

to reading texts written in a strange language—a “language” that consists of sherds (fragments of pottery), tools of stone and bone, sandals, textiles, wooden objects, implements of ceremony, chase, and war, dimensions of houses, storage pits, firepits, and postholes, and even of corncocks, bean pods, squash rinds, and other refuse that might impolitely be called “garbage”!

But when all these finds are winnowed, statistically manipulated, charted, and mulled over, we come up with an amazing amount of information about these Indians and the way they lived. We not only can date, with fair precision, the materials and houses that we excavate, but we can even make a fair guess as to the way these Indians organized themselves in order to carry out various objectives in a fairly efficient manner.

FLIGHT FROM DROUGHT

Briefly, our story of the Mogollon Indians begins at about 2500 B.C., at which time, because of drought, they had abandoned their homelands in what is now southern Arizona. They camped in Pine Lawn Valley (located in what we now call west-central New Mexico) because it was verdant and well watered. There, as I said earlier, they lived for several millennia. At first their houses may have been skin shelters or tents. Later they lived in pit-houses (circular or rectangular houses about 12 to 15 feet across, floors of which were excavated to a depth of about 2 feet), and still later (about A.D. 1000) they lived in communal apartment houses (of one story) built with masonry walls or in cliff dwellings. The idea of planting crops (maize) may have been introduced to them (from the south, by diffusion) soon after their arrival in Pine Lawn Valley, and the art of pottery making became one of their specialties as early as the beginning of the Christian era.

As we regard their handiwork we note slow but steady progress in everything they undertook. At about the time the Normans were invading England, the Mogollon Indians had reached a modest level of accomplishment. And in the next century or two (up to about 1350) they had progressed even more—at least as far as material things were concerned.

CLUES RUN OUT

Then for some reason or reasons, not yet known, they decamped. Where they went is also a mystery. Several possible causes for the abandonment of the area come to mind: a change in climate that might make the area too wet or too dry, enemies, inter-village wars or squabbles, an epidemic of some kind, psychological causes (ceremonial or ritualistic signs manifested to the priests). None of these seems entirely plausible to us, and I must admit we are entirely in the dark on the subject.

At any rate, the people did move out of

the Pine Lawn Valley and the Reserve area about A.D. 1350 or 1400, and we are going to try to find out why they went and where. This is a difficult but important problem and we may not succeed in solving it. But we have a hunch—and nothing more—that the Mogollon Indians moved north and westward. If we obtain good evidence on this point, we plan to move our camp within the next year or so in order to follow through investigations of this interesting and little-understood culture.

‘UNEXPLORED CHICAGO’—

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large flint projectile points for their weapons, as did the Early Hunters, and used knives and scrapers.

Then about 2,000 years ago came the Indians who built large burial mounds to cover the cremated or buried remains of their dead and cut elaborate ornaments of mica and copper. They are called the Hopewellian Indians because evidence of



CLUES TO HISTORY

Fragments of pottery, projectile points, and flint chips are the only records of Hopewellian Indian villages left for study by today's archaeologists.

this culture was first found on the Hopewell farm in Ohio. They raised corn and other crops and lived in villages now indicated only by fields covered with projectile points, scrapers, knives, and pieces of brown pottery that is thinner and better made than pottery of the Early Woodland group. This pottery is often cord-marked on the outside; that is, when the Indians were shaping the pots they thinned them by pounding the outside with a paddle wrapped with cords that left an impression on the outer surface. Some pottery is also decorated with incised lines and punched designs. In Ohio, cloth frag-

ments found in some of the burial mounds, where they have been preserved by the copper fragments that lay on them, indicate that the Indians knew how to weave.

LATER TRIBES

Last are the sites occupied by Indians shortly before the white man arrived. Late Mississippi is the name given to this culture. Some of the plain brown pottery has small white specks in it—shell temper, the archaeologist calls it. Other pottery is grit-tempered. Some is cord-marked. Many projectile points used by the Late Mississippi Indians were small, often less than one inch long. Usually they were triangular in shape, and all were carefully chipped. In the village refuse we find spoons and ornaments made of clam shells, bone awls and needles, flint scrapers, and hoes made of shoulder blades of large animals. Evidently these people ate fish and clams from the river in addition to the corn raised on their fields, for their refuse areas contain many shells and fish bones. Their cemeteries were small conical mounds near villages. The Upper Mississippi people probably were the ancestors of some of the Indians who first greeted the early French explorers.

Archaeologists then can assume that there were Early Hunters and Early Woodland, Hopewellian, and Late Mississippi farmers in the Chicago region because they know such groups lived in Indiana, central Illinois, and Wisconsin. People who come to the Museum with their collections, who know where they found them and who have a record of the things that were found together in the same field, are helping the archaeologists check their assumptions and write the prehistory of the Chicago area.

David Wenner of LaGrange, Illinois, a former professional archaeologist at one time associated with the Missouri River Basin Archaeological Survey in Oklahoma, is now interested in this problem of the archaeology of the Chicago area. He has been exploring likely areas for evidence of Indian camps and villages and has examined collections made by many people in this area. Interested members of the staff of the Department of Anthropology of the Museum are co-operating with Mr. Wenner in his efforts to learn more of the prehistory of Chicago.

Botanical Expedition to Tennessee And North Carolina

An expedition to collect material needed for the Hall of North American Woods (Hall 26) will be undertaken in June by Emil Sella, Curator of Exhibits in the Department of Botany. Mr. Sella will collect in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park of Tennessee and in parts of North Carolina. In addition to wood plants, he will seek other characteristic representatives of the flora of the southeastern states.



1953. "Botanical Expedition to Tennessee and North Carolina." *Bulletin* 24(6), 4-4.

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