



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

THE MIDDEN

A.S.B.C. LOBBIES TO SAVE SITE

Lobbying by the Archaeological Society may have contributed to a modest victory in the Queen Charlotte Islands recently.

The victory is a decision by Crown Zellerbach, in consultation with provincial government experts, to protect, at least temporarily, a site on Maude Island containing a number of trees and stumps showing evidence of forest utilization by the local Haida people.

The area --at about 300-metre elevation-- will be set aside until the Heritage Branch can make a thorough assessment of its heritage value. In the meantime, it will be marked, and protected by a significant windbreak of other trees-- a decision that comes just ahead of the fallers, as CZ has applied for a cutting permit for the area.

The site is also said to contain the remains of at least two uncompleted dugout canoes.

A.S.B.C. president Shirley Veale wrote urgently to Crown Zellerbach and the minister responsible for heritage --Evan Wolfe-- on learning the

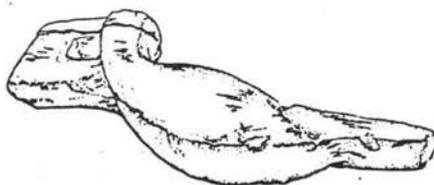
site might be threatened.

Wolfe replied with a note announcing an investigation, and CZ replied with most positive assurances that they would cooperate. The logging company spokesman also pointed out that CZ had made two other significant contributions to heritage last year:

* On King Island, near Ocean Falls a crew discovered a burial site, rerouted logging roads round it, notified local Indian communities and the Heritage Branch, and guaranteed to preserve the site.

* At Kyoquoct, a crew discovered remains of a native canoe, and took similar steps to protect it and notify authorities.

"In both examples, our loggers made the discoveries and took responsible action," wrote E.E. Burton, coast wood supply manager, to the minister. "However, we prefer to know about heritage sites or artifacts before beginning preparations for logging, so Ms. Veale's letter in respect to the Maude Island site was very timely."



WHATSITS?

See p. 13



EVIDENCE OF EARLY CHINESE ARTIFACTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA?

By Grant Keddie, Archaeology Division
B.C. Provincial Museum

First instalment of a series

This paper is a sequel to one by this author in the June 1980 issue of the Midden (Keddie 1980). Its purpose is to deal directly with artifacts said to constitute proof of early Chinese migrations to British Columbia.

"Chinese" coin from Comox

In 1951 the Comox District Free Press and the Courtenay-Comox Argus published articles entitled respectively "1000 Year Old Chinese coin found at Comox" and "A Thousand Year Old Coin". The coin in question was found by local resident Douglas C. Kennedy in his garden. According to both articles Kennedy took the coin to George Lowe, operator of Chin Confectionery. Mr. Lowe identified two characters as "Tinbow" (or more correctly Tien Pao) which he said referred to a period in the Tang Dynasty.

Mr. Kennedy later sent a carbon rubbing of the coin to some unknown person at the University of British Columbia who wrote back saying the coin dated to the Tang Dynasty and was more than 1200 years old. This letter along with Mr. Kennedy's coin collection were stolen about eight years ago (personal communication Kennedy, April 14, 1980).

I have not been able to locate a copy of the letter at U.B.C. It is not known whether it was sent to the Anthropology Department, the History Department or the old Museum.

If the coin was identified only on the basis of the characters Tien Pao it could have been interpreted as referring to the Tien Pao reign of the Emperor Hsuan Tsung of the Tang Dynasty and therefore have dated to approximately 742 A.D. to 755 A.D. (see Coole 1965 p. 163-4). However, this conclusion would appear to be incorrect. One of the newspaper articles (Comox p.5) and more recently Mr. Kennedy described the coin as being oval shaped and about one inch by one and a half inches in size with a square hole in the middle.

There are no oval Chinese coins in the Tien Pao reign period of the Tang Dynasty. This coin in fact appears to be a Japanese coin of the Emperor T'ien Pao and was made sometime between 1837 and 1868 (see Krause and Mishler 1976 p.817). The late Arthur Coole, one of the world's foremost authorities on Chinese coins, uses the Japanese T'ien Pao coin as one of his examples of foreign cash found in circulation in China at the turn of the century (Coole 1965 p.51). Coole demonstrates that both Japanese and Annamese coins dating from the 8th through to the 19th century were used in China (Coole 1965 pp. 17-28, 51). Japanese coins were especially common along the maritime routes of China.



