PART B

Minto Area Archaeology and History

MINTO AREA ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Final Report of the Minto Archaeological Impact Assessment Project

Permit # 94-6, Yukon Archaeological Sites Regulation

Prepared for
Yukon Heritage Branch, Whitehorse
Selkirk First Nation, Pelly Crossing
and
Minto Explorations Ltd., Vancouver

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Analysis of the project archaeological collections was completed by author, with the exception of the animal bones which were identified by J. Hourston-Wright of Edmonton.

MINTO AREAHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Cover Photo: 1883 View of Tutchone village on the Yukon River, Minto area; identified by the explorer Schwatka as Kitl-ah-gon (from Schwatka 1885a, Page 197)

INTRODUCTION

In June of 1994 archaeological field studies were completed in the Minto, Yukon area to assess the potential impact of a proposed mine development on the region's archaeological and historic sites. The proposed mine development area, situated in a small tributary valley known as Minto Creek on the west side of the Yukon River between Minto and Fort Selkirk, lies within the traditional lands of the Northern Tutchone, Selkirk First Nation.

The project proponent, Minto Explorations Ltd., is proposing to develop an open pit mine in the uppermost part of the Minto Creek basin. In addition to the mine, the development will include construction of a mill site and related mine structures in the same area, and an all-weather road to provide access to the mine from the Klondike Highway. Ore trucks traveling to the site will be transported across the Yukon River by barge using a barge landing facility which will be constructed somewhere around Minto.

The archaeological field project's site survey and assessment efforts focused on locales of greatest archaeological potential and on known sites, in particular the old settlement of Minto, also known as Minto Landing. Archival and oral history sources were also studied to identify potential archaeological and historic site locations, and to help strengthen the interpretations of site history and significance. Particular attention was paid to the traditional aboriginal land-use patterns in the region. This information was obtained through interviews with Elders of the Selkirk First Nation and through review of texts from earlier interview efforts with Selkirk Elders.

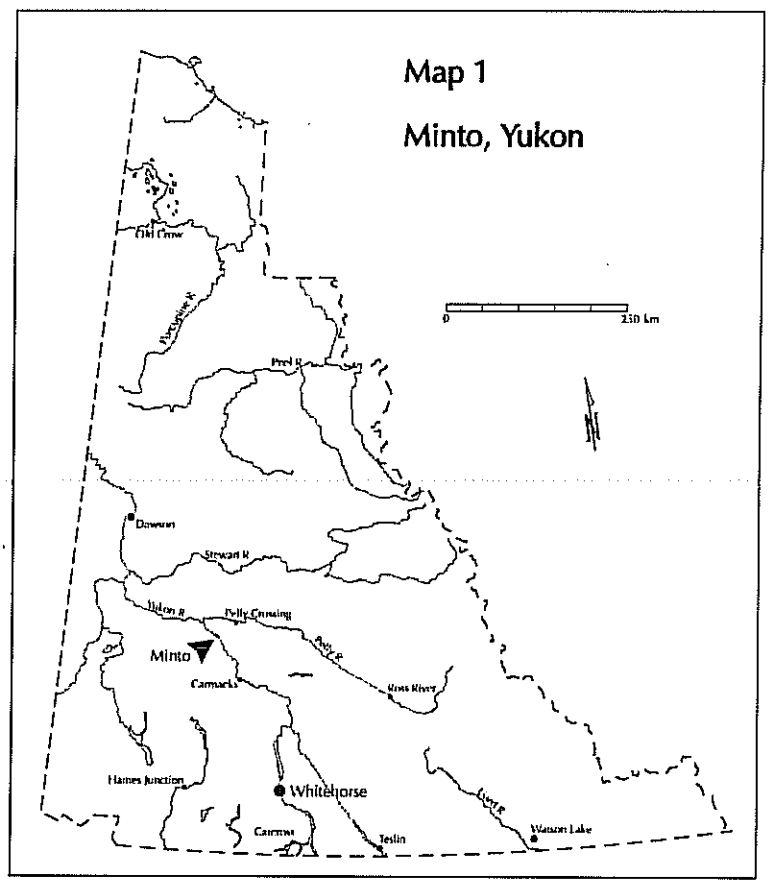
The results of the archaeological, oral history and archival research indicate that the site of Minto has a rich history. Minto received its English name in 1900 when the Northwest Mounted Police Post situated here was named in honor of Lord Minto, Governor General of Canada (Coutts 1980:187). During the Gold Rush it was a stop on the Whitehorse-Dawson trail. In the middle of the twentieth century, the site experienced a mini boom in anticipation of becoming a regional transportation centre. For the Selkirk First Nation, *Lhútsäw Dachäk* (the Northern Tutchone name for Minto) has been many things; a permanent village site in the twentieth century; a major trading centre in the nineteenth century, and likely in earlier times as well; and a long term seasonal campsite, occupied over thousands of years.

Other ancient campsites also exist along this stretch of the Yukon River. Oral history and archival sources show that in the nineteenth century there was another major Indian camp, an important trading site, a few miles downstream from Minto. Going further back, archaeological data indicates at least two other locales may have served a similar function in the past. Sites with extensive precontact archaeological deposits have been recognized at the Minto Airstrip and in the area of the Minto Resorts property.

The present report summarizes the history of the Minto area, as known from

archaeological, oral history and archival sources. After providing background information on the area, the traditional lifeways of the Selkirk First Nation are summarized and the changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are discussed. Both centuries have been times of great change for the Northern Tutchone.

The report then looks at the regional archaeological and historic sites record and summarizes the site investigations conducted by the project. Two previously recorded and three new sites were investigated. The potential impacts of the Minto mine development are then considered. No sites are known in the mine site development area. Of concern, however, are the sites along the east side of the Yukon River. These sites may be impacted by construction of a barge landing and river crossing site, or by other developments in the Minto area which may follow from the mine development.

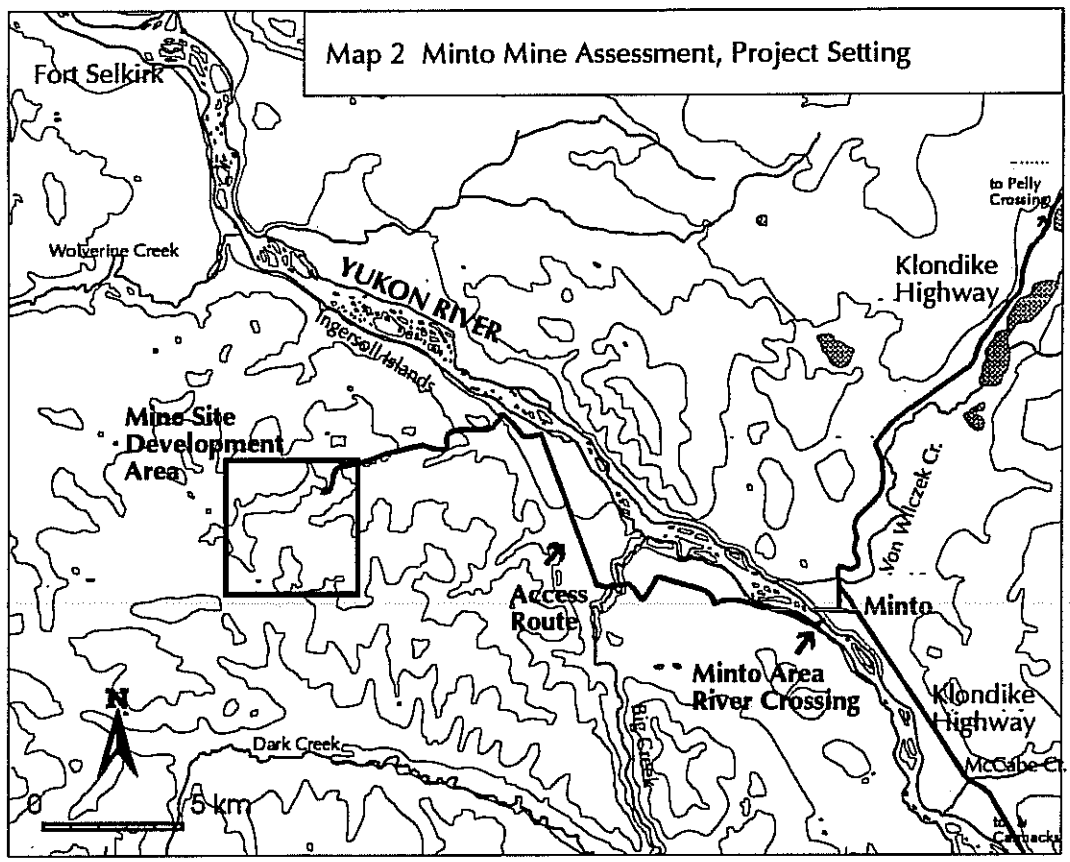


Regional and Local Setting

Today, Minto is a quiet river-side stop between Carmacks and Pelly Crossing in the central Yukon. About 240 km northwest of Whitehorse, Minto is the last place at which travelers heading north on the Klondike Highway see the Yukon River until they reach Dawson. Campground facilities, an airstrip, and a few private residences are located

here.

The study area under present consideration is the Minto area, defined as an approximately 20-25 kilometre stretch of the northwest trending Yukon River from around McCabe Creek north to the Ingersoll Islands, a large group of mid-channel islands upstream from Fort Selkirk and the mouth of the Pelly River. McCabe Creek is downstream from Hoochekoo Bluff and north of Five Finger and Rink Rapids. The major tributaries draining into this section of the Yukon River are Von Wilczek Creek from the east, and Big Creek from the west. Several lesser tributaries, including the one that is the site of the proposed mine development, flow into this stretch of river as well.



The Yukon River valley is approximately 5 kilometres wide in the Minto area. The river sits at ca. 1400 feet asl, the surrounding mountain tops reach elevations of ca. 3100-3500 feet. Most of the higher elevation areas are completely forest covered. Minto Landing itself is known for its dry, open grassy meadows and aspen stands. A large unnamed mountain ridge downstream from Minto Landing and opposite the mouth of Big Creek is a distinctive local topographic landmark. Rocky and non-forested, running for about 8 kilometres alongside the river, from the top (elevation ca. 3400 feet asl) one can see up river to Carmacks, down river to Fort Selkirk (M. van Bibber, interview with S. Greer June 20, 1994). Sheep are presently found on this ridge, though they have not always been there in

the past (S. Jonathan, interview with S. Greer June 21, 1994.)

The Minto area lies within the unglaciated portion of the Klondike Plateau physiographic subdivision (Bostock 1957; Jackson, Ward, Duk-Rodkin and Hughes 1991). The terrain in characterized by gently rolling hills separated by deeply cut, broad valleys. Bedrocks are principally metamorphic, though large bodies of volcanic and intrusive rocks and small bodies of sedimentary rocks occur throughout. Part of the Pelly River Ecoregion (Oswald and Senyk 1977:49), the area's vegetation is commonly closed stands of white and black spruce; stands of balsam poplar and trembling aspen occupy disturbed areas. Burnt-over areas, such as the valley in which the proposed mine development may occur, have been colonized by lodgepole pine.

A detailed accounting of the physical and social context of the proposed mine development can be found in project proposal submitted to the Regional Environmental Review Committee by Minto Explorations Ltd. (Hallam Knight Piésold Ltd. 1993).

TRADITIONAL LAND USE PATTERNS

The Minto area lies within the traditional territories of two regional groups of what is now known as the Selkirk First Nation (Gotthardt 1992:8, taken from Legros 1981:192-206). In the late 19th century, the upstream portion of the study area was used by the Tatl'á Män group. Their territory was centred around Tatlmain and Towhata Lakes, the north half of Tadru Lake, the three small lakes south of Pelly Crossing, Mica Creek, and Big Creek. Their main salmon fish camps were on the Yukon River in the Minto area. The downstream portion of the study area, below Big Creek, was used by the Fort Selkirk group. The Selkirk group, headquartered at Fort Selkirk, hunted the lands between the east flank of the Dawson Range and the Yukon River, south of Fort Selkirk. Fishing camps were located on the Yukon River both above and below Fort Selkirk.

Our understanding of traditional land use patterns of the Selkirk First Nation comes largely from the stories shared by Band members with outsiders such as anthropologists (Legros 1981, transcripts various dates; Gotthardt 1987) and linguists (Ritter, McGinty and Edwards 1977). More recently, the Selkirk First Nation has conducted studies about its history as part of Land Claims research. Early historic period accounts such as those by the trader Robert Campbell (Campbell 1958; Wilson 1970) and the explorer Frederick Schwatka (1885, 1885a) also give us some insights. These sources provide information on the period when the Selkirk people had already expanded the fur trapping part of their traditional economy and trading had become a principal focus of their yearly round.

