



# DAACS Cataloging Manual: Buckles

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DAACS Cataloging Manuals document how artifacts, contexts, features, objects and images are cataloged into the DAACS database. They provide information not only about artifact identification but also about how each database field is used and how data should be entered into that field.

The DAACS database was developed by Jillian Galle and Fraser Neiman, in collaboration with members of the DAACS Steering Committee. Jillian Galle and DAACS Staff, Leslie Cooper, Lynsey Bates, Jesse Sawyer, and Beatrix Arendt, led the development of cataloging protocols. In addition to DAACS staff and steering committee members, Monticello current and former Archaeology Department staff, Fraser Neiman, Jennifer Aultman, Sara Bon-Harper, Derek Wheeler, Donald Gaylord, Karen Smith, and Nick Bon-Harper also contributed to the development of cataloging protocols. Jennifer Aultman and Kate Grillo produced the initial versions of these DAACS manuals in 2003. They have been substantially revised by Cooper, Galle, and Bates in the intervening years.

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## INTRODUCTION

This section is based largely on the following dissertation:

White, Carolyn L.

2002 *Constructing Identities: Personal Adornment from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1680-1820*. Ph.D. dissertation. Boston University. "Identification Guide for Clothing Fasteners," pp. 185-241.

## 1. MAIN BUCKLE TABLE

### 1.1 ARTIFACT COUNT

**Do not batch buckles.**

### 1.2 BUCKLE TYPE

**Note:** The following descriptions are summarized from White 2002. She often uses "chape form" to refer to the combination of buckle pin, hook, and tongue. DAACS does not use the term "chape" – pins, hooks, and tongues should be cataloged as individual elements. The next section contains more detailed cataloging information.

#### 1.2.1 KNEE

Knee buckles were used to hold the breeches in place below or above the knee and to hold up the stockings. Knee buckles are generally much smaller than shoe buckles and are not convexly curved the way shoe buckles usually are. On knee buckles, the pin is between the short sides of the frame so the buckle can be oriented vertically. Knee buckles are often square or oval in shape. They are usually not as elaborately decorated as shoe buckles often are, although knee buckles and shoe buckles were occasionally made in matching sets. The chape form of knee buckles is also distinctive (see White 2002:222).

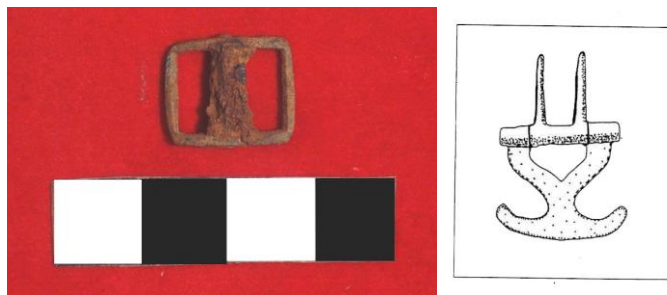


Figure 1: Knee Buckles

Drawing source: White 2002, Fig. 6.12, p.226

### 1.2.2 SHOE

Shoe buckles are one of the most common types of buckles seen on archaeological sites in America. They are usually rectangular and curved to fit the top of the foot, although shoe buckles can be seen in a variety of shapes and sizes. A wide range of decorative techniques, including stamping, casting, and engraving, was also used to embellish shoe buckles. Also, be sure to identify the shape of the buckle's chape in the Buckle Form table, as various chape forms can have chronological significance in the dating of shoe buckles (see White 2002:219). The chapes pictured in the Hook section are shoe buckle chapes.



Figure 2: Shoe Buckle

### 1.2.3 SPUR

Spur buckles (sometimes referred to as 17<sup>th</sup>-century belt buckles) usually have double-looped, trapezoidal frames, although occasionally one sees rectangular or D-shaped frames. Spur buckles are sometimes decorated with elaborate rosette or floral patterns, and often have hook attachments for spurs.

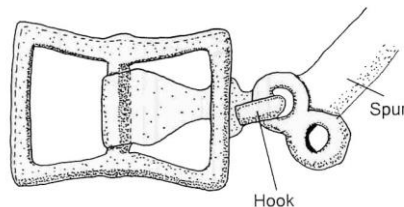


Figure 3: Spur Buckle

Drawing source: White 2002, Fig. 6.20, p. 237

### 1.2.4 STOCK

The stock was a cloth that wrapped around a gentleman's neck and was buckled in the back. Stock buckles were made from a variety of materials including silver and plated copper or tin alloys. They were often elaborately decorated, including designs set with gems or pastes. The frame is usually rectangular or oblong, with the pin attached between the shorter sides of the frame. The chape usually has a hook with three or four studs, and its tongue usually has three or four prongs.

