Interim Report — Archaeology at Ferryland, Newfoundland 2014

Barry C. Gaulton and Catherine Hawkins

This year's interim report highlights the goals and discoveries of the 2014 field season at Ferryland, Newfoundland. The focus of the 2014 fieldwork was twofold: 1) to further expose the ca. 1620s builder's trench immediately south of the Mansion House hall; and 2) to uncover a small segment of the colony's cobblestone street and associated deposits at the northern extent of our ongoing excavations across from the Colony Café.

Unfortunately, our investigations did not start in either of these areas but along the far eastern perimeter of the site (designated Area D), where ongoing shoreline erosion had cut into a long swath of cultural deposits from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Large sections of displaced sod and soil lay along the eroding embankment, as did a variety of artifacts from bottle glass and clay tobacco pipes to wrought iron nails and whole bricks (Figure 1). Freshly-exposed strata were recorded as were in situ objects including a late seventeenth-century pipe bowl (Figure 2), wine bottle fragments, iron nails and concentrations of red brick. As a result of these unforeseen circumstances, our plans for the upcoming 2015 field season may have to include a great deal of mitigation work so as to record any nearby deposits and features before we lose them to the sea. Alternatively, there is a proposal in development that would see the eastern perimeter of the site protected from future damage if suitable funding can be procured.

Figure 1: Shoreline erosion along the eastern perimeter of the site.

Figure 2: Late seventeenth-century pipe bowl, *in situ*.

Despite the initial setback, work soon started on the builder's trench behind the Mansion House (Figure 3). Our goals were to locate and expose the eastern extent of this feature in an effort to obtain a better understanding of its overall dimensions and associated cultural deposits. This operation revealed that the eastern edge of the builder's trench was oriented (not unexpectedly) parallel to the eastern exterior wall of the Mansion House hall. From east to west, the total length of the builder's trench measures 10.85m (35½ feet). Its width turns out to be slightly larger than first reported in 2013, measuring 4.84m (15¾ feet). Much to our surprise and delight, the depth of the builder's trench at the east end is much shallower than at the west end. Here, the cut into the subsoil is only 0.60m (2 feet) deep as opposed to 1.70m (5½ feet) to the west. Our efforts in removing the compacted and essentially sterile clay and rock used to infill this feature sometime in the second half of the 1620s was therefore less laborious, relatively speaking.

Figure 3: Builder's trench located south of the Mansion House hall. Field crew with range poles delineate the eastern and western parameters of the trench, as well as the varied depths at each end.

At the very bottom of the builder's trench, the crew exposed an early ca. 1620s deposit associated with the construction of the stone hall built for Sir George Calvert (the first Lord Baltimore) and his family. That this is an early construction and occupation layer was obvious based on datable clay tobacco pipe fragments, quantities of roof slate fragments for the roof, and limestone and fine sand once used to make mortar (Figure 4a-b). The limestone preserved many

Figure 4a (left): Early seventeenth-century pipe bowl and stem fragment; **4b** (right): fine sand and lime used to make mortar.

discarded fish, mammal, and bird bone that once comprised the meals taken by the colonists and craftsmen living and working at the nascent settlement. The remains of several rats were also common among the deposit, likely feasting on the remnants of these former meals (Figure 5a-b). A preliminary assessment of the 1900 pieces of faunal material, conducted by MUN graduate student Alison Harris, place fish at 81.8% of the total, followed by mammal (16.2%), shellfish (1.6%) and bird (0.05%).

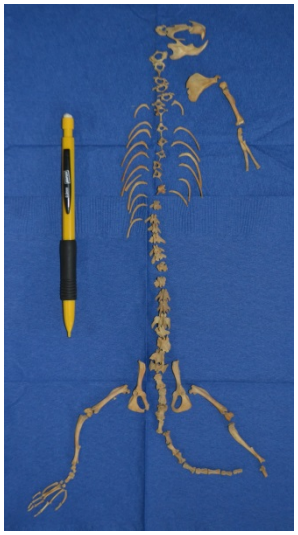

Figure 5a-b: Rat bones from the construction/ occupation layer at the bottom of the builder's trench.

