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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

Exclusive interview with the man
who may be B.C.'s first Provincial
Archeologist

Report of recent excavations
on the Fraser Plateau.

D A T E S F O R Y O U R D I A R Y

Arch. Soc. Meeting*

May 12 - Dr. Michael Kew of U.B.C. on
"Indian Place Names of the Vancouver Area".

June 9 - Mr. Bjørn Simonsen, Vancouver Archaeologist,
reporting on his 1969 excavation: "Archaeology of the
Hecate Strait Region".

British Columbia is to get a Provincial Archeologist. This seems to be the gist of a series of talks the Midden had with officials this week.

Deputy Provincial Secretary Laurie Wallace, who has major government responsibility for the Archeological Sites Advisory Board, confirmed Tuesday that the new job was being created. But, he said, the Civil Service Commission has still not approved appointment of the first holder of the title.

However, Vancouver Museum Archeologist Bjorn Simonsen confirmed that he has quit his job and expects announcement of his appointment to the new post shortly.

The new post, which this year would involve administering a massive bonanza budget of \$100,000 was created by the Provincial Government following years of quiet lobbying, particularly by Dr. Carl Borden, head of U.B.C.'s Archeology Department. The post will definitely involve coordinating the work of the Sites Advisory Board, work which Mr. Simonsen has been doing until recently in spare time from his job as Vancouver Archeologist.

His resignation from the museum after only seven months was not, he said, a direct result of the unhappy atmosphere among staff there, although this might make it difficult to find a replacement for him.

"The new job is a really good deal, although it's not really clear who I'd be working with or what my title would be," he added.

One thing, however, is clear. The tentative job description is firmly based on the wording of a major recommendation to the Provincial Government by Dr. Borden some two years ago. It will involve not only processing the increasing number of applications for dig permits and coordinating and inspecting fieldwork, but also locating and preserving important sites.

It is also possible that all plans for construction will have to be submitted to him so that possible rescue work can be coordinated. He will also organise a network of "wardens" across the province, to keep an eye on sites and construction.

The \$100,000.00 budget? The huge grant comes from the Provincial Parks Branch as part of a massive parks budget it has received this summer, and will be used exclusively for surveying and digging this summer in B.C. parks.

"About forty people would be employed in eight crews," said Mr. Simonsen outlining the plan. The Deputy Minister of Recreation and Conservation has suggested that the Sites Advisory Board might request the money, to help create jobs.



Two crews will conduct major excavations, one either at Montague Harbor or on the Sechelt Peninsula, the other on the Sauswap Lakes.

Three of the crews will be mobile, digging test pits all over the province to assess potential sites for future work.

And three of the teams will conduct surveys, mapping sites on the Coast and in the Interior.

(world copyright!!!)

OPERATION DOORBELL IS WELL UNDER WAY.

Operation Doorbell is well under way. A small team of experienced Arch. Soc. members is following up the 1969 Tsawwassen Bluff excavation, with a survey of neighbouring homes.

Purpose of the study is to ascertain the exact shape of the original midden, and to locate and record any artifacts which householders may have turned up.

This survey calls for a fair amount of sleuthing: the researchers are still hunting for the bulldozer operator who---said one householder---turned up a jade bowl in the garden!

Meanwhile, work also continues on washing last year's material---mos' level bags full of broken shell!

AN ARCHEOLOGIST'S WORK IS NEVER DONE....

A gossip column in Ma Murray's newspaper tells of one keen Lillooet citizen:

"Tom Hurley is slowly but surely digging down the slide at the rear of his property on Main Street. He enjoys this challenge to his vigour---Tom is in his 76th year---and comes across some interesting finds. Last Friday it was a skull, possibly some collarbone and upper arm bones, and, close around the crumbling cranium, a collection of seven arrowheads and spears, possibly originally contained in a moosehide bag around the neck of a young Indian. Tom remembers as a boy playing on top of the bench, and picking up brass and copper bracelets which he sold for a nickel each to Mr. Gibbs. An ancient graveyard was located up there, Tom recalls, and yielded treasure enough to keep a lad in nickels for several years!"

Among other things, the story says that the meticulous Mr. Hurley "starts works at six a.m. rain or shine with pick or shovel."

UNCLASSIFIED? HELP WANTED!

