In the 1940s, a young cowboy named Waldo Wilcox stumbled upon an ancient treasure in a remote area in Utah called Range Creek Canyon.

He found an elegant woven basket of grass and willow in an old stone-walled house. When he looked around some more, the young cowpoke couldn't believe his eyes. Pottery, weapons, and other ancient houses dotted the area.

"I thought, this stuff has got to be protected," he told The Washington Post. Wilcox was afraid that if word got out about his discovery, tourists, collectors, and vandals would ravage the site, as they had done other ancient sites of the Southwest.

So Wilcox protected the 4,200-acre area the best way he knew how: He didn't tell a soul. He even bought the land in 1951 to raise cattle. He and his family went to great lengths to keep the secret. They even built gates to keep people out.

When Wilcox decided to sell his land, he wanted to make sure that whoever bought the property would preserve the site. To do that, he sold the ranch to a local preservation group. The group then transferred the land to the state of Utah.

Scientists came to know that the site was littered with historic relics. Once Wilcox's secret was out of the bag, they began visiting the remote canyon. Scientists hoped to unravel the mysteries of an ancient Native American culture that had roamed Utah thousands of years ago. Those Native Americans were called the Fremont people.
Meet the Fremont

The Fremont were hunter-gatherers and farmers who inhabited the high-desert Book Cliffs in present-day Utah from about A.D. 500 to 1300.

In the canyon, the ruins of small villages are spread out along a 12-mile stretch of Range Creek, about two hours southeast of Salt Lake City.

"We've documented about 225 sites, and it's just scratching the surface," said Kevin Jones, a state of Utah archaeologist.

Almost all the sites include granaries, beehive-shaped storehouses for grain. Some granaries are the size of cupboards. Others are several yards across. Many of the granaries are perfectly preserved. Some were still filled with grass seed and corn--just the way the Fremont had left them.

Archaeologists also found granaries on cliff ledges. They suspect the Fremont put the granaries there to protect the food supply from rodents and raiders. Scientists say the granaries are evidence that the Fremont moved from place to place, leaving stashes of food at each stop.
Arrowheads, pottery fragments, and other artifacts lie on the ground at other village sites. Most of the homes are intact too, although the roofs of the houses in which the Fremont people lived collapsed long ago. The dwellings were once "warm and snug in the winter and cool in the summer," Jones said.

**Where Did They Go?**

Scientists say the Fremont people disappeared about 800 years ago. No one knows exactly why. Jones guesses they might have starved to death or joined other tribes.

Archaeologists have been learning more about the Fremont by studying the ruins and artifacts at Range Creek Canyon. Scientists say if Waldo Wilcox had not kept his mouth shut all these years, the ruins would have been ransacked.

"I was cussed all my life for locking those gates," Wilcox told a reporter. "Now the archaeologists tell me we were heroes for doing that."
Long Live the Vikings

Peter Adams wasn't searching for anything in particular when his metal detector went off in a farmer's field in northwestern England. He knelt and began sifting through the dirt for a piece of scrap metal or perhaps a coin.

Instead, Adams turned up two copper brooches that looked quite old. He reported his find to archaeologists. They determined that the brooches were more than 1,000 years old!

A few days before the soil was to be plowed under to grow potatoes, archaeologists returned to the field. They unearthed swords, spears, more jewelry, and other artifacts. What Adams had stumbled on was a rare Viking graveyard more than a thousand years old. It's no wonder he described it as "the find of a lifetime."

The Viking Age

Archaeologists determined the graveyard, near the village of Cumwhitton, included the graves of four men and two women. Researchers said it is one of the few Viking burial grounds ever found in Britain and helps explain more about the culture of the ancient people.

For more than three centuries, from about A.D. 800 to 1100, the Vikings lived in Scandinavia, a region of northern Europe that includes present-day Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The Vikings were known for their seagoing adventures, which they made in long, narrow longships powered by wind and dozens of oarsmen.
The Vikings were among the earliest explorers of North America. Historians believe that Leif Eriksson arrived on the northeastern coast of the continent, near what is now Newfoundland, almost 500 years before Christopher Columbus arrived in America.

**Conquerors**

In the Norse (Scandinavian) language, viking means "piracy." The Vikings were famous for their raids on other lands. Fleets of longships attacked coastal villages as far away as North Africa. The Vikings invaded and conquered England in 1013.

Archaeologists believe that the burial site discovered by Peter Adams was part of a Viking settlement. Items found at the site included weapons, spurs, a horse harness, a drinking horn, and a copper belt. Also found were a ring and a bracelet made of jet, a form of coal considered to be as valuable as gold.
Peter Adams found this Viking brooch.

This copper key belonged to one of the Viking women.

Rachel Newman, of Oxford Archaeology North, said, "We knew the brooches found by Mr. Adams came from a burial of a Viking Age woman, which was exciting and of great importance in itself. But we did not expect to find five other graves complete with such a splendid array of artifacts."

**Treasure Trove**

There are other Viking burial sites in England. A large graveyard at Repton, which held 240 bodies, had been hastily dug on a battlefield, perhaps after a battle. At another site, in Derbyshire, the cremated remains of warriors were buried in pots.

The rich trove of artifacts at Cumwhitton suggests that Vikings were wealthy settlers rather than plunderers. Newman added, "We could not have expected more from the excavation of the site."
Use the article "A Well-Kept Secret" to answer questions 1 to 2.

1. What did Waldo Wilcox find in Range Creek Canyon?

2. Scientists found that the Fremont left behind granaries in the villages, as well as on some cliff ledges. What did scientists conclude about the Fremont's lifestyle based on the granaries?

Use the article "Long Live the Vikings" to answer questions 3 to 4.

3. What did Peter Adams and archaeologists find in a farmer's field in England?

4. What has led archaeologists to believe that Vikings were wealthy settlers, rather than plunderers?

Use the articles "Long Live the Vikings" and "A Well-Kept Secret" to answer question 5.

5. How can ancient sites help scientists today learn about ancient cultures? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.