

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE JAMES FARM

Earlier this year Betty Barr, the great granddaughter of Jesse James, loaned two family portraits to Clay County for display at the Jesse James Farm and Museum. The charcoal portraits depict Jesse James and his wife Zerelda (called "Zee"). Barr presented the portraits at a Clay County Commission meeting.

1989 DELAWARE RIVER CROSSING SALVAGE DIG: FEAGINS TALK IN MAY

by Mary Conrad, with editing by Jim Feagins to ensure accuracy

"German Silver Decoration for a Site on the Old Delaware Reservation, Kansas City, Kansas" was the title of Jim Feagins's talk at the KCAS May meeting. The Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) has contracted with Feagins to analyze artifacts in the Unmarked Burial Sites (UBS) collections before their probable repatriation. The topic of this talk is the study of one of the UBS collections.

In December of 1989, a sand dredge operation was mining sand along the southern bank of the Kansas River, near Grinter House in western Wyandotte County. During the process of spraying water on the sand, a screen clogged. When a worker checked the screen, he found human skeletal remains sticking out of the river bank. The Kansas City, Kansas (KCK) police were called, and the KCK Fire Department also was summoned since the bones were on an unstable sand bank. The police and firemen did not recover any artifacts, but they did remove bones unsystematically.

The coroner was asked to examine the bones; and the wife of the coroner called Rodney Staab, the curator of Grinter House at that time. Staab contacted some KCAS members. These volunteers assembled on December 24, a bitter cold day. Bert Wetherill of KCAS organized the salvage efforts into a systematic excavation, though conditions were far from ideal. Some of the ground was frozen; and the sandy bank was unstable, a desirable condition for sand miners, but not for archaeologists.

Many spectators assembled so the diggers dared not leave an unfinished site overnight. Thus they finished digging that evening with the aid of car lights. During the one-day dig, Wetherill assessed the burials as representing two individuals, but a physical anthropologist later disagreed. Feagins will try to solve this mystery.

The report of the physical anthropologist concluded three individuals were represented--a young Native American and a male and female both of Native American and Euro-American descent. Biological anthropologists rely primarily on tooth structure to distinguish between American Indians and Euro-Americans. To distinguish genders they rely on various characteristics including the sizes of bones though this can present problems. A small-boned man might be identified as female, and a large-boned woman might be identified as male.

Along with the bones, the KCAS volunteers recovered artifacts. These included fragments of a tin can, a shell gorget, glass beads, iron buttons with rusted shanks, four-holed buttons, three gilt buttons, nails, a buckle, a strip of leather, tinklers, an earring, a German silver brooch, fragments of metal medallions (or ear wheels), a hair tube and fragments of fabric.

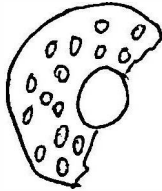
Many of the glass beads were found when part of the dirt was screened in Topeka. Nine different types of beads, most of which are multi-faceted, are represented. The facets are irregular, which indicates each bead was handmade. The glass facets were formed by pushing on hot glass as it cooled. Many colors of beads are present. The holes of the four-holed buttons were filled with blue and green corrosion so perhaps copper was associated with these buttons. Three buttons with shanks have the words "treble gilt colour" on the backs. Treble gilt colour indicates those buttons were dipped in gilt three times, and heat was applied in between each dipping.

Some fragments of fabric had been sprinkled with vermillion, a red pigment

Euro-American traders sold. By the nineteenth century, Indians bought pigments from these traders.

The nails may have come from boots or shoes. The tin can fragments indicate a circular can.

One earring and two ear wheels were found. Metal medallions (or ear wheels) might have hung from Indian earrings. Two fragments of ear medallions were found associated with cloth. The metal medallions are in a poor state of preservation. The impressions of the holes can be seen on the cloth.



Due to the association of the medallions with cloth, the medallions may have lain on the cloth on the chest of one individual. These medallions could have been attached to the ears. Both emigrant and Plains Indians wore medallions, often referred to as ear wheels. Often the earlobes were split, so the earlobes might hang down many inches when earwheel, rings and medallions were attached. If these medallions were components of earrings, Feagins thinks the associated fringed fabric may have been a shawl, though a blanket could be a possibility.

An associated large brooch of German silver is quite decorative. Brooches, both large and small, commonly were worn by Plains Indians.

The shell gorget has two metal studs through the shell, and shanks are on one side of the studs. This gorget was placed on the chest.



Shell gorgets were commonplace on the Plains, and they oftentimes hung from a necklace of beads. Were the recovered beads associated with the gorget?

Tinklers are cone-shaped rolled metal objects made by Indians after Euro-American contact. Strips of metal were cut from tin cans, pans or other metal objects. When sewed onto clothing, bags and other objects, the tinklers made tinkling noises.

