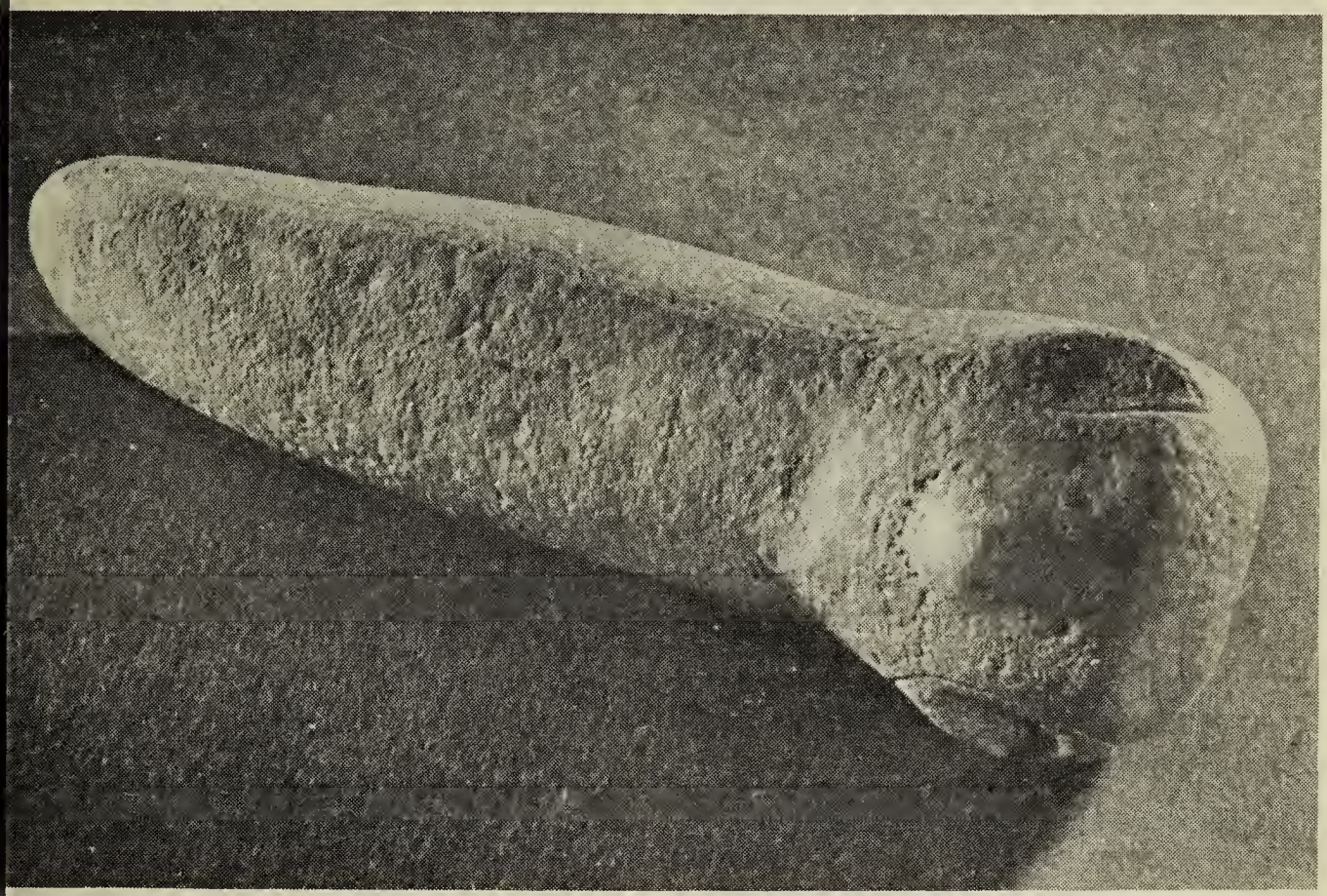
Sculptured Artifact

By BRUCE A. McCORQUODALE,
Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History



Sask. Govt. Photo by O. B. Roberts

The Saskatchewan Museum of atural History has recently received unusual sculptured stone artifact hich was discovered by Lt. H. R. glis of, Regina, Saskatchewan. The utenant, while exploring a grassy eadow in the valley of the North ork of the Frenchman River ap- oximately twelve miles northwest Eastend, Saskatchewan, found this long, cream-coloured stone partial- exposed among the grass roots. amination of this stone led him believe that it had been shaped humans; being highly appreciative the possible scientific value of ch artifacts, Lt. Inglis passed it to the care of the museum upon s return.

