

Longtime Member Reflects on the History of the ASBC Taking Action and Presenting Archaeological Issues to the British Columbia Public An Interview with Grant Keddie

by Adrian Sanders

The following is a transcription of part of an interview conducted on March 20th, 2009 in Grant Keddie's office at the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Adrian: Do you recall first hearing about the formation of the ASBC, and reading its publication *The Midden*?

Grant: Yes, [laughs] so when I was in high school I was one of the founding members of the Surrey Museum Historical Society and I couldn't get to the meetings in Vancouver because I lived in Surrey at the time and it was a long way to get in to the Centennial Museum [Vancouver location of the original ASBC meetings] so it wasn't until I got my first car in 1968 and of course right away I went regularly into Vancouver and went to the meetings... and I've got a complete set of *The Midden* still [laughs]. Certainly I

participated in the meetings, and went in to some of the volunteer projects at the time. There was a real mixture of people involved; some who weren't professionals in the group were very intelligent, people that were really active and gung-ho about it, so it was always five or six people who kept the machinery going over the years. You certainly had Roy Carlson starting it up and having the support of the universities all the time that was a real, real big help. . . .

I started Simon Fraser University in sixty eight so that's when I started going to meeting regularly. So obviously I participated throughout going to university.

Adrian: Would you say SFU was a hub of the society at this time?

Grant: Both UBC and Simon Fraser I would say, simply because Simon Fraser had more professors and more students, it probably played an important role in what was going on but certainly, you know, Dr. Borden who was the only person at UBC at the time who knew what was going on certainly contributed considerably with helping out with various projects. People got to volunteer when he was working at the Liquid Air site and the Marpole [site], a lot of people got to volunteer on those projects, and it is kind of unfortunate that today with the liability [with] contract archaeology there is not the opportunity for people to go out and participate in digs and that sort of thing. There really needs to be more monies made available so members of the archaeological society can, with the support of a few professionals, go out and be involved in some of these long-term projects. When there is action like that you get more and more people involved. If we had constant things going on like that in Victoria we could have a thousand volunteers from the society, there are so many active people out there that want to do something in archaeology but if you're just going to meetings where people are talking you'll lose people, especially younger people, you need to be doing active things all the time.

Adrian: Do you feel the era of the late sixties and early seventies presented a great opportunity to people such as yourself to engage the discipline of archaeology in a practical sense?

Grant: Yeah, I think certainly the Archaeological Society became a vehicle for learning about it and finding out what was going on at all universities at that time.

Adrian: Did that translate into gaining valuable work experience during your undergrad?

Grant: Mostly I started because I wanted to be an archaeologist since I was six years old. I read extensively, and if anything was going on I would go out and volunteer for a couple of days. When the Archaeological Society under Nick Russell did the Tsawwassen Bluffs site I went out there to volunteer for two days in between, between something else. I went on the first SFU field school in 1969 and then came back from that and Gay Frederick [then Gay Calvert] was working on the ... St. Mungo site next to the cannery and so I got back from that field trip [SFU field school] and went to volunteer on her project for a while. So if anything [was] going on I would go out and try and get as much experience on those various projects, but the next year I was actually working [as] a volunteer on the Liquid Air site, run by Paul Sneed who was one of Borden's doctoral students, and that led me to getting one of the first government jobs where Paul and I went out and surveyed all throughout the Interior in 1970, and because I was one of the few people with that experience I then got put in charge of one [similar project] the next year and literally every year I was doing one of these government surveys all throughout the province, and opportunities for jobs in those days, there were very, very few jobs available. The Archaeology

Branch at that time was one half-time person [laughs] then they brought on Bjorn Simonson I think part time, and then he eventually became a fulltime person, the whole discipline of archaeology was much more of an academic archaeology, and it wasn't really until the Archaeology Branch got all these formal, got more people and more formal rules and regulations regarding the act [Heritage Conservation Act (HCA)] and the regulations sort of took over, and even then it was some time before you got private contractors who became the big focus of archaeology.

Adrian: Can you describe the relationship the ASBC had during its formative period with the public?

Grant: The important thing is that it gained a lot of public support because members of the public became members of the society and they became aware of what was happening in archaeology, and they became supportive of making laws to protect it [heritage], so it is really individuals in the archaeological society, working with professionals that really got the first archaeological sites act implemented in 1960. Because they [ASBC members], being independent of the university could go to govern-

ment officials and put the pressure on I think that really played an important role. And, of course, there was two, Ardith Cooper and Della Kew, First Nations representatives on the board at the time, so that was the first time First Nations were speaking as part of that whole thing, and they could put more pressure on the government to be supportive in enabling the Act. So I would say the ASBC was crucial in getting legislation passed that supported the whole field of archaeology.

