

NEW TRENDS IN THE EARLY ONTARIO IROQUOIS TRADITION**C. S. PADDY REID***ABSTRACT*

At the tenth-century Boys site, a Pickering branch village in Ontario County, some specific environmental and/or behavioural factors are evident in the dietary practices. In addition, comparisons with other early Ontario Iroquois sites, including a synchronic Glen Meyer village, demonstrate a number of both exclusive and dominant ceramic traits which typify the Pickering branch. Possible adaptive response to a shortage of chert in the area is also apparent, and a palisade construction which is unusual among Ontario Iroquois villages reported on to date appears at Boys. One of the two excavated structures is believed to have served a specialized—possibly ceremonial—function.

INTRODUCTION

The Boys site (A1Gs-10), first excavated and reported upon by Frank Ridley (1958), and subsequently further examined by an O.A.S. salvage project in 1972 and McMaster University in 1972-73, has been radiocarbon dated at 975 A.D. \pm 120 (Reid, 1974: 73). In this brief report a number of site-specific aspects are presented and compared to other early Ontario Iroquois sites; and general trends in the early sequence are evaluated in the light of the Boys data.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The general topography of the village (Figure 1) is fairly typical of the Ontario Iroquoian pattern—ravines bound the site on two sides, with a small stream flowing through one of them to join Duffin's Creek, which in turn enters Lake Ontario about four miles to the south. The palisade configuration, however, is atypical, in that instead of surrounding the entire village the Boys palisade merely cuts off the head of the "peninsula" formed by the two ravines. In addition, the structural aspects of the palisade are at variance with other sites: instead of the normal single rows of pickets such as those at Miller (Kenyon, 1968: 12-13), Bennett (Wright and Anderson, 1969: Figure 3), and Van Besien (Noble, 1973: 9-10), the Boys palisade consists of a linear myriad of posts, often paired, and is much shallower in depth than the other sites mentioned with a mean depth into subsoil of only 8.2 inches; too, the posts are smaller, averaging 2.2 inches in diameter. Diameter and depth averages for Miller are 3.5 and 22 inches respectively (Kenyon, 1968: 17), for example. The Boys palisade (Figure 2) may well have served as much as a wind break and snow fence as a defensive structure, lying as it does directly athwart the prevailing winds.

The house patterns also offer interesting interpretational problems: the first structure excavated—House 1—is typically Iroquoian with medial hearths, storage pits, interior roof supports/sleeping platform fastening supports, and what may be an early example of the storage area at one end frequently found in later longhouses (Figure 3); however House 2 is radically different in its internal structural arrangements, and also in terms of the materials recovered. This structure (Figure 4) contains no interior sleeping platform supports and is partitioned across its centre, in addition the arrangement of hearths and pits is unusual, with all the pits in one "room" and the majority of these in one cluster on the east side (Figure 4). Also, no faunal remains whatever were found in this structure, unlike House 1, and none of the few pottery rimsherds had carbonized food remains on the interiors, again unlike House 1. Four main

possibilities are entertained for this house: (1) it is ceremonial in function; (2) it is a food storage building; (3) it is a temporary structure; and (4) it was completed shortly before the abandonment of the village and thus was never fully utilized. The fourth possibility is unlikely as it presupposes considerable lack of planning—even stupidity—on the part of the builders; the third is not likely due to the sheer size of the structure; the second is very unlikely as no faunal remains whatever were recovered despite the screening through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch mesh of the backdirt; leaving the first hypothesis as the lone acceptable one, certainly the layout of the interior points to a social use for the structure, although the evidence must remain tenuous at best.

