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# BÉNARD DE LA HARPE AND THE NASSONITE POST

M.P. MIROIR, R. KING HARRIS, JAY C. BLAINE AND JANSON MCVAY  
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF DONALD C. BOOK, FLOYD CIGAINERO,  
ROGER MCVAY, JOE B. RAFFAELLI, JR. AND PAUL E. SCHOEN

## Abstract

Data are presented on an Historic Period site (41 BW 5) in northeast Texas near Texarkana which suggests that it may be the site of the Nassonite Post established by the French trader, Bénard de la Harpe in 1719.

## INTRODUCTION

During the past 15 years, a group of nine amateur archeologists has been collecting artifacts, doing limited testing and researching documentary sources relevant to an Historic site located near Texarkana, Bowie County, Texas. Information gathered as a result of these efforts is in the possession of R. King Harris. Artifacts are dispersed among the authors. Because of the mutual effort on the part of all the participants in the recovery of the data from the site, all are listed as authors. The main burden of the writing, however, fell to Miroir, Harris, Blaine and McVay. Before the project was completed, Miroir and Janson McVay both died. Since their contributions were many, they are retained among the senior authors. The section on gun parts, gun flints, ball and shot was written by Jay C. Blaine.

## THE ROSEBROUGH LAKE SITE

The Rosebrough Lake Site (41 BW 5) has had several names applied to it — both popularly and in print. Among other names which have been applied are the Rochelle Place, Pearson Site and Fort St. Louis. Because the name Rosebrough Lake has appeared in published form a number of times, it is retained here.

The site is located on a natural levee which rises about 3 feet above the flood plain of the Red River (Figs. 1,2). Until the dam forming Lake Texoma was built several years ago, the site was subject to periodic flooding. The last flood known to have affected the site occurred in 1936. The site has undergone some sheet erosion. Generally, it is associated with a sandy silt matrix.

The site is herein separated into two contiguous areas, A and B, a division based on differences in the kinds of artifacts recovered and

wooden handle is of a type also present from the Spanish Fort sites (Bell et al. 1967) and the Gilbert Site (Jelks 1967). They appear to be made from the flattened thin parts of gun barrels and lock plates from guns or any other available piece of flat iron.

### Bells

Total: 2

A small fragment of a brass sleigh bell is decorated with a floral decoration. The provenience of the specimen which is too fragmentary to determine size is from Feature 1.

A small fragment of a hawk bell was found on the general surface.

### Strike-a-lights

Total: 5

A complete strike-a-light (Fig. 8L) is oval and somewhat like a flattened chain link in appearance. It measures 68 mm. long by 31 mm. wide and about 3 mm. in thickness. Fragments of the same type of strike-a-light have been recovered from the Spanish Fort sites (Bell et al. 1967). A complete specimen of this type was found in Grave 17 in the Old Birch Island Cemetery on Georgian Bay, Ontario (Greenman 1951: Plate XIX,D). Items found at Old Birch Island appear to be the result of French trade. The additional fragments of this same type of strike-a-light were found on the general surface of the site.

An iron ring (Fig. 8M) recovered from Feature 1 may have been used as a strike-a-light as a similar item identified as a round strike-a-light was associated with Grave 18 at Old Birch Island Cemetery (Greenman 1951: Plate XIX, A).

### Briefcase Lock

Total: 1

Part of a brass or bronze briefcase lock (Fig. 8P) from Feature 1 is of a type made in France near the end of the 18th Century (Allemagne 1967: Plate 61).

### Kettle Fragments

Total: 6

One fragment of a rim of an iron kettle was found in Feature 6. It is from a round, shallow kettle with three legs. In its rusted condition, the thickness of the kettle wall is 4 mm. Three other fragments of this type are among the inventory from the site.

A fragment of the rolled rim of a kettle is made of 22 gauge brass. It is from the general surface.

The fragment of a brass kettle rim (Found on the general surface) has two hand-wrought rivets in place. The kettle fragment is 22 gauge.

A small piece of 26 gauge decorated brass was associated with Feature 1. The design was made by pressing two straight ribs in the sheet brass.

### Metal Scrap

Total: 118

These fragments, all from Area A, are considered to be the scrap cut away and residue of metal discarded in the process of making various artifacts. They can be broken down as follows:

Iron: 68 fragments

Brass: 44 fragments of six gauges

gauge	no.
25	15
22	8
19	18
17	1
16	1
15	1

Lead: 5 fragments of 20 gauge

The gauge of the iron scrap was not determined because of the extremely rusty condition of the items. The brass scrap of all gauges appears to represent kettle brass. The lead scrap probably is the result of making patches to cushion flints in the vise jaws of guns. Although the sample is small, the inhabitants of the site appear to be obtaining sheet lead of one thickness (20 gauge) for this purpose.

