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HIGHLIGHTS

- * Report from Punchaw Lake
- * Innovation from the Navajo Nation
- * Unusual artifact found at Marpole

EDITORIAL

The media are often criticised, like Cleopatra's messenger, for being purveyors of "bad" news. So let us here trumpet the very good news from the Navajo Nation.

Details of the Navajo's recent resolution concerning archaeology may be found elsewhere in this issue of The Midden. The drift of it is clear enough: the Indians, without outside interference, have decided to protect their diminishing historical materials. This is not a law imposed on them by some distant, paternalistic Indian Affairs Department, nor is it a hot-headed, resentful attempt to get back at non-Indians for removing historic items from the reserves.

Instead, it seems to be a constructive, spontaneous attempt to cure a problem at source: prevention, rather than cure.

This mature approach to self-policing could be most effective here in Canada too. It is not enough (though it's a good start) to punish people for destroying archaeological sites (as the B.C. Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act does), nor to punish people for removing artifacts from reserves (as the Indian Act does). A constructive, educational approach, such as that taken by the Navajo Nation, would do even more to preserve Canada's cultural heritage - for all Canadians.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT PUNCHAW LAKE,
NORTH-CENTRAL BRITISH COLUMBIA

K. R. Fladmark
Department of Archaeology
Simon Fraser University
September 1973

Between May 20 and July 20, 1973 the Simon Fraser University Archaeology Field School undertook intensive examination of a large multi-component village site on Punchaw Lake, 35 miles southwest of Prince George, in the traditional territory of the Southern Carrier Indians. The purpose of the project was two-fold: first, to provide a thorough grounding in archaeological field techniques for the 16 student members of the crew; and second, to analyze late prehistoric settlement patterns as expressed by the precise spatial inter-relationships between all classes of cultural items. Traditional archaeological methods were complemented by various ancillary studies such as systematic floral and faunal sampling, dendrochronology, chemical soil analyses, and the experimental construction of a replica of a Carrier house.

The Punchaw Lake Site (FiRs 1) occupies over 54,000 square meters along the steep northwest bank of Tako Creek which drains Punchaw Lake and eventually empties via the West Road River into the Fraser, about 30 miles distant. Covered with a light growth of aspen and cottonwood, the site stands in marked contrast to the surrounding dense coniferous forest. Surficial cultural features include 43 house-platforms, 57 storage-pits, and a 100-meter segment of a deeply rutted aboriginal trail. House-platforms are not the circular semi-subterranean features commonly associated with the Interior Plateau, but instead shallow sub-rectangular to oblong benches asymmetrically incised into the sloping stream-bank.

Excavations concentrated on the complete areal exposure of two house-platforms and the precise in-situ retrieval of all cultural materials. A total of 6,200 "artifacts", including faunal remains, flakes above a minimum size, and modified tools, were fully recorded in situ employing a data coding system designed to facilitate computerized sorting and plotting. In addition firecracked rock, other features including hearths and post-holes, storage pits and burials (4) were three-dimensionally recorded.

Analysis is in an early stage and no overall statement of results is possible at the moment. However the following general comments are justified: The site is multi-component. Artifact types include a wide range of projectile point styles from leaf-shaped, lancolate, stemmed, corner-notched to side-notched forms. Microblades and macroblades are also represented. In addition a small

collection of trade goods indicates an historical component. Multiple occupation is shown by vertical variation in artifact types, raw material preferences, changes in burial patterns, and superimposed post-hole alignments. Spatial clusterings of house-platforms and associated localizations in intensity of forest clearing also indicate horizontal displacement of successive occupations. Alexander Mackenzie passed the site on the well-developed network of aboriginal trails in 1793 on his way to the Pacific. Although his locations are not always clear, it is possible that it was here that he observed a native "encampment of three families". Informant's data indicate that the site was occupied up until the early part of the 20th Century, and a modern trap-line still transects the locality.

