

Rare Indian Relics

BY KATHRYN LAWRENCE

FEW HOBBIES can be as absorbing as tracking down relics of the earliest Red Men in Carolina.

For Roy Lyons, Safety Director for the Southern Bell Telephone Company in Columbia, it has become almost a second occupation. Every weekend finds him exploring creek beds with his eyes alert for the glint of arrowheads, flint knives, or the rare Indian charms known as bannerstones.

Vacations are spent digging in ancient burial mounds, patiently sifting the sand for fragments of pottery and skeletal remains—or running down rumors of such mounds.

His finds, over the past 25 years, have included all types of projectile points, grinding tools, gamestones, rare peace pipes, Indian jewelry, and ancient burial urns. Some of these date back to 2000-4000 B. C.

"South Carolina is a fertile field for Indian relics," he declares. "We ought to have some way of recording all finds in the state—so that we can piece together the story of those early people."

LYONS first started collecting Indian relics back in 1932, when he was living in Aiken and working with a troop of Boy Scouts there.

In order to help the boys with their collections, he found he had to study up on Indian history. Then, as his interest grew, he began to delve into geology, archeology, and mineralogy.

Now his collection of rocks and minerals is almost equal to his Indian relics.

WORKSHOP

In 1956 he was transferred to state headquarters of Southern Bell in Columbia. However, he has retained his home in Aiken, using it on weekends as a workshop where he sorts and mounts his specimens.

It is a bachelor-type establishment—a man's dream of a place to work. Furniture is kept to a minimum. Handy work tables and shelves overflow with arrowheads, pottery, and rock specimens. The walls are decorated with mounted snakeskins, wood carvings, and hundreds of Indian artifacts.

Here he keeps open house for Boy Scouts who are working on badges, and for amateur collectors of every variety who have

run into a problem that they cannot solve.

BEST SITES

LYONS has done most of his exploring between the Congaree and the Savannah Rivers. He suggests that fertile fields for the amateur collector are to be found along the South Edisto River, along Shaw's Creek and Horse Creek in Aiken County, and along the banks of the Savannah River.

Near Stevens Creek in Edgefield County he has found grooved axes which may date back to the Archaic period of Indian culture (2000 to 4000 B. C.)

Near the Sand Bar Ferry Bridge on the Savannah River he has found a number of peace pipes carved from stone, and gorgets—flat stone ornaments which were worn about the neck.

Just below the southern boundary of the Savannah River Plant, near the town of Milletville, stone chips can be found in profusion along the river bank and for a mile inland, he reveals.

This area was evidently a manufacturing place for all types of projectile points, knives, and scraping tools.

Another spot which will prove interesting to the amateur archeologist is Stony Bluff quarry, one mile below Milletville on the Savannah River. Here the Indians mined chert and chalcodony for arrowheads.

BURIAL MOUNDS

LYONS has done a lot of digging in mounds along the Tugaloo River, which is a western source of the Savannah. These mounds were originally excavated by the University of Georgia, but there are still relics for the patient searcher.

In the Tugaloo mounds he has discovered bone needles and awls, counter stones used in Indian games, and portions of deer and puma jaws. Jaw bones were often made into scraping instruments for the preparation of pelts.

He hopes soon to examine ruins on Stallings Island, several miles above Augusta, Ga. This site

was excavated by the Smithsonian Institution, and revealed one of the earliest known Indian cultures.

Lyons' most spectacular find—and one that is entirely his own—is a burial mound along the Savannah. He is reluctant to reveal the exact location, but says it is on the Carolina side of the river, several miles below Augusta.

The discovery was made after friends on a fishing expedition had noticed a pot sticking out of the river bank, and reported it to him.

Here in a natural sand hill, rather than a constructed mound, he has already found several graves—along with implements, arrowheads, pieces of pottery, and burial urns which were used to provide food for the departed spirits.

RARE URNS

ONE HUGE urn, unearthed on the site, is made of grit-tempered clay and is in perfect condition. It is roughly conical in shape, with the top covered by an overlapping lid. It measures about 18 inches tall by 14 inches wide, and is crudely decorated with scratch marks.

It has a small hole broken in the bottom, which is typical of burial urns. The Indian body

was buried fairly deep, and an urn containing food was buried above it. The idea was that the Indian spirit could reach up through the hole to obtain nourishment.

