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ARCHAEOLOGY AT A FUR TRADE SITE, GePn-1

Permit 80-63

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POTENTIAL HISTORICAL RESOURCE IMPACT FACTORS

The impetus for carrying out an Historical Resources Impact Assessment at GePn-1 was provided by several residents of the Flatbush-Fawcett region who expressed a concern to Alberta Culture regarding the possible fur trade site. A recently constructed access road to a gas well site passes near the site, making it more easily accessible to plunderers and potential destruction by any future logging operations. Erosion of the Athabasca River bank was also cited as a possible factor endangering the site.

HISTORICAL RESOURCE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Several characteristic of the historical resource area were examined in order to assess the overall quality of GePn 1 and the possible affect of the above impact factors on the site. As the site has not been previously recorded, the site first had to be identified as a historical resource. Part of this process necessarily included the investigation of features and a search for cultural materials. By observing these site components an evaluation was made regarding the depositional integrity of the archaeological remains, the horizontal extent of the historical resource, the quality and diversity of the physical remains, and the probable antiquity and function of the site.

Hudson's Bay Company site of Nottingham House, dating 1802-1806 (Karklins 1979: 175,402). The specimens recovered are not regarded as particularly diagnostic of company affiliation or narrow time range.

The clothing artifact group is represented by 6 white glass beads and one white shell bead. Five of the glass beads are 'drawn' beads and the sixth is 'wire wound' (Figure 81).

One complete wrought nail and fragments of two others were recovered.

One piece of trade silver was recovered. This is a miniature round brooch, minus the cross-fastener pin (Figure 81). Similar specimens have been recovered in Alberta from Fort George (Kidd 1970:167,168,183), Rocky Mountain House (Acton House) where they were classified as earrings (Noble 1973:113,114), Rocky Mountain House I (D. Steer: personal communication), and Nottingham House (Karklins 1979:81,382), and in Saskatchewan at La Loche House (Steer 1977:114,311). These objects were manufactured by the thousands for the fur trade (Quimby 1966:93). The occurrence of these brooches is undoubtedly widespread, but as their presence at the above noted sites indicates, they are not diagnostic of company affiliation. As chronological indicators, however, they are somewhat more useful. The relatively nearby sites above were variously occupied between about 1787 and 1821. It is assumed that the silver brooch found at GePn-1 was deposited during the period of active site occupancy and that this period occurred within the aforementioned temporal span.

Several artifacts classified in the Activities group included scrap metal, an unidentified lead object and a double-ended centre eye, bone bodkin needle (Figure 83). Similar artifacts have been recovered at Fort George, where they were called 'snowshoe' needles (Losey et al 1978: 162,167; Murray 1980: A41) and from as far away as Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974: 158,161).

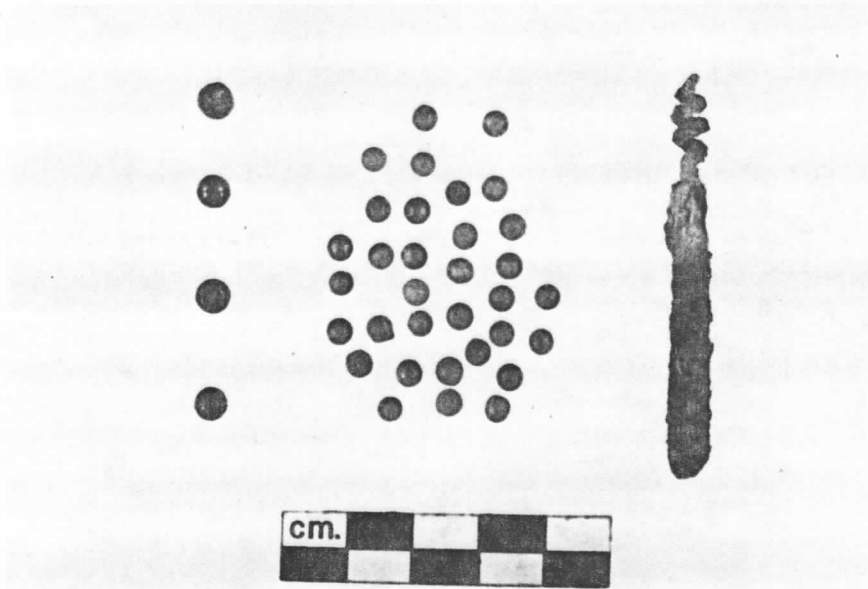


Figure 80: Lead shot and gunworm.

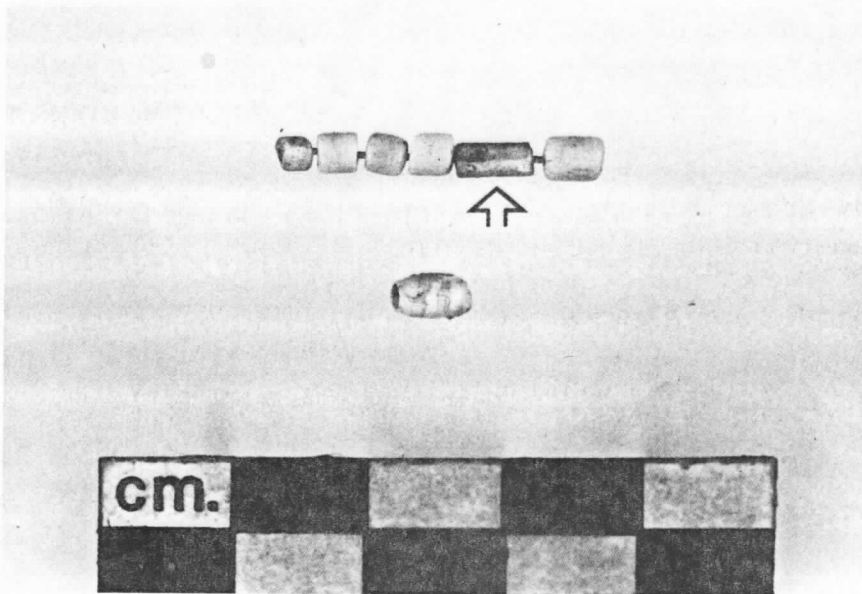


Figure 81: Beads. Shell bead indicated by arrow.