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THE JOHNSON SITE: A FOLSOM CAMPSITE

Abstract

Reinvestigation of the Johnson site, a Folsom campsite, after previous testing by H. M. Wormington and Louis Steege included the excavation of 5 test pits 3 x 6 feet at 6 foot intervals, an intensive surface survey of the natural enclosed area of the site, and a survey of the surrounding area.

The major artifacts recovered, fluted projectile points, were all within the range of variation reported from the nearby Lindenmeier site 15 miles to the southwest. The only difference noted was that the Johnson site is the only one so far discovered which has produced a high percentage of quartzite Folsom points. Lindenmeier-Johnson Folsom points are larger, thinner, and of superior workmanship to these from the Brewster site indicating a probable time difference.

During the summer of 1936, H. M. Wormington, of the Denver Museum of Natural History, investigated a small Folsom campsite north of La Porte, Colorado. The location was named for T. Russell Johnson, the local collector who discovered and reported the site. The fact that the site was largely deflated motivated only a cursory survey (Wormington 1957).

With the permission and cooperation of Wormington, the present authors undertook a more thorough study of the area during the spring and summer of 1960. The absence of bone and charcoal, and the scrambled mixture of several cultures of different age indicated that the site area had been deflated an undetermined number of times. A sample of Folsom projectile points was collected, and the project was abandoned.

The Johnson site is located in Section 36, T10N, R70W, Larimer County, Colorado. The location is 15 miles southwest of the Lindenmeier campsite. The Johnson site is situated inside the north wall of a V-shaped, simple fold remnant along the eastern flank of the Rocky Mountains. The hogbacks flanking the fold probably served as a windbreak for the camp area.

Wormington's excavation units (Fig. 18, C) lay close to a gap in the north hogback. In this locality the present authors excavated 5 pits, 3 feet wide and 6 feet long, at 6 foot intervals (Fig. 18, A). Later, Louis Steege of the Wyoming State Historical Museum paralleled this row of pits with a trench 4 feet wide and 40 feet long (Fig. 18, A). While the distal fragment of a Folsom point was found on the surface, the sub-surface artifacts were a mixture of several Middle

Period cultures (Mulloy 1954).

An intensive surface survey of the natural enclosure and the surrounding area was then conducted. Only the 3 upper strike-valleys inside the northern wall of the enclosure proved fruitful. Seven fragmentary Folsom points and 20 channel-flakes, 1 McKean point, 5 corner-notched Middle Period points, and 2 side-notched Late Period points were thus recovered from the surface (Fig. 19). Milling stones and side-notched points were also found on the hogbacks overlooking the site area.

A number of "stone circles" 9 to 10 feet in diameter were found within the Folsom area, and 1 of these was excavated in search of a clue as to their function. This effort proved futile because of local deflation.

Test trenches were also dug in the area below the north wall of the fold remnant. Three fragmentary Folsom points, 2 channel flakes, 1 plano-convex end scraper, and miscellaneous flakes were found below but within 3 inches of the surface. No cultural material was found deeper than 3 inches in any area except the gap in the north hogback, and in the majority of cases most sub-surface material was found in the sod.

Three small caves and a small rock shelter in the walls of the enclosure were tested, but only the rock shelter yielded cultural material. Beneath a level bearing 20th century artifacts were 2 Late Prehistoric levels. Two projectile points and a broken knife blade were taken from the 10 foot trench dug across the middle of the rock shelter floor.

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Conclusions

In the opinion of the writers, the investigation reported in this paper has virtually exhausted the possibility that the Johnson site can produce significant additional information concerning the Folsom Complex. Projectile points and channel flakes are the only

