

MISCELLANEOUS COLUMBIA PLATEAU BURIALS

By Roderick Sprague and Walter H. Birkby

1. INTRODUCTION

The burials described in this report are from twelve different sites excavated between 1959 and September 1967. This compilation is a housekeeping task to satisfy several small obligations to the National Park Service (Sheffler Cut, Ferguson, Freeland, and 1967 Survey), U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Sheffler Cut, Palus Talus, and Mesa), Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (Ferguson and Weippe), Colville Business Council (Freeland and 1967 Survey), and several interested individuals. Sprague directed field excavation of Ferguson, Palus Talus, Mesa, Sheffler, Freeland, and part of Weippe and was project director for Ferguson, Freeland, and 1967 Survey. Richard D. Daugherty, Department of Anthropology, Washington State University, was project director for Palus Talus, Mesa, Sheffler, Steamboat Rock, and Banks Lake. Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Daugherty for his kind permission to publish materials from the projects he directed.

Birkby was present only at the removal of the Palus Talus material; all other analysis was conducted at the University of Arizona. The Weippe material was not inspected by Birkby nor was any skeletal material recovered from the Mesa site. Complete osteometric records are on file at both Washington State University and The University of Arizona.

The skeletal and artifactual material, except the Weippe material, is housed in the Laboratory of Anthropology, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington. The Weippe skeletal material was reinterred in a cemetery at Spalding, Idaho, with the final disposition of the artifacts to be determined by the Nez Perce Tribe.

The usual background descriptions of flora, fauna, climate, etc., so common to archaeological reports, have been omitted because they are readily available in such sources as Collier, Hudson, and Ford (1942) for the Lake Roosevelt area and Sprague and Combes (1966) for the Snake River region. Likewise, the usual comparative analysis and

theoretical considerations have been omitted, since one of us has recently compiled a Plateau-wide summary of burial practices (Sprague 1967). The cultural features of the burials follow the terminology suggested in that same work with later additions (Sprague 1968). The descriptions of glass trade beads include color designations (e. g., 7.5BG 4/4) derived from the Munsell color charts. A "T" preceeding the designation indicates a transparent bead. Bead dimensions are given with the length first and diameter second. Often seed bead measurements are given as a range which includes both length and diameter. The Laboratory of Anthropology, Washington State University, converted from the English to the metric system since the earliest of the various sites dug. However, the system in use at the time of excavation has been retained in each case.

The usual craniometric tables have not been included in this report because a comparative analysis was not attempted on such a small sample (6 measureable adult crania). Similarly, no osteometric tables were constructed for the measurable post-cranial material, in as much as only 3 adult males and 3 adult females were from sites where the bones were not "separated into the least possible number of individuals present." All interested individuals who have need of such raw data may write to the Osteology Laboratory, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, where copies of the measurements are on file.

Whenever possible, estimated living statures are given for each sexed adult burial regardless of the osseous mixture in the site. These statures are derived from data given by Genovés (1967) and, although based on Mesoamerican material, we have found from experience that they work better than other formulas when computing American Indian stature.

All references within the text to states of dental attrition are the degrees of wear quantified by Hrdlicka (1952). Determinations of the skeletal age of children over 6 years old

IV. MESA BURIAL SITE (45-FR-52)

Approximately five miles up the Palouse River from its confluence with the Snake, a historic burial that had been completely destroyed by amateur looters was inspected by the Palus Burial Site crew while awaiting court permission to dig at 45-FR-36B. Artifacts recovered included fragments of iron pots and pans, horse trappings, fragments of leather, square-cut nails, and beads. The beads included, in order of frequency: white, black, robin's egg blue, and Cornaline d'Allep seed beads; white and black pony beads; and blue, red, amber, yellow, green, and light blue O. P. beads. In addition, the Roland Marmes family had recovered beads, buttons, copper kettles, horse trappings (cinch ring—Fig. 3f), a large sturgeon hook (Fig. 3f), and an iron knife (Fig. 3f). An apparently accurate date of 1820 to 1850 has been suggested for this site elsewhere (Sprague 1967:108).

V. SHEFFLER CUT BURIAL SITE (45-WW-30)

Late in the winter of 1959, Mr. Alexander Gunkel and Sprague, then graduate students at Washington State University, were called upon by Richard D. Daugherty of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology to observe the possible opening of a series of graves during the earth removal phase of a railroad relocation project in the Ice Harbor Dam Reservoir near Sheffler, Washington (Figs. 1 and 4). The site was located within Sec. 25, T10N, R33E, near Union Pacific Railroad tunnel number nine. The weather on the day of excavation was bitterly cold. Earth movers were working within feet of the excavators, and the time allotted by the foreman, John Valentine, amounted to 20 minutes for Burial 1, six minutes for Burial 2, and four minutes for Burial 3. Therefore, the burial locations on the accompanying map are approximate, based upon a hurried field sketch. The English system of measurement was still in use at Washington State University at the time of this excavation.

The incomplete osseous debris came from at least four individuals (one adult of indeterminate sex and three infants). All of the bones, with the exception of those from the adult, were in poor condition, friable, and with cortical exfoliation. However, the bones from Burial 2 had been impregnated with

cupric salts from the accompanying copper grave goods and consequently were well preserved.

Burial 1

This burial obviously had been looted prior to the removal of the top by the earth mover. The adult of indeterminate sex (Burial 1A) was in an extended position probably on the back. Orientation was 51° east of north. The cedar (juniper?) burial box was constructed of 3/4 inch mill lumber. It measured six feet long, 1.7 feet wide, and 0.8 feet in depth at the one point not cut by the machinery. Evidence suggests that it was approximately 3.2 feet below the original surface at the top of the box.

The artifacts overlooked or discarded by the looters included:

3 square-cut nails

1 brass chain approximately like a No. 14 single-jack chain sold by modern jewelers (242 mm. long) with each link made from a piece of brass wire 40 mm. long, bent into a figure eight with a half twist in the middle.

125 white (N 9/0) seed beads (2-3 mm.)

22 light green (5G 6/4) seed beads (3-4 mm.)

1/2 robin's egg blue (5B 6/8) round paste bead (8 x 6 mm.)

1/2 white (N 9/0) round paste bead (10 x 9 mm.)

2 hollow brass beads (9 x 7 mm.)

Apparently the skeletal material was destroyed by the looters with the exception of the nearly complete and articulated bones of both feet. All but one terminal phalanx and all of the medial phalanges were missing from both feet; the right was missing its fifth proximal phalanx; the fourth and fifth proximal phalanges were absent from the left.

A peculiar feature was observed on the left foot wherein the fourth metatarsal was 48 mm. long and the right was 60 mm. long. No other metatarsals or tarsals were affected. There was no evidence of atrophy of the affected element. The head and proximal end appeared essentially normal, and only the shaft seemed shortened. No copper stains were observed on any of the bones.

Burial 1B, an infant six months to 1 1/2 years of age, was found within the central por-

tion of the burial area and was probably the spoil from another looted grave. This poorly preserved burial was represented by the left half of the mandible, a left femur, a fragmentary right tibia and fibula, and the left calcaneus. None of the deciduous teeth had erupted fully, although the left central incisor was beginning to emerge. The age was based on the length of the femur (122 mm.) and the eruptive state of the central incisor. No copper stains were noted on any of the bones.

Burial 2

The blade of the earthmover had removed the top half of this burial prior to recovery efforts. This 1½ to 2-year-old infant had been placed extended on the back in a cedar (juniper?) burial box oriented 51° east of north. There was no evidence of looting.

The artifacts included:

- 1 possible shell pendant (55 x 16 mm roughly triangular in shape)
- 1 white pearl, four-hole manufactured button (13 mm. in diameter)
- 1 lead pendant (15 mm. in diameter, 2 mm. thick, possibly of native manufacture from lead shot)
- 1 brass chain (three pieces (1) 267 mm., (2) 120 mm., (3) Y-shaped piece with arms 70 mm., 140 mm., and 150 mm.) each 5 mm. link is made of a wire 15 mm. long bent in a figure 8 with a half twist in the middle.
- 1 iron object (45 mm. long and 11 mm. in diameter tapering to 5 mm.)
- 1 iron object (111 mm. x 7 mm. x 19 mm. tapering to 10 mm.)
- 1 iron object (230 mm. x 27 mm. x 11 mm.)
- 52 pieces of lead shot (21 No. 6, 30 No. 2, and 1 No. 00 buckshot)
- 65 white (N 9/0 seed beads (1-2 mm.)
- 94 white (N 9/0) seed beads (2-3 mm.)
- 32 white (N 9/0) seed beads (3-4 mm.)
- 7 black (N 1/10) seed beads (2-3 mm.)
- 13 black (N 1/10) seed beads (3-4 mm.)
- 2 Cornaline d'Aleppo (5R 5/12 over N 9/0) seed beads (2-3 mm.)
- 6 Cornaline d'Aleppo (T 5R 4/14 over N 9/0) seed beads (2-3 mm.)
- 1 red (T 5R 3/12) seed bead (3 mm.)
- 1 robin's egg blue (T 5B 7/6) seed bead (1-2 mm.)
- 2 green (T 7.5G 4/10) seed beads (1-2 mm.)
- 3 green (T 5G 6/10) seed beads (2-3 mm.)

3 yellow (2.5Y 8/8) seed beads (2-3 mm.)

1 robin's egg blue (5B 5/8) seed bead (2-3 mm.)

2 deep blue (T 5PB 5/10) seed beads (2-3 mm.)

1 amber (T 5YR 4/8) rough-broken faceted bead (4 x 5 mm.)

11 robin's egg blue (5B 7/6 or 6/8) round beads 6-8 x 7-10 mm.)

1 robin's egg blue (7.5B 6/8) round bead (11 x 9 mm.)

11 red (T 5R 2/8 with white N 9/10 dots) round beads (10 x 10 mm.) might be called Kitty Fisher's eyes by some authorities, strung on a leather thong

6 hollow brass beads (9 x 7 mm.) strung on a leather thong

The human remains were an incomplete and poorly preserved skeleton except where cupric salts had permeated the bone and retarded deterioration. Copper stains were observed on the right half of the mandible, on all seven of the cervical vertebrae, and on the first two of the six extant thoracics; also stained were the back of the occipital, both clavicles, two right ribs, and the superior angle of both scapulas. Age was based on the development of the deciduous dentition; the second molars were not fully erupted. Occipital deformation could not be determined because of the fragmentary and warped condition of the vault.

Burial 3

The cedar (juniper?) burial box of this inhumation was approximately the same size as that of Burial 1, indicating an extended adult burial had been looted. The axis of the grave was approximately the same as the other two. Artifacts included five square-cut nails used in the construction of the burial box, several fragments of light iron such as a tin can, fragments of heavy tanned leather, fragments of machine woven silk, and the following beads:

517 white (N 9/0) seed beads (2-3 mm.)

52 white (N 9/0) seed beads (3-4 mm.)

1 white (N 9/0) seed bead (5 mm.)

151 black (N 1/10) seed beads (3-4 mm.)

2 light blue (5B 7/6) seed beads (3 mm.)

2 light blue (T7.5 PB 4/12 with T7.5 PB 6/10 Core) O. P. beads (6 x 6-7 mm.)

1 light blue (T 7.5 PB 5/10 with T5 PB 8/6 Core) O. P. bead (6 x 7 mm.)

1 light blue (T 7.5 PB 2/10) O. P. beads (6 x 6 mm.)

No adult skeletal material remained; however, remnants of an infant six months to 1½ years old were found. Only the left tibia, left calcaneus, and an epiphyseal head of the humerus remained. Age was based on the morphological length of the tibia (96 mm.). It is quite doubtful that these remains were a part of Burial 1B because of the disparity in the tibial measurements at the level of the nutrient foramen and the existence of the additional left calcaneus. No copper stains were noted on any of the bones.

Conclusions

These three burials probably represent the remains of a badly looted historic burial site. The bead assemblage correlates well with material from the Asotin Site (45-AS-9) (Sprague 1958). It is probably of a later date than the material from Ford Island (45-FR-47), the closest excavated site (Combes 1968), and is earlier than the Palus Burial Site (45-FR-36B) (Sprague 1967), thus indicating a date of 1840 to 1860. The pattern of extended burials on the back in nailed coffins with abundant grave goods, especially beads, is one originally postulated by Sprague (1958) for the later half of the 19th Century and more recently supported by additional work (Sprague 1967; Combes 1968).

