

Indian Landing (20BA02) and The Little Log Cabin (20MU93) Archaeological Sites

A comparative Analysis

Matt Schroeder

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Dr. Dale Borders

A Brief History of the Sites

During the early 1800's, Pottawatomi Native American tribes migrated to southwest Michigan from their home territory in eastern Wisconsin. Unfortunately for the Pottawatomi, the Treaty of Chicago, signed in 1833, deeded all of Michigan's lands held by the Pottawatomi to the United States of America. Under this treaty, the Pottawatomi had agreed to move west of the Mississippi River, but several tribes refused this order and managed to evade government agents perusing the tribes' migration west. The remaining Pottawatomi settled in areas of Michigan such as what is now known as Hastings, MI today. Specifically, some Pottawatomi tribe members purchased around 150 acres of land from the United States government in the area referred to today as the Indian Landing archaeological site, which is located along the Thornapple River in Hastings Township (Indian Landing, 2011). Furthermore, in 1849, a Methodist Episcopal Mission was established at Indian Landing, north of the Thornapple River, for both settlers in the area and Native Americans alike. The mission itself was established by Reverend Manasseh Hickey, a Methodist Episcopal minister, who had a log cabin, right around 30x30 feet in dimension, built which contained two rooms with a shared fireplace separating the rooms (Indian Landing History, 2011). The mission operated until 1854 when Native Americans sold the property and abandoned the area. From 1855 to 1871 the mission site faced multiple owners and occupations and by 1894 the foundation of the mission was all that remained (Indian Landing History, 2011). Currently, the excavation of Indian Landing has been completed thanks to Dr. Dale Borders, a historical archaeologist at Grand Valley State University, and the help of many volunteers from the Charlton Park area, where the site is located, and GVSU students and staff.

The Little Log Cabin archaeological site, also known as Headquarters, is located immediately south of the Muskegon tributary in Egeleston Township. The site location was originally purchased by Henry N. Smith on October 1st, 1860 and this land contained three distinct and separate parcels. The northern parcel contained 18.1 acres and was located north of the Muskegon River tributary while the second parcel of land contained around 39 acres and the third, where the cabin was built, contained 32.7 acres. There are currently no official records which indicate when the log cabin was built on the third parcel of land, and the Muskegon County Courthouse which is thought to have held these records burned to the ground in 1891 destroying everything. What is historically understood is that Henry Smith died on July 2, 1901, and he bequeathed the Little Log Cabin property to his wife, Rachael. When Rachael passed away on February 25, 1910 the land was subsequently deeded to her daughter Henrietta. Henrietta Smith possessed the property until her death in 1944 when the property changed hands once again. The property was sold and transferred to Max Lane and Roy E. Messinger for nine-hundred dollars, and the land stayed under the ownership of Messinger until 1976 when Patrick Carten and his wife Patricia received the Warranty Deed for the land. Within the same year the State of Michigan purchased the land from the Carten family (Schlosser, 2007). Archaeological investigation of the Little Log Cabin didn't begin until 2006 when Grand Valley State University students, led by Dr. Jan Brashler, set out for their summer field school. Originally, students conducted 50x50 cm test pits in an old agricultural field in search of evidence for a prehistoric site at the Little Log Cabin location, and what they found surprised them: a log cabin (Schlosser, 2007). Thanks to the archaeological excavations of Dr. Jan Brashler and her field school students, we currently have a fair understanding of the Little Log Cabin site and know that the log cabin itself was around 8x16 feet in dimension.

Research Statement

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if Indian Landing (20BA02) and The Little Log Cabin (20MU93) are contemporaneous archaeological sites which yield similar archaeological materials. In addition, the study's aim was to identify if Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites maintain their own unique archaeological signature and exactly what this signature includes.

Methodology

With the primary goal of this research study questioning if Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites are contemporaneous, while each yielding their archaeological signature, data collection was essential. Therefore, data collection was the main methodological approach utilized for research over Indian Landing and the Little Log Cabin sites. Prior to my research on Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin, The Little Log Cabin's data had been cataloged and entered into GVSU's database while Indian Landing's material was only represented in catalog cards and the artifacts themselves. Thus, the Indian Landing artifacts needed to be individually analyzed and placed in a classification system. In turn, a classification system was created pertaining to Indian Landing artifacts and all Indian Landing material was analyzed and categorized according to the new classification created. This data was collected in hand written form and later transferred into a Microsoft Word document which specifically explained each category the artifacts belonged to and individual information pertaining to each artifact. Following the entering of data into Microsoft Word, data entry into Microsoft Excel

ensued in order to statistically analyze the Indian Landing data and make cross comparisons to The Little Log Cabin data, and both the Microsoft Word and Excel data is attached within the last pages of this binder. After completion of data entry into Microsoft Excel, comparative analysis began between the two archaeological sites. Comparative analysis was completed over all materials. Specifically speaking, architectural and personal materials found at both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin was of great interest for investigating the proposed research question.

