

The Nampa Image—An Ancient Artifact?

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Abstract

The July 1889 find in Nampa, Idaho, of a small human figure during a well-drilling operation caused intense scientific interest last century. Unmistakably made by human hands, it was found at a depth (320') which would appear to place its age far before the expected arrival of man in this part

of the world, according to accepted evolutionary dating techniques. Although all but forgotten by the general scientific community, the evidence, when viewed without evolutionary bias, still sounds convincing over a century after its discovery.

Introduction

In 1887 James A. Pinney, Nathan Falk, Joseph Perrault, John Bernard, and M. A. Kurtz formed a company to locate artesian water at the new frontier town of Nampa, Idaho. By July of 1889, the artesian well sand-pump had reached a depth of over three hundred feet. Mr. Kurtz was at the sand pump, running its out-coming contents through his hands. In his own words, he "had the clay image in...[his] hand and supposed it was a twig. I dipped it into a barrel of water standing near, washed it off and saw at once what it was" (Wright, 1890, p. 428).

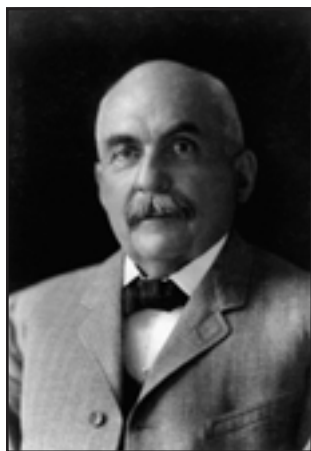


Figure 1. Mark A. Kurtz, finder of the Nampa Image in 1889. Photo from the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS). Used by permission of ISHS.

The other persons present when the image was found included Alexander Duffes, a prominent citizen of Nampa, plus the driller and his helper. In a letter dated November 7, 1889, to Kurtz, Duffes certifies that he "was present at the well along with yourself [Kurtz] and saw you pick it out of the sand as it was discharged from the sand pump. There were no others present except two men attending the engine and sand pump. And they could not by any means get it into the place where found, and were just as much

astonished as ourselves at seeing the find. These are the facts of the case, to which I hereby certify, trusting this will thoroughly quiet all doubts." (Wright, 1890, p. 435)

Duffes' statement hardly quieted all doubts. Because of the great depth (320') from which the find reportedly came up, the doubts of evolutionists regarding its authenticity became apparent. In the words of W. H. Holmes:

It [the Nampa Image] is said to have been brought up by an artesian well sand-pump at Nampa, Idaho, in 1889, and derives its archeological interest from the fact that the deposits penetrated are geologically ancient. According to Emmons, the formation in which the pump was operating is of late Tertiary or early Quaternary age; and the apparent improbability of the occurrence of a well-modeled human figure in deposits of such great antiquity has led to grave doubt as to its authenticity" (1919, p. 70).

Because of its fragile condition, the image is now being stored in a small container in the basement of the Idaho State Historical Society in Boise (see accompanying photographs).

More Details of the Find and its Notoriety

At the General Meeting of the Boston Society of Natural History on January 1, 1890, President of the Society F. W. Putnam called upon Prof. G. Frederick Wright to discuss information about the "Nampa Image" (Wright, 1890, pp. 424-450). The entire correspondence in the *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History* (1890, pp. 424-450) regarding the image and the research into its authenticity provides an interesting insight.

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Figure 2. The present-day Idaho Power building in Nampa located over the site of the well where the Nampa Image was found. The well is now capped and is located in one of the storerooms of the Idaho Power building. Earlier Annie Laurie Bird reported (1963, p. 10) that the well “...still serves Nampa since water pumped from its depths is used in the air conditioning system in the Nampa Idaho Power building.”

