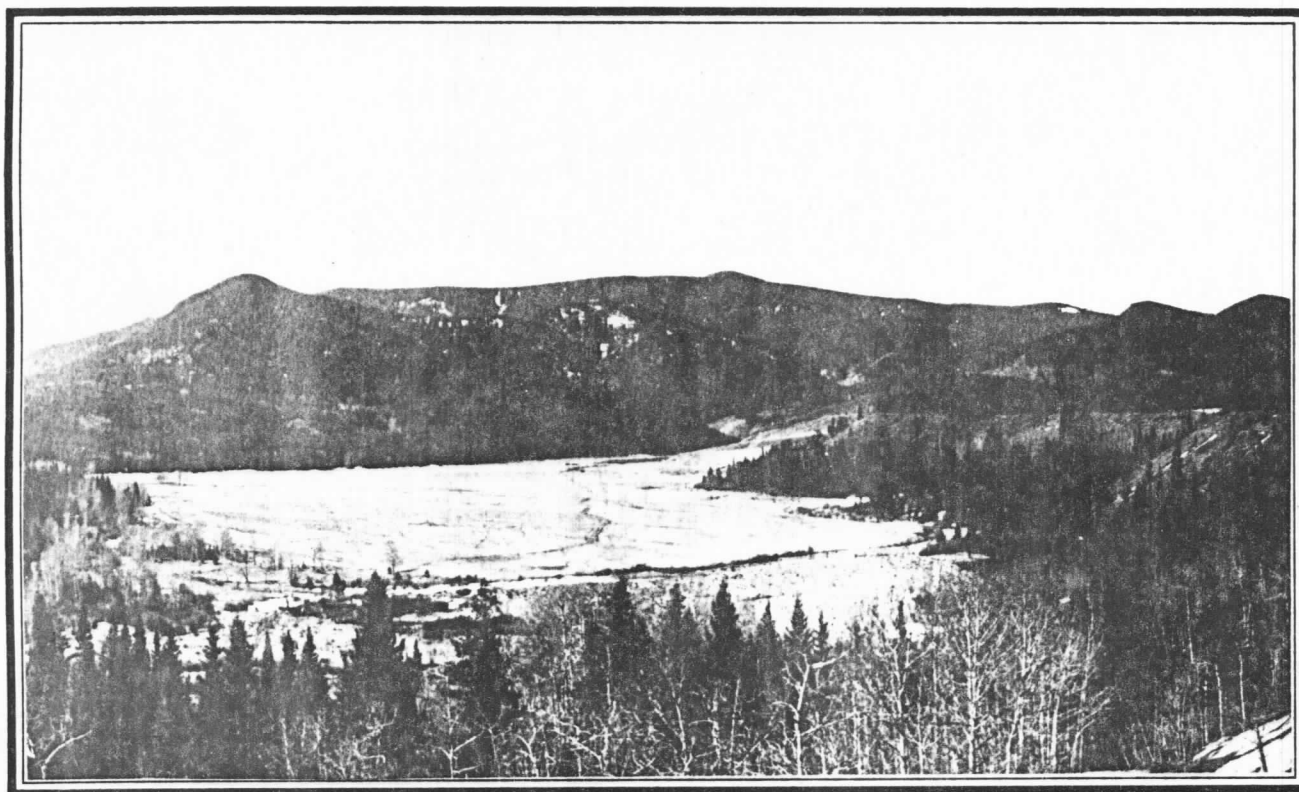


ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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SIBBALD CREEK: 11,000 YEARS OF HUMAN USE OF THE ALBERTA FOOTHILLS

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ABSTRACT

This report presents a detailed account of the findings of the 1980 salvage excavations at site EgPr-2 which is located in the southern Alberta Foothills at Sibbald Flat some 72 kilometers due west of Calgary. The improvement of Highway 968 as part of the general Kananaskis development program necessitated the archaeological work at this site.

Sibbald Flat is a large open meadow situated along the fringe of the high forested Foothills. It had apparently attracted grazing animals and, consequently, their human predators, for thousands of years. For almost a century it has served as a grazing preserve for local ranchers.