LITHIC TECHNOLOGY

An outstanding characteristic at Boys is the high incidence of usage of chert flakes: of the entire lithic assemblage *unused* chert flakes constitute only 13.9% at Boys, whereas at Porteous the figure is 76.2% and at Van Besien 70.7% (Noble, 1973: 34 and 47); Kenyon (1968: 28) refers to only "modest quantities of chipping detritus" at Miller; Wright and Anderson report 4,313 gms. of unused flakes at Bennett (1969: 63). Also at Boys there is selection of flakes for use which favours length and width, but not thickness, as is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
CHERT FLAKES METRIC DATA

Length (mm.)		Width (mm.)		Thickness (mm.)	
range	mean	range	mean	range	mean
<hr/>					
Utilized					
11.0-41.4	21.5	10.0- 23.1	15.1	2.2-6.6	3.8
Unused					
10.5-45.0	18.2	5.3-27.5	12.7	1.0-6.0	3.4

Obviously at Boys, and possibly at Miller too, the raw material is relatively scarce and the artisan is forced to economize by utilizing a maximum number of chert flakes. The obvious explanation is a distance factor: Boys and Miller are at a considerable distance from the chert sources of the Niagara Escarpment, whereas Bennett and all of the Glen Meyer villages are close. A possible second factor might be reluctance on the part of Glen Meyer peoples to trade large quantities of this vital raw material with Pickering villages, and, as shown below, trade goods are reaching both Boys and Miller; such a hypothesis would add further support to J. V. Wright's theory of a Pickering conquest of Glen Meyer (Wright, 1966; Wright and Anderson, 1969), providing a partial motive.

TRADE PATTERNS

Trade in the early Ontario Iroquois period is limited, but present. At Boys a single native copper awl displayed virtually identical trace elements to another from the Blackduck component of the Sinclair Cove site (Cile-4) on the north shore of Lake Superior (T. A. Conway, personal communication). Also present is a core of opaque Ohio chert, but most striking is a small piece of hammered native silver. Copper at Miller (Kenyon, 1968: 31) and at Bennett (Wright and Anderson, 1969: 60) attest to this limited trade pattern throughout the Pickering sequence, which is paralleled in the Glen Meyer sequence (Noble, 1973: 51).

CERAMICS

With the addition of the Boys data a number of temporal trends in Pickering are either confirmed or reinforced, and at least six attributes are useful for distinguishing between Pickering and Glen Meyer branch ceramics.

Exterior Rim Decorative Techniques

In the Pickering sequence (Table 2) dentate stamping is very strong early in the sequence and decreases over time; push-pull and incising increase over time and push-pull as a motor habit possibly becomes incised/trailed in the Pickering-derived Iroquois Linear and Ontario Horizontal types of the middle Ontario Iroquois Tradition (see Ridley, 1954, 1958; Wright, 1966: 49); linear stamp remains as an important minority Pickering technique over time, with some regional and temporal variance; and cording techniques are still something of an enigma.

Glen Meyer ceramic trends have recently been documented by Noble (1973) and, in contrast to Pickering, push-pull and dentate stamping are minor techniques. Linear stamping, plain rims, and cording techniques are all more prevalent in Glen Meyer than in Pickering.

Lip of Rim Decorative Techniques

The incidence of lip decoration decreases over time for both branches of the early Ontario Iroquois Tradition, however strong differences are evident here too. Dentate stamping, linear stamping, and push-pull grooving are strong in Pickering and virtually absent in Glen Meyer (Table 3); cording, and in particular corded grooves, are much stronger in Glen Meyer than in Pickering.

Interior Rim Decorative Techniques

The same general trends exist as for the exterior, with the important addition that incised criss-cross, scarce in Pickering, gains in popularity over time in Glen Meyer (Noble, 1973: 21) and may be a useful distinguishing minor technique separating the ceramics of the two branches.

Punctating and Bossing

Punctate segregated exterior bosses appear virtually unique to Pickering, and multiple rows of exterior bosses are far more frequent in Pickering than in Glen Meyer (Table 4). Interior bossing, on the other hand, is particularly Glen Meyer, and exterior bossing increases over time in Glen Meyer while decreasing in Pickering. In the case of punctate metrics (Table 5) Pickering interior and exterior punctates are consistently larger than those on Glen Meyer ceramics, and they increase in size over time while a corresponding decrease occurs in Glen Meyer. Distance apart is also greater in the Pickering sequence. Noble (1973: 20) has noted that punctating and bossing are among the most sensitive ceramic indicators of temporal sequence for the Glen

