

ARCHAEOLOGY

Choice Prehistoric Apartment Discovered by Archaeologists

EVEN IN the days when the aborigines of the West lived in rock shelters, there were desirable apartments and others not so good. One of the more desirable cliffside apartments, occupied continuously for a long, long time, has been discovered by Dr. E. B. Renaud, of the University of Denver.

Dr. Renaud and three associates from the university discovered the shelter in Turkey Creek Canyon, about 32 miles south of Colorado Springs.

The gray sandstone arch which formed the cliff shelter had a western exposure to the sun, and for outlook there was a grassy stretch and a creek of fine clear water beyond. Neighboring cliffs cut off the wind. Trees and bushes provided shade and firewood and privacy. A location not apt to be found by marauding tribes was a good selling point for a home in prehistoric America.

That the shelter was practically never unoccupied is deduced by Dr. Renaud from his excavations inside. These revealed a very large hearth in which ashes and fragments of charcoal formed a deep layer. Had the site been left uninhabited at intervals, this campfire material would have alternated with layers of sterile earth.

Grinding troughs, well worn from use, were found on a rocky bench in the shelter. On the wall of the apartment

were pictures which the occupants had painted in red. Dr. Renaud identified figures of three deer and a large wild turkey, also a strange design of scallops and bands.

"The unexpected depth and extension of the fireplace render this site, already made interesting by its rare painted pictographs, very important," Dr. Renaud stated. "For there are extremely few rock shelters in eastern Colorado, and none, so far, is known to have such a deep accumulation with evident remains of human activity."

Science News Letter, June 6, 1931

BACTERIOLOGY

Sea Salt is Cause of Red Stain on Hides

LARGE areas of brick-red discoloration which sometimes occur on hides have been traced to the use of sea salt for curing the hides. The color is due to immense numbers of red bacteria similar to those found fairly often on salted fish. The bacteria can stand remarkably high concentrations of salt.

Miss Madge E. Robertson, of the laboratories of the British Leather Manufacturers' Research Association, has found that the ordinary bacteria of dust and dirt cannot produce the red stains.

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Catalpa Trees

ON THESE warm days the grass beneath the catalpa trees is white as with snow—only the snow in this case is made of the scattered fallen flowers. The great clusters of snowy bloom, the huge broad leaves, and the long, green seed-pods that come later, all give this tree something of a tropical aspect, and make it seem a trifle out of place among the soberer elms and oaks and maples. And in a sense it is, too, for though it is a native species, its kin, like the trumpet creeper and the bignonia or cross-vine, are tropical or subtropical in origin.

Its long, slender seed-pods, after they ripen and turn brown and dry, are familiar to boys as "Indian cigars" or "smoking beans"; and indeed the tree often bears one of these names itself. Both the pods and the bark are listed as having medicinal properties, though they are little used.

Besides its great beauty as an ornamental, the catalpa has great usefulness as a fence-post producer. That is, if one gets the right kind. There are two principal species of catalpa. One, the hardy catalpa, grows rapidly and yields small timbers that last well and do not split. The other, the soft catalpa, grows even more rapidly, but often splits even while it grows, and rots out easily when set in the ground. It is somewhat difficult to tell the two apart. However, the pods of the hardy catalpa are much the smaller of the two, being seldom either longer or thicker than a lead pencil; whereas those of the soft species are huge affairs, frequently reaching a length of two feet and a thickness as great as a man's little finger. The bark of the hardy catalpa also is a mark, being much thinner than that of the soft.

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