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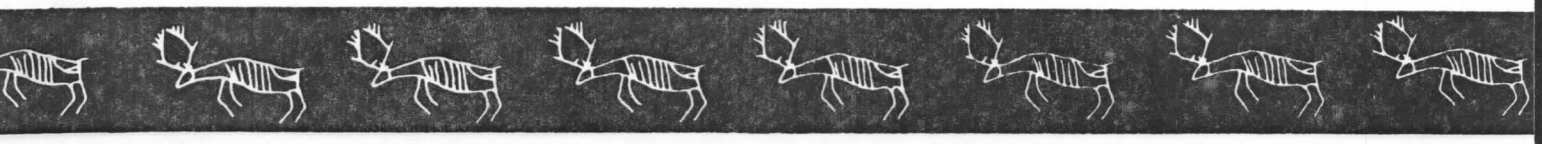

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LEST THE BEAVER RUN LOOSE: The Early 17th Century Christianson Site and Trends in Historic Neutral Archaeology

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ABSTRACT

The early historic, ca. A.D. 1615, Neutral Iroquoian Christianson village site (AiHa-2) has proved to be integral in the development of the historic Neutral sequence and the understanding of fur trade related events in early 17th century southern Ontario.

The following aspects of the Christianson site will be emphasized: 1. an examination of the ecological factors which may have influenced the placement of the village; 2. the morphology of the site, focusing on interior longhouse planning; and 3. analysis of the artifact assemblage. The artifact descriptions are primarily directed at those parts of the assemblage which could be attributed to ethnohistorically documented accounts of contacts the Neutral had with aboriginal groups and Europeans. While many of the connections are inferred archaeologically to have been based in the pre-European contact period, certain branches developed or, more possibly, were amplified after the Neutral became involved on a large scale in the fur trade some time around 1615. The desire of Europeans to deal directly with the Neutral about this time is interpreted as being the initiation of intensive participation of the Neutral in the fur trade.

Ceramic, lithic, shell, and European artifacts, perhaps certain faunal remains, and aspects of longhouse interments indicate the Christianson site belongs to the period when Europeans first entered Neutralia. As such, the identification of the intensity of foreign manifestations are important in identifying the pervasiveness of the effect of Europeans on Neutral relationships. While there does appear to have been notable consequences resulting from the Neutral involvement in the fur trade, the overall intensity is not as great for the entire network, particularly in the early historic period, as may have been suspected from a European ethnocentric point of view.

CHAPTER 8

METAL AND GLASS BEADS

Two problems arise when dealing with the artifacts that have been classified as European trade items. First, since a part of the Christianson site is presently located beneath a farm house dating to the latter half of the 19th century, with evidence of other earlier structures being encountered toward the western portion of the site, items of recent European and Canadian manufacture were frequently recovered from the ploughzone. Consequently, of those artifacts recovered from the surface and ploughzone, only those which could confidently be identified as being of 17th century origin were analysed. Thus, certain artifact types which may in fact date to the 17th century may have been excluded. There was, however, a substantial sample recovered from undisturbed contexts which, in combination with those from the surface and the ploughzone, should provide an idea of the nature of this portion of the assemblage.

Second, while visual separation of brass from copper is possible when the patina is removed (brass being bright yellow, and copper being brownish-orange), problems arise when attempting to differentiate between North American and European copper. Structure of the metal may be misleading as an indicator in that aboriginal hammering of European copper

would result in an appearance resembling hammered North American copper while heat treating and annealing of North American copper could result in a thinner, more regular appearance resembling European shhet copper (Horst Neumeyer, personal communication:1980). A case in point is a piece of brass which has been cut and hammered to form a blade. Such aboriginal modification of European metals would make visual differentiation, particularly for scrap, tenuous. At this stage it will be assumed that there were technological limitations on the degree to which natives could form copper, and that the structure of the copper recovered from the site is of such a refined nature that it probably is of European origin and manufacture.

Trace element analysis of the copper would provide definitive source identification of sample deposits in both the New and Old Worlds. However, such a study is beyond the scope of this investigation. The brass can without reservation be attributed to European origin, and despite the previously mentioned hazards, and until further research can be undertaken, copper showing regularity of thickness and smoothness of surface texture will be considered to be of European origin.

Despite these two handicaps, the quantity and particularly the nature of European items (Table 49), may substantiate placement of the Christianson site in the early historic period (Fitzgerald 1980).

compared to the relatively crude technique observed on the rolled beads and tinkling cones.

Rolled beads and tinkling cones

Two tubular beads rolled from sheet copper, measuring 29mm by 9mm (maximum) and 63mm by 11mm (maximum) exhibit irregular diameters and overlapping edges. Only the edges which form the bead ends appear to have been cut prior to rolling while the longer edges were simply snapped.

