

The Owners' Marks Found on Certain Blocks of Beeswax at the Nehalem Spit, Oregon.

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Of the many tons of beeswax recovered from the Nehalem Spit at the mouth of the Nehalem River only twenty two were recorded to have owners' marks carved or embossed into them. The only other Spanish shipwreck on which beeswax has been recovered was found in Baja, California. To date no owners' marks have been found on any of those blocks.

This paper will look at the owners' marks found on the Nehalem Beeswax blocks and, when possible, compare them to owners' marks found on storage jars recovered from other Spanish shipwrecks lost during the Manila Galleon period. At this writing, only storage jars (aguamanil, etc) with owners' marks were found on the artifacts recovered from the *San Diego* (lost in 1600 ad) and the *Concepcion* (lost in 1638 ad).

I have chosen a numbering system that utilizes an alphabet unit resembling the mark with a number corresponding to the number of times that type of mark has been used. For instance "X3" is the third block found to use an X type of mark.



This is the only block of beeswax found that utilizes two numbers for its mark. Most viewers would consider this the number "67", but it is more likely a "61".

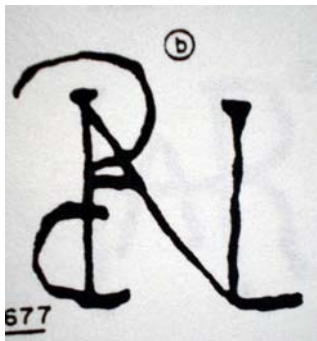
It was found on the Nehalem Beach in 1909 and was donated by Mrs. A.C. Anderson to the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum, where it is currently on display.



8-1; This mark utilized the number 8 or the & sign.



A-1; This attractive mark has an alphabetical theme showing an “A” with a superimposed semi-circle over the upper part and a “C” or circle over the lower.



There was one mark recovered from the storage jars aboard the *Concepcion* that has a noticeable similarity.



The "A-B" theme was also found on this jar from the *San Diego*.



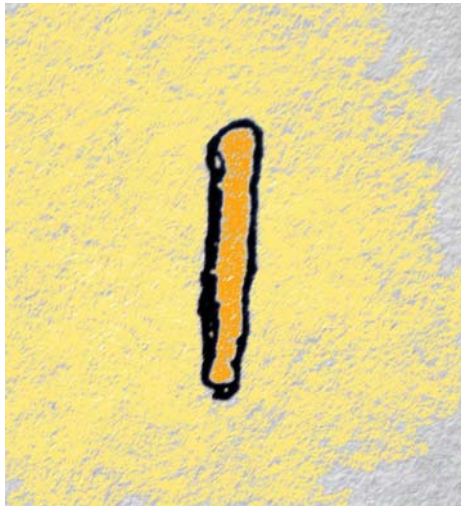
D-1; The diamond motif is found on a number of the blocks. This is the only one with the diamond standing alone. This mark was recorded by Dr. Miller in the 1920s.



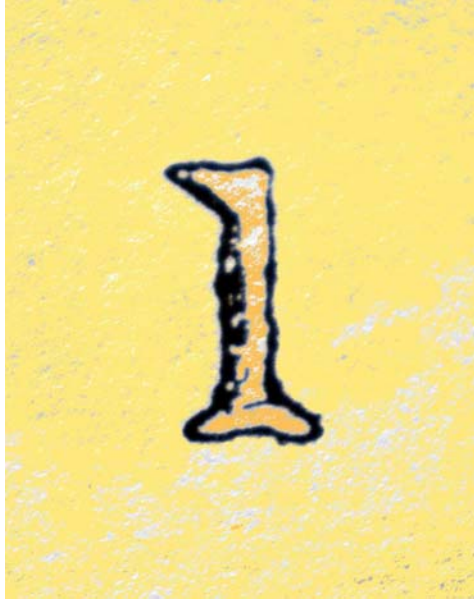
D-2; This mark with the diamond below the circled cross shows an apparent religious theme. It is on display at the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum (?).



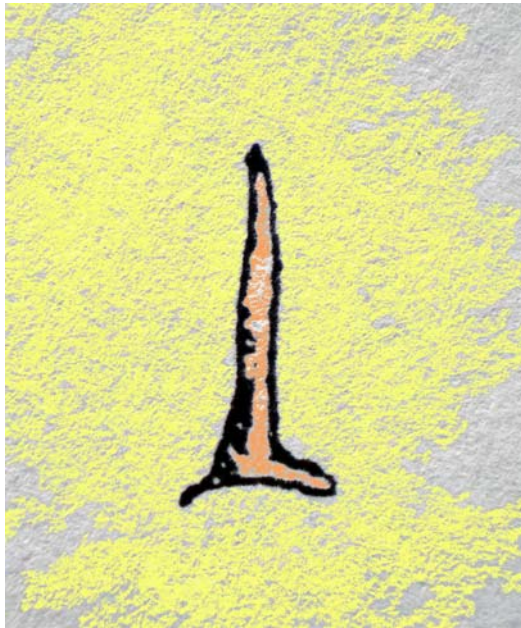
D-3; This mark, may be a drawing of the same block as D-2, but for now we will consider it a separate image. The problem arises that very few of these marked blocks remain in collections today.



