

NATIVE ARTIFACTS FROM MAUGERVILLE

by Ron Cunningham and David Black

Ron: Early in November, 1998, I decided to take a walk along the bank of the St. John River in Maugerville. As I strolled along that lovely afternoon, my thoughts were interrupted when I spotted what appeared to be an axe-like stone nestled in the sand near the bank. On closer examination, I concluded it was too crude to be an stone tool, although I did pocket it anyway.

Then I stepped around a clump of grass, and, to my surprise, 3 or 4 metres down the beach I came across a beautiful biface. It was lying on top of the sand, fully exposed, and clearly was man-made. After a few minutes of admiring my find, and being thankful for my good fortune, I proceeded along the shore another 15 metres or so. A flash of colour, like the colour of the biface I had in my hand, caught my eye. It came from a piece of stone embedded in a low cutbank along the edge of the river. I poked the bank with my walking stick and out fell a perfect projectile point.

Some time later, after a New Brunswick Archaeology Society meeting, I showed the artifacts to Pat Allen. She believes the projectile point was made between 2300 and 2500 years ago. David Black expressed a similar opinion when he examined the artifacts to determine what type of stone they were made from. His further observations follow.

Dave: The projectile point Ron found has a pointed blade with excurvate blade margins, and an expanding stem of a form usually called wide side-notched. The base of the stem has not been thinned. The artifact is 4.45 cm in length, 3.02 cm in width and 0.80 cm thick, and is similar in shape and size to other projectile points dating to the Early Woodland period in New Brunswick. The biface probably originally was a pointed oval in shape, but the pointed end was broken off sometime in the past. It is 6.78 cm long, 4.90 cm wide and 0.94 cm thick. It probably was used as a knife blade, or was intended as a preform to be made into a projectile point, and probably is similar to the projectile point in age.

Both artifacts are made from Kineo-Traveler Mountain porphyry, a distinctive volcanic rock having white feldspar crystals and clear quartz beads embedded in a green groundmass. Part of the biface has been bleached white, perhaps by exposure to sun and acid rain. The projectile point, on the other hand, is very well preserved, and has a waxy texture that is unusual in this type of stone.

The only known bedrock outcrops of Kineo-Traveler Mountain porphyry are in the Moosehead Lake area of central interior Maine. It also between Moosehead Lake and the central Maine coast as cobbles and boulders transported by glaciers. This type of stone does not occur naturally in Canada, and must have been brought to New Brunswick by Native people, either as finished artifacts from Maine, or as raw material that was made into artifacts here. Given their close proximity when found, and that they are made from the same exotic material, these two artifacts may have been made and used by the same Native person in the past.



Stone tools found on the Saint John River at Maugerville, N.B., by Ron Cunningham, NBAS past president