



Editor
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Vol. III, No. 1
February 1971

THE MIDDEN

PUBLICATION OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Published every two months by the Publications
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- *First of a series on local artifacts

Report on the 1970 Cariboo Survey.

By Paul G. Sneed (Anthropology U. B. C.)

During the summer months of 1970 (i.e. June 1 - August 31) an extensive archaeological reconnaissance was conducted by the writer with the assistance of Mr. Grant Keddie from Simon Fraser University. This reconnaissance was part of a continuing program, funded by the British Columbia Archaeological Sites Advisory Board, which is designed to locate, map, describe, and evaluate the archaeological resources of the province.

The area we surveyed extended approximately from 51° - 53° North latitude and from 120° 30" - 122° 30" West longitude. This area, known locally as the Cariboo, is delineated on the south by a line east-west through Cache Creek, B. C., on the north by a line running east-west through Quesnel, B. C., on the east by a line running parallel to (but west of) the North Thompson River, and on the west by the Fraser River.

In doing the survey, we gave attention to locating sites on the Fraser River and its tributaries. However, we gave particular attention to those areas in the Cariboo which are subject to recent domestic and commercial development. The part of the Cariboo where the most development is occurring seems to be the "lakes area". Therefore, we concentrated on giving fairly systematic coverage to the areas surrounding the larger lakes (e.g. Green Lake, Canim Lake, Bridge Lake, Lac La Hache, etc.).

While we did seek and get considerable information regarding the location of archaeological sites from the local people in the Cariboo, the majority of the sites recorded were located by systematic search carried-out by Mr. Keddie and myself. Transportation to and through the Cariboo was accomplished by means of a panel truck and an outboard boat. Needless to say, a great deal of walking had to be done in order to examine and properly record the archaeological sites.

Approximately 300 archaeological sites were plotted on topographic maps, recorded and described on site record forms, and photographed. I am not able, at this time, to give any detailed quantitative information on the structure or antiquity of the sites. However, I can say that the archaeological resources of the Cariboo exhibit a great variety in types and, probably, in age. The range of site types includes large house pit villages, single house pits, campsites, cache pit sites, special utilization sites (e.g., fishing stations and earth ovens), rockshelters, pictograph and petroglyph panels, quarry sites, and burial sites. Very few artifacts were collected from the surfaces of these sites, but those that were recovered included mainly chipped stone tools such as projectile points, scrapers, cobble spalls, and chipping detritus. Most of the sites had been occupied by pre-historic or historic Amerindian peoples, but some historic sites occupied by Euro-Canadians were also recorded.

In summary, most of the archaeological sites located by the survey team are not in immediate danger of being destroyed by present-day development projects. However, things are changing fast in the Cariboo. Already, at least 20 sites are in the process of being destroyed by looting and development. A start toward protecting the Cariboo's archaeological resources was made by the A.S.A.B. Survey Team last summer. However, we need a stronger commitment by the people and government of British Columbia for treating these sites as the non-renewable resource that they are, if we are going to retain any of our heritage.

MORE ANTHROPOLOGY IN SYESIS?

A puzzling press release from the provincial museum says that two long-defunct museum publications are to combine with the virtually moribund 'new' Syesis magazine.

Syesis has produced, at last count, two issues in two years, though described as biannual. It covers a huge area of human and natural history, only occasionally touching on areas of interest to the Society.

However, the Victoria release says that both Anthropology in British Columbia and Anthropology in British Columbia Memoirs will be integrated with it.

The ABC produced five issues between its inception in 1950 and its last appearance in 1956; the ABC Memoirs also ran to five volumes, the last appearing in 1964 and being of particular interest: The Impact of the White Man, by Wilson Duff, which, ironically, was to be Volume I of The Indian History of British Columbia.

Presumably the announcement is an attempt to broaden the base of Syesis' appeal to include more anthropology, which Archaeological Society members may welcome. The release adds that subsequent volumes of the Indian History may be published as supplements to Syesis.

MIDDEN FINDS

First of a series of close-ups on typical artifacts,
written and illustrated by Bjorn Simonsen,
Vancouver Museum Archaeologist

Since this is the first segment of a series of short, descriptive, articles on artifacts typically found in Northwest Coast sites, perhaps I should set out the specific region with which I shall deal. I propose to deal only with prehistoric material culture from the Fraser Delta, Gulf Islands and Southern Vancouver Island areas. There are three obvious reasons for dealing only with these areas of the province: 1. they are the areas with which both you and I are most familiar, 2. most probably, these are the areas where the Society will be involved with fieldwork in the future, and 3. if I were to cover all of British Columbia, this section of the "MIDDEN" could go on forever, and I do not plan to live that long. In fact, I could not even hope to cover all of the artifact types found in the three areas I have already outlined, and so will discuss only the most common.

