

# DATA BOX

233, 250, 251, 252, 271, 236

**NORTHERN ONTARIO FUR TRADE POSTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY - 1975**

J. W. POLLOCK, D. R. BALL, D. G. MACLEOD

233 - HILL'S LANDING

250 - MAMMAMATTAWA

251 - NEW POST

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236 - HISTORICAL FEATURES NEAR

FORT SEVERN

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# 271 - HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY AT FORT SEVERN, ONTARIO

JOHN W. POLLOCK AND DONALD MACLEOD

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During September 1974, M.E. Buss, then Fish and Wildlife Supervisor, Sioux Lookout District, Ministry of Natural Resources, notified the Historical Sites Branch concerning potential historical sites in the Fort Severn area. As a result, arrangements were made for John Pollock, Donald MacLeod (Supervisor of Archaeological Research, Ministry of Culture and Recreation) and Peter Such (Canadian Studies Co-ordinator, York University) to visit the site from August 11, 1975 to August 15, 1975.

Thanks is due to the District and Regional personnel of the Ministry of Natural Resources for their many aids. Warmest thanks is due to Mr. Jack Stoney and the many friendly residents of Fort Severn. In a very real way, the historical sites in the area are their special heritage.

Special thanks is due to Donald MacLeod who advised and assisted the writer throughout the field work and the writing of this paper. Many Thanks is also due to Peter Such who, with his endless enthusiasm and effort, greatly contributed to the field investigation.

## ABSTRACT

The discovery and recording of an important historic archaeological site at the village of Fort Severn, Ontario during August 1975 has raised a number of questions as to the extent and archaeological potential of the remains. From the small surface collection taken from disturbed areas and the recordable features visible in the riverbank, one cannot make positive identification of archaeological features known to be present on the site (Figure 35). It is apparent, however, that these features are of significance and should be salvaged through excavation as soon as possible.

## INTRODUCTION

During September 1974, M. E. Buss, then Fish and Wildlife Supervisor, Sioux Lookout District, notified the former Historical Sites Branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources concerning potential historic sites in the Fort Severn area. His letter described some surface-collected artifacts and potential archaeological features, as well as threats to these by a combination of erosion, vandalism and innocent curiosity. Subsequently this situation was raised in the Provincial legislature (Ontario 1974: 6464-5).

As a result, arrangements were made for John Pollock (Regional Archaeologist, Northern Region), Donald MacLeod and Peter Such to visit the site from August 11 to August 15, 1975.

## THIMBLE

One thimble was recovered from surface (Figure 4: 9). This specimen is brass with slightly tapering sides and a convex top. The sides are patterned, with small, round impressions (perforated). As the specimen has been crushed, diameter is not available. Length is 2.3 cm. Catalogue number M2154. No chronological indicators are presently available for thimbles, although this would seem to be a possibility.

## CLAY PIPE STEMS WITH SPUR HEELS

Two specimens from the surface are illustrated (Figure 37: 10,11). One specimen (Figure 37: 10) (catalogue #M2146) contains the letters I, F, on opposite sides of the spur heel. These pipes were exported by John Ford (England) between 1805-1865. He is mentioned as an exporter in the records of the Hudson's Bay Company for the years 1831, 1833-35 (Oswald 1975: 136) (Walker 1971: 24). Another pipe made from ball clay (not kaolin) (Walker 1971: 19) is illustrated (Figure 37: 11). This has the letters W,M on opposite sides of the spur heel. This dates the specimen to 1719-1763, and as being manufactured by a William Manby. There was an earlier William Manby (father of the above), 1681-1696 who is mentioned in the Hudson's Bay Company records as an exporter (Oswald 1975: 142).

## BOTTLE SHARD

This rounded base, black glass bottle fragment (Figure 37: 12) was recovered from the surface of the site (catalogue #M2120). It is manufactured from very thick glass 1.0 cm. thick and has a pushed-up base.

## GREEN BOTTLE TOP

This is a free blown bottle (Figure 37: 13). It is composed of a dark green glass dating 1840-1860 and may have been a medicinal bottle (catalogue # M2109).

## STRATUM 3 COLLECTION

The following artifacts all come from Stratum 3 (Figure 36), the earliest occupation level at the Fort Severn Site. On the basis of the gunflint, clay pipes, nails and ceramics, this level should date from 1759 to a date not later than 1800.

## SMALL TRADE BEADS

The small beads (Figure 38: 1,2) are all class IV beads rounded by re-heating. The larger small bead (Figure 38: 1) is a type IVa2 (Kidd 1970: 60). The three larger tube beads (Figure 38: 2) are all class 1a beads or simple monochromes of the type 1a 19 (Kidd 1970: 54) (catalogue #M2210).

