

Traces of Ancient Man Reported

Texan Finds Relics He Believes Very Old

Archæology

DISCOVERY of traces of human habitation which appear very old have been reported from the vicinity of Abilene, Texas, by Dr. Cyrus N. Ray, a Texan, who devotes his spare time to unearthing prehistory of the state.

A ranch owner declared that he had found some holes made by Indians in a ledge of rocks. Dr. Ray visited the site and counted 84 oval holes, probably mortar holes, hollowed in the great boulders by Indians so that they could conveniently pound up mesquite beans and other foods.

Searching more extensively, he found nearby the debris of a human camp site, with hearths, arrowheads, hammerstones, stone scrapers, and mussel shells. Seeking clues to the age of the hand-wrought stone tools and weapons, he observed that there is no permanent water supply within many miles, yet when a camp of such size was occupied there would have been need for a dependable water source.

A more striking clue to age is cited from the appearance of the boulders containing the mortar holes. Some of the boulders which were tilted slantwise appear to have been deeply eroded. Mortar holes in these stones are only shallow depressions, as contrasted with the other mortar holes which are 13 to 17 inches deep.

"It must have taken a tremendous lapse of time for the action of the rain water which fell on each stone to have dissolved and completely carried away the whole surfaces of large, hard stones to depths of ten or fifteen inches," Dr. Ray stated.

New discoveries of a spear point, hearth rocks, animal bones, and flint flesh scrapers sticking out of the side of the high Brazos River bank are also reported by this investigator. These stone scrapers and other objects are buried in the same geological layer of clay, beneath six to eight feet of soil, in which two skeletons were found some months ago, he has stated. The new finds are at three places along the river and side creeks, thirty or more miles away from the skeletons, but all are declared to be in the same deeply buried stratum of soil. A geological survey of the region will be necessary before definite conclusions as to the age of the dis-

coveries can be drawn.

The new discoveries appear to be worth investigating, in the opinion of scientists of the Smithsonian Institution.

Whether the Texas finds are evidence of ancient man in America or whether they are handiwork of fairly recent prehistoric tribes can only be determined by expert examination of the objects and of the geology of the region, Dr. J. W. Gidley, paleontologist, declared. Dr. Gidley, whose own discoveries in Florida led him to believe that man has inhabited America as far back as the days of the mastodons and other beasts extinct for some 20,000 years, pointed out that Texas would have been a favorable climate for a very primitive existence. Geologists of Texas should render their verdict as to the age of the deposits, he urged.

Dr. Walter Hough, well-known anthropologist, who visited the scenes where Dr. Ray has been making discoveries this summer found several

flints manifestly worked by human hands and lying buried in apparently undisturbed gravel under eleven feet of soil along the banks of Elm Creek. This site, to which Dr. Hough was led by the Texas investigator, impressed Dr. Hough as being the most curious and the most worthy of study of the various Texas mysteries. The geology of the gravel formations is not thoroughly known, and therefore the antiquity of these deeply buried tools remains to be determined.

At present, commercial interests have been most concerned with the gravel as good road-building material, and the bones and other significant objects in the gravel are shoveled away.

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Japanese and French silk worms have only one or two crops a year, whereas Cantonese worms have from seven to nine crops of cocoons annually.

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