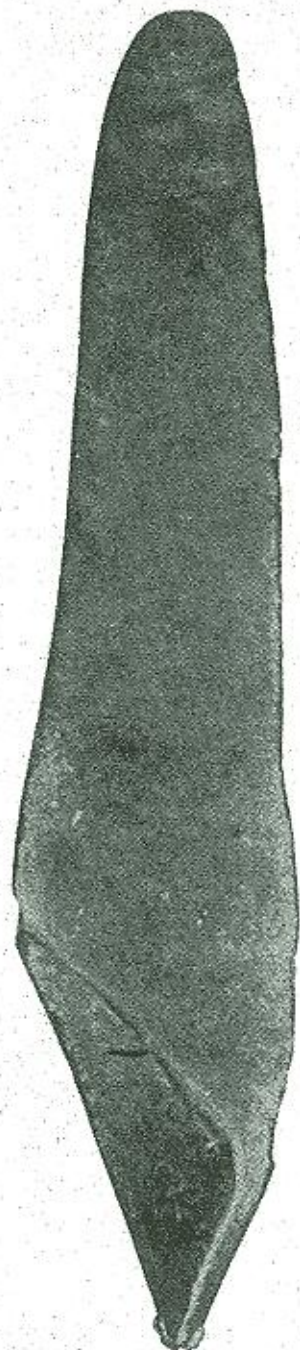


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Cover: Aboriginal Brass Knife

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ARTICLES AND REPORTS

BOISE RIVER ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY

*William James Nance
Idaho Archaeological Society*

The Boise River flood plain and its adjacent terraces provide a rich and varied environment. This environment was no doubt even richer in native plant and animal species before the intensive exploitation by settlers and agriculturalists beginning in the mid 1800's. These multiple environmental niches were exploited by the aboriginal population who inhabited the area prior to the arrival of Europeans. Aboriginal peoples left evidence of this exploitation in the form of lithic scatters, campsites, habitation areas and rock alignments, though subsequent activity has obliterated many.

In the spring of 1980, an archaeological site survey was conducted along the Boise River in Southwestern Idaho (see Figure 1). The area surveyed was bounded upstream by the lower or West end of Eagle Island and was similarly bounded downstream by the Indian Creek confluence with the Boise River at Caldwell, Idaho. This area is included in the Lower Valley Zone of Boise River as described by Ames (Ames, 1982), and includes portions of the flood plain, the terraces bordering the flood plain, drainages entering the Boise River for a distance of two miles upstream from their respective confluences and the Canyon Hill cliffs and narrows.

The survey was funded partially by a SHPO grant from the Idaho State Historical Society and all records, photographs, collections and other pertinent data were filed with and retained by the State of Idaho, Idaho State Historical Society Archaeologists office.

The survey was undertaken in an effort to locate and record any prehistoric period sites which may have remained in the area in question. Four problems presented themselves.

Little or no previous site surveys had been undertaken within the surveyed area proper, consequently, there were no established patterns of habitation with which information concerning possible site locations could be cross-referenced or compared. The area immediately upstream from the survey had been investigated in 1976 by Michael Ostrogorsky. The report indicated that the area surveyed was heavily impacted by agricultural and urban development. These impacts, together with owner reluctance to give permission to visually inspect their property resulted in no sites being recorded.

Extensive occupation of the area by white inhabitants since the mid 1800's onward has resulted in large areas of earth movement, road and canal construction. These disturbances continue into the present time. Agricultural and residential developments have totally rearranged, and in many instances obliterated surface depositions.

The Boise River has shifted its main channel at least twice since the 1860's, once in 1864 and again in the 1940's, and is now confined to its present channel by a series of constructed levies and dikes. Little or no data is available to document the former position of the main channel and associated geologic features.

Approximately 90 percent of the area is in possession of private owners, and while most people were very cooperative, some access to potential site areas was denied by the property owners.

Surveying strategies were developed to locate surviving geologic features which may have been utilized by aboriginal populations. These geologic features included fans and fan remnants, terraces and terrace remnants situated within the flood plain itself, high secondary terraces located adjacent to drainages entering the flood plains and areas such as the rock shelters which exist along the Canyon Hill cliffs and narrows. U.S.C.S. United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service soils maps and charts were used to locate these geological features. Those areas identified were then visually inspected, contingent upon the owner's permission, for evidence of aboriginal usage.

Four areas of aboriginal usage were identified within the area surveyed. These four areas include the Canyon Hill complex, the Willow Creek Drainage, riverine sites along the Boise River and scattered isolated sites.

