cellars stay at 65 degrees, the same temperature used for wine storage by modern French manufacturers. The cellars have a total capacity of 30,000 gallons. The wine industry was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar about 600 B.B. Some of the cellars were later used as cisterns, and still later as Roman tombs for ashes of the dead.

PREPARATIONS FOR PLAINS CONFERENCE GOING FORWARD

Speeches and reports, along with maps and drawings, artifact displays and photographs are being readied for the trip to Lincoln for the annual Plains Conference on Archaeology. The Wyoming Archaeological Society will present papers on the JO 301 and JO 303 sites this fall.

It is customary to duplicate copies of the addresses to give to those attending, and this year enough extra copies will be made so that the Society members will each receive copies.

COLORADO SOCIETY PROPOSES MERGER

Dr. Omer C. Stewart, Executive Secretary of the Colorado Archaeological Society, in a letter to Glenn Swcem said that the Colorado organization had discussed the possibility of merging with Wyoming society and publishing a joint periodical. The opinion of the Wyoming organization was sought.

The matter was placed before the general membership of the Sheridan chapter for discussion. Opinion was divided, but a large majority voted against the merger.

The Wyoming Society owes a great deal to the Colorado organization for its help and encouragement during its formative times. Their offer is flattering and appreciated, but it was felt that aside from financial considerations of a larger joint membership, there was nothing to be gained from the merging of two societies. The financial consideration would be lopsided, inasmuch as the Colorado organization has almost twice the membership of the Wyoming society.

The Wyoming organization uses some of its funds for field operations, and it would be unfair to ask the Colorado Society to finance Wyoming digs.

Dr. Agogino writes that he had recently located a large Early Man site in southeastern Wyoming. Agate Basin and Scottsbluff points are present in numbers.

A recent news photo showed Dr. Agogino, and member Eugene Galloway, with the skull of an extinct bison found near this site. The site seems to be an important one, and Dr. Agogino hopes to dig it this summer.

Dr. Agogino invited members of the Archaeological Society to take part in the dig, and individual members may wish to do so. At the last regular meeting, it was voted that the official field work of the summer would be an extension of the work started so successfully last summer at the Middle Fork of Powder River.

DR. WORMINGTON HUNTS EARLY MAN IN SIBERIA

The journal SOUTHWESTERN LORE, published by the Colorado Archaeological Society, states that Dr. Wormington made a trip to Russia this summer for the purpose of finding, if possible, some traces of Sandia, Folsom, or other culture that might link up with North America, and thereby provide clues to the time of migration of man into America. The results of the trip were negative, indicating perhaps that man migrated here earlier than is at present expected, or that perhaps a great deal more work needs to be done on both sides of the Bering Straits in order to clarify the picture.

A NEW-WORLD FLAKING TECHNIQUE

Old World archaeologists often classify flaking techniques by the type site at which they are found. Among the most distinctive types are the Clactonian, and the Levalloisian. The former is the older, and is typified by the percussion flaked bifaces found at Clacton-by-the-Sea. The flaking is done without special preparation of the core, and without a prepared striking platform. The Levalloisian technique, on the other hand is a very advanced form, and utilizes a core which is thoroughly prepared over its surface and edges. A striking platform is carefully prepared, and a large flake struck off which is surfaced on one side. The edges are very sharp, and the tool is a finished blade. It may be reshaped to make projectile points.

A flaking technique which was named before either of these and which originated in the new world, is the Teshoa flaking process. This consists in striking a plano-convex flake from the surface of a stream-rounded rock of suitable material. Resulting flakes are round or oval in outline, and have very sharp edges. They are suitable for use as blades or scrapers without further work. Considerable skill is necessary to produce the flakes with good outline and flat inner face. The technique certainly merits a name of its own, and it has one. The name comes from the Shoshoni, and was bestowed by Dr. Joseph Leidy in 1873, long before the words Clactonian or Levalloisian came into existence in archaeology.

The above information is based on an article by E. B. Renaud, past president of the Colorado Archaeological Society and former professor of archaeology at the University of Denver. The article appeared in the September, 1959, issue of Southwestern Lore.

Professor Jackson of the Botany department at Sheridan College is going to do some germination studies on the wild rye grass seeds collected by Don Grey at the summer's dig. The rye grass seems to grow well near the sites, and a knowledge of the growing conditions of the grass may lead to some information as to whether the rye is present at these habitation sites because of seeding by a foraging people, or because of an unusual soil condition due to fires, organic debris, etc.

Don Grey reports that, due to the problems of moving into the new college and getting classes organized, very little progress has been made on the carbon dating project lately. He also reports that work will resume very soon. We're getting impatient, Don. Some of these dates are mighty interesting. Those from this summer's work may prove very enlightening.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

Everybody who can make it is invited to Lincoln for the Plains Conference for Archaeology. It will be a very enjoyable session, and a great deal can be learned in a short time. It starts Thanksgiving day, and runs through Saturday.

The committee for selecting books for the Society library is making some progress, although the difficulties in getting together are rather large. They soon hope to order some of the more important works in the field.

The Casper chapter has promised to select a news reporter for that chapter so that our news will not be so much local to the Sheridan group. We are anxious to get a report on the activities of the Casper group, because we know that they have been looking at some interesting sites and have had some interesting field trips.

The time is now too soon to start planning next summer's field work. Last year's joint operation lacked a little in personnel handling, and it is hoped that we can do better this summer. The main thing that is needed is a firmer idea of how many people will be at the site and for how long. It is very difficult to plan an operation when there is no good idea of the number of people that can be counted on. Let's all start planning for a July operation, and try to arrange to be there for a pre-determined number of days, even if that is only one. If a definite personnel schedule can be worked out well in advance, we can guarantee that training sessions, briefing sessions, and campfire summaries will not break down as they did last summer. Please be thinking about it and planning during your regular winter meetings.

How about spending some of those long winter evenings working on some dioramas and displays. They make for good publicity, and good museum materials. A good diorama is a lot of fun (and work) to make, and is a real asset to a program, or for publicity work, such as promoting programs or museums.

WELERS OUT