CLAY TOBACCO PIPES FROM THE TOM PETERSON SITE (33CT390), CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

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ABSTRACT

The Tom Peterson Pottery (33CT390), one of three closely related reed stem tobacco pipe manufactories located along Big Indian Creek at Point Pleasant, Clermont County, Ohio, is known to have operated from at least 1870 to ca. 1900. In the summer of 1984, six distinct plain elbow pipe styles were recovered from the backfill of unauthorized excavations in the waster dump associated with this pottery, along with fragments of preserve jars, chimney flues, and kiln furniture. Although some of these pipe styles appear distinct from any produced at the well-known Peterson Brothers Pottery (= Kirkpatrick Pottery) on the opposite bank of Big Indian Creek, they are stylistically closely related and some are indistinguishable. Several pipe styles recovered by Murphy (1976) between the Tom Peterson Pottery and a third pipe factory, that of Bainum and (Thomas B.) Peterson, further up Big Indian Creek, are now known to be products of the Bainum and Peterson firm, the Clermont Pottery. No unquestionable products of the Tom Peterson Pottery are yet known from archaeological sites. The materials recovered from the excavations at 33CT390 are deposited at the Ohio Historical Center, Columbus, Ohio. The Historical Society owns the site, in conjunction with the U. S. Grant birthplace, and excavations at the site are not permitted.

INTRODUCTION

The Tom Peterson pottery (33CT390) is one of three potteries located at Point Pleasant, Clermont County, Ohio, known to have produced reed-stem clay tobacco pipes. The best known of these pipe factories, 33CT256, stood on the south bank of Big Indian Creek, immediately southwest of the U. S. Route 52 highway bridge over Big Indian Creek and only a short distance from the confluence of the creek with the Ohio River. Owned consecutively by William P. Lakin (died 1843), Cornwall Kirkpatrick (1849-1853), Nathan S. Davis (1856-1871), and the Peterson Brothers (George, Henry, and James; 1874-1883), this pottery is believed to have produced pipes as early as the Kirkpatrick-period, as the Kirpatricks are known to have manufactured similar pipes at their subsequent establishments in Illinois (Denker 1978). More than 80 distinct pipe styles are known from 33CT256, and many have been described in the literature (Murphy 1976; Sudbury 1979; Thomas and Burnett 1972).

Recent research, primarily in Clermont County deed and tax records, helps clarify the history of the 33CT256 (Peterson and Co.) site. In particular, while Thomas and Burnett (1972:5) report only that the site passed from the Pettersons sometime between 1880 and 1891, being owned by a James W. McKibben in the latter year, Clermont County deed records show that George Peterson sold his interest to John and Samuel Cooper as early as 1876 (Deed Book 103:297), while Henry Peterson sold his interest to the Coopers and to his brother James in June, 1881. Monroe Township tax duplicates last
list Peterson and Co. in 1882. The 1883 volume for Monroe Township could not be located in the County Treasurer's office, and the firm is not listed in 1884. James W. McKibben acquired the site at Sheriff's sale from Samuel Cooper in 1887 (Deed Book 122:140-141). While there is no evidence that McKibben operated a pottery at this site, Williams' Ohio Directory for 1883-1884 does list a "Peterson and Cooper" pottery (1883:436). Pipe production at 33CT256 is believed to have ended ca. 1884.

