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Part I

Second Season of Archaeological Activities
at Bethune-Thompson House, Williamstown, Ontario
1981

Part II

Report on the Test Excavations on the Property of
Mr. John A. Major, Williamstown, Ontario

for

The Ontario Heritage Foundation

by

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Project Archaeologist

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Part II

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INTRODUCTION

The second season of archaeological activities at Bethune-Thompson House revealed much information regarding the various occupants of this historic site. During the 1981 excavations the archaeologists chronologically identified various historical events on this property.

This report is not a summary of the two seasons of activities at Bethune-Thompson. It is, however, a discussion of the work and of the findings made since May 1981. Therefore, this report should not be read without prior knowledge of the archaeological work undertaken previous to 1981. Throughout this report, I have made many references to the 1980 archaeology at Bethune-Thompson (Lavoie 1981). Research undertaken before 1980 is summarized in the introduction of my 1980 report (Lavoie 1981: 1-2). Furthermore, I have not deemed it necessary to repeat myself regarding the discussion of the superficial geology, which can be found in my first report (Lavoie 1981: 5). However, some of the findings made in 1981 necessitated that I reformulate some of the conclusions I articulated in 1980.

During the second season of excavations this author did his best to answer many questions regarding the scope of the archaeology at Bethune-Thompson. Many Williamstown residents were interested in the multitude of finds made at the site. To this end, during the Williamstown Annual Agricultural Fair, a temporary exhibit of artifacts was set up at the Nor 'Wester and Loyalist Museum in late August.

Throughout the duration of the field work, the purchase of goods and services was funnelled through to various Williamstown businesses, or in communities nearby. The merchants appreciated this gesture.

Finally, this report consists mostly of artifact histories documented during the analysis of these finds, from September 1981 through to early April 1984. Descriptive terms for ceramics and glass, as well as other artifacts, are the same as those used during the writing of my first report (Lavoie 1981). Therefore, descriptive terms for ceramics can be found in figure 3 (Lavoie 1981:13), while the glass terminology can be seen in figures 7 and 8 (Lavoie 1981:50 and 51). Terms used in the description of clay tobacco pipes are illustrated in figure 4 of my previous report (Lavoie 1981:39).

Another glass with horizontal ribbing below the rim was identified in 1981 (RR1-11540). The ribbing begins one centimetre below the rim. However, the scanty evidence for this drinking glass does not permit further description. The stratigraphic context in which it was recovered would indicate that it is a late nineteenth, or early twentieth century object.

The last drinking glass is represented by three rim sherds (HH1-7940, HH3-9419 and 9450), two side fragments (HH3-9422 and 9441), and by one base sherd (HH3-9446). The average thickness of each sherd is 1.5 millimetres. These glass fragments could represent the bowl of a stemmed-drinking glass, or a common tumbler. One interpretation is as likely as the other. Based on the dates obtained for other drinking glasses in the same stratigraphic context, I would venture to say that this glass was produced during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Glass Beads

Six clear glass beads were unearthed in HH3 in 1981 (9543, four beads; 9894, two beads). These are tube beads whose surface has been modified by grinding (Karklins 1982:88; p89, Type IF; Kidd and Kidd 1970:53; p51, Type IF). It should be indicated that when examined closely, any one of the facets on the six beads is different in size from other facets. Furthermore, the threading hole of one bead differs from that of the next, but ranges from 1.5 to 3.0 millimetres. Width and length measurements also differ from one object to the other (length range: 4 to 6 millimetres; width range = 5 to 7 millimetres). These beads were made from a gather of glass shaped with a blowpipe and a tirador: a length of glass as long as 150 metres could be obtained (Kidd 1979:13). Kidd (1979:13) claims that when makers made hollow or tube beads, the diameter of the hole remained constant. This may be true, but not when metric attributes are taken, as indicated by the Bethune-Thompson beads.

Finally, these beads could have been used to decorate clothing; they could have been part of a necklace, or could have been rosary beads. Based on the stratigraphic context from which they were retrieved, these beads could date from the first half of the nineteenth century.