


edge. With the numerous test units in the clearing and across these two stone features it was concluded that these features were possibly the result of an attempt to increase the size and yield of a nearby vegetable garden. Similar stone arrangements can be seen on the other side of Freshwater Cove less than one kilometre away. The third stone feature was different from the others. It had no apparent relationship with the clearing, was perpendicular to the other stone features, had extremely well defined edges, and at least one definitive beginning. Broken 'stubby' beer bottle glass was found within this feature. The low height of the wall and the insufficient amount of stone downhill from it suggests the wall was not built

up much higher than at present, making it inadequate to be defensive. It is unlikely to be of military origins, though its function remains uncertain.

The removal of a bench and handrails associated with the trail were also monitored in the area of the La Fontaine Battery. There were two sections of handrails with a total of ten posts. Each post hole was investigated as was the minor disturbance caused by the placement of the bench. Cultural materials and deposits were absent. A French map from 1709 depicts earthworks in the area of the handrails; however, this area has been subjected to heavy erosion. 

**SEARCHING FOR INUIT IN THE UNKNOWN LABRADOR - A  
COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ALLIANCE (CURA) PROJECT**

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The following paragraphs report on archaeological research completed in July 2009 as part of M. Stopp's CURA research component. The five-year project "Understanding the Past to Build the Future" is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the other members of the multi-disciplinary team include archaeologist Lisa Rankin (lead applicant in the funding proposal); Hans Rollman of MUN's Department of Religious Studies; anthropologists John Kennedy and Evie Plaice; Labrador genealogist Patty Way; together with Greg Mitchell, a researcher for the Labrador Metis Nation. Our mandate is to examine Labrador Inuit presence along the coast south of Hamilton Inlet and to make results available to both an academic and community-based audience.

Until the 1980s, it was generally assumed that the Labrador Inuit resided no further south than the mouth of Hamilton Inlet and that their presence further to the southward was an ephemeral, largely archival phenomenon that was tied to the acquisition of European goods either through trade or by

scavenging at fishing stations. In 1980, an important series of articles advanced documentary, cartographic, toponymic, and a small body of archaeological data to argue that Inuit were present as far south as the mouth of the St. Lawrence by the sixteenth century (Martijn and Clermont 1980). In 1986, in a further effort to consider the extent and timing of Inuit presence in southern Labrador, Reginald Auger tested a number of sod houses on both shores of the Strait of Belle Isle (Auger 1991, 1993). A key outcome of his work was that sod houses of the region were replete with European artifacts, and that many dated well into the period of European settlement, begging the question of who inhabited these structures. Were sod houses inhabited by Inuit, by Europeans, or by Inuit-European couples, and how can they be differentiated?

Archaeological surveys of The Unknown Labrador (John Kennedy's name for the coastal stretch between Chateau Bay and Sandwich Bay) in 1991 and 1992 resulted in the identification of over 200 sod houses (Stopp 1997). As with Auger's results, these structures

were difficult to assign to any particular culture group. Some appeared to date to the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, some to the late eighteenth century, and a very few to an earlier period. In an effort to begin the process of identifying Labrador Inuit presence along this coast, Stopp (2002a) considered the combined archaeological and archival data, suggesting that there was indeed evidence of Inuit settlement in southern Labrador that pointed to both cold and warm season settlement. The evidence further suggested that trade or scavenging for European goods fitted in with a wide spectrum of other Labrador Inuit resource exploitation activities and that Inuit had probably begun to settle the coast south of Sandwich Bay by the sixteenth century. Two lists of sites were proposed as a way of structuring further research into distinguishing Labrador Inuit presence from European or Euro-Inuit during the early settlement period. One list consisted of sites with a high probability of being Labrador Inuit based on diagnostic artifacts and/or features. The second list consisted largely of cobble beach features and some sod houses at lower elevations that were possible evidence of Inuit presence but would require further research.

In July 2009, the authors and three further expedition members began testing at two sites, Great Caribou Island 1 and North Island 1, both thought to have a high probability of being Labrador Inuit. Test pits placed in 1991 yielded only European material. In the case of Great Caribou Island 1, that material suggested a late eighteenth century/early nineteenth century date, while the small collection from North Island 1 suggested a somewhat earlier period. The purpose of the 2009 field program was to test these sites more extensively and to delve deeper into the identification of Inuit along this part of the coast.

