

HOTEL PLAZA

An Early Historic Site

With a Long Prehistory

by

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with Appendix by

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EUROPEAN TRADE GOODS

Tinkling Cones (Fig. 20,c)

Brass tinkling cones were a popular form of adornment among the historic Indians. Five were found at Hotel Plaza, two in Grid A, Feature 2. Quimby illustrates an example along with other French trade goods characteristic of the Middle Historic Period (1966:70, Fig. 12).

Iron Coil Bracelets (Fig. 20,d)

One whole and one fragmentary iron coil "bracelet" or hair coil were associated with Feature 6, Grid A. Similar iron objects have been reported at Starved Rock (Keller 1949). The historic Arikara used copper coils around their hair of the same diameter as these iron coils (ISM collections; Wedel 1955:156, Figs. 69,k; 70,d).

Bell (Fig. 20,e)

One brass hawkbell was among the trade goods found at Hotel Plaza. Like tinkling cones, it is typical of the French trade goods of the Middle Historic Period (Quimby 1966:70, Fig. 12).

Iron Knives

Of the three iron knives found at the site, two were of the Middle Historic French clasp knife type (Fig. 20,f). One of these was found in Feature 8, Grid A. This type is illustrated and described by Quimby (1966:68f., Fig. 11). The third knife, which was found in Feature 7, Grid A, is not a clasp knife; it has a handle welded to the blade.

Awl (Fig. 20,g)

One example of an iron awl came from Grid A.

Brass

Seven pieces of flat brass may be the remains of brass kettles common between 1670 and 1760 (Quimby 1966:71).

Finger Rings (Fig. 20,h,i)

Brass Jesuit finger rings are typical of Quimby's Middle Historic Period (Quimby 1966:76f., Fig. 15). Two rings, one depicting the L-heart and the other the Virgin, were found at Hotel Plaza. Cleland (1972:202,207)

notes that cast Jesuit rings of the L-heart style are generally found on sites of the 1624-to-1700 period. The design on the Hotel Plaza specimen has not strayed far from the prototype design (Cleland 1972:203). Like most of the pre-1700 rings in Cleland's sample (1972:208), the two rings from Hotel Plaza have rounded bezels.

Pipestems (Fig. 20,j)

Two kaolin pipestems were found. The interior diameter of one pipestem was 6/64 inch. That of the other was 5/64 inch. According to Harrington, pipes dating from 1680 to 1720 had interior diameters of 6/64 inch. During the period from 1720 to 1750 interior diameters were generally 5/64 inch (Deetz 1967:40-41). Close inspection of the pipestem with an interior diameter of 6/64 inch shows the mark "Peter Dorn," a nineteenth century pipemaker. Because of this mark and the design of the stem, it is comparable to stems found at the Riviere au Vase Site in southeastern Michigan. This site was probably occupied during the middle of the 19th century (Fitting 1965:68, Pl. 39). The second pipestem fragment at Hotel Plaza probably also dates from some mid-19th century non-Indian use of the area.

Buttons

Buttons were a fairly common occurrence at the site; however, only one — a solid, round, brass button, without a loop (Fig. 20,k) — seems to predate the era of the twentieth century hotel. This specimen, although not identical, has similarities to buttons described by Quimby for the Middle and Late Historic periods (1966:78f.). Two round leather (?) buttons (Fig. 20,l), of uncertain but probably recent origin, were also found.

Beads (Fig. 21)

One crude clay bead, an oblong bone bead, and a section of crinoid stem represent aboriginal beads at the site. All of the glass beads found are diagnostic of Quimby's Middle Historic Period (1966:85f., Fig. 17), and would, therefore, probably be contemporary with the occupation of Fort St. Louis. These include a blue seed bead, two oblong, spher-