Charles F. Adams, President of the Union Pacific Railroad, brought the discovery of the image to the attention of the scientific community. President Adams, on a trip to Alaska, had been reading a newly published book by Prof. Wright on the Ice Age. On his return trip in the early part of September 1889, he stopped a few hours at Boise City, Idaho. Mr. Cumming, the general manager for the Union Pacific Railroad in that area, chanced to be in Boise the day after the image’s discovery. Upon being informed of the image, Mr. Adams examined the image still in the possession of its finder, Mr. M. A. Kurtz. In a letter dated Sept. 8, 1889, Mr. Adams informed Prof. Wright of the discovery and also enclosed a short memorandum detailing the find (Wright, 1890, pp. 425–426). Immediately after receiving the letter from Adams, Wright wrote Kurtz a letter with specific questions and requested a photograph of the image.

On September 27, 1889, Kurtz responded to Wright’s request by answering his questions and adds: “We have no means here of having the image photographed so I will send it by express, hoping it will interest you” (Wright, 1890, p. 427).

We can therefore safely assume that on September 27, or very shortly thereafter, the image was no longer in the possession of Kurtz, but made its way by express mail from Idaho to Wright in Oberlin, Ohio. Wright writes, “the image was in my own hands nearly three months in all, so that we had ample opportunity to examine it” (Wright, 1890, p. 439). This bit of information becomes important in evaluating one of the early criticisms of the image.



Figures 3–5. Various views of the Nampa Image as it was seen in August 1996 by the authors while at the Idaho State Historical Society. Notice penny to show scale. Used by permission of ISHS.

Objection I Said To Be An Admitted Hoax

A Mr. McGee attacked the honesty of Messrs. Kurtz and Duffes. Mr. Wright repeats McGee’s assertions in his 1894 second edition of *Man and the Glacial Period*:

'It is a fact,' says Mr. McGee, 'that one of the best known geologists of the world chanced to visit Nampa while the boring was in progress, and the figurine and the pretty fiction were laid before him. He recognized the figurine as a toy such as the neighbouring Indians give their children, and laughed at the story; whereupon the owner of the object enjoined secrecy, pleading: 'Don't give me away; I've fooled a lot of fellows already, and I'd like to fool some more.' (pp. xix-xx).

This well-known geologist turns out to be Major Powell, a famous explorer of the early west, including such areas as the Grand Canyon. Powell later personally wrote of the encounter with the unnamed people with the figurine and clarifies McGee's account by saying:

In the fall of 1889 the writer [Powell] visited Boise City, in Idaho [twenty miles from Nampa where McGee had reported the encounter]. While stopping at a hotel, some gentlemen called on him to show him a figurine which they said they had found in sinking an artesian well in the neighbourhood, at a depth, if I remember rightly, of more than three hundred feet.... (Wright, 1894, p. XX)

This timetable of the "fall of 1889" would throw grave doubts on whether Powell could have even seen the Nampa Image since we know that the image was sent to Wright in Ohio on September 27 or soon thereafter. It may thus be improbable that Powell even saw the Nampa Image. Furthermore, he never names the gentleman who reportedly showed it to him, so we have no sure connection between Powell's account and the discoverer of the Nampa Image.

Powell never says these men claimed to be perpetuating a hoax. He did say that a number of the townspeople had doubts about it:

While stopping at the hotel different persons spoke about it, and it was always passed off as a jest; and various comments were made about it by various people, some of them claiming that it had given them much sport, and that a good many tenderfeet had looked at it, and believed it to be genuine; and they ["different/various persons"] seemed rather pleased that I had detected the hoax. (Wright, 1894, p. xx)

Wright then concludes:

Thus it appears that Major Powell has made no such statement [that the owner of the image said: "Don't give me away; I've fooled a lot of fellows already, and I'd like to fool some more."], at least in public, as Mr. McGee attributes to him (Wright, 1894, p. xx)

Objection II

The Image a Modern-day Indian 'Toy'

It appears that Major Powell felt the image was only a modern-day Indian toy:

He [the writer—Powell] had known the Indians that live in the neighbourhood, had seen their children play with just such figurines, and had no doubt that the little image had lately belonged to some Indian child, and said the same. (Wright, 1894, p. XX)

