Excavations of 18th Century Burials From Fort Frontenac, Kingston

Nick Adams

We go east this month to hear Nick Adams report on the interesting findings of a recent salvage job he undertook in the City of Kingston, for the Department of National Defense. None of us encounter much in the way of 18th century material down here in southwestern Ontario, so come on out and hear about this interesting part of Ontario's archaeological record. Meeting time and place on Thursday, April 12th is the usual: 8:00 PM at the Museum of Indian Archaeology. See you there.
EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Executive is very, very happy to welcome George Connolly back into the fold after his recent illness and we wish him continued good health. We also extend our thanks to Wayne Hagerty (a man of many hats!) for his sterling job as interim Treasurer.

The Executive has been meeting recently, and after some initial delays (what with our President going off to Egypt for a month!), we are now on track. Of primary importance will be sorting out and sending off to the main body our accounts from the OAS symposium last fall, which until recently sat collecting dust in our office. Not far behind that we will sort out the accounts for the 1989 fiscal year, and provide the membership with a Treasurer's Report in one of the next two issues of KEWA.

On other fronts, slow progress is being made on both of our delinquent Occasional Publications. Word is that the Boreal Forest volume will be in hand by mid-April (could it be true!?). As soon as we have the copies, they will be sent out to the many individuals who ordered the volume as far back as last June! Thanks for being patient. As far as the Archaeology of Southern Ontario volume goes, the Executive is close to working out funding arrangements for the production of the volume, and editor Chris Ellis reports that he would like to have a camera-ready copy in hand by July 1st. Whether we make that deadline or not depends on one or two chapters, and on some large scale proof-reading still required. Specifically, come mid-June or so, we will be looking for about a dozen volunteers to help proof the incredibly huge reference section to the volume. Anyone who feels they can spare the time and have the patience to proof 10 to 20 pages of references in June, please contact an Executive member of Occasional Publication series editor Neal Ferris. You don't need to live in London to help, and the more reviewers we have, the quicker we will be able to proof this anticipated 100+ page reference section!

SOCIAL REPORT

The Executive is currently trying to plan a number of weekend field projects this summer for members. One of the first may be a weekend survey of a field on the Girard Guides of Canada Camp (Camp Orenda) in Yarmouth Twp., Elgin Co., run by Tom Arnold. Further information on this project will be announced in the next issue of KEWA.

The Executive is currently thinking about having another summer picnic this year and Carl and Judith Murphy, hosts of last year's successful bash, have graciously agreed to host the event again this year. We trust that members would again be interested in coming out to such an event (scheduled perhaps for late July or mid-August). But, in light of past failures in this department, we need to be convinced. So, in the next issue of KEWA we will be providing a Social Events Questionnaire, and encourage members to respond. In the meanwhile, if you do wish the Chapter to host a summer picnic, please mention it to an Executive member at the next speaker night.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to unavoidable circumstances (ie. the start of the field season), the article planned for this month’s issue has been delayed. In its place we provide a reprint of our successful issue of the Grand River - Waterloo Chapter's Newsletter, The Birdstone. Thanks to Birdston editor John MacDonald for allowing us access to the article. Also, we provide reprint of two recent book reviews which should be of interest to Chapter members.
SALVAGE EXCAVATION OF THE MOYER FLATS SITE

William Fox

The London archaeology office of the Ministry was notified by Mr. Jack Redmond in June of 1982 that a Cambridge area farmer was planning to construct a dyke along the Grand River bank of his property (see Figure 1). Jack, our Kitchener-Waterloo Archaeological Conservation Program member, arranged for access to the property, as he had discovered prehistoric ceramics eroding from the bank in the area of the proposed construction activities. A June field inspection verified Jack's assessment and a salvage excavation was arranged for July. Subsequently, a crew of five excavated on the Moyer Flats site (AiHc-24) for two days.

