

A REPORT ON THE

JAMES ANSTEY ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTION

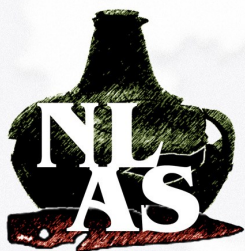
FROM BACK HARBOUR, TWILLINGATE



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Community Collections
Archaeological Research
Project

Volume 1
September 2014



**Newfoundland and Labrador
Archaeological Society**

Foreword

Archaeology is all about context.

Archaeologists lament the loss of context when an artifact is plucked out of a site without recording and mapping its relationship with all of the other artifacts and features surrounding it. The systematic recording of all of the various complex components of an archaeological site is what separates the professional discipline of archaeology from the keen-eyed artifact collector, but it doesn't mean that the relationship between archaeologist and collector is an unfriendly one.

The Community Collections Archaeology Research Project is an initiative of the Newfoundland and Labrador Archaeological Society that seeks to bring privately held archaeological collections in the Province out of shoeboxes, closets, and basements and showcase them for everyone in the Province to learn from and enjoy. The goal is not to encourage the private collection of artifacts, but rather to gain a better understanding of important collections that may not be curated by archaeologists or museum professionals in the Province.

In the spring of 2014, the NLAS received heritage funding through the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Government's Cultural Economic Development Program to hire an archaeologist to work with a private collector to analyze, record, and present a private collection to a wider audience. The end result is this report and an online gallery of the James Anstey Collection on the NLAS website.

The James Anstey Collection is a perfect subject to launch the Community Collections Archaeology Research Project. Robert Anstey, who earned a BA and MA in archaeology at Memorial University of Newfoundland and who is currently enrolled in the PhD program at Cambridge, is the archaeologist selected by the NLAS to analyze the collection and is the author of this report. James Anstey, whose collection is showcased here, is Robert's father. On the one hand, this report is an archaeological analysis of a private collection of artifacts, but on the other hand it's the work of a son, who has turned his father's pursuit into a career. An object without context is just a thing, whether it's a report or an arrowhead picked up off the ground. Understanding the context of that thing adds another layer of meaning and turns an object into a story.

Archaeology is all about context.

Tim Rast

NLAS President

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

September 2014

Introduction

This paper reports on archaeological material collected by James Anstey in Back Harbour, Twillingate, Newfoundland, between 2006 and 2014. Artefacts were surface collected by Mr. Anstey from four sites representing three precontact cultures including Maritime Archaic Indian (MAI), Groswater Palaeoeskimo (GPE) and Dorset Palaeoeskimo (DPE).

This material was catalogued and photographed by the author in June-July 2014 on behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Archaeological Society (NLAS) under the Community Collections Archaeological Research Project (CCARP). This project is aimed towards locating and engaging with private collectors of archaeological material from the Province and fostering a trusting relationship allowing archaeologists to catalogue and study their collections. This project also allows archaeologists to facilitate public education and promote awareness of heritage and archaeological resources (NLAS 2014).

This report is divided into two main sections. A cursory overview of previous archaeological research on Back Harbour is first provided, with a particular emphasis on the precontact cultures represented in Mr. Anstey's collection. This is followed by a summary and brief discussion – organized in sequential order by ar-

chaeological site Borden number – of the archaeological material collected by Mr. Anstey. Concluding remarks are provided at the end of the report.

Background

Back Harbour is a small coastal settlement northwest of Twillingate in Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland (Figure 1). The community is situated around a large cove from which it derives its name. Two smaller coves, Wells' Dock and Freeman's Dock, are located to the southeast.

Archaeological surveys of Back Harbour have documented a significant number of precontact archaeological sites relating to Maritime Archaic Indian, Groswater Palaeoeskimo and Dorset Palaeoeskimo occupations (see MacLeod 1966, 1967, 1968; Temple 2007; Wells and Renouf 2008). Archaeological sites are concentrated in the southeastern area of the Harbour and around Wells' Dock and Freeman's Dock though several smaller sites have been located elsewhere around its perimeter. While a large quantity of artefacts has been recovered from the area over the years, the majority of sites are unfortunately badly disturbed (Wells and Renouf 2008). Several individuals in the community hold artefact collections of varying sizes. James Anstey's collection consists of artefacts relating to three groups of precontact hunter-gatherers.

