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Progress Report on Archaeological
Fieldwork at L'Anse-aux-Meadows,
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The following report is a preliminary summary of work carried out during the 1974 field season at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Newfoundland, by the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch of Indian and Northern Affairs. The significance of the observations, the finds and the samples have to be evaluated before more definite facts and conclusions can be stated.

The fieldwork was carried out according to the general plan for 1974-75 discussed and approved by the L'Anse-aux-Meadows International Advisory Committee in Oslo in June 1974. Due to the timetable for the development of the site as a National Historic Site, some emphasis in the plan was laid on re-examining the previously excavated houses with a view to their final reconstruction by the end of the 1975 season. In addition to that, major archaeological investigations were to be carried out in two areas of main importance:

- a) the bog between the settlement and the brook (see site plan) in which artifacts and waste material from the Norse settlement as well as from possibly earlier habitation may have been deposited and preserved, and
- b) the area outside the central settlement, mainly on the southern and western sides of the brook, where additional features may be expected. Only the northernmost part of this big area, between the brook and the shore, was previously investigated by the Ingstads, where they located a smithy, fireplaces, boat-sheds, etc.

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Excavation of House D and the Areas Outside to the East and to the West (Including the Bog)

The re-excavation of house D revealed the existence of important parts of the original walls and a careful examination of the remains provided much information about the general outline of this building. Of major importance for the reconstruction of the walls was the observation that the building was wider and the walls more massive than had been previously assumed.

The area outside house D to the east on the settlement terrace revealed some features whose significance is not yet fully understood. Some of them may be remains of fireplaces belonging to an earlier settlement whose presence may also account for the stone artifacts found in this area. Of major interest was the find of a glass bead outside the east wall of house D. Though a rather common type -- spherical, clear white glass -- it is stratigraphically well associated with the Norse settlement and it would be hard to explain it as a trade bead of later date.

The area outside the west wall of house D showed some of the same characteristics as earlier mentioned in connection with the west-wall slope of house A. Both houses had been built on the edge of the gravel bank which at that time featured a steeper slope down to the bog basin. In both cases the bog later expanded up to and over the foot of the wall. The excavation of the slope of the gravel bank and the edge of the bog area yielded numerous pieces of cut or worked wood, among which were several shaped sticks. Three to four hundred pieces of worked wood were collected. All the cut wood from the bog outside house D -- as well as the similar finds outside house A -- have been worked with metal tools. A tight mat of twigs and branches of cut shrub covering several square metres was found. This mat can be explained in different ways: as an intentional stabilization of the soggy bog edge; as part of the roof from house D which had slid into the bog, or as a dump of cut shrub. Among the more noteworthy finds was part of a cylindrical container of bark with sewn edges.

Excavation of House E

The re-excavation of house E proved to be more difficult than expected. Over this ruin -- as well as over some other remains on the site -- the provincial government had built wooden structures as a protection. The removal



- 2 Clear glass bead found outside the east wall of house D in the settlement layer covered by sod from the collapsed wall.