

Hidden History of the Human Race

by Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson

In 1958, at a site near Lewisville, Texas, stone tools and burned animal bones were found in association with hearths. Later, as the excavation progressed, radiocarbon dates of at least 38,000 years were announced for charcoal from the hearths. Still later, a Clovis point was found. Herbert Alexander, who was a graduate student in archaeology at the time, recalled how this sequence of finds was received. On a number of occasions, stated Alexander, the opinions voiced at that time were that the hearths were man-made, and the faunal associations valid. Once the dates were announced, however, some opinions were changed, and, after the Clovis point was found, the process of picking and ignoring began in earnest.

Finding a Clovis point in a layer 38,000 years old was disturbing because orthodox anthropologists date the first Clovis points at 12,000 years. Some critics responded to the Lewisville find by alleging that the Clovis point had been planted as a hoax. Others have said the radiocarbon dates were wrong.

After mentioning a number of similar cases of ignored or derided discoveries, Alexander recalled a suggestion that in order to decide issues of early man, we may soon require attorneys for advocacy. This may not be a bad idea in a field of science like archaeology, where opinions determine the status of facts, and facts resolve into networks of interpretation. Attorneys and courts may aid archaeologists in arriving more smoothly at the consensus among scholars that passes for the scientific truth in this field. But Alexander noted that a court system requires a jury, and the first question asked of a prospective juror is, "Have you made up your mind on the case?" Very few archaeologists have not made up their minds on the date humans first entered North America.

The idea that Clovis-type projectile points represent the earliest tools in the New World is challenged by an excavation at the Timlin site in the Catskill mountains of New York State. In the mid-1970s, tools closely resembling the Upper Acheulean tools of Europe were found there. In the Old World, Acheulean tools are routinely attributed to *Homo erectus*. But such attribution is uncertain because skeletal remains are usually absent at tool sites. The Catskill tools have been given an age of 70,000 years on the basis of glacial geology.

Hueyatlaco, Mexico

In the 1960s, sophisticated stone tools rivaling the best work of Cro-magnon man in Europe were unearthed by Juan Armenta Camacho and Cynthia Irwin-Williams at Hueyatlaco, near Valsequillo, 75 miles southeast of Mexico City. Stone tools of a somewhat cruder nature were found at the nearby site

of El Horno. At both the Hueyatlaco and El Horno sites, the stratigraphic location of the implements does not seem to be in doubt. However, these artifacts do have a very controversial feature: a team of geologists who worked for the U.S. Geological Survey gave them ages of about 250,000 years.

The geologists involved said four different dating methods independently yielded unusually great ages for the artifacts found near Valsequillo. The dating methods used were (1) uranium series dating, (2) fission track dating, (3) tephra hydration dating, and (4) study of mineral weathering.

As might be imagined, the date of about 250,000 years obtained for Hueyatlaco by the team of geologists provoked a great deal of controversy. If accepted, it would have revolutionized not only New World anthropology but the whole picture of human origins. Human beings capable of making the sophisticated tools found at Hueyatlaco are not thought to have come into existence until about 100,000 years ago in Africa.

In attempting to get her team's conclusions published, Virginia Steen-McIntyre experienced many social pressures and obstacles. In a note to a colleague (July 10, 1976), she stated, "I had found out through backfence gossip that Hal, Roald, and I are considered opportunists and publicity seekers in some circles, because of Hueyatlaco, and I am still smarting from the blow."

The publication of a paper by Steen-McIntyre and her colleagues on Hueyatlaco was inexplicably held up for years. The paper was first presented at an anthropological conference in 1975 and was to appear in a symposium volume. Four years later, Steen-McIntyre wrote to H. J. Fullbright of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, one of the editors of the forever forthcoming book, "Our joint article on the Hueyatlaco site is a real bombshell. It would place man in the New World 10x earlier than many archaeologists would like to believe. Worse, the bifacial tools that were found in situ are thought by most to be a sign of *H. sapiens*. According to present theory, *H.s.* had not even evolved at that time, and certainly not in the New World."

Steen-McIntyre continued, explaining, "Archaeologists are in a considerable uproar over Hueyatlaco. They refuse even to consider it. I've learned from second-hand sources that I'm considered by various members of the profession to be 1) incompetent; 2) a news monger; 3) an opportunist; 4) dishonest; 5) a fool. Obviously, none of these opinions is helping my professional reputation! My only hope to clear my name is to get the Hueyatlaco article into print so that folks can judge the evidence for themselves." Steen-McIntyre, upon receiving no answer to this and other requests for information, withdrew the article. But her manuscript was never returned to her.