While one would think that this statement by Powell would constitute one of the most damaging of all objections to the reported find, it actually turns out to be entirely unsubstantiated. W. H. Holmes who wrote about this image years later (1919) makes no mention of this claim and, in fact, acknowledges that such images were not commonly being made by the Indians of that area:

It should be remarked, however, that forms of art closely analogous to this figure are far to seek, neither the Pacific slope on the west nor the Pueblo region on the south furnishing modeled images of the human figure of like character or of equal artistic merit. The nearest region in which work of corresponding culture grade occurs is in the middle Mississippi Valley, the period being recent (Holmes, 1919, p. 70).

A paper in *Creation/Evolution* (Lippare, 1989, p. 31) also seemed to run out of ammunition on this point in attempting to debunk the image when it says:

W. J. McGee (1892) felt that Brinton was too generous to Wright's book and called the Nampa image a transparent fraud—a charge to which Wright did not bother to respond. On the other hand, Wright asked Brinton to provide details in support of his clay toy claim (Wright, 1893a) (sic), but I was unable to find a response.

And no wonder for there appears to be no evidence that Indians in the area of Nampa, or to the west or the south for considerable distances, had made such images. Anyone who has seen the image knows of its fragile existence and to say that children would use such a fragile and small item (1½") as a toy seems pressing it to the extreme.

Objection III

Image Introduced into Sand Pump

In one of the first letters written by G. Frederick Wright to M. A. Kurtz about the image, the question of the sand pump and how it operated was discussed. This obviously was relevant to the possibility of the image being intro-

duced into the pump only to be “re-discovered.” Kurtz’s letter of October 21, 1889, to Wright discusses this question by saying:

The sand pump with the coupling at the top is a little over five inches in the chamber. The sand pump proper is 4 1/2 inches on the outside and the valve is about 3 1/2 inches on the inside. Anything put in from the top would have floated on top of the water and been ground to powder by the action of the sand pump. If there is any way to remove the implied doubt in your letter as to the genuineness of the image please inform me (Wright, 1890, p. 429).

Kurtz further amplifies the workings of the pump in a letter to Wright dated November 30, 1889:

We commenced work at 7 a.m. and the sand pump made a trip every six or eight minutes. Our sand pump is about eight feet in length and is worked very rapidly by steam. The suction valve is attached to two steel rods, attached to a bent rod of steel at the top, the whole forming what is called jars. Now the valve fits and works so nicely on the inside of the pump that if you were to throw a pin in it while at rest, the quick and sudden raising of the jars would throw it out at the top, and if the image had been thrown in as you suggest, it would have bounded out at the top, in good shape. The only other possible way would have been for the helper to have put it in after he had emptied the pump, and the only result would have been that on the descent of the jars, the valve would have knocked the image into pieces (Wright, 1890, p. 437).

Thus, it is clear from the workings of the sand pump, the image could not have been introduced by anyone with the result seen. It would have either been popped out when the pump was started, or broken into pieces if introduced after it had been emptied. In neither case would it have appeared as the contents of the sand pump was being emptied out into Kurtz’s hand.

Objection IV

Carried into the Depths through a Crevice

W. H. Holmes (1919, p. 70) hesitated to accept the ancient age of the image and proposed various alternatives for its discovery. Among the alternatives was the idea that the image may have been introduced to such a depth through a crevice:

While it may have been brought up as reported, there remains the possibility that it was not an original inclusion under the lava. It is not impossible that an object of this character could have descended from the surface through some crevice or

water course penetrating the lava beds and have been carried through deposits of creeping quicksand aided by underground waters to the spot tapped by the drill.

Those of our readers who have followed our previous papers on the artifacts of the gold-bearing gravels of Sierra Nevada Mountains in California (Gentet, 1991) and the famed California Calaveras Skull (Lain and Gentet, 1997) will at once vividly remember the skill of W. H. Holmes to account for many misplaced artifacts by the introduction of mysterious crevices!

