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PROCEEDINGS OF THE STATE COMMITTEE

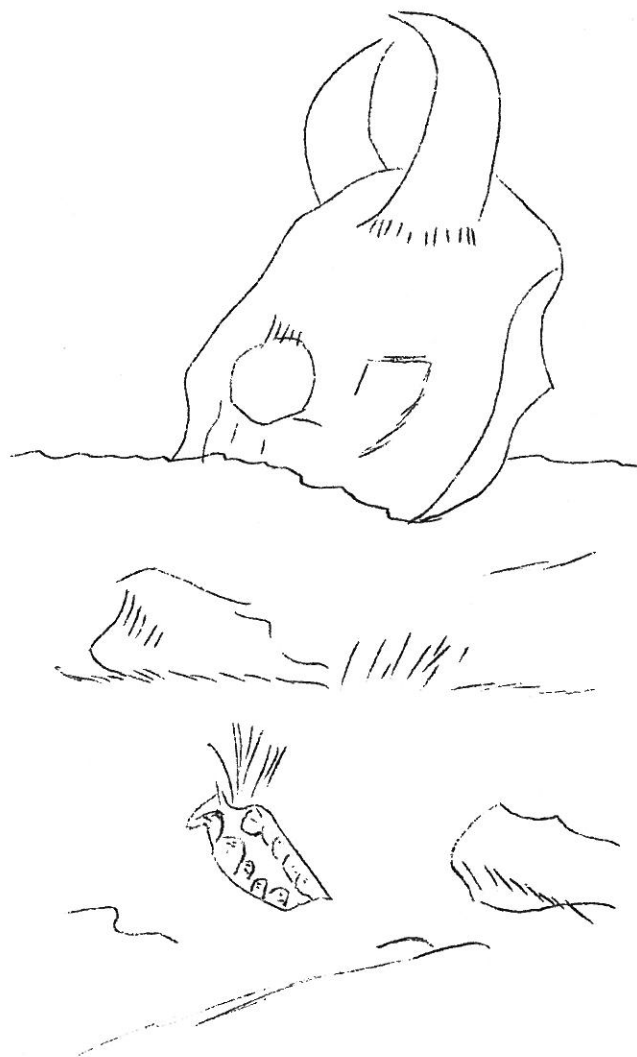
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE STATE COMMITTEE

The state executive committee met at the Idlewild Cafe in Buffalo for its first annual session.

An election of officers was held as the first item of business. The new state officers are:

Art Randall, President  
Don Grey, Vice President  
Bob Brown, Secretary Treasurer.

Art Randall presented a summary of the activities of the Casper chapter and outlined its plans for the future. Among these plans are the promotion campaigns for a museum in Casper to house the archaeological materials for the Casper chapter, and perhaps paleontological and geological materials as well.

A report of activities by the Sheridan Chapter showed a very similar set of plans for the future. A museum is being worked on, with a building promised to the society if suitable funds can be promoted for the operation of the museum.

Plans for the next season's field operations were discussed, and tentatively, it seems that there were two projects being carried forward. The Casper chapter has what appears to be a very good site in mind for an early spring operation and the Sheridan chapter, encouraged by the professional comment at the annual Plains Conference for Archaeology, is planning to continue investigations into the local aspect of the Meserve Complex unearthed in the Hole-in-the-Wall last summer. The Casper members expressed the hope that they could also participate in this operation.

One of the principal items for further action by the state board is the financing of the forthcoming memoir, which will embody the results of Wyoming Archaeological Society's operations to date. While some of the projects have not yet been completed, the society has been urged to make public the information that it has.

The problem of financing the memoir is a rather large one at the moment. The state funds amount to about \$270 at the present time. The Sheridan chapter has accumulated about \$200 over the past few years which could be used in the project. The smallest estimate thus far received is in the neighborhood of \$915 for a thousand copies of the memoir.

One possibility of financing the publication might be to send out pre-publication notices to schools and libraries that might be interested in order to determine the demand for the publication. If there is sufficient demand, the society might borrow the money until the copies are sold.

Sufficient funds must be retained in the state account to publish the monthly Archaeologist, which averages about seven dollars per month at the present time.

It seems evident that money-raising has become a problem with the Archaeological Society as it seems to with almost all other organizations sooner or later. However, it seems probable that the financial difficulties can be resolved without placing a great burden on the membership if a few possibilities pay off.

The importance of publishing our results cannot be overstated. Information that is recovered from scientific work is useless until it has been made available, and it behooves us to be sure that we do everything possible to make the information which we have gained useful to the professional people in the field.

The society has achieved well, and has received many plaudits from many quarters. We must always seek to be worthy of those compliments, and to improve with time and experience.

The Sheridan chapter reported considerable progress in building a chapter library, and plans are under way to work up an exchange system with the Casper librarian. This might help to lessen the financial burden upon each chapter for publication acquisition, and at the same time make more accessible some publications which are not readily available at all libraries. Some of the Smithsonian Institution publications are out of print and hard to locate.

