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THE WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGIST

PROGRAM NOTE: Dr. William Massey of the University of Washington faculty will speak to the group on his researches in the archaeology of Baja California (the peninsula of Lower California) at the meeting on Wednesday, February 13th. Dr. Massey has spent several field seasons doing archaeological survey and excavations in the lower part of the peninsula. He has written his doctoral dissertation on the area and has published on the ethnology of the region. Dr. Massey is a recognized authority on this region.

WEST BEVERLY DIG (Site 45 KT6)

This is the first of a series of news notes on current excavations. We plan on publishing a running commentary on our field activities.

The Washington Archaeological Society started its first official excavation on the west bank of the Columbia River approximately one and one-half miles north of the Milwaukee Railway crossing of the Columbia River at Beverly, Washington. In line with our basic policy to conduct all investigations on the highest scientific plane, Dr. Douglas Osborne was chosen to act as Archaeologist-in-Charge of the dig.

The location was chosen primarily because of information reported by Jack Lindquist who spent about one year working the site in connection with an extension course in Anthropology. He established that there are several levels of habitation, the deepest of which is 10 feet. The absence of significant quantities of "Trade" goods and the depth of the site give support to the theory that this may be a prehistoric site of considerable age. This site had been included in a previous survey report and was assigned the number 45KT6.

The numbering system used may be of interest to those of us new to the field. The '45' refers to the State of Washington which is 45th when states are arranged alphabetically. 'KT' is the abbreviation, or symbol, for Kittitas County. '6' establishes that this is the 6th site in Kittitas County to have been reported to the State Museum about which a survey report was filed. This numbering system is in use throughout the United States by the many museums, foundations, scientific societies and archaeologists doing professional work. Archaeology is no different from many of the other sciences--numbers are a sign of the times -- ask UNIVAC.

Our first group visit to the site was Labor Day week end. About 20 members with their families camped on the site and spent the daylite hours surface hunting and exploring the river bank and cliffs. Of course, the younger set found the river a luxurious natural swimming pool.

Two weeks later a similar group of members did the important preparatory work of digging test pits, mapping, and surveying. Three test pits were dug to determine the general area of the site. The profiles of each test pit definitely

established that the whole area was extensively used. On the basis of the material found in the test pits, surface finds, and general lay of the land, the next step was to establish a definite plan for the excavation. The mapping and surveying detail was directed by Dr. Osborne. Ten squares, 10' x 10', were staked out, square numbers placed on the stakes, and the brush cleaned off. Before starting to dig, the group gathered at the test pit #1, and Dr. Osborne discussed the significant features of the profile. Then digging began in earnest. Sand flew and the first artifacts came to light in the screens, to the delight of all the diggers.

Digging continued on week ends until cold weather called a halt and even the most hardy stayed home. To date we have collected about 230 artifacts from the site that have been catalogued by Kay Nelson. More will be written on this phase of the work in a later issue.

For those who haven't had the pleasure of camping at this site, here are a few important facts: The Indians certainly knew how to choose a beautiful site; the view is terrific; swimming in the river is fun and safe; the access road is fair and well marked; firewood is abundant, but bring your own water; stores are about 8 miles away, so plan to bring everything. If you can join in the digging, bring your shovel, liniment, and suntan lotion.

SEE YOU IN THE SPRING!

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

As per notice posted in January bulletin of the Society, the Activities Committee meeting was convened at the chairman's residence. All committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Lindquist, who was unable to attend. Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Nelson, Messrs. Widrig, Conover, Gent, Tracy, Osborne, and Heller were present. Robert Heller greeted the Committee with a refreshing interlude. Seven exploration sites were discussed in relation to their accessibility and possible yield. Two sites were approved for preliminary investigation: (1) The Spanish Castle, west side of Columbia River approximately 20 miles southeast of Wenatchee, road south through Malaga. Mr. Conover suggested this site because on this location there would be surface, trench, and cave work.

(2). Squally Hook, south side of Columbia River, 7 miles East of the John Day River mouth. Here deep and shallow trenching can be done. This location has yielded fine projectile points, mortars, and pestles, and some stone carving. Preliminary work will start as soon as weather permits, proven locations, in order. Work at Mr. Lindquist's location at Beverly will be resumed.

Other suggested locations are:

Vantage Vicinity
Cayuse Bar, cave and trench work.
Whiskey Dick, resume Dr. Earl Swanson's work, caves and trench
Skookumchuck, (if Mr. Scamman grants permission). Trench and caves.
Osborne Bar. Surface, trench and caves, burials

Also for future exploration:

Shearars Bridge, Tygh Valley
Deschutes River, Oregon. This is a very rich site, surface trenching and caves. Also, many tipi sites. However, this trip requires at least 3 days and is last of sites discussed for this coming season.