To suppose that this fragile, small, baked clay image had such a voyage through hundreds of feet of strata, including a 15’ layer of lava, is indeed an act of faith. It is pure speculation without any factual backing.

There is, however, the question of how the sand pump could have drilled precisely on top of a small item (1 1/2" long) 320’ under the surface of the land. Wright also wondered about this question, and spent a large portion of the summer of 1890 in Idaho to further study the finding of the image the previous summer and to study the geology of the area. Here is Wright’s conclusion:

To many it has seemed in the highest degree improbable that a six-inch hole should chance to hit so small an object at so great a depth. Upon inquiry, however, I found that a very much larger amount of sand and gravel was brought up by the pump from near the bottom than would be required to fill the six-inch hole, and that very likely there was drawn into the pump the material from a good many square feet about the bottom....From this it will be evident that quite a large cavity was made near the bottom, some of them saying that the pile of material thus brought out was as large as a small house. But most of it when I was there had been hauled away to make sidewalks (Wright, 1891, pp. 243-244).

There can be no question that Wright took this matter seriously and did not believe the image was ancient without checking out all the objections. He came away convinced that the image was indeed from the depths and very ancient. He also saw a possible link between the image and the investigations of geologist J. D. Whitney in the California gold-bearing gravels containing artifacts and human remains dating from before the beginning of the Ice Age:

But if we are compelled to ascribe such antiquity to the image, it will go far to relieve the Calaveras skull of the obloquy which has rested upon it on account of its advanced stage of development; for, certainly, the brain that could have modelled so perfect a form as this must have been far removed from that of the ape-like progenitor supposed by

Darwin to be the common ancestor of us all (Wright, 1891, p. 237).

The evidence from California, and now, Idaho, of human artifacts/remains did much to debunk the then current evolutionary timetable for human development. Both Wright and Whitney knew and understood the importance of such finds. Other scientists who held to the accepted evolutionary bias fought any introduction of ancient man. Even today in the latter 1990s—one hundred years later—such ideas of pre-glacial human remains in North America are unacceptable.

Objection V Strata Too Ancient to Contain Human Artifacts

From the very beginning, the geological setting of the Nampa Image has caused extreme conflict. The memorandum sent to G. Frederick Wright by Charles F. Adams on September 8, 1889, identified the stratum from which the image was believed to have come:

M. A. Kurtz was engaged in boring an artesian well. The image was brought to the surface through the pipe in the usual way among some heavy, coarse sand, from a depth of three hundred and twenty feet from the surface. The different strata that had been bored through were as follows:

- Sixty feet of soil.
 - Twelve to fifteen feet of lava rock.
 - One hundred feet of quicksand.
 - Six inches of clay.
 - Forty feet of quicksand.
 - Six feet of clay.
 - Thirty feet of quicksand.
 - Twelve to fifteen feet of clay.
 - Then clay balls mixed with sand.
 - Then coarse sand in which the image came up.
 - Then vegetable soil.
 - Then the original sandstone.
- (Wright, 1890, p. 425-426).

A U.S. Geological Survey geologic atlas (1904) published a few years later of this same well gives similar geological information:

A well bored at Nampa (elevation, 2490 feet) gave the following section:

At top, hardpan and loam	60 feet
Basalt, below which roots, leaves, and vegetable mold are found	15 feet
Boulders [<i>sic</i>] and sand	100 feet
clay seam	½ feet
sand	40 feet
clay seam	½ feet
sand	30 feet

15 feet

clay
Sand. (From the lower part of this stratum the sand pump brought up a small image similar to a roughly shaped doll, which at the time created much interest, as the statement was made on seemingly good authority that the find was genuine. Further substantiation of this remarkable occurrence has not been forthcoming, and the image may have been dropped into the wellhole by someone wishing to perpetrate a practical joke)

40 feet

Coaly material at the bottom of this stratum. More consolidated sandstone at bottom of section. 19 feet
Total 320 feet

Thus there is in this well, below the 60 feet of Quaternary material, 15 feet of basalt and 220 feet of sands with some clays. The latter probably represent the Idaho formation [Quaternary/Tertiary]. Near the bottom, at an elevation of 2170 feet, was a layer of lignitic material. Finally, below this came a harder sandstone, which may represent the Payette formation [Tertiary].

