

DAHLSTROM, MAX (1972)
RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE
IDAHO PRIMITIVE AREA, 1971

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A two-man team completed a partial archaeological reconnaissance of the Idaho Primitive Area between July 11 and August 22, 1971, at the request of the Intermountain Region Office of the U.S. Forest Service. The objective was to provide information on the archaeological resources of the Primitive Area.

A total of 66 sites were found during the survey and were assigned site numbers according to county: Valley County 10-VY-31 through 10-VY-75, Lemhi County 10-LH-185 through 10-LH-203, and Idaho County 10-IH-197 through 10-IH-198. These sites show evidence of human occupation and fall into the following categories: 32 campsites, 13 pictograph sites, 11 village sites, 7 rockshelters, 4 caves, 3 hunting blinds, 1 kill site, and 1 vision quest. The vision quest is the only site the surveyors doubt as being authentic.

There were 94 photographs taken of the sites, artifacts, flora and fauna of the area, and are numbered Ph 5701 through Ph 5794. Of the artifacts collected all were of rock or mineral material except for one hand drawn iron cavalry picket pin which is believed to have been left during the "Sheepeater Campaign" of 1879. There are 56 artifacts in the collection and are mostly fragments of projectile points, scrapers and tool blanks. They are numbered from 1637-1 through 1637-65 (not all numbers were used within this sequence). Most of the artifacts were made of siliceous materials or obsidian. Many of the sites yielded only flaking detritus as indications of prehistoric occupation. Of the 1009 pieces of manufacturing residue collected most were of siliceous materials, obsidian and schist.

Originally we were to start work by July 1, but there

was an eleven day delay due to the late arrival of the work contract. We had planned to walk into the area on the Stoddard Trail but before we could start we were invited by Dr. Al Erickson to work out of the University of Idaho's Wilderness Research Center on Big Creek. We flew into the Research Center on Sunday, July 11.

New plans were formed and we spent the first several days surveying a fifteen mile stretch on the north side of Big Creek. Then we went into the second, third, and fourth phases which were wide circular sweeps to the north and south of Big Creek, each taking from one to two weeks. The remainder of Big Creek was done during these phases. On the fifth and final phase we worked our way out of the Primitive Area through the Big Horn Crags and down to the Salmon River.

