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Newsletter of

The Ontario Archaeological Society (Inc.)

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

of

THE ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE GEORGIAN BAY REGION"

The eighth annual symposium of the O.A.S., hosted by the Simcoe County Chapter, will be held at SAINTE-MARIE Among The HURONS, Highway 12, Midland, Ontario on Saturday, October 24, 1981.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The site and theme of the eighth annual symposium of the O.A.S. provides an excellent opportunity for the presentation of papers concerning both prehistoric and historic components of the Georgian Bay region. Persons active in such research are invited to submit abstracts (about 200 words) of papers they would like to present on this occasion.

Please submit your abstracts by August 15, 1981 to:

The O.A.S. Symposium Committee

Chairman: Rosemary Vyvyan

Simcoe County Chapter, O.A.S.

445 Yonge Street

Midland, Ontario

L4R 2C2

(telephone: 705 526-7683)

* *

Symposium -- Advance Details

Friday, October 23 -- Hospitality suite open for O.A.S. members arriving the evening before the symposium. At 445 Yonge St. Hosts: Jamie Hunter and Rosemary Vyvyan.

Accommodation available at Highland Motel, King St./Hwy. 12, Midland at \$28.00 per room, max. 4 people, reservations reqd.

Student accommodation - please apply to Symposium Committee.

Saturday, October 24 -- Coaches leave York Mills/Yonge, Toronto sharp at 8.00 a.m. Reserve your seat through O.A.S. Toronto office - 223-2752.

Papers commence 10.00 a.m. Lunch approximately 12.00 noon.

Pre-Registration fee for the symposium which includes coffee, catered lunch and registration kit is \$13.00. Registration fee on the day of the symposium is also \$13.00 but does not include lunch. (Please note Sainte-Marie is some considerable distance from any restaurants and pre-registration, which includes lunch, is highly recommended.) A cash bar will be available during lunch and at the conclusion of the papers, at Sainte-Marie.

There is ample room for displays and publications -- please apply to the Symposium Committee for permission and space. Between

5.00 and 7.00 p.m. you may join a guided tour of Sainte-Marie.

BANQUET: At the Highland Motel, commencing 6.00 to 6.30 p.m.

Speaker -- Kenneth Kidd. Cost \$15.00 - reserved only.

contd./

Symposium ... continued

Coaches will return to Toronto both before and after the Banquet. Sunday, October 25 -- Guided tours of well-known local sites - details to follow. Beautiful day and Fall colours guaranteed.

Application/Reservation forms for pre-registration, coach transport, hotel accommodation, banquet, guided tours etc. will be available with the next issue of Arch Notes (May/June).

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O.A.S. AUDITOR

Murray Corbett, who has shared, with the late Frank Mee, the duties of auditor of the O.A.S., has asked to be relieved of these duties, and we take the opportunity to thank him for his work for the Society in this capacity.

We now need a replacement. The Executive would be glad to hear from any members of the Society who have an accounting qualification (C.A., C.G.A., or R.I.A.) who would be willing to serve as auditor for 1981. Please volunteer your services.

CORRECTION

Arch Notes 81-1 (January/February 1981): "Review of Ontario Archaeology - 1980" by John Reid:

The Yeigh pottery, located in Burford, is in region 4 and not, as listed, in region 5. The pottery was in operation from about 1802 until 1829 and not, as reported, until 1929.

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Deadline for Ontario Current Research submissions for the June, 1981 issue of the newsletter of the Society for Historical Archaeology is April 14. Contributions, related to a single specific subject, should be sent to:

Karlis Karklins
Ontario Current Research Area Co-ordinator
Society for Historical Archaeology
Parks Canada
1600 Liverpool Court
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1G2

ONTARIO MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The O.M.A. offers opportunities for training and development of museum workers in Ontario through seminars and courses of one, two and three-day duration in various Ontario centres. A "Certificate in Basic Museum Studies" can be obtained after successful completion of eight three-day courses. For further information contact the O.M.A. in Toronto at 923-3868. (O.M.A. newsletters are available from the O.A.S. library.)

O.A.S. Monthly General Meeting -- Toronto -- February 18, 1981

Reported by Margaret Ann Clark

"McIntyre: An Archaic Site in Southern Ontario"

Dr. Richard B. Johnston

Those members in attendance at the February general meeting were treated to an interesting presentation concerning the McIntyre Site by Dr. Richard Johnston of Trent University. The talk was followed by a lively discussion. During the discussion period Dr. J.H. McAndrews of the Royal Ontario Museum assisted in answering the many questions posed by members of the audience.

Dr. Johnston began by describing the area in Peterborough County where the site is located. Since the Trent River system has always been a common travel route, the region has been subjected to repeated occupations over a long period. This has resulted in an above average concentration of sites for south central Ontario. The McIntyre Site is the largest archaic site in southern Ontario, comprising two acres located on a drumlin on the shores of Rice Lake. It is situated beside a marshy area which prohibits access to open water.

Dr. Johnston had heard of the site, known for its size and abundant surface artifacts, previous to his investigations. There were reports of pits in the subsoil and the lithics in the owner's surface collection contained almost every diagnostic late archaic point. Test pits were dug in 1974. This preliminary work turned up many artifacts in the disturbed layer as well as subsoil features consisting of basin-shaped pits. These were made up of darkened soil containing fire-cracked rocks. Faunal and lithic materials were also recovered from these features. A radio-carbon sample obtained from one pit gave a date of 2765 BC.

The positive results of this preliminary study led Dr. Johnston to begin excavation of the site in 1975. The techniques used were designed to recover as much material as possible for a complete interdisciplinary study. Surface soil was shovelled and sifted through a motor-driven screen. Rocks contained in pits were collected and weighed. All soil from the thirty nine excavated features was collected and floated. The materials recovered included radio-carbon samples and lithics as well as faunal and botanical remains. These were studied by a variety of experts.

The three radio-carbon samples resulted in dates around 1700 BC. The lithics consisted primarily of axes and a biconcave mill stone which was of particular interest when considered with the large amount of botanical remains. The stone could have been used to process plants for food. Dr. Johnston stated that he had hoped to find diagnostic points in the pits which could have been used to date and sequence the features but that all points recovered were from the disturbed plough zone. The faunal assemblage

contained large and small mammals, several types of fish, turtles, and snake. Some bone needles were recovered. A burial containing a puppy was also found. The botanical material contained charcoal, nut shells, and seeds.

Dr. Johnston felt that the work at the site will contribute to our understanding of the subsistence activities which were carried out there. One objective of archaeology is to reconstruct the past. He felt that this objective could be satisfied by work at the site which could indicate the time and period of occupation and environmental utilization. One major concern at the McIntyre Site is environmental. The marshy area between the site and open water makes travel and transportation difficult. This causes Dr. Johnston to wonder why the site would have been located there. This problem is being studied by Dr. McAndrews.

During the question period, Dr. McAndrews told the audience that he felt that the marsh area had prehistorically been a wild rice bed. This food source could have been a factor in determining site location. These plants were later replaced by the various marsh plants found there now. Dr. Johnston pointed out that the analysis of 7500 seeds from the site shows only one possible rice grain. Dr. McAndrews stated that wild rice grains are known from only five sites due to their extreme fragility when charred. Tests by R.D. Fecteau at the museum have shown that only five grams of pressure are required to crush charred rice as opposed to 100 grams for sunflower seeds. This would seem to indicate that there is little likelihood that any rice would have been preserved in the pits.

Dr. Johnston pointed out that as well as some answers, many questions have arisen as a result of the work at the McIntyre Site. He hopes that these may be answered with further study.

* * * * *

OAS SUMMER BUS TRIP

A one-day bus trip is planned for August 8, 1981. The plan is to leave Toronto about the middle of the morning (a Saturday) and spend the day in the Brantford area, visiting the area museums, major collections, sites, the Six Nations Reserve and the Iroquois Pageant, returning by midnight. The next ARCH NOTES will carry more details, but meanwhile, keep the date open.