Complete post-hole patterns recovered for multiple occupations in one house-platform show that the construction mode through time has been based on rows of small poles arranged to produce an oblong A-frame structure with excurvate or apsidal end-walls. One house possessed an elongated side entrance, in other cases entry was through the apsidal ends. These houses were built on flat to slightly dished platforms partially sunk into the slope, most deeply on the uphill side.

Faunal remains indicate a reliance on beaver, caribou, deer, bear, bobcat and smaller mammals such as hare. Surprisingly, fish remains are barely represented despite excellent bone preservation. It should be noted that salmon runs in the West Road system are very minor and ethnographically the Carrier travelled to the Fraser River during salmon season. Tako Creek contains large quantities of trout and squawfish, and an elderly informant stated that such fish were trapped in the stream during spring and netted in the lake during the summer. It is possible that food preparation activities carried out along the stream reduced the number of fish bones within house-sites.

The overall size and richness of the Punchaw Lake Site was unexpected. As far as I am aware it is the largest village found to date in northern Athapaskan territory - a circumstance made more unusual by its isolated location on a small lake far from the major river systems. Perhaps its location at a junction of north-south and east-west elements of a major aboriginal trail system has been a causative factor in the site's development. There are indications of trading relationships with the west in the latest components, including obsidian from the Anahim Lake area, and ground slate knives and shell disc beads from the coast.

Intensive site surveying of a 30-mile radius around Punchaw Lake shows that the small lakes of the region have been more heavily occupied than the adjoining stretch of the Fraser River. In addition a considerable number of sites was found on high ridges,

Resolution of the Navajo Tribal Council
ENACTING AN ANTIQUITIES PRESERVATION LAW

WHEREAS:

1. The Navajo Nation contains many ruins and excavations of archaeological sites and objects of antiquity of general scientific interest, and
2. These sites and objects are irreplaceable and invaluable in the study of the history and preservation of the cultural background of the Navajo Nation, and
3. Large quantities of rare objects, pottery, petrified wood, fossils and artifacts have been sold to tourists and traders and these pieces of Navajo history and culture have been irretrievably lost to the detriment of The Navajo Nation as a whole;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. After the date of this resolution, any Indian who shall intentionally appropriate, excavate, injure or destroy any object of historic, archaeological, paleontological or scientific value, or any Indian who shall hold or offer for sale any historic or pre-historic object of archaeological, paleontological or scientific value, without permission from the Navajo Tribal Council as provided in Navajo Tribal Council Resolution CF-22-58 (15 NTC 3288), shall be guilty of an offense and if convicted, punished by labor for not more than one month or a fine of not more than \$500, or both.
2. After the date of this resolution the unauthorized buying, holding for sale or encouraging of illicit trade of objects of historical, archaeological, paleontological or scientific value by any person or employee shall be good cause for withdrawing a business privilege pursuant to Navajo Tribal Council Resolution CHY-33-70 (5 NTC S770 (b)).
3. After the date of this resolution any non-Indian who shall intentionally appropriate, injure, destroy, buy, hold or offer for sale or encourage illicit trade of objects of historical, archaeological, paleontological or scientific value may be excluded from Tribal land subject to the jurisdiction of the Navajo Tribe in accordance with procedures set forth in Navajo Tribal Council Resolution CH-60-56 and Resolution CH-64-60 and found in 17 NTC S971-976.

4. The Navajo Tribe's Department of Parks and Recreation and Navajo Tribal Museum shall be the lawful repository for and guardians of Navajo Tribal property of historical, archaeological, paleontological or scientific value.

Reprinted from The Washington Archaeologist, newsletter of the Washington Archaeological Society.

