

Figure 1. Location of Pigeon Cove site.

In 2012, I conducted excavations at an historic period Inuit site (FIBf-6) in Pigeon Cove, on Newfoundland Island near Cartwright, Labrador (Figure 1). This was part of the Memorial University CURA project “Understanding the Past to Build the Future” (website: www.mun.ca/labmetis). For seven weeks in July and August, with a crew of between eight and ten, I excavated one large winter house structure. Crew members this season were Amanda Crompton, Marc Bolli, Jake Loftus, Katy D’Agostino, CURA Research Assistant Robyn Fleming, and Memorial students Andrew Collins, Chandra Young-Boyle, Kyle Crotty, Michelle Davies and Brett Nuttall. Artifacts were processed as in previous years at our lab in Cartwright by MUN (Grenfell) students Chelsea Morris and Kellie Clark, who were funded by the NunatuKavut Community Council. During the course of the

excavation, there were numerous visitors to the site, including local residents and the passengers on the cruise ship *Akademik Ioffe*.

This site was selected for excavation because, unlike the other sites we have investigated, it contains only a single winter house, whereas the others contain multiple houses. It thus provided an opportunity to attempt to understand a previously unexplored aspect of the historic Inuit settlement pattern in the Sandwich Bay area.

House 1

The house at Pigeon Cove is situated on a bedrock terrace approximately 3m above sea level (Figure 1), and several bedrock outcrops were incorporated into the floor and benches of the house (Figure 2 and 3). The floor, benches and entrance passage of the house were almost completely excavated (Figure 2). The house interior has a roughly

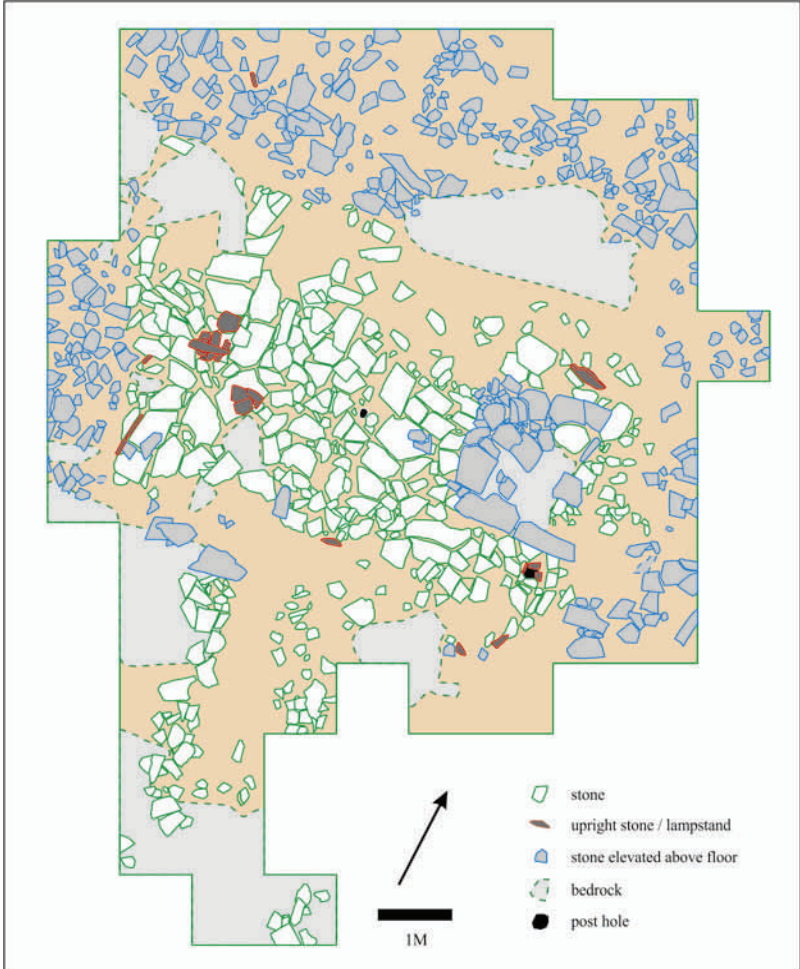


Figure 3. Pigeon Cove house after excavation.