A year later, Steen-McIntyre wrote (February 8, 1980) to Steve Porter about having her article about Hueyatlaco printed. "The ms I'd like to submit gives

the geologic evidence," she said. "It's pretty clear-cut, and if it weren't for the fact a lot of anthropology textbooks will have to be rewritten, I don't think we would have had any problems getting the archaeologists to accept it. As it is, no anthro journal will touch it with a ten-foot pole."

Steve Porter wrote to Steen-McIntyre (February 25, 1980), replying that he would consider the controversial article for publication. But he said he could well imagine that objective reviews may be a bit difficult to obtain from certain archaeologists. The usual procedure in scientific publishing is for an article to be submitted to several other scientists for anonymous peer review. It is not hard to imagine how an entrenched scientific orthodoxy could manipulate this process to keep unwanted information out of scientific journals.

On March 30, 1981, Steen-McIntyre wrote to Estella Leopold, "The problem as I see it is much bigger than Hueyatlaco. It concerns the manipulation of scientific thought through the suppression of 'Enigmatic Data,' data that challenges the prevailing mode of thinking. Hueyatlaco certainly does that! Not being an anthropologist, I didn't realize the full significance of our dates back in 1973, nor how deeply woven into our thought the current theory of human evolution had become. Our work at Hueyatlaco has been rejected by most archaeologists because it contradicts that theory, period. Their reasoning is circular. *H. sapiens sapiens* evolved ca. 30,000-50,000 years ago in Eurasia. Therefore any H.s.s. tools 250,000 years old found in Mexico are impossible because H.s.s. evolved ca 30,000. Such thinking makes for self-satisfied archaeologists but lousy science!"

Eventually, *Quaternary Research* (1981) published an article by Virginia Steen-McIntyre, Roald Fryxell, and Harold E. Malde. It upheld an age of 250,000 years for the Hueyatlaco site. Of course, it is always possible to raise objections to archeological dates, and Cynthia Irwin-Williams did so in a letter responding to Steen-McIntyre, Fryxell, and Malde. Her objections were answered point for point in a counter-letter by Malde and Steen-McIntyre. But Irwin-Williams did not relent.

The anomalous findings at Hueyatlaco resulted in personal abuse and professional penalties, including withholding of funds and loss of job, facilities, and reputation for Virginia Steen-McIntyre. Her case opens a rare window into the actual social processes of data suppression in paleoanthropology, processes that involve a great deal of conflict and hurt.

A final note: we ourselves once tried to secure permission to reproduce photographs of the Hueyatlaco artifacts in a publication. We were informed that permission would be denied if we intended to mention the lunatic fringe date of 250,000 years.

Sandia Cave, New Mexico

In 1975, Virginia-Steen McIntyre learned of the existence of another site with an impossibly early date for stone tools in North America -- Sandia

Cave, New Mexico, U.S.A., where the implements, of advanced type (Folsom points), were discovered beneath a layer of stalagmite considered to be 250,000 years old.

In a letter to Henry P. Schwartz, the Canadian geologist who had dated the stalagmite, Virginia Steen-McIntyre wrote (July 10, 1976), "I can't remember if it was you or one of your colleagues I talked to at the 1975 Penrose Conference (Mammoth Lakes, California). The fellow I spoke to as we waited in line for lunch mentioned a uranium series date on the stalagmite layer above artifacts at Sandia Cave that was very upsetting to him; it disagreed violently with the commonly held hypothesis for the date of entry of man into the New World. When he mentioned a date of a quarter million years or thereabouts, I nearly dropped my tray. Not so much in shock at the age, but that this date agreed so well with dates we have on a controversial Early Man site in Central Mexico. Needless to say, I'd be interested to learn more about your date and your feelings about it!" According to Steen-McIntyre, she did not receive an answer to this letter.

After writing to the chief archeological investigator at the Sandia site for information about the dating, Steen-McIntyre received this reply (July 2, 1976), "I hope you don't use this 'can of worms' to prove anything until after we have had a chance to evaluate it."

