

The Midden

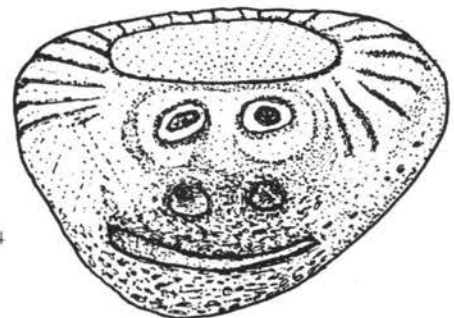


HISTORICAL RESEARCH AT KITIMAT: A.S.B.C. CHAPTER AT WORK. SEE PAGES 7 - 11

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SALISH RITUAL BOWLS: SOME NEW THEORIES. SEE PAGES 2 - 4



The Society

Forthcoming meetings:

Vancouver Chapter (2nd.Wednesday of the month; 8pm, Vancouver Museum)

Spring speakers will include Dr.R.Shutler (SFU) on Java, and the state archaeologist for Queensland on Australian archaeology (made possible by support from the B.C.Heritage Trust).

A busy schedule of activities is also planned for the Victoria, Kitimat and Abbotsford chapters.

The Midden

Subscriptions (\$8.00 a year) should be addressed to Ms.Lesley Prentis, 4320 Union Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 2X6

Next issue of THE MIDDEN will appear mid- April 1983.

Absolute deadline for expected submissions: Two weeks prior.

Particular thanks for help with this issue of THE MIDDEN are due to Ms.Nicola Lupton, Ms. Sharon Russell, Ms.Shirley Wallace, and Ms.Kathryn Bernick.

Publication of THE MIDDEN is made possible in part by a grant from the
B.C.HERITAGE TRUST.

COVER: Top: Volunteers and members of the A.S.B.C. Kitimat chapter working at the Carlson Farmhouse Research Project: Daniel Singh, Michiko Singh and Helen Singh. The 1972 dig is reported on on pages 7 - 11.

Bottom: Bowl from Crescent Beach: Used for first-salmon ceremony?
See item onposite.

ST. MUNGO OPENS ITS DOORS

The St.Mungo Cannery dig, now well under way, has entered a new phase with the opening of its Interpretation Centre. This facility will provide a focus for the literally thousands of visitors expected at the site this spring, including dozens of school tours.

The Archaeological Society is encouraging members to volunteer for screening: Help is urgently needed immediately. Volunteers should coordinate with Helmi Braches (985-0825) or Ron Murphy (435-3949, evenings).

RITUAL BOWLS OF THE SALISH INDIANS: SOME THEORIES

by

Grant Keddie
Archaeology Division
British Columbia Provincial Museum

Two questions I am commonly asked when giving public demonstrations in artifact technology revolve around the use of stone bowls and whether or not individuals or families specialized in making these and other stone tools commonly found by the archaeologist. The purpose of this article is to 1) provide a brief summary of Wilson Duff's conclusions regarding his ethnographic survey of the use of human seated figurine bowls (as presented in Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia - Anthropology in British Columbia, No. 5, 1956); 2) to present two accounts of stone bowl use not mentioned by Duff; 3) to comment on the family ownership and production of some stone artifacts.

Duff's
Conclusions

Duff is cautious in pointing out that the "accounts are fragmentary, and most were obtained by persons who little understood the intricacies of Salish religion." He concluded that some of the sculptured stone vessels were used in recent Salish culture by "shamans and (or) ritualists" and that "some at least, were made to represent guardian spirits." They could be used for clairvoyance, prophecy, curing, or other operations for which the shaman used his guardian spirit powers, and for the even greater range of use for which the ritualist used his spells - in life-crisis rites, sorcery, love magic, etc."

SALISH BOWL

Redrawn from
Harlan I Smith,
"Archaeology of
Georgia & Puget
Sound," 1907.