Site Setting

Moyer Flats, like so many of the earlier Princess Point components, is situated on a fertile floodplain of the Grand River (see Figure 2). Boomer loam soils cap sand and gravel deposits in the site vicinity (Presant and Wicklund 1971), and adjacent flats to the south east supported a maple/beech dominant forest with secondary amounts of elm, bass wood and pine when they were surveyed by Adrian Marlet in 1817 (Finlay 1978).

At present, the flats are cultivated and usually planted in corn; however, the Moyer Flats site is located on the river bank and is partially capped by a silty levee deposit. Recent flood action has created an erosion channel to the west. Few artifacts have been recovered from adjacent field surface. A lesser volume

Figure 1: Location of the Moyer Flats Site
Figure 2: Location of the Excavations
of flood silt has been deposited in this area, suggesting that the ploughed field artifact distribution is an accurate reflection of the limited westward extent of the Moyer Flats site.

Field Work

Given the apparently limited area and flood eroded nature of the cultural deposit, it was decided to attempt to salvage the majority of the remaining site. Bank profiling indicated that the artifacts derived from a 17 cm thick dark grey-brown silt A horizon, which was covered by 44 cm of flood deposited grey-brown silt. The latter was culturally sterile and thus was removed by shovel on July 21, exposing a roughly triangular area measuring 5.5 m N-S by approximately 3 m E-W (see Figure 3).

A pragmatic one meter square grid was laid out, and the old A horizon cultural stratum was trowelled and 1/4 inch screened for artifact recovery. It was evident immediately upon removal of the recent alluvium that the cultural deposit did not extend across the entire area exposed.
Excavation motifs were identified on exterior colouration and black or dark brown interiors. Orange coloured interiors appear to be the result of accidental secondary firing after vessel breakage. Rim decoration techniques and motifs are quite variable and will be described below; however, there are some recurring attributes.

All vessel rim exteriors have decoration applied on a well smoothed over cord surface. The interiors are completely smoothened and plain, except in one instance. Four of the five analyzable rims and another nearly complete specimen, display identical upper design elements on their exterior and interior surfaces. The final rim (Vessel 3) deviates only in having a row of obliques on the exterior as opposed to verticals on the interior. Exterior punctates on all four vessels displaying horizontal neck decoration are situated between the first and second lines (see Figure 5:1 and 3), and the bosses from interior punctates on one of three vessels with horizontal neck decoration are similarly placed (see Figure 5:6).

Vessel 1 is represented by one rim and four neck sherds (see Figure 5:1). The rim exterior displays a row of long sinistral oblique suture impressions, formed by two carefully placed stamps each, above eight or more horizontal lines which appear to have been formed by loosely twisted cord impressions. Rectangular punctates are spaced 20–21 mm apart (centre to centre), measure 4.5 by 3.5 mm and are 3 mm deep. Interior decoration consists of a row of long sinistral oblique suture impressions identical in form to the exterior, above slight bosses created by the exterior punctates. The lip is 7.5 mm wide and exhibits perpendicular suture(?) impressions. Neck thickness varies from 6.5 to 8.5 mm and this vessel was decorated with at least one simple pointed castellation.

Vessel 2 also exhibits a simple pointed castellation (see Figure 5:2). A row of cord wrapped stick impressed sinistral
Figure 4: South Profile of Excavation
obliques, above an opposed row of simple tool impressed dextral obliques, above three or more coarse cord wrapped stick horizontals constitute the exterior rim decoration. Slight bosses are evident as a result of interior circular punctates measuring roughly 5.5 mm in diameter, 7.5 mm in depth and situated approximately 31 mm apart. Above the interior punctates is a row of vertical to sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions. Smoothed over fabric(?) impressions are evident on the neck interior. The lip is 6.5 mm wide and is decorated with perpendicular cord wrapped stick impressions.

Vessel 3 is represented by one rim sherd and possibly two neck sherds. The rim exterior is decorated with a row of sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions above two or more cord wrapped stick horizontals (see Figure 5:3). Angular exterior punctates of similar form to those of Vessel 1 are 6 mm deep and located 19 mm apart. Interior decoration consists of a single row of cord wrapped stick vertical impressions above slight bosses. The lip varies from 7-8 mm in width and displays cord wrapped stick sinistral oblique obliques.

