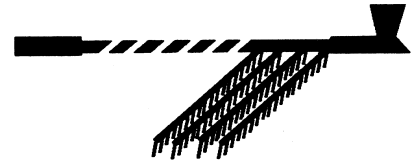


CALUMET

CONSERVATION PRESERVATION
EDUCATION EXPLORATION



Newsletter of the Indian Peaks Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society
JULY, 1999

ELECTRONIC CALUMET

We are offering an electronic distribution of the Calumet as an alternative to printed copies sent through the Postal Service. This is being done to reduce Calumet printing and postage costs. It will also increase the speed and ease of distribution. The electronic version will be sent as .txt or .htm attachments to e-mail. If you would like to receive electronic copies of Calumet issues, please send an e-mail to Tom Cree, tlc@lanminds.net
Please state whether you prefer the .txt or .htm format.

A Weekend Volunteer Opportunity

Mark October 9 and 10 on your calendar - the primary work weekend. Mark October 16 and 17 on your calendar - the alternate weekend, if bad weather cancels the primary date. This project is primarily survey and mapping of existing sites with the possibility of some shallow test excavations.

At the Willow Bunker project, the CAS and PIT volunteers located a large surface site near the work station. The CU Field School students located a few others. We flagged the large site until we ran out of flags - about 150. Additional survey adjacent to the site found that concentrations of material occurred along a ridge for nearly a quarter of a mile. If the rules of SHPO are followed, exactly, there are about 40 sites - not counting about 30 isolated finds (which might turn out to be complete sites with further survey). However, the array of sites will probably be listed as one huge site.

Most of the artifacts are flakes and cores of quartzite. But other materials have been observed. Close examination of anthills shows that micro-flakes (the finishing flakes on projectile points and tools) are being brought to the surface. This suggests deposition of flake material below the current surface, erosion zone. The area to be surveyed has shallow trenches that were used for irrigation in the past - probably, for alfalfa or wheat. It is probable that plowing also occurred - early in the century, perhaps?

Jeff Overturf, NFS, has arranged a weekend in October for surveying the site, doing the mapping, filling out the site documentation, and maybe even doing a couple of test pits. We will camp overnight at the work center. We have invited the Fort Collins chapter to join us. The work center is located 1 mile north of the intersection of Colorado 14 and Weld CR77, just outside Briggsdale. Briggsdale is about 22 miles northeast of Greeley. It is best reached from Boulder and Longmont by taking I-25 north to Fort Collins, taking the Mulberry exit (3rd exit) onto Colorado 14, and proceeding east for 42 miles to the intersection with Weld CR77.

Jeff is constructing a priority list of tasks to be completed. Almost certainly, survey of the major site will be first. Mapping of that site will probably be second. Jeff has discussed having a work-table that is moved from artifact to artifact during the mapping. The location of each artifact would be recorded using a Top-Con unit while volunteers would weigh, measure, photograph, and describe the artifact. This is a unique approach that would combine mapping and lab work, allowing the artifacts to be left in place.

Inside This CALUMET	
Electronic Calumet	1
Weekend Opportunity	1
Petra	2
Miami Stone Circle	5
One Village - One Ring	6
Footprints in Chauvet Cave	7
Who Came When?	7
The First Americans	8
Spencer Lake Mound	8
Membership Renewals	9
Officers/Board Members	10
Membership Application	10

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Tom Cree at (303) 776-7004 or tlc@lanminds.net to make reservations. This will be a quick, fun project - especially for those who had difficulty participating in the weekday projects.

PETRA

Russell D. Smith, IPCAS Member

While looking forward to joining a group of Canadians at a dig south of Amman, Jordan during the summer of 1997, I had a phone call from Dr. Philip Hammond asking if I could be persuaded to join his team at Petra in southern Jordan. Could I ever! Dr. Hammond has excavated in Petra for some 40 years and I had read many of his articles over the years.

I first visited Petra in 1962. At that time, wandering among remains of that rose-red city due to its remoteness, one was only allowed there under the protection of army personnel. Twenty-four years elapsed before I encountered any other person who had ever visited Petra. Even today, although thousands of tourists make a visit to the site, it is relatively unknown.

