

Fitting, James E. and Mark J. Lynott

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Date: seventeenth century. Artifacts associated with a contact period camp site in St. Ignace, Michigan, include a medium sized barrel bead of blue glass and a seed bead of light blue glass. Both specimens are illustrated.

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PLANT REMAINS
By Fel V. Burnett

The only plant material recovered from the Sposito site was charcoal from Feature #1. This was identified as pine, probably red pine (*pinus resinosa*). This was a disturbed feature so there is not even a positive association with the prehistoric occupation.

CONCLUSIONS

The Sposito site was a shallow site with a low intensity of occupation. It was tested under salvage conditions and even the few features appear to be mixed. The principal components were Middle Woodland, Late Woodland and Historic. The very late types of Middle Woodland material which had been recovered earlier in the Steiner sewer trench occupation were not represented in the collection from the Sposito site.

Interpreting the economic adaptation of any group of occupants is not possible because of the mixed nature of the deposits. From the faunal remains, it is not possible to specifically identify the season of occupation(s) or the economic focus. On a purely speculative basis, we might suggest that the Middle Woodland occupation was based on summer fishing and the Late Woodland occupation on winter hunting, but this cannot be supported by the distribution in the mixed deposits. Indeed, the relative quantities of ceramics and projectile points relating to these occupations would suggest exactly the opposite. This is in line with the distributional patterns of artifacts with the projectile points showing a different areal distribution for prehistoric components from that indicated by the ceramics.

The Sposito site provides an archaeological record of a Middle Woodland occupation of possibly the second through fifth centuries of our era. It provides a record of a fairly uniform late prehistoric occupation of the 15th, and possibly early 16th centuries which we have not had for the Straits of Mackinac region before. The amount of information obtained from the site is in line with the amount of time which we could devote to the project. It was not a primary project but we could not let it be destroyed when we were in a position to do at least some salvage work there.

Chapter 5

THE NORGE VILLAGE SITE (SIS-16)

By James E. Fitting and Mark J. Lynott

EXCAVATIONS IN 1972

In early August of 1972, part of the survey team opening test pits in a number of areas throughout the City of St. Ignace, located what appeared to be a contact period camp site next to the Norge Village Coin Laundry. This site was given the survey number SIS-16. Since the results of this survey have had only a limited distribution, (Fitting and Fisher n.d.), they will be summarized here since they have a direct bearing on the field strategy adopted in 1973.

Two five by ten foot test pits were opened in the area in 1972. The first was located along the old Soo Line railroad right-of-way between State Street and Church Street. The sod was found to rest directly on the hard packed gravel of the railroad grade and the unit was abandoned. A second five by ten foot unit, with an east to west orientation, was opened to the north of the Norge Village building and between the laundry driveway and the picket fence that forms the property boundary. A very thick humus, 14 to 18 inches, was found resting on beach sand. Several possible features and a post mold were noted in the sand but none were distinctive and no pattern was evident in this small unit. A large quantity of late historic material, and some material of aboriginal manufacture was recovered.

The unit contained 356 items of European manufacture. This included 34 machine made and machine headed square nails and 44 round wire-drawn nails suggesting that the main phase of historic occupation was just after the turn of the century. This contention was supported by a bottle opener for crown cap bottles which did not become widespread until the early years of this century. The collection also contained eight small sherds of earthenware, stoneware and porcelain, ten fragments of rusted iron, one piece of plastic and 257 sherds of glass including 131 fragments of melted glass.

The items of aboriginal manufacture included nine pottery sherds and 36 pieces of chipped stone. Two of the sherds were

17th CENTURY TRADE GOODS

In 1972, the ceramics suggested a proto-historic occupation but the only item which appeared to be of Late 17th century European manufacture was the flake of bifacial retouch on European bottle glass. Several additional contact period items were found in 1973 but they do not form a large group.

These included ten scraps of copper which appear to have been cut from the sides of trade kettles and one complete artifact cut from a trade kettle. The artifact is a disk 3.6 cm in diameter with a single hole in the center (Figure 20, D). The disk was recovered from Level 2 in Test Pit 5. Eight of the copper scraps were found in Level 1 of Test Pit 5 and the other two were found in Level 1 of Test Pit 4.