VI. FREELAND BURIAL SITE (45-FE-1)

In July 1965, the late Mrs. Goldie V. Putnam of the Inchelium area wrote Mary Avery, then Washington State University Library Archivist, concerning a series of burials eroding out of a bank on Lake Roosevelt (Fig. 6b). During the Christmas vacation of 1965, Sprague visited the site which was on the land of Mrs. Florence Brons (subsequently Mrs. William Freeland). Although they were eroding out of the bank adjacent to Mrs. Freeland's land, these burials actually were situated on National Park Service property within the Coulee Dam National Recreation Area (Fig. 1, 5, and 6a). Mr. Paul J. F. Schumacher, Chief, Archaeological Research, San Francisco Service Center, National Park Service, was appraised of the situation. When the second phase of the survey (Chance 1967) of the Recreation Area was contracted (National Park Service Purchase Order No. 940-564), it was expanded to include funds for the recovery of the burials. Verbal approval for the excavation was granted 10 April 1967, by

Mr. Narcisse Nicholson, Jr., Chairman of the Colville Business Council and the Tribal Land Committee.

The work was carried out under the direct supervision of Sprague during 8-14 April 1967. The excavation was conducted by a small but competent crew of students consisting of Ralph Baarslag, Jim Chatters, Dennis Kroll, and Pat Lincoln. Dave Chance took time from his survey duties and also helped with the excavations on occasion. Arnold Long, Park Ranger, Kettle Falls District, provided continued support from the National Park Service. Local publicity, both press and radio, was provided by Carol Davis of Colville. John and Ritta Hoffman and Betty Swift, local amateurs, supplied helpful information on other sites in the region and kindly permitted analysis of their collections. Barney Miller and the crew of Barney's Motel and Cafe provided hospitality and local color beyond the usual commercial room and board.

Special acknowledgement is due Mr. Paul J. F. Schumacher for securing the necessary funds for this salvage project. The excavation of the Freeland site could not have been undertaken without the continued efforts of Mrs. Freeland who brought the site to our attention and continued to protect it from amateur despoilers who abound in the Kettle Falls and Colville area.

Malacological identification of shell artifacts from the Freeman Site was made by Mr. James J. Landye, Laboratory of Anthropology, Washington State University. All *olivella* shell beads were identified as ***Olivella biplicata*** (Sowerby) and all dentalia as ***Dentalium* sp.** Other shells are identified as mentioned in the artifact descriptions.

The site is situated on the first bank above Lake Roosevelt in the SE¼ of the NW¼ of the NW¼ Sec. 14, T36N, R37E, slightly down river from the west end of the Kettle Falls bridge. As the first site recorded in Ferry County under the Smithsonian Trinomial system it was designated as 45-FE-1 with the additional name, Freeland Burial Site, in recognition of Mrs. Freeland's contributions.

The area occupied by the burials had been slightly leveled when the lawn and garden areas were laid out. This affected only Burial

X. WEIPPE BURIAL SITE

On 20 September 1967 during water and sewage line construction in the town of Weippe, Idaho, a series of Indian artifacts appeared in front of a bulldozer pushing fill into a ditch. The Laboratory of Anthropology, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, University of Idaho, was notified of the find through the kindness of several people including: Mrs. Homer Vanderpool, wife of the foreman for the job, Weippe; Marcus J. Ware, Director of the Luna House, Lewiston; and Dick Wyatt, Engineer for the project, Lewiston. Members of the Nez Perce tripe acquired what was not snatched up by local workmen, and on 21 September this material (buffalo robe, horse mane, iron blade, glass beads, gun barrel fragments, and copper beads) was turned over to Leroy A. Altmiller, Clearwater County Sheriff.

On 23 September Deward E. Walker, Jr., and Sprague visited the site and collected reports from many interested and helpful Weippe citizens. Among these were W. H. Durant, Weippe Mayor, and several workers on the project; John Hartline, Mike Albee, and the late Ira Penny. The Nez Perce National Park was brought into the project through the cooperation of Superintendent Robert Burns. On 28 September National Park Service personnel Earl Harris, Milo Anderson, and James Reynolds, with Sam Watters observing for the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, and Sprague reexcavated in the general area of the earlier find to determine what evidence remained. Additional work was carried out on 29 September.

