

ARCHAEOLOGY

"Tools" Made By Nature

► EVIDENCE of the great antiquity of man in America carries less weight as a result of consultation with experts in the field in Europe.

The verdict of a "jury" of archaeological stars is reported in *Masterkey* (Sept.-Oct.), publication of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles.

Some 47 specimens, believed to be tools chipped from stone by ancient Americans, were carried to Europe by Miss Freddie Curtis, amateur archaeologist of California. She showed them to 12 outstanding archaeologists.

In return, they showed her collections of man-made tools from museums of England, France and Italy, and also an imposing array of tool-like specimens judged not man-made from the nature of the area where they were found.

These "tools" created by nature closely resemble many of the crude, patinated, weathered, worn and non-traditionally shaped "tools" from America, Miss Curtis reports.

"In fact," she comments, "some of the material was better looking than some of our 'tools' and it was difficult to realize that they were not accepted as man-made."

Among the specimens carried to Europe by Miss Curtis were seven of those collected in San Diego by Dr. George F. Carter of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and judged by him to be 100,000 years old because of their position in rock strata.

The jury of experts judged that six of the seven were caused naturally—by stones flaking against each other or by action of heat or volcano. On the seventh specimen there was a hung jury. Dr. Kenneth P. Oakley of the British Museum of Natural History thought it might be a pebblecore tool. Hazzledine Warren, another British archaeologist, considered it seriously.

Two experts from Paris, Abbe Henri Breuil and Harper Kelly, rejected it completely. The others all wanted further information before coming to a decision.

All the other American specimens were collected from the surface of the ground and so lacked any geological evidence of their age.

Some, although made from different

kinds of stone, matched the European specimens in general style of workmanship so that if the American tools were mixed in with the European specimens, they would be indistinguishable. The rest, different in style, were judged to be natural creations.

Science News Letter, October 6, 1956

CHEMISTRY

Find Deadly Silo Gas By Radioactive Nitrogen

► DEADLY SILO GAS, which has killed farmers for years, is nitrogen dioxide.

Adding radioactive nitrates and amino acids to forage before starting silage-making showed University of Wisconsin's emeritus professor William H. Peterson that the dangerous gas is formed from nitrates by the action of bacteria. The finding was reported to the American Chemical Society meeting in Atlantic City.

The gas is formed during the first few days of silage-making. Farmers are warned against entering unventilated silos for five to ten days after filling.

Science News Letter, October 6, 1956

Questions

BIOCHEMISTRY—What kind of drug might be more needed than tranquilizers? p. 215.

CHEMISTRY—How can scientists now test insect repellents without themselves serving as guinea pigs? p. 214.

CLIMATOLOGY—How can pollens help to date ancient sediments? p. 213.

ICHTHYOLOGY—What rare fish has been found off the Chilean coast? p. 219.

PHYSIOLOGY—What is the connection between body build and juvenile delinquency? p. 212.

VITAL STATISTICS—What state has the highest death rate for coronary heart disease? p. 212.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Cover and p. 211, W. S. Finsen; p. 213, American Machine & Foundry Company; p. 214, General Electric Research Laboratory; p. 215, Chrysler Corporation; p. 218, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.; p. 224, Leisure Industries.

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—VICTOR W. KILLICK, In Charge of Astronomical Observatory, Sacramento Junior College, Calif.

MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE

... I have had many years experience in astronomy, and as Junior Leader here in Atlanta I always recommend Dynascope.

—LEONARD B. ABBEY, Jr., Deatur, Ga.

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