Another important source of information on aboriginal history are toponyms or place names. Most major landscape features within the traditional lands of the Selkirk First Nation are named. Place names may be descriptive, such as *Tagé Cho* which means big river. Other place names have stories associated with them, stories which may refer to

historical events or situations, or to long ago times.

Table Tutchone Place Names, Minto Area

Place Name	Feature
Tagé Cho	Yukon River
Ddhaw Tsawa Tagé'	Wolverine Creek
Ndu He'en	Ingersoll Islands
Tu Nétsat Tagé'	Big Creek
Lhútsäw Dachäk	Minto
Lhútsäw Tú'	Von Wilczek Creek
Eh tzu hutslah	(old village site)
Dant'ro Tú'	McCabe Creek

In the olden days, the Northern Tutchone traveled through their country along a series of well used trails. They moved with the seasons, hunting, fishing, trapping as they went. They lived for much of the year in groups of a few families. In the summer, when the salmon were running, the *Tatl'á Män* people moved to the Yukon River where they gaffed fish and set fish traps.

> They go to Minto for dog salmon (chum salmon). They speared them and dried a lot of salmon. (John Alfred Tape 1-A, ca. 202; Legros Tape #87; 20/1/87).

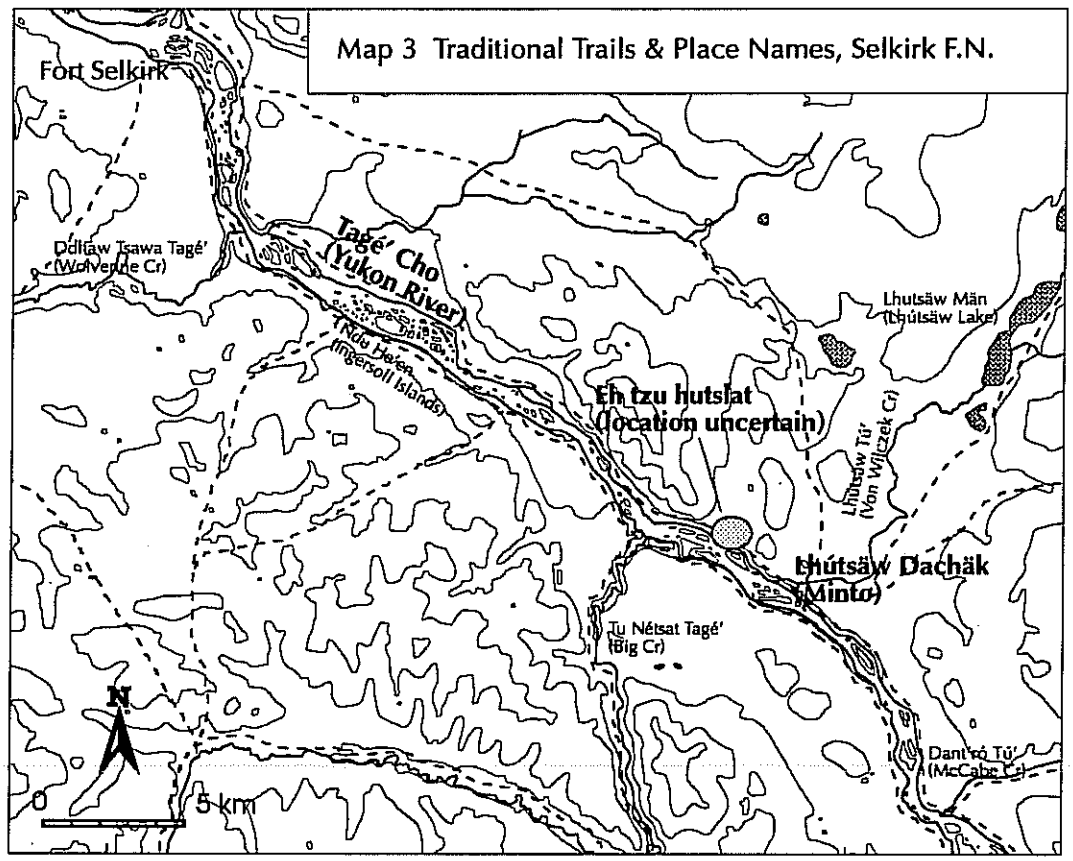
The fish were preserved for later use, as were berries that were picked. People also had fish camps just below Minto, in October, when the dog salmon arrived. This fish run attracted Tutchone from even farther away.

> Down Yukon River, past Minto there's lots of fish. People come from Selkirk to fishing for dog salmon. People from Champagne go there to fishing for dog salmon. (John Alfred, Tape 2-A, January 21, 1987).

The fall also saw people move away from the river, into the mountains, to hunt big game (caribou, moose, sheep) as well as small game (gophers, groundhogs, ptarmigan). They made dry meat and then placed it in caches for winter use. As winter came, the people spread out, some moving to their fishing villages on lakes such as Tatlmain. The cached meat and fish was brought down to camp with toboggans. Through the winter, they caught whitefish in the lakes, and on snowshoes, hunted caribou and moose.

> Long ago, they hunt all over the place, they go. They don't hunt little ways. They move big camp in the bush. All winter long, they don't come back there. Some people go this way, some people go that way....Five-six families at a time. (S. Jonathan, Interview with S. Greer, June 21/94).

The arrival of spring meant beaver and muskrat hunting, returning waterfowl, and more abundant food supplies. Big Creek is mentioned as one of several important beaver hunting areas used by the Selkirk people (Gotthardt 1987: 18). The Big Creek area is also indicated as a source area for ochre, the mineral used as a red dye (FSOHP Charlie Johnson Tape 1).



River Sites

In their seasonal round, the Selkirk people came to places on the Yukon River such as Minto primarily for fishing. Along the river they likely had their largest gatherings of the year, and seasonally reoccupied their old sites. In the nineteenth century, they also met the coastal Tlingit for trading at these river-side sites.

Both oral history and archival sources indicate that at least two locales along this stretch of the Yukon River were used as fishing camps in the mid to late nineteenth century. The archaeological sites at Minto Airstrip (KdVc-1) and Minto Resorts (KdVc-3), discussed in a later report section, may also have been important fish camp and trading sites at other times in the past.

The most well known of the nineteenth century camps is Minto Landing. The orig-

inal Tutchone name for the place is *Lhútsäw Dachäk* (Gotthardt 1992:6; S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript June 21/94). The name is taken from the nearby creek, *Lhútsäw Tú'*, which means jackfish river.

The name of the second Tutchone village along this stretch of the river is reported as *Eh tzu hutslat* (S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript, June 21/94; T. McGinty, Legros Tape #99, ca. 278). Elder Stanley Jonathan indicated that the site was also known by the one of the trading names of his grandfather Tlingit Tlen, the local head trader, or banker.

> Tlingit Tlen was the name given to him by the Chilkat Indians; his other trading name was Haanayan. This trading name was the same as the name of the place where he traded, the place below Minto. It means place where people come together. He had another name as well, before he became a trader (S. Jonathan, S. Greer transcript, 21/6/94).

Archdeacon Canham, resident at Fort Selkirk during the Gold Rush years, recorded the name for the site three miles below Minto as Tlarchoh Chark (Canham n.d.; taken from Gotthardt 1987 Place Names Appendix; Canham's transcription of the Tutchone place names should be considered very approximate). The site has no modern English name, but is situated by a feature known as Trouble Hill.

> Coast Indians travel to visit; last time they came to Selkirk; before they used to come to Minto. About three-four miles below Minto the place *Eh tzu hutslat* Trouble Hill they call it. It was a meeting place, because there is so much arguing there (T. McGinty, Legros Tape #99, ca. 278).[1]

According to the anthropologist D. Legros, this trading site is also mentioned in the journals of the Hudson's Bay trader Robert Campbell (Tape #99, with T. McGinty, ca. 308). Campbell describes Tatlmain Indians going down to that place near Minto to trade with Coast Indian at that time. The late Tommy McGinty said that Selkirk Indians too came to that same place to trade (T. McGinty, Legros Tape #99, ca. 278).

Both of these villages are marked on the oldest map for the area, the Kohklux map, which was drawn in 1969 by the Tlingit man Kohklux, who lived at Klukwan near Haines Alaska but regularly came to the area on trading expeditions. The original of this map (recently published in poster format; YHMA 1994), shows two "Sticks"[2] camps, on the east or right bank of Yukon River between the Tatchun River and King George's House (Fort Selkirk). The more southerly or upstream of these two villages is on the upstream

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1. T. McGinty Tape #10, Legros #108 Side 2 has the Trouble Hill story in Tutchone; McGinty also mentioned Trouble Hill in the Fort Selkirk Oral History Project, 1985 Transcript: T. McGinty Tape 1, Side 2, ca. #120; July 21, 1985). Other stories recorded by Tommy McGinty e.g., Legros Tape #1, refer to people staying at Minto or the place below Minto.
2. In nineteenth century the term "Sticks" was used to refer to Indians living in the interior, away from the Pacific coast.

side of a creek that drains a lake labelled *Ghlu tsugh'* (Von Wilczek/Lhútsäw Lake) and is likely the location of Minto. The more downstream one is below this creek and is named *Ghlu"-tul'san*. Both of these names are variants of the Tutchone name for Von Wilczek Creek, *Lhútsäw Tú'*.

Only one village was reported along this stretch of the river in 1883 by the American F. Schwatka, who rafted down the Yukon River that year. Though deserted at the time of his visit (July 12th 1883), the village was photographed by the explorer's party (Cover Plate) and described as "one log house about eighteen by thirty feet, and a score of the brush houses usual in this country" (1885a:199-200). Schwatka reported the village's name as *Kitl-ah-gon*, which meant "place between the high hills" (1885a:199). This name is not believed to be Tutchone; it is more apt to be Tlingit, the language of Schwatka's Klukwan guide.

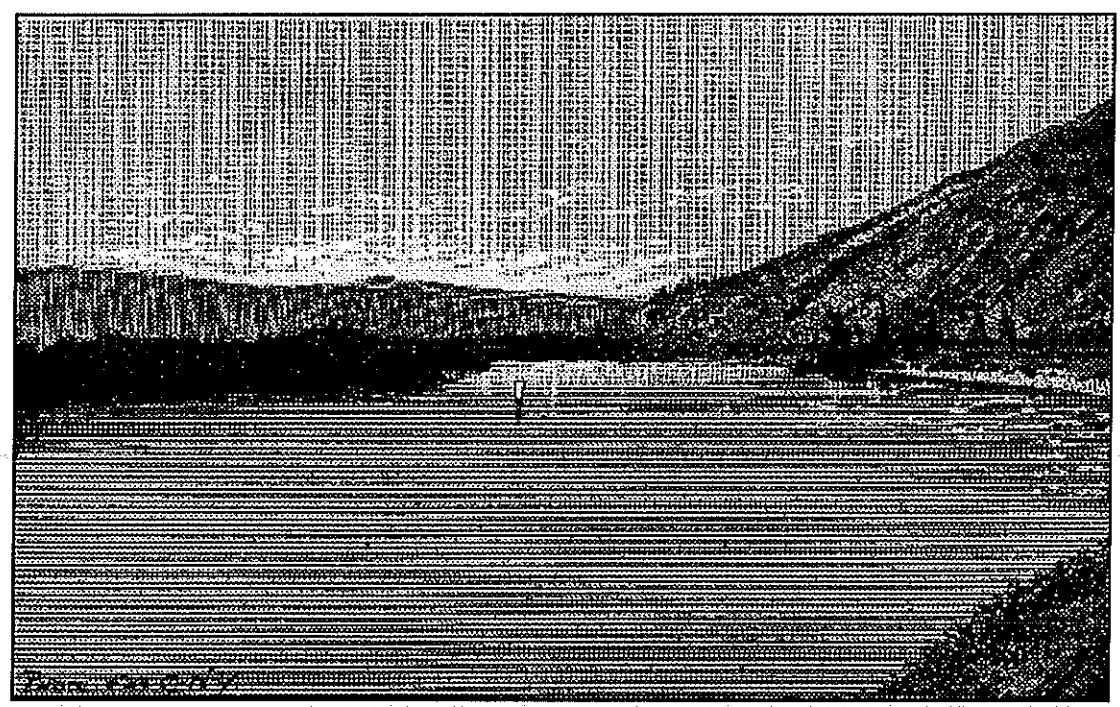

Plate 1 View Downstream from the Site Recorded in 1883 as *Kitl-ah-gon* (Schwatka 1885)

An earlier, edited version of the Kohklux map (Davidson 1903) also shows the Kitl-ah-gon village, placing it in this same stretch of the river, but downstream from the first two villages marked on the original of the Kohklux map. It is likely that Davidson took the Kitl-ah-gon village name from Schwatka's reports (1885, 1885a) and added it to those mentioned by Chief Kohklux.

