



The 2010 Capilano University Archaeology Field School

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The 2010 Capilano University archaeology field school concentrated fieldwork in the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve in North Vancouver. The fieldwork built upon that of previous field school groups, which, in addition to training students in field methods, had these goals: documenting early 20th century residential sites and logging camps that have been overgrown by several decades of forest re-growth; contributing to a more complete picture of local history; providing public education on archaeology and local history, and contributing to archaeological studies of early 20th century camp life, with particular focus on the historic archaeology of logging camps and Asian-American sites.

The focus of field work was at the McKenzie Creek site. Previous investigations suggest the site was a camp for Japanese loggers and their families, with the peak period of occupation around 1920.

The primary research objective was to test the hypothesis that following a year or two of use as a logging camp, the site

may have continued to be occupied by a small group of Japanese up until WW II internment. One of the ways of testing the hypothesis was to identify artifacts dating from 1921-1942. Preliminary analysis of artifacts does not support the hypothesis. Of several hundred artifacts recorded, none are clearly more recent than 1920, with one exception.

The exception was an empty bottle of "Bud Light Lime" which was deposited in the depression left by the uplifted roots of a tree which fell sometime during late 2009 and early 2010; this serves as a reminder of potential problems associated with doing archaeology in areas of high public use. Situated in a part of the Seymour Valley with no well-known old logging roads, or hiking or bike trails, the site was probably left undisturbed by people for several decades. Several years ago a recreational trailway for the public was built, effectively bisecting the archaeological deposits and resulting in the looting of surface artifacts.

Most artifacts catalogued during the 2010 field season came from under and around the roots of a single tree on the periphery

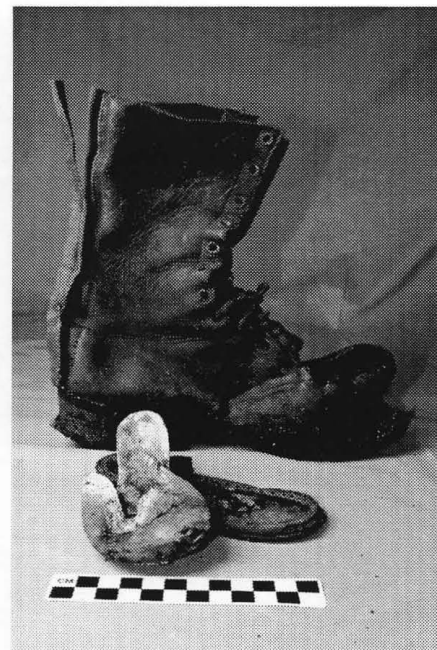
of the site, and are typical early 20th century camp refuse. The assemblage includes cylindrical food cans, rectangular meat cans, tobacco cans, oil cans, and a can for boot polish. Bottles and jars include those for hand cream, oil, ink, medicine, condiments, and liquids. Remnants of clothing include fragments of work boots and more than a dozen buttons (three being identified as 'Carhartts' which remains a popular brand of work clothing).

Two wooden features were excavated. One was an apparent cabin on a hillside, about 60 meters from the main part of the camp and based on the preservation of wooden planks, was assumed to be more recent than other structures. Besides planks, window glass and nails, only three artifacts were recovered (stove parts and a door hinge), which may ultimately prove to be post-1920, but that is yet to be determined. The other wooden feature consisted of several large cedar planks laid side-by-side near the central part of the site, close to a previously excavated bathhouse, other cabins, and what may be a garden area. Excavation revealed nails of various sizes, but the function remains a mystery. It may have been a canvass-topped building (not uncommon in early 20th century camps) or perhaps a structure to store firewood.

Although most field work was concentrated at the McKenzie Creek site, time was also spent on survey and monitoring some previously documented early 20th century sites. It hasn't been uncommon for historic artifacts in this area to become exposed by natural processes from year to year. One artifact of note was discovered in an area alongside the Seymour River that had a store with an attached house and several cabins that were occupied between 1900 – 1949. Natural processes had exposed fragments of a 78 rpm record. One enterprising student was able to get enough information from the fragments (colour residue from the label as well as the catalogue and matrix numbers impressed in the vinyl), to determine that it was likely a recording of *Broken Heart Polka*, by Roman Gosz and his Orchestra, pressed by DECCA in 1939.

Public education took the form of site visits, participation in public events, and a blog. Visitors were an almost daily occurrence and included professors and students from other universities, as well as members of the public who happened upon the excavations. A video news organization was on-site for a day with a view to making a story and creating stock footage of archaeology fieldwork. Public events in which the field school was represented included MetroVancouver –sponsored events in Upper Lynn Headwaters Regional Park and the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve, in which several hundred people were introduced to the project through artifact displays and discussions with field school students and the instructor.

A blog created and maintained by a student (archaeology-fieldschool.blogspot.com) was perhaps the most successful public education component, providing daily updates with text and photos of both field and laboratory work. There were close to 1200 visits to the blog, with more than 3100 page views. Visitors to the blog came from 29 different countries. Besides Canada, this includes the U.S., Turkey, Korea, Phillipines, Chile, Singapore, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Japan, Macedonia, Russia, the Netherlands, Italy, Finland, India, Brazil, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Greece, Ireland, Algeria, France, Slovenia, Malaysia, Spain, Belgium, and Serbia.



Students participating in the field school were Brittany Allinson, Sean Barnes, Jessica Clayton, Simon Danvers, Suzannah Forbes, Andrea Goutier, Bora Guc, Max Meridith, Anja Micevic, Nadia Pucci, Sonya Reid, Paul Roote, Verena Schneider, Rikki Seddon, and Andy Tung. Three previous fieldschool students – Spencer Kitson, Christie Leung, and Kaylen Riedlinger – volunteered in the field, the lab, or public events.

The field school was directed by Capilano University archaeologist Bob Muckle

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