The Sibbald Creek site is situated high above the valley floor and provided an excellent vantage of the grasslands below on Sibbald Flat. Although this site proved relatively shallow and poorly stratified the archaeological evidence revealed that it contained the refuse of successive occupation events which commenced at the time of the Fluted Point Tradition and continued without any major interruptions for an estimated 11,000 years. Artifacts were recovered that suggest this site had been utilized at least twice during the historic period.

Thousands of artifacts and other kinds of cultural information were recovered from the salvage excavations at EgPr-2 and much of this report is devoted towards their description. Apart from its wealth of information the Sibbald Creek site is significant for it is the first instance where artifacts of the Fluted Point Tradition were recovered in excavated context in western Canada.

Site EgPr-2 was originally destined for almost total destruction through back-sloping during highway construction. Fortunately, Highway 968 has since been rerouted and the remaining unexcavated part of the site has been left intact.

PART VI: THE HISTORIC CULTURAL MATERIAL FROM SITE EgPr-2

INTRODUCTION

The Sibbald Creek site continued to be used on occasions even during the historic period. Two separate episodes of occupations are evident from the debris recovered: one dating to roughly between 1850 and 1870, and the other relating to sporadic use sometime between 1940 and 1960. The refuse from the earlier phase is tentatively attributed to Assiniboine use of the site. As for the more recent items, they may have been left by people from the Stoney Reserve at Morley, by ranchers, tourists, or employees of the Bow-Crow Forest Reserve. The relative age of a few of the items was not determined. Artifacts relating to the earlier period of use were distributed irregularly over the central and eastern parts of the core area of the site, while those attributed to the later period were clustered east of the Block Excavation in the vicinity of unit 11N 24W.

NINETEENTH CENTURY HISTORIC MATERIAL

The items that are thought to relate to the nineteenth century use of the Sibbald Creek site are described first. They reflect a diversity of functions and, perhaps represent a social unit, or units, comprising members of both sexes. The items include glass, metal and ceramic utensils and containers, pipes, blobs of lead, decorative paraphernalia, and a portion of an awl.

Bottles (N=2)

A largely reconstructed bottle and the neck and some body fragments of a possibly identical example (Figure 89 a and b) were recovered from the excavations. The neck fragment still contained a metal corkscrew and fabric stopper. On the corkscrew ring is stamped in capital letters the words "PAIN KILLER". Both bottles are made of a light green tinted glass. The reconstructed example is 52.0 mm long, 45.5 mm wide and 27.0 mm thick. Both bottles were formed in a two piece mould, a technique which was used into the first decade of this century (Chopping 1978:11). Perry Davis was the first to produce the "Painkiller" concoction in 1840 and registered it in 1845 (Holbrook 1959:149). However, many imitations soon appeared on the market and it is likely that the bottles from EgPr-2 are not from the genuine Perry Davis Painkiller.

Teaspoon (N=1)

Another artifact that may date back to the use of EgPr-2 during the last century, is a spoon (Figure 92) which bears the mark "SHEFFIELD PLT. CO." stamped on its back. It is made of a copper alloy and appears to have been originally silver plated. According to Hume (1969:90 and 184), Sheffield plating was first begun in 1742 and was replaced by the electroplating method in 1840. While it could not be ascertained which process had been used to plate the spoon, the intricate design work present on the front and back of the handle suggests a nineteenth century date for this item.

Awl (N=1)

The tip of an iron awl or nail (Figure 93 d) was found in the vicinity of the ELEY cover. The tip is flattened and slightly twisted. The fragment is 29.1 mm long and 4.3 mm at its thickest point.

Tack (N=1)

One brass tack (Figure 93 b) with an umbrella-shaped head was found at EgPr-2. It is only 12.8 mm long. G. Lutick (personal communication 1981) mentioned that similar specimens were recovered from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta which was occupied during 1799-1821 and 1835-1861.

Lead Blob (N=1)

A small blob of soft metal (Figure 93 a) was discovered in the Block Excavation in the southeast quadrant of unit 13N 39W. The piece is only 17.5 mm long, 13.0 mm wide and 2.2 mm thick. No analysis of the metal was carried out. However, the rounded aspect of the edges suggests that the scrap is lead waste which resulted from the domestic production of shot.

