

Hogback: A Proto-historic Oneota Burial Site

Lloyd A. Wilford and John W. Brink
University of Minnesota

Abstract

The following site report describes and discusses the material recovered from the Hogback site during the excavations of 1947 and 1953. The site lies in the southeastern corner of Minnesota, near the town of Yucatan.

On the basis of a similarity of burial practices and artifactual traits it is concluded that the Hogback site is properly classified as a component of the Orr Focus. Furthermore, that the site represents remains of the Iowa Indians who inhabited southern Minnesota in the 17th century.

The Hogback site is located in southeastern Minnesota, in the west central portion of Houston County. The site is situated on a bluff overlooking a sharp bend in the Riceford Creek. It is on the west bank of the creek, about two miles from the town of Yucatan. The precise location is Township 102 N; Range 7 W; northeast quarter of the southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ section of section 7 (Fig. 1).

This report stems from two site manuscripts written by Lloyd Wilford after his excavations at the Hogback site in 1947 and 1953. The existence of the site was brought to his attention in 1942 when road widening operations unearthed some human bones and an initial excavation in 1947 was designed primarily as a test. A rectangle

32 teeth were present and exhibited a little wear. The epiphyses of all the long bones were united to their shafts, but the iliac crest of the left innominate was in a stage of beginning union and that of the right innominate was in a stage of non-union. Deep green stains, due to the presence of brass ornaments, were on all four lowest lumbar vertebrae, and on the middle portion of the shafts of each of the four forearm bones, the area in line with the lumbar region.

Skeleton #6 was generally north of Skeleton #4, with the skulls about two feet apart. The top of the skull was seven inches below the surface. Slab rocks were placed on both sides of the skeleton, producing an outline of the burial area.

The body was richly endowed with ornaments. At the inside of the left elbow angle was a small, four-handled mortuary pot (Pl. 16), and inside this was a small obsidian flake. Close to the left humerus was a brass bracelet (Pl. 14e). At the neck was a necklace of glass and shell beads. Near the bracelet were two brass coils of four spirals each (Pl. 14g). The most spectacular object was a leather belt or girdle around the body in the lumbar region (Pl. 14b). This had been thickly sewn with brass beads, which had served to partially preserve the leather. Most of the brass beads had collapsed and were mixed in with the decayed leather masses, but there were still many whole beads. It was the presence of the brass beaded girdle that had stained the lumbar vertebrae and the bones of the forearms. At the middle of the left ulna was a clam shell. There was a small

perforation near the hinge of the shell, but as the shell had partially disintegrated the hole may have been due to this disintegration; though it may represent a true perforation for suspension, for the shell was almost certainly an ornament on the girdle.

Skeleton #7 (Plate 4)

This was the burial of an infant, about two years of age, whose first deciduous molars had fully erupted, but its second deciduous molars had not. The skull was rather fragmentary but both jaws, the frontal, and both petrous processes were present. In front of the skull (east of it) were many fragments of ribs and vertebrae and a right clavicle. The last is about the size of the clavicle of Skeleton #5. There were only five fragments of long bones, one of which could be identified as part of a femur, and another as part of the shaft of a tibia or humerus. No ilia were present. From the presence of the ribs and vertebrae it is inferred that the burial was primary and that it was buried on the back, head to the west. The skull was nine inches below the surface.

Associated with the skeleton were 15 small shell beads, a brass coil (Pl. 14h), a brass bead and one glass bead. The coil was the largest and heaviest found at the site. ✓

Skeleton #8 (Plate 4)

The skull of this skeleton was in fair condition and fairly complete, but the rest of the skeleton was missing except for five rib fragments and parts of seven long bones. The long bones were a right clavicle and a right radius, both nearly complete, the proximal half of a right femur, most of the shaft of a left humerus,

a shaft section identified as part of a tibia, and two other shaft portions.

The deciduous dentition was complete, but the first permanent molars were far from a stage of eruption. The age of the individual was estimated at three years. The length of the radius was 93 mm., which is longer than the radius of Skeleton #5, but shorter than that of Skeleton #3.

The near absence of bones other than the skull and long bones indicates that the burial was secondary or badly disturbed. It was very close to Skeleton #6, and may have been disturbed at the interment of that body. The clavicle was at the western edge of the skull, but the other bones were east, northeast and north of the skull, and were clearly not in proper anatomical relationship. The skull was located eight inches below the surface.

✓ Found in association with the burial were five brass coils, three brass tubes, 34 shell beads, one glass tubular bead (Pl. 13a) and three clam shell fragments, probably part of one shell.