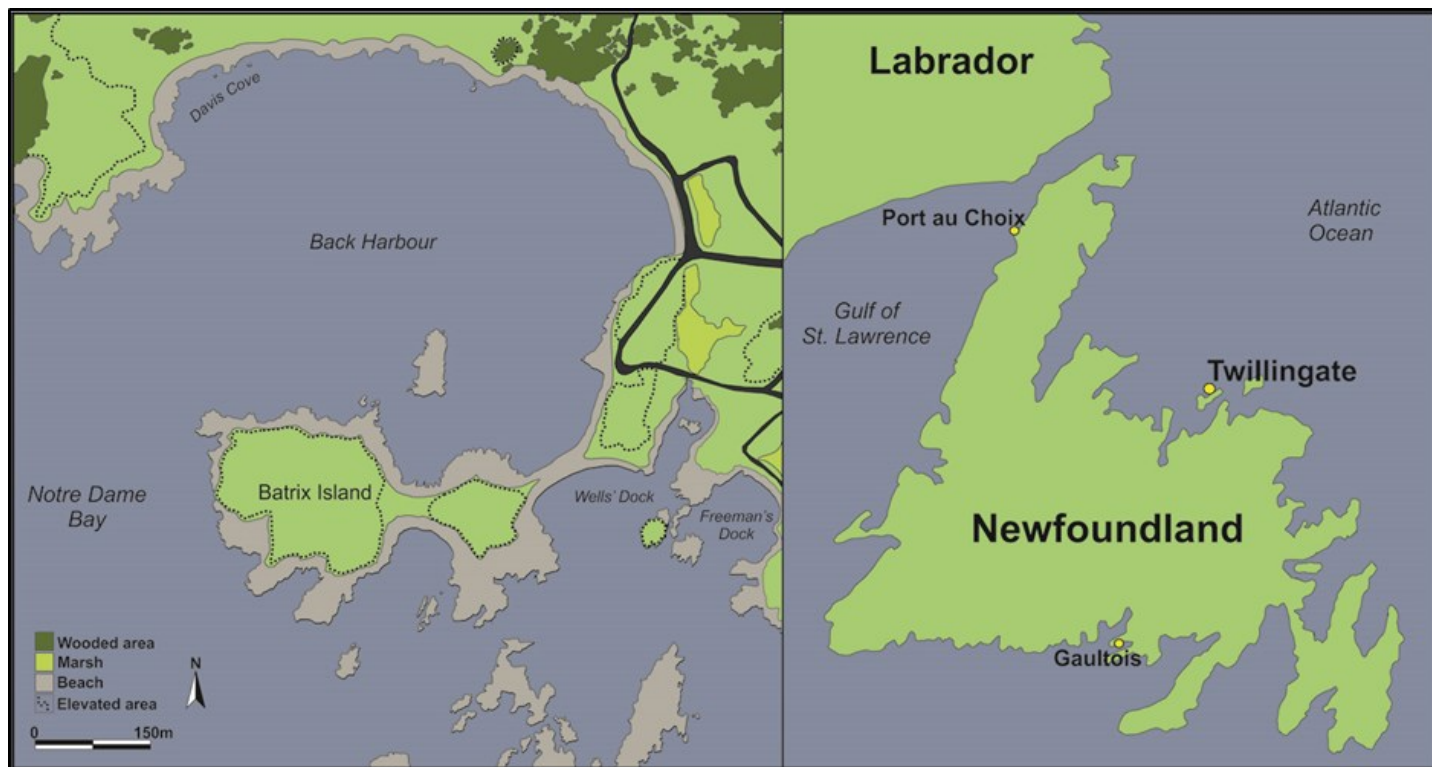


Figure 1. Location of Back Harbour, Twillingate, and other Newfoundland place-names mentioned in text.

¹ The Borden system is an alphanumeric numbering system used by Canadian archaeologists to track archaeological sites and the artefacts that come from them (Borden 1952).

