

Same: Hope you won't be upset by this story - I thought I said most things better than rehashed - And of course I did get the dining of Shee fish & blueberries - which I never have liked. I did read in the wilderness experience you gave me - Best to all. Sam

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Giddings Sifting Soil In Alaska

Could Turn Up Sign Of Early Migration

By CARLE HODGE

Within the Arctic Circle in far northern Alaska, a former Tucsonan archaeologist is sifting soil on which men lived more than 6,000 years ago.

Human habitation occurred there on the tundra even earlier than that.

If Dr. J. Louis Giddings Jr. can establish that it occurred much earlier, he will have a discovery of considerable scientific significance.

The location is not far from the Bering Straits, over which the first North Americans presumably bridged their way to the New World.

It is, as the University of Arizona's Dr. Emil W. Haury termed it yesterday, "at the small end of a funnel" from Asia.

Haury, recently returned from a week at the Onion Portage excavation, some 130 miles inland on the Kobuk River, described the site as one "of great potential."

"I think he has the possibility of giving us information, at least a glimpse, of early migrations," said the head of the university's anthropology department.

Giddings directs the Haffenreffer Museum at Brown University, Providence, R.I. He earned a master's degree in tree-ring research here in 1941. By then though, he already was an experienced Arctic hand. He was in Alaska at the time his UA degree was awarded in absentia.

This is the second summer that Giddings and his wife, the former Betty Ruth Warner, with student and Eskimo help, have plumbed the prehistoric campgrounds at Onion Portage, so called because of the wild onions that grow in profusion.

They are likely to spend several more seasons there, Haury said. The site is a fortuitous one, archaeologically, perched as it is beneath a bluff and above the river.

Over the millennia, loam has slowly sluffed down from the ridge, and the Kobuk, at high stage, deposits a coating of sand.

These two actions have sealed off the debris of succeeding periods of occupancy into thin but neat stratifications, like a layer cake.

Giddings has now spaded through six of the layers, the last of them containing big flaked points and other crude tools 50 to 60 centuries old, and into the seventh.

In the seventh and thus far oldest and lowest layer, charcoal was found. Whether human artifacts would be uncovered with the burned wood remained to be seen when Haury left the camp, 50 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

The day he left, he saw moose at breakfasttime. After a dinner of shee fish and blueberries fresh from the spruce stands, he was picked by the same means he arrived: A pontoon-equipped bush plane.

"There already were three Eskimos and the pilot in the plane, and it was only a Cessna 180," he said. "It sure was a long takeoff." Nineteen hours 100 miles later, he was Tucson.