WSU News Service

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 20--Ten pieces of another ancient skull, a piece of tibia that appears to be human bone, and four artifacts have been recovered from three different locations at the famed Marmes Archeological Site in Southeastern Washington.

The new discoveries were made with less than two weeks of excavations left to go under terms of a $70,000 grant from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to finance work at the site.

Washington State University scientists at the site say the tibia find was made very near the location of the original Marmes skull discovery, and could be the first piece of bone, other than the skull fragments of the Marmes Man.

The new skull was removed from excavations at the outer edge of the Marmes Rockshelter--whereas the original skull discovery was some yards out in front of the shelter. The new find included 10 pieces of the skull cap --which like the Marmes skull--are charred and broken. Several tiny flecks of charcoal were found with the fragments, and these possibly may provide a minimal sample to use in carbon 14 dating. Roald Fryxell, discoverer of the Marmes skull, said the new skull find has been dated geologically at 9,000 to 10,000 years old.

The four artifacts, meanwhile include a bone point, a stone scraper, and two utilized stone falkes (pieces that have been retouched and then used.) These were found in what is called the Harrison layer" about 18 inches below the Marmes excavation layer. Previously, three other stone artifacts had been removed from this layer.

The search for Marmes Man since last April has mushroomed into one of the most elaborate archeological manhunts ever undertaken.

It began with the startling announcement by two Washington State University scientists that charred fragments of a human skull older than 11,000

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years had been uncovered in a desolate canyon in Southeastern Washington. The search must end next December when waters behind Lower Monumental Dam (now nearing completion) pour into the area and flood the site under 40 feet of water.

The research could end prematurely in two weeks if additional funds are not found.

Directors of the project are Fryxell, a geologist, and Richard Daugherty, archeologist, and a recognized expert on early man finds. Last spring, the two assembled a crew of specialists in archeology, geology, zoology, paleontology and physical anthropology to tackle the crash program.

Since early summer, the 25-man crew has been sweltering in summer temperatures up to 120 degrees, as they attempt to accomplish a job of research that normally would require two or three years. The WSU team has had three months, but has measured its success in treasured bits of bone and stone--like those described earlier--and in an increasing store of information about the Western Hemisphere's oldest well-documented human remains, his way of life, his tools and diet, and his environment.

In addition to financing from the Corps of Engineers, they have received help from the U.S. Geological Survey---which has contributed consultants, plus analyses of radiocarbon and volcanic ash samples.

WSU News Service

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 21--A beautifully-fashioned bone needle, a stone scraper, two stone trimming flakes and more human bones have been uncovered at the Marmes Rockshelter archeological site, Washington State University scientists said today.

The needle, which Archeologist Henry Irwin described as "probably the oldest artifact of its kind ever found in the United States," was in three pieces--that fit perfectly together.

Irwin said this discovery indicated that the 11,000-13,00 year old Marmes man was much more sophisticated than had been thought previously.

"This tells that the ancient inhabitants of this site had sewn skins for clothing," he said. "With a needle of this type they could make waterproof clothing, for example. A needle is an invention, not an accidental discovery.

Irwin said the needle at one end measured 1/32 of an inch in circumference, with a drilled hole measuring 1/64 inch in diameter.

The bones that Tuesday were called a "second skull" and dug up near the mouth of the Marmes Rockshelter, today was positively identified as parts of at least three individuals. Physical Anthropologist Grover Krantz, new member of the Washington State University faculty, said 'Two skull fragments that should fit together don't, thus indicating the remains came from two individuals." He said they could be classed as young adults--a classification earlier given the original Marmes Skull. Krantz also said bones from a young child were found in the same location.

A third new find were two portions of the lower jaw from a non-human mammal--probably a small wolf or coyote. These were recovered from the Marmes layer. The bone needle came from the so-called "Harrison Layer"--about 18 inches below the Marmes skeleton remains.

Meanwhile, with important finds turning almost every day, time is running out for the 25 Washington State University scientists at the site. Funds will be exhausted Sept. 1, and the two project directors--Roald Fryxell and Richard

Daugherty--are now searching for a new source of funds to enable them to continue work until next December--when the area is flooded.

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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 22--A prominent alumnus of Washington State University has donated an extensive and valuable library of Western Americana to his alma mater.

Mr. Edwin Haines Burgess of Baltimore, Md., placed the first shipment of his large collection in the Washington State University Library last week. It was donated as a memorial to his parents the late Sara K. and Francis F. Burgess--long-time residents of the Palouse, who formerly lived on a ranch located between Palouse and Oaksdale.

Dr. G. Donald Smith, Director of the WSU Library, said WSU was "highly pleased to have this rich and comprehensive collection added to the Library. Many items will provide valuable support for our ever-expanding graduate programs."