Adrian: Would you describe the ASBC having a personality, and if so, has it changed throughout its existence? Have they been community oriented or at times personified through individuals?

Grant: Yeah, and certainly you have to look at the certain branches, certainly the focus has been community oriented, but when you look at who the people are that regularly attend the meetings they are generally people who are not professional archaeologists, and they are often the backbone of keeping the thing going. It is quite often specific individuals, one or two individuals that dedicate a chunk of their time to keeping this thing going. You really begin to notice when they are not there, and how things really start to slow down, the movement kind of disappears. So we had people like Shirley Cuthbertson who actually started off at the Centennial Museum [now Vancouver Museum] developing their First Nations program, and then was the head of the Education Division at the Provincial Museum [now RBCM] and then a Curator in History. She herself is very, very active in her private life with the ASBC and really organized and kept things going, and as long as a handful of other people helped her out.... So there are quite a number of situations where individuals, semiprofessionals, were really the backbone in getting all this stuff done, and so you have

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individuals who volunteered.... You also had Nick Russell who ran *The Midden* for many years, Kitty Bernick volunteering to be the editor of *The Midden* and having editorial experience. So her [work] as an individual really kept that going for a long time. So there are periods of ups and down where things are almost falling apart, but a few people are found to step in and they get going again. That is why it is always important to have a larger number of people involved. It's always easier having one hundred people doing a little of the work than having five people doing it all [laughs].

Adrian: What do you consider to be the most significant contribution of *The Midden*?

Grant: Well, there is a serious problem with publishing any kind of archaeological material, and *The Midden* had done this consistently for a long time. The sheer number of things that have been published there form an important part of our history, and certainly accessibility to the public. Often someone has published four or five reports that are difficult to get, and often there will be a nice little summary of the project in *The Midden*. To this day there are many individual topics that are in articles in *The Midden* that have not been written about anywhere else since then. So it is quite a valuable tool [resource], not just on particular sites or topic areas, but of the history of archaeology. And you've got this advertising about who is speaking, so you've got this whole history of who is giving lectures on what subjects at what time. The records of the society really provide a valuable source of information.

One of the very valuable projects they were doing in the late seventies, early eighties, was going around to private collections, gathering, photographing and documenting collections, and some of these private collections are things that often have artifact types that are rare in the museum collections [see article in this issue on the project, p. 9, and photographs on following pages]. So those records are there, and people really haven't utilized them to the point they should, including myself. It is the kind of thing [that] if those things ever came online, it would be a valuable source of information just getting the records. Sometimes what happens to those collections, they were later donated to a museum, so here we have this record with photographs of the collection often with information about where they came from. Whereas today, often collections are brought in by someone's granddaughter, there is no information that comes with it. [Similarly] the RBCM had an active policy back in the late sixties and seventies to document private collections, and we were often accused of "Well, isn't that just encouraging the looting of sites?"—when in fact nearly all these people were collecting them from eroding beaches and this sort of thing, or those obtained materials that had been previously looted from sites by their parents and this sort of thing. So, we had tens of thousands of artifacts, and we documented

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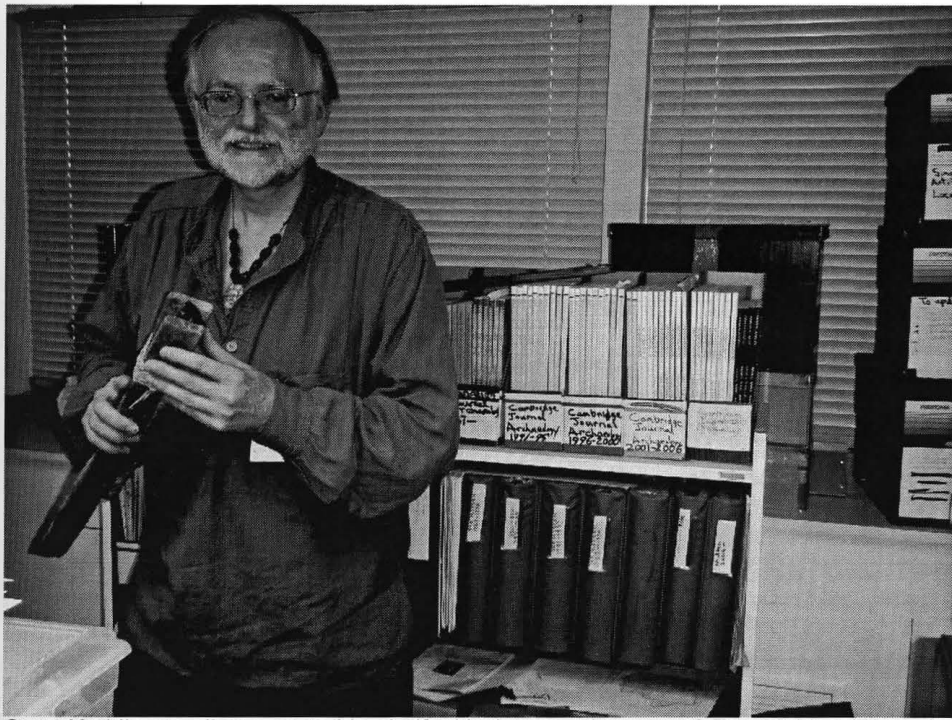
these, and at least twenty thousand of those we documented have since been donated, and they have come in here with Borden numbers on them. So literally, we've had people come in asking what are these funny numbers on these artifacts, my father has died and I found this stuff in the basement. And I say, "Oh, those are Borden numbers," and we looked in our catalogue and we had a complete record of who his father was and where they were from and everything about them. So we got this documented collection, and he said, "Is this of value to you", and I said, "Yes." And so he donated it all, right! So a lot of that work done back then that has been deemed insignificant is quite valuable. Remember, [and here are two separate cases where] what the ASBC [and RBCM] recorded is of [potential] use decades into the future.

