

Canada Receives Prehistoric Art

Archaeology

Replica of Ancient French Bison Given to Museum

CANADA, the Land of the Bison, has received a replica of the celebrated bison group which was modeled in clay by a first-rate artist of France some 30,000 years ago.

The original clay models were discovered in 1912 in a large cave of several chambers on the north slope of the Pyrenees in southern France. The entrance to the chamber in which they were found was blocked by stalactites that had been formed by slow natural processes operating through the long period of time that had elapsed since the artist left his work. The floor of the chamber bears the impress of naked human feet, mainly of the heel, and on the floor also is drawn an outline sketch of a bison.

Sketches of the bison and other animals are found on the walls of the cave. In one chamber were found the remains of bears, and the floor plainly showed their claw marks. The jaw bones of the bears when found in 1912 had been broken and the incisors removed, probably for decorative purposes.

Dr. Henry M. Ami, who arranged for the clay bison to cross the Atlantic, points out that Canada's real bison came from the Old World in prehistoric times. The real bison presumably reached America not



across the Atlantic, but from the opposite direction, journeying eastward across Asia and entering Alaska.

Dr. Ami spent almost half of last year in France, excavating at important sites where prehistoric men once lived. From this expedition, he has obtained collections of flint tools and weapons, and the bones of animals that supplied food to the primitive Europeans. Some of these collections have been placed in French museums. Other collections are now being distributed to museums of Canadian universities and to the Canadian National Museum.

Dr. Ami holds the view that the Eskimos of northern Canada belong to the same family tree as some of these prehistoric Europeans whose art and industries are shown in the exhibits. According to this theory, one of the European races was driven eastward during the retreat of the northern ice sheet, when the animals wandered north. These people followed the reindeer, the great stag, the bison, musk-ox, lemming, marmot, and other animals until the chase led into northeastern Asia, and thence across into the New World.

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Prehistoric Indian House Unearthed

Archaeology

THE complete plan of a big circular Indian house has been excavated in a cotton field in Mississippi, is the announcement made by Henry B. Collins, Jr., of the U. S. National Museum. Mr. Collins, who has returned from Mississippi bringing a drawing of the house plans, said that this is the first discovery showing clearly how the prehistoric Indians of the Southwest designed their buildings.

The house, which is in the frequently plowed cotton field of Claude Pepper near Deasonville, was recently recognized as an Indian site when bones and potsherds were dug up by two young men working for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. These men, Moreau Chambers and James Ford, invited Mr. Collins to work with them in excavating the site.

The house plan shows three circles

of post holes which were used for roof supports, Mr. Collins explained. The outermost circle is sixty feet in diameter. Tracing the circles with a string, as the Indians probably did in the first place, the archaeologists found that the circles were perfectly laid out. The Indian house builders dug the three circles in shallow trenches and set the posts firmly two feet deep within the trenches. The wall of the structure was very likely of wattle-work of reeds plastered with clay, Mr. Collins explained. Traces of a fire pit were inside the house, and also a square of post holes which provided additional roof supports and possibly set off an inner room.

The outermost trench was filled in with kitchen and household refuse, including bones of deer, bear, and smaller animals, fish jaws, clam and mussel shells, arrow points, bone

scrapers and awls, one pipe and much broken pottery. Some of the pottery is a red and white kind heretofore found only in Arkansas. The trash of an Indian settlement was usually piled in a heap, and it is difficult to account for this use of it to fill the trench, Mr. Collins said.

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Byrd's Discoveries—*Cont'd*

prevents the growth of any living plant higher than a moss. Nor does any living animal larger than an insect a few millimeters long permanently inhabit this great continent of five million square miles. For the discussion of these and numberless other scientific problems in meteorology, magnetism, glaciology, etc., the world awaits with the greatest interest the return of the Byrd Expedition.

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