

WITHIN THE COLLECTION

A LOOK INSIDE THE FORT VANCOUVER MUSEUM



TOBACCO PIPES

NCRI CURATION SERIES No. 2



TOBACCO PIPES

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INTRODUCTION

Why a booklet about tobacco pipes? Tobacco pipes are fascinating artifacts; they can be used to interpret personal politics, socio-economic status, social affiliation, and other attributes of the individuals that owned them (Pfeiffer 1982:2). Pipes can also be lovely, unique works of art that speak to the world and world-view of their maker. This booklet aims to give the reader an informative look at the tobacco pipes in the Fort Vancouver museum collection, while also showcasing some of the beautiful and unique pieces we have here.

Tobacco was in common use throughout the Americas for centuries, but truly became a worldwide phenomenon during the Age of Exploration (circa late 1400s to 1600s). When tobacco was first introduced from the New World it was viewed by some as a wonder drug, capable of curing numerous diseases and purifying the air. In the early days of tobacco use in the Old World, tobacco boxes and pipes were quite small because it was an expensive luxury item. Tobacco was consumed in other ways aside from smoking: snuff was a common form, and chewing tobacco was also popular. Snuff-taking was generally an elite practice, but the pervasiveness of smoking is what makes pipes such an excellent resource for archaeological science.

Tobacco cultivation and use grew and spread with colonialism and, as production increased, prices began to drop. This corresponds with changes in pipe technology that can be tracked through time, especially with the use of white clay tobacco pipes, which were cheap and plentiful for a long period. Although by the 19th century tobacco pipes were fairly standardized, design and style changes often mark events of historical significance or are associated with political movements. “President” pipes are an example of this, as are the Irish “Home Rule” pipes that became popular in the latter part of the 19th century. These traditions continue to this day, and it

is even possible to buy a pipe with President Obama's likeness (Coleman 2010).

Tobacco smoking reached widespread popularity in the 17th century, "The Great Age of the Pipe" (Borio 2003) but stirred controversy from the beginning. Even as it grew in popularity, tobacco gained foes wherever it spread, and many disdained the stink of tobacco smoke in streets and taverns. In the early 1600s the Pope banned smoking in holy places, and the Emperor of Mongolia made tobacco smoking punishable by death (Penn 1901:37). King James I of England artfully described his objections to tobacco smoking in his 1604 treatise *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*:

Smoking is a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black, stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.
(Goldsmid 1884:32)

That same year, James declared a 4,000% tax on tobacco, making it virtually unaffordable for most Englishmen. This had the unwanted effect of drying up funds that had previously been flowing into the royal coffers from tobacco taxes so, although the king despised tobacco, he ended up reducing the tax (though not as low as before). Needless to say, smoking was still a popular activity during the 19th century and while it remained controversial even then, it was not until the late 20th century that the ill effects of tobacco were universally accepted.

In addition to their variety and visual interest, tobacco pipes are useful to archaeologists for a number of reasons. Their ubiquity makes them ideal for comparison across space and time. At Fort Vancouver we can virtually guarantee tobacco pipe fragments will be recovered from excavations in any 19th century context. Clay tobacco pipes, in particular, are short-lived objects, often broken and tossed away, which means there are many of them left to find. Pipes are also subject to rapid changes in style and form, which makes it

possible to closely date and identify them. This booklet will explore some of the types of tobacco pipes in this museum collection. Although it will mainly focus on decorative pipes, it is important to mention that tobacco pipe fragments are some of the most numerous objects in our museum collection. We know from colorful descriptions that the inhabitants of Fort Vancouver liked their tobacco. Their smoking habits were often described, and evidence of smoking is frequently uncovered by archaeologists. In some areas stem fragments form virtual pavements, at locations where men were waiting to trade or taking a break from work.

Of the almost 7,000 tobacco pipe fragments found near the former site of the Sale Shop building, most were concentrated outside the east wall. Areas to either side of the front door had a higher concentration of pipe fragments than the stoop itself:

There is almost a pattern in the way pipes cluster about the door, then decrease in frequency to the north and south... We infer more than trash disposal... we interpret the concentration of clay pipes about the door as physical evidence of customers waiting outside of the Sales Shop [sic] for their turn at the counter inside. (Hoffman and Ross 1974:74).

