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**NORTHERN ONTARIO
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GLOUCESTER HOUSE: A HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

INLAND POST (1777 - 1818) *

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INTRODUCTION

The location and preliminary survey of the Gloucester House site was carried out under the auspices of the Historical Planning and Research Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, in late summer 1976. The project represented an interdisciplinary approach to the Albany River fur trade incorporating both historical/archival and archaeological research as a means of identifying and locating historically significant fur trade communities. Investigation of the site resulted in the location and initial mapping of two separate sets of structural remains that relate to at least two distinct phases of post construction. In addition, over 200 artefacts representative of the late eighteenth century period of occupation were recovered.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, kindly granted permission to use data for the historical section of this paper; to them we extend our thanks.

LOCATION

From a source approximately central in Northwestern Ontario, the Albany spills out over Canadian Shield rocks into the Hudson's Bay Lowland country and empties into James Bay. As one of the province's major river systems, it has amazingly escaped extensive industrial development to date. Its shores have not been logged and evidence of human presence is confined to small camping spots. Travel on the river has historically been by canoe or boat and this pattern has followed through to this day.

Gloucester House was located on the north side of the Washi Lake narrows, at Latitude 51° 23' 39" North, and Longitude 87° 03' 50" West. (Figure 29). The site is approximately eighty-five miles (36 km) by air north of Nakina, Ontario, and is accessible by aircraft or by the lengthy Albany River canoe route.

* Ed. note: A preliminary version of this paper was originally presented at the 10th Society for Historical Archaeology Conference, Ottawa, January 1977.

NAILS

Three nails were recovered from the site (Figure 41, e-g). The two collected from the beach are severely corroded; however, the third was excavated from a test pit and is in excellent condition. This complete specimen is hand-wrought from ironstock and measures 125.8 mm long. The head has six facets and measures 17.6 mm long x 9.6 mm wide x 5.0 mm thick. The spike has a flattened, spatulate end 8.7 mm wide x 1.3 mm thick and is morphologically similar to the nails and spikes from Albany Fort (Kenyon 1961:23).

GLASS TRADE BEADS AND BRASS BANGLES

Sixteen trade beads and one conical brass bangle were surface-collected from the site. The beads fall into three distinct categories: cylindrical or "cane" beads; small, sub-cylindrical beads; and a large and small form of wire wound, flattened ovoid bead.

The cane beads were of two colours: brick red with a dark blue-green translucent core, and white. The white cylindrical beads were further subdivided into three beads with a transparent glaze and opaque white core, and one bead that was unglazed, opaque white. Bead data is shown at Table 15 below.

TABLE 15 – GLOUCESTER HOUSE CANE BEAD DATA

Colour	Length (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Orifice Dia. (mm)	Core Colour	
Brick red	14.5	5.0	1.5	Dark green/blue translucent	IIIa3/4
Brick red	13.0	4.7	1.7	Dark green/blue translucent	"
Brick red	21.0	5.0	1.5	Dark green/blue translucent	"
Brick red	11.5	3.5	1.5	Pale green translucent	"
White	29.8	4.5	1.5	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	Ia4 ?
White	16.5	5.5	2.0	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	"
White	13.0	5.0	2.0	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	"
White	11.5	4.0	1.0	Solid opaque white	Ia5

Typologically, the red cane beads may be similar to the Kids' (1970) types 111a3 and 111a4. The first are small beads (2.4 mm diameter) of opaque glass with a red-wood exterior and a clear "Apple Green" core. The second category is composed of medium sized beads (4-6 mm) which are identical in colour but with clear "brite blue" cores (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 58).

Pratt's type 72B (long with dark core) is also similar, being round in cross section, tubular in vertical section, with a red exterior and dark core. Pratt's sample came from the Lemery site, an Oneida Iroquois village that he dates to the period 1660-1677 (Pratt 1961: 12, 13).

Similarly, five opaque, brick-red beads with a dark, wine-coloured, slightly translucent core were recovered from Fort George. Kidd suggests that these may be what are referred to as "bugle beads" (Kidd 1971: 172, 186, and Figure 96 a, b). Metrically, Kidds' beads range between 5.4-6.2 mm in length and 4.8-6.7 mm in diameter; the Gloucester beads fall well within these ranges.

The white cylindrical beads are somewhat similar to the Kidds' type 1a5, medium (4-6 mm) opaque white glass beads (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 54). Pratt's type 74 beads, again from the Lemery site, are comparatively similar. These are tubular beads, round in cross section and opaque white in colour with a "skim-milky core" (Pratt 1961: 13). Kidd reports 15 similar beads from Fort George. These had "... generally translucent, thin outer coatings or glazes and an opaque white core" (Kidd 1971: 172).

The sub-cylindrical beads were again divided into two colour classes; brick-red and white. Sub-cylindrical bead data are shown in the Table 16 below.