Beads (N=7)

A total of seven glass beads represented by three varieties was recovered from the Sibbald Creek site. Five of the beads (Figure 93 e) are relatively large and round in shape. Aqua-blue in colour, they vary from 8.5 to 9.3 mm in diameter. These wire wound beads are believed to be of European manufacture.

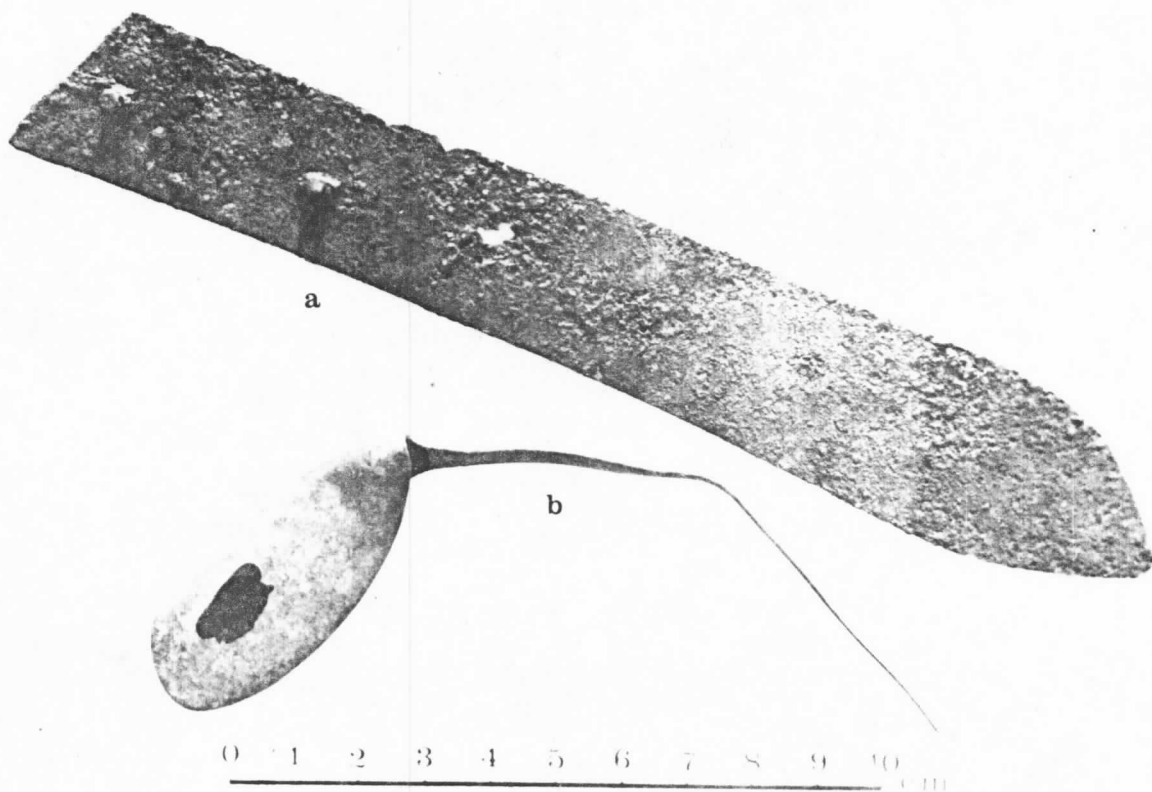


Figure 92: A knife blade, Cat. No. 3532 (a), and a "SHEFFIELD" teaspoon, Cat. No. 3881 (b), from EgPr-2.

