

California Clue To Peking Man

See also transcript, CBS radio news, 8 Jun 75.

New York
An abandoned cabin in a southern California valley may hold the key to the recovery of the priceless Peking Man prehistoric fossils, missing since they were packed in U.S. Marine footlockers in China at the onset of World War II.

Christopher Janus, a Chicago businessman who has been asked by the Chinese to locate the fossils, said a young California man has reported finding a footlocker full of bones and yellowing photographs of China in the cabin in a remote area not far from the Marine base at Camp Pendleton.

Janus, who has arranged a \$150,000 reward for information leading to the recovery of Peking Man, said his informant has all the appearances of being legitimate and arrangements are being negotiated for anthropologists to examine one of the bones found in the footlocker to determine its legitimacy.

In an interview, Janus also disclosed that he met with President Ford late last month and Mr. Ford indicated he would like nothing better than to return the fossils to the Chinese when he visits China next October.

The Peking Man fossils are believed to be those of a human-like creature

which lived more than half a million years ago. Parts of 40 Peking Man skeletons were unearthed in a limestone quarry near Peking in the late 1920s.

According to most accounts, U.S. Marines packed the bones into footlockers as the Japanese advanced into China in 1941. The fossils have been unaccounted for since.

Janus said several persons contacted him following recent publicity on his MacMillan Publishing Co. Book, "The Search for the Peking Man." Nearly all could immediately be dismissed as hoaxers except for the young California man, who currently is in the army and stationed at Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Janus said the soldier, whose name he withheld, told of going on a hunting trip with his uncle, a Marine, near Camp Pendleton, three or four years ago and finding the abandoned cabin.

Inside, according to the soldier, was a dusty Marine footlocker enmeshed in cobwebs and containing a variety of human-like bones, including a skull. Also inside, he said, were photographs appearing to show scenes of China in the 1940s and Marine facilities there.

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