Adrian: Thank you for this great history on the development of the ASBC, and its influences on the discipline of archaeology in the province. Could you share your views of the ASBC's commitment to heritage protection and how it ties in to its overall political spirit?

Grant: Because of the independence of *The Midden* they have been able to write critiques to the various government departments, and so when you've got artifacts leaving the country... often there are articles that heavily criticize that, which results in government taking action to not allow artifacts to leave the country. They have been able to openly critique the government on areas of failure in legislation, and I think that has certainly provided pressure that has either maintained what we have got or improved upon it. Certainly there has been [situations] in the past where government has wanted to take away what was already there [in terms of heritage protection legislation], and pressure from the ASBC helped maintain what we had.

Adrian: Drawing on an earlier discussion about the shifting character of the archaeological community or communities in the province, can you expand on the historic dynamic of this trend, particularly in relation to how it has influenced the way archaeology is conducted?

Grant: Besides the main ASBC branch [Vancouver] you've got your Nanaimo and Victoria branches who have remained a little independent of each other, but again they are part of the ASBC, and in terms of the local community they have also brought together, especially Victoria, I would say people from the university and private contractors do not interact very much but by going to the meetings. By giving presentations at the ASBC meetings they have played a role in bringing people together, you know, getting communications going, and of course the very fact that they are providing lectures in all of these locations, they are providing a venue for people to go and learn about archaeology, and that has not been done, so the fact that both academics and non-academics have this great opportunity [for gaining access to information



Grant Keddie standing next to his shelf with the complete set of *The Midden* (Photo by Adrian Sanders).

and creating dialogue is unique], unless they attend conferences or [and] read publications. So much of what is talked about at these lectures is beyond the publication, so you get to hear about the projects and see a whole side of that project that never forms part of the publication. I think the meetings themselves provide an important learning vehicle, and again there is this situation where only [at] conferences do you... held at some of the larger universities or here at the Museum and these conferences are few and far between, or you have the Canadian Archaeological [Association meetings] held all over Canada, [where] you have so many events going on, and although it provides the opportunity for people to see old friends and stuff, there is not really [the same type of] interaction going on at those meetings, they are too big. So I think a good forum for that is provided by the local ASBC meetings where people can discuss these sorts of things.

Adrian: Considering the society's sociopolitical role in heritage preservation issues, do you have any suggestions for where future energies might be focused?

Grant: I think the role they have always played in [raising] public awareness of the value of archaeological heritage, promoting changes in legislation, you know, I think they continue to play a critical role of all aspects of archaeology, whether its government departments or museums or contractors, there is a role for constant criticism. If the institutions are too darn busy to evaluate themselves sometimes a critique from outside really helps people internalize some of that and makes [for] positive changes. I see in the future, or what I would like to see happen is the ASBC maybe sponsor events between government bodies and private contractors and discuss these matters, because they are probably ever done on an individual basis, say between the Archaeology

Branch and private contractors. You know, everybody is so busy there is these kind of scattered interactions, you know, for people to sit down as a group and start to say, with a positive attitude, ok, these are the problems that we seem to be seeing here with the Archaeology Branch, and the Archaeology Branch can say we need some improvements with private contractors, it seems in order to better preserve our history, these are things that need to be done, and the contractors may say to the museum, you guys are making life difficult by forcing these policies, so we may need to rethink our policies. By getting together and discussing these things I think the ASBC can be seen as a neutral body [laughs], which it really isn't. But it would be a good vehicle for bringing some of these people together, and if they organized it pretty well, you would invite different government departments, the museum, and First Nations all together, and if

they don't attend they are part of the critique, and they have to suffer the consequences, but chances are they would attend, you know?

