

THE MOOT SITE (SULLIVANS) OND 3-4 *

The Moot Site has been known for many years- in earlier times it was mentioned in the History of Madison County as the "burial place on the William Sullivan estate near Valley Mills ". The State designation number of Ond 3-4 locates it on the Valley Mills Road a few miles out of Munnsville, New York. The site has been known by several names, usually due to change in ownership of the land, but also as an effort to hide its location from vandals.

For many years, it was commonly known as the Sullivan site and a few years ago described in literature as the Shepardson site to disguise its location. The late Howard Shepardson had done considerable work on the site and had a representative collection from it. The site has seen many years of activity by collectors and relic hunters. In recent years more scientific work by amateur and professional archeologists has also occurred. Almost every Oneida Indian sites collector known to the author has a small sampling of the Sullivan site material.

Fortunately, the main portion of the site has always been a hay field or under cultivation, and for other than surface hunting has remained intact. This is due to the failure of the owners to grant permission to excavate, the field does have high crop value. The village site is spread over one complete field and part of another, including a hedge-row dividing the two fields. The site elevation is one thousand ten feet above sea level, the top soil a light loam, dark brown, with a tan clay subsoil over a probable limestone shelf. Oneida Lake is very visible from Ond 3, approximately thirteen air miles away.

The burial plots, to date, three are known, and middens have been thoroughly investigated over many years by relic hunters and recently by archeologists. Three years ago, the writer and a few friends got permission to screen some of the former middens that had seen so much activity. A rather nice sample came from this project and the next year arrangements were made with the owner to commence excavating the main field to some degree. This last year, (1972) similar arrangements were made and work continued on the site proper. Problems developed as they so often do in any excavation, the size of the project proved to be larger than anticipated and we are reporting an effort not carried to full completion.

The archeologist, on occasion, must speed up the process of excavation due to limited manpower and poor digging seasons. Our first season of exploring and defining the site limits, of screening a few old middens, was conducted leisurely as was most of the work of the next season on the site proper. Toward the end of the second season, a system of digging one five foot square and then skipping fifteen feet to the next five foot square was attempted; checkerboarding a larger area to get an idea of the all-over village settlement patterns. Figures 1, 2, 3 will show this plan of procedure to some degree.

(1)

* Monte Bennett

Unfortunately, a poor season concluded our work on Ond 3, coming in the form of a constantly rainy season for 1972. The standards of good archeology were observed even under rather trying conditions. This included two Chenango Chapter digs which proved to be an educational experience for all concerned, including the writer. A good friend, Theodore Whitney, supervised the digs on both occasions and was very helpful in giving the proper directions for techniques to be used. The Ond 3 field committee also included Richard Bennett, Verne Lindsey, and Eugene Travers. Another Chapter member, Gordon De Angelo, plus one of his able assistants, also joined us and established with transit our datum point and marked it well enough so that future archeologists may relocate and use it. The Moot site certainly needs a full scale excavation in the future with a large crew. Due to the shortage of our manpower and the size of the task, we terminated our activity for the present. We did, however, excavate and record a total of one hundred forty-five, five foot squares.

We would like to thank the owner of the field, Francis Moot and his family of Munnsville, New York, who permitted the excavations and who followed our work with keen interest. An arrangement which compensated the owner for minimum crop loss was made for the last two seasons.

The material recovered has proven not only interesting, but appeared in a quantity that permitted adequate statistical information on the sample. We have tried to establish the function of recovered artifacts and also attempted to divide them into types and varieties. A few of the tables on measurements, classifications, descriptions are included in this study. They may be of reference value to others conducting a project in research on materials of early historic Iroquois times.

Our project on the Moot site involved a number of people over a four or five year period. Our only burial information comes from Lawrence Taylor of Silver Lake, New York. Other information came from the field records of the late Howard Shepardson of Poolville, New York. Much of the information on previous work on this site was unavailable or not published. Past collections, for the most part, were rather small and further investigation does not seem to be warranted with the necessary extra effort involved. The names of the owners of all collections that were viewed and used in this study are here listed:

Lawrence Taylor	Stanford Gibson	Reginald Bigford	Gary Bennett
Theodore Whitney	Richard Bennett	John Stillman	John Slater
Douglas Clark	Richard Cole	Mike Murphy	Aaron Bigford
Terry Bennett	Kenneth Brooks	Fred Chesebro	

Probably, one person more than any other has provided the bulk of the physical labor and interest in this project. This is Reginald Bigford of Earlville, New York. He kindly permitted the writer to examine his entire collection from Ond 3 and to photograph for future use many of the more interesting and significant artifacts.