The doner is a 1910 graduate of Washington State University and was for many years vice president and counsel of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He retired in 1958. He and Mrs. Burgess currently are visiting with relatives and friends in Whitman County and plan to return to Maryland in September.

The collection--which has been professionally appraised at more than $70,000 includes some 2,500 volumes and 500 other items. It represents a continuous collecting effort of more than 40 years, and contains many scarce and very rare items.

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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 23--The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rushing approval of an additional $50,000 grant in order that the search for Early Man at the Marmes archeological site in southeastern Washington may continue, Washington State University scientists learned today.

Work had been scheduled to stop Sept. 1 until the new grant was announced.

Sen. Warren G. Magnuson, D-Wash., informed project directors Richard D. Daugherty and Roald Fryxell of the decision after conferring with Gen. William F. Cassidy, chief of the Corps of Engineers.

The new allocation means that a 25-man scientific team from WSU will continue exploration for more skeletal remains of Marmes Man and his contemporaries. The crew has been at the site since the Corps of Engineers made an original grant of $70,000 following the discovery last spring of ancient human remains 11,000 to 13,000 years of age--the oldest such find made in the Western Hemisphere.

Magnuson said he also has asked the Corps of Engineers to look into the possibility of building a coffer dam at the site which would prevent flooding in December by waters behind the Lower Monumental Dam, now nearing completion. Unless this is done the site will be covered by 40 feet of water. The Corps of Engineers has agreed to explore the possibility, he said.

Recent finds at the site expedited requests that work be allowed to continue, the senator said. Only this week skull parts of three other ancient men were uncovered, which have been dated geologically at 9,000 to 10,000 years old.

A bone needle, stone scraper, two trimming flakes and a tibia that appears to be human bone were discovered also. Scientists said the needle is probably the oldest artifact of its kind ever found in the United States.

"What they have discovered has surprised and pleased the entire scientific community of the Western Hemisphere," Magnuson said.

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Daugherty, when informed of the new grant, said, "Roald Fryxell and I are extremely pleased that the Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service have made it possible to continue excavation at this important archeological site.

"The discoveries being made are of great significance to our understanding of the early pre-history of the American Indian, and our knowledge of late Pleistocene geologic events."

Magnuson explained that the Corps of Engineers makes money available to the National Park Service, which in turn contracts with Daugherty and Fryxell through WSU.

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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 24--A large open campsite along the Snake River, occupied by ancient man more than 10,000 years ago, has been discovered and excavated by Washington State University archeologists.

The excavation has yielded several hundred artifacts, including projectile points and other materials identical with those found at Lind Coulee, Wash., in 1950 and at the Marmes Rockshelter, Wash., a few years ago. Both of these earlier finds have been established as being more than 10,000 years old.

Dr. Roderick Sprague, director of a Washington State University Archeology Field School located near the site, said the materials were found in a very large open campsite that obviously had been occupied for thousands of years.

"Previous finds of this age have been in small campsites, caves or rockshelters," he said, "and have yielded a limited amount of artifacts--mostly projectile points. A trench here was found loaded with Lind Coulee and Marmes materials, as well as slightly later artifacts left there by what we call "Cascade" people during the period from 8,000 to 5,000 B.C."

A variety of stone and other tools--similar to those found in later period sites in many locations--were uncovered along with the very old projectile points.

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"The significance of this," Dr. Sprague said, "was finding them in the same stratum where we found the very old identifiable material. Normally, the very old sites yield mostly projectile points."

The Lind Coulee points and the Marmes points are radically different in style, and both differ from a third style of broken red points also found in the same stratum of material.

Dr. Sprague, and his assistant director Frank Leonhardy, have been unable to find any projectile point of this antiquity described in the literature, and are at the moment calling it their "Granite Point point."

The location of the discovery is near the tiny community of Wawawai, Wash.,--a few miles from a curve in the river known as Granite Point.

The two archeologists said it was quite common in ancient campsites to find a quantity of broken projectile point bases, which the Indians in camp had removed and replaced with new points.

Like many significant archeological discoveries, this was an accidental discovery.

Leonhardy--while conducting geological observations in the area where two other excavations were underway--decided to investigate how a large sand dune on the river bank fit in with the flood plain deposits in which the field school students were working. A small pit, dug to examine the stratigraphy, revealed a number of artifacts. Dr. Sprague then ordered a test pit, and this eventually grew to a deep trench more than 20 meters in length.

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The Lind Coulee points--at first--like the still unidentified Granite Point materials, were not identified, and it was not until Artifact No. 404 was uncovered that the scientists knew the significance of their discovery. This was a perfect, unbroken, Lind Coulee point. Soon after they found other whole Lind Coulee points as well as Marmes points.