Petra is/was a city located in southern Jordan in a rugged mountainous area just east of the Rift Valley that runs from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus. It truly is in the midst of a great wilderness made famous by Moses and the Exodus of an earlier time. The city, hewn from the red sandstone cliffs, surely was awesome in its day. Even in its present depressed state, it still is!

The city became the administrative center for the Nabateans who controlled the caravan routes that ran from Arabia to the Mediterranean Sea and from Aqaba north to Damascus. Practically all the buildings of the city were carved from the solid rock, whether houses, tombs, theater, cisterns or treasury building. The city flourished as long as the trading caravans were able to operate. Its history brackets the period 400 BC to 200 AD but now, thanks to archaeology, its history is taking on new life. Petra's location is shown in the map at the right, taken from the November, 1998 issue of National Geographic Magazine, as is the map of Petra, shown below.

Entrance to the city is, as it was, through that huge crack in the ground called by the Arabs, The Siq. The Siq, a geological fault a mile long, some 250 feet deep and only a few feet wide, ends with a dramatic view of the Khazneh or treasury building, shown to the right, again from National Geographic.

Roman presence in Petra is evident everywhere. The theater was hewn from the rock face that had once enclosed tombs. Dr. Hammond excavated the theater in the 1960s. Roman columns may still be seen along the central street following the wadi Musa that runs from the area of the Khazneh and theater toward the Temenos gate entrance to the religious worship area.

Our project was the continued excavation of the Temple of the Winged Lion, one of the few buildings not carved from the living rock. Much had already been accomplished over the previous 17 seasons by way of stone and dirt removal. Still, the total outline of the temple had not yet been determined and probably will remain so for a number of seasons. The temple had been demolished by the earthquake of 363 AD. Toppled pillars, stone decorations and walls were thrown asunder by the quake and over the following 1600 years were covered with dirt. Aside from removing tons of dirt and stones, building components were sorted when found and placed in reserved and protected areas to be available for future restoration. In my 1962 visit I stood next to the huge mound that covered the ancient temple without thought that 35 years later I would with pick, brush and wheelbarrow help to uncover it. For that matter, at that time, the buried temple was unknown. The work was very strenuous beginning with the climb up the mound at 6 AM until the noon heat of 100 degrees plus F. would cause us to shut down. At 4 PM work would begin again consisting of pottery washing, drawing, photographing and bagging finds for government inspection. Slowness of the work is attributed to lack funds to obtain earth moving equipment and the painstaking effort to document each and every stratum and matching it to other work areas of the site. Not so exciting this, except for the continuing expectation of uncovering something dramatic.

During the excavation, time was given over to exploration of the entire valley where one could appreciate the huge task undertaken by the Nabateans to preserve and channel water. This technology was the city's best defense, for by controlling the water supply in this wilderness the enemy had little chance of success against the Nabateans. Next to the Temple of the Winged Lion is another now famous archaeological site – the Byzantine Church and with it the beautiful mosaic floors that were found. In July 1998 Queen Noor officially opened the Church to the public.

Those of you who might be interested in Petra are directed to the December 1998 issue of the National Geographic Magazine for a more graphic description of the area. Also pictured in the article are some of the Bedouin family I stayed with while there – a family consisting of eight sons and three daughters. When I told the head of the family my grandfather had eight daughters and three sons he thought for a moment and replied, “We should have gotten together as we would have made a heck of a Bedouin family!”

Russell photographed a member of the Bedouin family preparing a meal.

Russell took this photograph of the entrance to the Monastery at Petra.

Russell photographed a portion of the artifacts uncovered during the project.

My participation in the excavation was a high point in my “archaeological career”. Granted, visiting Petra in 1962 was surely nothing like the experience that Johann Burckhardt must have had in 1812 on rediscovery of this ancient site. Yet I was privileged to see more of it than he and to participate in a dig there. Moreover, I was able to live for a week with the Bedouin before the archaeological team arrived and for a month following their arrival. The Bedouin, many of whom were born in the caves of the area, though now required to live in the village of Umm Sayhun, still claim Petra as their home.

