

ANTHROPOLOGY

Oldest Americans May Have Lived and Hunted in Nebraska

Three Discoveries of Fossil Beasts With Stone Weapons Are New Clues to Ancient Man

THE ELUSIVE earliest inhabitants of America, whom science is eagerly seeking, have been sighted in Nebraska, according to reports of no less than three separate discoveries.

Dr. W. D. Strong of the Bureau of American Ethnology, a specialist in the archaeology of the central plains, has visited all three sites. In a statement to Science Service he said that the discoveries, if accepted as authentic, should be of major importance, in view of Nebraska's strategic location within the region covered by the great glaciers in the Ice Age. Conservative scientists maintain that existence of men in this country as far back as glacial times can be proved only by finding human relics below undisturbed glacial deposits.

Two of the Nebraska discoveries were made by students from the University of Nebraska, specializing in geology or paleontology, and conducting field parties for the State Museum. Led by Bertrand Schultz, they dug into a bank in the South Loup Valle near Cumro, to uncover a bison skeleton. Close by a rib bone lay a beautifully chipped point of black flint, which Mr. Schultz removed.

Dr. Strong declares that, from examination of the site, he is convinced that Mr. Schultz' account of how the weapon was found is accurate. The important question is to fix the time when the bison and the hunter lived. The key to age is the yellow soil deposited sixteen feet thick over the layer of dark earth containing the bison and weapon. This yellow soil is of the kind known as loess, and may have been deposited before the last glaciation. Mr. Schultz holds the view that it was so deposited. Dr. Strong's verdict is that "while possibly well founded, these conclusions await confirmation by more experienced students of Pleistocene deposition in the Great Plains region."

The second student discovery was made sixty miles from the first, on the banks of the Platte River, near Grand Island. As a party led by Schultz was unearthing a fossil bison, a chipped

point of blue-gray flint came into view under a cluster of ribs and vertebrae. This time, the students photographed the weapon where it lay, and then removed it together with the impression preserved in the form of a small block.

"It is evident that these two discoveries are very important," said Dr. Strong. "In all probability they represent a very early and hitherto unknown Nebraska hunting culture."

The third and most recent discovery was made near the town of Angus. A. M. Brooking, who reported it, said that a mammoth was being excavated when Junior Brooks observed a stone weapon under the shoulder blade. The point was removed and found to be of crude workmanship. Mr. Brooking described it as similar to the points found with fossil bison at Folsom, New Mexico.

The mammoth bones found near Angus lay under almost sixteen feet of soil which some observers believe may date from the early Pleistocene age. One scientific observer pointed out that if the weapon found with this mammoth was indeed made in the early Pleistocene age it would mean that hunters were pursuing American bison as far back as 300,000 years ago. Some scientists, however, have expressed themselves as doubtful whether the weapon itself was as old as the mammoth.

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CHEMISTRY

Potent Chemical Seems To Control Yeast Growth

A POTENT chemical which seems to control and make possible the growth of yeast has been discovered in a wide variety of living materials by Dr. Roger J. Williams, biochemist in the University of Oregon. In a report to the American Chemical Society, it appears that a yeast plant will not grow, even when given its full quota of sugar, phosphate, salt and other fundamental

materials needed to build new structures, unless the special growth substance be present. This substance does not seem to belong to the so-called vitamin class.

Yeast was chosen because it grows rapidly, and, further because its progress may quickly be reckoned by count of the simple cells under the microscope. For some years biochemists have vaguely understood that a certain organic material called "bios" fostered the growth of yeast. The investigations of Dr. Williams indicate that a relatively simple chemical, contained in the "bios" and elsewhere, is the real operating principle. While the substance has not yet been isolated in crystalline form, its behavior in purified solution indicates that its formula is less bulky than that of common sugar. While part of its chemical structure shows that it is like sugar, other reactions show it to be a weak acid.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Officers Plan For Disaster Relief

A PLAN for a permanent organization in each state and province of North America that would be ready at any time to meet disaster in the shape of floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquake, fires, explosions and epidemics was presented to the Conference of State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America by Dr. E. L. Bishop, state health officer of Tennessee and chairman of the Conference's committee on disaster relief.

Under this plan there would be a committee in each state or province which would correlate the work of various agencies for disaster relief. The executive direction of the work in the various lines would be left to the agencies concerned. The medical service necessary would generally be supplied by the local physicians and hospitals.

Relief needs in the way of food, clothing, shelter and economic rehabilitation would be supplied by the American Red Cross. Health protection and disease prevention must be furnished by the public health authorities. The permanent relief organization should consist of the governor, the adjutant general, the state health officer, the Red Cross field representative, the state commander of the American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary, and others, according to the plan formulated by Dr. Bishop's committee.

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