Dr. Sprague said there were no surface indications of any kind that a campsite was underneath. He described the site simply as a "campsite on a sand dune."

The ancient men have left few clues to tell archeologists much about them. Lind Coulee material has been discovered at only two other locations--some 160 artifacts at Lind, Wash., and 20 odd points at Wildcat Canyon in Oregon--and this is only the fourth location in which Marmes material has been uncovered.

"We know the Granite Point men were hunters," Leonhardy said, "as we found animal bones--mostly elk--buried in the deposits. We also found quantities of mussel shells, but no fish bones of any kind."

Dr. Sprague said the ancient Indians probably used every means available to find food. Grinding tools present in the bottom of the trench indicated, he said, that in addition to meat, they used seeds and root materials for food.

What they used for shelter is unknown. This site is not a pit house--as is commonly found along the Snake; and there are no rock shelters or caves in the immediate area.

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The problem Sprague and Leonhardy were working on--when they found the campsite--was aimed at finding out when our ancient ancestors in the Northwest began using fish as an important part of their food supply. No evidence of fishing tools, or fish remains, has been found in the very old sites in this area of the United States, yet later Indians were known to have secured a substantial portion of their food supply from fishing. Among the Nez Perce, for example, fishing was an important part of the total economy.

The two archeologists believed they might find the key in so-called Altithermal period deposits--left by Indians in the hot and dry period from 4,000 to 6,000 years ago. At some time in this period, they believe, the food supply of ancient man changed to a fish emphasis, and they'd like to find out when, and perhaps why.

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WSU News Service

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Aug. 27--Two more ancient human skulls--at least 11,000 or more years old--have been unearthed at the famed Marmes Rockshelter archeological site in southeastern Washington.

One skull is that of a child, "not more than ten years of age," scientists say, while the other is the skull of an adult. Both were found not more than 20 feet laterally from the location of the original Marmes Man skull and at approximately the same depth.

News of the spectacular discovery was released today by Geologist Roald Fryxell and Archeologist Richard D. Daugherty, Washington State University scientists, who are directing the giant archeological manhunt underway at the site.

A flaked stone weapon tip also has been removed from the so-called "Harrison Layer," some 13 inches lower than the Marmes level of excavation.

The announcement came on the heels of a week of rapid fire discoveries including human remains from at least three other individuals dated geologically as 9,000 -- 10,000 years old, and a beautifully fashioned bone needle and other artifacts which are as old as Marmes Man. All of these have generated considerable excitement throughout the United States and brought hundreds of sightseers to the area over the weekend.

The three human crania--called Marmes I, Marmes II, and Marmes III--now represent the earliest well-documented human skeletal remains in the Western Hemisphere, and scientists are hailing the site as a "treasure trove of unprecedented information concerning America's earliest human inhabitant."

Fryxell's original discovery of the charred and broken skull fragments of "Marmes Man" hit the scientific world like a thunderbolt last spring, but the geologist describes the new discoveries as "scientifically much more significant."

"We now have a relative wealth of information concerning the physical

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type of man during the Marmes period, the tools he made and used, and the animals he hunted and ate. We also have collected data about the environment in which he lived, and the promise of great quantities of additional information and data at the site is there.

The Marmes site itself is threatened with destruction this December when Lower Monumental Reservoir is scheduled to be flooded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Senator Warren G. Magnuson last Friday said the Corps was rushing approval of a $50,000 grant to finance continued research at the site. He said the Corps is studying the possibility of constructing a cofferdam to preserve the site.

The first of the two new skulls discovered was a tiny cranium--long since crushed by the weight of overlying sediments. Confirmation that the fragile pieces of bone were human, and from a child, came from physical anthropologist Grover S. Krantz and zoologist Carl E. Gustafson, both of the WSU Anthropology staff.

Mrs. Paul A. Gleeson, 23, made the initial discovery, and she and Miss Claudine Weatherford, also 23, painstakingly exposed the pieces with brushes and dental picks. Dr. Henry T. Irwin of the WSU archeological team treated them with preservative and removed them from their location--some 20 feet west of the original Marmes discovery.

The third skull was uncivered by Dr. Stephen C. Robinson, 30, a nuclear physicist who read about Marmes Man in a national magazine and asked to join the team earlier this summer. It still has not been removed, but lies "in situ" some 20 feet east and slightly south of the original skull's location.

Krantz identified Marmes II as the skull of a child--perhaps 3 to 5 years in age. He said the sex could not be determined from the evidence available now.

Marmes III, he said, was a young adult, probably 18 to 25 years of age.

Some 2/3rds of each parietal has been recovered, plus a 2 inch strip of the occipital. The frontal is completely missing.