

Hrdlicka Studies Original Eskimos

Anthropology

They Were Once Indians, Smithsonian Scientist Finds

DISCOVERY of the old, original Eskimo type, and the equally remarkable discovery that the type still lives in an isolated part of Alaska is reported by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, anthropologist of the Smithsonian Institution, who has just returned from an expedition to the practically inaccessible region of the Kuskokwim River. These people are also definite evidence that the Eskimos were Indians.

In that region, never before visited by any one who might make a scientific study of the people, Dr. Hrdlicka found 3,000 Eskimos, a great many of whom he measured. He also unearthed many ancient burials, centuries old, and measured these skeletal remains of the earlier generations of these isolated Eskimos.

Unchanged Through Centuries

The results show a type that has remained constant through centuries, and Dr. Hrdlicka declares that it seems now that this is the old original type of Eskimo from which the other deviations have developed. This type of Eskimo has been occasionally found in the Bering Sea region, but its significance was never explained. These oldest Eskimos lack the extraordinary facial development and outstanding jaws which are characteristic of Eskimos that wandered to Greenland and other Arctic regions. The necessity of chewing skins and the kind of food eaten by the Arctic tribes is held responsible for the highly specialized head shape usually thought of as typically Eskimoid.

The Eskimos of the Kuskokwim show clearly that the Eskimo was originally an Indian. Many of these Eskimos, especially in the old, long-buried generations, have heads that cannot be distinguished from Indian except by the skilled expert, Dr. Hrdlicka states. Thus, any question that the Eskimos are of a different and distinct race is set definitely at rest, he believes.

Poor and Happy

The Eskimos of the Kuskokwim have always been poor, judging from their possessions. Their home land lacks proper materials for fine workmanship. But in spite of their hard life, these Eskimos are the happiest people on earth, the anthropologist

reports. Many of the young men and women are attractive by the white man's standards of good looks.

The only serious disease among these cheerful people is tuberculosis, but this one malady afflicts no less than one person in every three among them, it was found. One doctor and one nurse attended approximately 1,000 of these tuberculous Eskimos.

Should Be Cared For

"Everything possible should be done for this group of people," Dr. Hrdlicka states. "At present they are not diminishing, for they have large families. But if tuberculosis conquers them, their land will revert

to wilderness, for it is not a white man's land."

These Eskimos live as far as 400 miles up the river from the bay, and Dr. Hrdlicka penetrated this region as far as the groups were to be found. The work of replacing old, hazy theories with solid facts about the native people of Alaska goes forward surely, but slowly, Dr. Hrdlicka explains, for the season when exploration and digging can be achieved is only a few months of each year. Besides the measurements of Eskimos, Dr. Hrdlicka has brought back important collections which fill about 50 boxes.

Science News-Letter, August 23, 1930

New Device To Measure Ceiling

Meteorology—Aviation



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Dr. Marvin sighting through the clinometer which he has designed

THE clinometer, a simple device which enables one man quickly to determine the aviator's ceiling at night has been designed recently by Dr. C. F. Marvin, chief of the U. S. Weather Bureau, and is being put in use at government flying fields.

It is used in connection with a search light focused vertically on the clouds. At a certain distance from the light, often 1,000 feet, the observer sights the clinometer on the white spot on the clouds and meas-

ures the angle of sight with a pendant which hangs on a scale attached to the instrument. Then with the ground distance and angle of sight known, the vertical height of the clouds can be readily calculated as the leg of a right triangle.

In the day time ceiling height is usually measured by sending up a balloon. A crude instrument depending on the same principles applied in the clinometer has been used in the past to make this determination by night.

Science News-Letter, August 23, 1930

Iodine For Plants

IODINE, which has figured largely as "good medicine" for man and beast during the past few years, now assumes a similar role for plants.

Investigations by the bureau of plant industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have shown that a small amount of iodine added to the soil produces a better growth of tobacco and an improvement in its quality.

Plant Physiology

Science News-Letter, August 23, 1930

An amplifier to increase the volume of tone from a violin or cello has been tested and pronounced satisfactory.

Trolley cars capable of a speed of 60 miles an hour are being put in use.