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Newsletter of

The Ontario Archaeological Society (Inc.)

A FLORAL FIRST FOR ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGY

by Annie Gould

ABSTRACT

This article describes and discusses the first floral impression reported from a prehistoric pot sherd in Ontario. Its implications for archaeology in general and the site in particular are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the ceramics from the Greaves site (BhGq-2) revealed that a Middle Woodland body sherd with a coniferous needle impression on its exterior surface had been recovered. This paper will describe this floral impression and will attempt an identification of its species. It will also discuss the impression's significance for the site and for the archaeological record. Finally, the paper will discuss the use of the impression in order to ascertain the environment and geographical area in which the pottery vessel was made.

The Greaves site was tested in 1979 under the direction of Roberta M. O'Brien, Regional Archaeologist for the South Central Region of the Historical Planning and Research Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation. The site is located at the junction of Kawagama and Bear Lakes on Concession II, Lot 8 of Livingstone Township, Haliburton County, Ontario (Figure 1). To date, the analysis of the artifacts has established that the site is a multicomponent campsite with Middle and Late Woodland ceramics and lithics, as well as Historic remains (Gould 1980). Unfortunately, there is no cultural stratigraphy present on the site and the Middle and Late Woodland ceramics were recovered at the same levels. This would indicate that all of the artifacts have been thoroughly mixed at least in the Ah or humus horizon from which the ceramics were recovered.

DESCRIPTION

The Middle Woodland body sherd (Figure 2) was screened from Level 4 (15-30 cm) of the south quadrant of square N12E2. The sherd is 9.4 mm thick, compact in texture, and tan in colour. It is abundantly tempered with crushed granite rock that is 1-3 mm in width and consists of quartz, feldspar and mica (in order of plentifulness). The sherd comes from a coil-built vessel as coils are visible in the sherd's cross-section. Both surfaces of the sherd have been treated. The exterior surface has been scraped by an implement that had a 1.0 mm wide, square-ended tooth while the interior surface has been scraped and then smoothed over.

The needle impression overlies and depresses the scraping marks on the exterior surface (Figure 3). It is flat, 12.8 mm long, 1.8 mm wide and has a petiole, plus a medial ridge that runs

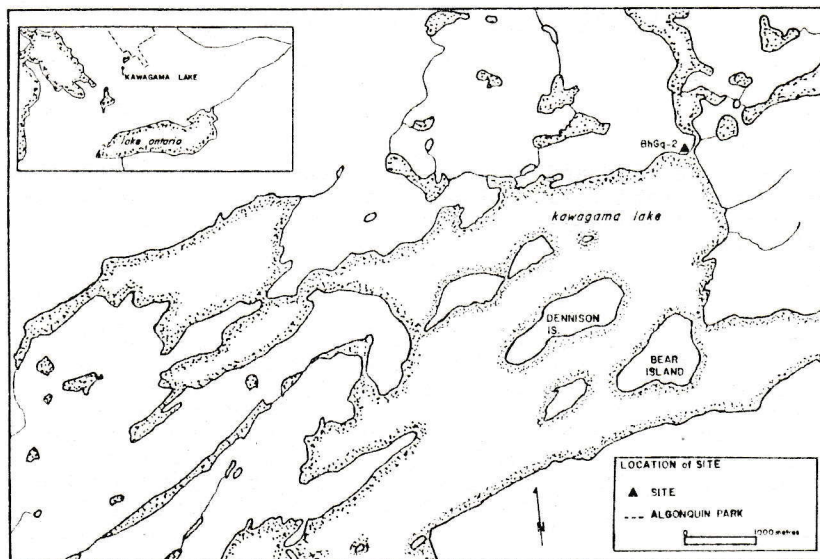


Figure 1 Location of Greaves Site

along its entire length. Unfortunately, the impression lacks the tip of the needle as the sherd has broken off at that spot (Figure 3).