Similarly, the copper tinkling cones appear to be of native manufacture. Rolled with overlapping edges into the form of cones, the two examples measure 43mm and 34mm in length with base diameters of approximately 10mm and 11mm.

Glass beads

That only 17 beads were recovered from the Christianson site, five of them from burial features (4 from H4E F15, 1 from H4E F25), may in itself give an indication of the early historic placement of the site, despite the arguments against such an assumption by Townsend (1976) and Ramsden (1977:38-39). Ian Kenyon has developed a glass bead sequence for historic Neutral sites, identifying four periods. On the basis of four beads available in 1968, the Christianson site was placed in Period 2 (Kenyon 1969:12), to which a date of 1600 to 1615-1620 was given (Kenyon 1969:31). Also included as a Period 2 site is the Shaver Hill ossuary (Stothers 1970, 1972), because of its proximity to the Christianson site, has

been identified as the village's ossuary (Kenyon 1969:4). However, the coefficient of similarity between the Christianson site and the Shaver Hill ossuary determined from glass beads, including the 1969 and 1979 samples from the Christianson site, is a very low 59.85 out of a possible 200.00 (Tables 50 and 51). While there are certain types that do exhibit similar percentages at the two sites, Ia5, Ia19, and IIa13 (Kidd and Kidd 1970), a larger percentage of the beads consist of types found exclusively at one or the other of the sites, such as IIa15 at the Shaver Hill ossuary, and IIa56, IIb18, IIIa12 and IVk3 at the Christianson site. When star bead types IIIm-, IIIm?, IIIm1 and Ivk3 are combined, they comprise 37.50% of the Christianson site assemblage, but only 4.92% of the Shaver Hill assemblage. Kenyon contends that star beads are more typical of the later Periods 3 and 4, and as such Shaver Hill probably dates to late Period 2 (Kenyon 1969:12-13). If such were the case, the predominance of star bead types at the Christianson site would suggest a much later date for the site. However, "gooseberry" beads (IIb18) and translucent indigo seed beads (IIa56) are considered to be diagnostic of the earlier Period 1 (Kenyon 1969:10, 13).

Several weaknesses are apparent in Kenyon's approach, most notable of which is the assumption that there was a constant, readily available, and equal distribution of glass

TABLE 50. Christianson site glass bead frequencies and metrics.

Type*	Frequency		Length (mm)		Diameter (mm)		Shape/ Dominant colour	Remarks
	N	%	r	$\bar{x}$	r	$\bar{x}$		
Ia5	2	11.76	11.0	11.0	4.0	4.0	tubular/ white	metrics available for one only**
Ia19	1	5.88	-	-	-	-	tubular/ dark blue	no metrics available**
Ibb1	1	5.88	-	-	-	-	tubular/red	
IIa13	1	5.88	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0	round/white	
IIa56	3		1.9-2.1	2.0	3.1	3.1	circular/ dark blue	
IIb18	2	11.76	-	-	-	-	round/ white	no metrics available**
IIIa12	1	5.88	-	-	-	-	tubular/ dark blue	fragment
IIIm-	1	5.88	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.9	ground tubular/ dark blue	colour sequence differs: b/w/r/w/ c/w/***
IIIm?	1	5.88	-	-	-	-	ground tubular/ dark blue	fragment
IIIm1	2	11.76	4.9-13.8	9.4	5.1-13.1	9.1	ground tubular/ dark blue	
IVk3	2	11.76	7.0	7.0	6.7	6.7	milled barrel/ dark blue	metrics available for one only**
TOTALS		99.97						

* Kidd and Kidd 1970

** These beads have been reported in Kenyon (1969:15) but are not in the McMaster collections.

*** b (blue) r (red) /(over)
w (white) c (clear)

TABLE 51. Comparative glass bead frequencies from the Shaver Hill ossuary and the Christianson site.

