

THE PREHISTORY OF THE LAKE MINCHUMINA REGION:
AN ARCHEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

By

CHARLES EDGAR HOLMES

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee to
examine the dissertation of CHARLES EDGAR HOLMES find
it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Robert E. Ackerman
Chairman

R. H. Allen

Carl E. Gustafson

R. D. Dougherty

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THE PREHISTORY OF THE LAKE MINCHUMINA REGION, ALASKA:
AN ARCHEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

by Charles Edgar Holmes, Ph.D.
Washington State University, 1984

Chairman: Robert E. Ackerman

This study defines a cultural sequence for the Lake Minchumina region. Two sites (MMK-4 and MMK-12), located at the east side of lake Minchumina were excavated. More than 6,000 specimens were recovered and analysed. Chronological control was possible using radiocarbon dates, obsidian hydration measurements, artifact typology, and sediment and geological analyses. Also, differential preservation of bone (diachronically) was demonstrated to have potential as a relative dating technique. Five archeological phases were recognized that span the period between approximately 600 B.C. and A.D. 1800. Three related phases (Blueberry, Cranberry, and Raspberry) make up the Minchumina tradition, a local variant with crossties to the Northern Archaic tradition and the Norton tradition. These phases, linked by flake burins, microblade technology, and lanceolate point forms, form a cultural continuum. The Blueberry phase dates between c. 600 B.C. and 0 B.C., the Cranberry phase dates between c. A.D. 0 and A.D. 550, and the Raspberry phase dates from c. A.D. 550 to c. A.D. 1000. The Dogwood phase (c. A.D. 550 and A.D. 850) represents a local manifestation of a Norton/Ipiutak-related (Eskimo?) group that was

intrusive into the local "Indian" population. The most recent phase, Spruce Gum (c. A.D. 1250 to A.D. 1850), is poorly known. It has affinities with protohistoric Athapaskan culture. People assigned to both the Raspberry and Dogwood phases appear to have been replaced locally by a new group which was ancestral Athapaskan.

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