

Wormington, H.M.: Ancient Man in North America,
Denver Museum of Natural
History, Popular Series No. 4,
1957, 322 pages, 72 figures.

This edition is the fourth and expanded version of Dr. Wormington's classic handbook. This is one of the few anthropological volumes that strikes that rare balance of competently serving both professional and amateur interests.

Interested laymen and amateur archaeologists will find Dr. Wormington's book excellent for a number of reasons. First of all, it is extremely clearly and lucidly written with a minimum of archaeological jargon. Secondly, the pictures illustrating the artifacts or artifact types under discussion, as well as the archaeological finds, are clear and very instructive. Thirdly, almost all the available data on the subject of Ancient Man in North America is presented in brief summary form so that an interested reader can easily comprehend what the archaeologists have been doing and upon what they based their conclusions. And finally, some sections of the book, such as Methods of Dating, Pleistocene and Recent Periods, and The Peopling of North America, give the lay reader a clear and concise view of how the professional archaeologist works and thinks.

Though the whole book is of interest to the laymen, most of it is invaluable to the professional. And for those who are teaching, the amassing of almost all the data of investigations on the subject of Early Man in the New World, as well as the mature judgments of how individual sites fit into the general scheme of things is extremely valuable. Dr. Wormington's discussion of the Early Man materials has been divided into four general sections. The first of these sections concerns the Paleoeastern tradition. This is an

excellent compilation of the available data as well as a good deal of data that are not normally available. The various cultural complexes and artifact types involved are described and very intelligently assessed. The next section concerns the Paleowestern tradition. This again takes in most of the available data but is not quite so neatly organized nor the types quite so easily defined. This is perhaps due somewhat to the nature of the finds and the materials as well as the relative recency of finds and recognition of this field. The final tradition she discusses is the Paleonorthern. Here the materials available to her are a good deal scarcer and the final analysis of most of them is still to be completed. She has done an excellent job considering what she has had to work with. My personal feeling about this section is that perhaps the materials described are not so old nor so uniform as the materials in her other two traditions and that we may yet find in the northern areas Paleoeastern and/or Paleowestern materials temporally preceding the Paleonorthern.

The section on human skeletal remains is again an excellent summation of the meagre data on the physical characteristics of the most ancient men of North America. The final section of her book, entitled "The Peopling of North America" should, in fact, be re-entitled "Problems Concerning the Peopling of North America." This section is extremely lucid and well written and shows tremendous amount of insight into this complex subject. Dr. Wormington's hints and posing of problems go a long way towards pointing out the direction that future research should take. Part of this section contains rather sober and very valuable reflections on over-enthusiastic interpretations by archaeologists of their own material.

In conclusion, I would recommend that every archaeologist, amateur and professional, have this book in his library, and the intelligent layman, as well, will find it thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating. Dr. Wormington has stated that this is the last of this series on Ancient Man she will write. I hope this is not true, for

her contributions to the study of Ancient Man in North America have been invaluable, and, I am sure, will continue to be so.

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