OAS OTTAWA CHAPTER BIRTHDAY APPROACHING

The 10th birthday of the Ottawa Chapter will commence at 7.30 pm., Wednesday, May 13 and all members are welcome. A car pool from Toronto is a possibility -- please contact the office if you are interested.

The party may feature a reunion of "Sheguiandindians" who participated in work on Manitoulin Island in the early 1950's.

O.A.S. Monthly General Meeting -- Toronto -- March 18, 1981

Reported by Janet C. Cooper

"Mounds of Sacred Earth"

Dr. Walter A. Kenyon

For some time now, Dr. Kenyon has been re-examining the phenomenon of artificial mounds of earth and he has developed a theory to explain the reasons for their construction. As archaeologists familiar with eastern North America are well aware, mounds of earth are ubiquitous throughout the Mississippi drainage system -- some 10,000 are reported in the Ohio River valley alone -- and they reach their northern limit in Ontario. When the first American colonists arrived in North America, they were informed by the natives that the mounds were artificial, but no one knew when they had been constructed or by whom. A number of suggestions were subsequently put forward in an attempt to solve the mystery of the mound makers; some of these were wild indeed, but none suggested that the Indians themselves might have been responsible. As Dr. Kenyon noted, there was no good reason for Europeans to invoke a new and foreign race of mound builders, but the fact that they held such a low opinion of the local natives probably accounts for the situation. Obviously, no cognizance was taken of the first-hand accounts of Fernando de Soto who had landed in Florida and wandered through the Gulf States between 1538 and 1543: de Soto had actually visited a number of settlements with mounds, had seen the houses of priests and important people on the tops of these, and had been informed that the mounds were temples. However, by the time the American colonists arrived all the sites had been abandoned and were covered over with grass and trees.

In Ontario, the first mounds excavated were those by Walbridge in the Bay of Quinte area in the late 1850's. Believing the mounds to be burial mounds, Walbridge was astonished to discover that many of them contained no burials at all; Ritchie's excavations of mounds in New York State also revealed that many were "empty". During the next hundred years or so, Ontario mounds were excavated by a number of people -- including Dr. Kenyon -- and, as a result, architectural details and local sequences have been worked out. The problem of dating the mounds was also solved: it is now known that none were built in southern Ontario after about 200 or 300 A.D., and that they continued to be built into the historic period in the Lake of the Woods region. But this information, Dr. Kenyon stressed, does not help us to understand the significance of the mounds themselves; what we should be looking at is the variation in the mounds and in the grave furnishings, as well as the variety of burial practices.

In order to provide us with some awareness of the richness of variety that excavation of the mounds reveals, Dr. Kenyon showed a large number of slides from his own excavations. From these, it could be seen that, although the mounds were typically annular

(that is, circular with a central depression), they varied widely in size from the insignificant to the very impressive; on the impressive side, the mound at Long Sioux Rapids on Rainy River is some 124 feet in diameter at the base and rises to a height of 24 feet -- it is the largest native monument in Ontario, and very likely the largest one in all of Canada. We also saw that there were grave furnishings from a number of sources: items of native manufacture from local materials, items of European manufacture and items from other portions of North America lying considerable distances from the sites. It seems clear that the mound builders had contact with a number of manufacturing centres. Another important area of great variety was that concerning the skeletal remains themselves. We saw that some burials contained grave goods, while others did not; we also saw that there were flesh burials, bundle burials, cremations, scattered bones and skulls; and that some skulls had been given special treatment by packing them with clay and painting them with efforts to reconstruct the appearance of the living individual, with many showing evidence that the brain had been removed through the occipital region.

When one has assumed, as Dr. Kenyon and many others did when they first saw the mounds, that these were mounds erected to mark the burial place of some important person or persons (i.e. tombstones), it is difficult to reconcile such a conclusion with the evidence that emerges from excavation of the mounds. Since the building of the mounds represented a massive amount of work, it was reasonable to expect that grave goods worthy of an individual important enough to command such an expenditure of human energy would be found, but in many cases there was either a total absence of grave goods or valuable grave goods were associated with women and children. Often, too, the disposition of skeletal material, such as the skulls on which such lavish reconstructive effort had been expended, was such as to indicate that any significance they might have had was over by the time they were put into the mound.

These things bothered Dr. Kenyon and other archaeologists both here in Ontario and in other parts of the world where similar phenomena occur. In an effort to understand the full significance of all the evidence provided by the mounds, Dr. Kenyon searched the mound literature from many other parts of the world and was struck by the fact that all of the mounds appear to be Neolithic -- a period which is defined by the appearance of agriculture, pottery and burial mounds. The question he asked himself was "what is the nature of burial mounds, that they appear at this particular period?" While we see the appearance of agriculture and can understand that a direct, functional relationship exists for the presence of pottery in a settled agricultural society, the appearance of burial mounds is not as obvious. However, Dr. Kenyon suggests that the Neolithic was not so much a period which saw economic revolution as one which saw religious revolution, albeit a religious revolution which came about through this new mode of production.

By way of explanation of his hypothesis, Dr. Kenyon asked us to consider the differences between the relationship of man to his real world in a hunting and gathering society and that in an agricultural society. The real world of the hunters and gatherers was essentially a horizontal one, and their relationship to it was through their technology and the spiritual world that surrounded the hunt -- a relationship of a purely magical nature. This is spelled out very clearly when one examines hunting rituals, such as that of the Eskimos who perform the proper rituals for the Old Woman of the Sea so that she will not take away the seals upon which survival depends. But when we move to the world of the agriculturalist who actually intervenes in the process of regeneration, we see that it is a real-world, rather than a magical-world, activity which maintains the cycles of food supply. With this fundamental change, gods appear which are more appropriate to the new way of life and the new conditions of existence. With this new world of growing things comes a vertical, rather than a horizontal, orientation; to express their affirmation to a god of growing things, people gave their earth a new vertical dimension by heaping up the earth. The observation that a pole is often "planted" in the centre of these mounds lends weight to the suggestion that this represented a ritual intervention in the process of regeneration.

These mounds are, then, essentially sacred places. It is Dr. Kenyon's considered opinion that they were normally built in the spring, after winter during which a group may have been dispersed; that there tends to be a correlation between mound locations and river rapids where the fishing is particularly good, supports the idea that people would regroup at such a location in the spring and that it is at these places where crops would be planted and where the mounds would be placed. When individuals are buried in such mounds, they are buried there for the same reasons that we bury people in St. Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey: because these structures are sacred places. As with our sacred places, the sacred mounds were made sacred by a number of rituals -- such as the power transfer effected by removing and eating the brains of recently-dead honoured people, or the painting and masking of skulls. However, the very act of building the mound was, in Dr. Kenyon's opinion, most probably the ultimate ritual which made the site sacred.

* * * * *

DONATION BY MRS. MARGARET MEE

Mrs. Margaret Mee has kindly donated to the Society some of the materials gathered by her late husband, and long-term O.A.S. member, Frank B. Mee. Margaret and Frank together attended the original classes held by Norman Emerson, and participated in the first excavations, out of which the O.A.S. evolved. Frank served on numerous occasions as Auditor for the Society and twice as President and was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his exceptional record.

OAS LONDON CHAPTER NEWS

At the January meeting Ian Kenyon, Field Archaeologist, South-western Region, M.C.R., told us of his work at the old gaol yard of the former Waterloo County Gaol. This was well illustrated with a slide show of the site and the 19th century artifacts recovered. Ian also showed a copy of an old newspaper account of a local murder and the resultant hanging which took place at the gaol yard. In February, Mr. Paul Carroll, Chairman of the Van Egmond Foundation, told us something of the Van Egmond restorations in Huron County. Following this he gave a humourous presentation which turned out to be a spoof on archaeological interpretations. At the March meeting Dr. Mary MacDonald of the University of Western Ontario spoke of work concerning the pre-history of the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt.