GROUND SLATE KNIVES

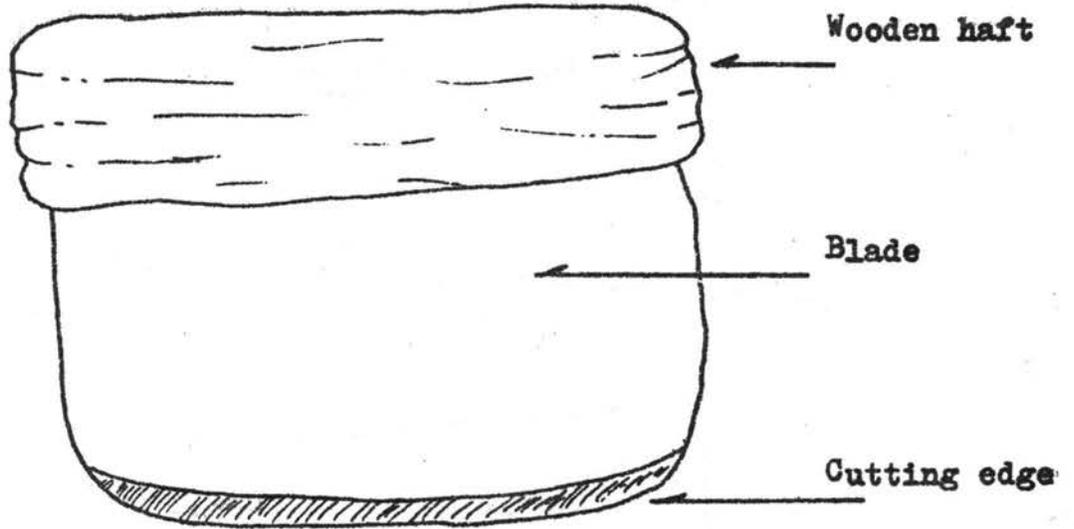
Ground slate knives (or rather, ground slate knife fragments) are probably the most common artifact found in sites of the Lower Mainland and Gulf of Georgia regions. They are most common in the Marpole Phase of the Fraser Delta Sequence developed by Borden. At the type site for this cultural phase, over 3,000 slate knife fragments were uncovered.

The local source of raw material for the inhabitants of the Marpole site might have been the McNab Creek area of Howe Sound since this is the closest known quarry and one which is easily accessible by water.

Actual manufacturing techniques are governed largely by the quality of the raw material as in the production of any artifact. However, the basic technique was to block out the form of the artifact by chipping. The resulting blank was then shaped by means of bilateral grinding until an even thickness (2 mm. average), was achieved throughout. The cutting edge was usually produced by a bilateral symmetric level while the sides and back were blunted. Occasionally more than one side supported a cutting edge.'

Ground slate knives vary in shape and might be rectangular, trapezoidal, or semi-lunar ("Ulus"). In many cases, these were hafted with a wood handle and used primarily for butchering fish.

GROUND SLATE KNIFE



BOOK REVIEW

Canadian Historic Sites: occasional papers in archaeology and history, No.1.
Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1970. \$1.50.

This is the first of a series produced by the National Historic Sites Service of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to be published irregularly.

The scope of these papers would seem to be largely historic rather than prehistoric archaeology judging from the first one which begins with a broad survey of the archaeological investigations of the National Historic Sites Service from 1962 to 1966. The majority of these took place in Eastern Canada, with only one site described from each of the western provinces. Most of the sites described are forts, and other buildings from the 17th to 19th centuries, though there are a few Indian excavations as well. The B.C. site is one at Friendly Cove on Nootka Sound where excavations took place to learn more about a Spanish settlement there in the late 18th century. Little Spanish evidence was found, but the excavators did discover midden deposits 18 feet deep and many precontact Nootkan artifacts!

The other major article in this paper is "A Classification System for Glass Beads for the use of Field Archaeologists," by Kenneth E. and Martha Ann Kidd. The authors discuss the manufacture and history of the glass beads often found on postcontact North American sites. They then give identification charts for the two main types of beads plus complex (and beautiful) colour charts and descriptions. This article is of most interest to the specialist, but should intrigue anyone who has ever found a trade bead.

This series is available from the Government of Canada bookstore, (Information Canada Bookstore) and should be well worth watching.

S.R.

MEMBER BECOMES COLUMNIST

Congratulations to long-time member Hilary Stewart for ably taking over Lynn Hancock's weekly column in the Victorian newspaper. And we look forward to receiving a review copy of the archaeology book she is currently writing!