

## OLD INDIAN AGENCY HOUSE SITE ANALYSIS

### PREFACE

In formulating a judgement on the provenance of a ceramic object, the archaeologist and the historian observe the object differently. The historian observes the whole article, its shape, size, color, decoration and markings before making a judgement. The archaeologist bases his judgement on a part, or parts, of the whole using paste color, glaze, texture, thickness, and, perhaps, a portion of the decorative color or design. These two approaches may result in a difference of classification.

For example, earthenware, stoneware, and porcelaneous ware often had identical chemical composition, but differed in hardness, porosity, and color due to their firing temperature. The archaeologist can ascertain these differences by testing the paste, while the historian can only rely on factory markings or historical records. If the potter mislabeled his output to appeal to the current fashion or had a undetected kiln misfiring, the ceramic would probably be classified differently by the archaeologist and the historian.

A lack of uniform classification in describing ceramics is another area of confusion. One type may be named after a specific potter, even though produced by many different potters, while others of the same type may be referred to by the place of manufacture or port, even though many wares could also carry that designation. Some are referred to by their glaze or body, even though the glaze or body is not specific for that ware.

Also, the two disciplines may differ in their classification due to the use of inaccurate, misleading, or 'traditional' terms. Inventories, trade accounts, and other historical records refer to ceramics in generic, obsolete, or

descriptive terms with little regard for accuracy. It took many years for "China Export Ware" to lose the designation, "Lowestoff". Today much of 18th and 19th Century earthenware is still being called 'porcelain'.

This lack of uniformity has created confusion and difficulty in communication not only between the archaeologist and the historian but also between archaeologists. In this monograph simple, precise terms were used to describe the decoration or appearance in a manner that, it is hoped, have a commonality to both groups. There is no attempt to attribute manufactory without a specific backstamp or other marking.

#### HISTORY OF SITE

The old Indian Agency House is situated near the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers in Columbia County, Wisconsin. It was built in 1832 to house John Kinzie, the Indian agent to the Winnebagos, who only lived there for about two years.

#### RESULTS OF SITE EXCAVATION

The ceramic material from the site of the Old Indian Agency House weighed 3757.98 grams and consisted of 1129 sherds. It was classified as follows: 79% earthenware, 17% stoneware, and 2.6% porcelain. The greatest percentage (22%) of sherds were recovered at a depth between 20-25cm (8"-10") with 88% lying between 10-45cm (4"-1'6") (figure 1). The ceramics recovered consisted of one white salt-glaze item; one creamware cup; painted and printed pearlware; painted, printed, banded, gilded, lustered, and plain white ware; plain, banded, and mottled yellow ware; red, gray, buff, and brown commonware; unglazed, painted, and printed porcelain. There were tablewares, utility wares, toys, ornamental wares and a pipe bowl.

Figures 2 and 3 show that three test units, #1, #7, and #8, accounted for 77.5% of the ceramic material found on the site. In specific terms: 63% of the earthenware, 11% of the stoneware, and 3% of the porcelain were in these units.

The three units were contiguous and lay on an east-west axis on the south side of the house with test unit #8 two meters southwest of the kitchen porch; test unit #1, four meters; and #7, six meters. Each unit was two meters square. Test unit #8, nearest to the kitchen porch, contained ceramic material that was fairly constant in quantity at each level down to a depth of 70cm (2'4") but contained fewer sherds than the other two. Test unit #1 contained no sherds below 45cm (1'6") and #7, no sherds below 50cm (1'7 1/2").

The only other test units with any significant amounts of ceramic material were #4 and #5. Test unit #4 with 4.6% of the ceramics recovered was on the north side of the house. It lay on an east-west axis one meter north of a stone slab porch and contained 4% (36 sherds) of the earthenware, 7% (14 sherds) of the stoneware, and 2% (1 sherd) of the porcelain. Test unit #5 was located on the west side of the house eight meters northwest of the southwest corner. It contained 5.5% (48 sherds) of the total ceramics. Of these 5% (48 sherds) were earthenware, 7% (14 sherds) were stoneware, and 0%, porcelain.

#### CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Initially the sherds were separated by paste and classified by traditional methods resulting in the identification of 206 items. This provided certain basic information, but inevitably bogged down in a morass of imprecise terminology and uninformative data. In order to collate the data so that it would provide useful information on changes in form and types of ceramics, changes in site usage, and information on trade, a system based more on

There was only one ceramic item which with a degree of certainty can be said to predate 1832. Since the manufacture of white salt-glaze declined sharply after 1770 (Lewis 1969:62), an undetermined item of white salt-glaze tableware (S-20) was probably the earliest item recovered. White salt-glaze ware is far too early for the site and for the region, and the fact that one sherd was found in test unit #8 at a depth of 65-70cm while the other sherd was found in test unit #4 on the other side of the house at a depth of 15-20cm distorts the time element so that conjecture of who or when it was deposited is impossible. so that it is not possible to determine a date of deposition.

Although documentary references to creamware date as early as 1769 in Virginia (Noel-Hume 1969:394), it still was being advertized in Wisconsin as late as 1847 (Weekly Wisconsin, 1847:3/5). A creamware cup (E-57) painted in green, red and black under the glaze in a stylized floral design is particularly interesting (figure 4). From its shape and style of decoration, it is possibly late 18th Century or early 19th Century German or Moravian. Sherds with identical decoration were found at the Cinko-Kircher site (1845) in Kenosha County and the <sup>WENDORF</sup> Jackson site in Washington County. Also it appears to be identical to a cup found in the excavation of a barn on the Benjamin Vierling site (1804-1890s) in the Moravian community at Old Salem, North Carolina. (Hammond 1989:37-41).

It is not likely that either Mrs. Kinzie, Connecticut born and New York raised, or Mr Kinzie, from Canada, Illinois, and Michigan, would have had the opportunity to acquire Moravian or Central European wares. In 1839 Germans began to arrive in this region and immigration steadily increased until 1848 when a flood of immigrants from all parts of the German and Austrian empires arrived (Conzen 1976:19). It is probable that the cup is associated with this activity.

Pearlware first appeared in America around 1785-86 (Noel-Hume 1969:394), but there is no mention of it in the Milwaukee County newspapers or store inventories between 1836 and 1856. With the large amount of pearlware found in midwest sites, it is likely that the many references to "common", "glazed", "edg'd", "blue edg'd", "blue sprig'd" and "printed", alongside "c.c.", "white china", and "white granite" are what we now refer to as pearlware.

The molded and painted shell-edge decoration was a standard design during the first quarter of the 19th Century (Noel-Hume 1969:394), so that the three blue painted shell-edge plates (E-8, E-12, and E-6) and the magenta painted shell-edge plates (E-10, E-13) could have been among the articles of tableware the Kinzies brought with them. They also could have been purchased in Milwaukee in 1843 (Donaldson 1843:SC25), or even as late as 1845-1847 according to an illustrated, marked plate dated 1845-1847 in Veneita Mason's Popular Patterns of Flow Blue China. [Mason 1982:58] The quality of the molding and the careful brush work found on these sherds would indicate that these are early pieces. Two sherds (E-65) had an imitation shell edge painted on the rim of a possible plate or saucer in a dark blue (147.FOH).

Transfer-printed pearlware was made between the period 1790 and 1865 (Noel-Hume 1969:396), and transfer-printed whiteware was introduced about 1810 (Whetherbee 1985:14) and is still being made. Therefore, the date of a transfer-printed sherd based only on a design segment and the glaze is tentative at best. Since 13.8% of the transfer-printed tablewares could have been purchased before 1830 although as late as 1910, it is possible and very likely, considering the popularity of transfer-printed wares, that the Kinzie's had transfer-printed tablewares.

Probably the earliest transfer-printed wares are four dark blue and white pearlware items (E-5, E-18, E-91, E-102, E-105) and a whiteware item (E-74) made

between 1790 and 1855. Five other pieces of transfer-printed pearlware (E-19, E-23, E-38, E-95, E-102) and four pieces of transfer-printed whiteware (E-80, E-81, E-84, E-90) in a medium blue probably date between 1810 and 1860. Green (E-14, E-15), brown (E-17, E-53, E-55), black (E-31), purple (E-40), maroon (E-11), and light blue (E-73, E-94, S-8) transfer-printed pearlware and whiteware dating between 1830 and 1865 were also found.

Although some early flow blue dates from 1818 (Wetherbee 1985:14), the deep blurry blue was produced in quantity between 1825 and 1845 with production continuing as late as 1910 (Kovel 1986:257, Williams 1975:1). A dark flow blue (cup (E-96) and twelve-sided plate (E-97) possibly in the Tonquin pattern marketed by J. Heath from 1845-1853 (figures 6 and 7), a dark flow blue 44cm (17 3/8") platter with a swag border, a foot rim and handle to a pitcher (E-22), and a 16cm (6 1/4") bowl in a floral design along with three flow blue sherds (E-104, E-114, E-116) constituted the transfer-printed blue flow wares and would all fall between the dates of 1825 and 1910. A flow mulberry (666.FOH) eight-sided plate (E-29) could probably be dated 1835-1855.

