

JUNE MEETING

An enthusiastic group of rockhounds and chow hounds gathered at Ideal Park on June 10. Dr. Tharin of Hope College presented a most interesting discussion of the Continental Drift Theory. His talk was well illustrated with maps and slides. The Continental Drift Theory is gaining wide acceptance. Many thanks, Dr. Tharin.

JULY MEETING

Place -- Ideal Park  
Time -- 6:30 Potluck Dinner  
Program - "Show and Tell"

AUGUST MEETING

Place -- Allendale Community Hall  
Time -- 1:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. with a 5:00 P.M. Potluck Supper. Bring your own table service and two dishes to pass.  
Subject: - Rock Swap - No selling - only swapping. Displays are welcome to view or trade.  
Between now and Aug. 15 - Eat - Sleep - Dream

ROCK SWAP

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The editor, bless his pointed little head, left our new president's family wanderings out of the last DRIFTER. So with apologies to Art, Dorothy, and family here they are.

June 20 - Sylvania and Brown Co., Ky.

June 26 - Fort Knox and return home

Early August - Up to Michigan's Copper country and he says they may just stay there.

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This issue of the DRIFTER will conclude Rich Van Beek's articles on the Indian Mounds. It has been a fine job requiring much effort and dedication. Good job, Rich.

ROCK E. SWAPPER SEZ "KARL DE BACK, DISPLAY  
CHAIRMAN FOR THE ROCK SWAP, IS LOOKING FOR SPECIMEN  
AND/OR LAPIDARY DISPLAYS. IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO  
SHOW OFF, CONTACT HIM AT CH3-4014."  
THINK SWAP | THINK DISPLAY

THOSE INDIAN MOUNDS  
(Part V--conclusion)

Before we follow Coffinberry on more mound explorations I would like to quote from a paper he wrote on Archaeology at the request of the Kent Scientific Institute (K.S.I.) which shows once again the often times closely allied fields of interest of geology and archaeology. In this excerpt he is quoting from "On Antiquity of Man" by Maclean:

Near Osage Mission, Kansas, there was found a human skull embedded in a solid rock which was broken open by blasting. It was examined by Dr. Wively, who compared it with a modern skull, and found it resembled the latter in general shape,...Of this relic he says 'It belongs to a man of large size and was embedded in conglomerate rock of the tertiary class (Cenozoic Era), and found several feet below the surface. Part of the frontal parietal and occipital bones were carried away by the explosion. The pieces of rock holding these remains weigh some 40 or 50 pounds and through it runs a vein of quartz, or within the cranium crystallized organic matter, and by the aid of a microscope presents a beautiful appearance."

But now let us listen again to Capt. Coffinberry as he relates some more of his own experiences in the rather quaint language of a century ago in a report dated 1876:

"To the Kent Scientific Institute:

"Ladies and Gentlemen of the Institute: I beg leave to report that in pursuance of the duty devolving upon me, as chairman of the committee on mound exploration I have done something in that line; and to some extent have been successful in procuring some valuable relics of the mound builders, which may contribute in some way to the key which may at some future time unlock the mysteries in which that prehistoric race of mankind is at present enshrouded.

"First: I would say that early last spring I made arrangements through Dr. Mc Ilvain to have the privilege of opening a mound in Lamont, Ottawa County, on the premises of a Mr. Hedges.....

"In regard to the mound on Mr. Hedges premises, he had taken a notion that we wanted to open it, and that he could have a nice little job done in his meadow by having it all removed, and ... cast into a low place in his meadow, at such a distance from the mound as to make it very unprofitable for the K.S.I. and the result was that it was not explored.

....."Having obtained permission of the owner, Mr. P. McCauley,....I proceeded on the 24th day of August with Mr. A. Clemmens and his team, plough and scraper, to the Grattan group of mounds....and commenced work by ploughing (notice spelling) and scraping.

"This location, like many others selected by the mound builders, shows that if they were not skilled in the arts and sciences to such an extent as we claim for people of the 19th century, (19th century!--wonder what he would think of the state of "the arts and sciences" of the 20th century were he living today!--RVB) they did know enough to choose some of the most beautiful locations in the land.....

"In No. 3...we found a piece of copper, about two and a half inches long, one and a half wide, and one quarter of an inch thick in the middle, and sharp towards each end, which had probably been used as a kind of chisel. This implement was covered with the thickest coating of oxide of copper of any copper tool that I have ever seen exhumed, and much thicker than the copper boulders so frequently met with in this vicinity, in the heavy drift of this lower peninsula of our state. Presuming that our heavy drift is older than our mounds....." (Interesting that "copper boulders" were "frequently" found in this area a century ago.. Wonder whether any of our members have ever found such "boulders". Although the science of modern geology was less than 100 years old in 1876, obviously geologists already knew that this area had once been covered by glaciers as evidenced by the "heavy drift". In another document Coffinberry wrote, "I believe at this time it is generally conceded by most geologists that America is the first continent emerged from the last glacial epoch and Prof. Winchell holds the idea that there have been many glacial epochs on our globe".)

