

BURIAL YIELDS CLEWS TO RED OCHER CULTURE

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THE PEOPLE of the Red Ocher Culture were Indians who first lived in the Upper Great Lakes region and adjacent areas a thousand years or more before the birth of Christ. When these Indians buried their dead, they sprinkled powdered red ocher, usually in profuse quantities, over the body and offerings in the grave. Thus, some thousands of years afterwards when archaeologists discovered the cultural remains of these people, they named this assemblage of tools, weapons, ornaments, and burial customs the "Red Ocher Culture."

The name is not a very good one because it has since been found out that other groups of Indians living in the

region at the same time, as well as some earlier groups and some later groups, also used powdered red ocher in their graves. But to remember this fact is less confusing than to try to change the established name of this culture to something more suitable.

In the Upper Great Lakes region the Red Ocher Culture has a time span of about 1,000 years. It had its beginnings in the Algoma Stage of post-glacial lake levels at 1100 or 1200 B.C., when the water plane in the basins of Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior stood at 595 feet above modern sea level, or about 15 feet higher than at present. This culture had ended by the time of the migration of Hopewell Indians into the region around 100 or 200 B.C.

ARTIFACTS IN MUSEUM

Early Red Ocher Culture or Red Ocher I lasted from about 1100 B.C. to perhaps 500 B.C. in the Upper Great Lakes region, and it is a typical culture of the Late Archaic period. It can best be illustrated by this Museum's collection of characteristic tools, weapons, and ornaments from a site in Dyer, Indiana that was excavated in 1915 by Philip C. Schupp of Chicago.

The Dyer site consisted of a burial in a sandy ridge that was once a shoreline feature of glacial Lake Chicago. At the time of its use by Red Ocher Indians this ridge was a marked elevation at the edge of a swamp or shallow lake and near the mouth of a creek that emptied into the lake or swamp.

The burial in a once deep pit was that of an adult male in a flexed position. At the side of the right arm there was a bar amulet $6\frac{3}{8}$ inches long made of ground and polished slate. Near the left arm there was a double pointed copper awl, square in section and

$4\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. Around the neck of the skeleton were 45 globular, thick copper beads graduated in size and ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.

On top of the skeleton there were three copper celts, or axes, ranging in length from $4\frac{1}{4}$ to $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and a tremendous leaf-shaped blade of whitish flint with the point broken off. This blade was $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches long as found in the grave, but when restored in accordance with other whole blades



A large leaf-shaped ceremonial knife of chipped flint, typical of the Red Ocher Culture, excavated at Dyer, Indiana, in 1915, and now in the Museum's collections.

of this class, it is at least 19 inches long.

Beneath the skeleton there were two side-notched, leaf-shaped blades of the type called "turkey-tail," so named because the basilar part of the blade, in silhouette, resembles the posterior of a plucked turkey. These "turkey tail" blades were made of a dark, blue-gray flint and were 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. With them there was a stemmed blade made of the same kind of flint and otherwise similar.

Other objects found in the grave were a faceted lump of galena, or lead ore, and a small, broken point of brown and dark gray flint that looks as if it might have had multiple side notches.

Powdered red ocher was scattered throughout the grave. It covered the skeleton and all of the stone and copper artifacts, and permeated the sand at the borders of the grave pit.

OTHER CULTURE TRAITS

Although the site at Dyer is typical of Red Ocher I it did not have all of the types of artifacts known for that culture. Probably there is no site that contains all of the characteristic tools, weapons, and ornaments. Various other Red Ocher I sites have produced additional traits such as bird-stones, shell beads, leaf-shaped knives of copper, slate gorgets, grooved and ungrooved axes of stone, caches of trianguloid blades, and copper harpoons with multiple barbs on one side.

However, the diagnostic traits of the Red Ocher culture are the "turkey tail" blades of blue-gray flint and the large leaf-shaped knives, usually of white flint. If either or both of these traits are present in caches or burials, with or without red ocher, the culture is identifiable as Red Ocher. Al-

MUSEUM ATTENDANCE INCREASED IN 1959

"Probably the year of greatest impact upon the people of Chicago" is the description given to 1959's activities and events at Chicago Natural History Museum by Dr. Clifford C. Gregg, Director.

Attendance increased to 1,075,426 from 1,049,401 in 1958. This was the 3rd consecutive year in which the number of visitors has exceeded a million.

"Chicagoans were made more aware of what the Museum is, what it does, and what it has to offer the public than ever before," said Dr. Gregg. "There were more special events, more special exhibits, more innovations than in previous years, and Chicago responded to these attractions. One way in which the Museum's role in the city's life has been emphasized has been by the silhouette-illumination of the exterior of the white marble building every night since June 16 when, along with other public buildings in the park system, it completed installation of the new lighting system. During the summer the Museum remained open to visitors beyond the normal hours on a number of evenings, and late in the year evening chamber music concerts once a month were inaugurated in the James Simpson Theatre. During the period of the Pan American Games and Festival of the Americas the Museum staged, for the first time anywhere in the United States, a special exhibit assembling American Indian art of the entire western hemisphere, ranging from Alaska to Patagonia. In November and December the centennial of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* was celebrated with a special exhibit of Darwiniana. Many new permanent exhibits were also added in the Museum's four departments—Anthropology, Botany, Geology, and Zoology."

As always, Dr. Gregg noted, a full program of scientific research and field work by expeditions in various parts of the world was continued. There were zoological expeditions working in the Belgian Congo, Peru, Panama, Nepal, the Philippines, Dutch Guiana, Mexico, Colombia, and at sea collecting fishes in West Indian waters.

though Red Ocher I shares many of its traits with other Late Archaic cultures, particularly one called Glacial Kame, it does not share the "turkey tail" blades of chipped stone and the particular type of large leaf-shaped knives.

Red Ocher II, which lasted in the Upper Great Lakes region from about 500 B.C. to 100 B.C., can be recognized by the addition of burial mounds and/or Early Woodland pottery. In adjacent regions Red Ocher II seems to merge with Early Adena culture, and like Early Adena is one of the immediate ancestors of the famous Hopewell culture.



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