Comparative Analysis

Architectural Material

Particular attention was paid to the architectural material of both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites during comparative analysis. This was conducted to see if both of the sites yielded similar materials and to demonstrate the amount of similar materials found at both archaeological sites. Furthermore, the architectural analysis was primarily conducted due to the nature of each architectural structure at the sites being in the form of a log cabin. Of the architectural materials, window glass, brick, concrete, mortar, and nails were cross analyzed. Window glass, brick, concrete, and mortar were compared solely on the number of each type of artifact found at both sites. This analysis can be seen in Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5, which are attached in Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3. As one can see from the graphs, both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites yielded material in this realm; however, the amount of material differs greatly between the sites. For example, the amount of brick recovered from The Little Log Cabin site is drastically less than brick recovered from Indian Landing. Another point of interest is the presence of large amounts of concrete at

The Little Log Cabin while Indian Landing only yields one piece of concrete. Additionally, high numbers of mortar were discovered at Indian Landing while The Little Log Cabin site yielded no mortar, but rather large amounts of wall plaster and wall board. The significance of the differentiation between architectural materials found at the Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin is further discussed within the results section of this paper.

In addition to the analysis of window glass, brick, concrete, and mortar, nails found at Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites were also analyzed. This analysis included identifying and cataloging the various types of nails found at each site. In particular, two types of nails, cut and wire, found at Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin were examined. This distinction was made based off of the idea or notion that the evolution from cut to wire nails in the mid-late 19th century can be identified as a time period transition. As seen in Figure 6, Appendix 3, a general analysis solely of the amount of nails at the two sites provides one with the fact that both sites yielded large amounts of all classifications of nails. However, when one delves into the types of nails, specifically wire and cut nails found, a different picture emerges, which is illustrated by Figure 7, Appendix 4. The numbers for wire and cut nails derived from The Little Log Cabin site were extracted from the research of Kathrine Hardcastle and her detailed examination of the metal artifacts from The Little Log Cabin site in 2007.

Unfortunately, these numbers only include the nails found within the cabin feature itself, and thus do not reflect the whole scope of the site, which is exactly what the numbers pertaining to Indian Landing entail. In turn, the data must be analyzed according to the context of the artifacts represented in this data. Taking this into consideration, the nails found at both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin are predominately cut nails with a ratio of 99.6% cut nails at Indian Landing and 92.2% cut nails at The Little Log Cabin. Initially, this percentage may not appear to

be statistically important; however, this data does indicate a higher use of wire nails at The Little Log Cabin site and thus gives one vital information which is further discussed in the discussion section of this paper.

Personal Items

Specific attention was paid to personal items during comparative analysis due to the invaluable information which this material could provide to my research question. Particularly, beads, marbles, rings, and coins were cross-examined to further explore the relation between Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites. Beads found at both sites were categorized by material form and analyzed in this same manner, which can be viewed in Figure 8, Appendix 4. Marbles were also categorized and examined by material form found at each site, which can also be seen in Appendix 5, in Figure 9. Rings found at the two sites were analyzed by number present, which can be seen in Figure 10, Appendix 5. Coins found at Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites were assessed according to date of mint. This was conducted to demonstrate a time frame of the sites based off of the coin dates reflecting the occupation period. Moreover, Schlosser, a former GVSU student who conducted detail analysis pertained to the personal items found at The Little Log Cabin, specifically examined the coins found at The Little Log Cabin site and Schlosser's data is integrated into my analysis. The date range analyses of the coins from both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites can be viewed in Appendix 6, Figure 11.

Discussion and Results

Comparative analysis demonstrated Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites to yield similar artifacts originating from the 19th century. Of the materials studied, concrete and nails found at both sites specifically indicated the time frame of the two sites. For example, the presence of a single piece of concrete at Indian Landing may be a result of surface contamination of the site while The Little Log Cabin produced 94 fragments of concrete, which was not utilized as a popular construction material until the late 19th century and early 20th century (The History of Concrete). In turn, the presence of 94 pieces of concrete at The Little Log Cabin site indicates a possible occupation of the site into the 1900's when concrete became popular as a building material. The nails recovered from Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin also indicate the time frame of both sites. For instance, cut nail machines came into existence in the late 18th and early 19th century, and between the periods of 1791-1815 there were 88 patents for cut nail machinery (Nelson, 1968). Moreover, cut nails were commonly used throughout the 19th century, and the transition to wire nail use in construction did not become popular until the 1890's (Nelson, 1968). Indian Landing yielded 99.6% cut nails while The Little Log Cabin produced 92.2% cut nails. Thus, one can clearly state that the two sites are mid-19th century archaeological sites based off of the nail distribution itself; however, with a lower percentage of cut nails found at The Little Log Cabin site, the occupation duration of The Little Log Cabin seems to have extended into the time of wire nail production and use, which did not occur in history until the late-19th century. This conclusion based solely on the concrete and nail distribution of the two sites is further supported by the personal items recovered from the sites, specifically the coins and tokens discovered. The date range of coins found at Indian Landing was 1843-1863 while the coins yielded from The Little Log Cabin dated from 1853-1891. With dates ranging from the mid to late 19th century, one can again clearly affirm that these two sites