Maritime Archaic Indian (MAI)

Maritime Archaic Indians were the first people to occupy Newfoundland and Labrador with habitation sites dating between 8000 and 3200 BP (years before present) (Bell and Renouf 2003). Maritime Archaic Indians are characterized as maritime based on the coastal location of most of these sites as well as a hunting technology focused on marine mammal hunting (Renouf 1999). Woodworking was important based on their production and use of large pecked and ground slate tools such as axes, adzes and gouges. Most of the Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts recovered from Back Harbour are related to this industry. Three charcoal-based radiocarbon dates from the Curtis (DjAq-1) (Figure 2) Maritime Archaic Indian burial ground in Back Harbour range from 3720 ± 130 BP (GSC-834) to 3200 ± 90 BP (GaK-1254) (Gajewski et al. 2011).

hunters with a specialized marine mammal hunting technology. Groswater lithic artefacts are much smaller than Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts. They also display exceptional craftsmanship and are often made from fine-grained and/or colourful cherts. Common Groswater lithic tools include: box-based, side-notched harpoon endblades; harpoon sideblades; predominantly rectangular flared endscrapers; side-notched flaked and ground chert burin-like tools; concave sidescrapers; thin asymmetrical bifaces; and microblades (Renouf 2005:58). The two Back Harbour Groswater components, Anstey (DjAq-2) and Dock Road-2 (DjAq-8) (Figure 2), have not been dated due to a lack of in-situ features containing materials suitable for radiocarbon dating.

Dorset Palaeoeskimo (DPE)

