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# The Clay Pipe Assemblage from an 18- and 19th-Century Aboriginal Consumer Site in the Upper Mid-Continent

## **Cover Page Footnote**

I badgered many colleagues by telephone in preparing this paper (especially for examples of Fiolet pipes), from Michigan to Minnesota to Manitoba as well as Ontario, and I thank them for their assistance and patience. Special thanks to Jennifer Hamilton of the Canadian Park Service in Winnipeg for tracking down Fiolets in their collections.

## THE CLAY PIPE ASSEMBLAGE FROM AN 18TH- AND 19TH- CENTURY ABORIGINAL CONSUMER SITE IN THE UPPER MID-CONTINENT

C. S. "Paddy" Reid

*Four years of excavations at the multi-component Ballynacree site (DkKp-8), located at the mouth of the Winnipeg River in northwestern Ontario, uncovered a large number of fur trade artifacts spanning virtually the entire period from initial French contact to the end of the fur trade era in the late 19th century. The clay pipe assemblage serves as an example of some unusual aspects of a major aboriginal village site, as opposed to a fur trade post site, as the quantities, time ranges, and types of pipes are at variance with those expected from such a site.*

*Quatre années de fouilles effectuées au site Ballynacree (DkKp-8), complexe situé à l'embouchure de la rivière Winnipeg dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario, ont mis au jour un grand nombre d'artefacts reliés à la traite des fourrures à partir des premiers contacts avec les Français jusqu'à la fin de ce type de commerce dans les dernières années du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'assemblage de pipes en argile constitue un exemple de certains aspects inhabituels d'un grand site de village aborigène, par opposition à un site de poste de traite des fourrures, parce que les quantités, les intervalles de temps et les genres de pipes diffèrent de ceux attendus d'un tel site.*

### Introduction

The Ballynacree site (FIG. 1, 2) has been identified as the home village of the Cree chief La Marte Blanche (Reid 1985), who was a major ally of French explorer Pierre Gaultier De Varennes, Sieur de la Verendrye, who founded Fort St. Charles on Lake of the Woods in 1732 (Burpee 1927: 9). The site is stratified with Archaic, Laurel, Blackduck, Selkirk, Sandy Lake, French Fur Trade, English Fur Trade, and Post-Confederation historical components. It is situated on an island near the source of the Winnipeg River at a point where residents could control traffic moving up and downstream from the two portages between Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River.

The site was threatened by severe water erosion caused by hydroelectric dams, and a four-year-long rescue excavation yielded over 100,000 artifacts (see Reid and Rajnovich 1983, 1985, 1991; Reid 1985, n.d.). For the purposes of this paper, the term "consumer site" indicates an aboriginal village other than aboriginal dwellings directly adjacent to a trading establishment and is meant to be descriptive only.

### The Assemblage

Of the 112 artifacts listed in Table 1, only six could be reconstructed to the stage of complete bowls, heels, and at least a portion of the stem (FIG. 3). All are of white ball clay, there are no

