

# IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST



**Vol. II No. 2**

# IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST

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## THE FUTURE OF THE IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST

Since publication of Volume II, No. 1 in July of 1978, several events have taken place concerning the Idaho Archaeologist.

First, the Idaho Archaeological Society (IAS) made a proposal to the annual meeting of the Idaho Advisory Council of Professional Archaeologists (IACPA) held in Boise on October 6 that the Archaeologist be adopted as the periodical for Archaeology and Anthropology in the State of Idaho. A rather wide-ranging discussion took place concerning such matters as frequency of publication, costs, editing, format and other matters. Dr. Merle Wells of the Idaho Historical Society was present to discuss financing procedures and the requirements which would have to be met in order to be eligible for funding. The Board of IACPA voted to accept the offer of the IAS substantially as presented.

Subsequently, a special meeting of the IAS Executive Board was held on October 17, 1978, to initiate the steps necessary to bring about the needed changes. In addition to the Board members, Richard Harrison of the State Office, Bureau of Land Management, and Thomas Green, State Archaeologist, were present. As a result of this meeting, it was determined that two boards would be necessary:

**1. An Advisory Editorial Board.** This board is charged with the responsibility for establishing overall policy and guidance for the Idaho Archaeologist. The following IACPA and IAS members agreed to serve an indefinite term on this Board: Roderick Sprague of the U of I; B. Robert Butler of ISU; Thomas Green of the State Historical Society; Truman Joiner, J. Perry Silver, Jr., and Glenda Torgeson of Boise as well as Audrey Hedley of Caldwell.

**2. An Editorial Review Board.** This Board will be responsible for the actual editing, publication and circulation of the Archaeologist. Members are William Norquist of Nampa, James Huntley of Marsing and Kenneth Ames and Richard Harrison of Boise.

At a joint meeting of the two boards held on December 17, 1978, the following policies were agreed upon:

**1. Area of Interest.** The area of interest, while primarily the bounds of the State of Idaho, may, to be realistic, include adjacent portions of the Snake and Columbia drainages, the Northern Great Basin and the Plateau/Montane Region of the abutting states and provinces.

**2. Format.** The Idaho Archaeologist will be printed on 11x17 inch stock with a 100 pound card-stock cover. It will normally be sixteen pages,

folded and stapled to 8½x11 inch trimmed size. The text will be set in 10-point Baskerville typeface using two columns to the page. Should sufficient manuscripts be received, the number of pages will be increased as necessary to a maximum of seventy-two. Numbering will be cumulative for each Volume with an index included in the Winter issue.

**3. Manuscripts.** Manuscripts should not exceed 5,000 words (20 MS pages) including figures and illustrations. Photographs will be limited to two per manuscript except that more than two may be included if accompanied by five dollars each to defray the average cost of plate preparation. Except for the foregoing, manuscripts must conform to the style specified in the "Notice to Authors" section of each issue of AMERICAN ANTIQUITY.

**4. Content.** The Idaho Archaeologist will publish original papers concerning historical and pre-historical archaeology of Idaho. Professional as well as lay persons are encouraged to submit papers. Such papers may include field reports, work in progress, comments, queries, etc. The Archaeologist will also publish letters to the editor of not more than two-hundred words, as well as notices of happenings or meetings, brief reports of such meetings and other items pertinent to Idaho Archaeology.

**5. Copyright.** Responsibility for formal copyrighting of articles will be that of the author. The standard copyright notice will be included in each issue of the Archaeologist. Unless full copyright protection is specified by the author, it will be assumed that the article is donated to the Archaeologist. Reference to or quotation from published articles will, in accordance with the copyright law and established practice, require crediting both the author and the Idaho Archaeologist.

**6. Editing and Review.** All manuscripts will ordinarily be edited by members of the Editorial Review Board. In event further editing is deemed necessary, the manuscript may be submitted to appropriate University or College Staff member(s) for review. In all cases the manuscript will be returned to the author for final review prior to publication.

**7. Frequency of Publication.** The Idaho Archaeologist will be published as a Quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter) with the exact date of publication being unspecified at present.

**8. Subscription Charges.** The Archaeologist will be mailed at no additional charge to IAS members. All others will be charged five dollars per year.

**9. Manuscript Submission.** Manuscripts or other material intended for publication should be mailed to: Editor, Idaho Archaeologist, c/o Bill Norquist, 423 7th Avenue South, Nampa, Id 83651.

## LITHIC QUARRY SITES IN NORTHERN OWYHEE COUNTY

By  
James L. Huntley

Every local collector, professional or amateur, is aware of the many kinds of lithic materials used by the native Americans to make various stone tools. A survey of the old open campsites, or caves and rockshelters, will attest to the variety of stone used in making tools, milling stones and other artifacts in the area herein described. Obsidian, ignimbrite, basalt, agate, chert, jasper, opalite, rhyolite, fossilized wood, siltstone, and petrified bog are all in evidence. Almost every site in this part of the Owyhees, be it upland or along the Snake River, has this great diversity of chipped stone. Where did the Indian peoples get all this material? Most of it is found locally.