Type	Shaver Hill Ossuary		Christianson Site	
	N	%	N	%
Ia2	1	.27		
Ia5	105	28.69	2	11.76
Ia13	1	.27		
Ia19	23	6.28	1	5.88
Ia21	1	.27		
Ia22	36	9.84		
Ibbi			1	5.88
IIa8	3	.82		
IIa13	23	6.28	1	5.88
IIa15	123	33.61		
IIa55	11	3.01		
IIa56			3	17.65
IIa57	3	.82		
IIb18			2	11.76
IIe2-	5	1.37		
IIg-	1	.27		
IIIa12			1	5.88
IIIc1	1	.27		
IIIk1	3	.82		
IIIm-			1	5.88
IIIm?			1	5.88
IIIm1	18	4.92	2	11.76
IVb1-	1	.27		
IVbb5-	7	1.91		
IVk3			2	11.76
TOTALS	366	99.99	17	99.97

Coefficient of similarity (Robinson 1951) 200.00-140.15=59.85

beads throughout Neutralia. Moreover, one can question the representativeness of the samples utilized. Many of the collections examined by Kenyon were recovered from "excavations" from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and have since become distributed among many individuals and institutions. Consequently, Kenyon did not have the complete site samples. As an illustration of possible bias introduced by this factor, two separate intact collections from the Hamilton site were compared: one of 53 glass beads surface collected by George Gee (Kenyon 1969) and the other excavated in 1970, 1972, and 1976 by Noble and Lennox (Lennox 1977a). A coefficient of similarity of 145.98 was obtained (Fitzgerald 1978:25). Similarly, comparison of the Sealey "village" collection, which in fact includes beads collected from the surface, screening of midden backdirt and disturbed burials, with the Sealey ossuary sample, which in fact was only seven burial recoveries in 1967 (Kenyon 1969: 5), produced a coefficient of but 107.58 (Fitzgerald 1978:25).

An additional problem in the utilization of glass beads is that their distribution on sites is strongly influenced by the fact that, unlike ceramics, their purpose is decorative and ornamental rather than of daily functional usage, and as such they may not have a distribution throughout the site as ceramics presumably have. In the late protohistoric Carton

ossuary, 89% of the 611 beads were of the translucent indigo seed bead variety (IIa56). All of these, however, were recovered from a small area of the ossuary, perhaps originally having been part of an embroidered decoration on an article of clothing (Kenyon 1969:10). Thus, the inclusion of a single garment in the ossuary may severely distort the picture of the nature of beads from the ossuary. Similarly, of the 292 beads recovered from the Hood site, 106 small white (IVa-), 72 small black (IIa-) and 16 small clear dark purple (IIa-) beads formed a strand in Burial B of Feature 38 in House 6 (Lennox 1978:161, 163, Fitzgerald 1979:52). Despite the fact that these bead types were restricted to this burial, their numerical predominance biases the entire site sample. As a result, the concentration of glass beads, particularly from burial contexts within villages may not mirror the nature of the glass bead assemblage within the village. While the problem of representativeness plagues all artifact classes, with glass beads it should be of greater concern when seriations are attempted, especially when dealing with small samples.

As previously mentioned, the Christianson site glass bead assemblage consists of 17 beads of 9 varieties (Table 50). Three circular translucent dark blue/indigo IIa56 type recovered from burial Feature 15 of House 4E constitute the

predominant type, with ground tubular star bead type IIIm1, (H4E F15, MA1-15PZ), milled star bead type IVk3 (Midden B), white tubular type Ia5 and white "gooseberry" type IIb18 being represented with two examples each. A small fragment has been identified as a variety of IIIm (H1 F43), but is too small to classify it further. Single specimens of the translucent dark blue/indigo tubular type Ia19, opaque white round type IIa13, dark blue layered tubular IIIa12 (H1 F30), and red tubular compound Ibb1 complete the assemblage.

The predominant colours of the beads from the Christianson site are white and dark blue. This would tend to corrobarate Kenyon's (1969:36) statement that the Huron, particularly at an early stage of French-Huron-Neutral trade, may have filtered out the red beads received from the French, since red was noted by Sagard as being an important colour among all groups except the Nipissing (Wrong 1939:250). It was not until later, perhaps when the Neutral had more say in what they received, that red beads began to appear, like other European goods, in greater numbers.

An interesting and perhaps important aside to the dating of sites using glass beads may be seen in the examination of inclusions in village burials. Burial feature 15 from House 4E contained 158 shell beads and only four glass beads.

Burials in House 6 Feature 38A and 38B and House 12 Feature 7 from the later Hood site contained exclusively strands, or earrings manufactured from large numbers of glass beads. While the House 2 Feature 9 burial at the Hood site had shell beads included with numerous glass beads, the shell beads were likely a part of clothing and not a strand (Fitzgerald 1979:47). It would appear that the proportion of shell beads to glass beads in village burials decreases over time, and thus may indicate the relative age of the site.