INVENTORY OF SITES LOCATED

Investigations based upon a visual survey of landforms identified as having potential archaeological depositions revealed the presence of 24 sites. These sites were identified on the basis of three criteria. The first criterion concerns the actual physical presence of cultural material on the site itself. The second identifying criterion addresses itself to collections taken from individual areas. The third criterion was utilized only in conjunction with the sites

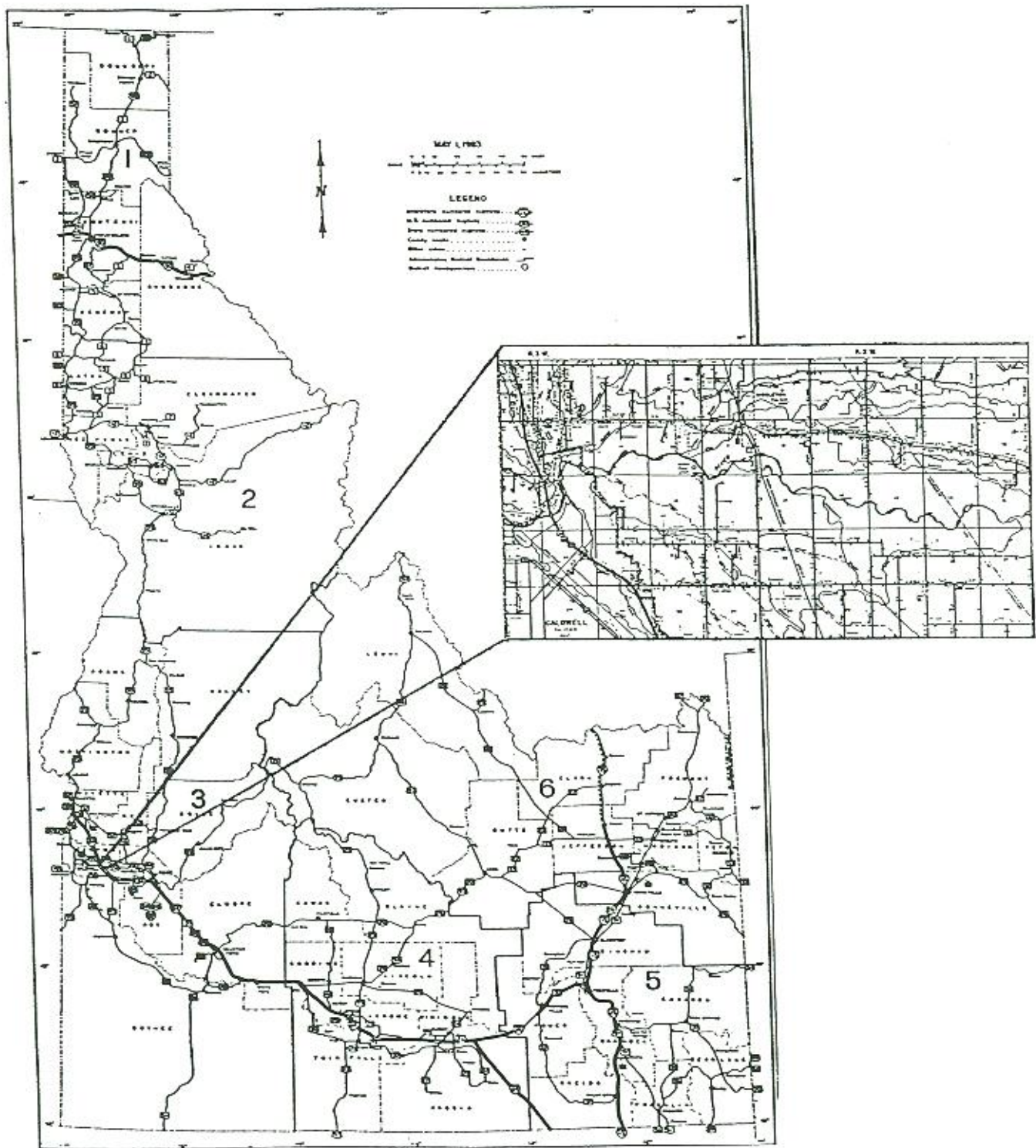


Figure 1. Map showing the general location of the study area.

located on the Canyon Hill escarpment. Certain rock-shelter sites were classified as having archaeological potential based upon comparison of data generated from shelters which had been excavated by amateurs and collectors. Shelters which contained select soil features and physical dimensions similar to those which had been excavated were identified as having archaeological potential.

The twenty-four sites identified, align themselves into four broad categories. Scattered isolated sites, randomly

distributed throughout the terraces and the upland flood plain, comprise the first category. The riverine sites distributed along the streamways and alluvial terraces bordering the Boise River are the second category of sites. A group of sites situated along the terraces of Willow Creek for a distance of three miles from the place where Willow Creek enters the Boise River flood plain are included in the third category. The fourth category of sites are those which are located upon the basalt escarpments of the Caldwell, Idaho, Canyon Hill narrows.

