

Casemates and Cannonballs

Archeological Investigations at Fort Stanwix, Rome, New York

by

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Figure 52. a, brass eyelet from the sally port, Level II; b, copper bracelet with engraved figures from the sally port, Level II; c-d, lead pendants from the north casemate, Level II and the west barracks, Level II; e, silver pendant from the sally port, Level III; f, stone pendant from the southwest bombproof, Level II; g, brass tinkling cones from the sally port, Level II and the west casemate, Level II; h, silver plated brass earring from Feature 52, Level IV; i, lead net sinker from the northeast bombproof, Level I; j, Type 2 beads from Feature 69, Level III; k, Type 3a bead from the bridge area, Level XI; l, Type 4b bead from the north casemate, Level I; m, Type 5a bead from the guardhouse area, Level II.

Beads

A total of 318 beads were recovered from the site (table 18). Only three, one bone, one ceramic and one plastic, were not manufactured from glass. Fourteen of the beads were definitely from post-1781 contexts, and another 15 were types manufactured over the past 200 years and were found in questionable context. These are not described below. The bead inventory was unvaried compared to those of historic period Indian habitation sites in this area. The beads exhibited only one surface color and were rather drab and monotonous. The beads were of types that had a long time range so they were of no use in separating the British from the American occupations of the fort.

Type 1. Simple, drawn, doughnut bead. This was the most abundant type found. They range in diameter from 2.0 to 4.0 mm. and have been called embroidery beads, versus seed beads that measure under 2.0 mm. in diameter (Hsu, 1969, p. 41). These are equivalent to Stone's seed beads, Class I, Series A, Type I (L. Stone, 1970, p. 350).

Variety a. Opaque white. These have a diameter of 2.0 to 4.0 mm. with 90 percent between 3.0 and 3.5 mm. The exterior is smooth and has a luster.

Variety b. Opaque turquoise. These have a diameter of 3.0 to 4.0 mm. with 90 percent between 3.0 and 3.5 mm. A majority of the turquoise beads have eroded or pitted exterior surfaces.

Variety c. Opaque grey-blue. One bead of this variety is 3.5 mm. in diameter. It has a smooth exterior surface.

Variety d. Translucent turquoise. These have a diameter of 3.0 to 4.0 mm. with 90 percent between 3.0 and 3.5 mm. The exterior surface is pitted and eroded.

Type 2. Compound, drawn, doughnut bead. This is identical to Type 1 except for the number of constituent parts (fig. 52j). The beads are white over white but the inside layer of glass does not have the same luster as the outer layer. These are equivalent to Stone's seed beads Class I, Series B, Type I (L. Stone, 1970, p. 353).

Type 3. Compound, drawn, tube bead.

Variety a. Clear over opaque white (fig. 52k).

These have a diameter of 9.0 to 11.0 mm. and a length of 6.0 to 9.0 mm. A transparent glass layer over an opaque white glass gave this type a pearl-like appearance. This is equivalent to Stone's necklace bead Class I, Series B, Type III (L. Stone 1970, p. 307).

Variety b. Opaque red over translucent green (Cornaline d'Aleppo). This has a diameter of 3.5 mm. and a length of 16.0 mm. This was recovered during the excavations of 1965, but no provenience data was given for it. It was cut from a longer tube and the ends have been fire polished. This is equivalent to Stone's seed bead Class I, Series B, Type III (L. Stone, 1970, p. 354).

Type 4. Simple, drawn tube bead. These are equivalent to Stone's necklace bead, Class I, Series A, Type VI (L. Stone, 1970, p. 301).

Variety a. Blue, translucent. These are 2.5 to 3.0 mm. long and 4.0 to 5.0 mm. in diameter. They were cut from longer tubes and heat tumbled to smooth the broken edges.

Variety b. Black, opaque (fig. 52l). This has a diameter of 5.9 mm. and is 22 mm. long. This section was snapped off a longer tube and the ends are jagged and irregular.

Type 5. Simple, mandrel wound bead. These are equivalent to Stone's necklace beads, Class II, Series A, Type VIII, Variety A (L. Stone, 1970, p. 325).

Variety a. This has a diameter of 10.5 mm. and a length of 10.0 mm. The molten glass strand from which this bead was constructed was very thick, so the contact lines are quite distinct (fig. 52m).

