

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNGE AND ONTARIO IROQUOIS TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Recent research has disclosed that Middle Woodland, Point Peninsula cultural remains are present throughout the Grand River Valley-Niagara Peninsula region of southwestern Ontario. There does not appear to be cultural continuity from this Point Peninsula base to later Princess Point Complex remains, but a strong cultural intrusion into Ontario is postulated sometime after 500 A.D. It is suggested that the close correspondence of the cultural remains of the Younger Tradition and the western branch of the Ontario Iroquois Tradition at all time levels is a reflection of the ethnic identity of the Younger Tradition people as Iroquois. It is furthermore suggested that the Younger Tradition people shifted into southwestern Ontario to be absorbed by late prehistoric Iroquois, and that this cultural displacement was the result of northward intruding Upper Mississippian people and culture.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research has indicated that the Younger Tradition and western branch of the Ontario Iroquois Tradition, as well as the New York Iroquois tradition all emerged from a pre-1000 A.D. time horizon. This time horizon is typified by collarless vessels which are characteristically cord roughened over the bodies; display moderately everted rims, with predominately flattened and splayed lips; and which have decorative motifs executed upon them (on the lip, rim exteriors and interiors and necks) in a cord-wrapped stick motif (Fitting, 1965; Ritchie, 1969; Stothers, 1974, 1975a; Wright, 1966).

In New York State this stage of cultural development has been called the Owasco (Ritchie, 1944, 1969), and is classed as pre-Iroquoian. In southwestern Ontario this stage has been termed the Princess Point Complex (Stothers, 1970, 1971, 1972a, 1973a, 1975a) and is considered developmental Iroquois. In southeastern Michigan and northwestern Ohio the analogous developmental time period has been termed the Riviere au Vase phase of the Younger Tradition (Fitting, 1965). This phase apparently represents a development, in that area, which was roughly coeval with, and in part a development from a recently defined and apparently more lacustrine and littoral manifestation called the Western Basin Complex (Stothers and Prah, 1972; Stothers, 1975a).

MIDDLE WOODLAND ANTECEDENTS

In New York State there apparently occurred an 'in situ' development from the terminal Hunter's Home phase of the Point Peninsula into the Owasco (Ritchie, 1969; Ritchie and MacNeish, 1949). In southeastern Michigan and northwestern Ohio, an 'in situ' development from a recently defined Middle Woodland manifestation called the Western Basin Middle Woodland (Prah, Brose and Stothers, 1972; Stothers, 1973b, Stothers, n.d.) apparently gave rise to the Riviere au Vase phase of the Younger Tradition, with heavy contributory influence being exerted by the Western Basin Complex, and the local non-Hopewellian (Middle through Late Woodland) Wayne Tradition of southwestern and south-central Michigan (Fitting, 1965, 1970; Prah, Brose and Stothers, 1972; Stothers, 1975b).

Until very recently, a Middle Woodland precursor for the western branch (Wright, 1966) of

the Ontario Iroquois Tradition and the developmental Iroquois manifestation called the Princess Point Complex was not recognized.

Survey for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the National Museum of Canada between 1972 and 1974, as well as the study of private collections from the region of the Grand River Valley and along the north shore of Lake Erie, have indicated that Middle Woodland cultural remains are indeed present in southwestern Ontario (Stothers, 1974b). This Middle Woodland cultural material initially appears most similar to the Point Peninsula 2 material from New York State (Ritchie, 1951; Wright and Anderson, 1963); however further study and analyses are necessary before any conclusive statements can be advanced.

Although a few of these sites display higher percentages of early Late Woodland ceramic traits (cord-wrapped stick impressed motifs, exterior punctates and interior bosses, cord-roughed body sherds, and flat lipped vessels) in direct association with classic Middle Woodland ceramics (which display rim sherd, neck sherd, and body sherd decoration executed in dentate stamping; rocker stamping; pseudo-scalloped shell; interior channelling and coil breaks), this author does not believe that a gradual 'in situ' development occurred from Middle to early Late Woodland times. These early Late Woodland ceramic traits in association with classic Middle Woodland ceramic traits may be indicative of a latter temporal placement within the framework of what is termed Middle Woodland. This author firmly believes that a cultural intrusion into Ontario occurred sometime after the onset of the Scandic Episode (Bryson and Wendland, 1967; Baeris and Bryson, 1967).

