GLOBALIZATION

New Iterations of Old Patterns of Change

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IN OUR MODERN WORLD of transnational corporations and debates about whether global markets improve or detract from our lives and those of people in developing countries, it is hard to see history and archaeology's relevance. How does a modern tennis shoe—manufactured in China, India, or Brazil and marketed across the United States, Canada, and Western Europe—compare with a piece of pottery, a clay pipe, or an ornate button found at Fort Vancouver? The rate and pace of modern change seem so rapid and immediate that discussions of the fate of nations, world economies, and global connectedness seem far removed from the architecture, clothing, and speech of history. Nevertheless, globalization, related to the movement of people, products, industrial production, and ideas, has a long history. Our understanding of migration patterns, the effects of new products, and the modern world market cannot be understood without reference to the past two hundred years of change.

Of course, people were moving around the world long before written history. In the historic period, companies like the Hudson's Bay Company and the British East India Company expanded deep into contested territories, their motive being trade and the great profits that could be made from natural resources. There are many ways to define globalization, but here we look at it in terms of the past. The following characterization by Giddens is apt for our purposes: globalization is

the increase of social relationships worldwide; these relationships link distant places in such a way that activities in each place are shaped by events occurring elsewhere.

From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, the interaction between local and regional settlements and their far-flung administrative centers was part of the story of globalization. In the case of Fort Vancouver, the fort itself was the regional headquarters of a company administered from England—17,000 nautical miles away. At Fort Vancouver, we have uncovered objects from around the world. Stoneware jars from England and China; decorative tablewares from England, France, China, and Japan; English brick; Hawaiian coral (used to make mortar); even buttons made in England for a Haitian King. There are many ways to consider these objects. Some artifacts represent early capitalism and the imposition—both overt and unintentional—of colonial values. Others represent the spread of indigenous plants and traditions from the New World to the Old early in the colonization of the Americas.

Fort Vancouver was a hub of activity, a place where people from Hawaii, Portugal, Scotland, and England mingled with Métis and French-Canadians and with Indians from diverse tribes. Often the men employed by the Company were married to local women, a tradition that had persisted since the early days of the fur trade. Consider walking through this crowd, the ways people might be dressed, the things they would be carrying, and so on. Consider that most of the trade goods available in the area were from the Hudson's Bay Company stores. The people of the fort distinguished themselves from each other through their use of what are now artifacts in addition to the types of objects they possessed. The impact of this input of global products and ideas was tremendous, on both the way of life of indigenous people and those from faraway places.

The arrival of missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman heralded an influx of Americans to the Pacific Northwest, bedraggled survivors of the Oregon Trail who were often near starving and running out of supplies. Though the land claim question (the American or British ownership of the region) had yet to be settled and the Company could not stop immigrants from coming, the Hudson's Bay Company

officially discouraged any aid to these immigrants. John McLoughlin's assistance to the settlers was controversial. The tensions between nations over an area that had been dominated by a transnational company were played out in a colonial drama that was directed by the region's natural resources, its remoteness, and the technology and cultures of the nineteenth century.

As Americans took over the area, they first traded with the Hudson's Bay Company, but eventually bought goods from an array of trading partners. During the U.S. Army period, Japanese pottery became common as the Japanese market was opened to the West. Ceramics in general came from a diversifying range of sources—many representing new American-made wares.

After the Hudson's Bay Company moved to British Columbia, Fort Vancouver began to reflect a tendency toward U.S. trade protectionism that was ascendant at the time. Artifacts of U.S. manufacture are more prevalent in late nineteenth and early twentieth century contexts, illustrating the tendency for global trade regimes to wax and wane as individual nations decide to limit international trade in order to give a boost to their own (often fledgling) industries. Whether the present form of globalization is a new phenomena or merely represents the newest iteration of an old pattern remains to be seen. Aspects of the processes of the global shift of the world economy, reflected in modern conceptions of globalization, are also seen in many of the historical objects recovered from Fort Vancouver.

Clay Tobacco Pipe
FOVA 15003 (4.5 cm H × 2.25 cm W)

Stone Tobacco Pipe
FOVA 694 (3.5 cm H × 5 cm W × 1.5 cm D)

TOBACCO PIPES

Tobacco pipes are interesting because they represent two distinct threads of culture associated with the smoking of tobacco. Pipes made in England and Scotland litter the site. These white clay pipes were cheap and disposable, and according to many contemporary writers, smoking was very popular here. Dunn, for example, wrote of Fort Vancouver: "The voyageur and the trapper, who have traversed thousands of miles through wild and unfrequented regions; and the mariner, who has circumnavigated the globe, may be found grouped together, smoking, joking, singing, and story telling; and in every way banishing *dull care* till the period of their again setting out for their respective destinations arrive." We also have carved stone pipes; this pipe is of Indian origin. While this pipe is also for smoking tobacco, it is probable that it was used quite differently than the imported clay pipes. Dunn commented on the smoking habits of the Indians of the lower Columbia, indicating that "smoking rites precede every matter of great importance; and sometimes they are politic." The carved stone pipes found at Fort Vancouver were probably not disposable in the same way as the clay pipes, and may have been associated with ceremonial uses rather than casual tobacco smoking.

