

Allan J. Hudson

For the fifth story in our series on Canadian Pioneer Archaeologists, we have Mr. Allan J. Hudson, Mortlach, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Hudson, who was born in England in 1890, came to Canada at the age of sixteen. His trip out here was for his health but, once here, he decided to stay to seek his fortune homesteading. Mr. Hudson admits he never did find the fortune but he did find his real interest in life when he moved to Mortlach in 1939. This interest was the active study of archaeology.

As a boy, Mr. Hudson had read considerable literature on early man, owing to the fact that his father, who was a teacher in London, England, was also a keen student of the origin of man. This early interest in archaeology was quickly revived, therefore, when he came to a place where due to drought conditions thousands of artifacts had been found and were still being picked up on the wind-eroded fields around Mortlach.

Mr. Hudson admits that when he first started collecting artifacts, he did so merely as an interesting way of passing the time. His imagination, however, soon became aroused as he began to wonder how the stones were worked, what people or peoples made the tools, how long they had been there, and so on.

Since Mr. Hudson was very familiar with Old World archaeology, he says he tended, at first, to interpret his finds in the European manner. However, as he became more acquainted with the geological history of the region, such explanations became less and less satisfactory. In the first place, he noticed that none of the artifacts or chipped flakes showed any signs of glacial chatter marks, which would indicate that all relic material had accumulated since the

last glacier which retreated 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. Also, the attempt to label Canadian artifacts on European lines by similarities of type and shape obviously had the weakness that, on the basis of surface finds, nobody could determine any one cultural assemblage of artifacts. His dream, therefore, was to find some day a buried site where conditions had been depositional and the material sealed in.

This dream of Mr. Hudson's was realized in 1948 when, through the combined efforts of himself and John McLean of Mortlach, the "Besant Site" east of Mortlach was discovered. Together the two men explored the valley containing the site and during the next two years uncovered most of the present known fire-hearths. Consequently, as a result of fairly continuous exploration on a systematic basis both by himself alone and as a member of professional Museum parties, such as the one conducted by Boyd Wettlaufer in 1954, a much clearer picture of Indian stone culture was obtained.

Another activity that fitted in with Mr. Hudson's archaeological examination of southern Saskatchewan was his participation in a private survey for an Ottawa botanist, of the glacial channel system of southern Saskatchewan from the Cypress Hills to the Manitoba border. This gave him an opportunity to view many private collections of artifacts and also pick up specimens over a very wide area.

Mr. Hudson says his last remaining ambition is to find an "early-man" site in Saskatchewan that can be properly excavated. He also maintains that the best method of studying archaeology is by the use of a spade and screen, whereby the whole story of a prehistoric site can be clearly seen in an open cut bank. —F.S.

**CONTRIBUTIONS to
SPADE AND SCREEN**
may be sent directly to
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