Adrian: Does one project stand out as being the most fun you have had practicing archaeology?

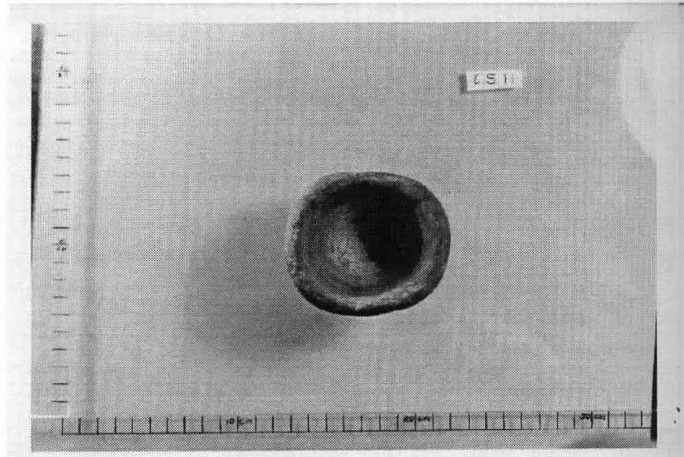
Grant: [Laughs, long pause] There is fun and there is adventure, and sometimes the adventure includes a lot of negative things and such [Grant did not choose to disclose what he intended here]. I would say looking back at all the projects I've done I would say my work at the mouth of the Chilcotin River at Gang Ranch back in 1972 was probably the most adventurous thing being in a more isolated area, but I also think of the 1969 SFU field school at Kwatna Inlet being adventurous stuff because again we were in an isolated scenario, and when I did surveys you never stayed in a hotel or anything. You stayed in a tent or you didn't even bother, you would just put a cot out in the bush at night, and, you know, you would work all day until sunset, eat and then put your cot in the bush and sleep like that. You didn't stop work at a certain time, you got up and ate breakfast and you'd go walk the Fraser River and go up the gulches, till you'd stop for lunch briefly, and you'd put in 12, 14-hour days, and that was always adventurous. You worked your butt off; you were in great shape and that sort of thing. There are many different projects that when you were out being active and doing things that hop into my mind.

One project I worked for two years on was with the Songhees Band as part of a training project. I was the only non-First Nation working on the excavation, and although one had to scurry to keep ahead of everybody in doing the project, it certainly was a real learning experience in working with First Nations,

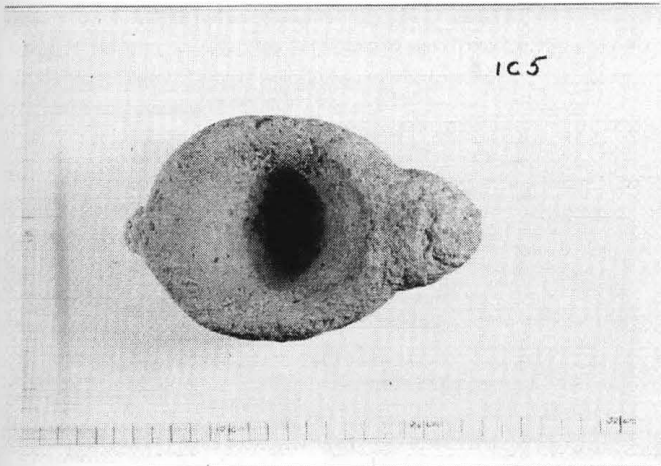
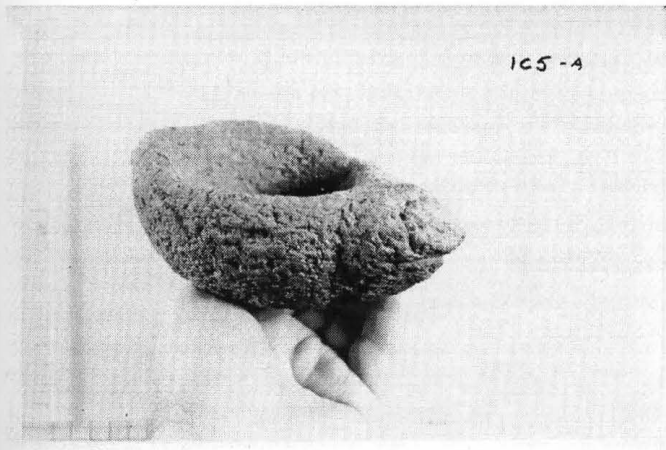
especially younger people who really had no interest in their history at that time. The Chief John Albany came to us and asked, he was complaining, "the young people are not learning their language, they are not interested in this stuff, can we do something together that will help this?" So we got involved for four different summers, plus winter works projects, so we were always trying to get some money to get this going. We had a number of younger Songhees here working on various winter work projects and so my whole experience with that, trying to inspire the younger people to learn, and seeing the appreciation of the elders that the younger people were doing this sort of thing, that was a more memorable situation when I think of the work that I have done.

