

THE OLD SHAKOPEE BRIDGE SITE:
A LATE WOODLAND RICING SITE ON SHAKOPEE LAKE
MILLE LACS COUNTY, MINNEOSTA

by
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Abstract

A large number of small archaeological sites used for a narrow range of activities should be present in the Mille Lacs area of Minnesota, for the area's prehistoric inhabitants were hunters-and-gatherers, and, in the late prehistoric period, harvesters of wild rice. These small camps would have been occupied for brief periods during particular seasons of the year, when individual species of plants and animals were mature or most abundant. Archaeological excavations have concentrated on the recovery of material from burial mounds and the larger artifact-rich sites in an attempt to establish the identity and temporal sequence of the areas archaeological cultures. As a result, however, information concerning many of the seasonal pursuits which were an integral part of these past cultural life-ways -- pursuits which have left only scanty remains at small sites -- has remained relatively limited. The excavation of the Old Shakopee Bridge site was one phase of a broader research project designed to supplement this limited information. The site was excavated by a University of Minnesota fieldschool under the writer's direction in early August, 1972.

The purpose of this report is: (1) to describe the excavation of the Old Shakopee Bridge site and the recovered artifacts and features, and (2) to attempt to isolate the temporally distinct settlements represented among the sample of artifacts and features. Although artifact mixture at the site has obscured the identification of cultural assemblage systems, at least three major settlements spanning portions of the late Middle Woodland and the Late Woodland are indicated by stylistic elements within the ceramic and projectile point samples.

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laminated paste is tempered with shell or finely ground granite. The exterior surface can be either smooth or cord-marked.

5.3.5. Clay Waste (23 specimens). Small hunks of temperless clay waste were in 1-2 (5), 2-1 (5), 2-2 (2), 4-2 (1), 9-1 (1), and F33 (1). Similar hunks with grit temper were in 8-2 (2), 12-1 (1), 15-2 (1), 20-1 (1), 21 (1), N1/3 (1), and on the surface (1).

E. POSTCONTACT ARTIFACTS (Plate 10)

A wide variety of postcontact artifacts was recovered from the first 2 levels. The site area has served as a dump and as a source of worms for many years. Some of these artifacts may be associated with an early farm that once stood on a slope across the road from the bridge.

- 1-1: 4 pieces of early blue-green glass from a jar or bottle; 1 small piece of porcelain; 1 modern button.
- 2-1: 1 modern piece of green glass; 1 modern briefcase latch; 1 square iron nail; 1 shoe heel with a wooden filler.
- 2-2: 1 piece of early blue-green glass.
- 3-1: half of an iron horse shoe.
- 3-2: 1 folded piece of iron; 1 eroded piece of leather.
- 4-2: 1 folded piece of iron.
- 5-1: 1 square iron nail; 1 piece of modern glass; 1 modern button; 1 small piece of iron.
- 7-1: 1 early ceramic pipe of a variety produced from about 1860 onwards for some years -- a reed stem was inserted in the bore (Plate 10, d); 1 piece of early blue-green glass; 1 iron square nail; 1 modern button.
- 8-1: 1 modern nail; 1 modern can top.
- 8-2: 1 modern nail; 1 folded piece of iron.
- 9-1: 2 pieces of early blue-green glass; 1 modern piece of glass; 1 modern 'dime store' ring (Plate 10, a).
- 10-1: 1 piece of folded iron.
- 11-1: 1 modern screw; 1 modern shot gun shell.
- 11-2: 1 copper ring (Plate 10, c).
- 12-1: 1 modern shot gun shell; 1 modern piece of glass; a piece of styrafoam cup; 1 piece of iron.
- 13-1: 1 Grain Belt beer bottle cap.
- 14-1: 1 modern nail; 1 Grain Belt beer bottle cap.
- 15-1: 1 modern ribbon broach.
- 16-1: 2 shot gun shells; 1 modern can top; 1 flip-top bottle cap; many small blue beads. ✓
- 16-2: 1 flip-top beer can tab.
- 17-1: 2 pieces of early blue-green glass; 1 piece of modern glass.
- 17-2: 1 modern note-book clip.
- 18-2: 1 Hamms beer bottle cap.
- 19-1: 1 piece of modern glass.
- 19-2: 1 shot gun shell.