Clay Tobacco Pipe
FOVA 2009 (14 cm L × .5 cm DIAM (stem),
10 cm L × 3.5 cm DIAM. (bowl section)

BRITISH WILLOW PLATE
& CHINESE "WILLOW" PLATE

This popular blue and white pattern (bottom) is often mistaken for a Chinese-produced item like this top example. In fact, it was produced in Staffordshire, England. The Staffordshire potteries used transferprinted patterns on relatively cheap earthenwares to produce affordable copies of previously unaffordable luxuries. The sale of such products in the Pacific Northwest during the mid 1800s represents the movement of a design aesthetic from China through Europe and into the American frontier.

Chinese "Willow" Plate
FOVA 317 (3 cm H × 22.5 cm W × 18.5 cm D)

British Willow Plate
FOVA 1900 (3.5 cm H × 25 cm DIAM.)

Tea Cup
FOVA 322 (6.5 cm H × 10.5 cm DIAM.)

Saucer
FOVA 36099 (3.5 cm H × 17.5 cm DIAM.)

TEA CUP & SAUCER

Lieutenant Charles Wilkes reported that in 1841, "Towards sunset, tea-time arrived, and we obeyed the summons of the bell, when we were introduced to several of the gentlemen of the establishment; we met in a large hall, with a long table spread with an abundance of good fare." Tea drinking was a popular activity at Fort Vancouver, not just among the elite but also among the people of the village. This teacup represents both the spread of Asian form and design to the West and the globalization of the custom of drinking tea. While tea drinking dates back over five thousand years in China, it is relatively new to the rest of the world. Tea drinking began in Europe during the 1600s, when tea was very rare and expensive, much like Chinese porcelain. Portuguese and Dutch companies were the earliest tea traders. The British East India Company did not capitalize on tea's popularity until the mid-1700s. By forcing the production of opium in India in order to exchange it for tea in China—the trilateral trade system—the East India Company saved itself from having to exchange coin for tea, thus making its business extremely profitable. The tea-for-opium trade eventually led to the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century, and to the East India Company's monopoly on the tea trade. A teacup from Fort Vancouver therefore is tied to an immense global process that changed the Northwest as it changed the world.

CORAL & ENGLISH BRICK WITH CORAL MORTAR

These two artifacts exemplify globalization at Fort Vancouver. The coral is from Hawaii and was used to make mortar for the brick Powder Magazine and chimneys of the Hudson's Bay Company buildings. This brick was made in England. Together, these two objects represent the long sea journey of supplies from London to Vancouver. George Simpson wrote about the other Hawaiian import, human labor, when he visited the islands in 1841: "About a thousand males in the very prime of life are estimated annually to leave the islands, some going to California, others to the Columbia, and many on long and dangerous voyages, particularly in whaling vessels, while a number of them are said to be permanently lost to their country, either dying during their engagements, or settling in other parts of the world."

English Brick with Coral Mortar
FOVA 7833 (11.5 cm H × 17 cm W × 7.5 cm D)

Coral
FOVA 9879 (10 cm H × 19 cm W × 14 cm D)

CHINESE & JAPANESE PORCELAIN

These beautiful porcelain objects represent two different eras of Asian imports at Fort Vancouver. The object on the bottom is a Japanese porcelain teapot recovered from a former pond in the village area that became a trash dump for the U.S. Army. The object on the top is a Chinese Ginger Jar bearing design themes similar to those seen on modern Chinese imports as well as Spode transfer-printed wares. Pots like these have been produced in China for hundreds of years, which makes dating such objects challenging unless they appear in a context with finite dates, such as at Fort Vancouver. These ceramics illustrate the way trade and trading partners change according to prevailing governments' foreign policy.

Chinese Ginger Jar
FOVA 32826 (16 cm H × 15 cm DIAM.)

Japanese Teapot
FOVA 21896 (11.5 cm H × 14 cm W × 19 cm D)

PHOENIX BUTTONS

These uniform buttons are interesting international artifacts. They were made in England for King Christophe of Haiti. After Christophe's suicide in 1820, these buttons were put on the open market and many ended up in the northwestern United States, particularly at fur trade and Indian sites along the Columbia River. Emory Strong hypothesized that they entered the lower Columbia River in the possession of Nathanial Wyeth, an American trader who in 1832 and 1834 challenged the Hudson's Bay Company's dominance in the fur trade. McLoughlin wrote: "We opposed him [Wyeth] as much as was Necessary. We had and still have Mr. Ermatinger in the Flat head Country and Mr. McKay in the Snake Country and they opposed our opponents so Effectually that they are Receding from us...we may be certain Wyeths Losses are Great, and though he still keeps up Fort Hall yet he has very few Goods." McLoughlin later bought out Wyeth's stock of goods and purchased Fort Hall for the Hudson's Bay Company. While Wyeth's American venture failed, these buttons may provide a tangible record of his attempt as well as a tie to global political events.

Phoenix Buttons
FOVA 10930 (1.5 cm DIAM.), 10931 (1 cm H × 1.5 cm DIAM.), 10932 (1 cm H × 1.5 cm DIAM.), and 10933 (2.5 cm DIAM.)