There are the projects and then there are inside museum related things, so I've done a lot of public... I've done literally thousands of lectures on tool technologies all over the province in my 36 years here. I've gone to First Nations reserves up in the Peace River area where I'm doing artifact technology demonstrations and to see, you know, you hear the feedback later on where you are in a classroom situation and some child in grade three or four who always sat at the back of the room and never said anything, and now the teacher says they are sitting up at the front of the room and you can't shut them up [laughs], just because of that experience; that you are there talking about them and how their history was and all the incredible things their ancestors knew how to do. It suddenly gave them a purpose and so when I think of my contribution to archaeology that is the sort of thing that comes to mind. I have kids running up to me in shopping centers and in cafes and saying, "oh, your Grant Keddie, you gave a technology thing at my school when I was in grade seven, that really inspired me to learn, I didn't go in to archaeology but I went to university and I did all these sorts of things", you know? Those are the kinds of things that are the most gratifying, and if I had not done all those things I should have a big stack of publications, but these are real things you can see. I guess in reality those are the things that are really rewarding, either that you have left [something] behind, that you have made a difference out there.

Often the Museum has had projects around the province where we would offer these special school programs, they would often bus kids in from many miles away. Often this is a huge event for them, as no one from Victoria ever comes to talk to them. So it's a big special day and all the kids are terribly excited about it, and we'll often give a lecture to the adults at night, and we might have a follow-up day where we get the kids to bring their parents to the event we have that day. So the kids are dragging their parents down there all excited about stuff, and many of the parents come to these events who normally would never attend them, so it becomes very much a family thing. So that is a rewarding thing.... You often have local museums or heritage societies involved in these events that we do, and suddenly you are injecting some life into them, so suddenly they are in the local newspaper and more people join their society, so you see the physical results of the stuff that you have done in generating this enthusiasm and you see that going on for years and years. That is why I think one of the things in the future for the ASBC would be to encourage more branches throughout the province,



to get one in Ft. St. John and wherever there is viable, local culture where they can associate with the museum. Where the population is quite low you can work something out where essentially the museum and archaeological society can be linked with a society down here that can maybe help bring speakers up to those areas. This is where I think there need to be more government funding, and where the ASBC could apply for to do a speakers circuit. So you get volunteers from universities and museums who then go on a speakers tour throughout the Interior. I've done a number of these in the past, but, you know, you get burnt out doing [these] things. So you go into a town and you do all this stuff and then you get interviewed on the radio, then you go to the next town and you do the same thing all over again. If we had twelve people doing that, the impact of archaeology and the acceptance would really be enhanced throughout the Interior, because there is a lot of negativity about archaeology. When I was up surveying the Cariboo and the Chilcotin I would be on a ranch where sometimes I would be approached by some guy with a gun saying "what are you doing on my land," and usually after a five minute conversation they would say "I didn't know you were an archaeologist" so they invited me for dinner and wouldn't allow me to leave. There was this great enthusiasm for archaeology everywhere, and now it is sort of... you start hearing these rumors that someone found something and they were told to bury it or bulldoze it away, so the media about archaeology stops projects is a real thing that we have to try and overcome. So going giving a talk to the Kamloops



Images of small stone bowls from the ASBC Private Collections Project.

Ranchers Association and these sorts of groups would really dispel that sort of stuff, and answer their questions and help alleviate most of their fears, and assisting them in working with local First Nations groups, and getting them on side. Especially in smaller communities these things work very well for the benefit of everybody.

Adrian: Can you think of a funding venue capable of providing such an opportunity?

Grant: There isn't one that is really well defined now, but I think there should be something equivalent to a heritage fund. You know, in the cities you have all these heritage monies for maintaining heritage homes, and that has been a very big focus, but there are a lot of projects that should be done that are proactive, rather than waiting for something to be destroyed where a contractor has to rush in there. There should be a system where looking at every city and town around BC we know where there are a lot of sites, and the first thing we should be doing is survey around that whole area, so the city knows what [heritage potential] they have, and those are the areas where things are most likely to be destroyed, and have the highest impact. That is where the local archaeological society can fit in... so the Nanaimo Archaeological Society had this project surveying and updating sites in their area, working

with the Band, the Band got together with the city council and established a policy, that if you find archaeological sites they are to be phoned, and you have individuals you talk to, right. So if you do this in a local community where you get everybody on side, you have discussions, and you may have your differences, there may be situations where conflicts arise you can't oversee, but in most cases you can overcome the conflicts. By being pre-emptive, you know, where the sites are, and you do some work to define their boundaries. So there is some place where within ten years, you know, a piece a property is going to be developed, so you get in their and define that stuff, so if somebody is going to develop it you can say sure you can develop it but just stay away from this northwest corner here, and as part of the development project we want you to put money into making this a historic park with some markers there indicating it is there and why it is important.