## CLAY PIPE: BOWL AND STEM

This pipe has a TD on the spur heel and a TD encircled on the bowl facing the smoker (Figure 38: 3). It fits the shape of types #12 and #14 (Oswald 1975: 39). Shape #14 has thin, narrow bowls, narrow but flat-based foot, and a lip often at an angle to the stem which is small-bored (circa 1820-40). These were manufactured by Thomas Duggan, who

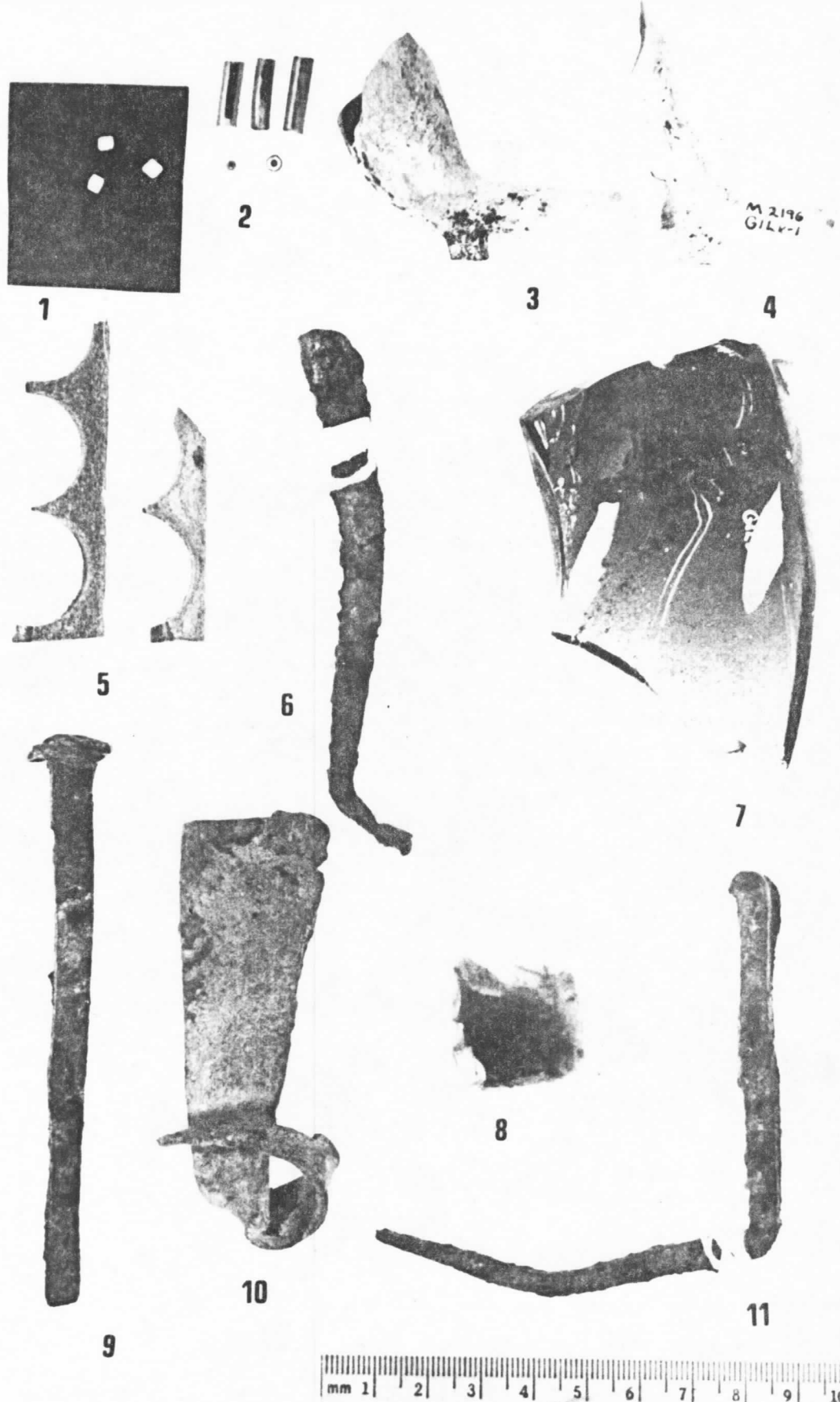


Figure 38

ARTIFACTS FROM FORT SEVERN  
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY POST  
(FIRST OCCUPATION LEVEL)

- 1,2 - glass trade beads
- 3 - T.D. clay pipe manufactured by either Thomas Duggan (1826-32) or most likely by Thomas Dormer (1748 - 1770)
- 4 - Thomas Dormer pipe (1748 - 1770)
- 5 - bone button cutting debris
- 6 - wrought iron nail (pre 1800)
- 7 - green glass bottle fragment
- 8 - gunflint, wedge-shaped (1650 - 1770)
- 9 - wrought iron nail (pre 1800)
- 10 - lead strip (cut)
- 11 - iron staple

TABLE 6 - ARTIFACT TOTALS FROM GIIV-1 (cont'd)

ITEM	QUANTITY
STRATUM 3 COLLECTION (cont'd)	
iron staple	1
leather thing	1
chert fragment	1
boot leather piece	1
cloth fragment	1
iron wire	1
STRATUM 3 TOTAL	118

## INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The artifactual evidence, supported by the stratigraphic profile, (Figure 36) indicates that the Fort Severn site represents a stratified historic site (at least in certain portions of the site) dating from 1759 to present and has the potential of providing valuable information regarding historic fur trade archaeology.

I strongly recommend that further excavations take place at this site, especially in the threatened area in front of the present Hudson's Bay Company store. The Hudson's Bay Company should be contacted and arrangements made to protect the vital area in front of the present store. This site should be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (1974) as an historical archaeological site.

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*Hudson's Bay Company Archives* (from Parks Canada above)

B.198/a/1 1761-62

B.198/a/2 1760-61

B.198/a/15 1771-72

B.198/a/18 1773-74