Steen-McIntyre sent us some reports and photos of the Sandia artifacts and said in an accompanying note, "The geochemists are sure of their date, but archaeologists have convinced them the artifacts and charcoal lenses beneath the travertine are the result of rodent activity. But what about the artifacts cemented in the crust?"

Neolithic Tools from the California Gold Country

In 1849, gold was discovered in the gravels of ancient riverbeds in central California, drawing hordes of rowdy adventurers. At first, solitary miners panned for flakes and nuggets in the gravels that had found their way into the present stream beds. But soon gold-mining companies brought more extensive resources into play, some sinking shafts into mountainsides, following the gravel deposits wherever they led, while others washed the auriferous (gold-bearing) gravels from hillsides with high pressure jets of water. The miners found hundreds of stone artifacts, and, more rarely, human fossils. The most significant artifacts were reported to the scientific community by J. D. Whitney, then the state geologist of California.

The artifacts from surface deposits and hydraulic mining were of doubtful age, but the artifacts from deep mine shafts and tunnels could be more securely dated. J. D. Whitney thought the geological evidence indicated the auriferous gravels were at least Pliocene in age. But modern geologists think some of the gravel deposits are from the Eocene.

Many shafts were sunk at Table Mountain in Tuolumne County, going under thick layers of a basaltic volcanic material called latite before reaching the

gold-bearing gravels. In some cases, the shafts extended horizontally for hundreds of feet beneath the latite cap (Figure 5.10). Discoveries from the gravels just above the bedrock could be from 33.2 to 55 million years old, but discoveries from other gravels may be anywhere from 9 to 55 million years old.

Whitney personally examined a collection of Tuolumne Table Mountain artifacts belonging to Dr. Perez Snell, of Sonora, California. Snell's collection included spearheads and other implements. There is not much information about the discoverers or original positions of the implements. There was, however, one exception. This was, wrote Whitney, a stone muller, or some kind of utensil which had apparently been used for grinding. Dr. Snell informed Whitney that he took it with his own hands from a car-load of "dirt" coming out from under Table Mountain. A human jaw, inspected by Whitney, was also present in the collection of Dr. Snell. The jaw was given to Dr. Snell by miners, who claimed that the jaw came from the gravels beneath the latite cap at Table Mountain in Tuolumne County.

A better-documented discovery from Tuolumne Table Mountain was made by Mr. Albert G. Walton, one of the owners of the Valentine claim. Walton found a stone mortar, 15 inches in diameter, in gold-bearing gravels 180 feet below the surface and also beneath the latite cap. Significantly, the find of the mortar occurred in a drift, a mine passageway leading horizontally from the bottom of the main vertical shaft of the Valentine mine. This tends to rule out the possibility that the mortar might have fallen in from above. A piece of a fossil human skull was also recovered from the Valentine mine.

William J. Sinclair suggested that many of the drift tunnels from other mines near the Valentine shaft were connected. So perhaps the mortar had entered through one of these other tunnels. But Sinclair admitted that when he visited the area in 1902 he was not even able to find the Valentine shaft. Sinclair simply used his unsupported suggestion to dismiss Walton's report of his discovery. Operating in this manner, one could find good reason to dismiss any paleoanthropological discovery ever made.

Another find at Tuolumne Table Mountain was reported by James Carvin in 1871. "This is to certify that I, the undersigned, did about the year 1858, dig out of some mining claims known as the Stanislaus Company, situated in Table Mountain, Tuolumne County, opposite O'Byrn's Ferry, on the Stanislaus River, a stone hatchet... The above relic was found from sixty to seventy-five feet from the surface in gravel, under the basalt, and about 300 feet from the mouth of the tunnel. There were also some mortars found, at about the same time and place."

In 1870, Oliver W. Stevens submitted the following notarized affidavit. "I, the undersigned, did about the year 1853, visit the Sonora Tunnel, situated at and in Table Mountain, about one half a mile north and west of Shaw's Flat, and at that time there was a car-load of auriferous gravel coming out of said Sonora Tunnel. And I, the undersigned, did pick out of said gravel

(which came from under the basalt and out of the tunnel about two hundred feet in, at the depth of about one hundred and twenty-five feet) a mastodon tooth. And at the same time I found with it some relic that resembled a large stone bead, made perhaps of alabaster. The bead, if from the gravel, is at least 9 million years old and perhaps as much as 55 million years old."