Our March meeting took place at the M.C.R. building, 55 Centre Street, London, as the Museum of Indian Archaeology is in the process of moving to their new building. The new building has been erected on the former Lawson property, containing the Lawson Village site, now deeded to the University of Western Ontario. Since the Chapter's formation, the Museum has provided us with a meeting place.

The Chapter Picnic, an annual affair, will be held on June 13 at Rob and Deborah Pihl's place in Granton. Attendance has grown each year and we look forward to more this year.

The London Chapter is also looking forward to another weekend bus trip. This year it will take place on the holiday weekend in October and we are planning to go back to Ohio. Columbus is one place that we will visit and our itinerary includes some of the Hopewell and Adena sites, as well as another visit to Flint Ridge.

The latest Chapter membership list shows that we have about fifty members.

C.N.

OAS SIMCOE COUNTY CHAPTER NEWS

The January meeting featured a cataloguing session held at Ste. Marie for the material excavated in 1980 from the Brittain Pottery Works. In February a combined meeting and workshop explored faunal and human osteology. The March meeting featured a slide show. The April 8th meeting, to be held at Simcoe County Museum will feature David Newlands, whose topic will be "The Archaeology of Potteries". All are invited.

ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMMES

The Ontario Historical Society is a large and active organization with many activities and workshops planned for 1981, foremost being the Annual Meeting planned for June 12-14 at Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more information contact the O.H.S. at (416) 486-1232.

A SELKIRK VESSEL FROM THE BERENS RIVER

by Grace Rajnovich and C.S. "Paddy" Reid

A Clearwater Lake Punctate ceramic vessel found on the Berens River in 1978 has been completely reconstructed.

The vessel was found in a hundred pieces eroding from the shoreline of the Boot Site (ElKn-2), on the east bank of the Berens River about five kilometres west of Barton Lake (Pelleck 1980:24). John Pelleck located the site when conducting a portion of the West Patricia Archaeological Survey, a multi-year inventory of the northwestern area of Northern Ontario by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (MCR). The Boot Site is used by modern fishermen and has been almost completely destroyed by their activities and water erosion. Only 17 other artifacts were recovered, all surface collected, comprising a quartz core, a black Lake of the Woods chert core, a quartz biface base, an exfoliated body sherd from another vessel and 13 flakes (Pelleck 1980:24). No artifacts were found in shovel tests.

All the sherds of the vessel were recovered from an area of about 60 x 60 centimetres at the water's edge. About 40% of the pot was reconstructed in the MCR laboratory in Kenora then it was sent to Henry Hodges, director of the Art Restoration and Conservation Programme at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, for further restoration. Hodge's students reconstructed about 70% of the vessel using the original sherds and filled in the remainder with acetate, decorating the artificial areas with a distinctly different but blending pattern compared with the original.

The vessel is 28 cm high, 30 cm in diameter at the widest part of the body and 21 cm in diameter at the mouth. The walls are about 8 cm thick throughout the vessel (Figure 2). As already reported by Pelleck (1980:25), the vessel is decorated with exterior punctates 1 to 1.5 cm apart, 5.4 to 6.6 mm wide, 11.1 to 15.5 mm long and 1.5 to 2 cm below the lip. They raise interior bosses. The rim is short, about 3 to 3.5 cm high and the lip is flat and smoothed. A series of oblique cord-wrapped paddle-edge impressions encircle the interior edge of the lip, about 1.5 cm long and spaced 2.5 to 3 cm apart.

The entire exterior is impressed with a fabric creating a linear weave pattern from lip to base. The threads of the vertical warp are about 3 mm wide and are spaced immediately beside each other at the rim but are stretched 3 mm apart at the widest part of the body. The threads of the horizontal woof, slightly thinner than the warp, appear to encircle the warp threads (Figure 3). The impressions are not distinct so it is unclear whether further cross-threads are involved and whether the warp and woof are twisted or flat. The weave may be a relative of Saylor's "simple linking" (1978:56).

The vessel is classified as a Clearwater Lake Punctate type of

Selkirk Ware (Hlady 1971), dated tentatively in Northern Manitoba to AD 1500 - 1780 (Hlady 1970:112). It is probably a product of the Woodland Cree (ibid:114). The Berens River pot will be displayed in the Lake of the Woods Museum in Kenora.

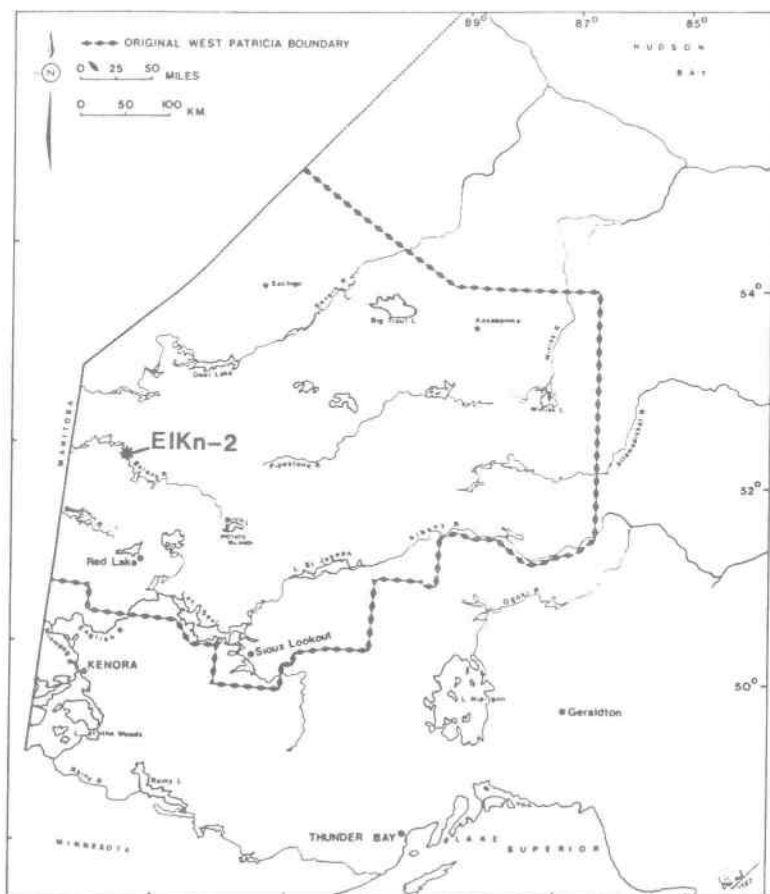


FIGURE 1: The Boot Site (E1Kn-2) on the Berens River north of Kenora.

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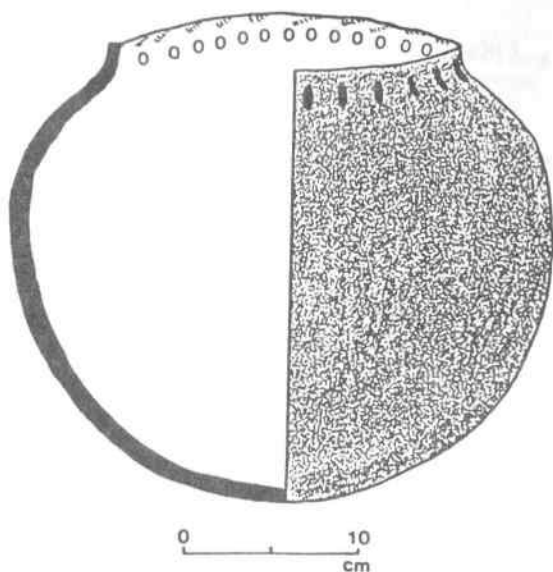


FIGURE 2: A Clearwater Lake Punctate Type of Selkirk Ware, probably the product of Woodland Cree.