Like the Groswater, Dorset Palaeoeskimos were arctic-

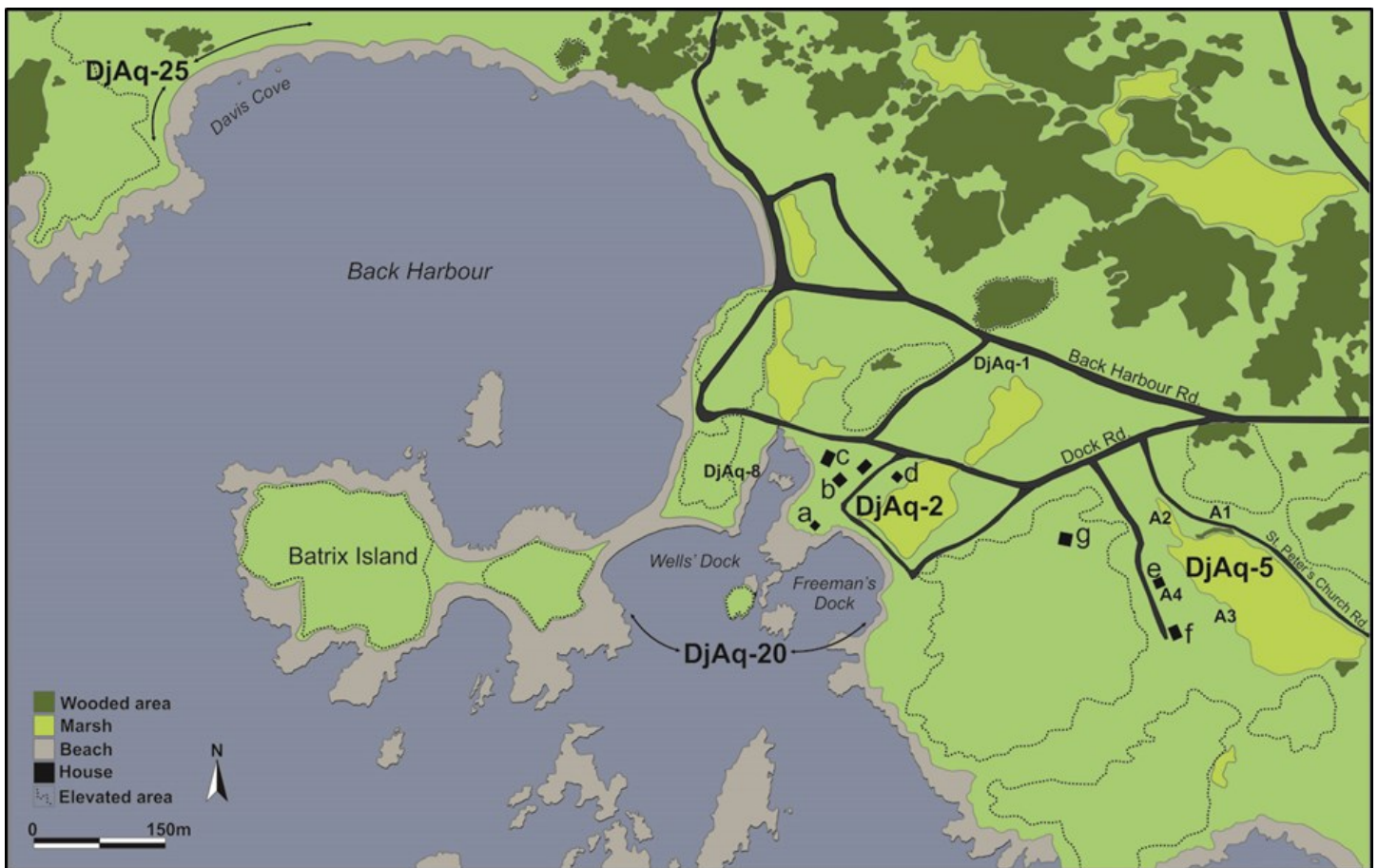


Figure 2. Location of Back Harbour archaeological sites and landmarks mentioned in text.

Groswater Palaeoeskimo (GPE)

Groswater Palaeoeskimos were arctic-adapted hunter-gatherers that occupied the Province 2800–1900 BP (Renouf 2005:58). Groswater Palaeoeskimos lived predominantly along the coast and were marine mammal

adapted hunter-gatherers. They were focused on marine-mammal hunting and lived in predominantly coastal areas in Newfoundland 2000–1200 BP (Renouf 1999:408). Typical Dorset lithic tools include: tip-fluted triangular harpoon endblades; triangular and thumbnail

endscrapers; asymmetric bifaces; microblades; ground and polished burin-like-tools; and rectangular soapstone lamps and pots (Renouf 1999:408). The Anstey site is the only Dorset site in Back Harbour for which there is a dated component. A charcoal sample associated with a stone feature at the site was dated to 1540±40 BP (Beta-238907) (Wells and Renouf 2008:55).

Site	Number
Anstey	170
Back Harbour-3	32
Batrix Island Intertidal South	15
Back Harbour-6	1
Total	218

Table 1. Number of artefacts per site in Anstey collection.

James Anstey Collection

There is a total of 218 precontact artefacts (Table 1) in the possession of James Anstey. The author catalogued each artefact in the basement of Mr. Anstey's residence in Back Harbour. The collection was first sorted by site designation and then by artefact type.

Each artefact was subsequently labeled with a specific Borden (DjAq) and sequential catalogue number. Catalogue numbers were provided by the Rooms Provincial Museum. Artefact information was recorded on digital archaeological Specimen Record Forms provided by the Provincial Archaeology Office (PAO). The artefacts were also photographed.

Anstey (DjAq-2)

The Anstey site (Figure 2) is located on the properties of James (Figure 2a), Sharon (Figure 2b) and Crystal Anstey (Figure 2c) as well as Gilbert Manuel (Figure 2d). It is a large but heavily disturbed archaeological site with an intensive Palaeoeskimo (Dorset and Groswater) and minor Maritime Archaic occupation. Lithic artefacts have

Cultural Affiliation	Number (%)
Maritime Archaic Indian	2 (1.2)
Groswater Palaeoeskimo	12 (7.1)
Dorset Palaeoeskimo	153 (90.0)
Palaeoeskimo	2 (1.2)
Undetermined Precontact	1 (0.6)
Total	170 (100.1)

Table 2. Summary of artefacts from Anstey by cultural affiliation.

been collected by locals for decades from a large vegetable garden on the site (Temple 2007:19; Wells and Renouf 2008:7). In spite of this substantial disturbance a 2007 survey by Wells and Renouf (2008:12) found on the property of Sharon Anstey a small undisturbed area including an in-situ Dorset feature.