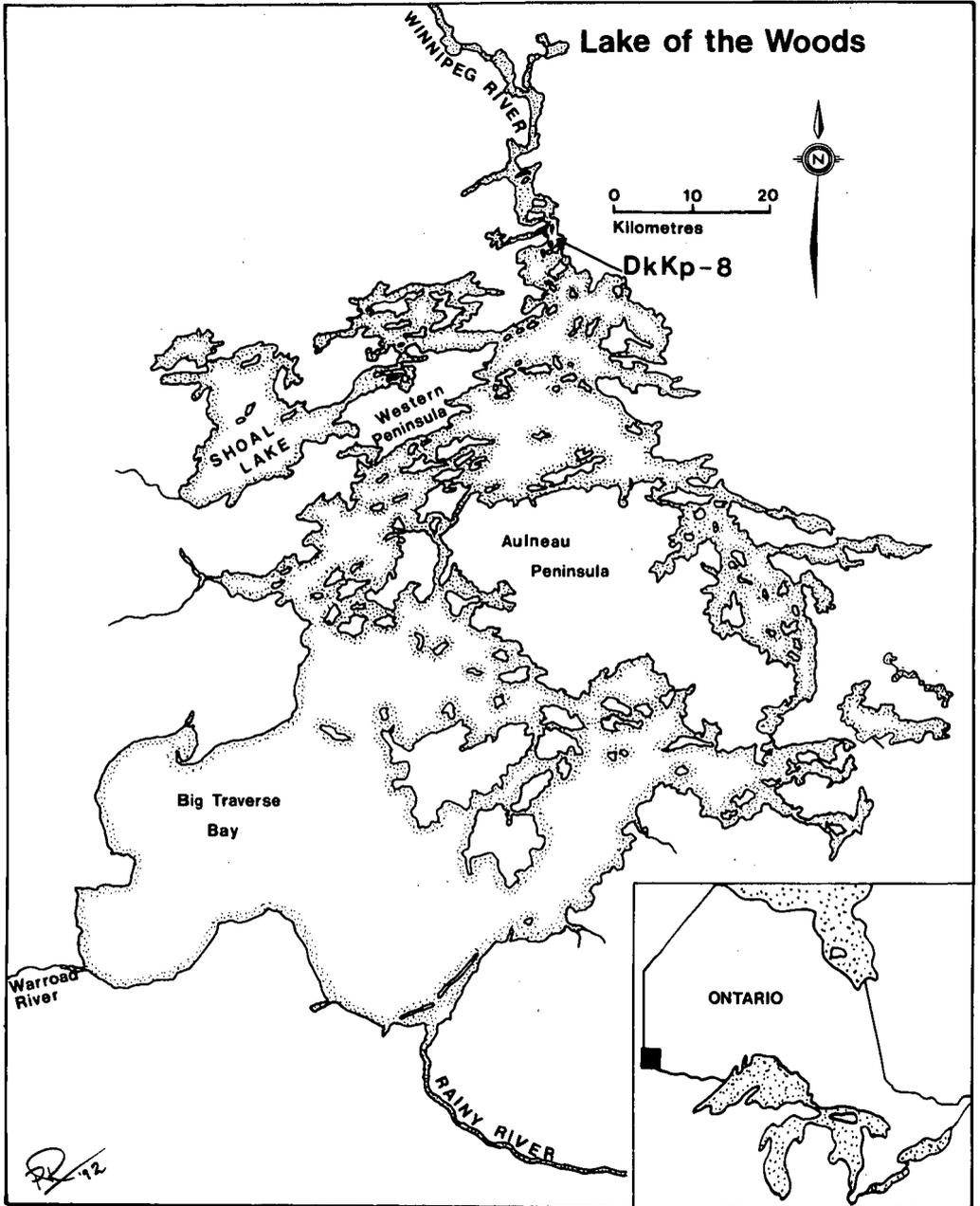


Figure 1. Location of the Ballynacree site (DkKp-8).