### Glass and Shell Trade Beads

The use of European trade beads (i.e. glass and shell beads of non-Indian origin) as time markers has been under study for a number of years. A description of the manufacture of these items and their occurrence in Texas and Oklahoma sites relevant to this study can be found in Harris and Harris 1967. The relative positions and utility of these items as time markers is based at present on inter-site comparisons and documentary correlation (Harris and Harris 1967:156-158). The bead types as expressed here result from this study.

In the following descriptions, a standard color chart (Bustanoby 1947:28-29, Plate 8) has been used to indicate the hues of the beads. It should be noted that bead surfaces are frequently altered by age and weathering and it is sometimes difficult to determine the original color. However, the color can often be restored by immersing the beads in a weak solution of muriatic acid for about two hours and then washing in water. It is surprising how many beads that would have otherwise been classified as "dirty white" turn out to be red, green, yellow, or blue when cleaned.

General terms are used to describe the bead shapes: barrel-shaped, donut-shaped, round, and tube-shaped (bugle). Some of the larger (necklace) beads are described as being olive-shaped. This term was taken from an early 18th century document (Thwaites 1959:143) and was apparently widely used by the French to describe certain of the trade beads.

There is documentary evidence that Indians used the larger beads mainly for necklaces and the small and medium-sized ones principally on skins, garters, and the like. The large beads will here be referred to as necklace beads, the medium and small ones as garter beads. The beads were sorted into size groups as follows:

0-2 mm. — extra small

(The measurements are for bead

2-4 mm. — small

diameter measured perpendicular

4-6 mm. — medium

to the hole axis. Length

over 6 mm. — large

is disregarded in this

classification.)

At the end of each type description, it will be indicated whether the bead is tumbled (ends smoothed by placing in hot drum with sand and ashes), untumbled (with ends left sharp) and/or twisted (while the hot canes were being stretched lengthwise). The

abbreviations T, UT, and TW will be used to indicate these respective manufacturing processes.

The glass beads are classified into three categories on the basis of structure: simple, compound and complex.

Simple beads are those composed of a monolithic, structurally undifferentiated mass of glass. Both hollow-cane and mandrel-wound forms are common. Mandrel-wound beads were made by winding a hot thread of glass around a wire or mandrel.

Compound beads are those consisting of two or more layers of glass. These are normally hollow-cane beads.

Complex beads are those having decorative designs made of tiny glass elements that are pressed into the bead.

Examples of some of these types are shown in Figure 9. An asterisk (\*) next to a number indicates that it is illustrated.

### Glass Bead Types

**No. 1.\*** Large, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 10 specimens.

**No. 2.\*** Large, white, opaque, elongated, olive-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 8 specimens.

**No. 3.\*** Large, white, opaque, round necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 5 specimens.

**No. 4.\*** Large, white, opaque, barrel-shaped garter bead, of compound construction. The inner layer of glass has a porcelain-like texture, while the outer layer is clear glass but has a slightly frosted appearance, probably due to age. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 5.\*** Medium, white, opaque, barrel-shaped garter bead, of compound construction. The inner layer of glass has a porcelain-like texture, while the outer layer is clear glass but has a slightly frosted appearance, probably due to age. T. 94 specimens.

**No. 6\*** Medium, white, opaque, olive-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 8.\*** Large, light grayish-white, semi-translucent, donut-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass has a frosted-like appearance similar to No. 7. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 9.\*** Large, Peacock Blue, opaque, elongated, olive-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass has fine lines running lengthwise with the bead, giving it a texture reminiscent of stripped sugarcane. T. 11 specimens.

**No. 10.\*** Large, Peacock Blue, opaque, barrel-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass has fine lines running lengthwise with the bead, giving it a texture reminiscent of stripped sugarcane. T. 44 specimens.

**No. 11.\*** Medium, Peacock Blue, opaque, barrel-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass has fine lines running lengthwise with the bead, giving it a texture reminiscent of stripped sugar cane. T. 40 specimens.

**No. 12.\*** Large, Turquoise Blue, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 13.\*** Large, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, olive-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is often cane-like in appearance. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 14.\*** Medium, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, olive-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 15.\*** Medium, Gobelin Blue, opaque, barrel-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 8 specimens.