The Indian Trade Shop had a similar pattern of pipe fragments, suggestive of a smoking area adjacent to a doorway (Hoffman and Ross 1975:155).

Fort Vancouver's Chief Factor, John McLoughlin, did not smoke or chew tobacco, and was "almost a teetotaler," according to Roulstone (1975:84). In spite of this, Company employees were allowed a half-hour smoking break between 9 and 1, after dinner (the midday meal), and an afternoon break as well (Roulstone 1975:135). Archaeology in the area of the Chief Factor's House suggests that smoking was a popular activity in the yard outside.

A more specific inference of social behavior is gained by noting the isolated area of high density at the southwestern corners of the fence in front of the house. This isolate of clay pipes neatly correlates with a dense isolate of bottle fragments. This small area, which adjoins the yet unexcavated Bachelors' Quarters, appears to have been a convivial meeting place for gentlemen of the Fort. (Hoffman and Ross 1972:162)

The Bachelors' Quarters building at Fort Vancouver had a smoking room, where clerks and subordinate officers would gather in the evenings for smoking, drinking, and storytelling (Roulstone 1975:143). Many accounts of the Bachelors' Quarters recall the large amounts of smoke that issued from the common room during evenings. Charles Wilkes observed in 1841 that,

After meals, it is the custom to introduce pipes and tobacco. It was said that this practice was getting into disuse, but I should have concluded from what I saw that it was at its height. (1970:329)

Johann Augustus Sutter once commented that he found the main hall at Fort Vancouver to be so smoky it was difficult to breathe (Hussey 1976:141). A similar comment was made by W.H. Gray about his 1836 visit to Fort Vancouver: after dinner, "all retired to the social hall, a room in the clerks' quarters, where they indulged in a stiff pipe of tobacco, sometimes filling the room as full as it could hold with smoke" (1870:151). By all accounts the smoking room was a place of orderly frivolity, but the low standard of joinery between that room and others often caused consternation (Hussey 1976:136). The following quote from a letter by Reverend Herbert Beaver illustrates this point:

Another dismal and dreary winter has dragged its slow length along, distinguished from the former only by somewhat less frost and snow, but by infinitely more rainy

weather, nine days out of ten throughout it being of the latter description. A considerable part of it has been rendered peculiarly disagreeable by the intolerable annoyance of late hours, smoking, and various nois[es] at all hours, and other nuisances, as practiced by the inmates of the opposite side of our house, separated from our own by thin and ill-joined partitions. These had, at one time...increased to such a degree, as to determine me no longer to subject my wife to them. (Jessett 1959:67)

At Hudson's Bay Company establishments the indigenous wives of Company employees were noted for their habit of smoking, even though it was considered unladylike by the British. One officer, Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun, even attempted to bribe his wife to quit smoking with a pair of diamond earrings—to no effect (Munnick 1972:A-62).

During the 1840s and 1850s Fort Vancouver was the main supplier of goods to Americans arriving in the area after crossing the Oregon Trail. After the U.S. boundary was settled as the 49th parallel the Army sent troops to the area. As the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks was established it began to take over the areas once occupied exclusively by the Hudson's Bay Company. Areas of the Village, and even some buildings inside of the fort, were leased out to the American military as the Company moved their operations northward to the new Columbia Department headquarters in Victoria (British Columbia). Village archaeology at Fort Vancouver is often a blending of early U.S. Army artifacts and fur trade artifacts, though the difference is often distinguishable.

Artifacts found associated with these different occupations are distinctive because goods were acquired from different trading partners and manufacturers. The juxtaposition of the Hudson's Bay Company and U.S. Army pipes makes for an interesting comparison, and the pipes collected archaeologically reflect the changing inhabitants of the area. For example, we begin to see Irish "Home Rule" pipes, and American President pipes associated with the U.S. Army. Also present, but with less frequency, are the red clay, wooden,

and briar pipes which became very popular in the late 19th century.