William J. Sinclair objected that the circumstances of discovery were not clear enough. But in the cases of many accepted discoveries, the circumstances of discovery are similar to that of the marble bead. For example, at Border Cave in South Africa, *Homo sapiens sapiens* fossils were taken from piles of rock excavated from mines years earlier. The fossils were then assigned dates of about 100,000 years, principally because of their association with the excavated rock. If Sinclair's strict standards were to be applied to such finds, they also should have to be rejected.

In 1870, Llewellyn Pierce gave the following written testimony. "I, the undersigned, have this day given to Mr. C. D. Voy, to be preserved in his collection of ancient stone relics, a certain stone mortar, which has evidently been made by human hands, which was dug up by me, about the year 1862, under Table Mountain, in gravel, at a depth of about 200 feet from the surface, under the basalt, which was over sixty feet deep, and about 1,800 feet in from the mouth of the tunnel. Found in the claim known as the Boston Tunnel Company. The gravels that yielded the mortar are 33-55 million years old."

William J. Sinclair objected that the mortar was made of andesite, a volcanic rock not often found in the deep gravels at Table Mountain. But modern geologists report that in the region north of Table Mountain there are four sites that are just as old as the prevolcanic auriferous gravels and contain deposits of andesite. Andesite mortars might have been a valuable trade item, and could have been transported good distances by rafts or boats, or even by foot.

According to Sinclair, Pierce found another artifact along with the mortar, "The writer was shown a small oval tablet of dark colored slate with a melon and leaf carved in bas-relief. This tablet shows no signs of wear by gravel. The scratches are all recent defacements. The carving shows very evident traces of a steel knife blade and was conceived and executed by an artist of considerable ability."

Sinclair did not say exactly what led him to conclude the tablet had been carved with a steel blade. Therefore, he may have been wrong about the type of implement that was used. In any case, the slate tablet was in fact discovered, with the mortar, in prevolcanic gravels deep under the latite cap of Tuolumne Table Mountain. So even if the tablet does display signs of carving by a steel blade, that does not mean it is recent. One could justifiably conclude that the carving was done by human beings of a relatively high level of cultural achievement between 33 million and 55 million years ago. Sinclair also said that the tablet showed no signs of wear

by gravel. But perhaps it was not moved very far by river currents and therefore remained unabraded. Or perhaps the tablet could have been dropped into a gravel deposit of a dry channel.

On August 2, 1890, J. H. Neale signed the following statement about discoveries made by him. "In 1877 Mr. J. H. Neale was superintendent of the Montezuma Tunnel Company, and ran the Montezuma tunnel into the gravel underlying the lava of Table Mountain, Tuolumne County. At a distance of between 1400 and 1500 feet from the mouth of the tunnel, or of between 200 and 300 feet beyond the edge of the solid lava, Mr. Neale saw several spear-heads, of some dark rock and nearly one foot in length. On exploring further, he himself found a small mortar three or four inches in diameter and of irregular shape. This was discovered within a foot or two of the spear-heads. He then found a large well-formed pestle, now the property of Dr. R. I. Bromley, and near by a large and very regular mortar, also at present the property of Dr. Bromley."

Neale's affidavit continued, "All of these relics were found... close to the bed-rock, perhaps within a foot of it. Mr. Neale declares that it is utterly impossible that these relics can have reached the position in which they were found excepting at the time the gravel was deposited, and before the lava cap formed. There was not the slightest trace of any disturbance of the mass or of any natural fissure into it by which access could have been obtained either there or in the neighborhood. The position of the artifacts in gravel close to the bed-rock at Tuolumne Table Mountain indicates they were 33-55 million years old."

In 1898, William H. Holmes decided to interview Neale, and in 1899 published the following summary of Neale's testimony. "One of the miners coming out to lunch at noon brought with him to the superintendent's office a stone mortar and a broken pestle which he said had been dug up in the deepest part of the tunnel, some 1500 feet from the mouth of the mine. Mr. Neale advised him on returning to work to look out for other utensils in the same place, and agreeable to his expectations two others were secured, a small ovoid mortar, 5 or 6 inches in diameter, and a flattish mortar or dish, 7 or 8 inches in diameter. These have since been lost to sight. On another occasion a lot of obsidian blades, or spear-heads, eleven in number and averaging 10 inches in length, were brought to him by workmen from the mine."