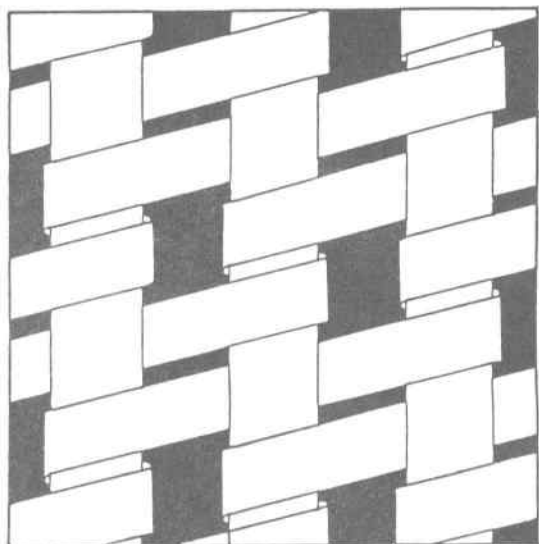


FIGURE 3: The fabric visible on the Selkirk vessel - a straight warp with wound woof.

* * * * *

ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN "SPHINX"

If you saw the movie "Sphinx" you may have wondered about some of the faces in the scenes of tourists visiting major Egyptian sites. It seems that the movie makers were not able to hire many actual tourists as "extras", the real tourists being on too tight a schedule, but some of the R.O.M. archaeological crew, en route to the Dakhleh Oasis, were in Cairo at the time, and obliged by acting as tourists for the film. Others were recruited from embassy staff.

In the movie, a beautiful young lady archaeologist makes good by bettering Howard Carter, providing exciting, if rather implausible entertainment. If the movie has a message to those participating in the O.A.S. trip to Egypt, it is surely to stick with the group, and not wander off too far alone.

FOR SALE

A set of AARO's, Nos. 2,3,8,10-36. \$300 for the set.
Wanted: AARO 1892-3 (publ. 1893) and AARO 1893-4 (publ. 1894).
Contact: Dr. Jerry Melbye, Erindale College, Univ. of Toronto.

"ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES IN ARCHAEOLOGY"

The McMaster Anthropology Society 7th Annual Symposium was held in Hamilton on February 21, 1981. Following are abstracts of the papers presented.

* * *

Zoological Inference from the Archaeological Record: An Example From the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Pat Sutherland, Department of Anthropology, McMaster University.

Archaeology is often portrayed as a discipline which draws heavily upon studies in the natural sciences for the purposes of cultural and environmental reconstruction. Less frequently recognized is the potential role of archaeology in contributing to knowledge in the natural sciences.

The Dawson caribou, Rangifer tarandus dawsoni, endemic to the Queen Charlotte Islands in northern British Columbia, has been described as one of the least known Canadian mammals. Its taxonomic status has been a matter of some debate, particularly because only a few specimens exist in scientific collections and the animal which was last observed in 1908 is now believed to be extinct.

Archaeological investigations conducted on prehistoric shell middens on the Queen Charlotte Islands have yielded additional information on the skeletal morphology of the Dawson caribou such that inferences concerning its evolutionary history on the Islands are now possible.

* *

John Yeigh Pottery: Environmental Considerations.

Rita Michael, Consulting Archaeologist, Hamilton, Ontario.

When John Yeigh with his family immigrated to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania, he was given a lot which he considered as "being a very bad one, or so poor I do not like it". As a farmer and potter he required four essentials: a good and close source of water; clay; and wood. He also needed to be near his market and on a good transportation route. All of these he found on Lot 8, Concession 6, Burford Township, Brant County in 1802.

Local folk-lore does not record precisely that Yeigh was a potter, but a farmer who "in the midst of towering pines...was not long in making the forest yield to the axe."

In the fall of 1980 the site was investigated archaeologically. Evidence of a kiln, house and/or workshop and a well was revealed. The site lies very close to highway 53, so close in fact, that widening of the highway in the recent past may have destroyed some of the site. Today the site yields a tobacco crop every other year, and lies exposed to the elements and depredation of the plough.

* *

Environment of the Late-Archaic in Southern Ontario.

John H. McAndrews, Department of Botany, Royal Ontario Museum and Department of Botany and Geology, University of Toronto.

Fossil pollen analysis of Holocene sediment shows the vegetation of the deciduous forest region to have been relatively stable. However, the adjacent mixed conifer-hardwood forest was drastically altered 5,000 years ago when the predominant hemlock all but disappeared owing to an epidemic disease.

The McIntyre site, dated at 3,700 years ago, is situated in the mixed forest adjacent to Rice Lake. It is almost surrounded by wetland and separated from the lake by an impassable marsh, a most unlikely site location by modern standards. Fossil pollen and seed analysis of cores from the marsh show that between 5,000 and 1,400 years ago the site was adjacent to open water supporting wild rice beds. Thus the late Archaic McIntyre site people had immediate access to wild rice.

Excavation and flotation at the site by R. Johnston yielded about 7,500 charred seeds of which R. Yarnell identified one possible wild rice seed. This suggests that either the inhabitants were not using wild rice or that they did use it, but the charred seeds were not preserved. Our experiments indicate that charred wild rice seeds are unusually fragile and that this accounts for the general dearth of fossil wild rice at this and other sites.

The spread of wild rice at Rice Lake 5,000 years ago corresponds with a rise in water level attributable to postglacial isostatic rebound. It also corresponds with a change in sediment type perhaps reflecting altered water quality linked with the disappearance of the acid hemlock litter.

* *

The Satchell and its Environment.

Ian T. Kenyon, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and James H. Payne, University of Toledo.

Satchell is an Archaic period complex characterized by the use of lanceolate and stemmed projectile points made of coarse grained rocks. Occupying a land area of about 50,000 sq.km., the Satchell complex is found in S.W. Ontario, S.E. Michigan and N.W. Ohio. This paper studies the locational patterns of Satchell sites in two separate areas. S.W. Ontario and N.W. Ohio. In both areas Satchell sites are seemingly associated with oak forests and oak savannas. This finding is consistent with two alternative hypotheses:

- 1) That the Satchell "culture" had a "narrow spectrum" economy focussed on the resources of mast-producing forests, or
- 2) that Satchell was not a separate cultural entity but rather a specialized assemblage (perhaps a "seasonal pose") used by certain Archaic cultures which hitherto have not been considered as being related to Satchell.

* *

Catchment Analysis of the Slack-Caswell Site.

Susan M. Jamieson, Department of Anthropology, McMaster Univ.

Catchment analysis of the Ontario Iroquois Slack-Caswell site can be visualized as a series of rings. The innermost ring, one kilometer around the hamlet, provided most subsistence products and some toolstone resources within a specific land/riverine environment. The outermost ring, five kilometers from the site, encompassed a cluster of toolstone outcrops. Nearby sites, also of late Middleport date, exhibit a similar subsistence catchment pattern with diminished emphasis on toolstone acquisition. Although this pattern determined site location on the landscape, it would appear not to determine spacing between sites.

* *

Environmental Perspectives in Southern African Archaeology.

Morgan Tamplin, Department of Anthropology, Trent University.

Archaeology's changing view of the relationship between culture and environment is reviewed within the framework of Southern African archaeology.

Recent interpretation of both Stone Age and Iron Age cultural systems must be seen in the context of changing paradigms and research strategies.

The implications of these new viewpoints are discussed in the context of ongoing research in eastern Botswana.

* *

Environmental Interpretations of the Catfish Creek Survey Data.

Dana Poulton, Museum of Indian Archaeology.

This paper deals with the preliminary findings of a survey of the Catfish Creek drainage in East Elgin County conducted during the summer of 1980. The body of data comprises 126 sites ranging from Early Paleo-Indian to Prehistoric Neutral. Aspects highlighted include the correlation between Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic sites and fossil beach ridges, the significance of Early Woodland site clustering, the distribution of Glen Meyer sites on the Norfolk Sand Plain and the abandonment of the Sand Plain by the Neutral.

* *

Ecological Approaches. A Challenge for Ontario Archaeology.

Ron Williamson, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, and Rob Phil, Museum of Indian Archaeology.

Recently there has been much diversity in the way archaeologists have chosen to examine the relationship between culture and ecology such that some definitions have led to rather limited interpretations. It is only through adequate environmental

reconstruction and deduced resource scheduling that hypothetical constructs can be considered prior to the formation of dynamic models applicable to settlement-subsistence sub-systems.