What an experience!

Miami Stone Circle, revisited

K. Kris Hirst, About.com Archaeology Guide

05/30/99

According to the latest news, Florida Governor Jeb Bush and his cabinet are putting the Brickell site on the Conservation and Recreational Lands program, slating it for purchase in the next fiscal year for its appraised value or 50 percent of the developer's selling price, whichever is cheaper. The Brickell site, you will recall, was the focus of intense international scrutiny earlier this year, when the site was rediscovered within the proposed right-of-way of an exclusive Miami beachfront condominium project. The site is cut into the native bedrock, with a series of holes which have been interpreted (by some people) as sea animal shapes such as whales and dolphins. The ensuing debate was typical of development versus preservation discussions in this country and around our planet. This step is not the end point for the Brickell site because the money to pay for the site has yet to be found, but it goes a long way to protecting this one-of-a-kind resource.

One Plains Village and One Besant Ring

Michael Landem, IPCAS Member

In April and May of this year Powers Elevation Company mitigated two sites in North Dakota that were directly in the path of a gas pipeline running from Beulah, N.D. to some dwindling oil fields just across the border in Canada. There the CO₂ gas would be pumped into exhausted wells at 17 atmospheres in order to force residual oil up out of the ground and into waiting tank trucks.

I was a member of the first four-man crew that began the project on April 23rd under the direction of Byron Olson. After losing half of the first eight-day session to rain, the pipeline schedule was moved up three weeks, so we ended up digging 24 days in a row, ten hours a day, with a crew of 12 to 16. Good thing, too, or I would have been up there all summer.

Like the sod house dwelling pioneers that followed them, the Native-Americans were a people with a very limited non-perishable material culture. Bone, hide and cloth were gone. No pottery was recovered. Lithics were mostly primary and secondary flakes of the ubiquitous root beer colored local material: Knife River Flint. We excavated over 200 square meters 15 CM deep and found three points. I found two of them in situ. The first ring was a Plains Village site as determined by the one point found there, the second a 2,000 year old Besant ring. We found two Besant points there: one a rather crude point on a flake with the traditional square base and shallow, wide side notches and the other a fully-flaked biface that appeared, by basal width to length, to have been broken and reshaped. The second site also yielded two flakes of charcoal and about a dozen bifaces of such similar morphology as to possibly be the product of a single individual. Only three lithic materials were represented: 99.9% Knife River Flint, one example of a local baked-in-a-coal-seam porcellanite, and three pieces of very good quality obsidian, cloudy to opaque black, whose probable source was Yellowstone's Obsidian Plateau or just across the border in Idaho.

The pipeline crew ploughed through on our last day of digging, bulldozing and grading a construction road 75 feet wide from Beulah to Canada at the rate of about three or four miles a day. Hundreds of workers and dozens of huge vehicles followed behind by a day or two, trenching, welding, X-raying and dropping 14-inch pipe into the trench in lengths of a mile or two at a time. We were in such a hurry to be out of their way that hundreds of quad bags remained just out of the right-of-way to be screened the next week by local laborers.

It was quite an experience. We all got very good at opening and manipulating bags in high winds. If you happened to drop a bag or let a piece of paperwork get loose from your clipboard it was gone forever. Driving into the site after the many, heavy rains was like being on a slip-'n'-slide in rubber boots - a thrill a minute.

The geology was simple: a claystone base permeated with limonite and hematite pigments over several layers of coal, all topped with glacial debris and large erratics scraped off the Canadian Shield, mixed liberally with loess and aeolian Holocene sediments. Not much deflation exists at all. The digging was very easy, mostly shovel work with light trowel edge shaping and clean-up. Culture ended well above 15 cm below present ground surface on both sites.

The most interesting things were just out of the right-of-way: a large turtle effigy and a rock mound with berry bushes growing out of it which were not supposed to grow there. It is the possible result of two things: animal transport via feces, or food offerings associated with a burial or other ceremonial activity. The bird/animal explanation seems the less likely as it was the only example of this plant for miles despite very similar mounds and growing conditions all around and extremely abundant bird populations found on the Northern High Plains.