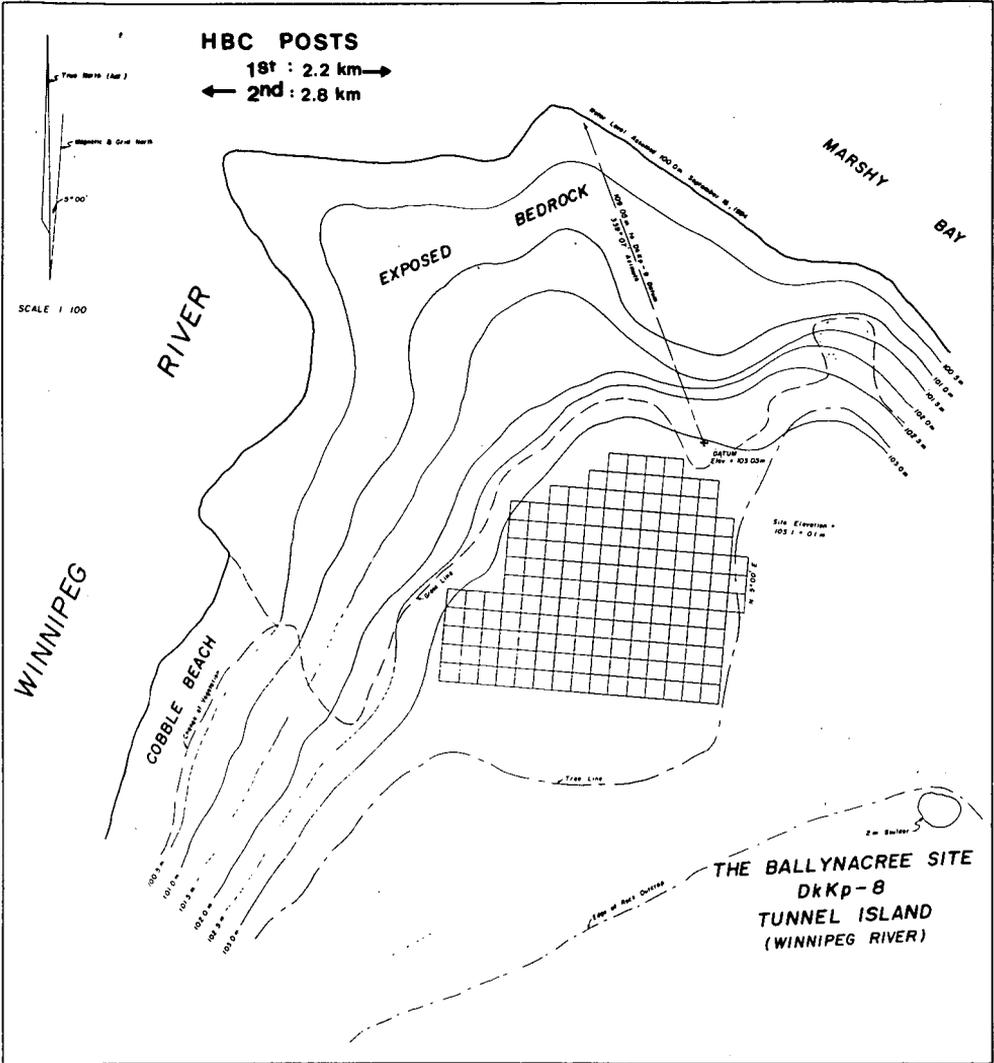


Figure 2. Site plan.

Table 1. Pipe fragment frequencies.

Item	N	%
Bowls and fragments	59	52.6
Stems and fragments	46	41.1
Heel/spur fragments	5	4.5
Mouthpieces	2	1.8
Total	112	100.0

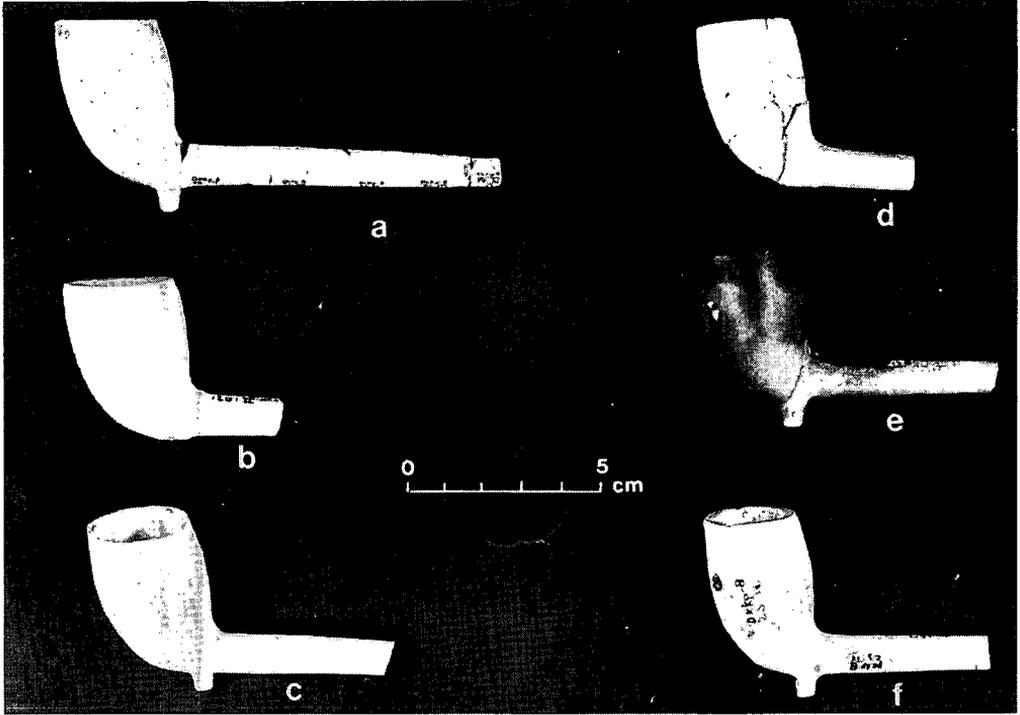


Figure 3. Plate of six reconstructed pipes.

stub-stemmed varieties, and all are typical of an assemblage from the latter half of the 19th century.