According to archaeological reports, there appears to be a proliferation in pipe types and brands in the 1850s and 1860s, the period when the U.S. Army and Hudson's Bay Company occupations overlap at the site (Chance and Chance 1976:177). Retail competition increased: not only was the Hudson's Bay Company pressured to buy from American manufacturers, but American retailers were expanding their efforts to sell in direct competition with the Company. All of these forces may have encouraged local retailers to carry a more varied selection of pipes.

Around 1870, the variety and quality of pipes in and around the site appears to drop. Most of the clay pipes recovered from the period are inferior quality T.D. and McDougall pipes, heavy and thick with frequent cracks on the surface (Chance and Chance 1976:178). Smoking preferences at the time began to gravitate towards pipes made of other materials (such as briar and meerschaum), and cigars began to increase in popularity as well.

As the transition from the 19th to the 20th century occurred, pipes fell out of favor and cigarettes took over as the most common way to smoke tobacco. Interestingly, we often find cigarette butts associated with the early archaeologists of Fort Vancouver!

CARVED STONE PIPES



Clockwise from top left: FOVA 51701, FOVA 3734, FOVA 172935, FOVA 172936, FOVA 11667, FOVA 43670.



FOVA 3734, argillite, measurements: height 2.06", width 0.90"

The earliest pipes in the Fort Vancouver collection are carved stone, usually made of argillite or a similar pipestone. These objects of Native American manufacture come in a wide variety of shapes with an array of designs. The craftsmanship is sometimes crude, and at other times exquisite. The argillite used to make this particular pipe is only mined in the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia, and has been traded from there since before Europeans arrived in the area.

In the shape of a man with a flattened head, this carved pipe bowl has incised lines on the face which resemble tattooing. Interestingly, this pipe is smoked with the top of the head facing downward, so as shown it is upside-down.

Carved of argillite, this is a Haida-style raven that likely would have been part of a larger scene along the stem of the pipe. This finely carved pipe is one of the most beautiful in our collection.



FOVA 11212, argillite, measurements: height 2.13", width 0.75".



FOVA 694, stone, measurements: length 2.13", width 0.75".

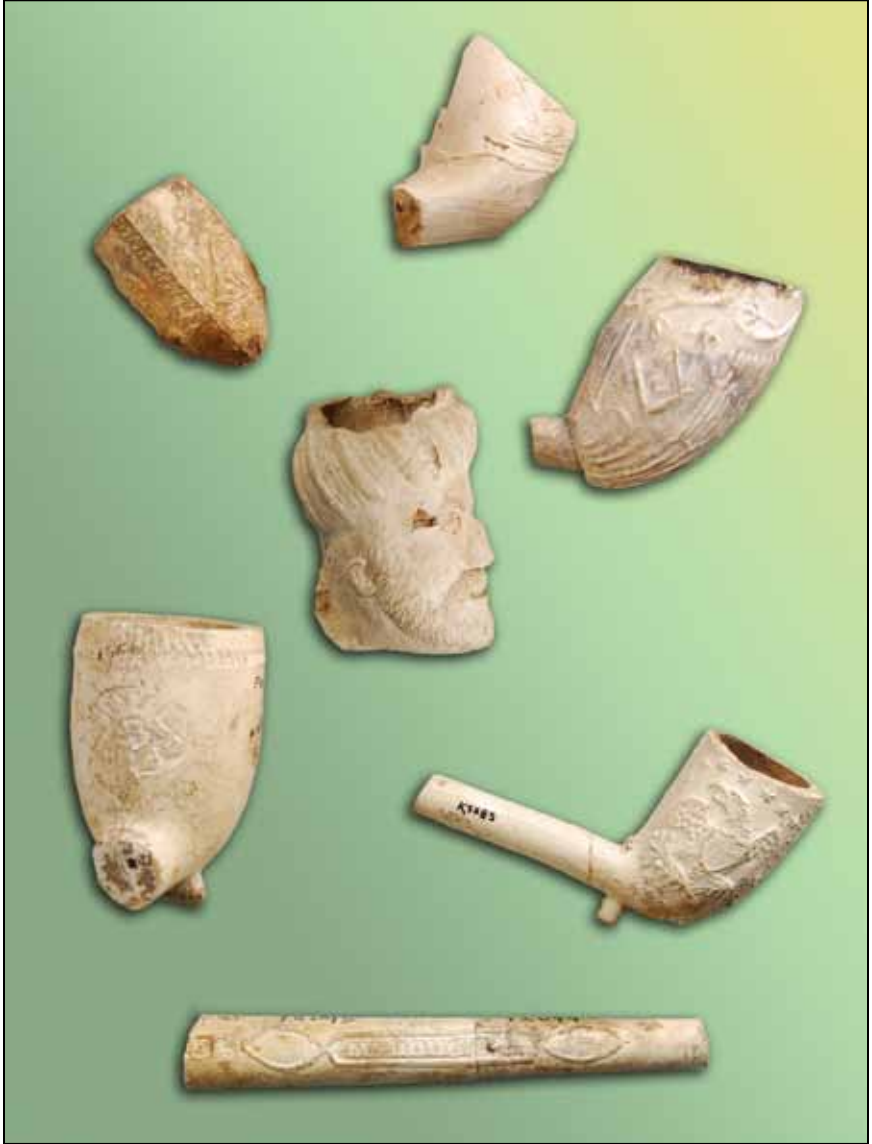
Found during early Fort Vancouver excavations (circa 1950) in the area of the Owyhee Church, this carved stone pipe resembles a wagon, with the bowl of the pipe centered on top. Most of the pipe bowl is missing, but it is clear where the stem was attached, and there is also a small hole in one of the "wheels" for carrying the pipe on a thong.