Japanese Tien Pao
coin 1837-68

In British Columbia, Japanese coins have been found with Chinese coins on Tlingit hide armor (Emmons 1933:33) and have been found associated with mid-19th century Chinese settlements (based on my own observations of "bottle hunters'" collections). The precise origin of the Comox coin may never be known. If the coin is not one lost from someone's coin collection in the first half of the twentieth century it is probable that it was lost by Chinese immigrants in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Comox District Free Press

1951 100 year old Chinese Coin Found at Comox, April 19, p.1., Comox, B.C.

Coole, Arthur Braddan

1965 Coins in China's History. Inter-Collegiate Press, Inc., Mission, Kansas, (4th Edition).

Courtenay-Comox Argus

1951 A Thousand Year Old Coin, April 18, p.1, Courtenay, B.C.

Emmons, G.E.

1933 Unpublished manuscript in the Ethnology Division of the British Columbia Provincial Museum. (page numbering separate for each chapter, Reference to Chapter 9).

Keddie, Grant R.

1980 Early Chinese Explorations on the Pacific Coast? The Midden, Archaeological Society of British Columbia, Vol. 12, No. 3, June, pp. 2-8.

Krause, Chester L. and Clifford Mishler

1976 Standard Catalog of World Coins. Krause pub., Iola, Wisconsin.

PRESERVING OLD HOUSES: INFORMATION AVAILABLE

The Heritage Conservation Branch is offering for loan a series of 10 slide/tape packages on historic house conservation. They include topics such as preserving log buildings, and restoring old hardware and paint.

They can be borrowed from the Resource Information Centre of H.C.B.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS NEED TO REACH GRASS-ROOTS, URGES SUTHERLAND

A.S.B.C. past-president Ron Sutherland has made a strong plea to archaeologists to demystify their work and "go public".

Writing in Datum magazine - published by the B.C. Heritage Conservation Branch - he urges archaeologists to not only write the formal reports required by their excavation permits, but also to produce grass-roots reports, especially for the local weekly newspapers. Sutherland says archaeologists must be prepared to offer their work for public scrutiny, especially because of their general reliance on public funds.

"I believe that a summary attractively written for the general public should become a requirement of the preliminary report so it may be distributed to the various media outlets of the region of the excavation so that it would still be considered a newsworthy item." But the language must be simple, he says. "I am sure the public is much more interested in the living style of our early people - such as how and why they lived in a particular area and what they ate - than in quantitative comparative studies." Such simple P.R. is vital, concludes Sutherland. "I believe if we do an effective job of informing the public the future of archaeology is secure and sites will be respected during the times of increased development; however, if we do not 'go public' we must share the responsibility of sites being disregarded and being destroyed for the sake of progress."



LOOK FOR . . .

The Annual Research Report for 1978, promised imminently from the Heritage Conservation Branch. And then maybe 1979?

PBS ANTHROPOLOGY SERIES, ODYSSEY, TO REPEAT



Odyssey, the 12-part PBS television series about anthropology and archaeology, will be repeated January through March, after its successful debut on Channel 9 last April. PBS reports the series attracted audiences generally twice the size of its prime time average.

The programs tell stories about people and cultures, past and present, in all parts of the world. In the exploration and discovery process, Odyssey spans several continents and 40,000 years. Of particular interest to ASBC members is Seeking the First Americans, in which archaeologists from Texas to Alaska search for answers to the question: Who inhabited this continent first and when?

The segment titled Franz Boas (1858-1942) portrays one of the most important figures in American anthropology. By virtue of his fieldwork with the Kwakiutl, his involvement with museums, his teachings, and his theories on race, Boas was singularly responsible for shaping the course of American anthropology.

Odyssey probes the ruins of two New World communities - the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, in The Chaco Legacy, and the dazzling South American empire of The Incas.

Key to the Land of Silence examines how the Rosetta stone, discovered by a lieutenant in Napoleon's army and decoded 25 years later, unlocks the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian language.

Another program observes a culture coming into conflict with an increasingly industrial world - northern Canada, where the winter hunting grounds of the Cree Indians are threatened by dam construction (Cree Hunters of the Mistassini).

A second season of 16 new Odyssey programs is scheduled to premiere on PBS in the fall of 1981.

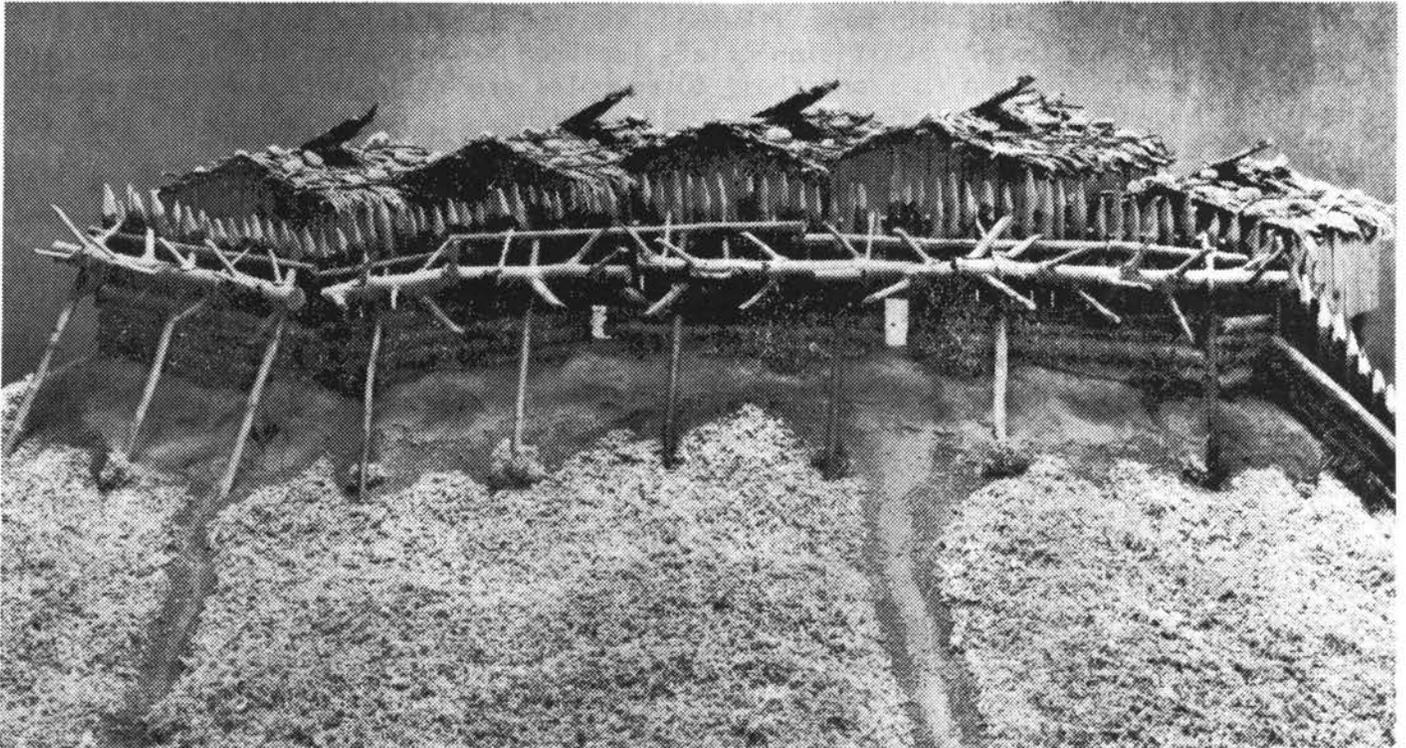
LOOK FOR . . .

. . . A new archaeological journal, titled North American Archaeologist.

The publication is designed to take an overview of the continent north of Mexico. Two issues a year, \$25 (U.S.), from Baywood Publishing Co., Farmingdale, N.Y.

THE STORY OF NEKT AND THE KITWANGA FORT
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

By George F. MacDonald,
Senior Archaeologist, National Museum of Man*



A Model of the Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site.

In late 1971, a fortified hill, shaped like a Killer Whale fin, near the village of Kitwanga, was declared of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Its builder was a fierce Gitksan warrior chieftain named Nekt.