Variety b. Clear, painted. This has a diameter of 7.5 mm. The exterior surface was painted to imitate a pearl. The beads found at Fort Ligonier were essentially the same as at Fort Stanwix (Grimm, 1970, pp. 49-50), except for a few wound beads at Fort Ligonier that were different colors. Neither fort had complex, multi-colored beads. It seems rather unusual that more beads and bead types were not found at Fort Stanwix considering the trade activities in and around the fort. There were accounts of Indian scouts, messengers and families staying for various spans of time. In 1775, it was reported that:

... the people who live on the ground are one John Roof, Thomas Mayers, William Cloyne, Bartholemew Brodhock—John Steers and Stephanus Delyrod a Frenchman—who trades there for Major Fonda—the fort is all in ruins and the barracks by an accident last fall was burnt to the ground, nothing now remains but a room which the officers used to mess in, now occupied by the Frenchman mentioned above . . . (Duncan, 1969).

During the siege, Col. Willet stripped the Indian camps of bag and baggage, and in 1779

troops passed through the fort before and after destroying the Indian villages to the southwest. Two major treaty signings and many minor meetings were held with the Indians, and Indians are known to have visited the fort many times. Despite this, trade items, in general, were not found. See also: Buckles, Type 10; Bracelet; Ring; Pendants, Type 3; and Tinkling Cones.

Tools

Many tools were used to erect fortified positions; the most common were picks, shovels, spades, axes and billhooks. Picks, shovels and spades were needed to dig ditches and form earthworks. Axes and billhooks were used to clear trails and to cut wood and brush for revetting the earthworks.

In 1776, General Philip Schuyler requested intrenching tools for his various field commands, but was told that there were very few and that he should buy and borrow suitable tools from local inhabitants (Geo. Washington to Schuyler 6/13/76, Washington Papers, 1932). In December 1776, he ordered Henry Glen to:

Apply to Mr. Rensselaer for what iron he may have in store, and employ the blacksmiths at Schenectady and in its vicinity, in making axes, spades, shovels and pick-axes, for which they will be allowed the same price as those at Albany. The iron for the shovels, and the steel for the axes, is not yet arrived. You will desire Mr. Rensselaer to forward you as much of each as will suffice for 1600 each . . . (Schuyler, 1880, p. 49).

Capt. De La Marquese, the French engineer at Fort Stanwix, reported making helms for axes, pickaxes and spades and other implements shortly after he arrived in 1777, but he did not inventory the number of tools. When the English troops retreated from Fort Stanwix on August 23, 1777, leaving behind much of their equipment, the American troops listed 100 picks, 50 billhooks, 80 falling (sic.) axes and 106 spades as part of the captured stores (Scott, 1927, facing p. 289). An inventory of engineer's stores taken on July 1, 1778, listed 238 picks, 90 billhooks, 170 axes and 150 spades (Clinton, 1900, #1554).

Spades and Shovels

Four types of spades and one type of shovel

were found at the fort. The spades were rectangular with flat edges and flanged at the top for pushing with the foot. The shovels had slightly curved blades with pointed tips and no flanges. Our spades did not fit well into Peterson's typology (Peterson, 1968, pp. 181-182).

Type 1. Rectangular with straight sides and square corners (fig. 53b). The socket for the handle attachment is primarily above the blade so that only an inch or less of the bottom of the handle rests against the back of the blade. A rivet through the socket and the wood handle kept the handle from slipping or turning. The top $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the blade is bent forward to form the flange. The thickness of the blade is approximately $\frac{5}{32}$ inch at the top and gradually tapers down to $\frac{3}{32}$ inch at the bottom. The two spades of this type were found in the fill of the ditch (Levels XI, XIII) near the bridge area. One is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 8 inches long and the other measures 6 inches wide and $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. The sockets of both are broken.

Type 2. Rectangular with slightly tapering sides and square corners (fig. 53c). The socket for the handle is more a part of the blade, rather than added on at the top. Approximately 3 inches of the handle rested against the back of the blade. A rivet kept the handle in place. The thickness and the flange are the same as Type 1. Two specimens of this type were found; one in Feature 57 (Level IV) in the west barracks measures $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the top, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the bottom and $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches long and the other, from Feature 69 (Level II) in the east barracks, was 7 inches wide at the top, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches at the bottom and $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

Type 3. Metal spade with a wood core (fig. 53a). A wooden paddle and handle were carved from one piece of wood, fitting inside the blade of the metal spade. The back of the blade is one piece of metal and another piece of metal is welded on beginning about halfway up the front. The top of the front piece was bent backward and the back piece forward over the top of the wood paddle to form the top of the spade. Each part of the blade has a 4-inch shank at the top to secure the handle with rivets plus two or more rivets through the blade and paddle. Four specimens were found, one near the bridge (Level XIII), one in the sally port (Level II) and two in the middle of the southwest casemate (Levels I, II). They are quite uniform in size, measuring 6 to