A later publication (Savage, 1958, p. 20) lists Quaternary basalt flows from Recent, Late and Early Pleistocene in the county where the image was found. While the exact age of the 15' basalt layer is unknown, it would be either "Recent" or "Pleistocene." This area of Idaho was never covered by ice, but it did have a much wetter climate during the time of the glaciers and suffered greatly by large amounts of water during local catastrophes such as the Bonneville Flood.

What is certain is that the Nampa Image is an enigma to evolutionary theories. Man simply could not have been present making clay images of himself at such a remote time. But, such is the dilemma of evolutionary thought when confronted with data that does not fit.

Objection VI Image Could Be Made to Appear Old

If the Nampa Image were not really old, how could one account for its ancient appearance? After the image was shipped to Ohio to be examined by G. Frederick Wright, it was given to Albert Allen Wright, professor of natural history at Oberlin for careful examination. Also, it was given to F. F. Jewett, professor of chemistry. Wright also recorded their opinions. Over eight full pages of Albert Allen Wright's report are included in Wright's paper (Wright, 1890, pp. 439-447). It is only possible to summarize A. A. Wright's conclusions briefly:

(1) The 1½ " image is that of a female. It is not the work of a child or mere novice. If the short leg was ever of equal length with the other, it was broken and rounded before it came up from the well.

(2) The image was molded out of a plastic, gritty clay, and afterwards burned in a fire.

(3) The unaided eye distinguishes two elements in the material—a powdery material too fine to be called sand and yet not so fine as the elements of porcelain clay, and grains of quartz and possibly of other minerals, scattered at random through the finer substance. The image was so friable that it was not possible to make a thin section.

(4) The source of the material for the image fit the clay balls brought up from the well shortly before the image was found. The clay balls were found to be concretions with interiors nearly white with very fine-grained material displaying concentric rusty rings while the exterior contained the coarse quartz grains.

(5) When the clay was subjected to the heat of a Bunsen gas burner, the oxidizing portion turned red while the remaining portion was gray due to a lack of oxygen at the time of burning. This agreed with the different shades of color observable upon the image's surface.

(6) Albert Allen Wright then tried to duplicate the image using a clay ball that had been brought back from the Idaho well site. After making a similar image and heating it with his Bunsen burner, Wright concluded:

This is the only attempt that was made, and I may say that the success of the imitation was far beyond my anticipations. The general tone and variations of color in the two are exceedingly similar....There is only one point, which seems of any importance, in which the duplicate fails to reproduce the original, and that is a superior tint of redness at one or two points upon the surface of the original, notably upon the back, and at the left hand. This raises the question whether the extreme tint in the original may not be due to a slow deposit or iron rust from external, or even internal sources, and thus furnish evidence of its antiquity. To this it may be replied that the extreme color can be obtained by using a few drops of hydrochloric acid upon the clay, and the reheating. Even deeper tints than are seen in the original can thus be secured (Wright, 1890, pp. 446-447).

In conclusion, Albert Allen Wright said (Wright, 1890, p. 447):

When we find that it is possible in a few hours to produce a duplicate which exhibits all the external and internal characters of the original, there is nothing left in the image itself to sustain the theory of its antiquity. Whoever compares the two [no picture of the duplicate was given] will see that the tool marks are as distinct and fresh in the original as in the duplicate. He will see the same corroded surface on the duplicate [in the grooves?] as on the original. The interior tenacity, composition and color are the same in both. The variations in the ex-

ternal color have been fully set forth. While therefore it would be a great pleasure to be able to confirm the evidence of its antiquity brought forward from other sources by my friend and co-laborer Professor G. F. Wright, I am still compelled to say that I can find no satisfactory marks of the tooth of time upon it.

