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## THE BELL SITE, Wn9, AN EARLY HISTORIC FOX VILLAGE

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### PART I. ARCHEOLOGY

#### Introduction

Those of us who were excavating at the Reigh Old Copper cemetery during the summer of 1953 were told by local residents about the discovery, made years before, of an Indian "chief" who had been buried astride his horse in a location immediately to the west. Our preoccupation with salvaging information from the Reigh site, which was being destroyed by gravel mining operations, probably allowed us to only nod our heads and say, "That is very interesting!"

Well, there had been such a discovery on the hill to the west, a result of early gravel mining, but the "chief" had been buried near the horse, not on it, and it was reported in the Oshkosh *Daily Northwestern* on July 20, 1911. The find is described in the present report under the section on burials.

This site again came to notice in 1958 when gravel mining operations were resumed and Neil Ostberg, of Milwaukee, began collecting activities as the stripping of the topsoil proceeded. When, in the spring of 1959, it appeared that the entire site would soon be destroyed, Ostberg brought the situation to the writer's attention. Ostberg's collection from the site was remarkable in that it contained both aboriginal artifacts and trade materials of the early historic period. The pottery was unlike any of the known Wisconsin types, and, in view of the presence of trade goods, it appeared as if this might be a village site of one of the Central Algonkian tribes which had fled to Wisconsin from their former habitat east of Lake Michigan during the period of the Iroquois wars.

On May 23 the site was tested with Professor Baerreis's

category of scrapers. There was only one specimen in the form of a finished scraper (Fig. 18, Y). One or two of the small nondescript flaked implements might have been utilized in scraping, but it is apparent that stone scrapers early disappeared from use.

### Drill

Again, only a single specimen was found to represent a type of implement which is usually found in greater numbers on prehistoric sites. The drill is shown in Fig. 18, Z.

### Gunflints

Gunflints are of both native and European materials and manufacture. The European flints are tan or honey-colored and of the French spall variety. The Indian-made flints are of local chert, chipped on both sides to a squared outline. The flints are much battered, some showing use with the fire-steel. Fig. 20, A-E, are French. Fig. 20, F-H, are of native manufacture.

### Miscellaneous Chipped Stone

Nine chipped chert implements are too crude or fragmentary to permit identification or classification. A total of 288 chert flakes were recovered in the excavations. Thirteen artifacts or flakes were of Hixton silicified sandstone, the only known source of which is the Silver Mound in Jackson County, about 100 miles west of the site (Porter, 1961).

### Glass Artifacts

#### Beads (Fig. 21)

Although we sifted all dirt through  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch mesh screens and, hence would have been likely to have missed seed beads

TABLE 2. DIMENSIONS (MM) OF TRIANGULAR PROJECTILE POINTS.

	NO.	LENGTH				V	WIDTH				AV. L-W RATIO	r for L AND W
		RANGE	MEAN	STD. DEV.			RANGE	MEAN	STD. DEV.	V		
TOTAL SERIES	35	15-31	24.3	4.8	19.7		11-19	15.1	1.9	12.7	.62	.41
LONG POINTS	21	20-31	27.3	3.6	13.1		11-19	15.1	2.0	13.8	.55	.72
WIDE POINTS	14	15-24	19.8	2.8	14.2		12-17	15.0	1.8	11.8	.76	.92

that there were very many of them. We spotted none during our work.

Large glass beads were fairly numerous. The most common form is oval to round, of spun translucent glass. These beads are often made of poor quality glass and the layers are usually not fully fused. There were 43 beads of this type (A).

Next in number are opaque white, ovoid glass beads which also occur, rarely, in more rounded shapes. Total number of this class is 28 (B).

Dark blue stick beads, sometimes slightly curved, are represented by 9 specimens (C).

Two translucent amber-colored beads (D) are of the same disc shape as the blue "man-in-the-moon" variety, but lack designs.

Large translucent glass beads with 8 facets occur in amber (5) (E), blue (10) (F), green (1), and white (3) colors.

Of the 11 polychrome beads, 4 are of the stick variety (J) and the remaining are ovoid. Colors are limited to white, blue, green, and red (light and dark) (I).

There were 2 fluted translucent blue glass beads found (H).

Nine miscellaneous glass beads include ovoid and "doughnut" shapes in translucent blue and green glass (G).

### Glass Fragments

Seven small fragments of thin glass were found. Five of these may have come from mirrors; two are evidently from small bottles.