The banded ware consisted of two items of pearlware, two of white ware, and two of yellowware. A 20cm (7 7/8") bowl (E-43) in a mocha design was thinly potted (.3cm) with a dark brown (5YR 2/1) double band and a cat's eye design on a grayish green ground and a jug (E-42) showing a dark brown (5YR 2/1) band contiguous to a blue (236.FOH) band which was possibly decorated in a mocha design were the two pearlware pieces. Both of these pieces probably date between 1800 and 1840. A thinly potted (.3cm) whiteware mug (S-3) was decorated in a mocha design with reddish black (10R 2/1) bands and a cat's eye design in brown and orange on a light blue gray (5B 7/1) ground. It probably dates from the early to middle 1800s. The other whiteware sherd (S-18) was .5cm thick and had a glossy but grainy blue (025.FOH) exterior surface with a smooth, white

glazed interior. It was possibly from a Dutch or English jug of the period 1880 to 1920. The banded yellowware bowl (E-27) and (E-32) were the type commonly used in the kitchen between 1830 and 1950. Except for the whiteware jug and the blue and cream banded bowl (E-27), the other pieces of banded or mocha ware were very likely from Mrs. Kinzie's kitchen.

There were two pieces of spatterware which had its peak period from 1810 to 1830 but was still being produced into the late 1800s (McConnell 1990:14). One was a 20cm (7 7/8") twiffler (E-21) and the other (E-104), an undetermined form. Both were blue spatter. A third piece (E-9) with a floral design in shades of magenta with green leaves and a black stem may also be spatterware, but identification is uncertain.

There were two lusterware saucers: (E-16) had a purplish-pink (243.FOH), stylized floral design edged with a wide and a narrow band and (E-66), a 8cm (3 1/8") saucer, had pink (343.FOH) luster bands and a stylized floral decoration. Pink lusterware dates from c.1810 to c.1850. These pieces could have been used by Mrs. Kinzie to serve tea.

One piece of porcelain was a tea cup, probably of Chinese or Japanese manufacture between the years 1830 and 1850. This cup (P-9) was 8cm (3 1/8") in diameter, .3cm thick, with a light gray (7.5Y 7/0) surface color. It was decorated in underglaze blue (238.FOH) and the glaze did not extend down to the base.

As part of their tea drinking activity, the Kinzies could have brought the cup with them. It was not uncommon to use unmatched cups when serving tea, as attested to by the fact that very few complete tea services turn up in inventories in this region and time period. Part of a canister (P-15) which might have been used to store tea was also recovered.

Two pieces of whiteware and three pieces of porcelain were gilded. The

whiteware pieces were a 16cm (6 1/4") muffin ((S-54) with a low relief design and a gilded edge and a 24cm (9 3/8") supper plate (S-42) with a gold tracery of delicate vines and flowers around the edge. A child's porcelaineous plate or soup bowl (P-6) was decorated with the letters "A" and "Z" or "7" in gold around th

e rim, a porcelain cup (P-7) painted rusty orange (443.FOH) with faint traces of green overlaid with gold wavy lines, and a 16cm (6 1/4") porcelaineous muffin (P-12) with a vining floral decoration outlined in orange (540.FOH) and gold made up the rest of the gilded wares. The child's plate was a type of decoration that was in vogue from 1820 to 1860, but continued to be produced much later and the muffin (S-54) was common from 1850 to 1930.

Decorated whiteware in copper luster was also recovered. A sherd (S-16), a 22cm twiffler (E-67), and a 26cm table plate (E-67) had copper luster bands. These three pieces of copper luster probably date after 1860 and possibly as late as 1910.

Plain or undecorated, whiteware with molded paneled, grooved, ridged, fluted, scrolled and low relief designs comprised 31% of the tablewares. Although 4% of the whiteware dated before 1832, it was still being made until the mid-sixties. At the time of the Kinzie marriage in 1830, this ware was relatively expensive, fine enough for the tables of the rich, but strong, durable, able to stand up to hard travel, and thus suited for the needs of the pioneer (Collard 1967:125). It was being imported in hugh quantities and very likely some pieces were purchased for the journey and stay in Portage.

The bulk of the plain whiteware dated after 1840 and consisted of muffins, twifflers and platters in fairly sizable quantities. Dating after 1860, several bowls were also included.