In another report to the K.S.I. in January, 1878, Coffinberry writes:

"I left home on Tuesday the 11th of September, 1877, on the 10 o'clock train, G.R. & I.R.R.. and arrived at Howard City about 12:30 P.M., and from there to Lakeview I took what is popularly known as the "lightning train" for Lakeview, leaving Howard City at 5:30 P.M. and arriving at Lakeview, a distance of 12 miles, at 10:30 P.M.; a little over two miles per hour on the Lakeview stage." (What today we can travel in about an hour, in those days was an all day trip -- till 10:30 in the evening!--RVB)

Coffinberry excavated many mounds on this trip with varying results, but we will confine ourselves to this brief excerpt:

"What was very interesting about the skeleton (exhumed from a mound at Town Line Lake, about 3 or 4 miles northeast of Lakeview) is the fact that it was that of a female and in the pelvic cavity were the plates of a prenatal skull not yet joined permanently together, these plates I have been able to bring into form of a head by using stucco and very careful handling, for they are very thin and delicate."

In earlier articles we quoted extensively from the reminiscences of Charles Belknap in 1916 concerning the Converse Mounds. But now let us read some of the contemporary newspaper accounts of these excavations:

From the G.R. Eagle of Saturday, May 30, 1885:

"This morning while some of Shriver, Weatherly & Company's workmen were putting in a sewer connection in the 8th Ward, they excavated an Indian grave and found in it two bars of silver weighing 5 and 7 pounds respectively, a hatchet, and some other Indian relics."

From the G.R. Daily Democrat of Wednesday, June 3, 1885:

"A solid lump of copper weighing  $14\frac{1}{2}$  pounds was found in the sewer excavation in Court Street (now Scribner), Monday night where the silver lumps and Indian relics were discovered recently. Relic hunters are now numerous around the locality mentioned."

From the G.R. Eagle of Wednesday, June 3, 1885:

"The Indian relics found on Court Street are on exhibition at Preusser's and attract much attention."

In a letter to the Editor in the G.R. Eagle of Thursday, June 4, 1885, Coffinberry writes:

"In excavating a ditch in Court Street between West Fulton and Shawmut Streets (Lake Michigan Drive) for the purpose of putting in water pipes, the workmen had to pass through the ground under what had once been an ancient mound of the so-called 'Mound Builders'. I remember very well observing the same mound when I came to Grand Rapids in the summer of 1846 before the land had been laid out in streets and lots. Court Street had been laid out when the land was platted and subsequently graded and the mound removed, but the grading did not disturb the deposit of the natural surface of the ground. From my experience in mound exploring, I judge that when the Mound Builders buried their dead they dug a pit or grave and deposited the subject or subjects...and then the mound is built on and over them and the relics that are deposited with them.

"The find of May 30--Decoration Day (apparently just another working day in 1885 although a holiday and a Saturday --RVB)-- was rather of a peculiar character having in deposit some things evidently of Mound Builder manufacture but the thin silver plate or sheet was manufactured in a rolling mill by white folks, for neither Indians nor Mound Builders had rolling mills in their day."

Forty years later, having been informed by a Prof. Putnam that some of these objects, mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, were now on display in the "Michigan case" of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., Director Sargent of the Kent Scientific Museum wrote to the Director asking for more information and photographs and received this reply dated Dec. 9, 1915:

"I have your letter of Dec. 6 regarding the objects in our museum from Grand Rapids. In referring to the catalogue, I find this entry: From mound on Court Street, between West Fulton and Shawmut Streets, Grand Rapids, Michigan, obtained May 30, 1885, portions of human skeleton, bone implements, cut teeth of bear, carving representing a beetle of light colored limestone, portion of double pipe, pipe of green serpentine, and two fragments of ornaments made of thin hammered silver, a nugget of copper, weighing thirteen pounds, a nugget of silver weighing 7-3/4 pounds, and a nugget of silver weighing 5 pounds...

"We also have a general report of the find by Mr. Coffinberry. This was published in the Grand Rapids Eagle....(this is the same report we're quoting--RVB)

"The copper axe found in this mound is in the Wyman collection which, if I am not mistaken, is in the Field Museum of Chicago (now the Chicago Museum of Natural History). The thin sheet of silver, of which the two ornaments in our Museum are made, is native work, and belongs to the same period as the other objects. It was not made by 'white folks' as stated in Mr. Coffinberry's report.  
Sincerely yours, C.C. Willoughby, Director"

Pursuant to receiving the above information, Director Sargent wrote to the Field Museum and received this rather curt reply dated Dec. 17, 1915:

"Answering your letter of December 13th, I beg to advise you that the Museum has the Wyman Collection, which includes six pieces of copper from Grand Rapids Michigan, three of which are copper celts and three implements of uncertain use."