Badly needed: anyone who can run a Gestetner better than the Editor (and that shouldn't be hard!). Preferably someone who has access to a machine of their own (or their office's). Corrected stencils and paper provided.... Call Nick Russell, daytime, 324-5335.

EXCAVATION IN SOUTHERN CARRIER INDIAN TERRITORY:

A Preliminary Report by Paul Donahue,
Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin.

ABSTRACT

Excavations designed to test the effects of the Fur Trade period on Southern Carrier Indians of the Blackwater River area were undertaken this past summer. An ecological approach is taken and some preliminary results are outlined.

RECORDED HISTORY OF THE AREA

According to written accounts Alexander MacKenzie was the first European to penetrate the Interior Plateau of British Columbia when, in 1793 he travelled from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska to Bella Coola and the Pacific Ocean via the Peace, Finlay, Parsnip, Fraser, and West Road Rivers. His route was partially retraced in 1797 by James Finlay, another North West Company associate, who explored portions of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers. An objective of both men was to assess the potential of establishing direct trade relations with the plateau inhabitants. Consequently, an initial North West Company Post was established in 1805 by Simon Fraser at the north end of McLeod Lake and, in 1806, with Forts St. James and Fraser at the east ends of Stuart and Fraser Lakes, respectively. Numerous forts and posts rose and fell in rapid succession. Two of the most important to our research on the Blackwater River area and Gatcho Lake (see map) were the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Chilcotin and Kluskus Post. The former was established near the mouth of the Chilco River about 1828 and closed some years later because of difficulty with the Chilcotin Indians. No journals have survived from the Kluskus Post but Morice (1905:275) suggests that it terminated operations about 1850.

It was during this latter period that Father Demers, the first Catholic missionary to enter the Central Plateau, travelled from Alexandria to Stony Creek and Fort St. James, where he arrived on September 16, 1842 (Monro, 1943:7-8). About 1883, Reverend Father Adrian G. Morice, O.M.I., came to Williams Lake with the intent of proselytizing the Chilcotin Indians living near Anahim Lake. In the summer of that year he visited the Chilcotin Indian village of Kluskus and, during June of 1884 he stopped at Algatcho, a Carrier Indian village located on Gatcho Lake (D.L.S:1930:35).

The Cariboo Gold Strike made obvious the need for a road from the coast into the interior. Under the leadership of Lieutenant H.S. Palmer a detachment of Royal Engineers was assigned the task of determining the best route for a road between Bella Coola and Fort Alexandria on the Fraser River. At the same time and by the same route came another, less-welcome European introduction---smallpox. According to Morice (Ibid., 307) at first it attacked the Chilcotin and then the Southern Carrier.

In 1876 and 1877 George M. Dawson of the Canadian Geological Survey travelled along the Blackwater River (West Road River) and visited the village of Algatcho.

In his report of 1878 (p.27) he mentions a coastal style longhouse which had recently been repaired for a potlatch. A photograph (now at the National Museum of Canada Archives) was taken of this house. An important implication of his survey is that the government was showing an interest in the lumber and mineral potential of the plateau.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's settlers began moving into the area and today it is one characterized by small, relatively isolated communities and scattered cattle ranches.

With this rather brief sketch of the central Plateau historic period in mind it is clear that many agents of culture change affected the Plateau during the historic period. At this point perhaps we should ask ourselves some questions concerning Plateau prehistory and history. For example, when was the Plateau first occupied, did it ever function as a migration route for ideas or people, how early are coastal influences seen in this area, can excavations here offer us some insight into the impetus for the Southwestern Athabaskan migration, what might be said of climatic fluctuations on the Plateau, and, finally, can we determine through archeology the effects of the Fur Trade on the native inhabitants?

As may be noted, there are many factors which suggest that archeological research in the central Plateau should be productive. With reference to the contact period between Indians and Whites, the ethnohistorical records--- which may be used to substantiate the archeological evidence---are fairly complete and continuous from 1793 to the present in the form of Hudsons Bay Company Journals and Ledgers, missionaries' accounts, and explorers' and trappers' journals. Discussions with Roscoe Wilmeth of the National Museum of Man, with whom I worked in 1969, and residents of the Anahim Lake area, and a review of the available literature further indicated that the Agatcho and Kluskus Indian Reserves should provide the data necessary since both sites were occupied until relatively recently; a coastal style longhouse had been in use at Agatcho in 1876 and a Hudsons' Bay Company post existed at Kluskus from about 1844 to 1850. Both sites lie along fifty-three degrees north latitude, being separated by some fifty air miles. Agatcho (Ffsk-1) forms the headwaters of the Entiako River and Kluskus (Fgsd-1) is along the West Road or Blackwater River.

