

**SOME ADDITIONAL FINDS AT THE BELL SITE (47WN9)
IN WINNEBAGO COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

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In 1959 Dr. Warren L. Wittry directed a salvage project with limited resources at the Bell site (47Wn9), a historic Fox village site in Winnebago County, Wisconsin. The results were published in the March, 1963, issue of The Wisconsin Archeologist (Vol. 44, No. 1). Soon after the salvage work was completed the site was almost completely destroyed by gravel removal operations. The site was later returned to agricultural practices. The author and his wife surface hunted for the next few years on this site and found some glass beads, shell artifacts, and brass artifacts that are of types not included in Dr. Wittry's report. The purpose of this report is to augment the original Bell site inventory of artifacts.

INTRODUCTION

The Bell site (47Wn9) is located on the edge of the high bank on the south side of Big Lake Butte des Morts in Winnebago County. The site was occupied between 1680 and 1730. For a detailed account of this site the reader is urged to consult the March, 1963, issue of *The Wisconsin Archeologist* (Wittry 1963). The Bell site is critical to understanding the acculturation of the Fox Indian people, since flint projectile points and native pottery were in contemporary use with flintlock guns and brass kettles on this site (Quimby 1966). Most of the artifacts described in the present report are types not reported by Dr. Wittry. A few types that were found by Dr. Wittry were encountered by us in a test pitted feature and are included because they are an integral part of that feature:

DESCRIPTIONS

Surface Finds

Artifacts shown in Fig. 1 are glass beads and shell artifacts found on the surface in the general area of the 1959 excavations. Figure 1(a) is an example of the "man-in-the-moon" bead similar to those reported from Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974) and Birch Island, Ontario (Greenman 1951). Small beads such as those shown in Figs. 1(a) and 1(e) were not spotted during Dr. Wittry's excavation because 1/4" mesh screen was used for sifting the dirt. Beads shown in Fig. 1(c,d) were found very close to the shell bead (Fig. 1(f)) and the shell pendant (Fig. 1(g)). Since Fig. 1(c) represents five examples, these artifacts probably

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are the remains of a necklace. The shell artifacts have a reddish-brown coating similar to the coating found on shell artifacts at the Lasanen site (Cleland 1971). None of the types shown in Fig. 1 are types reported in Wittry (1963).

Material from Burial Feature

Artifacts shown in Fig. 2 were associated with a single feature. Just south of the 1959 excavations an unusual brass pin was found lying on the surface along with several brass bells. Careful removal of the top several inches of soil in this area revealed several more bells, several tinkling cones, and a glass bead. A three foot by five foot test pit dug in this immediate area produced the rest of the artifacts shown in Fig. 2, along with some human bone. Unfortunately, the plow zone extended down to 13 inches, the bottom level of this feature. The bones, apparently the remains of a three year old child, consist of cranial and postcranial elements including symphases, mandibular and maxillary fragments, and deciduous teeth.

The total of 85 artifacts found in association with the burial contrasts dramatically with a burial reported by Wittry that had no associated artifacts. Neil Ostberg, who originally reported the site, excavated five burials with very few or no associated artifacts.

A brass pin (Fig. 2(a)) was probably bent by the plow. It is 120 mm long and has some sort of brass clips attached. Possibly it was part of a hinge for a small wooden box. Two coils of rectangular brass wire (Fig. 2(b)) consist of three and a half wraps and are similar to examples on display at the Madeline Island Historical Museum, where they are identified as finger rings. One has a very small piece of woven material adhering to it. A perforated thimble (Fig. 2(c)) is like one reported by Dr. Wittry. Eleven brass bells (Fig. 2(d)) are "flushloop" hawk bells with iron clappers, similar to ones reported by Dr. Wittry. Some have buckskin still attached. Seventeen brass tinkling cones, almost all with buckskin remnants, were also similar to those of the 1959 excavations.

A large shell bead (Fig. 2(f)) is like those found at Birch Island, Ontario (Greenman 1951). It has a hole diameter of 2.5 mm. The shell pendant (Fig. 2(g)) has a thickness of 4 mm. Shell wampum beads (Fig. 2(h)) are represented by seven specimens still attached to each other by what appears to be some kind of plant fiber.