Skeletons #9, 10, 11 and 13

These four burials comprised a group of skeletons that had been successively buried in the same general area. The order of the burial was clearly shown as the burials were exposed. First to be buried was #9, a middle-aged male. He had been buried in the extended position, on the back, with the head south. His chest was about one foot east of the feet of Skeleton #6.

Subsequently Skeleton #13, an adolescent less than 15 years of age, had been buried immediately north of #13. It was in the extended

the burial though the femurs had a green tinge from brass ornaments associated with Skeleton #11.

The depth below the surface of the skull was 12 inches, and that of the left knee was 13 inches.

Skeleton #11

This was the skeleton of a young child with complete deciduous dentition, but the first permanent molars had not yet begun to erupt. The skeleton was fairly fragmentary, no doubt due to its immaturity. The bones of the skull, including both jaws, were nearly all present. Only a few vertebrae were present, as bodies and parts of neural arches not joined, and the portions present all had brass stains. There were no bones of the shoulder girdle or upper extremities, except for the distal end of a radius deeply stained with brass. Both ilia were present and these also were stained with brass. Both femora and the proximal end of one tibia were present. Almost certainly the young child had been interred as a primary burial in the extended position, head west on the pelvis of Skeleton #10. As the bones of Skeleton #10 had not been disturbed by the burial of #11, it is believed that both had been interred at one time. The depth below surface of the child's skull was 16 inches, and that its left knee was 18 inches.

A girdle or belt (Pl. 14c) similar to that associated with Skeleton #6 was around the young child's waist. The girdle was of leather covered with brass beads. As exposed, many of the beads seemed to lie in rows. It was the presence of the beads which had discolored the ilia, the lumbar vertebrae, and the distal end of

the radius. They had also discolored the distal halves of the femora of Skeleton #10, particularly the left femur. Near the girdle were three brass coils of three, four and six spirals respectively. Near the skull were two glass beads (Pl. 13e), possibly ear ornaments. ✓

Skeleton #13

This was a very incomplete burial. The bones in situ included the right humerus, with its separated proximal epiphysis, the right ulna, a section of the shaft of the right radius, most of the right ilium, part of the right ischium, the right femur with its separated distal epiphysis in place. The mandible was present though broken, and it is believed to have been in place. The second molars had fully erupted, so the skeleton was that of an adolescent about 14 years of age. It had clearly been buried on its back in the extended position, head west. Other bones of this skeleton were found in the area around the legs of Skeleton #10. They included part of the left ilium, most of the left ulna, the distal epiphysis of the left femur, a patella, the left astragalus, calcaneum and scaphoid, the right calcaneum, and three metatarsals.

The depth below the surface of the mandible was 17 inches, and that of the left knee was 18 inches.

There were no artifacts associated with the burial.

Skeleton #12

This skeleton was the remains of a young child with complete deciduous dentition, and in which the first permanent molars had not yet erupted. The skeleton was very incomplete with the bones in a poor state of preservation, probably due to its immaturity.

Present were the lower portion of the skull with the mandible in occlusion with the maxillae, part of both scapulae, the left clavicle, both humeri and a few of the rib fragments. Vertebrae and the pelvic bones were missing, but both femora were present and apparently in situ. The body had been buried in the extended position, on the back and with the head west. The distance below surface of the skull was 16 inches, as was the distal end of the femur.

Associated with the burial were beads of brass, shell and glass. ✓
Most numerous were the tubular or barrel-shaped shell beads (Pl. 13b), of which there were 120. There were also six brass coils, two tubular brass beads, 16 spherical glass beads and one small barrel-shaped glass bead. Most of the beads were in front of the skull, but behind the skull were three brass coils, one glass bead and a fragment of ✓
clam shell.

Unnumbered Skeleton

At 13-1 North, 3-7 East were a few bones of a young child, much too incomplete to be numbered as a skeleton, but here designated as 12-A. It was three feet north of Skeleton #12, and two and a half feet west of Skeleton #10. The principle bones were the distal half of the right humerus, a right ulna lacking the proximal end, and the acromion process of the right scapula. These were all stained a deep green in color. There was also present a section of the shaft of a long bone a little larger than the humerus, but it had no green stains. Associated with the bones was a mat of disintegrated leather in which the brass objects were mixed. The metal objects were sections of a brass strap made by folding three thicknesses of sheet brass (Pl. 14i).