In the fall of 1969 a research proposal was submitted to the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Archeological Research, Inc., New York, and the Archeological Sites Advisory Board, Victoria, which suggested in part that the Interior Plateau provides us with an excellent archeological laboratory, and that research specifically designed to determine the impact of the fur trade on the southern Carrier should be undertaken. Our problem orientation required that investigations be of the direct-historical, ethno-historical, and multidisciplinary approaches, and would have to include testing of both pre-contact and post-contact sites, the collection of modern plants and animals for comparative purposes, and extensive research of the pertinent Hudsons' Bay Company records now on microfilm at the Public Archives in Ottawa.



Before proceeding farther a brief consideration of previous research in Interior British Columbia is in order. Excavations had been rather limited until only recently when we see a burgeoning of "digs" taking place. Most research has been concentrated on the southern Interior Plateau, beginning with Harlan I. Smith in the late 1800's.

More recent are the excavations of C.E. Borden and David Sanger. Sanger has provided us with a 7500 year sequence (5500 B.C.-A.D. 1800) for the Lilboet, Lytton, and Kamloops area (Sanger, 1970). He has also reported the earliest date, ca. 100 B.C., for a semi-subterranean house pit attributable to Shish speakers.

Closer to our research area within southern Carrier Indian territory are investigations by Borden and Wilmeth. Borden surveyed in the Gotsa, Euchu, and Metalkuz Lakes area to the north during the summers of 1950-1952. His sites range from a basal date of 465 B.C. (Wilmeth: 1968:14) for the Metalkuz Lake pit house to the historic Chinlac Village site. To the south, near the present-day community of Anahim Lake, located about 200 miles west of Williams Lake and the Fraser River, Wilmeth has excavated house sites in the historic Chilcotin region dating from approximately A.D. 1 to the historic period. Also present is an undated microblade-bearing component which may belong to the late B.C. period (Wilmeth, 1969). Nearby excavation in 1968 by Mitchell on the Chilcotin Plateau suggest a 5,000 year sequence similar to Sanger's (Mitchell, 1970).

J.F.V. Miller excavated two sites on Bear Lake and Jason Smith dug at the Ice Mountain site on the Stikine River, both in 1969 and 1970.

DESCRIPTION AND BIOTA

Algatcho and Kluskus are on the southern margin of what can be termed the "Long Lakes" environmental region, extending from 53 degrees north latitude between the Coastal Mountains and the Fraser River. This region is characterized by rolling hills, numerous large water bodies, grassy meadows, quaking bogs, and thick stands of primary and secondary growth timber. Low lying regions have an average elevation of 3500 feet.

Dominant species of trees in the area are quaking aspen (populus tremuloides) lodgepole pine (pinus contorta latifolia) and white spruce (picea glauca). The animal population is partly composed of such large game animals as moose, blacktail deer, cariboo, grizzly bear and black bear. Fur bearing animals include wolf, wolverine, beaver, marten, fisher, lynx, muskrat, river otter and mink. Golden Eagle, loon, Spruce grouse, Franklins grouse, and Ruffled Grouse were among the birds observed in this area. Also noted were rainbow trout, suckers, squawfish and freshwater ling. Small rodents were also abundant.

This part of the plateau is known for its chilly winters (10-20 degrees F., January mean daily temperature) and its mild summers (55-60 degrees F., July mean daily temperature.) The total mean annual precipitation is from 16 to 20 inches (Meteorological Branch, 1969: Figs. 1-4.)

THE 1970 EXCAVATION

Each of the two sites tested was initially surveyed to determine the most feasible locale for excavation. In general, standard excavation procedures are followed; however, several additional techniques designed to collect information on present and past environmental conditions were utilized. For example, soil and pollen samples were gathered both from within the site area and from outside of this "culturally contaminated" area in order to obtain archeological and comparative control samples. Some soil matrix samples were wet-screened through a #40 mesh screen "box" to retrieve micro-organic remains such as seeds, snails, fish and small mammal bones which may permit the reconstruction of local environments. A collection of plants (128 specimens) and animals (135 specimens) was made for comparative purposes in the identification of the archeological specimens and for an analysis of the modern environment.