TABLE 2
PICKERING AND GLEN MEYER RIM DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES

Technique	PICKERING						GLEN MEYER					
	Miller		Boys		Bennett		Porteous		Van Besien		Goessens	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
Dentate stamp	5036	67.2	111	29.3	11	3.0	-	-	-	-	3	0.6
Push-pull	707	9.4	78	20.6	205	55.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Turtle suture stamp	584	7.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linear stamp	417	5.6	77	20.3	66	17.7	3	3.9	297	38.2	240	48.6
Punctate	361	4.8	9	2.4	19	5.1	-	-	6	0.7	13	2.6
Plain	348	4.6	24	6.3	3	0.6	9	11.8	95	12.2	43	8.7
Incised	37	0.5	9	2.4	35	9.4	7	9.2	175	22.5	19	3.9
Cord techniques	-	-	24	6.3	1	0.3	54	71.0	180	23.0	123	24.9
Crescent stamp	-	-	5	1.3	-	-	-	-	8	1.0	29	5.9
Dragged stamp	-	-	3	0.7	5	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beaded stylus	-	-	3	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Check stamp	-	-	2	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scarified	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fabric impressed	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comb stamp	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suture stamp (not turtle)	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	2	2.6	2	0.2	-	-
Fingernail impressed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.3	-	-
Combined techniques* (and "other")	-	-	30	8.1	27	7.3	1	1.3	12	1.5	24	4.9
Totals	7490	99.9	379	100.1	372	100.1	76	99.8	778	99.6	494	100.1

* Kenyon (1968) classified rims according to either "dominant technique" or "the one closest to the lip of the vessel", so a certain skewing of technique frequencies must be expected.

PICKERING AND GLEN MEYER LIP OF RIM DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES

Technique	Miller		PICKERING				Porteous		GLEN MEYER			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Dentate stamp	5366	69.8	134	35.4	13	3.5						
Plain	721	9.3	46	12.1	156	41.9	10	18.2	558	67.8	246	49.8
Turtle suture stamp	556	7.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linear stamp	417	5.4	97	25.6	89	23.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Punctates	35	0.4	5	1.3	21	5.6	-	-	21	2.6	23	4.7
Incised	7	0.1	1	0.3	-	-	14	7.2	90	10.9	96	19.4
Push-pull groove	-	-	33	8.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corded	-	-	26	6.9	2	0.5	29	67.3	110	13.4	61	12.3
Crescent stamp	-	-	5	1.3	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	27	5.5
Beaded stylus	-	-	4	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dentate st., incised groove-	-	-	3	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linear st., push-pull "	-	-	3	0.8	4	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linear st., notched lip	-	-	3	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dentate st., p-p groove	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Double push-pull grooves	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Push-pull groove, notched lip	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dentate st., notched lip	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Double corded grooves	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corded, notched lip	-	-	2	0.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Incised groove	-	-	1	0.3	13	3.5	1	1.8	17	2.0	8	1.6
Incised criss-cross	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	5	0.6	8	1.6
Incised, notched lip	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Double incised lines	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scarified	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comb stamp	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suture stamp (not turtle)	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corded groove	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5.4	14	0.5	11	2.2
Dragged stamp	-	-	-	-	6	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fingernail impressed	-	-	-	-	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linear st., 2 p-p grooves	-	-	-	-	6	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Smoothed punctate							16			1.9		
"Other"	577	7.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	11	2.2
Totals	7679	100.0	379	100.2	372	99.9	55	99.9	823	99.9	494	99.9

Meyer ranch; it would now appear that they are also sensitive indicators of Pickering/Glen Meyer ceramic separation.

Body Sherd Treatment

Notable is the high incidence of check stamping in Pickering, virtually absent in Glen Meyer (Table 6). Glen Meyer plain bodies decrease in frequency over time, whereas in Pickering they increase; ribbed paddle is a major technique in Pickering but minor in Glen Meyer; cording techniques are much more prevalent in Glen Meyer; and fabric impressing is also more frequent in Glen Meyer.

SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS

The most striking aspect of the faunal data from Boys is the great prevalence of fish—66% of the material recovered (mammals comprise 30.7%, birds 2.4%, and no other class exceeded 0.4%). For the Miller site Kenyon (1968: 24) had remarked on the paucity of large mammal bone, but at Bennett deer were very abundant (Wright and Anderson, 1969: 60). The fishing emphasis at Boys may reflect either dietary preferences (possibly because of an abundant supply), or an environmental factor may have precluded the taking of large numbers of deer—the remains of only five individual deer could be identified in the materials recovered, and no antler artifacts whatever are present in the artifact assemblage. At the De Waele site, a Glen Meyer village dating to the end of the eleventh century, this emphasis on fish is also apparent (W. A. Fox, personal communication), which would seem to suggest that environment is the causal factor; however at Van Besien, also a Glen Meyer village, deer comprise 48.2% of the faunal remains, and Van Besien is virtually synchronic with Boys (Noble, 1973), so an environmental cause seems to be ruled out. It would appear, therefore, that dietary preferences are operating in the early Ontario Iroquois Tradition, and that they can be detected archaeologically.

SUMMARY

The Boys site provides new data concerning the early Ontario Iroquois Tradition, filling in a portion of the Pickering sequence to provide a more complete chronology. Some apparently unique aspects of the village, especially the palisade and House 2, may reflect social factors. Ceramic comparisons outline distinct temporal trends within the Pickering sequence, and further confirm the separation of Pickering and Glen Meyer ceramics. The operation of possible dietary preferences cross-cuts the two branches and may indicate a closer relationship between the two areas than the archaeological separation into two branches suggests. Some future research priorities are suggested, especially the excavation of at least two more early-to-middle period Pickering sites, including substantial portions of the palisades and house structures—the uncovering of similar buildings to the inferred ceremonial structure at Boys would prove to be particularly interesting and exciting for Iroquoian archaeology in Ontario.

TABLE 4
PICKERING AND GLEN MEYER PUNCTATING AND BOSSING ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	PICKERING				GLEN MEYER					
	Boys		Bennett		Porteous		Van Besien		Goessens	
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Punctate segregated exterior bosses	79	20.8	38	10.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exterior bosses	60	15.8	92	24.7	2	2.6	130	15.8	125	25.3
Interior punctates	5	1.3	69	18.5	-	-	31	3.7	49	9.9
Exterior bosses, 2 rows	4	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Punctate seg. exterior bosses, 2 rows	3	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exterior punctates	1	0.3	-	-	2	2.6	16	1.9	5	1.0
Interior and exterior punctates	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exterior bosses, double punctate segregated	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interior bosses	-	-	-	-	20	26.3	23	2.8	11	2.2
Absent	225	59.4	173	46.5	52	68.4	623	75.7	304	61.5
Totals	379	100.1	372	99.9	76	99.9	823	99.9	494	99.9