* * *

Looks Like a Good Paradigm, But Will it Float?

William A. Fox, Historical Planning and Research Branch, Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

A range of those difficulties inherent in the ecological approach, from a philosophical, sampling, recovery, and interpretative standpoint are summarized. In an attempt to provide a tangible product, data are presented regarding the time and expense required for eco-fact recovery/processing and analysis.

* * * * *

THE THOROLD SITE

Dr. William Noble, of McMaster University, spoke to a most interested audience at the recent meeting of the Joseph Brant Archaeological Society, in Burlington on March 23rd., on the Thorold site.

After a review of the evolution of the McMaster archaeological program and of sites previously excavated, as well as the problems they posed, the speaker ably demonstrated that many of these had correspondence with the Thorold site.

The Neutrals are now seen as a Chiefdom, a unique political confederacy combining a number of tribal or distinguishable units. One of these was the Niagara tribe, previously known principally from early map references and from an ossuary near St. Davids, which was discovered, and looted, in 1909. The Thorold site is the first known village of these people, and from its 8½ acre size, probably the major village during the circa 1615 period. As such its salvage prior to development for residential housing is a matter of satisfaction, a major contribution to the evolving understanding of the Neutrals, and the archaeological record of Ontario.

CHINESE FIND OLDEST MUMMY ... The Toronto Star, Feb. 19, 1981

Chinese archaeologists have unearthed what is probably the oldest mummy in the world -- a beautiful young woman with blonde hair hanging to her shoulders as it did 6,470 years ago.

The body was found last year at the site of the ancient city of Loulan in a remote and arid region of northwest China where caravans to Europe later passed, the official People's Daily said.

B O O K R E V I E W S

Archaeology of Eastern North America, Vol. 8, Fall 1980.
Ann Arbor: Eastern States Archaeological Federation. 137
pp., illus. Single issue, members \$10.00, non-members
\$12.00.

Eight papers, presented in a symposium held at the 1978 Eastern States Archaeological Federation Conference in Belle Mawr, New Jersey, are introduced here as "The Canadian Connection". The papers, two of which deal with the Archaic Period and the remainder with the Middle and Late Woodland of southern Ontario, are published in the Archaeology of Eastern North America in an effort to represent all regions in the Eastern Woodlands culture area. Taken together, the papers are lucid, well documented and reflect very well, indeed, on the current state of archaeological research in Ontario.

Ian Kenyon's report on the George Davidson site, a Middle Archaic "Broadpoint" campsite located near the mouth of the Ausable River, adds to the very short list of excavated and dated Archaic sites in southern Ontario. This is complemented by Arthur Roberts' "Geographical Approach to Southern Ontario Archaic" which uses statistical analysis to classify the physiographic locations of a number of pre-ceramic sites located at the western end of Lake Ontario. His conclusions, that these sites are consistently situated on well drained locations within 60 metres of a small stream or spring, are duplicated at Kenyon's George Davidson site.

A paper by Clark Sykes analyzes the relationship between the practice of slash and burn horticulture and the life span of Iroquoian villages while Mima Kapches discusses "Wall Trenches on Iroquoian Sites", features thought to have served to insulate and drain the longhouses.

Phillip J. Wright discusses a remarkable collection of 39 partial and complete pottery vessels recovered from the bottom of Charleston Lake west of Brockville. The pots, found near Red Horse Lake Portage, after which the site is named, were identified as Middle and Late Woodland vessels which can be duplicated in nearby sites. William Fox, in a paper entitled "Miskwo Sinnee Munnidominug", which, we are mercifully informed at the outset, means "Red Stone Beads" discusses the origin, manufacture and distribution of this artifact type commonly found in Historic Petun village sites.

David Johnson reports on the "McKenzie or Woodbridge Site", a single component Late Ontario Iroquoian site located at Woodbridge and finally, OAS members will not want to be without

a printed copy of Martha Latta's paper on the Logan and Beeton sites, so lucidly presented at a meeting of the society last fall, and here published as "Controlling the Heights: The Iroquoian Occupation of the Albion Pass Region".

Dennis C. Joyes

Northern Ontario Fur Trade Archaeology: Recent Research.

Archaeological Research Report #12, Historical Planning and Research Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1980. Edited by C.S. "Paddy" Reid. 219 pp., illus., \$5.00.

This publication covers various papers, site reports and pictorial reports of fur trade sites in northern Ontario. Current and previous research in the fur trade keeps geographically to the Historical Planning and Research Branch's three areas designated Northwestern, North Central and North-eastern, Ontario. Included are graphs, diagrams and photos of the sites and of artifacts found in them. There are quotations, obtained from the Hudson Bay's archives in Winnipeg, from journals covering various posts or forts of the company.

This is certainly of interest to anyone wishing to find out what has been accomplished in research into the fur trade as related to archaeology.

Margaret Brennan

ARCHAEOLOGICAL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have registered for 1981 for the Toronto and Niagara areas. Licencees planning work in these areas should contact the Society's office for further details.

All volunteers to date are certainly available weekends, possibly during the week, and have their own transportation and camping equipment. Some offer considerable previous experience.

Members wishing to be recorded on the Volunteer Log should contact the O.A.S. office -- (416) 223-2752.

EGYPT TRIPS

A second trip to Egypt is announced for November 28th to December 12th, 1981. The first trip, October 31st to November 14th, created so much interest that there is the possibility of a large crowd. If the second date is of interest to you, and you prefer a smaller party, contact the O.A.S. office for further details.

Both trips are exclusive to our group and space on them may be reserved only through the O.A.S. office. Costs to the operator are rising rapidly but our prices remain firm. The second trip is at the same price as the first, \$1,568 basic for 14 days, and represents incredible value and will undoubtedly prove to be the travel bargain of a lifetime.

NEWS FROM THE MANITOBA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

We have received a letter from Philippe Trottier, Past President of the Manitoba Archaeological Society, assuring us in the strongest possible terms that his organization is not only well but thriving, with a number of new and exciting programmes which he recommends to the O.A.S. We quote from his longer letter:

"Firstly, we print and sell calendars portraying scenes of prehistoric daily events (a copy was enclosed, and it is a handsome product). As a break-even venture (with no cost to us) it provides the public with a tangible product which will give them some familiarity with one of the topics embraced by archaeology -- the reconstruction of prehistoric lifeways.

"Secondly we produce a one-half hour biweekly T.V. program covering various topics pertaining to archaeology in Manitoba. In this fashion we avail ourselves to the public right in their own livingrooms. The cost of this program is minimal. These efforts have been encouraged by both amateur and professional alike in this province.

"Clearly there is a need to educate the public for now the public interest is needed more than ever what with the recent call for public participation on the Federal Cultural Policy Review which includes considerations of "past cultures". There is no time to sit on one's laurels with a smug 'I'm alright Jack' attitude. We need the public to speak out on archaeology now. Our Society is ready and prepared to assist those who are not and to act on their behalf."

This is reassuring news! As I noted in my earlier references to the Manitoba Archaeological Society (Arch Notes 80-5:3-4), the O.A.S. has had a long history of good working relations with its sister societies in the neighbouring provinces and states. We take serious note of their doings and their problems; these may well be ours tomorrow, and so I am relieved to learn that my interpretation of Mr. Trottier's article erred in its assessment of the seriousness of the situation in Manitoba.

As I noted before, we wish them well and we look forward to many more years of useful discussion and cooperation with the Manitoba Archaeological Society on behalf of Canada's archaeological resources. As Mr. Trottier observes, this is a goal which requires all of our efforts.

Martha A. Latta

PRYOR MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL FIELD SCHOOL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH PROGRAM

JULY 8 to JULY 15, 1981

Sponsored by: University of Alberta, Edmonton and University of
Maine at Orono.

The Pryor Mountain International Field School and Archaeological Research Program was established in 1977 to provide advanced undergraduates and graduate students with training in the recovery, analysis, and interpretation of data pertaining to prehistoric adaptive strategies in a mountain environment. Each year, students, instructors, a cook, a lab supervisor, and excavation supervisors pitch tents at the mouth of a spring high in the Pryor Mountains of Montana. This scenic national forest base camp provides the facilities for seminars and labs and as a departure point for surveying and excavating the numerous caves and rock shelters in the area. Weekends are free for excursions to attractions such as the Bighorn Recreation Area and Yellowstone National Park. Nearby towns provide a variety of laundry, banking, food, entertainment and postal facilities.

1981 research activities will involve a survey to locate new cave and rockshelter sites and the excavation of previously opened sites. One of the most important mid-altitude archaeological sites to be excavated is Crystalsin Cave where five cultural levels have been identified. A rich record of mountain sheep remains, about 2000 years old, is being used to investigate mountain sheep procurement. Excavation will also be continued at False Cougar Cave, a high altitude site rich in Holocene and late Pleistocene cultural materials. Three hundred meters to the west of this site is a natural animal trap cave containing a record of vertebrate remains. This site will also be excavated during the 1981 season.

Application to the field school should include a vita outlining educational background and previous experience plus names of two references (include address and telephone numbers) and should be sent to: Dr. David Young, Dept. of Anthropology, Alumni Building 004 A, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, U.S.A. Students accepted into the field school program will be sent registration forms for admission to the University of Alberta, that must be returned to: Mrs. M.J. French, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta, by May 8, 1981.

The total cost to the student for this program will not exceed \$600 (Canadian); this includes tuition, food and laboratory supplies. Students will be invoiced directly by the University of Alberta for tuition; funds for food and laboratory supplies will be collected in the field on June 8. A limited number of scholarships may be available. Experienced persons interested in supervising an excavation crew should indicate this interest in the

contd. on page 24

ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN ARCHAEOLOGY

by William A. Fox

While the ecological approach to archaeology is much in vogue these days, few researchers appear willing to acknowledge the tremendous obstacles facing anyone attempting to reconstruct past environments and human activities, let alone the relationship of one to the other. Descending through levels of abstraction we might begin by noting that there is no agreement between scholars as to the degree to which various former human groups were influenced by or themselves influenced the natural environment. Nor is there agreement, given an ecological frame of reference, as to whether the appropriate unit of study is the individual or the various systems in which individuals or groups functioned.

Ignoring the preceding academic "cake slicing" and returning to the world of dirt and stones and bones, we confront the *archaeological site* in its multitude of forms. Choosing a five acre Iroquoian village as a hypothetical study unit, it would be fair to assert that few archaeologists have the opportunity, motivation or perhaps, the right to excavate such a site in its entirety. Consequently, a sample area is usually selected for investigation.

At present there is only one published study available addressing sampling strategies as applied to the problem of obtaining representative collections of any artifact or ecofact (carbonized botanical remains, animal bone, etc.) class from our village. This is Bellhouse and Finlayson's (1979) article in the Canadian Journal of Archaeology. Their results were informative and important; however, the study dealt only with ceramics which had been recovered through screening middens on the Late Prehistoric Southern Division Huron Draper village. The degree to which their results can be applied to other periods and Iroquoian groups or even to other artifact or ecofact classes in middens is at present unknown. Studies are now underway involving the sampling of a variety of artifact classes within longhouses using the Draper village data. What this means is that we know very little about how to obtain representative artifact and ecofact samples from Iroquoian villages, let alone any other type of site.

Returning to our hypothetical village and granting our investigator the ability to develop an adequate site sampling strategy, our intrepid archaeologist may be faced with yet another hurdle - a corollary to the former, but none the less a problem. Aware of the most advanced recovery techniques available and the resultant manpower requirements, our investigator may realize that she does not have the time, personnel and/or money to recover "everything" from every "undisturbed" feature - let us say sub-plough zone pit. Again a sampling strategy must be devised which will produce as complete and representative a body of data as possible.

Virtually no information is available concerning appropriate methods of drawing pit samples from within longhouses or of selecting fill samples within pits. Even given "total" recovery of all

artifacts/ecofacts within a pit, we do not know what human activities they represent. This is due in part to the fact that while we can identify pit "types" - or believe we can, we have little understanding of the depositional processes that led to the filling of these features. Regarding the sampling of a large Type 1 "storage" pit feature in a hypothetical longhouse, a recent and unpublished study by John MacDonald undertaken on the Glen Meyer Yaworsky hamlet indicated that in order to ensure representation of all floral taxa (as represented by carbonized seeds) one had to undertake flotation of all pit fill. No partial sampling strategy could be identified which would guarantee representation of all taxa, due to the low density and unpredictable loci of carbonized seeds. Again, the applicability of these data to other pit types, sites, etc. is unknown at present.

Our investigator now realizes that since total pit fill flotation is impossible, then some potential information must be lost forever. But what is this magic process called *flotation*?

It is the most effective artifact and especially ecofact recovery technique readily available to archaeologists at present. This "sophisticated" process consists essentially of dumping archaeological site soil into water, collecting the material that sinks in a 2mm. mesh screen and collecting the floating debris in finer mesh screens. There are a wide variety of methods, machines and even liquid media in which this can be accomplished. The technique is time-consuming - .63 litres of pit fill can be processed per minute (on average) using the relatively rapid SMAP machine (and we have little experimental evidence on which to assess the recovery rate of this our best available technique). Since it requires two people to operate existing flotation systems, and "storage" pits can range in volume from 30 to over 1500 litres, and there can be many such pits on a five acre Iroquoian village ... well, you can imagine the time and manpower demands facing our probably under-funded archaeologist!

Some appreciation of the relative efficiency of flotation recovery as opposed to traditional $\frac{1}{4}$ " screening of archaeological deposits can be gained through experiments undertaken during the Force site (a 13th century Iroquoian village) rescue excavations in 1978, where a little over 1600 litres of fill from 51 features was "floated". Janet Cooper (1980) in her Force site faunal analysis found that while the identification rate of bone elements below class was much lower for floated as opposed to $\frac{1}{4}$ " screen samples (due to the small and fragmentary nature of much of the bone recovered by flotation) nevertheless, 95% of the elements identifiable to class were being missed in $\frac{1}{4}$ " screening, as were 89% of the elements identifiable below a class level. That's a lot of information being lost!

Rudy Fecteau in his Force site archaeobotanical analysis found that 76% of the pits floated produced carbonized botanical remains, while none of the screened pit fill produced any! The abysmal screening recovery rate seems to have been due to the

small size of the corn remains and the few pits producing nut shell fragments (4/51 - 8%) which, due to their durability and consequent size, can more often be recovered in $\frac{1}{4}$ " screening. Nevertheless, the above information is clear cut, if not shocking, and is corroborated by recovery data from other sites.

Mention should be made of the additional difficulties encountered in analyzing and interpreting those ecofacts recovered by our brave archaeologist once they have been delivered to various specialists, such as faunal analysts. These difficulties can be technical in nature, involving incomplete reference collections and the variable preservation of organic remains, or theoretical, concerning problems in equating ecofact quantities with formerly existing food volumes. A number of articles describing some of the difficulties inherent in ecofact interpretation have been published over the past decade.

The truly formidable nature of the quest for an accurate perception of man's past environment and activities, as well as an understanding of how the two interrelated, should be more than evident by now. While much remains to be learned regarding site and feature sampling, as well as artifact and ecofact recovery techniques (not to mention the contribution of soil chemistry, etc.), the only chance for archaeologists to obtain an accurate ecological perception of the past is through the use of the most effective data gathering techniques available. One should never lose sight of the fact that the hypotheses and theories formulated concerning man's past can be no more accurate than the data on which they are constructed, or to use the old computer adage, *garbage in garbage out!*

Reprinted from K E W A newsletter of the London Chapter, O.A.S. March 1981, 81-3.

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contd. from page 21

initial application letter. A maximum of 15 students will be accepted.

Students will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the project area. Participants are responsible for their sleeping gear, tents and personal items. A professional cook will prepare meals for project members and all field equipment will be provided. A packet of detailed information will be sent to all those requesting additional information and/or acceptance into the field school program.

* * * * *

THE MYSTERIOUS STRUCTURES ON THOMPSON ISLAND

by David Arthurs

Skimming over the waters of Lake Superior, the Jet Ranger helicopter approached the north end of Thompson Island, one of the chain of islands lying off the north-west shore of Lake Superior, 25 kilometres south and east of Thunder Bay. Slowing as he came in over the tree tops, the pilot lowered the aircraft into a tiny clearing in the centre of the island. The helicopter landed gently on the uppermost of a series of terraces of water-rounded cobbles, seven metres above the lake. These were created through violent wave action at a time when Lake Superior stood at levels much higher than today. In contrast to the brilliant yellows and oranges of the October forest that crowded up against the edges of the clearing, the terraces were a monotonous grey-green colour, barren except for the lichen that encrusted the rocks.

Scattered here and there across the terrace was the evidence that at some time, for some reason, others had visited this bleak and desolate spot. A few metres from the helicopter's float was a large circular pit, three metres in diameter and nearly a metre in depth. It had been constructed by extracting cobbles from the crest of the beach terrace and piling them about the excavation to form a wall about 50 centimetres in height. On the north-east side this wall was breached to form an entrance-way into the structure. Farther along the terrace, and on the one below, similar pits could be seen.

There were fourteen features in all, twelve of which were pits. Ten were circular or oval structures one to one-and-a-half metres in diameter, and about a half-metre deep. One was a very small, shallow pit, apparently associated with one of the larger ones, and one, the large structure already described, three metres in diameter and almost a metre in depth. This structure had a low wall surrounding it and a doorway facing toward the north-east. Also observed was a cairn-like construction of rocks and an unusual deposit of coarse sand, rectangular in shape and measuring four-and-a-half by two metres in size, on the lowest terrace a short distance away from the pit. As the crew examined, measured and photographed each in turn, the same questions came to mind as have occurred to all who have come across these strange structures - who built them? Why were they constructed? And when?

The series of elevated beaches on which the structures lie forms a saddle between two bedrock knobs near the northern end of the island. The uppermost of these relief and strand lines lies about seven metres above the present level of the lake. Certainly the location of the site was not conducive to habitation. The island lies almost ten kilometres off the protected harbour of Sturgeon Bay, and to the east a twenty-five kilometre stretch of open water separates it from Isle Royale. The island itself is little more than a rock ridge jutting above the waters of

Lake Superior. Six kilometres in length, at its widest point, it is only about 500 metres across. On the lakeward side, exposed to the furious storms of Superior, it consists of narrow rocky beaches and low bluffs, while on the landward shore are precipitous cliffs. A rounded bedrock ridge forms the backbone of the island, and the cobble terraces lie against it on the lakeward face. These beaches were formed during the Algoma phase of Lake Superior some 2,000 years ago (P. Kor, personal communication).

The rock structures of Lake Superior are perhaps the most enigmatic examples of Ontario's ancient heritage. Since they were first brought to the attention of archaeologists by Colin MacMillan, then of Marathon, Ontario, in the mid-1950's (McIlwraith 1959b:9) these strange structures, popularly known as "Pukaskwa Pits", have been the subject of considerable interest in academic and popular circles alike. Manifested in a variety of forms, from circular and oval pits, to pavements of small stones, to immense rectangular structures with walls over a metre in height, they have been discovered singly, or in clusters of as many as seventy or more, in over fifty locations along the north-eastern shore of Lake Superior (cf. McIlwraith 1958; 1959a,b; Emerson 1959a,b; Dawson 1975; Conway 1975). Although the eastern shore of the lake appears to have the densest concentration of sites, a number of rock architecture sites have been discovered in the western Lake Superior basin during the past few years, and with the discovery of the pits on Thompson Island in 1976 (Newton and Engelbert 1977:34-35), their distribution now encompasses the entire north shore of the lake. Although those on the cobble beaches of Lake Superior are unique, they bear similarities to structures found across the Canadian Shield country from the east coast to the prairies, and constitute part of what has been termed a "Shield rock building tradition" (Tyyska 1973).

The age and function of the Lake Superior rock structures has been the topic of spirited debate for over two decades. Many researchers have assumed that the structures were built when the terraces upon which they lie were the active beaches of Lake Superior. This assumption was largely based on the apparent ages of the few artifacts found associated with the pits at Red Sucker Point, near Marathon, Ontario.

"The findings were invariably sparse but a certain pattern was evident. The lower beaches and the rectangular structures inevitably produced a small sprinkling of pottery, flint chips (a few worked), clam shell and a few burnt bone fragments. The intermediate beaches yielded no pottery but still provided a sprinkling of flint chips, shell, and a little bone. Beach 16 produced an Old Copper Culture projectile point in situ. The uppermost beaches produced absolutely nothing." (Emerson 1959b:71)

The pottery, to which Emerson attributed a maximum date of 3,500 B.P. in his preliminary study, consists of a few plain and cord malleated body sherds of laminated construction. Although in

southern Ontario (the area with which Emerson was most familiar), cord malleated ceramics are relatively early, in northern Ontario they occur late in the ceramic sequence, approximately 850-450 B.P. The copper projectile point, believed to be some 5,000 years old (Emerson 1959b:752), is actually a very late style, that might even be historic. That no artifacts were recovered from the uppermost beaches is not all that unusual, considering the general paucity of cultural materials on these sites. Though not conclusive, this casts some doubt on the hypothesis of a direct correlation between the ages of the beaches and the structures upon them. Geomorphological evidence argues against any great antiquity for the sites as well. If the structures are of any great age, and were associated with active beaches, there should be evidence of water action on the earlier ones. Perhaps as long ago as 8,400 B.P., water levels in the Lake Superior basin fell to a stage lower than the present, and then rose again, reaching their maximum in the Nipissing-Great Lakes phase after 6,000 B.P. (Prest 1975:271-275). Many geologists believe this could have occurred as recently as 4,000 B.P. Any structures built before the Nipissing maximum, therefore, and any artifacts associated with them, would have been submerged at the Nipissing maximum and reworked by the waves. There is no evidence that this has occurred on any of the documented pit sites. These two lines of evidence indicate that the rock structures are probably of post-Nipissing age, and most likely date late in prehistory.

The paucity of artifactual material associated with the structures also makes interpretation of the function of the rock structures exceedingly difficult. On a habitation site, the archaeologist can make inferences as to the function of the site, or of different areas of the site, on the basis of the types of tools and other materials found, and their relationship with one another. On a cobble architecture site often the only clues as to the function of the structures are the pits themselves. In the interpretation of the structures, archaeologists and laymen both have entered into the debate. Among the suggestions offered over the years are that the structures represent temporary storm shelters for prehistoric canoeists, hunting blinds, voyageur's rifle pits, or the graves of warriors long since violated by tomb robbers. Other interpretations include fish smoking huts, sweat lodges, menstrual huts, and permanent habitations (cf. Piper 1924:200; McIlwraith 1958; 1959:40; Kushnick 1958; Emerson 1959b; Dawson 1975). None of these has gained any particular support, however, in the absence of artifacts to substantiate them.

The interpretation most widely favoured today (largely, unfortunately, on the negative evidence of lack of artifacts), is that the structures served a ceremonial function. This view was first advanced by Emerson in the late 1950's, who drew parallels with the religious practices of historic Algonkian cultures:

"Vision seeking was general among Woodland Indians such as the Ojibwa and Cree. They sought out isolated, desolate areas, usually high ground, to fast and meditate and commune

with the supernatural. Such individuals went alone in isolation. The desolate stone beaches of Red Sucker Point provide admirable conditions calculated to aid in stimulating hallucinatory visions. It is a locale of wild wind, thrashing waters, enveloping fog, crashing lightning and bone drenching rain, a place of isolation and depravation. And certainly there are plenty more favourable hunting, fishing, camping and habitation sites at many locations not too far distant. What other explanation than vision-seeking would account for the presence in such a place and for such long periods of time of men who left such meagre cultural evidence of their presence?" (Emerson 1959b:72)

As to the question of who built the structures, they have been ascribed to the authorship of the Ojibway, the Cree, the Sioux, the historic voyageurs, and even (though this is least likely of all), the Eskimo. To determine the ethnic affiliation of the structures will be most difficult as even habitation sites, with their wealth of pottery and other artifacts, cannot at present be attributed to any specific ethnic group without some degree of uncertainty.