The bulk of Mr. Anstey's collection derives from this site and includes primarily Palaeoeskimo lithic tool types (Table 2). Groswater tools include harpoon endblades, bifaces and biface preforms and an endscraper (Table 3; Figure 3); some exhibit ground surfaces.

Two Groswater endblade specimens (Figure 4) are exceptionally well-made, including ground dorsal and ven-

Groswater Palaeoeskimo

Tool Type	Number
Endblade	3
Biface	2
Biface preform	6
Endscraper	1
Total	12

Table 3. Summary of Groswater artefacts from Anstey.

Dorset Palaeoeskimo

Tool Type	Number
Endblade	21
Endblade preform	25
Dart	2
Biface	41
Biface preform	3
Endscraper	29
End-of-blade scraper	2
Concave sidescraper	1
Microblade	7
Microblade core	3
Burin-like tool	4
Burin-like tool preform	2
Abrader	1
Soapstone lamp	1
Soapstone pot	3
Soapstone vessel	7
Soapstone debitage	1
Total	153

Table 4. Summary of Dorset artefacts from Anstey

<i>Palaeoeskimo</i>	
Tool Type	Number
Adze	1
Axe preform	1
Total	2

Table 5. Summary of undiagnostic Palaeoeskimo artefacts from Anstey.

<i>Undetermined Precontact</i>	
Tool Type	Number
Ceramic vessel	1

Table 6. Summary of Undetermined Precontact artefacts from Anstey.

<i>Maritime Archaic Indian</i>	
Tool Type	Number
Woodworking tool	1
Plummet	1
Total	2

Table 7. Summary of Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts from Anstey.

tral surfaces as well as edge serration, and are remarkably similar to Phillip's Garden West variant endblades from Port au Choix (Figure 1) and elsewhere in the Province (Lavers and Renouf 2013; Renouf 2005; Ryan 2011). Phillip's Garden West variant endblades have previously been recovered from the Dock Road-2 (Figure 2) site to the northwest of the Anstey site (Temple 2007:55; Wells and Renouf 2008:32).

Typical Middle Dorset tools dominate the Anstey site collection (Table 4). Bifaces (Figure 5), scrapers (Figure 6), preforms (Figure 7) and endblades (Figure 8) com-



Figure 4. Phillip's Garden West Variant endblades.

prise the majority of Dorset tool types (Table 2). Other tool types represented include two darts (Figure 9), soapstone vessels (Figure 10), microblades (Figure 11), microblade cores (Figure 12) burin-like tools (Figure 13)



Figure 5. Dorset bifaces from Anstey.



Figure 3. Groswater artefacts from Anstey. Top row (l-r): Six biface preforms; bottom row (l-r): two bifaces, an endscraper, and three endblades.



Figure 6. Dorset scrapers from Anstey. The first two in the top row are an end-of-blade scraper and a concave sidescraper; the others are endscrapers.



Figure 7. Dorset preforms from Anstey.



Figure 8. Dorset endblades from Anstey.



Figure 9. Darts from Anstey.



Figure 10. Soapstone vessel fragments from Anstey.



Figure 11. Microblades from Anstey.



Figure 12. Microblade cores from Anstey. The first two are chert; the third is milk quartz.



Figure 13. Burin-like tools from Anstey. The first two are preforms.



Figure 14. Abrader from Anstey.



Figure 15. Adze fragment from Anstey.



Figure 16. Axe preform from Anstey.



Figure 17. Precontact ceramic sherd from Anstey showing both surfaces.



Figure 18. Maritime Archaic Indian plummet (l) and tool fragment (r) from Anstey.

and abraders (Figure 14), all of which are common in Dorset collections elsewhere in the arctic and subarctic (Harp 1964; Renouf 1999).

Palaeoeskimo woodworking tools are represented by a fragment of an adze (Figure 15) and an axe preform (Figure 16). Both are made from silicified slate. These artefacts may be Groswater as similar, nephrite specimens have been recovered from Groswater sites in Port au Choix (Renouf 1994:177, 187; 2005:58) and elsewhere in the Province (e.g., Auger 1984:196).