Figure 4. Fragment of a harpoon or lance head with iron blade secured by a rivet.

Figure 5.
Two iron ulu blades.



rectangular shape, measuring approximately 11m wide and 9m from front to back, including the benches (Figure 3). The rectangular, paved floor area measures approximately 7.5m by 5.0m, and the entrance passage is approximately 4m long. Interior features include at least three lampstands and two postholes (Figure 3). Deposits in the southeastern section of the house were over 1m in depth, and time did not permit complete excavation in that area. There may be some evidence of rebuilding of that part of the house, but we ran out of time before we could investigate it thoroughly.

Results

Approximately 4220 artifacts were recovered from the excavation of the Pigeon Cove house, along with many hundreds of faunal remains. The analysis of the fauna has not yet begun, and processing of the artifacts is still in a preliminary stage. A wide range of

both European and traditional Inuit items were recovered, some of which are illustrated in Figures 4 to 10.

Summary

The materials from the Pigeon Cove house suggest a date in the early 18th century, roughly contemporaneous with some of the structures at the nearby Indian Harbour site. In comparison, the house at Pigeon Cove contains a much greater quantity of material, suggesting that the occupants were comparatively wealthy and perhaps more heavily involved in European trade. Considering this in conjunction with the solitary nature of the structure, it may well be that the occupants were people of some importance, perhaps including a 'big-man' trader familiar from the historical literature.



Figure 6. Miniature soapstone lamp.

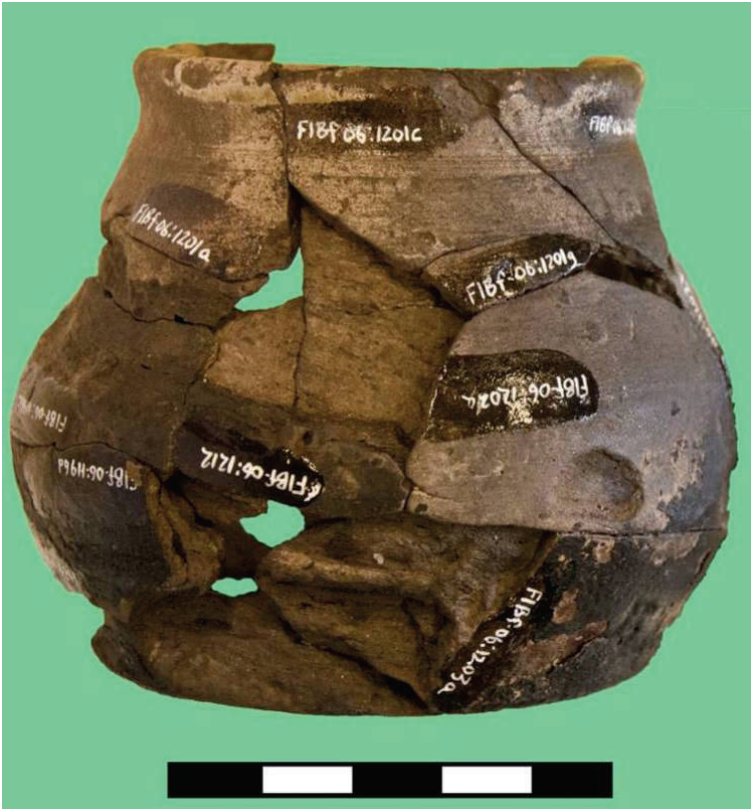
Figure 7. Soapstone oil lamp.





Figure 8. Harpoon head with fragment of iron blade.

Figure 9. Small French coarse earthenware vessel.



