

Project Report Number 30

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT SITE 45JE16,
INDIAN ISLAND, JEFFERSON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Appendix B (pp. B1-B20)

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS OF 45JE16

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Introduction

Artifacts included under the rubric "historic" need not be those associated with any particular written history. Most often "historic artifacts" refer to those elements of technology associated with the appearance of Europeans and white Americans. Any technological remains credited to Native American manufacture are called "prehistoric." Such a distinction, however, is semantic and may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of archaeological reality. Therefore, the artifacts analyzed in this section include items which may have been manufactured by either Europeans or Native Americans from materials not commonly associated with Native American indigenous resources.

Due to the fragile nature of certain archaeological materials, many of the artifacts were recovered as fragments (e.g., broken bottles). Serious attempts were made to piece together these fragments in order to identify whole units. Oxidation of metallic artifacts also is a problem, particularly in an area where climate is as changeable as in the Northwest. Scaling as a result of rusting rendered several artifacts unrecognizable, hence severely limiting their usefulness in analysis. Due to the relatively small number of historic artifacts recovered from 45JE16, this analysis must be accepted as having limited value in the interpretation of the ethnohistoric process.

intersecting a circle which runs around the button just outside the holes. It is similar to a pearl shirt waist button shown in the 1908 Sears and Roebuck Catalog (Schroeder 1969:1004). This distribution of buttons is shown in Table 1.

Glass Artifacts: Beads

A total of seven glass beads, all blue in color, were recovered during the excavations at 45JE16. Four of the beads are light blue, almost aqua in color. They average 6 mm in diameter and are somewhat elliptical in cross section. The center hole is about 2 mm in diameter. This could be the type of trade bead described by Strong (1959:226) as popular on the Columbia River, the "China" bead (Appendix A, Plate 21b).

The remaining three beads are translucent blue faceted beads averaging 7 mm in diameter (Appendix A, Plate 21c). The faceting is irregular, and the ends of the beads are rough indicating they were broken from a tube (Strong 1959:227). The length of the beads is 7 mm, 10 mm, and 8 mm. The holes are large and surrounded by a concentric layer of light blue. The 8 mm bead has a hole 4 mm in diameter and the facets appear to have been cut rather than made with a spatula. The other two beads have 3 mm diameter holes, and the 7 mm long bead is quite worn with the edges of the facets being rounded. Strong dates such items from 1830 to 1870 along the Columbia River (1959:227) and suggests trading vessels as the source of supply (1959:225). The unit distribution of beads is shown in Table 1.

Ceramic Artifacts: Earthenware

The unit distribution of earthenware items recovered from 45JE16 is shown in Table 1. Wherever possible, fragments were pieced together in order to reconstruct the original artifact.

A few other miscellaneous metal artifacts were recovered during excavations, but are either too incomplete or too rusted to permit identification. In addition, a few unidentifiable items of copper also were found.

Concluding Comments

When describing historic artifacts from any archaeological site, it must be remembered that any manufacturing dates which can be established are not necessarily the date at which the artifacts were deposited at the site. What a date of manufacture can provide, however, is the earliest date any artifact could have been deposited as, of course, something could not have been in use before it was made.

Excavations at 45JE16 resulted in the recovery of some thirteen hundred artifacts which have been classified as historic (Tables 3 and 4). As pointed out in the preceding analyses, 63% are non-metal in composition and 37% are metal artifacts. (The majority of the artifacts were recovered in the upper 20 cm, some in the next 20 cm level, and a few to a depth of 60 cm from the surface). A distribution of the artifact categories described herein according to depth revealed little change.

A range of manufacturing dates, some only estimates, provides one with the span of years between the 1830's and the present. The majority of the dates seem to cluster about the late 1800's, and again just after the turn of the century. These date ranges should be used with caution. The only concrete dates obtained from the artifacts are 1840 (from the dime) and 1910 (from the military plaque).

A few of the artifacts probably were trade items. The majority were of European/American manufacture and could represent the increasing numbers of settlers moving into the area beginning in the 1840's.