Another large urn found on the site has a stamped overall design, consisting of interwoven swirls resembling a "lovers' knot."

With the exception of these urns, nearly all pottery found in the mound was broken. This was often done deliberately by Indians at the time of burial—to release the spirit of each article so that it could follow its owner.

Of two complete skeletons which Lyons has found, one was flexed, with knees pulled up to the chest, and the other was stretched out.

Flexed burials were more common in early periods of Indian culture, but from other relics found on the site, Lyons believes

the mound dates from about 1200 to 1500 A. D.

In spite of his care in diagram-

ing his site and digging, he occasionally loses a piece. He is still bemoaning the loss of a perfect set of human teeth, which he found and then laid aside for a moment, and has not been able to find since.

BANNERSTONES

LYONS' most prized possessions are bannerstones—smoothly shaped and polished stones about the size of an axe head. Each stone is perfectly symmetrical and has a hole drilled through the center. Some of the stones are oblong with tapered edges; others flare out in the shape of a butterfly. They may be made of granite, quartz, steatite, or hematite.

"They stopped making these several thousand years ago," says Lyons, as he fingers the stones in his collection.

Archeologists disagree on the purpose of bannerstones. Some of them contend that they were used as weights on throwing sticks—the type of weapon which preceded the bow and arrow. Other experts contend that they were charms attached to a staff and carried like a mace in ceremonies. Lyons holds with the latter view.

Both schools agree that the bannerstone had some mystical importance to the Indian.

Lyons found his most valuable bannerstone a couple of years ago along the Edisto River. It is of gray steatite, in the shape of a stubby, rounded cross. There are several drilled pits in a strange pattern on its polished sides. An archeologist who accompanied Lyons offered him a choice of anything in his collection if he would trade it.

"I wouldn't part with this stone for anything," declares Lyons.

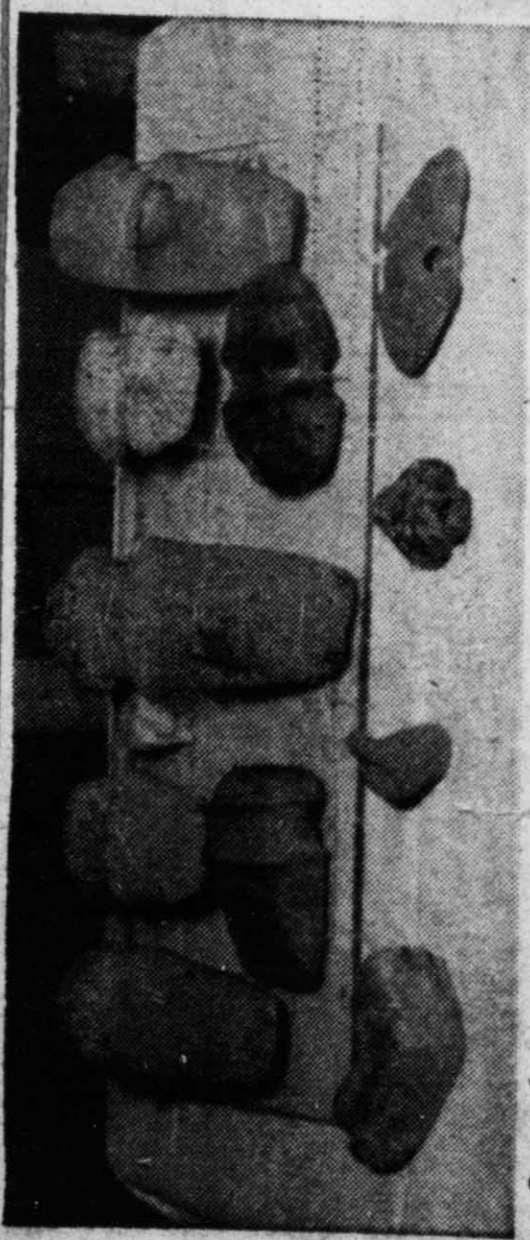
ALTHOUGH he found his first arrowheads as a boy working on his father's farm in Laurens County, he paid little attention to them.

"The colored folks in the area used to call them 'thunderbolts,'" he recalls. "They thought they were the result of lightning striking the ground."

