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Report of an Archaeological Survey of Coahuila, Mexico

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During the 1937 season, the University of Nebraska sent C. Bertrand Schultz and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia sent Dr. Howard to excavate Burnet Cave in the Three Forks region of Eddy County, New Mexico. This location is regarded as important and has produced unquestionable evidence of association of Man and an Ice Age fauna which might be older than the Pluvial Folsom fauna. The cave was excavated from the mouth to the interior through the thick talus toward the rock floors exposed in 1935. A depth of sixteen feet was reached in the talus and no rock floor was encountered. More than fifteen thousand specimens of small mammals, for the most part insectivores, were recovered. These animals were most numerous below the nine foot level. Large bones, possibly of Bovidae and Cervidae, were found crushed in the roof fall in direct association with charcoal and the bones of Geomyidae, Heteromyidae, Muridae, and other small mammals. Some of the bones had been charred.

It appears, without question, that these bones were left in their positions by Man. The material recovered this year should go far towards giving us an adequate conception of the exact age of the bone-bearing and possibly culture-bearing deposits.

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REPORT OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF COAHUILA, MEXICO

During the first part of last summer, thanks to the kind assistance of Dr. Dudley Jackson and Dudley Jackson, Jr., of San Antonio, Texas, I was able to make a short archaeological reconnaissance north of the city of Monclova, Coahuila, Mexico. While the survey was necessarily of the most cursory sort, nevertheless it gave abundant proof that, with time and under closer scrutiny, Coahuila should yield significant data on the nature and distribution of the cave culture which finds expression in the already well known caves of the Big Bend of Texas.

In all, eleven sites were visited and described; and in addition, some six more were seen and recorded but not visited.¹ Not many data on the material culture were obtained, due to the fact that we did not excavate; the only artifacts discovered were a small fragment of coiled basketry and a sotol (?) fiber sandal, both of which came from the sides of a pothole sunk by a native. The sandal was of the double type found quite commonly in the Texas material; but it was interesting in that instead of having the hinge at the toe, as is usual,

1. All of the sites were either caves or shelters. No surface sites were located.

it had the hinge on the inner side of the foot along the straight margin of the sandal. The basketry showed the split stitch on a split rod foundation.

At three localities (numbered as two sites and all within ten miles of one another) pictographs were found. These proved the most interesting finds of the survey. Although at present there is no way to associate the pictographs definitely with cultural material from the sites in which they were found and thus with the people using that material and bearing that culture, nevertheless, from the evidence at hand and until there is proof to the contrary, it seems safe to assume that the paintings are so associated. If this is granted, there are some significant facts to be noted. Although so far as superficial examination goes, the material culture from the Big Bend caves and that which I have seen from the caves of Coahuila is practically identical, the pictographs from the two areas are quite distinct. Those from Texas in many cases represent zoomorphic figures, while those from Coahuila are small, fine-lined, and in no case seen by me were they of a zoomorphic nature. In Coahuila sites, the most common element was the zig-zag line or rather the chevron. From the study of the full series of pictographs many of the more complicated motives and patterns appeared to be nothing more than manipulation of and variations on the chevron: adding parallel lines to the wings, placing a dot between the wings, fitting one chevron within another, or attaching them in horizontal sequence to form the zig-zag line. Another very common element consisted of a red dot surrounded by a circular band of yellow, looking not unlike a sun. There were also many groups of parallel, vertical lines of alternating colors. The painting in most cases was executed in what seemed to be red and yellow ochre. The only other color occurred in two figures done in black, but one of these was very possibly modern, thus leaving the other's authenticity in doubt also.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN ALBERTA, CANADA

Work that we have done, since leaving the University of New Mexico, in the area around Edmonton, Alberta, has been preliminary to investigations that will take place in the coming spring and summer when it is possible to travel to the north. Because of the frontier aspect of western Canada and the handicap of the extreme winter, we have accomplished little in the way of field work. An attempt to trace migration routes in this region, where so little archaeological work has been done, will then be made. Through the