In association with the construction debris, faunal remains, clay tobacco pipes, and a partial lead bale seal was a small copper crucifix measuring 2.8cm wide but broken at the top. It shows a simple representation of the Crucifixion on the front and the Virgin Mary and Christ Child on the back (Figure 6). The Catholic iconography is unmistakable. We believe it was part of a rosary and may have belonged to either an early Catholic colonist, one of the two Jesuit priests who visited briefly in 1627, or possibly even Lord Baltimore himself.

This crucifix is the first unequivocally Catholic artifact found at Ferryland dating to the Calvert era (1621-1629) and, as such, is an exceptional find. George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, envisioned his New World colony at Ferryland as a place where all Christians would enjoy freedom of religion without fear of persecution. However, back in England, Catholics would be fined or imprisoned for openly practicing their faith. The crucifix can therefore be seen as both a tangible reminder of Calvert's forward-thinking ideas and a physical manifestation of Ferryland's importance as an early birthplace of religious toleration in British North America.

Figure 6: Front (left) and back (right) sides of copper crucifix.

It is not just the crucifix but all of the objects from this 1620s deposit which are of great importance. In over 20 years of archaeology at Ferryland, rarely have we come across a well-sealed, discrete deposit dating specifically to the Calvert period – in this case sometime between 1623 and 1628. This layer will provide a valuable window into the lives of Ferryland's earliest seventeenth-century European settlers. Further insights about this period in Ferryland history will, nevertheless, be a slow process; roughly 30 metres of this deposit remain to be investigated and all of it is covered by several feet of compacted fill.

In conjunction with the work undertaken on the builder's trench, the remainder of the field crew spent most of the summer excavating a small area across from the former Colony Café. It is the same location where in previous years we uncovered a late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century dwelling, earlier domestic and industrial deposits from the Kirke and Calvert periods respectively, as well as pre-colonial occupations by migratory fishermen and the Beothuk (Gaulton et al. 2012; Gaulton and Hawkins 2014; Gaulton and Tuck 2013). The purpose of the 2014 excavations was to further investigate the colonial-era deposits (leaving the pre-colonial occupations for a later date) and expose a small section of the seventeenth-century cobblestone street located at the north end of the site (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Excavations across from the Colony Café showing the cobblestone street at the north end of the excavation area.

This street was first reported by Tuck (1996) and Carter, Gaulton, and Tuck (1998) at the eastern and western extents of the original 1620s village. Subsequent investigations determined that the street was approximately 13 feet wide, 400 feet long and runs largely under the current Pool road (Gaulton and Tuck 2003). The 2014 excavations were successful in uncovering the southern edge of an approximately 3 metre long segment of cobblestone street truncated to the north by the insertion of a modern waterline. Seventeenth-century deposits atop and directly south of the cobblestone street were extremely rich in material culture.

The earliest colonial-period artifacts date from the operation of the nearby forge situated roughly 7 metres to the southwest. It appears that this area was a frequent dumping ground for forge waste as most excavation units contained hundreds of pieces of slag, numerous fragments of iron

scrap and nails, as well an occasional broken/unrepairable tool, implement, or personal accoutrement. Of note were two partial boot spurs, one made of brass and the other of iron (Figure 8a-b). Ceramics, clay tobacco pipes, and case bottle glass were also found. Given the large number of newly-discovered artifacts associated with the daily operations of the colony's smithy, an in-depth examination may be warranted so as to enhance our previous interpretations (see Carter 1997).

Figure 8: Two boot spur fragments made of brass (left) and iron (right).

Above the forge refuse was a domestic midden dating from the second half of the seventeenth century and believed to have originated from one or more nearby dwellings northeast of the current excavation. Tracing this deposit to its source will prove difficult as much of the dwelling(s) and midden lay under the modern Pool road. Regardless, the artifacts contained within provide insight into the lives of those who discarded them.

