

Shell Ring

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In Hoff (2007) we describe an unusual small ring (Figure 1) made from a large olive shell. The ring is small (17 mm inside diameter) and may fit a small adult woman or child. It is doubtful that a adult man could even wear this on his small finger. It may have also been used as a earring but lacks wear evidence of long term attachment. The ring was found in Scioto County, Ohio associated with an unusual Cowrie shell necklace and Whelk shell ear plugs.

The ring is made from what appears to be a lettered

olive (*Olive sayana*) which grow to about 3+ inches (76+ mm) long and about 1.25+ (35+ mm) wide. Native American use of olive shells is not unusual. As shown in Figure 2 it has a highly desirable durable shiny finish. Recently we found a large olive shell on the beach and felt it would be interesting try making a ring. The example we used to make our ring (Figure 1 C) was 70 mm long 30 mm wide. To construct this ring

they probably cut through the entire shell rather than scoring and snapping the shell which was also commonly used for other pendants, beads and tinkers. The front could be easily made by just grinding but the back was probably cut and then ground. Knowing the value placed on these shells it is doubtful it was broken then ground.

Figure 2 shows the area on the shell where the ring was obtained. Although it would have been fun to do it exactly as the Native American we must admit that we resorted to modern technology called a "Dremel Tool" and grinder. Besides we probably would never get this article completed for another year.

References:

Abbott R. Tucker 1984. Collectible Shells of Southeastern U.S., Bahamas and Caribbean. American Malacologists, Melbourne FL. ISBN 0-915826-11-9.

Hoff, Frank & Nancy 2007. Shell Artifacts, Emphasis on Southeastern Collections. Published by Pasttime Artifacts, Dade City, Florida ISBN 0-9662960-5-2



Figure 1 - Olive shell ring (A & B) described in Hoff 2007 and new one on right.

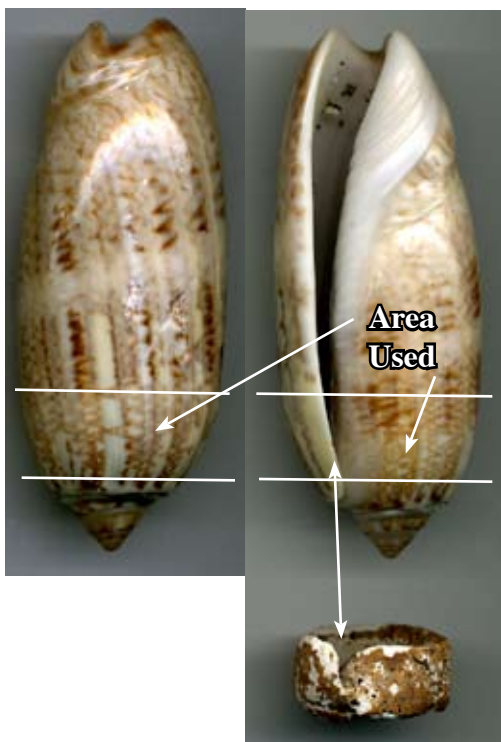


Figure 2 - Lettered olive shell (*Olive sayana*) showing area utilized for the ring. The remaining portion could have been used to make a "Tinker" (see separate article provided).