#### Bowls

There is a remarkable—indeed perhaps almost unique for an excavated assemblage—paucity of decoration in this sample from an aboriginal consumer site (as opposed to a fur trade post site): 52 (88.1%) of the bowls and fragments are plain. This total includes TD pipes with no other decoration on the bowl. Only seven bowls and fragments (11.9%) are decorated.

#### Plain

Forty-eight (81.35%) of the bowls and/or fragments are undecorated,

without a picture, pattern, or the label TD. This figure may be misleading to some degree as 44 of the fragments in the sample are small enough that even if the letters "TD," for example, appeared on the back (smoker's side) of the bowl it would not necessarily show on a small fragment. Nonetheless, the figure is not wildly inaccurate as all or part of the letters "T" or "D" would appear on some of the fragments if the intact bowl had them.

#### Decorated

There are seven (11.86%) decorated bowls. (This category does not include TD pipes.) Of these, one possesses a series of raised dots and geometric designs and is very probably a Montreal pipe, as the identical design appears on

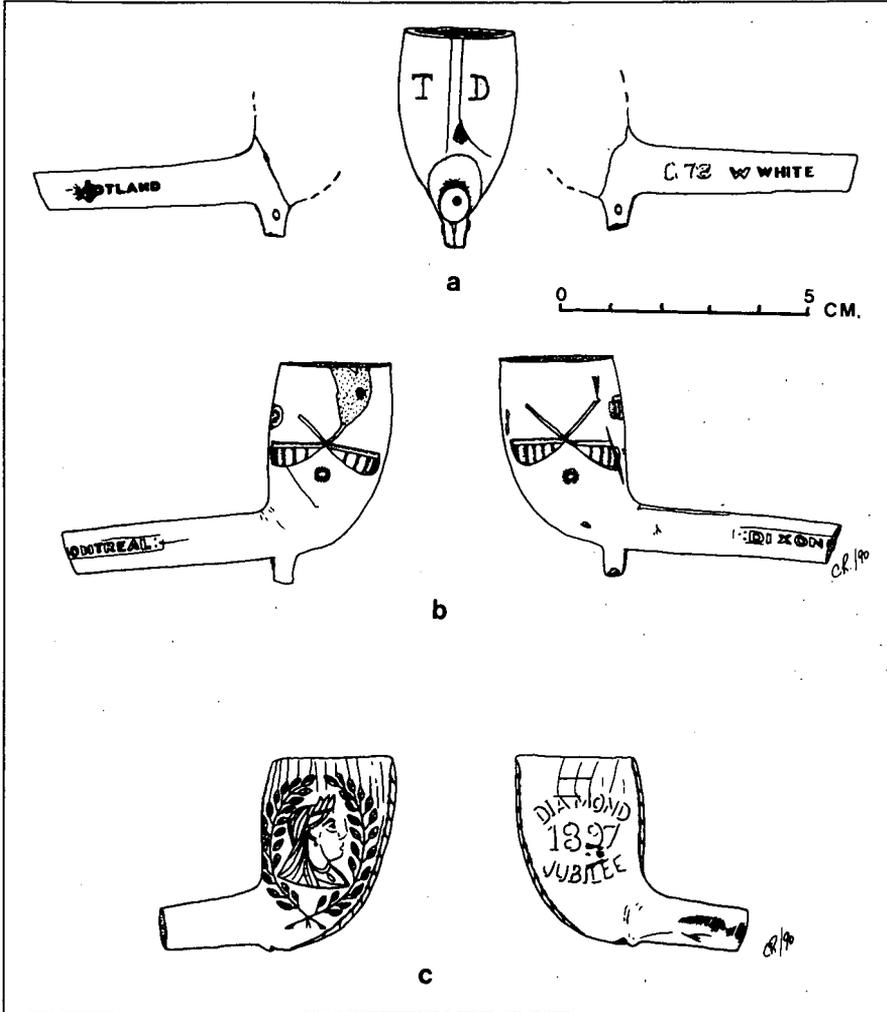


Figure 4. Line drawings of selected pipes.

pipes at other 19th-century sites in Ontario with both Dixon and Bannerman makers' marks (Kenyon 1984). Of the remainder, one is fluted—a design very popular in the 19th century with virtually all pipe manufacturers (see Kenyon 1980; Walker 1971). One pipe has a raised design that may be part of a turban from a human effigy design, and another has a pair of crossed lacrosse sticks above a ball on each side of the bowl (FIGS. 3C, 4B). One pipe has motifs commemorating Queen Victoria's

Diamond Jubilee of 1897 (FIGS. 3B, 4C), a very small fragment has a raised floral design, and another has an incised motif, although its small size makes the design indecipherable. Only one has sufficient stem to show a maker's mark—the lacrosse design is a Dixon's/Montreal pipe.

