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## DOGTOWN: A Historical and Archaeological Study of a Late Historic St. Croix Chippewa Community

Robert A. Birmingham

*In 1982 the Burnett County Historical Society, in conjunction with the Beloit College Archaeological Field School, conducted a multiphased research project on a somewhat legendary Historic period Chippewa site known locally as Dogtown. The objectives of the research were to determine the location of Dogtown, describe the nature and history of the site, and provide a historical framework from which its importance in terms of local and regional history could be assessed. The study combined the collection of oral history, an extensive literature search, and archaeological survey and test excavations. Dogtown was found to be a fairly recent (early 20th century) settlement located in a remote part of Burnett County. A probable predecessor settlement (late 19th century) is located nearby. Although the core of the settlement was a single extended family, the site functioned as an important seasonal gathering spot for area Chippewa. In general, Dogtown was found to be representative of Late Historic socio-economic adaptations of the non-reservation St. Croix Chippewa in northwestern Wisconsin.*

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DOGTOWN RESEARCH PROJECT

#### OBJECTIVES

There are few life long residents of Burnett County, Wisconsin and vicinity who are not familiar with an old Chippewa community called "Dogtown." For some, it was one of the original Chippewa villages in the area, a predecessor of the modern Danbury Indian community. Others know it because of stories concerning an epidemic that decimated its population. Still others remember it as the place where John Kenebec and his family lived in the early part of this century. The stories vary but the persistence of the place name in local folklore identifies it as an important feature of both local Native American and general Burnett County history.

Where and what was Dogtown? Recently these questions were raised by researchers conducting an archaeological and historical site survey of the St. Croix River drainage in connection with the National Park Service's development of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Commonwealth Associates 1977, 1978; Perry 1982). Preliminary investigations indicated there were a number of possible locations of the community. The researchers also reported that there were numerous interpretations concerning the history of the community and origin of its name. They concluded that much more historical and archaeological research was needed to adequately resolve the questions concerning Dogtown.

This report is the result of such research. It details the results of a six month study conducted by the Burnett County Historical Society, made possible through

levels of Feature 1 produced large concentrations of both machine cut and wire nails. Many had obviously been used and some appeared to have been burned. This together with the other evidence of burning both in and outside of the feature leads to the suggestion that the nearby house, at one time, had been accidentally or intentionally burned and its debris deposited in Feature 1.

The fact that both wire and machine cut nails are present in concentrations further suggests that the original structure was built sometime shortly after 1880 when wire began to replace cut. Since someone bothered to clear and dump the debris, it is probable that the structure was subsequently rebuilt. Perhaps the nail concentrations represent an attempt to reclaim usable nails—the discards winding up in the garbage hole.

Other datable artifacts support a late 19th century or very early 20th century date for the contents of the feature. Among these are the “hole-in-top” tin can—a predecessor of the modern “sanitary” can—and the remains of a woman’s high lace shoe. Waste flakes and other prehistoric lithic material were found mixed with the later primary deposit. Elsewhere in Test Pit 2 prehistoric lithic material was found distributed to a depth of 50 cm with a notable concentration between 20 and 30 cm below the present ground surface.

Animal remains recovered from Feature 1 are from deer, muskrat, turtle, and clam. The remains were most heavily concentrated in the lower levels of the feature and were numerically dominated by muskrat bone. In general, the frequency of muskrat at the site along with the remains of mink (Test Pit 1) and artifacts identified as “muskrat” spears indicate that hunting/trapping for pelts was an important economic pursuit at the site.

### Test Pit 3

Figure 17 depicts the stratigraphic profile of Test Pit 3. It consists of a thin sod layer, a 13–25 cm dark brown A Zone or humus, and an underlying light brown B Zone of sandy loam. Cultural material was concentrated in the bottom level of the humus and top level of Zone B. Much of this was animal bone representing deer and muskrat. Artifacts recovered from this excavation unit were all from late in the Historic period and contemporaneous with artifacts from elsewhere on the site (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Vertical distribution of cultural material, Test Pit 3 (47–Bt–70).

	A-Level 1	A-Level 2	B-Level 1	Total
Beads	1	—	1	2
Stoneware Fragments	2	—	2	2
Earthenware Fragments	—	—	1	1
Wire Nails	—	1	2	3
Machine Cut Nails	4	4	13	21
Bottle Glass	—	6	20	26
Window Glass	—	—	4	4
Animal Bone	5	42	68	115
Clam Shell	1	2	2	5
Total	13	55	113	181

## Description of Cultural Material

Artifacts and other cultural material recovered during the course of archaeological investigations at 47-Bt-70 are described below. Measurements are given in metric units, except where convention or common sense dictates otherwise.

