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A Fluted Point From Collingwood Township, Ontario

ABSTRACT

A broken fluted point is described from Collingwood Township, Grey County, Ontario. This is the first such report from Grey County and extends the known range northwards.

INTRODUCTION

For twenty years the broken projectile point, the subject of this paper, has been in the possession of its finder, Mrs. Mildred MacMurchy, of Thornbury, Ontario. In September, 1966, Mrs. MacMurchy took the writer to her former farm on the south half of Lot 12, Concession 1, Township of Collingwood (Fig. 1), to indicate the spot where she had found it and to recount the circumstances.

Mrs. MacMurchy is conversant with aboriginal artifacts, as she had assisted in the partial excavation of an Iroquoian village site by the University of Toronto on the same farm. The fluting on the reported point, and its remoteness from the Iroquoian village, were two of the factors which enabled her to remember precisely where she had found it.

THE ARTIFACT

The partial point measures 32.0 mm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, 47.0 mm ($1\frac{7}{8}$ " long (Pl. 1). Comparison with published illustrations of similar points (Ritchie, 1957) suggests a probable original length of about 76.2 mm (3"). Both sides are poorly fluted, apparently the result of several attempts and the edge flaking shows poor workmanship. No intentional basal blunting to prevent cutting of the binding is apparent. An over-all lanceolate shape is indicated, but it is not pronounced. The material used is chert, in three colour zones, mainly a fairly clear light beige, separated by a thin band of dull yellow from a grey-brown area having fine black speckles. It is not known if the black speckles are the result of corrosion after manufacture or inherent within the chert.

THE CHERT

A comparative examination of chert found in the Blue Mountain area has not yielded conclusive results. Many specimens excavated on the nearby Iroquoian site showed the same three colour zones but occur with other colours and in almost any combination depending on the size of the piece. Other Iroquoian sites in the vicinity confirmed this

