Paleo-Indians practiced a highly mobile subsistence strategy with an emphasis on large Pleistocene megafauna. Paleo-Indian social organization consisted of small groups that spread rapidly to inhabit North and South America. Paleo-Indian sites are distinguished by the presence of diagnostic projectile points and associated tools, and the remains of extinct megafauna. Conservative estimates for the Paleo-Indian Period place this earliest North American occupation between 14,000 and 10,000 B.P.

During the Pleistocene, a portion of a large inland lake covered the project area with water (Currey, et al. 1983). This lake, known as Lake Bonneville, covered much of the Eastern Great Basin. This lake was impounded by landforms and large dams of ice. As glacial runoff slowed, the waters of the lake receded gradually. Cataclysmic floods, resulting from fractured or subjected ice dams created catastrophic shoreline changes. The route of the railroad was exposed from the water sometime between 14,500 and 13,500 B.P. The resulting shoreline may have supported humans; however, there is no archaeological evidence for such an early occupation of the Great Basin. People do not appear to have inhabited the region until later in the Paleo-Indian Period, ca. 11,500 B.P., but precise dating of such early occupations is complicated. The geologically active, erosional nature of the Great Basin diminishes the probability that intact, early Paleo-Indian cultural materials could be identified.

The first known Paleo-Indian occupations of the Great Basin are represented by three distinct technological traditions or complexes. These are known as the Western Clovis Complex, the Western Stemmed Complex, and the Folsom Complex (Willig and Aikens 1988:1). Each is identified by the presence of diagnostic tools.

Paleo-Indian sites are rare in the area of the park. However, a brown chert, Alberta-series projectile point fragment was found at site 42BO922 in the park by the Western Archaeological Conference Center in (WACC) 2000. This Terminal Paleo-Indian projectile point dates between 9500-9000 B.P. (Draeger and Ireland 1986:596) (Figure 4.2). The Alberta projectile point is stemmed and the stem measures 17.65 mm wide by 13.53 mm tall. The thickness of the projectile point is 7.45 mm from the base to the break measures 35.61 mm. This point was collected and prepared for curation at GOSP (FS-2000-18) (WACC 2000).

The Clovis complex (11,500 to 11,000 B.P.) is represented by lanceolate form projectile points fluted on both faces to facilitate hafting. Spurred end-scrapers, gravers, perforators, backed blades, and formalized and expedient bone tools are also associated with the Clovis technological assemblage. Clovis sites are limited in Utah to isolated surface finds and several small sites such as Lime Ridge (Davis and Brown 1989), Hell'n Moriah (Davis, et al. 1996), and Site 42MD300 (Copeland and Fike 1988).

The Western Stemmed Complex (11,000 to 8,000 B.P.) is characterized by large stemmed and shouldered lanceolate projectile points associated with crescent knives and heavy core tools. In Utah, Western Stemmed points have been recovered from Danger Cave (Jennings 1957), Hogup Cave (Aikens 1970), and the Sevier Desert Site (Simms and Lindsay 1984). Substantial argument remains whether the Western Stemmed and Clovis complexes are coterminous or represent different time frames and adaptations (Bryan 1988:53; Willig and Aikens 1989).