both represent mid-19th century occupations, and once again the date range for The Little Log Cabin site extends its occupation into the late-19th century. Furthermore, this result is consistent with the historical record documentation pertaining to both sites which again reaffirms the two sites contemporaneous nature for mid-late 19th century occupation.

Determining an archaeological signature for both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin sites entails more than solely a comparative analysis. Moreover, it includes a systematic examination of all artifacts recovered from the two sites. Thankfully, all artifacts for both sites were entered into a classification system and this data was subsequently entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Since Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites are both contemporaneous sites dating to the Mid-Late 19th century, one must find distinction between the two sites to identify their archaeological signature. For Indian Landing, the archaeological signature is derived not only from the architectural materials common in the 19th century recovered from the site, but also from the middle to lower class objects which it yields. The architectural materials discovered at Indian Landing were common mid-19th century artifacts, such as brick, cut nails, and mortar, and thus further exploration into other artifacts from Indian Landing is essential for identifying the sites signature. For example, a previous research study on the historical ceramics yielded from the site, conducted by Casey Huegel in 2009, indicated that the socioeconomic status of the inhabitants at Indian Landing to almost certainly be of the lower to middle class range due to the inexpensive wares and decorative styles present in the ceramic assemblage. Another indication that this site was of lower to middle class occupants comes from the clay marbles found. As demonstrated by the American Toy Marble Museum (2008), clay marbles in the mid-late 19th century were inexpensive and mass produced children's toys which were first manufactured in Akron, Ohio. In addition, the two rings discovered at

Indian Landing were constructed of non-metal material, most likely condensed rubber or wood, which in turn indicates a lower social class. Other determining factors of the archaeological signature include the presence of personal adornment items such as beads and unique finds such as a brass fish weighing scale and jackknife.

The Little Log Cabin archaeological signature is similar to that of Indian Landing due to their contemporaneous nature. Again, the archaeological signature of The Little Log Cabin site is defined not only by the vast amounts of architectural materials, but also by the personal items the site yielded. One of The Little Log Cabin's identifying marks is derived from the architectural materials it yielded, specifically the large amount of wall plaster and decorated wall board it yielded which Indian Landing did not produce. The presence of this material is a well understood indication of middle to upper class due to the simple fact that it was not necessarily affordable for average Americans at the time to plaster and wall board their homes.

Speculatively speaking, the wall board found at The Little Log Cabin may be what was referred to as "Sackett Board," which was a composite material that was made of layers of thin plaster placed between four plies of wool felt paper; this material was not invented until 1894 by Augustine Sackett (Gardner, 2005). If "Sackett Board" is representative of the wall board material found at The Little Log Cabin, it not only reinforces the middle to upper class standing of the sites occupants, but also reaffirms the later occupation of the site previously mentioned.

The personal items found at The Little Log Cabin can also aid in determining the sites unique archaeological signature. For instance, The Little Log Cabin yielded several beads which can be interpreted in many ways. One interpretation of the beads found at the site is that they were once a part of a personal adornment item and thus used for personal use such as beautification. Another interpretation, which may predate the site itself, is the use of beads for

trade with Native Americans. For example, Janet Spector (1976) demonstrated that glass beads were often trade items between European settlers and Native Americans and are often the most common classes of artifacts found at historic Indian sites (p. 17). Since the number of these beads is not specifically high at The Little Log Cabin and the site is more historic in nature, it is fair to say that the possibility of the beads found at this site are most likely for personal adornment rather than playing a role in trade with the surrounding Native American communities. The ring recovered from The Little Log Cabin also plays a role in distinguishing the archaeological signature of the site. This is due to the fact that the ring discovered was made out of a metal alloy, which may actually be silver, and in comparison to Indian Landing rings this is a higher standard of construction material and consequently this emphasizes a higher standard of living at The Little Log Cabin. Additionally, the glass marbles recovered from The Little Log Cabin also show promise in identifying an archaeological signature for the site. All marbles recovered from the site were constructed of glass and three out of the six of these marbles indicated hand blown creation; in turn, this demonstrates a higher social class at The Little Log Cabin in comparison to the Indian Landing marbles. For instance, the American Toy Marble Museum (2008) stated that previous to the invention of manufacturing machines for marbles, they were very expensive because they were handmade. With the presence of handmade marbles at The Little Log Cabin a higher social class may be implied and utilized to demonstrate the archaeological signature of the site.