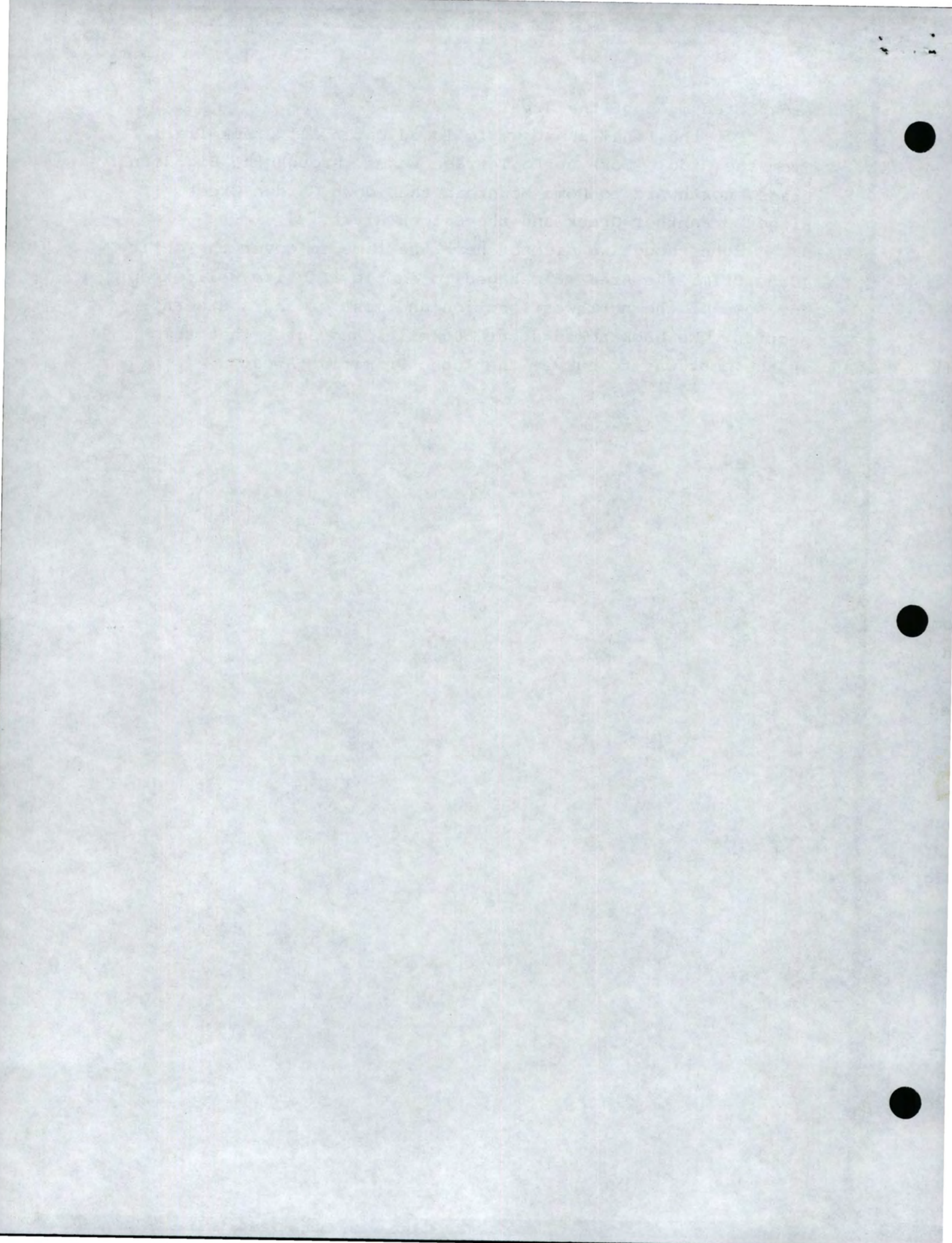
During phase two we left Big Creek at Goat Creek traveling northward to Coyote Springs and then southwest to Blackburn Saddle, south along Cave Creek to Big Creek and east to Taylor Ranch. Phase three was a swing west along Big Creek to the town of Big Creek. After getting maps from Earl Dodds at the Big Creek Forest Ranger Station we worked our way back down Big Creek to Beaver Creek and then northeastward to Chamberlain Basin. From this point we continued to move northeastward to Grass Mountain, swinging south to Cold Meadows, Crescent Meadows, down Coxey Creek to Big Creek and Taylor Ranch.

