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The Mortlach Site
in the
Besant Valley of Central Saskatchewan

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Soils Report
Physical Features and Soils of the
Mortlach Archaeological Area

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Evidence of Contact with White Man

Two objects were found of European origin. Both of these appeared in the very top of the upper level.

1. A Blue Bead

Found in square N₂W₄ of Project 2. This is a trade bead of the type commonly distributed throughout the area in the late seventeen hundreds. The fact that only one bead was found indicates its scarcity at this time, and may well move back the time of the late occupation to the seventeen hundreds. A good estimation would be 1750 A.D.

2. Metal Scraper

This was found in the grass roots. It is a very crude tool made by flattening a section of hollow tubing. The metal was tested and proved to be high-speed steel—undoubtedly part of a gun barrel. The metal barrel was seven/sixty-fourths of an inch thick.

Features

There were no indications of a house type anywhere in this cultural level—in fact, nothing in the way of features except fire hearths. These may well be called fire *pits* for they were circular depressions one foot and a half to two feet across, and possible six to eight inches deep, dug into the original surface of the ground during occupation. The sand under these pits was baked hard and reddened by the fire. Burned stone and bone were scattered in and around them, and they contained much ash-impregnated soil; from the top they could be discovered by the observing of the blackened area in the vicinity of the hearth stones. These people apparently lived in tents or shelters and built open fires over which they cooked their food.



ILLUSTRATION 5
Firepit with Stoves, Bone and Artifacts of the Moose Jaw Culture—Project 1B