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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN THE  
LIBBY RESERVOIR AREA, NORTHWESTERN MONTANA

DEE C. TAYLOR

University of Montana Contributions to Anthropology

Susan R. Sharrock, Editor

Department of Anthropology  
University of Montana  
Missoula, Montana

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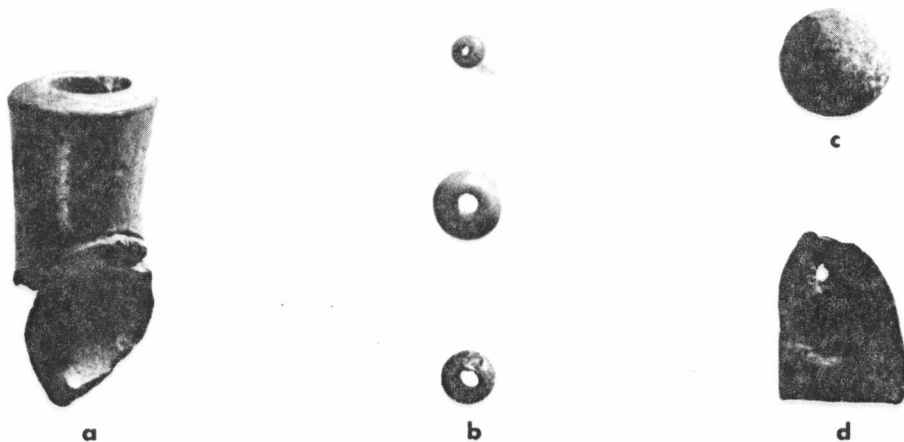


Fig. 40. Ground stone artifact and trade goods. a, elbow pipe fragment; b, beads; c, musket ball; d, copper pendant. (Scale: actual size)

several small facets where it was cut with a sharp instrument (Fig. 39c). Two horizontal parallel lines are incised on each side (Fig. 39b and d). The bowl portion of this pipe was not present, but I think it likely that our find was originally intended to be a platform pipe. The Kutenai called this type of pipe "kukpokh." White (1955: 8) suggests that this form was not the original Kutenai pipe, but rather was introduced from the east by "early Indians who preceded, or accompanied trappers and traders in this area...."

The older form, a tubular pipe, was used in those rituals which a man's guardian spirit required him to perform. Platform and elbow pipes were smoked on social occasions (White 1955:7). The latter pipes, especially those of the elbow type, sometimes were inlaid with metal for ornamentation or greater strength.

From the International Boundary site, 24LN517, we recovered a small highly-polished cylinder of banded argillite (25 mm. long, 28.5 mm. in dia., but with a large flake broken off one side). We cannot be sure, but this may have been intended for a pipe also. Perhaps the best quarry for pipe stone in western Montana is located along the banks of Pipe Creek. This stream flows into the Kootenai River a few miles downstream from Libby. The stone there, a siliceous argillite, is present in several colors and was used by the Kutenai for many of their pipes (White 1955:3). The specimen at 24LN517 likely came from there, but of course not the others. The pipestone must have been traded in; we do not know the source for the fine-grained sandstone.

Most of Turney-High's informants said that tobacco was so old that it was mentioned in the folklore dealing with pre-human times; others had a vague idea that the spirits had given the first tobacco seeds to the Kutenai. There seem to have been elaborate ceremonies connected with tobacco gardening (Turney-High 1941: 172). The Tobacco Plains was named after the old Kutenai gardens there. Tobacco was also grown "just west of the West Fisher river where it empties into the Fisher river proper" (White 1955:11).

## Bone Artifacts

Strangely we found no bone artifacts in our survey and neither did Borden (1956) in his Upper Kootenay valley survey. The only artifact in this class which we encountered was in Mr. Norris's collection from 24LN508. This was a long piece of elk antler with the tip and edges highly polished. This may have come from a digging implement such as that described by Turney-High (1941:33). Turney-High (1941:75) mentions that the Kutenai used bone for many tools--needles, awls, hide scrapers, chisels and gouges, and a cross-shaped kind of fish hook.

Bone chips and fragments were abundant throughout many sites, and there can be little doubt but that butchering and cooking activities took place at these locations. Most bone was badly broken; some fragments bore cutting marks, and many were charred or fire-blackened. The density of bone debris at some of the sites is suggested by one instance in which we counted the bone fragments within a 5 ft. sq. trench. In Trench 13 at the Fisher River site (24LN10) we tallied 206 pieces of bone; we did not consider this to be unusual.

As we had suspected during the survey, most bone was identified as deer by University of Montana zoologists. Besides deer (Odocoileus), we recovered bones of elk (Cervus canadensis), many duck bones (Anatidae), and Canadian goose (Branta canadensis). We found skull fragments and teeth of bear at the Fisher River site (24LN10) and almost an entire bear skeleton at Hammon's Gardens (24LN513). The bears were both black bears (Euarctos americanus) rather than grizzly bears.

Unfortunately most of our bone material was unidentifiable except into broad categories, e.g., mammal or bird, because it was so badly fragmented.

