The Hutchinson Site: A Place to Prepare for the Final Journey

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Located on a tributary of the Rouge River in Scarborough, the fourteenth-century Hutchinson site was occupied by two comparatively small households, either simultaneously or at different times, but there is little evidence to suggest that it served a particularly focussed economic role within the broader subsistence-settlement system of the larger community. Rather, the most outstanding feature of the settlement is the quantity of human remains found in the occupation area and in its immediate surroundings, relative to the number of people likely to have lived there at any given time. Treatment of the bodies of the dead, prior to their ultimate burial in the community ossuary, thus appears to have been the prime activity carried out at the site. It seems that the site represents a cemetery similar to those described in the ethnohistoric sources of the seventeenth century but seldom encountered in the archaeological record of south-central Ontario. The patterns uncovered at the Hutchinson site provide insights into aspects of Middle Iroquoian mortuary practice, community formation and, perhaps, the maintenance of identity within the community.

Introduction

Around the end of the thirteenth century A.D., small multi–lineage groups were evolving into the larger communities that are the hallmark of the Middle Ontario Iroquoian period. This was but one step in an 800-year-long transition to agricultural village life. Nevertheless, it was one which witnessed change in the form of a region-wide intensification of food production, decreased mobility, community aggregation (if not population expansion), and increased levels of co-operation and communication among neighbouring polities with a concomitant homogenization of material culture and subsistence-settlement patterns. While these developments were not necessarily synchronous from one region to the next, or even within a given region, they necessitated the development of complex socio-political means of regulating internal and external community affairs. The appearance on sites, in variable frequencies within and between regional settlement clusters, of palisades, semi-subterranean sweat lodges, and increasingly orderly settlement layouts within villages that were intensively occupied throughout the year, rather than more sporadically used over a longer period of time, are but some of the traits seen to be reflections of these general processes (e.g., Dodd et al. 1990:357-359; Ferris 1999:46-

47; Kapches 1995:90-91; MacDonald 2002:348; MacDonald and Williamson 2001:71-72; Timmins 1997: 228-229; Warrick; 2000:445-446; Williamson and Robertson 1994:38-39).

Another of the characteristics of the Middle Iroquoian period in south central Ontario is the rise of the tradition of ossuary burial as a community-wide, rather than family-oriented, rite as tended to be the case during Early Iroquoian times (Dodd et al. 1990:353; Johnston 1979:97; Spence 1994:15-17; Williamson and Steiss 2003:101). The development of this practice was undoubtedly accompanied by subtle or specialized changes in customs concerning the treatment of the remains of the dead that likely varied from one community to the next. The recent salvage excavation of the Hutchinson site (AkGt-34), located on a tributary of Morningside Creek in the middle reaches of the Rouge River watershed (Figure 1), provided a glimpse into mortuary treatments employed by at least one segment of a fourteenth-century community as they prepared their dead for final ossuary burial. While the Middle to Late Iroquoian groups of this area were clearly participating in the development of a well-defined and populous regionally-based social network (Kapches 1981:229-231), some of the unusual features of the Hutchinson site indicate that the "homogeneity" of the Middle
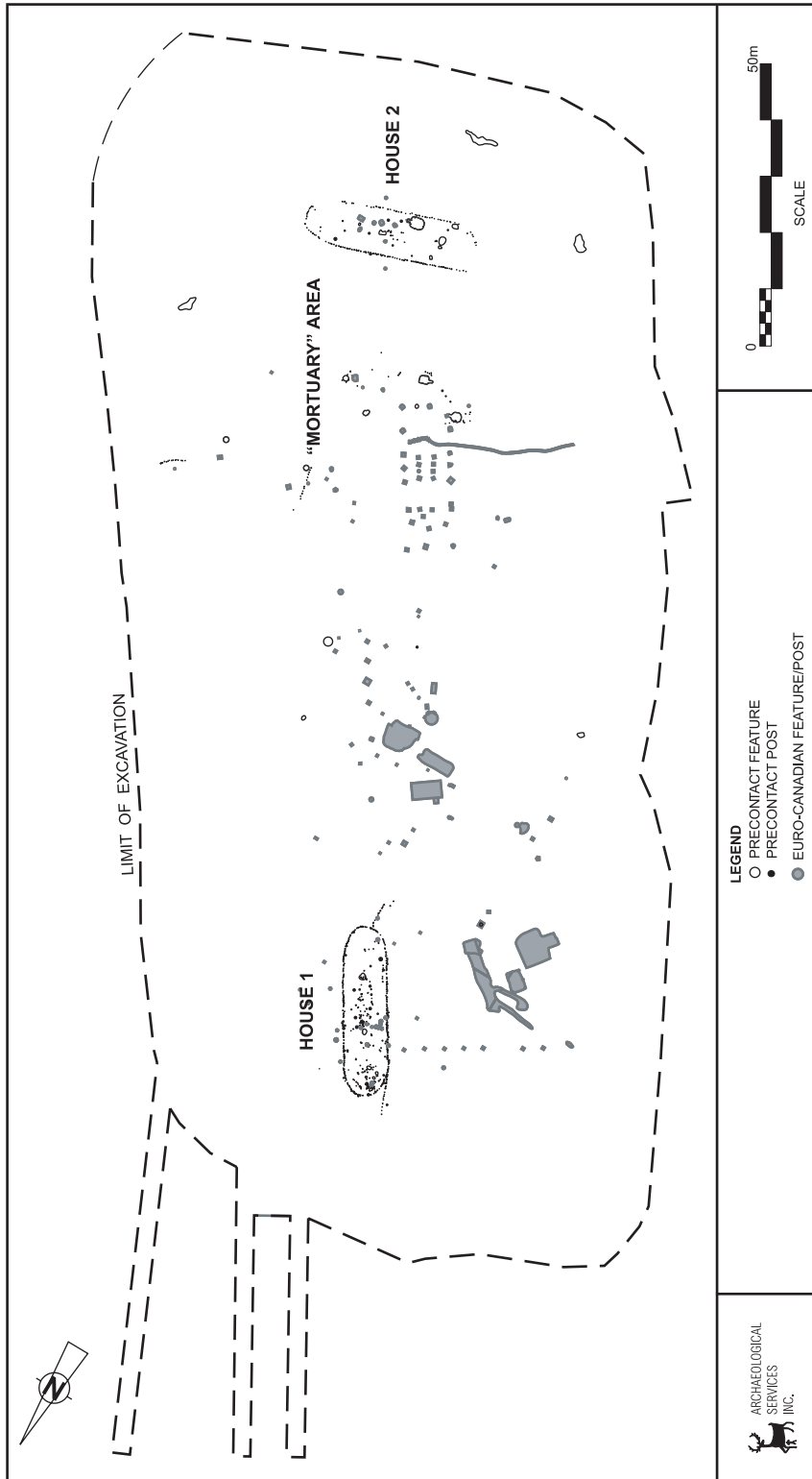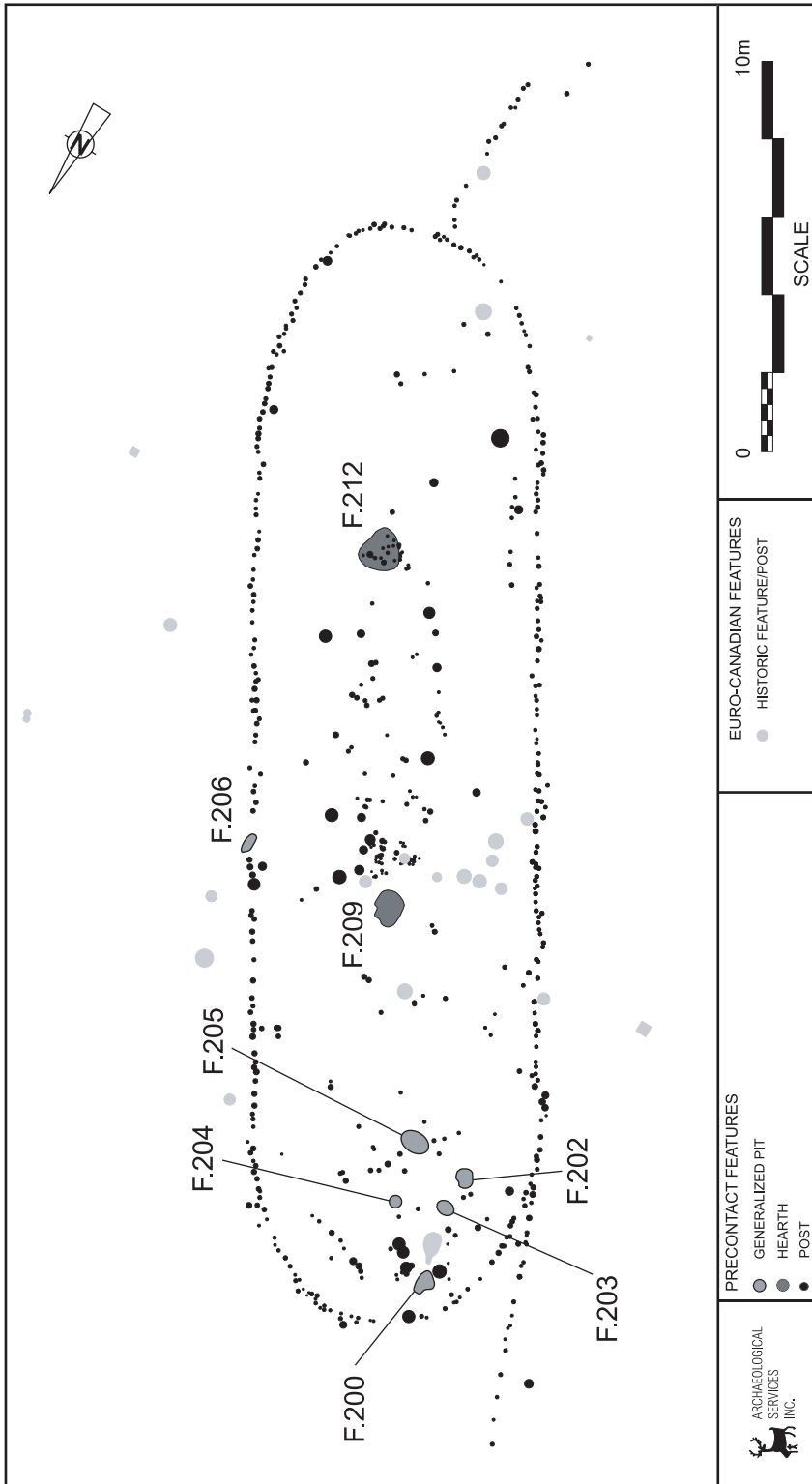
Figure 1. *The location of the Hutchinson site relative to other Middle and early Late Iroquoian sites within the middle reaches of the Rouge River watershed in Scarborough and Markham.*

