

## ARCHAEOLOGY

# Stone Age Had Farmers

**Report evidence that 8,000 years ago, men farmed in Iran. Radiocarbon calendar was used to date remains. Layers showed progressive civilization.**

➤ Evidence that 6,000 years before the birth of Christ, men raised goats for meat and milk, grew grain for food and sheared sheep for clothing was reported in Philadelphia.

Remains of the world's first known farmers were discovered in a cave on a hillside in Iran, about 50 miles from the Russian border. The discovery was made by Dr. Carleton S. Coon, of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The finds were dated by Dr. Willard F. Libby, nuclear physicist at the University of Chicago, who found that the radioactive carbon clock placed the time that these earliest farmers lived at about 6050 B.C.

A total of 28 layers was successively unearthed, showing that this same Belt Cave served as a home for successive generations of men from the Middle Stone Age through the New Stone Age. During this time culture developed. The oldest of the inhabitants of the cave knew only how to hunt wild animals for their meat and skins. Later they herded animals for milk and wool. Later still they began to cultivate the soil and grow grain and to make pottery dishes.

Earliest animal to be domesticated was the goat, Dr. Coon found. Then came the sheep and later the pig and the ox.

The Stone Age men who lived in this cave knew how to make sickles to cut their grain. Evidence of the use to which their stone blades were put was found in a coating on the cutting edge due to the silica in the grain stems. Some were coated on one edge; others had two cutting edges.

The baked pottery left behind by the Stone Age farmers was tempered with chaff when it was fired, another evidence of the growing of grain.

Among the 31,000 bones and other objects found in the cave were a few remains of the human occupants themselves. The skull of a 12-year-old girl was among the finds. She was of the Neanderthal type, and lived in the Middle Stone Age period, about ten or twelve thousand years ago. Remains of two adults were also unearthed.

The Stone Age farmers grew their grain and raised their herds in an ideal location, Dr. Coon points out. Near the coastline of the Caspian Sea, they had an ideal temperate climate for early agriculture. It never freezes in that area and there is adequate rainfall to sustain a rich soil.

Science News Letter, May 5, 1951

## ARCHAEOLOGY

## Find Ancient Fingerprints Clear 3,500 Years Later

➤ FINGERPRINTS of men who sealed jars containing oil, probably about 3,500 years ago, were still clear when the jars were unearthed during excavations in 1950.

This was reported by Dr. Alan J. B. Wace, professor of archaeology at Farouk I University, Alexandria, Egypt. He told the American Philosophical Society meeting in Philadelphia of the discovery of an important house with a large basement in the excavations at Mycenae, Greece.

In one room of the basement stood the thirty "stirrup jars" for oil which had been

stopped with clay and sealed with their owners' signets. The still clear fingerprints were found on these jars. Beneath the floor were fragments of "gaily colored frescoes" from a yet earlier building.

The Mycenae excavations are supported by the American Philosophical Society under the direction of the British School at Athens, with assistance from the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, England, and the British Academy.

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