

Vanishing "Hawg"

The auk and the dodo must now make room for a newcomer in the Limbo of extinct animals. The razor-back hog, once a familiar sight in the piney woods of the South, is doomed to extinction. During the State Fair of Texas, a razor-back sow and her shoat were on exhibit in the Live Stock pavilion just to show what sort of animals once grew in the South. Live stock experts declare that the genuine razor-back is as much of a curiosity to the younger generation as many animals now exhibited by circuses or that are kept in many of the zoological gardens of Texas and other southern states.

The Texas Museum of Natural History, an institution devoted to the study of natural wild life of this state, has classed both the razor-back hog and the long-horn steer as animals doomed to early extinction and plans are now under way by which mounted specimens of both will be placed in the Museum's permanent collection.

W. H. Standish of Lyons, Ohio, a world authority on breeds of live stock, who judged dairy cattle at the State Fair of Texas, declared the razor-back hog has become such a curiosity in many sections of the South that it is of greater interest to many school children than a camel or lion, both of which are common sights to all children of the cities where zoos are maintained and that are frequently visited by the great circus parades.

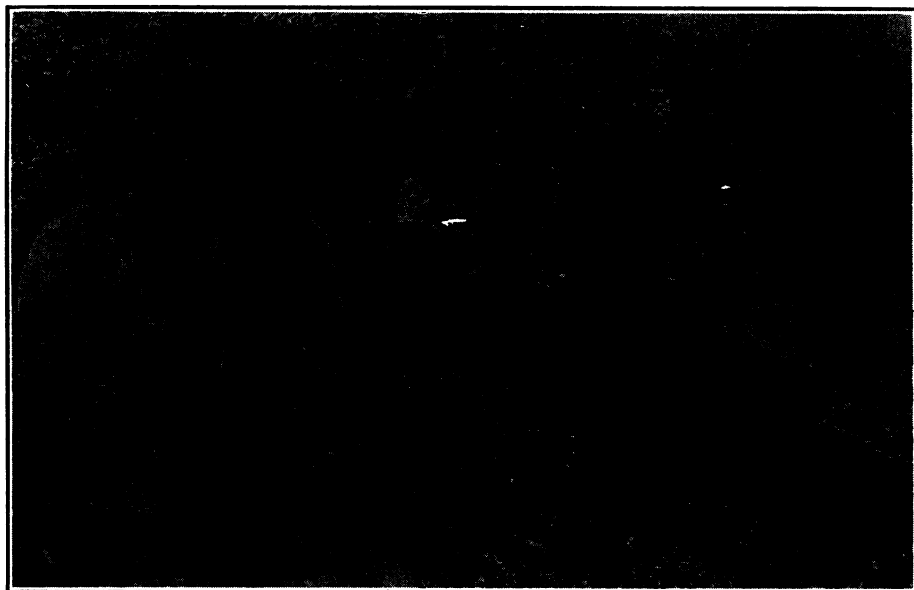
Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

ASTRONOMY

Meteors Reveal Heavens

The only imports to this earth of ours, the meteors that flash in the night, are being studied by the Harvard College Observatory in the hope that they will throw some light upon the composition of the mysterious dark nebulae that appear in parts of the sky. These dark nebulae are believed to be immense heavenly clouds of dust and it may be that the "shooting stars" that are seen from earth are similar particles of stellar dust that plunge into the earth's atmosphere at the high rate of speed of 25 miles a second. Study of photographs of meteor trails, which are hard to obtain, show that some of them are discontinuous and that often one trail breaks up into two or more. Plans are under way to photograph meteors from various parts of the earth in order to discover their secrets.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926



MAKING A FIND. George Langford (right) and his assistant Albert Tennik, removing objects from a newly discovered grave in the Fisher Mound Group.

Indian Mounds

(Continued from Page 162)

must have been inter-tribal traffic in the metal, probably with the Indians of the upper Great Lakes region. The date of the middle layer therefore goes back again to an unknown antiquity, and considering the fact that the first of the upper-layer burials above it contain no European relics, this antiquity may easily be very great.

One expensive luxury only, did these aborigines permit themselves: the clay pots which they buried with their dead are of a very high order of workmanship for early Indian pottery. It seems to have been the invariable custom of the Indians of this period to bury the bodies of women and children with a pot of food as provision for the last long journey. Men were not so provided; presumably the collections of weapons placed as pillows beneath their heads were considered adequate to secure ghostly game for a brave. But a food-pot is always part of the furniture of a well-stocked grave, if a woman or a child lies there. As a rule there is a clamshell spoon in the pot, and frequently bits of bone from the meat.

Other finds have been eloquent of individual experiences in the dangers and hardships of savage life. One skull of a man, a thick and heavy skull, must be that of a warrior who died in battle, for a small chert arrow-head was found protruding from its broken temple bone when it was uncovered. Another skeleton was found with an arrow-head between its empty ribs.

Perhaps the most pathetic of such mute records of battle and sudden

death was the skeleton of a young squaw with the bones of an infant beside her. There was an arrow point between the bones of her forearm, and another under her left shoulder blade. It does not require much imagination to reconstruct the sudden raid of the tribe's enemies, the terrified flight of the young mother and her baby, the wound received as she tried to protect her child, and the deliberately aimed shaft that at last drove through her heart. This unsung Helen did not outlive the sack of her city!

To the student of Indian history and migrations, the most important thing about Mr. Langford's discoveries is the resemblance between the things these middle layer Indians made and the utensils, implements and tools of the Iroquoian group of recent and modern Indians in the eastern part of the United States. The Iroquois Indians were the backbone of the formidable Six Nations alliance which in Revolutionary days made endless trouble for the Americans, though they had at one time been the allies of the French against the English. Cooper's old favorite novel, "The Last of the Mohicans," deals with a part of the struggle against this formidable Indian alliance, said to have been one of the most highly advanced native American political arrangements north of Mexico. Hitherto nothing resembling Iroquoian handiwork has been found west of Ohio, and this discovery in Illinois may throw new light on the route of the predecessors of the tribe eastward to their final empire.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926