

EXPEDITION FINDS VICTIM OF SACRIFICE IN CLIFF HOUSE

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THE SKELETON of a young victim of a sacrificial ceremony was found buried under the ancient walls of a cliff house by associated scientists and myself during the 1951 archaeological excavations for Chicago Natural History Museum in western New Mexico.

The evidence of the grim sacrifice consists of a headless skeleton of a young person,



THE 'DIG' IS A GIRL'S JOB, TOO

The unearthing and preservation of the bones of a prehistoric Indian woman, the victim of sacrificial rites, is partly the work of Elaine Bluhm, Museum staff member who participated in the 1951 Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest.

probably a female. Excavations in a cave, tucked away in a beautiful canyon through which a small permanent stream flows, had been under way for some time. At the mouth of the cave is a small one-room house, the walls of which are built of good masonry. The purpose of this isolated room is unknown, although we have made guesses concerning its purpose. At any rate, before the foundation for this one-room house was laid, the girl-victim was beheaded and her body (minus the head) was placed on the ground. The wall was built directly over it.

FIRST INSTANCE AT SITE

Although this is the first evidence of human sacrifice that our expeditions have uncovered over the years, such practices were fairly common among Indians in the New World. Among the ancient Mayas of Yucatan, maidens were thrown into a cenote or sinkhole to propitiate the gods and to bring good luck to the city of Chichen-Itza. The Pawnee Indians of the Plains used to

sacrifice a maiden to the Morning Star. On ancient pottery bowls made by the Mimbres Indians, who lived just south of Pine Lawn Valley (where Dr. John B. Rinaldo, Assistant Curator of Archaeology, and I have for several years been carrying on archaeo-

Dr. Paul S. Martin recently returned to the Museum after leading the Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest (his 17th expedition in the area). The 1951 excavations of prehistoric Indian caves were begun in June.

logical researches), are found realistic paintings of victims being beheaded.

Thus it may be seen that human sacrifices are not rare. But the interesting fact is that this human victim is the first to have been uncovered for the Mogollon culture. In past seasons Museum scientists have found under walls ceremonial caches of pottery, turquoise, and shell bracelets but never before a human victim.

This find puzzles the archaeologists, for the building itself is small and isolated and seems unimportant. However, it is possible that the room might have served as a kind of outpost or watchtower, for it is located in a relatively narrow canyon, the head of which is high up in the mountains and the mouth of which debouches into the fertile and formerly heavily populated San Francisco River Valley. This canyon is a short cut used by modern horseback travelers who seek the shortest and quickest route out of this valley, over the Tularosa mountains and down into another valley, and it might have been used in ancient times by unfriendly peoples as an easy approach to a populous valley. Therefore an outpost or small fort would have been desirable. In it several sentries might have been stationed, who, at time of invasion, could have given alarm to the peoples below in the valley.

REASON FOR SACRIFICE

If this guess has any merit, it may explain the human sacrifice for the following reason: A fortress, in such a location, would have been useful, but its value might have been greatly enhanced by a ritualistic sacrifice of a maiden. The ritual might have been performed either to insure good luck to the builders or to please the god of war.

This unusual and weird discovery tops a summer of archaeological researches of great interest and significance. The cave itself yielded an abundance of specimens of the earliest prehistoric periods. In fact, more stone tools of the pre-pottery period (circa 2,700 B.C.-A.D. 1) were recovered this year than in eight previous seasons put together. The total number of stone tools alone runs