Conclusion

Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites each have a unique historical story to tell through the material remains recovered from these two sites. Both

historical documentation and artifact data was utilized to answer the proposed research statements which were to determine if Indian Landing (20BA02) and The Little Log Cabin (20MU93) are contemporaneous archaeological sites which yield similar archaeological material while also identifying if Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites maintain their own unique archaeological signature and exactly what this signature includes. In order to draw conclusions pertaining to the research questions, a comparative analysis of the site was conducted. The comparative analysis included a precise analysis of both the architectural and personal artifacts recovered from each site. Moreover, the results of this data demonstrated that Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites are contemporaneous mid to late 19th century historic sites with the exception that The Little Log Cabin yielded several artifacts indicating continued occupation into the early 1900's. Specifically speaking, the archaeological signature demonstrated by Indian Landing entails a large quantity of lower to middle class archaeological material dating to the mid-19th century which is associated with lower to middle class personal items such as wood or hardened rubber rings and clay marbles. The Little Log Cabin's archaeological signature was similar to Indian Landings in that it too yielded a large amount of architectural materials associated with personal items; however, The Little Log Cabin yielded architectural material which indicated a higher standard of living than that of Indian landing and the personal items, such as hand blown glass marbles, which also signified a higher social class. Furthermore, The Little Log Cabin site also provided several personal adornment items such as glass beads and a metal ring which were most likely utilized for personal adornment. Overall, both Indian Landing and The Little Log Cabin archaeological sites yielded interesting information which can be utilized to retell Michigan's history at a local level.

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Appendix 1

Figure 1

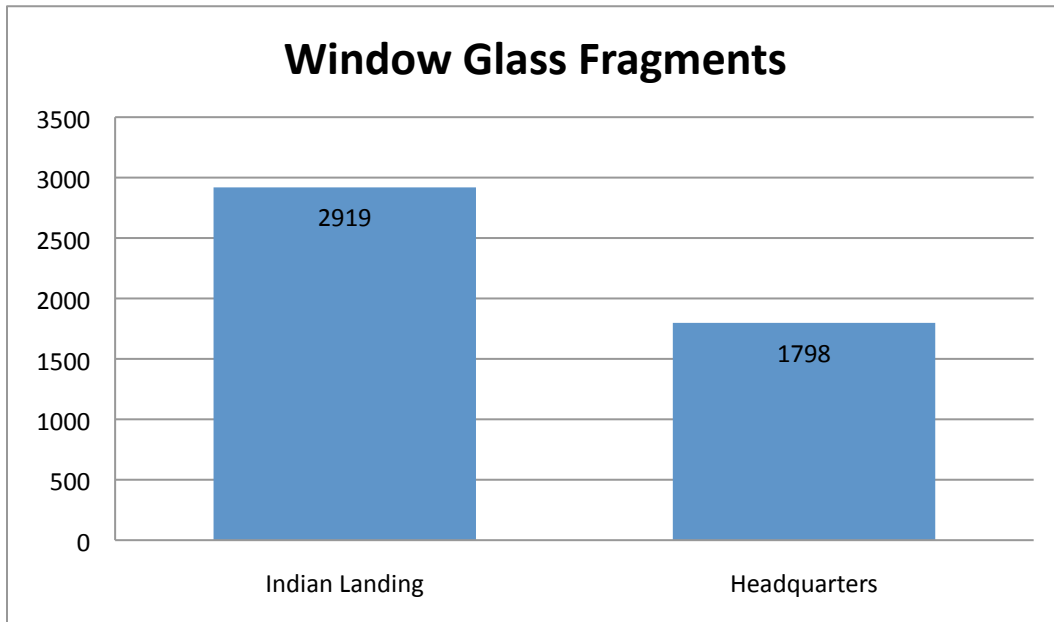
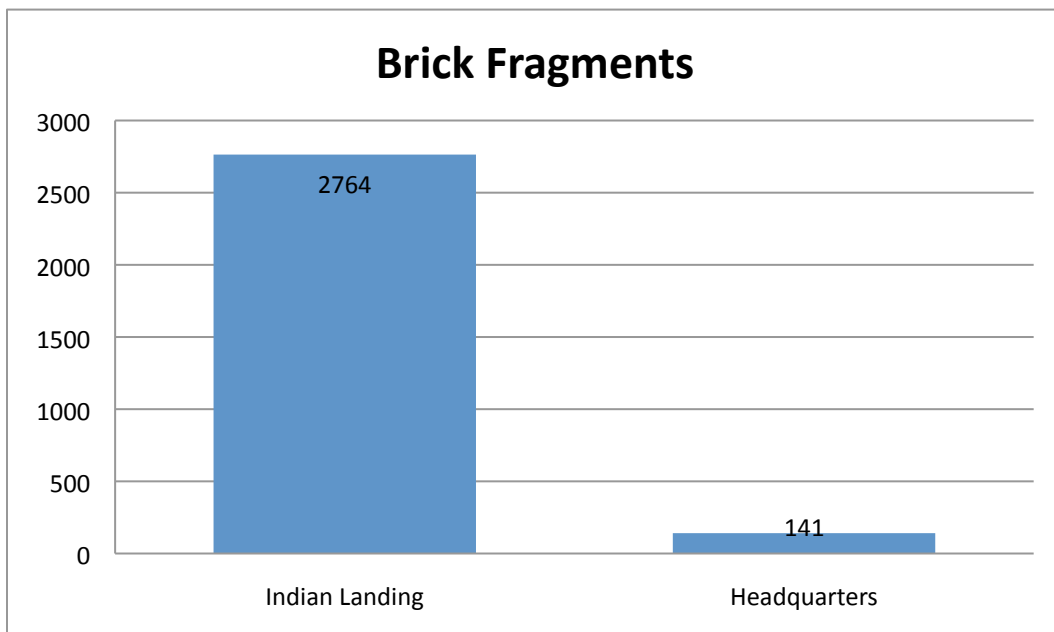