**No. 20.\*** Large, white, opaque, elongated, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with four dark blue stripes which are evenly

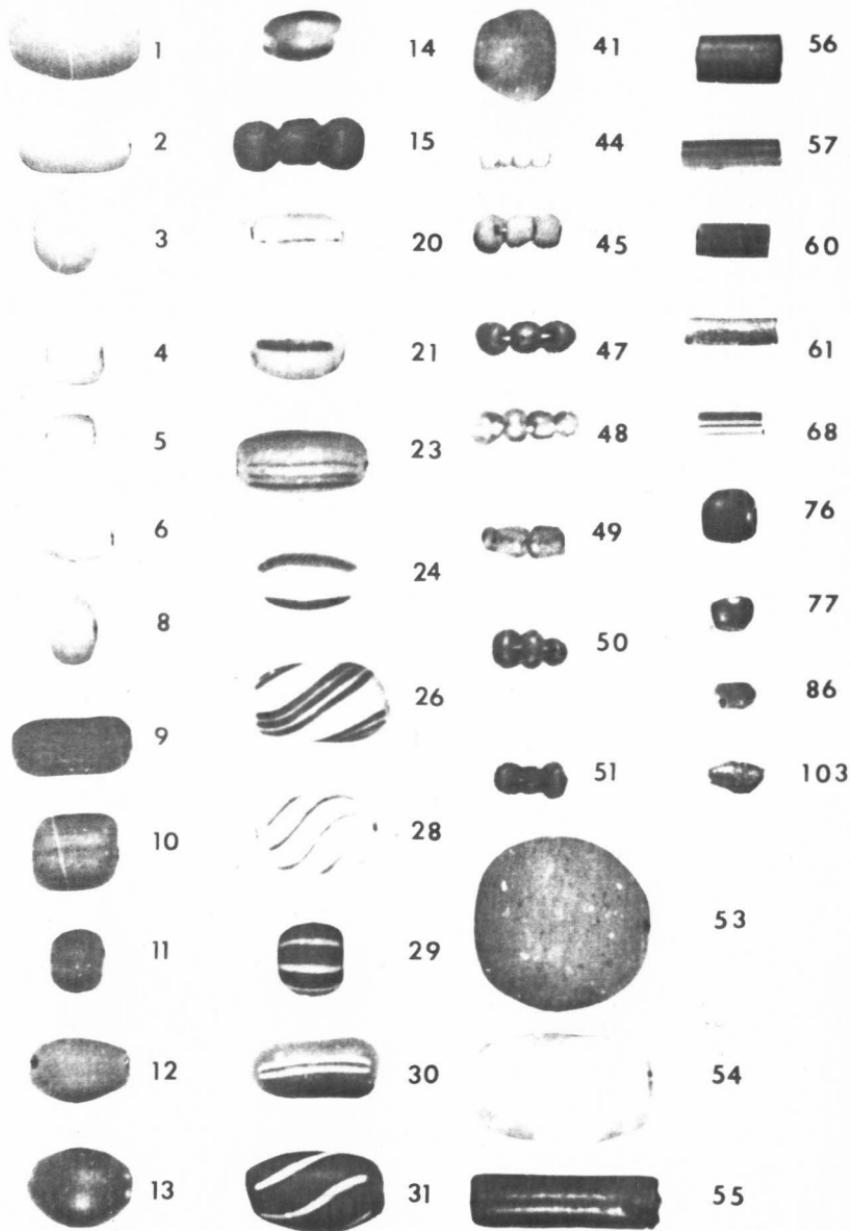


FIGURE 9. Glass Trade Beads. Sample of trade beads from Site 41 BW 5.

spaced and parallel the long axis. The white glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 21.\*** Large, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with three blue stripes which are evenly spaced and parallel to the long axis. The white glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 23.\*** Large, bluish-white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with three longitudinal sets of three blue stripes spaced evenly around the bead. The bluish-white glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 24.\*** Large, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. Extending longitudinally across the surface of the bead are three sets of stripes, each of which is composed of two red stripes, and between these, a blue stripe. The white glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 26.\*** Large, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with three sets of three blue stripes which are twisted in an S-shape around the bead. The white glass is porcelain-like in texture. The inner layer of glass is bluish-white. TW. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 28.\*** Large, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with six rather evenly distributed red stripes which are twisted around the bead in an S-shape. The white glass is porcelain-like in texture. TW. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 29.\*** Large, Emerald Green, translucent, barrel-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The bead surface is covered with eight white stripes, rather evenly spaced and parallel to the long axis. T. 4 specimens.