*TD*

There are four (6.77%) TD bowls (FIGS. 3A, D, E, F; 4A) and all are spurred. One is a W. White/Scotland bowl with a raised TD (FIG. 4A); the

Table 2. Marked pipe stems.

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Dixon's Montreal	1876-1894	9	52.9
Fiolet (a) St. Omer	1765-1921	5	29.4
Bannerman Montreal	1858-1907	2	11.8
W. White Scotland	1805-1955	1	5.9
Total		17	100.0

pipe type and mold number, G78, and the letters "D" and "O" are present on opposite sides of the spur. The second (FIG. 3A) is a Bannerman/Montreal pipe with an impressed TD. The remaining two are seemingly identical: both have small impressed TDs, are exactly the same size and shape, and bear identical mold marks. One pipe is definitely a Dixon's/Montreal (FIG. 3F), but the stem on the second (FIG. 3D) is broken close to the bowl and no maker's mark remains. It is probably a Dixon's pipe, however. (This pipe is not included in the values in Table 2.) It should be noted that the "lacrosse" Dixon's pipe also bears the impressed letters "TD" (FIGS. 3C, 4B).

#### Stems and Mouthpieces

The 46 stem fragments and 2 mouthpieces are undecorated except for maker's marks on 12 items: six Dixon's, five Fiolet, and one Bannerman. None are glazed or varnished, a largely 19th-century practice (wax also was used), to prevent the smoker's lips from sticking to the porous clay. This may indicate that these are pipes from the cheapest price range. Since the assemblage is predominantly 19th century (see discussion below), the Harrington and Binford methods for dating pipes by bore diameters (Harrington 1954; Binford 1962) were not considered appropriate. In addition the sample

size is too small to employ either method effectively.

#### Heels and Spurs

Of the five heel and spur fragments, one shows a Dixon's/Montreal maker's mark. A second fragment bears the opposing marks of "G" and "3."

Among the bowls there are nine specimens complete enough to determine presence or absence of spurs. All three of the Dixon's bowls (including the hypothesized Dixon's bowls discussed above) have spurs, as do the Bannerman, the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee, and the W. White bowls. The bowl decorated with raised dots and geometric designs is hypothesized to be either a Dixon's or a Bannerman bowl also has a spur.

#### Comparisons and Discussion

##### General Comparisons

##### *TD Pipes*

The debate on the TD monogram—its age, which manufacturer first used it, and the distribution thereof—has already been pursued in considerable detail elsewhere (see, for example, Kenyon 1982a, 1982b; Oswald 1975; Reid 1977; Walker 1971, 1977). For the Ballynacree assemblage the debate as to origin is largely irrelevant as all but one have marked stems (White,

Dixon's, Bannerman) and in all likelihood the final one also is a Dixon's. The TD has a continent-wide, indeed world-wide, distribution, making comparisons relatively meaningless if the TD alone is used as a reference point. What is significant at Ballynacree is the huge preponderance of pipes of Montreal origin.

#### *Dixon's and Bannerman Pipes*

Dixon's, Hendersons, and Bannerman were the three main Montreal pipe manufacturers in this period. In 1875, Bannerman even opened a pipe manufactory at Rouses Point in New York state (Sudbury 1980), which survived only until 1884. Montreal pipes are relatively widespread in their distribution across the upper mid-continent, but not in the same large quantities as the Scottish-made pipes (Walker 1971). It is not the presence of Montreal pipes at Ballynacree that is surprising (although the absence of Hendersons is), but rather their preponderance in a market saturated with Scottish-made pipes. Date ranges for these Ballynacree pipes are shown in Table 2.