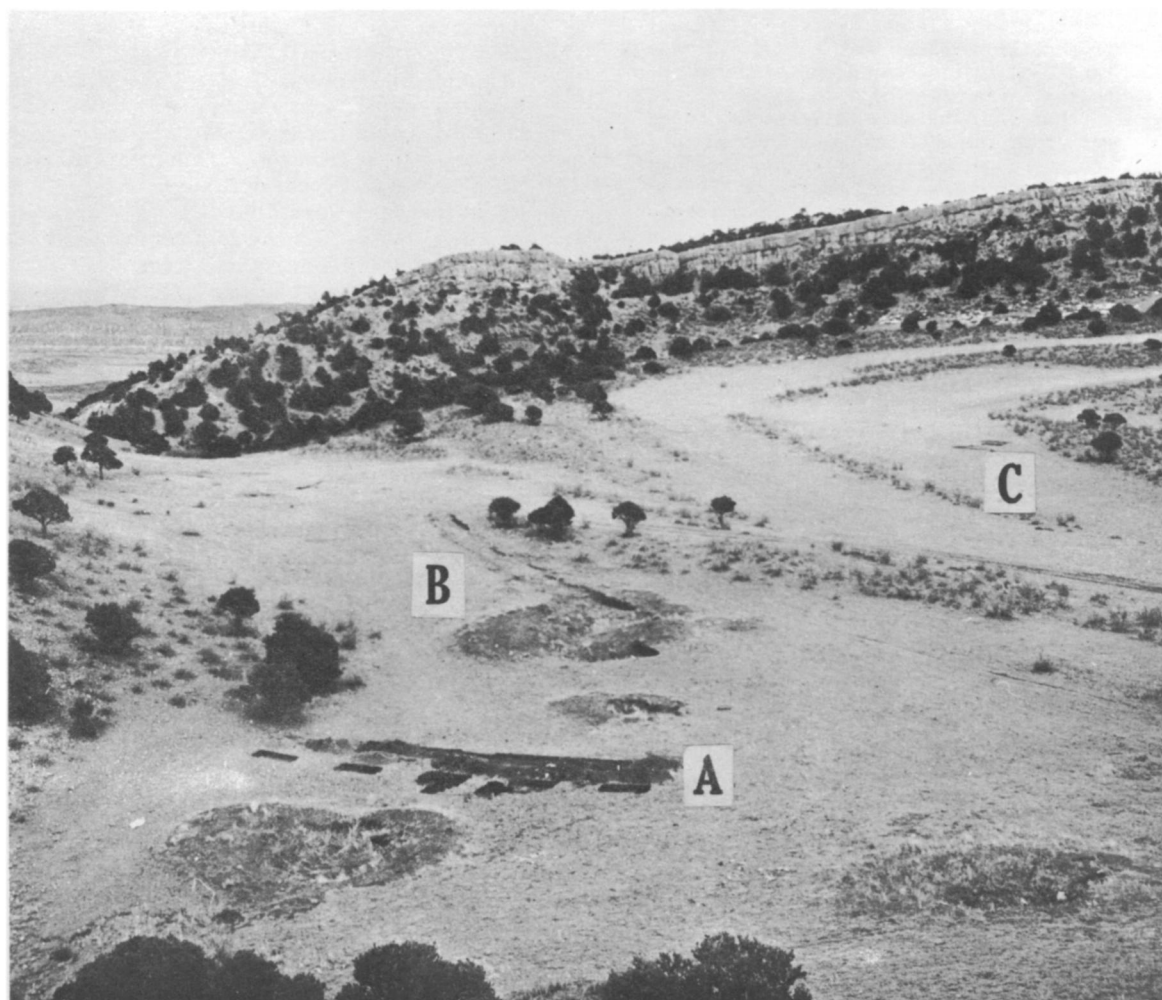
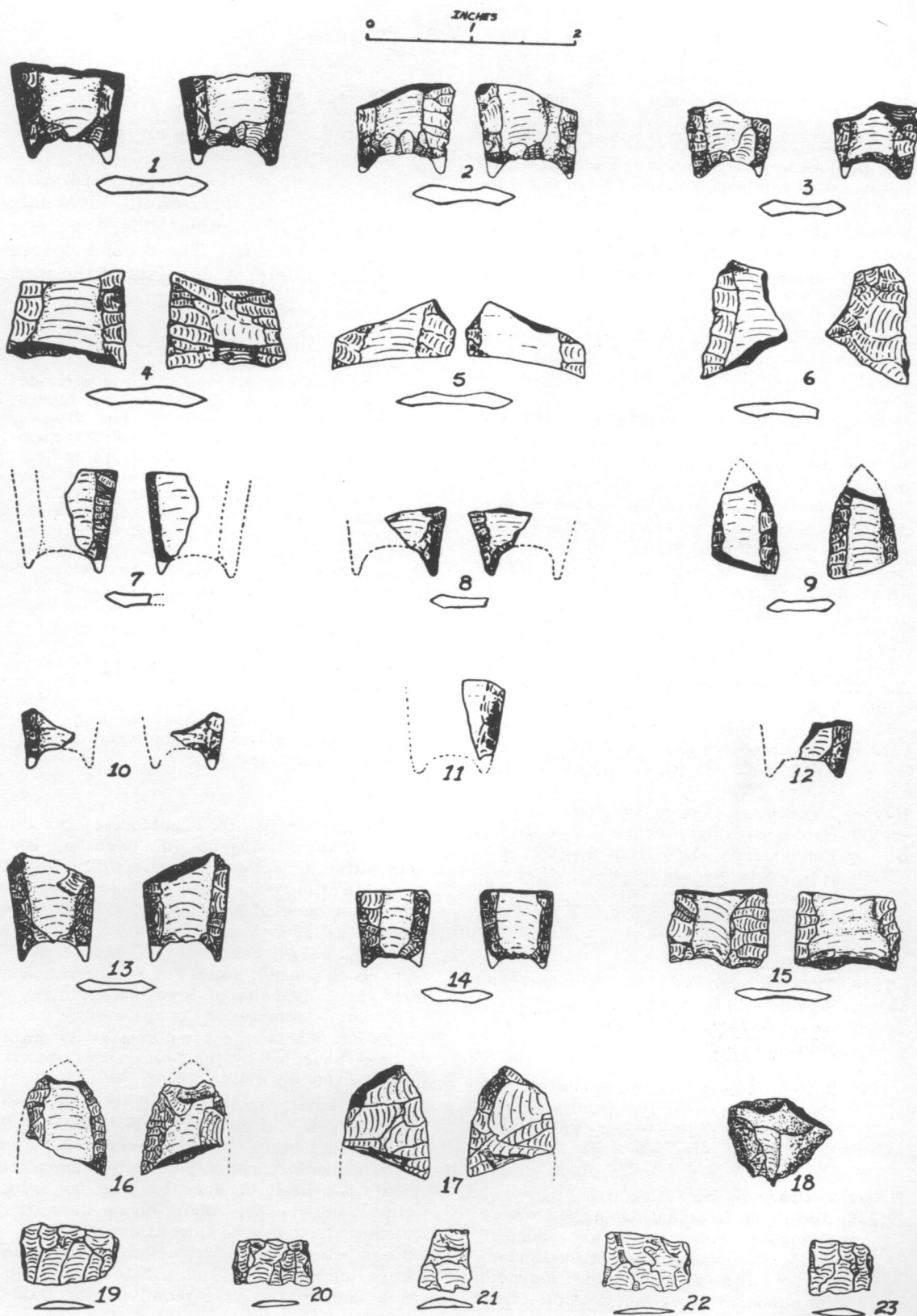