TABLE 5
 PICKERING AND GLEN MEYER COMPARATIVE PUNCTATING AND BOSSING METRICS

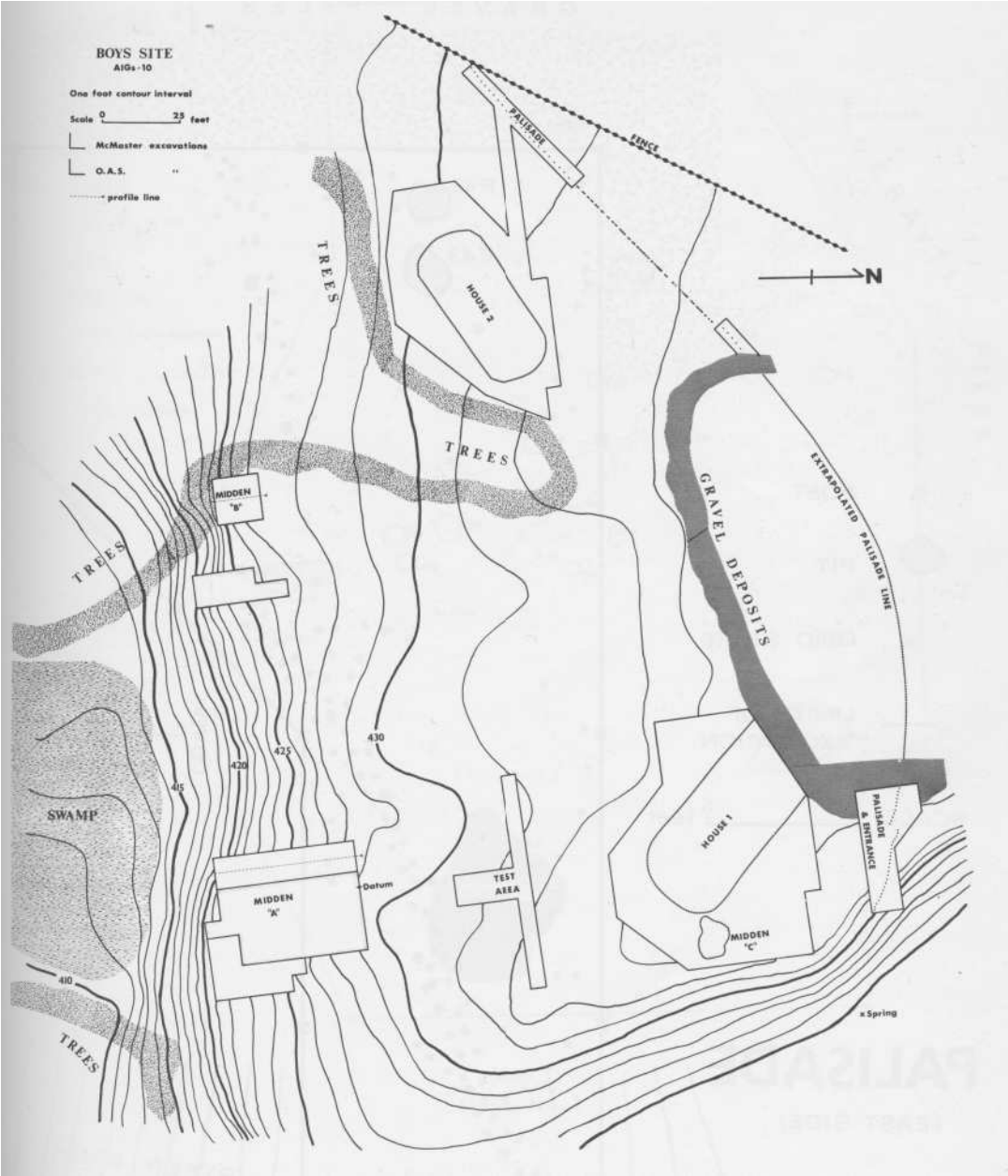
Mean measurements (mm.)	PICKERING		GLEN MEYER	
	Boys	Bennett	Porteous	Van Besien
Exterior punctates				
diameter	5.8	6.4	3.8	2.9
distance apart	16.1	19.0	10.8	13.8
distance below rim	21.2	23.1	20.0	24.2
Interior punctates				
diameter	4.5	5.5	2.0	3.3
distance apart	15.2	19.5	8.0	15.7
distance below rim	18.0	21.3	10.0	17.0

TABLE 6
PICKERING AND GLEN MEYER BODY SHERD SURFACE TREATMENT

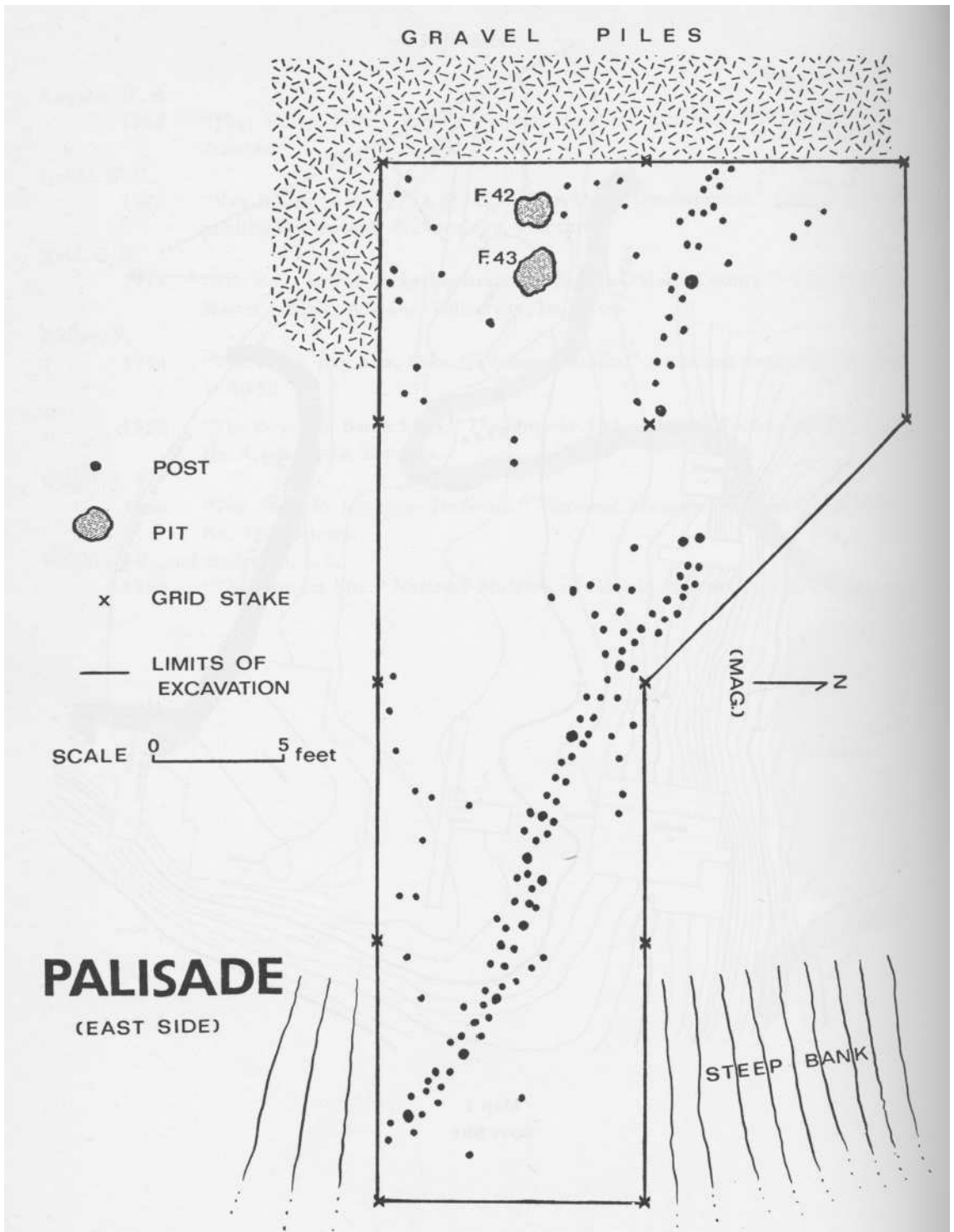
Treatment	Miller		PICKERING				Porteous		GLEN MEYER		Goessens	
	f	%	Boys f	%	Bennett f	%	f	%	Van Besien f	%	f	%
Plain	1273	44.3	1312	50.0	2457	51.9	274	30.0	131	32.6	189	10.0
Corded	1049	36.5	502	19.2	237	4.8	565	61.6	2090	51.8	810	45.0
Check stamp	551	19.2	287	11.0	221	4.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ribbed paddle	-	-	323	12.3	1842	37.6	-	-	30	0.7	5	0.3
Scarified	-	-	150	5.7	52	1.1	-	-	70	1.7	518	29.0
Fabric impressed	-	-	42	1.6	6	0.1	12	1.3	480	12.0	244	14.0
Scarified over cord	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.7	41	2.0
Incised	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	7.1	33	0.8	-	-
Totals	2873	100.0	2616	100.0	4905	100.0	916	100.0	401	99.7	1807	100.3