The bones were those of a rather large male. All third molars had erupted, and all the epiphyses of the long bones had united, but the iliac crest was in a stage of incomplete union, so the individual is believed to be of sub-adult age.

The depth below the surface of the skull was 23 inches, and that of the distal end of the tibia was 28 inches.

A single artifact accompanied the burial--a fully grooved basalt axe (Pl. 8c) at the right elbow of the individual.

Skeleton #19

This skeleton constituted the remains of a young child, interred as a primary burial in the extended position, on the back with the head northwest. It was an individual of about four years of age, with complete deciduous dentition, but noneruption of the first permanent molars. For so young an individual the preservation was amazingly good. The skull, mandible, all 12 long bones of the extremities, both scapulae, both ilia, both ischia, both pubises, the right clavicle, and 15 ribs were whole. The epiphyses of the long bones were present, though not united, and none of the vertebral bodies were united with their respective neural arch. Both the skull and the feet were 12 inches below the surface.

Several artifacts accompanied the burial. The pelvis and the lower vertebrae were stained with deep green color from the brass beads sewn on a leather girdle or part of a garment. They seemed to have been strung in bands of five or six and were apparently the same as those found with Skeletons #6 and 11. A clam shell was found at the base of the skull. Both temporal bones had light brass stains

from a necklace composed of a number of brass beads, coils, a glass bead, and seven mammalian claws (Pl. 10e). A thin, triangular projectile point was above the skull (Pl. 6a). ✓

Skeleton #20

This was the remains of a middle-aged female, interred as a primary burial in the fully flexed position, on the stomach, with the lower extremities under the body and the head west. It was buried almost directly below Skeleton #14, with the reburial of many of the bones of displaced Skeleton #2. The skull was crushed and flattened and it was located 12 inches below the surface, and the proximal end of the right femur was one inch lower.

Though the bone was less well preserved than some of the other skeletons, Skeleton #20 was very complete. The skull, innominates, and scapulae were broken; but all the vertebrae, the clavicles, and the long bones of the extremities were present and mostly whole.

No artifacts accompanied the burial.

Skeleton #21

Skeleton #21 was the remains of an old adult male, interred as a primary burial in the extended position, on the back, with the head northwest and the hands on the pelvis. The skeleton was fairly complete, though many of the bones were broken. The skull was crushed, but the mandible, though broken, was complete. Only two long bones, the left clavicle and the right femur, were whole while the remainder--except for the missing right clavicle--were fairly complete. All ten metacarpals were present, as were all the vertebrae, and most of them whole.

Glass Artifacts

Glass Beads

The original inventory of the Hogback site included 29 glass beads of various sorts, but only 27 of these remain to be seen today. All the glass beads were recovered during the 1953 excavation and were found in association with six burials.

Spherical Glass Beads

Twenty-four of the glass beads were designated as being spherical or nearly spherical in shape. These have been divided into three classes on the basis of their size.

Large Spherical Beads (Plate 13e)

There are five complete large beads and one fragment. All are opaque and bluish in color, approaching a faience blue. They range in diameter from 7.3 to 8.2 mm. The diameter of the perforations ranges from 1 to 1.9 mm.

Medium-Sized Spherical Beads (Plate 13d)

There are seven complete beads and four fragments. The largest of these medium-sized beads are similar in color to the large beads above, while the smaller are deep blue like the small beads below. Two of the beads had had three vertical white stripes each, equally spaced, spanning most of the length of the bead. The diameters of these beads range from 5.4 to 6.1 mm. The diameters of the perforations range from 0.9 to 1.8 mm.

Small Spherical Beads (Plate 13c)

There are twelve complete small beads and four fragments. All are deep blue in color, nearly turquoise. The shapes are generally

spherical, though a few are approaching a tubular form. The diameters range from 3.5 to 4.6 mm. The perforations are all less than 1 mm. in diameter.

Tubular Glass Beads (Plate 13a)

There are two such tubular beads, both are opaque and milk white in color. The longer bead has a length of 13.2 mm. and a diameter of 4.4 mm. The other bead is 10.5 mm. long and 5 mm. in diameter. The diameter of the perforation of the longer bead is 1.5 mm., but that of the shorter bead is 2.8 mm.

Barrel-Shaped Glass Bead (Plate 13b)

There is one barrel-shaped glass bead; it is thicker in the middle than at the sides. It is tan in color. The length is 4.4 mm., the diameter is 4.1 mm., and the diameter of the perforation is 1 mm.

