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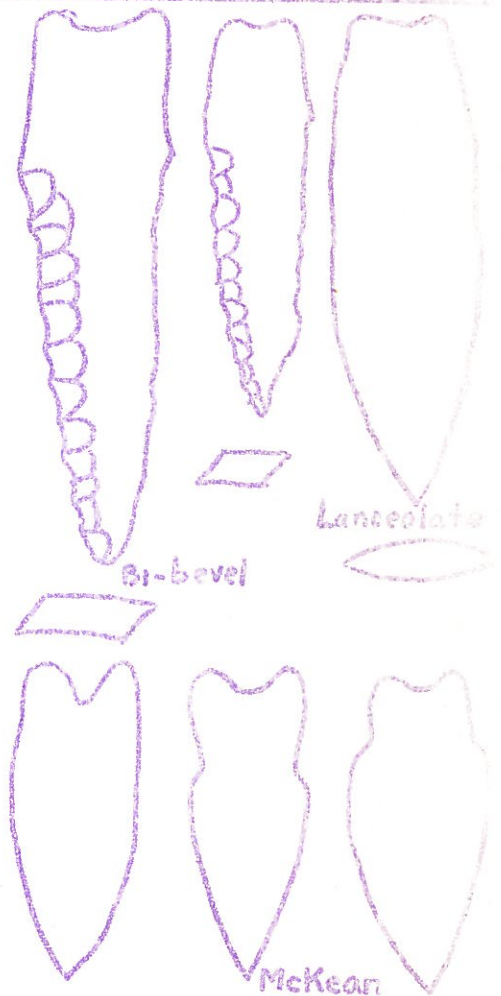
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Site number 48 JO 303 is a group of small rockshelters on the Middle Fork of Powder River. Starting June 20, two of these shelters were excavated by members of the Casper and Sheridan chapters of the Wyoming Archaeological Society.

This site had been discovered early in June by Don Grey, Al Kester, and Dr. Bentzen while doing the reconnaissance in the vicinity of 48 JO 301, the Sweet Site. Preliminary surface hunting and small trenches in the rock shelters revealed enough cultural debris to make them worthy of further investigation, and it was decided that they would make good training projects for some of the new Casper members.

The shelters proved to be unexpectedly productive. The first shelter dug was very small, but yielded a well-defined habitation layer, and some 63 artifacts were recovered, along with two charcoal samples for dating purposes. As had been hoped from surface finds at the previous survey of the Sweet site, some McKean culture began to appear.

The second shelter to be dug was larger than the first, and proved to be proportionately more productive of information as well. It proved to have several habitation layers which were very well defined in large areas of the shelter floor, and these layers provided a wealth of artifacts and charcoal. Some 123 artifacts were recovered.

The first shelter to be dug was called Number Two on the site plan. This shelter was about 20 feet in length, 7 feet high, and had about a 6-foot overhang at the deepest point. Immediately in front of the shelter was a flat space of ground about 25 feet in radius, bordered in front by several large rocks. Some of these large rocks had small basins eroded from them, and served as natural water traps during rains.

Excavation was begun on this shelter by digging a 3-foot wide trench perpendicular to the wall and about 25 feet long. This trench revealed only one habitation layer as indicated by a band of darkened earth. The dark color was due to charcoal and ash from fires. The soil above this layer had been disturbed by animals and other occupants, and was not differentiated from surface material. Some 19 artifacts were found in this material. These were: 3 scrapers, 6 blades or fragments, 2 McKean type points, 1 side-notched point and 7 point fragments of unidentifiable style.

The habitation layer produced, among other things, 2 McKean points, 9 corner-notched points, 6 side-notched points, 1 bi-bevel type artifact (of which more later), and 8 point fragments of unidentifiable type. There were several blade fragments and scrapers of course. One object of unidentified usage was a small ball, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, of igneous rock, quite round and well polished. This was probably a stream-worn piece, but the reason for its presence in the site is not known.

The occurrence of the McKean types was very encouraging, as it was hoped that the McKean complex might be dated as a result of this investigation. The McKean complex is known to be older than 3200 years but has never been accurately dated. The shelter yielded two carbon samples, but the dates would be of doubtful significance since there were several artifact types mixed together in the stratum.

