

DESCRIPTION OF EIGHT GLASS BEADS FROM THE NAKINA RIVER,
NORTHWESTERN B.C.

A Report for the Atlin Indian Band

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During the summer of 1973, in conjunction with the Atlin Indian Band gravehouse project, a number of sites on the Nakina River, northwestern B.C., were tested for archaeological potential.

The glass beads described below were recovered from test excavations at IgUg 6 a stratified Inland Tlingit village site called T'latenkaxo. This site is located on the right bank of the Nakina River, approximately 10 miles upstream from its confluence with the Sloko River, at Canoe Landing (IgUg 1).

The village of Canoe Landing marks the inland limit of canoe or boat navigation up the Taku-Nakina Rivers from the Coast, which is approximately 40 miles distant. Canoes were stored at the village, while trails were followed to interior points.

A total of 8 excavated beads were recovered from IgUg 6, representing 10% of the total artifact yield from the site. Beads have been described according to the classification system developed by Kenneth and Martha Kidd (1970). Both colour and size notation also correspond to Kidds' method of bead analysis. Size categories used refer to bead diameter, and having the following numerical values: very small, under 2mm; small, 2mm - 4 mm; medium, 4mm - 6mm; large, 6mm - 10mm; very large, over 10mm.

Following Karklin's (1971) suggestion that "transparent" is more descriptive than the term "clear", used by Kidd, the former term is adopted below.

Seven of the eight artifacts described are drawn beads, while the remainder is wound. The distinction between these types of manufacture are described in Kidd (1970) and Karklins (1971:3-4).

DRAWN BEADS

If* Tubular; cornerless; hexagonal; small; transparent, bright navy. This specimen has 18 irregular facets. The perforation is large, circular and even, while the ends exhibit regular breaks.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
5mm	3mm	2mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{45}$ TP #2

Artifact # IgUg 6: 17 (Fig. 1:c)

If* Tubular; cornerless; hexagonal; large; transparent, bright navy. The body facets on these two specimen are elongated irregular hexagons, with small triangular facets cut on each corner. Perforations are large and circular, the ends are pitted and uneven.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
7mm	8mm	4mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{45}$ TP #4

Artifact # IgUg 6:18 (Fig. 1:a)

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
7mm	8mm	4mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{15}$ TP #4 Artifact: IgUg 6:19 (Fig. 1:b)

11a 36 Round; medium; opaque; aqua blue. The surface of this bead is pitted; the perforation is even.

* Asterisked types are not yet described in the Kidd^s' type list.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
3mm	5mm	1mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{3}$ TP #1

Artifact # IgUg 6:8 (Fig. 1:g)

11a 40 Round; medium; opaque; robins egg blue. Only half this bead was recovered.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
3mm	5mm	-

Provenience: $\frac{D}{3}$ TP. #1

Artifact # IgUg 6:9 (Fig. 1:d)

11j* *Round?*
~~Tubular~~; large; transparent; eight grey with one shadow blue horizontal spiral, with white centre. Perforation and shape of bead are uneven

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
10mm	10mm	2.5mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{2}$ TP #3

Artifact # IgUg 6:5 (Fig. 1: e)

1Va9 Circular; medium; transparent redwood outer layer, opaque white inner layer. The surface of this cornaline d'Aleppo bead is pitted.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
4mm	5mm	1mm

Provenience: $\frac{D}{18}$ TP #3

Artifact # IgUg 6:3 (Fig. 1:f)

WOUND BEAD

W16* Round; small; transparent, scarlet

<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Perforation</u>
2mm	2mm	1mm
Provenience: $\frac{D}{3}$ TP #1		

Artifact # IgUg 6:12 (Fig. 1:h)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

All of the eight beads described were recovered from the stratum of mixed sand and silt, in the upper 45 cm of deposit in the site. This upper component also contained numerous post-hole and post-mould features, attributed to both smoke-house and habitation structures; and assorted locally manufactured items, as well as artifacts of glass, metal and leather. It has been associated with the use of gravehouses on the Nakina River, likely dating at this village site from the 1870's - 1890's.

The tubular, cornerless hexagonal beads (Fig. 1:a-c) are the predominant type, and have also been found in a number of gravehouse burials. They have similarly been recorded in burials all the way from Alaska, and western Canada, south to the San Joaquin Valley, in California (Woodward, 1965:10). Facetted beads are also known as "Russian Beads", and "O.P." beads, according to Woodward and were popular on the West Coast from the 1830's to around 1880. This bead type was commonly used for necklaces, and the ornamentation of garments.

The only other diagnostic type of bead from IgUg 6 is the Cornaline d'Aleppo specimen (Fig. 1:f), named because it was associated in the Italian export business with the city of Aleppo in the Near East (Woodward, 1965:19). These beads were popular in the latter part of the first half of the 19th Century, and were widespread among Athapascan speaking groups of North-Western Canada and Alaska, as well as down the West Coast.

The circular beads (Fig. 1:d, g) are useless for dating, since they have a long temporal range. They were used mainly to decorate clothing and various other items (Karklins, 1971:16).

Although wound beads (Fig. 1: h) may eventually be of use for dating purposes, a chronology has yet to be worked out.

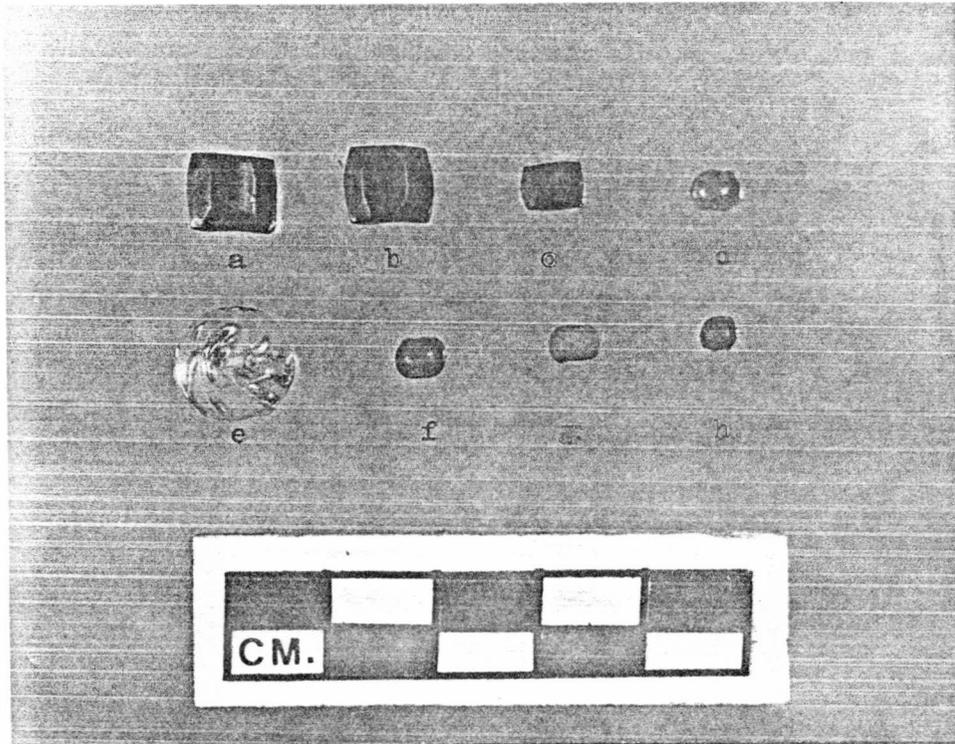


Fig. 1 Glass beads from IgUg 6, on the Nakina River, Northwestern B.C.

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