**TOM PETERSON SITE (33CT390)**

The Tom Peterson Pottery was located on In-lot 28, in the village of Point Pleasant, between Indian Street and Big Indian Creek, only slightly upstream from 33CT256 but on the opposite bank and above the U. S. Route 52 highway bridge. The earliest record of a pottery at this site is the map of Point Pleasant in Lake's 1870 Atlas of Clermont County, Ohio (Figure 1). The lot was then owned by Thomas Peterson, the father of George, Henry, and James Peterson. Although the deed record has not been located, Monroe Township tax duplicates indicate that Thomas Peterson first paid taxes on this lot in 1870, and it seems very probable that the pottery began in that year. The 1870 Federal population schedule lists his occupation as carpenter, however. Also listed are his sons Henry, potter; George, journeyman potter; and James, at school. While it is possible that Henry and George Peterson worked across the creek at Nathan Davis' pottery (Davis is also listed as a potter in the 1870 census, and it is almost certain that he was their uncle by marriage), it is more likely that Henry and George operated the pottery on their father's property. Further, the 1870 Federal census of manufacturers lists "Peterson & Bro." operating a hand pottery, with two men producing "jars, jugs, and crocks" valued at $1000 per year.

On the death of Thomas Peterson, the heirs (including Martha A. Davis, widow of Nathan Davis) sold the lot to James Peterson, who in turn sold it to Olive, widow of George Peterson, in 1887 (Deed Book 121:622). In the meantime, the three Peterson Brothers purchased the Nathan Davis pottery in 1874. All three are listed as potters in the 1880 census, although George was no longer a member of the firm Peterson and Co. and may have been working at the Tom Peterson pottery, which was then owned by James. A perplexing entry in Williams' Ohio Directory for 1888-1889 lists "Peterson & Co." which may refer to 33CT390, for Lake's 1891 Atlas of Clermont County, Ohio lists only H. C. and T. B. Peterson as potters. (Thomas B. was the son of Henry C. Peterson.) Whether Henry and Thomas B. Peterson operated the pottery on In-lot 28 during the period 1881-1891 or whether they were connected with a third pottery, the Clermont pottery, which stood a block east at the present site of the Grant Memorial Church, remains to be determined. Some archaeological evidence, in the form of an amber Windisch-Muhlhauser beer bottle fragment (1866-1903) and particularly a dinner plate fragment with a characteristic Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles back-stamp dating ca. 1885 (Gates and Ormerod 1982:Figure 99a), suggests that the 33CT390 waster may date well into the 1880s. Rist (in Sudbury 1979:183) suggests that the Tom Peterson pottery was last operated by Henry H. Bushman, a son-in-law of Nathan Davis, around 1901. H. H. Bushman is listed as a potter in an 1896/1897 directory (Thomas and Burnett 1972:7), presumably at either the Tom Peterson or the Clermont pottery. Although the 1900 census lists no potters in Point Pleasant, the 1910 schedules list Thomas B. Peterson, "prop. pipe factory," and John L. Bainum, "pipe factory" (E. D. 38:7A); also listed (p. 8A) is Charles Bushman, "pipe factory". These references clearly pertain to Bainum and Peterson's Clermont pottery, which an 1898 factory
inspector's report lists as employing 8 workers over the age of 18 years. At present, the later years of the Tom Peterson pottery (33CT390) remain unclear, as does its relationship with the nearby Clermont pottery. A postcard view of Indian Street probably dating to 1902 shows the front of the small, ramshackle frame building on the Tom Peterson site, but nothing in the photograph suggests that the building was being used as a pottery.

In summary, the Tom Peterson pottery is known to have been active from 1870 to 1874. It may have operated in conjunction with the Peterson and Co. pottery at 33CT256, or it may have been revived by George and/or Henry and Thomas B. Peterson. Its closing date remains uncertain, but it may have lasted until the turn of the century.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT 33CT390

In the summer of 1984, unauthorized digging in the waster dump associated with the Tom Peterson pottery exposed a considerable amount of archaeological material. Robert Genheimer (Miami Purchase Association for Historic Preservation) reported the digging to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, which, in turn, asked the author to check the situation. A sample of waster material was collected and the hole partially filled. Subsequently, it was completely filled by Ed Fuhrman of the Grant Birthplace Museum. The site was again visited with Alan C. Tonetti (Ohio Historic Preservation Office) on 24 March 1985, at which time additional material was recovered in the area between the Tom Peterson waster dump and the Grant Memorial Bridge. The pottery site is on property acquired by the Ohio Historical Society in 1927, and further excavation is not permitted.

The waster sample collected for the Society contains numerous clay pipes, fragments of saggars and other kiln furniture, broken preserve jars, jug fragments, and fragments of chimney flues. Comparison of the sagger and preserve jar fragments with similar artifacts from 33CT256 show minor but distinctive differences (cf. Thomas and Burnett 1972:18 and Murphy 1976:Figure 81). Of more immediate interest are the clay tobacco pipe forms described below. At least five and possibly seven distinct "plain" types can be recognized in the available material.

TOM PETERSON TOBACCO PIPE STYLES

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety A (Figure 2)

Diagnosis. Plain elbow pipe with relatively short bowl, raised ring around edge of stem. No ring around bowl lip. Base of bowl interior with faint sloping, shelf-like ridge and wide (ca. 8 mm diameter), shallow recess. Maximum height, 38-40 mm; bowl diameter, 24 mm; stem diameter, 14-16 mm; bore diameter, 7-8 mm.

Discussion. Murphy (1976) did not recover this style from 33CT256, but Thomas and Burnett (1972:27) illustrate as their PL-6 a virtually indistinguishable pipe. Kevin Connell (Cincinnati, Ohio) reports PL-6 as being a fairly common plain style at 33CT256 and has kindly provided me with specimens from the site. The only noticeable distinction is a slightly smaller bore diameter (5-6 mm) in the 33CT256 specimen; this may not be a consistent difference and, in any case, does not reflect a difference in the pipe mold used, merely a difference in the reamer used to make the pipe stem bore.
Figure 2. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety A.

Figure 3. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety B.
Figure 4. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety C.

Figure 5. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety D.
Figure 6. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety E (upper row) and Variety F (lower row).

Figure 7. Tom Peterson Plain pipes, Variety G (upper left and center); similar style retrieved from Zanesville, Ohio, privy, bowl interior showing a faint shelf or ridge around the base, possibly a product of 33CT256 (upper right); style very similar to Variety G, from 33CT256 (lower right); another similar style from 33CT256 with characteristic internal bowl profile, possibly a Peterson Brothers product (lower center); Murphy’s (1976) Point Pleasant Ringed Elbow, Variety F, a form from 33CT256, lacking stepped interior bowl profile.
Figure 8. Clermont Type III pipe from site of the Clermont Pottery (upper left) and form near the Tom Peterson waster dump (upper right); Point Pleasant Ribbed Elbow, Variety E (lower left) and untyped ribbed elbow form (lower right), both from near the 33CT390 waster dump.

Figure 9. Bowl fragments of Tom Peterson Plain, Variety C 33CT256 and a style similar to Thomas and Burnett’s (1972) PL-11 33CT256 (upper left and upper center); fragment of an undescribed Point Pleasant Idian style 33CT256 with characteristic sepped interior bowl profile resembling Murphy’s (1976) Point Pleasant Punctate, Variety O (Thomas and Burnett’s GD-14) from 33CT390 (lower left) and a specimen from 33CT256 (lower center), both showing the characteristic stepped interior bowl profile; Point Pleasant Punctate, Variety L, from 33CT256, probably a Peterson Brothers product (lower right).
It seems clear that this pipe style was made at both 33CT256 and 33CT390, so that its production may have been limited to the period 1870 - ca. 1875. Regardless, production at 33CT256 probably did not begin until the Petersons acquired the pottery in 1874.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety B (Figure 3)

Diagnosis. Plain elbow pipe with relatively high bowl and short stem, comparatively narrow ring around end of stem; no ring around bowl lip. Base of bowl interior with relatively narrow (ca. 5 mm) and deep recess and a correspondingly more conspicuous shelf around the bowl base. Measurements: maximum length, 40 mm; maximum height, 44 mm; bowl diameter, 25 mm; stem diameter, 14-15 mm; bore diameter, 7-8 mm.

Discussion. This style appears indistinguishable from Thomas and Burnett's PL-7 style from 33CT256, though neither Murphy nor Connell has retrieved examples of the style from 33CT256. Since specimens are not available for direct comparison, Thomas and Burnett do not provide measurements of their pipes, and no scale is included in their photographs, it is possible that minor distinctions between their PL-7 and my Tom Peterson Plain, Variety B exist. Even so, it seems likely that this represents another instance of a mold that the Petersons took with them when they bought the Nathan Davis pottery.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety C (Figure 4)

Diagnosis. Plain elbow pipe with relatively high bowl and short stem, broad, low, indistinct ring around end of stem, and no ring around the bowl lip. Bowl interior as in Variety B.

Discussion. This style is very similar to Tom Peterson Plain, Variety B but has a broader, fainter ring around the stem, a consistently smaller stem bore, and a slightly greater maximum length. It is not known from 33CT256.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety D (Figure 5)

Diagnosis. Equidimensional plain elbow pipe with lower part of the bowl compressed and subangular rather than rounded bowl base; stem relatively high and wide. Ring around bowl lip relatively thick, with a similar ring around the edge of stem; bowl interior with recessed area ca. 9 mm in diameter, producing a distinct shelf 1-2 mm wide. Measurements: maximum length, 41-42 mm; maximum height, 41-42 mm; bowl diameter, 26-28 mm; stem diameter, 15-16 mm; bore diameter, 8-9 mm.

Discussion. Thomas and Burnett's PL-8 from 33CT256 closely resembles this style but has a distinctly larger stem (stem diameter, 16-19 mm), greater maximum length (43-44 mm), and a slightly greater height (41-42 mm). Thomas and Burnett's PL-11 apparently lacks any trace of a ring around the bowl lip and the stem edge. A distinctive reamer used to force the clay out of the bowl seems to have been used on PL-11 pipes, producing a faint, shelf-like, stepped cross-section on the bowl interior, a feature apparently characteristic of all Peterson produced pipes at 33CT390 and 33CT256. On the few PL-11 specimens available, this shelf is rather high on the bowl wall, nearly as high as the top of the stem (see Murphy 1976:Figure 8c). The similar shelf or ridge on the interior of PL-8 bowls (and on Tom Peterson Plain, Variety D bowls) is
considerably lower in the bowl and more distinct. This simply means that differently-shaped reamers were used, and it is not at all certain that the same reamer was consistently used with the same pipe mold.

The stepped interior bowl profile created by a reamer with a peg-like, nipple-like, or bullet-like protuberance at the tip appears to be an innovation introduced by the Petersons and may be used to distinguish their pipes from earlier products at 33CT256. It is not known to occur on either the various ribbed styles found at 33CT256, or on any of the styles known from the Clermont Pottery site. Some, presumably earlier, geometric and anthropomorphic forms from 33CT256 do have this feature, so that it may not actually have originated with the Petersons (or the Petersons may have used earlier molds). The purpose of this minor improvement in pipe-making is obvious, as it permits a deeper bowl, increasing the likelihood that the stem bore will connect with the bowl interior without creating a dangerous thinning of the bowl base by using a bowl reamer of uniformly large diameter. It may also serve to decrease the likelihood of clogging the stem hole with burned tobacco.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety E (Figure 6, upper row)

Diagnosis. Plain equidimensional elbow pipe with lower part of bowl compressed and subangular rather than rounded bowl base; stem relatively high and wide. Comparatively narrow ring around bowl lip, thinner than ring around edge of stem. Shelf around interior base of bowl not well developed. Measurements: maximum length, 41-42 mm; maximum height, 39-42 mm; bowl diameter, 26-27 mm; stem diameter, 14-18 mm; bore diameter, 8-9 mm.

