

1975

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THE EGLI AND LORD SITES:
 THE HISTORIC COMPONENT- "UNADILLA" 1753-1778

Franklin J. Hesse

Upper Susquehanna Chapter

Preface

In the late 1950's, the author investigated a trench which was being dug for a water main on the Henry Egli property in Sidney, New York. At that time, a few kaolin pipe fragments, brass sherds and flint chips were observed in the upper portion of the trench. In 1968, the river bank (near where the water main trench had been dug) was inspected. At this time, several flint chips, some fire-cracked rock, and what appeared to be a possible midden were observed on the surface. With the permission of the landowner, testing of this area was begun. A trench paralleling the river bank was established to determine whether evidence of subsurface occupation existed.

Shortly after this work was completed, Howard Chamberlain (member, Upper Susquehanna Chapter) informed the author that topsoil was being removed from Mr. Egli's meadow adjacent to the river bank. Investigation revealed several features, which were then excavated in an effort to salvage them before the bulldozers destroyed them completely.

Before this work was finished, Mr. Norm Davies, a local contractor working for Mr. Egli, informed the author that a building was going to be erected on this site. Mr. Egli granted permission again for excavation on his property, in the area of the proposed building. Four days were spent salvaging this area.

In July, 1970, testing was begun on the Lord Site (directly across the river from the Egli Site) by the Upper Susquehanna Chapter, NYSAA. Permission to do this work was granted by chapter member Ms. Mary Kirby Lord (owner). In April of 1971, a short distance from these test trenches, salvage work was conducted on another part of the Lord Site where construction was underway for a new sewage treatment plant for the village of Sidney.

Introduction

In 1968, 1970, and 1971 archaeological excavations (primarily salvage) were conducted on the Egli Site and on the Lord Site. They are located in the township of Unadilla, Otsego County, New York, three quarters of a mile above the original confluence of the Unadilla and Susquehanna Rivers and on the north bank of the Susquehanna, 1000 ft. above sea level. (see map, Fig. 1). The Lord Site is on the south bank of the Susquehanna, directly opposite the Egli Site. This site is in the village of Sidney, New York, Delaware County (see map, Fig. 1).

Both the Lord and Egli Sites are multi-component sites. The most recent component is an 18th Revolutionary period Indian settlement; the remaining components are prehistoric (most notably the Late Woodland Owasco, with some evidence of Middle Woodland, Early Woodland, and Archaic). This report deals with the historic component, the Indian village of Unadilla. The prehistoric components will be considered in a separate report.