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OUR SCREENING PROCESS

After eight years on a number of Oneida sites, we decided to use the screen wherever possible to get a more complete picture of the material present on so many of these random dug areas. Very little screening had been done on the scale we used. At first, a quarter inch hardware cloth was used on a simple standing frame but so many of the smaller beads and very tiny artifacts seemed to still get by us. We since have used a three layer screen, each layer consisting of a movable frame on small wheels or with a sliding tray feature and all this mounted on a two by four frame with legs. This certainly has been instrumental in recovering many bead types which normally fell through. Being tilled for years, the site produced plow sole marks on the clay subsoil when we dug the last inch or so by trowel or hoe. We used the archeologist's pitfall- the shovel- on a most regular basis. The layer of the plow zone was simply shoveled on the screens where it could be sifted very quickly. The only time the shovel was discarded was during the actual scraping of the base to reveal the living floor pattern of post molds and hearths. This final step was done by hand.

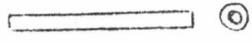
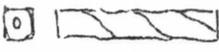
: This method is an excellent procedure for small areas, but we did discover that although we continued on in this manner, our progress was very slow. We did feel, however, that since the cultural layer had been disturbed beyond recognition, that the shovel work and the screening did little harm, if any. Two five foot squares were the average for an eight hour day for one person, with one exception. My father, intent on missing absolutely nothing, rubbed his screen until only fine stone remained, which of course, was very slow. We laughed at his laborious rubbing but in the end he appeared to find most of the small new bead types for the site.

HISTORICAL INSIGHT

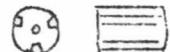
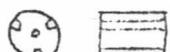
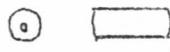
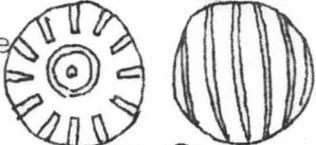
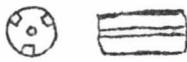
Since the Moot site occupation seems to fall into the historic period of the seventeenth century, the writer decided to include some of the historic information in this paper. Most of our material, undoubtedly, results from trade with the European outposts of the time. The Dutch from the east had located at Fort Orange in 1624 and within a short period a limited amount of certain trade items were being exchanged with the Mohawks and, no doubt, some of these filtered west to the Oneida villages or beyond.

The Iroquois obtained flintlocks initially during the period 1635-45 and one observer in 1642 spotted Mohawk warriors armed with flintlocks obtained from the Dutch. (Grassman, 1969) Furs were being taken to Fort Orange by the Oneidas and Mohawks in the late 1650's, no doubt, because of the high cost of trade goods offered by the French. (Hagerty 1963) In 1634, Van Den Bogaart, and two companions, visited some of the Mohawk villages and at least one Sinnekin (Oneida) castle. It probably was the Thurston site as was pointed out in a Chenango Chapter Bulletin report. (Whitney , 1964)

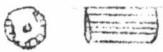
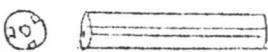
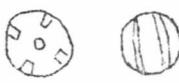
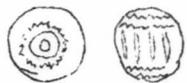
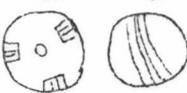
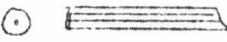
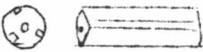
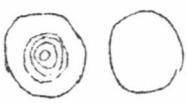
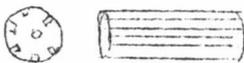
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(R) GLASS TRADE BEADS	Drawing, Number, Percent		
1. Dull red, round or oval and opaque. Some with rings around the hole of dark opaque, mixed with the dull red		1426	55.84
2. Red cane, round and usually long. A few with what looks like silver strips in the red itself.		192	7.48
3. Round red with green translucent core. A couple had an almost translucent red outer coating, then a black layer and finally the green translucent center.		62	2.48
4. Round black , opaque.		26	1.00
5. Black cane, opaque and short.		259	10.00
6. White cane, opaque, short, with three opaque red stripes.		1	.04
7. Round, opaque seed beads with some light green or translucent clear centers. Bead is red.		63	2.32
8. Red twist cane, opaque and long.		11	.42
9. Red cane, opaque with green translucent core, usually short.		171	6.60
10. Black cane, short, opaque with three opaque red stripes.		30	1.20
11. Black opaque seed beads. A few under a strong light are a very dark red.		12	.46
12. Round black with six white opaque stripes. A few have six, seven or eight thin white spiral stripes, still opaque.		14	.54
13. Round, blue , translucent.		7	.27
14. Round, light blue and opaque.		37	1.46
15. Round, red, opaque with clear translucent center.		35	1.36
16. Black , opaque with three opaque white stripes. This bead is short, cane.		27	1.02
17. White cane, opaque and short.		23	.92
18. Red cane, opaque with opaque black center.		78	3.12

