

With last summer's shoreline erosion fresh in our minds, we started the 2015 field season by digging a north-south test trench a few metres back from the eroding embankment in Area D. The goal was to identify *in situ* cultural remains that may be at risk from tidal action, as well as mitigate the impact that future protective measures may cause to these same cultural resources. The 1 x 6 metre trench exposed the remains of a stone footing from a 19th- to early 20th-century structure (Figure 1). That this building was likely a dwelling can be demonstrated by the large



Figure 1: Stone footing uncovered at Area D.

number of domestic artifacts including cast iron stove parts, ceramic and glass table wares, clay tobacco pipes, faunal remains and clothing items such as buttons and buckles. Robert Holloway's c. 1910 photograph of Ferryland shows several dwellings in this part of The Pool, the second northernmost being the likely candidate for these excavated remains. Below this feature was a rich organic deposit containing a mix of mostly 18th- and 19th-century material but a few 17th-century objects. The soil matrix indicates that this area was likely used for gardening prior to the construction of the 19th-century dwelling while some of the earlier artifacts may have originated from a late 17th-century house east of the trench previously reported by Crompton (2001).

Next, we turned our attention back to the two ongoing areas of investigation at Area F: 1) the massive builder's trench directly south of the Mansion House hall built in the 1620s; and 2) the terrace south of the Calvert-era stable and brewhouse. A 1 x 5 metre area was excavated on each side of the builder's trench, most of the work involving the physical removal of several feet of essentially sterile fill to reach a thin construction deposit at the bottom (Figure 2). The associated



Figure 2:
Builder's trench
excavation looking
north, Area F.

cultural material is important not only for what it tells us about the construction of the Mansion House but also about the tasks and daily activities of the masons, slaters, and carpenters who built it. Fragments of brick, roof slate, lime stone and window glass were dispersed amongst bits of ceramic cooking pots and storage vessels, clay tobacco pipes, and the remnants of former meals in the form of fish and mammal bones (Figure 3). One small piece of slate was incised with a series of intersecting circles, likely created by a mason using a set of dividers or compass (Figure 4). Its exact purpose remains uncertain, although it could be related to the manufacture of slate gaming pieces — several of which were found in other early contexts at Ferryland.



Figure 3: Earthenware storage and cooking vessels and faunal remains found at the bottom of the builder's trench, Area F.



Figure 4: Incised slate recovered from the bottom of the builder's trench, Area F.

Excavations on the terraced area south of the stable and brewhouse produced a significant quantity of 17th-century material, most of it dating to the first half of the century (Figure 5). A surprising number of roof slate fragments, sometimes in the hundreds per excavation unit, as well as many pieces of limestone and window glass fragments are seemingly associated with the early construction and occupation of Calvert's Avalon colony. This is encouraging as it may suggest that there is an early structure on the terrace, perhaps east or south of our current excavation. An alternative interpretation is that this terrace was a work area for early tradesmen who built nearby structures such as the brewhouse, stable, and Mansion House.



Figure 5: Excavation of the terraced area south of the Calvert era brewhouse and stable, Area F.

Several clay tobacco pipe bowls (ca. 1620-40) were recovered during this operation, as were a small number of copper aglets, tin-plated straight pins, a small buckle and the top of a copper thimble (Figure 6). Roughly one half of a large Rhenish stoneware 'Bellarmine' bottle was found in the same deposit and later pieced together in the lab. The vast majority of artifacts, however, were coarse earthenware fragments, most of which were heavily trampled into small pieces. This terrace was clearly an area of significant activity but its exact purpose will only be revealed through further investigation.

During the last four weeks in the field season we redirected most of the field crew to Area B, where previous excavations uncovered portions of the 17th-century cobblestone street and below it remnants of pre-colonial occupations by European migratory fishers and the Beothuk (Gaulton



Figure 6: (left and centre) ca. 1620-40 clay tobacco pipe bowls and (right) copper aglets and tin-plated straight pin recovered during excavation of the terrace, Area F.

and Hawkins 2014, 2015). Our focus this year was on the pre-colonial deposits in an effort to acquire information on the extent and nature of these occupations. Three separate features were revealed, each representing a distinct episode in Ferryland's early history.