Iroquoian periods subsumes considerable diversity of practice, tradition, and response to wider socio-political forces.

Background to the Hutchinson Site

The Hutchinson site was first documented in 1986 during a survey undertaken by Mayer, Pihl, Poulton and Associates (MPP) as part of the archaeological master plan of northeast Scarborough. It was initially identified as a nineteenth-century Euro-Canadian homestead occupied from the early 1830s to the late 1870s (MPP 1987:12). The precontact component was not identified until the site was resurveyed the following year, when 71 precontact ceramic and lithic artifacts were recovered (MPP 1988:155). These

artifacts occurred in two diffuse concentrations, separated from one another by a distance of about 80 metres, along the crest of the slight ridge that forms the backbone of the site area overlooking the confluence of two tributaries of Morningside Creek (Figure 2). The sparse character of the surface scatters led Dana Poulton to suggest that the precontact component of the site represented a Middle Iroquoian period cabin site consisting of two separate, but somewhat overlapping occupations, perhaps originating from the Archie Little 2 site (AkGt-17) or the Russell site (AlGt-162), both of which are located approximately a kilometre away (Figure 1) and both of which have been identified as Middle Iroquoian villages (MPP 1988:161), although in neither case has this attribution been confirmed.

Figure 2. *The location and approximate extent of the Hutchinson site based on surface investigations.*

The Hutchinson site was relocated in the spring of 2001 during a routine survey carried out in advance of the development of a subdivision and was subject to salvage excavation shortly thereafter (MacDonald and Robertson 2003). The initial 2001 surface investigations basically replicated MPP's results in terms of the diffuse patterning and general sparseness of the precontact artifacts found on the surface of the site. Following plough zone test unit excavation, the ultimate phase of the field work entailed mechanical removal of the plough zone within an area of approximately 2.2 ha in order to expose and document the features associated with both the Iroquoian and Euro-Canadian occupations (Figure 3).

The Iroquoian Settlement Patterns

As suggested by the surface scatter, the Iroquoian component indeed proved to consist of two occupation areas, each represented by a single longhouse (Robertson and Brennan 2003). These structures were separated from one another by about 110 m.

Lying at the extreme northern end of the site, House 1 (Figures 3-4) measured 28 metres long and 7.1 m wide. The structure was oriented 150 degrees east of north and both ends were rounded, with short tapers. The northwest corner of the structure was appended by an approximately 6.25 m long windbreak or screen, which maintained the same basic northwest-southeast alignment as the house wall. This structural feature may have served to shelter an entrance centrally located along the end wall, where a gap approximately one metre wide may be observed. A similar entrance and windscreen were evident at the south end of the house. The only other comparatively well-defined gap in the walls that may represent the location of a former entrance was a

Figure 3. *The settlement patterns uncovered at the Hutchinson site.*

Figure 4. *House 1 at the Hutchinson site.*

one-metre-wide break located at the approximate mid-point of the east wall. A small, shallow pit (Feature 206) located in this gap may represent activity that pre- or post-dates the occupation of the house.

The walls of the house were formed by sections of single posts alternating with those that were staggered or occurred in clusters, with an average density of 4.8 posts per metre. Clustering was particularly evident along the northeast corner, suggesting that this section was rebuilt on at least one occasion. Similarly, a line of posts set in approximately 0.5 m from the southwest corner wall of the house may represent an episode of refurbishment. Overall, wall posts ranged from four to 14 cm in diameter, with a mean of 6.9 cm and a standard deviation of 1.3.

Nine features and 192 posts were distributed throughout the interior of the house. The majority of the posts were located in the central corridor in the approximate centre of the structure, between the two centrally located hearths (Features 209 and 212), or at its extreme north end. These posts had a mean diameter of 7.5 cm, with range of 3-30 cm and a standard deviation of 4.0. Seven posts clearly served as superstructure supports. Five of these, four of which were more or less symmetrically paired, were sited along the edge of the central corridor, between 2.0 m and 2.7 m from the side walls. The sixth was established along the centre line at the north end of the house, while the seventh was located approximately 0.5 m from the wall in the southwest corner.

The overall pattern of post distribution provided little indication for the presence of either bunk lines or partition walls, although the areas immediately adjacent to the side walls were generally devoid of features or posts that appear to be related to interior domestic activities or furnishings. A row of four posts across the southern end of the house may represent the remains of a screen defining a storage cubicle, while a slightly curved line of nine posts in the northeast corner of the house may represent a small screened-off space.

House 1 contained two hearths, situated 9.3 m apart from one another. A small cluster of posts lay to the immediate south of the northernmost hearth (Feature 209). The other hearth (Feature 212) was also the focus of a discrete cluster of posts that likely reflect the remains of cooking equipment. The area between these two hearths contained a diffuse scatter of posts that often occurred in pairs or small, discrete clusters. With the exception of Feature 206, the remaining six features in the house (Features 200, 201, 202, 203, and 205) were concentrated in the north end of the structure, slightly to the west of the centreline. All of these were shallow, generalized pits surrounded by numerous posts, which together may represent a domestic activity area associated with a third hearth of which no traces had survived.

While the shell of the House 1 appeared to have been relatively robustly built and likely could have withstood colder weather conditions, the internal disposition of features and posts does not suggest that interior activity was especially formalized or orderly. This may indicate that the structure was not occupied for a long period of time or by a great number of people.

Lying at the southern edge of the site adjacent to the slope leading down to the creek, House 2 measured 28.8 m in length, 7.7 m in width and was oriented 68 degrees east of north, roughly parallel to the contours of the land and positioned at the top of the slope (Figures 3 and 5). The ends of the structure were poorly defined, but appear to have been rounded with short tapers. Construction of the walls was generally characterized by short sections of single posts, although some areas are comprised of paired posts. The average density of wall posts was 3.2 posts per metre, when calculated on the basis of the surviving sections of wall as opposed to the total circumference of the structure. Wall posts had an average diameter of 5.6 cm, with a range of 4-9 cm and a standard deviation of 1.0. The identification of entrances to the house is problematic in view of the poor preservation of the end walls and the adjacent sections of the side walls.