Objects of Leather

Parts of skin garments were found with the three skeletons numbered 6, 11, and 19 in which the leather had been preserved by the brass beads. Leather was also found with the unnumbered skeleton. For the most part the leather had disintegrated into amorphous chunks or masses, but there were two fairly large sections of flat leather. The larger had a maximum length of 207 mm. and a maximum width of 82 mm. The smaller was 80 mm. long and 65 mm. wide. These pieces were fairly flat and were stiff, though not brittle.

Metal Artifacts

Though metal artifacts have been referred to up to this point as being "brass," this label cannot be applied with certainty to all

bowls are diagnostic of the Orr Focus, but these are no more numerous than other styles and should probably be regarded as only a type. Hogback's effigy pipe is not unique to the Focus--another is reported from the Allamakee County sites, and a near identical copy of the second, un-incised Hogback pipe was found at the Burke Site in Allamakee County. The fully grooved axe and the turquoise bead are, however, unique features at the Hogback Site. Insufficient investigation is probably the best explanation for these. The absence of any ground stone artifacts at the Farley Village Site greatly hampers any conclusions concerning which tools were ceremonial and which were utilitarian in purpose.

Neither the Wilsey, Rushford, nor the Farley Site yielded any shell or bone artifacts, thus limiting comparisons with the Hogback material to the Upper Iowa region. The only shell or bone artifacts from the Hogback Site which are not represented in the Allamakee County assemblages are the bone fishhook and the tubular shell beads; the former at least can be explained on the basis of chance preservation. All other Hogback artifacts of bone and shell have very similar equivalents at the Upper Iowa River sites, though these sites also display a considerable number of shell and bone and particularly antler artifacts which are not represented at any Minnesota Orr Focus sites. The mammalian claws from the Hogback Site are also unique to the Focus.

Glass beads are not found at any of the other Orr sites in Minnesota, but are known in abundance from the Upper Iowa River assemblages. These Iowa beads were also found in association with burials and were identical to the spherical Hogback beads in color and shape, and the

sizes were equivalent to the large and medium-sized spherical beads at the Hogback Site. No tubular glass beads were reported from anywhere but the Hogback Site, and no reference is made to spherical beads with decoration as seen on several Hogback specimens. But both these types are pictured in Quimby's (1966: 84) discussion of European trade goods in the Upper Great Lakes region as being characteristic finds of the Early Historic Period (1610-1670). Thus encountering these goods in eastern Minnesota at about the same time, or slightly later, is entirely in keeping with the documented travels of the French traders.

Aside from the Hogback Site metal trade goods are encountered at one other Orr Focus site in Minnesota, the Wilsey Site, where five brass or copper tubular beads were found in association with one of the burials. But again, all types of brass goods described in this report are seen in nearly identical form in northeast Iowa. The exception to this are the conical-shaped tinklers, these however are known from the above mentioned Utz Site in Missouri.

In 1959 several metal beads from the Hogback Site were sent to Mildred Wedel who wished to analyze them in preparation for her report on Orr Focus sites. A spectrographic analysis was performed and the results are shown in Table 3. The "very strong" presence of zinc in the beads is clear evidence that the metal is brass and not native copper. However, similar tests have been performed on other Orr Focus metal goods and has revealed that some are copper while others are brass. This precludes any judgment that because the tested Hogback beads were brass therefore all the other metal objects are also brass.

The cultural material comprising the Orr Focus presents the interpreter with a rare opportunity to link the archaeological record with the known ethnographic identifications.

The Oneota material, in general, is considered to be the remains of the group of Siouan speaking peoples known as the Chiwere Sioux. Griffin (1937: 181) states that, "It is fairly obvious that this connection between the known areas occupied by the historic Chiwere Sioux and the archaeological culture called the Oneota Aspect is of such a nature that there is a high probability of direct correlation." One Chiwere group, the Iowa, had established themselves in southeastern Minnesota and northwest Iowa. Although it cannot be said with certainty that the Iowa were settled in southeast Minnesota before the first French contacts, there is fairly reliable evidence that such was the case by the late 1600's, when Nicolas Perrot alluded to "a river which is named after the Ioways," and locates this river west of the Mississippi and north of the Wisconsin River (Bray, 1961: 18). Perrot thus became a source for the direct acquisition of European goods. The stay of the Iowa in Minnesota and northwest Iowa apparently ends by the year 1703, when, as they continue their developing Plains adaptation, they are found in western Iowa (Wilford, 1937: 55).

In view of this evidence, then, the Hogback Site is almost certainly an Iowa Indian cemetery and can be dated with equal certainty to the last half of the 17th Century.

