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THE DUCK RIVER or ASCHKIBOKAHN SITE
OF WEST-CENTRAL MANITOBA:
THE ROLE OF THE NORTHERN MARSH
IN THE SUBSISTENCE
OF LATE WOODLAND PEOPLES

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6. HISTORIC ARTIFACTS AND BONE TOOLS

Introduction

No separate historic component was observed during the 1976 Aschkibokahn Site excavations, although a few historic artifacts were recovered from the upper levels of three units. However, bone tools were numerous and some were used in resource exploitation. Bone tools from the 1976 excavations include twelve awls, eight bird bone beads or tubes, two chisels, two antler handles, two harpoons, two needles, a spatula, a wedge or flesher, and four miscellaneous tools. The historic artifacts and bone tools will be described and their functions briefly discussed.

Historic Artifacts

The historic component in the study area is extremely limited, despite the fact that local villagers report that the island was occupied up until 1950, and is visited every Spring by employees of the Provincial hatchery. Apparently recent occupations are limited to the northern and central areas of the island. Excavation of the upper three levels of units 14N8W, 22N22W, and 28N2W (Table 11 and Appendix E) in the study area on the southern tip produced the following artifacts: two small fragments of brown bottle glass, one lead pellet, three small fragments of clear glass, several unidentifiable fragments of rusted metal, a 22 caliber shell in good condition, a small, green "seed" bead, and a plain, cast whitmetal button (Plate 31). Most of the historic materials appear to have been

TABLE 11. HORIZONTAL DISTRIBUTION OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

	14N8W	10N22W	20N18W	22N22W	28N2W
Bead	1				
Lead pellet				1	
Button				1	
22 caliber shell					1
Clear glass					3
Square nail					1
Brown glass					2
Total	1	0	0	2	7

discarded recently with the exception of the seed bead, possibly the lead pellet, and the button which dates *circa* A.D. 1750-1812 (Olsen 1963:552).

Bone Tools

The analysis of the bone tools began by identification of the species and element used in tool manufacture. The artifacts were measured and the degree of modification described. Tools were then grouped into general functional categories for descriptive purposes.

Awls

The term "awl" means a tool which was presumedly utilized for piercing. This use is implied by a pointed end exhibiting polish or some other sign of wear on and near the tip of the points. Of the twelve awls recovered, three (Plate 32f-h) were constructed from the proximal half of the right or left femur of adult muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*). The shafts of these femurs have been broken at an angle, the broken edges of which show considerable wear and polish. They are 24 mm in maximum length but vary in width.

Most of the awls were manufactured from splinters of long bone cortex fragments from medium to large mammals. A pelvic bone of a large bird provided the material for a flattened, tapered trianguloid tool with polish on the tip (Plate 32e). Typical awls made from shortened and polished accessory carpals of moose (*Alces alces*) were also present. One is complete (Plate 32d), but the distal end is missing from the second (Plate 32c). The final awl displays a sharp break on one end and a polished, faceted fan-shaped area on the opposite end which narrows to a single sharp point (Plate 32a). Longitudinal facets have been removed from one side which is also characterized by