Some of the specific accounts in the literature surveyed include the use of a bowl for a girl's puberty ceremony in the Kamloops area, and to mix medicine and to bring rain in the Chilliwack area.

Duff emphasized that "all accounts agree that they were used to hold water, and in Salish culture in general, it is not uncommon for shamans and seers to use containers of water in which to see distant places, and for shamans to use water in their curing procedures."

Unpublished notes of Diamond Jenness, dated Oct. 27, 1935 provide information he obtained from Sechelt informants: "The stone figures with bowls in their laps were used to hold oil in (whale oil?) at potlatches; the Indians dipped their dried fish in

the oil. They were made - or many of them at least - by a family at Sechelt, and were carried to different places by the daughters of that family as they married. Enemies raided the village at Sechelt and carried off 2 figures, whereupon the family threw the remaining 6 or 7 in their possession into the water, lest they be carried off also. Some surviving members of the family probably know where they were thrown."

First
Salmon
Celebrated

Ellen Webber provided information from an "old Indian" living somewhere in the lower Fraser area in the 1890's. Although this article shows obvious Christian influence, its reference to the first salmon ceremony is basically in keeping with other ethnographic references:

"The first fish caught in each village or camping place was offered to God, by burning. A small portion of the entrails was placed in a bowl with the heart and taken by the medicine man as far out into the Fraser as he could wade, and there it was held aloft and burned." (Webber 1899 p. 311)

In this circumstance no mention is made of the shape of the bowl. Could these be the fish-face-like bowls common on the Lower Fraser?

The well-known Sechelt Image, which Duff relates on a stylistic basis to the seated human-figure bowls, had a similar ownership claim to a specific family as the bowls mentioned by Jenness. When the Sechelt image was found c. 1921 it was "claimed by Dan Paull of Sechelt, who recognized it as a mortuary stone of his family, which, as an uncle related to him, had disappeared many years ago, during an epidemic of smallpox. It had formerly been set up to the memory of the wife of a chief" (Duff 1956:89).

Family
Owned
Bowl

The passing of ownership of stone bowls through the female line was mentioned in a story related to Hill-Tout: "The Chilliwack formerly possessed a large stone statue of a human being. It was owned by a certain family, and was taken to the neighbouring Sumas tribe by a woman who married into that tribe." (Maud 1978:55). In this story there is no tradition of bowls being made by the family: "This statue was said to be the work of Quqals, who one day passing that way saw a man and wife, who in some way displeased him, and were in consequence transformed into stone statues." (Ibid) One may surmise from this that the statue in question could have been found as an archaeological specimen by the Indians and passed through the family. This is certainly a possibility that we have to keep in mind. We simply do not know what would be done with a stone figure found archaeologically by Indian people in the prehistoric or early historic period. Would it be reincorporated into a new ritual?

This is certainly possible. At present the Jenness story is unique in stating that the bowls were "made" by at least one specific family.

Boas reports inherited use of hafted hammer heads on Vancouver Island:

"The Kwakiutl claim that grooved and perforated stone hammers with long handles (dexuma'no), like those of the Bella Bella and other northern tribes, were not made. It is said that about 1840, a hammer of this type was introduced through the inter-marriage of a Kwakiutl and a Bella Bella; and the hammers are still called "Do'qwa-is" hammers from the name of the person who first introduced them. Their use has always remained confined to Do'qwa-is and to his descendents." (Boas 1909, p. 314).

Conclusion:
Evidence is
Sparse

The evidence for specific uses of stone human figure bowls and that for the family use and making of stone artifacts among the Salish is still very sparse. Most of the ethnographic information was collected at a late time period long after the traditional use of these items and should be viewed with caution.

The specific use of some of these bowls will undoubtedly be determined by on-going and future analytical laboratory techniques which examine the micro-residue left on them. The question of family ownership and manufacture of bowls and handmauls is certainly an interesting one that may shed some light on the process of artifact diffusion. Although the evidence is weak for select family production and ownership we should keep this in mind when examining the distribution of some artifacts on both an intersite and intrasite basis.