A single rim sherd represents Vessel 4 (see Figure 5:4). Splaying of the vessel orifice following rim decoration has distorted the exterior design elements, making technique difficult to assess. A single row of sinistral oblique suture(?) impressions are situated above a row of dextral oblique cord wrapped stick(?) impressions, which in turn are above a row of bosses and plats of cord wrapped stick horizontal impressions. A single row of sinistral oblique suture(?) impressions is all that remains of the interior decoration, as the rest of the surface below has split away. This has obscured the exact form and dimensions of the interior punctates, which are spaced 16 mm apart. Cord wrapped stick sinistral oblique impressions decorate a 7-8.5 mm thick lip on a simple pointed castellation.

The exterior of Vessel 5 displays a row of cord wrapped stick verticals, crossed by cord wrapped stick dextral obliques, above one or more trailed(?) horizontal lines (see Figure 5:5). This criss-cross motif is repeated on the rim interior, above a row of circular punctates 4.5 mm in diameter. These punctates are 24 mm apart and 7 mm deep, producing slight exterior bosses. The 7.5 mm thick lip is decorated with sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions.

While the diagnostic sherds of all previous vessels (1-5) were derived from Unit 1, Vessel 6 is represented by a single large sherd from Unit 7 (see Figure 3, Figure 5:6). The lip is missing, however, it seems that little of the decorative motif has been lost. A row of sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions surmount five cord wrapped stick horizontals, below which is a geometric pattern of horizontal and oblique knotted cord impressed elements. The interior displays a row of sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions above a line of circular punctates 3 mm in diameter and 5 mm deep. Spacing could
Figure 5: Moyer Flats Ceramics
not be determined and these deep punctates form bosses between the first and second horizontals on the exterior.

Vessel 7 is again represented by a fragmentary rim, minus lip, which was recovered from Unit 2. The exterior displays vertical cording above 3 or more cord wrapped stick horizontals. Oval, upward slanting punctates measuring 6 by 4 mm and 5 mm in depth are located between the first and second horizontals. These punctates are spaced 11.5 mm apart and create interior bosses. No other interior decoration is evident.

Vessel 8 is represented by two incomplete rim sherds from Unit 1. Exterior decoration consists of vertical cording above five or more horizontal lines of oval cord wrapped stick punctates. Circular punctates 6.5 mm in diameter and 9 mm deep are, as usual, located between the first and second horizontal lines. The interior displays a row of sinistral oblique cord wrapped stick impressions above bosses.

Other neck sherds in the sample, which could not be correlated with particular vessels with certainty, display horizontal line and/or opposed triangular parallel line motifs, usually on well smoothed over cord surfaces. Techniques range from linear repeated cord wrapped stick to knotted cord to linear repeated simple tool impressing. Unit 5 produced a shoulder portion of a thin, finely made vessel displaying four or more horizontal cord wrapped stick impressed lines on the neck, and what may be fabric impressions on the shoulder and body. An otherwise plain, smooth interior exhibits a myriad of fingernail impressions created when the potter provided interior support to the vessel during the application of exterior decoration.

Body sherds display cored or smoothed over cord exteriors and one or two vessels may have been decorated with fabric impressions. Mean maximum body sherd thickness is 7 mm (n=83); however, a sub-conical basal portion of a vessel recovered from Unit 4 displays a maximum thickness of 23 mm. Three drilled mend holes are present on three smoothed over cord body sherds, apparently relating to one vessel and recovered from Units 4, 6, and 7. Finally, Unit 7 also produced a piece of fired ceramic wastage or a portion of an extremely crude juvenile vessel.

Lithics

Recoveries were again limited, although the excavated lithic sample was enhanced by adjacent field surface material. The majority of excavated lithics, including fire cracked rock, derive from Units 1 and 2. While debitage may have been utilized in the form of "pick up" tools, only three more formal tools were recovered from an excavated context.