Adrian: Sounds like the primary concern is where that initial funding is going to come from?

Grant: Yeah, and I think it is the kind of thing where it would be jointly sponsored. As with many things, you have the Federal and Provincial governments kick in different proportions, and they do this with many things, why can't you do this with the archaeology? Well, people already assume that archaeology is already paid for; the people who are destroying it have to pay for it. The reality is that things are being destroyed all the time; they are not in the radar. We see these sort of things happening, where conflicts develop because it's [the work of archaeology] not proactive. You've got to get in their and do large-scale city surveys. In the Archaeology Branch I would have an individual whose job it is solely to communicate with municipal governments all over British Columbia. Go to their annual municipal convention and give a talk on why archaeology is important, how they should organize and document this, and how they should work with the First Nations in their community. So, that would alleviate a lot of problems that we know are going to happen, you know, the uncovering of burials is [otherwise] going to happen. We know, in most cases, it's predictable. Federally, we should really have a body within the Archaeology Branch that has some committee within government that is in charge of funding for these sorts of things. Those kinds of organizations have existed in the past that we have done away with. There really need to be some kind of independent body that has a regular budget that is probably part of an umbrella group with the Heritage Conservation Branch, that with this money available puts its focus on local communities and with a very specific purpose. So, if a local archaeological society, working with the local city and the First Nations and there is clearly something of social benefit to the community, that should be a priority, and they receive the money. Again, somebody needs to write up a policy for that sort of thing, and those people are around, we just need to find them.

Adrian: Would you be able to situate this discussion historically? Reflecting on your earlier experiences working in a professional capacity for the province, and observing the transition of this work that has since been focused in the hands of private con-

tractors hired by developers, what are your sentiments about the state of heritage management in relation to the way archaeology is presently practiced?

Grant: Yeah, I mean obviously because of the enormous extent of something you needed to have private contractors, you had to have large numbers of people for doing this sort of thing. Now there could have been a larger government body that had more input in those procedures, but I say what we need in combination with that is more

of an involvement from the provincial government in looking at local heritage, First Nations and non-First Nations. Because we keep forgetting that everything after 1846 can be bulldozed away. So if you had some important European figure who had a well in their backyard and three meters of garbage that represented their history that we could bulldoze it away and it's not protected by law whatsoever. You

get Chinese village sites getting totally looted and bulldozed away. So really, each municipality should develop a heritage... [designate] what is important in their community. You know, it might be a 1946 gas station with original gas pumps? Well that might be the oldest thing in that town surviving, and they might want to make that something unique that they have; there should be money to go toward that. Help-

ing make people aware of their history and heritage, whether it is First Nations or not, and certainly there is a need for doing more historic archaeology, and if that is not covered in legislation there should be monies made available for doing that....

Essentially what was going on initially was there were small amounts of money made available to what was then the Archaeological Sites Advisory Board [ASAB], but they often came through other government departments, so when I had that job, although I was actually monitored by the ASAB, the money came through the Department of Recreation and Conservation. What our job was—it was proactive—we would go out to hundreds of locations for proposed park sites, where park benches and outhouses [were planned] all throughout the southern Interior. So we were proactive in documenting these, making sure that government officials didn't destroy sites. So that was a big priority, and there was lots of money available for that. Then you had cut backs, and you had the Ministry of Transport came in, so the people putting in the roads became the payers of archaeologists, and then that is when more and more private contractors came in and forestry became

the big money thing. So you've been taking this money from other government departments for funding most of the archaeology. So it got to the point where there wasn't really an organized body that really had a substantial funding guaranteed on a regular basis to organize this whole thing. I think you need to develop an entirely new department that has an annual budget for doing

the kinds of things I am talking about. So when archaeologists are say working in the Kamloops area they should be working with the local archaeological society and the city council and the First

Nations in that area, and discussing and fitting in to their already established plan for what they are doing in the area. It seems a lot of stuff is shot in the dark. Some archaeologist is working in that town and nobody in that town knows anything about it, and I think everything suffers because of that. There is a lot of local knowledge that can be gathered, not just [from] First Nations but

from non-First Nations as well.