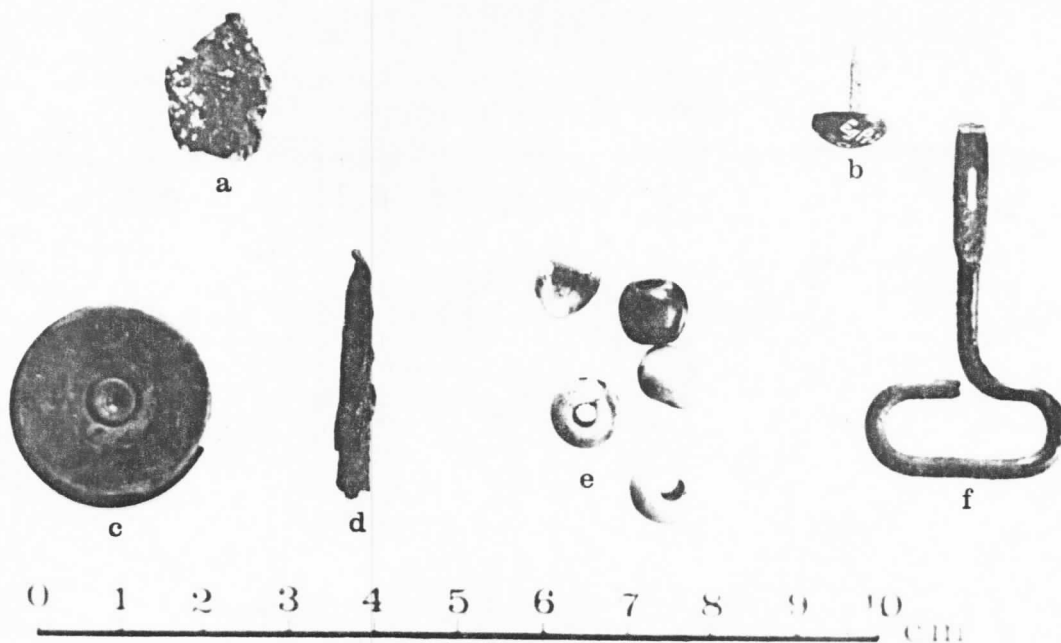


Figure 93: Early and recent historic period artifacts from EgPr-2. Included are a scrap of lead (a), a brass tack (b), a shotgun casing (c), an awl or nail fragment (d), one olive-green and four aqua-blue round beads (e), and a metal can opener (f).

Another bead (Figure 93 e) is similar to the above examples but differs only in that it is of a dark green colour. These large round beads are classified by Kidd and Kidd (1970:84) as Type W1b examples. According to G. Lutick and J. Svencicki (personal communication 1981) similar examples were recovered during the excavations of the 1835-1861 and 1865-1875 phase sites of Rocky Mountain House.

The last example is a multi-faceted transparent blue bead. It is smaller than the above round beads, having a length of 5.0 mm and a diameter of 6.1 mm. It, too, is of European manufacture. Examples of this type were also encountered at the excavations at Rocky Mountain House.

TWENTIETH CENTURY MATERIAL

The items which suggest a relatively recent use of the Sibbald Creek site include nine one inch long round wire shingle nails, a plastic button, a cap and fragment from a beer bottle, a .22 calibre rim-fire "D" cartridge casing, a brass shotgun shell casing with a head stamp designation of "D. C. Co. No. 12 VULCAN" (Figure 93 c), a metal key (Figure 93 f), a plain metal can, and covers from "Player's" cigarette tobacco and "Copenhagen" snuff containers. In addition, there were several scraps of rubber, plastic, and portions of a soft metal container such as the ones from shaving cream or tooth paste. The majority of these items came from the vicinity of unit 11N 24W.

The other items that came from this part of the site are two fragments of a bone china tea cup and 45 small pieces of a thin-walled, clear glass object. This clear glass varies in thickness from 0.9 to 1.0 mm. The diameter, as reconstructed from part of a rolled rim, was in the order of 57.0 mm. It is suspected that the fragments might be from a goblet, or more likely, from a lamp chimney.

A badly rusted iron knife blade (Figure 92) came from the western end of the Block Excavation in the northeast quadrant of unit 14N 41W. It had a rivet-attached, probably wooden, handle. In form it resembles modern machine-made knives. A nine inch metal pie plate or dish was found near by in the northwest quadrant of unit 13N 39W. It was in a more advanced stage of corrosion than was the knife. The occurrence of these two items in the vicinity of two of the nineteenth century artifacts, the "Sheffield" spoon in the southeast quadrant of unit 14N 44W and the olive-green round bead in the northeast quadrant of unit 14N 43 W, suggests that perhaps the knife and plate, too, relate to the Indian occupation of the site during the last century.