This is a simple stone pipe with the bowl missing. It was found in an area that dates to between 1830 and 1870 and was most likely associated with the Hudson's Bay Company Village.



FOVA 18680, stone, measurements: length 2.61", diameter 0.98"

WHITE CLAY PIPES



Clockwise from top: FOVA 11703, FOVA 8606, FOVA 7658, FOVA 18614, FOVA 21701, FOVA 79369.



FOVA III, white clay, measurements: length 9.5", width 1"

This pipe is one of the most common at Hudson's Bay Company sites in the Pacific Northwest. It has for decoration "PRINCE ALBERT" impressed in a circle on the rear of the bowl. Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha married Queen Victoria in 1840, so that is the earliest manufacture date for this style. Maker's Marks are impressed in a rectangle in each side of the stem: "J & T" on the left and "FORD" on the right. The stem is also decorated with embossed crosshatched lines, each rectangle with an embossed dot.

Home Rule pipes, like this one, were part of a trend of Irish-themed pipes that was popular during the later 19th century. The potato famine that hit Ireland during the mid-19th century, coupled with conflicts with the British government over secession, land reform, and religion, caused massive emigration, much of it to the United States. Pipes like this were a way to flaunt objections to British treatment (Alexander 1986:69).

Irish-themed pipes were made in Ireland, Scotland, and Holland. This one has a harp surrounded by clover, and remnants of green paint remain. Although Irish Home Rule was being promoted abroad as early as the 1850s, most pipes of this pipe date to between 1870 and 1900. This particular pipe was manufactured by the McDougall Company of Glasgow, Scotland. It was recovered from the Village, in pre-1887 strata, and is related to the early U.S. Army Camp Vancouver.



FOVA 21700, white clay, measurements: height 1.83", maximum diameter 1.15".

This pipe is decorated with eight-pointed stars and a vertical frond along the front mold seam. It was recovered from the Village pond that was used as a trash pit, and is associated with the early U.S. Army occupation of that area.



FOVA 15003, white clay, measurements: height 1.76", width 0.90"



SAJH 115809, white clay, measurements: height 1.38", length 1.56".

According to Pfeiffer the style and quality of the bowl decoration on this pipe suggests French manufacture (1982:79-80). This bowl was found at the Belle Vue Sheep Farm on San Juan Island, an outpost of the Hudson's Bay Company.



FOVA 18621, white clay, paint, measurements: maximum bowl diameter 0.83", length 1.14".

This pipe has a cockled (fluted) bowl held by a bird foot. Bird claw pipes continue to be popular, especially in clay or carved from meerschaum; the John Pollock Company of Manchester England continued to produce similar pipes until 1992 (Pfeiffer 1982:50, 52). According to some it is more common to encounter this type of pipe at British sites than American ones (Hammond 1981:14-15), so it makes sense to find such a pipe at Fort Vancouver, a fur trade post run by a British company.