Three of the sites are located within Ada County, Idaho. Twenty-one sites are located within Canyon County, Idaho.

The site number, as assigned by the Office of the State Archaeologist; a physical description of the site; and a brief description of the identifying criteria for each site located are as follows.

10 AA 170

This site is located adjacent to Indian Creek in an area where a spring which emerges from beneath a basalt flow and Indian Creek has cut a small canyon through the basalt. The site consists of a pair of rock alignments and accompanying lithic scatter. One alignment is a hollow rectangle extending from a short section of rimrock. The second alignment consists of a line of large basalt boulders arranged along the edge of a rimrock ledge. These alignments were considered to be aboriginal in origin because of the presence of lithic debris found in direct association with the alignments. These lithics consisted of cryptocrystalline and obsidian material.

10 AA 171

This site was located on the south side of the Boise River on the high terraces which parallel the Boise River flood plain. This is an area where water from local springs and seeps combines with run-off to drain the rolling expanses of the terrace surfaces. The cultural material consists of fire cracked rock, spalls and cobble tools. The area is subject to intensive agricultural activity and housing development.

10 AA 172

This site is located on the upper terraces of the Boise River. It is located adjacent to a water course. The creek bed is now dry and any water it carried had been diverted for agricultural usage. The area is also subjected to very intensive agricultural usage. At the time of the survey, the field had been plowed and disced. Cultural material consisted of a cryptocrystalline biface fragment and a cobble chopper. The biface is the distal end of a knife.

10 CN 23

This site is a collapsed lava blister situated on the Canyon Hill escarpment overlooking the Boise River. The shelter entrance faces to the Northwest. The estimated area of the shelter is 16 square meters. The floor is covered with large boulders and soils. A bivalve shell fragment was recovered from the surface at the rear of the shelter.

10 CN 24

This site is a rockshelter. It is located on the Northwest corner of Canyon Hill. The shelter is formed in a collapsed lava blister. The floor of the shelter is filled with roof fall and soils. There is a deposit of historic debris in the form of a hearth and glass fragments on the floor of the shelter.

10 CN 25

This site is a rockshelter. It is constructed from two large basalt boulders which are leaning together. A large space is available between the boulders. The area enclosed is roughly six square meters. The surface of the enclosed space had been utilized in historic times, with surface evidences of fire hearths, glass fragments, and

small caliber cartridge cases. The enclosed space is quite roomy, and can accommodate several persons.

10 CN 26

This site is located on the alluvial terraces that are adjacent to Hartley Gulch Creek. The site is presently in agricultural production and is also the site of a small housing development. The area encompassed is roughly five acres. Cultural material present include a cryptocrystalline worked flake. This artifact is constructed from a large percussion struck blade. Other cultural material consisted of a conical ground stone pestle recovered from the garden space of Mr. Orvil Kraus. Kraus also reported quantities of shell in his pasture, though an examination of area indicated showed no surface evidences of shell features.

10 CN 27

This is a rockshelter formed by the gravels underlying the basalts of the Canyon Hill canyon eroding out and forming a hollow beneath the basalt. This shelter is located on the Boise River. The shelter has been subjected to vandalism, however approximately 30% of the total shelter appears to be intact. The foreslope also appears to be relatively undisturbed. A large amount of cultural material was present on the surface of the potting back dirt. This cultural debris was collected for and retained by the Office of the State Archaeologist. Items collected included lithics, a worked flake, bone fragments, a smoothed wooden stick, and a pot sherd. The lithics included obsidian and cryptocrystalline materials. The sherd is a body fragment, brown in color and is without any decoration.

The shelter is frequented by neighborhood youth on a regular basis. Evidence in the form of beer cans, fires, and an old mattress, and graffiti painted on the entrance to the shelter attest to this activity. The area of the shelter is approximately 65 square meters.

10 CN 28

This site is a cliff overhang on the Canyon Hill Escarpment. The soils of the shelter are brown in color and there are no surface indications of the possible depth of the deposition. The floor of the shelter contains evidence of historic usage in the form of glass fragments and hearths. Although surface deposits are historic in nature, due to the location of the shelter and the presence of prehistoric cultural material in similar geologic locations on the escarpments, this site was judged to have excellent potential for containing archaeological deposits.

10 CN 29

This site is a rock shelter situated in a lava tube which has been filled to within 40 to 60 cm of the ceiling with rock fall and soil. The enclosed area is 15 square meters. The surface had indications of historic usage in the form of glass sherds. There is no indication that the shelter has been vandalized. The shelter is similar in nature to others in the Canyon Hill complex and may be the site of an intact habitational unit.