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NEWSLETTER PROVES HIGHLY SPECIALIZED

Zooarchaeological Research News. Vol. 1, No. 1 (Nov. 1982)

Tim Schowalter and Jean Williams, co-editors.

\$6.00 annual subscription (4 issues), Payable to Zooarchaeological Research News c/o Tim Schowalter, 9712 84th Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T6E 2E9.

Zooarchaeological Research News is "a newsletter devoted to North American zooarchaeological studies ... a means of communication for people with an interest in zooarchaeology." The intention is to provide up-to-date information to researchers studying faunal remains. The newsletter will not be publishing articles, but rather listings of recent literature -- unpublished reports and obscure publications as well as citations from the better known journals and publishing houses. In addition there will be book reviews, reports of regional research, reports of conferences, and assorted notes, announcements, enquiries, etc.

Jean Williams and Tim Schowalter, co-editors of Zooarchaeological Research News, plan to publish four issues a year. They see themselves as "organizers" of information that they hope will be sent in regularly. The success of the newsletter, they state, will depend on the cooperation and contributions of zooarchaeological researchers in Canada and the U.S.

Judging from the first issue, Zooarchaeological Research News will not suffer from a lack of information to pass on. The "Recent Literature" section includes 91 citations, mostly from 1982 publications. Articles are listed separately from books, and are organized by topic (analysis, "birds," "fish," etc.). There is no separate listing for theses and dissertations, although four M.A. theses (three from S.F.U.) are included under "Articles" -- a rather unexpected classification. There are three regional reports, from: the Zooarchaeological Identification Centre of the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa; the Archaeological Survey of Alberta, Edmonton; and the Osteotheque-Osteology Studies and Research Service in Montreal. There are also two book reviews, and a brief report (and a list of paper titles) of the 1982 London meetings of the International Council for Archaeozoology.

The editors have obviously put a lot of work into collecting and presenting the material. In addition to being well-organized and maintaining a high professional standard, the 16 pages of text look good and read well. Archaeologists doing research with faunal remains will, I believe, find a \$6.00 subscription well spent. The newsletter is, however, decidedly for specialized professionals: amateurs will find it of little interest, as will archaeologists who are not involved in faunal studies.

Kathryn Bernick

A.S.B.C. MEMBERS MAY CRUISE THROUGH THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS

Hilary Stewart describes proposed charter

Keep hearing about the legendary Queen Charlotte Islands? Long to go there, to wander among the old totem and mortuary poles at Nin-stints, a World Heritage Park? Don't know how to get there without a boat? Read on.

A small charter group with an archaeological bent will sail through these beautiful islands in September. We will visit the abandoned Indian village of Tanu, once the largest, most flourishing village of the Haida, and the ancestral home of Bill Reid. The posts, planks and beams of once great houses, the gigantic spruce trees and the hushed forest speak of a vanished era. The carved poles of Skedans, too, with its sweeping beach on either side, will touch you with a sense of wonder as middens tell of the long heritage of the powerful Haida. Among other sites, we will visit the incredible remains of New Clu, with its derelict oilery and ancient logging trucks standing like moss-covered ghosts in the forest. The sheltered waterways make for smooth sailing. A close look at sea lions, eagles, ravens, puffins and other wildlife will be added interests, as will the marine creatures of the amazingly rich low-tide shores. Some of these marine delicacies we catch or gather en route for gourmet meals on our floating home, the 45 ft. sailing cutter The Darwin Sound.

The trip is scheduled for Sept. 11-17 - \$750 - all inclusive, Sandspit to Sandspit. For further information, or to book, write Pacific Synergies, 2221 Panorama Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 1V4, or phone 929-1188.



SKEDANS. Q.C.I.

By James Tirrul-Jones, Curator, Kitimat Museum.