Fig. 18 - Johnson Site, Letters A-B on East-West line. Current Excavations Indicated: Letters A and C. Wormington's Excavations Indicated by Letter B.



lithic products definitely assignable to this culture, although a number of others may belong to the same complex (Fig. 19, 18). The Johnson site is the only site thus far discovered which has produced a high percentage of quartzite Folsom points (Fig. 19, 4-7). The projectile points recovered are all within the range of variation reported from the nearby Lindenmeier site (Roberts 1936). A comparison of the Lindenmeier-Johnson Folsom points with those from the Brewster site, Wyoming's only published Folsom site (Agogino and Frankforter 1960), shows the artifacts from the Folsom level of the Brewster to be smaller, thicker, and inferior in workmanship to those from the Lindenmeier and Johnson sites; and this may indicate a time differential.

One fragmentary point (Fig. 19, 10) is heat fractured and an attempt will be made to use the thermoluminescence technique to discover the antiquity of the burning. If the artifact was not accidentally burned by one of the later cultural groups in the area, the date should conform to the $10,780 \pm 375$ years B.P. date (Agogino and Haynes, 1960) from the Lindenmeier site.

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BIRD REMAINS FROM A SIOUX INDIAN MIDDEN

Abstract

Thirty-seven species of birds comprise the avifauna unearthed at a midden located at Mill Creek Indian Village near Cherokee, Iowa. This village was occupied by the Sioux from approximately 1000 to 1500 A.D. The presence of the rough-legged hawk, a winter resident, suggests that the site was occupied during the winter. Because of the absence of bones of young birds it is doubtful that Indians lived here in the middle of summer. Woodland birds comprised 21% of identified remains; raptorial and scavenging birds, 28.4%; prairie dwellers, 16.2%; marsh-dwellers, 13.5%; and aquatic species, 10.9%. Judging from the avifauna, the area surrounding the midden was probably mostly deciduous woodland with nearby prairie and marshes. The passenger pigeon is the only extinct bird found here.

Recently Dr. W. D. Frankforter, Director of the Sanford Museum in Cherokee, Iowa, submitted a collection of bird bones for identification. They had been excavated on the west bank of Mill Creek, at Mill Creek Indian Village, 3 miles north of Cherokee, N 1/2, SW 1/4, Section 10, T 92 N, R 40 W, Cherokee County, Iowa. The Sanford Museum and the University of Iowa, Department of Sociology-Anthropology, cooperated in the excavation of this site for a number of years. It was occupied by the Sioux from approximately 1000 to 1500 A.D.

Many small mammal bones were found mixed with the bird remains. Most of the bird bones were in good condition, light-brown in color, and only slightly mineralized. Some had been charred by fire and others bore tooth-marks. Many bones were fragmentary and beyond identification, and no bones were found articulated. Those that were identified are listed below. Distribution data were taken mostly from DuMont (1934).