This cultural intrusion has been elaborated upon elsewhere in considerable detail (Stothers, 1973a, 1975a) and appears to represent a coeval and analogous situation to that of southeastern Ontario (Spense, 1967; Johnston, 1968a, b), Pennsylvania (Jones, 1931; McCann, 1971) and New York State (Ritchie, 1938, 1969) where some aspect(s) of the fragmenting Hopewellian Interaction Sphere were "fusing with local resident complexes after shifting into these other regions (Ritchie, 1969: 215)." Middle Woodland sites that the author believes to be Point Peninsula 2 were originally believed to be Saugeen sites by James V. Wright. Although the ceramics and lithics of early Point Peninsula and Saugeen sites are very similar in their decorative motifs and techniques, as well as their crudity, paste, thickness and huge temper particle size, this author's cursory comparison suggests that there is a difference between the two types of ceramics. However, further comparative analyses are needed before definitive statements can be made.

The Middle Woodland sites located in the region of the Grand River Valley are (cf. map and Figure A): one of the major components of the Armour's Point (AfGv-1), Neuman (AfGv-3), Oswego (AfGv-26), Blair Flats II and Klingander (AfGv-53) sites, while the Christy (AfGv-4), Chippawa Flats (AfGv-63), and Lookout (AeHc-7) (Stothers, 1972b) sites are single component Middle Woodland sites. Other sites which are probably Middle Woodland but from which an insufficient amount of cultural material was obtained to be conclusive were: Marden (AfGv-15), Shore (AfGv-24), Hawthorn Ridge (AfGv-34), Roger's Creek (AfGx-24), and Tuscarora (AgGx-14).

THE YOUNGE TRADITION: ALGONKIAN OR IROQUOIS?

Recent detailed analyses suggest that the evolution of regional Late Woodland manifestations (such as the western variant of the Ontario Iroquois Tradition [Wright, 1966] and the Younger Tradition [Fitting, 1965]) from a common base, along with constant cultural contact due to geographical proximity, probably in part accounts for similarities between the two traditions at all time levels. Although certain Michigan sites have been equated with the

Glen Meyer branch (Prahl, 1969) of the Ontario Iroquois, they are distinct, showing only superficial similarities (Prahl, Brose and Stothers, 1972). The ceramic types which typify the Younge Phase of the Younge Tradition are most clearly typified by what has been termed Vase Corded and Vase Tool Impressed (Fitting, 1965). These ceramics are a temporal-stylistic equivalent of certain Glen Meyer ceramic types such as Stafford Stamped, Glen Meyer Oblique, and Glen Meyer Linear Stamped (Wright, 1966). Middle Ontario Iroquois ceramic types such as Iroquois Linear and Ontario Horizontal (Wright, 1966; MacNeish, 1952) are a temporal and stylistic equivalent of Springwell's phase ceramic types such as Macomb, Interrupted Linear and Macomb Corded Linear (Fitting, 1965). The earliest phase of the Younge Tradition, which has been called the Riviere au Vase phase (Fitting, 1965), and which apparently represents a cultural blending of the traits that emerge from the Western Basin Middle Woodland and the Western Basin Complex (Fitting, 1965), is a temporal and stylistic equivalent of the Princess Point Complex, located only a few miles to the east in southwestern Ontario.

Although Fitting originally suggested that the Riviere au Vase phase ceramics reflected a transitional stage between Middle Woodland and early Late Woodland in terms of cultural material such as the Vase Dentate (Middle Woodland) and Vase Corded (early Late Woodland) ceramic types, it was later suggested that Vase Dentate be removed as a major definitive type for the early Late Woodland, Riviere au Vase phase (Prahl, Brose and Stothers, 1972), because the original analysis was based on the culturally mixed Younge site. However, recent work by Stothers on the MacNichol site (33-WO-10) in Ohio which is a Younge Tradition, Riviere au Vase phase site dated to $740 \pm 90/80$ A.D. (DIC-197) (cf. Figure B) and several small late Middle Woodland fishing sites located on Indian Island (a Michigan State offshore island located in the western basin of Lake Erie) indicates that Vase Dentate and Vase Corded ceramic type varieties do in fact overlap from late Middle to early Late Woodland times.

Towards the end of the Middle Ontario Iroquois stage or the beginning of the Late Ontario Iroquois stage—a time period which witnesses the coalescence of Middleport/Pound/ and/Lawson manifestations into the Niagara Peninsula region of southwestern Ontario—the Younge Tradition in Michigan appears to have been terminated, while strong intrusive Upper Mississippian elements appear in that region. The Woodland Younge Tradition is believed to have been forced out of, or to have voluntarily vacated the region of southeastern Michigan about 1400 A.D., with the advent of Upper Mississippian culture in northwestern Ohio (Stothers, 1973b).

The fact that southeastern Michigan, northwestern Ohio and southwestern Ontario remained essentially vacant until historic times when various Algonkian-speaking peoples such as the Ottawa, Miami, Potawatomi and Mississauga relocated within these areas in response to European trade (Brose, 1974; Fitting, 1970, Quimby, 1966) has led to much speculation that the Younge Tradition people were Algonkian speakers. Any attempt to use the direct historic approach for ethnic identification has been shown to be a futile effort (Brose, 1971).