One blue, five sided monochrome glass bead (Fig. 2(i)) resembles some found at the Fort St. Joseph site at Niles, Michigan. Twenty-one opaque, peacock-blue glass beads (Fig. 2(k)) are round and of simple construction. Fine lines run the length of the beads. This bead type is present at the Guebert site in Illinois (Good 1972). Three opaque, light

blue, tubular beads (Fig. 2(l)) have three straight inlaid bars running parallel to the line hole. Each bar has white margins with a red center. The sixteen seed beads are white and have opaque centers (Fig. 2(m)). They are also present at the Guebert site.

One of the most unusual artifacts associated with this feature, in my opinion, is the blue colored, glazed ceramic pendant (Fig. 2(e)). It is glazed on one side and was perforated before firing. As far as I know this type of artifact has not been reported on any historic site.

CONCLUSION

The Bell site revealed for the first time the aboriginal culture of the Fox Indians (Wittry 1963). The artifacts tell the story. For this reason the archeologist tries to gather as much information as possible. Dr. Wittry had little comparative data to work with because there were very few known sites of the Middle Historic period when he prepared his report. Even worse, he had to excavate with limited resources and very little time. In spite of these difficulties the Bell site became the most completely reported site of the Middle Historic period (Quimby 1966).

Investigators currently working on historic sites in Wisconsin still find the Bell site critically important to their work. It is hoped that in some small way this report will benefit future research.

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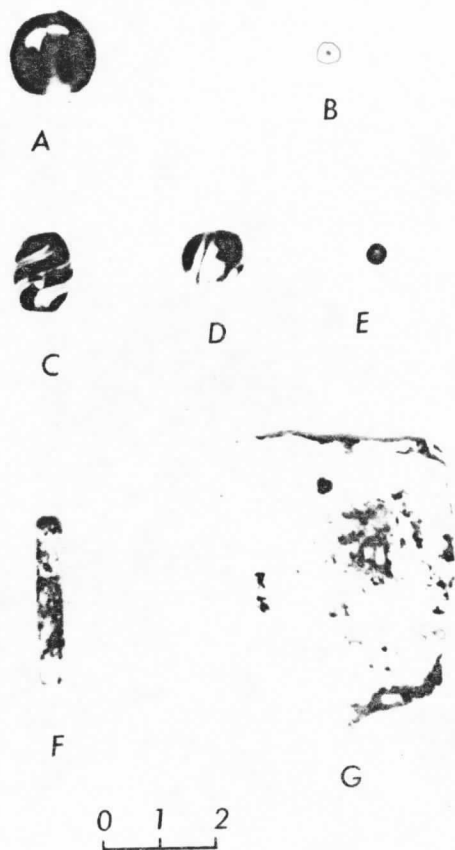


FIGURE 1: Artifacts found on the surface.

A. "Man-in-the-moon" beads are bright blue discs about 5 mm. thick with an inlaid design in white of a "man-in-the-moon" on the obverse and a comet with two stars on the reverse. Three examples found (two are fragmentary).

B. Opaque, yellow, barrel shaped glass beads of simple construction. One example found.

C. Opaque, blue, elongate spheroidal glass bead with four inlaid bars parallel to the line hole. These bars have white margins with red centers. Five examples found (one fragmentary).

D. Opaque, blue, elongate spheroidal glass bead with three inlaid bars parallel to the line hole. These bars have white margins with red centers. One example found.

E. Translucent blue, donut shaped bead of simple construction. One example found.

F. Tubular shell bead with 2 mm. hole. A reddish-brown coating covers most of the bead. One example found.

G. Shell pendant with a reddish-brown coating on most of its surface. One example found.

FIGURE 1: Artifacts found on the surface.



FIGURE 2: Artifacts associated with much disturbed burial.

- A. Brass pin (1 found).
- B. Brass wire coil (2 found).
- C. Brass thimble (1 found).
- D. Brass bell (11 found).
- E. Ceramic pendant (1 found).
- F. Shell bead (1 found).
- G. Shell pendant (1 found).
- H. Shell wampum beads (7 found).
- I. Glass, five sided, monochrome bead (1 found).
- J. Glass, donut shaped bead (1 found).
- K. Glass bead (21 found).
- L. Glass stick bead (3 found).
- M. Glass seed beads (16 found).
- N. Glass stick bead (1 found).
- O. Brass tinkling cones (17 found).

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