

## HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE STEPHEN MACK HOUSE

by

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### ABSTRACT

*In September 1981, limited archaeological excavations were conducted at the Stephen Mack House in Winnebago County, Illinois. The house was constructed in 1839 and the Winnebago County Forest Preserve Commission is currently planning to restore the structure to its original appearance. The archaeological work was undertaken in order to provide details concerning the original land grade and entranceway. The excavations established the grade and determined that the present stepway is not original. The excavations also yielded a variety of 19th - 20th Century Artifacts as well as evidence of an early Late Woodland occupation.*

### INTRODUCTION

From September 2 to September 10, 1981, limited archaeological investigations were conducted by the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center, Inc., at the Stephen Mack House (11-Wo-256) on the Macktown Forest Preserve in Winnebago County, Illinois. The house is located in the NW ¼, SW ¼, NE ¼, Section 23 of T46N R12E. The work was undertaken for the Winnebago Forest Preserve District under the terms of a contract with the County of Winnebago. The fieldwork was conducted by the author and Edgar S. Oerichbauer, Executive Director of the Burnett County, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Stephen Mack, a former trader for the American Fur Company, built the house ca. 1839 and is acknowledged to be the first permanent white settler in Winnebago County. He was also the founder of the village of Pecatonic (Macktown), a settlement from which the modern town of Rockton developed in the mid-nineteenth Century (Carr 1898). The house is presently included in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Macktown Historic District (Figure 1).

The Winnebago County Forest Preserve is planning a phased restoration of the house as well as the nearby William Whitman Trading Post. The archaeological work was undertaken in order to provide

however, that all steps in the lithic reduction sequence are represented including what appear to be preforms or blanks. This, together with the presence of hammerstones, would suggest that a major activity at least at this part of the site was the production of stone tools from locally acquired raw materials.

## HISTORIC

Historic artifacts comprised the largest portion of the Stephen Mack assemblage. For convenience, this material is classified and discussed in terms of functional contexts of utilization.

### Personal Context of Utilization:

#### Adornment

post-1839

1. Glass bead. This is a light blue convexo-elongate bead with a raised "corncob" surface decoration. Seams extend the length of the bead and indicate it was molded rather than wire wound or drawn. It is 11mm long and 5mm wide (Figure 17).

#### Clothing

1. Buckles. Two specimens, 29mm and 31mm in length (Figure 18 A & B).
2. Buttons. Seven specimens.
  - A. One two-hole shell button 16mm in diameter (Figure 19 A).
  - B. One four-hole glass button 9mm in diameter (Figure 19 B).
  - C. One one-hole bone button 8mm in diameter (Figure 19 C).
  - D. One two-piece brass button with a brass eye set into a hole in the back. It has an embossed decoration on the face and is 13mm in diameter (Figure 19 D). This is similar to South's (1964) button Type 27 which he dates to the 19th Century after 1837.
  - E. One badly corroded two-piece metal button with a missing eye 14mm in diameter (Figure 19 E). This may be the same type as D above.
  - F. One metal button with a sunken panel with four holes (Figure 19 F). This is similar to South's (1964) Type 32 button which is also dated after 1837.
  - G. One large two-piece metal button with the back piece crimped over the front (Figure 19 G). The eye and eye attachment are missing. This specimen is 29mm in diameter.

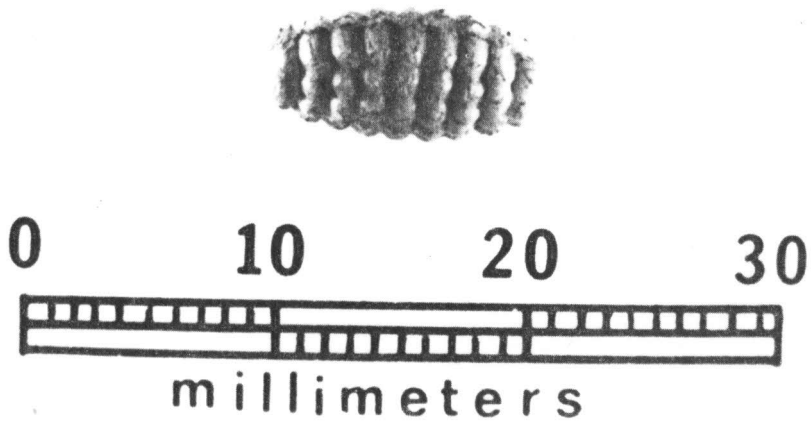


FIGURE 17: Glass Bead.