At Algatcho (Ffsk-1) the soil is quite shallow and consists of little more than a thin layer of organic material overlying a leached zone over the presumed glacial till. Forty square meters were excavated on the bluff overlooking Gatcho Lake, where the photograph taken by Dawson indicated that the log house, which was expected to provide data on the postcontact subsistence and hunting economy, was located. Although excavations failed to uncover any evidence of this structure, several hearths, a flagpole base in a well-constructed rock-lined pit, postholes with no discernible pattern, and a rather large midden containing artifacts, and a dense concentration of burnt bone fragments were uncovered.

Small side-notched pentagonal, and stemmed points; unifacial and bifacial implements; cut and worked bone; bark rolls and a few probable microblades were excavated from all levels; in addition, contact materials such as nails; bottle glass, some of it retouched; trade and copper beads; two copper projectile points; and one metal unilateral bipoint which, according to two native informants, is believed to have been used for spearing beaver was recovered. One artifact of further interest is a 'prototype' of that all-purpose tool, the Swiss Army knife: a large obsidian flake with both unifacial and bifacial chipping. It has a bifacial knifelike blade, a unifacial scraping edge, and two spokeshave-like notches. Presumably, this tool served many functions.

After five weeks at Algatcho we flew to Kluskus; however, permission had not been received from the Kluskus band to excavate on their reserve and a survey was necessary to locate an alternate site. Many miles were covered by foot, horseback and boat before the site of Tezli (Igsd-1), one mile west of the main reserve and situated on both banks of the Kluskus Stream was decided upon. This site consists of thirty-eight circular depressions ranging from a meter to eleven meters in diameter and from a few centimeters to over one meter in depth. An arbitrary size distinction between pit houses and cache pits was made by using a two-meter diameter measurement. Those greater than two meters in diameter (twenty-four of the depressions) belong to the house pit category and those less than two meters (14) belong in the cache pit category.

The large size of the site, its location on alluvial and-outwash deposits and the unusual depth of some depressions suggested a stratified site. The presence of a stone fish-weir indicated one manner in which the resources of the area may have been exploited.

After constructing a site map it was realized that four distinct pit clusters existed. At least one pit in each cluster was sampled by trenching from outside the pit rim to the pit center. Excavations varied from a few centimeters to one meter below surface and in all but one pit sterile soil was reached before the end of the field season. In the main clearing, pits B and D were deeply stratified and underlain by a sterile river gravel, presumably the bed of an abandoned river channel. Pit O-P, however, consisting of a raised earthen ring with an attached cache pit, was not a pit house but possibly a tent ring overlying the rocky soil some few centimeters below surface. Only one of the five structures tested showed any evidence of construction techniques. On the rim of Pit B were two potholes oriented so that the inner one angled towards the original roof area with the outer one immediately adjacent to it and used as a support post. From a small pit located near the central hearth and a possible outline in the profile of a center post, one may infer an inner main post. This form of construction agrees with Morice's sketch of historic Carrier semisubterranean dwellings. (Morice: 1893: 191).

Only four of the over two hundred artifacts excavated at Tezli were of non-native manufacture, and these were found on or immediately below the surface. Although a few worked bone remains were recovered, one conspicuous feature of Tezli was the near absence of bone remains---probably due to soil acidity and/or age. In addition to the ubiquitous utilized, non-utilized and retouched flakes, excavations yielded a ground stone fragment, two perforators, a "zinken-like" implement or flake-knife, and numerous chipped points including large and small side-notched, corner-notched with expanding stem, straight stemmed, and lanceolate varieties. Interestingly, the zinken-like item (see Giddings, 1964: plate 69, #15) appears in the Arctic and in late Siberian Paleolithic sites although no relationships are inferred or implied.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO SITES

A comparison of artifacts from both sites indicates the predominant use of obsidian at Algatcho and of basalt at Tezli, which may simply be due to the proximity of the former to Anahim Peak and nearby river gravels known to contain obsidian. Points from Tezli are generally larger and those smaller ones which do appear are only in the upper levels.