10 CN 30

This site is a rockshelter created by undercutting the gravels beneath the basalt escarpment of Canyon Hill. There is no evidence of surface disturbance. Similar areas in the immediate vicinity have contained cultural mate-

rial. This is a very large overhang and it is filled to within 10 to 20 cm. of the ceiling with soils and debris. Estimated total area, based on width and depth of the shelter is 84 square meters.

10 CN 31

This site is a massive rockshelter formed from a large lava tube. The area enclosed is 24 square meters. The entrance is visible from the Boise River flood plain and Mason Creek. The surface of the site is composed of dust, gray rodent mixed soil, organic debris, basalts, cinders and historic rubble. There is a large probability that the site had been extensively vandalized by local collectors. Lithic debris is present on the surface.

10 CN 32

This site is a rockshelter formed when gravels were washed from beneath the basalt escarpment creating an area of undercutting. The undercutting extends for 70 cm. beneath the basalt and covers a 13 square meter area. The area is filled to 20 cm. from the ceiling with rock fall, aeolean and rodent deposited soils. The site contains extensive rock fall and some materials washed from local irrigation. Archaeological potential of the site is based upon comparison with other sites of identical nature which are located in the immediate vicinity.

10 CN 33 (Myhre Site)

This site is a rockshelter. It was formed when the gravels located beneath the basalt escarpment of Canyon Hill eroded away forming an area of stress upon the basalts. The pressures generated upon the cliff face by the lack of basement support resulted in a large portion of the cliff shearing and slumping down slope. The resulting resting position of the shear block created a large cavity. A set of chambers, crevices, and chambers were created. In 1967-1969, the area was discovered and excavated as a High School project. A set of field notes and an artifact catalogue were constructed. The site has been 80% disturbed by this activity. The collection was located during the course of the survey. Extensive photographs of the collection were procured and are on file at the Office of the State Archaeologist. The artifact inventory is on file at the College of Idaho, Snake River Research Center. Residual artifactual material was located on the slope below the site.

10 CN 34 (Murphy)

The site is a rockshelter. It was formed when the basal gravels eroded from beneath the basalt escarpment creating a stress upon the basalt cap. The collapse of the cliff and resulting boulder pile has created an area of crevices and chambers. The site was described by Mr. Tim Murphy, BLM Archaeologist, Elko District. He reportedly found the area when he lived in the subdivision on the rim above the site. Murphy supplied a mineralized vertebrae to the inventory of materials collected and retained by the state of Idaho. He also reported that a large marine scallop shell was collected from the site area. This shell was drilled in two places near the hinge portion of the shell. A visual survey of the chambers revealed that bone fragments and bones protruding from beneath boulders were still present at the site. This site may be similar to the Myhre Site, however the area and depth of fill material may not be as great.

10 CN 35

This site is located on a sandy fan above the Willow Creek flood plain. The cultural material consists of scattered fire cracked rocks and lithics. The area was extensively potted from the 1930's to the 1950's. The collections were made by a local Boy Scout group, who subsequently gave it to the local council. Record of this collection has been lost. The site is presently in agricultural usage as pasture area.

10 CN 36 (Steinbach)

The site is located on a high terrace that is adjacent to Willow Creek. The area has been utilized as a source for borrow and a small pond had been constructed on the premises. Cultural material collected consisted of obsidian lithics and an obsidian utilized flake. Although no sub-surface testing was done, the scatter was of a light density and probably consists of surface material.

10 CN 37 (Dillon)

This site is located on the bottom lands and along the terraces of Willow Creek on land owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ira Dillon. The site is located in an area subjected to seasonal intensive agricultural activity. The artifact collection procured from this area by the Dillons was assembled as a result of irrigation and tillage practices. The collection contains edge ground, end beveled, end ground conical pestles; worked and utilized flakes of obsidian and cryptocrystalline materials; and split stemmed Rose Springs type projectile points. Photographs of portions of the collection were retained by the Office of the State Archaeologist.

10 CN 38 (Beck No. 1)

This site is situated on a small rounded hillock and low terraces adjacent to Willow Creek. The ranch house and associated outbuildings currently occupy a portion of the site. Mrs. Beck and children exhibited their collection of obsidian lithics and broken stone tools which they procured from the site area after the Spring run off had washed over the plowed ground of the site area. The farm yard had a lithic scatter in the drive lane.

10 CN 39 (Beck No. 2)

This site is located upstream from the Beck Ranch farm yard on Willow Creek. It occupies a series of terraces above the high water zone of Willow Creek. The area is utilized for agricultural purposes. The cultural material observed was a very low density lithic scatter.

10 CN 40

This site is located on the edge of the terraces which border the Boise River flood plain near Willow Creek. The area is being utilized as a borrow pit and gravel source. Canal construction has further impacted the site. Cultural material is present in the form of fire cracked rock, broken cobbles, obsidian and cryptocrystalline lithics. The cultural material is of light density, and constant disturbances will most likely destroy the site.

