

ARCHAEOLOGY

America's Ancient History Revealed by CWA Projects

Distant Past in California May be Dated by Burial Posts; Glass Bead Discoveries Suggest Site Visited by De Soto

CWA archaeological projects in five states, under the guidance of the Smithsonian Institution, are yielding new information on America's ancient history.

An old Indian burying ground explored in Kern County, California, has revealed grave posts of extraordinary importance. The wooden posts may enable archaeologists to establish some definite "ancient history" dates for the region, thus turning prehistory into dated history in California.

The posts, according to report received at Washington, D. C., are of cedar or juniper wood. Old as they are, annual growth rings in the wood are well preserved. It is hoped that by comparing the rings with the long calendar of annual rings shown in California redwood trees, the years when the grave posts were cut and made can be determined.

By a similar calendar of Southwestern tree rings in unbroken sequence from the seventh century to the present, archaeologists have been able to fix the ages of more than 75 ruined settlements in the Southwest.

The California Indians whose age may be learned were buried with few possessions. The excavators have found 150 burials, wrapped in cloth and matting, in the graveyard.

CWA workers near Murphy, North Carolina, have excavated an Indian mound and identified the site as a Cherokee village visited by the Spanish explorer De Soto. It is called Guasili in the Spanish records.

Another Indian village which De Soto may have visited is being explored at Bradenton, Florida. European glass beads suggest that the Spanish gold-seeking expedition tarried there, and exchanged beads for information, hospitality, or supplies.

A large mound being explored by another CWA group in Macon, Georgia, is proving far more extensive than had been expected. Near the top, the

digging has disclosed evidence of European contact. More deeply buried are phases of aboriginal cultures, some belonging to historically known tribes. From pottery fragments, the archaeologists see indications that these Georgia Indians had contacts with tribes farther north.

In Tennessee, the CWA workers are still seeking to identify Indians who built the numerous mounds in Shiloh National Military Park. The Indian site became a strategic point during the Civil War, and the excavators have uncovered a good many Civil War relics.

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ASTRONOMY

Meteor Showers To Be Observed From Airplanes

METEOR showers in Central Europe will in future be observed from airplanes flying high above the mist and clouds which often blot out the sky in November, when the Leonids appear. The government of Czechoslovakia has agreed to put at the disposal of the Astronomical University of

Prague a specially adapted airplane with an unlimited field of view.

On the last occasion when the Leonid meteors were due to appear (the nights of November 16, 17 and 18, 1933), a three-engined Fokker left the airport of Prague with three observers. One of these, Dr. Hubert Slouka, writing in the scientific periodical *Nature*, gives the number of meteors observed at a height of 3,000 meters (10,000 feet).

Contrary to expectation, last year's Leonids were decidedly few, but it is expected that with the new methods of observation meteoric showers will be accurately recorded in future, irrespective of poor visibility conditions near the ground.

Science News Letter, February 17, 1934

BACTERIOLOGY

Organism Causing "Black Beets" is Found

A MICRO-ORGANISM which is the cause of the condition known to vegetable canners as "black beets" has been found by Dr. E. J. Cameron of the National Canners Association research laboratories, Washington.

In a report to the Society of American Bacteriologists, Dr. Cameron explained that the condition has on occasions caused loss to beet canners.

The micro-organism which Dr. Cameron found caused the condition grows only moderately in plain beet juice, but grows much faster and the beet juice is blackened when a strip of iron is sterilized with the beet medium, thus dissolving in the beet juice.

Science News Letter, February 17, 1934



DID DE SOTO CAMP HERE?

CWA workers digging out of the Florida sand, near Bradenton, an Indian village where Hernando De Soto may have rested. It was not many miles from here that the Spanish gold-seeking expedition landed and began its historic trek throughout the Southeast.