A single sherd of a precontact ceramic vessel (Table 3; Figure 17) was found by Mr. Anstey in the vegetable garden on the site. It is grit-tempered with no apparent decoration. Precontact vessel sherds are quite rare on the Island of Newfoundland and have been found at only two other sites on the island, L'Anse à Flamme (CjAx-1) (Penney 1984:148) near Gaultois (Figure 1) and Gould (EeBi-42) (Teal 2001:54) in Port au Choix. Precontact ceramic sherds are typically associated with Recent Indian and/or Woodland period occupations (Stapelfeldt 2009). Given the absence of other Recent Indian artefacts from the Anstey site, it is possible this item was scavenged by Palaeoeskimos from a Recent Indian site or obtained in trade. Mr. Anstey noted a similarity between the clay used in the ceramic and clay found in the intertidal zone west of the site. On this basis he suggested that Palaeoeskimos made the vessel.

Two Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts were found at the Anstey site (Table 3; Figure 18). They include a broken soapstone plummet with incised line grooves and a small ground chip from a slate woodworking tool.

Back Harbour-3 (DjAq-5)

This is an extensive but badly disturbed Maritime Archaic Indian site located on the properties of James Anstey (Figure 2e), Dean Young (Figure 2f) and Richard Center (Figure 2g) which surround a wet, marshy area. It is divided into four Areas (Figure 2:A1-4). Area 1 is located on either side of St. Peter's Church Road on the north-east side of the marsh. Area 2 is located next to a low crowberry-covered knoll to the northwest of Area 1. Area 3 and Area 4 are located on the western side of the marsh. Artefacts have been surface collected primarily from Area 4, on the gravel driveway of Mr. Young (Temple 2007:37; Wells and Renouf 2008:19). Artefacts are uncovered there nearly every year when snowplows and road graders scrape sod and subsoil from the edge of the road.

Mr. Anstey's collection from Back Harbour-3 consists of 32 Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts (Table 4). The majority of artefacts are related to woodworking and tool production, such as axes (Figure 19), adzes (Figure 20), a celt (Figure 21), gouges (Figure 22), preforms (Figures 23-24) and fragments of unidentifiable woodworking tools (Figure 25). All of these artefacts were collected from Mr. Young's driveway except for the celt (Figure 21) and an axe (Figure 19a) which were collected from the fill of a utility pole on Richard Center's property. Mr. Anstey also collected from the driveway four abrad-er fragments (Figure 26) and a fragment of a slate knife (Figure 27). A large net sinker (Figure 28) with pecked line grooves was collected along St. Peter's Church Road in Area 1.

Tool Type	Number
Axe	3
Axe preform	2
Adze	4
Celt	1
Gouge	3
Gouge preform	1
Slate knife	1
Net sinker	1
Bayonet preform	1
Woodworking tool	10
Abrader	4
Biface preform	1
Site total	32

Table 4. Summary of Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 19. Axes from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 20. Adzes from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 21. Celt from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 22. Gouges from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 23. Ground slate preforms from Back Harbour-3. l-r: two axe preforms; gouge preform; bayonet preform.



Figure 24. Rhyolite biface preform from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 25. Fragments of unidentifiable woodworking tools from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 26. Abraders from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 27. Slate knife fragment from Back Harbour-3.



Figure 28. Net sinker from Back Harbour-3.

Batrix Island Intertidal South (DjAq-20)

This site is located in the intertidal zone south of the isthmus connecting Batrix Island to the mainland (Figure 2). The site encompasses Wells' Dock and Freeman's Dock. Artefacts, primarily Maritime Archaic Indi-

Maritime Archaic Indian

Tool Type	Quantity
Axe	1
Adze	2
Gouge	1
Gouge preform	1
Bayonet	1
Woodworking tool	1
Plummet	1
Total	8

Table 5. Summary of Maritime Archaic Indian artefacts from Batrix Island Intertidal South.

an, have been found occasionally by residents over the years. Most artefacts from this site are either waterworn or covered by marine algae.

Mr. Anstey has found a total of 15 artefacts at this site (Table 5). The majority of this collection is comprised of typical Maritime Archaic Indian tool types. These include an axe (Figure 29), fragments of adzes (Figure 30), a gouge and gouge preform (Figure 31), bayonet (Figure 33), a woodworking tool (Figure 34) and a complete slate plummet (Figure 35).

