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SOME LATE SITES IN THE OLDMAN RIVER REGION, ALBERTA

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Glenbow Foundation

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1957, I was informed through Dr. Ernest Reinhold, University of Alberta, of a site along the Oldman River, northeast of the town of Coaldale. Immediately afterward, I went to Coaldale to see Jacob Hubert, who had reported it to Reinhold. Hubert escorted me to the Ross site (in the Borden system, D1Pd-3) and to two other nearby localities—the Upper Kill (D1Pd-1) and the Lower Kill (D1Pd-2).

The Ross site was originally discovered by David Quapp of Coaldale, who, like Hubert, takes a vital interest in archaeology and its problems. The Foundation was fortunate enough to secure the assistance of Quapp during the summer of 1957. Arthur and John Quapp, Norman and Edward Richards, all rendered valuable service during their tenure as employees of the Foundation. I will not forget the fine co-operation I received throughout the summer from Timothy J. O'Leary of the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

The Ross site received its name from the landowner, Cleve Ross of Chin, Alberta. Freely and openly, he granted us permission to excavate on his property. The Davidson family allowed us to dig at the buffalo kills. For helping to expedite digging, as well as for their generous hospitality, we owe the late Mr. C. R. Daniel, Jr., and his wife of Lethbridge, and Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Meyers a great debt. Herb Johnson of Chin provided us with much useful information. I hope the many others who contributed directly and indirectly to the success of our field work will accept my appreciation for their part in it. Especially, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to J. D. Herbert, formerly Executive Director of the Glenbow Foundation, for the enthusiasm and encouragement which made all obstacles seem simple.

THE SITES

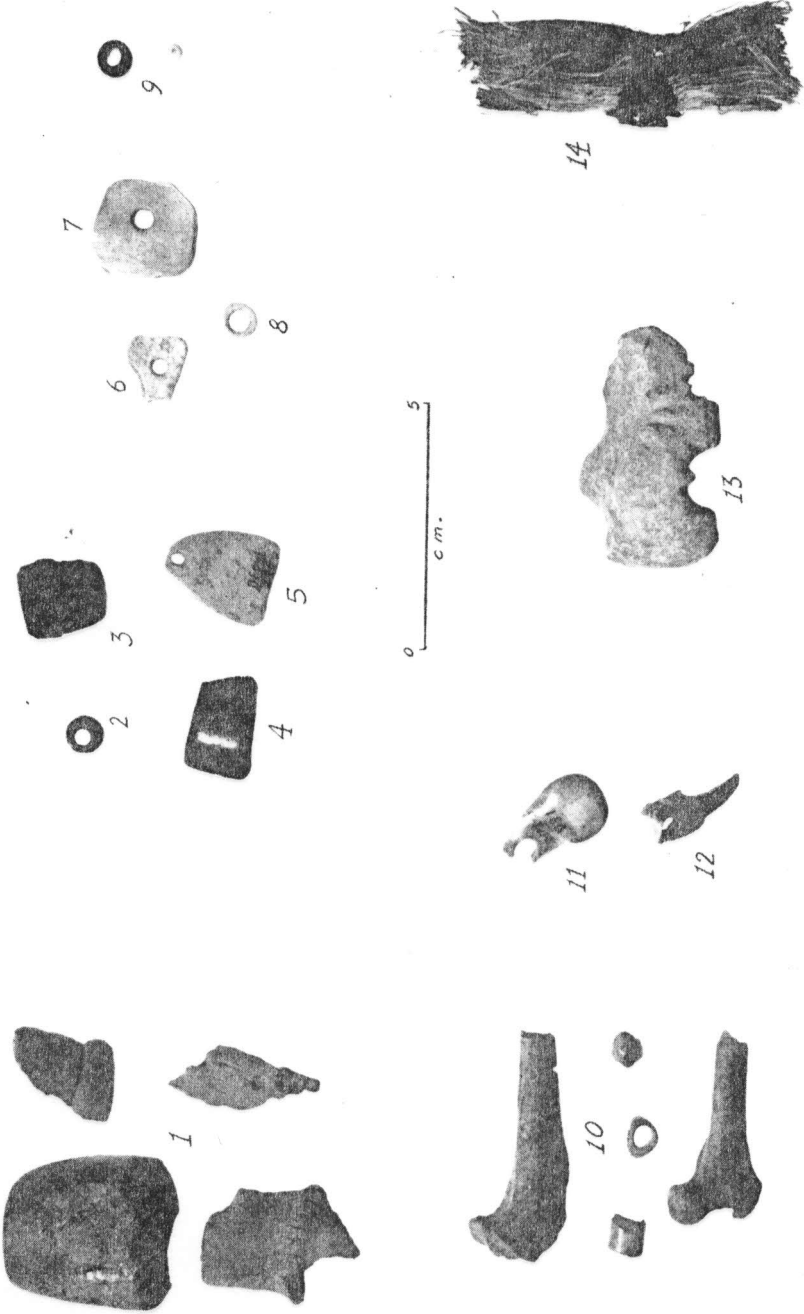
The Ross site lies on a bottom along the south bank of the Oldman River, about three miles above the confluence of the Little Bow River (Plate I). Substantial undercutting of the bank exposed three occupation layers containing hearths, faunal remains, and cultural debris. The top layer runs continuously some 670 feet along the cutbank; while the lower two layers, not so darkly stained, are intermittent and less extensive. The occupation layers have been numbered—I, II, III—from bottom to top.

