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The Excavation and Investigation of Fort Lookout Trading Post II
(39LM57) in the Fort Randall Reservoir, South Dakota
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SITE DATES: 1820-1850

cabins with earthen floors. Windows were either few and very small or totally absent. Doors were crude plank affairs hung on heavy hinges. The roofs were low and flat and were covered with earth and sod. All in all, they probably were dark and dingy but served exceedingly well the purpose for which they were built. Under such conditions luxury items were no doubt scarce and evidence for them is largely wanting. Most of the articles obtained represent commonplace objects which were used about the post or were for trade purposes. By 1830 trade items had become more or less stabilized in character and are not as sensitive indicators of the source of origin or period involved as formerly. However, they still have some significance.

Evidences of food which remained in the fill of the fire basins and numerous pits were the charred fragments of rabbit, bird, and an occasional fishbone, also charred beans, corn, and pits of wild plum and chokecherries. Noted for their absence were the remains of buffalo bones. Whether the occupants traded for Indian-made pemmican or just carried large pieces of buffalo meat back to the post for immediate consumption is a question archeology cannot answer.

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

At the beginning of operations in 1950, Mr. Garth went over the entire surface of the site, carefully picking up all artifacts which were present. They included objects of iron, particles of glassware, fragments of chinaware, stone artifacts, slivers of bone, a few Indian potsherds, and the remains of an old leather shoe sole. Whether this assemblage of artifacts can be assigned to periods of occupation represented by buried material is questionable. In the series, such objects as axheads, iron-kettle fragments, butter-churn particles, etc., are not of sufficiently distinctive character to be differentiated from similar objects in use at the present time. A few of the items may be old, but most of these artifacts probably were never in the possession of the occupants of the two levels uncovered. Only the artifacts that were found in actual association with the two levels will be considered from the standpoint of historical significance.

TRADE BEADS

Various types of glass trade beads were scattered on the floor, inside various pits beneath the floor, or in the fill above the floor of the upper historic levels. Some workers contend that beads are variable enough in form and style to be identifiable according to period and also reflect their place of manufacture, but those found here do not help in that respect. None was ornate, such as the multicolored "Hudson Bay bead," sometimes called the "star bead," and most complex forms consist only of faceted or simple bicolored types.

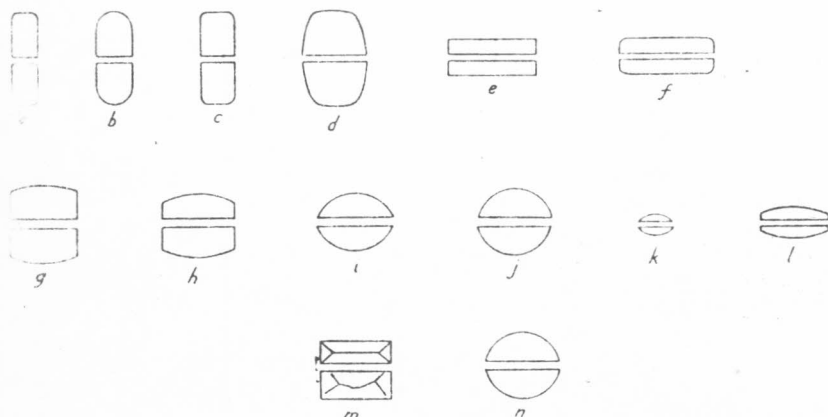


FIGURE 6.—Bead types according to shapes, showing cross sections of each.

Six hundred and fifty-nine beads of the various types make up the collection. For study purposes they were first separated into groups depending upon color alone. It was found that there were 49 green, 422 white, 128 blue, 11 red, 19 pink, 22 black, and 8 with a white core and a red outer coat. Next, they were separated according to shape within each color group and it was found that 14 different shapes were present (fig. 6). Sizing came next, and out of the total there were 225 of the "seed" form, those that did not exceed 2 mm. in diameter. Most of the colors present in the larger types were displayed by the seed beads with the exception of the black.

All seed beads were either type *a* or *b* (fig. 6) with the exception of a single specimen that was made from a square glass cane, the corners of which were slightly ground off, leaving rounded rectangular surfaces on the sides (fig. 7).

One interesting group, represented by 14 specimens, were the faceted beads. They ranged in height from 2.5 mm. to 10.0 mm. with corresponding diameters. Most of them were cut from a hexagonal cane and the facets appear to have been made by rubbing each small section against some abrasive object, thus creating a number of irregular facets over either the entire surface or a part of the surface. Two spheroid faceted beads are in the lot. They are crude and show the same irregularities in shaping that are displayed by the cylindrical specimens.

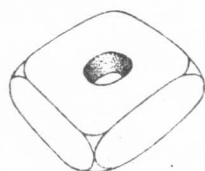


FIGURE 7.—Unusual square-cut glass trade bead.

The central perforations vary from 2 mm. to 3.5 mm. A number of these beads display some iridescence, especially the blue and black varieties, which may have resulted from lying in contact with potash derived from the wood ashes in the site.

In the white variety there is a wide range both in shape and size, while the color itself was not standardized and shows a range from a dead white through a mild greenish hue that shades off into a very light gray. According to the accompanying chart (fig. 6) all the white beads conform to types *a* to *i* and *l* with the greatest stress being placed on those from *a* through *e*. Types *a* through *f* were originally parts of slender glass tubes or canes which were segmented into individual beads and then fire treated to round and smooth off the rough edges resulting from the cutting of the tubes.

Glass beads were assigned definite trade values by the trader or fur company dealing with a particular group or tribe. This "value" fluctuated from locality to locality and from trader to trader. The Hudson's Bay Company, for instance, established a standard value which was "one made beaver" or the equivalent of 50 cents. The term "made beaver" was applied to a skin that had been processed ready for shipment to a tannery through the trader. When an Indian wanted to purchase a certain article in the trader's store he was told how many made beaver skins it would cost him. Two beads known to manufacturers as "Cornaline d'Aleppo" and to the traders of the North as "Hudson's Bay beads" had an exchange value of six beads for one made beaver. A transparent green bead and one of opaque yellow glass were of the same value. A light-blue bead had a value of three for a skin, and three other varieties two for a skin. A large bead of pale-blue opaque glass was the most expensive in the group, as a trader exacted two skins for it. The smaller beads known as seed beads were sold in "bunches" of five or six strings, each 4 to 6 inches long, according to the size and kind of beads, and having a weight of four or five bunches to the pound. The value of one bunch of seed beads at Fort McPherson was said to be one beaver. The value of beads outside of the fur trade of the North was not so definitely established (Orchard, 1929, pp. 88-89).

One thing certain is that all these types were in use during the period between 1820 and 1850, and that some of them are still being sold either on Indian reservations or in nearby towns where Indians make and sell beadwork to tourists and various shops.

TRADE PIPES

A fair collection of clay-pipe fragments was recovered from the floor of the upper historic level and in the fill above the floor. Forty-eight stem fragments and nine fragmentary bowls, some with portions of the