TABLE 16 – GLOUCESTER HOUSE SUB-CYLINDRICAL GLASS BEAD DATA

Colour	Length (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Orifice Dia. (mm)	Core Colour	
Brick red	1.7	2.5	0.5	Translucent green	IVa6
Brick red	3.2	2.8	0.5	Translucent green	"
Brick red	3.0	3.0	0.8	Translucent green	"
Brick red	4.0	3.5	1.0	Opaque black	IVa1
Opaque white	3.0	3.5	1.0	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	IIa12
	3.0	3.5	1.0	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	"
	3.5	3.0	1.0	Translucent glaze, opaque white core	"

The Kidds' type iv-a series of beads most closely approximate the Gloucester House sample. However the Kidds' typology varies either in colour, shape, or size to those from Gloucester. The Kidds' small (2.4 mm) redwood beads with clear apple-green or black core approximate the sample in colour and size but their beads are round rather than ovoid (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 79). The sub-cylindrical red beads are similar to Pratt's type 72c beads which are short with a dark core and round in cross section, oval in vertical section, and have a red exterior (Pratt 1961: 13). Kidd refers to these as "Cornaline d'Aleppo" beads, noting that the Fort George sample had a dark red exterior and a dark, translucent green core (Kidd 1971: 175). The white beads are similar to Pratt's (1961: 17) type 110 from the Cheeseborough site dated to 1745. Again these are round in cross section and tubular in vertical section and are opaque white in colour.

Dawson (1969: 34) reports four opaque white glass beads from the Longlac Post site. These are flattened eye to eye, round in cross section, and ovoid in vertical section, and, according to Dawson, are of two sizes. While Dawson's diameters for his two categories are equivalent to the diameters from Gloucester House, the Gloucester beads are longer.

Three flattened ovoid beads, round in cross section, and either white or mustard-yellow in colour, complete the Gloucester House bead sample. All three are wire wound; the two white beads being much larger than the single split yellow bead. Wire wound bead data are shown in Table 17 below.

TABLE 17 – GLOUCESTER HOUSE WIRE WOUND BEAD DATA

Colour	Length (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Orifice Diameter (mm)	
Opaque white	9.0	7.5	2.5	W1c1
Opaque white	7.5	7.5	2.5	
Mustard yellow	5.5	4.5	1.5	W1c*(c) or (d)

These beads would be listed under the Kidd's W1c or oval wire wound category. W1c1 is closest to the white Gloucester beads, i.e. oval opaque white; however, the Kidds' beads are listed as small: 2–4 mm, whereas the Gloucester House beads are large: 6-10 mm (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 84). Pratt's type 108 that are round in cross section and flattened oval in vertical section are somewhat similar; however, the beads illustrated by Pratt are red and blue (Pratt 1961: 16 and Figures 108 and 109). Pratt's sample was collected from the Brewer site that he dates to *circa* 1710.

Ten complete and three fragmentary "... plain white, barrel shaped beads. . ." were recovered from Fort George. These ranged in length from between 5.0-9.2 mm and from between 2.6-6.2 mm in diameter (Kidd 1971: 173). The Gloucester beads fall within Kidds' length range, but are somewhat larger in diameter.

The mustard yellow bead again falls into the Kids' W1c category. Their closest colour is W1c 5 (amber) but the type is large: 6-10 mm, whereas the Gloucester bead is medium: 4-6 mm (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 84).

Three complete and three fragmentary "...dark yellow to orange, barrel shaped beads. ..." ranging between 4.4-11.5 mm in length and 2.8-6.7 mm in diameter were recovered from Fort George (Kidd 1971: 173). The Gloucester House bead is similar in colour and falls within the ranges given for Fort George.

Logically, the closest comparisons in glass beads are with Fort George that began and ceased operations within the lifespan of Gloucester House. The usual problems of lack of comparative metrics and individual colour interpretations make exact comparisons difficult.

TINKLING CONE

The single conical brass bangle or tinkling cone recovered from Gloucester House measures 19.0 mm long x 5.5 mm in maximum diameter and is made from sheet brass, probably from a kettle, that measures 0.5 mm in thickness. The Gloucester specimen falls well within the dimensional ranges given by Kidd (1971: 170, 185, and Figure 95) for Fort George; Wright (1967: 58) for Stratum 1 of the Pic River site; and Nystuen and Lindeman (1969: 25, 47, and Plate 23) for Fort Renville.

CAST IRON PINCERS OR TONGS

The pincers are virtually complete, with the exception of one arm that is broken off just above the hinge bolt (Figure 41b). The complete arm measures 170.0 mm in total length and 11.0 mm in maximum diameter. The arm is round in section and flattened and notched at the end, presumably to extract nails. The pincers measure 222.0 mm (8¾") in total length and are 28.5 mm wide at the jaws. The jaws are 49.5 mm in height and are flattened and sharpened to form a cutting edge which runs horizontal to the arms. Blackburn (1974: 150) illustrates a pair of pincers that are similar to the Gloucester specimen and suggests that woodworkers use them primarily as a means of pulling small nails and tacks. Sloan (1964: 90, 91) illustrates a similar set of pincers but suggests that they were used by blacksmiths. The pincers from Gloucester House could have fulfilled either function, as both carpenters and smiths were present at the post.

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As the field work conducted at Gloucester House was of a preliminary nature, there is very little in the way of comparable settlement data from the site at present. Consequently, comparisons are restricted almost exclusively to similarities between artefact classes.

Relatively few trading establishments dating from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century appear in the literature. This problem is further compounded by the varying sample sizes recovered from these sites and the depth and detail of the analysis performed on the material. Subsequently, as a result of these and other factors the comparison drawn from the Gloucester House material are somewhat limited, and the report is basically descriptive in form.