This particular pipe was recovered from excavations in the Village, and dates to between 1829 and 1900.

With its gruesome expression, this pipe stands out from the crowd. A simple molded white clay pipe, glazed in green and yellow, this is the popular “Punch” character pipe. Mr. Punch was one of the main characters in the puppet show “Punch and Judy.” Though the show began in 16th century Italy, Punch and Judy shows are still being performed the world over. This pipe dates to between 1830 and 1869, and was excavated from the Village.



FOVA 15044, white clay, paint, measurements: height 1.47”, width 0.86”.



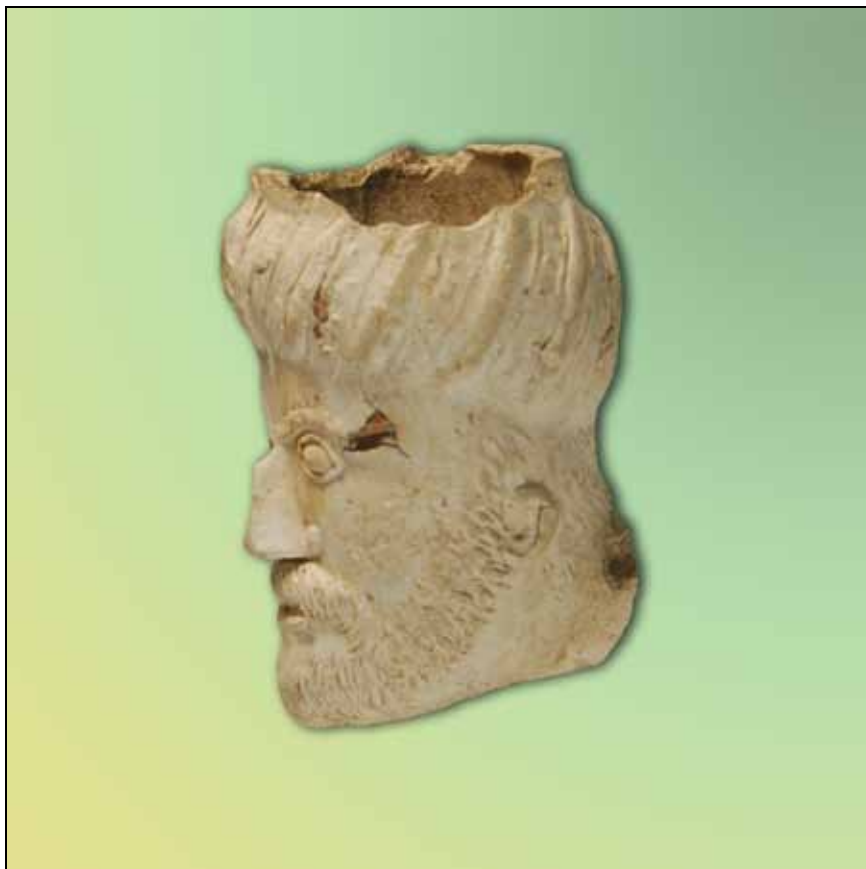
This is a molded face pipe recovered during some of the early Fort Vancouver excavations that took place between 1948 and 1952. It dates to the mid 19th century.

FOVA 36242, white clay, measurements: height 1.26", width 0.94".

This pipe was recovered inside of the Fort Vancouver stockade, and dates to the mid 19th century.