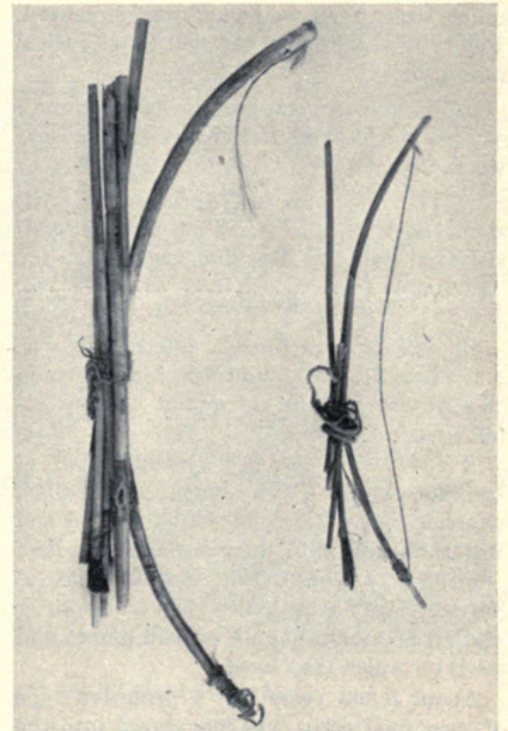
above 1,500. In addition, tools made from bone and antler, leather objects, sandals, painted tablitas used as headdress in ceremonies, bows, arrows, cigarettes, matting, string, and fragments of basketry were recovered. These objects, along with those found during the season of 1950, will help clear up the origins and growth of the Mogollon culture.

Although the work was dusty and the cave difficult to reach, the rewards were great. The work this summer has unfolded another bit of the fascinating but little-known Mogollon culture.

A KIVA UNCOVERED

In addition to the excavations in Cordova Cave and the small cliff house, two other noteworthy tasks were carried forward this season.

One was the partial excavation, under the direction of Miss Elaine Bluhm, Assistant in Archaeology, of a large rectangular structure—a kiva, in all likelihood—in which religious ceremonies were observed. This kiva is unique in the valley, and therefore excavation of it is of great interest. Because of its large size (about 25 feet by 30 feet by 7 feet deep) and because of the tons of rocks that once composed the walls of the building and had toppled into it, digging has been very slow. At the close of the season about half of the excavation remained to be done, but it is possible to



CEREMONIAL BOWS AND ARROWS

These miniatures of the classical weapon of the American Indians were used in religious or puberty rites by Mogollon hunters about A.D. 1100. Excavated from a cave by the Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest.

announce that the roof timbers burned in prehistoric times and collapsed on the floor.

Although the fire was undoubtedly unfortunate for the Indians, it brings joy to the hearts of the archaeologists to know that the roof burned. The reason for this unholy rejoicing is that because of the fire everything that was in the kiva at the time of its destruction will still be there. We may expect to find pottery, tools, weapons, ceremonial objects, and even skeletons of people who might not have been able to escape. All these objects have been undisturbed and may permit us to obtain information about the ancient ceremonies. We shall complete the work on this kiva next year.

FINDS MANY NEW SITES

The other undertaking was a reconnaissance for new sites in western New Mexico and in east-central Arizona. This was in charge of Dr. Herbert C. Taylor, Jr., of Western Washington College, Bellingham, Washington, formerly a teaching assistant at the University of Chicago. Dr. Taylor's work was sponsored by the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, and was tailored to dovetail with the intensive investigations carried on by the Museum. Dr. Taylor spent ten weeks on this project, operating within a radius of eighty miles from the Museum camp, and found 75 sites of major importance. The analysis of the survey is yet to be made but a few tentative conclusions may be drawn from the data:

1) The late manifestations of the Mogollon culture (Reserve Phase) cover a large area—much larger than we had formerly realized. The results of the survey will be published next year.

2) The culture complex known as Mimbres extends at least as far northwest as Glenwood, New Mexico.

3) The region east of Springerville, Arizona, was a cultural transition zone between the Puebloan and Mogollon peoples.

HISTORY RECONSTRUCTED

On the basis of present information Dr. Rinaldo and I have tentatively reconstructed the history of the Mogollon Indians as follows:

About 5,000 years ago a band or two of Indians wandered into Pine Lawn Valley, western New Mexico, in search of food and water. Drought in their ancient homeland (southern Arizona) had forced them to move. Here in this valley they found water and an abundant supply of wild plants and seeds on which they lived.