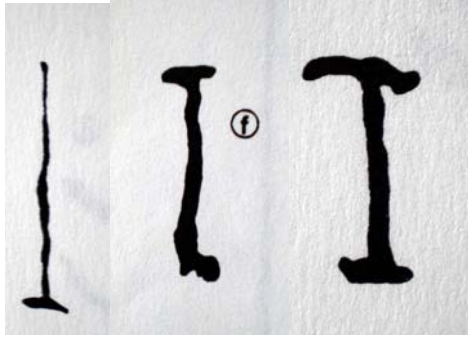
I-1; This mark appears to be a simple I or numeral 1. This image is from a tracing by D.S. Boyakin of Nehalem.



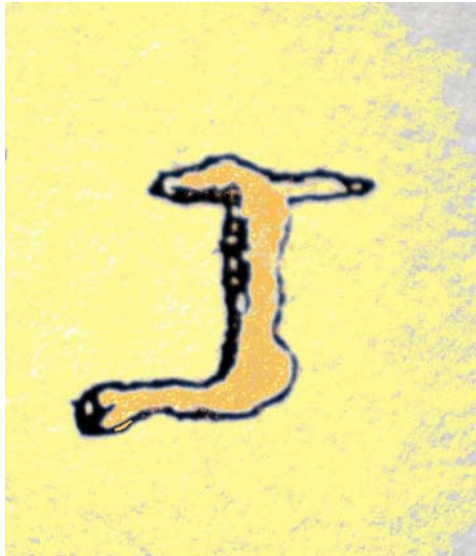
I-2; This numeral 1 has been on display at the Clatsop County Historical Museum. (From a Sam Foster photo).



I-3; A footed I or 1 possibly with the upper part worn or missing.



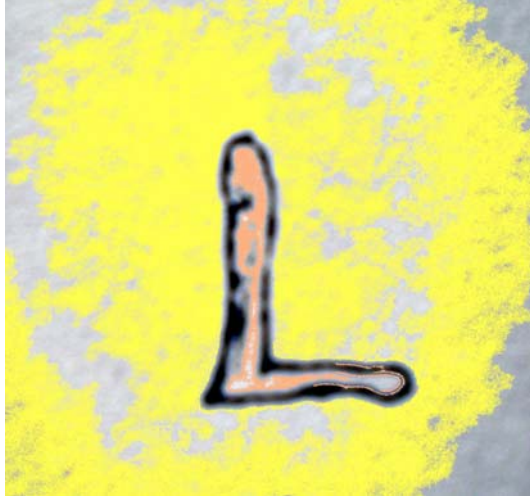
Predictably, vertical lines such as Is and 1s might be quite common. These three such marks were found on the *Concepcion*.



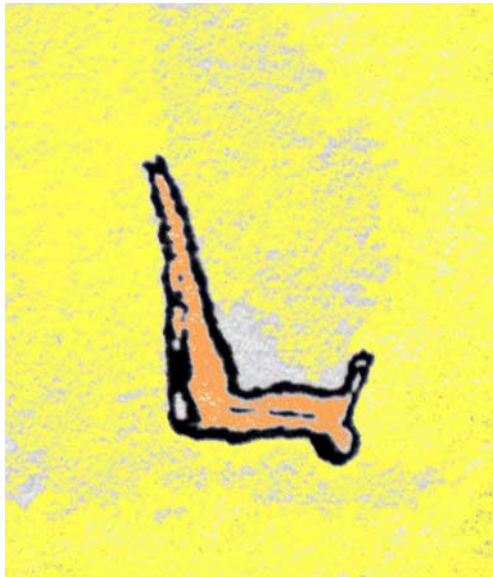
J-1' This appears to be the letter "J". It was reported by Prof. Davidson of the University of Oregon in the 1920s.



This "J" was found on a storage jar from the *Concepcion*.



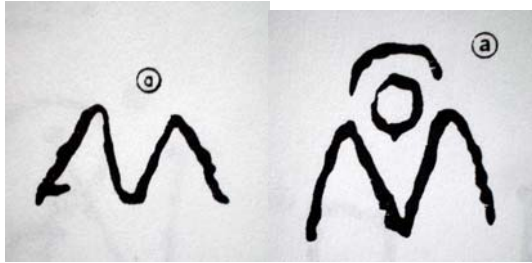
L-1; This simple L was reported by Dr. Miller in the 1920s.



L-2; I have no information on this footed L.



M-1; This capitol M has a diamond tucked in the valley.



These two “M”s were found on *Concepcion* storage jars.



This “gm” symbol from the *San Diego* also shows the circle above the initials.