Unit 1 produced a bipolar battered Onondaga chert fragment displaying unilateral irregular bifacial denticulate edge retouch and measuring 22.6 mm by 18.9 mm by 8.4 mm in maximum length,
width and thickness, respectively. A large chlorite schist adze blank was found broken in two pieces in Unit 2. It measures 150.2 by 99.2 by 56.6 mm and weighs 1181 grams. This blank had been flaked into rough shape and pecking refinement had begun when it apparently broke and was rejected. A ovate-acuminate black slate spall from Unit 7 displays bifacial edge retouch and measures 29.2 by 22.4 by 5.5 mm. Slight rounding edge use wear is evident at 30 x magnification, suggesting that this small tool was utilized in cutting soft material (meat?).

Additional support for butchering activities on site is provided by the majority of biface thinning/re-sharpening flakes among the chert debitage. Little primary reduction of chert cores appears to have occurred and only one flake displays dorsal pebble cortex. Chipped stone material frequencies and weights for the excavated and surface collected tool and debitage samples are provided in Table 1 below. Table 2 enumerates fire cracked rock. Finally, a triangular sandstone slab from Unit 6 has 2 spalls removed from the wide end. It measures 129.0 by 48.6 by 15.6 mm in length, width and thickness and its function is unknown.

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*does not include adze blank

Table 1: Chipped Stone Material

The surface collected assemblage is equally unimpressive, including a chert bipolar core, utilized flake and thumbnail scraper, and a bit spall from a chlorite schist adze. All chert again is Onondaga Formation material. The point/ridge bipolar core measures 25.0 by 17.9 by 10.5 mm, while the linear flake is 31.5, 17.6 and 4.7 mm in maximum length, width and thickness. The latter displays bilateral discontinuous edge use retouch and terminates in a hinge fracture. Measuring 20.4 by 17.3 by 6.4 mm, the burnt thumbnail scraper has a continuous retouched working edge with a 1 cm radius curvature. Finally, 28 mm of the former cutting edge is retained on the chlorite schist adze spall, which measures 16 by 31 by 4 mm.
Table 2: Fire Cracked Rock Material

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Ecofacts

A total of 93 faunal bone elements were submitted to Rosemary Prevec for identification. Of these, 73 could be identified to class (Prevec 1983). Bear is the most abundantly represented mammal and the majority of this bone was recovered from Unit 2, with lesser amounts from Units 1 and 6 (see Figure 3). Also identified are marten (1 molar - Unit 6) and Leporidae sp. (hare or rabbit scapula - Unit 3). No bird remains were identified, but reptiles are represented by snapping turtle bone from Units 6, 7 and 8 and another turtle species shell fragment from Unit 2. Fifteen bivalve and 3 snail shell fragments were recovered. The Unionidae sp. bivalves may well represent a food source for the site inhabitants, while Prevec (1983: 5) suggests that the bear and marten elements derive from skins, as only the head and foot portions of the body are present.

Rudy Fecteau (1983) studied 470 millilitres of carbonized plant remains recovered through flotation. Soil samples from the cultural stratum in Unit 1 produced 1 carbonized raspberry seed, an unidentified seed and a tentatively identified carbonized corn kernel fragment. Two goosefoot and three unidentified seeds came from Unit 2 and a single goosefoot seed was identified for Unit 6. Recently, Rudy studied the screened material and identified 9 carbonized butternut shell fragments from Units 1 (8) and 3 (1) (Fecteau 1985). Of the carbonized wood, white elm was most abundantly represented with 76 fragments from Units 1 to 7. Second in popularity was maple with 10 fragments from Units 3 to 6. Two pieces from Unit 6 were identified as sugar maple. Beech (2 fragments) and birch, ironwood and white pine, represented by a single piece each, round out the sample. A further 29 fragments were unidentifiable.