**No. 30.\*** Large, Brittany Blue, opaque, elongated, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The surface of the bead is covered with three evenly spaced sets of stripes, each of which is composed of two white stripes, and between these, a red stripe. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 31.\*** Large, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, olive-shaped necklace bead of complex construction. The surface of the bead is covered with five white stripes twisted S-like around the bead. TW. 1 specimen.

**No. 41.\*** Large, milk-glass, eight-faceted necklace bead of mandrel-wound, pressed facet, simple construction. The surface sometimes appears frosted, probably due to age. 2 specimens.

**No. 44.\*** Small, white, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass has a porcelain-like texture. T. 108 specimens.

**No. 45.\*** Small, white, opaque donut-shaped garter bead of compound construction. The inner layer has a porcelain-like texture, and the outer layer is clear but has a slightly frosted appearance, probably due to age. T. 901 specimens.

**No. 46.** Small, Peacock Blue, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass of this bead has a sugarcane-like texture. T. 1030 specimens.

**No. 47.\*** Small, Gobelin Blue, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass has a porcelain-like texture. T. 36 specimens.

**No. 48.** Small, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 20 specimens.

**No. 49.\*** Small, clear, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 50.\*** Small, black, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 35 specimens.

**No. 51.\*** Small, red, opaque (outer layer), donut-shaped garter bead of compound construction. The outer layer of opaque glass is brick red, and the inner layer is a

translucent light green. This bead is generally referred to as "Cornaline d'Aleppo" T. 38 specimens.

**No. 53.\*** Large, milk-glass, translucent, round necklace bead of mandrel-wound construction. 2 specimens.

**No. 54.\*** Large, milk-glass, translucent, olive-shaped necklace bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. 1 specimen.

**No. 55.\*** Large, red, opaque (outer layer), tube-shaped (bugle) necklace bead of compound construction. The outer layer of opaque glass is brick red and the inner layer is a translucent light green. This bead is generally referred to as "Cornaline d'Aleppo," but in this case the bead stock was broken into tube-shaped beads. T. 4 specimens.

**No. 56.\*** Small, Brittany Blue, opaque, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead, of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 57.\*** Small, red, opaque (outer layer), tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of compound construction. The outer layer of opaque glass is brick red and the inner layer is translucent light green. This bead is the same as No. 55 except the diameter equals that of a small size bead. T. 35 specimens

**No. 60.\*** Small, Gobelin Blue, opaque tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 61.\*** Small, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of simple construction. T. 13 specimens.

**No. 63.** Small, Colonial Yellow, translucent, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of simple construction. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 64.** Small, white, opaque, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of simple construction. T. 15 specimens.

**No. 65.** Small, white, opaque, tube-shaped (short bugle) garter or necklace bead of compound construction. The inner layer has a porcelain-like texture while the outer layer has a slightly frosted appearance. UT. 62 specimens.

**No. 66.** Small, black, opaque, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of simple construction. The glass of this bead is porcelain-like in texture. UT. 2 specimens.

**No. 67.** Small, red, opaque (outer layer), tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of complex construction. The surface of the bead is covered with three evenly spaced sets of stripes, each of which is composed of two white stripes, and between these, a red stripe. The inner layer is translucent light green. This appears to be a variety of "Cornaline d'Aleppo" with addition of stripes. T. 34 specimens.

**No. 68.\*** Small, red, opaque (outer layer), tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of complex construction. The surface of the bead is covered with three evenly spaced sets of stripes, each of which is composed of two white stripes and, between these, a chocolate brown stripe. The inner layer is translucent light green. This appears to be a variety of "Cornaline d'Aleppo" with the addition of stripes. T. 18 specimens.

**No. 69.** Small, dark amber, opaque, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of complex construction. The surface is covered with nine alternating red and white stripes which run parallel to the long axis of the bead. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 70.** Small, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, tube-shaped (bugle) garter or necklace bead of complex construction. The surface of the bead is covered with three evenly spaced sets of stripes, each of which is composed of two white stripes, and between these, a red stripe. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 76.\*** Large, black, opaque, donut-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 77.\*** Large, dark Bluebird Blue, translucent, donut-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 78.** Medium, pearly white, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 79.** Small Sky Blue, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 30 specimens.

**No. 80.** Small, Peacock Blue, translucent donut- to barrel-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 21 specimens.

**No. 81** Small, Colonial Yellow to Brass colored, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass often has a cane-like texture. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 82.** Small, Colonial Yellow to Brass colored, translucent donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 83.** Small, Emerald Green, translucent, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 11 specimens.