Several 1x1 m test units were placed inside each house and in the middens outside the entrances. Excavation and collection were by 10 cm layers per quadrant and all soil was

screened through ¼ inch mesh. Surface maps for each layer and soil profiles of completed test unit were maintained, and overall maps of houses were also prepared. Faunal samples, soils samples, wood, radiocarbon, and shell samples were collected alongside various artifact categories and all await analysis.

### ***Great Caribou Island 1 (FbAv-13)***

This site is situated on a raised cobble beach that arcs around Green Cove, a sheltered cove on the west side of Great Caribou Island. This large island at the mouth of St. Lewis Inlet has a long history of human habitation, as far back as the Palaeoeskimo period. It became especially important in the early historic period because of the well-known mooring known as Battle Harbour on its eastern and seaward side.

The site consists of two sod houses, one at each end of the cove. Each house is associated with collapsed stone fox traps on the relict cobble beach and small pit features set into the cobbles that were probably used for storage. Another relict cobble beach in the neighbouring cove contains further large and small pit features that are probably associated with Inuit settlement in the area and their storage-related subsistence strategies (Stopp 2002b). The houses are readily identifiable by a perimeter of mounded sods marking the remains of house walls, and by tall grasses that grow out of organically enriched soils inside the dwellings, along the entranceways, and in the midden deposits.

The analysis of materials and architecture has hardly begun but some preliminary statements can already be made on the basis of field observations. The entryways of both houses angle to the southwest and slightly downslope, and do not face directly towards the mouth of Green Cove. Entrance passages are not demarcated by mounded sods but by an oblong formation of large cobbles that were visible on the surface and only partially buried. These were initially interpreted as being part of the entryway floor but it is more likely that they served as hold-down rocks on the en-

trance roof. There is no obvious entrance well, but the downslope trajectory of the entrance passage may have served that purpose. Raised sleeping platforms have not yet been identified and may be found in future excavations. Middens were outside each entranceway and yielded the bulk of the faunal material from this site, consisting chiefly of seal bones but one possible pig tooth also seems to be present.

The walls are only of sods, with no rock and/or wood foundation as is found in many nineteenth century structures along the coast. The height of the sod perimeter averages 30-50 cm in height. There is little sod overburden within the structure, begging the question of the nature of the superstructure. It is possible that sods or perhaps a wooden superstructure were removed and re-used elsewhere. A thin sod overburden made excavation relatively easy and the living floor was distinguished by a thin, dense, dark organic layer with artifacts immediately atop bedrock.

The artifacts from both structures are wholly European, with the exception of some whalebone planking, noted below. For both structures, ceramic wares are of the same age and type as those collected from the late eighteenth century site of George Cartwright's Ranger Lodge, in the nearby community of Lodge (Stopp 2004), suggesting contemporaneous habitation.

House A yielded very fragmented ceramics that included shards of fine white earthenware from a single vessel; shards of blue and white Chinese export porcelain that also appear to represent only a single vessel. Repair holes drilled into one piece suggest re-use, a trait sometimes found at Inuit sites. A small quantity of glass trade beads ranges in colour from blue, red/white, and white. Some small lead shot was recovered, and pipe fragments are from only a small number of pipes. One intriguing architectural feature that appeared in the interior test trench was two sections of worked whalebone planking. These extend

across the end of the trench and into both baulks and will have to be exposed in a future field season.

House B artifacts resemble those from House A, suggesting that the two houses are relatively contemporaneous. When this structure was first recorded in 1991, one corner had been looted by local people intent on collecting "arrowheads" (they had actually amassed a small collection of gunflints). There has been no further damage and the earlier disturbance is now overgrown. The first find from the interior of House B was a chert flake and many more were found thereafter. Although very exciting, these probably belong to the earlier Dorset presence in the area (a Dorset site was recorded in a cove to the west in 1991). Ceramics are represented by a few small shards of Chinese export porcelain, three shards of tin-glazed earthenware, and small fragments of kaolin pipe. There are also gunflints, lead shot, and clear and green-tinted thin glass shards.