A microscope peering into the open end of the tinklers revealed useful information. About 40 percent of the tinklers have tiny tubes in their centers. Feagins surmized the tubes were hairs which had stuck out of the tinklers at one time. He reasoned corrosion had migrated from the tinklers and surrounded the hairs to show their shape and placement. The capillary-sized tubes are the reason Feagins suspects hair had been in some of these tinklers. Tinklers usually did not have hairs going through them; but when they did, the hair most often was horse hair and occasionally moose hair.

Feagins decided to look at the tinklers and a few other metal artifacts by using cat scans and xrays. Randy Richie executed the cat scans, and Rory Richie took the xrays. Harvey Fritz, who is part Dakota and a member of the Crow, was the Native American observer of these radiological operations. Fritz is in charge of the radiological equipment at 13 hospitals.

Cat scans can be turned into three-dimensional pictures. With this perspective, Feagins could see tinklers were stuck together (rusted together). He also could "see" the original tinning, so he knew the exterior space beyond the tinning represented rust. Since cat scans do not show microscopic images, Feagins could not see the interior detail of the tinklers in the cat scan image.

Feagins interprets one metal artifact as the remains of a hair piece, which could have been taken on and off as an accessory. If a hair piece, a large shock of braided

hair would have extended from the metal tube. The hair in a hair piece could have been the actual hair of the owner, but not necessarily.

An xray of the tube showed small holes in the tube. A cat scan revealed evidence of hairs. Even though a cat scan of this intensity generally does not show soft tissue or hairs, corrosion apparently had migrated to the hairs, so the images of braids were captured by modern technology. German silver hair tubes do contain copper, so some of the copper could have migrated and attached to the hair. The cat scan did not show the individual hairs, but rather showed the braid. By assigning color to the corrosion, Randy Ritchie was able to show a reverse of the inside of the hair tube.

Feagins showed a picture of a George Catlin painting of The Prophet displaying ear medallions and a hair tube. These accessories were used by the emigrant tribes in what is now the Kansas City area. The portrait of The Prophet, a Shawnee who lived in southern Wyandotte County for a time, was painted around 1830. This portrait shows three arrows through an ear, with large medallions, or ear wheels, hanging from the ears. This painting also shows a hair tube at the top of his head.

These KCK burials were found on land that was a part of the Delaware Reservation in the nineteenth century. In fact, the burial was located in the area of the river called the Delaware River Crossing. Staab said an early Corps of Engineers map shows the reason for the placement of the crossing--hard rock forming the surface of the river bed.

Thus the question arises whether the buried individuals were Delaware Indians. That area of the reservation was known as Muncie, but the buried may or may not have lived in the Muncie community.

The hair tube made of German silver gives a clue to the date of the burial. German silver took over the niche of silver sales in the 1830s. Feagins places the date of the burials in the mid 1800s. The Delawares were in the area by that time, so the burials could be Delaware. However, the river crossing was a common crossing frequented not only by the Delaware, but also by the Shawnee, Wyandotte, Potowatomie, Kansa and possibly the Kickapoo who lived farther north. Feagins said a case could be made for Delaware, and the next most likely would be Shawnee since the Shawnee Reservation was nearby to the south. However, he admits there are many possibilities.

Staab said the area was quite international with Delawares, Wyandottes, Shawnees, Muncies, Senecas, French and others living in close proximity to each other. He said many of the Indians, both Delaware and Shawnee, living right in the vicinity of the burials had the last name of Dougherty. If these were local burials, he thinks it would be a good guess that these Indians were named Dougherty. Staab said many of the Doughertys now live in Oklahoma. He said if these Oklahomans would allow DNA testing, the theory of a Dougherty relationship could be investigated.

The affiliation of the burials likely will not be ascertained with certainty. If the physical anthropologist's determination of the skeletons showing a mixture of Native American and Euro-American is correct, any number of Indian tribes could be candidates as many tribes had intermarried with Euro-Americans by the mid-1800s. When the Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandottes moved to what is now Wyandotte and Johnson counties, they already had intermarried frequently.

Editor's note: This Delaware River Crossing described above is the same river crossing where Joe Chandler found a pipe tomahawk years ago. Joe donated the artifact to the KSHS (see Nov.-Dec. 1999 issue of Kansas Preservation, p. 3).

FT. OSAGE ARCHAEOLOGY

John Peterson, recently employed with the Center for Archaeological Research at Southwest Missouri State University, has been hired by Jackson County to compile a synthesis of the various archaeological projects undertaken at Ft. Osage over the years. This may take lots of "digging" in archives as the reports may be scattered. Further, the findings of some excavations may not have been compiled into reports.