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SKEENA RIVER PREHISTORY

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GITLAXDZAWK:
ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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Clay Pipes N-15

One elbow fragment, eight bowl fragments and six stem fragments of clay pipes were recovered. They were examined by Ian Walker of the National Historic Sites Service who provided useful comments (1971).

A bowl and elbow fragment and a stem fragment had inscriptions, which could be identified. One (GdTc 1-95) was made by John Ford, a London firm whose distributor was the Hudson's Bay Co. from 1830 to at least the 1870's. It is identified by the letters "I" and "F" on both sides of the spur at the base of the bowl. On the inside face of the bowl is stamped "FORD * STEPNEY" (Plate 37h). A stem fragment (GdTc 1-38) has the number "78" stamped on the side and two other words, one identified as "GLASGOW". This is a Scottish pipe made by the firm of W. White in Glasgow between 1805-1955, but mostly during the 1840's (Plate 37i). The number is the type model which was called "Small Plain, T.D." in 1900. One mouth piece of a stem (GdTc 1-38) has been heavily chewed and trimmed by use.

Glass N-105

Glass fragments are commonly found all over the site. Articles of glass recovered in the excavation include beads, and fragments of bottles, drinking glasses, serving dishes, lamp chimneys, window glass and buttons.

(a) Beads N-14

The beads were examined by K. Karklins, of the National Historic Sites Service who considers them as typical trade beads between 1830 and 1880 (personal communication 1973). The following types occur in the collection:

- (a) Large facettted (8 x 9 mm), with diamond facets.
Dark blue with a light blue core (2 specimens).
- (b) Large facettted (7 x 10 mm) with pentagonal shaped facets.
Light opaque blue with lighter cores (2 specimens).

- (c) Small faceted (4.5 x 5.5 mm) with octagonal facets. Dark blue with light cores (1 specimen).
- (d) Tubular, faceted (5 x 5 mm). Dark translucent blue glass (1 specimen).
- (e) Large rounded (8 x 10 mm). Opaque light blue (2 specimens).
- (f) Small rounded (6 x 7 mm). Translucent dark blue (1 specimen).
- (g) Seed beads (3 x 4 mm) 1 white, 3 blue.
- (h) Polychrome (7 x 8 mm) red translucent glass with rows of small dots in black, yellow and blue (1 specimen).

(b) Bottle Fragments N-52

No whole, and few large fragments of bottles were recovered. Nothing resembling a bottle dump was found although such features are common at historic Indian villages in the region.

The bottom part of a square, light green bottle (GdTc 1-133) had the inscription "...HO WOLFE'S". It was identified by Olive Jones (personal communication 1975) of the National Historic Sites Service as the firm Udolfo Wolfe & Co. of Germany, established in 1848. The green bottle probably contained a "Schiedam Schnapp's" (Monroe 1967: 168, 169). Another large (8.8 cm) and thick, light blue square bottle (GdTc 1-132) probably contained some spirit.

Three fragments from the bottom of dark green wine bottles were recovered and show a pontil mark at the base (GdTc 1-26, 145, 198). This technique of manufacture was out of style by the late 1850's.

Three other fragments of square or panel bottles were found, one (GdTc 1-184) has no inscription, the other (GdTc 1-149) has an unidentified "...NE/DIR..." on two sides and a third (GdTc 1-85) is inscribed "PAINKILLER". This was identified as a bottle of "DAVIS VEGETABLE PAINKILLER". Apparently widespread in the Northwest, this medicine was found in southeast Alaska (Ackerman 1965:24) and southwest Alaska at Tikchik (VanStone, 1968:293).

CONCLUSIONS

Excavations at the Fortress were limited both in time and areal extent. Despite this fact, several conclusions can be reached in evaluating the site in terms of middle Skeena prehistory.

The prehistoric material culture items recovered are few and not very diagnostic. There is little tie-in with the nearby site of Gitaus and the relationship between the two as outlined in the oral history is unclear. Splitting adzes, planing adzes, bar abraders and faceted red ochre pigment pieces are all typical of the late period in the Prince Rupert harbour sequence, and are suggestive of strong coastal influence.

The historic trade goods, where identifiable as to temporal text, indicate a mid to late nineteenth century occupation at the site. The range of goods when compared to the Prince Rupert samples (Inglis 1973) is restricted, a fact which is likely the result of sample size, making the following observations premature at the best. Decorative items are few, and rolled copper tube tinklers are absent, although they are common at other historic sites on the north coast. Evidence of firearms is represented by only one flint.

There is good evidence of contact with the coast from the artifacts and from the faunal collection, where several species of shells and sea mammals were recognized. The nature of this interaction is difficult to assess at this time, as are any contacts with upriver peoples. The traditions which depict the Kitselas as being intermediaries between the coastal-interior trade have yet to be verified in the archaeological record.

The settlement pattern of the site in terms of house units and poles is well documented, but much work needs to be done on delineating the activity areas and the suggestive evidence for fortifications.

Also little can be said of everyday life at the site. Houses were spacious and a considerable amount of monumental art was present suggesting some degree of affluence. Artifact samples do little to verify this, and