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BIG-GAME HUNTING ARTIFACTS FROM MINNESOTA

by  
Christy A.H. Caine

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## BIG-GAME HUNTING ARTIFACTS FROM MINNESOTA

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### Abstract

A Browns Valley type point, a Scottsbluff type point, and four Cody knives, recovered as surface finds, give evidence of the presence of the Big-Game Hunting Tradition in east-central Minnesota. These artifacts, their location, and similar finds in the Minnesota-Wisconsin area are described.

Six artifacts of the Big-Game Hunting Tradition have been identified in collections from the lower Snake River valley in east-central Minnesota (Pine County, T. 39, R. 22). A Browns Valley type point and a Scottsbluff type point, recovered as surface finds, are part of the collection made by Mr. and Mrs. Steven Vach of Pine City that has been donated to the University of Minnesota. Four Cody knives, also surface finds, are in the collection of Mr. Joseph Neubauer of Pine City.

All six artifacts were recovered from the lower Snake River valley near Pine City, Minnesota. The Snake River is part of the drainage basin of the St. Croix River which forms part of the boundary between Minnesota and Wisconsin, and joins the Mississippi River just below St. Paul, Minnesota. The Snake River, which has its source to the northwest near Mille Lacs Lake, drains a large portion of central Minnesota before emptying into the St. Croix. The lower portion of the Snake River runs west-east to the St. Croix, cutting through a plain which slopes to the southeast and was

formed as ground moraine during the middle and late Wisconsin glacial periods. Here the river forms a wide shallow valley which becomes progressively narrower as the river approaches the St. Croix.

Both the Browns Valley type (Fig. 1) and Scottsbluff type (Fig. 2) points were collected from the surface of a high sandy outwash which rises some twenty feet from the Snake River valley floor and



Figure 1. Browns Valley type point from east-central Minnesota. Length, 9.4 cm.; width, 3.5 cm.; thickness, .9 cm. Vach Collection, University of Minnesota, Acc. 615-50.



dams the south end of Lake Pokegema, separating it from the Snake River. This prominent piece of land is only about one-quarter of a mile wide at its maximum and offers a good view of the river valley to the south, Lake Pokegema to the north, and the outlet of Lake Pokegema into the Snake River to the east. This area has been the site of surface finds by local collectors for many years. Large quantities of lithic, ceramic, and trade artifacts indicate occupation of the site from the Archaic through Late Woodland and early contact times. Both of the Big-Game artifacts from the Vach collection were found in a plowed field on this site.

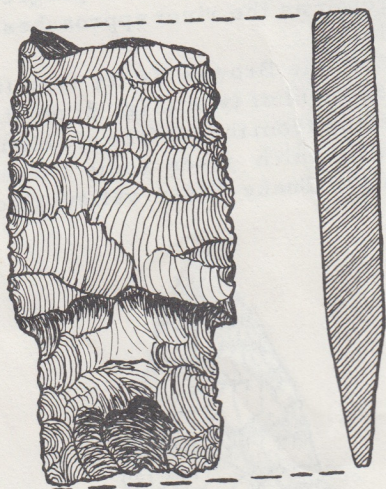


Figure 2. Scottsbluff type point from east-central Minnesota. Length, 7.2 cm. (incomplete); maximum width, 3.5 cm.; thickness, .9 cm.; width of stem, 2.3 cm.; length of stem, 2.5 cm. Vach Collection, University of Minnesota, Acc. 615-72.

The Browns Valley type (Fig. 1) is plano-convex in longitudinal section, exhibits slightly oblique parallel flaking on one face and more irregular flaking on the other, and has a thinned base. The material is variegated reddish chalcodony with small inclusions of quartzite.

The Scottsbluff type point (Fig. 2) is incomplete, missing part of the distal section. It exhibits the fine parallel flaking and retouching characteristic of the type. The base is thinned and slightly concave. The material is brown chalcodony.

The four artifacts of the Cody knife type (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6) were also recovered as surface finds from the Snake River valley and their exact provenience is unknown. All four artifacts are of white chert. They exhibit irregular flaking, although in outline they resemble Cody knives. Two of the specimens have slightly concave bases. Of the four artifacts only one (Fig. 5) appears to be complete.

The Browns Valley type point is certainly significant in that, as far as it is known, this is only the second find of this type of point in Minnesota. The other instance is from the type site at Browns Valley, Minnesota (Jenks 1937). Although the dating of this site is uncertain, Jenks suggests 8,000 years (Jenks 1937:47). Wormington further points to the similarity of Browns Valley points and those recovered from the Jimmy Allen Site in Wyoming which dated 7,900±200 years ago (Wormington 1957:146). Regardless, the form, flaking, and similarity of the points to others of the Big-Game Hunting Tradition suggests considerable antiquity for the Browns Valley type.

The Scottsbluff type point, on the other hand, is not a unique find in the Minnesota-Wisconsin area. Several examples exist in private collections in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and eight partial specimens were recovered from the Renier cremation burial site in north-eastern Wisconsin (Mason and Irwin 1960). Unlike the present specimen, the Renier Site points, as well as most of the points in private Wisconsin collections, are made of quartzite (Mason and Irwin 1960:52). As far as the author is aware, the Cody knife specimens are unique for this area.



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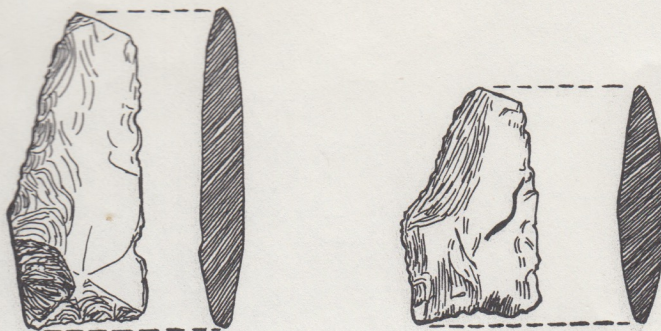


Figure 3. Cody type knife from east-central Minnesota. Length, 5.2 cm. (incomplete); width, 2.2 cm.; thickness, .8 cm. Joseph Neubauer Collection.

Figure 4. Cody type knife from east-central Minnesota. Length, 3.9 cm. (incomplete); width, 2.3 cm.; thickness, .9 cm. Joseph Neubauer Collection.

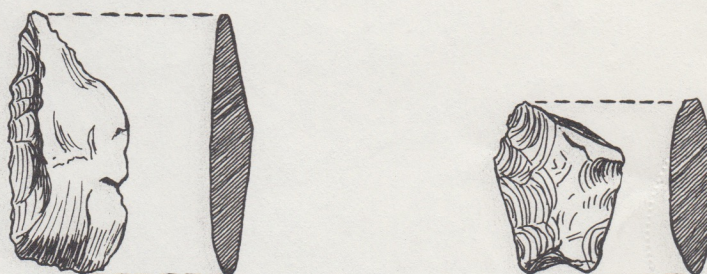


Figure 5. Cody type knife from east-central Minnesota. Length, 4.2 cm.; width, 2.0 cm.; thickness, .7 cm. Joseph Neubauer Collection.

Figure 6. Cody type knife from east-central Minnesota. Length, 2.8 cm. (incomplete); width, 2.1 cm.; thickness, .8 cm. Joseph Neubauer Collection.

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University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota