

REPORT SUMMARIZING WORK OF SOUTHWEST EXPEDITION

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(Continued from December, 1937 issue)

The sites excavated in 1937 by the Field Museum Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest were chosen because from surface indications they appeared to be of early dates. Toward the end of the season it was found, from the survey conducted by Mr. Lloyd (see December, 1937 FIELD MUSEUM NEWS) that there were some very much earlier ruins in the neighborhood—ruins which might go back to A.D. 500 or before. But it was impossible to probe into them at this time when the season was almost concluded. Therefore these earliest ruins have been reserved for investigation during another summer.

As was the case with the survey, all of the information acquired from the excavations has not yet been compiled. But it is safe to state that the expedition penetrated into

supplies was in small slab-lined, above-ground rooms.

At about the end of the eighth century after Christ, another group of Indians moved into this area. This penetration was probably peaceful, but nevertheless had far-reaching results. The Basket-Maker culture was modified. The new culture which developed from this contact of two peoples is called "Pueblo" and still flourishes to a certain extent in New Mexico and Arizona.

The houses which were excavated during the summer of 1937 were constructed immediately after this new group of Indians merged with the Basket-Maker Indians, and are representative of an interesting and little-known period. The astonishing changes wrought by this cultural meeting were reflected in the types of dwellings, for no two houses were the same, and none were exactly like those built in earlier or later



One of Sites Excavated by Archaeological Expedition

View from a photographic tower showing (in front) ruins of ancient corn storage bins, and (in rear) a kiva pit house of the prehistoric Indians who inhabited the extreme southwestern part of Colorado. The site covers an area of about 1,300 square feet. The measuring stick on the wall in the center is 10 feet long.

a period of southwestern history about which little is known.

To clarify this, I must explain that the earliest people in Colorado and northern Arizona about whom we know anything are called Basket-Makers. This is a misnomer, because the Basket-Maker Indians made pottery as well as baskets. Their culture flourished some three or four hundred years (approximately from the middle of the fifth century A.D. to the middle or end of the eighth century). During this time the culture of the Basket-Maker Indians underwent few changes. Briefly, it may be stated that the Basket-Maker Indian lived in a roundish or squarish subterranean house, the floor of which was seven or eight feet below the ground surface. The roof consisted of logs supported by forked upright posts. In the floor and near the center of such a house was a firepit. Entrance to the house was through a passageway which was always located on the south side. Pottery-making, textile-weaving, and agriculture (corn, and later, beans) were practised by these Indians. Storage of food

periods. It was observed also that the newcomers were about ready to enlarge the small, slab-lined, above-ground storage bins so as to make them suitable for habitation, and to transform the old underground chambers for use only in ceremonies.

These and other facts gleaned by the researches of the past summer are of great archaeological significance. The sites in which work was carried on represent a cultural period of flux and change which had never before been studied or even noted in southwestern Colorado. From the results obtained it will be possible to prove that kivas (underground ceremonial chambers) grew directly out of early underground houses. Pottery in an abundant variety of excellent types was carefully collected by levels. Thus if the types at the bottom of a refuse heap are different from those in the middle or top layers, the differences may be noted. When the broken specimens of pottery are mended, they will add immeasurably to the Museum's collections, which have lacked the types found by this expedition.

NEANDERTHAL TOOTH EXHIBITED

By HENRY FIELD

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The second lower right molar tooth of a Neanderthal man has been placed on exhibition in the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C). This tooth, presented to the Museum by its discoverer, the late Dr. Henri Martin, was found in 1911 during excavations at La Quina in the Charente district of France. This site was excavated intermittently from 1905 to 1936.

The thick deposits at La Quina belong to the Middle Mousterian culture. In the lower levels bones of the horse occur more frequently than those of the reindeer. There is also abundant evidence of bison and fallow deer. Many animal bones show evidence of being flint-marked, particularly those which have served as chopping-blocks. A large series of flint and bone implements have come to light, showing the technical skill of the Neanderthal workmen.

In Hall C there are representative series of stone and bone implements from the various levels at La Quina. Dr. Martin also found seventy-six calcareous spheroids which may have been used as bolas by the ancient hunters of the Charente some fifty thousand years ago.

In 1911 Dr. Martin also found the skeleton of a young woman about twenty-five years of age. The teeth were well preserved and large in size. A slight deposit of tartar occurred, principally on the molars. According to Professor G. G. MacCurdy, of Yale University, traces of the habitual use of a toothpick were found between the first and second molars. In addition to this skeleton, fragments of about thirty Neanderthals have been unearthed during the past 30 years.

Dr. Martin believed that at La Quina cannibalism was not practised; also, that Neanderthal Man did not bury his dead. There is, however, evidence from other excavations to suggest that some five hundred centuries before the birth of Christ members of the Neanderthal race believed in a future life. For example, one Neanderthal's skeleton was found with a flint implement in his hand and the leg bone of a bison by his side—thus the weapon to protect him and the meat to sustain him on his voyage beyond the grave.

Since the turn of the century a number of Neanderthal skeletons have been found, associated with Mousterian cultures. Thus it was possible to make a reconstruction of a Neanderthal family at Gibraltar in the Hall of the Stone Age (see FIELD MUSEUM NEWS, September, 1933). These figures were modeled by Mr. Frederick Blaschke.

As prehistoric human remains are usually retained in the country of origin as national property, an original Neanderthal tooth comes as a welcome addition to the Museum's collections.

Field Museum is fortunate in also possessing two cranial fragments of a Neanderthal child from Le Moustier, Dordogne, France, and the world-famous Cap-Blanc skeleton of a young Magdalenian girl.

Fluorescent Opal

A fluorescent mineral of more than usual beauty has been added to the exhibit of fluorescent minerals in Hall 34. This is a hyalite, a colorless, water-clear, transparent variety of opal. It is shown in the form of a film covering a granite surface. When exposed to ultra-violet light, as provided in the Museum exhibit, the colorless mineral emits a brilliant green light, while the enclosing granite glows with a dull red.



Martin, Paul S. 1938. "Report Summarizing Work of Southwest Expedition."
Field Museum news 9(1), 3–3.

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