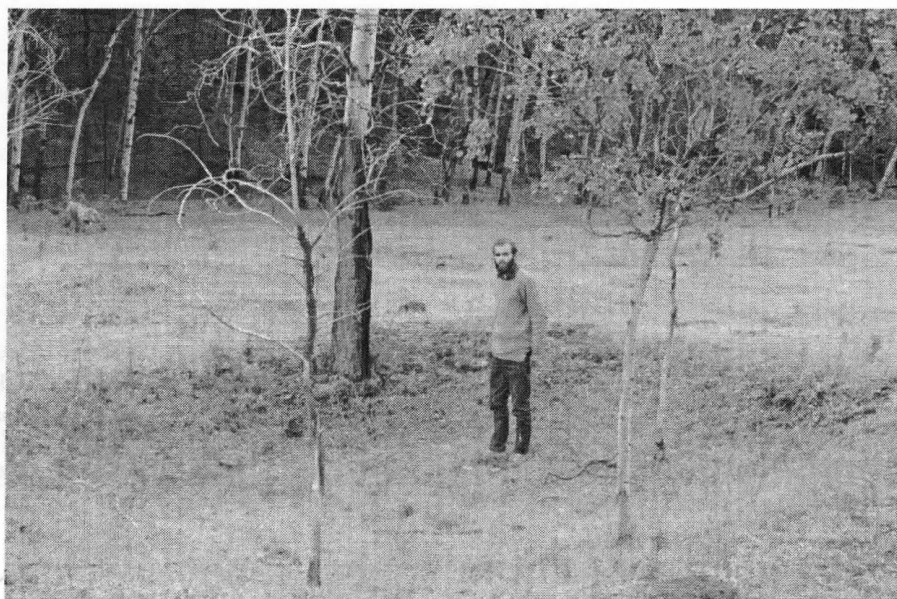
When I was up in the Burns Lake area doing these public programs I talked to all kinds of people, [including] this guy who was 92 years old. We had these obsidian sources, these unidentified obsidian sources, and he was talking about 50 years ago when he went through the mountains and there was obsidian there. So I showed him the stuff, and I've got that [location] on a

map. Then two guys who were skidoo people told me about another source, and only skidoo people would ever go there [laughs], so I've told a number of people and hopefully they will go out and get that. So the local community is a valuable source of information.

A lot of people have local collections, again, that need to be documented. When you pool the knowledge of the local First Nations and non-First Nations and city officials and everything, everyone wins, and you get better results. And I think the ASBC could play a role in that in terms of their regional organizations, and probably if you actually had a situation where you had all those different groups together that would become the vehicle for forming an archaeological society in a place that may not necessarily have enough people to keep it running on a regular basis. So if you actually get the city planner attending the local archaeological meetings and he's aware of what is going on and

(Photo: Grant Keddie standing inside one of two large newly recorded housepits on high bluff above Dog Creek. 1970.)

There should be something equivalent to a heritage fund.



he doesn't need a lesson every time something happens....

A common problem is you get a developer that takes archaeology seriously, they are keenly interested, then they move to Calgary, and somebody else comes in and they don't know anything about this and you start from scratch all over again, usually by digging up some site and people coming by and asking, "why did you let this happen?" and they are going, "I didn't know what this was", and that sort of scenario. So there is a role where people in the archaeological society, involving people from the university and others together to promote more intensive involvement on the local level, [including] more members of the public and professionals.

Adrian: Can you shed some light on what you may involve yourself in come retirement?

Grant: Well, what I am trying to do is work on as many collections as I can before I retire [laughs] so that I can take that information to later work on. So right now, this thing sitting in front of me I need to get back to, I need to do an analysis of all the beaver teeth in our collection, make commentary about those, that has never been done before, and look at all the ethnographic use of them, such as beaver-toothed dice and this sort of thing. So I'm taking my knowledge of what is in the collection and looking at real things, adding new information from a different perspective. Then working on a lot of things that I am now documenting in the collections that when I retire I want to get that stuff published, get that stuff out there.

Then I want to probably document the world of the future, there is a real need in museums to start taking really seriously the electronic documentation of data and sub-samples, so if somebody comes in from the field and you've got a piece of gunk on a stone tool, that is given a number, that is put into a special container to preserve and document it so people are aware of it.... I just took a two day course on x-ray florescence, so I have a fairly good understanding of what that can do and it is just absolutely mind boggling what that can do with stuff in our collection.

One of my projects I will probably continue when I retire is looking at... I'm convinced iron tools were used at least a

Photo: Grant Keddie recording the remains of a single Chinese house and grave, site FcRo-7, near Collins Creek, 1970..

There is a need for doing more historic archaeology, and if that is not covered in legislation there should be monies made available for doing that.



thousand years ago by First Nations, [the material] either coming around the Pacific Rim or [from] ship wrecks, some also coming early on from eastern Canada. So I'm looking at abrading stones and looking for evidence of iron compounds on the surface of those, so the x-ray florescence can absolutely tell that for sure, but it is a pretty complicated process to do that out, so I have scanned a bunch of material now and I've already got some concrete results on other things. For example, I've shown that if you look at the natural constituents on the rock itself then you look at its surface layers and I

have an abrading stone for example that I have used for sharpening mussel shells and bone, but you look at it and you can't see anything on it, it's perfectly clean and even when you clean it off there are massive amounts of calcium and strontium in the surface of that abraded.