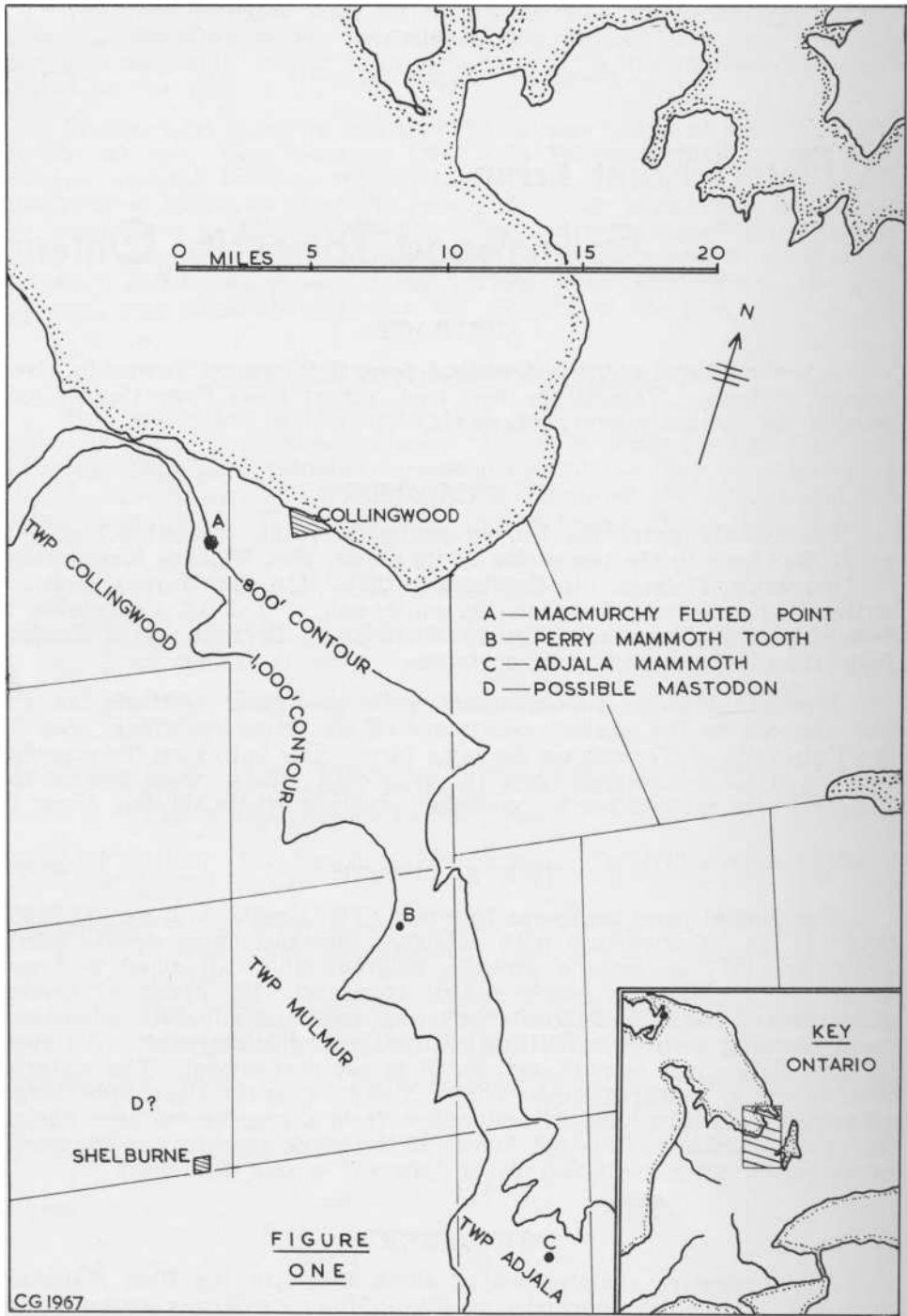
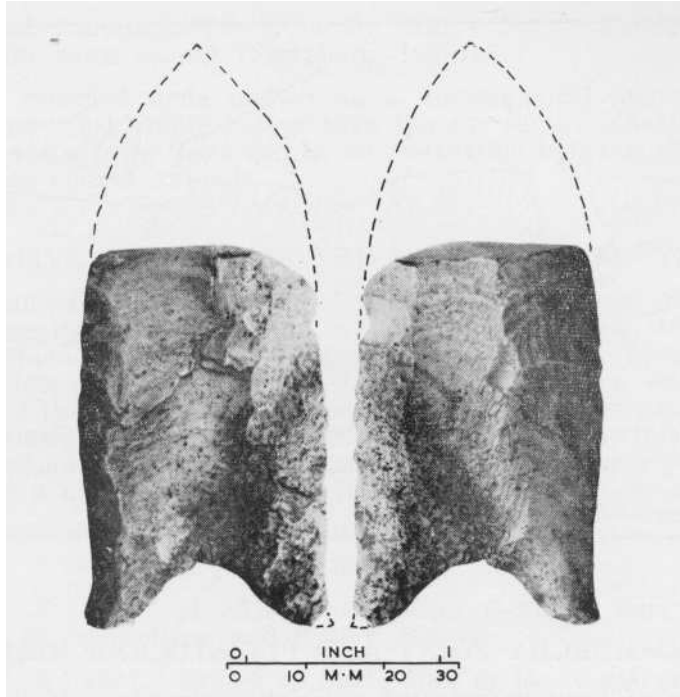


Figure 1 — Location of MacMurchy fluted point



THE MACMURCHY FLUTED POINT

PLATE ONE

observation. The writer therefore believes the later Iroquois obtained their chert from the same source as the maker of the fluted point, even though an exactly corresponding sample was not located. Chert nodules may be found freely on the ground along the Blue Mountain portion of the Niagara Escarpment at and above an elevation of 1,100 ft. on the observations of the writer, but a search for an area of concentration or a possible flint-shop yielded nothing.

THE SITE OF THE FIND

The point was found on the surface of a low gravel knoll on a flat terrace some 15 ft. above the present level of an un-named tributary of Silver Creek (Fig. 2). Although now only about two feet wide, this little stream runs in a gorge apparently cut through the glacial till by a powerful flow of water, most probably melt-water of glacial origin (Fig. 3). A pause in the recession to the present level is indicated by the gravel strewn terrace on which the point was found. There is no evidence to suggest the reasons for the occurrence of the point at that location. It may have been swept down by the waters from a higher level, or found where it was dropped. A careful search failed to locate the missing tip portion.