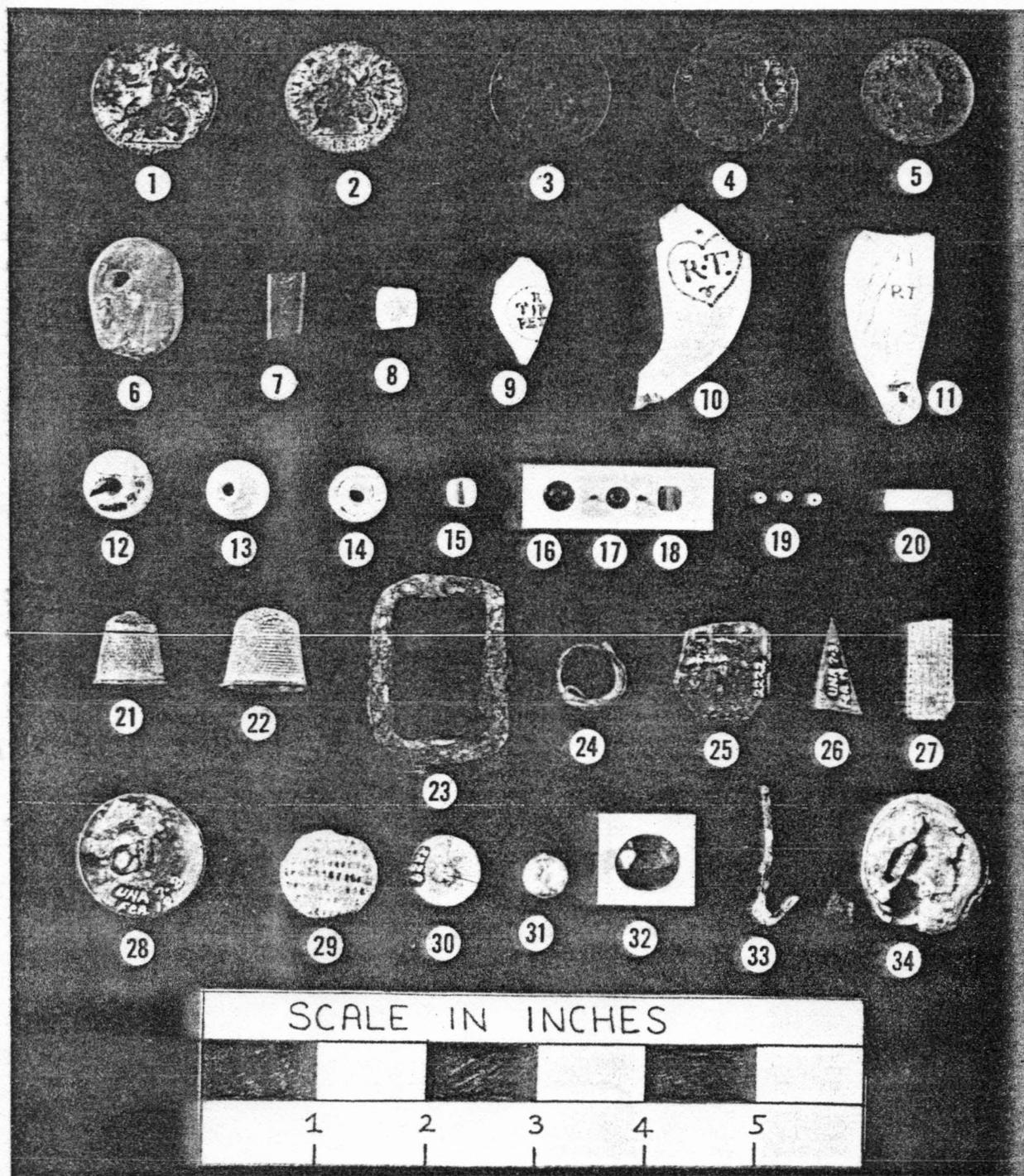


PLATE 3. Artifacts from the Egli and Lord Sites. Figs. 1-3, 5, British coppers: 1, George II, 1732; 2, George II, 1747; 3, George III, 1775; 5, date illegible; Fig. 4, copper AUCTORI CONNEC: obverse, INDE:+ +ET-LIB: date illegible; 6, red slate pendant; 7, catlinite bead fragment; 8, shell bead; 9-11, R Tippet Kaolin pipe bowl fragments; 12-14, opalescent beads; 15, red on blue on white ground glass bead; 16, 17, red translucent beads; 18, *faceted blue bead; 19, white seed beads; 20, white tube bead; 21, 22, perforated brass thimbles; 23, iron buckle; 24 brass spiral; 25, cut and punched brass; 26, brass projectile point; 27, embossed pewter strip; 28, brass button; 29, 30, pewter buttons; 31, faceted clear glass button; 32, opaque black glass button; 33, iron fish hook; 34, brass bell with clapper. Egli: 1-4, 6-10, 14-19, 24-31, 33. Lord: 5, 11-13, 20-23, 32.

* cornerless hexagonal (?)