## Trade Goods

### Beads

3 specimens; Fig. 40b, Table 29

All three beads are spherical in shape and are perforated for stringing. They have small flattened surfaces at each end of the hole so that when strung with other beads these facets fit against each other.

The smallest bead is uniformly bright blue in color, i.e., it does not have a different colored center around the hole. The largest bead, also bright blue, does have a white center. The third bead, intermediate in size, at present appears to be a deeper blue in color, but the surface is covered with a shiny patination. Quite likely this bead was burned, and we cannot be sure of its original color. Two beads came from excavations at 24LN10, where they were recovered from the same level (6 to 8 in. below the surface) as other aboriginal material. The third bead, the largest, came from 24LN511.

Borden (1956) does not report trade beads from the Upper Kootenay valley.

At the present stage of our knowledge it is quite difficult to say much that is meaningful about glass beads. They are surely European trade items. Almost

TABLE 29

## CHARACTERISTICS: TRADE BEADS\*

Maximum Diameter	Diameter between Facets	Diameter of Perforations	Material	Provenience
4.5	3	1.5	Glass or porcelain	24LN10, Trench 5
7	5	3.5	Glass	24LN10, Trench 13
9	7	2 x 3 (not round)	Glass or porcelain	24LN511

\* Measurements in mm.

all trading posts had the same kinds of beads to exchange, and although it is possible sometimes to identify European sources and dates of manufacture, we are not usually able to state precisely when or where the items were traded.

Copper

1 specimen, Fig. 40d

From the Hammon's Gardens site (24LN513) we recovered a small piece of hammered copper. It measures 23.5 mm. long and 17.5 mm. wide. One end is squared off as though part of the copper had been folded and broken off. The other end is rounded and perforated by a hole 1.5 mm. in dia. Surfaces are indented and bossed as though they had been pounded. When found the faces were covered with green copper oxide. We consider this to be part of a pendant or bangle.

Borden (1956:96) reports a pendant of copper foil from his site DhPt9, just over the International Boundary from our site 24LN517.

Lead Ball

1 specimen, Fig. 40c

We recovered one lead ball, 14.5 mm. in dia., from our test pit on site 24LN515. The surface of this sphere is slightly pitted. We think that this is a musker ball; it could possibly date from the time when the Kutenai (according to Turney-High's informant, Chief Paul) first acquired the horse from the Cree--at the time when the first trade muskets reached the Plains. Turney-High (1941:38-39) says that this was well under 200 years ago.

The presence of European-manufactured materials in some of our sites does seem to indicate that at least there the cultural remains cannot be very ancient.

commonly used projectile points during the Late Prehistoric Period were the corner-notched types; the side-notched point types began to appear toward the end of the period. The advent of the side-notched point types may correspond in time to the displacement of the Plains Kutenai and their arrival in the river valley, although other explanations are possible. Even though their popularity faded somewhat, corner-notched arrowpoints continued to be used into the Historic Period.

I have previously discussed the religious beliefs that may be evident in the pictograph panels (24LN510 and 24LN530) and the solitary rock structure (24LN523). These sites are considered Prehistoric, but they also may have been sacred places in the later periods. Smoking was usually a ceremonial activity, and the red pipe-stone elbow pipe at the International Boundary site demonstrates that this practice was present. The red pipestone may also indicate prehistoric trade with tribes located farther east.

### The Protohistoric Period (A. D. 1800 - ca. 1880)

Although they occupied the entire Kootenai River drainage system in the nineteenth century, the Upper Kutenai had main centers near Fort Steele and Fernie in British Columbia and at the Tobacco Plains, Jennings, and Libby in Montana. Borden's (1956) survey of the Upper Kootenay region and Choquette's (1971) recent work were done in territory occupied for the most part by the Fernie, Fort Steele, and Tobacco Plains bands. The Windermere Lake band is located in former Kutenai territory, but that group came into existence only after the introduction of the reservation system. Our survey area included the territories exploited by the Tobacco Plains, Jennings, and Libby bands.

In a few instances it is possible to relate ethnographic data to particular locales, such as, for example, the main villages and tobacco gardens at Tobacco Plains and near the Fisher River site (24LN10). According to Schaeffer's (1967) informants, the Fisher River site was one of the main camping places for the Libby-Jennings band (A Kiye Nek). This Kutenai group frequently made hunting and fishing trips to Flathead Lake, and probably by 1847 some of them had decided to live there permanently (Malouf 1952:7). For some reason they met almost no resistance from the Pend d'Oreille. After the famous "Treaty of 1855" between Governor Stevens and the western Montana Indian tribes, the Libby-Jennings band abandoned the Kootenai River and settled around the northern end of Flathead Lake. But visits continued between Kutenai bands, and contacts, sometimes for ceremonial purposes, were frequent.

According to Turney-High (1941:178), the Sun Dance was the most important ritual. Since there was only one Sun Dance for all of the Kutenai, this event brought all of the bands together at a time and a place which were dictated by the Sun Dance Spirit. At least once the Sun Dance Spirit selected the Fisher River site, and this major ceremony was held there. Schaeffer's (1967) informants reported that the remains of an old Sun Dance structure were standing there in the 1870's.