

## A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON 45KT3

By Charles M. Nelson

Recently another site designation, 45KT27, for this village site has been brought to my attention. Dr. Greengo of the University of Washington says that this is its official title. Four years ago a complete survey did not exist along this part of the Columbia River, and so the designation "45KT3" was taken from a then available but now antiquated source. Although the site's official title is 45KT27, for the purposes of this report 45KT3 shall be used since that is how the artifacts and profiles are labeled.

Some years ago, at the advent of the Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dam Projects, a great deal of interest was invoked concerning the archaeology of that stretch of the Columbia River (extending from Rock Island Dam southward to Priest Rapids) which was to be flooded. Accordingly we undertook to find and dig a site in one of these reservoirs which would reveal a maximum of information about the pre-history of that area. Since there had been very little work done on house structures in the Columbia River Basin it was further decided that the site would have to have comprised a village at one time. With these things in mind 45KT3 was first visited in the fall of 1957 and in the year following excavations begun.

45KT3 is located within the Wanapum Dam Reservoir on the west bank of the Columbia River about seven miles south of Trinidad, Washington. It occupies the northern terminus of Osborn Bar, slightly downstream from Lodged Pole Rapids and directly across the river from the 'Pot Holes' and the 'Churchyard'. About three miles to the south Osborn Bar terminates. Here, at the mouth of Quilimine Creek another large site is located.

Osborn Bar is bounded on the west by high, basalt cliffs into which there has been worn only two substantial canyons; one at each end of the bar. The northern most and smallest of these houses a perennial stream which enters the Columbia just a few yards north of the site. The face this stream has cut reveals an old gravel terrace under several feet of silt. Farther south on Osborn Bar this condition changes and a high ridge of gravel more than replaces the sand.

45KT3 is composed of about 30 definite house depressions which are all either round or slightly elliptical, which range from 4.7 to .5 feet in depth, and whose diameters vary from 50 feet to 15 feet. The obvious range in their sizes is due partly to the age of the site, the amount of the degree to which each has lost its original shape, and their basic styles. It is also possible that some are storage pits, although it has been found that size is no criterion for judging the original use of each depression.

In the main this report shall deal with the stratigraphy and shapes of the various houses that were excavated or sampled, and shall mention the artifacts that were found only to corroborate the stratigraphy.

STRATIGRAPHY

The major excavation concentrated in house depression 15, where 1,205 artifacts and 310 feet of stratigraphy were recovered, in addition to vast quantities of chipping, bone and shell detritus. Aside from this excavation, there were tests



# THE WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGIST



**NEXT MEETING - SEATTLE CHAPTER:**

Date and place of September meeting  
will be announced next month.

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The June meeting of the Seattle Chapter of the Washington Archaeological Society was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Weld. The program consisted of a demonstration of the interaction that results from social contact between individuals in the same culture complex.

