

GENERAL SCIENCE

American Found Antarctica, Philosophical Society Is Told

American Mariner Only Twenty Years Old Made Find On Sealing Voyage; Greek Coins Reveal Trade Upset

THE LOG book of Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer of Stonington, Conn., adventurous early nineteenth century American mariner, was offered to the American Philosophical Society as proof that Capt. Palmer and his shipmates were the first ones to set eyes on Antarctica.

Found by Col. Lawrence Martin, chief of the Division of Maps of the Library of Congress, in the possession of Capt. Palmer's descendants, who still live in Stonington, the log book constitutes the first direct proof that the Yankee skipper was the discoverer of the great white continent to the south, Society members were informed.

A new chapter in an old geographical dispute between the United States and Great Britain has been written as a result of the find, the Society has learned.

Immediately after Col. Martin presented his report describing the find, Prof. William H. Hobbs of the University of Michigan took issue with British authorities for continuing to call the land found by Palmer "Graham Land" to honor a British mariner who sailed along its coast a dozen years after the American.

A fascinating story of high adventure in the icy seas below the tip of South America and of international rivalry was told by the two men in their respective papers.

Seven Ships

Capt. Palmer commanded one of a fleet of seven sealers that left Stonington, a famous port of another day, on Aug. 31, 1820, to hunt seal in the Antarctic. Two months later six of the ships laid over in President Harbor in the South Shetland Islands to prepare for sealing while Palmer was sent out to locate a better harbor.

It was on November 17, 1820, that Capt. Palmer in his 44-ton ship, the "Hero," sighted the peninsula that juts out of Antarctica toward South America and is called by geographers today "the American Salient." Capt. Palmer's

name was given to the land, but subsequently British mapmakers persisted in naming most of it and eventually in referring to all of it as "Graham Land."

Capt. Palmer has been generally credited with finding the great white wastes to the south of South America, but the evidence until now has been purely circumstantial. Interviewed by Science Service, Col. Martin related that he found the logbook on a trip to Stonington in search of old papers. A specialist in maps and charts, he was looking mainly for old maps when he stumbled across the logbook, a much more valuable find. He had been visiting one after the other descendants of old seafaring families in the hope that they would have maps of interest to the historian.

Cruised For Week

Capt. Palmer, who was a mere strippling of twenty when he made his discovery, sailed along the coast for a week. The stretch of land he found was

thought for many years to be a peninsula and it is believed to be that today. However, a few years ago Sir Hubert Wilkins, in his flights across the southern ice camp, reported that it looked like an island to him.

"Lightning" in Tube

An electrical discharge in a tube filled with gas behaves like a stroke of lightning, Prof. J. W. Beams of the University of Virginia and Dr. L. B. Snoddy reported to the Society.

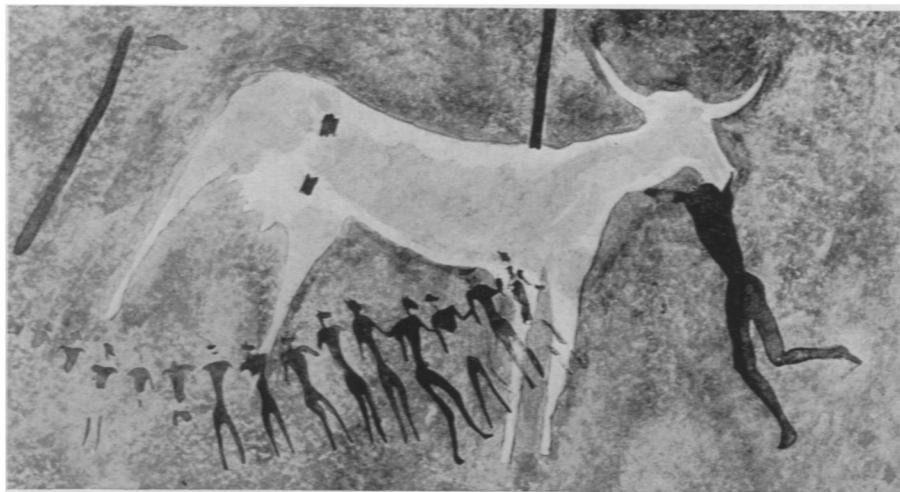
Studying the speed with which luminosity traveled in a long discharge tube, the two researchers found a discharge that appeared to correspond to the "leader stroke" of lightning and a return discharge that was similar to the return stroke of a flash of lightning.

Short On Tin

Greek coins, short on tin, reveal an ancient trade upset that happened when mighty Carthage was destroyed, Dr. Earle R. Caley, Princeton University chemist, informed the American Philosophical Society meeting in Philadelphia.

Predicting that modern pennies—now 95 per cent. copper and five per cent. tin and zinc—may be changed chemically, recording another historic shortage of the important metal tin, Dr. Caley said:

"It seems likely that, at the present rate of tin consumption, the time will



HONOR TO THE COW

Antiquity and wide distribution of the cult of the sacred cow is attested by this rock painting, probably of Stone Age date, found in what is now arid country in Lybia, North Africa. It shows a circle of devotees dancing around behind a huge figure of a white cow. (The larger figure without a head is probably not a part of this painting but of another group near by.) This picture, shown at an Art of Early Man exhibition of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, was supplied by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.