As can be seen from the preceeding discussion, the problem of interpreting the rock structures of Lake Superior is far from being solved. Each new site discovered, however small, adds yet another piece of information to the puzzle, whether it be regarding the function of the structures, their age, or their distribution. In the case of the Thompson Island site, it represents the most westerly and southerly of the pit sites now documented in the Canadian Lake Superior basin, and demonstrates that these unusual architectural features are not confined to the eastern part of the lake. Work on this site and others in the area in future may be of considerable help in determining the temporal range of the structures, and perhaps their archaeological cultural affiliation as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

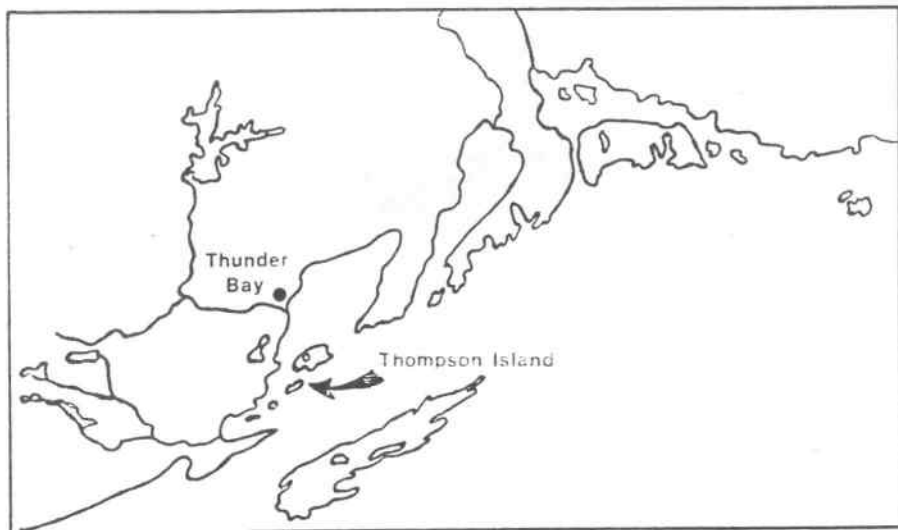
This project was part of a reconnaissance flight of the Thunder Bay Islands undertaken on October 2, 1980. The author would like to thank Phil Kor and Bruce Thacker of the Ministry of Natural Resources for arranging the flight during which the Thompson Island site, DhJg-1, was investigated. Thanks also to our pilot, Murray Bale, of Dominion Pegasus Helicopters, who took us to the site and set us gently down.

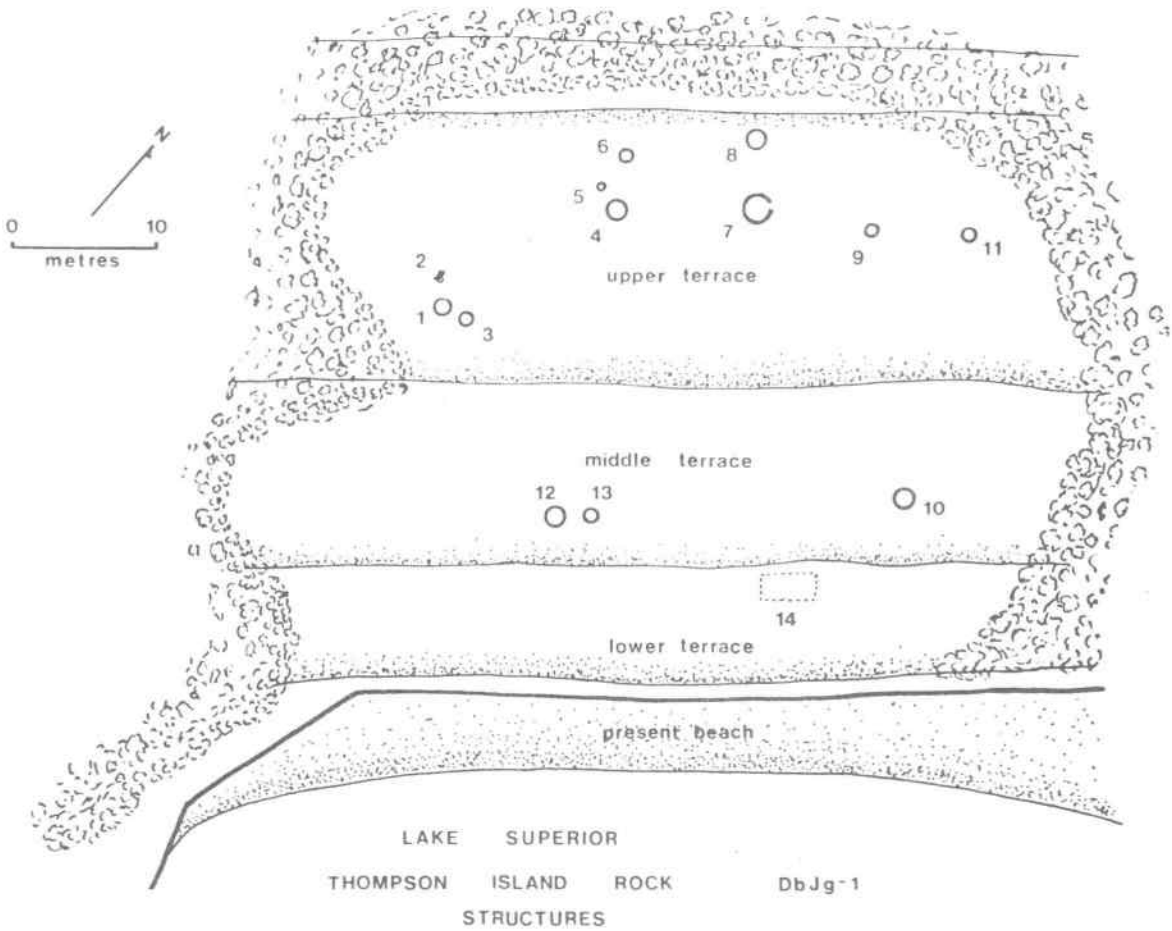
The archaeological work upon which this article is based was performed under license 78-D-0236.

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 Arch Notes

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Executive: President: David K. Riddle (807) 475 1447
 Vice-President: Dave Hunt
 Secy./Treasurer: Michael McLeod
 Newsletter: WANIKAN - Editor: Mike McCann
 Meetings: Usually at 8.00 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month, excluding June, July & August, in the Aesthetics Lounge, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay.
 Chapter Fees: Individual \$4.

WINDSOR CHAPTER

Executive: President: Garth Rumble (519) 735 2714
 Vice-President: Steve Strudwick
 Secy./Treasurer: Peter Reid
 Newsletter: SQUIRREL COUNTY GAZETTE - Editor: Peter Reid
 Meetings: Usually at 7.30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, excluding June, July & August, in the Windsor Public Library, 850 Oullette Ave., Windsor.
 Chapter Fees: Individual \$3.

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Publications: Scientific Journal: ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGY
Newsletter: ARCH NOTES

Meetings: Usually at 8.00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of
the month, excluding June, July and August, in
the McLaughlin Planetarium (Lecture Theatre),
Royal Ontario Museum, Queen's Park, Toronto.

Fees: Individual \$10; Family \$12; Institutional \$20;
Life \$200. Chapter Fees extra.