This specimen is a pestle-shaped, ulptured limestone artifact (see hoto). One end has been roughly ulptured into the shape of a human ead which converges below the outh to meet the longer shaft or eck" which then tapers rather adually to terminate in a blunt end. is 223 mm. long (8¾ inches) and mm. in diameter at the midsection 2¼ inches).

The most prominent feature of the head are the nose and ears. The ears are represented by large crescent-shaped ridges located slightly forward of the lateral mid-line. The nose consists of a rounded, vertically-oblong elevation. The eyes are small circular pits spaced rather closely together; a curved line of nine small pits under the nose represents the mouth. The top of the head is nearly flat, suggesting the use of this artifact as a pestle; the absence of marks of abrasion or percussion, however, denies this suggestion. Two shallow parallel grooves around the forward quarter of the perimeter of the top of the head may represent wrinkles of the forehead. From the upper end of each ear a concentric groove passes in front of the ear and curves below the ear to terminate approximately at the lateral mid line. Also under each ear and located close to the base of the head may be seen two transverse parallel grooves, each approximately 10 mm. (⅜ inch) in length.

The neck of this artifact displays fewer prominent features. In transverse cross-section it is nearly cir-

cular in outline except for a marked flattening on the facial side. This flattened side is marked by a medially located groove 60 mm. (2⅜ inches) in length which is terminated at the head-end by an obscure transverse line 10 mm. (⅜ inch) in length. On the posterior side near the base of the head an elliptical shape, 15 mm. (⅝ inch) in width and 35 mm. (1⅜ inches) in length has been inscribed. The longitudinal axis of the ellipse lies at right angles to the axis of the neck.

The material of which this artifact is composed is a cream-grey limestone with a distinct foliation disclosed by minute parallel ridges on the sides of the neck. The greater part of the surface is covered with small percussion pits. This reveals that the specimen was partly shaped by "pecking."

The question that everyone is inclined to ask at this point is, "Well, what is it?" The answer to the question seems to be that we may never know with certainty what it was used for. We can guess of course. Perhaps it represents an Indian god and was revered as a personal token of his existence. It may have been a sacred object in a medicine bundle. One might also guess that it was a ceremonial pemmican-pestle at religious rites. Perhaps we shall never ascertain its true function, but in the meantime it is a pleasant diversion to contemplate what this artifact may have meant to a primitive and obscure race of the past. One thing is clear—its creator possessed a considerable artistic ability. The head of a man is skillfully rendered in a sophisticated and subtle form.

Further knowledge of this artifact may yet be obtained through careful excavation of prehistoric sites or even through surface collecting. The gradual accumulation of series of specimens frequently results in a greater understanding of their form and function. Eventually, it may be possible to relate this artifact to a specific culture and time period. To this end it is requested that persons with similar artifacts in their collections correspond with the museum.

Sask. Silver-Haired Bat Records

(Continued from Page 40)

the female strongly suggested mating activities. (Bats normally mate in the fall, the sperm surviving in the female until spring, when the ovum is fertilized.) Palmer states that the Silver-haired Bat breeds in "early fall" (1954:66), but little is really known of its habits.

Further knowledge of the distribution and natural history of the Silver-haired Bat and other species will largely depend upon the contribution of specimens and observations from interested persons throughout the province. Actual specimens ought to be collected wherever possible because of the possibility of misidentification of most species as well as the value of a series of skins. The desirability of placing specimens in museum collections is obvious. Here real records of our fauna are collectively and readily available to students as well as being permanently safeguarded.

COVER PICTURES

The two cover pictures of Blue Jays form part of a series sent us by Mr. and Mrs. L. Keresztes of New York (see BLUE JAY, Vol. XIV, page 21). The Keresztes knew that we would be especially interested in these pictures of the bird that gave our magazine its name. Since the magazine's name was chosen by Isabel M. Priestly, we find it particularly appropriate that the Blue Jay was actually the last bird mentioned in her field notes. Dr. S. Houston, who has been checking through Mrs. Priestly's notebook recently, sends us her last entry: "April 8, 1946. Lovely morning. Walked out along the tracks to pond on west road. Meadowlarks singing, juncos everywhere, blue jays around fir trees. Ponds frozen over. No ducks or red-wings, just one brewer's. On way home heard blue jay singing."