In 1949 McMinn and a team of surveyors working for the government of British Columbia came to the Kitimat Valley to do a complete survey of the area. At that time only the native people of the Valley, the Haisla, lived there and a rumour was going around that ALCAN intended to build a large aluminum smelter in the valley. Two years later, work on the smelter commenced, and many of the workers, who came from all over the world, thought that they were the first white men ever to inhabit Kitimat.

Little did they know that just eight years earlier Charlie Carlson had left his homestead in the valley for good. He was the last of a number of pioneers who settled in the valley at the turn of the century.

Capt. Charles Carlson first came to Kitimat in his sloop in 1902, looking for a place to sell his furs. In 1904 he returned to this valley to take up permanent residence. There was much talk of a railroad coming to Kitimat at that time. Kitimaat and Omenica Railroad stocks were selling fast, and Kitimat real estate was subdivided into lots that sold for \$90 - \$350. each. Unfortunately for the early Kitimat pioneers, the railway never came. By 1908 everyone knew that Prince Rupert would be the new northern terminus, instead of Kitimat. Charlie Carlson, however, stayed on.

In 1913 Carlson began construction of a house on 60 acres of homesteaded land. A year later he purchased 40 more acres. His farm was located only 50 feet above sea level, less than a quarter mile from the head of Douglas Channel, near the present Eurocan Pulp Mill, on the Kitimat River. Carlson grew potatoes, carrots, strawberries and other fruits and vegetables. He had horses, cows, pigs, chickens, and 16 head of cattle. About 1929 he sold his livestock and began fishing during the summer and living on his farm during the winter months only. Finally he left Kitimat altogether in 1944. Much of what we know of Kitimat's early pioneers is from the reminiscences of the people who were there and are still living today - people like Elizabeth Anderson Varley, who wrote the excellent book Kitimat My Valley. According to Mrs. Varley, Mr. Carlson was a hard worker and womanizer, who played the violin, liked company and told great stories.

Since so few of Kitimat's early pioneers are still living, such insights into this largely undocumented period of B.C.'s history are rare gems to be treasured by those interested in Kitimat's medieval period (post-Native settlement and pre-ALCAN).



Screening
sifting
Carlson

C. Joins in Historical Research Project

It is for this reason that the Archaeological Society of B.C., Kitimat Chapter, and the Kitimat Centennial Museum decided to do a small archaeological survey and excavation of the Carlson farm site. This site is threatened by the continued industrial development in the Kitimat area.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

On July 25, 1982 work began at the Carlson farm site. Archaeological activity at the site was carried on for five weekends until Aug. 28. Prior to this small project, no previous archaeological research had been done on the pioneer sites of Kitimat. Details of building construction, types of materials available, the range and variety of goods available in Kitimat and the effect of the constant flooding of the old farm sites was still virtually unknown. Our project began with the hope of filling in some of these gaps in the history of Kitimat.

Field research began with a survey of the land originally owned by Mr. Carlson. This revealed that most of the farm site has been chewed up by large machinery and little is left of the surface upon which Mr. Carlson walked. It was decided to concentrate our efforts on the area immediately surrounding the remains of the collapsed Carlson house. Though the boards and timbers of this house are very rotted, it stood until 1970 when it gave way under the winter snows.

Fifty meters east of the farm house, an old ditch and some fence posts were discovered. This ditch was hand dug and runs up to the Ocelot Road. This road borders where the Kitimat River used to flow during the time of the farm site's occupation.

The collapsed farm house itself, though extremely overgrown with dogwood, elderberry and alder, showed recognizable remains of gables, boards and beams. The beams were hand hewn, still showing their axe marks on the sides. However, all of the 2cm thick boards were sawn, probably at a mill. Board and timber sizes ranged from 1.5 cm by 30 cm to 22 cm by 24 cm. Detailed fitting and joinery work was evident from examination of the timbers.

Few artifacts were found on the surface during the survey. A few fragments of tin, a steel hinge, a brass eyelet and some bits of modern glass were found among the boards of the collapsed building. Some metal parts of a cast iron stove were noted lying near the south east corner of the building. A collection of nails was made which included a majority of wire nails with a number of square cut nails. A rusty 5 cm pipe was protruding from the ground at the south end of the house. It appeared as if the whole area had been flooded.