In 1979, after a preliminary examination of the site and discussion with some of the elders of the Kitwanga Band of Gitksan Indians, a research program on the history and archaeology of Kitwanga Fort was begun by Parks Canada and the National Museum of Man.

The research had two aims: to excavate the Kitwanga fort site and to discover its traditions by archival research and field inquiry among the descendants of the fort's founders.

Archival work was undertaken by Rosalind Whalley who spent three months on the Skeena River tape-recording legends and songs that told the stories of the wars conducted against the Kitwanga by the Haida, Kitimat, Niska and the Coast Tsimshian.

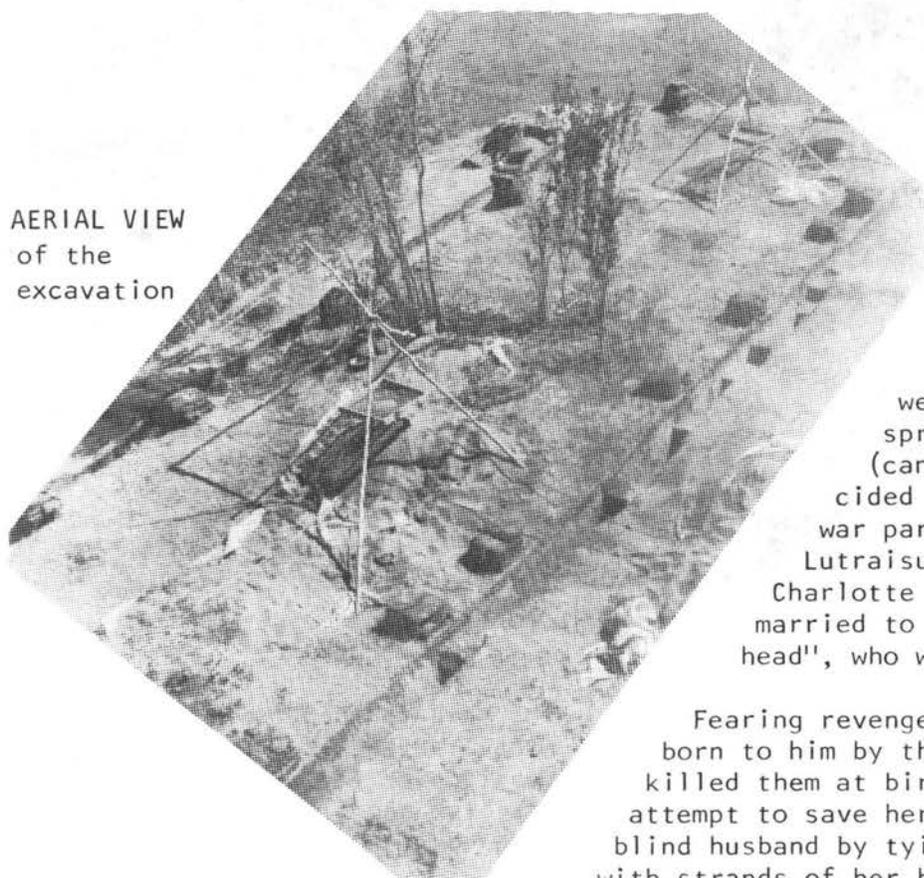
The wars were not territorial but for

* This article, published with Dr. MacDonald's permission, first appeared in the now-defunct periodical Conservation Canada, Summer 1980.

food, stores and Gitksan slaves, and to gain control of the lucrative trade routes between the coast and the interior tribes.

The most famous of all of the trade routes was the Grease Trail, named from the greasy candlefish oil that was packed along it from the Nass to the Skeena River. This trail, described as the widest and most used of all the trails, passed within sight of the Kitwanga Fort.

The names of the many chiefs are associated with the fort, among them, "Hlengwah" (Earthquake), Awkawt (Foolish) and Laelt (Big Snake) of the Frog-Raven clan. Eagle clan chiefs included names like Gok, Skayen, Dewalas and Gilaow which are not readily translated. Wolf clan chiefs included Tenemget and Aktee. Each chief had a house within the fort and their totem poles are among the proud possessions of the modern village of Kitwanga.



AERIAL VIEW
of the
excavation

The most famous name associated with the fort is that of Nekt. Many versions of his story have been collected, from which the following composite version has been distilled.

