

THE FLETCHER SITE : PART I

by

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INTRODUCTION

During the fall of 1954, members of the Jordan Museum of the Twenty excavated an Iroquoian site under the supervision of members of The Ontario Archaeological Society. This site is located on the property of Mr. Martin Fletcher, Lot 10, Concession 2, Glanford Township, Wentworth County, who kindly permitted excavation to be carried out.

THE EXCAVATION

Thin and badly looted hillside middens were found along the steep western bank of the Twenty Mile Creek, which borders Mr. Fletcher's property. Two five-foot squares were excavated here but they produced very little cultural material and no further work was carried out in this area.

Further back, in a heavily wooded section of the site, a large, disturbed refuse midden was located. Two parallel trenches were staked out through the approximate center of the midden, as well as three five-foot squares to the north-west of this ash dump. Although inclement weather limited excavation to a single day, enough material was recovered to tentatively date this site and recognize its tribal affiliations. The following analysis is concerned only with the more diagnostic cultural material obtained, and will be treated categorically.

POTTERY

RIMSHERDS

<u>Ceramic Type</u>	<u>Tribal and Temporal Relationship</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Lawson Incised	Neutral and Erie - dominant in historic and late prehistoric times.	15
Lawson Opposed	As above.	4
Ripley Plain	Erie and Neutral - dominant during historic period.	1
Dutch Hollow Notched	A Seneca type, although it does appear on late Erie and Neutral sites.	1
Problematical A	Rim shape appears to be Seneca.	1
Problematical B	High collared form (Cayuga?)	1

In all, a total of 27 rimsherds were recovered, including four that were too fragmentary to be of diagnostic value.

CASTELLATIONS

There were only three castellations on the rims examined: two incipient pointed and one peaked nubbin.

BODY SHERDS

The majority of the body sherds were plain although several grass-wiped sherds and one cord-malleated sherd were found.

SEED POTS

These are small and very crudely manufactured pots thought possibly to have been the products of children or to be roughly formed models for larger pots. A single rim fragment of a plain specimen was recovered.

It must be stated here that there was far from an ample sample of rim sherds for a proper ceramic analysis but the information gathered agrees with the temporal implications suggested by the remainder of the cultural material.

CLAY PIPES

Pipe remains were very scarce, consisting of one stem, one neck, and one small bowl fragment of a ringed conical pipe. The scarcity of pipes on this site may be partially accounted for by previous digging by relic-seekers who would be paying special attention to such artifacts.

WORKED BONE

This category includes: a centrally perforated netting needle, measuring $1 \frac{7}{8}$ inches from one end to the eye and $\frac{5}{16}$ " in width; the tip from a broken awl; a medicine tube or large bone bead, $2 \frac{3}{4}$ inches in length; an uncompleted tube or bead, finished at one end but only incised at the intended breakage point of the other and measuring $4 \frac{1}{4}$ inches overall; the end of a cut tibia, discarded during the manufacture of beads; and a small antler flaker, heavily scarred at the utilized end. All the beads were constructed from bird bone.

UNWORKED BONE

Refuse bone was rather sparse although the following animals, listed in order of abundance, could be recognized: Virginia deer, bear, various rodents (groundhog, muskrat, squirrel, pocupine, and beaver), dog, fish, and raccoon. As on most Iroquoian sites, the majority of the bones had been broken beyond recognition.

STONE ARTIFACTS

The following types of flint arrowheads were recovered: three straight based triangular, approximately 1 inch in length; one side notched, $1 \frac{7}{16}$ inch in length; one lozenge shaped, $\frac{15}{16}$ inch in length; two unfinished forms or blanks, approximately $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inch in length, and two fragments. Of similar material are two snub-nosed scrapers, two side scrapers, and two unusual cutting tools, triangular in shape, approximately $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inches from base to apex, and sharply serrated along the two sides. The serrated edges on the latter suggest a sawing function.

Two bi-pitted hammerstones and a sandstone abrader, showing use on one side only, were also recovered.

WORKED SHELL

Two pieces of purple-coloured wampum with a diameter of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch were recovered.

METAL

COPPER

The rim portion of a French trade kettle, four inches long and $2 \frac{3}{8}$ inches wide, was recovered. The lip of the rim is rolled over $\frac{5}{16}$ " and has a diagonal punched design located $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the lip. This design appears to be an aboriginal improvisation. Another strip of copper, $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inches long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, has two holes, $\frac{3}{32}$ " in diameter, spaced $\frac{13}{16}$ " apart and $\frac{3}{16}$ " from the edges, measured from their centers. This object may have been used for strapping on or around some wooden object.

IRON

The following iron objects were found: a small, thin, severely corroded strip $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inches long by 1 inch wide; the head of a hand wrought nail, beginning to split; a complete hand wrought nail $4 \frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, and an irregular fragment of iron. Some of these objects may be intrusive and have no direct connection with the aboriginal material.

FEATURES

A single 2 inch diameter postmould was found extending eight inches into the subsoil at a twenty degree angle. This angled post may have acted as a side wall support for a longhouse.

CONCLUSIONS

The cultural material indicates that this is an historic Neutral site, possibly dating about 1630 A.D. This date is tentative and is arrived at on the basis of the French trade goods recovered.

The scarcity of trade goods suggests that this is an early contact site which the French trader probably never visited personally. We would postulate that the material found its way to this site via trade with the Hurons to the east. When we consider that Etienne Brule was the first white man to enter the Neutral country, slightly before 1626, and that the Neutrals were destroyed as a tribal unit in 1651, it does not leave too great a time period for French trade goods to filter into the country. In addition to this historical material, the ceramic series, small as it may be, supports the suggestion of a late Neutral site.

REFERENCES

- Cranston, J.H., 1949, "Etienne Brule, Immortal Scoundral." Ryerson Press, Toronto.
- Emerson, J.N. - Personal communication.
- MacNeish, R.S., 1952, "Iroquois Pottery Types." The National Museum of Canada, bulletin No. 124. Ottawa.