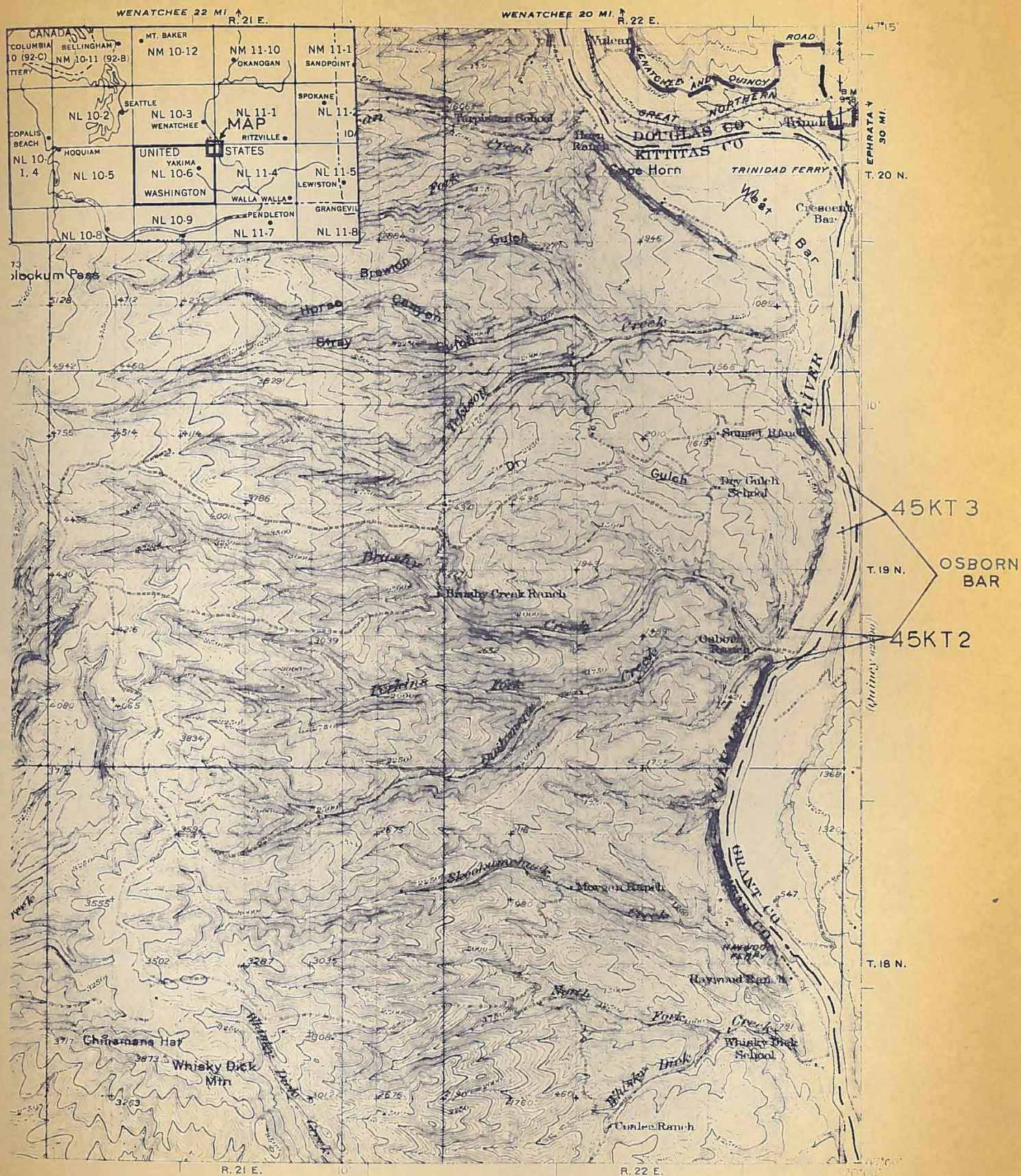
The business portion of the meeting dealt with the Society's activities during the summer months--July and August. In addition to continuing the work at the Fish Town Site, the Society is undertaking a program in association with the Department of Anthropology of the University of Washington to supplement the work being done in the Wanapum Reservoir. This program will consist of an intensive survey of the Whisky Dick Area. The location is shown on page 3, Plate I, Vicinity Map. There will be sufficient testing done in connection with the survey so that those sites recorded can be evaluated with respect to future work. It is possible that from these will develop an excavation project for the 1961 season.

Other research data developed by Society members in the Wanapum Reservoir will be made available to the University for use in the evaluation of the archaeology of this area. The article following in this issue is a portion of the data being furnished to the University under this program.

The details of the survey work to be done at Whisky Dick are now being worked out and those interested in participating will be advised of time and place by calling:

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EA 3-7215





VICINITY MAP of SITE 45KT3  
NORTH END of OSBORN BAR  
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON



made in Housepits 7 and 10. In the former, twenty feet of profile was recorded and about 210 artifacts found, and in the latter ten feet of profile was noted and only one artifact recovered. In addition to this, work at 45KT3 had previously been conducted by Ted Weld, who had completely removed Housepit 12, in which he found 754 artifacts.

The following is an examination and interpretation of the stratigraphy in each house, as far as is possible at this early date. Unfortunately there has not yet been enough work done in any one of the house depressions. It will require further excavation of an extensive nature in and around a number of the house structures to determine their exact shape and construction and soundly interrelate them with other such structures along the middle and upper Columbia.

