

SKELETAL, CULTURAL AND FAUNAL MATERIAL FROM THE SPRINGBOK FLATS

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The farm Wellington on which this material was discovered is situated longitude 28° 29' east, latitude 24° 54' south and lies 16 Km. (10 miles) due east of Tuinplaats where in 1929 some prehistoric human remains were uncovered. Wellington is densely covered by acacia thorn bush and grass, with the



FIG. 1. Rhinoceros vertebrae, human skull, and implement.

exception of the cultivated areas, and is bisected by a large donga running north to south. This donga follows roughly the bed of a prehistoric stream now completely covered by a layer of black soil 9 ft. thick.

In 1957, after a heavy storm, it was found that a section of the northern end of the donga had been severely eroded by storm-water exposing a large new section of the calcareous subsoil. It was in this section that the cervical vertebrae of a large animal were discovered, firmly embedded in the lime approximately 14 ft. from the present land surface. After removal, it was found that certain bones bore evidence of a heavy implement having been used on them possibly in the process of dismembering the body. No other skeletal part of the animal was recovered.

The material was sent to the Palaeontological Department of the Witwatersrand University for identification and report. The vertebrae belong to the order Perissodactyla and compare very favourably with the family Rhinocerotidae and are well on the way to fossilization.

On the same level, a quarter of a mile lower down the donga, human skeletal remains were uncovered

during earth-moving operations. This was not a burial. Indications were that the individual had died where he fell, on his face with the arms and legs outstretched. It was found that the base of the skull was missing and the ribs on the left side crushed. A large stone implement was found close by.

Approximately a mile further down the same donga on higher ground, an Iron Age burial was located during contour work. The skeleton was lying in a fixed position, head to the south and facing east. The remains were in a good state of preservation. From this burial site were also recovered a metal scriber, a badly rusted metal object and two typical Iron Age pots badly damaged possibly by our earth moving operation. At a distance of 30 ft. from this burial site, the living site was uncovered which produced many pot polishing stones, a multitude of potsherds, a few pieces of slag, many antelope, monkey and other unidentified bones, and several metal implements. After passing all the soil through



FIG. 2. Iron-age skull and metal implements.

a fine sieve a human tooth was recovered, with a 2 mm. hole drilled through the centre of the upper end of the root and an incisor tooth of an antelope with a neat groove cut round the central portion of the root, and part of an ornament made of river mussel shell.