The impression was compared to eight coniferous needles and their impressions belonging to the Department of Botany of the Royal Ontario Museum. As a result, it was found that the sherd's impression resembled the impressions made by the needles of Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) and Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) the most. Figure 4 shows both of these species' needles and their impression in plasticene while Figure 5 shows the positive mould of the sherd's impression. Both of the above species have needles that are flat and make impressions with the same petiole and medial ridge that are present on the sherd's impression. The needles are as wide as the sherd-impressed one and have length ranges into which the sherd impression would fit. Balsam Fir needles range from 12-25 mm in length and Eastern Hemlock needles are from 8-15 mm in length (McKay and Catling 1979:26).

The remaining six coniferous species compared with are Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Tamarack (*Larix laricina*), Spruce (*Picea*), Pine (*Pinus*), American Yew (*Taxus canadensis*), and Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). Eastern Red Cedar needles are too short (5-7 mm) while Eastern White Cedar trees do not have needles but have two types of scale-like leaves instead (McKay and Catling 1979:25,27). Tamarack and Pine needles are too long and narrow being 25 mm and 20-150 mm long, respectively (McKay and Catling 1979:27,29). Finally, Spruce

and American Yew needles lack the same morphological characteristics of the sherd's needle. Spruce needles are four-sided and lack the petiole (McKay and Catling 1979:30-31). American Yew needles have medial ridges on both sides which leave medial grooves instead of ridges in their impressions (McKay and Catling 1979:25).

DISCUSSION

The needle impression on the sherd's exterior probably resulted when the needle was accidentally pressed against the vessel after it had been scraped and while the clay was still moist. The needle remained imbedded in the clay until the vessel was fired whereupon it was burned out. This most likely occurred in the Middle Woodland Period between ca. 700 B.C.-1000 A.D. (Wright 1972:44).

The significance of this accidental incorporation of the needle into the sherd's surface is threefold. First, it is the only other culturally-associated floral remain recovered from the Greaves site besides two charred corn kernels (Zea mays) (Gould 1980).

The second reason the floral impression is significant is that it may, depending on the floral species involved, provide another variable which can be used to delineate the geographical area and environment in which the vessel was made. This assumes that the floral species involved lived in the same area and environment then as they do today. Regarding the Greaves site impression, if it is of a needle from an Eastern Hemlock tree then the vessel could only have been made in the Mixed Forest zone where that species resides (McKay and Catling 1979:26). However, if the needle came from a Balsam Fir tree then the vessel could have been made in either of the three vegetation zones where those trees are: Boreal, Mixed and Carolinian (McKay and Catling 1979:15-17). At this point other variables such as trading practices must be considered in order to decide in which zone the pot was made. According to Wright (1979:36,76), fragile goods such as pottery vessels would not have been taken by trading parties travelling great distances and would not have been involved in trading transactions that consisted of successive hand-to-hand arrangements. It is therefore likely that the pot would have picked up a Balsam Fir needle in the area used by the makers of the pot (the Mixed Forest zone) and not in the other zones from whence the pot could only have been traded (the Boreal and Carolinian zones).

The final reason the floral impression is significant is that it is the first one reported for Ontario archaeology (J.H. McAndrews pers. comm. 1980) and it is one of three accidentally impressed casts reported in the archaeological literature of North and South America. So far only two published accounts mentioning accidental floral impressions have been uncovered by the author with the assistance of J.H. McAndrews and F. King (pers. comm. 1980). R.I. Ford (1979:300) says that he and Dr. Doreen Ozker examined and identified a seed cast on the

interior of a Schultz Thick sherd as an Egg Gourd seed (Cucurbita pepo var. ovifera). The sherd came from Saginaw, Michigan and dates ca. 500 B.C. The other published account is by M.C. Zevallos, et al. (1977:385-389) in which they describe a charred kernel of maize (Zea mays) that had been imbedded in the exterior surface of a sherd of the Valdivia culture (4000-2000 B.C.) of southern Ecuador.

It is important to note that the small number of reports (mentioned above) on accidental floral impressions is probably not due so much to a rareness of the casts but to the lack of analysis time and or to the large size of ceramic collections on some sites that discourage researchers from looking for accidental floral impressions in addition to other diagnostic attributes.

CONCLUSIONS

Excavations at the Greaves site (BhGq-2) have recovered a Middle Woodland body sherd that has, on its exterior surface, the first floral impression ever noted in Ontario archaeology and the third accidentally-impressed one ever reported in the archaeological literature for North and South America. Analysis of the floral impression revealed that it is a coniferous tree needle that had been accidentally incorporated into the surface of the sherd between 700 B.C.-1000 A.D. (Wright 1972:44). It was compared to modern needle specimens and their moulds which showed that the sherd's needle could have come from either a Balsam Fir (Abies balsamea) or an Eastern Hemlock (Tsuga canadensis) tree.

The recovery of the floral impression is significant for three reasons. First, it is one of three culturally-associated remains recovered from the Greaves site (Gould 1980). Second, it becomes one of the few reported accidentally-impressed floral remains in the archaeological record. Finally, the identification of a floral impression from a site can provide previously unknown evidence of change in the climate of the area used by the site's people as well as new information on the subsistence patterns practiced there. However, the above was not the case for the Greaves site impression which only served to confirm an obvious fact: that the pot was made in the Mixed Forest zone where the Greaves site is located and where the site's people would have spent most of their time.

In conclusion, it is important for researchers to look for accidental floral impressions because they can add new information about the environment present at the site where the impression occurred.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Roberta O'Brien has been of invaluable assistance not only in the writing of the article but in the creation of the site report as well. As director of the excavation at the Greaves

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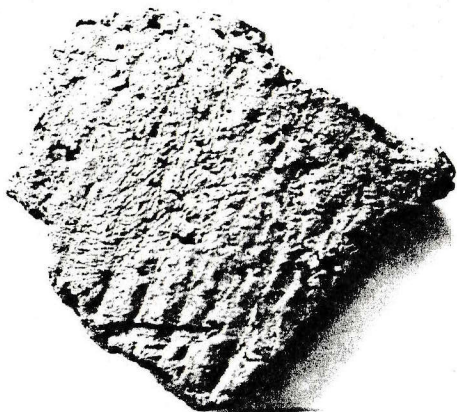


Fig. 2 Middle Woodland body sherd with floral impression.

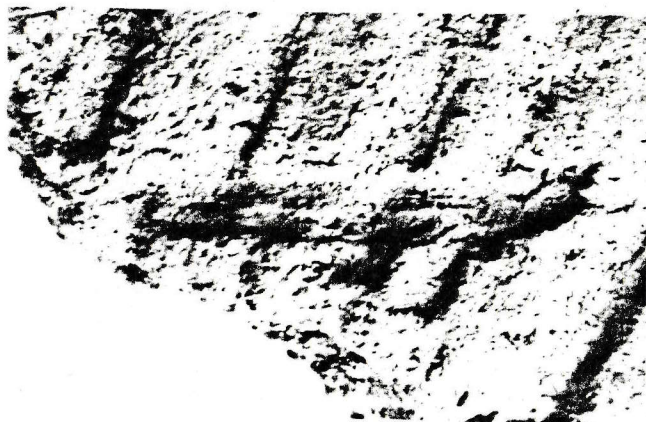


Fig. 3 Floral impression (enlarged 7 times)

Fig. 5 Positive mould (enlarged 2 times) of floral impression in plasticene.

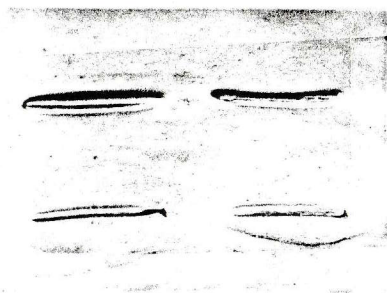


Fig. 4 Modern needle specimens (ventral surfaces up) and their impressions in plasticene (enlarged 2 times).
Left: Balsam Fir
Right: Eastern Hemlock



a floral first ...

annie gould

Arch Notes

site, she has provided information and advice vital to the writing of both the article and the report. She gave the author permission to use material from the report in this article and reviewed it as well.

Thanks must also go to J.H. McAndrews of the Royal Ontario Museum who assisted the author in her research of this article and also reviewed the manuscript.

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Photography for the article was done by Robert Park and the maps were drawn by the author and Marc Garneau.

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STOPPERED

Ray Coneglio of Hamilton, a bottle collector, has had to curb his rummaging through farms and old dumps for valuable bottles because the Ontario Heritage Act of 1975 makes it illegal for unlicensed archaeologists to dig up anything buried in the ground before 1940.

from the Globe & Mail, May 2, 1981

THE PETUN AS SEEN IN 1981 -- A GEORGIAN BAY
FUR TRADE COOPERATIVE

by Charles Garrad

... a paper presented at the O.A.S. 1981 Symposium ...

ABSTRACT

Ontario historians and archaeologists have sometimes portrayed the Petun as an Iroquoian tribe from the Bruce Peninsula, evolved from the same Middleport base as the Eries, Hurons and Neutrals, and in the early Historic Period entirely dominated by the Huron, whom they served as an agricultural satellite, principally providing tobacco, and by whom they were excluded from the fur trade.

While any reading of the primary sources suggests weak points in this construct, the accumulating archaeological evidence entirely refutes it.

Petun archaeology seems to suggest five possible migrations, and the directions from which they came. It shows the subsequent blending of the arrivals, including non-Iroquoians, to form a new social mix that the French viewed as a tribe; their acceptance of European trade goods; and their heavy exploitation of such fur-bearing mammals as the beaver.

- - -

As the time available fortunately does not allow a detailed overview of the present state of Petun archaeology, I will concentrate on two facets of Petun participation in the fur trade. The first is the evidence for fur procurement from the presence of the bones of fur-bearing animals, especially the beaver, in excavated faunal samples; the second is that for the purpose of exploiting local beaver, a number of distinguishable separate protohistoric migrations converged into one area, mainly Nottawasaga Township, to become, collectively, the historic Petun.

I assume that the presence on a site of European trade goods is sufficient prima facie evidence for assigning a protohistoric or historic time for the site; and that the presence in the faunal samples of specific mammal bones is sufficient prima facie evidence for the trapping, hunting, or acquisition by any suitable means, of that mammal.

In June, 1888, David Boyle visited Nottawasaga Township to record Petun archaeological sites. According to the Archaeological Report published in 1889, he found "ten village sites, twenty-one ossuaries (and) one fortified place". In August, 1902, Father A.E. Jones visited the "fortified place" on the William Anderson farm near Duntroon, which he described in the 1902 Archaeological

Report, and again in his 1909 "Old Huronia", under the heading "Old Indian Earthworks". Both men were puzzled by the location of the earthwork in a stream valley rather than on a hill and the explanation lies in the fact that it was not the work of by-gone Indians but of by-gone beavers. I was shown this old beaver dam in 1961, then very much overgrown, and was able to find it again, with even more difficulty, a few weekends ago.

A search along the drainages in the Petun area for evidence of present and recent beaver is quickly and easily rewarded. Despite modern human population, traffic and activity, there is still a beaver population in Nottawasaga Township. If left alone to be fruitful and multiply, their numbers would increase rapidly. And left alone they were, for the many centuries before the arrival of European trade and contact. Evidence in the landscape for really old beaver dams, centuries old and more, may not be recognised easily, as they disappear into their surroundings. I know of one beaver dam barely recognisable as such today which I watched being built only a few years ago.

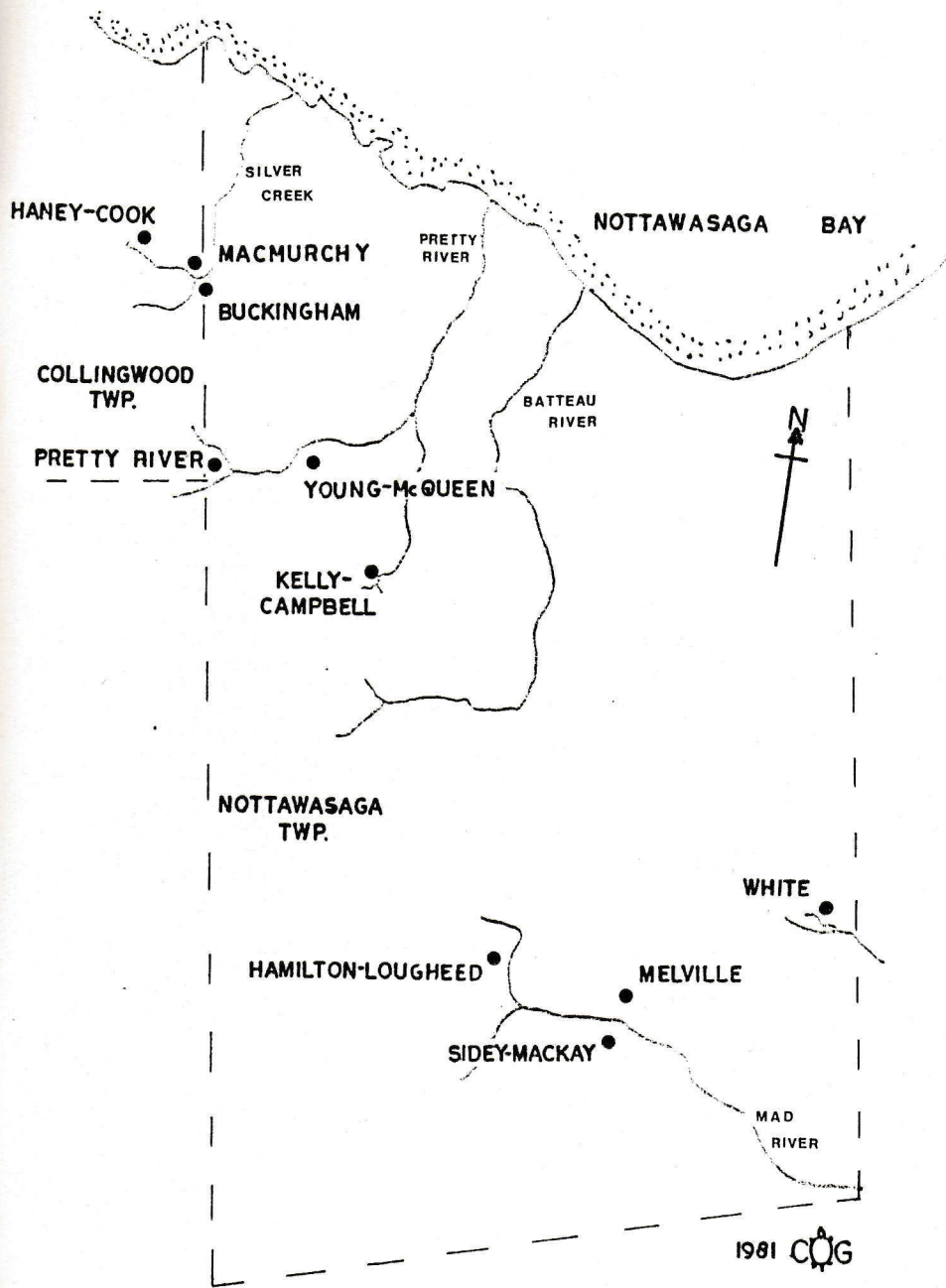
There appear to be no prehistoric Woodland Period sites in Nottawasaga Township, but in the Protohistoric, when European trade goods became available through native trade channels, to be paid for with furs, people arrived in considerable numbers. Consequently, all Petun area sites possess European trade goods and the bones of beaver and other fur-bearing animals.

In 1926, William J. Wintemberg excavated part of the Sidey-Mackay BbHa-6 site at Creemore, and in his posthumous 1946 report, these significant words appear:-

"Bones of mammals were the most plentiful, but whereas bones of deer are most abundant in collections from other Iroquois sites, in the Sidey-Mackay collection, bones of deer took second place. The species represented were beaver, Virginia deer, bear, domestic dog, woodchuck, wapiti (and more than a dozen others) ... Most of the bones of the deer, wapiti and beaver skeletons were present."

The apparent absence of European goods from Wintemberg's recoveries delayed recognition of the association with faunal samples in which the bones of beaver predominate. This absence was due to the use of unskilled casual help and the lack of screening during excavation. Further examination of the site during 1977 led to the recovery of a number of brass, copper and iron pieces of European origin, and a new faunal sample. This was analysed by Rosemary Prevec, who confirmed the dominance of beaver at 43% of the total identifiable mammalian recovery, and demonstrated that beaver skinning had occurred on the site.

The material culture, particularly the pottery types, clay pipes and suggested chert sources point to a Lake Ontario drainage origin for the Sidey-Mackay people, between the Humber



and the Rouge, and to such sites as Thomas, Seed-Barker, and above all, MacKenzie/Woodbridge. From MacKenzie to Sidey-Mackay overland is only some 45 miles, through the Beeton pass at about half-way, and there is even a similarity in the way the two sites are situated, the MacKenzie perched on a terrace overlooking the Humber at Woodbridge just as Sidey-Mackay overlooks the Mad at Creemore. The evidence is not conclusive but it is the best we have.

Thirteen miles (21 km) northwest of Sidey-Mackay is the MacMurphy BcHb-26 Site. There are similarities, MacMurphy also possessing European metal but no glass, and beaver bone to a similar percentage, 45% to Sidey-Mackay's 43%. But the material cultures differ substantially. The MacMurphy pottery types include Blue Mountain Punctate, derived, it is suggested, from Fort Ancient (Ohio), and Tuttle Hill Notched, thought to suggest Whittlesey (Ohio) associations, a thought further supported by the recovery of a Whittlesey-like conch-shell "ear drop" from the adjacent and probably related Buckingham ossuary. The Whittlesey-like Wolfe Creek site near Chatham on the River Thames reported by Gary Foster at last year's Symposium possibly represents a movement which entered Ontario from Michigan and is moving towards the Neutrals as they withdraw west towards their historic location, and with whom they merged and were, in consequence, diluted. A confusing number of radiocarbon dates for the Wolfe Creek site, can be averaged to support the "around A.D. 1500" date suggested last year from the artifacts. This date, and even later, is compatible with my scenario, permitting such a protohistoric movement to the MacMurphy site from the Neutral area to contain a diluted Whittlesey element. MacMurphy is a rich site, and rich in the quantity and diversity of stone tools, a number of which may be interpreted as having specialised association with the needs of the fur trade, the quality of which, the forms and serrated edges, adding to the idea that the MacMurphy people were Neutrals (who, of course, probably had a greater number of separate origins than the later Petun). Wherever they came from, their origins are clearly different from those of the Sidey-Mackay people.

Earlier than Sidey-Mackay, earliest of all Petun area sites, is the White BcHa-1 Site, perched on the very eastern edge of Petunia closest to Huronia, and for the apparent reason that the White Site people were proto-Hurons and may be described as degenerate terminal Lalonde. Their predominant pottery decoration is recognisable as that of Lalonde High Collar although the White site collars have shrunk to medium height. A side notched isosceles triangular chert point, an impoverished chert industry and the clay pipe forms all suggest a Lalonde derivation. In 1966, based only on some of the ceramics, Dr. James V. Wright bravely ventured an opinion of an approximate 1550 A.D. date for this site. The subsequent discovery of European metal in minor amounts confirms the early protohistoric placement of the site.

The site is situated at the western end of an ancient beach ridge

MOST FREQUENT MAMMALS ON EIGHT PETUN SITES

PROTOHISTORIC - EARLY

WHITE

BEAVER 34 % WOODCHUCK 16 % DEER 11 %

PROTOHISTORIC - LATER

SIDEY-MACKAY

BEAVER 43 % CANIS 18 % WOODCHUCK 10 %

YOUNG-McQUEEN

BEAVER 59 % WOODCHUCK 15 % DEER 8 %

MACMURCHY

BEAVER 45 % WOODCHUCK 22 % BEAR 18 %

HISTORIC

MELVILLE

BEAVER 41 % WOODCHUCK 21 % DOG 11 %

HAMILTON-LOUGHEED

BEAVER 35 % BEAR 24 % DEER 16 %

HANEY-COOK

WOODCHUCK 34 % BEAVER 29 % BEAR 19 %

KELLY-CAMPBELL

BEAVER 27 % DOG 16 % BEAR 15 %

CG 1981

which no doubt served as a trail back to Huronia and along which the White Site people returned from whence they came, for they left no eligible successor site to suggest a continuing presence in Petunia. Perhaps they were just not as numerous, or tenacious, a people as those who arrived later to squeeze them out. It is tempting to connect their departure with the arriving Sidey-Mackay people, by whom they may have been forcibly ousted, an event mentioned much later by Jerome Lalement as "formerly waged cruel wars". The recovered materials include no evidence of any warfare other than with the beaver, whose bones predominate among the identifiable mammalian species, with twice as many beaver bones as woodchuck and three times as many as there are of deer. This contrasts with a prehistoric classic Lalonde site, Copeland, in Huronia, where deer exceeded beaver, and suggests that the very function of this Lalonde thrust into Petunia was to tap the beaver supply.

The Young-McQueen BcHb-19 Site, on the Pretty River, possibly results from yet another entry, roughly contemporary with Sidey-Mackay and earlier than MacMurchy, of whose influence there is no trace. Here, the pottery types make a unique and distinct complex, dominated by Lawson Incised, the highest percentages in the area of Ontario Horizontal and Seed Incised, and flavoured with Black Necked, Dutch Hollow Notched, Lawson Opposed, Niagara Collared, Onondaga Triangular, Pound Necked, Ripley Plain and Seed Corded. If this combination suggests anything, it would be a conservative group from Niagara/Lake Erie, yet there is little in the lithics to suggest any connection to the Neutrals. The ten squares excavated in 1974 and 1975 produced four pieces of European metal and enough of a faunal sample for Jennifer Shalinsky to demonstrate that there were more bones of beaver, at 59% of the mammalian sample, than the total of all other mammals combined.

The fifth and last entry was the largest and possibly took place over a period of years. It differed from the others in that instead of settling in their own previously unoccupied river valley, as had the Sidey-Mackay people on the Mad River, the Young-McQueen people on the Pretty River and the MacMurchy people on Silver Creek, the newcomers, whom we will call the Melville people, joined the Sidey-Mackay people on the Mad River and together the two groups occupied a new village, the Melville BbHa-7 Site, directly opposite, and within easy sight of, Sidey-Mackay. There the pottery types of Sidey-Mackay continue, plus the new clay pipe styles, quantities of conch shell, large sandstone discs and raw cherts from southern Lake Huron of the new people. While the conch suggests a southern connection, no actual origin is apparent. However, the chert sample entirely lacks the Onondaga chert of the Neutral. If they were a southern people they entered Ontario through Ottawa territory, skirting north of Neutral influence. Their wealth - and numbers - perhaps explains their apparently easy acceptance by the Sidey-Mackay people. Their joint village at Melville was visited by Champlain in 1616 and was by him described as THE Petun Village, the others being merely their "neighbours and allies". That

Champlain saw the Melville Village people as somehow different to the others precisely accords with the present archaeological interpretation.

While there is no historic record of epidemics resulting from Champlain's visit, this could explain why the Melville, Young-McQueen, MacMurchy and two other sites all appear to terminate at about this time. The survivors generally moved up their respective rivers, MacMurchy to Haney-Cook BcHb-27, Young-McQueen possibly to Pretty River BcHb-22, and the Melville people certainly to Hamilton-Lougheed BbHa-10, if the pottery type coefficients mean anything.

The Hamilton-Lougheed site is identified as the EHWAE of the Petuns, and the St. Peter & St. Paul of the Jesuits, who described it as the principal village, which is logical as the successor to Melville. It seems to have suffered a similar fate and was abandoned soon after the 1639 visit of the Jesuits Garnier and Jogues.

Both Melville and Hamilton-Lougheed are rich in the European trade goods of their times and artifacts of the native culture are abundant and diverse, speaking of the cosmopolitan nature and important political and social standing of these villages. They were also rich in beaver bone, comprising 41% at Melville and 35% at Hamilton-Lougheed, of the identifiable mammalian species, in each case considerably more numerous than any other species.

At this juncture, I have either made my point, or I haven't, so I won't belabour you further with statistics, but try to briefly summarise later events as interpreted from the combined ethnohistoric and archaeological records.

Under the stress of further diseases, massive loss of population and beginning Iroquois harassment, the entire southern part of the Petun area was abandoned. From the Jesuit Relations we know that by 1647 the new capital, frontier and southernmost village was ETHARITA, the Jesuit St. John the Evangelist, being the Kelly-Campbell BcHb-10 Site. Between 1640 and 1647 therefore, the two original founding groups at Hamilton-Lougheed, and the occupants of lesser nearby villages, all moved. The pottery type coefficients suggest that the original Sidey-Mackay people remained as near the south as possible but abandoned the Mad River system, moving some six miles north to the previously small ETHARITA. Their erstwhile partners, the Melville people, leapfrogged intervening settlements to add to the Haney-Cook Site, together with survivors from MacMurchy, if continuing Tuttle Hill Notched pottery can be so interpreted, their village being the Petun EKARENNIONDI, the Jesuit St. Mathew. This site may have been the Ottawa capital and was at times more Ottawa than Petun. Significantly, it controlled a trail leading over the Blue Mountain and down into the Beaver River Valley, perhaps regarded as Ottawa territory, and home of the animal for which it is named. The suggestion of Ottawa

contact - and therefore probably alliance - began at Melville in the chert sources and expanded at Hamilton-Lougheed with cherts and red silstone from remote upper Lakes sources and continues at Haney-Cook. It seems that the Melville people, ever opportunists, had abandoned their Sidey-Mackay hosts and moved in the most literal sense into the Ottawa camp, a honeymoon with enough stress that on at least one occasion, according to the Jesuit Relations, the Ottawa moved out, leaving the newcomers dominant. In 1648 the Jesuits recorded that the group centred at ETHARITA were the Nation of the Wolf, and the group occupying EKARENNIONDI were the Nation of the Deer, "...two different Nations which occupy the whole of that Country," as Father Paul Ragueneau put it, confirming our interpretation of the archaeological record.

In 1649 the Petun Wolf met disgrace and lost their senior status when the Iroquois attacked and destroyed ETHARITA. In 1650 the Deer at EKARENNIONDI, now exposed to the enemy and having lost means of shipping furs to French sources with the abandonment of Huronia, left Ontario for the fresh beaver grounds of Michigan, Wisconsin and later Ohio, always attempting to remain middlemen and primary suppliers of furs, first to the French, later to the British, finally to the Americans, for as long as the fur trade lasted, and involved in a formal Confederacy relationship with one Ottawa band until the last century. They are still together, today, in Oklahoma, where descendants of both groups may be found on adjacent former reservations.

Petun archaeology is far from being totally understood. The picture I have presented is over-simplified, too-abbreviated and still tentative. But the complex archaeological record does seem to show a multiplicity of origins, a process of homogenisation around two polar identities, and an interest in the beaver. It does not show any connections with the Bruce Peninsula, or that the Petun were satellites to anybody.

For establishing the firm statistical base on which Petun association with beaver rests, I would like to thank Chris Andersen, Janet Cooper, Peter Hamalainen, Grant Hurlburt, Annie Katzenberg, Rosemary Prevec, Jennifer Shalinsky, Alyce Sheahan and Harold Wodinsky for their work with our faunal samples, and especially their mentor, teacher and inspirer, the godfather of Ontario faunal analysis, Dr. Howard Savage.

I also wish to thank Aileen Coles, Bill Fox, Christine and Michael Kirby, Norma Knowlton, Ella Kruse, John Robertson, Jim Shropshire, Derek Spencer and other O.A.S. members of the "Petun Studies Group" whose skilled and patient excavating, help, advice and happy personalities over the years have resulted in our present state of understanding of Petun archaeology.

* * * * *