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ARTIFACTS OF THE NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS

New book by A.S.B.C. member,
Hilary Stewart

" From the Tlingit in the North to the Coast Salish in the South the author spans the broad length of the Pacific Northwest Coast in depicting a wealth of stone, bone, antler and shell artifacts of the early Indian cultures. Clear-cut diagrams showing how these items were made and how they were used give liveliness and meaning to the unearthed fragments of the past. In the only book to cover this subject, Hilary Stewart's extensive research has culminated in over 1000 scientifically correct illustrations. She writes with warmth and sensitivity as well as accuracy and with an acute awareness of the interests of both the layman and the serious student. 172 pages, 1000 illustrations and diagrams, over 50 photos, hard cover, 9 x 10½. "

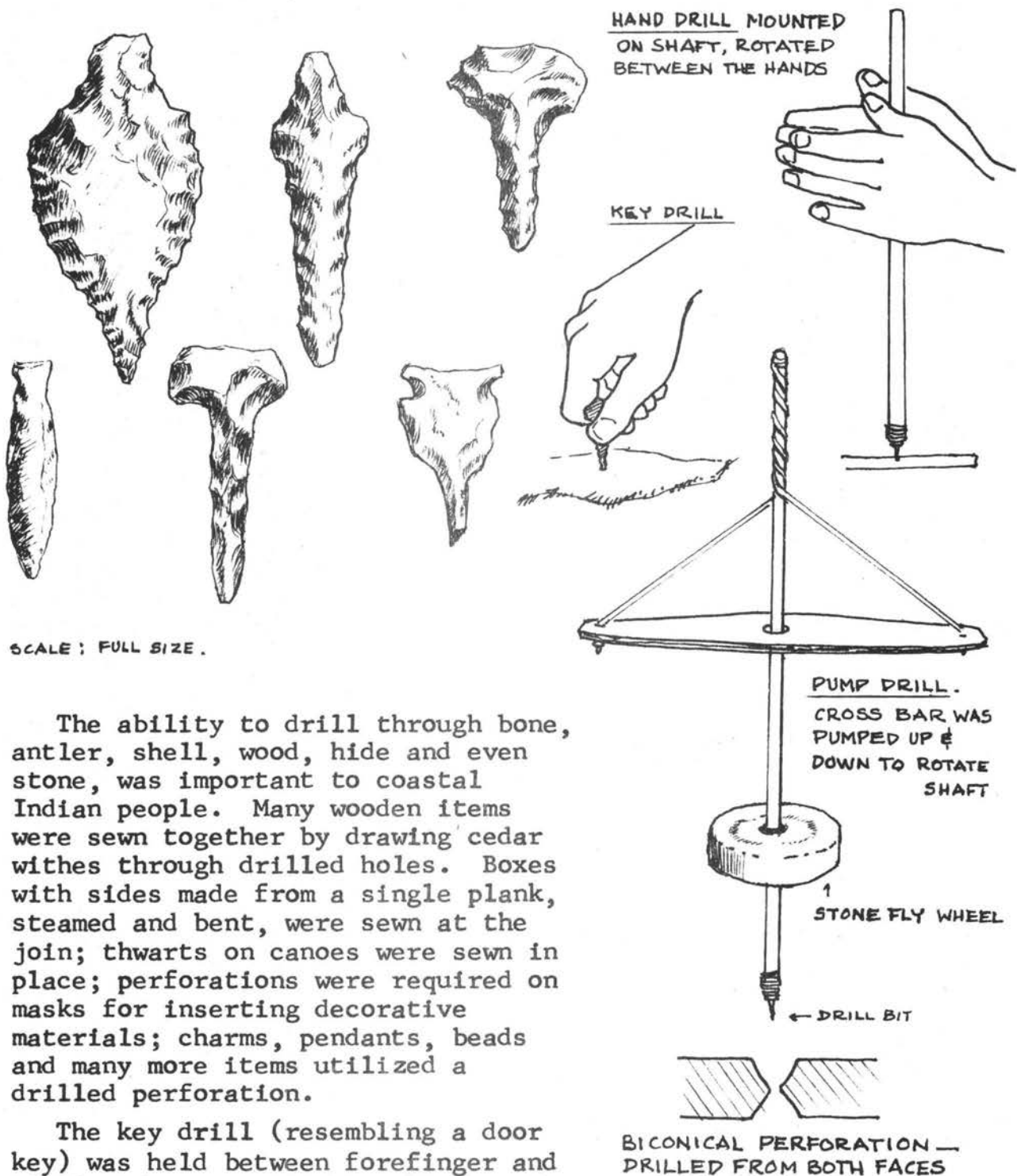
- Publisher.

