

## LIX. PROGRESS REPORT ON OKLAHOMA ARCHAEOLOGY.

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During the years 1914 to 1917, inclusive, I did some field work in the way of archaeological investigations in Oklahoma, mostly in the eastern part of the state. This was done while I was connected with the University of Oklahoma, though means for conducting the same was largely secured from other sources. The outbreak of the World War rendered it impracticable to continue such a line of investigations, for the time being at least. Since 1917, therefore, with the exception of brief seasons of field work in the Panhandle of Texas (1920) and in northeastern New Mexico (1921), which were spent with surveys conducted by eastern institutions, but little systematic work was done in that line until this year (1925).

In April, 1923, while on a brief visit to Beaver County, I located and identified the traces of an irrigation canal dating from the pre-historic period, and located in the valley of the Cimarron River and that of one of its tributaries. During the course of my work with the archeological survey of the Texas Panhandle, in June, 1920, a similiar but larger system of ancient irrigation works had been found and identified in Meade and Clarke counties, in southwestern Kansas. It may be of interest to know that an arrangement has been effected with the State Highway Commission, whereby both of these systems are to be surveyed and mapped in the not distant future.

At the regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, held in Oklahoma City, on May 5th, last, as secretary of the Society, I was authorized and directed to organize and conduct an archaeological expedition for active field investigations at such point or points as might be deemed promising in the way of practical results. Securing the services of a number of volunteer workers—mostly college and university men—arrangements were made to go to the field as soon as possible after the close of the scholastic sessions for the year. It was decided to engage in the work of excavation in the vicinity of the town of Grove, in Delaware County, where it was planned to continue the work of investigating the contents of the floor of an ancient cave dwelling (begun in 1916, under the direction of the writer) and also to dissect a mound of the true Mound Builder type. In order to do this, the force of helpers was divided into two camps.

The cave proved to be more extensive in its ramifications than

it had been believed, though one large chamber, which was visited in 1916, was found to have been sealed shut by a drift of clay during the intervening period. The mound had been previously partially worked by the owner and much of its contents had also been surreptitiously removed by vandals at the instigation of a commercial collector from a neighboring state. The cave floor yielded a much finer collection than that which had been secured nine years before. According to the best of our present information, most of the material secured dated back from fourteen to twenty-three centuries. Traces of a still more ancient human occupancy were found but these have not as yet been investigated. The material secured from the cave floor deposit consisted chiefly of implements and ornaments of stone and bone, together with bones and teeth of game animals, tortoise shells, bivalve shells, etc. Although the cultures represented showed the remains to belong to the Neolithic period, there was no trace of the use of metals.

The mound contained many items which had apparently been deposited as votive offerings, probably given in a sacrificial spirit by its builders. These consisted of implements and ornaments of stone, both flaked and polished, and of copper. Some of the stone ornaments were covered with the green salts of decomposed copper. With these, there was also a great deal of pottery, mostly in broken fragments. The tobacco pipes were of stone and of a type that indicated Siouan origin. If so, they were deposited there while the Sioux peoples were migrating eastward toward the Atlantic Coast, where they are known to have dwelt for several centuries before their regressive migration to the West, some five or six centuries since. The mound also proved to have been invaded and violated by some of the modern Sioux peoples (probably Osage) within the past two or three centuries. These seemed to have dug numerous holes on the surface of the mound, finding and destroying or carrying away many of the objects which had been buried ceremonially by their own kinsmen or ancestors, and ending by burying many of their dead intrusively on the surface of the mound. Most of the broken pottery has been restored, enriching the Society's museum collection with a fine display of ceramic specimens from a cultural era not hitherto represented therein. While there are certain resemblances between the arts and crafts of this ancient Siouan culture and that of the Caddoan peoples who represent a much more recently arrived migration, there are also so many marked differences that there is no question as to the distinction between the two.

Much scouting and exploring has also been done, incidentally, and the field for the continuation of such research is now known to be much more extensive and more varied than it had previously been known to be. At the same time, it is with regret that I have to report that it is being exploited and robbed of much of its most valuable contents by ignorant and unskilled "relic hunters" at the instigation of commercial collectors already mentioned. Indeed, our camps were frequently beset in the night by the paid prowlers, thieves and thugs of such an operator, who seemingly will stop at nothing in the effort to discourage the efforts of a public institution in that field.

Oklahoma needs money to continue this work. What has been done in this line hitherto has been on the modest lines of a pioneer. The people of this state cannot afford to permit such a field of investigation to be despoiled of its best material merely to gratify the greed of an individual, who neither knows nor cares for the scientific values and who keeps no records by which later identifications and scientific classifications might be definitely placed.