

consisted of driving the animals over cliffs or steep declines, where they were slaughtered by hunters waiting below. Concomitant with the increasing use of this technique was a continued diminution in the size of projectile points, culminating in the appearance of small, triangular notched forms used as tips for arrows rather than for darts.

Another innovation of this period was the introduction of pottery-making. Occurring only sporadically in the early part of the period, ceramics gradually increased in importance, both in the prairie area and in the Boreal Forest. Some of the wares show close relationships to the pottery of the woodland region of Minnesota and of the middle Missouri area of North Dakota, while others occur in Canada only and are of northeastern origin. In southern Alberta an earth-lodge village clearly derived from those of the Missouri valley indicates the spread of new people into the area. North of the prairie region, mixed economies continued to prevail, generally consisting of the hunting of a variety of mammals and birds as well as fishing. Continuing relationships with the south are suggested by the appearance of small arrow points typical of the prairies, reaching as far as the southwest Yukon.

In coastal British Columbia, the way of life based on salmon fishing continued to develop. The major technological change occurred around the beginning of the Christian era with the introduction of heavy woodworking tools of pecked and ground stone. In the interior plateau country small side-notched points made their appearance at about the middle of this period, gradually replacing earlier forms, and indicating the continuation of contact with the area east of the Rockies. Also at this time, based on evidence from the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and British Columbia, the Athabaskan language stock, the most important family in the northern area, appears to have spread to its present limits.

Trade goods finally began to appear in the archaeological sites of western Canada, ushering in the historic period. At this point identifications of archaeological complexes with historic tribes such as the Chilcotin, Carrier, Hidatsa and Blackfoot, are often possible. Such attempts are made difficult by the large-scale displacement of one group by another which resulted from the introduction of the fur trade and the use of fire-arms and, in the prairie area, of the horse. Nevertheless, the assignment of archaeological sites to such widely separated groups as the Salish and the Cree proceeds with growing confidence as excavation continues.

2.1.3 Prehistory of northern Canada

Northern Canada, as discussed here, refers to the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories including the Arctic archipelago. It is an area of great physiographic complexity, and the prehistory of its Indian and Eskimo occupants is equally complex. The rich sea mammal and fish resource, as well as the caribou, attracted prehistoric man into some of the most inhospitable regions of North America. Climatic fluctuations through time, that markedly affected the availability of both sea and land mammals, had a concomitant effect upon man who relied on them for food, clothing, shelter, and indeed for much of the material culture that permitted survival.

The earliest evidence of man thus far found in the New World comes from the northern Yukon Territory where, 25,000 to 30,000 years ago, hunters preyed on such animals as mammoth, horse, bison and caribou. These early hunters must have come from Siberia across the broad plain that connected Asia and North America at that time and penetrated through the interior of Alaska into the large portion of the Yukon that was free of ice during the last continental and mountain glaciation that covered the rest of Canada. Early man may have passed southward through a gap between the continental and mountain glaciers but subsequent re-advances of the ice have destroyed all traces of his passage. During the waning of the last ice sheets, bands of hunters possessing a distinctive stone tool kit including fluted spear points rapidly expanded to occupy most of the unglaciated portions of North America. These big-game hunters of ultimate Asiatic origin have been called Clovis. In southwestern Yukon and western Mackenzie District a sequence of cultural complexes can be tentatively traced from around 8,500 years ago to recent times. The evidence of palaeoecology and archaeology suggests that large herds of grazing animals such as caribou, bison and musk-ox, as well as smaller animals, were hunted on the open tundra-taiga until the area was forested 4,000 years ago.

Culturally, these people were related to their western neighbours in Alaska but all were influenced by groups of southern big-game hunters referred to as Plano. There is also evidence that northern technologies and ideas spread southward into the British Columbia plateau. The