10 CN 67 (Gavin)

This site is located on the high terrace of Willow Creek adjacent to the Boise River flood plain. The site is situated in an alfalfa field and is subjected to seasonal disturbances. Cultural material present on the surface of the site includes fire cracked rocks, cobble choppers, flaked

cobbles, stone tool fragments, obsidian and cryptocrystalline lithics. A representative sample of lithic materials were collected and retained by the Office of the State Archaeologist. Continued working of the land is resulting in the further exposition of additional artifacts and on this basis, the site has been judged to have excellent potential for a subsurface deposition of cultural material. This site may be the camp referred to by Bird (1934) that was located near the town of Middleton, Idaho.

10 CN 68 (Whitney)

This site is situated on the low flood plain terraces on the South side of the Boise River near Middleton, Idaho. The site is also near the Idaho Historical Site which commemorates the Ward Massacre of 1854. The land is owned by a Mr. Whitney. He reported that he and his father had cleared the local river bottom lands of trees in the early 1900's. During the course of leveling a portion of the terrace and irrigating his pasture, he collected several artifacts. The artifacts consist of two obsidian side

notch projectile points, and a large obsidian biface fragment. A visual examination of the leveled area revealed no surface deposition, however the site was covered in thick sod and pasture grasses.

10 CN 69

This site is located on the South side of the Boise River where a watercourse enters the Boise River flood plain on the edge of the high terraces on the east bank of the drainage. The area is subject to intensive agricultural usage, and was heavily plowed and disced at the time of the survey. Cultural material located on the surface was confined to large lithics. Fire cracked rocks, fire reddened rocks, cobble tools and tool fragments were the major cultural objects in evidence on the site. This site is located in an area that has been subject to development. The presence of the drainage and the imposing view of the Boise River are a great incentive for developing the area for housing. The site will most likely disappear as a direct consequence of this development.

Site Number	Type	Associated Culture Material
10-AA-170	Rock alignment Lithic scatter	Obsidian biface frag (1) Cryptocrystalline flake (1)
10-AA-171	Stone tool scatter Cobble tools Fire-cracked rock	Cobble chopper (1) Incised cobble (1) Fractured cobble (1)
10-AA-172	Stone tool scatter	Cryptocrystalline biface fragment (1), Cobble chopper (1)
10-CN-23	Rockshelter	Shell fragment (1)
10-CN-24	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-25	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-26	Lithic Scatter Stone tool scatter	Pestle (1) Cryptocrystalline flake knife (1)
10-CN-27	Rockshelter	Sherd (1), Faunal (76), Pressure flakes (6), Lithics-obsidian (3) ccs (2), Wood stick (1)
10-CN-28	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-29	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-30	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-31	Rockshelter	Faunal remains
10-CN-32	Rockshelter	None
10-CN-33	Rockshelter	Rock spall (1), pressure flake (1), Olivella shell fragments (3), Faunal remains (72)
10-CN-34	Rockshelter	Mineralized vertebrae (1)
10-CN-35	Lithic scatter	None
10-CN-36	Lithic scatter	Obsidian modified flake (2)
10-CN-37	Lithic scatter Stone tool scatter	Photograph of collection
10-CN-38	Lithic scatter Stone tool scatter	None
10-CN-39	Lithic scatter	Obsidian flake (1)
10-CN-40	Lithic scatter Cobble tools Fire cracked rock	Obsidian flake (3) Cryptocrystalline flake (1) Basalt flake (1)
10-CN-67	Lithic scatter Cobble tools Stone tool scatter	Obsidian flake (7)
10-CN-68	Stone tool scatter	None
10-CN-69	Cobble tools Fire cracked rock	Fire cracked rock (1) Cobble chopper fragment (1)

All sites recorded were located on the basis of non-perishable cultural material. The small sampling of recorded sites, together with their wide temporal and spacial distribution precludes any in-depth discussion as to aboriginal habitation or usage patterns for this section of the Boise River.

No sites were recorded within the flood plain proper. This could be a function of natural changes in the landforms which take place as a result of yearly flooding. The presence of usable plant and animal resources available within the flood plain doubtlessly served to attract aboriginal populations, but the archaeological sites located by this survey do not record any evidence of this usage. According to Bird (Bird, 1934) a Shoshonean village was located on the north bank of the Boise River some two miles east of the site of the Ward Massacre. An attempt to locate this site proved unsuccessful. Two problems were encountered. The Boise River shifted its channel in 1964, and the precise location of the river before this realignment was not recorded. Extensive agricultural usage in the area in question has resulted in the sloughs and swales being filled and leveled with materials taken from the nearby alluvial terraces and fans. Identification of intact geological units in this area was not possible and the survey strategy was based upon the examination of identifiable geologic features.