A noble family from the ancestral town of Tmlaham went to the Nass River one spring to fish for eulachon (candlefish). The visit coincided with the attack of a Haida war party, and one of the daughters, Lutraisuh, was abducted to the Queen Charlotte Islands. She was forcibly married to a Haida chief named "Bullhead", who was totally blind.

Fearing revenge from any sons that were born to him by this captured woman, Bullhead killed them at birth. Lutraisuh, in an attempt to save her third son, deceived her blind husband by tying back the boy's genitals with strands of her hair.

The son was saved and Lutraisuh decided to escape. She obtained a knife and canoe from Bullhead's nephew who wanted to replace him. Then after cutting off her husband's head while he slept, made good her escape after a furious chase by his relatives. Unable to paddle the canoe and nurse her son at the same time, she cut out Bullhead's tongue and gave it to the boy as a pacifier. It was from this episode that the boy derived the name of Nekt (Gitksan for tongue-licked).

Lutraisuh paddled to the mouth of the Nass River where she settled with relatives. Nekt grew up to be a reckless youth with exceptional strength, which led to violence and expulsion for him and his mother.

After wandering in the forest for some time, Nekt killed a grizzly bear and made a suit of armour from its skin which he lined with tablets of slate. Obtaining a magical club called Strike-Only-Once, he became the most feared warrior on the north coast. Bent on revenge for the hardships he and his mother had suffered, he waged war far and wide from his stronghold on a hilltop near Kitwanga on the Skeena River.

At first, Nekt was assumed to be a mythical grizzly bear who could never be defeated. Eventually his identity was discovered and several families from Kitimat and the Nass entered into a pact to kill him. They obtained the first gun to come into the Nass River area and shot him while he donned his armour.

It is interesting that the story tells that Nekt was killed with the first gun to come into the area, for it was the rifle which spelled the end of the Kitwanga Fort as a strategic site. After 1824, when accurate rifles became available from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Simpson, the fort became vulnerable to fire from the Grease Trail.

The famous war chief of the Coast Tsimshian, Legaic, used the power of the Hudson's Bay Company to extend his own influence over the villages of the Nass and Skeena River. His first steps were to marry his daughter to the chief factor of the company and to provide the land for the post.

Legaic lost no time in using the guns and ammunition supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company to overpower the regional chiefs and their strongholds in the interior. While Nekt's death may have preceded Legaic's annual wars with the Skeena by a decade or two, there is no question that the Kitwanga Fort did not survive these onslaughts.

Legaic used every device and tactic at his command to gain a monopoly over trading rights, which saw prized furs from the interior traded for the highly coveted new European tools and weapons.

The archaeological portion of the project began on July 1, 1979 to clear the fort hill and surrounding land of a dense cover of Saskatoon and soapberry bushes. As the clearing progressed, more and more depressions and features of various kinds began to appear. These included house-pits and house wall ridges; food storage pits and even the hiding places for people under the floors of the houses within the fort.

Three rectangular platforms on top of the fort hill clearly marked the locations of three of the original houses. The house at the eastern end of the site also had a house-pit depression within the platform. Such house-pits were reserved for chiefs of high rank. Indian consultants from Kitwanga claimed that this was the house of Nekt, who planned many war parties in council with his warriors around the central hearth.

The historian, Marius Barbeau, asserted that there had been five houses on top of the hill in Nekt's day, a figure confirmed by Indian consultants, but there was evidence of only three. However, within days of closing down the project and back-filling the trenches, two central hearth features that marked the centre of two more houses were discovered. These were not ordinary houses, but had been built on stilts over either end of the hill and only one corner of each house set on firm ground.

Burned timbers of the easternmost house were found where they had collapsed down the steep slope of the fortified hill. Other evidence of burning confirms that the fort met its end in flames.

Perhaps some of the inhabitants survived the siege undetected in the underground hiding places. These hiding places held up to four women and children, and were fitted with trap doors inside the house, as well as escape tunnels under the palisade.

Barbeau (1928) recounts an episode of war which took place centuries ago at a fort in the area, which could well describe the last days of the Kitwanga Fort.