The Activities Committee will appreciate all information as to Coastal sites which can be explored during the winter months.

The committee chairman wishes to thank the members of his committee for their full attendance at this first meeting. We believe it will bear good fruit for the Society. Note: (as Mr. Gent suggested) when navigating strange waters, though the Captain be sure of his course, it pays to have a pilot bold who rides the prow, sans shoes, sans sox, but an expert on submerged rocks. The pilot who saw us safely through to his bar..... Osborne.

A NOTE ON ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORD

In order to prevent the loss of information which would be of interest in the years to come, we are suggesting that the Senior Archaeologist on the site or survey be responsible for keeping a record. The manner in which this shall be accomplished will, in general, be as follows: The Senior Member Archaeologist who is on the site or survey for the day shall have notes kept which can be typed and filed in a standard loose-leaf binder which is to be maintained by the Society's secretary. The information to be kept should include the date, the weather, who was present, what squares were dug and by whom, artifacts found, surveys made, and any other information which may be deemed of interest to fellow members.

This information shall be signed and presented to the Society's secretary who will have it available for fellow members.

We are also planning to keep a series of photographs of our various excavations and surveys which will be filed and maintained in the same manner as that proposed above. It will be appreciated if members will turn in copies of all snapshots taken on any of our surveys or excavations, giving pertinent details such as date, location, persons or objects in photo, and the name of the donor.

SITE 45GR41, The FIRST EXCAVATION Conducted by the Washington Archaeological Society

The site in question was test-excavated by a group from the Society on the Labor Day Week End, 1956. The work was done at the request of the Grant County Public Utility District. The site itself is, or was, located in S.2, T.13N, R.23E, on the east bank of the Columbia River near the lower end of the Priest Rapids, across from the old power house. The house pits, of which there were 11 or more, lay a few hundred yards north of the axis of the Priest Rapids Dam. Hence, there was need for immediate investigation before the processes of construction destroyed them.

Mr. John Campbell, formerly of the University of Washington and now a graduate student at Yale University, had been hired by the Public Utility District, at the suggestion of myself, and had worked with hired P.U.D. labor for about one week in the late summer. He had been able to open a few house pits and had found little. He recommended that there be one more test before the site was abandoned to the construction activities. Hence, the Washington Archaeological Society undertook to test two more house pits.

House Pits at Site 45GR41

House pits No. 5 and 11 were chosen. A trench 5 feet wide and 50 feet long was excavated at its greatest depth, to 40 inches. A profile was prepared and a total of only 6 artifacts recorded. A plan map was not made as this had previously been done by Campbell. House pit 11 was roughly circular, with a 30-ft. diameter; house pit 5, also circular, was smaller -- about 20 feet in diameter. No. 11 was the more shallow, 10 inches to 1 foot in depth, while pit 5 was 20 inches deep. The pits had been dug, by the Indians, into a heavy gravel-cobble fill to depths of approximately 20 inches; the soil was such that it was not possible to see clearly the outline of the house pits on the profiles of the trench.

The northern part of pit 11, which lay to the north of pit 5, was filled with heavy cobbles and the southern half had a heavy sandy fill. There was a hummock of earth, about 5 feet wide, between the two pits. It appeared that pit 11 had been dug first and then, presumably being abandoned, was partly filled with earth as it was taken from the more recently-excavated pit 5. Undisturbed river cobble and gravel lay at a depth of from 20 to 24 inches below the center of the house pits. It appears at a shallower depth throughout the undisturbed part of the area; hence the Indians did excavate their pits into the heavy cobble. Organic remains, midden, were poor and few in the house pits. None of the usual areas of charcoal, mussel shells, ash, etc. (the usual midden) appeared. A possible fire pit, marked by two concentrations of cobbles and some charcoal, appeared between squares 6 and 7 in house pit 5, at a depth of only 6 inches from the surface. It is a probable fire pit remnant.

The Artifacts

House pit 5 yielded the most. These were the fragment of a bone awl at a depth of 27 inches in square 9; a chipped flake and an oval chipped adze or skin flesher of gray Gneiss, 4 x $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, at a depth of 10 inches in square 8; a bit of red paint, probably trade Vermillion, in square 7 within the first level, and a brass ring of the folded curtain ring type in level 3 (12 inches to 18 inches) in square 6. The latter is obviously the result of a recent disturbance, although the paint, if it is trade paint, indicates a late occupation.

