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River Basin Surveys
Bureau of American Ethnology
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CLARENCE T. HURST, 1895-1949

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THE death of Dr. Clarence Thomas Hurst leaves a noticeable vacancy in the ranks of American archaeologists, because he was an outstanding member of that rare company of "expert amateurs." Since there are few professional archaeologists in America in proportion to our large area, we cannot have rapid progress until we develop more of the people, so important to the development of European prehistory, who make sound and significant contributions to our knowledge of American prehistory as a hobby or avocation.

Dr. Hurst was one of these but first he was a zoologist, having received his Ph.D. in that field at the University of California in 1926. After teaching zoology at Mills College for two years, he went to Western State College of Colorado at Gunnison where he remained until his death. After 1930 he was Dean of the Graduate School at Western State and after 1937 head of the Division of Natural Science and Mathematics. In 1933 he had an appointment as a Research Associate in Zoology at the University of California.

It was about this time, while working on zoological research and teaching zoology as well as performing many extra administrative chores for his college, that Dr. Hurst started to become an archaeologist. His decision came about as the result of a loan to Western State College of a large private collection of prehistoric pottery and artifacts, mostly collected in the Southwest. Dr. Hurst took the responsi-



FIG. 24. Clarence T. Hurst.

bility of seeing that the collection was adequately preserved and exhibited, which led to a thorough study of Southwestern prehistory. By 1935 he had become aware of the need to protect antiquities from irresponsible curio

hunters. For this purpose and to further adult education in Colorado prehistory, he helped establish the Colorado Archaeological Society. Started as a local western Colorado society, it published the first issue of *Southwestern Lore*, the journal of the Society, in June, 1935, just two months after the Society was founded. As executive secretary and editor for the Society from its beginning until his death, Dr. Hurst was personally responsible for its stability and growth. He wrote enough to insure the continuation of the journal and alone handled the business of the Society.

Always understanding and patient with "arrow-point collectors" and "pot-hunters," Dr. Hurst nevertheless left no doubt about his stand for protection of antiquities and for scientific excavation. Numerous editorials in *Southwestern Lore* and several speeches at State conventions reiterate this point. It is remarkable that so many remained to be taught and came back for more, and even paid for the lessons. From nothing in 1935, the Society grew until today there are 425 paid memberships in Colorado and about 150 from other states. The regular appearance of four issues a year of *Southwestern Lore* for the last 14 years has been an important factor in the steady increase in membership.

Southwestern Lore can best be characterized as semi-professional, for it has contained many popular articles along with those by Frank H. H. Roberts, Marvin Opler, E. B. Renaud, Frederic H. Douglas, Erik K. Reed, and other professionals. It has also been the means by which Dr. Hurst has made known his own work. In 1939 reports began to appear concerning Dr. Hurst's personal archaeological research, and in the summer of that year he excavated in Tabeguache Cave. "Tabeguache" is now known as an interesting and peculiar culture which must be taken into account in the history of the Southwest and its northern periphery. The material suggests that "Tabeguache" people existed in western Colorado in pre-Basket Maker times, as well as during the time of the Basket Makers.

The leading article in *AMERICAN ANTIQUITY* for January, 1949, entitled "A Corn Cache From Western Colorado," written by Dr. Hurst and Dr. Edgar Anderson, gives a fair summary of Dr. Hurst's work and indicates what can be

accomplished by an amateur archaeologist who is willing and able to become an authority in a limited area. Dr. Hurst should be commended also as a good example to all for the way he quickly published results of his field work. Starting with his first excavation in the summer of 1939, for which a 14-page report appeared in June, 1940, Dr. Hurst has published the results of each field session within six months and a comprehensive analysis of the site within a year of the completion of each cave.¹ For example, the excavation which yielded the material for the *AMERICAN ANTIQUITY* article referred to above, was made in the summer of 1947. Because of Dr. Anderson's ready cooperation and speed in analyzing the corn, the manuscript was submitted in July, 1948.

At the age of 53 Dr. Hurst, a thoroughly competent archaeologist, embarked upon a program of study which would undoubtedly have broadened his perspective and further sharpened his analytic ability. Taking his first leave from teaching and administrative duties in 15 years, he left Gunnison in August, 1948 to study for six months in museums of eastern states. He spent most of his time at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, where accommodations and assistance were made available to him. However, illness in Cambridge deprived him of the scholarly pleasure he had hoped for, and when somewhat recovered, he tried to return home. Upon reaching Omaha, where his wife was staying with relatives, the seriousness of his condition became apparent and he entered the hospital on November 23 where his death occurred on January 17, 1949 from a bacterial heart infection which seemed to have been an aftermath of the pneumonia suffered in Cambridge.

It is with great personal as well as professional regret that I record the passing of Dr. Hurst. He was a sincere and understanding friend to many, and one of the best of the expert amateurs in his adopted field of archaeology.

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¹For a bibliography of Dr. Hurst's publications, see *Southwestern Lore*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 83-8. *Editor*.