Radiocarbon Date

A 12 gram sample of carbonized wood recovered by flotation from the cultural stratum was submitted for dating. The result was a determination of 1050±80 B.P. (I-13,078) or 900 A.D., uncorrected (Fox 1983).
Recoveries during the two days of salvage excavation were admittedly limited, but they are also tantalizing. Taken together, the data suggest that a portion of a former lodge site was exposed. A hearth may have been situated in or adjacent to Unit 1, as evidenced by fire cracked rock and burnt chert debitage distributions. Ceramics were also concentrated in this area, while bear remains suggest that a skin may have been left lying just to the south of the feature. The "post holes" penetrated only a centimeter into the subsoil and thus, are not totally convincing.

Whether or not the artifact distribution represents a lodge site or outdoor activities, the total area involved appears to have been limited, albeit reduced in size by river erosion. It is much smaller in area than the Blair Flats site (AiHc-8), located some 250 meters to the north. The latter, based on surface reconnaissance, appears to be a small village site or hamlet surrounded by middens. Floral and faunal evidence from Moyer Flats suggest that the site was occupied during the warm season (Prevec 1983: 5). Since both the ceramic and lithic artifact assemblages from the Blair Flats village and Moyer Flats site are extremely similar, it may be that the latter represents an outlying summer/fall activity area related to the village.

Ceramics from both sites look like Princess Point wares (Stothers 1977). While the Moyer Flats vessel sample is very limited, the ratio of interior to exterior punctated vessels (1:1) is nevertheless considered significant. The only dated site in Stothers' sample approaching this ratio is the Porteous village at roughly 1:2 interior to exterior punctates (Stothers 1977: 251). All other Princess Point sites assigned to his Early and Middle phases display a heavy preponderance of exterior punctation. Conversely, exterior punctates give way in popularity to interior punctates on Glen Meyer sites by the eleventh century. The ceramic data, then, suggest that the single radiocarbon date for Moyer Flats, when calibrated to later in the tenth century (Timmins 1984), may well be an accurate chronological indicator.

Conclusions

The Moyer Flats site excavations are noteworthy more in the questions they raise than in those answered. Are the Moyer Flats and Blair Flats sites contemporary? If they are, do they represent a tenth century northern outpost of the earliest agriculturalists (Glen Meyer peoples) in the Grand River valley; an occupation already organized in a traditional Iroquoian seasonal settlement pattern? As little remains of the Moyer Flats component, only future excavation of the Blair Flats hamlet can begin to answer these questions. The latter site may equal or surpass the Porteous village in providing information concerning the critical initial period of Ontario Iroquoian
transition from a hunting and gathering to a more sedentary agricultural society.

Acknowledgments

The writer wishes to begin by thanking Mr. Jack Redmond for calling attention to the endangered site and assisting in the field work, and also Mr. Floyd Moyer for allowing access to his property for the excavations. Field work was quickly and efficiently accomplished by the writer's crew, consisting of Ian Kenyon, Neal Ferris, Jeff Hohner and Chris Hohner. Report production was made possible through the word processing skills of Christine Dodd and the artistic talent of Janie Fox, who illustrated the ceramics. Thank you all.

References


The following two reviews, written by Dr. William Lovis of Michigan State University, appeared in a recent issue of Michigan Archaeologist (35(1), March 1989: 54-57). They are reproduced here for London Chapter member interest.

Studies in Southwestern Ontario Archaeology edited by William A. Fox
Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, OAS #1, 1986

For a dozen years the newsletter of the London Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society, KEWA, has been a major forum for the dissemination of important information about the archaeology of Southwestern Ontario. At the time of publication of this 1986 volume 89 separate articles covering an impressive range in topics had been published in KEWA. The success of this publishing program, organized on a less ambitious and less formal basis, and on a shorter interval than the journal Ontario Archaeology, lies in the rapid transmission of current and preliminary information for assessment and use by the archaeological community. That KEWA more than adequately achieves this end is witnessed by the numerous references in other publications to articles that have appeared in its pages over the years.