This book will be on sale at the November meeting of the Society at a special reduction off the retail price of \$12.95 for members by kind arrangement with the publisher.

DRILLS

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Excerpt from "Artifacts of the Northwest Coast Indians" by Hilary Stewart c 1973



(See article on page 12)

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Archaeological Investigations at Punchaw Lake - con't

knolls and terraces at a significant distance from any body of water. Such sites would have best served as game look-out stations, a settlement pattern typical of the sub-arctic Athapaskans. Indeed, so few sites were found along major rivers compared to those found on small lakes or high overlooks that it is tempting to suggest that the long-term settlement pattern of the area has been more attuned to terrestrial and lake resources than to salmon.

On-going analysis will focus on production of computerized plots showing the vertical and horizontal relationships of all excavated materials; separation of components; definition of activity areas; and tests of the validity of random-sampling procedures applied to house floor situations. Preliminary results point out the critical importance of close provenience studies in the reconstruction of prehistoric settlement patterns and the necessity of treating all levels of archaeological data - from firecracked rocks to total sites - as being of qualitatively equal significance in the analysis of the spatial structure of prehistoric activities. The quantity of data recovered by this approach allows virtually limitless possibilities of cultural reconstruction, and strongly illustrates the wastefulness of any archaeological method which reduces the retrieval of close proveniences.

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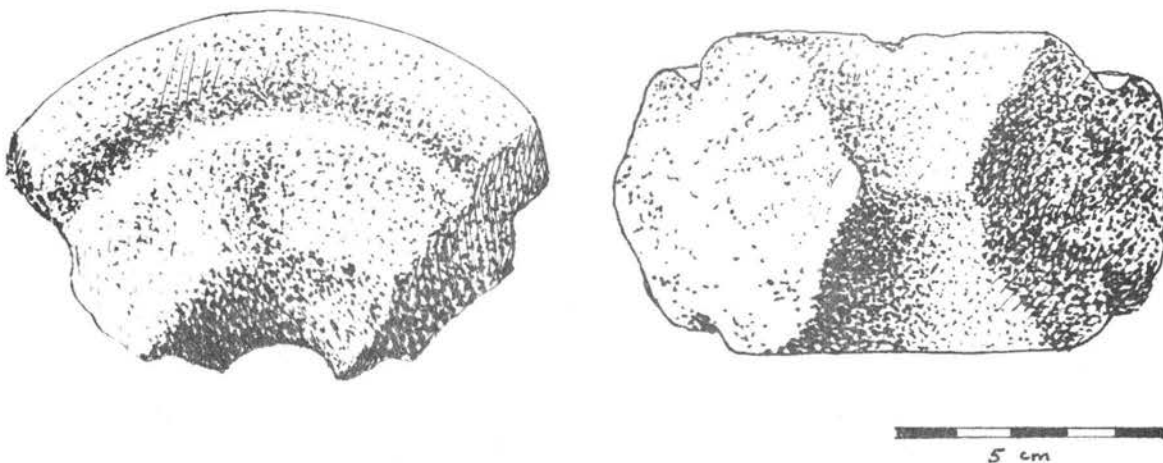
AN UNUSUAL ARTIFACT FOUND BY SOCIETY MEMBERS

When City College ceased their month-long salvage dig at the Marpole site, directed by Jim Baker, members of the Archaeological Society of B. C. continued on with the excavation. A large area of this very rich site, disturbed only near the surface, was doomed to be sealed over by black top to provide further parking facilities for the nearby Fraser Arms Hotel. Members spent weekends and sometimes evenings and week days working at the site, mindful that each day brought the ultimate destruction of the bulldozer closer.