Only 25 posts, together with seven features were present within the interior of the structure. The interior posts, which had a mean diameter of 8.3 cm, a range of 4-20 cm and a standard deviation of 4.0, lay primarily in the centre of the
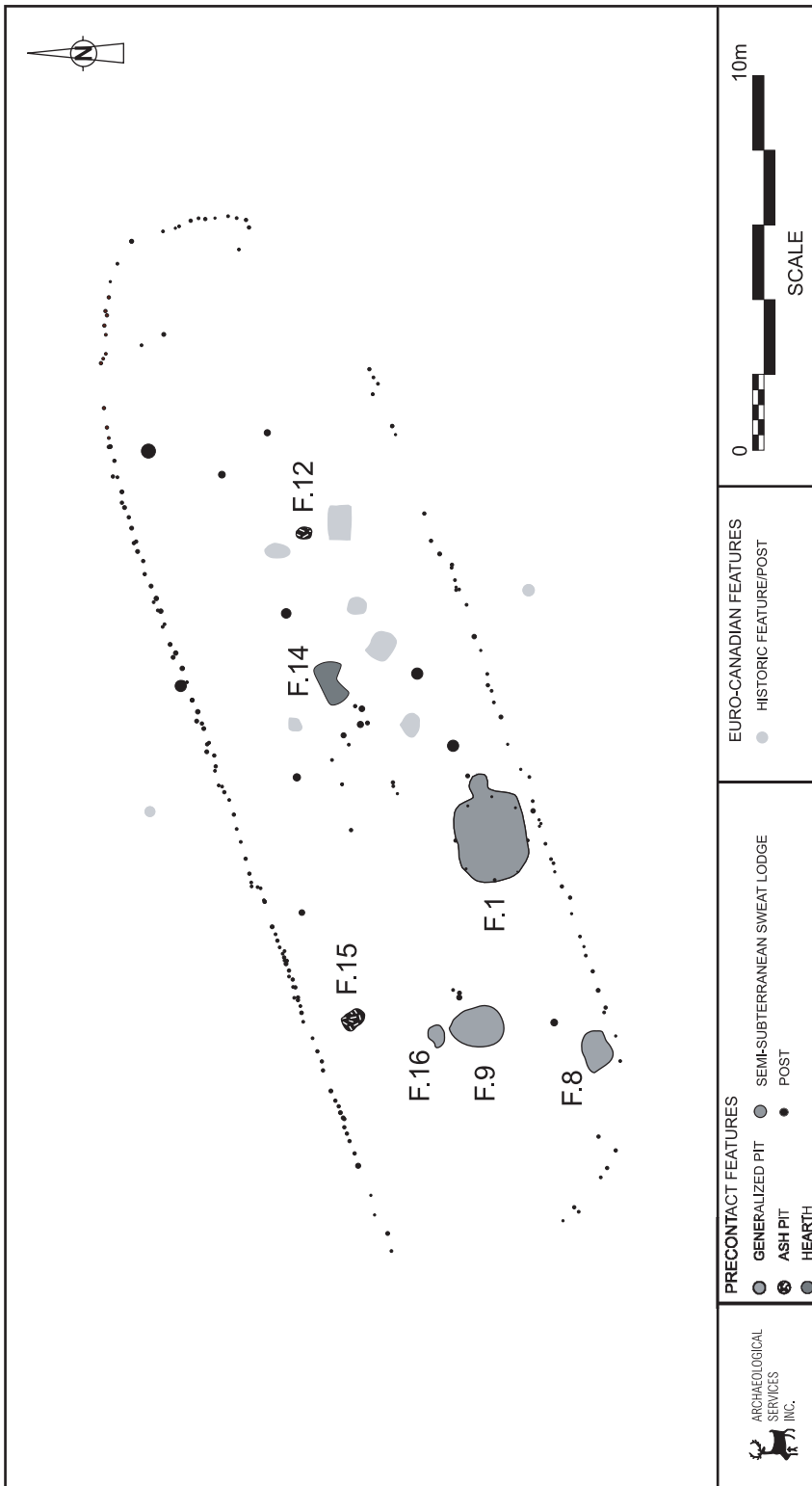
Figure 5. *House 2 at the Hutchinson site.*

house, where they were for the most part associated with a central hearth (Feature 14). Larger support posts, while present, did not appear to indicate the presence of well-defined bunk lines or a formally defined central corridor.

In addition to the hearth, House 2 contained two ash pits, four generalized pits and one semi-subterranean sweat lodge. Towards the west end of the house, three pits (Features 8, 9, and 16) together with one ash pit (Feature 15) formed a linear arrangement that traversed the width of the central floor. The area between these features and the end of the structure was devoid of any evidence of use. The remaining ash pit (Feature 12) lay approximately four metres to the east of the hearth.

The semi-subterranean sweat lodge (Feature 1) was situated approximately four metres to the southwest of the hearth, immediately adjacent and parallel to the south wall of the house, with its entrance facing to the east. No living floor was encountered at the base of the feature, suggesting that the sweat lodge was not used often or for any lengthy period, as such a veneer of highly organic soil mixed with ash, charcoal, and fired soil was likely to accumulate only gradually over the life span of the structure.

Overall, the poorly defined ends of House 2, along with its less heavily built walls may indicate that it was an open-ended shelter that was only partially or temporarily screened during inclement weather in the warmer months (cf. Latta 1985:48). The low density of features and interior posts may also be consistent with such seasonal use, even though the features include a hearth and an interior semi-subterranean sweat lodge. The latter seems to have been used only briefly. Again, the house seems to have been neither intensively nor extensively occupied.

In general, the areas around and between the two houses did not appear to have been used for exterior domestic activities that left any subsurface evidence—other than refuse disposal in a few peripheral locations. It is possible that some traces of such uses were erased by the later nineteenth-century occupations, but if the Iroquoian occupation was related to specialized resource extraction tasks, one would perhaps expect to see more evidence for exterior processing activities or facilities associated with the houses.

The one exterior area that appears to have been used intensively lay to the north of House 2 (Figures 3 and 6), where two broad clusters of features and posts were encountered. This portion of the site seems to have been used for temporary burial of deceased members of the community and, perhaps, the completion of rites associated with their deaths or the handling of their remains (Robertson and Brennan 2003:51-61). Eight features and 31 posts formed a loose cluster approximately 20 m to the north of the longhouse. Most of the posts formed four short alignments associated with two semi-subterranean sweat lodges (Features 71 and 72). Three of these post alignments were relatively straight, and measured from 1.0 to 2.5 metres in length, while the fourth formed a loose curvilinear row of up to seven metres in length to the north and west of Feature 71. As semi-subterranean sweat lodges have only rarely been identified as exposed features that are not directly associated with a formal house structure (e.g., an isolated sweat lodge was documented at the fourteenth-century Dykstra site in Barrie [Clish 2000]), it is likely that the various post alignments represent the remains of one or more slightly built, temporary structures. The opposing orientations of the two sweat lodges may be an indication that two such shelters were built. Similarly, the sweat lodges themselves appear to have been used only briefly or irregularly, as their living floors were thin and discontinuous. Regardless of whether they were used simultaneously or on different occasions, it appears that their layout relative to one another was structured by similar considerations of symmetry and opposition that seem to have determined the location of such features within certain houses on some settlement sites (e.g., Dodd and Riddell 1993:149; MacDonald and Williamson 2001:68; Robertson and Williamson 2003:14, 24).

A single pit that was devoid of contents (Feature 55) lay four to five metres to the northeast of the sweat lodges. Farther north and east was a temporary grave (Feature 106), which measured 115 cm in length, 90 cm in width and 12 cm deep and contained over 80 pieces of
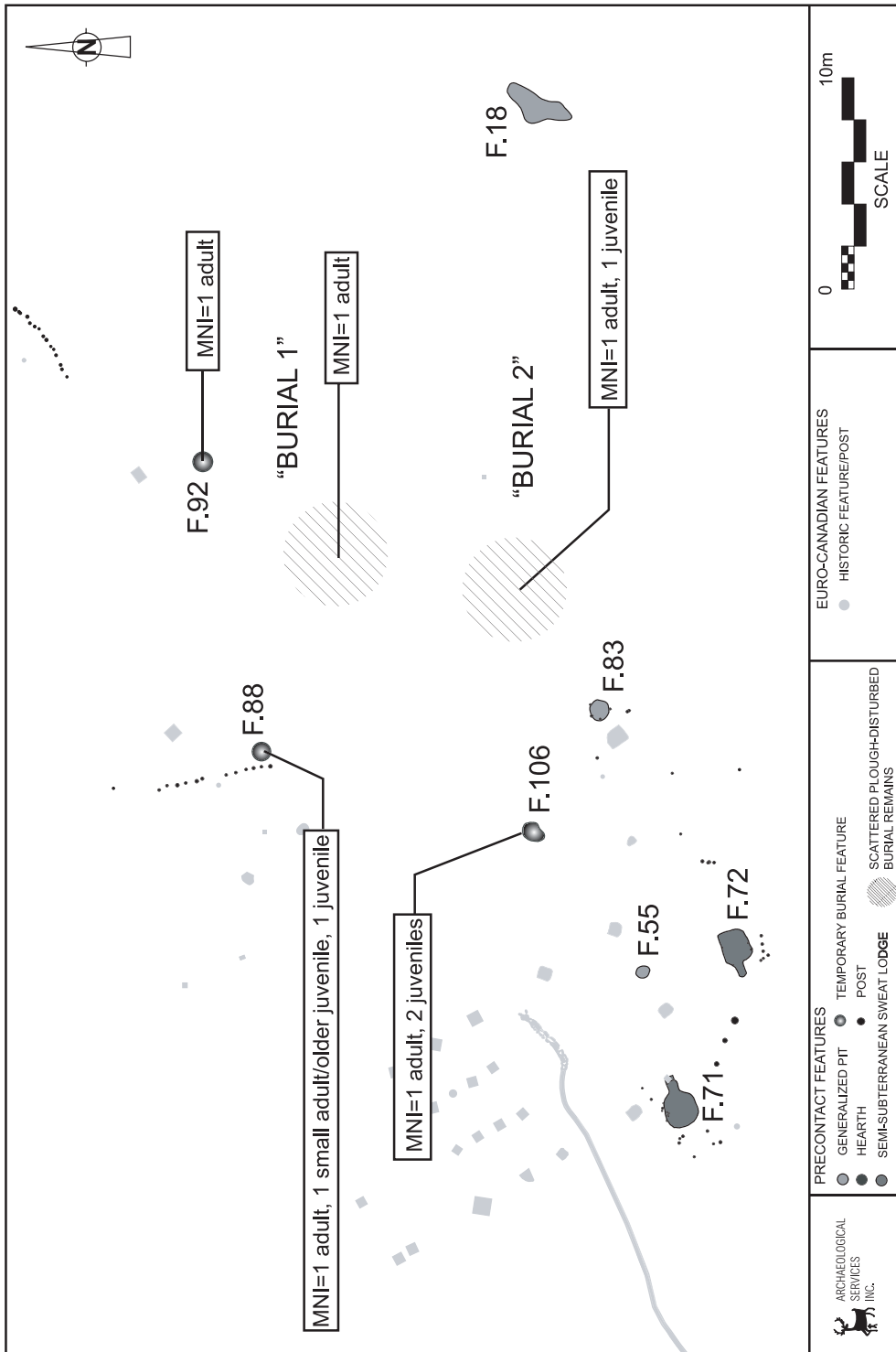
Figure 6. *The mortuary area at the Hutchinson site.*

human bone. Most of these bones were small distal extremities and bone fragments representing the disarticulated remains of at least one adult and two juveniles (Figure 6, Table 1). These and the other human remains from the site were subject to basic identification and inventory prior to their reburial. In the agreement reached with the Six Nations of the Grand concerning the disposition of these remains, detailed analyses were not permitted, although all elements were examined in an effort to identify pathologies, age indicators, and taphonomic attributes such as rodent- or carnivore-gnawing. The majority of the material was poorly preserved and prone to fragmentation, but there were no indications of long-term exposure, in the form of rodent- or carnivore-gnawing while the bones were relatively fresh.