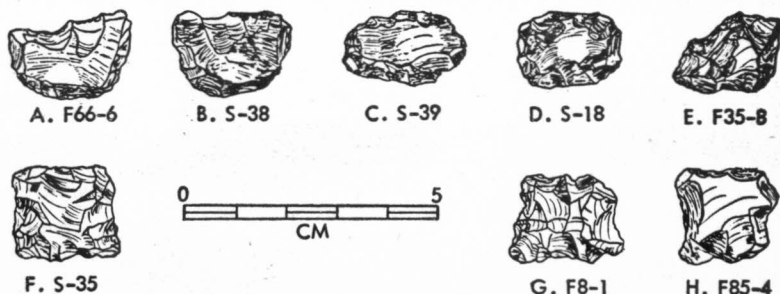


FIG. 20. Gunflints. A-E, French; F-H, Indian.

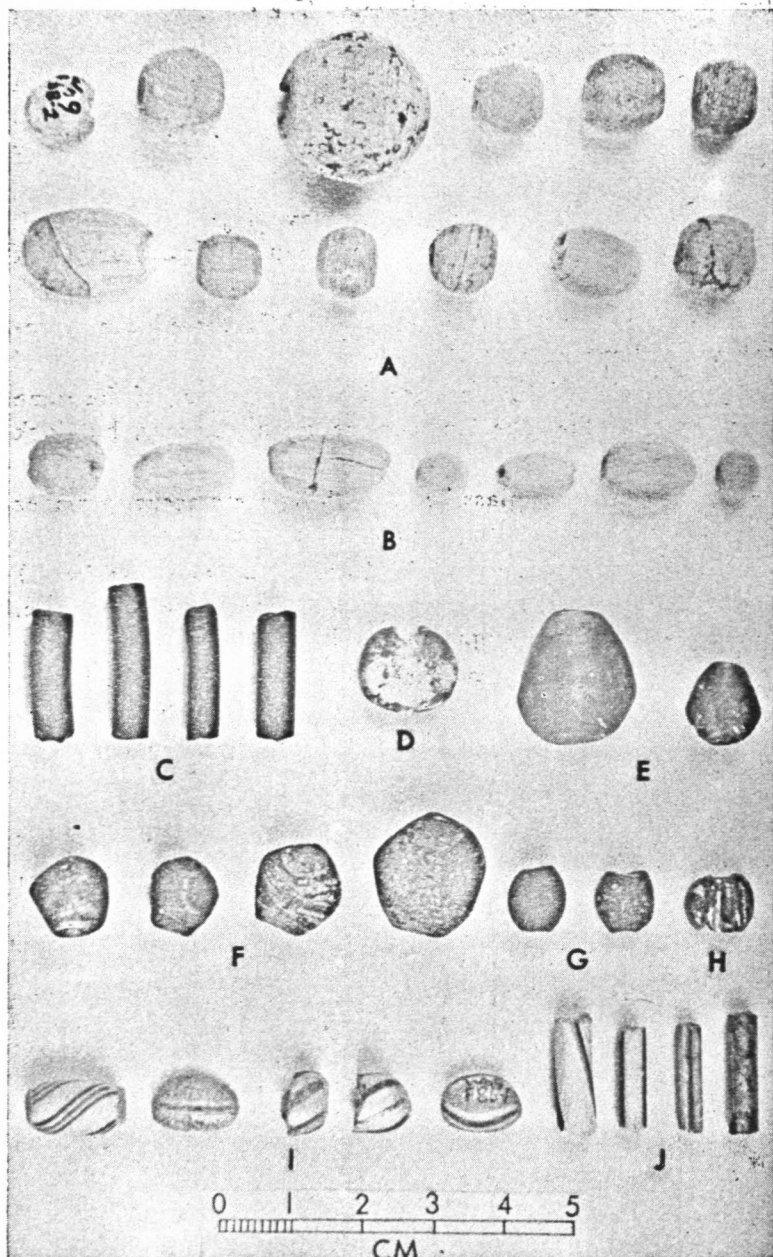


FIG. 21. Glass Beads.

the Sauk, as the makers of Type II pottery. But if that were the situation, some other Central Algonkian group not so close to the Fox could be the author. The Potawatomi or Mascouten seem the next most logical as a tentative correlation. I am confident that additional work in the future will give Type II pottery a more definite tribal assignment.

### Summary

For the first time, the aboriginal culture of the Fox Indians has been partially revealed. The Bell site was occupied during the period 1680-1730, a critical time when aboriginal material culture was utilized side-by-side with European equivalents. Early during this period, however, stone axes, knives, scrapers, drills, and bone awls were replaced by iron implements. Brass and glass were also taking their toll of native implements and ornaments.

Historical records of bear ceremonialism, dog sacrifice, the medicine lodge, food, housing, and other customs have been supplemented by archeological data, or vice versa.

Investigation of the Bell site was a salvage project. The resources were limited and again I wish to express my sincere thanks to Neil Ostberg, the Scouts and staff of the Oshkosh Public Museum, the illustrators of this report, and all others who aided or abetted the work.

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