

site. There are, however, handicaps. Our soundings of 1934 showed an extreme scarcity of burials, and burials, as a rule, give the fullest information about the culture of prehistoric times. We shall, therefore, have to be content probably to determine the ceramic development of earliest Rayy by means of the abundant fragments and occasional vessels found in the remains of the dwellings of the prehistoric people: the chief scientific problems fortunately can thus be solved despite the scarcity of objects, and the culture relations of the earliest settlers of Rayy with the neighboring areas can be determined, in addition to defining the characteristic local features of the site.

E. S.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN DURANGO DURING MARCH, 1936

DR. MASON has been engaged in research in northern Mexico since early December on an extension of Dr. Edgar B. Howard's project for the study of Early Man in America, a project supported by a grant from the American Philosophical Society. While Dr. Mason has covered exhaustively the area around Durango and has found nothing to correlate with Dr. Howard's finds in the United States, nevertheless, this negative evidence is of distinct value to the problem, and his evidences are of undoubted importance.

The following extract from a letter recently received from Dr. Mason should not only of itself be of interest to readers of the *Bulletin*, but indicates the thoroughness of his investigation of the problem before him.

THE greater part of the month to date was spent in the high mountains west and northwest of Durango City. Although it was an interesting experience, the archaeological results were disappointing. The country is high, the habitations and passes being probably about eight thousand feet, the mountain tops much higher. Everything is pretty heavily forested, mainly with great pine trees and live oaks, very little cactus. It was very dry, the wagon trails being several inches deep in fine dust, but it was always cold at night; when camping out we needed all the bedding and clothes we had as well as a blazing camp-fire. It was generally warm in the sun during the day, but if cloudy and damp it was chilly and uncomfortable.

From Durango City west into the mountains there is a railroad, mainly used to bring out ties. This enabled us to go by auto into this country, though we did not motor further west than over the divide on the Pacific side of the drainage. Here we left the auto and did the rest of our explorations around this region by horseback with pack-mules. On March sixth we rode with horses and mule-train to Cueva Larga, arriving by moonlight. It was a great sight for us, since there appeared to be cliff-houses well defined. The next day these turned out to be of Colonial period. We made camp in a cave and worked two days before proving that all cave deposit had been dragged to the front to level space for buildings and all strata disturbed. March ninth in the morning we excavated another neighboring small cave without results, and we visited another group of rock-shelters in the afternoon which were equally sterile. On March fourteenth we were off again and examined a recent archaeological site. It was very much like a small rude ball-court and it may turn out to be a discovery of some importance. We dug all March fifteenth, but found nothing. Next day we rode to Cueva Pintada of which we expected much, but it turned out to be a rock-shelter with little overhang, the main point of interest being designs in red ocher on the rocks, probably relatively recent. We copied these and then returned to Sotolitos, and the next day we picked up the auto at Guitarra. On March nineteenth we pushed on to the Cueva de Juan Miguel which, as far as we can tell, is the "Cueva Grande de San Miguel" mentioned in Ward's *Mexico in 1828*. A magnificent great open cave with a stream at its front, the most promising thing we have seen yet. But though we went down to 2.40 metres, to bed-rock in two places, and ran a trench clear across at lesser depth, not a trace of human occupancy below 20 centimetres! Disgusted, we quit work and returned to Otinapa on the twenty-second, breaking our gear-housing for the second time on a high center place on the road, but getting the motor going again. The road from Otinapa to Durango being so bad, on March twenty-third we put the auto on a flatcar and brought it in by rail. It is now being repaired.

J. A. M.