Because of Davidson's addition to the Kohklux map, the Kitl-ah-gon site has been identified by most historical researchers (Coutts 1980:187; YHI files; Gotthardt 1987) as

Minto. Study of Schwatka's documents suggest that this is a mis-identification, however. While his text (Schwatka 1885:200) implies that the site is situated in the valley of Von Wilczek Creek, the explorer's survey maps (Schwatka 1885, Map 5) place the Kitl-ah-gon site *downstream* from the mouth of Von Wilczek Creek.

Photo engravings of the views from the Kitl-ah-gon site taken by Schwatka's party agree with the map location. Plate 5 shows the view downstream from Kitl-ah-gon, Plate 6 the view upstream from the site (Schwatka 1885:32,31 Plates 16 and 15). The bluff in the right background of Plate 6 is on the west side of the Yukon River, downstream from Minto Landing; this plate could not have been taken at Minto. The village which Schwatka named as Kitl-ah-gon is more likely the more northerly village whose Tutchone name is *Eh tzu hutslat* or *Haanayan*.

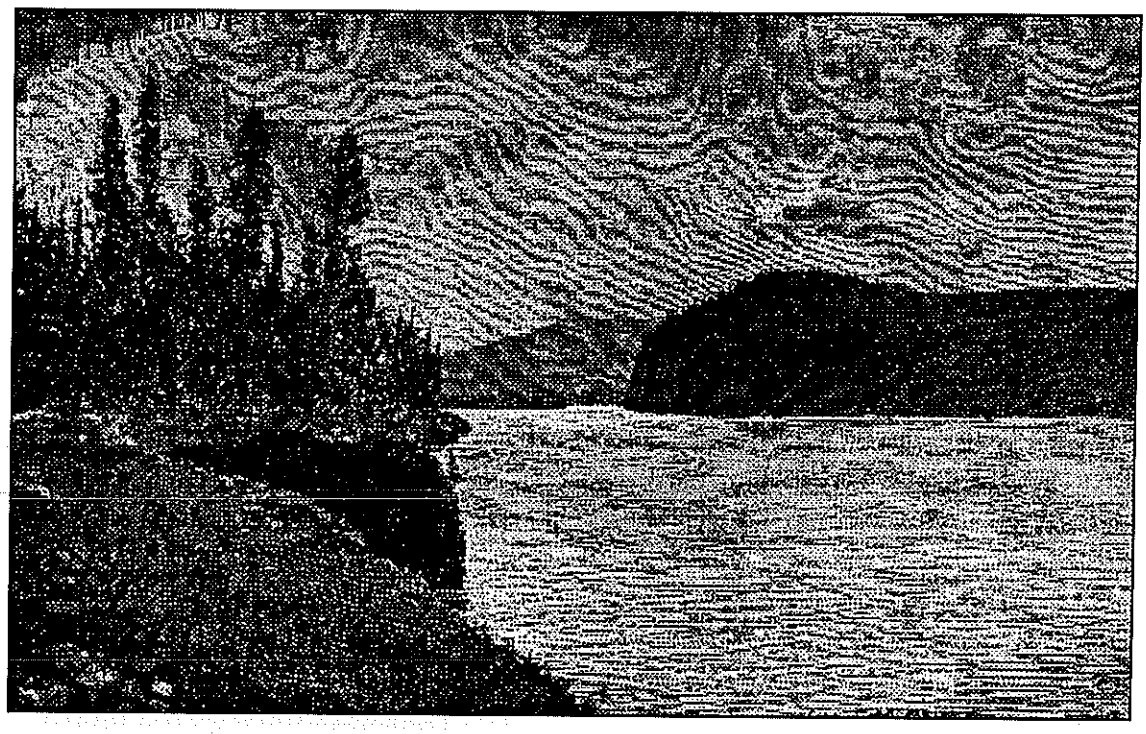

Plate 2 View upstream from the Site Recorded in 1883 as *Kitl-ah-gon* (Schwatka 1885)

The setting of this old village site was discussed by Selkirk Elder Stanley Jonathan (Interview with S. Greer, June 21/94), but its location has not yet been mapped or investigated by an archaeologist. The late Tommy McGinty referred to it as being about three miles below Minto (McGinty Tape #1, ca. 349, Legros Tape #108; 10/7/84). This would place it close to the site of Old Tom's cabin, discussed in a later report section. The view upstream from the latter site matches well with Plate 6. This setting also fits the descriptive place name "between the high hills". Moreover, an important fish eddy which was traditionally used by the Selkirk people is located by this locale (Gotthardt 1987:26), so it would not be surprising that an important site would be situated in the area.

Based on the foregoing, it appears that traditional stories of the Selkirk people which refer to events that took place at Minto, may in fact have happened at either of the two old sites. Many of these traditional stories are connected to the trade with coast Tlingit Indians.

Trade with the Coast Indians

The unique and dynamic character of the nineteenth century fur trade in the interior Yukon is well documented in both oral history and period, archival sources. The trade in furs from the Yukon likely began around the turn of the nineteenth century when the harvest of sea otter pelts on the coast declined due to over hunting (McClellan 1964). It is believed to have peaked during the years ca. 1839-1864 (Legros 1984), when thousands of dollars worth of Yukon furs were traded each year on the northwest Pacific coast. The wealth involved was significant. Aboriginal control of the Yukon fur trade ended with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-98 (McClellan 1964).

The nineteenth century fur trade operated along pre-existing aboriginal coast-interior trade networks. The Chilkat Tlingit of Klukwan, near modern-day Haines, took on the role of middlemen in the fur trade. They packed European goods to the interior, exchanged them with the Tutchone for furs which they in turn packed back to the coast and sold to the European trading ships. Fort Selkirk, downstream from Minto, is said to be about the furthest point inland the Chilkats came on their trading expeditions.

> When the Coast Indians got to Minto, they cooked up a lot of dried, fat meat for them. They all have big meal. Everyone sold sewings and furs and buy things from the Coast Indians. They all went back to their own places. (Jessie Suza, Tape 4, Side 2, Jan. 24/87).

The nineteenth century aboriginally controlled fur trade brought many changes to the Northern Tutchone. But the changes were not just in their economy, the way they made their living. Although they had always taken some fur bearers, with the arrival of the fur trade they incorporated more trapping into their yearly round. The changes, however, were more a result of the new wealth produced by the trade and the meeting of two different cultures, Tlingit and Tutchone. Stories of the trade with the coast Tlingit, or *Eh'ro* or *Älro* as they were known in Northern Tutchone (Gotthardt 1987:71) figure prominently in the oral history of the Selkirk people.

We have few details on the early years of the trade, but there must have been difficulties and fears at first when arrangements and protocols had not been agreed upon by the two parties. A skirmish is supposed to have taken place at Minto between the Coast Indians and the Selkirk people a few years before Robert Campbell established Fort Selkirk in 1848 (Legros as cited in Gotthardt 1987:71). The story, paraphrased by the anthropologist C. McClellan (1975a:213) goes that a Chilkat trader insulted the wife of his Tutchone trading partner. The partner, Tlingit Tlen, was enraged and killed the Chilkat and four of

his packing slaves on the spot. He then persuaded the rest of his band to cut off all trade with the Tlingit simply by never appearing at any of the trade rendezvous sites. After four or fives years the Tlingit, having no more furs to trade to the whites on the coast, were desperate and made peaceable overtures.

Once it was well established, trade between the Tutchone and the Chilkats was conducted between trading partners. The head trader, or banker at the site below Minto was Tlingit Tlen, grandfather of Selkirk Elder Stanley Jonathan. He was widely known throughout the southern Yukon and was said to have many wives (McClellan 1975:503). Tlingit Tlen is credited with giving the first big potlatch in his part of the country. The potlatch was to honor his mother, who starved to death during a very hard winter; the time is speculated to be around 1820 (Easterson 1992:5).

The yearly or twice yearly trade rendezvous with the Tlingit traders became important events in the annual cycle of the local Tutchone, as shown in the following story excerpt about a family camped at Lhútsäw Lake after a difficult winter in which some family members died of starvation. After they get their strength back

> ...a lot of people came and stayed with them, and soon they would go down to Minto to meet with the Coast Indians. The husband went with the people up to another lake to get Tahsra fish, because the Coast Indians likes that. Now they're all ready to go to Minto. The men made a trip half way down with some packs of all sorts. Then everybody went to Minto and some came back to get the rest of the packs. The people all hollared, the Coast Indians are coming.
>
> When they got to camp, they said they will stay for awhile and go back right away, because they ran out of somethings. The people told them what are you doing in Selkirk, there is hardly anybody there. The people purchased some chewing tobacco, bundle of materials and other things. After that they cooked for one another. The Coast Indians were cooking small dried white fish with a lot of grease. And in return the other people cook the Tahsra fish in a lot of fish grease too. In no time the fish pans were empty, the Coast Indians told the people your fish is sure good. The Coast Indians all went back, they walked all the way by foot, because they are scared of rafts. The couple and some Selkirk people all went back to Lhútsäw Lake. They stayed there for fish. (Jessie Suza, Tape 6, Side 1, Feb. 10, 1987).

According to the late Tommy McGinty, the Selkirk people made a calendar by putting marks on a moose shoulder blade bone. They gave the calendar to the Coast Indians, so they would know when to come back (T. McGinty, Legros Tape #99, ca. 319). Details of trade transactions are also clearly remembered.

> When people buy shotgun about 4 foot long; pile beaver skin up to height of that gun. When they're satisfied they say "han de". Thankyou in Coast Indian language. Give box of shells too. (R. Tom Tom translates T. McGinty tape #5, Legros tape #63).

The profits generated by the trade were important to both the Tutchone and the Chilkats. The latter is perhaps most well known, however, because of the actions the Chilkats took to protect their trading interests. In 1848, the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Selkirk, near the mouth of the Pelly River. A few short years latter Fort Selkirk was destroyed by the Chilkats because it interfered with their trade with the Tutchone (Dawson 1887:139). Details of that event, including the rescue of the Hudson's Bay trader Robert Campbell by the Tutchone, are clearly remembered by Selkirk people (cf. McClellan 1970).

But the trade and the new wealth it generated also brought conflict within the Tutchone as well. The Trouble Hill story apparently relates to such a conflict. According to the late Tommy McGinty, a Coast Indian named Seegooyay determined that bad medicine had been made upon his sick Tutchone trading partner by another Tutchone man who jealous over the furs the latter had accumulated for trade. Another conflict story relates how a group of Southern Tutchone, possibly from the Hutshi or Champagne area, burnt up the cache of furs and trade goods near Minto that belonged to Tlingit Tlen (McClellan 1975:504, 1975a:213; S. Jonathan transcript, S. Greer, 21/6/94). The raid is said to have taken place sometime after the destruction of Fort Selkirk.

A man named Quantuk (also spelt Kwantuk) was involved in leading a peace ceremony at Minto (or perhaps the site below Minto; T. McGinty Tape 2 Side 2 ca. 000, Legros Tape #134; 10/7/84). The ceremony involved drumming and dancing, with some type of cover over the head, and went on for four to five days (see also Rachel Tom Tom translates T. McGinty Tape #6, Legros Tape # 63A). Whether this peace ceremony was for the Trouble Hill situation, or the one of the other conflicts indicated is uncertain.

EARLY YEARS OF CONTACT, EXPLORATION

Throughout the nineteenth century, as the trade with the Tlingit continued, more outsiders began to enter the lands of the Selkirk people. Robert Campbell and his party of Hudson Bay traders and explorers were likely the first non-Indians to see the Minto area. Whether this happened in 1843, the year Campbell first traveled down the Pelly River to its junction with the Yukon, or not until 1848, the year Fort Selkirk was established near the mouth of the Pelly (Wilson 1970), is uncertain. During the years when Fort Selkirk was in operation, 1848-1852, Campbell's party was regularly in the Minto area as they traveled between Fort Selkirk and Tatlmain Lake. They relied on the generosity of the Selkirk people and Tatlmain's bountiful supply of fish to get them through the long, hard winters when starvation was a constant threat (Gotthardt 1987:18;1992).