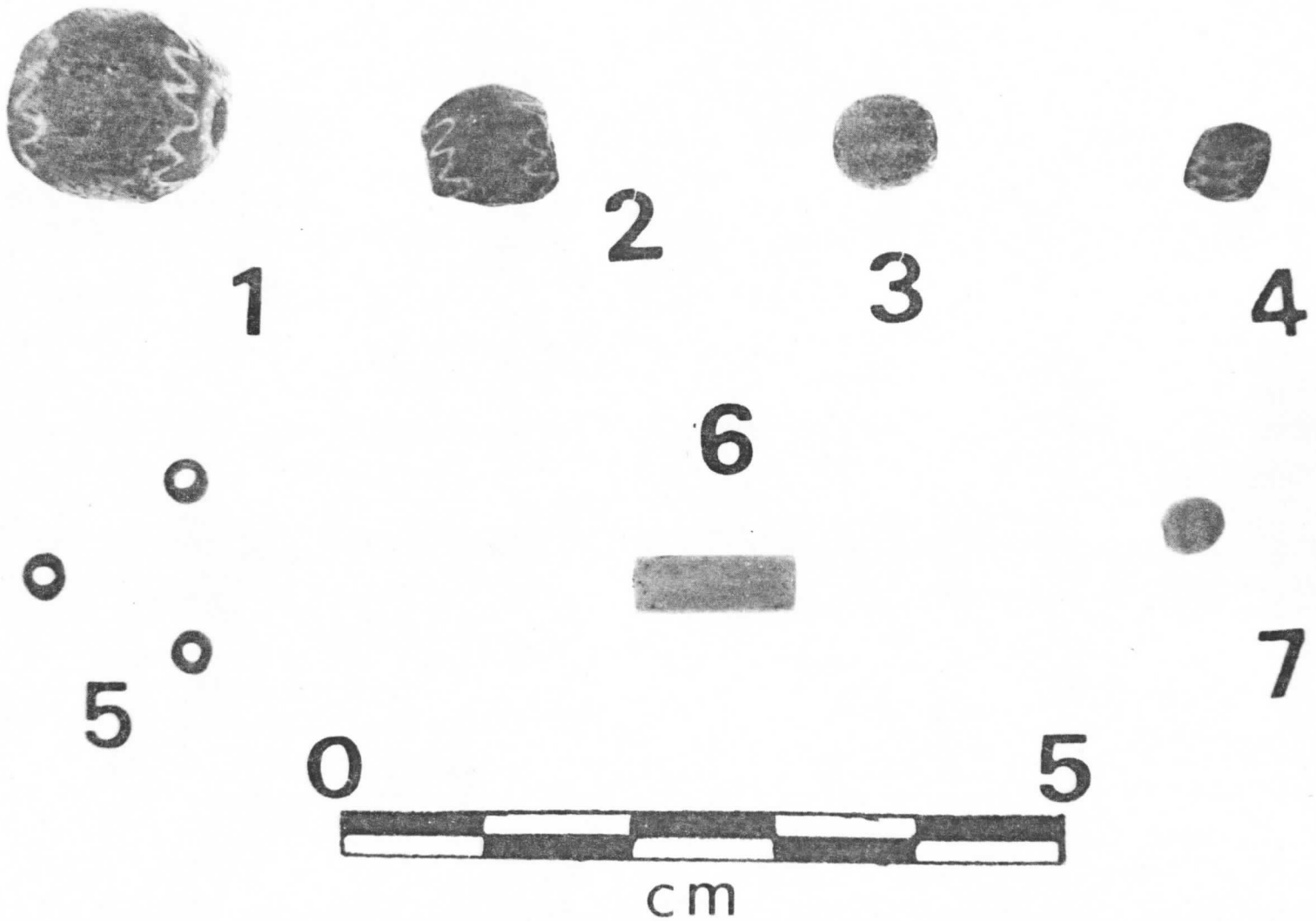
That the presence of grave goods, particularly shell and glass beads, may be a method of disposing of large quantities of fur trade related items (Ramsden 1979), the transition from large amounts of shell to large amounts of glass beads in burials would appear to indicate when glass beads were being exchanged in quantities that would necessitate such a dispositon. As such, it would appear that the Christianson site dates to a period when glass beads may have begun to appear in greater frequencies but also to a time when their occurrence was not as predominant as shell items in the trade inventory.

Utilitarian Items

Only 9.47% of the copper artifacts could be identified as being of utilitarian nature. In contrast, 19.61% of the brass and 88.24% of the iron assemblages were classified as

FIGURE 61. Glass beads.

1. Star bead type IIIm1: MA1-15PZ
2. Star bead type IIIm: House 1 Feature 43
3. Star bead type IVk3: MB
4. Star bead type IIIm1: House 4E Feature 15 burial
5. Indigo translucent type IIa56: House 4E Feature 15 burial
6. Opaque white type Ia5
7. Opaque white type IIa13: House 4E Feature 25 burial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