Figure 2



Appendix 2

Figure 3

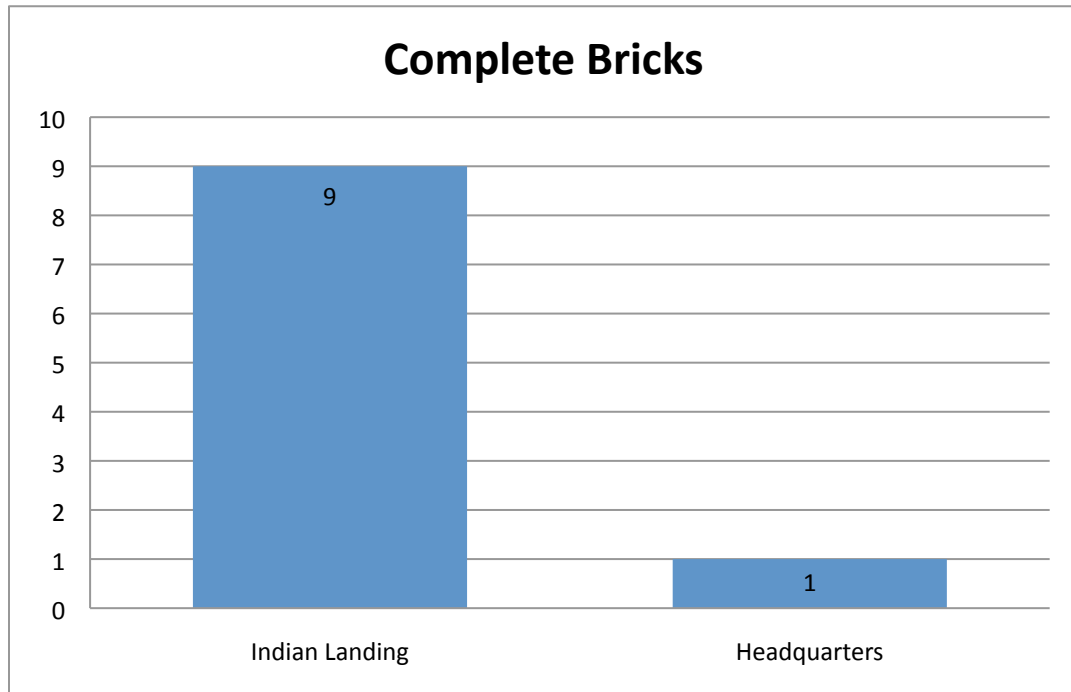
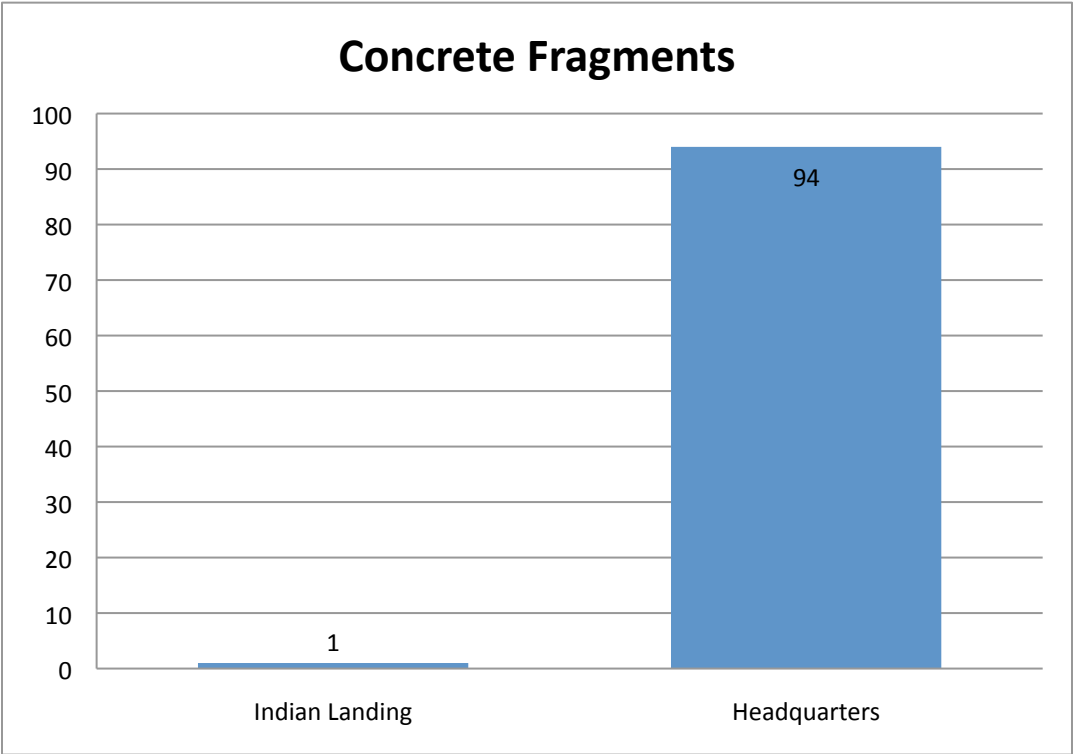