Helen Singh
working at the
farm project

EXCAVATION

Shovel tests were made in the area near the farm house and a 5 cm layer of brown earth was found 20 cm below the grey silty surface, when tests were done in pockets of land that appeared as if they were not excavated previously by machinery. These small areas were within 15 meters of the house and revealed no artifacts except for a bit of brown glass turned up 8 cm below the surface, just 2 meters north of the house.

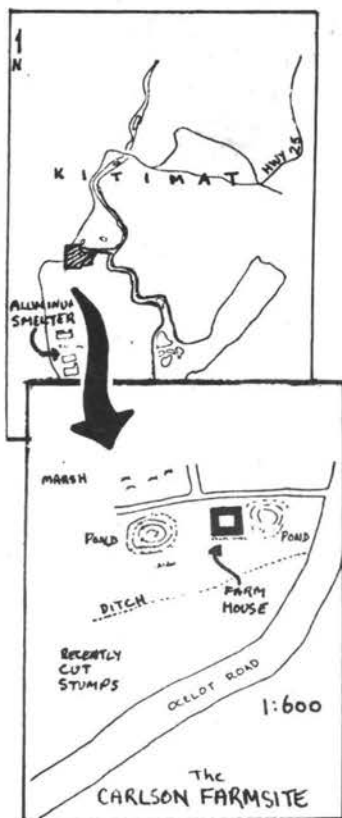
Recognizing that little was left undisturbed in the area near the farm house, it was decided to clear an area within the collapsed house, which was left alone except for occasional visitors and for hunters to the site. The area chosen for the clearing of boards and the removal of a deposit of grey silt was near the back of the house. This clearing area was three meters square.

The removal of collapsed boards can reveal or destroy important evidence concerning the construction of the building. We therefore began our excavation with the removal of the first board, noting the direction in which the boards lay and looking for any evidence of joinery. Boards were removed according to arbitrary levels of approximately 30 cm each, reaching the base of the house at 60 cm deep. One can imagine that it was impossible to keep the first level at exactly 30 cm throughout. An effort was made, however, not to remove a single board until it was entirely exposed. Due to the extremely rotted condition of the boards and the large size of the clearing area, very little material needed to be removed from outside the clearing area.

The first level of boards was rotted and disarranged from flooding of the area. They were, however, very likely close to their original place, judging from recognizable features such as gables and beams.

Removal of the first level of boards revealed few artifacts, among which was a cast-iron bracket. The bottom 20 cm of level one was a mixture of silt and rotted wood. The lower 10 cm of this level contained a layer with a mass of roots from growth occurring after the house had collapsed.

Level two was a mixture of rotted boards and grey silt. It therefore, as at the bottom of level one, required a combination of digging out the silt which was then sifted, and removing the boards. Near the middle of this level a number of artifacts and features began to appear. A house post was discovered thus confirming that the house was built on a post foundation, rather than horizontal logs. In the middle of the level in the north-west quarter of the clearing area, crushed pieces of a 30 cm diameter drain tile were discovered which



sloped downward and ran in a north-south direction. This level also revealed shell buttons, a brass match case, fragments of a wagon wheel, a rabbit snare, bits of congoleum tile, leather harness straps, glass beads, bottle glass and bottles, window glass, mirror fragments, a wooden box fragment with mortise-and-tenon joints, five fragments of fired glazed clay dishes, a file, concrete chinking and unidentifiable rusty bits of metal.

