

**Shoto Clay - Wares from the  
Lake River Ceramics Horizon  
of Southwest Washington State**

**Part 2 - Club Heads**

**David A. Heath  
2011**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT _____	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS _____	4
INTRODUCTION _____	4
CLUB HEADS _____	5
BRIEF DISCUSSION OF SITES _____	6
PUBLIC COLLECTIONS _____	7
Club Heads - Double Head _____	8
Club Heads - Single Head _____	13
Clarifications of Terms _____	34
References _____	35
Notes _____	36

**Shoto Clay - Wares from the  
Lake River Ceramics Horizon  
of South Washington State**

**Part 2 - Club Heads**

**David A. Heath**

**ABSTRACT**

This paper is the second of several that have been proposed with an aim of contributing to the body of knowledge related to the subject of ceramic wares, which have been recovered from the Lower Columbia River region in Southwest Washington State and are commonly referred to as Shoto Clay or Lake River Ceramics. Previous research and reporting on this subject has been limited due to a lack of professionally lead excavations and the limited availability of wares from which scientific study might be made.

The author, over a span of several years, has attempted to locate privately held collections that contain these wares with a goal of photographing and obtaining basic data. Through various sources and informants, several local area collections were identified. These collections ranged in size but most were limited to only few examples. When permission could be obtained, photographs, measurements and associated information was collected.

These efforts have resulted in identifying several hundred specimens, many of which had not been previously documented. In some instances, previously unknown ware types were additionally identified. This and future papers will serve as a presentation of the author's findings.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I must give an enormous thanks to the numerous individuals, who allowed access to their privately held collections. Without the forbearance and cooperation of these individuals, this and other prepared papers would not have been possible. They gave freely, allowing access to their homes and contributed hours of their time to answer questions during telephone interviews. Their cooperation and support cannot be underestimated nor overlooked.

Dr. Alison Stenger, the Director of Research for the Institute for Archaeological Studies in Portland, openly shared and discussed her research. Countless numbers of corresponds were exchanged, sharing information and ideas, in a manner that was mutually beneficial and in the spirit of cooperation. It was due in large part to Dr. Stenger's encouragement that this and other prepared papers were ultimately prepared and shared.

Kenneth Matsen, joint author of "Shoto Clay: Figurines and Forms from the Lower Columbia," who gave of his time and provided valuable information about Lake River during the 1950s-1960s. He shared his original research notes and photographs; along with those that had been prepared by Robert Slocum. Mr. Matsen is a kindly gentleman whom I'm proud to call a friend.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second of several papers that will be prepared in the near future and are designed to contribute materially to the subject of Shoto Clay. Out of respect for the work performed by Robert Slocum and Kenneth Matsen; and due to familiarity by the general public, the term Shoto Clay will be referenced, but know that Lake River Ceramics can be interchangeably used. Photographic evidence and basic recorded information was prepared based on specific ware type classifications that have been identified with the Lake River Ceramics Horizon. These include bowls, figurines, pipes, gaming devices, items of personal adornment and miscellaneous wares.

It is the author's intent to avoid offering any theories about who made these wares or why these wares were made. The information will stand alone and it will be up to others to develop their own ideas about the "Who and Why." The author is not a trained archaeologist or anthropologist. So please forgive any omissions and oversights that will surely be noticed. It is hoped the information provided with these papers will have some informational value and benefit the general public and professional communities. The author is particularly interested in providing material support to any student who might have an interest in pursuing the study of these ceramic wares. The author will be happy to share any images and research information with researchers, provided the author's materials are not used for personal monetary gains and the author is provided with a copy of the finished work.

## CLUB HEADS

This paper discusses a new ware type classification referred to as a Club Head. This ware type was not previously reported by Slocum - Matsen or Stenger and suggests these researchers may not have been aware of such items. The author hopes future researchers will expand on their study.

