

Whiskey Row — The Second Year

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The 2008 excavation of Whiskey Row has brought to light new insights into the early days of the fledgling community on Agate Bay as well as unexpected evidence indicating a prehistoric presence. Old questions have been answered, but equally mysterious new ones have emerged out of the soils of the murky past.

On September 3rd, I will be revisiting the Whiskey Row site in a program presented to the Homesteaders at Duluth Town Hall, at 1pm. This is a continuation of the program presented last year.

New artifacts, a number of which are unidentified and presently a mystery, were unearthed starting with the public dig June 23rd through 27th. During that week, untrained volunteers could sign up to get involved in actual hands-on archaeology work. The result was a total of 932 hours of excavation time and numerous artifacts and structural elements belonging to Whiskey Row buildings. At least two structures have been identified as saloons and additional relics have provided a window into the forgotten world that was Whiskey Row.

Some of the items located were identifiable as period pieces available between 1883 and 1887. Others are not so easily classified or understood. One prairie species plant root was dug up belonging to a plant not normally found in this area. Its leaves are known to have been used as a tobacco and a medicinal tea by prehistoric people. It also requires a long-standing grassy opening (such as prairie) to maintain a presence. Why is it here? These and other questions will be addressed during the course of the program on September 3rd.