Figure 4



Appendix 3

Figure 5

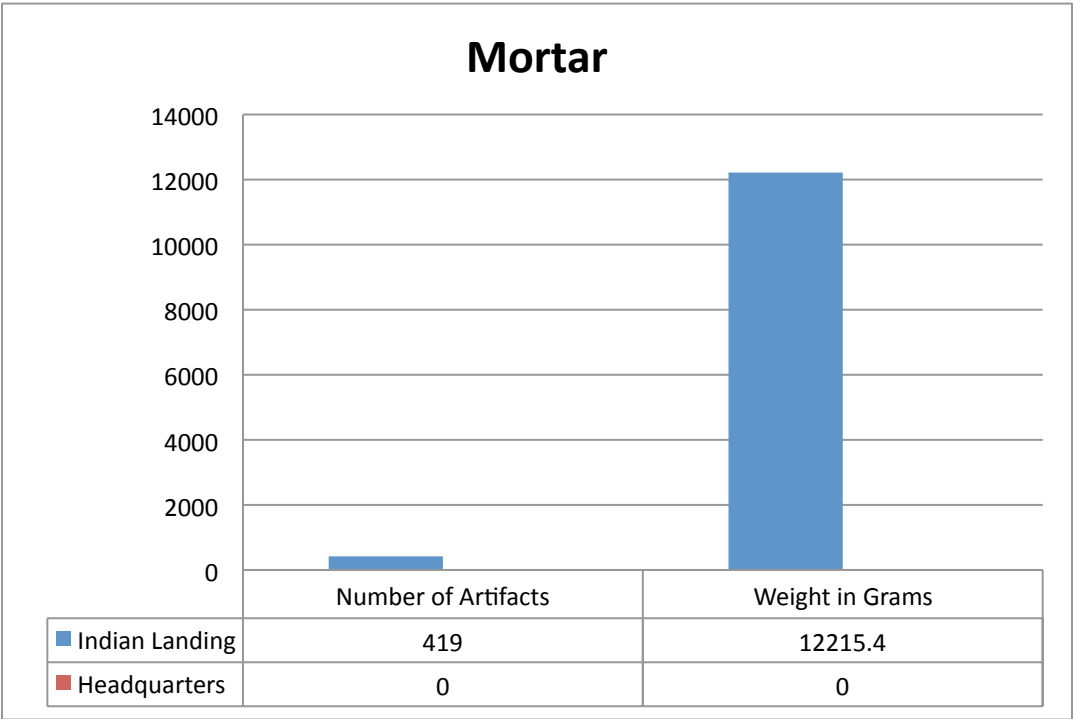
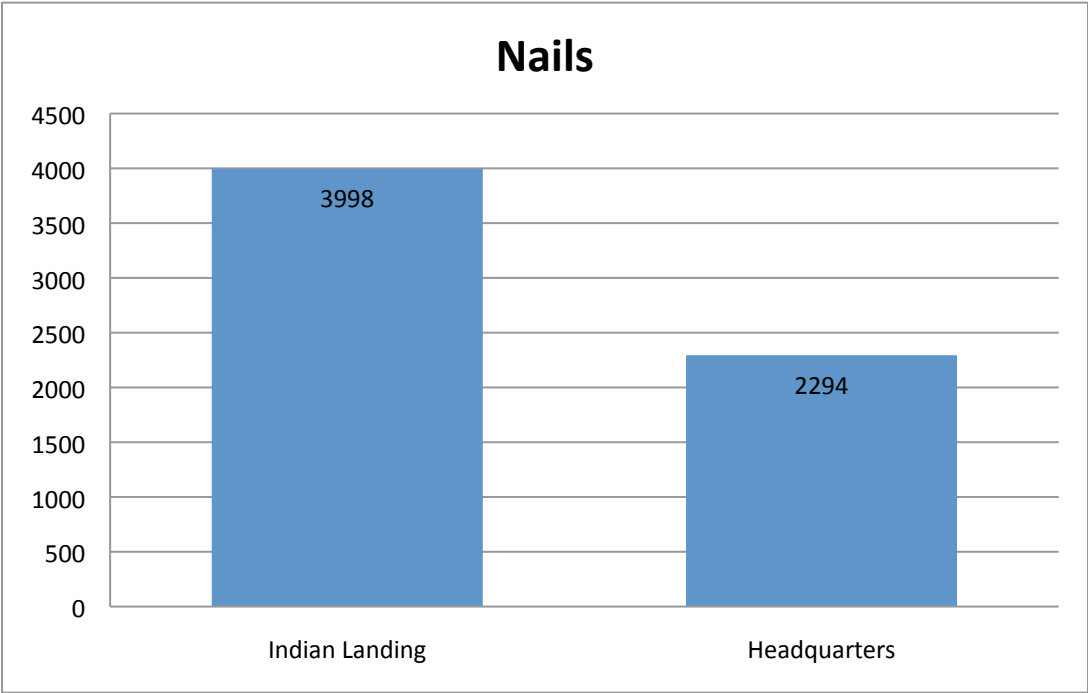


