

Comments and Communications

Prehistoric Sutton Hoo

SINCE the discovery of the archaeological treasure of Sutton Hoo (1) in Suffolk, England, little attention has been paid to any of the earlier horizons that occupy the immediate area. Basil Brown, of the Ipswich Mansion Museum (2), states that, during the 1938 excavations at the site in question, Neolithic and some Bronze Age flints were found, along "with sherds of Beaker pottery which were discovered in the mound content when the trenches were dug through three barrows." In the (80-foot wooden) ship mound itself, "when the trench was widened (1939), and below the old ground level, six Bronze Age pits or 'hut sites' showed up with hearths and Beaker sherds." However, to date, nothing has been published on these or other earlier remains—largely because the ship burial overshadowed everything else.

Only recently Bruce Mitford, Keeper of British Antiquities, of the British Museum, found a few stone specimens during one of his visits to the site. The author visited this archaeological locality in June 1950, in the company of Peter A. Green, of Ipswich, and collected a few Neolithic stone implements (Fig. 1) on the same spur of land as that occupied by the

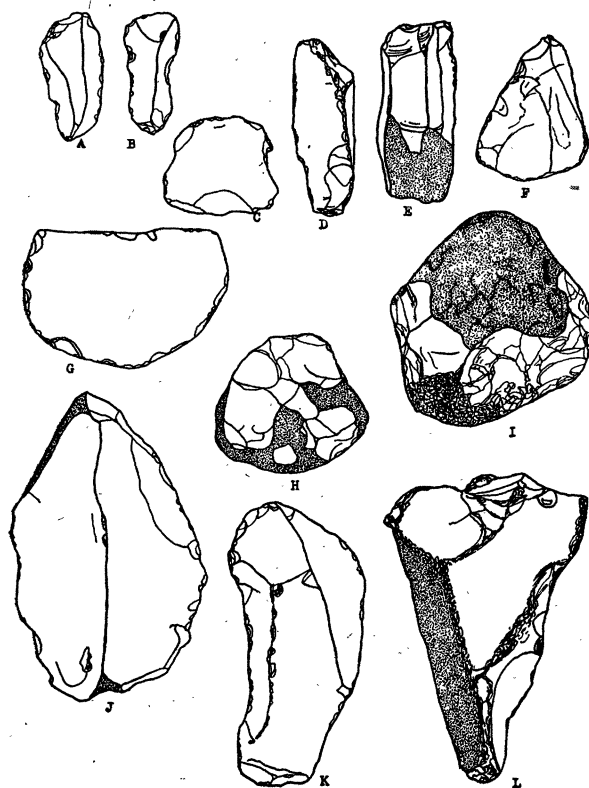


FIG. 1. Artifacts from Sutton Hoo, Eng. A, B, and E represent single and double longitudinal keeled end scrapers; C, F, and G, side scrapers; D (and possibly K), knife blades; H, flint core; I and J, choppers; and L, fist ax.

ship barrow. The presence of a very heavy patina may be noted on a majority of these flint artifacts.

The sand impression of the ship's hull became a casualty of the recent war when a British soldier drove his tank down the center of the excavations during maneuvers!

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References

1. KENDRICK, T. D., et al. *Antiquity*, 14, 1 (1940).
2. BROWN, B. Personal communication.

Oldest Natural History Museums and Institutional Herbaria in America¹

THERE seems to be little question that the first organized society to acquire and exhibit natural history specimens in America was the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, which must have begun prior to April 20, 1770 (1). In his article on this subject G. G. Simpson states that, about three years later, January 12, 1773, the Library Society of Charles-Towne, S. C., "voted to establish a museum." Next in chronological sequence came the Philadelphia Museum, founded by Charles Wilson Peale in 1785. Dr. Simpson admits the difficulty in deciding how to arrange chronologically the other early museums at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the Peabody Academy at Salem, Mass., the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, etc. A recent issue of *American Heritage* includes an illustration of Rembrandt Peale's Baltimore Museum begun in 1813 "against the advice of his father. It is now one of the nation's outstanding municipal museums," according to D. S. Smith (2).

It is the purpose of this brief account to furnish the records of two more natural history museums in the Philadelphia area, as well as a bibliographic note on the Boston Society of Natural History, founded in 1830 (3) and included in the ensuing list of early institutional herbaria. All the museums listed were founded early in the nineteenth century. Of those omitted by Dr. Simpson, the first was organized at West Chester, Pa., March 18, 1826. Unlike the Literary and Philosophical Society of South Carolina, which was organized in 1814, the Chester County Cabinet of Natural Science was able to acquire a three-story brick building, which was operated as a sort of lyceum and museum. The building still stands on South Church Street in the borough of West Chester, but was sold to pay off a mortgage. For nearly a century it has been used for various educational and small business enterprises.

The entire mineral cabinet of the Chester County

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