In such a salvage situation, the careful and time-consuming trowelling method was replaced by the shovelling and screening, working in 10 cm and 20 cm levels, in an effort to retrieve a greater quantity of artifacts in the short time left.

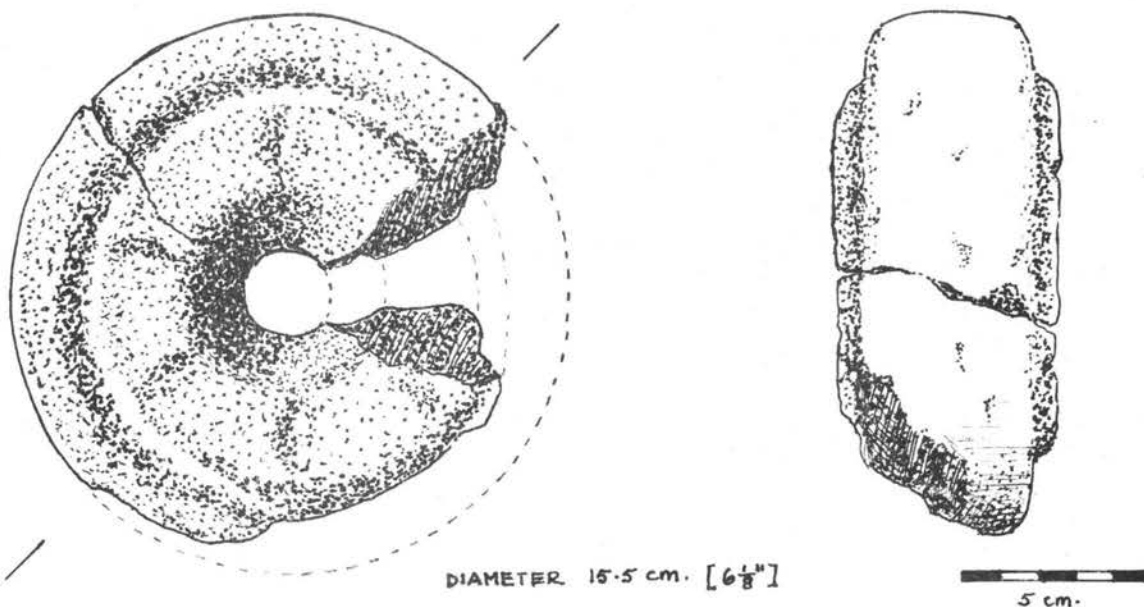
One Sunday, a member of the Society was filling her bucket with shovelled dirt and happened to glance at a pile of discarded fire-cracked rocks that had been tossed into the bottom of an abandoned four-foot deep pit. She idly thought how the shape of one of the rocks looked something like the cross section of a biconically perforated stone, and continued filling the bucket. Two buckets and four glances later she gave in to the thought nagging at the back of her mind, jumped down into the pit and picked up the rock.

When lumps of dirt had been wiped off on the leg of her jeans, in usual archaeology fashion, she found herself holding a quarter section of a large biconically perforated stone that had, for added reward, a deep bifacial groove around the edge, 3/4" from the perimeter. She was elated!



The artifact was of pecked sandstone, having the natural rough texture all over, except for the entire outer rim which was ground to a satin smoothness. This seemed unusual.

When work was finished, the member took her day's finds home to be washed and handed over to Jim Baker at a later date. While pondering over the sandstone fragment, she remembered hearing at the dig that on the previous day another member of the Society, Jim Garrison, had found "a broken sinker stone". Could Jim's find possibly be another part of this stone? She phoned him on a hunch and later, when the two stones were brought together, they fitted exactly and made up more than three quarters of the total perforated disc. Not only that, but the small and previously meaningless notch on the quarter section of the artifact was repeated around one face of the larger piece, creating a decorative pattern to the whole!



