EARLY HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

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The human history of almost every region, as one follows it backwards through time, passes into vague and indefinite trails where facts and legends intermingle in inextricable confusion. It is the purpose of the historian to pick his way through this maze of endless contradictions and sift the chaff from the grain. Even where written records are available their fragmentary character often prevents positive conclusions. When the historical research concerns peoples who have left no written records, only some of their handiwork, the difficulty increases. The early history of Lehigh County embodies many such problems.

A discussion of the history of any region in Pennsylvania must be concerned with both the early Indian inhabitants and their successors, the white men. The writer is inclined to introduce the question of still earlier habitation as this has long been in his mind, and particularly so since there opportunely comes to his desk, as he now writes, a publication* pertinent to this topic.

Pre-Indian Occupation

A vast literature deals with early Man, and almost every European museum contains extensive collections of artifacts left by earlier civilizations. Various classifications have been proposed for the different stages in Man's development as evidenced by these discoveries. Generally three major divisions have been made—Eolithic, Paleolithic, and Neolithic—but with numerous minor subdivisions. The question has frequently been asked, especially by European geologists and anthropologists, as to why similar evidence of early Man has not been obtained in North America. Was the North American Indian the first man to occupy this continent? This question has been debated for almost a century and at times so heatedly that one prominent geologist is reported to have given the advice to his subordinate workers to destroy promptly any artifact they might find that did not present definite indication of its relatively recent origin, and thus avoid unseemly and prolonged controversy. Nevertheless, the evidences of Man having lived in North America previous to or during the Ice Age have accumulated by finds in many States. These artifacts have been found in association with the remains of animals now extinct here, such as the mastodon, sloth, armadillo, glyptodont, bison, camel, tapir, sabre-tooth tiger. Pennsylvania is not one of the States listed by Sellards where such finds have been reported, but New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Ohio are included. Doubtless many heralded reports of artifacts of ancient Man should be ignored as of little value, but many cannot thus be lightly dismissed.