Today there are many serious collectors of Indian artifacts in the state, and Lyons hopes that someday there will be a central agency to record the various finds, and to correlate information.

Recently an Archeologists Club has been formed in Columbia, and Lyons is a charter member. A local physician, Dr. Richard Kahaley, is president. The group meets on the first Friday even-

ing of every month at the University of South Carolina, and any interested persons are welcome.



Some of the relics shown above date back to the Archaic period of Indian culture (2000 to 4000 B. C.). The grooved axes mounted on the glass plate were found by Lyons in Aiken and Edgefield counties. Relics in the foreground are: an elbow pipe of stone; a pipe bowl with animal effigy from the Tugaloo mounds; a cross-shaped bannerstone of rare value; and a butterfly bannerstone. (Photo by Carto)



Roy Lyons, State Safety Director for the Southern Bell Telephone Company, is shown with a small part of his Indian collection. He is holding an ancient burial urn which he discovered in a mound along the Savannah River.

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 History of the Catawba in
 and Indian Land
 By J. HARVEY WHITE

In reading the history of North Carolina we find that the three most powerful tribes of Indians in the State were the Tuscaroras, between the Neuse and Cape Fear rivers; the Catawbas, between the Yadkin and Catawba, and the Cherokees, beyond the Broad and in the western part of the State. Of these three tribes the Tuscaroras were driven out in 1711 and are now living in New York. The Cherokees were partly removed to Indian Territory, but about two thousand now remain in Jackson, Cherokee, Swain and Haywood counties. A remnant of the Catawbas is still living in York and Lancaster counties, South Carolina.

Much has been written and said concerning the Tuscaroras and Cherokees, while very little attention has been paid to the important services rendered the State by the Catawbas.

The origin of these Indians is not clear. According to their traditions they came from Canada. They were living south-west of the Ottawa river, in the present province of Ontario, in 1608 when the French came to Quebec.

They were a brave, courageous people, always at war with their hereditary enemies, the Connewangos.

The French took sides against the Catawbas who in 1648 decided to remove to a place nearer the English settlements. So in 1650 they left their old homes, crossed the river at Detroit, and set out for the headwaters of the Kentucky river. They were pursued by the Connewangos, and, being encumbered by their women children and possessions, were overtaken on the Kentucky. They turned upon their pursuers like a wounded bear upon the hunter. For a whole day the battle raged; the Connewangos, inflamed with an undying hate inherited from their ancestors, fought like demons, but the Catawbas, fighting for the existence of their race, were victorious. The Connewangos were driven back, but they never forgot their hatred of the Catawbas for in 1753 we find them declaring in council at Albany that as long as the grass grew and the water ran they would never make peace with the Catawbas.

After their great victory the Catawbas divided into two bands, one remaining on the Kentucky which was called by the hunters the Catawba; the other turning eastward crossed the mountains and settled in what is now Botetourt county, Virginia. The western band was afterward absorbed into the great Chicasaw and Choctaw families, and, as a tribe, disappeared. I have heard that there were a few families of them living in Mississippi, but it is only a rumor.

The eastern band lived about nine years in Botetourt county, where we find a reminder of them in the name of Catawba creek, also a town named Catawba. Their hunters, exploring towards the south, crossed the Dan and discovered the Yadkin and Catawba rivers. They carried home such glowing accounts of this new region that in 1660 the whole tribe set out to inhabit it. This region was claimed by the Cherokees who naturally resisted this invasion of their territory. The two tribes met in battle near old Nation Ford, three miles from the site of the present town of Fort Mill. The Cherokees were more numerous, but the Catawbas were (to quote Adair) "the bravest men on the American continent" and at first had a decided advantage. As the day waned the numbers of the Cherokees began to tell, but before they could gain their victory darkness ended the battle. Both armies slept on the field of battle. At dawn the Catawbas arose ready to renew the fight, but with day-light there came a deputation from the Cherokees, complimenting them on their bravery and saying it was better to live as brothers than as enemies. Peace was declared and became permanent. The Cherokees gave up to them all the country north-east of the Catawba or Eswau Travora. The country between that and the Broad river was to be neutral ground, hence the Indian name for the last river was Eswau Huppeday or Boundary river. In this great battle the Cherokees lost eleven hundred men and the Catawbas one thousand.

CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.

Source: Scrap Book of Dr. James H. Thornwell II