To the north and northeast of Feature 106 were another two large shallow pits (Features 88 and 92) and two short lengths of fencing, screening, or windbreaks, each of which measured approximately five metres in length. Measuring 88 cm long, 78 cm wide and 20 cm deep, Feature 88 yielded over 200 pieces of human bone, representing, at a minimum, one adult, one small adult or older juvenile, and one other juvenile (Figure 6, Table 1). Feature 92—which measured 95 cm long, 85 cm wide and 11 cm deep—contained seven elements representative of at least one adult (Table 1). As was the case with Feature 106, the remains from Features 88 and 92 primarily consisted of small disarticulated elements, such as teeth or hand and foot bones, or miscellaneous bone fragments.

Another feature of note in this portion of the site was Feature 83, located to the southeast of Feature 106. This pit, which measured 201 cm in length, 190 cm in width and 9 cm deep, was surrounded by four seven to eight cm diameter posts, suggesting the presence of some form of associated structure. Three formal bone perforators, or awls, and a small "bodkin" (Figure 7) were found in the pit. These constitute the only worked bone artifacts recovered from the site. The perforators include one probably manufactured from white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) antler, one made from a medium-sized mammal, perhaps domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*)

or racoon (*Procyon lotor*), and one made from an unidentified piece of mammal long bone. The bodkin is also made from unidentified mammal bone. Its butt end is decorated with at least two annular grooves cut to create a series of pea-sized balls, only one of which survives due to breakage (Balmer and Stanchly 2003:68). William Fox (personal communication 2003) has suggested that such bodkins may have been evocative of rattlesnake rattles, and by association, the Horned Serpent of the lower world (cf. Fox 2003:5). While Feature 83 did not yield human remains, it is similar to the other temporary graves in terms of its size, it was surrounded by four posts, as if to clearly demarcate its presence, and the assemblage of worked bone may well represent an offering of a personal tool kit, given that no other bone artifacts were recovered from the site.

A large quantity of scattered human bone was also encountered in two somewhat discrete concentrations during the stripping of the plough zone to the immediate south and east of the three burial features (Figure 6, Table 1). When these were encountered, mechanical excavations were halted and all of the soil was screened. The elements recovered in this process were generally small, poorly preserved, and fragmentary, due to the impacts of long term ploughing and exposure. Like the material from the features, however, these remains were primarily small distal extremities, which represented one adult and one juvenile in one of the concentrations (plough zone "Burial 1") and an adult in the other cluster (plough zone "Burial 2"). They may have originated from the ploughed out portions of the graves, or may represent the former presence of other shallow temporary burial features in the area. All that can be said in this regard is that based on element duplication, the adult from plough zone "Burial 2" cannot be the same as the adult who was interred in Feature 106.

Given these finds, this activity area appears to be related primarily to funereal activities—notably the temporary interment of individuals, probably as primary burials, followed by their exhumation and final excarnation prior to their ultimate burial in their community's ossuary. In total, a minimum of nine, or possibly ten, individuals are represented

**Table 1.** *Summary of human remains from the mortuary area.*

Feature	Individual	Body Representation	n
106	Adult	Loose Dentition	8
		Torso Elements	3
		Long Bone Fragments	1
		Hand/Foot Elements	28
	Juvenile	Cranial Fragments	18
		Loose Dentition	2
		Torso Elements	3
		Long Bone Fragments	4
	Unknown	Miscellaneous Unidentified Fragments	15
88	Adult	Loose Dentition	14
		Torso Elements	6
		Long Bone Fragments	3
		Hand/Foot Elements	99
	Small Adult/Older Juvenile	Loose Dentition	1
		Torso Elements	6
		Long Bone Fragments	2
		Hand/Foot Elements	14
	Juvenile	Torso Elements	1
	Unknown	Miscellaneous Unidentified Fragments	94
92	Adult	Loose Dentition	2
		Torso Elements	1
		Hand/Foot Elements	4
Plough Zone "Burial 1"	Adult	Cranial Fragments	37
		Loose Dentition	8
		Torso Elements	1
		Long Bone Fragments	15
		Hand/Foot Elements	9
	Unknown	Miscellaneous Unidentified Fragments	70
Plough Zone "Burial 2"	Adult	Loose Dentition	4
		Torso Elements	11
		Hand/Foot Elements	13
	Juvenile	Cranial Fragments	65
		Loose Dentition	3
		Torso Elements	8
		Long Bone Fragments	11
		Hand/Foot Elements	1

Figure 7. *The bone tools recovered from Feature 83 in the mortuary area: perforators or awls made from an unidentifiable mammal long bone fragment (a), a medium-sized mammal metapodial (b), white-tailed deer antler (c) and a "bodkin" made from unidentifiable mammal bone (d).*

by the human remains from the mortuary area: five adults, one small adult or older juvenile, and two or three younger juveniles. Added to these remains, however, are three shallow, disturbed flexed interments found on the south side of the creek opposite the settlement (Figure 8). These interments were discovered during the course of a criminal investigation and human remains recovery operation at the Staines Road site (AkGt-55) (Williamson and Steiss 2003:102) that took place at the same time as the Hutchinson excavations.

Although the relationship between these three burials, two adult females and a juvenile, and those found in the mortuary area at Hutchinson is not entirely clear, it is likely that they are contemporary, based on the fact that one of the adult females was accompanied by a ceramic smoking pipe
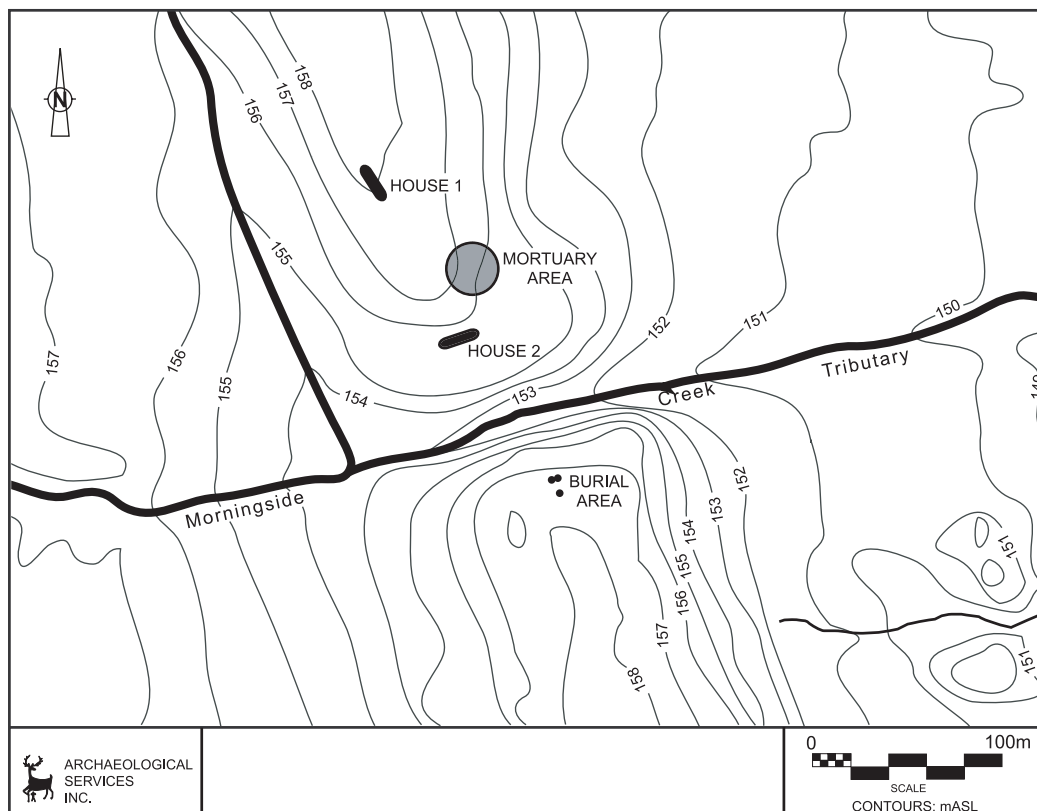
Figure 8. *The Hutchinson site in relationship to the burial area on the opposite side of the creek.*

with a barrel-shaped bowl (Figure 9). In any case, if these three individuals were members of the same community, they were accorded different treatment: they were not buried within the main site area and were excluded from final reburial in the community ossuary, with all that may imply regarding their identity in life or the manner of their death.

