



**DISCOVERY SITE**—Palaeontologist C. R. Harington of the National Museum of Canada (right foreground) with Indian guide Peter Lord shortly after their discovery of a midden of prehistoric bones in Old Crow River flats in the Yukon last summer. Bones of such prehistoric animals as the mammoth, camel, ground sloth, giant beaver and giant moose were found free on the

bank of the river, others buried in the silt of what once was a prehistoric lake. Among the bones were at least four man-made implements fashioned from bone, making these the oldest remains of early man in the Canadian north, possibly dating back 40,000 years.

—NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA  
Photograph

## Scientists Find Oldest Evidence of Man...

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River in the Yukon. He and Dr. W.N. Irving, a Museum-archaeologist working nearby, recovered about 900 pounds of bones of animals that roamed the area in prehistoric times. The finds at several localities on Old Crow River included bones of the mammoth, horse, bison, camel, ground sloth, giant beaver, giant moose, muskox and a type of wolf or dog. Some of the species are now extinct or gone from that region, and some still live there.

But among the bones at one locality were man-made implements. There was a serrated flesher fashioned from the leg bone of a small caribou, a bone scraper, a bone anvil, and an implement that looks like a pick made of mammoth bone.

Along with them were a number of mammoth and bison bone fragments that could have been broken only by man.

Dr. W.E. Taylor, director of the human history branch of the museum, is enthusiastic about the find.

"Old Crow Flats is a great natural laboratory in which to study the record of biological and cultural evolution during the past 40,000 to 50,000 years," said Dr. Taylor. "The remarkable number of archaeological sites coupled with their abundance of fossil bones fosters the promise that this could become one of the most important areas for such scientific studies in the New World."

The museum director said he was looking forward to the work Dr. Irving and Mr. Harington would be doing at the site this summer.

The fact that the implements were found with the fossils of the prehistoric animals indicates early man probably was there at the same time.

Precise scientific tests and observations are now being made on the bones to see if they are all of the same age and to determine how old they are.

Mr. Harington who was with his Indian guide, Peter Lord at the time said the actual discovery of the first site was an exciting thing.

"We came around a bend in the river," he said, "and even from the boat you could see the bones on the shore. Almost at once I knew it was a valuable find, for we could see other bones imbedded in the sand above the clay."

Mr. Harington said Mr. Lord was a great help to him.

"He's a resident of Old Crow, knows the area well

and is a very keen observer" said Mr. Harington.

Although no stone tools were found, scientists connected with the project believe stone must have been used to make the bone implements.

Remains of dwelling for this ancient people have not yet been found, but it is possible stone implements will be uncovered if and when a living area is located.

Some of the bones were found in middens, or refuse heaps, made by prehistoric man. While many of the bones are delicate, they have been well preserved by natural freezing.

The fact that they are heavily mineralized shows they must have been thawed out for some time as well. A sample of the flesher along with samples of the mammoth bones, taken with a dentist's drill, have been sent to Dr. Kenneth P. Oakely of the British Museum to compare the amounts of fluorine and uranium.

If they are the same, it would mean the bones and the implements are the same age.

Dr. Oakely pioneered in the development of this technique for comparing the ages of fossil bones.

Scientists believe that Old Crow Flats, where the discovery was made, once was a lake surrounded by hills and low mountains. It was formed by meltwater from the great continental ice sheet of the Wisconsin Age (named for the place in which it was first identified). The last major stages of the Wisconsin glaciation were between 10,000 and 25,000 years ago, but the glacial lake probably was drained well before 10,000 years ago.

The meltwater formed a series of lakes as deep as 200 feet. Later, when the lake barriers finally broke down (more than 10,000 years ago) the water flowed into the Yukon River, leaving a thick deposit of sand and

silt behind.

"We think the bones came from beneath the lake silts," said Dr. Irving, "but our data come from reconnaissance observation rather than from careful excavation and study."

He said it was remotely possible, that the bones were washed into the place where they were found by a stream that did its work after the great lake had been drained.

"This would make them late glacial or early postglacial in age," he said, "perhaps 12,000 to 15,000 years old, but most likely nearly 15,000. However, the few radiocarbon dates we have on mammoth remains from Alaska and Siberia all range older than 20,000 years. The artifacts from Old Crow made on mammoth bones probably are older than this."

Immediate significance of the finds is that they fill a important gap in the archaeology of the New World. Man is known to have come here from Asia more than 12,000 years ago, and perhaps as much as 40,000 years ago, but no remains older than 8,000 years have been found in unquestionable context north of southeastern Alaska. This latest discovery affords a glimpse of very early man in the north less than 1,000 miles from Asia. It also lends strong, if indirect, support to the theory that man came here from Asia before the last glaciation rather than after it. Conservation opinion holds that there is insufficient evidence to prove that man was here before the last glaciation but this view is not so widely held as it was once. Finds made in Alberta, Idaho, Texas and the Valley of Mexico are highly suggestive of pre-Wisconsin age for man in the New World.

While some of the newly-found bones were lying on the river bank, other specimens were dug out of a deeply buried layer of sand. Enough of these were uncovered to convince the two scientists last summer that all of the fossils probably had come from the same place.

The Geological Survey of Canada will use the radiocarbon method of testing the age of the specimens. This method of testing supplies information for as far back in

## Senior Citizens to Be Assisted By Employment Service for Jobs

"Senior Citizens' Month in Alaska is an occasion for the Fairbanks office of the Alaska State Employment Service to suggest to all area employers there are many older workers in Alaska who can produce effectively in work situations for which they are qualified by training and experience," according

to James E. O'Rourke, Manager of the local employment service.

"Past experience throughout American industry and business proves that the Senior Citizens can produce effectively in many work situations. Our staff is available to assist employers who may be interested in hiring older workers," O'Rourke said.

Job orders for Senior Citizen workers may be filed with the local office of the Alaska State Employment Service by visiting the office in Room 131, State Court and Office Building, from 8:30 A.M. to noon, and one to five in the afternoon, Monday through Friday, or by calling 452-1501.

## A-67 Radio

### Show Expanded

"The Alaska 67 Show" has been expanded and rescheduled for the summer months.

The weekly KFAR—Television program has been lengthened to a full 30 minutes, and moved from 10 to 6:30 p.m. Sunday on channel 2 in Fairbanks.

The show, hosted by Jim Binkley and Dave Jones, features an in-depth report on the A-67 site, its progress, personalities and programming for the coming summer.

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