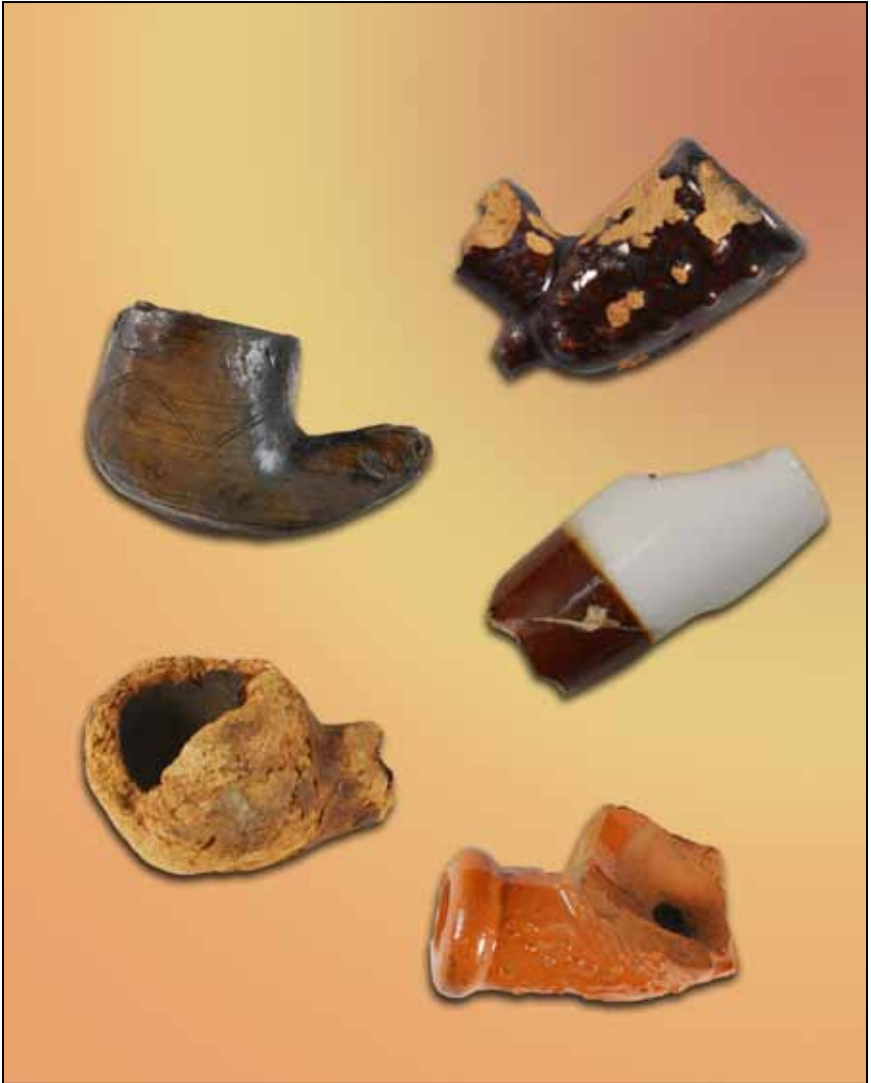
FOVA 11900, white clay, measurements: height 1.25", width 0.75".



FOVA 7658, white clay, measurements: height 1.25", width 0.75".

This figural pipe was unearthed inside of the fort near the Chief Factor's House and Kitchen, an area when many pipes have been found. The bearded man with the turban is often referred to as a "Turkish Man", and many variations on the Turkish Man pipe are known. This one dates to between 1830 and 1860.

PIPES MADE FROM OTHER MATERIALS



Clockwise from top: SAJH 119021 (terra-cotta), FOVA 15058 (porcelain), FOVA 36252 (red clay), FOVA 581 (corn cob), FOVA 21703 (wood).



FOVA 2004, red/tan terra-cotta, brown overglaze, measurements: height 1.75", length 1.5"

This terra-cotta knobby pipe bowl with brown glaze was probably made by the John Taber Pottery in East Alton New Hampshire. The company was in existence from 1864 to circa 1872 before moving to another location. Similar pipes in the Fort Vancouver museum collection are from the San Juan Island Belle Vue Sheep Farm. These pipes are common at archaeological sites in the Western United States dating from the 1860s to the early 1870s (Pfeiffer 1982:47-48).

President Millard Fillmore is depicted on this pipe. Most “President” or “Campaign” pipes are the stub-type with a removable stem, though some pipes are more properly referred to as commemorative pipes, especially those representing past presidents such as Washington (Pfeiffer, Gartley, and Sudbury 2007). President pipes are also known to have been produced in Germany, including those representing Fillmore and Pierce (Pfeiffer, Gartley, and Sudbury 2007). Interestingly, these pipes were thought by their German producers to have been produced for American slaves. The American Civil War and the emergence of American pipe production combined to slow down the sale of German pipes to the U.S. market. This pipe was probably produced in Grossalmerode, an area so dependent on the American market that most producers went out of business by 1872 after the post-Civil War decline in exports to the United States.