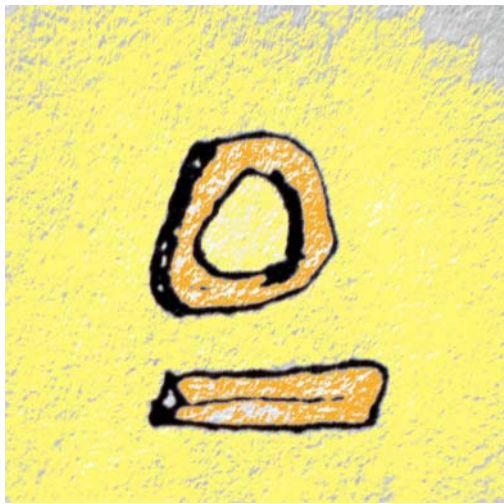
N-1; This N has a curious serif on the upper left corner.



N-2; This mark repeats the diamond motif. It is from an illustration from "Scott's History of Oregon Country."



N-3; This mark has a curious symbol, like a standard of some importance, rising from the letter N. This block measured 20" X 16" X 6".



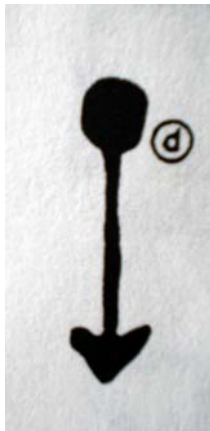
O-1; This mark shows a line beneath an O or 0. This was reported by Dr. Miller in the 1920s.



There was one circle found on the *San Diego* marks, which may well be a simple ware mark.



O-2; This mark has an arrow depicted above an O or 0.

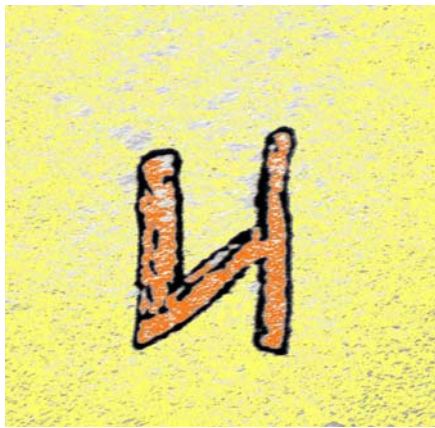
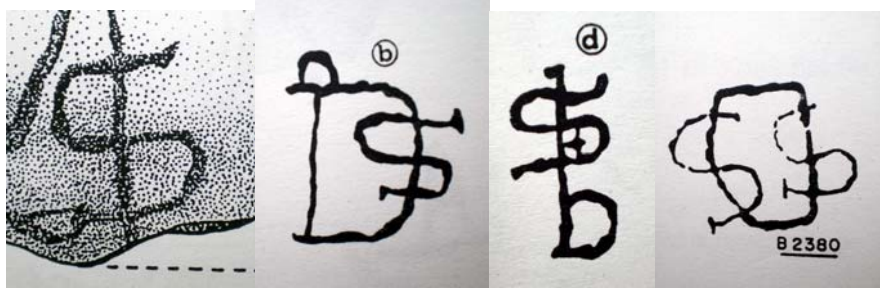


The arrow motif was also found on the *Concepcion's* storage jars.



S-1; This block is on display at the Heritage Museum in Astoria, Oregon. This is a good example of how one

artist may draw the marks inverted from the way a curator may chose to display the artifact. One immediately gets the feeling that the \$ sign is being considered here. Of interest now is the similarity of this mark to some found on storage jars recovered from the shipwreck of the *Concepcion* lost at Saipan in 1632.



U-1; This straight lined U was reported by Dr Miller in the 1920s.



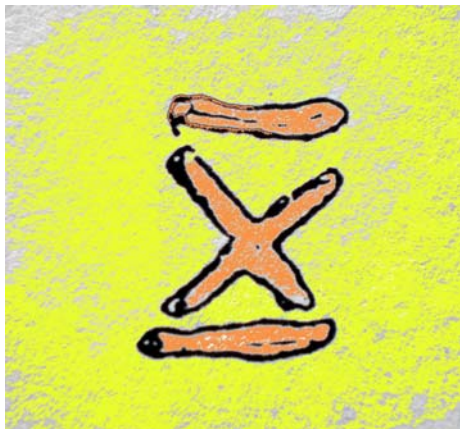
V-R; This complex mark seems to show a V-R mix with a triangle within the V. It was reported By Dr. Miller.



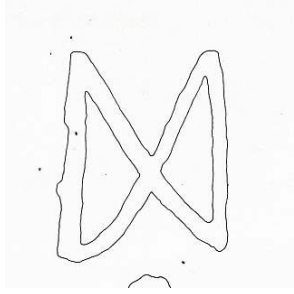
X-1; This X image is from a tracing by D.S. Boyakin of Nehalem.



X-2; This X may have a J attached.



X-3; This X mark has bars atop and below. It is from another of Mr. Boyakin's tracings.



This “X” mark was found on one of the *San Diego*'s storage jars.



These final two marks found on the *San Diego* are included here for the general interest of this paper.

Note on images; At this point, the colored drawings are adapted from “Oregon Shipwrecks by Don Marshall. The *Concepcion* marks are from that project’s archaeological report and recorded by the artist Edwardo Bersamira. Photos of the marks from the *San Diego* were obtained by the author with the assistance of the staff at the National Museum of the Philippines. Permission has yet to be sought for publication of the photos for A-1 and D-2