Four patterns in plain whiteware were tentively identified. There were three pieces of the Six Panelled Trumpet design manufactured by J.W. Pankhurst



(1850-1882) (Wetherbee 1985:31). They consisted of a 20cm (7 7/8") bowl (S-62), a 22cm (8 5/8") twiffler (E-78), and a cup foot rim (E-83). One cup foot rim (E-86) was the President shape. A 12cm (4 6/8") muffin (E-54) was the Fluted Pearl design manufactured by John Wedge Wood (1841-1860). Part of a backstamp in underglaze black with the name of "Wood" printed on a flowing banner was found and is identical with the backstamp used by John Wedge Wood. The fourth pattern was the Triple Border design on a 16cm (6 1/4") muffin (E-48). It had the impressed letters "nsto" and "celly" but could not be further identified. Triple Border was a design made by J. Edwards (1842-1851) but also was reproduced by several modern factories (Wetherbee 1985:41).

The use of decals began at the beginning of the 20th Century in Europe but it was not until the 1930s that it was in vogue in the United States. Two sherds (S-34) had a floral decal in blue, green, and violet while a 10cm (4") saucer (P-1) was decorated in a pink (242.FOH) and green (312.FOH) floral design with a very low relief ridged border and gold edge. Both items appear to be late Victorian or early 20th Century tableware.

The yellowware varied from unglazed to glazed. With the exception of a 20cm twiffler (E-28) with an embossed border design of rice seeds and a rope edge, the yellowware was utility ware. The only identifiable piece (S-57) was a 30cm (11 7/8") shallow baking dish or pie pan commonly used in food preparation after 1840.

The yellowware was nearly equally divided between thrown and molded pieces. Thrown yellowware dates from the late 18th Century in England and from about 1828 in America (Ketchum 1983:11). Thrown wares continued to be made through the next two decades after molded wares were introduced in the 1830s. In Wisconsin thrown wares were made by local potters up to the turn of the century.

Red, buff, gray, and brown commonware made up 20% of the ceramic material.

One of the most interesting items was a four gallon buffware crock (E-39) with a variegated olive-glaze on the outer surface and a very dark gray slip (5Y 3/1) inner surface. It was painted in an underglaze blue (347.FOH) floral design with the number "4" and the letters "rar Rus" impressed in the side. This pottery, Farrar and Russell was located in Portage, Wisconsin and operated between 1860 and 1862. Only two examples of its production were previously known (Dearolf 1986:31) (figure 6). One sherd (E-89) appears to have the same body composition and thickness, the same slip color and characteristics, the same decorative color although the fragment of color on the sherd is so minute that this is difficult to say with certainty, and the surface glaze appears similar but the surface color is more on the olive side. Could this sherd have been from another crock by Farrar and Russell?

The only decorative or personal artifacts were a piece from a parian statue (P-17), a 4cm (1 1/2") pipe bowl (P-16) with a .5cm diameter stem, and the toys. These consisted of several pieces of a child's tea set, two 6cm (2 3/8") undecorated porcelain saucers with a grainy-glazed surface (P-2 and P-3), a 4cm (1 1/2") plain porcelain saucer (P-8), a handle (P-5) with a smooth glossy glaze, and two dolls. The painted flesh (120.FOH) and molded, yellow (5Y 7/3) hair places one doll (P-4) in the late 1890s period, while the style of the molded, unpainted, and unglazed arm would indicate that it was from another doll of a slightly earlier period.

#### CONCLUSION

The quantity of utility wares (29%) seems disproportionate to the tablewares. If the non-kitchen items are excluded from the utility wares, only 27% were used in food preparation or storage. Whereas 51% of the assemblage is

tableware. This does not suggest a farm homestead use of the site. It is known that soldiers from Ft. Winnebago were quartered here before the Indian Agency house was built for the Kinzies, who did not homestead the property and only lived in it for a short time.

Before 1833, when the Kinzies left the site, 16% of the tablewares were transfer-printed pearlware or white ware which were still available in the marketplace between 1845 and 1865.

The sparcity of porcelain tablewares with .9% that could be dated before 1850 and only 6% afterthat date suggests that the finer wares were not included with the supplies for the journey west or were either too expensive or unavailable in the dry goods store where supplies were purchased. Even after 1850 the only porcelain found was in the form of cups and porcelaineous muffins and saucers. Perhaps an attempt to provide a liittle bit of civilized living, but in the main not practical for frontier living.