#### EXTINCT ELEPHANT BONES FOUND

The Big Horn Coal Company, while operating in its strip mine north of Sheridan uncovered a scapula which has been tentatively identified as mammoth or mastodon by Dr. McGrew of the University of Wyoming geology department. This is the second area of such finds in the Sheridan area. Several years ago, Glenn Sweem found the mandible of a mammoth in alluvial beds west of Sheridan. Whether the two alluvial beds correspond as to date is not known, but the Sheridan chapter is getting to be more and more hopeful of a find with Sandia points one of these days. A careful search of the outcrops is one the agenda for early spring. Perhaps some characteristic bones of mammoth or mastodon can be found even if relics of man cannot be located. These would be a welcome addition to a museum reference collection.

#### NEW BISON SPECIES?

A bison skull found by Bill Sands of Buffalo has been tentatively identified by Dr. McGrew as bison occidentalis, but with the qualification that it might be a new species since it differs in some respects from other specimens of bison occidentalis on hand.

The skull, actually there were two skulls, was found under about 20 feet of overburden resting on a clay bed. No evidence of prehistoric man was noted with the finds. The finds were exposed by operations on the new highway east of Buffalo.

The need of a program in salvage archaeology for highway construction is sadly unfilled in this state.

## CHAPTERS ELECT OFFICERS

The officers elected at the Sheridan chapter at the regular January meeting are:

Glenn Sweem, President,  
Don Grey, Vice-President,  
Ray Bentzen, Secretary-Treasurer,

Elected to the board of directors of the chapters were:

Louis LaToush  
Zane Hilman.

The officers elected at the Casper chapter were:

Art Randall, President,  
Bob Brown, Secretary-Treasurer,  
Wally Alford, Vice-President  
Al Singleton, Correspondent.

Other elections at Casper included Trustees, and a librarian:

Mr. O. W. Scully, trustee, 2 years  
Mrs. George Briggs, trustee, 2 years,  
Bob Carpenter, trustee, 1 year  
Sylvia Hahn, Librarian.

## OLD TRAILS IN THE BIG HORNS

(Editor's note: The following article was submitted by Hans Kleiber of Dayton. It affords important first-hand information on Indian travels in the mountains in recent times.)

Prior to 1908, the north end of the Big Horns had shown few traces of use by domestic stock except along the driveways where cattle and sheep were taken to and from their summer pastures. Here and there, trails to water, where this commodity was scarce, and to salt licks, were beginning to be worn, but beyond that the upland grazing grounds, open or partly timbered, were still very much as nature had left them for hundreds of years before the white man entered into the picture.

During that long period they had been grazed, season in and season out, by so-called game animals such as buffalo, elk, deer, mountain sheep, and some areas, by antelope. But the cropping had been so light that the forage cover and the soil underneath it was left practically undisturbed.

Of all these animals the buffalo left more evidence of use behind them than all the others combined. The trails they had made could still be easily identified because, moving in larger herds and being heavier, they had distinctive features of their own. Many of their wallows in wet places and dry, had been worn so deep that the purposes they had once served could not be mistaken. But the most widespread and remarkable evidence they left were their heads, many with horns still on them, and

to a somewhat lesser extent their bones. These could be found in almost unbelievable numbers from the open ranges to isolated small parks in the timbered areas, and even above timberline. I recall running into five heads, and in part their bones, one time in a space not much bigger than a good-sized corral, in a small open pocket on the West Fork of Tongue River. It was such an unusual spot for buffalo to wander into and end up that I was hard put to find a reasonable explanation other than they were snowed in and died of starvation.

While their remains were scattered more or less generally throughout the Little Horn and Tongue drainage, by far the heaviest concentration extended from the Burgess country south up a series of long parks into the head of Granite Creek, a tributary to Shell Creek, for a distance of about 14 miles. Aside from the better foraging condition of that area the only conclusion that could be drawn was that the buffalo were driven into these parks from the Tongue River as well as the Shell Creek side by Pre-Historic Hunters and then slaughtered. Some ancient camping grounds and surface finds of artifacts lend considerable credence to such an assumption.

Trails of the other game animals were much harder to make out. For one reason they were much lighter afoot as well as in bone and horn structure than the buffalo so that whatever remained of them had disintegrated much faster. For another, their feeding habits were different, timber meant shelter to them and they drifted in and out of it from one small park to another, or followed along streams so that their trails, some of them well worn, often as not began nowhere and ended up in much the same way. There was no question about not having been plentiful, for their partly charred or disintegrated bones could still be found around the fireplaces or under the sod at ancient camp grounds.

