

# TROJAN III

35-CO-1

Archaeological report covering the third and  
final season of salvage excavation of the Trojan site.

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## SITE DESCRIPTION

### THE SETTING

The Trojan Site is located on the left bank of the lower Columbia River about forty miles downstream from Portland, Oregon, and six miles upstream from Rainier, Oregon. The site lies in a pleasant, sheltered cove fringed with a backdrop of low ever-green-studded hills and fronted by a sandy stretch of beach. Coffin Rock is framed in the foreground of the site. The present-day town of Kalama, Washington is visible on the right bank of the Columbia River. Ocean liners and pleasure craft, the river traffic of today, replace dugout canoes of the distant past and sailing ships of the historic past.

The area that was excavated was pastoral in appearance, cleared and relatively level. At the time excavating began, it was used for pasture, with a small portion under cultivation as a vegetable garden. It was in this garden area that the 1970 excavation was centered.

### GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The Trojan Site is at Columbia River mile 63 in Columbia County, Oregon, in the N. W. quarter of S. W. quarter of N. W. quarter of Section 1 Township 6 North, Range 2 West, Willamette Meridian. The latitude is 46°2'6" North; the longitude is 122°52'54" West. The Site Designation is 35-CO-1, 35 indicating Oregon, CO Columbia County, and 1 the assigned Site Designation obtained from the University of Oregon.

The area excavated during the three seasons (1968, 1969, and 1970) totaled approximately 13,000 square feet. The area excavated in 1970 (upon which this report is based) was 6,775 square feet, or approximately 0.156 of an acre. It lay immediately north of the 1968-69 excavation, separated from it by a single-lane dirt road.

## HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

Artifacts described in this section were clearly of foreign, usually European, origin. They are often classified as "trade goods"; but no evidence exists that these items were traded to Native Americans. They may have been possessions of early travelers or early settlers.

Curiously, the first two summers' excavation at Trojan produced only one item that could be considered a trade item. This was a small fragment of a molded clay pipe stem. Yet during the third summer of excavation a variety of trade items were found in an area only thirty meters north of the earlier excavations.

Any explanation of the occurrence of trade material in one area and not in the other can only be conjectural. Perhaps a plausible explanation is simply that this last area excavated was the area of Native American occupation during the period of commerce with Euro-American river traffic. The physical area of the entire site indicates that it would have been comparatively small throughout its existence. Perhaps by the time trade items found their way into this camp, disease had already decimated the population and only a small remaining group inhabited the area excavated in 1970.

Some of the beads found and one pipe stem fragment had been burned. This may have occurred naturally in the day-to-day occupation of the camp or it may have been associated with Coffin Rock burials.

Mr. Emory Strong assisted with identification of these materials and generously shared library references with us.

### BEADS

Beads were the most frequently encountered trade item. A total of seventy-nine beads was tallied from the excavation. These were scattered throughout the site, but most occurred in the upper levels. A few were found at greater depths in disturbed areas.

An article in Arizona Highways, July 1971, entitled "The Enduring Intrigue of the Glass Trade Bead," summarized the significance of the beads: "In the 'winning of the West' the trade bead deserves a place high above the 'influential' Winchester. It may very well have been the trade bead that won the West."

At Trojan the most common bead found was the "Canton" bead, robin's egg blue in color, opaque, round, oval or cylindrical in shape. This was

also the most common type found all along the Columbia River. They date from 1811 to about 1900. The round and oval beads examined appeared to be wire wound. The oblong or cylindrical beads were tube, "cane" or "bugle" beads. Tube beads were made from a rod of glass broken into desired lengths with the ends often polished and rounded.

Of the seventy-nine beads found, ten had been burned. The burned beads retained color and shape identity but had melted sufficiently that measurement was distorted. Eight of the beads were light blue seed beads that had been fused together in a cluster. Nine were cylindrical "Canton" style beads. Five "Cantons" were oval in shape. Forty-nine were round "Cantons." The eight remaining beads were of a variety of types. These are described individually.

#### Bead #1

Tube bead: exterior opaque, brick red; interior translucent, light bottle glass green. This is the oldest type of Cornaline d'Alleppe dating back to the 16th Century but continued to be made for many years. The large size is rare on the Columbia but the small seed size is quite plentiful. This type was the forerunner of several common types with red exteriors and yellow or white centers.

MEASUREMENTS: length 4 mm, diameter 5 mm.

PROVENIENCE: JJ-12-2.

#### Bead #2

Semi-transparent, blue, tubular glass bead. This type of bead, rare on the Columbia River but plentiful in the Eastern United States, has been made for centuries. They were used in great numbers to ornament curtains, purses and baskets.

MEASUREMENTS: length 17 mm, diameter 5 mm.

PROVENIENCE: MM-16-1.

#### Bead #3

Translucent, bright blue, round glass bead. The surface finish resembled the smoky, acid finish of "satin" glass.

MEASUREMENTS: diameter 8 mm, bore 1.7 mm.

PROVENIENCE: GG-22-1.