The final feature located in the vicinity of the main mortuary area was Feature 18, a stratified refuse-filled depression or trench-like pit located on the periphery of the site approximately 15 m to the east of Feature 83, and roughly the same distance to the northeast of House 2. This feature proved to be the richest deposit at the site in terms of artifact content, bearing in mind that the overall assemblage recovered from the site is small. It yielded over 60 percent of the ceramic vessel assemblage, three-quarters of the ceramic pipe and lithic assemblages, and almost 60 percent of the faunal sample. The soil matrices comprising the three

major depositional strata were comprised of large quantities of charcoal, ash and fired soils.

Although the community plan encountered at the site is somewhat unusual, the proximity of House 2 to the mortuary area suggests that they are closely related in terms of the occupational history and function of the site. The more isolated position of House 1 relative to House 2 and the mortuary area renders its relationship to the events that took place in the southern portion of the site less clear. Its presence, however, can be neither coincidental nor fortuitous. If House 1 was not directly associated with the funereal activities carried out at the site, it either pre- or post-dated them; if the former, then the site clearly assumed additional significance within the settlement landscape of the middle Rouge River Valley; if the latter, then it is unlikely to have been established in ignorance of the significance of the site and the funereal activities that took place there. Reoccupation of the site would have been a deliberate acknowledgement of

Figure 9. *The smoking pipe accompanying one of the female interments in the burial area on the south side of the creek, opposite the Hutchinson site.*

the importance of this place in the history and identity of the community (cf. Robertson 2001:57-59).

The Artifact Assemblage

Although human remains were numerous at Hutchinson, the remains of daily life at the site were sparse. The artifact assemblage consists of only 380 items (Table 2).

Ceramic Artifacts
A total of 224 sherds constituting portions of vessel rims (*n*=14), rim fragments (*n*=8), necks and/or shoulders (*n*=34), bodies (*n*=72), and unanalyzable sherds (*n*=96) make up the ceramic vessel assemblage. Approximately one quarter of the analyzable body sherds (*n*=17) show evidence of surface treatment in the form of smoothed over ribbed paddling, while two sherds recovered from Feature 1, the semi-subterranean sweat lodge in House 2, bore traces of a red ochre wash (Wojtowicz 2003:63).

Eleven individual vessels were identified within the assemblage, of which ten could be analyzed. While the sample is exceedingly small, it points to a broadly fourteenth-century date for the occupation (Table 3). Middleport Oblique (*n*=4) and Ontario Horizontal (*n*=3) types predominate, with single specimens of Pound Necked, Middleport Criss-cross and Ripley Plain rounding out the typed vessels (Wojtowicz 2003:65).

In terms of spatial distribution, Feature 18, the refuse deposit located to the southeast of the mortuary area (Figure 6), contained two of the Middleport Oblique vessels and the Pound Necked and Middleport Criss-cross specimens. The other two Middleport Oblique vessels and two of the Ontario Horizontal vessels were recovered from Feature 71, one of the semi-subterranean sweat lodges in the mortuary area. The remaining Ontario Horizontal vessel and the Ripley Plain vessel were recovered from two of the Euro-Canadian features to the southwest of House 1.

Table 2. *The Hutchinson site Iroquoian component artifact assemblage.*

Artifact Class and sub-class	Class Frequency	Sub-class Frequency	% of Class
Ceramics	236		100
Rim Sherds		14	5.9
Rim Sherd Fragments		8	3.4
Neck and Shoulder Sherds		34	14.4
Body Sherds		72	30.5
Unanalyzable Vessel Sherds*		96	40.8
Disc		1	0.4
Juvenile Ceramic Sherds		2	0.8
Pipe Fragments		9	3.8
Lithics	38		100
Crude Biface		1	2.6
Utilized Flakes		3	7.9
Unmodified Flakes and Shatter		33	86.9
Ground Stone		1	2.6
Faunal Remains	108		100
Worked Items		4	3
Unmodified Remains		104	97
Total	382		

*Generally, all sherds smaller than 25 mm were considered to be unanalyzable.

Table 3. *Hutchinson site ceramic vessel types.*

Type	n	%
Middleport Oblique	4	36.4
Ontario Horizontal	3	27.3
Pound Neck	1	9.1
Ripley Plain	1	9.1
Middleport Criss-Cross	1	9.1
Unidentifiable	1	9.1
Total	11	100.1

The ceramic pipe assemblage consists of three bowl fragments, three stem fragments, one stem/elbow fragment and two mouthpiece fragments. The bowl fragments are too small to permit complete identification of their form and decoration, beyond the fact that they exhibit plain, incised ring and opposed motifs respectively. The stem and elbow specimens are plain, and the two mouthpieces are tapered (Wojtowicz 2003:67). All but two of the pipe fragments were recovered from Feature 18.

One juvenile vessel rim sherd was recovered from Feature 18. The vessel is collarless and has been decorated with zones of short vertical lines that have been faintly impressed into the fabric. A second crudely shaped body sherd from a vessel with an extremely small capacity was recovered from Feature 83, one of the features in the mortuary area (Wojtowicz 2003:67).

The final ceramic artifact of note is a small ground ceramic disk, measuring 16.6 mm in circumference, that likely was manufactured from a body sherd (Wojtowicz 2003:67). It was found in Feature 71.

Stone Artifacts
The lithic assemblage is similarly limited. The flaked stone industry is represented by a biface fragment of Onondaga chert, ten secondary knapping flakes, one secondary retouch flake and 25 shatter fragments of which four were thermally altered (Miklavcic and Steiss 2003:67). More than three-quarters of the debitage was recovered from Feature 18. Onondaga chert predominates among the debitage (87 percent), while there are trace quantities of Balsam Lake, Lockport and Selkirk cherts. The only ground stone item recovered is a chlorite schist axe fragment from Feature 202 in House 1 (Miklavcic and Steiss 2003:68).

Subsistence Remains

The faunal sample is extremely limited and the majority of the finds are calcined. The assemblage appears, however, to reflect an emphasis on small- to medium-sized mammals, including chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*), squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and, possibly, racoon, and small- to medium-sized birds, based on remains recovered from Feature 16 in House 2, Features 71, 83, 88, 106 in the mortuary area, Feature 200 in House 1, and Feature 18 on the southeast edge of the settlement (Balmer and Stanchly 2003:68-69). Domestic dog is present, as is white-tailed deer, but both species are represented by only few specimens. Fish is represented by a single vertebra.

The plant remains, analyzed from soil samples collected from Features 18, 88 and 202, include three domesticated crops, maize (*Zea mays*), bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), and tobacco (*Nicotiana rustica*)—together with a diverse range of gathered wild plants, such as bramble (*Rubus* sp.), elderberry (*Sambucus* sp.), sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and wild rice (*Zizania acquatica*) (Monckton 2003:70-71). Virtually all of the plant remains, both cultigens and wild taxa, were recovered from Feature 18. Neither the faunal nor plant remains samples permit any conclusions to be drawn regarding the seasonality of the occupation or occupations.

Local Middle Iroquoian Ossuaries

The location of the final resting-place of the human remains disinterred from the main part of the Hutchinson site is unknown. The nearest, broadly Middle Iroquoian, ossuaries that have been documented are Fairty (AlGt-3), Tabor Hill (AkGt-5), and Ralph (AlGt-26) (Figure 10). Fairty, situated approximately 1.5 km to the northwest of Hutchinson, was located on a small promontory on the eastern bank of a minor tributary of Morningside Creek. The site consisted of a single burial pit (Donaldson 1962:18). Analysis of the skeletal remains (Anderson 1963) indicated that the disarticulated remains of at least 512 individuals were interred in the pit. Tabor Hill, located seven kilometres to the south, overlooked Highland Creek and consisted of two