After the Hudson's Bay Company's withdrawal from the area, for the next several decades there were few outsiders in this part of the Yukon. An exploratory party of the Western Union Telegraph Party may have possibly come through in 1867 (Dawson 1887: 142). By the 1880s, small parties of prospectors looking for gold were regularly spending summers in the upper Yukon basin (Dawson 1887:142; Wright 1976:162). These miners

seem to have had little dealing with the local residents.

Mention has already been made of the 1883 trip down the Yukon River via Minto, made by the American explorer F. Schwatka (1885). In 1887, the Canadian geologist/ explorer George Dawson traveled by Minto going in the reverse direction, up the Yukon River. Another of Dawson's geological parties, under William Ogilvie, surveyed the river heading downstream that same year (Dawson 1887; Wright 1976:192).

The Gold Rush Years, 1897-99

During the years of the Klondike Gold Rush years, thousands of people moved through the Minto area en route to Dawson. During the rush, aboriginal trails along both the west and east sides of the Yukon River were improved into wagon roads. Roadhouses opened up at regular intervals, perhaps every fifteen or twenty miles, along these trails. One of the first roadhouses in the area was upstream from Minto, on the west side of the river (Yukon Heritage Inventory: Minto file; Malcolm 1982:112); it was operated by a Captain Fussel. Another, known as McCabe's Roadhouse, was situated on the east side of the river, by McCabe Creek (Gotthardt 1987: Place Names Appendix). There was also a roadhouse operated by a Mr. Renton in the Minto area (Malcolm 1982:112)

A roadhouse opened up at the site of Minto Landing during this same time; the name of its operators is not known. Besides serving travelers heading to and from Dawson, this roadhouse likely also served the commercial fishery which operated on Tatlmain Lake during the gold rush years. Developed to supply fish to the stampeders in Dawson, the fish were taken from Tatlmain to Minto along the old foot trail by horse sledge and shipped from there to Dawson by stage (Gotthardt 1992:11).

Minto received a great deal of attention during the last year of the Gold Rush when a series of murders were committed here. In the winter of 1899 three men were murdered and robbed along the Dawson-Whitehorse trail just upstream from Minto. The murder took place on the west side of the river in the McCabe Creek area. The circumstances and the resulting lengthy police investigation of these murders are well documented in various period sources (e.g., Armstrong 1936; Lynch 1904), as well as in a more recent novelized account (Malcolm 1982). One man, George O'Brien, was charged and executed in Dawson for his part in the crimes. The second accused, Graves, was never caught.

These murders brought the Minto area to the attention of officials, and in 1901, the first Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) post was built here. The post was built near where the murders had taken place, on the west side of the river, opposite the mouth of McCabe Creek upstream from Minto Landing (Yukon Heritage Inventory files). It was named in honor of Lord Minto, the Governor General of Canada who visited Dawson that summer (Coutts 1980:187).

In 1903, the original Northwest Mounted Police Minto post was closed and a new

detachment was built across the river, at Minto Landing. At that time the detachment consisted of three constables, one supernumerary constable, and three horses (NWMP Annual Reports 1903 p. 47). The post was closed in 1905 when the detachment moved to Carmacks. It operated again for a few years again around 1949 (Yukon Heritage Inventory files).

The turn-of-the century police buildings at Minto Landing are no longer standing. They were situated just north of the campground and current barge landing (Dan Van Bibber, interview with S. Greer June/94). The Police Reserve lot (Lot #13) still exists (Yukon Heritage Inventory files).

The Twentieth Century

Following the busy gold rush years, for most of the first half of the twentieth century Minto was a relatively quiet stop on the Whitehorse-Dawson road. Various non-natives, including Finlay Beeton, the Horsefals, Billy Atkinson, and Walter and Rita Israel operated a roadhouse and a wood camp out of the Minto site throughout these years. The wood camp supplied fuel to the steamboats running on the river. The roadhouse served travelers heading up or down the Yukon River valley.

By this time, most of the Selkirk Tutchone people had settled in permanent communities. Fort Selkirk, where the two chiefs, Big Jonathan, and Peter McGinty lived, was the home base for most families. At Fort Selkirk there was a store and a school. Local and external events, such as the collapse of the fur market and the government prohibition on the use of fish traps (both occurred in the 1930s; see Gotthardt 1987, Table 3) severely affected the economy and hence the lives of the Selkirk people during this period.

The Selkirk people continued to use the Minto area for hunting and trapping, just as they had in the nineteenth century. For example, in the early 1940s, when Elder Stanley Jonathan was a young, unmarried man, he trapped in the area up Wolverine, Dark, and Big Creeks, including the area of the proposed mine site development. Mr. Jonathan stayed in tents while out on the trapline, returning to his home base at Fort Selkirk after each run of the line (S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript June 21/94).

A couple of Selkirk families were based at Minto during these years, however. The Billy Isaac family lived here, in a cabin (D. Van Bibber, S. Greer notes, June 22, 1994). The family of Selkirk Elder Maria Van Bibber was also based here (Maria Van Bibber, S. Greer notes, June 20, 1994). Mrs. Van Bibber's father, Joe Roberts, reused the old police post building, a two story structure, as the family's residence (D.Van Bibber, S. Greer notes, June 22, 1994). At the time Mrs. Van Bibber's father trapped in the area around Minto, specially around Big Creek and the area towards Lhútsäw Lake. Running the trapline took four to six days; Mr. Roberts stayed in tents rather than cabins while out on the line. The small lakes on the west side of the Yukon River, across from Minto, were known as good places to get muskrats, as was the McCabe Creek valley. Each year, the men still

went to Tatlmain Lake for the spring beaver hunt.

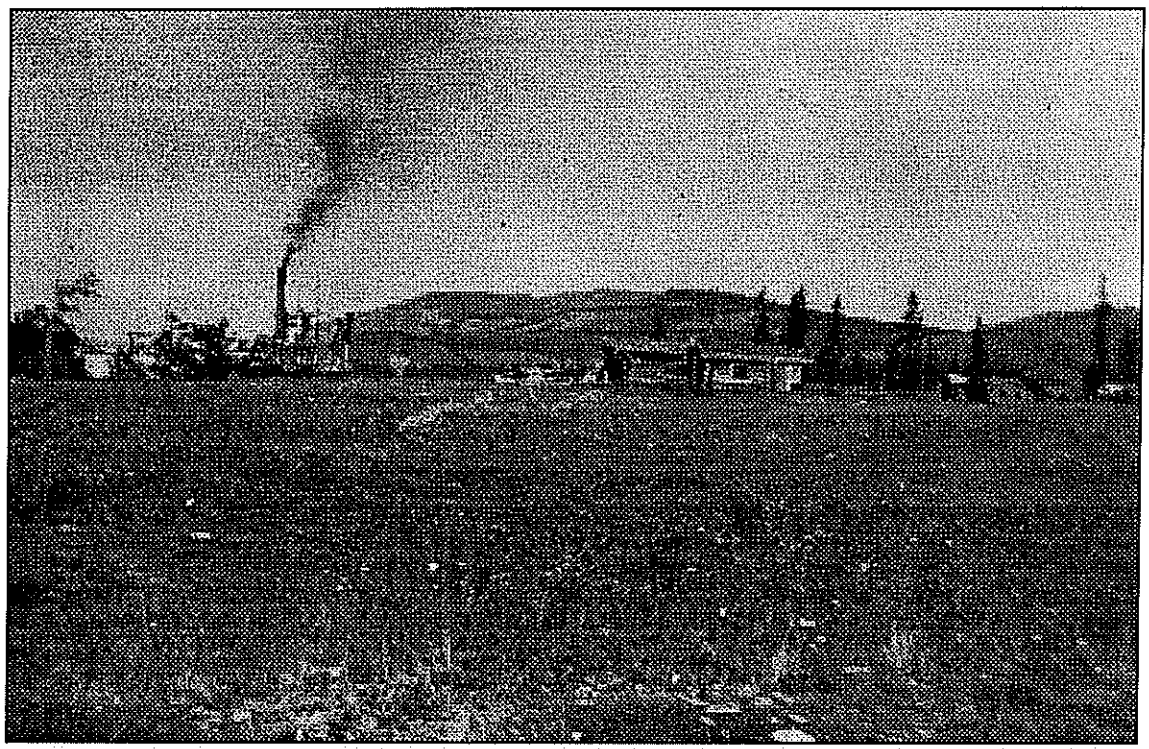

Plate 3 Minto in the Early Twentieth Century, steamer on left, homes of Joe Roberts and John Alfred in centre (Yukon Archives; Stu Bates Collection)

Mrs. Van Bibber recalled that her father was always busy. In between trapping sessions, from March until late April, then again in late June, and again in the fall, he would be cutting wood for the local wood supplier. All the family members helped with this work. They took they trees on the east side of the river and hauled the wood to Minto where it was stacked and later loaded on the river boats. In those years, when the boat docked, or the caterpillar train (in the winter) arrived at Minto, it was an occasion of great excitement.

According to Mrs. Van Bibber, several times a year, such as at holiday times, the family went down to Fort Selkirk to visit with everyone and to get supplies. In the summer time they also went to Fort Selkirk to get salmon. The fish caught there was dried, and brought back to Minto, where it was cached for next winter's use.

The area around Minto continued to supply most of their food, however. The family hunted grouse and rabbits up on the mountain behind Minto. In the fall, they took geese on the islands in the river. Along Lhútsäw Creek, and in the hills back of Minto, they got lots of berries: strawberries, raspberries and high and low bush cranberries. Each spring, as soon as the ice went out, the family put their net in the river near the loading ramp. Suckers, inconnu and the occasional jackfish were caught. A smaller net was also put in

the river for salmon, but most of the family's salmon was taken during the summer visit to Fort Selkirk.

In the late 1940s, Minto experienced a boom, with a tremendous growth in its population. The situation was triggered by the construction of the road north from Minto to the Keno Hill mine at Elsa, near Mayo. Plans called for the ore to be shipped by truck to Minto, where it would be loaded on the river boats and sent to Whitehorse, the head of the rail-line (Bates n.d.). By 1949, the road was completed south to Minto.

The Minto boom was assisted by the Hudson's Bay Company closure of its store at Fort Selkirk. Almost all the families at Fort Selkirk, both Indian and non-native, relocated to Minto at this time. This included Mr. and Mrs. Coward (she was the Selkirk school teacher at the time), the Camerons, and the Horsefals (Freddie Harper, Tape 1-A, April 20, 1987; Rachel Tom Tom (Tape 2-A; March 19, 1987). By 1952, Fort Selkirk was all but abandoned, except for the Danny and Abbey Roberts family.

Other Selkirk families, including the Jonathan family, the Blanchard family, Old Susé, and several others joined the John Alfred and Joe Roberts families at Minto. Most of the new families are said to have had tent camps at the site, and spent several months of each year there at this time (Bates n.d.).

Stanley Jonathan and his wife, a young married couple at the time, were among the many Selkirk First Nation families that moved to Minto at this time. Besides the closure of the Fort Selkirk store, they were drawn to Minto by opportunities for employment. Mr. Jonathan got work on the highway which was being built at the time (S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript June 21/94). Other families liked Minto because it provided easy access to the old favorite hunting and trapping areas around Tatlmain Lake (Rachel Tom Tom, Tape 3A, April 17, 1987).

With the boom, government made its re-appearance at Minto. The Forest Service set up an office here and a highway construction camp was built at the site. An airfield and weather station were set up a short distance to the north (Yukon Heritage Inventory files). In 1949, the police opened up a post at the site again, after closing the Fort Selkirk post (Bates n.d.). In 1950, the townsite was officially surveyed. Lots were laid out about a mile from the river. The same year, the bridge was built across Von Wilczek Creek.

The firm of Taylor and Drury operated a store at the Minto Landing site during the highway construction period (D. Van Bibber, S. Greer notes, June 22, 1994). The Israels also operated a store and cafe here at one point, before moving their business to McCabe Creek; the latter location provided better access to the highway traffic (Bates n.d.). The Cowards then took over the Israel's store at Minto. During these years, possibly around 1954, a church was built at the settlement. Nothing remains of this structure today (Yukon Heritage Inventory files). One source indicates that the building was moved away from Minto (Bates n.d.).