The accounts differ. Holmes said about Neale, "In his conversation with me he did not claim to have been in the mine when the finds were made. This might be interpreted to mean that Neale had lied in his original statement." But the just-quoted passages from Holmes are not the words of Neale but of Holmes, who said, "His [Neale's] statements, written down in my notebook during and immediately following the interview, were to the following effect." It is debatable whether one should place more confidence in Holmes's indirect summary of Neale's words than in Neale's own notarized affidavit, signed by him. Significantly, we have no confirmation from Neale himself that Holmes's version of their conversation was correct.

That Holmes may have been mistaken is certainly indicated by a subsequent interview with Neale conducted by William J. Sinclair in 1902. Summarizing Neale's remarks, Sinclair wrote, "A certain miner (Joe), working on the day shift in the Montezuma Tunnel, brought out a stone dish or platter about two inches thick. Joe was advised to look for more in the same place... Mr. Neale went on the night shift and in excavating to set a timber, 'hooked up' one of the obsidian spear points. With the exception of the one brought out by Joe, all the implements were found personally by Mr. Neale, at one time, in a space about six feet in diameter on the shore of the channel. The implements were in gravel close to the bed-rock and were mixed with a substance like charcoal." When all the testimony is duly weighed, it appears that Neale himself did enter the mine and find stone implements in place in the gravel.

About the obsidian spearheads found by Neale, Holmes said, "Obsidian blades of identical pattern were now and then found with Digger Indian remains in the burial pits of the region." The inference to be drawn from these facts is that the implements brought to Mr. Neale had been obtained from one of the burial places in the vicinity by the miners. But Holmes could produce no evidence that the any miners had actually obtained the blades from burial pits.

Holmes simply stated, "How the eleven large spearheads got into the mine, or whether they came from the mine at all, are queries that I shall not assume to answer."

Using Holmes's methods, one could discredit any paleoanthropological discovery ever made: one could simply refuse to believe the evidence as reported, and put forward all kinds of vague alternative explanations, without answering legitimate questions about them. In a paper read before the American Geological Society in 1891, geologist George F. Becker said, "It would have been more satisfactory to me individually if I had myself dug out these implements, but I am unable to discover any reason why Mr. Neale's statement is not exactly as good evidence to the rest of the world as my own would be. He was as competent as I to detect any fissure from the surface or any ancient workings, which the miner recognizes instantly and dreads profoundly. Someone may possibly suggest that Mr. Neale's workmen 'planted' the implements, but no one familiar with mining will entertain such a suggestion for a moment. The auriferous gravel is hard picking in large part it requires blasting, and even a very incompetent supervisor could not possibly be deceived in this way... In short, there is, in my opinion, no escape from the conclusion that the implements mentioned in Mr. Neale's statement actually occurred near the bottom of the gravels, and that they were deposited where they were found at the same time with the adjoining pebbles and matrix."

Evolutionary Preconceptions

One might ask why Holmes and Sinclair were so determined to discredit Whitney's evidence for the existence of Tertiary humans. The following

statement by Holmes provides an essential clue. "Perhaps if Professor Whitney had fully appreciated the story of human evolution as it is understood today, he would have hesitated to announce the conclusions formulated, notwithstanding the imposing array of testimony with which he was confronted." In other words, if the facts do not fit the favored theory, the facts, even an imposing array of them, must go.

It is not hard to see why a supporter of the idea of human evolution, such as Holmes, would want to do everything possible to discredit information pushing the existence of humans in their present form too far into the past. Why did Holmes feel so confident about doing so? One reason was the discovery in 1891, by Eugene Dubois, of Java man (*Pithecanthropus erectus*), hailed as the much sought after missing link connecting modern humans with supposedly ancestral apelike creatures. Holmes stated that Whitney's evidence stands absolutely alone and that it implies a human race older by at least one-half than *Pithecanthropus erectus* of Dubois. For those who accepted the controversial Java man, any evidence suggesting the modern human type existed before him had to be cut down, and Holmes was one of the principal hatchet men. Holmes, Sinclair, and others all did their part, using questionable tactics.

Nevertheless, in the early part of the twentieth century, the intellectual climate favored the views of Holmes and Sinclair. Tertiary stone implements just like those of modern humans? Soon it became uncomfortable to report, unfashionable to defend, and convenient to forget such things. Such views remain in force today, so much so that discoveries that even slightly challenge dominant views about human prehistory are effectively suppressed.

Further Reading

Hidden History of the Human Race
by Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson.

Forbidden Archaeology (audio)
by Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson.