Buried Treasure by Pinkney Gage

Long Stone Knife Blade Valuable Indian Relic

Among the more valuable American Indian relics you might find is a long stone knife blade—something four to five inches or more in length.

As a matter of fact, if someone in your family has a collection of Indian arrowheads and spear points—and thousands of Americans have—it may well be that one of them will prove to be such a piece on close examination.

In any event, a friend of mine discovered one a couple of years ago while on a fishing trip in Oklahoma. He saw the end of the blade—a couple of inches of it—sticking out of a bank that had been partially washed away in a recent freshet. Using all possible care, he removed the surrounding earth, exposing the ancient weapon so that he could lift it out without the possibility of damaging it.

The blade was single-edged and a little more than six inches in over-all length. From the hilt, where it was a little over an inch wide, it curved gently back to the tip which was in direct line with the straight back.

But there was more to the weapon than that. Unlike most Indian knife blades, which are usually found without any hilt or handle, this one had part of it. From the widest part of the blade the stone extended for a good three inches in a line directly opposite to the blade itself.

This part, however, this rudimentary handle, was chipped in such a way that if it were wound with rawhide, or given a wooden or other covering, it would prove a most effective weapon—far different from what the usual crudely hilted stone knife must have been. Indeed, holding it in one's hand it was easy to visualize the original weapon as beautifully balanced and splendidly designed for its purpose.

The finder of the knife still has it, or did have last September when I saw it. He has been offered $150 for it, but has refused it for the double reason that the offer isn't high enough and that he doesn't need the money.

MAN BARELY MISSES JACKPOT WITH PRINCE ALBERT STAMP

As soon as the voice on the radio had finished describing one of the most valuable of the Canadian stamps, Jack was positive that he had one.

"I'll bet I've hit the jackpot," he said, leaping to his feet. "Listen to this. I wrote it down: reddish purple color, sixpence denomination, picture of Prince Albert — all on very thick, soft wove paper . . . It's worth one thousand dollars, and I'm sure there's one in that old collection that Great Uncle Charlie started when he was a kid."

Within 10 minutes Jack was back from upstairs with a dog-eared album under his arm, and in another five minutes we had discovered that the stamp he had been thinking of was not the right one.

Instead of being reddish purple in color it was a decided grayish purple, and whatever kind of paper it was on, it most definitely was not of the very thick, soft wove type that had been described by the broadcaster.

Jack looked wistfully at the face of Prince Albert who peered out of his oval frame as if he expected to catch sight of Victoria at any moment. As I looked through a magnifying glass at the printing on the stamp, CANADA POSTAGE SIX PENCE, Jack was swearing softly to himself.

"Mine's unused, too," he said dejectedly. "Even though the color is off, you'd think it would be worth something important, but it can't be or the broadcaster would have mentioned it."

That didn't make too much sense to me. Realizing that time limitations in radio are as severe as those of space for newspapers, I went out to my car to dig out the Scott's catalogue I usually carry with me. It was the sensible thing to do.

The stamp in question was printed in various shades over the years from 1851 to 1859, both on laid and wove paper, perforated and imperforated. Furthermore, they all have considerable value, the smallest being a brown violet on wove paper, issued in 1859 and with a catalogue value today of $300 unused and $150 used.

Jack's proved to be an unused slate gray put out in 1855. Its value today is $500.

A 1918 NICKEL STRIKE-OVER OF 1917 DENVER-MINTED ONE

Ted stuck a jeweler's glass in his eye, glanced briefly at two of the nickels, quickly examined a dozen more, and counted out $50 for the lot of 100.

"That's an average price of 50 cents apiece, Okay?"

The seller nodded, scooped up the bills and left. As the door closed behind him, Ted grabbed his hat. "How about some lunch, Pink? I'm starved."

That was all right with me, but I was curious as to why he would so quickly pay 50 cents apiece for 100 buffalo nickels in a range of dates extending at least into the late 1920s.

"There was one coin I spotted that makes the whole deal worthwhile," Ted said, digging into his baked potato. "It's the 1918 nickel that is a strike-over of a 1917 issue by the Denver mint.

"I used my eye glass to be sure. And it showed as plain as could be. The strike-over, I mean, which makes it valuable even though the coin has been circulated."

I asked how much it would be worth. He told me that $50 would be a reasonable price, even though $150 would not be too much if the coin were in absolutely mint condition.

"But those other coins are worth something, too," he went on, "just so long as they haven't been badly worn by use.

"For instance, there were good examples of the 1917, 1919, 1920 and 1924 nickels with the Denver or San Francisco mint marks below the words FIVE CENTS on the reverse.

"Each one of them is worth $5 or more depending on condition. And some of them are in such fine shape that I ought to be able to get $15 or $20 for them."

I asked if he felt his purchase price was very low.

"Not at all," he replied. "It will take me two or three years to sell the stuff—a time lag that will mean I'll earn the difference that I get."

(Released by McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

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Astronomy Questions

By J. HUGH PRUETT
Astronomer, Extension Division
Oregon Higher Education System

Here are some questions the answers to which will likely be of interest to the readers.

1. "In a recent article you discussed radio noises from sources in the sun and some stars, and that are now regularly picked up by suitable receivers. Have any such 'signals' ever been detected from the planets?"

At the April meeting of the American Astronomical society, Dr. Bernard F. Burke and Dr. Kenneth L. Franklin gave a report on radio waves from the planet Jupiter which have been picked up by the Carnegie Institution through a very sensitive apparatus located at Seneca, Md. The antenna is so extensive that it is "housed" on a 96-acre field.

Best Explanation

Only when Jupiter is directly in range of this instrument are the signals received. It seems the best explanation for the disturbance is that thunder storms are in action in the extensive atmosphere of this giant planet. But to be detected at our great distance, these storms are surely of a very much more powerful nature than are the greatest of those experienced on our earth.

2. "From the findings of science, how old is the universe? In other words, what was the time of creation?"

Until recently the age of the universe had been put at from two billion to three billion years. This was based partly on the rearrangement of chemical products found on the earth. At a recent meeting of the American Chemical society, Dr. J. Laurence Kulp and George L. Bates of Columbia presented a paper in which they stated that evidences point to an age of nearly five billion years. This is based on "the isotopic composition of lead on earth and in the meteorites that fall on the earth."

Mars Closer to Earth

3. "In a recent press dispatch it was stated that last year Mars came closer to the earth than at any time in the past quarter century. What about the approach of 1939?"

Last year the closest approach of Mars to the earth was, in round numbers, 40,000,000 miles. In 1939, this distance was about 36,000,000 miles, and in 1941, 36,000,000 miles. The so-called "close approaches" occur every 15 to 17 years. But some are closer than others. At the most favorable, the separation between the earth and Mars is less than 35,000,000 miles. The approach of 1924 was closer than it will again be for centuries.

4. "Are there likely inhabitants on Mars?"

Don't we wish we knew! No telescope powerful enough to reveal such life, if it does exist, has yet been constructed. Prof. Percival Lowell thought the fine lines on Mars were canals dug by intelligent beings to ditch water from the melting polar snow caps to the rest of this distant planet. If animal life exists there, it must be very different from that on our world. Many have thought that the varying colors with changing seasons shows the presence of vegetable life.

Concrete Block Houses Found Safe In A-Blast Tests

Yucca Flats, Nev.—An American family, living in a concrete masonry home of the proper type would stand a good chance of surviving an atomic bomb attack, according to results of tests conducted recently during the "Survival City" atomic device.

Damage reports made by evaluation teams studying the effects of the blast on typical American residences reveal that homes of lightweight reinforced concrete block, or precast lightweight concrete, survived the explosion with only minor structural damage.

The test houses were located 4,700 feet from ground zero in the blast. The evaluation studies indicated that the greatest danger to inhabitants of the concrete masonry homes that survived the blast would appear to be flying glass, window blinds and furniture.

Further studies by government evaluation teams are expected to show that the greatest safety is in homes with basements or other type survival shelters.

MEXICO TO BID

Mexico City —(U.P.)— Because of the success of the 1955 Pan American Games, Mexico is expected to make a bid for the 1960 Olympics. President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines reportedly has authorized Mexican representatives to present an official invitation to the International Olympic Committee when it meets in Paris next month.

Salem — (U.P.)—Twenty counties in Oregon will take part in the nationwide civil defense exercises—June 15-16, according to State Civil Defense Director Arthur M. Sheets.

FARM INCOME

Washington —(U.P.) —Farmers in 1955 will continue to get about the same share of the consumer's dollar as they received in 1954, according to the Agricultural Marketing service. The service said the farmer will get about 43 cents of each dollar spent for farm goods, while marketing agencies will get about 57 cents for services they provide.

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