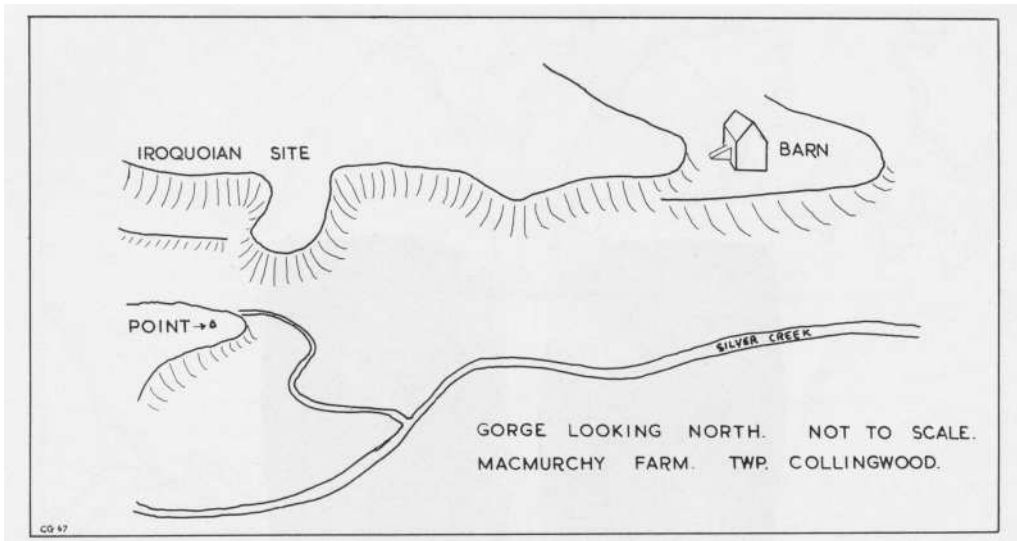


FIGURE 2

THE MacMURCHY POINT AND PLEISTOCENE REMAINS

Because of the demonstrated association elsewhere of fluted points of the MacMurphy type and the remains of now extinct Pleistocene fauna (Ritchie, 1957, p. 3), a search for locally recorded finds was undertaken with the following results:

Mastodon remains are reported from near Shelburne, in the County of Dufferin (Fig. 1 D, Sternberg, 1930, p. 62; Russell, 1965, p. 4), but no details are available, (Churcher, 1966, *pers. corn.*).

Mammoth remains are reported from Lot 14, Concession 6, Township of Adjala, County of Simcoe (Fig. 1 C, Hunter, 1909, p. 51), from Lot 25, Concession 5, Township of Mulmur, County of Dufferin (Fig.

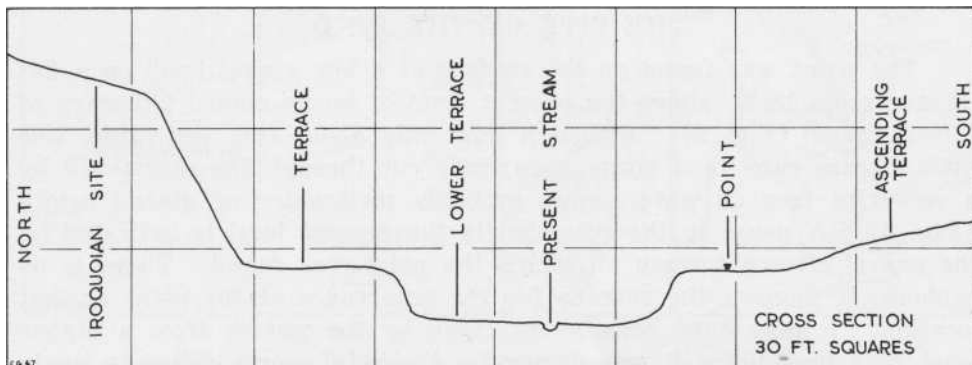


FIGURE 3

1 B, Verbal communication from Mr. Harry Perry, Banda) and else-where in the same county (Sternberg, 1930).

These reported finds plotted on a topographical map are located at elevations considerably higher than the site of the MacMurchy point (800 ft.), and clearly there can be no association between the point and any of these distant animals.

A TENTATIVE DATING FOR THE MacMURCHY FLUTED POINT

The paleo-Indian occupation of the northeast part of this continent lasted approximately from 5,000 to 3,500 B.C. (Ritchie, 1957, p. 17). Lack of evidence by which the MacMurchy point may be more closely dated precludes any positive location within this time period, but it is suggested that since the ice retreated northwards, the more northerly the point, the later might be the date of manufacture. By this hypothesis, the MacMurchy fluted point would derive from the closing years of this period, and a date of about 3,500 B.C. is tentatively suggested.

REFERENCES

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