In reviewing this ware type, two possible uses are suggested. The first use is the item may have functioned as a net weight. This suggestion was based on the ware's similarities with banded net weights, where both are girdled transversally by a groove. The author is inclined to think these wares would not have functioned well for such a purpose, but perhaps future research will prove otherwise. The author is inclined to suggest the actual use may have been as a Club Head. All of these wares are effigy items and it is likely they were not practical for use as an actual weapon. Rather, it would seem more plausible that they may have functioned as a small hand-held device known as a Dance Wand or a long Staff. Based on a review of the privately held collections that formed this study, the known total inventory for Club Heads currently stands at 15 individual specimens. The limited numbers suggests this ware may be a relatively rare item.

Club Heads are solid and formed by hand molding a homogeneous clay paste mixture. The clay paste contains a naturally occurring mixture of fine-grained

sands and flecks of mica. The body of this ware type is extremely thick in comparison with other classified Shoto Clay wares and may be representative of some of the largest wares ever produced during the Lake River Ceramic Horizon.

Two distinct forms were identified, the "Single Head" and the "Double Head." The Single Club Head is formed such that it follows a distinctly conical shape. The larger distal end features either an anthropomorphic or a zoomorphic face. In some instances, the face appears to feature both human and animal characteristics. The proximal end terminates in a blunt-end point. The Double Club Head form features two faces, either anthropomorphic or zoomorphic - a face being located at each end of the ware. In some instances, the faces appear to feature both human and animal characteristics. These faces may be of equal or varying sizes. In some instances, the faces may be mirror images, in other instances they are completely different representations. Both club-head forms are girdled transversally by a single, deep groove that would serve to receive cordage or sinew binding used in securing the club-head to a shaft. This groove will often feature a small circular pit or recess located on the top (or back) of the ware. Inventory: N = 15, Single Head form = 7, Double Head form = 8

The methods used to create decorative motifs are consistent with those that have been identified with other classified Shoto Clay wares. These include the use of incising, punctates, impressions and appliqué,

absent was the use of shell inlay. Applied coloring methods appear to have been limited to smudging. The completed ceramic was likely placed in the smoky part of the fire, allowing soot to be deposited on to the surface of the ware. Several specimens demonstrate that care was used to ensure an even distribution during the smudging process. The Single Head forms demonstrated a higher frequency of having been colored by smudging.

### **BRIEF DISCUSSION OF SITES**

Controlled archaeological investigations have been conducted at several sites along the upper stretches of Lake River. These sites are located on privately owned lands and several of the landowners reportedly operated "lease to dig" options with local area collectors between the 1940s and early 1970s (Matsen, comm.). These sites include Herzog (45CL11), Felida Moorage (45CL12) and Duck Lake (45CL79).

Excavations at the Herzog site were obtained by lease and conducted by the Oregon Archaeological Society between 1964 and 1966 (Slocum, Matsen, 1968). At Herzog, OAS concentrated on excavating several rectangular shaped house depressions. Excavations at Felida Moorage were conducted under the direction of Mr. Chuck Hibbs in 1984-85 (Stenger, comm.). This excavation focused on several small excavation units located throughout the Felida Moorage site. Excavations at the Duck Lake site was

conducted under the direction of Bob Slocum and Ken Matsen. The results of this excavation suggest the site was used as a seasonal hunting camp.

The Herzog and Felida Moorage excavations turned-up a small number of ceramic wares, much of it fragmentary. These fragments were mainly from elongated -cylindrical, -rectangular and tabular figurines. Other fragments found were less identifiable due to a lack of complete wares from which comparisons could be made. The excavation targets at each of these sites may have limited the excavator's ability to encounter complete specimens. Several, individual informants have indicated that the occupation areas with in the village site(s) was not where the majority of complete specimens would be found. Rather, complete specimens were found (often as a cache) near the river's edge. Annual flooding at Lake River, undercuts the river's banks, deflating archaeological deposits and exposing the wares.

Artifact assemblages collected from these sites are consistent with artifacts assemblages identified for the Portland Basin's Multnomah Phase defined by Dr. Richard Pettigrew (1981). These include notched and single perforated net weights; stone pestles and mauls; small narrow-necked projectile points; bone and antler tools such as perforators, wedges, and root digger handles; hammer stones; and an abundance of fire cracked rock.

