

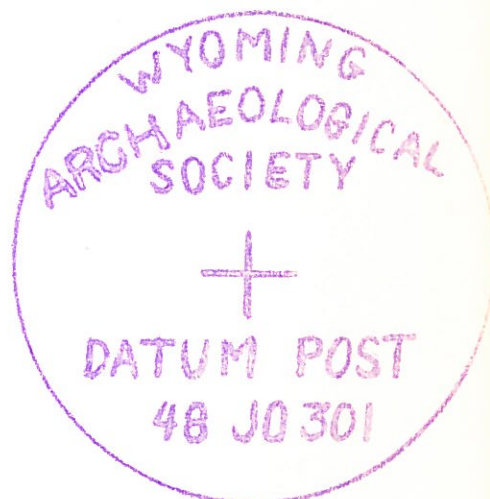
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The Wyoming Archaeologist is the monthly publication of the Wyoming Archaeological Society, a member of the Society for American Archaeology. Subscription is by membership. Dues are \$2.50 annually, and are payable to the Secretary of any chapter.

An article by David H. Hopkins in the June 5th issue of SCIENCE summarizes a great deal of geological and paleontological research that has been done in connection with the Bering-Chukchi sea floor over the past 20 years or more. Archaeologists have long been sure that man came to the Americas from Asia across the Bering Straits. It has not been entirely certain whether he crossed on land at a time when the land was elevated relative to the sea, or crossed on the ice during the winter when the sea was frozen. The findings reported in this article make it quite clear that a land crossing was possible.

Stated very briefly, the tentative conclusions reached in the article are: (1) There was a land bridge between the two continents during most of the Cenozoic times. (2) A passageway appeared across the Bering Straits sometime before the beginning of the Pleistocene epoch. (3) A land bridge existed during each glacial interval, and disappeared during each interglacial interval. (4) The land bridge disappeared for the last time about 10,000 to 11,000 years ago. (5) During the last major glacial interval (Wisconsin), the land bridge is believed to have had an arctic climate with tundra-like vegetation.

Very probably there was dry land during the summers, although the summers must have been very cold on the land bridge. The appearance of the land bridge during each glacial interval is probably due to the fact that vast quantities of water were frozen in the continental ice sheets, causing the oceans to be partially depleted. A drop of 100 feet in ocean level would be sufficient to bring the land bridge into existence at the present time, although somewhat more would have been required in the past. It is believed from evidence gathered all over the world that the oceans dropped as much as 200 feet during some of the glacial intervals, and there seems ample reason to believe that even before sediments had raised the Bering-Chukchi sea floor to its present level, that this large a drop in sea level would have produced a land bridge almost a thousand miles wide.

Many forms of evidence have been gathered in this study. For example, when the land bridge was in existence, it provided a barrier to sea life travelling between the Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea. While this land barrier was in place, the sea life forms progressed in different ways on either side, providing clear evidence of the land bridge. When the sea extended over the area, it provided a barrier to travel of land animals, and again provided for differentiation of animal life in the two separated areas. Glacial evidence, some of it dated by radiocarbon means, provided information on the extent and times of glaciation.

The combination of geological, paleontological and even archaeological evidence seems to indicate quite clearly that Bering was the highway by which man entered the Americas from the Old World.

One of the foremost questions before the New World archaeologist is that of the time of man's first crossing into this country. It seems likely that several different migrations were made. Possibly a general migration occurred each time the land bridge formed during the glacial epoch. Since the land bridge existed apparently for the greater part of the Cenozoic times, it is quite possible that man might have migrated here as an ancestral form, although no evidence has ever been found to support this idea.

Certainly many questions about man's origins in America are still mysterious.

Mapping has been completed and preliminary investigation of a group of 13 rock structures which have been named the Powers Site, and given the number 48 SE 302. This site has produced no artifacts, and the use of the rock structures is not understood. These structures vary from four feet in diameter to 18 feet in diameter. The structures are of various types, all overlooking a steep hillside. Some are just walls across fissures in a rimrock, while others are constructed on relatively flat ground. None of the walls are more than about two feet in height. Some are circular, and some are semicircular. Since all the structures overlook current game trails, one tentative hypothesis is that these structures might be game blinds in which hunters hid until game came within bowshot. This hypothesis is by no means established, however.

