

MINUTES OF THE 886th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

18 MAY 1993

Chairman John Speakman

Secretary Howard Savage

The meeting was held at the Faunal Osteology Lab, South Borden Building, University of Toronto. It was attended by 17 members and 9 guests (Jennifer Young, guest of Don Young, Yvonne Bendell, guest of Jim Bendell, and Stephen Thomas and Sybil Jones, Ernie and Sylvia du Vernet, Charles Garrad and Frances Duke, Dr. Peter Lewin and Cynthia Yee, guests of Savage).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Norm Martin, as F. O. N. representative of the Brodie Club, announced several upcoming meeting and exhibitions and distributed supporting brochures and posters.

Savage asked for suggestions for locale and dates for the annual Field Outing of the Brodie Club. After discussion, Speakman's offer of his cottage on Lake Simcoe and surroundings on Sunday 27 June was favoured by most Club members. A map of the location of Speakman's cottage will be mailed to members.

Savage exhibited illustrative sketches of the skulls of two Faunal Lab specimens, a Polar Bear and a Melville Island Wolf, done by Cynthia Yee, as coursework in the Biomedical Communications Division of the Faculty of Medicine, U. of T.

SPEAKER OF THE EVENING

Howard Savage, of the Department of Anthropology, U. of T., described a 1.3 cm. length of human hair imbedded in a calcrete mass recovered in Pendejo Cave in southern New Mexico. The calcrete mass, a form of limestone, was excavated by the crew of Dr. Scotty McNeish, of the Andover Foundation for Archaeological Research, Boston, Mass. one year ago, also contained a small charcoal mass, dated by radio-carbon assay at 19,180 years B. P. Examination of the hair by Mr. Anthony Tessarolo, a hair and fibre analyst of the Centre of Forensic Sciences of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Ontario, revealed it to be a human hair, and consistent with being a body hair (non-scalp). This conclusion was based on the characters of the hair shaft's medulla, cortex and cuticle, as seen at Scanning Electronic Microscopy magnifications up to 600 times.

Distinctive differences between human hair and other mammal hairs, including that the two primate species of southern Mexico, were illustrated by slides and photographs. Reference hairs from two extinct mammal species living in New Mexico in the same general Late Pleistocene dating, the short-faced bear (Arctodus sp.) and the North American Lion (Panthera leo atrox), are needed to exclude these two species.

During the last eight years, it has been realized that hair does preserve in Arctic permafrost, dry arid caves, and damp cold deposits in high altitude limestone caves. Human and other

mammalian hairs from adjacent levels of Pendejo Cave and dating from 16,000 to 18,000 years B.P. have been recovered in a loose, tangled state, but are less reliable in their dating because of their loose state. Further investigation of the imbedded hair by Mass Accelerator Spectrometry and DNA findings are in progress.

After considerable discussion about the provenience of the imbedded hair, and the human palm-sole prints in deeper and earlier levels of Pendejo Cave, the Speaker was thanked by Bruce Falls and given a hearty round of applause by those present.

MEMBERS' NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Young reported seeing a flock of approximately 25 turkey vultures between Sarnia and London in early May'93.

Bodsworth had seen during the past week in the Toronto Beaches area in a 1½ hour period 11 - 12 warbler species. A garney duck had been seen recently near Pembroke and in New York State.

Norm Martin had seen an osprey on the previous day near Belleville.

Garrad had seen a white Snowy Owl near Collingwood three weeks previously.

Boissoneau had just completed his annual spring bird report. He had seen a yellow-throated warbler in Dixon Wood five days previously.

Bendell commented on the flutter display of spruce grouse in the Algoma district recently.

Carrick reported trumpeter swans nesting in Wye Marsh recently.

Bruce Falls reported several yellow-headed blackbirds usually among flocks of red-winged blackbirds had been seen recently in the St. Clair Wildlife Area, as well as a least bittern. He had seen 139 bird species in a single day in the Long Point area recently.

Bertin reported a Cougar near Fredericton, New Brunswick two months ago.

Reading reported a coyote had been seen frequently in Thornhill this past winter. He described a flourishing trade currently in exotic birds and animals in Venezuela.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10.15 p.m., for refreshments.