Figure 6



Appendix 4

Figure 7

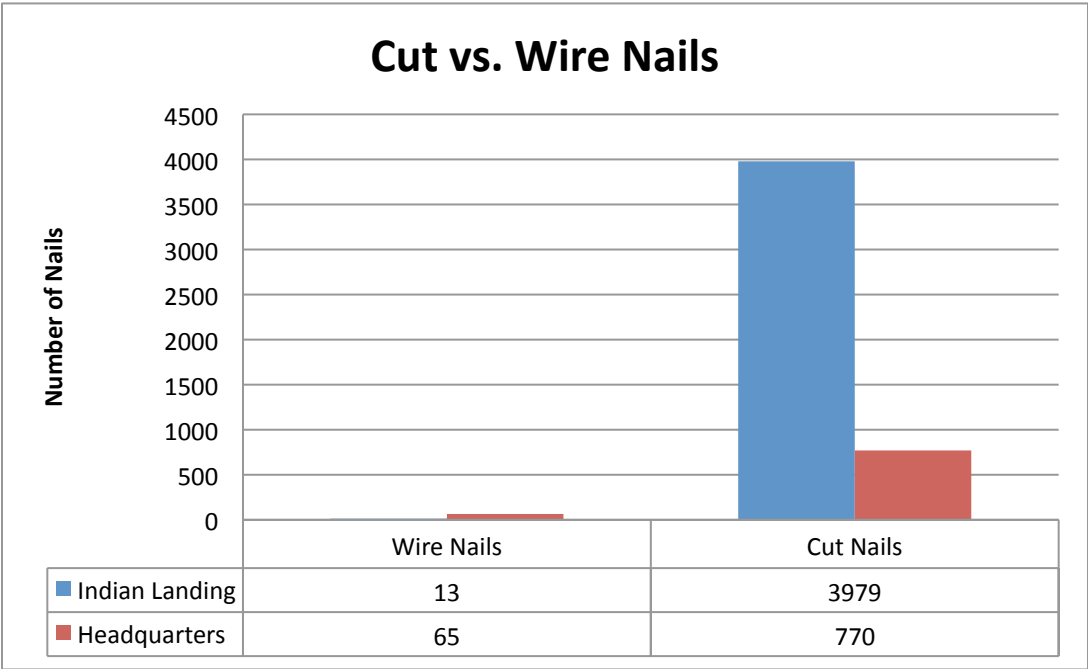


Figure 8



Appendix 5

Figure 9