PLATE IV

Various artifacts from the Oldman River region.

- Fig. 1. Pipe fragments (elbow pipe, upper left)
- Fig. 2. Bead (steatite)
- Fig. 3. Pipe plug
- Fig. 4. Ring (steatite)
- Fig. 5. Pendant (steatite)
- Fig. 6,7. Pendants (shell)
- Fig. 8. Bead (shell)
- Fig. 9. Beads (glass)
- Fig. 10. Cut bird bones and bird-bone beads
- Fig. 11. Pendant (elk tooth)
- Fig. 12. Pendant (bird claw)
- Fig. 13. Buffalo stone (ammonite septum)
- Fig. 14. Hair brush

From Layer II of the Ross site: 8; Layer III: 6,7,11,14; Grassy Lake Cairn: 1-5,9,12,13; From Layers I, II, III of the Ross site and the Grassy Lake Cairn: 10



Flaked bone is nowhere better exemplified than in a split rib from Layer I of the Ross site (Plate V, fig. 15). Several flakes have been removed from the outer surface to produce a fairly sharp-edged instrument.

Two *elk incisors*, one each from the Cairn and Layer III of the Ross site, were perforated at the root, which is flat and thin in section (Plate IV, fig. 11). Both appear to have been drilled from two sides; the perforation is worn smooth, almost polished. The specimen from the Ross site has minute incisions on both surfaces running across the perforation from one edge of the tooth to the other. A small nick occurs along one edge where the incisions meet.

Three large *bird claws* have been drilled from both sides near the articulatory surface (Plate IV, fig. 12). Owing to decomposition, the horny covering has disappeared, leaving the porous, bony inner surface exposed. In their present condition, the claws run about 2.5 cm in length. The perforations are about 4 mm in diameter.

The fragmentary outer surface of a *beaver tooth* was found at the Cairn. The isolated position of the Cairn and its elevation above the river make it seem highly probable that this fragment was transported by man. But the fragment shows no sign of workmanship.

WORK IN SHELL

Of three *shell beads* from the Cairn, two are gastropods: one has been referred to *Natica clausa* by C. R. Stelek of the University of Alberta. An aperture has been cut into the main body convolution. It ranges from Lower California to Alaska on the Pacific Coast. The second has been referred by Stelek to *Olivella boetica*, which is found from San Diego to the Arctic and Bering seas. A small shell bead, a thickness of about 1.5 mm and a diameter twice that, is probably made of *Unio*. Several fragments of this shell were recovered at the Cairn.

Two shell beads from the Ross site (Layers II and III) are virtually indistinguishable from each other (Plate IV, fig. 8). They are 8 to 9 mm in diameter with apertures (drilled from one side) of about 3 mm. Probably made of sections of *Unio* shells, they are 2 to 3 mm thick.

Two poorly made *pendants* from Layer III of the Ross site vary in form (Plate IV, fig. 6, 7). One is roughly triangular. It is small (maximum dimension 14 mm) and has an aperture of 2.5 mm. The hole was drilled from both sides. The other pendant is about 20 mm square. The hole, which is 3 mm in diameter, was drilled from both sides. Both pendants are probably made of *Unio*. Fragments of *Unio* were found at all sites except the buffalo kills.

WORK IN GLASS

Two *trade beads* were recovered at the Cairn (Plate IV, fig. 9). The larger, dark blue and transparent, has an oval-shaped aperture ($2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 mm across), the edges of which are unevenly moulded. It is slightly larger than 7 mm in diameter and 4 mm in thickness. The smaller bead, also globular in shape, is white and opaque. The bead is slightly flattened at both openings. The aperture is round and regular at the edges. It is 3 mm in diameter and 2 mm thick.