

ARCHAEOLOGY

Darts With Elephant Bones Prove Americans' Antiquity

PREHISTORIC elephants, hunted to death by cunningly shaped primitive darts, have been unearthed in New Mexico, proving at last to scientific satisfaction that America was inhabited as long ago as 8000 B. C.

The discovery, which places America's famous Folsom Men more definitely than ever before in a niche of time, was made by a joint archaeological expedition directed by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the University Museum, Philadelphia. The site of the discovery is Blackwater Draw, between Portales and Clovis.

Dr. Edgar B. Howard, leader of the expedition, reported finding at the site bones of ponderous mammoths with stone spear points made by man associated beyond doubt with them. One of the ancient hunter's weapons lay under a vertebra, another under a shoulder blade, and another between the forelimbs of a beast. The prehistoric ele-

phants thus slain were obviously trapped in a bog, where they floundered until the eager big game hunters could dispatch them with their pointed spears.

Bone points, the first of their kind ever discovered in connection with prehistoric elephants or with America's ancient Folsom Men, were unearthed at the scene. One of these bone points rested on the base of a mammoth's tusk.

The antiquity of the event, about 10,000 years ago, is estimated on geological and climatological evidence. The remains of the hunt, with the lost and discarded weapons, were buried through the centuries by hard silt and several feet of sand, and remained undisturbed.

Scientific witnesses attending the excavation of the bones and weapons included Dr. Ernst Antevs, geologist of the Carnegie Institution, Dr. Harold Colton of the Museum of Northern Arizona, and Dr. Frederica de Laguna, archaeologist of the University Museum.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Alaskan Mummy Caves Shed Light on Ancient North

DISCOVERY of important mummy caves, where prehistoric people of the North hid away their dead, is a signal achievement of the Smithsonian Institution's expedition to Alaska, just returned.

Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, leader of the anthropological expedition, and his four associates braved fog hazards and rocky barriers to explore two caves which they believed would contain bundled mummies of Alaska's early Aleutian Islanders.

These caves are no more than crevices in rocky mazes of the Aleutian Islands, Dr. Hrdlicka explained. A first attempt to reach one cave failed due to heavy fog that shut out the island and the two great volcanoes nearby. With the aid of the Coast Guard, the party returned and, finding that here were indeed buried many ancient people, both adults and children, they began to work as fast as

they could to remove mummy bundles from the confusion of fallen rock and debris. Foxes in the cave tomb had added to the damage of time.

"We worked with our hands," said Dr. Hrdlicka. "Tools were of no use. We had no time to think of resting or eating, for if fog settled down we would be marooned, perhaps for days."

By afternoon, the sea was running to a considerable swell, and the workers made haste to get away. All material collected had to be passed by relay in sacks from one man to another for three-quarters of a mile to the beach where the boat was waiting.

Collections from the two caves, now awaiting scientific examination, filled 20 large barrels.

"They promise, from what has already been seen, to be of signal importance," said Dr. Hrdlicka.

It is already astonishingly evident, he

said, that these burials reveal art such as has never before been known to exist in the Far North. Baskets and mats that protected the mummy bundles are worked in fine stitchery in red, rich brown, and black.

Some of the mummies, in excellent preservation, are expected to advance knowledge of the way these Eskimo-like people lived, as well as their physical types. The Aleut custom of bundling dried bodies in grass mats and skins and hiding them in secret cave tombs has been known to science for more than 50 years, but the limited specimens found by explorers have stirred anthropologists to the realization that they had still much to learn about life in the prehistoric Far North.

From excavations in the Aleutian Islands this summer, Dr. Hrdlicka is convinced that these stepping-stone islands that swing out from Alaska toward Asia were once thickly inhabited. The islands contain hundreds of sites, he has learned, many of them pre-Russian. And in the days when America was being populated by its original "natives," these Aleutian Islands were probably a secondary highway which carried wanderers into this continent, Dr. Hrdlicka now believes. Bering Strait, farther north, has long been recognized as the primary highway of the ancient migration, but the Aleutian Islands have heretofore been considered a mere side-track into which some groups drifted from the Alaskan side.

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CHEMISTRY

Glucose Is Source of New Type of Explosive

CORN may find still another extensive industrial use, as ultimate source of a new type of explosive. This outlook is opened up by researches of a young Atlas Powder Company chemist, James A. Frorer.

The explosive itself is made by nitrating a hitherto rare chemical known as mannitol. Mannitol bears much the same relation to the rare sugar mannite that glycerin bears to glucose. Mannite, hitherto expensive even in small quantities, can now be made in tons from glucose or corn sugar, which in turn is made from cornstarch.

Nitrated mannitol, which is chemically more or less analogous to nitroglycerin, is expected to be of industrial rather than military importance as an explosive. Mannitol may also find an even greater usefulness in electrical condensers.

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