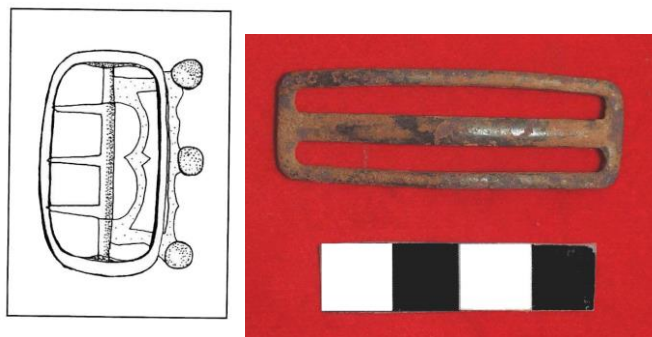


Figure 4: Stock Buckles

Drawing source: White 2002, Fig. 6.14, p.229

### 1.2.5 UNIDENTIFIABLE

Use “Unidentifiable” for any buckle that cannot be identified as either “Unid: Harness/Utilitarian” or “Unid: Clothing.”

### 1.2.6 UNID: HARNESS/UTILITARIAN

The term “Unid: Harness/Utilitarian” was created for buckles that can be identified as harness or utilitarian buckles, but for which further identification is not possible. Harness and utilitarian buckles are usually larger and sturdier than most clothing buckles. They are almost always undecorated.



Figure 5: Unid/Utilitarian Buckle

### 1.2.7 UNID: CLOTHING

The term “Unid: Clothing” has been created for buckles that can be identified as clothing buckles, but for which further identification is impossible. This category also subsumes several different specific types of buckles, including hat buckles, belt buckles, baldric buckles, and some cinch buckles. These types of buckles are easily confused and difficult to identify; therefore, a buckle from any one of these types should simply be cataloged as “Unid: Clothing.” If you are completely sure that you have, for example, a belt buckle, Buckle Type should still be “Unid: Clothing,” but describe the buckle as a belt buckle in the Notes.

### 1.2.8 OVERALL BUCKLES

These should be cataloged in the General Artifacts table. Form should be “Overall, fastener.”

### 1.3 COMPLETENESS

Choose either “Complete” or “Incomplete.”

### 1.4 OBJECT WEIGHT

Weigh the buckle. This measurement should be in grams, to the nearest tenth.

### 1.5 MENDED?

Choose “Yes” or “No.” The default is “No.” Disregard the “N/A” option. If mended, list the other Artifact IDs in the Notes field.

### 1.6 POST-MANUFACTURING MODIFICATION

Choose “Yes” or “No.” The default is “No.” Ignore the “N/A” option.

Post-Manufacturing Modification is a field seen in all of the different artifact categories. Use this field when an artifact appears to have been physically modified in order to change its original function.

Catalog the object as it would be cataloged in its original form. Enter “Yes” under Post-Manufacturing Modification, and describe in the notes how the object has been modified.

### 1.7 CONSERVATION

The default is “No Conservation.” If a buckle has been conserved, enter “Yes” into this field and describe the conservation in the Notes field.

### 1.8 MARKS?

The default for this field is “None.” If there is a mark, enter into this field exactly what appears on the buckle. If there is a non-letter mark on the buckle, describe this in the Notes field.

## 2. BUCKLE FORM TABLE

The Buckle Form table is used to describe the various elements or parts that make up the buckle. The Buckle Form table consists of the following fields:

**“Buckle Part”**

**“Material”**

**“Manufacturing Technique”**

**“Shape”**

**“Element Type”**

**“Buckle Length”**



**“Buckle Width Pin”**  
**“Center Point Measure”**

**Note:** The Buckle Form tab should always be filled out, no matter how incomplete a buckle you may have.

Since many of the selections made in the Buckle Form fields are interrelated and dependent on the buckle part being described it is most logical to describe the function of the Buckle Form table on the basis of buckle parts:

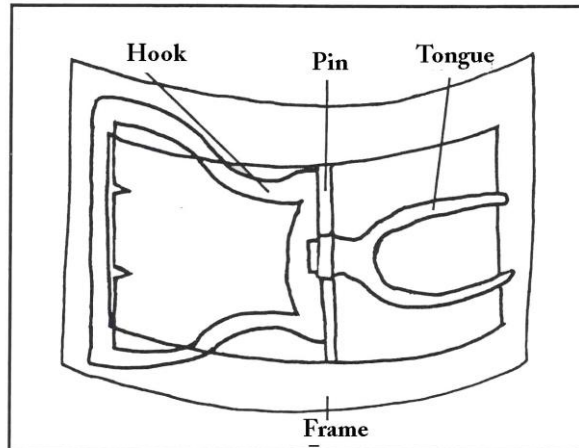


Figure 6: Buckle Parts  
Drawing source: White 2002, Fig. 6.2, p. 188

Enter a separate line for each of the following buckle elements (if present):

## 2.1 FRAMES

Frames are the buckle parts most often recovered on archaeological sites. Always enter a frame into the Buckle Form tab, even if you can't determine the buckle's shape or measurements.

**Buckle Part:** "Frame"

**Material:** "Copper Alloy", "Gold", "Iron", "Pewter", "Silver", "Steel", "Missing", "Unidentifiable"

*Note:* Many buckle frames were made from a material known as "pinchbeck." This is an alloy made from four parts copper to one part zinc. Pinchbeck frames should be cataloged into DAACS as Copper Alloy.

**Manu Tech:** "Cast", "Drawn/Wire", "Forged", "Stamped", "Unidentifiable"

**Shape:**

“Circle”, “D-Shape”, “Oval”, “Trapezoid”,  
“Square/Rectangle”, “Unid: Angular.” (See Figure 7)  
*Note:* Use “Unid: Angular”, if you can’t tell, for example,  
whether a buckle is square/rectangular or trapezoidal.

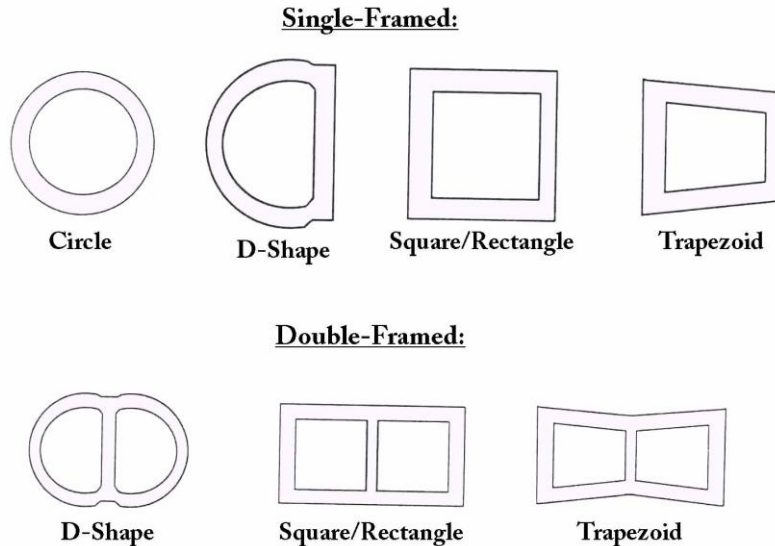


Figure 7: Frames shapes (Not Pictured: Oval)  
Image adapted from White 2002, Fig. 6.3

**Element Type:**

Choose either “Single Framed” or “Double Framed.” See Figure 7

**Buckle Length / Buckle Width:** For buckle frames, any complete measurement should be taken. Thus, the frame length could be recorded even if the frame width is incomplete.

**Pin, Center Point Measure:** DAACS measures the distance from where the pin intersects the frame to the outside edge of the buckle. You can still take these measurements even when the pin itself is missing, as long as you have a pin terminal and at least one outside edge intact.  
*Note:* Leave this area blank if there is no pin terminal or if the buckle has a Type 5 pin terminal (where the pin serves as one side of the frame).

## 2.2 HOOKS

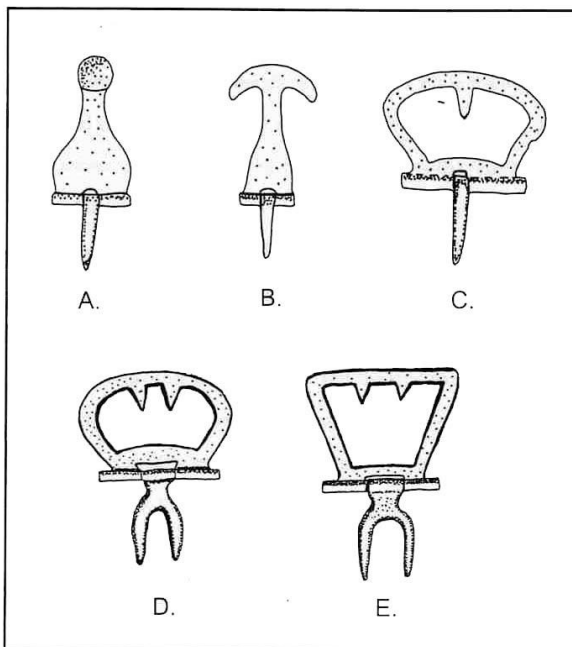
The hook, often referred to as the roll, is a moveable part attached to the pin. It serves to secure the leather or strap to the buckle. Hook shapes are often used to identify specific buckle types. For example, the above buckle type descriptions often refer to specific “chape forms” – in DAACS, this generally refers to the hook shape.

**Part:** "Hook"

**Material:** "Copper Alloy", "Gold", "Iron", "Pewter", "Silver", "Steel", "Missing", "Unidentifiable"

**Manu Tech:** "Cast", "Drawn/Wire", "Forged", "Stamped", "Unidentifiable"

**Shape:** Using the examples in Figure 8, select one of the following hook shapes "Anchor", "Stud", "Loop".



A. "Stud" hook shape with single-pronged tongue.

B. "Anchor" hook shape with single-pronged tongue.

C. "Loop" hook shape with single-pronged tongue.

D and E. "Loop" hook shapes with double-pronged tongues.

Figure 8: Hook Shapes  
Image source: White 2002, Fig. 6.9, p. 219

*Note:* The hook shapes pictured above are all from shoe buckles.

**Type:** "Not Applicable"

**Buckle Length / Buckle Width:** For buckle hooks, any complete measurement should be taken. Thus, the hook width could be recorded even if the hook length is incomplete.

## 2.3 PINS

The pin can be either moveable or cast as part of the frame. It anchors the hook and the tongue to the rest of the frame.

Note that the center part of a double-framed buckle should be cataloged as a pin. Also, the pin and the tongue are occasionally cast together as one piece. In this case, enter

the appropriate data separately under Pin and Tongue, but indicate in the Notes that they have been cast as one piece.

*Note:* Include the pin in the Buckle Information table **even if the pin is missing**, as one can still determine the pin terminal type for a missing pin. This is the only buckle part for which this protocol applies.



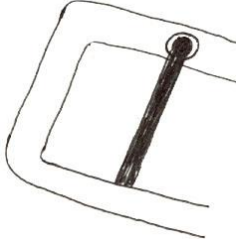
**Part:** "Pin"


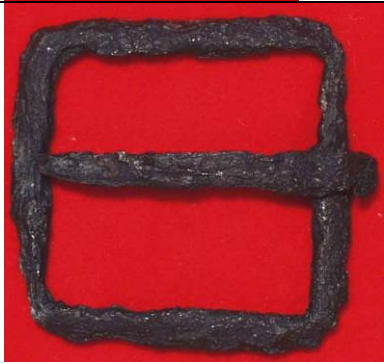

**Material:** "Copper Alloy", "Gold", "Iron", "Pewter", "Silver", "Steel", "Missing", "Unidentifiable"

**Manu Tech:** "Cast", "Drawn/Wire", "Forged", or "Unidentifiable"

**Shape:** Type 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 Pin Terminal (see below)

Figure 9: Pin Terminal Types

<p><b>Type 1 Pin Terminal</b> The protruding lobe into which the hole for the pin is drilled is the width of the entire frame (White 2002:189)</p>	 <p>Image source: White 2002, Fig. 6.4</p>
<p><b>Type 2 Pin Terminal</b> The protruding lobe into which the hole for the pin is drilled is only a thin piece of metal flush with the outside edge of the frame (White 2002:189)</p>	 <p>Image source: White 2002, Fig. 6.4</p>
<p><b>Type 3 Pin Terminal</b> See image.</p>	

<p><b>Type 4 Pin Terminal</b> On double-framed buckles, the pin is cast as part of the frame</p>	
<p><b>Type 5 Pin Terminal</b> On single-framed buckles (usually square/rectangular), the pin also serves as one side of the frame. Primarily seen on utilitarian/harness buckles.</p>	
<p><b>Type 6 Pin Terminal</b> The pin is welded onto the frame. Pictured here is a copper alloy frame with an iron pin welded onto its backside.</p>	

**Element Type:** This field records the relationship of the pin to the frame. Note if it is oriented along the “long axis” (the pinhole is located on the long side of the buckle), the “short axis” (the pinhole is located on the short side of the buckle) or whether it is “equidistant” (in the middle of a square frame). *Note:* Even if a pin is missing, you might be able to tell the pin’s orientation. You can also determine pin length for missing pins as long as you have both pin terminals.

