

dinate medical research workers in these fields just as the Infantile Paralysis Research Commission has drawn together, without invasion of individual initiative and enterprise, nearly all infantile paralysis research, whether financially supported by them or not.

Continuation and extension of the research upon infantile paralysis is indicated by President Roosevelt's recent announcement of a new National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis to be formed shortly.

Science News Letter, October 9, 1937

ARCHAEOLOGY

Seek Virginia Indians Older Than Known Tribes

THE ancient history of Virginia is proving hard to write.

Most of it is so far lost that archaeologists are assembling it from small puzzle pieces, indeed—such things as fragments of pottery and stone tools. These scraps, however, interpreted by experts, are bringing to light the real “first families of Virginia,” and may eventually show where they hailed from.

A good deal of attention is being given to the archaeology of this historic state by David I. Bushnell, Jr., of the Smithsonian Institution. Mr. Bushnell roams hills and fields of the state to examine sites where Indians once had flourishing villages.

He has just published a report on sites below the falls of the Rappahannock, where lived Algonquian Indians who knew Capt. John Smith and his Jamestown colonists. Some of the Indian villages on Smith's famous 1624 map of Virginia can be identified with more or less certainty.

These interesting Algonquians, Mr. Bushnell points out, were far from being the earliest Virginians. On the ground at their deserted camp are relics of several periods of occupancy. Most of this material seems to be from Indian trash heaps, which white settlers scattered when they pushed their plows over the ground.

Carefully salvaging the fragments of Indian existence, Mr. Bushnell finds imprints of cloth and netting on clay bowls—showing types of textiles these tribes made. He studies types of stone knives skilfully flaked, and styles of pottery used in early Virginia housekeeping. Some objects he assigns to earlier eras than others.

Underground may still be hidden the foundations of houses and also burials, perhaps in levels indicating their ages.

There may be some thousands of years of human existence to account for, before the story is done, for the Rap-

pahannock's left bank has yielded one Folsom-type dart point, and in western states the hunters who made this kind of stone weapon are rated as having roamed some 10,000 years ago.

Science News Letter, October 9, 1937

GEOGRAPHY

Vikings Rivalled Chinese As Compass Inventors

VIKING navigators, who explored and settled in North America four centuries before Columbus, and left their sagas to intrigue and stimulate him in his dreams, may also have been the inventors of the mariner's compass that guided him across the ocean. This is the opinion of a Berlin geographer, Heinrich Winter, who has been making a search for medieval manuscripts for mentions of the use of the magnetic compass.

Herr Winter discounts the commonly accepted story that the compass was first invented by the Chinese, then passed by them to the Arabs, and learned from the Arabs by navigators of Amalfi, in southern Italy. Arabian mention of the compass, he states, is later than a number of references in the medieval literature of western Europe.

There is at least one definite mention of the compass as early as the middle of the thirteenth century, and numbers of references in the fourteenth. Even the phenomenon of compass variation with change in longitude, which terrified Columbus' sailors, was known in the fourteenth century, declares Herr Winter, adding that it was mentioned by the English poet Chaucer in 1380.

The earliest type of compass was simply a piece of natural magnetic iron ore enclosed in a small box and floated in a basin of water. This magnetite compass was called a “leidarsteinn” by the Norsemen. This word is cognate with early English “lodestone,” and means the same thing—a stone that leads or guides. An-

other Norse name for it was “sejersten,” which means “sailing-stone.”

Herr Winter believes that Norse sailors brought their invention south with them. There was a Norman Kingdom of Sicily in the Middle Ages, which could serve as a contact-point for exchange of information between the men of the North and the seafarers of Italy.

Science News Letter, October 9, 1937

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF MARCH 3, 1933

Of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER published weekly at Washington, D. C., for Oct. 1, 1937.

Washington
District of Columbia

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia aforesaid, personally appeared Watson Davis, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

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Editor, Watson Davis, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington, D. C.

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Watson Davis,
Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1937.

[SEAL]

Charles L. Wade
(My commission expires March 26, 1938)

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