The uppermost feature is a well preserved fireplace represented by large flat beach rocks, two courses high at the back and with a single course for the hearth floor (Figure 7). It measures 1.55m long by 1.2m wide. Some of the rocks on the floor are reddened and/or spalled from repeated heat exposure and there are pockets of charcoal throughout. At the front of the hearth and in associated deposits to the east was earthenware fragments produced in North Devon as well as the occasional clay tobacco pipe. The feature, its stratigraphic position, and associated artifacts all signify its use as a cook room fireplace built and used by fishers from the English West Country sometime in the latter 16th to early 17th century.



Figure 7: Cook room hearth, Area B.

Immediately below and directly adjacent to the cook room fireplace is a crude arrangement of purposely placed, large angular cobblestones exposed over a 3 metre area. This does not appear to be a foot pavement but instead a *galet* or artificial beach constructed by migratory fishers to dry cod. Amongst the crude stone paving were bits of Portuguese ceramic and iron nails but no clay tobacco pipes or English ceramics — suggesting an earlier occupation by migratory fishers from Portugal or Northern France.

At the very lowest cultural deposits in Area B (Figure 8) was an assortment of highly micaceous earthenware fragments previously identified as originating from Brittany in Northern France (Pope and Batt 2008). Base and body fragments from storage and cooking vessels as well as rim pieces from a jug that may have held wine were amongst the most prevalent finds. In the same sandy lens as these European artifacts were scattered flakes of local Drook formation chert providing tell-tale evidence for a roughly contemporaneous Beothuk presence. A small Beothuk hearth was also uncovered, consisting of about a dozen rounded beach cobbles some of which are discolored by and concreted with burnt organic matter (Figure 9). Both in and around the hearth were preserved botanical remains and a few insect casings. Native species such as raspberry and beach pea were readily identifiable, and Alison Bain at Université Laval kindly assisted by classifying the insect remains as ground beetle (Bain, personal communication Aug 14, 2015).



Figure 8: Soil profile below the 1620s cobblestone street, Area B. The lowest deposit on the far right (Event 806) contained early European and Beothuk material.



Figure 9: Exposing the Beothuk hearth at Area B.

Of particular importance was the presence of carbonized grape seeds: a few at first but then by the dozens as the field crew spent hours at the wet screen teasing them out of the early deposit. The excavation units adjacent to the Beothuk hearth produced over a hundred grape seeds, with more to follow as large soil samples were collected for later examination at Memorial's Paleoethnobotany Laboratory (Figure 10). As stated in previous reports by Tuck et al (1999) the presence of grape seeds in Beothuk contexts at Ferryland is suggestive of friendly contact with Europeans as grapes do not grow wild in Newfoundland and must therefore have been acquired by the Beothuk in the form of raisins or poorly strained wine. These recent finds not only add further weight to Tuck's suggestion of amicable contact but also implies that it may have occurred with greater frequency and duration. Continued investigation and analysis of these early 16th-century deposits has the potential to shed new light on the nature and extent of the Beothuk presence in this part of the province as well as their interactions with European newcomers.

As a parting note, it is important to remember that a small but dedicated laboratory staff wash, sort, and catalogue our daily finds at Ferryland as well as perform additional conservation treatments to metal artifacts. One of their additional tasks involves the reexamination and inspection of excavated iron nails stored from the previous field season. The additional step of storing iron nails for a period of a year or more, prior to reburial, often results in the exfoliation of surface corrosion. Not only does this improve our ability to identify the underlying iron artifact (nail or otherwise) but also reveals some notable 'treasures.' Such was the case this year.



Figure 10: Carbonized grape seeds and several beach peas associated with the Beothuk/early European occupation at Area B.

Reexamination of one of these pieces revealed a well-preserved copper cloak hook, very similar to one discovered several years ago (Figure 11). The discovery of this notable artifact embedded in iron concretion should serve as a cautionary tale for others when cataloguing and discarding iron nails. As monotonous as it may seem, this is an important step in our efforts to extract as much information from the artifacts as possible.



Figure 11: Copper cloak hook embedded in iron corrosion alongside a similar, previously excavated cloak hook. Found during the re-examination of iron nails excavated in 2014.

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