ANTHROPOLOGY

Panchito Visits New York

➤ PANCHITO HAS MADE his first trip to New York in the company of Dr. T. D. Stewart of the U. S. National Museum in Washington. Panchito grinned, but he wouldn't say anything about the skyline. For Panchito has been dead some 15,000 years; he is the most famous of early American skeletons.

"Panchito" is the nickname which Mexicans have bestowed upon Tepexpan man, who is quite a popular personage among his present-day compatriots. Quite properly so, for he has a number of unique distinctions: He is certainly the earliest known Mexican, possibly the earliest known North American. He is the only American thus far found who died in the company of a herd of native American elephants. Finally, he is the only prehistoric man anywhere whose remains were discovered through the use of the same geophysical methods that are used in prospecting for oil and minerals.

Since the arrival in this country of this highly important skeleton, some of Panchito's secrets have been won from him by Dr. Stewart and Senor Javier Romero, Mexican scientist who carried the bones on their long plane flight from Mexico City to Washington.

Senor Romero has been reconstructing the long bones of his arms and legs, which were more or less cracked up when found. There are formulae which enable anthropologists to estimate a dead man's probable height in life from measurement of these bones. Panchito presents a riddle, for his forearm bones indicate that his height was about five feet eight inches, whereas his leg-bones indicate a height of only five feet five or six inches. Seemingly Panchito was a short man with long arms—good lightweight fighter, maybe.

Dr. Stewart has made a plaster-of-Paris cast of the interior of the skull, on which studies of brain size and shape will be made. Thus far it is possible to state only that this early American had a good brain, with sharply-marked convolutions.

While in New York, Panchito is making his headquarters with the Viking Foundation, which sponsored the search over an ancient lake bed near the town of Tepexpan that brought the now famous bones to light. The search was led by Dr. Hellmut De Terra, Viking Foundation anthropologist, Dr. A. V. R. Arellano of the Geological Institute of Mexico, and Dr. Hans Lundberg, Canadian geophysicist.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1947

MEDICINE

Cancer Weapon Hunt Goes to Deep Sea

➤ SCIENTISTS are turning to the deep sea for possible weapons in the war on cancer.

Two researchers in the University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography have found that marine microorganisms cause some destruction of hydrocarbons which have been found to produce cancer tumors in mice.

Benzanthracene, dibenzanthracene and other cancer-producing hydrocarbons were attacked and oxidized considerably by the action of a culture of deep-sea bacteria under controlled laboratory conditions.

"The findings from these cursory investigations have been presented with the hope of stimulating further research into the possible application of bacteria or their products to the treatment," explains Dr. Claude E. ZoBell, associate professor of marine microbiology, who led the investigation.

Collaborating with Dr. ZoBell was Frank D. Sisler, research assistant.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1947

EDUCATION

Military Equipment Pays Cost of Foreign Study

➤ MILITARY EQUIPMENT left on a hundred beachheads will soon be paying the cost of study and research by Americans in some 22 countries.

Surplus U. S. material sold abroad will be used under the Fulbright law passed last year to finance educational grants for U. S. citizens in cooperating countries. The State Department is ready to receive applications from those who want to study abroad, although actual inauguration of the program may be some months in the future, due to conditions abroad. Already 12,000 have applied, 5,000 of whom are veterans.

In Italy, the United Kingdom and China there will be a million dollars available annually for the next 20 years. Nineteen other countries will have lesser amounts for educational exchanges.

The Fulbright law money can not be spent within the United States, but nations can arrange to defray the travel of their students to and from the borders of the United States if that travel expense can be paid in their own currency.

Most fruitful use of the money is expected to be for graduate study and investigations. Experience has shown that foreign study is most profitable to the student after regular college work has been completed.

One member of the President's board of ten to select students is Dr. Ernest O. Lawrence, Nobelist in physics who invented the cyclotron in which the atomic bomb element plutonium was first made.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1947

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 52 AUGUST 2, 1947 *No. 5*

The weekly summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., NOrth 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscriptions—$5.00 a year; two years, $8.00; 15 cents a copy. Back numbers more than six months old, if still available, 25 cents.

Enterer as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., PEnnsylvania 6-5566, and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, STate 4439.

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