Mr. Anstey also found a small number of Dorset Palaeo-eskimo lithics (Table 6) at Batrix Island Intertidal South. These include a biface (Figure 35), concave sidescraper (Figure 36) and two soapstone vessel fragments (Figure 37). Also present in his collection from this site are an undiagnostic hammerstone (Figure 38) and biface pre-



Figure 29. Axe from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 30. Adzes from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 31. Gouge preform (l) and gouge (r) from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 32. Bayonet from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 33. Fragment of a woodworking tool from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 34. Plummet from Batrux Island Intertidal South.



Figure 35. Dorset biface from Batrrix Island Intertidal South.



Figure 36. Dorset side-scraper from Batrrix Island Intertidal South.



Figure 37. Soapstone vessel fragments from Batrrix Island Intertidal South.



Figure 38. Hammerstone from Batrrix Island Intertidal South.



Figure 39. Preform from Batrrix Island Intertidal South.



Figure 40. Fossilized walrus tusk from Batrrix Island Intertidal South. Proximal end is on the left; distal tip is missing.

<i>Dorset Palaeoeskimo</i>	
Tool Type	Number
Biface	1
Concave sidescraper	1
Soapstone vessel	2
Total	4

Table 6. Summary of Dorset artefacts from Batrix Island Intertidal South.

<i>Undetermined Precontact</i>	
Tool Type	Number
Hammerstone	1
Biface preform	1
Walrus tusk	1
Total	3

Table 7. Summary of Undetermined Precontact artefacts from Batrix Island Intertidal South.

form (Figure 39) as well as a fossilized walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus* tusk) (Figure 40). The walrus tusk was uncovered when Mr. Anstey had a channel dredged from the western margin of the intertidal zone east to his wharf, which is alongside his cabin on the Anstey site. Given the recovery of Maritime Archaic Indian material during similar dredging in the past (Temple 2007:59) it is possible the tusk is related to that occupation, but without any apparent cultural modification it is difficult to be certain. Submitting a sample of the specimen for radio-carbon dating may shed light on this possibility.

Back Harbour-6 (DjAq-25)

This site is located along the northern perimeter of Back Harbour in an area known as Davis Cove (Figure 2). Maritime Archaic Indian and Palaeoeskimo artefacts

have been found eroding from the edge of the sod along the top of the beach as well as on the level terrace above (Wells and Renouf 2008:44). Most of the site has likely been destroyed by coastal erosion. Mr. Anstey collected from the eroding sod a single Maritime Archaic Indian axe (Figure 41).

Concluding Remarks

This report summarizes James Anstey's collection of precontact artefacts from Back Harbour, Twillingate. Mr. Anstey's finds contribute to a better impression of the cultures and types of artefacts present at Anstey, Back Harbour-3, Batrix Island Intertidal South and Back Harbour-6. The presence of Phillip's Garden West material as well as a fragment of precontact ceramic is particularly notable as these artefacts are quite rare in the Province. While there is generally no provenience associated with private collections it is worthwhile to document such material as it offers the potential to contribute to further understanding cultures and artefact types as well as to document previously unidentified archaeological sites. Importantly, the provenience of or contextual information about an artefact is more valuable to archaeologists than the physical artefact. Analogous to a crime scene, an archaeological artefact is a piece of evidence that can contribute to recreating a past event or identifying a particular culture or individual. However if artefacts are removed from their original position, it is analogous to removing a page from a book. The story is incomplete. It is the hope of the NLAS that this report will encourage more private collectors to come forward with their collections and rather than removing artefacts from sites report such finds to the Provincial Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to James Anstey for allowing his artefact collection to be catalogued and photographed. The Community Collections Archaeological Research Project was funded through the Cultural Economic Development Program – Heritage, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Email correspondences with Elaine Anton, Collections Manager of Archaeology and Ethnology at the Rooms Provincial Museum, Stephen Hull, Provincial Archaeology Office, and Tim Rast and John Erwin of the NLAS were helpful in making the project run smoothly.



Figure 41. Maritime Archaic Indian axe from Back Harbour-6.

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