A review of privately held collections suggests that Herzog was likely the epicenter for the production of Shoto Clay wares. At this time, only Herzog has produced a complete inventory of all classified wares types. Ceramics wares recovered from adjacent sites are similar, but the number of classified ware types is not fully represented and the number of individual specimens is reduced. In summary, the farther away a site is from the Herzog, the results suggest there is a decrease in the number of ceramic wares recovered. Interviews and inventories suggest that Green Lake may have been another important ceramic producing site. Unfortunately, little has been written about the site at Green Lake and reportedly, little of the site has remained untouched (Strong, 1959).

It should be noted that Shoto Clay wares have been recovered from Sauvie Island, Oregon. The area that appears to contain the greatest concentration of ceramics is along the northern most section of Gilbert River near Oak Island. It was also reported the Oak Island contained a ceramic maker's site (Stenger, 2009). The author has only documented incomplete examples as having come from this area.

## **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Public collections are located at two regional locations. The first collection is located at the Clark County Historical Museum in Vancouver Washington. The second collection is located at the Burke Museum in Seattle Washington. At last check, neither museum had their wares on public display.

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC281



Side View

Top View

Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 115 mm

Width: 82 mm

Height: 77 mm

Features incised lines, molded impressions, finger prints, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is rounded, full groove.



## Club Heads - Double Head



RC282



Side View



Top View

Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 129 mm

Width: 83 mm

Height: 77 mm

Features incised lines, molded impressions, fingernail impressions on the bottom, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is rounded, full groove.

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC284



Side View



Top View

Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 93 mm

Width: 46 mm

Height: 43 mm

Features incised lines, molded impressions, mica flakes, appliqué eyes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC290



Side View

Top View

Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 120 mm

Width: 72 mm

Height: 61 mm

Features incised lines, molded impressions, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, the bottom is flat, full groove.

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC291

Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 105 mm

Width: 48 mm

Height: 39 mm

Features incised lines, impressions, molded impressions, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

# Club Heads - Double Head



RC291

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC292



## Club Heads - Double Head



RC292



Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 151 mm

Width: 71 mm

Height: 54 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is flat, full groove.

## Club Heads - Double Head



RC295





## Club Heads - Double Head



RC295



Club Head, Double Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 110 mm

Width: 46 mm

Height: 40 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC283

Club Head, Single Head (Zoomorphic Bear or Bat)

Length: 140 mm

Width: 48 mm

Height: 51 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC283



## Club Heads - Single Head



RC285

Club Head, Single Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 138 mm

Width: 44 mm

Height: 48 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, appliqué, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

# Club Heads - Single Head



RC285



## Club Heads - Single Head



RC286

Club Head, Single Head (Anthropomorphic - Skull)

Length: 95 mm

Width: 44 mm

Height: 46 mm

Features incised lines, impressions, molded impression, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC286

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC287

Club Head, Single Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 100 mm

Width: 53 mm

Height: 52 mm

Features impressions, sculpted brow and nose, punctates, appliqué mouth, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, the bottom is rounded to cupped, 3/4 groove.



## Club Heads - Single Head



RC287

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC288

Club Head, Single Head (Anthropomorphic)

Length: 95 mm

Width: 44 mm

Height: 46 mm

Features incised lines, molded impressions, molded nose, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC288

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC289

Club Head, Single Head (Anthro-zoomorphic - Owl with human characteristics)

Length: 143 mm

Width: 65 mm

Height: 58 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, appliqué eyes, molded impressions, molded nose, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC289

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC293

Club Head, Single Head (Anthro-zoomorphic - Turtle with human characteristics)

Length: 146 mm

Width: 49 mm

Height: 46 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, molded nose, mica flakes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove, the sides feature small decorative motifs suggestive of claws.

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC293

## Club Heads - Single Head



RC294

Club Head, Single Head (Anthro-zoomorphic - Owl with human characteristics)

Length: 121 mm

Width: 52 mm

Height: 47 mm

Features incised lines, punctates, molded impressions, molded nose, mica flakes, appliqué eyes, an applied slip (or Burnished) finish, fire clouding, smudge coloring, the bottom is flat, 3/4 groove, the sides feature small decorative motifs suggestive of wings.



