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American Institute of Human Paleontology

AMERICA has yielded no remains of man comparable in age to such Old World finds as the Neanderthals of Europe, Pithecanthropus of Java, and the Australopithecines of South Africa. Despite the disadvantage of rarely being able to see fossil human bones, a few American anthropologists usually have an international reputation as students of ancient man. Their contributions, perforce, deal mostly with broad aspects of human evolution rather than with descriptions of actual specimens.

Until 5 years ago, American anthropologists inclined to this special interest were content to do little more than report developments and express opinions through established organizations of a general nature. The turning point came on 2 Sept. 1949 when six physical anthropologists attending a seminar at the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research in New York (formerly The Viking Fund, Inc.) informally constituted themselves and one other as the American Institute of Human Paleontology. The initial members were Joseph B. Birdsell, University of California at Los Angeles; Loren C. Eiseley, University of Pennsylvania (president); Paul Fejos, Wenner-Gren Foundation; Theodore D. McCown, University of California at Berkeley; Hallam L. Movius, Harvard University; T. D. Stewart, U.S. National Museum; Sherwood L. Washburn, University of Chicago.

The first, and so far most important, move of the Institute, aided by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, was to purchase the Barlow collection of molds in England and deposit it with the University Museum in Philadelphia. As a result of this and other acquisitions of molds, the University Museum is now supplying, promptly and at cost, reliable replicas of many remains of ancient man. Next, the Institute entertained at dinner in New York on 17 June 1952 all those attending the Wenner-Gren Foundation International Symposium on Anthropology. Henri V. Vallois, direc-

tor of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, gave the main address. Each guest received, as a souvenir of the occasion, two important casts from the Institute's collection of molds.

Activities on such a scale are not the sole purpose of the Institute. Each member strives in his own way to increase knowledge of ancient man. It is noteworthy in this connection that Movius joined with Vallois to edit the monumental *Catalogue des Hommes Fossiles* published by the XIXth International Geological Congress (1952). Two other members helped provide data for the catalog. This summer several members will visit the Old World to study original specimens.

In all such work, Americans often find it necessary to supplement the information appearing in print through correspondence or conversation with the original discoverers of early human remains. Casts and photographs of the objects, sometimes generously supplied by the discoverers, also convey some of the extra information. However, use of all such information raises ethical problems related to publication. Discoverers are accorded first publication rights, but when they delay publishing for many years the situation can become complicated. Thus, although the Institute is trying to speed the flow of information, at the same time it is intent on maintaining good working relations with foreign colleagues.

At the meeting of the Institute in New York on 15 May 1954, membership was increased to 16, a category of foreign corresponding membership was created, and Sherwood L. Washburn was elected president. Plans were made for expanding Institute activities, especially as regards research and fuller participation in forthcoming anthropological meetings. Since a need exists for roentgenographic standards in connection with fossil bones, a committee was set up to promote studies and publications along this line.

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