The small amount of prehistoric material encountered at the site was all lithic in nature and appears to be the byproducts of stone tool manufacture. The assemblage consisted of 47 flakes and seven pieces of shatter. Most (44 or 81%) of this material was quartz, but cherts, Gunflint silica, and taconite were also used. Judging from the smooth cortical surfaces found on some of the specimens raw material was locally acquired stream cobbles. The prehistoric material was recovered only from Test Pits 1 and 2 with the heaviest concentration from the latter.

For convenience and to facilitate comparison with the 47-Bt-101 assemblage, the historic material is classified and described within categories representing functional contexts of utilization.

## Personal Context of Utilization

### Beads

Three hundred and seven tiny glass seed beads of various colors and one large black glass necklace bead were recovered. They were found in all three test pits although they were most heavily concentrated on Test Pit 1. All of the beads are "drawn" or produced by the Hollow Cane method of manufacture. This involves the introduction of an air bubble in the molten mass which is then drawn between two rods. After the tube hardens, it is cut into segments. The bead segments are often shaped by tumbling in sand and ash.

The classification of beads from 47-Bt-70 follows Kidd's system (1970) as applied by Spector (1976). In this classification system, Hollow Cane beads are categorized by classes that reflect the evolution and complexity of the manufacturing technique. The classes of Hollow Cane beads are:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Class I   | Simple monochrome tubular beads.                              |
| Class II  | Derived from Class II, but shaped by reheating and tumbling.  |
| Class III | Derived from Class I, but with two or more layers of glass.   |
| Class IV  | Derived from Class III, but shaped by reheating and tumbling. |

Most beads from the site are Class II. Class IV beads are also present, however, and consist of donut shaped seed beads that are red with white cores. This is considered to be a late form of a bead commonly referred to as Cornaline D'A-leppo (Orchard 1975:100).

Within classes, beads are sorted into types and given lettered designations (a. . . .n). The criteria used in establishing types depend on the nature of the collection but are arranged so that they follow a progression from simple to complex in terms of manufacturing processes. Only the Class II seed beads at 47-Bt-70 have more than one "kind" of bead. However, these are similar in all respects except color and therefore are classified as the same type. Color was used as the criterion for dividing this type into varieties which is the final level of classification in the Kidd-Spector system. Varieties are given numerical designations (1. . . .n).

TABLE 5: Glass beads (47-Bt-70).

Class/Type/Variety		Description		Frequency
Seed Beads	Ila1	Color: Clear		22
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.0–1.3 mm		
		Width 1.7–2.1 mm		
	Ila2	Color: Frosted, amber in light		1
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.3 mm		
		Width 2.0 mm		
	Ila3	Color: Opaque white		73
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 0.7–1.0 mm		
		Width 1.6–2.0 mm		
	Ila4	Color: Opaque yellow (Munsell: 5Y8.5/8)		1
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.2 mm		
		Width 1.9 mm		
	Ila5	Color: Semi-translucent pink (Munsell: 7.5 RP 8/4)		2
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.1 mm		
		Width 1.5–1.7 mm		
	Ila6	Color: Semi-translucent yellow green (Munsell: 7.5 GY 7/10)		3
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.0–1.5 mm		
		Width 2.0–2.5 mm		
	Ila7	Color: Semi-translucent green blue (Munsell: 5 B 8/4)		100
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 0.9–1.4 mm		
		Width 2.0–2.1 mm		
	Ila8	Color: Translucent blue (Munsell: 7.5 B 6/10)		1
		Shape: Donut		
		Size: Length 1.5 mm		
		Width 2.0 mm		
	Ila9	Color: Opaque turquoise (Munsell: 7.5 B 6/8)		54

	Shape:	Donut	
	Size:	Length 0.8–1.5 mm Width 1.9–2.3 mm	
IIa10	Color:	Opaque purple blue (Munsell: 7.5 PB 7/8)	29
	Shape:	Donut	
	Size:	Length 0.9–1.2 mm Width 1.9–2.0 mm	
IIa11	Color:	Opaque purple (Munsell: 7.5 PB 4/12)	16
	Shape:	Donut	
	Size:	Length 0.9–1.7 mm Width 1.6–2.2 mm	
IIa12	Color:	Opaque grey (Munsell: 10 B 8/1)	1
	Shape:	Donut	
	Size:	Length 0.9 mm Width 1.5 mm	
IVa1	Color:	Translucent red exterior (Munsell: 5 R 4/12) and white core	4
	Shape:	Donut	
	Size:	Length 1.0–1.2 mm Width 1.8–2.0 mm	
Necklace bead			
IIa1	Color:	Black (burgundy in intense light)	1
	Shape:	Irregular barrel	
	Size:	Length 12.0 mm Width 6.5 mm	

Table 5 presents the classification and descriptive data for the beads recovered at 47-Bt-70.