How did Professor G. F. Wright respond to this negative evaluation of the Nampa Image? In one paragraph he says:

Professor A. A. Wright's examination, it is true, is not of itself conclusive as to age, but there is nothing in it bearing indubitably against its age; while the similarity of the material composing the image and that composing the clay balls, seem to me strongly confirmatory of the genuineness....It seems in the highest degree improbable that anyone should have manufactured such an object on the spot, and have been so successful in meeting all the conditions present (Wright, 1890, p. 448).

One thing seems certain: A. A. Wright succeeded in manufacturing an image very similar to the Nampa Image. In order to do so, sophisticated equipment and chemicals were used. Were such items available on the frontier? If they were, what would be the motive of making such an image? And, how could such a fragile image be planted in the sand pump and survive? And, what about the repeated reports of the integrity of Kurtz and Duffes by many people who knew them? Could the driller, Mr. H. B. Grumbling [misspelled "Grumbley" in one section of Wright's paper], have somehow been responsible for the image? Wright quotes a letter received from Grumbling (Wright, 1890, p. 449):

I was present at the find of the image. Circumstances were such that there could have been no mistake. I don't think there was any chance for the helper to have placed it in the sand, nor do I think he was capable of so doing.

Grumbling only speaks of his helper. He says nothing about anyone else present, including himself. Nor is anything else known about the helper than what was said. The question still remains: "What would be the motive?" A mere prank? If so, why such a sophisticated one?

There is also the point raised by Kurtz: "The similarity of the material composing the image and that composing the clay balls, seem to me strongly confirmatory of the genuineness" (Wright, 1890, p. 448). The image was said to have been located originally in the sand layer *immediately under* the clay ball layer. The clay balls and the image were composed of identical material. This is a strange circumstance. One would normally have expected the image to have been found *higher, not lower*, in the sequence than the material from which it is identical. This would lend credence to the possibility that the clay balls

laying on the surface by the drilling operation would have afforded someone an opportunity to make an image, just as was accomplished by A. A. Wright. The other possibility is that the material from which the clay balls were formed was available to an ancient artisan to use prior to the geologic event that formed the clay balls.

The other professor at Oberlin who examined the image was F. F. Jewett, the chemist. His letter preserved by Wright (1890, p. 448) says:

A careful examination of the Nampa image, and experiments made upon clay taken from the same well, lead me to the conclusion that the image must be of considerable age. I cannot account for the accumulation of the oxide of iron upon the grains of sand, lying between the body of the image and its arms, except by supposing it to have been the result of the slow decomposition of substances containing iron, in its immediate vicinity. Although I have been able to reproduce the color of this oxide tolerably well by heating clay coated with a solution of iron chloride, yet I have not been able to reproduce it by simply heating clay to different degrees of temperature.

Jewett does not provide a detailed account of how he heated the clay "coated with a solution of iron chloride." Did he use a Bunsen burner, as did A. A. Wright? Or, was a more simple mechanism used, one that could have been more easily duplicated in frontier Idaho? And, Jewett makes no mention of A. A. Wright's duplication of the "deeper tints" of redness by using a few drops of hydrochloric acid. The existence of iron oxide on sand grains "lying between the body of the image and its arms" is the sole criteria that leads Jewett "to the conclusion that the image must be of considerable age."

Who Would Profit From a Hoax?

The question of motive or profit enters the picture. The day after the discovery of the image, the general manager of the Union Pacific Railroad chanced to be in Boise City and saw it. As Wright pointed out (1890, p. 448):

There was no sensational publication in the papers, nor has there been any suggestion of mercenary motives. There were no archaeologists or scientific men on the ground to be humbugged. Apparently the image would have disappeared and dropped out of notice but for the fortunate chance which brought it to the attention of Mr. Adams, when his own mind was interested in that class of subjects. The evidence is most direct as to the impossibility of the image's having fallen into the well from the surface, or of its having been put in by design.

