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BANFF PREHISTORY: PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT

AND SUBSISTENCE TECHNOLOGY

IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK

ALBERTA

by

Ole A. Christensen

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SECTION 8: BONE TOOLS

Metapodial Flesher N=1 (Fig. 24 No. 2).

Modification: Longitudinally thinned and transversely cut. Due to decomposition, the serrated distal end of this artifact has largely disappeared. Considerable polish was present on the edges of the transverse cut at the distal end, suggesting some use at right angles to its longitudinal axis.

Element: Elk metatarsal.

Metrics: Length, 26.4 cm; maximum width at proximal end, 5.3 cm; length of modified element, 23.5 cm; length of transverse cut, 16.1 cm; maximum distal width, 2.8 cm.

Distribution: EkPw-2.

Discussion: This specimen is similar to those illustrated by Wormington and Forbis (1965:111) from the Red Deer area, except it lacks the incised decoration found on the latter. This type of tool is common in the northern Plains of the United States but much less so in Canada (Wormington and Forbis 1965:107).

SECTION 9: HISTORIC TRADE GOODS

Gunflint N=1 (Fig. 31 No. 2).

Form: Square.

Modification: Retouch is present on the dorsal surface along four edges. On the ventral surface it is present on one edge only.

Flake Type: Blade.

Lithic Type: Dark grey flint.

Metrics: Length, 27 mm; width, 25 mm; thickness, 8 mm.

Distribution: EiPw-2.

Discussion: The metrics of this specimen (see above) suggest that it was most likely used in a musket, according to both Smith's Table (Smith 1960:49) and Woodward's Table (Woodward 1960:39). Due to the lithic type, it is likely that this is a British gunflint, rather than one of the French specimens of "blonde" light-coloured flint (Smith 1960:46). Also, French gunflints are characterized by "gnawed" heels (Hamilton 1960:77) as compared to the square backs, almost entirely formed by primary flaking in the case of the British specimens (Smith 1960:46).

Gunflints were produced in Britain as early as the seventeenth century. These were produced on spalls until around 1750. It is only after this time that conventional "prismatic" gunflints on blades predominate. However, until 1800, the French, at least in the western hemisphere, had almost a complete monopoly on the gunflint trade (Hamilton, 1964:53). The Banff specimen is probably a British gunflint of the type produced on a blade, obtained from the Northwest Company or the Hudson's Bay Company some time after 1800.

Trade Beads N=6 (Fig. 31 Nos. 3-9).

Form: Four whole and two fragmentary round glass beads.

Metrics: 6 to 8 mm x 9 to 10 mm in diameter, with 2 to 3 mm holes.

Distribution: EjPx-6.

Discussion: These beads are quite similar to Elliot's "large blue opaque glass beads" (Elliot 1971:234) from the Cypress Hills, Alberta, which measured 6 to 8 mm x 9 mm in diameter. Beads of this type were apparently numerous, all during the nineteenth century, in the middle and upper Missouri River area (Elliot 1971:235). These specimens may have reached the inhabitants of Banff Park, either directly or indirectly, from American traders.

- No. 1 Incised Stone
No. 2 Gunflint
Nos. 3-9 Blue Glass Trade Beads

Fig. 31 Banff Lithic Miscellany and Historic Trade Goods

(1.3 Actual Size)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