Recent discussion with James E. Fitting (verbal communication, September 27, 1974) indicates that he would tend to concur with the hypothesis that the Younge Tradition was one of the prehistoric Iroquois traditions, and that a logical explanation for the disappearance of the Younge Tradition after 1400 A.D. may essentially be because of their withdrawal into Ontario as a result of the encroaching Upper Mississippian peoples. This Upper Mississippian encroachment appears to have extended as far as the Weisner site located north of Lake St. Clair in southwestern Ontario (Zurel, 1973) (cf. Figure A).

James Fitting has suggested that the large number of burials found in southeastern Michigan, along with extremely low artifact yields ("more people than pots") is an indication that

perhaps the late Younger Tradition people came to that region to die and/or dispose of their dead. The question arises as to where the Younger Tradition people were other than during their burial rituals? Perhaps they were in Ontario, and only returned to their homeland to dispose of their dead. Fitting and others (Fitting, 1970: 233; Zurel, 1973: 8) have pointed out that traits most commonly associated with the Ontario Iroquoian Neutral and Huron, such as ossuaries (as well as minor variants such as mass bundle burials) and longhouses are also associated with Younger Tradition sites. Where did the Younger Tradition people go? Younger Tradition cultural material does not suddenly appear at this late date in regions to the north, south or west. If these people were culturally and linguistically similar enough to the people who made up the western branch of the Ontario Iroquois, as is suggested by their ceramics and lithics (Fitting, 1965), it would have been relatively simple for them to have joined the post-Middleport peoples of southwestern Ontario in their eastward withdrawal and coalescence, with relatively little trace of such having happened in terms of remnant cultural material.

