

THE STUDY OF AFRICA

Sub-Sahara Africa is gradually revealing its history. Where a void once existed substance is now taking shape. From the wadi (dried up stream bed) of Olduvai Gorge of Kenya in East Africa Louis and Mary Leakey have discovered the remains of human form which they have named "Homo Habilis". It is here that the earliest remains of man, to date, have been found.

As early as 1848 with the discovery of a skull at Gibraltar consideration of the possibility of evolution has existed. Eight years later in 1856 somewhere in the Neander Valley just out of Dusseldorf, Germany another skull was found -- Neanderthal man was born. In 1859 Charles Darwin had published his now famous text "The Origin Of The Species" which had quite a lot to say about the feasibility of evolution. His "Descent Of Man" published in 1871 not only re-enforced his earlier theories but also concerned itself with natural selection, variation, geographical distribution and adaptation. Twenty years later in 1891 a Dutch doctor discovered what is know as Java Man. In 1920 in a cave at Choukaoutien, China we have the discovery of Peking Man. Four years later Raymond Dart named his discovery Australopithecus Africanus, the southern ape of Africa. According to the Carbon Dating process the age of this find is 3.5 million years old.

Each discovery has pushed the age of man further and further back. It is believed by most scientists that an ancestor of man called Dryopithecus existed twenty million years ago. From this one branch called Ramapithecus which is 14 million years old evolved. It is from this evolutionary branch that we find Australopithecus Africanus which is 3.5 million years old, Australopithecus Robustus which is 1.5 million years old, Homo Habilis at 2 million, Homo Erectus at 1.6 million and Homo Sapiens at 100,000 years old.

There has been numerous methods utilized in determining the age of the remains of life. Among these are chemical analyses which determine the percentage of flourine, uranium or nitrogen in recovered bones. The use of these give us the relative age and dates of discoveries. For absolute dates and aging Radiocarbon (C14) and potassium argon dating have become the most useful and widely used since World War II. There are other means by which

science attempts to reconstruct what the pre-history (that history which existed before writing was discovered) of the world is. "Paleobotanists attempt to reconstruct the environment of a particular period through the determination of rates of sedimentation of various kinds of soils and through the reconstruction of rainfall and vegetational patterns." Archaeologists, while limited in their data to those material objects which are imperishable and recoverable, have, since 1943, made greater efforts to interpret the relationships between the material objects themselves, the observed or inferred physical environment in which they were found, and the social nature of the human society which made use of them. Inferences about the nature of the human inhabitants, their populations their economy, their settlement and migration patterns, their religious beliefs and practices, some other aspects of social behavior, and their relationships with other peoples are now being drawn with considerable assurance of accuracy.

The involvement of archaeologists, anthropologists and others interested in the prehistory of Africa have brought about a redefinition not only of the chronology of periods of history, but also of such things as the components of cultures and civilizations. In the past the marks of a civilization included such things as:

as: (1) well defined social order (2) surplus of food, (3) monumental architecture, (4) domestication of animals, (5) a well-defined and organized Cosmic View, (6) a form of writing, (7) urbanism, (8) division of labor, and (9) trade. Because writing, except in Egypt was not to be found in most of the remainder of Africa it has been easy, in the past, to say that sub-Sahara Africa had no history. The role of the griot is changing this by pointing out the role of oral history. The types of materials used in the construction of buildings in sub-Sahara Africa was generally wood. These, as a result, were not as permanent as those constructed of stone in other places where stone was more plentiful.

By utilizing the talents of archaeologists, paleobotanists, anthropologists, historians and others we are gradually discovering the history of Africa.

by ROOSEVELT FITZGERALD:
COORDINATOR ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAM



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WINTERIZING your car can help prevent nippy temperatures from nipping your winter driving fun.

Following these cold weather tips for your car can help let you whiz through winter and save money at the same time.

1. Check your antifreeze. Use all new antifreeze if your cooling system hasn't been changed in two years.
2. Install a new air cleaner.
3. Check belts and hoses, replacing any that are brittle or cracked.
4. Change your transmission fluid if it is very dark or thick.
5. Rotate tires, check their air pressure and replace any bald or badly worn tires.
6. Lubricate the suspension points on your car's chassis, especially the front end.
7. Brakes—replace shoes and pads if badly worn. Turn drums if they're scored. Check fluid in the master cylinder.
8. Change your engine's oil filter. One of the most convenient ways to drain the oil is using Amalie's one-gallon refillable Dispos-Oil-Jugs. Check your owners manual for the grade of oil recommended for your car.
9. Wax or completely rustproof your car.

Don't let Ol' Man Winter put the freeze on your winter motoring plans.

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