#### Bead #4

Opaque, round, black bead with white dots (resembling dominoes or dice) impressed into the bead. The dots were arranged in rows of five dots around the bead with each row staggered so the dots in one row were not in line with the dots of the next row. This is an uncommon bead for the area.

MEASUREMENTS: diameter 9 mm.

PROVENIENCE: DD-13-1.

Bead #5

Transparent, dark blue, oval bead.

MEASUREMENTS: diameter 9 mm.

PROVENIENCE: DD-13-1.

Bead #6

The same as #5 except in size. Transparent, dark blue, oval bead.

MEASUREMENTS: diameter 8 mm.

PROVENIENCE: DD-16-6. (disturbed area.)

Bead #7

Semi-transparent, faceted, blue, tube bead with a light blue inlay that is common but not found in great numbers.

MEASUREMENTS: length 6 mm.

PROVENIENCE: DD-13-1.

Bead #8

Transparent, medium blue, tube bead.

MEASUREMENTS: length 4 mm.

PROVENIENCE: EE-16-1.

## COINS

Twelve coins were recovered from the upper levels of Trojan. Four of these were recent American coins. Four were American coins minted in the 1850's and 1860's. One English coin bore the date 1842. Three were Chinese coins. Only the Chinese coins and two of the American coins with drilled holes will be considered here. The other coins are listed in Appendix B: Historic Material.

Square BB-14-2 yielded a silver three cent piece of a variety known to have been issued between 1851 and 1853. There was a small hole drilled near the edge, through the date at the apex of one of the star points, which suggests the coin had been used as an ornament.

Square DD-13-1 produced an 1854 seated Liberty dime similarly drilled which also may have been an ornament.

Three Chinese coins were screened from squares AA-16-2; BB-14-2; and BB-15-2. According to Emory Strong, Chinese coins have been found in great numbers along the Columbia. They were favored by the Native Americans to ornament garments and headdresses and for use in necklaces. These coins were brought from China by early fur traders. Chinese laborers were imported to work on railroads and in the fishing industry in the 1860-1900 period; thus, not all coins found along the river were necessarily trade items.

## SUMMARY

For innumerable sites along the Columbia River, similar hypotheses could be stated and the recovery of certain information and material might be predicted which would not deviate from the pattern of sites already documented. This would be true of Trojan. Artifact types, manufacturing techniques, materials utilized, and features occurred here that would have counterparts in other lower river sites and in mid-Columbia sites as well.

These recognizable relationships lend continuity and reinforce the body of information already compiled for the area. It is, however, deviations from the predicted events that furnish additional information and make one site distinctive from another.

What can be reconstructed from information and material salvaged from Trojan that is typical or atypical of Columbia River sites? What conjectures can be made concerning the early inhabitants?

Although Trojan, 35-CO-1, was never specifically noted as a village in historic or ethnographic records, abundant evidence from the excavation determined that a site existed here from roughly 680 A.D. to the late 1700's or early 1800's when Euro-American artifacts indicate contact with whites. It seems logical to conclude that there was more or less continual occupancy during this time span. It was of this region that Verne Ray said, "it appears probable that few areas of the world could have provided a more desirable habitat than that occupied by the Chinook." (Ray 1938:46). The climate was mild. A year round supply of fish, shellfish, and game, berries, nuts and roots in season would have been abundant. Timber was available and accessible for building houses and canoes and for other purposes. In short, the need to migrate in pursuit of seasonal food supplies should have been non-existent in this setting. No clearly definable interruptions in the occupational midden indicated periods that the site was unoccupied.

The utilization of wood and plant fibers must be assumed since no wooden materials were recovered and only the smallest trace of what appeared to be matting was found. However, the presence of celts and hammering tools associated with wood working activity did occur. The presence of bone, shell, fish vertebrae, charred bulbs, and nuts demonstrates the use of these indigenous foods.

An abundance of notched points and rounded points found in far larger quantities, for example, than flaked cobbles and scrapers suggests a

great reliance upon fishing.

That the inhabitants of the site traveled, traded or both in distant places is evidenced by the presence of 'foreign' materials found in the site. Obsidian and nephrite could have come from regions remote to Trojan. Pumice ornaments, ground, drilled and sometimes incised seem to have been favored along the lower Columbia River, but have not been reported used in this manner along the upper or middle river.

Tribal or linguistic stock has been traced for many villages along the Columbia. No positive determination for either tribal or linguistic stock is apparent for Trojan.

At least two separate types of burial occurred at 35-CO-1. Neither corresponds with funeral customs described by early historians and ethnographers. However, both flexed burials and cairn burials have been reported from other sites in the region.

Projectile points at Trojan were predominately of the 'small point tradition' with a mean weight of less than one gram. Nearly half of the points examined were Form I-S, which had convex sides; a base that was either unmodified by pressure flaking or only slightly modified and of no specific shape.

The abundance of this Form may set 35-CO-1 apart from other Columbia River sites and become the hallmark of the site. These small points came to be referred to as 'Trojan points' and they do not seem to be reported in this abundance from other sites. Form I-S points were distributed vertically and horizontally throughout the area excavated in 1970.

We have no assurance that these artifacts functioned as a projectile point but we have classified them thus because, at the present no other function can be ascribed.