

THE EVANS WICKIUP SITE

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DENNIS C. JOYES
CONTRIBUTIONS BY DON GREY

DISCOVERY

The Evans Site consists of the remains of a single conical wickiup located in the Little Snowy Mountains of central Montana. An amateur archaeologist from Billings learned of the Evans Site through Clarence Evans of Lavina, Montana, and in April of 1962, an expedition guided by Evans located the site. Photographs were taken, as well as core samples from the lodge poles, in an attempt to date the structure by dendrochronology. However, no further work was done at the time due to unexpected snow and cold weather in the area.

The following year, on June eighth and ninth of 1963, another expedition also consisting primarily of members of the Montana Archaeological Society, returned to the site and conducted an intensive archaeological investigation, the results of which comprise the subject matter of this paper.

ENVIRONMENT

The Evans Site is located in the hilly uplands of the Little Snowy Mountains of central Montana. The Big Snowy Mountains, of which the Little Snowies are an extension, are isolated, vertical uplift mountains which rise 3000 to 4000 feet above the surrounding plains to a maximum elevation of 8730 feet above sea level. This rather small mountain range, which is about twenty-four miles in length, running from northwest to southeast, and about ten miles wide is extended on the east approximately another fifteen miles by a dissected plateau, 5300 to 5500 feet in elevation known as the Little Snowy Mountains. It is in this dissected plateau, near where it begins to merge into the higher uplift areas of the Big Snowies, that the Evans Site is located.

The uplift that created the Big Snowy Mountains was more steeply dipping on the south and as a result the mountains rise rather abruptly on the south side while a low angle of dip on the north and east has created the benches or foothills which are known as the Little Snowy Mountains. The surrounding plains gradually slope away from the mountains and one

ARTIFACTS

Two glass beads and the barrel of a flintlock gun constitute the artifacts found at the site. All of these items were found in the interior of the wickiup and were covered with from four to six inches of humus. The beads were a tubular, barrel shaped variety one-half inch long and .2 inches in diameter and made of opaque, white glass. Dr. Arthur Woodward, of the University of Arizona, stated that such beads date from the "early 19th century". (Dr. Woodward to Don Grey, personal communication, 1964.) Grey has undertaken an intensive study of the gun barrel and his findings are reported in the following section:

THE NORTHWEST GUN FROM THE EVANS SITE

BY DON GREY

Upon discovery, the barrel of the gun was about sixty-seven centimeters in length and had obviously been crudely sawed off at the muzzle end. The bore measured just under .60 caliber i.e. about twenty-four gauge. The breech end of the barrel was closed by a plug with integral tang. The tang had a round end and a chamfered hole for the head of a screw. About eighteen centimeters of the breech end of the barrel was semi-octagonal in shape; octagonal on the top and sides, but round on the bottom. Two blocks for retaining pins were brazed to the bottom of the barrel, one at twenty-six centimeters from the breech and one just behind the makeshift muzzle at sixty-four centimeters from the breech. Approximately eleven and four tenths centimeters from the breech was the mark of a former rear sight. A home-made rear sight had been formed a short distance in front of the original by using a chisel or knife to turn up a transverse flap of metal and then cutting a notch in the middle to form the sight. A new front sight had been formed near the sawed-off muzzle by turning up a similar flap and then filing away the sides to leave a small projection near the center. Some marks, including a small pennant could be seen near the breech on the left flat of the barrel.

In the spring of 1964, the writer undertook the removal of the rust from the exterior of the gun barrel. The principal method employed was that of electrolytic reduction (Plenderleith 1960) with only light mechanical methods used in places of thick rust accumulation. The rust removal was extraordinarily successful, and a large number of marks were brought to light.

On the left flat, near the breech, appeared the initials T. B., over a pennant design. Above the initials was a fleur-