The bottle glass was mostly broken and found, for the most part, in a single area at the south edge of the south-east quarter of the clearing area. For this reason the clearing area was extended south for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ metre, in order to collect a greater sample. Because most artifacts were discovered in the south-east quarter it is believed that this was a dumping area. The bottles were dumped en masse in this corner. The bottle glass is in many colours: dark brown, light brown, amethyst, green and clear. One type of bottle has writing on it which reads Thorpe & Co., Trademark, Vancouver, B.C. The bottom of this bottle bears the date 1926 or in some cases 1925. The thickness of the glass varies a great deal with a single bottle, e.g. from 7 mm to 35 mm. The bottles were of both cast and blown glass. In all, one kilogram of glass was collected.

Level two was dug down to a natural layer of blackened earth with bits of charcoal interspersed within it. Upon reaching this depth all wood was cleared away and the carbon layer was then removed and sifted. No artifacts were found in this layer.

Two areas within the clearing area were mapped out for further excavation within the clearing area. A small one half-metre-square pit was outlined in order to examine the foundation of the house post discovered, and a one metre pit plus an extended area to the south of it was outlined, in order to find out if the debris in the south-east quarter went any deeper.

The post pit revealed that the post was set directly into the earth about 30 cm deep with stakes driven next to it to firm it up.

The pit in the south-east quarter was dug in 10 cm levels leaving a baulk running across the centre. After the carbon layer, no artifacts were discovered. The soil underneath the carbon layer was light, then dark brown humus, then light brown earth again on top of grey silt. No artifacts were found in this pit.



The Carlson Farmhouse,
Kitimat. Derelict, 1956

SUMMARY

The Artifact and Site History

The house site was burned clear, then the house was built. The area, judging from the humus buildup, must have at first suffered only infrequent flooding. It certainly did flood though, on occasion, judging from the silt content of the soil just below the burn layer. After the house was built, a ditch was dug and a large drain installed beneath the house. This must have contributed to flood control. Also at that time there were no roads and the area was more free to drain.

Items left in the house and parts of the house itself were frequently under water; since the building of major roads in the area since 1950 created a swampy area where it was once well drained. This caused most things to be buried under a layer of silt, and all artifacts except glass were found in an extreme state of deterioration. Our pioneer era is therefore quickly lost to the elements. The important articles of everyday life are made of wood, paper, leather, and metal; all of these materials will deteriorate in our climate in the space of less than 100 years. This emphasises the importance of studying the material history of our pioneers now, before all evidence is irretrievably lost to the elements.

Charlie Carlson

Carlson was indeed an extraordinary pioneer. Living in isolation in an area where money was scarce and freight and mail arrived only periodically, he acquired many commercially-made items, dishes, brass fittings, sawn lumber, nails in abundance, concrete, drain tile, leather goods, beads and even soft drinks.

His house likely had indoor plumbing and was painted and decorated. The size of the house means he expected company and likely got it. His ability as a carpenter is proved by the fact that his house was no 'pioneer' dwelling. The outside walls were made of large hand-hewn beams, dovetail-joined at the corners. A number of glazed sash windows were framed into the outside walls. The outside was finished with shakes. The house had inside partitions and the peaked roof included two gable windows jutting out from each side of the middle of the roof. All this he built, plus farming and raising livestock.

This site has left us all a monument to an extraordinary level of industry and commerce that was achieved within an environment that we today might find harsh and unforgiving.

ANNUAL INDEX TO THE MIDDEN, JOURNAL OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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TWO MAJOR CONFERENCES SET FOR SPRING

The Northwest Anthropological Conference is being held in Boise, Idaho, March 24-26. Inquiries should be directed to: Kenneth Ames, NWAC Conference Chair, Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology and CJA, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 83725.

The Canadian Archaeological Association will be meeting April 21-24 in Halifax. For more information contact Program Chair Robert Ferguson, Parks Canada Atlantic Region, Historic Properties, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 1S9.

AND ONE MORE CONFERENCE

The Classical Association of the Canadian West, Annual Meeting, will be held on Feb. 18 & 19 at S.F.U. There will be an archaeological session at 2.00 p.m. on Feb. 19, chaired by Dr. P. Hobbler of S.F.U. For information, contact Dr. R. Sullivan, Dept. of History, S.F.U.

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