Figure 10. *Presumed Middle Iroquoian ossuaries and their potentially associated villages within the general vicinity of the Hutchinson site.*
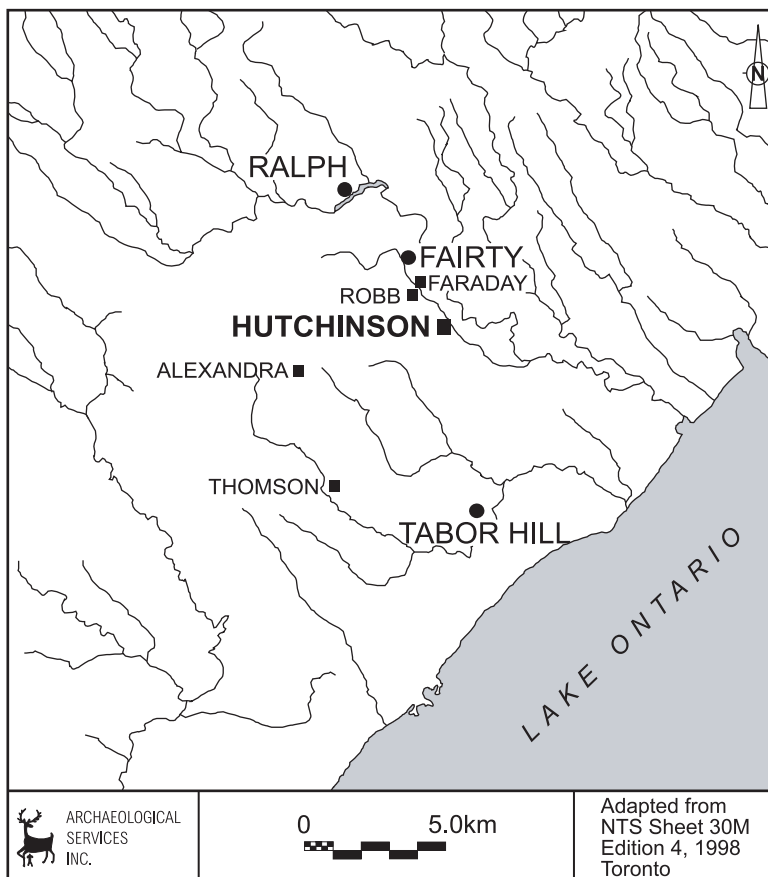
burial pits containing the remains of 472 individuals (Kenyon 1956:184; Kenyon and Churcher 1960). The more poorly documented Ralph ossuary was located less than three kilometres to the northwest of Hutchinson. It is reported to have lain on the west bank of the Rouge River in the Town of Markham and to contain at least 40 skeletons (Konrad 1973). One other potential contemporary ossuary is that represented by the Staines Road remains that were recovered from a fill and rubbish deposit on the south side of the creek opposite the Hutchinson site (Williamson and Steiss 2003:102). The original provenience of these remains, which represent a minimum of 308 individuals, is not known, but it may be assumed that they derive from an ossuary somewhere within the Rouge River drainage.

Given their size, it is apparent that Fairty, Tabor Hill, and perhaps the original ossuary con-taining the Staines Road remains were intended as the final resting places for the dead from two or more allied villages, given community size during this period (Dodd et al. 1990:354; Warrick 2000:443). In all likelihood, Fairty was associated with either the Robb site (AlGt-4), located less than one kilometre to its southwest, or the Faraday site (AlGt-18), located approximately 500 m to its south-southwest (Dodd et al. 1990:354; Kapches 1981:131), as well as with some other community, as it seems unlikely that Robb and Faraday were contemporary or immediately successive, given the short distance separating them. While Robb was clearly a major unpalisaded settlement, consisting of at least nine longhouses (Williamson et al. 2005:49-51), few details concerning the character of the Faraday site are available. Based on limited ceramic samples from both sites, Kapches

(1981:178) suggested that Faraday was the later of the two. Another potential contributor to the Fairty ossuary is the community represented by the Alexandra site, a settlement comprised of 15 longhouses located only a few kilometres to the southeast (Williamson and Steiss 2003:103; Williamson et al. 2005:51-52). The Tabor Hill ossuaries have traditionally been associated with the Thomson site (AkGt-20), which is the closest known village, situated two kilometres to the west (Kenyon 1956; Emerson 1956; Kapches 1981:71-86), but given the number of people interred at Tabor Hill, and the fact that there were two burial pits, more than one community may be represented by these remains.

A Place to Prepare for the Final Journey

Within the context of the Late Woodland archaeological record of south-central Ontario, the patterns encountered at the Hutchinson site are largely unique. The site cannot be accommodated easily within the prevailing settlement typology of "camp," "cabin," "hamlet" and "village" that is derived from early ethnohistoric accounts (e.g., Lennox and Fitzgerald 1990:438). This is not necessarily surprising as such a scheme cannot do justice to the diverse range of settlement forms, functions, and histories that these sites represent (MacDonald 2002:62-63; Robertson and Williamson 2003:3-4). On the basis of superficial criteria, it would normally be classified as a "special purpose" cabin site. With more detailed examination, however, it yielded little evidence to suggest that it served a particularly focussed economic role within the broader subsistence-settlement system of its constituent community. It is neither a "hamlet," "cabin," nor hunting or fishing "camp" of the types that likely supported the major semi-permanent settlements of the area. Rather, the most outstanding feature of the site is the fact that the bodies of 12 or perhaps 13 people were buried, for the most part temporarily, within the settlement or its immediate environs. Relative to the number of people likely to have occupied the site at any given time—a maximum of perhaps 40-60 if both houses were occupied simultaneously and

to capacity, based on traditional criteria such as the number of hearths (e.g., Heidenreich 1971:116-118; Warrick 1990:225-237)—the number of burials seems to be disproportionately high if Hutchinson was simply an agricultural cabin site. This assumes, of course, that no tragedy had occurred. The other striking feature of the Hutchinson remains is that they represent a relatively diverse range of individuals in terms of age, suggesting either that the site was used by a single family over a long period of time, or by a larger lineage group or clan segment who made rather fewer trips to the site to take care of their recent deceased.

Furthermore, the distribution of the burial features within the site does not correspond particularly well with the patterns documented on other settlements. They certainly do not constitute the "scattered human remains" found in middens on numerous later sites that have traditionally been interpreted as prisoner sacrifice. Likewise, they are not the dispersed and random by-products of defleshing and corpse preparation prior to primary burial that may occur on settlement sites, accounting for more or less isolated elements that were ultimately incorporated as inclusions in domestic features (cf. Williamson et al. 1998:14-15). Nor do they resemble formal burial patterns found on some settlement sites. Throughout the span of the Late Woodland period, human burials are often encountered within houses (e.g., Fitzgerald 1979; Kapches 1976; Kenyon 1968:19; Knight and Melbye 1983; Saunders 1986; Spence 1994; Ramsden et al. 1998:76-83; Williamson 1978; Wright and Anderson 1969:11-13). Use of semi-subterranean sweat lodges and other bunk-line or house-end features for temporary and even permanent burial was reasonably common, and even in cases where burials were located in exterior areas within the settlement compound, there does not generally seem to have been a concern to separate these features from the domestic realm. In at least one case, documented at the mid-thirteenth century Antrex site in Mississauga, incorporating a temporary burial feature within a house interior (Figure 11) seems to have been a major priority, one that even transcended house
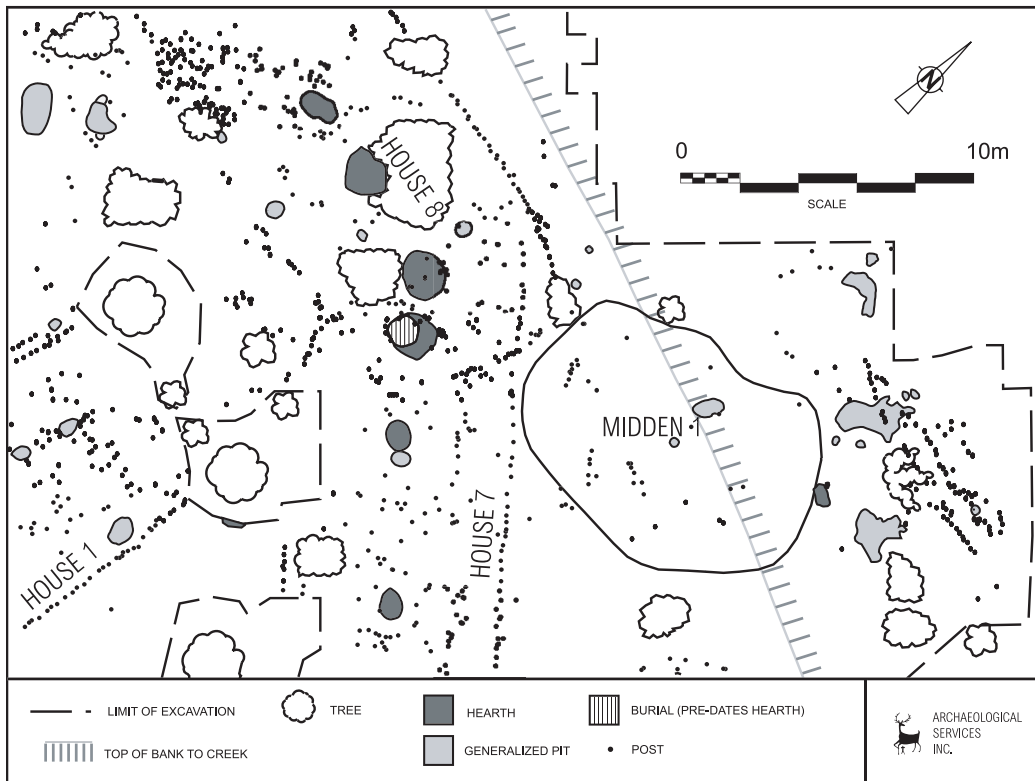
Figure 11. *At the Middle Iroquoian Antrex site in Mississauga, a burial feature that contained the disarticulated and fragmentary remains of at least three individuals—an adult, a sub-adult and a juvenile who were ultimately disinterred—appears to have played a critical role in determining the layout of two, if not three, successive longhouses, serving as the "axis" around which they were constructed. The burial feature was originally surrounded by a screen of stakes and was overlain by a hearth, which given its location relative to the houses, may represent a ceremonial event.*

abandonment and replacement (Robertson and Williamson 2002a:95-96). In contrast, the Hutchinson site burial areas were well defined and located at some remove from the occupation areas (Figure 8). Admittedly, such comparisons may not be completely apt, given that intra- and inter-house burials on settlement sites are generally thought to represent "unique" situations, events, or practices.