About 3,000 years ago a primitive type of corn (pod corn) was introduced into the area and, soon after, beans and squashes. These food plants—agriculture, in other words—brought about spectacular changes in the lives of these Indians whom we call Mogollon, after near-by mountains of the same name.

Some 1,000 years later (about A.D. 1) the ideas of pottery-making and living in semi-subterranean houses (pit houses) were borrowed from progressive neighbors. During the next thousand years the house-form tended to remain the same, but the other



THE MODE IN SANDALS, 500 B.C.

Wickerwork footwear worn by the prehistoric Mogollon Indians in New Mexico. Excavated from a cave by the Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest.

arts flourished—pottery-making, weaving cloth, baskets, and sandals, and making weapons and tools of bone, wood, and stone.

About the time the Normans conquered England (A.D. 1066), profound changes in architecture and pottery took place in America. Pit houses went out of style, and in their place we find houses built on the surface of the ground with masonry walls. These houses were what we call multiroomed and were made up of two to twenty-five rooms. The pottery, too, reflects a change, for instead of bowls and jars decorated with designs done in red paint on a brown background, we find pottery designs executed with black paint on a white background.

FITTING PIECES TOGETHER

Many gaps in our knowledge of the history of Mogollon Indians still remain to be filled; but each season we add a little to our knowledge. Finally from our studies of the Mogollon culture we hope to achieve a bit of an understanding of the processes involved in the growth, flowering, and collapse of civilizations.

The discovery of a female who perished in a sacrificial rite and who was buried for reasons not clearly understood by us may seem trifling and of only passing interest. Yet this information is as valuable to us as the archives of a kingdom are to a historian. Any facts, domestic odds and ends, scraps and bits of wood, pottery, clothing, and the like provide us with contacts with the people of the past. We need all these miscellanea to piece together history and to make valid reconstructions. The urge to understand

the nature of our civilization and others and to expand the frontiers of knowledge is very great and eminently worth while.

This is the eighth season that the Southwest Archaeological Expedition of the Museum has carried on researches in Pine Lawn Valley, western New Mexico. Staff members of the expedition, in addition to myself as leader, Dr. Rinaldo, Dr. Taylor, and Miss Bluhm, were Thomas Alder, photographer and assistant cataloguer, and Arnold Besser, Stanley Jones, Miss Marjorie Kelly, and Miss Elizabeth Morris, excavators. In nine earlier seasons other sites of a different nature were investigated by Museum expeditions.

CHILDREN'S FREE MOVIES ON SATURDAY MORNINGS

Four more motion picture programs for children will be given at the Museum on Saturday mornings during November. The entertainments, to be presented each Saturday at 10:30 A.M., will be given in the James Simpson Theatre, under the auspices of the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation. On one program, that of November 10, the picture, "Shangri-la Alaska," will be accompanied by a talk by Fred Machetanz of Kenton, Ohio, the explorer who made the film.

Children may come alone, accompanied by parents or other adults, or in groups from schools, etc. No tickets are needed.

Following are titles and dates of the programs:

November 3—AUSTRALIA'S BARRIER REEF

The fabulous coral growths and the underwater life shown under magnification

Also a cartoon

November 10—SHANGRI-LA ALASKA

Pioneering on the last frontier. Color motion picture and story by Fred Machetanz

November 17—PACIFIC ISLANDS

Life in Hawaii, Bali, and Tagaqa

Also a cartoon

November 24—ANIMAL LEGENDS

Also a cartoon

Audubon Society to Present Sunday Lecture, Nov. 18

The autumn series of free lectures to be presented in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum by the Illinois Audubon Society will begin Sunday afternoon, November 18, at 2:30 o'clock. The opening lecture, "The Four Corners," by Fran W. Hall, head of the department of photography at Carleton College, will be illustrated with motion pictures in color. The general public is invited, and Members of the Museum are entitled to seats in the reserved section of the Theatre.



Martin, Paul S. 1951. "Expedition Finds Victim of Sacrifice in Cliff House."
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