Discussion. This variety can be distinguished from Variety D by virtue of the relatively thin ring surrounding the bowl. There is considerable variation in this feature but it can generally be used to distinguish this form, which is also distinct in having a much less well developed "shelf" around the interior of the bowl base. This variety is known only from 33CT390; it has not yet been found at 33CT256.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety F (Figure 6, lower row)

Diagnosis. Plain equidimensional elbow pipe with lower part of bowl compressed and subangular rather than rounded bowl base; stem relatively high and wide. Ring around stem and bowl lacking, occasionally represented by a very faint incised line below the lip. Prominent "shelf" around interior of bowl base. Measurements: maximum length, 41-42 mm; maximum height 40-41 mm; bowl diameter 25-29 mm; stem diameter, 14-18 mm; bore diameter, 8-9 mm.

Discussion. This and the proceeding two varieties are so nearly identical in size and shape, except in the variations in the ring around the bowl lip and stem edge, that they may represent products of a single mold that has been retooled one or more times. Variety F has a bowl interior with a basal profile identical with that of Tom Peterson Plain, Variety D. Variety F occurs at both 33CT390 and 33CT256 (Connell, personal communication), the specimen in Figure 6, lower right, being from 33CT256.

Tom Peterson Plain, Variety G (Figure 7, upper left and corner)
Diagnosis. Small, plain elbow pipe with slightly flaired stem; no ring around bowl lip or end of stem, though a faint, hair-like raised ridge may sometimes occur near the edge of the stem. Small (ca. 3 mm in diameter) recess in base of the bowl interior. Measurements: maximum length, 36-37 mm; maximum height, 31-32 mm; bowl diameter, 21-23 mm; stem diameter, 14-16 mm; bore diameter, 6-7 mm.

Discussion. At 33CT390, this style was found only in the area immediately adjacent to the U.S. Route 52 highway bridge over Big Indian Creek, considerably downstream from the waster dump that yielded varieties A through F. A nearly indistinguishable form is available from 33CT256, a site which has also yielded a number of rather similar styles, including Murphy's Point Pleasant Ringed Elbow, Variety F (1976:Figure 70; this paper, Figure 6, lower right); Thomas and Burnett's PL-3; and several undescribed forms. Tom Peterson Plain, Variety G is characterized by a small recess in the bottom of the bowl, which must have been produced by a corresponding peg-like reamer. Virtually identical pipes from 33CT256 have a consistently larger (ca. 5-8 mm diameter) recess in the base of the bowl (although they may well have been made from the same mold) and at least one fragmentary specimen appears indistinguishable from the 33CT390 specimens.

DISCUSSION

The relative abundance of the four plain pipe styles recognized at 33CT390 is given in Table 1. Data for Variety D may also include some specimens of Varieties E and F, which were not distinguished in the original analysis. Comparable plain pipes from archaeological sites are difficult to assess without direct comparison, and no undoubted products of the Tom Peterson pottery have been identified in the literature. A pipe from the Queensgate II project (Cinadr and Genheimer 1983) is similar to Variety D but appears to be distinct. A pipe fragment recovered from a Zanesville privy by Bruce Heistand (personal communication; Figure 6, upper right) closely resembles Tom Peterson Plain, Variety G but has a shorter, narrower stem and a distinctive internal bowl profile.

TABLE 1. RELATIVE ABUNDANCE OF PLAIN PIPE STYLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pipe Style</th>
<th>Number Recovered</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>56.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>22.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Two pipe styles reported by Murphy (1976:26) from the Tom Peterson pottery (Point Pleasant Ringed Elbow, Variety E, and Point Pleasant Diamond Stamped Elbow) were found just upstream from 33CT390, nearly opposite the Grant Birthplace. Sudbury (1979:184) was the first to suggest that these might actually be products of the Clermont Pottery. Data provided by Rist (1983) greatly strengthen this surmise, and the recent discovery of Diamond Stamped Elbow pipe fragments at the Clermont site (immediately
behind the Grant Memorial Church) by Murphy now make this certain. Connell (personal communication) has also found fragments of this style, of Murphy's Point Pleasant Ribbed Elbow, Variety E, as well as stem fragments of at least one plain form similar to those styles from 33CT390, behind the Grant Church. Immediately across Back Street (west side), numerous fragments of Point Pleasant Diamond Stamped Elbow and Point Pleasant, Variety E occur, rather conclusively demonstrating that these styles were made at the Clermont Pottery.