The artifacts described include those recovered through the National Park Service excavation on 28 and 29 September, those turned over to the University by the Clearwater County Sheriff, and artifacts kindly donated by Mrs. Mike Albee of Spokane. Reported by workers but never recovered were a bison horn and possibly a copper bracelet. The bison horn is reportedly still in Weippe in the hands of an amateur collector.

Excellent news coverage was provided by Walker Roberts of the **Lewiston Tribune**. Gun identification was provided by Dr. Raymond L. Proctor, Department of History, University of Idaho.

The skeletal material was superficially analyzed by Sprague but could not be sent to Birkby for a complete analysis. Included were: the left radius, ulna, and metacarpals all encased in soft tissue preserved by copper salts (total measurements was 29.5 cm. from the proximal end of the radius to the distal end of the third metacarpal;) the mandible with severe tooth wear through the first molars, no significant wear on the second molars, and the third molars had not erupted; several small cranial fragments; and a fragment of the distal end of an immature tibia. These skeletal remains were reinterred in a cemetery at Spalding, Idaho.

Because the burial was first removed by a backhoe, placed in the backdirt, and then bulldozed into the ditch before being seen, there obviously were no cultural features observed other than the artifact assemblage.

The artifacts included:

- 391 rolled brass tubular beads (ranging in size from 1 to 14 mm. in length by 3 to 8 mm. in diameter)
- 698 deep blue-green (7.5BG 4/4) seed beads (3-4 mm. x 2-3 mm.)
- 5 brass tinklers (24 x 7 to 33 x 9 mm.)
- 4 rectangular brass pendants (89 x 104 mm., 55 x 90 mm., 40 x 55 mm., and 35 x 45 mm.)
- brass bracelet (9 x 115 mm.)
- 24 fragments and 2 bail ears from a brass kettle
- iron spear point (308 mm. long by 60 to 17 mm. wide and tang 12 x 85 mm.)
- probable iron spear point (230 x 43 x 18 mm.)
- knife fragment (125 x 32 mm.)
- 6 fragments of smooth-bore gun barrels (580 x 28 mm.-butt end, 395 x 19 mm.-muzzle end, 253 x 19 mm.-muzzle end, 115 x 20 mm.-central fragment, 86 x 20 mm.-central fragment, 136 x 20 mm.-bent central fragment) at least two, probably three guns are represented
- 3 iron axe heads (see Fig. 8 for dimensions)
- 1 probable gun works fragment (5 x 20 x 130 mm.)
- iron rod (125 x 8 mm.)
- iron hook with two chain links and fragments of at least two more links (hook—132 x 41 x 7mm., links—98-115 x 26-30 x 5-6, Fig. 8.)
- a bison robe
- a leather garment
- black horse mane with hide attached
- 2 elk teeth
- worked bone fragment (88 x 23 x 9)
- fragments of a basket rim

Intrusive objects collected during the excavation included round nails, fencing staples, the handle of a plastic hair brush or mirror, a battery carbon, and sherds of modern glazed porcelain.

The presence of only blue-green seed beads, the brass kettle, rolled brass tubular beads, and the trade axes all indicate the early historic period (1800-1820). The gun fragments were all in poor condition because of severe corrosion but would best fit the description of smooth bore English flint locks from about 1820. Hanson (1955:39), in describing Northwest guns, says, "The barrels of all the trade guns examined were octagonal for about seven inches [Weippe specimen 7 5/16 in. =187 mm.] at the breech, this octagon becomes sixteen sided and then terminates in two or three circular ridges" [only one is still visible on the Weippe fragment].

The three trade axes are all styles that have a fairly long history, hence are of little use in dating. Russell (1967:257) describes the technique of manufacturing thus: "Trade axes were commonly made from a single elongated flat plate of iron, one end of which was hammered out while hot and wrapped around a pattern to form the eye." Such axes lacked a poll or counter-balancing metal opposite the blade, thus were difficult to use and were limited largely to the Indian trade by the time of Euroamerican influence in the Nez Perce territory.

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