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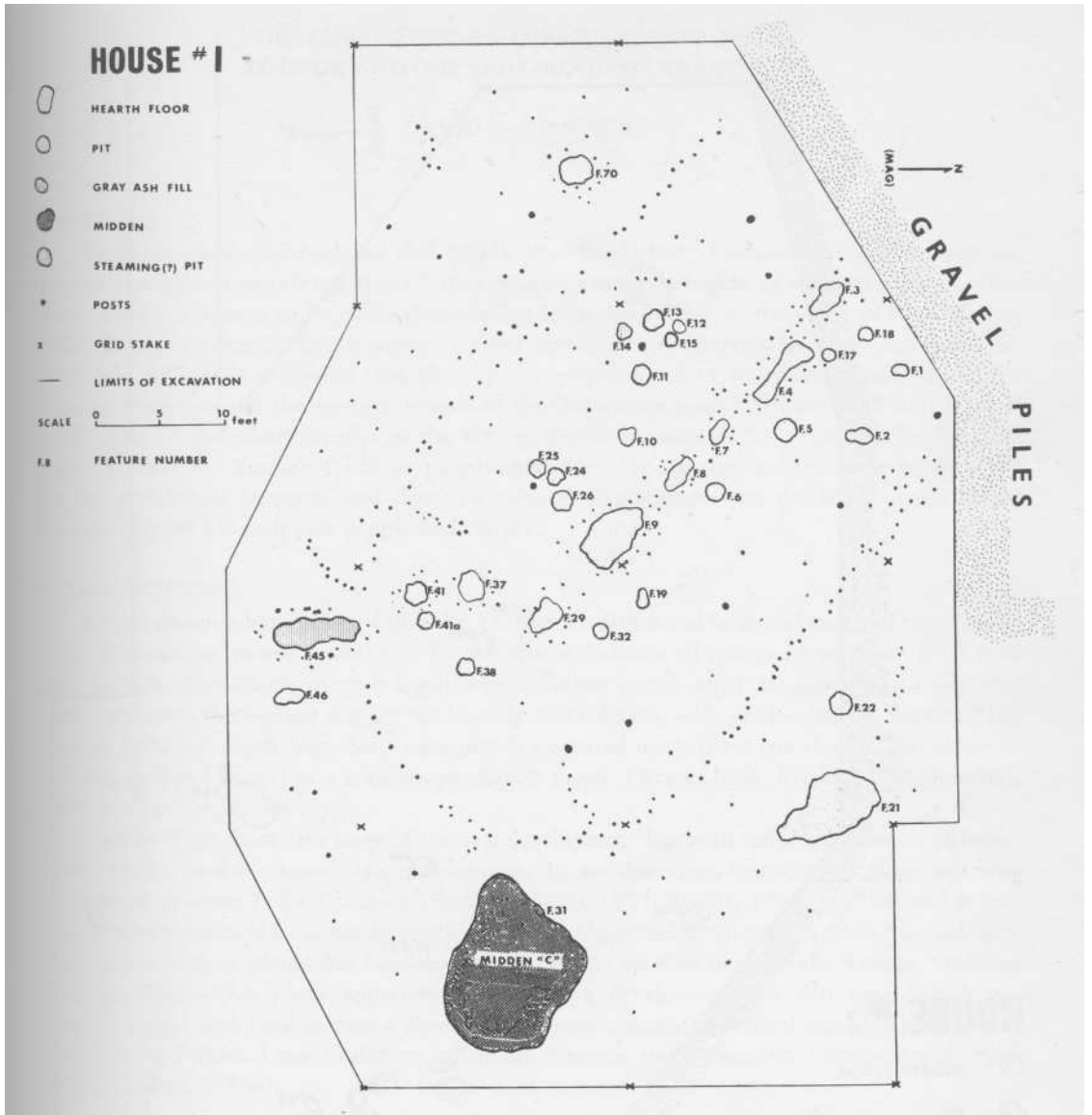
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Map 1 Boys Site



Map 2
Palisade (East Side)



Map 3
House No. 1

