

WARM MINERAL SPRINGS MAN

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North American archaeological stations in midcontinent at which stone tools are found in association with extinct fauna such as camel, horse, bison, and elephant are no longer rare (Wormington 1957). Application of the radio-carbon dating technique at stations which produce the elephant-Clovis point association consistently produces dates in excess of 11,000 years ago (Haynes 1969).

Finds of human skeletal material of equivalent antiquity are rare. A few decades ago it was argued that, in the unlikely event that man had been in North America

that long ago, the proof would lie in the primitiveness of the human skeletons.

Although it is true that human skeletons have seldom been found associated with extinct megafauna, skeletons are well known from the period of time following the extinction of the megafauna. Without exception they present no striking evidence for the Neanderthal-like brow ridges, occipital buns, or massive faces

which previously had been expected as proof of their antiquity. At times, as in the case of the discovery of Minnesota "man" (Jenks 1936), such signs of uniqueness have been sought, found, argued and counterargued (Hrdlička 1937).

Now that the antiquity and associations of man in the New World are no longer in doubt, it is becoming clear that the oldest Americans yet known are most

remarkable for their lack of apparent primitiveness. Considering what is now

known about late Paleolithic and Mesolithic humans in the Old World, what

formerly was an embarrassment in the New World can now easily be rationalized

as what should have been expected along.

To acknowledge that the earliest Americans now known are not exotically different from later populations is not to say that they are identical with the later groups: how they differ and how they are similar are interesting questions

