

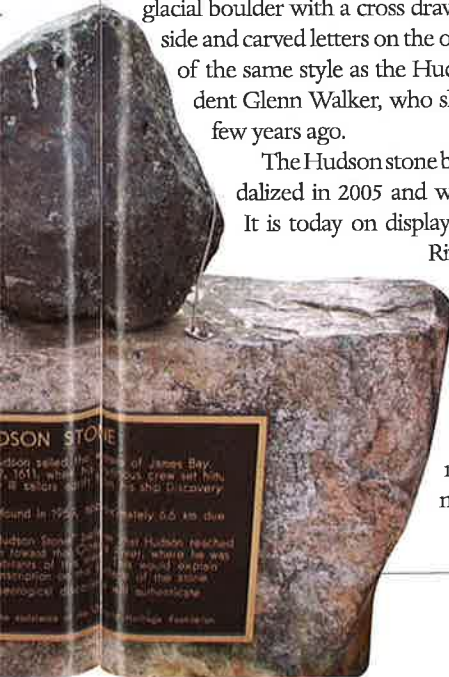
ne rocks?

Hudson was... Or was... e to hold

Hudson, in a small... w—who... west Pas-

ace with... gs near... Ontario... Hudson... in Chalk... Ontario.

olar bears... far south



One theory is that Hudson could have travelled with a party of northern Cree, who regularly followed river systems to trade with southern tribes. The English explorer probably knew that the French under Samuel Champlain were in the St. Lawrence Valley.

“Even though they were at war, Hudson quite logically would have made the decision to try to reach the French, because then he would have had an outside chance of returning to Europe,” says Slattery.

Archaeologist Ken Swayze of Cobden, Ontario, also thinks there may be something to this theory. He wonders whether Aboriginal trading parties meeting in Kitchisipirini territory on what is now Morrison Island on the Ottawa River decided it was not in their interest to turn Hudson over to the French. Perhaps they didn’t want the French to know about the trade route to Hudson Bay.

The Kitchisipirini people acted as middlemen in the trade for northern furs and had for years stymied Champlain’s efforts to push northward in search of the “great northern sea” Europeans believed was the Northwest Passage to the Orient.

An artifact known as the “Hudson stone” in Chalk River, Ontario, which is near Morrison Island, bolsters this theory, Swayze believes.

“This rock had ‘HH captive 1612’ etched into it with copperplate precision,” said Swayze. Found by a road-building crew in the 1950s, it was sent to the British Museum in London for analysis in the 1960s. “They concluded the style and manner of the inscription was consistent with that period.”

Also found at Chalk River is “cross rock,” a cabin-sized glacial boulder with a cross drawn in red pigment on one side and carved letters on the other side that appear to be of the same style as the Hudson stone, says local resident Glenn Walker, who showed Swayze the rock a few years ago.

The Hudson stone broke apart after being vandalized in 2005 and was repaired with cement.

It is today on display at a small park in Chalk River, together with a plaque that says, “Perhaps some future archaeological discovery will authenticate this engraving.”

For now it’s just a theory. As Slattery says, “You’re never going to find anything marked ‘Henry woz ’ere.’”

— Nelle Oosterom

Border-crossing button

U.S. military relic discovered on Alberta First Nation.

When Calgary-based archaeologist Tommy Ng and his crew were digging at an Alberta site last summer, the last thing they expected to find was an American military artifact from the late 1800s.

It’s anyone’s guess how a U.S. military button, produced as early as 1875 for

the coats of enlisted men, became buried near the Bow River, a half-hour drive west of Calgary, on land belonging to the Stoney Nakoda First Nation.

The button is adorned with the Civil War eagle, with its outstretched wings, a striped shield at its breast, three arrows clutched in its right claw, and an olive branch in its left. According to Ng, senior project archaeologist with Bison Historical Services, which is excavating the site in advance of work to widen the narrow 1A highway, the button could be evidence of an extensive Aboriginal trade network, or it could



have been brought to the area by an American settler or trader.

“It could be a personal effect and it could be trade,” Ng said. “I don’t know of any excavations in Alberta that have found anything similar, but to me this is pretty unique. I didn’t expect to see anything of the U.S. military up here.”

Another option, the more romantic one according to Ng, is that the button could have been cut from the coat of an American soldier and brought to Alberta by an Aboriginal warrior who participated in a battle south of the U.S.-Canada border. According to Nakoda elder Wilfred Fox, at least three Stoney warriors joined the Sioux and Cheyenne at the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn.

No matter how the button arrived in the Bow River region, it is a remarkable find at a remarkable site that was used for thousands of years. The earliest artifacts Ng found at the site — stone tools and projectile points — date back some 7,800 years, while more recent objects include nails, China pearlware, a gun flint, a fur trade bead, a man’s copper alloy ring, and shell casings from a Henry .44 repeating rifle.

— Rob Alexander

Artifacts found on Alberta’s Stoney Nakoda First Nation include a projectile point, top left, a U.S. military button with the Civil War eagle, centre, and dozens of other objects.



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