Given the lack of evidence for intensive occupation at Hutchinson, and the disparity between the numbers of living and dead represented in the archaeological record, it would probably be more accurate to characterize the site as a formal cemetery. The occupants of House 2, if not House 1 as well, seem to have been there to attend to the dead, and their tenure may not have extended much beyond the time required to

complete the tasks and rites associated with interring, exhuming, and preparing the remains. Further support for this suggestion is lent by the documented practices of the contact period Huron. While the practices and underlying beliefs of communities separated by a span of 200 years may have been somewhat different, recourse to ethnographic sources in search of analogies is warranted. In south-central Ontario, the Middle Iroquoian period sees the development of community-wide ossuaries, largely comprised of commingled remains. This represents the crystallization of the basic patterns that characterized contact-era Huron practices, and a shift away from the use of the smaller common burial pits that appear on many earlier village sites (e.g., Kenyon 1968; Warrick 1991). On the basis of present evidence, the earliest true ossuaries

appear to be the three eleventh to fourteenth century features at Serpent Mounds on Rice Lake, which, combined, contained the remains of 69 individuals (Johnston 1979:92-93, 97) and the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century Moatfield ossuary, which contained at least 87 people (Williamson and Pfeiffer [eds.] 2003). These sites, in their different ways, foreshadow the developments of the Middle Iroquoian period in south-central Ontario, as exemplified by sites such as Tabor Hill and Fairty. The Huron Feast of the Dead represents the culmination of this historical development. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that other basic aspects of the Huron mortuary program were taking shape at the same time, if they were not already in place.

The Huron funerary process is well documented in the writings of the seventeenth century explorers and missionaries. These works have been summarized many times in the archaeological literature and need only be discussed briefly here, with particular emphasis on the pre-ossuary burial phase. Gabriel Sagard noted that the cemetery was usually located "an harquebus-shot" from its village (Wrong 1939:75), which Heidenreich (1971:149) suggests was a distance of 250 to 350 metres. Upon the death of an individual, and after three days of mourning, he or she was typically interred in the cemetery in the manner described by Samuel de Champlain:

> they take the body of the deceased, wrap it in furs, cover it very neatly with tree-bark, then lift it up on four posts on which they build a cabin covered with tree-bark, as long as the body. Others they put into the ground, which is propped up on all sides for fear lest it fall on the body, which they cover with tree-bark, putting earth on top, and over this grave likewise they erect a little cabin. Now it must be understood that these bodies are thus buried in these places only for a time…[Biggar 1971:160-161].

Sagard further recorded that the burial huts or shrines over graves might be surrounded by "a hedge of stakes…out of honour for the dead and to protect the burial house from dogs and wild animals" (Wrong 1939:208). Death and burial were occasions for feasting and public lamentation and bereaved spouses were expected to continue to follow a prescribed code of mourning behaviour for some time in order to demonstrate their grief over their loss. Women, in particular, would visit the cemetery frequently to mourn at the graves and memorial feasts were held on a regular basis (Thwaites 1896-1901:10:269-275).

Not all who died were buried in the cemetery. Infants, for example, were excluded from formal cemetery burial. Instead they were buried along paths frequented by their mothers, so their souls would re-enter the womb and be reborn in the next child (Thwaites 1896-1901:10:273). The souls of victims of violent death were believed to be dangerous and were accorded exclusive funeral treatment, in that their bodies were burned or buried immediately, the implication being that in some cases this occurred almost literally "where they fell" (Thwaites 1896-1901:39:31). Individuals who died on a journey were cremated and their bones were collected (Thwaites 1896-1901:10:129), presumably to be returned home and interred as a bundle burial. Others might be taken to the village cemetery, but not interred in formal graves. Victims of drowning or freezing were taken to the cemetery, where their bodies were disarticulated, the flesh burned, and the skeletal remains thrown into a ditch, where they apparently remained exposed to the elements (Thwaites 1896-1901:10:273). Generally, all of these unfortunates were excluded from the final ossuary burial.

At the end of a particular village's tenure in a given location, those who had been formally interred in the village cemetery were exhumed for reburial in the ossuary. The accompanying ceremony, the Feast of the Dead, represented the final act prior to village abandonment. The Feast of the Dead lasted several days and involved much ritual feasting and the exchange of gifts, serving to socially integrate both the living and the dead more than any other event (Trigger 1969:102-112).

In his *Relation* of 1636, Jean de Brébeuf provided a brief description of some of the preliminaries to the Feast of the Dead and the creation of the ossuary:

each family sees to its dead, but with a care and affection that cannot be described; if they have dead relatives in any part of the Country, they spare no trouble to go for them; they take them from the Cemeteries, bear them on their shoulders, and cover them with the finest robes they have. In each Village they chose a fair day, and proceed to the Cemetery, where those called *Aiheonde*, who take care of the graves, draw the bodies from the tombs in the presence of the relatives.…

…after having opened the graves, they display before you all these Corpses.… The flesh of some is quite gone, and there is only parchment on their bones; in other cases the bodies look as if they have been dried and smoked, and show scarcely any signs of putrefaction; and in still other cases they are still swarming with worms. When the friends have gazed upon the bodies to their satisfaction, they cover them with handsome Beaver robes quite new: finally, after some time, they strip them of their flesh, taking of skin and flesh which they throw into the fire along with the robes and mats in which the bodies were wrapped. As regards the bodies of those recently dead, they leave these in the state in which they are, and content themselves by simply covering them with new robes.

…The bones having been well cleaned, they put them partly into bags, partly into fur robes, loaded them on their shoulders, and covered these packages with another beautiful hanging robe. As for the whole bodies, they put them on a species of litter, and carried them with all the others, each to his Cabin, where each family made a feast to its dead [Thwaites 1896-1901:10:279-285].

Returning to Hutchinson, certain specific elements of Huron practice appear to be reflected in the patterns encountered at the site. No infant remains, for example, were present among the 12 or 13 individuals interred there. And while refuse of all types was limited in quantity, the vast majority of the domestic material that was recovered derives from Feature 18, a refuse-filled depression or trench-like pit near the mortuary area, but on the periphery of the site. This deposit also incorporated a considerable amount of burnt material. It is not inconceivable that this feature is related to a feasting event, particularly as such funeral feasts appear to have been a component of earlier Iroquoian practice (e.g., Fox and Salzer 1999:247-252). Finally, Feature 83 bears certain similarities to some of the basic cemetery features described in the historic accounts (Figure 12). The posts surrounding the pit could represent a screen or markers placed around its periphery, analogous to the protective "hedge" described by Sagard (Wrong 1939: 208),

Figure 12. *A depiction of a Huron cemetery with scaffolds and grave shrines (Permission granted by the Champlain Society to reproduce this image. Biggar 1971:Vol.3, Plate 8).*

or perhaps even the vestiges of a scaffold. Given the absence of any human remains in the feature, perhaps the latter is the more likely. The presence of the four bone tools, the only specimens recovered from the site may, on the other hand, indicate that an offering was placed in a pit excavated beneath the structure.

In other respects, however, the site manifests significant differences from expectations based on the ethnohistoric sources. The site is not located within the 250-350 metre "range of an harquebus" from a village. The nearest *potential* villages, Archie Little 2 and Russell, are located 800 and 1,100 metres respectively, to the northeast of Hutchinson. This distance may account for the presence of the two longhouses, assuming that they are directly related to the use of the site as a cemetery, if the site was visited on a regular basis, as was likely the case, or the rites associated with mourning and honouring the dead were protracted affairs.

It would also appear that funereal process involved the construction of the sweat lodges, which were protected by temporary shelters. Given the role of communal sweat lodges in ritual and curative practice (MacDonald 1988:17-18, 1992:239; MacDonald and Williamson 2001:66-68), it is possible that these features were built exclusively for use in ceremonies that were associated with the initial burial of these individuals, or that accompanied their disinterment. While it is noteworthy that all these activities took place at some distance from either of the houses at the site, there may have been several steps in the ritual process, given the presence of the additional sweat lodge in House 2. Undoubtedly related to these questions is the strong association between semi-subterranean sweat lodges and human burials found on numerous other southern Ontario sites between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Sweat lodge features could be used as temporary or final graves (MacDonald and Williamson 2001:Table 10 [e.g., the Uren, Bennett, Alexandra, Parsons, and Dunsmore sites]), or burials could be located in close proximity to them, as was the case at Myers Road (Ramsden et al. 1998:78, 80, 82). The ethnohistoric sources do not explicitly indicate that the spiritual well-being of the survivors

of the deceased, or those charged with handling their remains, was maintained through such prophylactic means as the sweat bath ritual, but given Huron beliefs concerning the potential dangers posed by the souls of the dead, it is likely that some such measures would be necessary. Given that communal semi-subterranean sweat lodges had long fallen out of use by the time of European contact, it may be that other practices had taken their place. Sweat-bathing itself had certainly not lost its power as a means of purification during the contact period (MacDonald 1988:18-19).

Perhaps the most important regard in which Hutchinson diverges from the contact period cemetery pattern, however, is its size. It is unlikely that the twelve to thirteen individuals who were interred at the site represent all of the dead from a given village during the entire span of its occupation. Gary Warrick has suggested that by the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries, the average village had a population of 400-500 and was occupied for approximately 30 years (Warrick 1990:348). Notwithstanding the difficulties inherent in the concept of the "average village", it is clear that the Hutchinson group could represent the dead of only a small segment of such a community, or that they constitute a group of relative "outsiders."