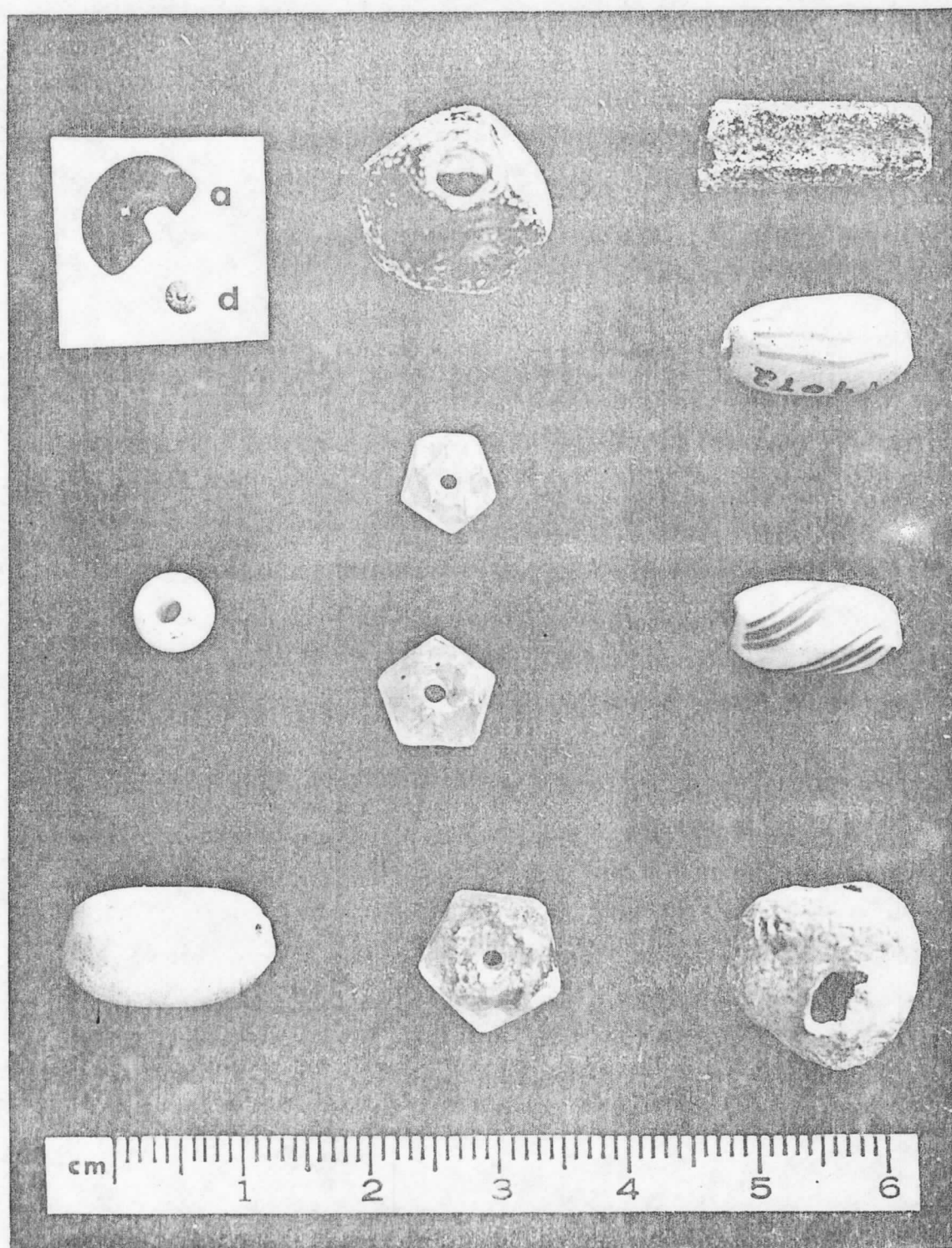


FIGURE 21. European and Indian Beads. a. (19084). b. (19069). c. (19076). d. (19116-seed bead). e. (19005). f. (19072). g. (19037). h. (19005). i. (19075). j. (19144). k. (19005). l. (19086).

oidal blue and white striped beads, two white beads of the same shape, four blue decahedrals, one spherical translucent white bead, and half of a spherical black bead.

Miscellaneous Non-Indian Artifacts

The remainder of the non-Indian artifacts may be attributed to the twentieth century

hotel. Quantities of glass, china, crockery, square and round nails, unidentifiable pieces of iron, wire, washboard fragments, bricks, concrete, and clinkers are but some of the items found. Subsequent reference to them will be made only when they were found in featured areas.

FLORAL REMAINS

Botanical remains were not abundant, and all but one specimen occurred in historic features. They included three kernels of corn,

an eight-rowed corncob found with a burial, a peach pit, half a bean, and one other fruit pit.

FEATURES

BURIALS¹

Feature 1, Grid A — This was a poorly preserved, extended burial of a child, which had no associated grave goods. It was found at a depth of 30 inches and was overlain by Features 2 and 4, both pits. According to the notes, the bones of the trunk, upper limbs and feet were missing.

Feature 5, Grid A — This was a partial, extended burial cut by Feature 2, which undoubtedly accounts for the missing lower limbs. Feature 5 was on top of another burial, Feature 6. The burial was found at a depth of 24 inches with the pelvis at a depth of not quite 35 inches. Associated artifacts were a chert hammerstone, a rough abrader next to the right half of the pelvis, and one La Salle Filleted sherd. One nail and nine Swanson Series sherds were found in the six inches above the burial.

Feature 6, Grid A — One small section of this burial was cut by Feature 5, most of it was overlain by Feature 2, and another portion by Feature 4. This burial consisted of only the skull, teeth, and a long bone (a humerus?) but was accompanied by the ground-glass pendant and the two iron-coil bracelets or hair

ornaments and therefore can be assumed to be historic. It occurred at a depth of 33 inches and was overlain by one Swanson sherd.

Feature 19, Grid B — A poorly preserved extended burial, found beneath mottled dark and light sand on the yellow sand subsoil, occurred at a depth of 18 to 24 inches (Figs. 22 and 23). The skull was crushed, the ends of the long bones crushed or missing, and many ribs, vertebrae, and the right hand were missing. The skeleton measured six feet long, 16 inches across the shoulders, and 11 inches across the pelvis. The humerus was 12 inches long and the femur 20 inches long. The hands had been placed on the hips. Associated materials included 11 chert chips, one chert core, three Swanson sherds, two lumps of clay, and a fragment of burnt corncob. Another Swanson sherd and a worked flake were also reported. The area was riddled with rodent holes.

Feature 22, Grid B (Fig. 25) — An extended skeleton in good condition was buried in yellow sand at a depth of 36 to 42 inches. There were no associated artifacts. Judging from the dark earth tunnel leading into it, the burial had been attacked by rodents.

Feature 24, Grid B — A burial, extending from a depth of 18 inches to 24 inches, was in poor condition. Due to the poor preserva-

1. The skeletal remains were not available for study. Apparently all have been lost or discarded.