#### HOUSEPIT 15

The stratigraphy and artifacts of Housepit 15 present an interesting and complicated problem, for in it there are three apparently unassociated structures, which represent at least two different structural designs and a considerable span of time in the relative existence of the site as a whole. They are indicated in Profiles C-C' and D-D' as house floor 15A, house floor 15B and cultural component 15C.

Above the midden in these house structures there are four layers. Lying directly on the midden is a river-deposited layer of sand which contains historic materials, such as belt buckles, knife blades, and buttons. Lying atop it is an irregular deposit of midden that the Columbia River has removed from the slope to the west housepit and deposited in the hollow which marks the structure's position. Above this stratum there is another band of light colored sand, containing plastic buttons, tin cans, and other more recent signs of occidental culture. It is between the deposition of this layer and the one directly below it that the dead man (Profile C-C', Plate No. 5) was interred, probably as an anchor for the ferry which used to operate in that vicinity previous to 1900. Finally there is the topsoil, being separated from the stratum below by another lens of charcoal, which suggests a hot, fast-burning fire swept through the area.

House floor 15A and the house fill above it represent a period just prior to historic times, corresponding to the latter portion of Swanson's Cayuse III phase, which he dates prior to 1811, and no earlier than about 1700. The house floor itself is distinguished by a lens of concentrated organic material and charcoal, containing great amounts of fish vertebrae. An abrupt change in cultural materials at a level in the midden corresponding to the dark lenses was found by an examination of the fish bone in each level of each square and an apparent intrusion into house structure 15B.

On the basis of stratigraphy alone, 15A could be considered merely a component of 15B, although this would necessitate assuming that the structure of the house was changed from stepped to a straight sided pit in the course of its occupation. However, when the artifacts are examined in relation to the stratigraphy, it becomes evident that this was not the case at all. The artifacts in 15A, including ground adzes, a fossil-ivory "doll", an abalone pendant, a carved pipe, small triangular side-notched points, and an abundance of stone beads, are indicative of late plateau culture, just prior to historic times. Here too, a certain variety of gambling bone is confined which has been found



only in association with late houses in this area. On the other hand, the artifacts from 15B contain none of the things just mentioned, although the material culture is as pronounced as that of 15A. The differences in points, blades, scrapers and bone implements are just as striking. Indeed, there is almost no duplication of artifact types between the materials of these two structures.

Housepit 15A was a shallow, round saucer-shaped excavation about forty feet in diameter. It was about three feet deep, with steeply sloping sides resembling those of House 12. It is impossible to tell the nature of the entrance or the cover it possessed. No postholes were noted and no where did the stratigraphy reveal a probable entrance. The general nature of the floor, however, suggests that an entrance could have been conveniently situated either on its north or east sides. Several hearths were noted, widely scattered through the house fill. All but one of these were small and without rocks. This fire pit, or perhaps conglomeration of smaller fire pits, which occupied the central position in the house, is about eight feet in diameter and six inches in depth. In it there are few rocks and little soil variation, except in the very center where there is some rust red ash. Artifacts associated with it include a harpoon toggle, a gambling bone, two stone beads, several points, and a few scrapers.

The floor of Housepit 15B is far different from that of 15A. The central area is large and flat and bordered by two more or less perpendicular steps. These steps vary from fourteen to eighteen inches in height and form concentric rings about the central area. The first step is rather narrow, reaching a maximum of slightly more than two feet in width. The second, or top, step is of approximately the same width along the west side of the house, where a moderate slope in the land forced the construction of another concentric wall. To the river (east) side, where the terrain slopes gently away from the house, the top of the second step appears to be about the extent of the structure, or at least the living area. Here, too, the most probable place for an entrance exists, as the bottom of the midden beyond the second step cannot be distinguished from that of 15A and since it extends in a level plane all the way to the river bank.

Unlike the fire pits in House 15A, those in 15B were situated to the side of the central area, against or near the first step. An earth oven, about five feet long and three feet wide was found in a comparable situation. It was full of small irregular pieces of basalt, averaging about three to five inches in diameter. There was a fair amount of bone associated with it.