A bison herd graced our first site with their massive presence. One day they come to the fence twenty feet away and reacted to my dog Rex, tied to the back of a truck that morning, by bunching and staring him down for over half an hour while huffing like a cluster of massive bellows. They can push their double fences over by simply leaning into them. They never walk anywhere or follow trails like cattle, but rather as a herd first graze one area and then run swiftly to another. Beautiful to watch, they are fast, aggressive and dangerous and this first-hand experience makes it harder for me to imagine living among thousands and hunting them with frail sticks and sharpened stones.

Rex had many opportunities to cross the fence and chase these monsters of the Great Plains after that day but sensibly declined them all. He did chase horses, antelope, deer, birds, gophers and rabbits, then would come back panting 15 or 20 minutes later, lie in a puddle, and drink it dry. One horse very seriously tried to kill him but he was a little too agile for the repeatedly flung hoof to find the target.

Footprints In Chauvet Cave

K. Kris Hirst, About.com Guide To Archaeology
06/13/99

Chauvet Cave, discovered in France in 1994 by archaeologists Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel-Deschamps and Christian Hillaire, is a Paleolithic art house, with more than 400 wall paintings and engravings in several enormous galleries. The cave and its paintings dates to between 23,000 and 32,000 years ago, and within its limits are a wealth of hearths, stone tools, and foot prints. The latest news to hit the wires about Chauvet Cave is the discovery of a series of child's footprints, showing how he skidded in the soft clay of the cave. These footprints, tentatively dated between 25,000 and 27,000 years before the present, are far younger than the Laetoli footprints (which are from Australopithecus afarensis and date to 3,500,000 years ago), but are, at present, the oldest human footprints known.

Who Came When?

K. Kris Hirst, About.com Guide To Archaeology
05/03/99

An article in Newsweek this week takes a crack at describing the astounding paradigm shift that's occurring in archaeology today. I am referring--so is the Newsweek article--to the complete reconfiguration of how we understand the populating of the American continents. The discoveries of the Monte Verde site, an occupation in Chile convincingly dated earlier than any Paleoindian site in North America, and the recent physical anthropology studies of Kennewick man and other early residents of the Americas, have completely altered the traditionally accepted theories.

It is really an exciting time to be an archaeologist, to be perfectly honest; but true to international press form, instead of discussing the opportunities and excitement, the article focuses on the bitterness on the part of several scholars. I do not think that is a fair description of the state of archaeology, and in fact I am certain that it is not the main reaction, which I gauge differently. Here is why.

In 1927, Ales Hrdlicka had a visitor. Hrdlicka was the physical anthropologist at the Smithsonian Institution. For the previous 40 years or so, a debate had raged in American archaeology over the length of time humans had been in the American continents. Hrdlicka had a reputation for extreme and obstreperous skepticism, and that reputation badly frightened the man who came to his office.

That man, Jesse Figgins of the Denver Museum, had something to show Hrdlicka: two projectile points that had been found at a site where his museum had been digging the deeply buried bones of a bunch of bison--an extinct variety of bison--near the town of Folsom, New Mexico.

Figgins was a paleontologist, not an archaeologist; and Hrdlicka and colleague W.H.H. Holmes were both polite, but regretted that Figgins had not called in other scientists to see the in situ artifacts. Figgins took this advice to heart, and several months later, telegrams went out from the Denver Museum: the Folsom-site bison contained embedded projectile points, and they were there to be seen. Shortly thereafter, Folsom became the first widely accepted peri-glacial site in the Americas.

According to David Meltzer, who has dedicated a certain portion of his career to studying the history of archaeology, the overall response in the archaeological community to the Folsom finds was relief, to have the forty-year controversy finally settled; relief and excitement, I should think.

Like in the battles before Folsom was discovered, the scholarly battles over pre-Clovis sites have been fierce and painful, and they've been fought over decades. Like in those battles, many of the participants spoke warmly and without caution. Like in those battles, the issue has been resolved with the discovery and confirmation of one rock-solid archaeological site. How could we feel differently?

The First Americans?