In light of the absence of sites on the flood plain, there can be two possible interpretations. First, aboriginal usage areas were located in the flood plain and a combination of surveying strategies and surface degradation by cyclical flood patterns and agricultural usage contributed to the failure to locate these areas. The second interpretation allows for the usage of the flood plain without the establishment of long term specific use sites. In view of the fact that aboriginal sites are located along the periphery of the flood plain, it is reasonable to assume that the flood plain itself, while being utilized for the abundant resources, was not the loci of the more permanent type of habitation, such as a winter village.

The survey established, that while no evidence of aboriginal use was located within the confines of the flood plain proper, such evidence of aboriginal usage was indeed present on the fans, terraces and stream drainways which enter the flood plain. This surface evidence consists of lithic scatters, stone tool scatters and fire-cracked rock concentrations. These areas are located well above the high water flood zone of the flood plain. Additionally, sites are located along the streams and drainways which enter the flood plain. The sites are located well up the stream ways, usually at the point where the water course enters the flood plain. These water courses emerge into the flood plain either from the foothills to the north of the Boise River or from the high terraces which border the south of the Boise River. All of the probable area of aboriginal usage along these stream ways were not examined. Many of the more exclusive housing developments are also located on the terraces adjacent to the stream ways. Large scale development of tracts of land have been on going during the last twenty years. Excavation of basements and foundations, filling and altering of natural contours and landscaping projects have destroyed most of the natural surfaces in these areas. Quarrying and crushing operations utilizing the underlying terrace grav-

els have also contributed to the destruction of areas which were probable used aboriginally.

There is historical evidence pointing to the usage of these higher landforms by the aboriginal populations. According to Bird (1934), Willow Creek was along the trail utilized by a band of Shoshonean peoples. These peoples are reported to have collected flour from a grist mill which was located north of the town of Middleton, Idaho. After receiving their flour, they proceeded to a campsite north of the mill. On the high terraces adjacent to Willow Creek evidence of aboriginal usage is present. Chipped stone tools and tool fragments, ground stone tools, cobble tools, the associated debris from the manufacture of these implements and concentrations of fire-cracked rock are in evidence on the terraces. There is no conclusive evidence that these sites are the same ones reported by Bird, but their presence indeed confirms her description of the usage of these terrace areas. Other sites along these stream courses were recorded. None of these sites were within the flood plain proper, but rather were located on the fans and terraces well above the high water zones.

The basalt escarpments of the Canyon Hill narrows provided multiple areas suitable for aboriginal use. The combined features of easy access to the river, the multiple plant and animal resources available for exploitation and the existence of sheltered areas suitable for habitation would have served to attract the human population to this section of the Boise River. The density of sites along the escarpments attest to this power of attraction. Overhangs, undercuts, boulder piles, fissures and lava tubes provided the human population with a multitude of habitable rock shelters. These shelters have been the focus of local collectors and neighborhood youth. A variety of these site types are located along the escarpments on both sides of the Boise River. Most of the sites have been impacted by the activities of the local residents, with site damage ranging from slight disturbances, to sites which have been 50 to 85 percent destroyed by collectors. The site types include small shelters subject to infrequent usage, caves and shelters exhibiting longer periods of use and the crevices and crannies which were utilized for burial areas. Several collections of artifacts taken from these shelters confirm both the presence and variety of these sites. The collections reveal a wide temporal distribution of materials and suggest a long occupation of the survey area. Some artifact types and styles show a similarity to the artifacts recovered from the Dry Creek Rockshelter (Webster, 1975). Artifact types observed are consistent with those found not only in surrounding Idaho sites (Ames, 1982a), but artifact types found throughout the area (Heizer and Hester, 1970).

Surveying urban areas for archaeological sites is hampered by an overlay of agricultural, industrial and urban development. Surveying strategies must be developed which enable the investigator to isolate and inspect surviving intact geologic units. Data from soils inventories provided to developers and agriculturists was combined with diplomacy and footwork to locate sites in this study. Clearly, important data can be generated through such efforts.

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SHORT CONTRIBUTIONS

AN ABORIGINAL BRASS KNIFE FROM THE TETON RANGE, WYOMING

*Charles G. Willingham
Targee National Forest*

In early September, 1987, members of the Sierra Club notified the Targee National Forest of the discovery of what appeared to be a metal knife blade and obsidian artifacts near Alaska Basin in the Jedediah Smith Wilderness, Teton Range, Wyoming. The location was visited in late September of the same year for the purpose of recording the finds. The site examination revealed an aboriginally modified brass knife in association with a sparse lithic scatter.