FOVA 946, red/tan clay, clear overglaze, measurements: height 1.43", width 1.36".



SAJH 118191, off-white terra-cotta, clear slip glaze, measurements: height 1.60", length 1.82".

This “President” pipe depicts Franklin Pierce, who became president in 1852. He is often considered one of the worst presidents in history due to his sympathies toward slavery and support of the Ostend Manifesto, which suggested the U.S. should annex Cuba from Spain to be run as a slave state.

This is one of two fragmentary Pierce pipes recovered from the Belle Vue Sheep Farm site on San Juan Island. This pipe is identical to those produced by a German company in Uslar. It appears that the Pierce pipe was the last of the president pipes produced in Germany even though production continued into the presidencies of Buchanan and Lincoln.

This is a Woodstock briar pipe. A small metal insert is still present inside the shank of the stem, and an amber pipe bit was found nearby. The pipe is from the U.S. Army era, circa 1885, and was found in the pond area of the Village.

The briar pipe manufacturing industry began in France in Saint-Claude in the mid to late 1850s (Rapaport 1979:108). By the mid-1860s the briar pipe industry had moved to the U.S. and England. Briar pipes were prized for the superior flavor they imparted to tobacco smoke.

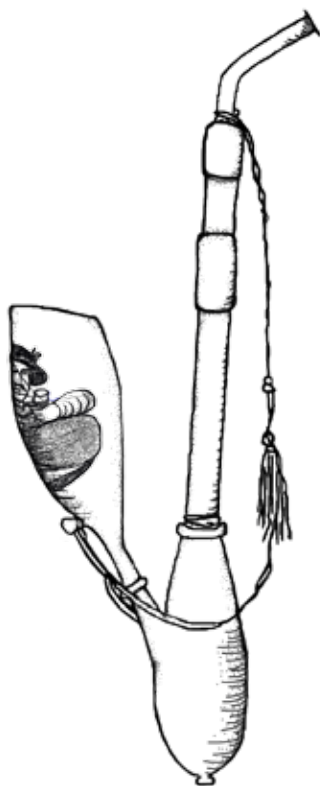


FOVA 18619, briar, measurements: length 3.86", width 1.34"



FOVA 18618, porcelain, painted,
measurements: height 4.88", width 1.50".

Drawing of a typical "coffee house" pipe; the reservoir is just below the pipe bowl.



This is an interesting example of a German or Bavarian “Coffeehouse Pipe”. The bowls were typically made of porcelain, which easily features colorful designs, while the other three parts of these pipes—the reservoir, stem, and mouthpiece—were made from a variety of materials, including wood, metal, bone, and antler. This type of porcelain coffeehouse tobacco pipe was popular in Germany and Eastern Europe in the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Unfortunately, porcelain bowls did not provide the best smoking experience. They became quite hot, which caused a condensate to form in the bowl of the pipe. This led to the production of multi-part pipes with a large reservoir to collect the condensate. The illustration opposite is a drawing of how the typical coffee house pipe would have looked. This artifact was recovered from the pond area of the Village in U.S. Army-era deposits.



FOVA 21703, briar (wood), rubber, and metal, measurements: bowl height 1.57", bowl length 2.58", mouthpiece length 2.22".

This complete briar pipe has a slightly curved, flat saddle style hard rubber mouthpiece. A decorative metal band once encircled the end of the shank. The bowl itself is decorated with incised lines and circles. This pipe is from the Army occupation of the Village and dates to between 1860 and 1887.



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The Northwest Cultural Resources Institute (NCRI) is a cooperative partnership based at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, dedicated to fostering cultural resources research, education, and stewardship in the Pacific Northwest. The institute brings together National Park Service staff, university professors, and subject matter experts to facilitate research and training, provide expertise, and support other innovative educational endeavors using national parks as laboratories.

The resources available in national parks—including museum collections, archaeological deposits remaining *in situ*, and extant examples of historic architecture—form an unparalleled opportunity for study within the fields of history, archaeology, museum studies, cultural anthropology, and historical architecture. The NCRI encourages applied approaches, where topics are integrated into their larger physical and social contexts through place-based learning and investigation.



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