In addition to the coins, liquor bottle fragments, nails, TIPPET pipes, axes, and buttons, a number of other important artifacts reflecting the period should be mentioned. From both sites, ceramic types including salt-glazed ware, creamware (both decorated and undecorated), slipware, redware, combware, yellowware, stoneware, and porcelain were recovered. (See Pl. 5, Figs. 1-16) Glass beads of the opalescent, red oval, blue faceted, red and blue stripes on white ground, and white seed types, as well as a rectangular shell bead, and an elongated rectangular catlinite bead fragment were found. (See Pl. 3, Figs. 7, 8, 12-20) Finds were: straight tined forks with decorated bone handles; a bone handled pistol grip knife; a brass ring; bone handled pocket knives; a decorated brass bracelet fragment; jews harps; (See Pl. 6, Figs. 1-5, 13, 10, 8, 9). copper silk pins (Pl. 6, Fig. 14); a copper pot lid (Pl. 7, Fig. 3); blown glass stemware fragments (Pl. 1, Figs. 3, 4.); gun flints; musket balls (Pl. 4, Figs. 1-6, 11, 12); a wrought iron chain (Pl. 2, Fig. 1); iron kettle fragments (Pl. 7, Figs. 1, 2); an iron file and awls (Pl. 2, Figs. 6, 8, 15); a buckle; and perforated brass thimbles (Pl. 3, Figs. 21-23). Of interest was the discovery of a ruptured gun barrel, found in feature 19 on the Egli Site. Approximately 8 in. from the muzzle is a ripped out aperture which appears to be the result of an explosion. A pistol barrel was found at the Lord Site, as well as a trigger (Pl. 4, Figs. 7, 8).

In the lower meadow area west of the Egli Site and near the river, a small hearth was located which contained carbonized wood embers interspersed with many small droplets of lead. In a more reddened area within this hearth lay a "puddle" of solidified lead (Pl. 4, Fig. 13). The casting of lead shot was apparently carried out here, and the loss of molten lead during the casting process is apparent. Pewter may have been melted to provide for shot; a pewter plate fragment (Pl. 4, Fig. 18) mentioned previously, exhibits a very ragged edge where it was torn, possibly to render the plate a more manageable size for the melting pot. Lead sprues also attest to casting of shot, as a few of these were also recovered (Pl. 4, Figs. 14, 15).

Several artifacts reflect native manufacture. Artifacts made from iron and brass include: a fishhook (Pl. 3, Fig. 33); a conical, barbed harpoon (Pl. 6, Fig. 6); a punched ornament (Pl. 3, Fig. 25); a conical and crimped jangle (Pl. 6, Figs. 15, 16); and a projectile point (Pl. 3, Fig. 26). Two glass liquor bottle fragments and a window pane fragment, their edges exhibiting unifacial chipping, were utilized as side and end scrapers (Pl. 1, Figs. 7-9). Native-made artifacts from stone were a small, red slate pendant (Pl. 3, Fig. 6) and a small, blueish colored fish effigy (Pl. 6, Fig. 12). This effigy is partially ground to conform to the general shape of a fish and is incised on both sides forming eyes, tail and pectoral fins.

A second effigy found several years ago at the Lord Site by Mrs. Grace Cook, then a resident of the present village of Unadilla, is in the form of a turtle and is made of lead (Pl. 6, Fig. 11).

FEATURES: At the Egli Site (within area III) ten historic features were defined. (See map, Fig. 2) Features 74, 65, and 21 were straight walled and flat bottomed and may have been used as storage pits. Features 5, 11, 19, 61, 66, 70, and 71 were refuse and cooking pits, round to oval in outline and basin shaped in cross section. Features 17, 19, and 21 contained the preponderance of historic artifacts recovered in situ and seemed to represent an important area of activity.

REFUSE BONE REMAINS: Only when refuse bone remains were found in situ in features defined as historic were they considered as representative of the historic component. This greatly reduced the quantity of refuse bone and results in a rather restricted representation of fauna used for subsistence. 458 refuse bone remains were collected indicating the consumption of terrestrial fauna, mainly deer and smaller mammals such as woodchuck and beaver; and from the historic accounts, hogs and cows may be added (Halsey, 1901:143). A few bird bones were found in addition to evidence of aquatic fauna such as fish, turtle, and river mussel.

Certain flora were used as attested to by the presence of carbonized butternuts and hazel nut fragments. Historic accounts provide information as to the growing of corn (Halsey, 1901: 143).

Subsistence of the historic aborigines at Unadilla was based upon such activities as hunting, fishing, food collecting, and gardening. Undoubtedly some food was obtained through contact with the English as well. It is hoped that a more complete and detailed account of the faunal remains will be forthcoming, after an analysis is done on the total refuse bone remains.