It is true that Kurtz, Duffes, and possibly Grumbling were all early and well-known men of the new frontier town of Nampa. As will be seen, they had land in the new town to develop and a little notoriety for the emerging town might be a possible motive for a hoax. Concerning Alexander Duffes, the *History of Idaho*, Volume I (Hawley, 1920, p. 744) records:

The main line of the railroad was built in 1883 as far as Caldwell and a small station was established at Nampa, but the town was not founded until two years later, when Alexander Duffes, passing through on his way to his old home in Canada, saw the possibilities of the place as a location for a town. He obtained 160 acres of Government land near the little railway station and platted part of it in town lots, setting aside a site for a schoolhouse and building the first residence. On November 11, 1885, he and his family moved into their new house, the first to settle in Nampa. Other early settlers and businessmen were: Benjamin Walling, John E. Stearns and B. Grumbling [the engineer at the well site?].

Volume III of *History of Idaho* (Hawley, 1920, pp. 179-180) has a section on Mark A. Kurtz which says, in part:

It was in 1887 that Mr. Kurtz became a resident of Nampa, Idaho, which at that time could boast of a population of but one hundred and fifty, contained a section house and a few other buildings but no churches. Mr. Kurtz purchased a ranch located about three miles north of Nampa and Mrs. Kurtz one on the south side of the railroad tracks, on which a portion of the present city stands....He was keenly interested in everything that had to do with the welfare and progress of Nampa and was largely instrumental in bringing capital into Canyon county for its development and upbuilding. He took a deep interest in the progress of the city and in all that pertained to its welfare....He was a member of the first Chamber of Commerce organized in Nampa.

Some may say that the motive could have been associated with the development of the new frontier town. It certainly put the town on the map of the USA!

But, countering such a thought, all material that we read regarding the character of Duffes and Kurtz spoke against such a theory. The *History of Idaho* (Hawley, 1920, p. 180) also records: "The worth of his [Kurtz's] character was acknowledged by all...." Upon his sudden death by a heart attack on the morning of Tuesday, October 23, 1906, *The Nampa Leader-Herald* (1906) characterized him as follows in a front page obituary: "...religious, and of a high moral character...."

And perhaps most importantly of all, G. F. Wright, after spending a good part of the next summer (1890) in Idaho wrote:

And, first, I would say, that, while upon the ground and in the vicinity, I had repeated interviews with the gentlemen in whose presence the discovery was made, I feel entirely confident that there is no ground to question the fact that this image came up in the sand pump from the depth reported (Wright, 1891, p. 243).

Summary and Conclusions

Unlike the many ancient human artifacts and bone finds in the gold-bearing gravels in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California last century (Gentet, 1991), the Nampa Image was a sole clue to an ancient landscape now buried deeply under the surface. As such, it is more difficult to claim it as excellent evidence of ancient man in North America.

Nevertheless, the evidences for the genuineness of the Nampa Image seem weighty. The condition of the image would present a very sophisticated challenge for someone on the early frontier. And the workings of the sand pump, which was in operation at the discovery of the image, excludes it being introduced during the on-going operation from on top and surviving. Furthermore, while one might envision a motive for a hoax (though the idea of a hoax to promote the new frontier town was never mentioned by any other writer the authors researched), the people involved were always described as citizens of stature in the community and trusted in their words.

There is, however, always the possibility that all is not as it first seems to be. Perhaps we will never know for sure, but this much we do know: had the find come from a geologic horizon where man's artifacts were expected, there would have been far less controversy involved. The current theories of evolution and the stretched out geologic timetable should not hinder acceptance of human artifacts or bones found in stratum where conventional "wisdom" prohibits.

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“Everything in life has to do with your world view. You go to the zoo either to rejoice in the Creator or to find some alternative to Him. Your help for the needy is wrapped either in the arrogance that you are godlike and can figure out every detail, or in the modesty and humility that admits even your kindness might be wrong. Your starting point, and your discoveries along the way, determine how you build and manage both your zoos and your governments— if, indeed, these days you can tell the difference.” Joel Belz in *World* (5/20/95).