"Abalone-pearl-labret spread her skin robe over her fair daughter Skawah and led her to the inner partition of the house, wherein are secreted a family's sacred possessions. With her hands she scooped up the earth from the floor and raised a copper shield, which hid a passage extending to the forest tangle in the rear. Both mother and daughter crawled down the narrow opening, re-setting the shield behind them. . . As the fugitives crouched in hiding they heard the war whoops of the invaders. . . Succeeded with fatal progress the crackling of fire overhead, the acrid smell of burning cedar, the rumbling of corner posts and roof beams sinking to the floor, then stillness, that of death and extinction. Only ruins remained of the defaced terraces of Keemelay, and terror below in the bosoms of mother and daughter abandoned to their fate in a wasted homeland."



Reconstruction of the Grizzly Bear costume of the warrior Nekt by the Ksan Dancing Association of Hazelton.

In the hiding place at the back of Nekt's house, arrows and spears were found that had been cached next to a large, birch-bark lined food storage pit. Every effort had been made to ensure there would be some survivors if the fort were taken.

The defences of the fort relied heavily on massive logs that had been hoisted to the top of the palisade walls and held by cedar ropes. At a signal from a long wooden war horn the ropes were cut and the logs rumbled down the fill crushing the invaders in their paths. Both the "man-crushing logs" and the "trap door" were adopted by Nekt's successors as family crests.

These crests survive today in the carvings on two poles in Kitwanga village. Unfortunately, both poles fell to the ground many years ago and are deteriorating rapidly.

The names and traditions associated with the Kitwanga Fort are still well remembered at the village to which the survivors of the fort moved in two stages after 1830. In fact each of the dozen or so poles still standing at Kitwanga village describes episodes in the lives of the survivors. The faces of Lutraisuh, Nekt and his Haida father in the canoe stare down from one pole, while another shows Nekt in his grizzly bear armour holding his magical club. Enemy warriors crushed under the log rollers bear witness on yet another pole to the battles with the Haida and Kitimat.

Much information on the Kitwanga Fort is being assembled in the form of tape recordings, notes, models and photographs by researchers from Parks Canada and the National Museum of Man helped by Indian consultants from Kitwanga. The end result

of this research will be presented to the Canadian public as an interpretive program at the Kitwanga National Historic Site.

Perhaps the revival of Indian interest in their arts and traditions will cause new poles telling the story of the warrior Nekt and the Kitwanga fortified hill, to rise again along the banks of the Skeena River. Young Gitksan in particular, and Canadians in general will then be reminded of the days when Indian knights in armour besieged hilltop forts in the Canadian Northwest.

Reference: Barbeau, Charles Marius - The Downfall of Temlaham, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1928.

EARTHWATCH - the organization which supports scientific research by cajoling amateurs to pay for the privilege of helping - is planning at least 40 projects for 1981.

Research involving archaeology will be carried out in Africa, the Middle-East, Central America, North America, and the Pacific.

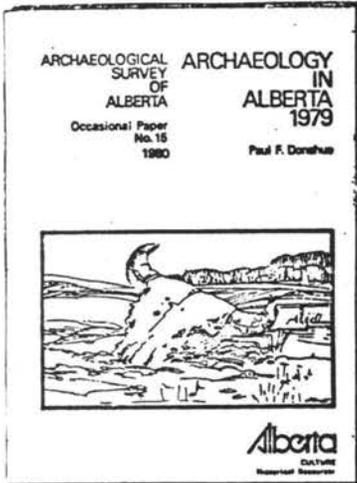
The tentative costs quoted are what participants pay (in US\$) after arriving at a local staging post under their own steam:

- Libya: Excavation of a Miocene fossil site; 2 weeks in January, February or March, \$950.
- Israel: Excavation of Early Bronze Age city; 3 weeks in June/July, \$975.
- Guatemala: Excavation of a Mayan jade workshop site; 3 weeks January through August, \$890.
- Belize: Excavation of two early Mayan sites; 2 weeks April/May, \$950.
- California: Finding and recording petroglyphs in the Black Canyon area of Mojave Desert; 2 weeks, June/July, \$690.
- Easter Island: Excavation of burial chambers, and surveying and lab work; 3 weeks, March through May, \$1,000.

For more information, write Earthwatch, 10 Juniper Street, Belmont, MA 02178, U.S.A.