Recovered from the area between the 33CT390 waster dump and the Route 52 highway bridge, in addition to approximately half a dozen specimens of Tom Peterson Plain, Variety G, were one stem and a nearly complete specimen of a Diamond Stamped Elbow pipe (Rist's Clermont Type III), the nearly complete specimen being illustrated in Figure 8 (upper right), as well as two fragments of Murphy's (1976) Point Pleasant Ribbed Elbow, Variety E, (Figure 8, lower left) and a previously undescribed ribbed form (Figure 8, lower right). In view of the rarity of these styles in this area between Route 52 and the 33CT390 waster dump, an area badly disturbed by excavations and earth moving connected with a recent bridge replacement, it is impossible to determine whether these are stray finds, possibly washed downstream from the Clermont Pottery site (or from a related waster dump), or whether these forms were produced at the Tom Peterson Pottery. Careful excavation at 33CT390 and the adjoining area may determine this point.

Also found in the area between 33CT390 and the Route 52 highway bridge is the fragmentary punctate stem illustrated in Figure 9, lower left. This example closely resembles Point Pleasant Punctate, Variety 0 (Thomas and Burnett GD-14), a slightly smaller size possibly due to shrinkage during firing being the only noticeable difference in the few available specimens. The interior of the bowl has a well developed shelf and a small, deep recess (Figure 9, lower center). If this is not a stray specimen from 33CT256 that has inadvertently found its way to 33CT390, then it probably represents another style produced at both factories.

CONCLUSIONS

Plain reed stem tobacco pipes recovered from the Tom Peterson Pottery site (33CT390) are conservatively dated at 1870 to ca. 1885 and, for the most part, appear to be indistinguishable from very similar pipes (some possibly made from the same molds) found at 33CT256 and dating from 1874 to ca. 1885. It is possible that Tom Peterson Plain pipe styles were also produced by the later Clermont Pottery, ca. 1895, but it remains to be seen how distinctive these forms are. Future research goals include recovery of a larger sample of pipe waster material from both the Clermont Pottery and the Tom Peterson site, detailed comparison of the Tom Peterson styles with these and with a larger sample from 33CT256, and attempts to refine the dates for tobacco pipe manufacturing at these sites.

All of the styles from the waster dump proper (33CT390), as well as Tom Peterson Plain, Variety G, are distinguished by a relatively prominent shelf around the interior of the bowl and a related recess in the base of the bowl. This feature occurs in pipes at 33CT256, including some geometric and anthropomorphic forms (such as the undescribed Point Pleasant Indian Variety illustrated in Figure 9, upper right) and is believed to relate to the Peterson Brothers period of production at 33CT256.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Robert Genhelmer (Miami Purchase Association for Historic Preservation) as well as Franco Ruffini and Alan Tonetti (Ohio Historic Preservation Office) for calling to my attention the recent activity at 33CT390. Kevin Connell (Cincinnati, Ohio) has been extremely helpful in providing access to his collections from both 33CT256 and 33CT390, and this paper has benefited greatly from discussions of Point Pleasant pottery with him. James Addington (Ohio Department of Transportation) provided background on recent ODOT activities at the U.S. Route 52 highway bridge replacement site and also provided the initial contact with Kevin Connell. As in the past, Byron Sudbury (Ponca City, Oklahoma) has provided many useful ideas and considerable encouragement. James F. Morton (Columbus, Ohio) has kindly furnished the illustrations for this paper.

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