



# SCREENINGS



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## BLOWN GLASS BEADS -- A UNIQUE BEAD TYPE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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Recent test excavations by Keith Gehr (Longview, Wash.) at the Bayview Cannery Site in Wahkiakum County, Wash., have uncovered a unique bead type which has not been reported elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest (see Figs. 1 and 2). The manufacturing technique for producing this type of bead has not been precisely determined, but apparently the bead originated from a glass bubble which was drawn to form a glass tube with extremely thin walls (.25 mm.). Somehow, portions of the tube were cut and blown thus forming olive-shaped beads, but the exact method cannot be deduced. Finally, the beads appear to have been hot tumbled to round each end about the hole.

This type of bead does not appear to have been blown in a mold, nor blown individually from a glob of glass on the end of a blowpipe. The entire length of the bead is marked by longitudinal striations normally associated with tube beads, and in fact, the only attributes distinguishing this type of bead from a tube bead are the extremely thin walls and the expanded central cavity.

The only whole blown bead recovered from the site is reddish purple (5 RP 5/8) and measures 7.3 mm. in length by 5.3 in diameter. It was found at a depth of 110-120 cm. in a historic component of the site together with material cultural remains normally associated with Hudson's Bay Company sites. Specifically, such associated remains included fragments of hand forged and machine cut nails, various sized lead shot, glass tube beads, stoneware ale bottles, clay pipes, olive green wine bottles, metal and bone buttons, window glass, and blue transfer printed earthenware plates in the "Chatsworth" pattern manufactured by Copeland & Garrett and/or W. T. Copeland of Staffordshire, England, ca. 1833-1867.

If this type of bead was imported by the Hudson's Bay Company, it probably dates between 1822-1860 and was undoubtedly traded elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. No specimens of this type of bead have yet been reported from Forts Vancouver, Nez Perces, Okanogans, Spokane, or Colville; but due to the thinness of its walls, this type of bead may rarely exist in an unbroken condition. However, fragments should survive, and if excavated material is screened through 1/8-inch mesh, then such fragments should appear. One such fragment was found earlier at the Bayview Cannery Site, and it resembles the hard front wing of a beetle.

Anyone who may have or know of additional examples of this type of bead are requested to get in touch with the author at the following address: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Vancouver, Washington, 98661.

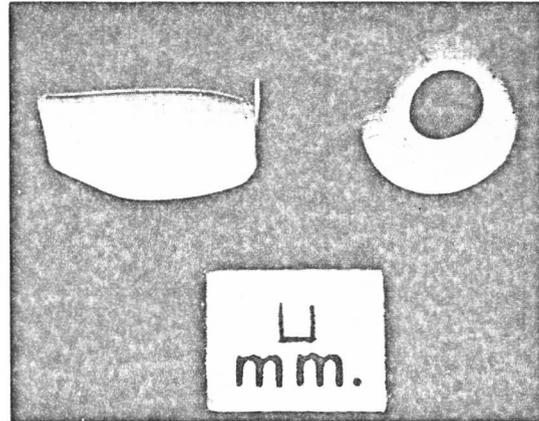
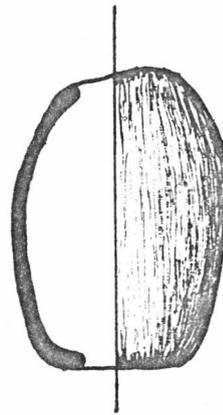


Fig. 1. Two views of the complete blown bead from the Bayview Cannery Site.



0 5 mm.

Fig. 2. Cross-section of the complete blown bead from the Bayview Cannery Site.

ED. NOTE: Lester A. Ross is Laboratory Director, Ft. Vancouver Archaeological Project. OAS members will recall his slide-illustrated talks concerning the excavation and reconstruction of Ft. Vancouver. Since the beads described in his article were originally uncovered by OAS member Keith Gehr, Mr. Ross felt it appropriate to report his findings in SCREENINGS. We appreciate this opportunity for it illustrates the mutual benefits of amateur-professional cooperation.