OIL AIDS ALBERTA ARCHAEOLOGY



Archaeology is booming in oil-rich Alberta. A report published by that province's Archaeological Survey shows that in 1979 archaeological activity increased by 90% over the previous year.

Of the 207 archaeological permits issued for Alberta in 1979, 98 were for projects involving proposed housing subdivisions, compared to 17 in 1978 - a real measure of the province's prosperity.

Another 43 projects were associated with oil and gas activity.

W.J. Byrne, writing an introductory overview to the report titled Archaeology in Alberta, 1979, noted that there was not a lot of basic research undertaken during the year, despite the huge increase in permits:

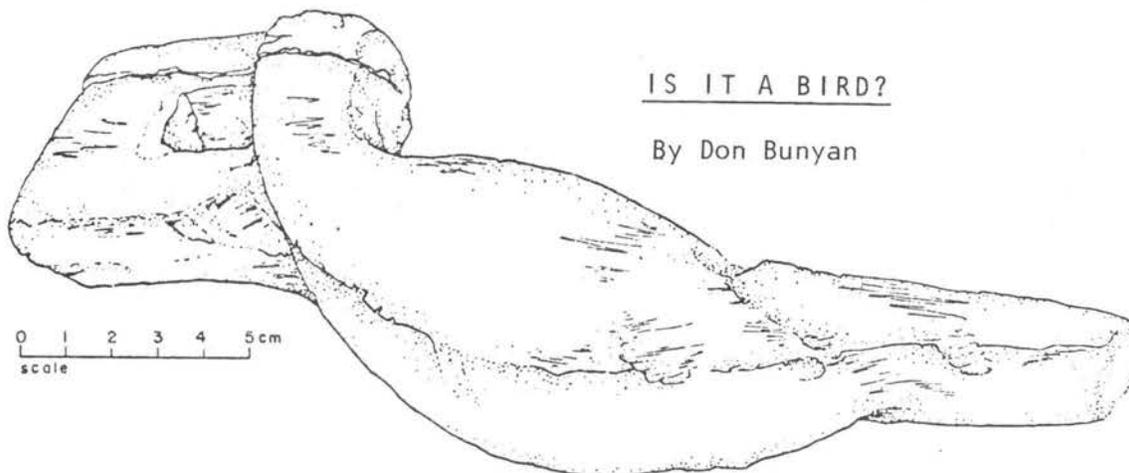
"In any event, the total pattern becoming evident in the archaeological discipline in Alberta is that of ever-increasing volume and ever-increasing dispersion of areas of activity. More and more industrial programmes are being subjected to archaeological impact assessment prior to the initiation of construction, and most government programmes are now undertaken to full conformity to archaeological conservation principles."

Byrne felt that one of the highlights of the year was the decision to build a pavilion for the Strathcona Science Park near Edmonton, to acquaint the public with the growth of archaeological resource management in Alberta.

The 224-page paperbound book - available free from the Historical Resources Division of Alberta Culture - contains 21 reports, covering some 32 of archaeological permits issued during 1979.

IS IT A BIRD?

By Don Bunyan



Were they billy clubs? Baseball bats? Boat-hooks? Or, indeed, bird-figures? Although a more educated guess might be carpenter's tools, no-one really has a clue. Perhaps there were prehistoric policemen patrolling the Pitt River shore three millennia ago, or ball-games on the lazy summer meadows. There probably were boats and there certainly were wood-workers. But what function was served by the objects illustrated here has archaeologists guessing.

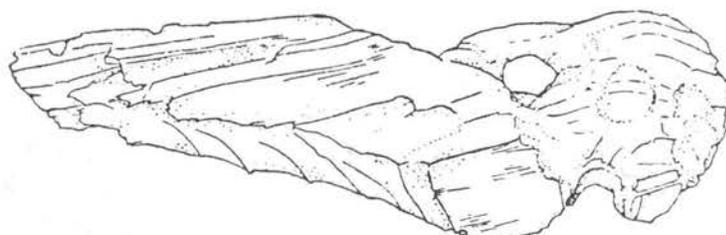
These artefacts were discovered last summer in water-logged ground at DhRq21, an extensive site in Port Coquitlam on the right bank of the Pitt River near its confluence with the Fraser. In The Midden of October 1980 the Project Director, Valerie Patenaude, described the education programme at the site for schoolchildren last May and June. Many of our readers visited the site during one of the "Open House" days.