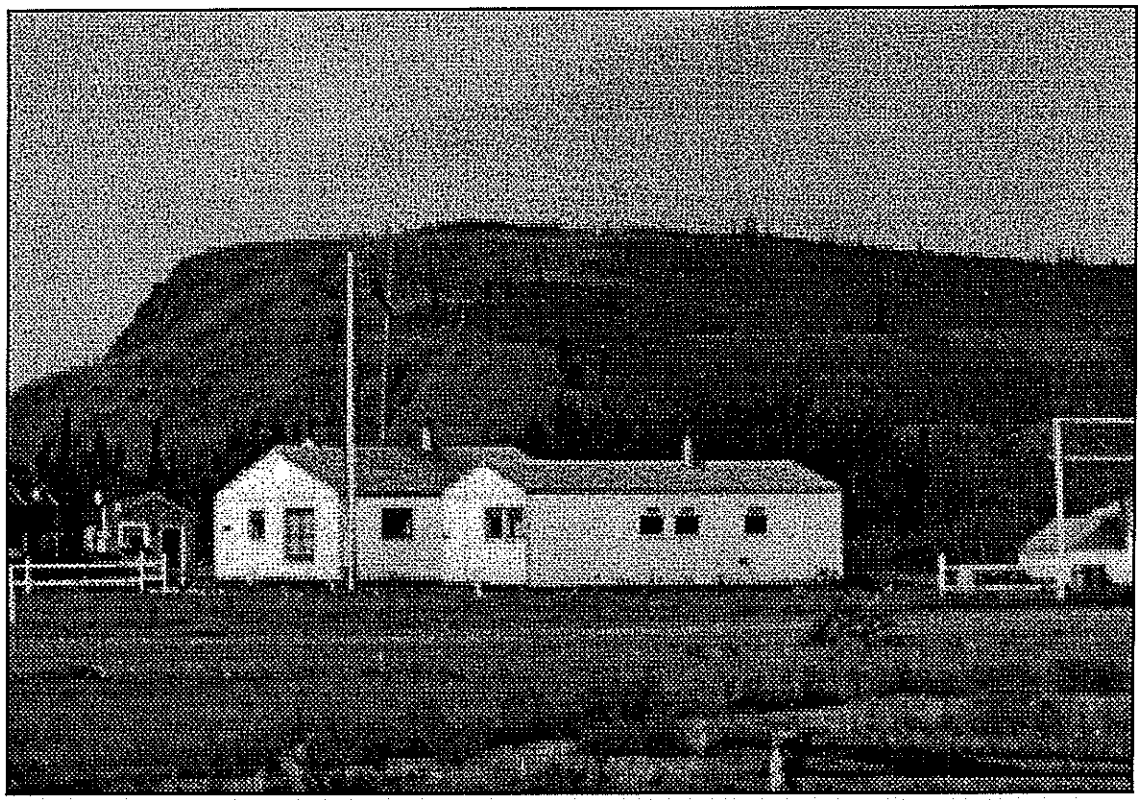

Plate 4 Police Headquarters at Minto During the Mid-Century Boom (Yukon Archives, Stu Bates Collection)

The mid-century boom at Minto was relatively short-lived, however. After a bridge was built across the Pelly River in 1950, and a store opened up at that site, most of the Indian families based at Minto began to move to Pelly Crossing. There they built permanent homes (S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript June 21/94; Julia Roberts Tape #1). Then, after the highway was completed through to Carmacks, and then Whitehorse in 1951, Minto ceased to be a major transportation depot when ore was no longer shipped on the river boats. With the boom over, the non-Indian families moved away from Minto too. In 1952, the Forest Service moved its operation to Mayo. The police pulled out in 1954, and moved their buildings to Carmacks (Bates n.d.)

During the 1950s and 1960s, Minto returned to being a quiet, river-side stop. Only a couple of Selkirk First Nation families were based at the site. They hunted and trapped in the surrounding area. Wood cutting was no longer an important seasonal activity by this time, however, because with the highway, the wood burning steamers no longer operated on the river. In 1966 the last of the Indian families moved away. Other Indian families that were based elsewhere still continued to come back to Minto for the summer salmon fishing though (S. Jonathan, S. Greer Transcript June 21/94).

Only in the last decade did Selkirk people once again establish permanent homes

at the site. Today several families call Minto home, and one family operates Minto Resorts, a seasonal campground and cafe business. Other Tutchone families continue to come here during the fishing season, just as their ancestors did. Being the pleasant river-side stop it is, Minto Landing is also a popular site for regional First Nations gatherings, thus continuing a similarly old tradition.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Archaeology provides glimpses into the area's human past through the material remains left by long ago people's at sites they used. In the south-central Yukon, the most common finds at archaeological sites are stone tools and the by-products of stone tool manufacture and maintenance as well as animal bones from long ago meals. Evidence of structures that once housed people, hearth places, storage-pits, and hunting and fishing structures are also sometimes found.

Archaeologists have observed that through time, the material remains found at old sites, particularly the stone tool styles and manufacturing technologies, have changed. Geographically, across regions, they also differ. Such differences and changes permit archaeologists to define regional archaeological cultures, or technological traditions, and then to determine their chronological order or sequence. These are assumed on some level to reflect past human populations and their way of life. Through comparative studies, archaeologists are often able to identify the historical and geographical roots of the different technological traditions, and hence past population movements and expansions.

A distinct stratigraphic marker which occurs throughout the southern and central Yukon provides some idea of the age of archaeological deposits found here. Around 1,250 years ago most of the southern Yukon was covered by deposits of volcanic ash which originated from the eruption of a volcano in southeast Alaska. In the traditional territories of the Selkirk people, ash deposits were on the average one to six inches in thickness (Lerbekmo et al. 1975:203-209). Archaeological deposits found below this stratigraphic marker are older than 1,250 years ago, those above it, younger than.

Regional Precontact Cultural Sequence

A regional sequence of precontact cultures or technological traditions has not yet been firmly established for south-central Yukon, but it is expected that it should be similar with other glaciated parts of the Territory (Gotthardt 1987:2). People likely began living in the area some 8,000-10,000 years ago, soon after retreat of the glaciers. Few sites which feature occupations ascribable to the earliest occupations, referred to as Northern Cordilleran, have been found in the south-central Yukon. The stone tool kit of the earliest culture(s) is thought to be characterized by small tear-drop shaped points, large round-based spear points, and knives, scrapers and other tools often made on long stone flakes or blades (Gotthardt 1987). The geographic origins of this technological tradition, whether from the south, or the northwest, continue to be debated.

Somewhat better known is the following precontact culture that is characterized by a distinctive lithic technology which emphasized the production of composite tools referred to as microblades. This technology, dated approximately 7-8,000 years ago to ca. 5,000 years ago, involved the systematic production of small, standardized stone blades which were fitted in a series into the slotted edge of a bone or antler piece to form the cutting edge of a knife, or piercing edge of an arrow or spear, for example. Microblade technologies appear to have spread into the south-central Yukon from interior Alaska to the northwest; ultimately they appear to have originated in Siberia.

Around 5,000 years ago, at which time essentially modern vegetation patterns had become established in the area, a new technological tradition made its appearance in the south-central Yukon. The Northern Archaic Tradition is characterized by large side-notched spear and arrow points, a variety of end and side scrapers, and what are interpreted to be stone net sinkers.

The archaeological deposits which post-date the fall of the White River volcanic ash, dated to ca. 1,250 years ago, are considered by archaeologists to be directly ancestral to the region's historic native cultures. They also show continuity in tool technology and subsistence and settlement patterns with the preceding Northern Archaic Tradition. New artifact types which appear in sites post-dating the ash fall include tools made on native copper, multi-barbed points made of bone or antler, and small stemmed stone arrow points.

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, items of European manufacture begin to appear in Yukon archaeological assemblages. This reflects the beginning and intensification of trade between Russian traders on the coast and in interior Alaska, and aboriginal groups such as the coast Tlingit with whom the Selkirk people traded. With the European trade, implements of stone, bone and copper began to be replaced by imported metal tools; birch bark baskets and boiling stones used in cooking were replaced by copper pots, and dentalia shells and porcupine quills, used in clothing decoration, were replaced by glass beads (Gotthardt and Easton 1989:15). Subsistence patterns also changed, as people began to incorporate more fur trapping into their yearly round.

The sequence and ages of the various ancient cultures or technologies of the south-central Yukon is not well understood, owing to the limited archaeological investigations that have been completed here. Major sites at which excavations have been conducted include the Pelly Farm Site, located on the Pelly River about three miles above its mouth; various sites in the Fort Selkirk area; a cluster of sites in the Tatlmain Lake area; and a large cluster of sites in the area of Frenchman and Tatchun Lakes (Charlie and Clark n.d.; Gotthardt 1992, 1990, n.d.; Gotthardt and Easton 1989).

Field Studies

The 1994 Minto archaeology project was a cultural resource management study, its

primary aim to identify and assess sites which may be impacted by the Minto Mine development, and suggest means of avoiding or alleviating such impacts. More specifically, the project's goals were to, within the proposed Minto mine and mill site development and access areas:

-locate, identify and evaluate all historic/archaeological features

-produce an accurate map of the location of all historic and archaeological features and sites

-provide recommendations to Minto Explorations Ltd. and the Yukon Heritage Branch concerning the mitigation of impacts on any historic/archaeological sites and features that may result from the development of the mine and its associated access facilities.

The project was designed to cover several potentially different levels or stages of the impact assessment process. An **overview** of the potential impact of the Minto project, including indications of locales of potential archaeological and historic significance had been provided in the Project's Terms of Reference (Gotthardt 1994). The present project's objectives were then to both (1) **inventory** and (2) **assess** those sites which may be impacted by the development. The project could also potentially have (3) **mitigated** the impact on a site where warranted or possible (e.g., entirely collect a site so that it is of no further concern).

Given the large area involved, a complete inventory and assessment of sites which potentially could be impacted by the development would not have been possible without a lengthy, multi-year field project. This scale of assessment was not recommended by the supervising agency (Yukon Heritage Branch), nor could it have been justified. The project Terms of Reference called for greatest field study of those areas deemed to be of highest archaeological potential: the actual Minto site (Minto Landing area), and the Access Route, especially where the latter is near Big and Minto Creeks. Other parts of the impact area, including the proposed mine and mill site area in the upper creek valley, were recommended to receive an overview assessment only. The project was a best effort with the available time and resources.

The field project lasted eight days, of which about five days were spent looking for new sites, and investigating the known sites in the Minto area. Two days time was spent interviewing Selkirk First Nation Elders Stanley Jonathan, Dan Van Bibber and Maria Van Bibber. Another day was spent searching files of the Yukon Archives and the archaeological and historic site files of the Yukon Heritage Branch. The field research team consisted of Eugene Alfred, a member of the Selkirk First Nation, and the author. Details on the project's scope, goals and methods can be found in the field report (Greer 1994).

Standard Yukon archaeological site survey and assessment procedures were followed to identify and evaluate sites. At all locales investigated, the objective was to determine if there are any archaeological or historic remains including either artifacts or structures or features on the surface or in buried context. The river bank face was checked

for evidence of eroding material, the site surface carefully scanned. Away from an eroding bank face, if there were no easily recognizable signs of material remains, sub-surface testing was conducted by shovel in areas of high potential such as flat surfaces, edges of river terraces. Once artifacts or structures/features were recognized at a locale, whether in surface or subsurface context, site testing focused on determining the nature and extent of the artifact remains found there and their respective stratigraphic context. The approximate horizontal extent of a site was determined and major above-ground structures and features were recorded. All artifacts found in eroding river bank context and encountered in test pits were collected.

Although not a detailed oral history project, interviews were conducted with Elders of the Selkirk First Nation. The objective of this work was to determine traditional land use patterns in the study area, and gather information on potential locales of cultural significance in the Minto area which therefore should be avoided at all costs. Notes were taken during these interviews and some sessions were taped recorded. Copies of the notes, tapes and transcripts from these interview session have been filed with the Selkirk First Nation.

Field Work Results

As indicated, field investigations were limited to three geographic areas: the mine and mill site area in the upper Minto Creek valley; the access route along the west side of the Yukon River and the north side of the Minto Creek valley; and the east side of the Yukon River around Minto. The field work completed in each of these three areas varied, with the area of highest archaeological potential, the east side of the river around Minto receiving greatest attention.

(1) The Mine and Mill Site Area

The topography of the mine and mill site area is characterized by moderately elevated, rounded hills dissected by narrow steep-sided stream valleys. The entire development area is forest covered to the mountain tops, save for an odd small blocky bedrock spur or castellated outcrop. There is little flat ground. The area was completely burnt a number of years ago and there are many tree throws; foot travel is difficult. The area has also been the scene of extensive mineral exploration work; old cut lines, an abandoned air strip and a mining drill shack from work in the 1970s were seen. Many deep sub-surface mineral exploration trenches from the current development work now criss-cross the uppermost reaches of the Minto Creek basin and the surrounding hill tops.