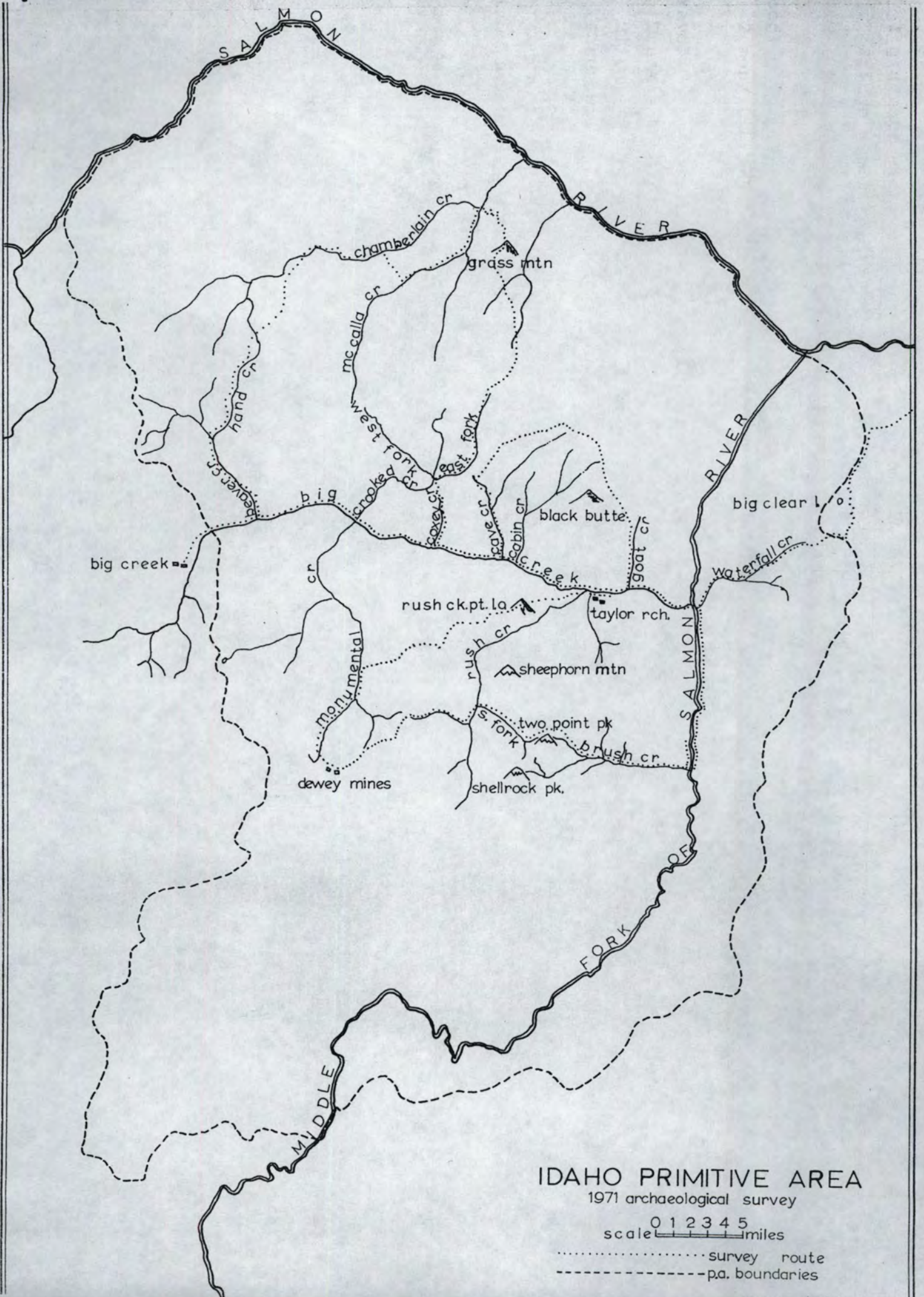
Phase four was not only to cover different terrain but also to trace rumors of obsidian at Thunder Mountain, Mud Creek, and Marble Creek. After covering the 10 miles of Big Creek to the Middle Fork we followed it southward to Brush Creek, then turned west to Thunder Mountain, north on Monumental Creek to Milk Creek, northeastward to Rush Creek Ridge, and then dropped down to Big Creek and Taylor Ranch. We found no obsidian but with more time the material could probably be discovered. The information about the obsidian came from Wilber Wile who lives at Big Creek and has

prospected much of the area.

For the final phase we followed Waterfall Creek Trail from the Middle Fork up to Terrace Lakes through the Big Horn Crags, northward to Dome Mountain then down Garden Creek Ridge to Panther Creek and the Salmon River.

Even though we did not have the time to cover the entire Idaho Primitive Area we managed to sample it quite well except for some of the northwest section and most of the southern section. We backpacked about 500 miles and agree that this is the best way to survey the Idaho Primitive Area.





IDAHO PRIMITIVE AREA

1971 archaeological survey

scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 miles

- survey route
- p.a. boundaries