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(R) GLASS TRADE BEADS (Continued)	Drawing, Number , Percent		
19. White, round and oval, opaque		1	.04
20. White cane, opaque, short, with three black opaque stripes.		8	.32
21. Red cane, opaque and short, with three opaque black stripes.		1	.04
22. Round, black, opaque with two opaque white spiral stripes.		2	.08
23. Black cane, opaque with three opaque red stripes on three opaque white stripes, short.		13	.52
24 Yellow cane, opaque, short.		7	.27
25. Green, round, translucent.		4	.16
26. Red, round, opaque with translucent blue center.		3	.12
27. Red, round, opaque, with black opaque center.		5	.20
28. Red cane, opaque and short with a translucent amber center.		3	.12
29. Red, round, opaque with an amber center.		5	.20
30. Round, opaque black, with twelve opaque white stripes, large.		1	.04
31. Dark blue, round, translucent.		1	.04
32. Round, and oval, opaque black, with four white spiral stripes.		1	.04
33. White seed bead, opaque and round.		7	.27
34. White, round, opaque.		1	.04
35. Dark blue seed bead, translucent and round.		7	.27
36. Red cane, opaque, short with three opaque blue stripes,		4	.16
37. Green seed bead, translucent, round.		1	.04
38 Blue cane, round and opaque.		4	.16

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(R)	GLASS TRADE BEADS (Continued)	Drawing, Number, Percent
39.	Red cane, Round and opaque, Very small ridges length of bead, long.	 2 .08
40.	Black, round, Opaque with three white circles on bead, Flush eyes.	 1 .04
41.	Round yellow, Translucent.	 1 .04
42.	Black cane, Round short, Opaque with one silver strip.	 6 .24
43.	Red cane, opaque, short, with three blue stripes on three opaque white ones.	 1 .04
44.	Red cane, round, opaque, with six white stripes, black core, long.	 1 .04
45.	Blue cane, round, opaque, with three white stripes, long.	 1 .04
46.	Black, octagonal, translucent, suspect this bead is historical and intrusive.	 1 .04
47.	Dark blue, round and opaque with four white opaque stripes.	 1 .04
48.	Round, blue, " star" mainly opaque.	 1 .04
49.	Round, red, opaque with three opaque blue stripes on three white ones.	 3 .12
50.	Round, opaque, long cane, white with three red stripes & three green ones.	 1 .04
51.	Round, green, opaque.	 1 .04
52.	Round cane, opaque light blue with three opaque red stripes.	 1 .04
53.	White cane, opaque with three blue and three white stripes alternating.	 1 .04
54.	Round clear (see through) seed beads	 3 .12
55.	Round white, opaque, large, with what looks like light brown lines circling the eye of the bead.	 1 .04
56.	Red cane, long, opaque, three white stripes alternating with three blue ones.	 1 .04

(R) GLASS TRADE BEADS (Concluded)	Drawing, Number,	Percent
(57) Dark blue, Cane, opaque	 1	.04
(58) Yellow, round, seed type, opaque.	 2	.08
(59) Red Cane, long, opaque. This was like # 8 but with shorter turns.	 2	.08
(60) Black. round, large with small opaque white lines running around the bead in no certain pattern. Commonly called " Roman Bead "	 1	.04
(61) Opaque, cane, long, whitish gray with twelve thin brown stripes.	 1	.04
Totals		2597 100.98

(In the author's manuscript, the drawings of the beads were hand colored with the result that they were more attractive and more informative. We find this impractical and overly expensive to do in our mimeographed publication. We suggest that interested persons might color their own copy. - Editor)

(S) EUROPEAN COINS Figure 13, O (one face)

The coin is a particularly prized artifact from any archeological site. The date of such a coin will indicate a time before which the site occupation could not have terminated. Coins, however, circulate for some time after coinage. From early recoveries from the Moot site, we note French coins of 1655, 1656 and 1657. Our excavation of 1972 turned up the 1656 Liard. Surface examination in 1973 produced a 1659 One Liard piece, a 1640 double Tournois and an one-quarter Ecu (cut in half) silver coin, date not discernible, but a coin ranging from 1640 to 1653.

(T) MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS

There were several items of special interest although they appear on many Iroquois sites. A brass knife or dagger hilt guard is shown Fig. 8, L . The Colonial type iron door or gate pintle (11,C) was probably used in the village. An iron chain (11,E) from its crude construction and place of recovery is an item of trade. We have the distinctive spiral ear ornament.(12, B,D,I) The keys (13, A,B) and the bale seals (13, p,R,s) could pertain to fur trading in the town. The brass spoon (13, Q) has a heel mark that may prove diagnostic. An unique brass item is shown in Figure 14, B. The gimlet like pieces (15, C,D) may be gun cleaning equipment. Scissors and shears were popular trade items. (Fig. 15 ,O,E,F) The lead bar(16Z) made bullets and effigies like this one:

