

THE SHORT SITE : A PRELIMINARY REPORT

by

William S. Donaldson

INTRODUCTION

During the weekend of April 22, 23, 1961, The Ontario Archaeological Society carried out an exploratory excavation on the farm of Mr. Blake Short, Lot 10, Broken Front, Darlington Township, in the county of Durham.¹

This site, which lies within the town of Bowmanville, Ontario, was brought to the attention of the Society by Mr. C.M. Robinson of Oshawa, who discovered its existence in the spring of 1954 when he noticed chipped stone artifacts in the freshly ploughed field. These formed the beginning of his sizeable surface collection from this site.

THE SITE AND EXCAVATION

Extending some 450 feet north of Barber's Creek and 300 feet east of its tributary, the Soper, the Short site lies on relatively level ground some ten feet above the waters of these streams.

Immediately south of the site, Barber's Creek empties its waters into Lake Ontario through a small, marshy bay known locally as The First Marsh. In spite of its proximity to the community, several species of waterfowl still inhabit this marsh and trout swim the streams that feed it.

Since all but a narrow strip of land along the creek banks was under cultivation at the time of excavation, the scope of our work was necessarily limited and the eastern limits of the site had to be judged by a surface survey of the cultivated area.

Eight five-foot test squares were excavated to subsoil by trowel and brush in the uncultivated strip along the creek banks at the south-west corner of the site. This area was selected as the most likely to provide a meaningful sample since the greatest concentration of surface material lay just within the ploughed field at this point.

As Mr. Robinson's surface collection and the material from

1. The author is indebted to the late Mr. Blake Short and his family, whose co-operation in this endeavor have made this report possible.

our surface survey indicated, at least three cultural horizons were encountered. Unfortunately there was no clear separation of strata in the test squares excavated and classification of the artifacts depended on typology alone. Though this posed no great problem, it did deny us the supporting evidence of stratigraphy and the opportunity to determine whether or not each cultural horizon represented a single occupation.

With the exception of a possible hearth in one square at the extreme south-western corner of the site, no features were encountered during excavation and sterile clay subsoil was generally reached at a depth of seven inches.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

Bird, fish and mammal bones, mostly fragmentary and calcined, were scattered throughout the excavated area. Much of it, particularly the fish bone, was in too poor a condition for recovery. When this occurred, its presence and relative abundance was recorded in the field notes. The only vegetal remains encountered were half a dozen charred kernels of corn, found in close association with Iroquoian pottery.

The recovered artifacts fall into three general cultural periods: Woodland, Iroquoian and Historic. The latter, which began with the arrival of the first settlers in 1794, is well recorded elsewhere² and need not be mentioned here except to report that from pioneer ox shoe to modern cartridge cases, all phases are represented.³

The non-ceramic prehistoric inventory includes notched stone netsinkers, hammerstones, "pot-boilers", stone adzes and a wide variety of flint tools including projectile points, scrapers, choppers, drills and knives (Plate I). Most of these are Woodland in character and, as suggested by the abundance of flint chips and stone spalls, were probably completed on the site.

There was a paucity of worked skeletal material on the site. A bone awl and antler flaking tool were the only such items recovered during excavation. Both of these were broken and in a poor state of preservation.

In addition to the elbow sections from two Iroquoian pipes, the ceramic complex contains pottery of both Woodland and Iroquoian manufacture. The former is a grit-tempered, coil constructed ware ranging in colour from light buff to orange, and dark brown. There

2. Hamlyn, R.G., Lunny, R., and D.R. Morrison, 1958.

3. Through arrangements with Mr. Robinson and Mr. Forrest Dilling of Bowmanville, a display of artifacts from this site has been installed in the Bowmanville Historical Museum, Bowmanville, Ont.

are no collars on the slightly flared rims and several of the vessels have striae on the interior walls from grass or reed brushing. The techniques employed in decorating these vessels include: complex and linear dentation, rocker stamping, incising, punctation and cord impressing. One vessel had been malleated with a cord-wrapped paddle on the body area (Plate II).

Though grit tempered, the Iroquoian pottery has been constructed by the paddle-and-anvil method and is generally harder and less friable than the earlier ware. The rims carry short collars, usually with a convex interior contour, and both of the castellated rim sections in the inventory are the pointed variety. Body sherds are undecorated and smooth but all the rim sherds and most of the neck sherds carry incised linear designs (Plate III).

The combined Woodland and Iroquoian pottery inventory embraces only 26 vessels, 14 of which are Iroquoian. This is hardly enough to derive a meaningful coefficient of similarity to other sites in the province but, when considered with the rest of the recovered material, it does provide enough evidence for some preliminary conclusions.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Though individual specimens within the lithic series can be duplicated on a wide range of Woodland sites in Ontario, the bulk of the inventory is typical Middle Woodland. A perusal of the literature available to the author indicates that the Woodland pottery most resembles that from other sites in the province which have been equated with Point Peninsula 2 or 3 in New York State⁴ and for the time being we will so classify this occupation.

One vessel (Plate II, fig. h), with horizontal neck cording and a cord-wrapped paddle body decoration, might be considered proto-Owascoid in design but coil breaks and interior striae are quite evident and it does not seem out of place with the others.

The Iroquoian pottery compares favourably with that of the late Black Creek - Lalonde stage of development in Ontario and can reasonably be assigned to that period. The evidence suggests that the charred corn dates from this time as well.

It would appear we have a seasonal hunting and fishing station rather than a village site. The location is well suited for such a purpose and the artifact complex seems to bear it out. It is still too early to say how long or how often this site was used during each of the two prehistoric periods represented, but there is little doubt

4. Dally, R. and James V. Wright, 1955.
Emerson, J.N., 1954.
Ritchie, William A., 1949.
Ridley, Frank, 1954.

that these periods are Middle Point Peninsula and late Black Creek-Lalonde.

It is hoped that the resumption of work in the fall of 1961 will provide sufficient evidence to determine the full extent and nature of this site, which is located in an area where little previous archaeological research has been carried out.⁵

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5. A preliminary field survey in the summer of 1961 has revealed similar Iroquoian and Point Peninsula sites in the area, as well as an Archaic campsite and large Glen Meyer village.

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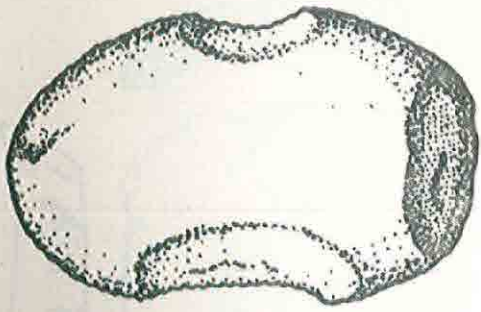
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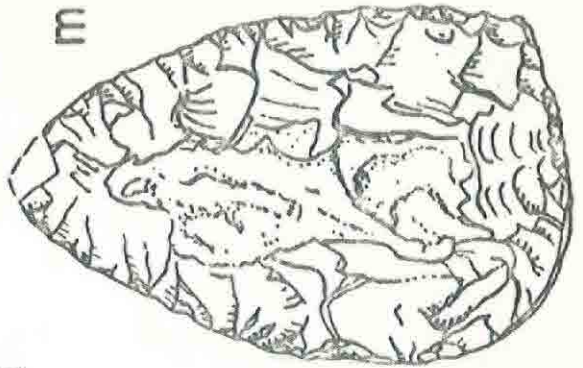
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ILLUSTRATIONS

- PLATE I. Chert and stone artifacts, Short site.
- PLATE II. Middle Woodland pottery, Short site.
- PLATE III. Prehistoric Iroquoian pottery, Short site.



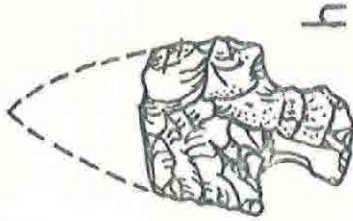
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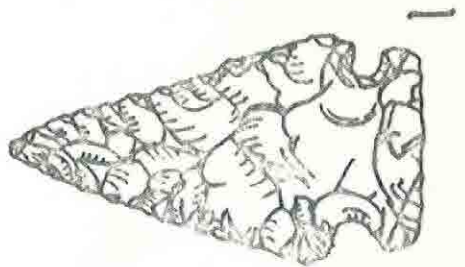
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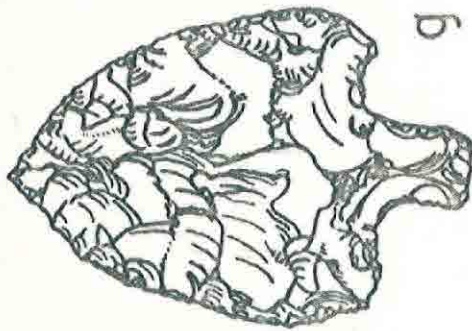
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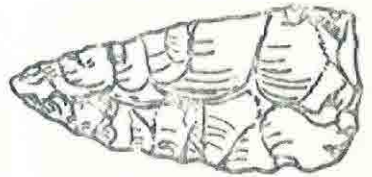
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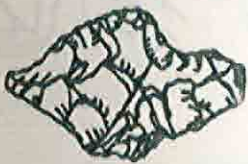
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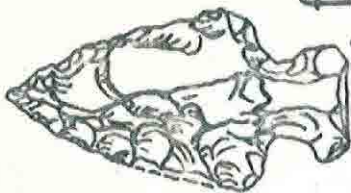
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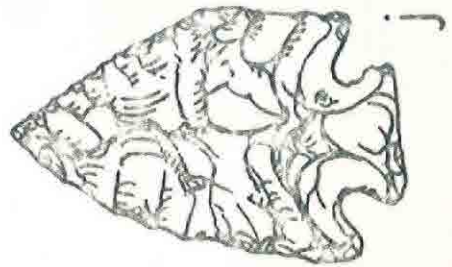