About the special form of the house, it is a little early to comment safely. The steps are a new innovation in this region of the Columbia, although I have heard that the University of Pennsylvania excavated some similar houses sometime after the turn of the century. Whether 15B is round or rectangular remains to be determined through more excavation, although the former seems, at this point, much more likely. The housepit is considerably earlier than 15A, as both stratigraphy and artifacts have indicated. It is likely that it corresponds to Swanson's Cayuse I or II phases (1300 to 1700), and it is remotely possible that it is of even greater antiquity.

Cultural component of 15C is the most baffling feature we have run across at Osborn Bar. Lying just north of Housepit 15B, and partially covered by 15A, there is no surface indication of its presence, although it is an aboriginal excavation. Apparently in the excavation of Housepit 15A, dirt was piled to



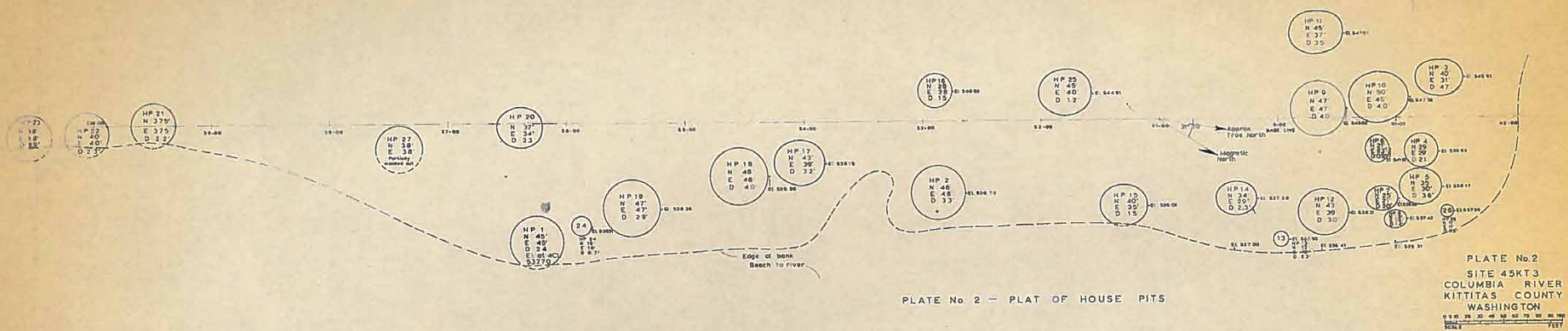
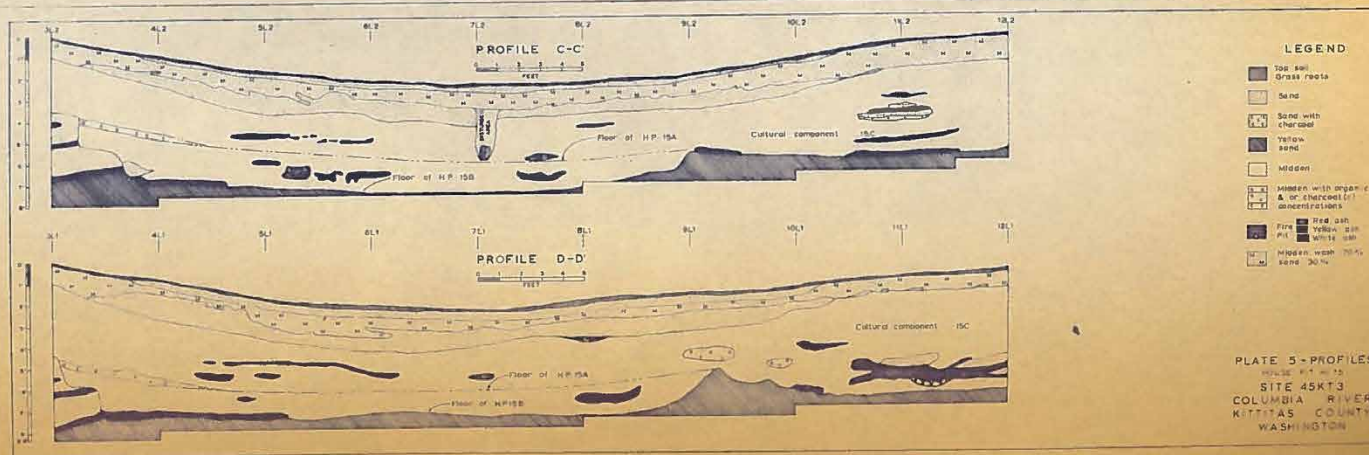
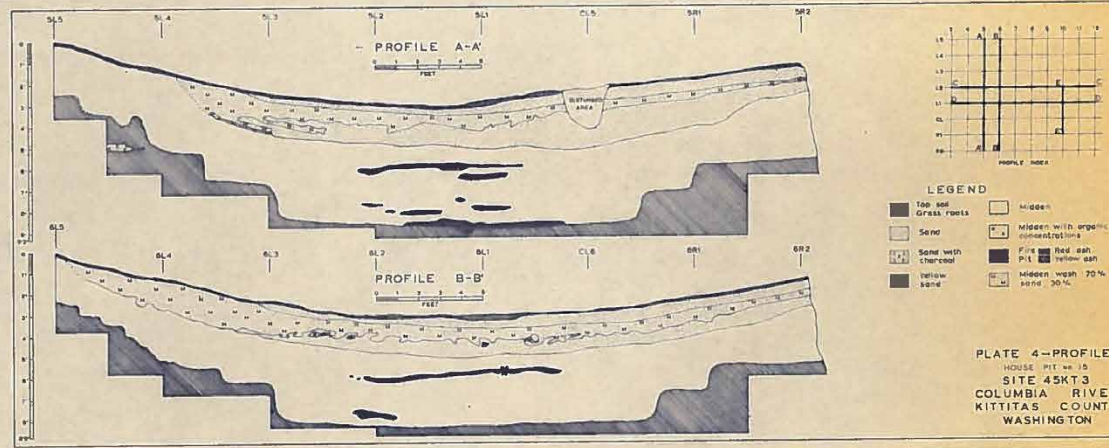
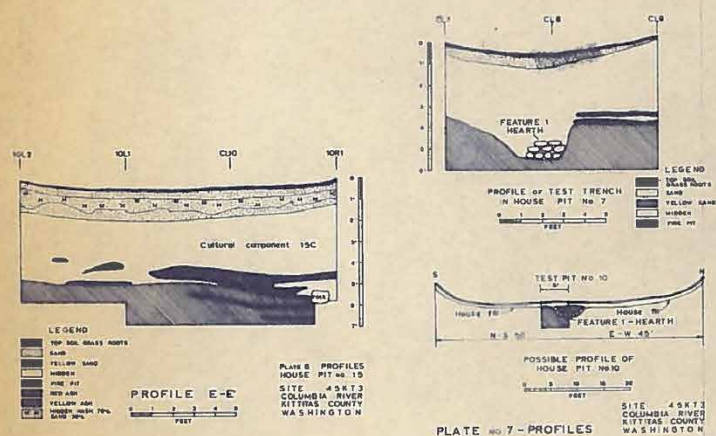