The site is located on the western slope of the Teton Range, Wyoming in the headwaters of Teton Creek, a major tributary of the Teton River in the Snake River drainage system (Figure 1). Alaska Basin, a glacial cirque below the rim of the Teton Range, lies slightly upslope of the site to the east. Mount Meek, which attains an elevation of 10,300 feet, is located on the Teton Divide 1.5 km to the south. The site is situated at an elevation of 9,080 feet on the edge of the timberline in an open sedge grass area interspersed by limestone boulders. Subalpine fir and whitebark pine forest border the site to the north. Surface observations indicate that the site covers approximately 950 square meters and is composed of a sparse scatter of obsidian debitage and tools including two scrapers, a notched flake and a small side-notched projectile point. Small amounts of quartzite debitage and one biface were also observed. The debitage on the site consists predominantly of secondary and tertiary flakes. The knife was located at the base of a limestone boulder on the northeastern edge of the site.

The knife blade is made of brass and measures 23.3 cm in length (Figure 2). The width measures 4.9 cm at the widest point near the proximal end and tapers to a width of 1.5 cm at the rounded distal end. The blade measures 0.2 along the thickest edge, tapering to a thin cutting edge. Striations on both sides run diagonal to the cutting edge. This, in addition to the concavity of the edge, indicates repeated sharpening. The dorsal and ventral surfaces of the blade have an undulating surface which suggests manufacture by cold hammering. The proximal end of the blade is formed by folding the metal and hammering it flat against the blade on both sides. This may

have been done to facilitate shafting or, in the absence of a shaft, to better accommodate direct hand use.

The occurrence of aboriginally worked metal artifacts in the region is, indeed, rare. A few sites containing such artifacts, however, have been identified along the Snake River, Idaho. A brass bipoint was reported from Three Island Crossing (Plew and Meyer 1987) and iron projectile points were reported from Swiss Valley (Plew 1989). Crabtree (1968) discussed aboriginal metal artifacts discovered at the Oregon Trail Site. Copper artifacts of European origin have also been found at the Rattlesnake Canyon cremation site (Bonnichsen 1964) and in Hells Canyon (Caldwell and Mallory 1967).

The use of brass articles by early explorers and fur traders for trade with the historic tribes is documented in various journals and fur trade company inventory lists. One of the earliest introductions of brass into the Northwest was associated with the fur trade during the early eighteenth to middle nineteenth centuries. Hudson's Bay Company introduced brass as a trade item in the form of kettles and hawks bells into the Northwest from their trading posts on Hudson Bay in the early eighteenth century (Ray and Freeman 1978:130). Tribes from the northern plains such as the Blackfoot and Mandan were known to travel over a thousand miles to trade at York Factory on Hudson Bay prior to 1720 (Ray and Freeman 1978:45).

Brass items continued to be included with the Hudson's Bay Company trade goods into the early nineteenth century. Ogden is known to have carried brass items for trade during his Snake Country Expeditions and it was likely used by the Alexander Ross expedition during 1823-1824 and subsequently by the John Work expedition during 1830-1831. Brass items are also known to have been used and traded by the American fur companies. When William H. Ashley sold out to Smith, Jackson and Sublette in July, 1826, his inventory of goods included copper kettles and brass wire (Chittenden 1902:4-5). The journal of Harrison G. Rogers, a member of the company of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, includes a "brass handle knife" in the list of items presented to the

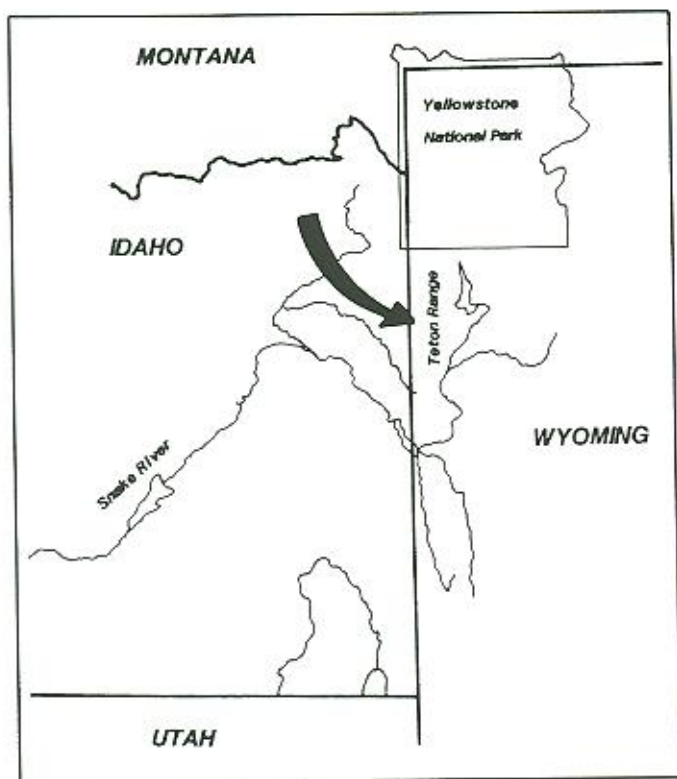


Figure 1. Map showing site location.

