

The Oldest Resident in Duluth Township

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Back on September third I presented a program for the Homesteaders group at the Duluth Town Hall. This presentation was an update of the ongoing excavations at Two Harbors on the Whiskey Row archaeological site. Included were a few slides of some likely prehistoric artifacts. After the program ended I was approached by one of the group who said he had dug up a stone artifact from his garden and asked if we could take a look at it. Later, archaeologist Don Menuey and I met with the gentleman at his home to examine his find.

It turned out to be an Agate Basin type projectile point made out of high quality jasper and approximately 7,000 to 9,000 years old. Prehistoric quarries in this type of iron formation jasper are found just outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario. It can, however, be found locally, scattered in till deposited by the Superior sub-lobe of the glacier.

The artifact could have been used as either a spear point or a knife. They were essentially a multi-purpose implement used by the hunters of what is called the —big game culture. Elsewhere, this style of projectile point has been associated with extinct giant bison kill sites. Unfortunately, northeastern Minnesota is not a very good area for the preservation of skeletal remains. As a result of this, we do not know what these people hunted here locally. Only the stone artifacts remain.

Whoever this ancient resident of Duluth Township was, it can be said that he was incredibly skilled at working stone. The design of the point and method of flaking implies that he was from the late Paleo-Indian culture. His world would have been a very different place from the Duluth Township we recognize today. Exactly how different we will never know, but due to the willingness of the individual from the Homesteaders group to share what he found, we get a fleeting glimpse of one of Duluth Township's oldest residents.