

**EARLY MAN IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO:
NEW PLANO EVIDENCE**

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ABSTRACT

A new Plano site in the Rainy River area of Northwestern Ontario has produced 2 surface-collected projectile points possessing Agate Basin attributes, and 2 other bifacially flaked lithic tools. Their significance, and the site's potential for future research, are briefly discussed.

THE SANDMOEN SITE AND ARTIFACTS

The Sandmoen Site (DfKp-1) is located near the mouth of the Rainy River at the southeast corner of Lake of the Woods (Fig. 1) and was brought to the author's attention by Mr. Kevin Sandmoen whose family owns the site. It is situated on a glacial Lake Agassiz Campbell strandline at an elevation of 1125 feet, one of several such Campbell strandlines in the Lake of the Woods/Rainy River area (Eelson 1967) which fall between the 1100 and 1145 foot contours. All of the artifacts discussed in this brief paper are from the Sandmoen collection and were recovered from the surface after the site was ploughed some years ago.

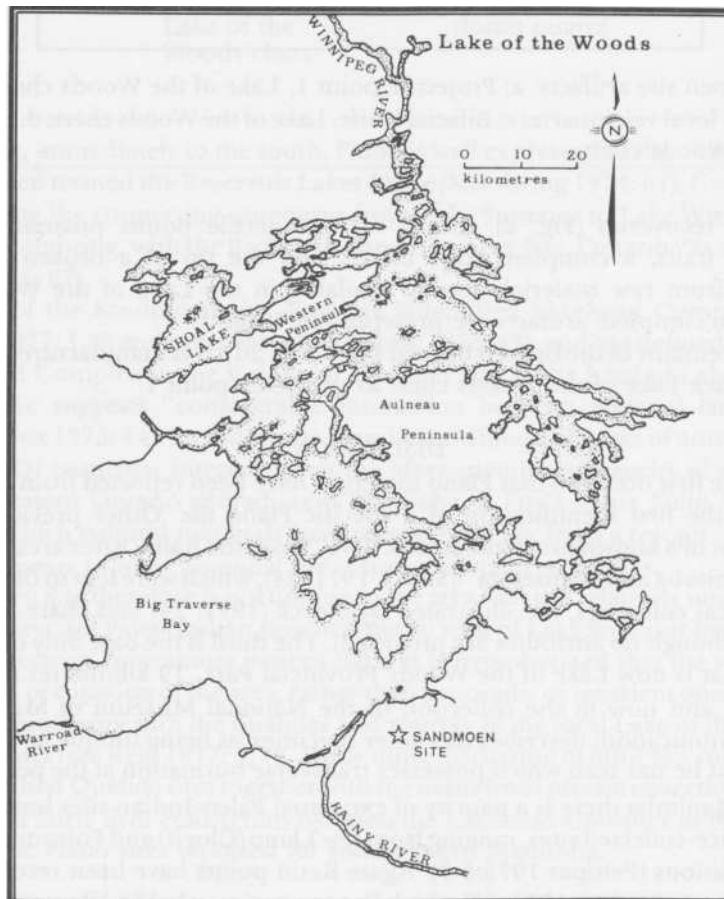


Fig. 1. Lake of the Woods, Ontario, study area.

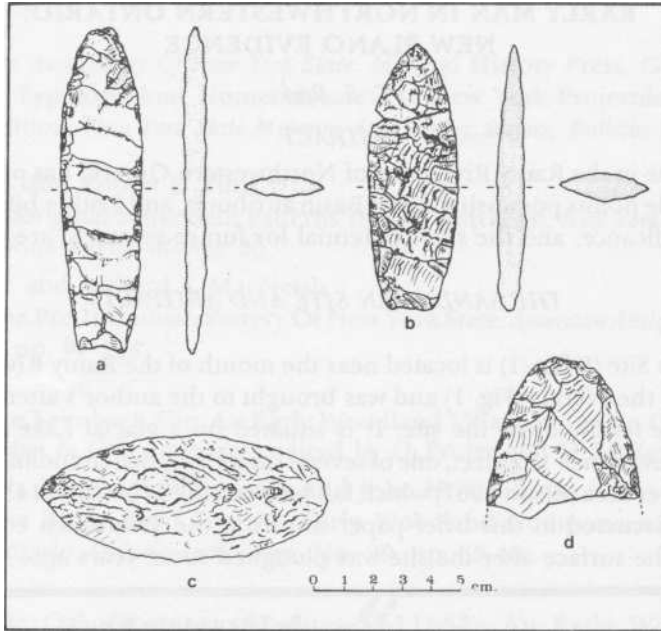


Fig. 2 Sandmoen site artifacts: a: Projectile point 1, Lake of the Woods chert; b: Projectile point 2, local vein quartz; c: Bifacial Knife, Lake of the Woods chert; d: Biface tip, Lake of the Woods chert.