Mapping and preliminary excavation was also begun at the Ostrom or 48 SE 308 site, which is some five or six miles from 48 SE 302. This site consists of rock structures again, but of a different type. There is a tipi ring in the group, and others nearby, and some forty or more rock cairns. Actually these cairns are no more than rectangles about two feet in width and four to six feet long. In most cases the stones are not piled more than two deep. It was first thought from the shape that these might be grave covers for ground burials, but preliminary excavation showed that this was not the case. So far, the investigation has deepened rather than clarified the mystery. As is often the case, it was quite easy to hypothesize about the site before excavation had started. Now several hypotheses have been eliminated, without the addition of any positive information to replace the lost guesses. But that's what makes archaeology worth while.

ARTIFACTS PLACED ON SALE

The artifacts donated to the Society by Celeste Caldwell of New Mexico have been sacked and put on display in several Sheridan stores in the hope of bringing in a little revenue to purchase equipment for publication and site operations. The artifacts have been sacked with about four or five items in a sack and are priced at one dollar. There are some good buys in the lot, too. If you need some items for your collection, have a look.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Among the needed equipment which the Society hopes to purchase is some additional photographic films, and the necessary outfitting for a good bathroom, some surveying equipment, better publishing equipment for the monthly Archaeologist and occasional memoirs, and storage cabinets for relics and paper work. We also badly need a home, a place to store the equipment and shops in which to prepare exhibits of recovered data, and publish our findings. In short, we have a bad case of growing pains. Anyone who has any items we might be able to use, who would like to sell them at reasonable (meaning very cheap) prices, will be welcomed with open arms.

In order to get the Casper chapter off to a flying start, or rather, to keep them going as they have been, a joint operation has been scheduled west of Kaycee, starting June 20. This is intended primarily as a training session for the Casper chapter, but all members are welcome.

The site consists of several rockshelters, some tipi rings, a number of stone structures, possible cave sites, and a lot of unexplored country to thoroughly explore for further sites. The dig will last perhaps two weeks, and should provide a variety of experience for those who will take part. Lots of dirt will be moved, and we think some very interesting answers about some basic archaeological questions in this area will be found. It is quite possible that a certain type of point which seems to be native to this general area, may be dated and placed in sequence in these operations. We know the cultural aspect which produces these points is represented at the site.

The point mentioned above is a peculiar bi-bevel that looks like a drill design, but is definitely used as a projectile point. Two McKean type points have been found on the surface near the area, and it is quite possible that a McKean horizon may show up in the dig. It may be that a sequence of cultures can be established at the site, and some exact dates obtained for the McKean and other horizons.

SITE REPORTS FILED

Glenn Swann, state President, and Dr. Ray Bentsen, state Secretary, have both filed additional site reports within the last few days. These two have each filed about fifteen or twenty reports at the latest count, and are the best contributors of site reports. We know that some of you have some worthwhile sites in mind. Why not file a site report before that valuable information becomes lost?

The Society now has a block of numbers in Hot Springs County, and is filing some site reports on the west side of the mountains that were discovered by Dr. Bentsen. Some interesting patterns are beginning to develop on our site map. It may well be that with a little more information, we can soon plot most of the main migratory trails across the mountains as used by prehistoric peoples. If we can, it will make a very interesting and valuable addition to the lore of old Wyoming.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

The tone of this entire issue has had some of the informality of the "Campfire" department, and certainly the issue is short, but the only apology we offer is that we are packing for the first big dig of the summer. Perhaps when the dig is over, a very interesting issue can be put out containing a summary of the operation.

Dr. Malley departed for South America soon after school was out this spring, and won't be back for two years. It will seem like a long time to us. We'll miss his help and encouragement, but of course, we wish him good hunting.

MEMBERS OUT