Very truly yours, F.W. Skiff, Director"

About twelve years previously an article in the Evening Press of Feb. 20, 1904, says concerning one of the items found "within the city limits" by Coffinberry:

"On the rounded side of this relic is carved a figure which closely resembles the Egyptian scarab! The piece itself is now in the Peabody Museum at Harvard sent there as a compromise after two Grand Rapids men had long disputed for its ownership and neither would let the other have it".

The above and other correspondence shows how widely dispersed the relics from the Grand Rapids mounds had become, as well as the wide-spread knowledge of and interest in them. Interesting that a man from Massachusetts knew more about the current location of relics from Grand Rapids than local people did. But now back to Coffinberry's letter to the editor of the Grand Rapids Eagle in 1885:

"When I came to Grand Rapids in June, 1846, the Blackskin tribe of Indians were then located on the west side of Grand River almost among the group of mounds that then existed, but which are all since removed by grading the streets. Mr. Louis Campau, who was the first white man to settle in the Grand River Valley, and was well acquainted with the Indian character, told us that 'the Indians knew nothing of the mounds only that they were the work of man; and that they (Indians) were fond of being buried on or near them'....

"As to the native silver and copper found by the laborers, they were no doubt found and deposited by the Mound Builders. They could not make any use of these and therefore kept them as valuable or curious specimens, as we do many specimens of copper and other things and when the owner died deposited them with them. The Mound Builders did use native copper and silver when they found it in small pieces that they could work without smelting such as their hatchets, arrow points, fish hooks and small ornaments, but large nuggets and boulders such as the Weatherly find, I think they could make no use of but retained them as natural curiosities, the same as I and many others do nowadays.  
W. L. Coffinberry"

So apparently there always were rockhounds--in prehistoric times, in Coffinberry's day, and of course today!

We will now quote again from the Press article of Feb. 20, 1904, in which the writer now gives his conclusions concerning the "mound-builders". Bear in mind that some theories have changed in the 66 years since this was written. As stated earlier, it is now thought that these people were the ancestors of the Algonquin Indians:

"As to the people who made those things, we may safely draw some conclusions; they were well distinguished by traits of domestic economy and domestic relations from the Indian who was found in possession of the continent at the time of its European discovery. Their monuments indicate that they had entered upon a career of actual civilization; they lived in stationary communities, tilling the soil and relying upon its generous yield as a means of support; they clothed themselves, in part at least, in garments regularly spun and woven; they modeled clay and carved stone; they mined and cast copper by methods which are equal of any in vogue today; they quarried mica, slates and other rocks which they wrought into articles adapted to personal ornament, to domestic use, or to the chase; and finally they had a well defined religion which, from the traces of it which remain in every part of the great plains, we may suppose to have been national. It is a reasonable supposition, also, that they had a national government as well."

## THE FUTURE OF THE MOUNDS

And now what about the future of the Norton Mounds? You will remember that two years ago the Grand Rapids Mineral Society passed a resolution recommending that the Mounds be developed as a National Monument and we have been corresponding ever since with various governmental agencies and officials on the National, State, and local level.

Last summer the National Park Service informed us that Federal funds were being allocated to the states to be used "to aid in the preparation of state surveys and historic preservation plans. Once a state has completed its survey and plan, funds may be allocated for individual preservation projects, such as the Norton Mounds." At their suggestion we contacted the State Liaison Officer for Michigan and asked that the Norton Mounds be included in Michigan's Historic Preservation Plan so that Federal funds could be obtained.

This is now in the hands of the Historic Preservation Task Force of Michigan which is conducting inventory and planning for historic preservation for the Historic Preservation Advisory Council which is appointed under state law by the Governor.

In a letter addressed to us and the Grand Rapids Mineral Society dated June 11, 1970 we were told that the Task Force considers the Mounds to be highly significant and that some action should be taken to preserve and emphasize this significance but they question whether they are significant enough to be recommended to the National Park Service as a National Monument.

The letter then goes on to say: "This matter certainly seems to justify further in-depth study and discussion, and I would suggest that a meeting be arranged as soon as possible between interested and concerned people in Grand Rapids and members of the Task Force. If you and Mr. Frankforter will spearhead such a meeting, I will be glad to coordinate things at this end. The meeting should probably be in Grand Rapids so a visual inspection of the Mounds could be made. It might be possible for some National Park Service people to attend. I will look into this."

This letter, which was signed by Norman F. Smith, Chief Recreation Research Planning Division of the Department of Natural Resources, is most encouraging and we will keep you informed of further developments.