#### ***North Island 1 (FeAx-03)***

This site is located on a raised terrace overlooking Schooner Cove, a small, protected cove on the northern side of North Island, one of the Dead Islands group at the mouth of St. Michael's Bay. Schooner Cove is well known as a protected harbour, and is shielded from the rough open waters of the Atlantic by the high landmass of North Island. First recorded during the 1991 survey, North Island 1 was also inhabited by Dorset Palaeoeskimo but there is no evidence of other settlement, neither Aboriginal nor European.

The site consists of two sod houses, both located on the same terrace approximately five meters apart, east to west. Slightly raised, mounded walls mark three sides of each house. The Inuit inhabitants took advantage of the natural topography by constructing the southern wall of each house into the hillside, making the houses somewhat indistinguishable from the natural lay of the land. Similar to the houses of Great Caribou Island 1, these structures are also defined by tall grasses growing in

the interior, the entranceways, and middens, denoting the presence of enriched organic soils. Also like Great Caribou Island 1, the entrances extend downslope, and the House A entrance is characterised by large cobbles on the surface. The entryways point in opposite directions, one to the east and the other to the west. This could be a structural element influenced by topography or it may reflect allocation of personal space in this very small cove.

The walls of both houses are con-

uncover a discernable sleeping platform, but in House B there appears to be a collapsed sleeping platform on the western wall. More extensive excavations of both House A and House B will be needed to further investigate the location of these platforms.

The middens, which were located outside each entranceway, yielded a wealth of faunal and artifactual material of exceptional preservation because of a matrix of chiefly mussel shells. Fauna included caribou, seal, bird, and



*A complete bone handle found in the midden of sod house #2 at North Island-1 (Stopp, Jalbert)*

structed wholly of sod and there appears to be a moderate amount of overburden located within each structure from post-abandonment collapse. Artifactual evidence of collapsed sod rooftops is supported by the recovery of several chert flakes and one Palaeoeskimo microblade discovered within the sod overburden.

Excavations within House A failed to

cod. Extensive mussel beds line the shore of North Island I and are easily accessible at low tide. The substantial amounts of mussel shell in each midden suggest that the inhabitants of FeAx-03 readily exploited this resource. Different dumping episodes were evidenced by 5-10cm of soil in between each shell level, to a total depth of 30-40cm below surface. The

lowest level of the House A midden, which yielded crystal quartz and chert flakes, was likely part of the Palaeoeskimo occupation in this cove.

Preliminary analysis of the artifacts recovered at North Island I suggests a date of the late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth centuries. The combination of ceramics, the minimal presence of European objects, and the recovery of a moderate number of Inuit artifacts suggest an earlier occupation than at Great Caribou Island 1.

The ceramic artifacts recovered from both House A and House B included shards of unglazed dark brown stoneware, most likely originating from a single storage vessel, red earthenware exhibiting a poorly bonded white tin-glaze with blue decoration, and a slipped coarse red earthenware. Two ceramic shards from an eroding slope that formed part of the House A midden include a white tin-glazed buff earthenware, believed to be delftware, that retains two bored repair holes; and a piece of buff earthenware with a poorly bonded brown oxide glazing. Other European artifacts included one blue trade bead, a lead seal, two fragments of clear glass, possibly from a cup, and a small number of shards of green bottle glass.

Inuit artifacts consisted of a whalebone handle, two pieces of worked bone, one of whale, the other possibly caribou, all recovered from the midden at the entrance to House B. A complete whalebone section with four pairs of bore holes and one hole at one end was found within House B near what is believed to be the sleeping platform. Soapstone artifacts were also recovered.

#### **Western Arm 1 (EkBc-04)**

Cindy Gibbons, manager at Red Bay National Historic Site, requested our help to re-locate sod houses first recorded in the 1970s by Dr. J. Tuck in nearby Western Arm. In the final week of the field season, four days were spent in Red Bay to search for these features and to complete our field records. The sod

houses were quickly located on the eastern side of the arm. Tremendously high grasses prevented an exact identification of several mounded features in this area. A number of interesting finds were made in our test pits including a collection of bird bones that we hope to have identified as curlew; a section of worked whalebone resembling a sled runner; a roof tile fragment; a fragment of red tin-glazed earthenware with white decoration on a blue background; and a fragment of red earthenware with a repair hole. This collection of material is very reminiscent of Inuit presence and probably dates to the late 1600s-early 1700s.

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