Part of one day only was spent investigating the mine and mill site area, traveling on an all terrain vehicle (A.T.V.) along some of the numerous trails which now cut through the development area. One of the castellated bedrock outcrop knobs which provides a good view south over the upper Minto Creek valley was examined; no artifacts were seen.

No sites were detected in the development area, nor were any locales that may have site potential seen. While examination of this area was brief, it is unlikely that sites would be detected in this kind of valley, with its terrain and vegetation conditions, at this scale of site inventory or survey project. The severe burn would have destroyed any above-structures wooden structures, and could also have led to slumping which also destroys sites. While we know people have used this area, it would take a detailed, systematic survey testing program, well beyond the scope of the present project, to find sites which resulted from such use.

Oral history data recorded from Selkirk First Nation Elders indicate that their people traditionally hunted and trapped in this valley (S. Jonathan, M. Van Bibber, S. Greer transcript and notes June 21, 22 1994). They reported that their use of the creek basin was reduced after the last forest fire burn, however. Temporary abandonment or lack of use of a severely burnt area, such as the Minto Creek valley, is a common land use practice for Yukon First Nations.

(2) The Access Route

The road to the mine site area will run along the west side of the Yukon River and the north side of Minto Creek. The route has been cleared a number of years ago to provide access to the project area. The portion of the route from the mouth of Minto Creek to the mine site area has seen vehicular traffic in the last few years. Most of the route, however, is now covered by a low shrubs and grasses; there were no surface exposures along the Yukon River valley portion of the route.

The Minto Creek and downstream portion of the Yukon River (between Big Creek and Minto Creek) parts of the Access Route were traversed using an A.T.V. The upstream portion (between Big Creek and the bank opposite Minto) of the Yukon River part of the Access Route was examined during a one-day foot traverse.

a- The Yukon River valley: most of this section of the proposed Access Route is placed well back from the banks of the Yukon River. Except for the area directly across from Minto, the route does not follow the old Dawson/Whitehorse winter road trail which is situated in close proximity to the river bank. The route crosses Big Creek approximately three kilometres upstream from the creek mouth, close to the major rise in slope in the river valley. A terrace bench feature on the south side of the Big Creek crossing had already been destroyed by the earlier trail construction. No ancient cultural materials were seen in the area.

Most of this portion of the access route runs through generally flat, well-drained river valley bottom ground. The natural vegetation consists of stands of mixed forest or mixed forest and wetlands. Sites are not known to be located in poorly drained locales, or in the middle of flat undistinguished landscape features such as that through which the route runs.

The ground surface on that section of the route directly across from the Minto site on the west side of the Yukon River consists of shattered bedrock covered by a mature moss and spruce forest; it is considered an unlikely setting for archaeological sites.

b-The Minto Creek valley: most of this section of the proposed Access Route is cut into the steep hillside along the north side of Minto Creek; that is, there is no flat ground. The entire route shows no likely site settings. The only flat portion of this section of the route is that directly alongside the Yukon River, a distance of less than a kilometre between the boat landing area where site KdVd-1 was discovered by the mouth of the creek and the trapping cabin currently owned by John Bulley. The current road trail surface in this area has been scraped, and provided adequate exposure of potentially buried cultural materials. Except for site KdVd-1[1], described below, no cultural materials of any antiquity were detected in this area.

(3) The Minto Area: River Crossing/Barge Landing Sites

The actual site for construction of the barge landing which will allow transport of vehicles across the Yukon River has yet to be determined. At the time of the field study, three potential locales were being considered (Jim Proc, Minto Explorations Ltd., personal communication). Working upstream, these are: #1 the current Minto barge landing site, situated just north of the Yukon Government campground; #2 the narrow channel area between the Yukon Government campground and the privately owned Minto Resorts; #3 the first narrow channel area south/upstream from Minto Resorts. All three areas were checked for sites.

Field studies around Minto concentrated on the east side of the Yukon River since no sites were reported on the west shore by the Elders of the Selkirk First Nation. The ground surface on the west side that was traversed was noted as being an unfavourable site setting: shattered bedrock covered by a mature moss and spruce forest vegetation. The two more southerly potential barge landings sites on the west shore areas were examined only from a distance, with binoculars from a boat on the river; similar conditions were observed in these two locales, and it was determined that more detailed examination was not warranted.

The east bank of the river, from the mouth of Von Wilczek Creek south/upstream to the property owned by Bill Harris, mid-way between McCabe Creek and Minto was studied. Survey results show that the east bank of the Yukon River in the Minto area has been and continues to be an important area for human use and occupation. Details of the sites situated there are provided in the following report section.

Site Inventory Results

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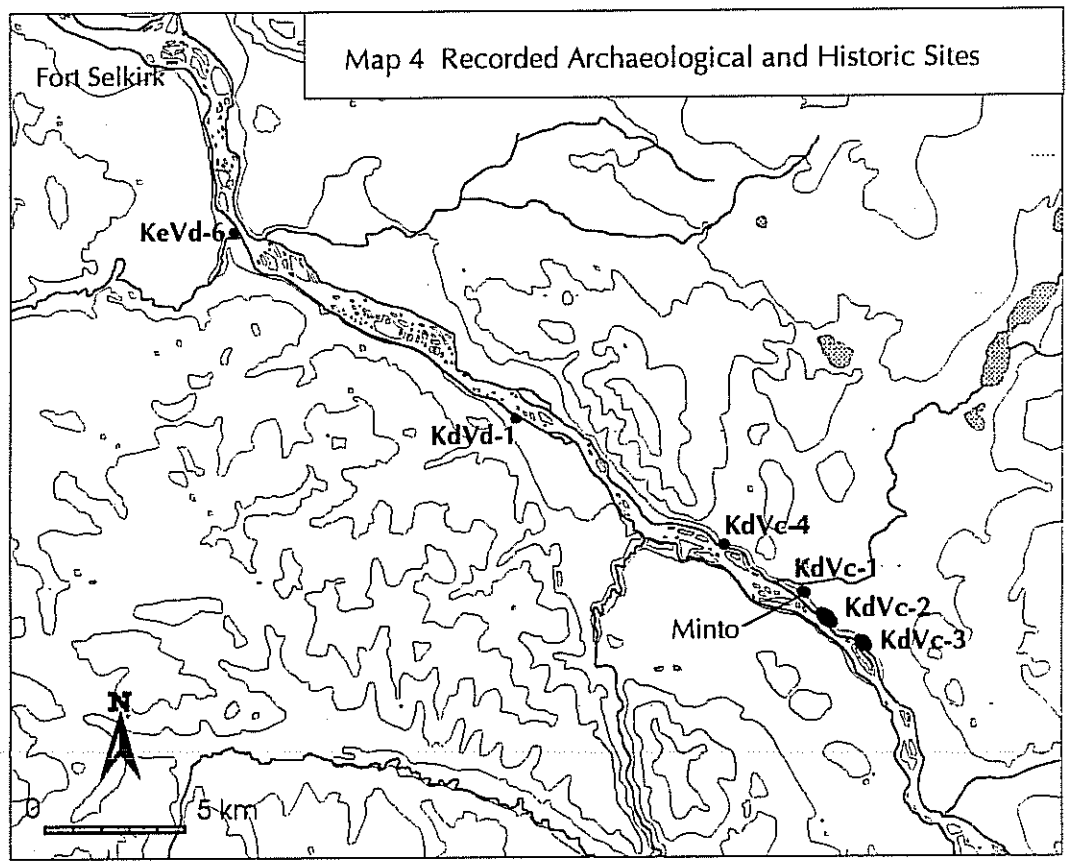
1. Archaeological sites are referred to by their respective Borden number, e.g., KdVd-1, following the standardized system of site registration used in Canada.

A discussion of the known historic and archaeological sites in the Minto area follows. Indian grave sites are not included in the listing for confidentiality reasons; most visitors to the Minto area are aware of the graves which overlook the old Minto settlement. No graves are known in the area of the mine site development, along the access route, or any of the potential barge landing/river crossing sites (Selkirk First Nation Land Claims office files).



Within the Minto area specifically, five sites have been recorded: KdVc-1, KdVc-2, KdVc-3, KdVc-4 and KdVd-1. Three of these were identified during the present impact assessment project. Site KeVd-6, marked on Map 4 but not discussed in the text below, is located downstream from the mine site development area, at the mouth of Wolverine Creek (CHIN files). Our understanding of local and regional site distribution patterns, is still poorly developed. To a certain degree, it is largely a function of where archaeologist's have conducted investigations. Road accessibility has been a key factor in the latter.

Systematic excavations have not been conducted at any of these sites, and consequently not a great deal is known about them. It is unlikely that any of the three sites right around Minto (KdVc-1, KdVc-2, KdVc-3) were occupied at the same time. More likely, through time a particular site was likely occupied and then abandoned as the nearby river channels changed and become more or less suitable for the taking of salmon. A particular

site may have been reoccupied again somewhat later in time as local river conditions improved. This is believed to have been the situation in the Fort Selkirk area further downstream (Gotthardt and Easton 1989: 7).

KdVc-1 Minto Airstrip

KdVc-1 is an archaeological site located on the river bank along the east shore of the Yukon River at the western end of the Minto airstrip. What may have been a large site covering an area of hundreds of square metres has largely been destroyed by surface grading during airstrip construction and maintenance. The western end of the site is being eroded into the Yukon River.

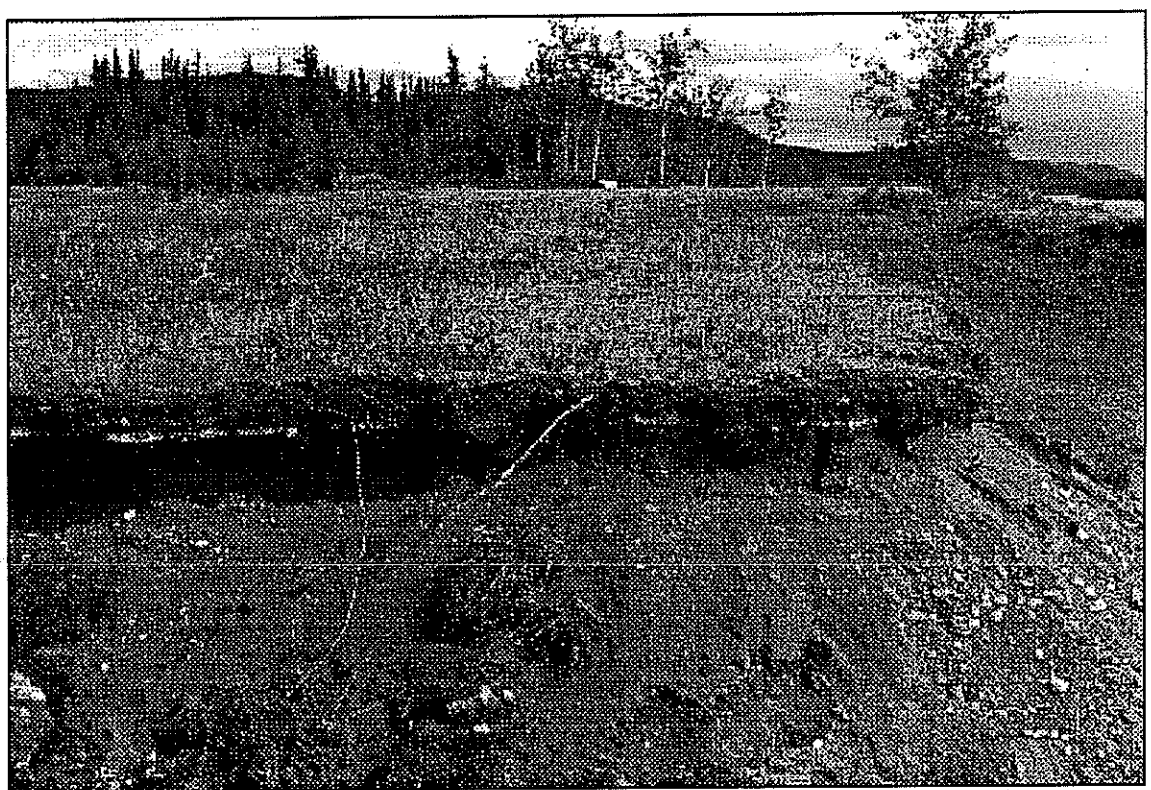


Plate 5 Eroding Cultural Deposits at Minto Airstrip, Site KdVc-1
White band is volcanic ash layer, dated to ca. 1250 years ago

A quantity of stone tool lithic material was collected from the disturbed site surface in 1994. A number of old fire places, evidenced by fire-cracked rock and bone fragments, were noted along the eroding bank face. Most of the eroding buried material was noted as being stratigraphically placed above the White River volcanic ash layer, dated to ca. 1250 years ago. A small area of intact (buried but not yet eroded) precontact period archaeological deposits still exists by the river bank.

