



Photo: Circa 1910 photo of Sandpoint, Idaho

### **ITD Receives Award of Merit from the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)**

On January 7, 2015, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) received an Award of Merit from the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) at their annual conference in Seattle, Washington. Established in 1988 this award recognizes specific achievements of individuals and organizations that have furthered the cause of historical archaeology. ITD was presented the Award of Merit by the SHA “for the department’s efforts and vision on the Sandpoint Archaeology Project, a nearly decade-long urban archaeological project that has provided the basis for a detailed narrative of life in the small western town of Sandpoint, Idaho, and a rich comparative database for exploring broader social and economic transformations in the West.”

The Sandpoint Archaeology Project was a nine year archaeology project in the small town of Sandpoint, Idaho. It ultimately became the largest archaeology project in the state’s history, and one of the largest urban archaeology projects ever completed in the United States. Archaeological work was completed as part of mitigation undertaken prior to the construction of a four lane byway through  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long portion of Sandpoint (part of the US-95, Sandpoint North and South construction project) that was the first area settled when the town was established in the 1880s. The area impacted by construction was the town’s earliest commercial district. Archaeological excavations resulted in the recovery of almost 600,000 prehistoric and historic artifacts associated with a Chinese residence/business, two brothels, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, worker housing complexes and several of the town’s businesses. Taken as a whole the artifact collection provides a rich material narrative of life in a small western town and a rich comparative database to explore broader social and economic transformations in the west.

The multi-volume final report was completed in 2014, but the contributions of the project extend well beyond just the artifacts recovered. It is clear that the artifacts recovered will provide research opportunities for archaeologists and historians for years to come, but more importantly the project also led to lasting contributions to the community. As part of the project, archaeologists have produced the lead volume of the report for a general audience interested in the history of the region, a general audience history book, teaching trunks for use by elementary school children, and collaborated with the Bonner County Historical Society to produce a permanent museum exhibit based on the findings from the project.

Overall, the Sandpoint Project has enriched the city of Sandpoint, the state of Idaho as well as the professional archaeology community thanks to the efforts and vision of the Idaho Transportation Department.



Photo Left to right:

Teresita Majewski, VP, Operations, SRI Inc. and Chair of SHA's Awards Committee  
 Charles Ewen, President, SHA  
 Marc Münch, Idaho Transportation Department, State Highway Archaeologist  
 Mark Warner, University of Idaho; SHA Conference Co-Chair



Photo: Sandpoint 4<sup>th</sup> grade students learning about the Sandpoint Archaeology Project and the history of their town.





Photo: Artifacts are recovered during screening of dirt during 2008 excavations.



Photo: Once artifacts were recovered they were analyzed and catalogued for final storage. ITD allows for all of our recovered artifact collections to be made available to professional archaeologists and historians for future research.



Photo: Liquor Bottle Cap

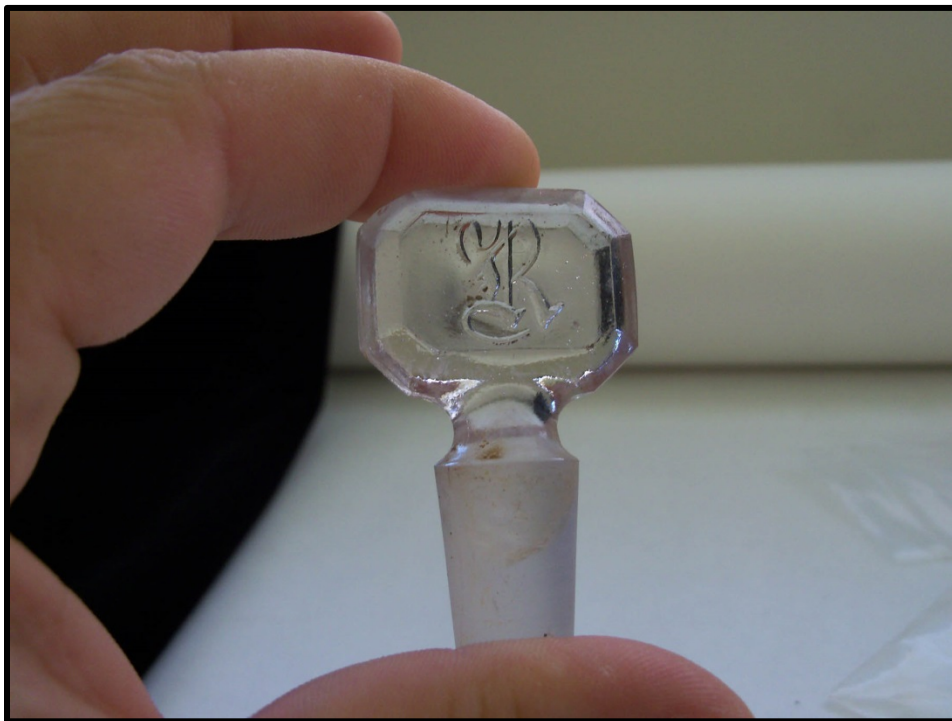


Photo: Glass Bottle Stopper



Photo: Chinese Coin



Photo: Fragments of small porcelain figurine from the Nesbitt Boarding House location (think bric-a-brac from your grandmother's mantle).





Photo: Cleaned artifacts on racks waiting for sorting and identification.



Photo: View of the completed US-95, Sandpoint North and South construction project.