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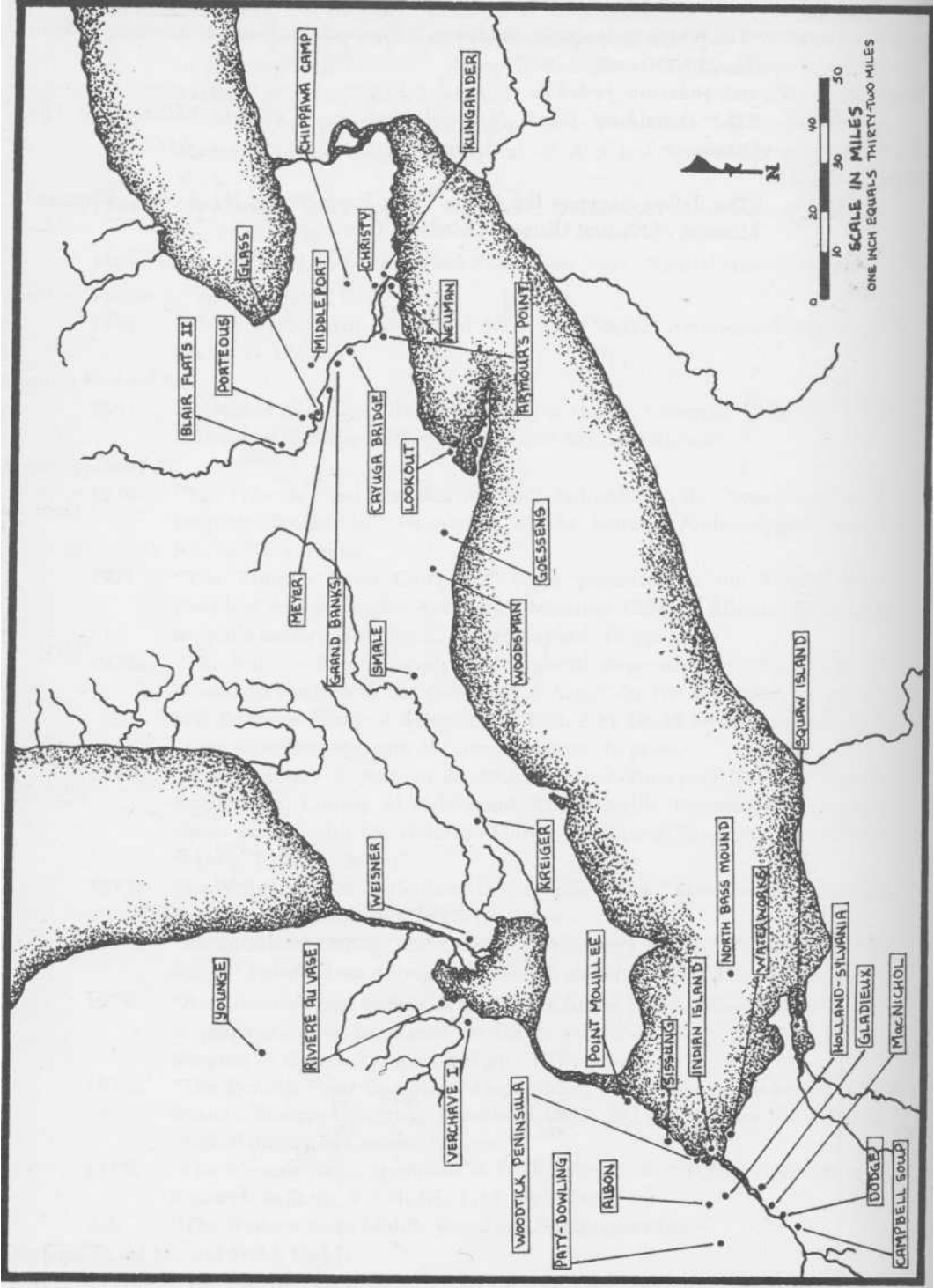
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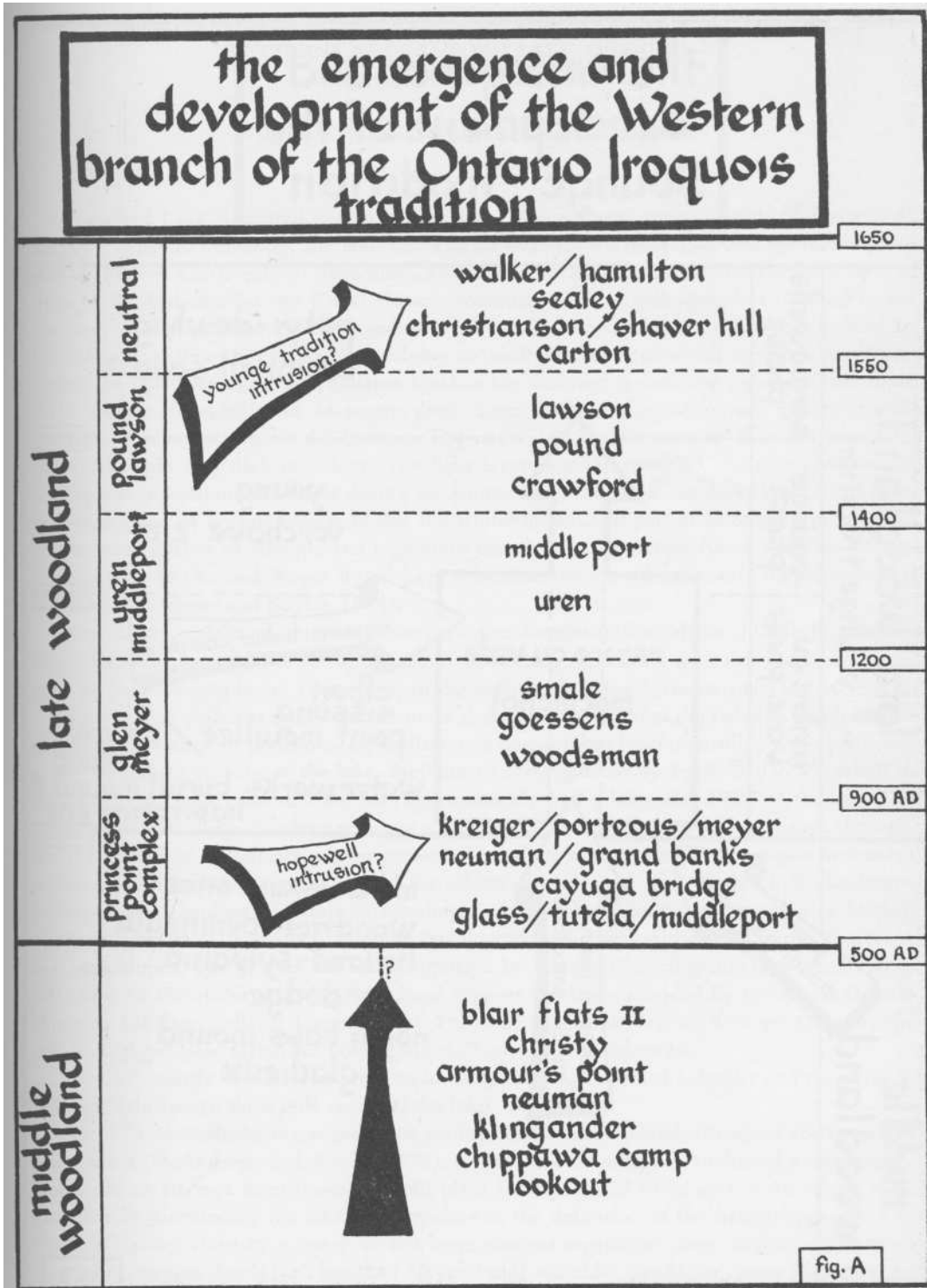
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