The mystery objects, carved out of red cedar wood, were found at the bottom of one of the trenches excavated on a patch of raised land that in ancient times had been an island. The trench was cut down the shore of the one-time island towards the former slough channel, its depth limited by the anomalously high water table in the area of the old channel. When the archaeologists observed a number of wooden objects preserved in the mud at the bottom of the trench, excavation was halted for fear of damaging the fragile things. Only a few pieces, including the three shown here, were retrieved. Other material from the trench comprised artefacts associated with fishing, micro-blades, disc beads, small hand-tools for cutting and scraping, bone implements, slate discs possibly

used as wedges in wood-working, basketry, adzed stakes, and spreader stakes for drying fish. The assemblage is typical of the Locarno Phase (3500 - 2500 B.P.). Wood from an adzed stake has been dated by radio-carbon analysis at 2930 ± 80 B.P.

This is one of the oldest water-logged sites known in our area. It is not in immediate danger of destruction, as the new highway will not encroach on the water-logged part of the site and there are no plans yet for early development of that particular patch. However, the danger will inevitably arise some day, and there is some urgency to the task of excavating the soggy treasury and preserving its frangible contents. Both the recovery and the preservation will be expensive; hopefully the money for both tasks will be found before it is too late.

And so we come back to the question: what are these strange objects? The best guess so far is that they may be some form of adze-holder. The originals, at present in Victoria undergoing the preservation process, are too delicate to handle. However, one of the team members is about to

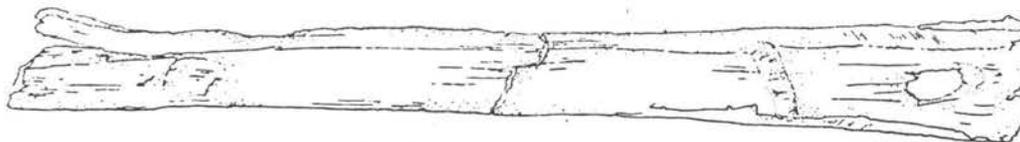


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carve new wood in the old shapes, in the attempt to see whether some sort of implement can possibly be hafted to them. Perhaps then the functions of these things can be deduced. Meanwhile, it's anybody's guess. The Midden would like to offer a

prize for the best one -- or perhaps a prize for the most likely and another for the most original-- but we do not have the money. We shall be happy, however, to forward all reasonable suggestions to the Project Director.

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A.S.B.C. LIBRARY REPORT, DECEMBER 1980

By Jim Garrison, Librarian

The Society maintains a lending library available to members in the Museum lounge after each meeting. Due to limited space only a portion of the collection is kept here, but there is a complete list to choose from.

For the most part the books and other material deal with archaeology but there are also some of a historical nature that may arouse your interest. Just tell Jim Garrison if you see the name of a book or pamphlet that you would like to borrow.

The use of this library is one of a number of benefits you receive for your annual membership.

Some recent additions to the library are as follows:

- * A Survey of Contemporary Indians of Canada. Part I.
- * Prehistory of North America, by Jesse D. Jennings.
- * The Great Sandhills of Saskatchewan, by J.J. Epp and L. Townley-Smith.
- * Skeena River Prehistory, by Richard Ingles and George MacDonald.

WORKING FOR YOU

F.Y.I.

The 1980/81 A.S.B.C. executive - elected or appointed - is as follows:

- President - Shirley Veale
- Vice President - Helmi Braches
- Treasurer - Bob Gilley
- Recording Secretary - Tony Loxton
- Corresponding Secretary - Maureen Edwardson
- Publicity - Don Bunyan
- Programs - Bill Paul
- Projects - Elinore Glavin
- Phoning Committee - Evelyn Gilley
- Chapters - Derek Scrivener
- Past President - Ron Sutherland
- Midden Editor - Nick Russell
- At Large - Jim Garrison
- At Large - Hilary Stewart

Members are invited to meet the executive at post-meeting coffee.

THE MIDDEN is produced by the Publications Committee of the Archaeological Society of British Columbia. Editor: Nick Russell.

Mail may be addressed to The Editor, P.O.Box 29, Whonnock, B.C., V0M 1S0.

The next issue of THE MIDDEN will appear February 1981.

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