Preliminary analysis suggests that Algatcho is a mixed two-component site: an early component is represented by the presence of microblades possibly dating somewhere between 5,000 B.C. and A.D. 1, the temporal range of microblades at the Lochmore-Nasip locality in the southern Plateau (Sanger, 1970). The second or late component has been dated by trade items to no earlier than 1850 and up to 1945, when Algatcho was abandoned and the occupants moved to Anahim Lake. (Historic artifacts were dated through the courtesy of personnel at the Historic Sites Division of the National Museum of Man).

An 1850 date was unexpected because of its lateness but is significant in that trading on the coast, and indirectly with the interior, began in the late 18th century. There is also a good possibility that Alexander McKenzie travelled through the Gatcho Lake area in 1793. In short, Algatcho was presumed to have been occupied about 1800, but the archaeological evidence suggests otherwise. Items of recent native manufacture can be placed in the temporal range of Sanger's late period, A.D. 1-1800, and are indistinguishable from Borden's recent Carrier material at Chinlac. Numerous similarities also exist with the Chilcotin material from Wilmeth's Analim Lake sites.

Tezli may also be considered a multi-component site. Most artifacts were found within the structural units; however, a number were found outside and below the overturned soils resulting from pit house construction. Three artifacts, all points, are of special interest in view of their context. One is a corner-notched point with parallel sides, sharply contracting tip, expanding stem and lack of basal grinding. It appears to be comparable to Sanger's middle period, (1500 B.C.-A.D. 1) on the basis of size, corner-notching and expanding stem, as does a similar based point with convex sides. A second point has side-notching, a concave base, beveled stem, and convex edges. On the basis of photographs, measurements, and the opinion of Roger Powers (personal communication) who has worked with similar material, it is thought similar to the Bitterroot points excavated at Birch Creek in southeastern Idaho. The third point, originally thought to be a Besant point, is stubby, has poor retouch, convex edges, and a parallel stem. Tentative inferences are that it shows some likeness to points recovered from east of the Rocky Mountains (personal communication: Ross Thomson and B. Reeves). In summary, the pit house units, for which C-14 samples have been submitted, will probably date pre-1800 or pre-contact but fall within the latter part of the A.D. period. This is inferred by their resemblance to historic Carrier pit houses. Most of the artifacts recovered appear to lie morphologically between those from Natalkuz Lake and recent Carrier sites. However, the first two of the above points, plus some possible microblades, suggest a late B.C. date for the earlier component.

A preliminary analysis of the modern faunal collection indicates that Algatcho lies within the zone of transition between the coastal mountains wet-upland region and the dry interior. Several small rodent species are apparently represented by two subspecies characteristic of coastal and interior forms respectively, e.g., the wandering shrew, Sorex vagrans cf. longicauda and S.v. cf. obscurus (Merriam), and the whitefooted deer mouse Peromyscus maniculatus cf. Borealis (Mearns) and P.m. cf. macrohinus (Rhoads) (see Cowan, 1960). Two subspecies of the same species do not normally occupy the same locale unless the environment is changing. We cannot presently determine in which direction the environment is trending. All the subspecies collected at Tezli were interior forms.

Analysis of the archaeological fauna is incomplete but fur-bearing animals obviously predominate at Algatcho with fish playing only a slightly less dominant role. At Tezli the situation is of a different nature in that fish remains are most conspicuous. Needless to say, this information supports some ethnographically-known results of the Fur Trade.

Present plans call for more extensive excavations at Tezli and preliminary testing at Kluskus for the 1971 field season. Five weeks, of a ten-week season, will be spent at Tezli completely excavating as many pit houses as possible, testing others, and excavating some caches and trenches. The trenches will be placed in the clearing on an axis that does not intersect with any of the disturbed and culturally mixed soils from the pit houses. They should give us some insight into the pre-pit-house site history and of work areas outside the houses, plus a complete record of soil development. The five weeks remaining will be spent at Kluskus digging exploratory trenches and test pits in the hopes of determining time depth and real extent of the site. Test pits will also be placed on a high bench overlooking the site with the assumption that earlier components may be found there.

This field season we hope to determine the time depth of Tezli and the significance of the four house pit clusters (e.g., do they represent seasonal, temporal, and/or functional variants?) We will also investigate Kluskus to see if it bridges the temporal gap between Algatcho and Tezli and, consequently, permit us to develop a chronology for this portion of the plateau.