Sharon Begley and Andrew Murr

New digs and old bones reveal an ancient land that was a mosaic of peoples—including Asians and Europeans. Now a debate rages: who got here first?

As he sat down to his last meal amid the cattails and sedges on the shore of the ancient lake, the frail man grimaced in agony. A fracture at his left temple was still healing; deep abscesses in his gums shot bolts of pain into his skull. Still, he was a survivor, at forty-something, long-lived for his people. But soon after he finished the boiled chub that he had netted from a stream in what is now western Nevada, he felt his strength ebbing like a tide. He lay down. Within hours he was dead, felled by septicemia brought on by the dental abscess.

When his people found him, they gently wrapped his body in a rabbit-fur robe and secured his bulrush-lined leather moccasins, his prize possessions; he had patched them twice with antelope hide on the right heel and toe. Surely he would want them where he was going. His people dug a shallow grave in a rock shelter, lined it with reed mats and laid him within. Some 9,400 years later, anthropologists would discover him. They would name him Spirit Caveman.

He wasn't supposed to be there. Spirit Caveman is the wrong guy, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. According to the standard anthropology script, anyone living in America 9,000 years ago should resemble either today's Native Americans or, at the very least, the Asians who were their ancestors and thus, supposedly, the original Americans. But Spirit Caveman does not follow that script—and neither do more than a dozen other skeletons of Stone Age Americans. Together, the misfits have sparked a spirited debate: who were the First Americans?

The emerging answer suggests that they were not Asians of Mongoloid stock who crossed a land bridge into Alaska 11,500 years ago, as the textbooks say, but different ethnic groups, from places very different from what scientists thought even a few years ago. What's more, stone tools, hearths and remains of dwellings unearthed from Peru to South Carolina suggest that Stone Age America was a pretty crowded place for a land that was supposed to be empty until those Asians followed herds of big game from Siberia into Alaska. A far different chronicle of the First Americans is therefore emerging from the clash of theories and discoveries that one anthropologist calls, "skull wars."

According to the evidence of stones and bones, long before Ellis Island opened its doors, America was a veritable Rainbow Coalition of ethnic types, peopled by southern Asians and East Asians. And even, perhaps, Ice Age Europeans, who may have hugged the ice sheets in their animal-skin kayaks to reach America millenniums before it was even a gleam in Leif Ericson's eye. "It's very clear to me," says anthropologist Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian Institution, "that we are looking at multiple migrations through a very long time period—migrations of many different peoples of many different ethnic origins."

Prank at Spencer Lake Mound or Erik the Red Never Visited Wisconsin

K. Kris Hirst - About.com Guide To Archaeology

July 8, 1999

As anyone working in public archaeology can tell you, there is a persistent rumor that there is evidence--suppressed evidence of course--that the Native American mounds of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa were built by Vikings. To support this breathtakingly racist premise, bogus data are used, such as oddly shaped glacial erratics labelled, "Viking mooring stones", various "rune stones" of very dubious origin, and rumors of horse skeletons found in mounds and not reported. One of the funniest stories associated with these Viking legends has to do with the Spencer Lake Mound in extreme northwest Wisconsin. There was, undeniably, a horse skull found in Spencer Lake Mound. How it got there is a tale worth telling.

During the summers of 1935 and 1936, the University of Wisconsin excavated Spencer Lake Mound. The principal investigators were Ralph Linton and W. C. McKern; their staff of students included A.C. Spaulding, George Quimby, David Stout, and Joffre Coe--all destined to become pretty famous archaeologists in their own rights. It was in the fall of 1936, probably, when a young college student signed up for a beginning anthropology course taught by Ralph Linton. The young man, who is known in this story only as Mr. P., had been an avid artifact hunter while growing up in northwestern Wisconsin. Conversing with his classmates in 1936, Mr. P. discovered that excavations at the Spencer Lake Mound the previous summer had revealed an astonishing artifact: a horse's skull buried deep within the mound.