With the completion of work on shelter Number Two, attention was turned to a larger shelter, called Number Three. An exploratory or investigative trench was made, and in the wall of this trench five layers were noted. The top layer was loose material or scuff which yielded a

few artifacts. The second layer was darkened from ash and charcoal, and produced several artifacts, including some McKean types. The third layer was composed of yellow, pebbly sand, and contained little charcoal, except in isolated firepits but produced a number of artifacts, including McKean types. The fourth layer was again darkened by ash and charcoal, and produced a number of artifacts, including some of the bi-bevel objects which are of considerable interest. The fifth layer was sterile white sand.

For record purposes, the first and second layers were combined into Habitation Layer One. The third layer was called Habitation Layer Two, and the fourth was called Habitation Layer Three.

Parts of the shelter floor had been disturbed by rodent burrows, and at least one place had been dug over an area of five square feet or so. As excavation proceeded, a fairly large and nearly undisturbed area was isolated in the middle of the shelter. The stratigraphy was well defined in this material, and it was hoped that a clear sequence of cultures would be obtained here, as well as sufficient charcoal to afford a carbon date on the various levels.

123 artifacts were recovered from the shelter. The greatest depth of habitation evidence was 34 inches. Approximately 400 square feet of floor area were excavated.

In Layer One, some 30 artifacts were recovered, including: 5 bifaces, 8 blades, 2 scrapers, and 15 points. The 15 points were divided into 3 side-notched, 4 corner-notched, 4 McKean, and 1 bi-bevel type, plus 4 fragments that could not be assigned to a type. The bi-bevel is called a point although some doubt exists as to its actual function.

Layer Two yielded 10 blades, 7 scrapers, 2 bone awls, 6 bifaces or choppers, and 26 points. The points were divided into 5 side-notched, 1 corner-notched, 15 McKean, 1 lanceolate, 1 bi-bevel, and 3 unassignable.

Layer Three produced a scraper, 4 blades, 1 biface, and 33 projectile points or fragments thereof. The points were: 1 side-notched type with a concave base, 1 corner-notched type, 7 McKean, 17 bi-bevel, and 3 bases that are probably bi-bevel types, 1 lanceolate, and 3 unassignable fragments.

Adequate charcoal samples were found in all three habitation layers, including several firepits and hearths which had points in close context. It seems assured that dates will be found for all the horizons involved. The 27 McKean points found seem to make it quite certain that the site represented a phase of the McKean complex, primarily during the time of deposition of the second habitation layer.

The McKean people must have been hunters, for the strata which contained McKean artifacts also contained deer bones invariably. A large number of scrapers was found in this second layer also, most of which were worn smooth on the edges, adding further evidence of hunting and hide working.

Much work will be done on the materials recovered in order to obtain as accurate a picture as possible of the cultural significance of the finds, but it can be said at this time that the site is an important one in the Middle Period archaeology of this area.

The bi-bevel objects (a more suitable name can probably be found) are the subject of much discussion, some of which is outlined below. They will furnish conversation and debate material for several nights during the coming winter.

Some 23 bi-bevel objects, or perhaps more accurately, 19 bi-bevels and 4 probable bi-bevels were found in Shelter Three. Three of these could not be assigned definite levels because they came from disturbed areas. All the others came from Layer Three, the oldest layer which produced evidence of habitation at the site. In Layer Three, they constituted the predominant artifact in the numerical sense, the runner-up being the 7 McKean points from that layer.

The name bi-bevel was attached to the objects because of the manner of flaking along the edges. In general outline (see cover), the objects resemble projectile points with lanceolate type base sections and triangular point sections. The bases are very finely chipped, showing long narrow pressure flaking in many cases. The bases are slightly concave, and are lenticular in cross section. The edges of the point section are flaked from one side only, giving the edges a beveled appearance. Both edges are treated in similar fashion, as if, after sharpening one edge, the point was rotated 180 degrees about its long axis and sharpened on the other edge.

Several of these objects are known from surface finds and many different names have been given them. The most commonly applied name is "drill." Other people feel that they were re-worked points that had been sharpened while hafted by simply flaking from one side, and then rotating as described above. There is, of course, the possibility that these are simply an individual style of point, deliberately and originally made in the fashion in which we find them.

Four complete bi-bevels were found, ranging in length from one and seven-eighths inches to two and seven-eighths inches. Eight of the other fragments are nearly complete, and probably fall within the size range of the complete artifacts. Seven of the items are made of red chert, and the others of various textures and colors of quartzite which occur in an outcrop near the site.

A close microscopic examination of all the specimens shows no wear on the lateral edges. On the four complete specimens, no wear or polishing of the point can be noted. Examination of the broken specimens in which the base is intact shows that the points were broken off by force exerted toward the base along the major axis of the tool, or by lateral forces which "pried" the points off, causing abrupt fracture along a surface nearly perpendicular to the long axis of the object. In at least one case, the point is very wide and thin, and would stand very little torsion.

