Surface Archeology of Southwestern Washoe County, Nevada

THE G. W. SMITH COLLECTION

by

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With a Section on Glass Beads

by

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Contents

Drills

Most of the drills are of the "winged" type, with a broad flat base for holding between thumb and forefinger or for hafting, and a long, slender drill shaft. A few specimens consist of apparently random flakes which have one end worked to a point. Three chert specimens appear to represent two Desert side-notched points and one Elko side-notched point that have been reworked into (hafted?) drills.

End Scrapers

Two specimens are nondescript flat flakes which have been steeply retouched on one end. The retouch is completely unifacial, and is the only evidence of shaping of the tools.

Side Scrapers

Three specimens, all apparently random flakes, have steep unifacial retouch on one or both edges (Figure 4, n).

Crude Bifaces

A large collection of bifacially worked artifacts of various sizes and degrees of finish apparently represent different stages in the manufacture of projectile points (Figure 4, a-l). Some specimens are very chunky and perhaps represent abortive attempts to adequately thin a nucleus for refinement into a finished tool. Many specimens are broken and apparently were discarded for that reason. These are not considered to be finished tools because of their obvious crudity and imperfection, and because there is a complete graduation of forms from very crude nuclei down to well-finished, but broken, triangular and leaf-shaped blades that lack only modification of the bases to mark them as projectile points.

Unclassified Scrap

Chipped stone fragments, apparently random flakes, are numerous in the collection. Some are scratched and nicked, showing evidence of utilization, but no attempt at shaping to a standardized form is evident. Presumably these represent workshop debris associated with the manufacture of projectile points.

SHELL AND STONE ORNAMENTS

Olivella Beads

Olivella shell beads, perforated along long axis. Range in length, 10-25 mm.; 1 from 26Wa1056, 2 from 26Wa1061, 1 from 26Wa1081, 1 from 26Wa1091, 4 from 26Wa1107.

Perforated Discs

Perforated disc beads of unidentified shell. Range in dia., 6-10 mm.; 2 from 26Wa1081, 2 from 26Wa1107.

Mussel Shell Pendant and Fragments

Irregular fragment of mussel shell, uniconically perforated near edge; 1 from 26Wa1107. Unmodified irregular fragments of mussel shell. No evidence of working; 2 from 26Wa1056, 2 from 26Wa1061, 1 from 26Wa1077, 3 from 26Wa1088, 1 from 26Wa1105, 3 from 26Wa1107, 3 from 26Wa1082.

Stone Pendant

Carved, keyhole shaped pendant. Length, 26 mm., dia. at rounded base, 14 mm. Two shallow punctates near rim of rounded end. Perforated for suspension at the opposite end. From 26Wa1092.

GROUND STONE

Several small, flat pieces of sandstone and basalt have their edges ground smooth. One is roughly circular, one is triangular, two are rectangular and one is nondescript.

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

Glass Beads [This section by John Witthoft]

A total of 539 glass beads are found in the collection. They may be classified into twenty-four types.

Type A: A sub-spherical, sub-tubular bead of opaque bone-white glass, usually the same length as its diameter, which has been cut from a tube and then rounded by tumbling. Many are asymmetrical. They do not show construction in successive zones and contain tiny spherical bubble holes. Their surfaces have a fused, glossy, but pitted and irregular appearance. They range from 3 to 10 mm. in dia. This bead type is known

mainly from California collections, where it and type B occur in huge quantities in the old pot-hunters' samples from cremations in the tops of shell-heaps and other sites. This bead type did not usually get into the Plains trade and is barely present in some Missouri Valley graves after 1850. It is sometimes present on Sioux ethnographic breast-ornaments of bone tubes, probably dating after 1870. This bead type on the Plains probably came with the late stages in the trade in *Dentalium*. The bead is so abundant in California collections that it may have a fairly long time span, and may not be a good close dating device. It was likely of Spanish manufacture. It is the most numerous type in the collection. A large group of type A beads, which also included one bead of type B, from the Shirley Mine Creek Site (26Wa1061), are fused and cracked, and look like the California lots that have gone through a cremation. This type is probably the shabbiest bead that ever came into the North American trade.