There was, however, one exception in regard to leaving old trails behind them, and that was mountain sheep. While their summer range was mostly at and above timberline, they frequented canyons through the rest of the year where they hung out around rimrocks and bedded on high shelves, and in their wanderings to and fro left trails with distinguishing features of their own. There are places north and west of Dubois where in certain formations, pre-historic hunters took advantage of that habit where their trails crossed narrow gulches or runnels by walling them up above and below and covering the space between with dead limbs and other natural appearing materials through which the sheep would break in running over them. They must have worked, for some had been no mean structures to build. Another evidence of the sheep were their skulls and horns, often found at the foot of rims or in the talus slopes below, and judging from their state of preservation they resisted the ravages of time just about as well as the heads of buffalo.

But aside from the trails of game, there were others of far greater interest. These were the ones made by ancient peoples of which little is known nowadays except the campgrounds and artifacts found along their routes. These were still easily noticeable then and led from the plains on either side of the mountains, usually along some high hogback over the first uplift into the higher valleys. There was nothing haphazard about



their courses in leading from one watershed to another, without much deviation, along the crests of divides and crossing high passes. If at all possible they avoided canyons or heavy bodies of timber, and most of their camps discovered so far were on slightly elevated ground in the open from where the valleys and slopes around them were in plain sight, with wood and water not too far away.

Some of these trails had been used for hundreds, and possibly thousands of years, for many down-hill stretches had eroded so deeply in the course of time that other tracks along side of them had also been worn into the soil. One of the most outstanding examples of what might even deserve the name of a trail system, before the sheep and cattle more or less obliterated it, was near the crossing of the present highway on Prospect Creek and Granite Pass. Old trails crossed one another there from the Burgess country in the direction of Shell Creek, past Duncan Lake through heavy timber to the head of the East Fork of Tongue River, and still another branched off from that trail at the mouth of Woodchuck and led over a high pass into the Shell Creek country.

There is no doubt that pre-historic peoples used that part of the Big Horns a great deal, not only in travelling from one side of the mountains to the other, and in summer hunting, but perhaps as a refuge when pressured by shifts of population. It's also possible that prolonged drought periods may have had something to do with it, for having been largely meat-eaters, they would naturally follow their main food supplies wherever they went. Aside from these possibilities the mountains provided comfortable shelters, especially in their south and west exposures such as are not found on the plains below, saying nothing of plenty of wood and water, all important factors in their nomadic way of life. Also, they may have been greater travellers than we are apt to give them credit for in this day and age, and having got used to the idea of Indians living on reservations for many years now. They were, or became a nomadic race from the time they entered this continent and it can be assumed that they would be yet if it hadn't been for the white man over running their domain.

An incident, a long way from being pre-historic, during my early years as forest ranger may not be out of place here as it had something to do with this inherent travelling trait in the Indians. Early one spring in 1912 or '13, when most of the snow had gone from the open parks in the direction of Granite Pass I was riding along the Forest Service Telephone line to see what repairs it might need when a couple of riders appeared in the distance. Since nobody travelled that section so early in the season, I naturally wondered who they might be. On coming nearer they looked like Indians, which made it all the harder for me to account for them as they were more strictly confined to the reservation then. On getting to within about a hundred feet of one another I stopped, holding up my right hand and they did likewise. I might say here that I was wearing my official badge about the size of the end of a tomato can then on the outside of my shirt, which I am sure they took in. This gave me a chance to size them up more closely, and I saw that one of them was an old man of perhaps 70 or more, and the other quite young. I rode up to them and asked them what they were doing there. As this the old man fished an envelope out of his coat pocket and handing it to me, said, "Me Shoshoni-- Big Chief." In reading the letter I found it was a sort of passport

from the agent at Fort Washakie giving them permission to travel to visit relatives on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana. I told them that this was a long ways from here, and asked why they cut across the mountains as they did. "Oh," the old man said, waving his arms, "Me camp here, -- father and mother-- me little boy." In reply to my question why his father and mother came, he said, "They came for buckskin--hunt buffalo." He pointed toward Granite Creek. "Me camp over there--buffalo all over." On asking him if he had been through here since, he indicated that he had come this way again, but a long, long time ago. With that I wished them good luck, for they had nothing with them except an old blanket and a few odds and ends tied to their saddles.

What the old Shoshoni told me that day proved most revealing to me, for in subtracting about 60 years from the 70 that I judged him to be, it would have placed him in this neighborhood as a boy at some time during the 1850's, and chances are this was along time before white men had been in this part of the Big Horns.

#### OVER THE CAMPFIRE

First comes an apology for the typing on this issue. It was ~~not~~ done by the college typing class. The editor didn't get on the ball soon enough to get it to the experts for final typing, so it was done in his own inexperienced way.

Several interesting articles on various kinds of archaeology have recently appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, Scientific American, and the National Geographic Magazine. We'll try to include a short resume of some of these in the next issue.

We'll be looking forward to word from Casper's new correspondent prior to the next issue.

EMBERS OUT