## Club Heads - Single Head



RC294



## Clarifications of Terms

**Burnished Finish** appears on many of the ceramics and often gives the ware a polished appearance. Some of these burnishing is very fine and prevents water absorption. There has been some speculation that perhaps some form of applied treatment was added to the ware surface. This has yet to be confirmed and a point of future research.

**Clay Paste** used to construct these wares appears to be from local sources located on Lake River. Analysis indicates tempers or fillers were not added to the clay paste prior to manufacture. The paste characteristics are uniform, highly plastic and homogeneous, often containing naturally occurring opening materials such as fine-grained sands and mica flecks.

**Fire Clouding** is a term used to describe deposited carbon on the ceramics surface. This typically occurs during the firing process and may suggest the ceramic was in contact with the smoky part of the flame or incompletely burnt fuel source.

**Grey Slip Finish** appears on many of the ceramics and often mutes the decorative motifs. The appearance suggests a slurry type clay mixture that was rubbed over the surface of the ware.

**Lake River Ceramics** is a term put forth by Dr. Alison Stenger of the Institute for Archaeological Studies, Portland Oregon (Stenger, 2002). This term has gained acceptance in the archaeological community.

**Shoto Clay** was the name first applied to the ceramic wares found at Lake River by Robert Slocum and Kenneth Matsen (1968). This is the term most commonly used by those who maintain privately held collections. Ken confirmed the term, “Shoto Clay,” was not intended to say the Shoto peoples made these wares (comm., 2008). Rather, it was intended as a location reference that directly relates to Lewis and Clark’s historically recorded observation of the people who occupied the upper stretches of Lake River in 1806.

**Smudging** is a coloring technique used to blacken the ceramic ware. This is typically done by exposing the finished ware to the smoky part of the flame, not to be confused with fire clouding.

## References

- Heath, David  
2004 to Current Personal Research Notes, unpublished.
- 2009 Prehistoric Ceramic Wares From The Lower Columbia River, unpublished.
- Hoffarber, Ray  
1969 Felida Site (CL6), Screenings, Oregon Archaeological Society, Vol. 18(9) and Vol. 18(10)
- Matsen, Kenneth  
1966 Clay Artifacts, Screenings, Oregon Archaeological Society, Vol. 15(7)
- 2008 to current - Personal Communications.
- Osborne, Douglas  
1957 Pottery in the Northwest, American Antiquity, Vol. 23(1).
- Pettigrew, Richard M.  
1981 A Prehistoric Culture Sequence in the Portland Basin of the Lower Columbia Valley, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers, No. 22
- Slocum, Robert  
1968 Lower Columbia River Figurines - A possible Cultural Indicator For The Northwest, PSU, Prehistory of the Northwest, Anthro. 407, Dr. Thomas M. Newman
- Slocum, Robert; Matsen, Kenneth  
1968 Shoto Clay, A Description of Clay Artifacts From The Herzog Site (45-CL-4) In the Lower Columbia Region, Oregon Archaeological Society, No. 4
- 1972 Duck Lake - Archaeological Site Report 45-CL6A), Oregon Archaeological Society, No. 6
- Stenger, Alison T.  
1990 Japanese Influenced Ceramics in Pre-contact Washington ... New World Figurine Project 1: 111-122
- 2002 Prehistoric Ceramics From Southwest Washington, Screenings, Oregon Archaeological Society, Vol. 51 (7)
- 2008 to current - Personal Communications.
- 2009 A Vanished People - The Lake River Ceramic Makers, Institute for Archaeological Studies, Portland Oregon
- Strong, Emory  
1959 Stone Age on the Columbia River, Binforde and Mort Publishers
- Wilbert, Claire T.  
2010 Confronting Unprovenanced Collections: A Case Study Of Lake River Ceramics From The Columbia River Region Of The Northwest Coast, Scripps College, Undergraduate Program, Prof. Chen

# NOTES