So here we have [an artifact class] abrading stones, which are not seen as sexy artifacts, they have been basically ignored, archaeologists have reported, oh yeah, and 20% of everything we have found are abrading stones, there were a whole bunch of them, they were this size to that size and end of discussion, rather than saying, wait a minute, half the artifacts we have found are worked

some how on by an abrading stone and we know nothing about abrading stones, right. Here's an incredible opportunity to do an incredible amount, so I would like to be a catalyst, and say hey, look at this, we can tell whether there was ground shell, or bone on this right. Here is the proof and here is the way to do it, so hopefully somebody will follow through on it, some graduate student will do two thousand things and verify that.

I'm working with a nuclear physicist who is retired, so that when I have compiled what I am going to do I am going to go to them for critique, and ask, do I know what I am talking about, can you do this better, what I say I am seeing am I really seeing that? You invite a critique like that. What I have seen so far is we are going to be able to do that, we are going to be able to prove that there was iron on these tools, and that they are associated with bone cuts that had to be done with stone tools and that sort of thing. There are all kinds of artifacts in our collection we can do x-ray florescence on and other kinds of microscopic analysis, that will be able to tell us of things we didn't even dream of before. I get Nature and have been reading

about what they have been doing with this latest nanotechnology and other things, and I am one of the first archaeologists in BC to get there DNA done, and probably in Canada, so by getting involved in that stuff you become aware of the opportunities that, even though you are doing it for your personal stuff, you become aware of the incredible range of stuff you can do in archaeology. When we are talking about bone elements, we are going to be able to go in a site, and instead of saying there are a minimum number of so many animals you are going to be able to do studies on those and say all those 50 bones belong to six animals. I know we can do that stuff. Right now we don't have the machines and the expertise to do it, but this stuff can be done. So we need to be thinking about how we are collecting stuff, saving stuff, and documenting stuff for all that work to be done in the future.

The University of Victoria is setting up a lab now where in two years when they have a three-dimensional microscope set up it will be one of the best, if not the best microscope in the world, so there is an opportunity for students to look at stuff in our collection and will be able to ask what it is using that machine, what kind of behaviour in the past can we talk about with the aid of that machine? Every time I look at anything in our collection it is just mind boggling, its just endless, endless stuff. So that is why museum curators need to be very aware of and document that stuff, and if there are things costing money, they need to be pushing their management to invest money into those kinds of resources. Of course the are archaeological repositories all around the province, most of them do not have that support, and there needs to be more of a broader coordinating of documenting of things, so that the way we store and document something here and the way the *Secwepemc* people do it, and the way they do it in *Ta'ma'ha* and in Ft. St. James [are consistent]. We've got these standard procedures, rules and regulations to preserve this stuff for the future, and get it electronically documented so somebody in Victoria who wants to study something, they will immediately see where all the resources are and that they can study. That means institutions like this [RBCM] needs to hire more people to do that, it is a very labour-intensive thing. But, it's the amount of time it saves, and allows people to do research really quickly. So, [at present] a graduate student has to physically come to the museum and physically look through all the drawers for four hundred things, they just can't do it in the time they have to have their paper done. So, if stuff was readily available to them, easily accessible, they could document the data very fast and get on with the thinking part of it [laughs].

So that is what when I retire... and of course my big thing is I'm always experimenting making tools of various kinds. So I want to go out more and, you know, butcher dead animals with stone tools and that sort of thing, and I'll have more time to go out and I want to do a big re-assessment of the landscape and look at where the potential for early sites are. Especially around the Victoria area, say between the 5,000 to 12,000 years ago, all the sites along the shorelines are under water. So where is the inland evidence? It is there but it is really difficult to find, and

we have to do some large-scale studies, and get some outside money and hire some graduate students to document where the most probable localities are and then do some kind of testing regime throughout the whole area, and have that red-lighted on the radar so that if a housing development is going in their its not just a contractor going doing a minimum amount of testing where we know there are sites, but someone doing a real systematic testing of the ground surface in that area. So in some of these old areas, it's not just necessarily... you're looking at evidence of the landscape, so if you are looking at faunal material that is not human butchered but what was the natural landscape 10-11 thousand years ago? To document that although there is no human association with that then provides the setting for when humans could have been here, and that sort of thing. So you've got

these people in natural history who are living in an independent world who don't communicate with the human historians, and I would like to have more time to bring those people together, to get them working on larger-scale projects, where they are all helping out, looking at the big picture down the road.

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