PLATE No. 2 - PLAT OF HOUSE PITS





the north, thus obliterating any signs of a depression that might have existed there. It is also possible that 15B was constructed later and had a similar effect on it, although the reverse could just as well be true. You will notice on Profiles C-C' and D-D' (Plate No. 5), that 15A, 15B and cultural component 15C all seem to congregate in Square 9L1. Because of the later intrusion of House 15A, it is impossible to tell by means of the stratigraphy which of the other two is earlier.

Although 15C is an aboriginal structure or excavation of some nature, the artifacts and stratigraphy from it confuse one another. The large fire area, the edges of which are shown in Profiles D-D' and E-E', contains numerous rocks of gigantic dimensions, thousands of smaller rocks, at least one well defined hearth (Profile D-D'), three post holes, thousands of chips, thousands of pieces of bone, including split bone, joints, skulls, bird bones, fish bones, and assorted burned bones, some shell, hundreds of chipped stone artifacts, including points, blades, scrapers, graters, and numerous bone artifacts, including two dice, a pendant, six L-awls, an antler haft, several antler chippers, and other varieties of awls. Much of the fire area is rust red or white, suggesting very intense fires, yet less than one percent of the bone in these areas is in any way burned.

Exactly what this fire pit, which is at least twenty-feet in diameter, is, is somewhat of a mystery. The large numbers of rocks suggest a tremendous earth oven, as does the presence of so much bone. Contradicting this, however, is the great number of artifacts and chips in association with it which suggest an intense occupation or congregation of people. In these contradicting aspects of 15C there is one more stabilizing theory: that the fire area represents a large gathering of people for the purpose of feasting or something similar. This would account for all various aspects of the pit, except one, which cannot be fully appreciated at this time. The fact that 15C is an aboriginal excavation raises some question as to the why and how in back of it. Unlike houses, it may not have possessed a roof. Certainly with the fire that must have roared there at one time, a lodge of considerable size and not a regular house would have been needed to properly contain it. Further knowledge about its structure and function are expected to be forthcoming within the near future, through further excavation and analysis. The artifacts from cultural component 15C, although numerous, shed no conclusive light on its relative age in comparison with 15B, although further work will undoubtedly solve this problem. The artifacts, with the exception of some point, scraper, and awl types, are totally different from these so far found in any other part of the site.

In some places not all the earlier midden was removed by the house excavations. From this midden we have two projectile points and one blade. The two points are similar to a type which appears in all of the houses we have excavated so far, while the blade is of a more non-categorical nature. House 15B cuts its steps through three feet of older midden. This cut (Profile C-C') has revealed three charcoal lenses, the deepest of which is considerably below the rest of earlier midden. Although it is much too early to draw any conclusions, they might represent floor levels of a much earlier house structure. This presents but another problem that can only be solved through excavation.

Below the central area of House 15B we encountered the remnants of a burial which had evidently been disturbed in the process of digging the house. Only the jaw, pelvis and a few ribs remained. The jaw was extremely wide and badly abscessed.



Sex could not be determined.

#### HOUSEPIT 7

Housepit 7 lies about 220 feet north of Housepit 15, slightly back from the river bank. Its diameter ranges from twenty-two to twenty-three feet and there is approximately five feet of house fill in it. Compared to the stratigraphy of Housepit 15, the profiles of Housepit 7 are incredibly simple, although their nature leaves much room for speculation as to the exact shape and extent of the house. Only two five-foot squares were completely excavated and so our profiles from this house are limited.

The supposed center of House 7 is described (Plate 7) by a trench-like depression containing two small hearths. One of these was composed of a group of river cobbles. It had very little charcoal in association with it. The other, which was higher in the fire area, was made among a few larger rocks and contained large amounts of carbon-stained soil. There was no bone in association with either. Here again we have a unique occurrence; the use of a trench to contain the central heating for a housepit.

Two other lenses were unearthed, which contained great numbers of artifacts. These, however, were not fire pits, although they contained considerable charcoal, but rather were concentrations of organic material abundant in fish and mammal bone, shell, chips and artifacts. The upper levels of the house were quite sterile, containing only one point, and a few scrapers of poor workmanship. A third pit was started in this house, but never finished. It revealed, however, the proportion of an outer step, which suggests this house was a modification of the style of House 15B.

The artifacts recovered from this house possess some of the traits of those in House 15B and others of cultural component 15C. There were also some new traits apparent in the cultural material found in House 7. These include the finest examples of chipping noted in the whole site, a different type of antler chipper and a different style of harpoon toggle. From these facts it would seem that House 7 is of about the same general age as 15B.

#### HOUSEPIT 1

At present Housepit 1 is in the process of being dug by Walter Burke. He is using the same digging methods that we have used, and providing us with all the information that he can about the housepit.

Housepit 1 is located 500 feet south of Housepit 15 and has been partly washed away by the Columbia River. It is round, being forty-five feet in diameter. The same flood layers that overlay house depression 15 also overlay it; and it is about as deep as 15. As excavation has just begun, little is known about it, although it looks very promising.

It is too early to determine what type of house it is. The artifacts which are coming out suggest a transition between the earlier and later house types. There is also evidence of a large earth oven, a sunken hearth in one extremity of the house, and several postholes which are in definite alignments.