Eutaw Indians by Jedediah Smith on August 22, 1826 (Dale 1918:197). Brass nails were included in the supplies at the 1827 rendezvous at Bear Lake, Utah (Morgan 1953:232). Brass may also have been scavenged at immigrant sites dating to the middle nineteenth century. Crabtree (1968) noted that iron was scavenged from Euro-American sites along the Oregon Trail in the 1840's.

The location of this metal artifact in a remote, high altitude setting away from traditional Native American and Euro-American travel routes, however, deserves further consideration. It is known from archaeological, historical, and ethnographical literature that the Middle Rocky Mountains were inhabited by native populations. The presence of prehistoric sites at high altitudes indicates that these areas played an important role in prehistoric subsistence and settlement systems. Wright, Bender, and Reeve (1980) have referred to this lifeway as "high country adaptation". Archaeological investigations on the eastern slope of the northern Teton Range suggest that this adaptive system may have been in place in the northern Tetons for the last 3,000 years (Bender 1983:116). The utilization of mountainous areas by aboriginal populations continued, to some extent, into the historic period.

The journals of early explorers and fur traders in Idaho and Wyoming make mention of mountain dwelling tribes. In 1824, Ross encountered members of the Shoshone tribe to whom he referred as the "Ban-at-tees", or "Mountain Snakes" who "live a predatory and wander-

ing life in the recesses of the mountains, and are to be found in small bands or single wigwams among the caverns and rocks" (Ross 1956:166-167). Bonneville also reported small bands of Shoshone speaking groups that lived in remote mountain areas. He encountered such a group in the Wind River Range in 1832 (Irving 1961:192). Steward had referred to these Shoshonean mountain groups as Tukaduka, or mountain sheep eaters (Steward 1970:186).

The only diagnostic lithic artifact identified at the site for which a temporal association may be suggested was a small side-notched obsidian projectile point. It has shallow side notches, slightly rounded shoulders and a rounded base. The blade is excurvate and the cross section is plano-convex. Flaking is collateral on the convex surface. It measures 20 mm long, 9 mm wide and 3 mm thick. Morphologically, this point appears to fall within the range of late prehistoric types found in the Northern Great Basin. However, because of the surface context of the projectile point and the brass knife, the temporal relationship between these materials is uncertain.

Aboriginally worked metal artifacts are a rare occurrence in the Snake River drainage system. The only other brass artifact known for this area was discovered at Three Island Crossing. This brass knife is significant to an understanding of historic Native American settlement patterns and the process of acculturation in this region because of the scarcity of such artifacts and its location in a high altitude setting.

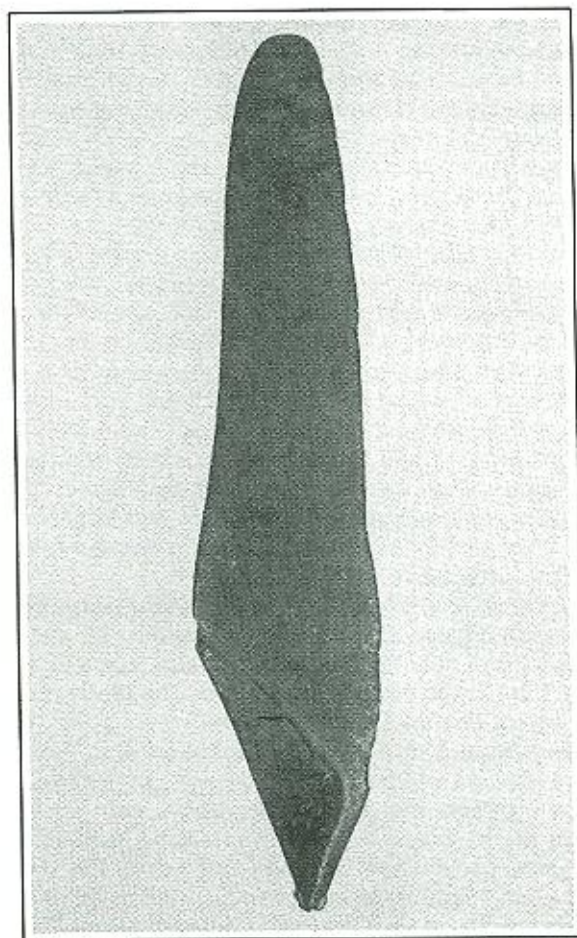


Figure 2. Brass knife blade.

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