### Hair pins

Three ferrous metal specimens were found and measure 6–7 mm in length.

### Buckles

- 1) Four specimens are ferrous metal and have rectangular frames with rounded corners. All have a hinge bar with two prongs (Fig. 18a–d). Length, 28–33 mm; width, 21–23 mm.
- 2) Two specimens have frames and prongs that are made from two interlinked parts (Fig. 18e,f). These are probably vest or suspender buckles. One is ferrous metal and is 29 mm long and 20 mm wide. The second is brass and is 30 mm long and 22 mm wide.

TABLE 10: Vertical distribution of cultural material, Test Pit 1 (47-Bt-101).

	A-Level 1	A-Level 2	B-Level 1	Total
Glass Bead	1	—	—	1
Buttons	2	—	—	2
Clasp	1	—	—	1
Eye	1	—	—	1
Toy Fragments	4	—	—	4
Tin Can Fragments	13	1	—	14
Bottles	4	—	—	4
Bottle Fragments	135	8	—	143
Dishware Fragments	4	—	—	4
Scissors	1	—	—	1
Door Lock Part	1	—	—	1
Wire Nails	24	1	—	25
Machine Cut Nails	5	—	—	5
Window Glass Fragments	—	45	—	45
Knife Blade	1	—	—	1
Cartridges	6	—	—	6
Harness Buckle	1	—	—	1
Wire Fragments	12	1	—	13
Plastic Fragments	3	—	—	3
Clam Shell	5	—	—	5
Animal Bone	3102	13	—	3115
Total	3326	69	0	3395

pieces of charred wood. Other material included cartridges, fabric, buttons, bottle fragments, tin cans, tin fragments, and 17¢ in coins. The coins bore dates between 1905 and 1919. Other dateable material also indicates early 20th century deposition.

Three cultural features were encountered in the test pit (Fig. 51). One of these (Feature 4) was a small basin shaped refuse pit. It measured 50 cm in diameter and 20 cm in depth (Fig. 52). It contained remnants of a modern sanitary food can, a tar paper washer, and several wire nails. The other two features were small (5–10 cm in diameter) postmolds that were aligned perpendicular to the main axis of the house structure.

The presence of numerous tar paper washers indicates that the northwest half of House Structure 12 was constructed with tar paper components. The post molds indicate that the roof was supported by pole sized posts driven into an earthen floor. The presence of charcoal and burned wood provide evidence that the structure was burned.

### Description of Cultural Material

A small amount of prehistoric material was found on and in the vicinity of 47-Bt-101. All of this material was recovered by surface collection, or in one case, shovel testing. This material consisted of two chert flakes, five quartz flakes, one

piece of quartz shatter, one broken quartz cobble, one small triangular quartz projectile point, and one chert stemmed projectile point. The triangular point is similar to arrow points used widely throughout the late Prehistoric period (after *circa* 600 A.D.) and the early part of the Historic period. The stemmed point was unfortunately misplaced during laboratory processing.

The prehistoric artifacts were found widely scattered over 25 acres on both sides of Dogtown Creek. This suggests that aboriginal usage of this part of the creek was limited to brief (hunting?) excursions.

The historic artifacts from 47-Bt-101 are described below.

### ***Personal Context of Utilization***

#### **Bead**

One drawn turquoise (Munsell: 7.5B 6/8) seed bead was recovered from Test Pit 1. It is identical to beads classified as IIa8 at 47-Bt-70. It is 1.5 mm in length and 2.3 mm in width. ✓

#### **Buttons**

##### ***Shell***

One elliptical shaped button with a depressed center and two holes (Fig. 53a). 13 mm in diameter.

##### ***Metal***

- 1) One top to ferrous metal two piece button. It has a circular depressed center and two holes (Fig. 53b). 11 mm in diameter.
- 2) One ferrous metal button with large central hole (Fig. 53c). 17 mm in diameter.

#### **Clasp**

One clasp similar to those that used to be associated with girdles (Fig. 53f).

#### **Buckle**

One brass buckle with three swivels. This apparently is a suspenders buckle (Fig. 53e). It is 54 mm in length.

#### **Eye**

One metal eye to shoe or boot (Fig. 53d).

#### **Pencil Lead**

- 1) One cylindrical section.
- 2) One tabular section (Fig. 55a).

#### **Toys**

All toys are from Test Pit 1.

#### ***Doll Parts***

- 1) One probable leg section is made from porcelain and bears a painted ribbon (Fig. 54a).
- 2) One ceramic arm section (Fig. 54b).