This nicely illustrated compilation by William Fox of the best of KEWA is an impressive sampling of southwestern Ontario archaeology published on the tenth anniversary of KEWA's inception. It is also the inaugural volume of the Occasional Papers series of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society. New typesetting and consistent page layout integrate the volume nicely, giving it more the appearance of a symposium volume than an anthology incorporating ten years worth of papers.

Fox's preface to this volume places KEWA in historical context for those both familiar and unfamiliar with its contributions. The subsequent three page "Introduction" by Bruce Trigger makes any summarization of the volume in this review redundant, beyond which the fact that 19 papers have been reprinted precludes individual treatment here. The range of topics covered in these selected works is impressive, and demonstrates the breadth of interest current in Ontario archaeology today. Papers on the role of the amateur by James Keron, a summary of southwestern Ontario prehistory by Deller, Ellis and Kenyon, several papers on Iroquois site archaeology, two mortuary site studies, and contributions on historic sites research and computer applications provides a full palette of subjects. Anyone with an interest in Great Lakes archaeology will find something of interest in this compendium volume.

As an introduction to KEWA this volume will make a believer if not a subscriber out of many. For those such as myself with spotty representation of KEWA in their research files this volume will fill the most significant gaps. For those who just enjoy archaeology, this volume will provide many hours of pleasurable reading on a diversity of topics. The London Chapter is to be congratulated on the quality of this lead volume of Occasional Papers. Studies in Southwestern Ontario Archaeology is a must for your bookshelf.

Archaeological Consulting in Ontario: Papers of the London Conference 1985
edited by W.A. Fox, Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, OAS #2, 1986

While many U.S. archaeologists are well versed in the panoply of professional activities variously labelled "Public" archaeology or "Cultural Resource Management", there remains segments of both the professional and avocational communities that stand
to benefit from an increased awareness of the range of legislation and regulation, as well as the roles of managing agencies, professional organizations, and private firms. Likewise, even the seemingly more knowledgeable among us can learn from the efforts of colleagues confronting and solving similar problems in neighboring countries such as Canada. It is in that arena that the volume edited by William Fox makes its contribution.

As the title reveals, this second Occasional Paper of the Ontario Archaeological Society, published in 1986, presents a compilation of 12 papers either presented at a 1985 Archaeological Consulting Conference hosted by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Southwest Region Archaeological Field Office, or at the 1986 Ontario Archaeological Society annual symposium. The Preface and Introduction, both by William Fox, present succinct statements on the rationale for and goals of the Consulting Conference, as well as synoptic statements about the subject matter of each contribution.

While the dozen papers included clearly reflect the problems and promises associated with the government agency management of resources, private sector involvement in archaeological resource planning, the need for public education, and the financial aspects of addressing the Canadian archaeological resource base on an unprecedented scale, what is perhaps most impressive about the contributions to this volume is the degree to which these issues are used to reflect ongoing archaeological research interests, problems, and deficiencies. Certain of these issues will strike familiar chords. For example, Ian Kenyon's paper "That Historic Crap!", directly confronts the growing issue of later historic sites archaeology in the context of planning and mitigation, not to mention the variable attitudes of archaeologists toward this set of relatively recent data. The contribution of Paul Lennox raises the complex issue of recognition of significant archaeological sites from surface collections, and with case studies demonstrates the degree to which low density surface displays can be at odds with subsurface information. A pair of papers by John Peters and Rob Pihl on the Ontario hydro site potential study discuss questions of data quality and bias that are applicable to any project of regional scope. Michael Spence discusses the complex issues surrounding the exhumation and analysis of human remains in light of regulation, minimal standards, and Native American concerns. The concluding paper by William Finlayson amply illustrates the changing context of archaeological research in the face of government legislation, contracting programs, and institutional affiliations, revealing the flexibility archaeologists need in order to better interact with a changing professional environment.

This volume provides an important set of Canadian parallels for both professionals and amateurs interested in contemporary archaeological policy issues. Educational outreach was a significant component of several of the included papers, and this volume achieves an important educational end. It should be welcome reading not just to Great Lakes archaeologists, but to anyone with an interest in preservation of the past.

to the London Chapter of the OAS.