

Spade and Screen

By Fred Robinson

Early in our series of tributes to Western Canadian Archaeologists must come the name of Donald J. McKillop of Regina. He was the best known Stone Age Relic collector in all of Canada during the years 1934 to 1951 and he was not an Archaeologist. He did not wish to be an Archaeologist, but his contribution to the science and the popularity he gave it, can not be calculated. During seventeen or eighteen years of collecting Indian Relics he amassed a collection of one hundred thousand perfect items which became the largest private collection in the Nation. This feat may never be equalled by one man again.

D. J. McKillop came to Regina from St. Albans, Vermont, U.S.A., after graduating in law at Harvard University. He entered the Real Estate business in Regina and stayed in that business until he retired in 1951 when he moved to Vancouver. His death at Christmas 1953 ended a great career in which the hobby of collecting Stone Age Relics had become more than a pastime.

Mac, as every Relic hunter called him, began collecting during the dry 1930's when soil drifting was a farm problem in Saskatchewan. He found that wind erosion on cultivated land would uncover arrowheads by sometimes hundreds per acre. The fact established, he began to locate every eroded field within two hundred miles of Regina. At first he collected only arrowheads but soon he identified the scrapers, knives, drills, blades, etc., until he became sure that each piece of flint or stone, showing either percussion or pressure flaking had been made that way by the Indian for a definite purpose. From this reasoning he began a detailed study of flint, stone and flaking methods far exceeding any studies ever made by any professional Archaeologist.

He classified more than one hundred types of flint and stone tools and gave these tools popular or common names most of which were objected to by the scientist. This actually served to increase Mr. McKillop's popularity and widen his acquaintance. He thought that the supply of relics would prove to be unlimited so he was one of the few in Canada to ever offer relics for



Donald J. McKillop

sale. He ran advertisements in such publications as *Popular Mechanics* to tell of the vast quantities of articles he would sell. Replies and correspondence came to him from every corner of North America giving him a wealth of information and huge amount of entertainment and interest in knowing other collectors. He then began to trade and exchange artifacts with others who held large collections. This gave him still a wider knowledge of flint. Evenings when he would lay out a thousand relics on his large table for a visitor to study are long to be remembered. Some of the most prominent Archaeologists called to see his collection and were amazed at its size and left feeling that he had not gathered the scientific information with the relics. Hundreds of amateur Indian Relic Collectors came to look also, and were not only amazed at what they saw, but left with determination to come again. No one but Mac himself ever saw all the McKillop Collection, no one could find enough time. He was the envy of every collector.

A Shelf for Robins

Vernier Rondeau, Rouleau.

Some years ago I made a shelf for robins and nailed it under the eaves of my garage. The birds never occupy it. A neighbor boy did the same thing and the robins did not use it. I wonder if other Blue Jay readers have had similar experiences.—Editors note: I did the same thing this summer and had similar results.