Fortunately, Jim Garrison's section of the stone had been found "in situ", and he had recorded a depth of 55 cm below the surface for it. Since the Marpole site is known to have been abandoned about 1500 years ago, this artifact might be around 2000 years old. The next question then, was "What is it?"

A sinker stone is not usually that thick and symmetrical, nor decorated. The size, weight and shape of this was very similar to some of the biconically perforated stone discs (sometimes called do-nut stones) that would have been used for the fly wheel of a pump drill, even to the groove around the perimeter. But so far as is known, the pump drill was used only by the Southern Kwakiutl, that being the only area where such stones have been found, none within Coast Salish territory. Furthermore, pump drills are thought to be a relatively recent development not dating back as far as the Marpole site.

If, however, this was traded down the coast, and was part of a pump drill, then that tool must have greater antiquity than was previously thought.

There is another most interesting aspect to this particular stone disc. The thick edge has not only the fine smoothness of a well-worn abrader, but a tracing of its outline proves it to be a compass-perfect circle! Could this have been some kind of revolving grindstone for making or sharpening the ground slate knives that were so abundantly used at Marpole?

"No", says Dr. Charles Borden, who made extensive excavations at the site in past years. "A good invention like that would have been repeated and we would have found others."

"I suppose it's possible", says Prof. Wilson Duff, running his fingers around the curve of the satin-like edge. "Whatever it is, I feel sure it has been worn smooth through use, not manufacture...it could be an important find."

For members interested in examining this artifact, it will be on display at the October meeting of the Society.

Hilary Stewart

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EDITORS, PLEASE COPY

"George", the psychic Ontario man who interprets archaeology without having any academic knowledge, got a big spread in Weekend magazine this summer.

But don't forget - you read it first in The Midden!

Incidentally, he's moving to Vancouver Island, so we can expect some intriguing insights into Western archaeology.

A.S.B.C. Diary

Centre for Continuing Education (Telephone: 228-2181)

"Thieves, Graves & Scholars: The Rape of Our Past" - Eight Wednesdays, Oct. 17 - Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. Van. Public Library, downtown. Co-ordinator, Dr. James Russell. Lecturers: Drs. H. Kassis, R. Pearson, J. Russell, A. Siemens, E. Williams, R. Carlson. Fee for our members: \$12.00.

"Peoples of the Pacific Rim: Art, Archaeology and Myth" - Nine Thursdays, Oct. 4 - Nov. 29, 8 p.m. Conference Room, Centre for Continuing Education, UBC, Mrs. Frances Robinson.

"Plants in Northwest Coast Indian Cultures" - Six Tuesdays, Oct. 2 - Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m. Kitsilano Public Library, Mrs. Nancy Turner, Provincial Museum. Includes field trip.

"The World of the Eskimo" - Eight Tuesdays, Oct. 9 - Nov. 27, 8 p.m., Room 102, Lasserre Bldg., UBC. Dr. Ian Whitaker, Visiting Professor of Anthropology, SFU.

"B.C.'s other Indians" - Seven Wednesdays, Oct. 10 - Nov. 21, 8 p.m., Room 222, Buchanan Bldg., UBC. Dr. David Wyatt, Anthropologist.

Centennial Museum

"Selections from the Edward and Mary Lipsett Collection" on display. Free admission to ASBC members.

Nov. 14 - A.S.B.C. regular meeting - 8 p.m. - Auditorium.
Dr. Alfred Siemens - "The Race for Pre-Columbian Artifacts, Mexico, South and Central America" (in the lecture series "Thieves, Graves, etc." mentioned above).

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE - 1973/74

President: Sheila Neville; Vice-President: Nick Russell; Past President: Bill Lane; Recording Secretary: Vera Ransom; Corresponding Secretary: Walter Harrington; Treasurer: Marie Duncan. Committee Chairmen - Programmes: Helen Smith; Projects: Alan McMillan; Publicity: Hilary Stewart; University Co-ordination and Private Collections: Ron Sutherland; Equipment: Jim Garrison; Social Convenor: Shirley Veale; Publications: Gladys Groves.