The surface recoveries (Fig. 2) consist of 2 projectile points possessing Agate Basin morphological traits, a complete large biface, and the tip of a broken biface. All are manufactured from raw materials locally available in the Lake of the Woods area. The attributes of the complete artifacts are presented in Table 1.

Only the tip remains of the broken bifacial knife (Fig. 2d). It is manufactured from the same high-quality black Lake of the Woods chert as projectile point 1.

DISCUSSION

This is not the first occasion that Plano materials have been reported from the Rainy River area, but it is the first identification of a specific Plano *site*. Other previously recovered materials consist of 3 known projectile points. Two "from the Rainy River area near the border of Ontario, Manitoba and Minnesota" (Storck 1971: 24), which were lent to the Royal Ontario Museum by local collectors, are illustrated by Storck (1971: 24) and share a general Agate Basin shape (although no attributes are provided). The third is the base only of a point beach-collected in what is now Lake of the Woods Provincial Park, 19 kilometres northeast of the Sandmoen site and now in the collection of the National Museum of Man. J. V. Wright (personal communication) describes this latter specimen as being unique in that it is the only such Paleo point he has seen which possesses transverse burination at the point of breakage.

In adjacent Manitoba there is a paucity of excavated Paleo-Indian sites but a considerable number of surface-collected sites, ranging from few Llano (Clovis) and Folsom to considerably more Plano locations (Pettipas 1975:5-7). Agate Basin points have been recovered from the Lac du Bonnet area (Pettipas 1970: 28) which lies approximately 175 kilometres northwest of the Sandmoen site.

TABLE 1
ARTIFACT ATTRIBUTES

Data Item	Point 1 (Fig. 2a)	Point 2 (Fig. 2b)	Knife (Fig. 20)
Maximum length	11.3 cm	9.1 cm	9.77 cm
Width, mid-point	2.7 cm	3.05 cm	4.38 cm
Maximum width	2.8 cm	3.05 cm	4.5 cm
Thickness, mid-point	0.7 cm	0.9 cm	1.51 cm
Basal width	1.7 cm	1.6 cm	n/a
Weight	29.6 g	31.1 g	64.8 g
Blade Shape	expanding ovate	excurvate	biconvex
Transverse Section	biconvex	biconvex	biconvex
Longitudinal Section	biplano	excurvate	biplano
Basal Shape	subconcave	subconcave	rounded
Basal Grinding	present	present	absent
Raw Material	Lake of the Woods chert	(local) quartz	(local) rhyolite

In Minnesota, immediately to the south, Plano is well expressed in the northern part of the state and has been termed the Reservoir Lakes Phase (Steinbring 1974: 67). Cultural flow from east to west along the connecting waterways from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg has been postulated by Steinbring, with the Brohm site near Thunder Bay, Ontario "as an eastern base" (Steinbring 1974: 67).

To the east of the Sandmoen site, Fox has identified Lakehead Complex sites in the Quetico area (1977: 1, 2) and northeast of Atikokan (1975: 43), and has defined the central area of the Lakehead Complex in the vicinity of Thunder Bay at the head of Lake Superior (Fox 1975: 1977). He suggests "considerable interaction between regional late Paleo-Indian populations" (Fox 1975: 44), including the Flambeau/Minoqua Phases of northern Wisconsin (Saltzer 1974). Of particular interest, given the afore-mentioned paucity of excavated Paleo sites in northwestern Ontario and adjacent Manitoba, is Fox's Vieux Point site (Daft-16) in Quetico from which cultural materials were recovered *in situ* from a test pit (Fox 1977: 3, 4); the site also appears to have potential for community pattern studies.

The Sandmoen Site therefore is not unique to the area, but it is relatively unusual in that it is one of the very few late Paleo-Indian sites in Ontario west of Lake Superior from which it may be possible to recover community pattern data. It is hypothesized that the site represents a well-established occupation of the area, rather than a sporadic or transient one, because (1) the people show a familiarity with the qualities and sources of the local Lake of the Woods chert, rhyolite and quartz (see Reid 1977: 5, 18, 19 for more discussion of lithic raw materials), and (2) the firmly identified Quetico sites together with the items from private collections on the Rainy River establish a fairly firm connection between the Lakehead Complex at the head of Lake Superior and the Plano sites reported for southeastern Manitoba.

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