House pit 11 which we considered to have been dug first and abandoned, yielded 4 artifacts, all of them trade pieces: 3 blue glass trade beads were found in the first level, in square 11, and a fragment of cloth came from the second level of square 13.

Conclusions

There can be no doubt from the condition of the pits and the lack of midden that the occupation was brief. There are other sites near the Priest Rapids, an excellent fishing place, that appear to have had a longer occupation. Furthermore, the period of utilization was almost certainly during that when trade goods were available to the Indians. These facts, plus the paucity of artifacts and the obvious recent disturbances, indicated that there was no need of continued excavations at 45GR41. The party therefore moved upriver to 45KT6. The artifacts from GR41, and the profile, are stored in the Washington State Museum.

- Dr. Douglas Osborne

Members Who Worked at GR41

Mr. Jack H. Lindquist
Patricia Griffin
Mrs. G. A. Griffin
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Gent
Mildred & Katherine Colbert
James Smith
Mrs. Smith
Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Nelson
Monty Nelson
Mr. Ted Weld
Mr. & Mrs. Tom W. Beddall
Dr. & Mrs. Douglas Osborne
Mrs. B. A. Trick

BRIEF RESUME OF TALK GIVEN TO THE WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY BY DR. EARL H. SWANSON, 14 December, 1956

Dr. Swanson talked on excavations conducted in the Vantage region of the Columbia Plateau in 1953 and 1954 by the University of Washington. He discussed the geographical and ecological conditions in the area, the locations and types of sites explored, and the problems encountered in the excavations. Dr. Swanson devoted much of his time to describing the finds from Cedar Cave, the principal site in the locality. He pointed out that a long cultural sequence of some 9000 years or more had been established, and explained some of the problems involved in working out an archaeological chronology. Especial attention was paid to the use of two-ply cordage for purposes of correlation. The talk was concluded with a discussion of culture patterns and culture history in this region of the Plateau.

Of primary interest to the members of the Washington Archaeological Society was the discussion of the use of cordage as a point of departure in the study of the chronology of the area. Many of us are well aware that types of pottery, in Arizona and New Mexico, and projectile points over much of America, change as time goes on and cultures change. Few of us were aware that such a simple trait as two-ply cordage, thigh spun of such materials as cedar or juniper bark or Apocynum (Indian Hemp) could be broken down into a number of attributes which are sufficiently sensitive to change so that the cordage from different sections of the stratigraphic column would reflect cultural change. Dr. Swanson's work near Vantage has, however, shown that this sort of study is locally applicable. Some of the factors of cordage which change are: materials, twist (up-to-the-right or to the left), number of plys, and tightness of twist. Swanson found that the percentage of these variables changed for different periods. He was thus able to develop the local chronology largely on cordage. This is fortunate because only small quantities of other kinds of artifacts came from the cave excavations.

ANIMAL FIGURINES

Abstract of Talk by Malcolm Farmer

The first of these animal figurines made of split twigs were found in a cave in Clear Creek on the north side of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in northern Arizona in 1933. Three CCC workers while clearing trail explored a small cave and found three of the figurines. A few more were found in a cave near Vasey's Paradise in Marble Canyon the next year, and some were found in a cave near Clarkdale, Arizona at about the same time. Not much interest was shown in the animal figures at that time, but in 1935 S. M. Wheeler found some in Etna Cave, Nevada in levels which indicated some antiquity and a possible association with Gypsum Cave hunters. Wheeler assembled data on the material but obtained no more data. During cave surveys in the Grand Canyon area in 1954 and 1955 by the Western Speleological Institute of Carson City, Nevada, and the Museum of Northern Arizona, more specimens were found and additional studies made to try to determine the age and cultural association of the figurines. In 1955 Dr. Douglas Swartz of the University of Kentucky with the cooperation of the two institutions noted above, plus Peabody Museum of Yale University and the U. S. National Park Service, tested some of the caves where the figurines had been found.

While it is still not certain what the cultural association of the figurines is, the possible date of at least 800 to 1200 years ago has been fairly well decided. Material has been obtained by which the radioactive carbon method of dating can be used and the age of the material will eventually be established.

Only additional finds with associated cultural material will solve the problem of the origins of the figurines in the Grand Canyon area which, to date, has been the major center for these artifacts. A recent find of the same type of figurines in a cave near Newberry in the Mohave Desert of California has extended the range and indicates something of the interest and perhaps value of such items in showing more on the cultural horizons of the Great Basin and the Southwest. We should hear of the little animals again.

To:

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