Idaho, the Gem State, is well named. Rockhounds from all parts of the country come to Idaho to collect the many kinds of gem stones found here. The pre-historic Indians also knew about the great variety of lithic materials suitable for making their stone implements. Several quarry sites have been discovered where these early people mined or gathered stone for use. They are discussed below.

1. A few miles south of Homedale, Idaho, is a place on the edge of the foothills called Graveyard Point, so called for the three or four graves of early white men found nearby. This area straddles the Idaho-Oregon boundary. Many kinds of gem rocks are found here and rockhounds from far and near come to collect straw agate, plume agate, moss agate and other gem stones, many with a variety of colors. On the Idaho side is a quarry of moss agate of some size where the Indians came and picked up or quarried this stone for their needs. Agate chippings from this quarry are found in campsites for miles over the surrounding country.
2. Near Highway 95, about one mile from the Oregon state line, is another long-used quarry site. (10 OE 911). Here, and also on the Oregon side, are deposits of a sedimentary rock locally called by several names—chert, jasper, picture rock, etc. It ranges in color from light tan through brown; pale green to a darker green and sometimes a light blue. The colors are in bands and conglomerates and when slab cut produce some beautiful and outstanding "pictures." Thus the name picture rock. It is being mined commercially now, but hundreds of years ago, the Indians discovered this rock which was not only pretty but made a good source for easily-worked stone tools of a good quality. Most campsites in a wide area contain chips and tools of this attractive material.
3. In Slaughter House Gulch, a tributary of Jordan Creek, just north of Wagon Town, is a large deposit of petrified bog (10 OE 917). This bog was once a swamp. As it solidified it trapped grasses, insects and small twigs inside. These can be readily seen in the silicified rock. Here the Indians quarried the bog for tool making. Camps and rockshelters over a wide area contain chips, cores and tools of this distinctive rock. In this same area on the west side of what is locally called Big Bog Meadows, is a small deposit of fine red jasper. This was also utilized by the Indians.
4. Near the mouth of Squaw Creek Canyon, on Sommercamp Road, is a quarry in the rhyolite intrusive rocks that form the local terrain (10OE 1447). The rock in this quarry is a fine-grained rhyolite suitable for making stone tools. It ranges in color from a pinkish hue to a light lavender. Though not used as much as agate or obsidian, it was utilized to some extent, possibly because it was locally available. Several caves and rockshelters are in the vicinity as well as some rock alignments. Whether these were made by Indians is not known at this time. Like other materials this rhyolite is scattered in area campsites. A good example is at the shelter on Hardtrigger Creek just to the east. Here the shelter inhabitants used a light-colored rhyolite which was the material from which the shelter was formed.
5. Obsidian and ignimbrite are found in Owyhee County in the form of small nodules, so-called "apache tears." They are not numerous but were utilized by the Indians. Nodules are found near Boone Peak, on the summit of Bachman Grade and at places in the south part of the county in the Owyhee River headwaters. Most obsidian was brought in from eastern Oregon or the Boise foothills.
6. Since much Owyhee County rock was formed by volcanic action, basalts of several kinds are in abundance. Some of this basalt was of a fine-grained nature and was much used by the Indians for making points, knives and scrapers. Milling stones such as mortars and pestles, metates and manos, hammer stones and other large implements were made from vesicular basalt.
7. Located along the bottom of the Owyhee foothills, facing the Snake River, are several existing hot springs as well as a number which have become extinct. Nearly all of these hot water formations resulted in the forming of deposits of opalite and cinnabar. Opalite was used by the Indians in some tool making but not to any great extent. In

(Lithic Quarry Sites . . . Continued from P. 2)

the past the hot springs served as wintering camps. Large deposits of mussel shell, indicative of a primary winter food supply, are found in the open camps near the hot springs, both existing and extinct.

8. Fossilized woods of many kinds are found scattered throughout the Owyhees. During its geologic past, Owyhee County, along with much of the rest of Idaho, had a diversity of climates, including glacial activity, abundant rainfall with pluvial lakes, periods of heavy forest growth and plant life as well as dry and desertic conditions. The Indians used this material and a variety of tools are found made from fossil wood. Some artifacts of great beauty were produced.
9. Near Mitchell Butte, close to the Idaho-Oregon line, is a small peak called Haystack Rock. On top of a small, flat-topped mesa just to the east

is another quarry site. This is a deposit of good-quality jasper in two colors—red and yellow. Local rockhounds come here to collect this material. There are several springs in the vicinity around which are small campsites with scatters of chipping debris and cores. This distinctive stone is found in many camps along the north part of the Owyhee uplands.

These are just a few of the known quarry sites in northern Owyhee County. The few mentioned here give us an understanding as to where the many kinds of lithic materials were obtained by the Indians to use in fashioning their stone implements.