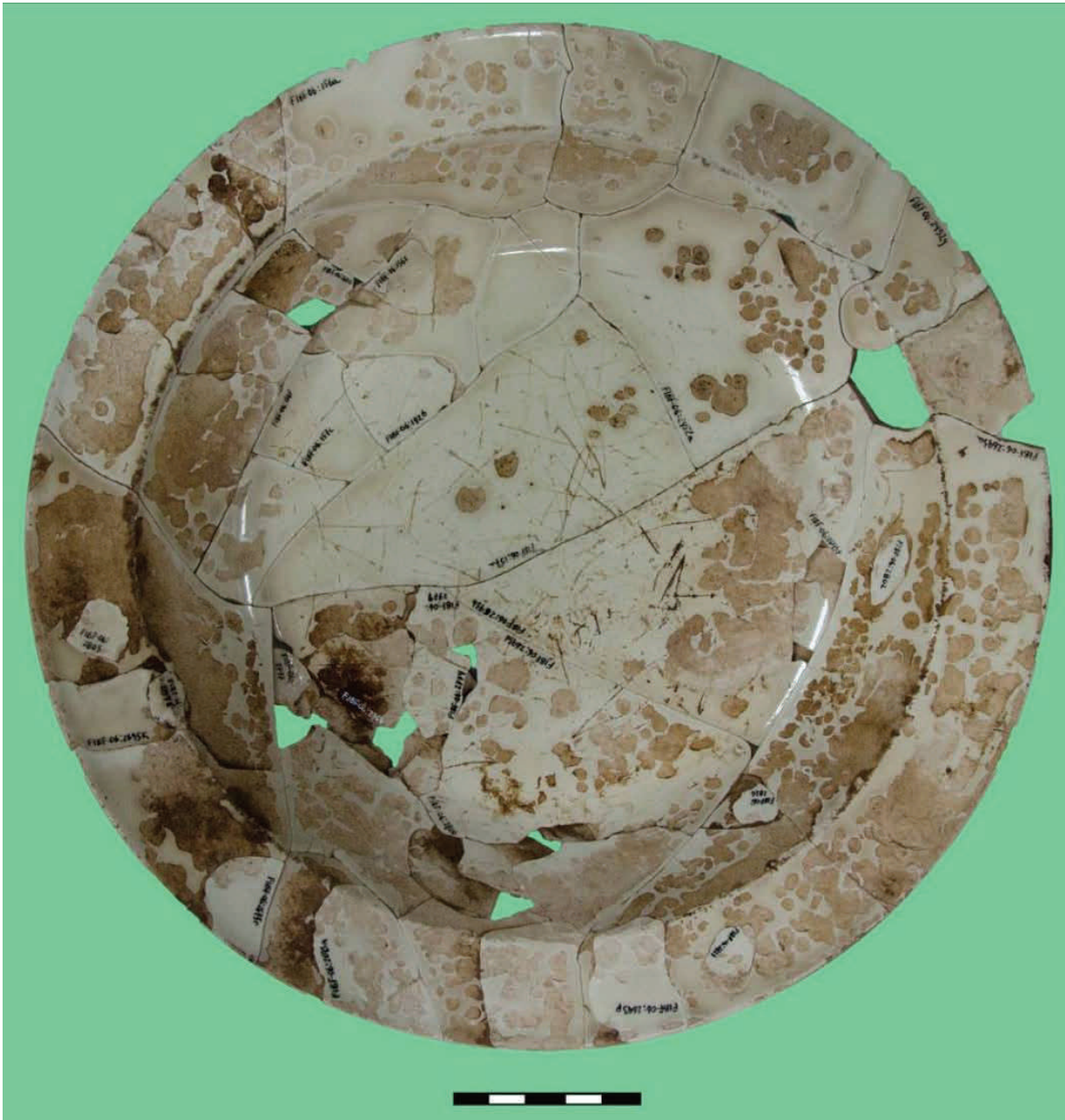


Figure 10. Creamware dish (possibly intrusive).