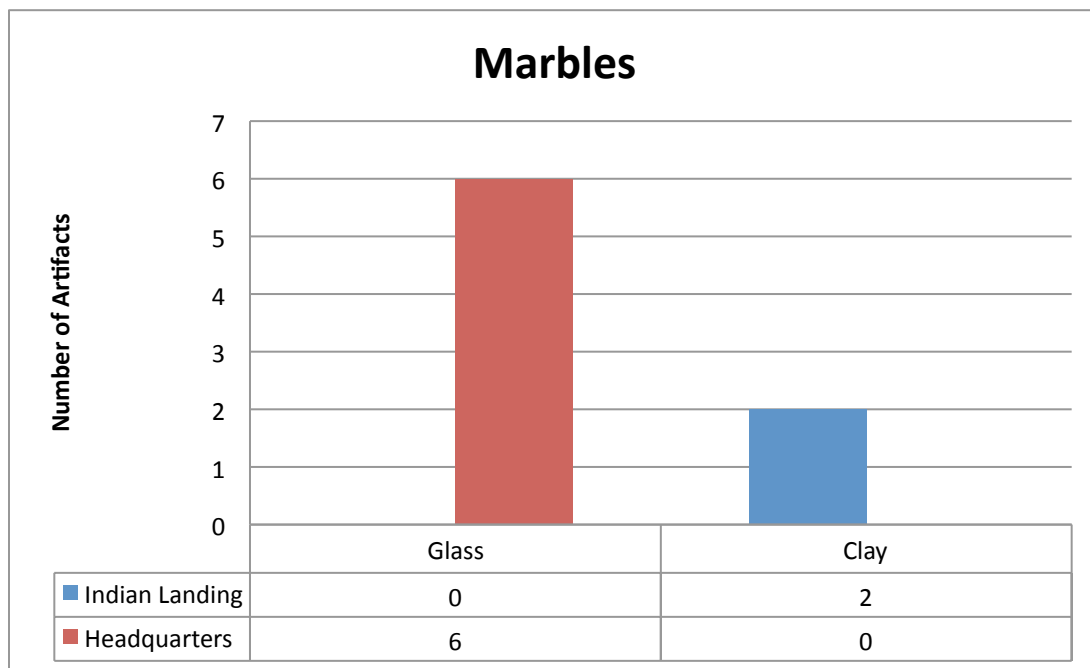
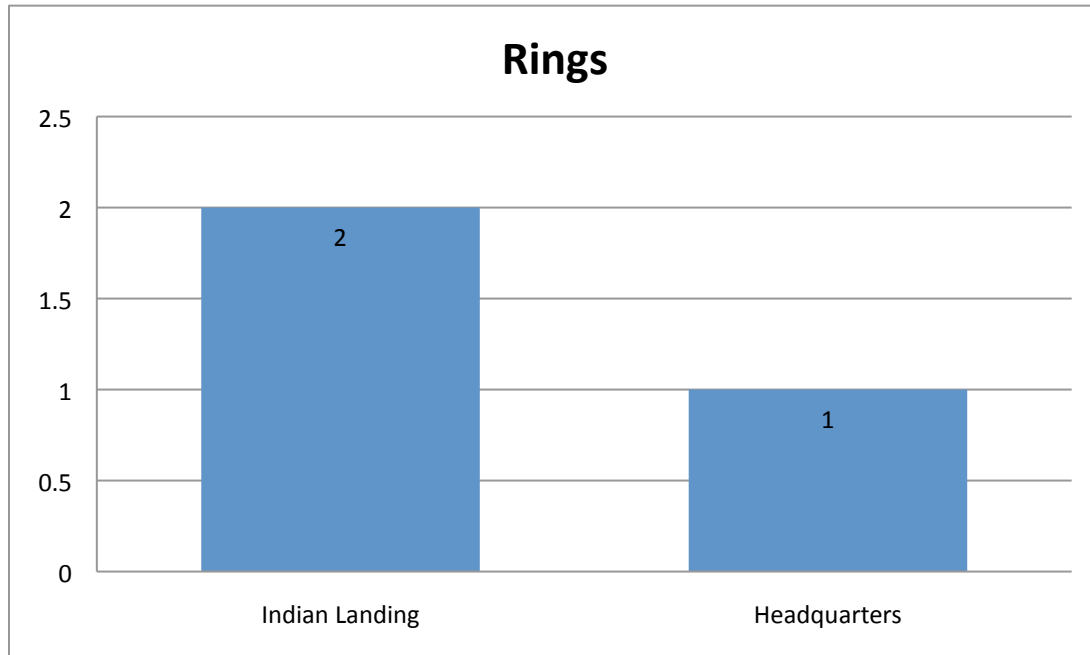


Figure 10



Appendix 6

Figure 11