Historic period use of the KdVc-1 area was also noted. Twentieth century middens

(garbage dumps) are situated towards the south/upstream end of the site, down the river bank. More recent aboriginal use of the KdVc-1 area is evident in traditional fish camp sites. These are located downstream from the airstrip, south of the mouth of Von Wilczek Creek.

The artifact collections from KdVc-1 (Appendix A) are predominately stone tools and flakes and debitage (the by-products of stone tool manufacture and maintenance). One tool fragment was among the pieces collected in 1994; it is an edge retouched tool, possibly some type of cutting or scraping implement (Plate 4). A number (possibly 8-10 different types) of lithic raw material types are represented in the KdVc-1 collection. These include several varieties of black and grey cherts of varying qualities, three apparently different types of obsidian, milky quartz, quartz crystal, and jasper (red chert). This large number of different stone tool material types suggests that the site may have functioned as a trade site in precontact times, before the trade with the Chilkats. Systematic excavation and investigation of the remaining deposits at KdVc-1 is needed, however, to further explore this idea. At Fort Selkirk, as many as 28 different stone tool types have been recognized (Gotthardt and Easton 1988:7).

KdVc-2 Minto Landing

KdVc-2 refers to the main Minto site; the designation covers a large site area, perhaps over a kilometre long along the river bank. Both buried precontact period archaeological materials and historic buildings, as well as contemporary structures and features such as the current barge landing site are located here.

The historic structures at KdVc-2 are a mixture of standing and collapsed buildings that date to the early to mid-twentieth century. The area currently used as fish camp sites at KdVc-2 is situated south of the campground, parallel to the river bank. It consists of one cabin as well as a series of camping sites with associated drying rack structures used during the fishing season. Further to the south at the site, are the private residences of the Joe and McGinty families.

Precontact period archaeological materials had previously been noted in the area immediately to the north of the Territorial Campground and the standing historic period structures. The 1994 field work found a few lithic artifacts in disturbed surface context in this same area. The archaeological deposits in this part of site KdVc-2 appear to have been entirely destroyed by ongoing gravel quarrying work, or other recent uses of the area, however.

A new area of precontact period archaeological finds was identified further to the south at Minto Landing. It is situated in the area between the recent fish camps structures south of the Territorial Campground and the McGinty and other residences. Lithic artifacts, as well as bone and historic period debris were recovered from the disturbed road trail surface. Intact, buried archaeological remains, likely also exist in the same area,

although testing was inconclusive as to extent of such deposits.

Plate 6 Contemporary Fish Camp Structures at Minto Landing, Site KdVc-2

South of the campground and inland from the river and the recent fish camp sites are the remains of several buildings, recognizable by their foundations or cellars. Abandoned vehicles and midden deposits are situated in this general area as well. These features relate to the mid-twentieth century use of the site.

The existing artifact collections from KdVc-2 (Appendix A) includes both precontact and historic period debris. The latter includes ceramic and metal fragments. The former is predominately stone flakes and debitage, with several different raw material types represented. The distinctive tan/caramel and jasper coloured cherts that are common in the south-central Yukon (Gotthardt personal communication) occur in the collection. Moose and another large ungulate species (possibly caribou) were recognized in the animal bones collected from the site (Appendix B). Most of the faunal remains picked up, however, are small broken bone pieces which were unidentifiable to species. Further testing of the site's precontact period archaeological deposits is required, however, to better understand the life-style and trade connections of the site's ancient occupants.

The records of archaeological and historic sites researchers who have visited the Minto in the last two decades provide information on recent impacts to the site and on the deterioration of the site's historic structures. Most of the site's previously recognized

archaeological deposits could not be found by the present project, and would appear to have been destroyed. Photos taken in the late 1970s by historic sites researcher M.Gates (Yukon Archives files) shows that the site's most obvious historic structures (the one story log cabin of hewn log construction with a nearby associated two story cache structure of frame construction situated just north of the Territorial Campground), are gradually deteriorating; stabilization of these structures is needed if they are to stand for long.

Plate 7 Site KdVc-2, Minto Landing
Precontact Period Deposits by roadtrail in foreground, Historic Building in background

A detailed map of the various find areas and structures at KdVc-2 has yet to be prepared. This should be done before any further work is done at the site, so that individual historic period structures can be mapped and identified.

KdVc-3 Minto Resort

Site KdVc-3 is situated along the east shore of the Yukon River about two kilometres south of Minto Landing, by the Minto Resorts property. The site was discovered in 1994 when bone and fire-cracked rock from ancient fireplaces were seen eroding from the bank edge along the Yukon River.

Investigations revealed that buried cultural deposits exist over a distance of several hundred metres. Testing of the archaeological deposits revealed precontact period occupations that both pre and post-date the White River volcanic ash layer, dated to ca. 1250 years ago. At least two stratigraphically separated occupation levels were recognized

below the volcanic ash layer. Because of its intact condition and good stratigraphic record, the site has considerable research potential.

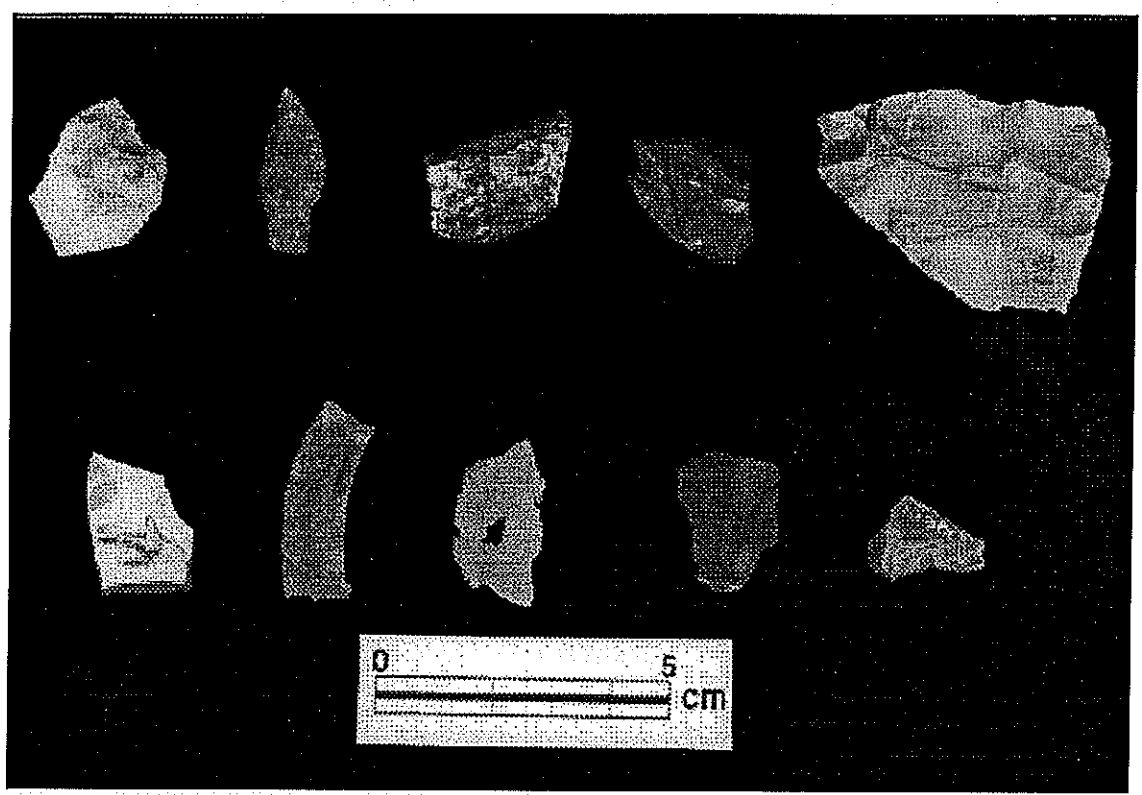


Plate 8 Selected Artifacts Collected From Various Minto Area Sites
Upper Row: KdVc-3:3 flake, white chert; KdVc-3:2 point, grey chert; KdVc-3:1 flake, white chert; KdVc-1:22 flake tool, grey chert; KdVc-1:25 flake core, grey chert. Lower Row: KdVc-2:13 ceramic fragment; KdVc-2:12 sheet metal fragment; KdVc-2:12 sheet metal fragment; KdVc-2:11 flake, black chert; KdVc-2:11 flake, caramel chert.

Among the artifact pieces collected from KdVc-3 (Appendix A) was a complete arrowhead (Plate 4). The small projectile point is a type which is generally thought to be relatively young in age, perhaps only a few hundred years old at most. The remainder of the collection is stone flakes and debitage. Like the other two Minto sites (KdVc-1, KdVc-2), several different lithic raw material types are represented: caramel coloured chert/jasper, varieties of grey and black chert, white chert, and milky quartz. Beaver and snowshoe hare remains were among the bones collected from the KdVc-3 site (Appendix B). Most of the faunal remains picked up, however, are small broken bone pieces which are unidentifiable to species.

Larger artifact and faunal samples from site KdVc-3 are needed to better understand the site's occupational and functional history. Further investigations should be conducted at the site.

KdVc-4 Old Tom's Cabin

Site KdVc-4, locally known as Old Tom's Cabin, is located on the east bank of the Yukon River, about five kilometres below Minto Landing. While outside the study area of the 1994 project, the site was shown to the author by local resident Kathy Kruse. It features two or more old cabin structures, plus associated historic debris. Buried deposits likely exist here as well, though no subsurface testing has been completed.

Old Tom was a German who lived here in the early twentieth century; other non-natives have lived at the site as well (M. Van Bibber, S. Greer notes, June 20/94). First Nations oral history of this area, discussed previously, indicates that an important fish eddy which was traditionally used by the Selkirk First Nation people is located nearby. This suggests that nineteenth century and earlier cultural materials could well be buried in the site area. An important nineteenth century trading site known as *Eh tzu hutslat* or *Haanayan* has also been reported as being located somewhere around the area of this site.

KdVd-1 Minto Creek

Site KdVd-1 is situated on the west shore of the Yukon River about 14 km downstream from Minto, at the north side of the mouth of Minto Creek. The site was discovered in 1994 when bone and fire-cracked rock were recognized in a pile of disturbed dirt that had been dumped by a bull-dozer. No intact archaeological deposits were detected, and it was concluded that the small site had been completely destroyed by construction of a temporary river bank landing site.

Small sites such as KdVd-1 are believed to have been occupied by a small group, such as a hunting party, for a short-term. The collections from the site are very limited (Appendices A, B). They include a single stone flake and some broken animal bone. One of the bone fragments was identified as moose. The use of this species by ancient hunters is not surprising; good moose habitat exists along this stretch of the Yukon River.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing review of the available archaeological, archival and oral history information has hopefully provided some insight into the human history of the Minto area. It shows that Minto figures prominently in the history of the local Northern Tutchone, Selkirk First Nation, being a major salmon fish camp and an important nineteenth century trading site. Throughout the twentieth century, it has continued to be regularly used by the Tutchone as a fish camp site. It was also the home base for some Selkirk families during the middle of this century. During the middle of this century, the Minto Landing site experienced a boom in anticipation of becoming a major regional transportation centre. The latter never materialized.

The existing information indicates that several locales along this stretch of the Yukon River, not just the Minto Landing site, have been used by the Tutchone at different

times in the past. Working downstream, these sites are: (1) the site by Minto Resorts, recorded as site KdVc-3, where extensive precontact period archaeological deposits exist; (2) the main Minto Landing site, recorded as site KdVc-2, which features precontact period archaeological deposits, as well as extensive historic period structures and middens, in addition to contemporary dwellings and fish camp sites; (3) the site at Minto airstrip, recorded as site KdVc-1, where precontact period archaeological deposits have also been found; and (4) the old camp and trading site known as *Eh tzu hutslat* or *Haanayan*, near Trouble Hill; the precise location of this site, as well as its condition is uncertain. Nonetheless, it is suggested that the latter site, not Minto Landing, is the Tutchone village identified by the explorer F. Schwatka in 1883 as Kitl-ah-gon. It is recommended that mapping of the location of this important village site, as well as on-site interview work with Selkirk Elders who are familiar with its history, be undertaken as soon as possible.