The following is an example of how to catalog a missing pin:

Buckle Element	Material	Manufacturing Technique	Shape	Element Type	Element Length	Element Width
Pin	Missing	Unidentifiable	Type 1 Pin Terminal	Equidistant	20	
Frame	Iron	Forged	Square	Single Framed	20	20

**Buckle Length and Buckle Width:** As mentioned above, you can take pin length measurements as long as you have both pin terminals (or a complete pin). Of course, the pin must be present to take width measurements. In the Notes, remember to enter distance measurements from the pin terminals to the outside edge of the frame.

**Pin, Center Point Measure:** DAACS measures the distance from where the pin intersects the frame to the outside edge of the buckle. You can still take these measurements even when the pin itself is missing, as long as you have a pin terminal and at least one outside edge intact.  
*Note:* Leave this field blank if there is no pin terminal or if the buckle has a Type 5 pin terminal (where the pin serves as one side of the frame).

## 2.4 TONGUES

The tongue is the prong that secures a loose strap end to the buckle. Earlier buckles had single-pronged tongues, while most 18<sup>th</sup>-century and later buckles have double-pronged tongues. Occasionally one sees nicks cut into the frame where the tongue prongs lie (these do not need to be noted in DAACS).

**Part:** "Tongue"

**Material:** "Copper Alloy", "Gold", "Iron", "Pewter", "Silver", "Steel", "Missing", "Unidentifiable"

**Manu Tech:** "Cast" or "Forged"

**Shape:** "Straight"

**Element Type:** "Single Prong" or "Double Prong" (see Figure 8).

**Buckle Length and Buckle Width:** For buckle tongues, any complete

measurement should be taken. Thus, the tongue width could be recorded even if the tongue length is incomplete.

### 3. BUCKLE DECORATION TABLE

The Buckle Decoration table should be filled out for any type of decorative technique seen on the buckle. Buckles with decoration should always be imaged.

#### 3.1 MARKS?

The default for this field is "None." If there is a mark, enter into this field exactly what appears on the buckle. If there is a non-letter mark on the buckle, describe this in the Notes field.

#### 3.2 BUCKLE FRAME PLATING

The default for this field is "None." If a buckle is plated, choose "Gilt," "Silver," or "Tin." You do not need to add gilding into the Decoration Tab (unlike buttons). If you cannot tell if the buckle is plated, choose "Unidentifiable."

#### 3.3 DECORATIVE TECHNIQUE

Choose from the following list:

**"Cast/Molded"**

**"Enameled"**

**"Engraved"**

**"Jewel/Inlay"**

**"Stamped"**

#### 3.4 DECORATIVE MOTIF

Using the drop-down list, select the appropriate decorative motif. Options are:

**"Beaded"**

**"Openwork"**

**"Foliate"**

**"Ornamental Grooves"**

**"Geometric"**

**"Ribbed"**

**"Lettering"**

**"Scrolls"**

**"Military Emblem"**

**"Unidentifiable"**

**"Notched and Grooved"**

Where necessary a more detailed description can be included in the Notes field.

### 4. CONDITION

#### 4.1 BURNED?

Enter "Yes" or "No." The default is "No." Ignore the "N/A" option.

#### 4.2 POST-MANUFACTURING MODIFICATION

Enter “Yes” or “No.” The default is “No.” Disregard the “N/A” option.  
Use this field when an artifact appears to have been physically modified in order to change its original function.

Catalog the object as it would be cataloged in its original form. Enter “Yes” under Post-Manufacturing Modification, and describe in the notes how the object has been modified.

#### 4.3 CONSERVATION

The default is “No Conservation.” If a buckle has been conserved, enter “Yes” into this field and describe the conservation in the Notes field.

#### 5. IMAGE

Please see manual on Image capture and entry into the database.

#### 6. OBJECT

Please see manual on Object entry into the database.