#### *Fiolet Pipes*

French pipes are fairly widely distributed over North America, but are hardly profuse. Fiolet is represented at Fort Coteau du Lac and Sillery in Quebec (Walker 1971: 34) and at the Caleb Pusey House in Pennsylvania (Alexander 1978). They also appear at two North West Mounted Police forts in western Canada, Fort Walsh and Fort Battleford (Jennifer Hamilton, personal communication, 1992). In these cases they represent a small fraction of the assemblage; at Ballynacree,

however, they represent 29.4% of the assemblage.

#### *W. White Pipe*

At the beginning of this pipe analysis it was predicted, given the statistical data from the growing number of published fur trade era sites, that Glasgow pipes such as those manufactured by W. White would predominate. That only 5.9% of the sample (represented by a single pipe) is Scottish is puzzling, as is the fact that there are no identified pre-1891 Scottish (Glasgow) pipes.

#### **Discussion**

There are a number of anomalies in the Ballynacree site clay pipe assemblage; each is summarized below. The first is the very high proportion of undecorated pipes, which is particularly unusual on mid- to late 19th-century sites, especially aboriginal consumer sites.

Second, there is a very high proportion of Montreal pipes at Ballynacree, comprising 63% of the identified makers' marks. Since the Montreal industry had a limited duration, this is unusual. In addition, the Montreal industry enjoyed only moderate success against the flood of Glasgow-made pipes that spread over North America in the 19th century (Iain Walker, personal communication, 1974, quoted in full in Reid 1977: 62-63). Oddly, despite their occurrence at Longlac Post (Dawson 1969), Fort Pic (Gall 1969), Fort Lennox (Barka 1978), and the Ermatinger House (Reid 1977), there are no Hendersons of Montreal pipes.

Also noteworthy is the complete absence of Ford of Stepney pipes. Ford

supplied the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) with pipes from 1831 to at least 1870 (Walker, personal communication, 1974 in Reid 1977), and Ballynacree is located only 2.2 km from the first location of the HBC Pat Portage Post and 2.8 km from the second, post-1836, location. Both locations, like Ballynacree, are on the Winnipeg River; therefore, not only was access easy, but HBC canoes/boats must have been passing the Ballynacree village regularly. Walker (1974 in Reid 1977) further commented that "every time [Ford] pipes are found they are either on HBC sites or on native sites within a convenient range of a HBC site."

The Ballynacree assemblage dates primarily to the late 19th century (see TAB. 2 and the 1897 pipe). The site has Archaic, Laurel, Blackduck, Selkirk, Sandy Lake, French fur trade, and English fur trade components, and yet there are no early white clay pipes. The Fiolets, which could have been early (1765 plus), were excavated in association with the remaining pipes, and while W. White began business in 1805, this specimen is marked "SCOTLAND" and hence post-dates the United States McKinley Tariff Act of 1891. The earlier historical strata are notable for the presence of stone pipes and absence of clay pipes (Reid n.d.).

There is a remarkable lack of variety in the assemblage in terms of the pipe makers represented, even less if the Montreal pipes are grouped together. This is unexpected for an aboriginal consumer site of the fur trade period. One would expect to see more Glasgow pipes—Murray and McDougall pipes, for example (again see Walker, personal communication, 1974 in Reid 1977).

The second highest frequency of makers is Fiolet of St. Omer, a French

manufacturer; they comprise 29.4% of the identified makers' marks. This emphasizes the unusual nature of the assemblage with its preponderance of Montreal pipes and low frequency of Glasgow pipes. Equally curious is the absence of other French manufacturers such as Gambier (who is represented at the Ermatinger House) (Reid 1977).

Because over 90% of the Ballynacree site was excavated (see Reid and Rajnovich 1991: 193–194, and FIG. 2), one of the research objectives included the formulation of "patterns" for aboriginal consumer sites during the fur trade (as opposed to fur trade posts) for the area west of Lake Superior. This was particularly important since so few "consumer" sites have been fully excavated, let alone published.

As mentioned above it was expected that an aboriginal village site pipe assemblage would reflect those of fur trade post sites; this is not the case, at least for the Ballynacree Site. It is therefore hypothesized that aboriginal sites not directly adjacent to fur trade posts exhibit a pattern of cultural selection—at least in the case of traded clay pipes—that does not necessarily reflect the pipe assemblages at the posts themselves. This pattern also may be reflected in the other sub-assemblages on aboriginal sites of the fur trade period, refuting the often-held assumption that the aboriginal participants in the fur trade were merely "consumers."

### Acknowledgments

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