Type B: A sub-spherical to sub-tubular glass bead in the same sizes as type A, but in coralline d'Aleppo style, with a core of light greenish glass like modern bottle glass that looks black by reflected light, and a thick overlay of Indian red glass. Cut from tubes and imperfectly rounded by tumbling like type A, and with the same surfaces and same included spherical bubble holes. They differ from the coralline d'Aleppo beads of the Plains in their rough surfaces, bubble-holes, and other details. This specific type has been observed on only a few ethnographic objects of late 19th century date, associated with type A. Types A and B are very closely related in their technology and the two types form a complex.

Type B1: Coralline d'Aleppo beads with cores of opaque white glass, like those of 1840-75 on the Plains, with smoother surfaces than type B. There are only two of these, from the Clam Bead Site (26Wa1107). One is spherical, measuring 9 mm. in dia., the other is tubular, measuring 8 mm. The first has a pinkish-white core. This bead type occurs in the east in the 1700-1750 and 1840-1875 intervals, and perhaps at other times.

Type B2: Large seed beads, 3.5 - 4.5 mm. in dia., with a very small, slender core of pale green glass, covered with a thick secondary zone of translucent cherry-red glass. Two examples from the Sand Flat Site (26Wa1081), were associated with types A and B and with seed bead types F and G. These probably date between 1850 and 1870 in Pawnee sites.

Type C: A spherical large bead, perfectly rounded and smoothed, without bubble holes but possibly wire-wound, of very deep cobalt blue, translucent glass, 9 by 11 mm. in dia. Several kinds of beads in this glass occur in Pawnee grave lots of 1845-1870, and some may be a trifle earlier than that.

Type D: Basket-bead (piece of thin-walled hexagonal tube, machine made and die-drawn) of cobalt blue glass, similar to type C, with rough non-fused ends, measuring 4-5 by 5-6 mm. These were in widespread use about 1900, but they are present in Pawnee grave lots that date between 1860 and 1870.

Type D1: Basket-beads of very deep blue cobalt glass, darker than types C and D, and of same form but their ends have been facet-cut to a sub-oval form, measuring 5 by 5 to 6 by 7 mm.

Type D2: Basket-beads of blue glass similar to type D, but made of three zones of glass, dark blue on light blue on dark blue, not facet cut, measuring 5.5 by 6 mm.

Type D3: Basket-beads of very pale blue glass, transparent, with cut facets like type D1.

Type E: A wire-wound oval bead of the same glass as type C, measuring 10 by 22 (?) mm. Only one example, from the Clam Bead Site (26Wa1107). One of the late wire-wound types of the Plains, probably dating in the 1860's.

Type F: Seed beads of sky-blue translucent glass, measuring 2 - 4.5 mm. in dia.

Type G: Seed beads of opaque white glass, of better quality than type A, with smooth surfaces, measuring 2.7 to 4 mm. These are the most abundant seed beads of 1820-40 on the Plains, but identical seed beads appear at other times in the East. The absence of opaque black seed beads in this size range and the presence of blue ones (type F) suggests that these date either close to 1820 or later than 1850, if we can apply Plains data to the group.

Type H: Cylindrical wire-wound beads of porcelain-like opaque white glass, better glass with more matte surfaces than type A. Fragments of three, 12 mm. in dia. These are occasional in the period 1840-60 on the Plains, but they may have earlier occurrences.

Type I: Seed beads, of translucent blue, lighter than type F, measuring 2.5 to 3 mm. in dia.

Type J: A very pale blue, almost transparent seed bead, 3 mm. in dia.

Type K: A seed bead of dull opaque light blue, 3.5 mm. in dia. These are typical of the periods 1815-20 and 1820-50 on the Plains, larger ones like type K being early.

Type L: A spherical wire-wound bead with many delicate lines of spiral windings on the surface, of translucent light amber-colored glass, measuring 10 mm. dia. This bead is exactly like beads of 1700-1750 in the east, but it is suspected that this specimen represents a reemergence of the type in the mid-19th century.

Type M: A wire-wound spherical bead of translucent pale cobalt-blue glass, 8 mm. in dia., of the mid-19th century.

Type N: A spherical wire-wound bead of opaque turquoise-blue glass, 10 mm. in dia., of the mid-19th century.

Type O: Two beads of transparent brilliant ruby-colored glass, 5.5 mm. dia., of a type not previously seen.

Type P: One long tubular bead with a small bore, of opaque pale lavendar glass, measuring 2.8 by 17 mm., also not seen before.

Type Q: A seed bead of translucent deep aqua green, 4 mm. in dia.

Type R: A fragment, surfaces not preserved, of a large glass bead with an opaque sulfur-yellow core overlaid with opaque deep cherry-red glass; an unfamiliar type.