Brass furniture tacks and several padlocks and keys suggest that these people had upholstered furniture as well as chests in which to secure their valuables. Clothing types/variety is also represented by objects such as hook-and-eye fasteners, aglets, buttons, and buckles. Ceramics, glass, and clay tobacco pipes commonly associated with foodways and leisure activities were among the most prevalent finds. The ceramics in particular demonstrate that these residents had access to a variety of decorative wares, some of which were relatively expensive. Several gunlocks as well as gunflints and a plethora of musket balls and lead shot show that hunting was a frequent activity. Literacy is also indicated (indirectly) by a partial brass seal matrix, the bottom of which bears an engraving of a three-masted ship. Figure 9a-b shows the detailed engraving on the brass seal as well as a positive image stamped into molding putty.

One other artifact from this midden deserves mention: the base of a tin-glazed bowl with the name Jean painted on the inside (Figure 10). Based upon the above-mentioned artifacts, Jean was

Figure 9a (left): Brass seal matrix engraved with a three-masted ship; **9b** (right): positive impression of seal matrix showing details.

very likely part of a well-to-do family residing in this part of Ferryland during the second half of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, she cannot be traced back to a particular individual; census records for this period are incomplete and only list the names of (most often male) heads of households. Future research may reveal that Jean is the wife or daughter of George, David II or Phillip Kirke, or one of the other prominent planters residing here at the time. For now, this small part of Ferryland's story will remain a mystery.

Figure 10: Tin-glazed bowl fragment bearing the name Jean (Iean) painted on the inside.

What is certain is the fact that the Ferryland archaeology project continues to be an exciting and informative community-university research partnership, and serves an important tool for teaching the public about this province's rich and diverse heritage.

Conservation Summary 2014
(by Donna Teasdale)

During the 2014 field season the conservation crew consisted of four regular seasonal staff, several summer students, one volunteer and one conservation intern. The crew was kept busy with daily artifact assessments, processing large quantities of ceramic, glass, and pipe and implementing conservation treatments on various unstable materials.

A number of small copper alloy objects, iron tools and hardware, lead artifacts, as well as wood, bone, textile and composite artifacts were excavated and brought to the lab for processing. In total the lab crew processed approximately 13,000 artifacts, with over 700 of those needing further stabilization at the conservation bench.

In addition to the copper alloy crucifix and brass seal matrix mentioned in the above archaeological report, a number of other interesting artifacts came into the lab. One being an unidentified artifact manufactured from copper alloy with iron corrosion at one end (Figure 11a-b). It is made of solid copper that has been beautifully turned with slight indent at the distal ends. Its function is unclear but is visibly part of a larger object.

Figure 11a-b: Unidentified copper-alloy artifact.

Also, a large amount of iron artifacts such as door hardware, fishhooks, knife blades, keys and unidentified objects were assessed and documented. Notable iron artifacts include a boot spur that appears complete, ball padlock, small cannonballs and numerous gunlock fragments. At the end of the season we had the opportunity to x-ray all excavated ferrous metal artifacts from 2014

(Figure 12a-b). These artifacts will undergo bulk treatment at Memorial University's conservation lab.

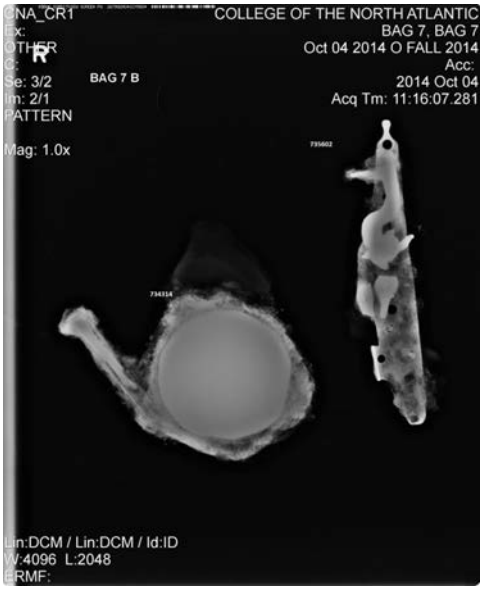

Figure 12a (left): x-radiograph of boot spur and ball lock; **12b** (right): x-radiograph of cannonball with nail embedded in the corrosion layer and a gun plate from a flintlock.