We have obtained information for this series of articles from the "Coffinberry Manuscript", a compilation of materials typed in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, a carbon copy of which is in the Ryerson Library, and also from various newspaper accounts in the micro-film department of the Library. We would also like to thank Mr. Frankforter of the Museum and Dr. Flanders of Grand Valley State College for the information they have given us and Mrs. Bartnick of the Library for making the Coffinberry Manuscript, maps, etc., available to use.

We will conclude this series of articles with the words of former Museum Director H. E. Sargent as he wrote concerning the Mounds in 1915:

"We hope that ultimately those at present obliterated may be reconstructed, that this group, that in many respects is one of the most remarkable on the continent, may remain for all time a monument to this most interesting people."

Rich Van Beek

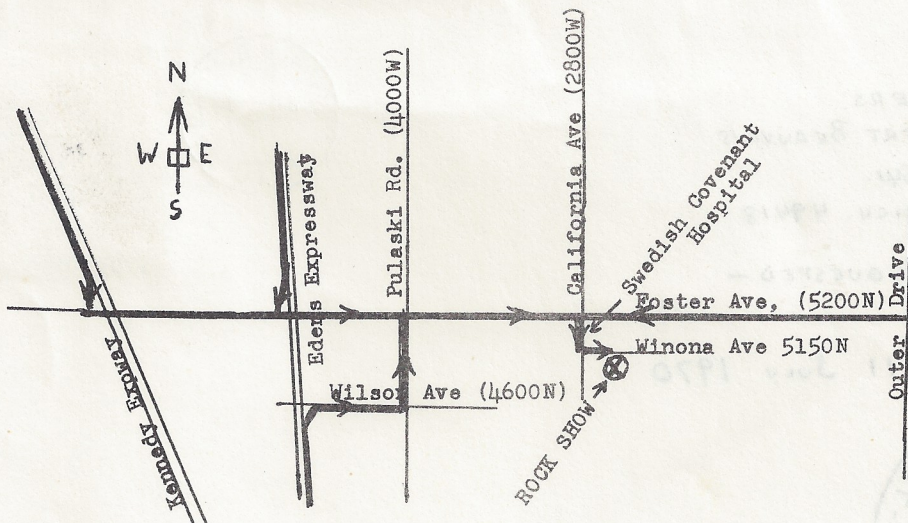
# GEM, MINERAL & FOSSIL SHOW

THE CHICAGO ROCKS AND MINERALS SOCIETY  
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND ITS  
FOURTH GEM AND MINERAL SHOW

This show will feature exhibits by its members of minerals, crystals, handmade jewelry, silver work, fossils, etc., etc. There will be working exhibits showing how stones are cut and polished to make gems of them, as well as nationally famous craftsmen demonstrating the art of working with silver and gold. Six prominent dealers from various parts of the United States will have a wide variety of minerals, crystals, fossils and other material available for you to purchase. The Hadley School for the Blind is cooperating in furnishing Braille descriptions to be used with special exhibits that will enable the blind to see crystal formations, fossils, etc.

**Saturday, July 18, noon to 9pm**

**Sunday, July 19, 12:30 to 6:30 pm**



ST. DEMETRIOS PARISH HALL . . . directly behind the Swedish Covenant Hospital . . . air conditioned.

**2727 Winona Ave., Chicago**

ADMISSION: Adults . . . 50¢, Children under 12 years of age . . . 25¢ or free if accompanied by parents. Blind admitted free.

AMPLE FREE PARKING

# ROCK SWAP AUGUST 15!

MORE DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, July 18 and Sunday, July 19 12:30 to 6:30p.m.

The Chicago Rocks and Minerals Society invites you to attend its Fourth Gem and Mineral Show. This show will feature exhibits by its members of minerals, crystals, handmade jewelry, silver work, fossils, etc. There will be working exhibits as well as nationally famous craftsmen demonstrating the art of working with silver and gold. Six prominent dealers will have a wide variety of materials available for you to purchase.

St. Demetrios Parish Hall...directly behind the Swedish Covenant Hospital. Air-conditioned.  
2727 Winona Ave., Chicago Adults 50¢ Children 25¢

Friday, Sept. 11 and Saturday, Sept. 12  
6-9p.m. 10a.m.-9p.m.

The Tulip City Rock Club presents its First Annual Show  
"Riches of The Earth"  
GEM & MINERAL SHOW  
Holland Civic Center, Holland, Mich. Donation 25¢

Don't forget our Rock Swap, a joint effort with the Indian Mounds Rock Club. The support of all our members is needed!

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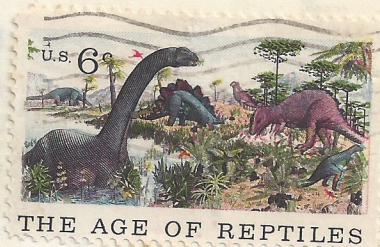
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- RETURN REQUESTED -

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