Recommendations: Impact Considerations

The archaeological impact assessment work conducted by the present project identified five archaeological and historic sites within or in close proximity to the Minto mine development area. The site survey work may not have identified all sites that may be impacted by the development, but is believed to have pinpointed all sites which could be recognized at the scale of impact assessment prescribed by the Project Terms of Reference. Archaeological impact assessment recommendations for the three geographic areas of the development follow.

No sites were recognized in the mine and mill site development area at the headwaters of Minto Creek, though the area is known to have been used by the Selkirk people as a hunting and trapping area. Sites in buried sub-surface context could possibly exist here. Should any sign of an archaeological site be encountered during construction work, this should be reported immediately to the archaeological staff of the Yukon Heritage Branch.

One site was detected along the access route on the west side of the Yukon River; this site is of no further concern as it is small and already largely destroyed. No traditional sites of the Selkirk First Nation have been reported on this side of the river, and the only historic indicated (the first location of the Minto Northwest Mounted Police Post) is believed to be located upstream from any proposed development.

Most of the access route on the west side is well back in from the Yukon River and situated in areas of very low site potential. Nonetheless, sites may still exist along the access route on the west side of the river, and should any sign of an archaeological site be encountered during construction work, this should be reported immediately to the archaeological staff of the Yukon Heritage Branch.

The Minto Mine project's barge landing site, located somewhere in the Minto area along the Yukon River, could potentially impact one or a number of important historic and

archaeological sites. It is uncertain which site(s) might be affected by this aspect of the proposed development, as the barge landing site had not been finalized. Nonetheless, as the present study has shown, several important sites exist on the east side of the Yukon River in the Minto area. Development in the area of these known sites should be avoided.

Based on the known sites on the east side of the Yukon River, the three potential barge landing settings investigated by the present project can be ranked in suitability as follows:

-#1, the most northerly potential barge landing site, the location of the current barge landing site at Minto Landing. Development here is **least desirable**, given the historic buildings and archaeological deposits, and the many current land use activities (campground, fish camp sites, etc.) which take place here. Elders of the Selkirk First Nation have expressed their concern over the ever increasing disturbance of their traditional fish camp site by its use as a transportation base and disturbance by bulldozers, etc. The intrusion of the Territorial Campground has also been noted. Moreover, the Selkirk First Nation has indicated its intention to make land selections at the Minto site as part of their outstanding land claims, currently under negotiation (communication from S.F.N. Land Claims Dept.).

-#2, the middle barge landing site between the current Minto Landing and Minto Resorts areas is less desirable, given current uses of the land areas and potential impacts to adjacent archaeological and historic resources situated just to the north at the KdVc-2 site.

-#3, the most southerly (south of Minto Resorts) of the potential barge sites would appear to be **most favourable**, assuming the developed area is situated well south of and upstream from, the KdVc-3 site area.

Given the scale and focus of the field studies conducted by the present project, however, it is recommended that whichever locale is selected as the barge landing construction site, systematic sub-surface testing be conducted there by an archaeologist. This testing should be undertaken on both sides of the Yukon River, before construction proceeds. The high density of sites along the Yukon River around Minto indicates the importance of the area to long ago peoples; other unrecognized sites may well exist along the river here.

Finally, it should be noted that the main Minto Landing site has been severely impacted by construction and bulldozing activity related to maintenance of the existing barge landing facility. This work is largely unrelated to the Minto Mine development project, and has been going on for a number of years. With further development in the Minto area the site will likely continue to be slowly destroyed, even if the Minto Mine Project's barge landing site is not constructed here. Soon there will be little left of the site's archaeological deposits and historic structures. Site structures, features and deposits should be mapped, so that destruction of the site can be monitored. Priorities for site inter-

pretation and building stabilization need to be considered. A heritage site management plan clearly needs to be developed for Minto.

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Site KdVc-1, Minto Airport

#	Description, Quantity		Raw Mat.	Horizontal	Vertical	Date & Int.
21 [a]	flake & 4 shatter	5	grey chert	west end of airstrip, south end, by river-bank	disturbed surface, roadtrail area	18/6/94 SG
22	edge retouched flake tool (alternate edges on both faces)	1	grey chert	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
23	rotated flake core	1	black chert	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
24	rotated flake core, with cortex	1	streak. black chert	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
25	rotated flake core	1	grey chert	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
26	large flake with platform, >45mm	1	poor black chert	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
27	shatter, >40mm	1	milky quartz	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
28	flake and shatter, <20mm	2	jasper	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
29	small flakes, <15mm	3	3 diff. obsid.	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
30	flake, <20mm	1	quartz crystal	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
31	flakes, with platforms, >25mm	7	clear, bl.,grey cherts	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
32	shatter, flakes without platforms, various sizes	12	bl.,grey cherts	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG
33	small, retouch flakes, incl. biface trimming	10	bl.,grey cherts	west end of airstrip	disturbed/scraped airstrip surface	18/6/94 SG

a. Earlier finds from the site (numbers KdVc-1:1-20) are not listed here, but are of a similar nature.

Site KdVc-2, Minto Landing

	Description, Quantity		Raw Mat.	Horizontal	Vertical	Date & Int.
9[a]	flakes (1 with platform), size < 30mm	2	bl.chert basalt?	north of camp-ground	surface, disturbed area	18/6/94 SG
10	flakes, shatter (1 with platform), size <25mm	3	grey & black cherts	area behind fish-camps, cabin, south of campground	surface, disturbed (roadtrail) area	18/6/94 SG
11	flakes, shatter, incl. core fragment, various sizes	8	grey, black, carmel cherts	area just north and west of T. McGinty place, near junction of roadtrails	surface, disturbed (roadtrail) area	18/6/94 SG
12	sheet metal fragments	2	copper, steel	area just north and west of T. McGinty place, near junction of roadtrails	surface, disturbed (roadtrail) area	18/6/94 SG
13	ceramic fragment (plate?) glazed	1	ceramic	area just north and west of T. McGinty place, near junction of roadtrails	surface, disturbed (roadtrail) area	18/6/94 SG
14	faunal remain, large mammal, not calcined	4 pc	bone	area just north and west of T. McGinty place, near junction of roadtrails	surface, disturbed (roadtrail) area	18/6/94 SG
15	faunal remains, large mammal innominate frag., not calcined	1	bone	area just west of T. McGinty place, by roadtrail	buried, 5 cm bs, just above volcanic ash	18/6/94 SG

a. Earlier finds from the site (numbers KdVc-2:1-8) are not listed here, but are of a similar nature.

Site KdVc-3 Minto Resort

#	Description, Quantity		Raw. Mat.	Horizontal	Vertical	Date & Int.
1	core tablet, reguvenation flake, jasper/carmel chert	1	jasper/ carmel chert	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
2	small, stemmed projectile point	1	med. grey ch.	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
3	flake, with platform	1	white chert	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
4	flakes, various sizes, with and w/o platforms	6	grey cherts	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
5	faunal, weathered med/large mammal frag.	1 pc	bone	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
6	faunal remains, fetal mammal, charred	18 pc	bone, tooth?	within 0-20 metres south of roadcut/ boat launch	eroding bank face, above vol. ash	18/6/94 SG
7	flakes, debitage; incl. bipolar, biface thinning, various sizes	ca. 100	grey bl. cherts	Eugene's Test 1, all above ash	some 20 cm bs, some just above ash (27-32 cm bs)	21/6/94 EA
8	flake, biface trimming, <10mm	1	grey/bl chert	Eugene's Test 1	in ash; 35cmbs	21/6/94 EA
9	flakes, debitage, <20mm	9	grey/bl chert	Eugene's Test 1	below ash; 50 cm and more bs	21/6/94 EA
10	faunal, hare	4 pc	bone	Eugene's Test 1	below ash; 50 cm and more bs	21/6/94 EA
11	flakes, debitage	7	dull gr.ch.	Eugene's Test 1	slopewash ? (unlabelled bag)	21/6/94 EA
12	faunal remains, calcined, large mammal frags., unident.	32 pc	bone	bank face, mid-way between Tests 1 & 2	eroding bank face, just above vol. ash	22/6/94 SG
13	large, thick flake from rotated core, >40mm	1	str.grey bl.chert	near Sheila's Test 2	slopewash	21/6/94 SG

14	flakes, debitage, various sizes	5	cherts, milky quartz	near Sheila's Test 2	slopewash	21/6/94 SG
15	flake, >30mm	1	jasper	Sheila's Test 2	ca. 8 cm below vol. ash, 60-65 cm bs	21/6/94 SG
16	faunal remains, charred, uni-dent. LM, SM & M	4 pc	bone	Sheila's Test 2	ca. 8 cm below vol. ash, 60-65 cm bs	21/6/94 SG
17	flake, bipolar, <20mm	1	cl.light grey chert	roadtrail behind site	disturbed surface/ roadtrail	21/6/94 SG
18	faunal, poss. identifiable	1 pc	bone	roadtrail behind site	disturbed surface/ roadtrail	21/6/94 SG

KdVd-1 Minto Creek

#	Description, Quantity		Raw Mat.	Horizontal	Vertical	Date & Int.
1	blocky shatter, <15mm	1	clear/ lt.grey chert	roadcut, by boat landing	disturbed surface/ dumped sediment pile	19/6/94 SG
2	faunal remains, large mammal, non-calcined	7 pc.	bone	roadcut, by boat landing	disturbed surface/ dumped sediment pile	19/6/94 SG

MINTO, YUKON
IDENTIFICATION GROUPS

Snowshoe Hare	*Lepus americanus*
Beaver	*Castor canadensis*
Moose	*Alces alces*
Small Ungulate	*Artiodactyla*
Large Ungulate	*Artiodactyla*
Ungulate	*Artiodactyla*
Large Mammal	*Mammalia*
Mammal	*Mammalia*
Class Uncertain	

Cat #	# Frags	Bone	Portion	Side	Age	Species	Alteration	Comments
14.1	1	thoracic vertebra	articular facets frag	A	IM	Ungulate		pos. Moose
14.2	1	ulna	shaft frag	L		Large Ungulate		
14.3	1	skull	basiocciput frag	R	IM	Ungulate		prob. Caribou
14.4	1	tibia	shaft frag	R		Small Ungulate	carnivore chew marks	prob. Caribou
15.1	1	innominate	pubis	R		Moose	sawn through acetabulum. some cortical nicks.	

Cat #	# Frags	Bone	Portion	Side	Age	Species	Alteration	Comments
6.1	1	clavicle	lateral 2/3	L	IM	Beaver		
6.2	1	femur	shaft 1/3	L	IM	Beaver	charred	
6.3	1	radius	~complete	L	IM	Beaver	2 nicks, possibly new, across shaft at prox. end	
6.4	1	tibia	prox. epiphysis	R	IM	Beaver	charred	
6.5	1	mandible	horizontal ramus frag	L	IM	Beaver	charred	
6.6	1	molar or premolar	frag			Beaver	charred	
6.7	1	molar or premolar	frag			Beaver	charred	
6.8	1	molar or premolar	frag			Beaver	charred	#s 6.6-6.8 possibly same tooth
6.9	1	tooth	frag			Mammal	charred	prob. Beaver, but can't prove
6.10	1	tooth	frag			Mammal	charred	"
6.11	1	mandible	horizontal ramus frag	L		Beaver	charred	
6.12	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
6.13	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
6.14	1		frag			Mammal	charred & calcined	
6.15	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
6.16	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
6.17	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
6.18	1		frag			Mammal	charred	
10.1	1	tibia	distal frag	L	YA-A	Snowshoe Hare	bleached. pitting of bone. pos. arthritic involvement	
10.2	1		frag			Mammal	bleached	
10.3	1		frag			Class Uncertain		
10.4	1	long bone	shaft frag			Class Uncertain		
18.1	1	innominate	ischium frag	R	IM	Snowshoe Hare	calcined	

KdVd-1, Minto Creek

Cat #	# Frags	Bone	Portion	Side	Age	Species	Alteration	Comments
2.1	1	rib	shaft frag			Large Mammal		
2.2	1	prox. phalanx, Digit 3 or 4	~1/2, longitudinal split		A	Moose	bleached	
2.3	1		frag			Large Mammal	bleached	
2.4-2.8	5		frag			Mammal	bleached	