### HOUSEPIT 10

Housepit 10 lies roughly 250 feet northwest of Housepit 15, and is situated atop the highest ground in the area. It is slightly elliptical, varying from forty-five to fifty feet in diameter. Along with Housepits 9, 11, and 12, it represents the deepest visible signs of aboriginal excavation. Two test pits were sunken into this house structure. Being at about the center of the dish, one revealed about eight inches of black midden, in which was found an abundance of bone, one scraper, a few chips and a central hearth lined with rocks. The hearth is in perfect preservation, the mammal bone seems almost fresh, and from the appearance of the house dish it has not long deteriorated. The pit on the edge of the dish confirmed its shape; that being suggested in Plate 7. Housepits 9 and 11 are of the same variety.

### HOUSEPIT 12

Housepit 12 was dug a few years ago by Ted Weld. Although the exact profile and positions of the artifacts in the house were never catalogued, Housepit 12 is an important link in the cultural chain of 45KT3. It was elliptical and constructed with straight sides like Housepit 15A. There are approximately three feet of midden fill in it. Furthermore, historical objects were found in it, plus twenty late side-notched points and eight late pentagonal points. Housepit 12, therefore, must represent a period of time around 1811, when historic trade first came into the area.

### HOUSE TYPES

There are three basic styles of houses present at 45KT3. The first is the stepped house; round or slightly elliptical in shape with a series of benches or steps around its perimeter which enclose a large, flat central area. The benches surrounding the central area are narrow and would have been suitable for sleeping and storage. Since these steps have no apparent break in them it is possible that the house entrance was in the roof, although of this we cannot be certain. Evidence has been found suggesting that the stepped houses were heated in two ways: by several fires built at the base of the inner step as in House 15A, and by means of a central fire contained in a long shallow trench such as in House 7.

The second type of house is simpler in its construction. Its excavation was comprised of a circular or slightly elliptical pit about three feet deep with steep, sloping sides (70° - 80°). The center of which was large and flat. These structures were heated with large central fires. Here again, because of intrusions and the lack of sufficient material, we may speculate as to the nature of their entrances. No evidence, however, was found indicating a ramp, though this possibility should not be overlooked.

The third and last house type is the simplest of all. The house excavation was formed by scooping out a large, saucer shaped depression in the ground between four and five feet deep. Unfortunately work in this variety of house has been limited to two test pits. These, however, revealed the saucer shaped depression and the central firepit shown in Plate 7.

The dating of these house types was surprisingly easy due to Dr. Earl Swanson's work a few miles south of 45KT3 and the nature of the stratigraphy recovered.



In his work Dr. Swanson established the ages of a number of kinds of house structures. (Swanson 1957) Of these types only one resembles any of our three types; that being the second type. These correspond to houses Dr. Swanson dates just prior to and during early historic times. At 45KT3 we found an abundance of artifacts in the steep walled houses to corroborate this, such as small side-notched points, a late variety of plateau pentagonal point, six ground adzes, an abalone pendant, a fossil ivory "doll", and an elaborate pipe carved in the shape of a fish. In addition to these two historic pieces were found in one of the houses. Furthermore, this variety of house was found intruding into a stepped house which definitely places the stepped house farther back in the chronology of the Bar. The difference in the artifacts of these two types of house structures is marked which might indicate a wide range in time between the two varieties. More interesting and perhaps even more striking is the chronological variety of artifacts distributed among the stepped houses, which suggests a considerable time range.

The third type of house (saucer shaped) is historic. The midden in these houses is shallow and the sides have not decomposed. Furthermore, the bone found in them is fresh in appearance and the absence of their flooding places them later than the other two types.

The earliest of the houses at 45KT3 probably doesn't antedate A.D. 1300 since it was about this time that the emphasis shifted from hunting to fishing and the Middle Columbia was heavily populated.

In the future further analysis of the stratigraphy, artifacts, and associated materials is expected to reveal a greater fund of knowledge. Especially in the study of the artifacts there is much to be gained in the development of cultural horizons along the Middle Columbia.

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