Type S: Fragment of a large translucent glass bead, faceted with a slender core of slightly opaque lavender glass, generally circular, many layers of glass.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF GLASS BEADS

Artifacts / Bead Types	26WA1056	26WA1061	26WA1080	26WA1081	26WA1082	26WA1088	26WA1099	26WA1105	26WA1106	26WA1107	Sites
A	9	57		149				15	2	45	
B	10		1	91	1	1	1	19	1	20	
B1		2		5						2	
B2											
C			1	1							
D			1	1						1	
D1			1	2							
D2											
D3											
E										1	
F				3						1	
G	9			38				2		26	
H		4								2	
I				3				1			
J				1							
K				1						1	
L										1	
M											
N											
O	2										
P				1							
Q				1							
R		1									
S		1									
TOTALS	30	65	4	297	1	1	1	37	3	100	= 539

The foregoing descriptions and listings are essentially work sheets, from which it may be possible to work toward better data from the beads themselves and from California data on glass beads. The letter designations are merely an outline form, not labels for types.

Types A and B make up most of the sample. These types came into the Plains trade in an occasional and sporadic manner, apparently about 1870. They occur in great abundance in California, and were probably of Spanish origin. Because of their abundance, and because our knowledge of Spanish crafts suggests slow technical change and little invention and technological improvement over long intervals, types A and B may have a long time span and thus may be poor time markers. It is doubtful that these types were in existence prior to 1800 however, judging from what we know of Spanish and other trade beads on the Plains.

Although some of the types, such as the basket beads, were being made as late as 1900, there are no types in this collection that were not extant before 1870. Seed beads of the types of 1870 and later are completely missing from the collection. There are only one or two beads that might pertain to 18th century types, but they are most likely of similar types of the mid-19th century. The total sample would be placed in the interval 1820-1870, and it is suspected that most of it would date between 1840 and 1870, with the bulk of the beads representing the tail-end of the period of Spanish control of California.

Some of the stone tools, especially arrowpoints, must be contemporary with these groups of trade beads. Many small obsidian side-notched arrowpoints of several sub-types are contained in the Smith Collection. It may be possible to correlate historic Numic point types with these bead types.

The material from the Shirley Mine Creek Site (26Wa1061) looks different from that of other sites. The burned beads suggest cremation in the California manner. Many of the non-obsidian notched points from this site look much like Yurok, Hupa, and other north California points on old ethnographic arrows. These would thus appear to be sites of the Washo or some other tribe rather than of any Numic band.

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Mother of Pearl Buttons

Flat disc shape. Range in dia. 9-15 mm. Two and four hole specimens: 1 from 26Wa1060, 2 from 26Wa1081, 1 from 26Wa1107, 1 from 26Wa1173.

Glass Buttons

Circular, raised ridge encircles holes in center. Range in dia. 10-15 mm. Two and four hole specimens: 1 from 26Wa1056, 1 from 26Wa1081, 2 from 26Wa1107, 2 from 26Wa1061.

Porcelain

One fragment of pendant made from porcelain sherd. Uniconically perforated near edge: 1 from 26Wa1060. Unworked porcelain sherd: 1 from 26Wa1081.

Ring Set

One ruby-red glass setting for finger ring. Oval in outline, flat in cross-section. From 26Wa1081.

Bottle Glass

Three fragments of bottle glass show evidence of having been worked. One fragment is made into a roughly triangular shape. Provenience unknown.

Metal Artifacts

One fragment of a very rusty knife blade, and a square-cut nail 8.5 mm. long. Provenience unknown.

Bullets

Two spherical bullets, dias. 99 mm. (for a 38 caliber gun) and 10.5 mm. (for a 41 caliber gun). The first, from 26Wa1107, is probably for a cap and ball pocket pistol, a Colt Navy or a Manhattan, of the 1840-65 period. The second, from 26Wa1105, is probably for a Northwest trade gun (identified by John Witthoft).

MISCELLANEOUS ARTIFACTS

Quartz Crystals

A collection of quartz crystals of varying sizes, of which the largest is 6.5 by 3.0 mm., the smallest 1.5 by 0.6 mm.; virtually all show evidence of battering on their ends, but they are otherwise unshaped.

Semi-Mineralized Bone

Splintered fragments of large mammal bone are conspicuously heavy for their size, suggesting mineralization. Identity of the bone is unknown, but it is attributed to a very large mammal because of the thickness of the fragments.