Deborah Merrett (2003) has recently calculated a crude death rate of 30.6 per year for a population of 1,000, based on the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century Moatfield ossuary (Merrett 2003:177). This is comparable to the crude death rate of 33/1,000/year suggested for the nearby Fairty ossuary (Warrick 1990:Table 46). The Moatfield data are far more robust than those from the Hutchinson site, given the fragmentary character of the remains at Hutchinson, the limited analysis that was permitted prior to their reburial, and the much broader demographic profile represented at Moatfield. This creates some difficulty in using these data to make any predictions about the size of the Hutchinson community. Nevertheless, it may be possible to compensate by excluding infants and children younger than approximately seven years of age from consideration, as these cohorts are

not represented in the Hutchinson sample. As these age groups had the highest mortality rate at Moatfield, ranging from 28.7 to 69 deaths per 1,000 individuals per year (Merrett 2003:Table 6.6), a mean death rate in the order of 10 per 1,000 individuals per year, calculated on the basis of the death rates for the balance of the Moatfield population, may be a more appropriate figure. Yet at this rate, the Hutchinson dead could be derived from a population of only 120-130 over as little as a ten year period. This is even fewer than the 200 people assumed to make up the average autonomous, multi-lineage community of the Early Iroquoian period (e.g., Warrick 1990:342).

This raises a number of questions. Was Hutchinson utilized by a particular kin group from one of the neighbouring village sites, or do the remains represent some other cross-section of their community? Were the bodies handled by a task group whose composition was determined by virtue of kinship, the manner in which the people had died, or on some other basis? What are the implications of these various possibilities for our assumptions concerning the rise of increasingly formalized and cohesive lineage and clan-based residential units during the Middle Iroquoian period? Are we seeing the perseverance of a smaller kinship unit's independence within the emergent larger communities of the Middle Iroquoian period in this portion of the Rouge River basin? In all likelihood, the dead from the Hutchinson site were ultimately re-interred in an ossuary, and were thereby re-integrated with their wider community (both living and dead members) and perhaps with the dead of neighbouring settlements as well. But the treatment of their remains beforehand and any ceremony it entailed may have been more private acts on the part of their immediate relations, standing in contrast to the highly public acts of mourning that would have accompanied the creation of the final community ossuary (Trigger 1969:102; cf. Hall 1997:32).

This may have been the compromise reached among this particular Rouge watershed group within the context of the emergence of larger Middle Iroquoian communities through the amalgamation of smaller groups, and the attendant negotiations and socio-political organization that this process required. Similar flexibility is seen in other aspects of Middle and early Late Iroquoian life in other regions, as may be seen, for example, in southern Simcoe County, where settlement patterns on some sites seem to portray complex and dynamic patterns of household fusion and fissioning, the incorporation of new families within the community, or simply a continuation of the more fluid economic and residential patterns of earlier times (e.g., Robertson et al. 1995:50; Robertson and Williamson 2003:50). Whether other regional Middle Iroquoian communities reacted in the same way remains unclear, but it should not be assumed that their responses to the social pressures of the time were exactly the same. Even though the Middle Iroquoian period, as an archaeological construct, was formulated on the basis of the apparent onset of widespread cultural homogeneity and rapid socio-political and economic shifts (Wright 1966:55, 97) it was actually a time of considerable diversity (e.g., Dodd et al. 1990:357; Ferris 1999; MacDonald 2002:348; Robertson and Williamson 2002b). Given the differences between sites in terms of settlement patterns, economic systems and material culture throughout the late thirteenth, fourteenth, and even fifteenth centuries, it is clear that the cultural realities of the period were complex and rooted in long term historical processes; individual communities underwent a series of transitions in different ways and at different times, depending on where they lived and on the structure of the social and economic networks in which they were involved.

The Final Journey

We will probably never be certain that the dead from the Hutchinson site were ultimately incorporated within any one of these documented local ossuaries, or were laid to rest in some other place entirely. We cannot even be sure of their origin. Were they part of the Archie Little 2 or Russell site populations, if these were not the same, or did they inhabit some other local settlement? The answers to these questions are likely to remain unknown.

Regardless of these uncertainties, we should recognize that there may be other similar small cemetery sites in the Rouge watershed that represent places where the deceased were prepared for their journey to the Land of the Dead. While it may ultimately prove that the Hutchinson cemetery represents a comparatively local or idiosyncratic response by an individual community, or a subset of that community, to the various sociopolitical transitions of the fourteenth century, the fact remains that large primary, but temporary, cemeteries in direct association with villages do not seem to be visible features in the archaeological record of south-central Ontario. The only published examples seem to be those noted for the early sixteenth century Mackenzie-Woodbridge and Keffer villages to which may be added the recently excavated Mantle site.

The Mackenzie-Woodbridge site was situated on the northern reaches of the Humber River in Toronto, and originally assumed to have been a "pre-contact Huron" community (Wright 1966:69). While a looted ossuary is reported to have been found less than a kilometre from the settlement (Wright 1966:70), more than a dozen individuals were found in a cemetery situated on a sandy knoll about 100 metres from the site (Saunders 1986). As all ages and both sexes were recovered, in both primary inhumation and secondary bundled forms, Saunders (1986:24) suggested a burial tradition more similar to Neutral practice than to Huron. While the potential presence of Neutral influence on Humber River communities has long been noted (e.g., Ramsden 1977:281-282), there is no way to reach a resolution regarding the burial tradition that the site occupants followed without data on the reported ossuary.

The recently excavated Mantle site, a large, sixteenth century Iroquoian site located on Stouffville Creek, also had an associated cemetery. The excavations revealed a four hectare settlement containing 82 house structures, at least 52 of which were occupied at one time, all encircled by a multiple-rowed palisade. The artifacts recovered from the settlement include a significant number of artifacts, mainly in the form of modelled human effigies on ceramic vessels, that are more usually found on contemporaneous Oneida villages in New York State (Williamson and Clish 2006). The cemetery, which consisted of 37 primary interments, was found a short distance beyond the village defences on a terrace of the creek valley. While Mantle was primarily an ancestral Huron community, the cemetery pattern more closely resembles New York Iroquois practices and may thus reflect the rites of only a small, distinct segment within the settlement.

The "cemetery" associated with the Keffer site, located on the West Don River, is less compelling. In this instance, the primary cemetery has only been characterized as "two burials outside the palisade…[an unspecified] number of pits that may have held burials…[and] an arrangement of six large post moulds that may have been a scaffold" (Finlayson et al. 1987:14). While the details are vague, this description does not convey the impression that the cemetery could have fully served the needs of the village, whose population has been estimated to have exceeded 700 people (Finlayson et al. 1987:20).

Given the scale of village site excavation within the past two decades, however, it would appear that while one or two individual burials might be found on the periphery of a village, large primary cemeteries were not located immediately adjacent to the settlement compound, but at a greater distance, as the historical sources on the Huron suggest. If this is indeed the case, then these cemeteries are likely to remain largely invisible unless they happened to include an occupational component as at Hutchinson. Even there, however, the Iroquoian component was only recognized incidentally during a re-examination of a Euro-Canadian farmstead (MPP 1988:160-161).

Even though our ability to detect these places is limited, they must have held particular significance in terms of their spiritual, historical and social associations, particularly in view of the complexity of Iroquoian views of death and the afterlife as attested by the documented views of the seventeenth-century Huron. The multiplicity of souls comprising the individual and their various powers for good and ill required careful

management and propitiation. Huron villages were inhabited by the free souls of both the living and the recently dead who had not yet been sent on their way by means of the Feast of the Dead. Moreover, living villages were also surrounded by villages of the dead, as deserted settlements remained inhabited by the souls of those ancestors who, for one reason or another, were unable to make the journey to the Land of the Dead (Trigger 1969:103-104). These spirits remained in the abandoned villages and planted their own crops in the former clearings (von Gernet 1994:42-45; cf. Hall 1976:363). Within such a world, cemeteries such as the Hutchinson site, and the transformative activities that took place at them, were likely essential to the continued well-being of the community, however it was structured, both in life and in death.

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Situé sur un affluent de la rivière Rouge à Scarborough, le site Hutchinson remontant au XIVe siècle a été occupé par deux familles relativement petites, soit en même temps ou à des moments différents, mais le témoignage ne nous permet pas de croire que ce site jouait un rôle économique particulièrement important. La caractéristique exceptionnelle de l'établissement se trouve dans la quantité des restes humains décelés dans la région occupée et dans son entourage immédiat, comparativement au nombre d'individus à y avoir vraisemblablement vécu à n'importe quel moment. L'activité principale qui s'est déroulée sur site a été le traitement des cadavres des défunts, antérieurement à leur enterrement final dans l'ossuaire communautaire. Le site représente un cimetière similaire à ceux décrits dans les sources ethnohistoriques du XVIIe siècle mais rarement rencontrés dans l'enregistrement archéologique du sud centrale de l'Ontario. Les ensembles mis au jour au site Hutchinson permettent d'approfondir notre compréhension des pratiques mortuaires de la période iroquoienne moyenne, de la formation de la communauté et, peut-être, du maintien de l'identié à l'intérieur de la communauté.

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