**No. 86.\*** Large, brick red, opaque, donut-shaped necklace bead of compound construction. The outer layer of glass is brick red, and the inner layer is translucent light green. This bead is generally referred to as "Cornaline d' Aleppo." T. 3 specimens.

**No. 96.** Medium, black, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. T. 4 specimens.

**No. 97.** Large, Colonial Yellow, semi-translucent, barrel-shaped necklace bead of simple construction. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 98.** Medium, Colonial Yellow, semi-translucent, donut-shaped, garter bead of simple construction. T. 3 specimens.

**No. 99.** Medium, Brick Red, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of compound construction. The inner layer is translucent green. This type is generally referred to as "Cornaline d' Aleppo." T. 3 specimens.

**No. 101.** Medium, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. 15 specimens.

**No. 102.** Medium, white, opaque, olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. The surface has four pressed facets. 3 specimens.

**No. 103.\*** Medium, Harvard Crimson, translucent, olive-shaped garter or necklace bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. 2 specimens.

**No. 104.** Medium, Harvard Crimson, translucent, olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. The surface of the bead has four pressed facets. 1 specimen.

**No. 105.** Medium, pink and white, opaque necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound construction. The surface of the bead has three pressed facets. It appears that two colors of hot glass threads (one pink and the other white) were wound on to the mandrel at the same time, giving the bead a marbled appearance. 1 specimen.

**No. 106.** Medium, turquoise, opaque, olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound compound construction. The outer layer of glass is turquoise and the inner layer is white. The surface of this type is nearly always badly pitted. 1 specimen.

**No. 107.** Medium, dark Bluebird Blue, semi-translucent, olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. 2 specimens.

**No. 108.** Medium, black, olive-shaped, opaque necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound simple construction. 2 specimens.

**No. 115.** Medium, Bluebird Blue, donut-shaped, translucent necklace or garter bead of complex construction. On the surface are four rather evenly spaced white stripes which run parallel with the axis of the bead core. T. 1 specimen.

**No. 118.** Small, white, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of complex construction. Two red stripes and two blue stripes alternate around the bead, the stripes running parallel with the bead axis. T. 4 specimens.

**No. 128.** Extra small, white, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 177 specimens.

**No. 137.** Medium, white, opaque, barrel-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 6 specimens.

**No. 138.** Medium, Peacock Blue, translucent, barrel-shaped garter bead of simple construction. T. 2 specimens.

**No. 155.** Extra small, Peacock Blue, opaque, donut-shaped garter bead of simple construction. The glass has fine lines running lengthwise with the bead, giving it a texture reminiscent of stripped sugarcane. T. 18 specimens.

**No. 169.** Medium, dark Bluebird Blue, semi-translucent, "somewhat" olive-shaped necklace or garter bead of mandrel-wound, pressed facet, simple construction. There are eight pressed facets. 1 specimen.

## DISCUSSION OF GLASS BEAD TYPES

Total: 2958

La Harpe's Nessonite Post was occupied over a relatively long time period; the total span being from 1719 to 1778. Glass trade beads were found in association with all of the features at the site and some over the general surface. Based on the kinds of beads collected from the individual features, some appear to have earlier types than others. Features 7 and 8 have beads associated with them which date to the period of establishment of the post in 1719. The bead types are: 1-6, 8-15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28-31, 41, 53 and 54. These types occur in large numbers at other Historic Period sites dating from 1700 to 1740 in their spans of known occupancy (e.g., Harris and Harris 1967:156).

Features 1-6 have bead types of a later period associated with them and therefore are assumed to be younger than the above mentioned feature. New bead types that appear in the trade after 1740 are: 57, 60, 61, 66-69, 76-83, 86, 87, 96, 97 and 99 (Harris and Harris 1967:156).

An unusually large number of beads are associated with Feature 1. The numbers and estimated age of the bead types present suggest that this may be the site of Alex Grappe's little fort and trading house built shortly after he settled at the site in 1737.

### Shell Bead Types

**No. 1.** Small, white or purple banded, tube-shaped bead. The drilled hole is very uniform in size through the bead and probably was made with a metal drill as it does not appear hour-glass-shaped like typical Indian drilling. The bead is about 12 mm. long.

**No. 2.** Small, white or purple banded, tube-shaped bead. The hole is of uniform diameter throughout. Length is about 6 mm.

## DISCUSSION OF SHELL TRADE BEADS

Total: 18

Shell wampum (identification by Arthur Woodward, personal communication) at the site is of two colors. Twelve specimens are made of dark purple shell and six are made from white shell.