In 2010, we started a re-housing project of the Ferryland archaeological collection which is comprised of approximately 2 million artifacts to date. Since 2010, collection management has become one of our main priorities. Our focus has been to re-sort and re-package the vast amount of ceramic, pipe, glass and metals from previous seasons to improve accessibility of collections storage. This project is ongoing.

During the summer we hosted a conservation intern, Danny Doyle, in partnership with The Rooms Provincial Museum. Danny is currently completing a Master's degree in Art Conservation at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He worked on a wide range of freshly-excavated material from leather shoe fragments to faunal material (Figure 13a-b). Danny is off to Egypt for the 2015 field season to complete a second internship as part of his program requirements.

Also, Charlotte Newton, archaeological conservator, volunteered her time to the Ferryland project during the 2014 season where she spent 10 weeks at the conservation bench. Charlotte's work is invaluable to the project and we hope she will return again next season. It will be her 14th year volunteering with the Colony of Avalon.

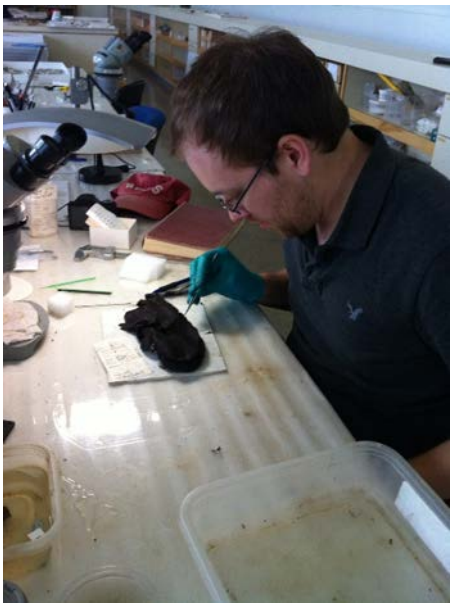

Figure 13a (left): Danny working on detailed cleaning of a copper alloy artifact using microscopy and small cleaning tools; **13b** (right): Danny cleaning a leather shoe fragment.

Most of the excavated materials from the 2014 season were fully processed and packaged for storage. These artifacts are housed at the on-site collection storage area. The artifacts requiring further stabilization, mainly those manufactured of iron, were brought to the Archaeological Conservation Lab at Memorial University for treatment and monitoring.

Overall, we had a fun and exciting field season. The Ferryland site produces an abundance of artifacts every year and the staff, students, and volunteers work extremely hard to get the material processed before the season comes to an end. This could not be accomplished without the knowledge and dedication of the Colony of Avalon laboratory staff members that have been with the project since its early years.

Collections Management Summary 2014

(by Maria Lear)

The Archaeological Collections storage area at MUN houses the digital catalogue of artifact records as received from the data entry that is completed on site in Ferryland. In addition it houses a small portion of the Ferryland collection as well as the original field tags. During the 2014 field season (June 23rd-August 16th) a total of 8700 records were entered into the database which accounted for 13,030 individual artifacts. The *majority* of the materials collected are as follows:

Ceramic: 6287 sherds catalogued (earthenware and stoneware, refined and coarse)
Clay pipes: 4122 fragments (bowls, heels and stem fragments)

Glass: 1754 shards (wine bottle fragments, drinking glasses and window glass)
Lithics: 351 finds catalogued (European flint, gunflints, slate and local chert)
Lead: 411 finds catalogued (lead shot, bale seals, waste and musket balls) with the majority being individual pieces of lead shot
Iron: 59 finds catalogued (nails, fishhooks, straps, blades, hooks, hardware and unidentified fragments)
Copper: 31 finds catalogued (buttons, sheeting and coins)
Silver: 2 silver coins were recovered
Organics: 13 finds catalogued (bone, wood, leather, charcoal, coal and shell)

Most of the collection is stored on site at the Colony of Avalon laboratory and within their dedicated collections storage area. Complete cataloguing of individual finds is also completed on site with digital database updates being submitted to MUN on a weekly basis.

In 2006, the entire collection was transferred from Memorial University's Archaeology Unit to the Colony of Avalon. Since then, the collection has grown significantly.

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