

ARCHAEOLOGY

Oldest Eskimo Find in Alaska Made by Archaeologist

1500 Years Set as Minimum Age of Settlement and Tree Rings Brought Back for Exact Date Study

BRINGING the good news that he has discovered the remains of an Eskimo settlement so old that it is the oldest evidence of man ever discovered in the Arctic, Henry B. Collins, Jr., archaeologist of the Smithsonian Institution, has just returned to Washington. The prehistoric settlement is at least fifteen hundred years old, Mr. Collins said, and is probably far older than that.

For several years, Mr. Collins and other explorers in Alaska have been finding pieces of fossil ivory carved in a style of art far superior to anything made by modern Eskimos. Archaeologists call this the old Bering Sea art. It has been believed that these things were very old, but to prove it the explorers wanted to find abandoned settlements where such objects were cast away when broken or worn out.

This summer, Mr. Collins, accompanied only by a student aide, James A. Ford of Mississippi College, set out for St. Lawrence Island and there he found a series of five settlements, one abandoned after another. The most recent of these villages was by the present seashore.

The sea gradually receded at this end of the island, Mr. Collins explained. The Eskimos, who always wanted to live close by the sea, kept moving forward to follow the advancing shore line. So, the older the settlement, the farther back from the present seashore it lies.

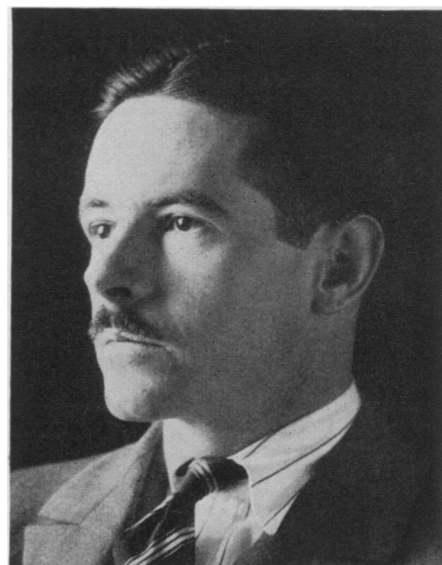
The Eskimos had a casual way of living on top of their kitchen waste heaps and trash piles. Remains of their wooden house beams and stone floors are still to be found frozen in the mounds that contain their broken tools and weapons and the bones from their meals.

In the latest abandoned village, by the present shore, the expedition found iron-bladed harpoon heads and other materials that the Eskimos acquired only after they met white men. This village was abandoned within the past hundred years. A little way back from the shore was found a mound that represents the next older village. Here the harpoons

were comparatively modern, but there was no trace of the white man's coming. Half a mile back from the shore, was a third village, with ivory objects carved in a more complex and beautiful style.

The fourth village, still farther back, lay at the base of a mountain, and here the carved objects thrown away in the last days of the village were like the objects used in the third village. But the art in the bottom of the mound was of a finer kind, the old carved fossil ivory of the Old Bering Sea culture that the explorers have been finding elsewhere.

Up the side of the mountain, by chance, Mr. Collins found the oldest settlement of all, where the shore line stood many, many centuries ago, and here the art is all of the ancient style. This is the settlement which he pronounces the oldest remains ever found in the Arctic. The timbers are to be sent to Dr. A. E. Douglass, of the University of Arizona, the astronomer who has been so successful in his efforts to date pueblo ruins of the Southwest by a "tree ring calendar." Whether the



HENRY B. COLLINS, JR.

Of the Smithsonian Institution, who has just brought back to Washington the earliest evidence of man ever discovered in the Arctic.

method of determining the date on which ancient timbers were cut can be applied to the Arctic is not yet known, Mr. Collins said. The wood from the region is chiefly driftwood and not very well preserved.

If the tree ring calendar can be fitted to Alaskan Eskimo settlements, however, it will mean that archaeologists will no longer have to say vaguely that prehistoric Eskimos lived "centuries" ago, or "perhaps a thousand years or more" ago.

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GEOPHYSICS

Newly Found Submarine Valley Will Guide Ocean Liners

TRANSATLANTIC liners now have a new "landmark" to guide them when approaching the American coast, with the discovery of a previously unknown submarine valley in the Georges Bank. This bank runs eastwards from Cape Cod for about 200 miles and the valley is near its eastern end.

Following the earthquake of November 19, 1929, off Newfoundland, which disrupted cable communication, Captain Bone, of the S. S. Transylvania, made a sounding to check his position, and found a much greater depth than anything expected in the vicinity. At first it was suggested that the rift had sud-

denly appeared as a result of the quake. During recent months the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey's survey ship, the *Oceanographer*, formerly J. P. Morgan's yacht, the *Corsair*, has resurveyed the region.

Using the sonic depth finder, which measures ocean depths by the time required for a sound wave to reach the ocean bottom and return as an echo, they found a valley about 8 miles long and 400 fathoms (nearly half a mile) deeper than the surrounding ocean floor. The normal depth in this region is about 100 fathoms.

The survey work was done with the