This was quite a shock to Mr. P. After gathering all of his available courage, he went into Linton's office and confessed that in 1928, the then-teenaged Mr. P. and a buddy had spent an afternoon pot-hunting the Spencer Lake Mound. The boys dug a sizeable hole, consuming the better part of a hot afternoon, without encountering any kind of a recognizable feature. They were about to backfill the opening when one of them suggested that they bury a horse's skull that lay along the edge of a nearby field a short distance away. This seemed like a brilliant suggestion to the undisciplined minds of the boys, so the skull was retrieved and carefully laid in an oriented position at the bottom of the excavation before backfilling commenced. Anticipation of the probable results of this piece of mischief somehow eased the monotony of the backfilling, and the miscreants mutually agreed that in about two hundred years some archaeologist would dig up the skull and conclude that he had found something really worthwhile [Mr. P., *Wisconsin Archeologist* 45(2):120 (1964)].

Linton found the story amusing, apparently, and a mightily relieved Mr. P. went off onto a career of his own, outside of archaeology. But, either Linton didn't tell McKern about the prank or he did tell McKern but McKern didn't believe him. For whatever reason, over the next 25 years or so, at least three publications--and probably a few others--described the Spencer Lake Mound as containing an in situ horse skull.

In 1962, Mr. P., by then a college professor but still with an avocational interest in archaeology, dropped into the office of Robert Ritzenthaler at Milwaukee Public Museum, when the first major monograph for the Clam River Focus (including the Spencer Lake Mound) was being prepared. Mr. P. told Ritzenthaler about his youthful escapade, and he was quite contrite about it and agreed to prepare a statement of the facts as best he remembered them, after 34 years. A copy of this was sent to McKern ...[who] responded with a statement to the effect that he was convinced that the skull he excavated was not the planted one, but as there was reasonable doubt, he would make some revisions [in the monograph] and suggested that his statement be published. Mr. P., however, requested that neither his statement nor McKern's be published, a request that was honored, until the Griffin review. [Ritzenthaler, *Wisconsin Archeologist* 45(2):115-116 (1964)].

Enter James B. Griffin, undeniably doyen of archaeology for the American northeast. In 1964, Griffin wrote a review of the Clam River Focus monograph, and noted that despite the previous publication of a horse skull in Spencer Lake Mound, there was no mention of it in the book. And, so, finally, notwithstanding the high level of embarrassment suffered by Mr. P., with an academic career of his own to maintain, notes by Mr. P., W. C. McKern, and Robert Ritzenthaler describing the story above were published in the *Wisconsin Archeologist*, and the situation was resolved. Further evidence (beyond Mr. P.'s complete lack of motive for making this story up) was provided by Walter Pelzer, mammologist at the museum in those days, who looked at the skull and identified it as a western mustang, a horse imported for use on Wisconsin farms in the early 20th century. Pelzer also spotted rodent gnawing on all planes of the skull that suggested to him that it had been exposed to the weather for a while before being buried. Radiocarbon dates of the charcoal recovered from the mound provided a use date for the mound between circa 500-1000 AD. At no point in these proceedings has any archaeologist ever believed the presence of the horse indicated early Viking presence in the American midwest. The horse skull only suggested to McKern and others that the Clam River Focus sites (of which Spencer Lake Mound is one) dated to the early historic period (i.e., 1700s). But, because there are publications in dusty library stacks saying there was a horse skull in Spencer Lake Mound, the rumors continue to persist, I suppose on the principal that if it's in print it must be true. But no! despite what you may have heard, as far as the evidence shows, the only Viking presence in the Americas was a failed 11th century colony in Newfoundland.

Membership Renewals

The following members have renewals due in July:

Pat Wales and Dale Bucknam, Kelly Fuentes, Steve Lekson and Cathy Cameron, Clay and Lynda Volkmann.

The following members have renewals due in August:

Priscilla Ellwood, Tom and Beverly Meier, Ernest and Barbara Stiltner

The following members have renewals due in September:

Patricia Adler, Cheryl Damon, Celia Fountain, Janet Lever, Elizabeth Novak, Russell Smith, and Allan Taylor.

This newsletter is published each month, except June and August, by the Indian Peaks Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society. The views expressed in articles or editorials appearing in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the membership or the Executive Board of the Indian Peaks Chapter, Colorado Archaeological Society.

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