A slightly smaller copper disk, lacking the central perforation, was found at the Lasanen site (Cleland 1971:23, 28), and a very rough disk of copper with a large central perforation (interpreted as a button) was found at the Bell site (Wittry 1963:18, 19). These may have been the proto-types for the silver decorative disks which become so popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

A peculiar lead seal (Figure 30, A) was recovered from Level 1 in Test Pit 6. One face is plain while the other, which is badly battered, has what appears to be part of a castle design on it. The plain face has "53" stamped on it.

The 1973 excavations yielded two glass beads, both of the cane type. Both came from Level 2 in Test Pit 5. One is a medium sized barrel bead of blue glass (Figure 30, B) and the other is a seed bead of light blue glass (Figure 30, C).

All of the contact period material came from two test pits, 4 and 5, with the exception of the lead seal from Test Pit 6. This material seems to be centered in the central part of the excavation but then so does almost all of the other material from the site.

HISTORIC CERAMICS

The historic ceramics from the site were few in number when contrasted with the amount of glass that was recovered. There were 89 historic sherds representing a minimum of 16 vessels, all but one shallow bowls, cups or crocks. The near absence of plates, platters and saucers is as striking as the infrequency of historic ceramics at a site with so much other late historic material.

The largest category of ceramics is that of plain white paste sherds with a clear overglaze. While no hallmarks were present much of this material was probably Ironstone china. Thirty-seven of the 89 sherds were plain examples of this ware with no type of decoration. Another 13 sherds were decorated. The decorated

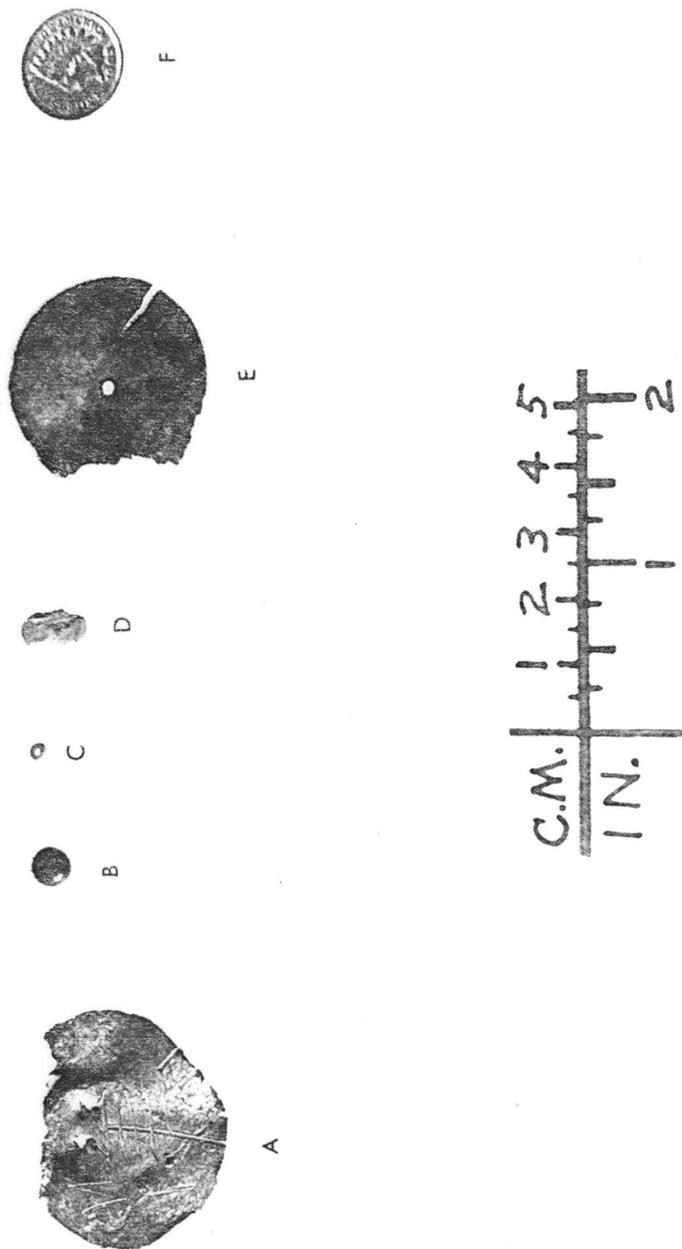


Fig. 30. Historic Artifacts from the Norge Village Site (Photo by George W. Davis).