Experiments with quartzite points of similar shape show that such material will bear very little torsion in any case. Trial with one of the complete specimens (number 173) from the site showed that even pasteboard was sufficient to break off the point when it was twisted in that soft material. The point will, however, bear considerable compressive stress without breaking.

The fact that this artifact is the predominant type in the layer in which it occurs seems to weigh against the hypothesis that they are drills.

It is the opinion (and only an opinion) of the author, that these are a distinct type of projectile point. The subject is far from settled however, and it is hoped that Site No. 48 JD 303 will shed more light on the subject. At any rate, the controversy is an interesting one and will lighten some tedious hours between digs.

This site consisted of some 98 loosely piled stone cairns along an old trail from the point of its origin in the mouth of Middle Fork Canyon to a point almost two miles upstream along the comparatively flat flood bordering the canyon. In addition to these structures, there are two cairns and a 125-foot line of stone on top of a hill beside the cairn marked trail. All these were mapped, and half of the larger cairn atop the hill was excavated. This cairn produced no artifacts per se, showing only a few flakes, one large lamellar flake, and two small bone fragments which have not been identified, but which do not appear to be human.

Photographs of the trail were taken, and some further excavations will be done in the future as time permits. It is hoped that some sort of date can be obtained for the structures. A large piece of "mountain mahogany" growing from the center of the cairn which was excavated may give a minimum date, but unless some typed artifacts can be found in direct association with the cairns, or better, some charcoal, there does not seem to be much hope of getting an exact date. Certainly, someone spent a lot of time and effort constructing the cairns. It does not seem likely that they served as simple trail markers, since many of them are quite large, and some are only a few feet apart.

SMOKE EATERS

During the operations at 48 JO 303, the workers were driven off the dig by hail and lightning one afternoon. Two days later, it was noticed that a tree near the road to the site was smouldering. The tree was watched for a few days, and when it did not seem to be going out by itself, the archaeologists took time off and did a little fire-fighting. Water was poured on the smouldering char by Louis Allen, who climbed up to the place where the lightning had struck. Several shovels of dirt thrown from the ground completed the job. No more smouldering was noted in the next few days.

LOSING GROUND ON WORK

As the rockshelters at 48 JO 303 were being dug, Don Gray and Glenn Sweet found three more to dig, and Dr. Bentzen and Don Gray spotted two more across a small canyon which they did not investigate, but which appeared to have possibilities. One of the shelters which Don found before breakfast one morning yielded two manes upon surface examination and appears to be worth some digging time. Two dug, and five found. We'll never catch up at this rate.

Some curious structures which look like caved-in rock igloos were found also, and these may prove to be cache sites or storage bins used by Middle Period foragers. Excavation may yield some interesting answers.

All-in-all, everyone was very cooperative and well conducted at this dig, and it is only for those who have not been to the dig that the ground rules below are repeated.

1. Abide by all rules agreed upon with the landowner. This includes closing gates found closed, bringing no firearms or fireworks to the site, and leaving dogs at home.
2. Observe good camping rules. Be careful with fire, matches, and cigarettes. Clean up all trash. A garbage pit is always dug at Society camp areas. Leave the area just as you found it.
3. It is expected that all Society members at the dig will follow the work schedule. Taking time off from work to do personal artifact collecting is in bad taste, particularly when the Society has furnished the site. Plenty of time is available in the mornings and evenings for surface hunting.
4. Surface finds are the property of the finder, but are to be checked in with the recorders for correlation with the materials obtained from the other work. Don't fail to check in your findings, for these are often a big help in evaluating work at the dig.
5. "Planting" or "salting" artifacts is strictly taboo. This can lead to much lost time and confusion of results.
6. All information about archaeological sites is confidential. The Society wants to preserve sites from "pot-hunters" until operations at the site are finished and results complete.
7. No digging or other subsurface work is to be undertaken except at the direction of the supervisory staff. Such work might jeopardize a valuable site.

Your cooperation will be appreciated. Those who were at the dig will agree that archaeologists are good campfellows, and good workers. We have an exceptionally fine esprit de corps, and have lots of fun. Let's keep it that way.

OVER THE CAMPFIRE

Harold Gilbert gets a special vote of thanks for his guitar and chin music at the dig. A few of those old songs around a campfire top off an evening just right, to our way of thinking.

MEMBERS ONE