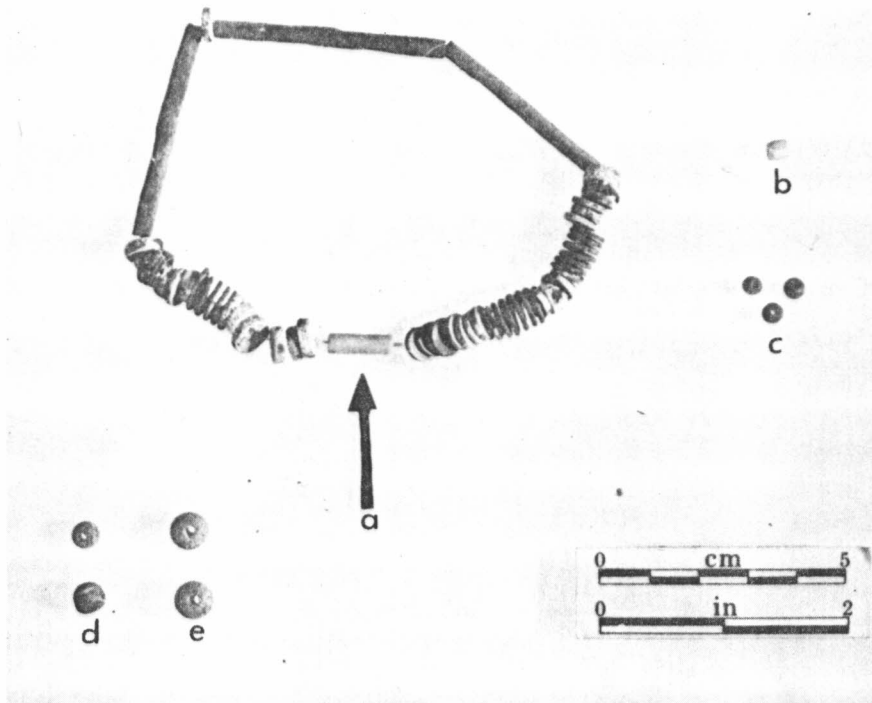


Plate 13: a- tubular glass bead, b- barrel-shaped bead, c- small glass beads, d- medium sized glass beads with decoration visible on bottom bead, e- large glass beads.

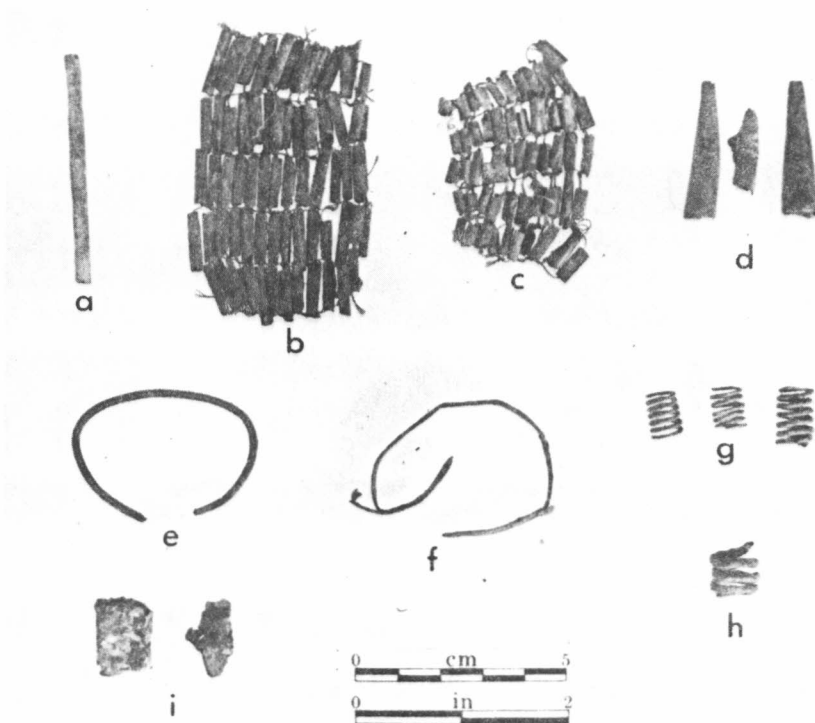


Plate 14: a- long brass tubes, b- medium-sized tubular brass beads, c- small brass beads, d- conical brass beads or tinklers, e- wire bracelet, f- strap bracelet, g- brass coils, h- thick brass coil, i- three-ply strap sheets of brass.