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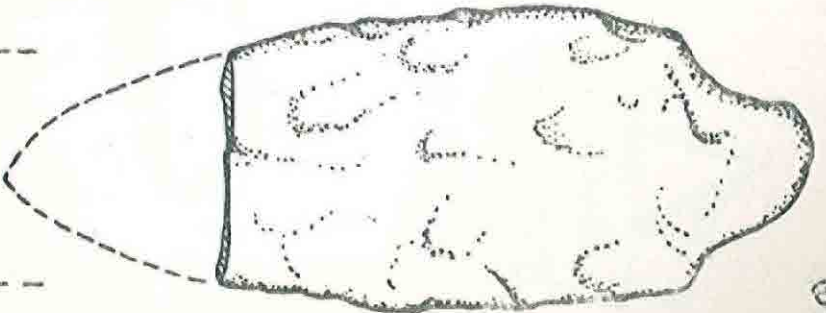
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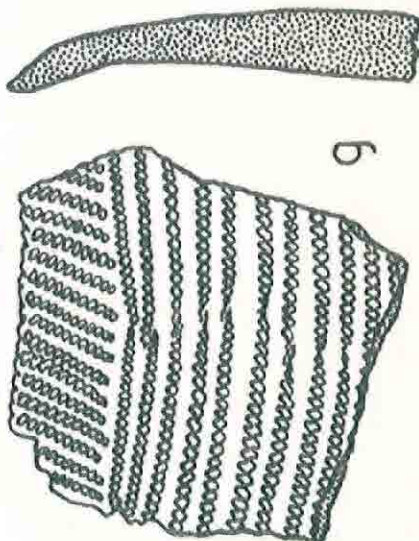
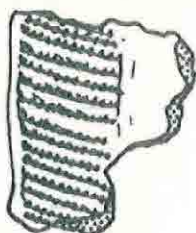
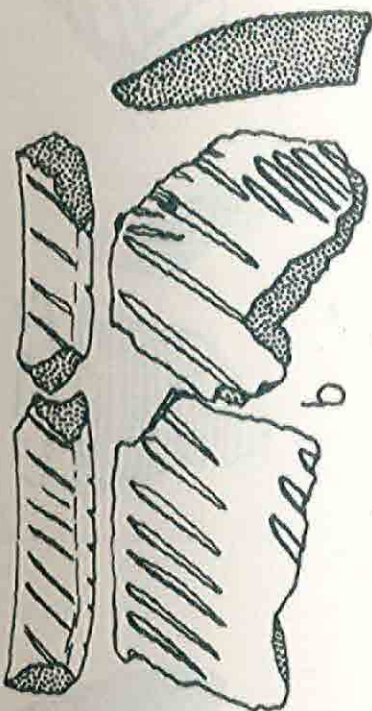
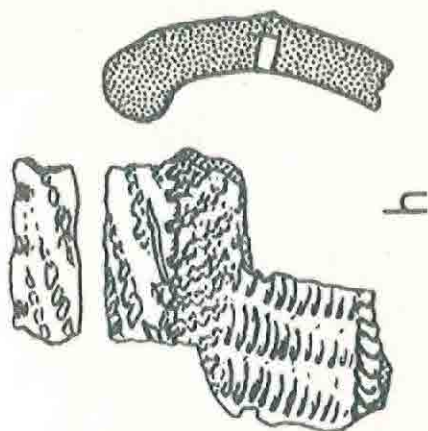
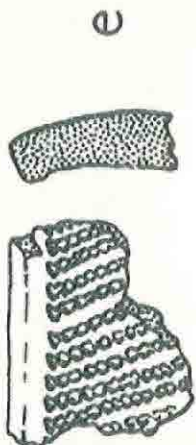
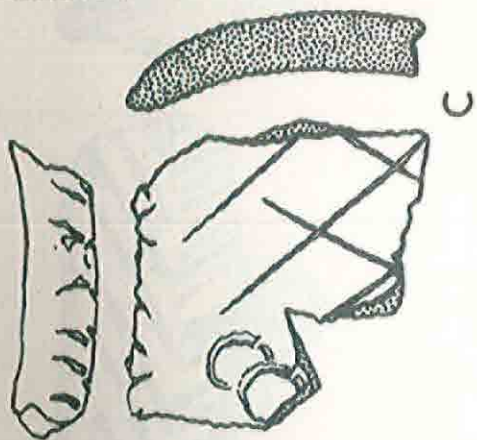


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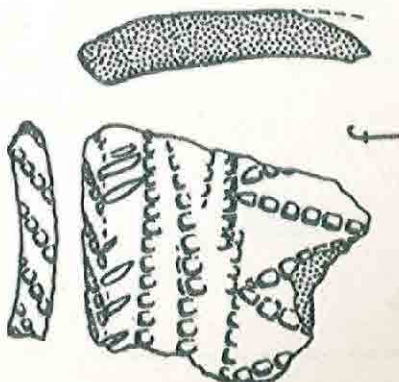
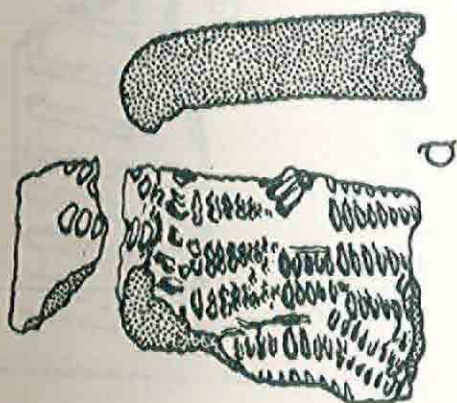


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