

TECHNICAL REPORT

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION: STUDENT SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAM (SST)

SYNOPSIS OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE CLARNO BASIN
NORTH-CENTRAL OREGON: 1970-1977

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Features 25 and 28 seem to suggest in-place activities. The former possesses just enough order to suggest "roasting" activities, and Feature 28 may be a butchering locale. At present it is thought that these three features reflect roughly coeval events, but not necessarily the latest ones at the site. One radiocarbon date of 0 ± 80 years B.P. (Gak 3865) was obtained from a charred limb fragment (Feature 27) in a planar association with these features, but is now considered suspect in terms of accuracy and/or provenience.

Some manifestations of what are considered to be among the latest occupational events at Indian Canyon-2 were exposed in 1976 and 1977. These lie concentrated around and in association with a large tuffaceous boulder, referred to as the "Datum Rock" (Figs. 5,6) which originated from the nearby cliff. Apparently, the boulder rolled into the site as talus debris sometime after the earliest occupation(s). Thereafter, it seems to have become a major focus of activity for site inhabitants and has, consequently, become a primary area of study during the past two years.

Those features that are thought to be purposefully associated with the boulder in late times comprise Features 31, 43 and 47 (Fig.5). Feature 31 is a rich lens of discretely scattered bone fragments of several mammalian genera. Many of these are long bones which have been longitudinally split, presumably for marrow extraction. The remainder includes mainly a variety of ribs, scapulae, mandibles, teeth and various other cranial parts. Many of these bones were charred, so it is probable that this feature constitutes a refuse area. For example, a scapula was uncovered within this feature in 1977 exhibiting a scorched spot exactly corresponding with an underlying extinct ember.

Specifically, mammalian genera from Feature 31 and other parts of the site comprise: deer (*Odocoileus* sp.); coyote (*Canis latrans*); woodrat (*Neotoma* sp.); jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*); brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus* sp.); bobcat (*Lynx rufus*); beaver (*Castor canadensis*); porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*); and other unidentified small rodent remains, many of which may be intrusive. A small amount of avian remains have been found, and the freshwater mollusk (*Margaritifera* sp.) is represented in minor quantities. As yet, no fish remains have been observed.

Feature 47 lies between and adjacent to the bone accumulation (Feature 31) and the "Datum Rock" and consisted of a small but moderately distinct lens of wood ash and charcoal. Its significance is that it is the only feature so far noted that shows definite signs of an actual fire. A charcoal sample from this lens was submitted for radiocarbon dating and yielded a date of 335 ± 90 B.P. (QC-465) which seems to be one of the latest occupational events at the site.

One of the more intriguing associations is Feature 43 which was also exposed in 1977. Here a total of fifteen beads, cut from mammal long bones, were located *in situ* directly below the "Datum Rock" over an area of about $1/3$ square meter (Fig. 5). The median dimensions of these beads are ca. 2×4 mm., and the ends had all been smoothed (Fig. 7a). They were fashioned from possibly tibias of a mammal approximating a wood rat (*Neotoma*) in size. Among these, a single glass bead, possibly wire-wound, exhibiting a blue paste glaze was recovered that was well within the size range of the bone specimens. Its outline is mildly barrel-shaped, and both ends show rounding suggestive of fire polishing (Fig.7b).

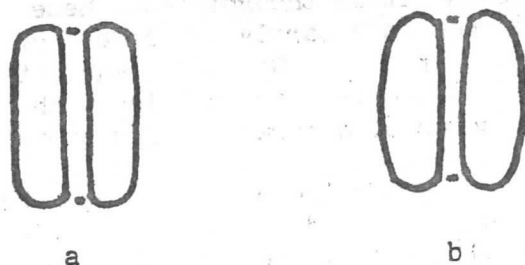


Figure 7. Enlarged cross sections of the two bead forms present in Feature 43. Form 'a' is fashioned from cut mammal long bones and smoothed on the ends. Note the abrupt angle between the center hole and the outside surface. Form 'b' is a glass bead of presumably European manufacture. Note the barrel-shaped outline and the rounded ends which suggest fire-polishing.

The significance of this blue bead is that it is of non-aboriginal origin, but the place and date of manufacture remain to be determined. However, it is similar to some carried by explorers and trappers as trade goods in the late 1700's and 1800's. At present, this bead constitutes the only non-aboriginal artifact found to date in the study area, and is therefore considered as something of an erratic. The presence of this bead probably indicates no more than minimal or indirect European contact, and through its association with Feature 47, its occurrence at 35WH13 can be dated at approximately A.D. 1615.

As for the more conjectural aspects of Feature 43, it would appear as if the bone beads were perhaps imitations of the glass specimen due to the isolated occurrence of the latter and the conformity of sizes. Secondly, the manner in which the beads were dispersed suggests accidental spillage over deliberate placement. The question arises as to why they are there at all. Interestingly, the beads lie directly below a natural "chair" formed in the "Datum Rock" which, incidentally, is frequently occupied by persons at the site while working on their notes. Imagining an earlier occupant sitting there, staring in frustration at the last bead from a broken necklace disappear into the loose sand below, is a tempting pastime.

A fairly complex group of features were located in 1976 and 1977, occurring just northeast of the "Datum Rock", which are probably associated temporally with those previously mentioned. Two small but very distinct clusters (Features 42, 44) lie approximately 2 meters apart in a northeast-southwest direction. They both have diameters approaching 0.5 m., and both consist of unaltered basaltic cobbles. At present their functions can only be supposed, but it is increasingly probable that they are post supports, perhaps for some kind of structure. Feature 42 has an associated charcoal stain to the north (Fig.5) which may lend credence to this notion.

Examination of the cobble clusters in Figure 5 show them to be a fairly common type of feature at Indian Canyon-2, but they occur in a wide range of forms and sizes. A brief classification scheme follows: