



**NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

*c/o Museum of Ontario Archaeology
1600 Attawandaron Road, London, ON N6G 3M6*



March 2012

12-3

The next meeting of the London Chapter will be held on Thursday September 12, 2013. The speaker will be Sherman Horn III, Department of Anthropology, Tulane University. His talk is entitled: *A New Twist on the Old Shell Game: Socioeconomic Networks and Developing Complexity in the Maya Lowlands*. Come out and hear what promises to be a very interesting presentation at 8 PM at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, 1600 Attawandaron Road. Doors open at 7:30 PM and as usual there will be free juice and cookies!

Speaker's Night is held the 2nd Thursday of each month (January to April and September to December) at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, 1600 Attawandaron Road, near the corner of Wonderland & Fanshawe Park Road, in the northwest part of the city. The meeting starts at 8:00 pm.

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We once again find ourselves having to apologize profusely for the delays in publishing the *Kewa* -- although perhaps apologize is too strong a word -- after all, we are willing to get it out to our readership if people submit us papers for publication. However, as we have made clear over and over, there seems to be little incentive for most members of the current Ontario archaeological community to publish anything these days and to the actual detriment of the discipline. I am certainly willing to admit that the academic community is somewhat at fault here as fewer university departments have active Ontario research programs and promotion (and tenure) decisions, as well as grant funding decisions, focus attention these days focus on publishing in more major and international journals rather than local ones, never mind in newsletters! Nonetheless CRM practitioners markedly dominate the Ontario archaeological field and they have also not been very forthcoming publication wise. Wonderful finds are constantly being made but the vast majority of CRM practitioners do not seem to care about getting that information out to a wider audience. The usual claim is that they do not have the time but I do not really find that a convincing argument. We all have major demands on our time including those of us in academia who publish regularly and yet, also have other major demands (such as teaching, academic service duties including reviewing papers for journals, book for presses, research grants for funding agencies and even, editing journals and newsletters like this one -- and yes, we have to write licence reports, do fieldwork and so on too!). It is simply a matter of priorities. I believe we have developed a CRM archaeological culture that simply undervalues publishing as a scholarly pursuit and we really need to do something about it as about the only people who do seem to publish and value it in CRM represent an older generation. Maybe we should make it a condition of getting a licence that all licensees have to publish at least one work per year. It need not be as elaborate as a book or journal article, but could be simply a newsletter article, a brief summary of CRM projects a firm was involved in (such as characterized the AAROs), or a summary for a popular magazine. At least this would be an incentive for people to reorganize their priorities and produce something -- there seems little incentive to do so now.

Well, so much for sermonizing but something does have to be done. I have reached the point where I am thinking we should simply stop publishing *Kewa* and local regional archaeological journals due to a lack of interest -- certainly, it would lighten my workload considerably. On the other hand doing so would do a great disservice to those who have worked so hard their whole careers to make these publications a success and sustain them (such as the founder of our newsletter Bill Fox and our many regular *Kewa* contributors over the years such as Neal Ferris, Jim Keron, Paul Lennox, Ian Kenyon, Bob Pearce, Dana Poulton, Pete Timmins and including this issue, Mike Spence). Also, it is these local journals and newsletters that connect the broader non-academic/non-CRM public to the archaeology they are paying for. Hence, it is also a disservice to the memory of the many members of the public with a genuine archaeological interest who have supported the OAS such as, but two examples, the recently passed Bill Donaldson and Art Howey. Moreover, as I made clear in an earlier diatribe (in *Kewa* 10[3-4]) the *Kewa* has and continues to be a major source of information about Ontario's past that is regularly cited in academic papers (and one presumes in CRM reports!) so I believe it remains a very important outlet, albeit one that now comes out very irregularly! Chris Ellis.

The Infant Burial of the Watford Site (AlGu-5)

By Michael W. Spence

THE SITE

The Watford site (AlGu-5) was fully excavated by the London Museum of Archaeology (now the Museum of Ontario Archaeology) under the direction of Robert Pearce in 1994-1996 (LMA 1997). It is a small late prehistoric Huron site in Richmond Hill, near a tributary of the Rouge River. Ceramics indicate a date of AD 1450-1500.

Although there are a total of seven longhouses on the site, overlaps indicate that they were not all contemporaneous (Figure 1). It may be that only two to four of them were occupied at any one time (LMA 1997). A single-row palisade encircles six of the houses, leaving House 4 outside the perimeter. Watford has been interpreted as a special purpose site occupied in the warm season rather than a full year-round village (LMA 1997:50-51).

House 4 is at the west end of the site, opposite and controlling access to a major gap in the palisade. It is 7 metres wide by 43 metres in length, oriented northeast-southwest, and has entrances in the southwest end and along both side walls (Figure 2). A line of interior posts suggests sleeping platforms along the northern side wall. There are six interior pit features, with 0-11 artifacts in each.

The southwest end of House 4 is different from the rest of the structure. It does not include any clear sleeping platform posts. The only hearth and the burial (Feature 31) are located there, both in the house midline (Figure 2).

THE BURIAL

In 1995, after securing the necessary permissions from Six Nations and the Cemeteries Branch, I exhumed the House 4 infant burial with Robert Pearce and Harry Lerner. The pit also contained some stones and shale fragments but these seem to have been just incidental fill inclusions. There were no grave goods. Feature 31 was 79 by 49 cm, and extended up to 11 cm below the top of the subsoil.

The body was oriented 45 degrees west of magnetic north, based on a line from between the two ilia through the centre of the head. The head was to the northwest and was turned to rest on its right cheek, facing southwest. It was also canted slightly up, since it and the underlying lower legs had been placed against the sloping northwest side of the pit. The legs were extended straight beneath the torso, the feet to the northwest and directly beneath the upper part of the head. In other words, the upper half of the body had simply been folded over the extended lower half.

The left arm was flexed, with the humerus extending down and slightly out from the body and the forearm angled to pass under the left side of the torso. The left hand and wrist rested on the left thigh and the lap, pinned in place there by the overlying torso. The

bones of the right arm were extended along the right side of the torso. The forearm was bent slightly out to place the hand near the right hip. The folded position of the body is unusual but not necessarily meaningful. The subadult burials of the Keffer site show a wide range of positions (Spence 1987, 1989).

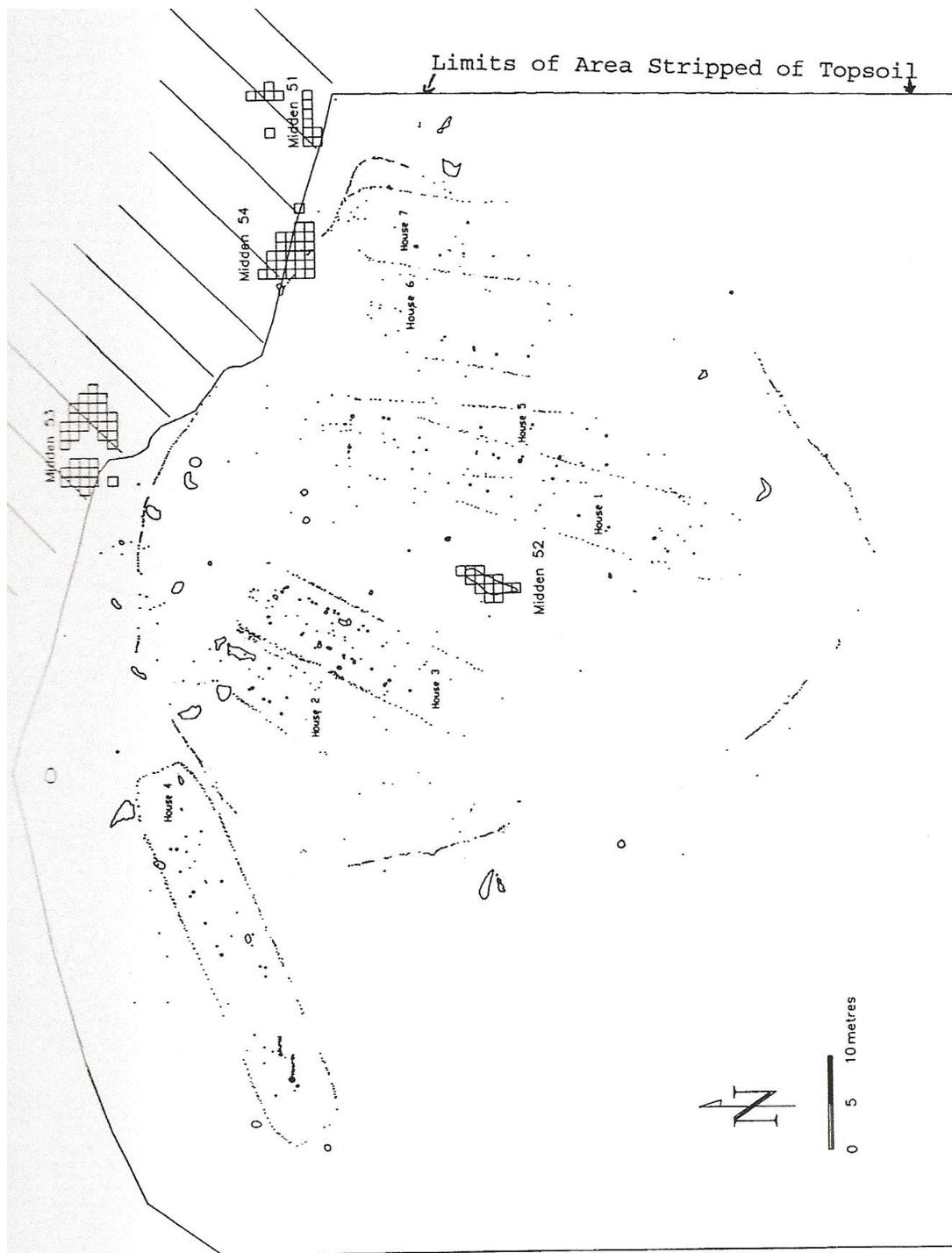


Figure 1: Watford Site Map.

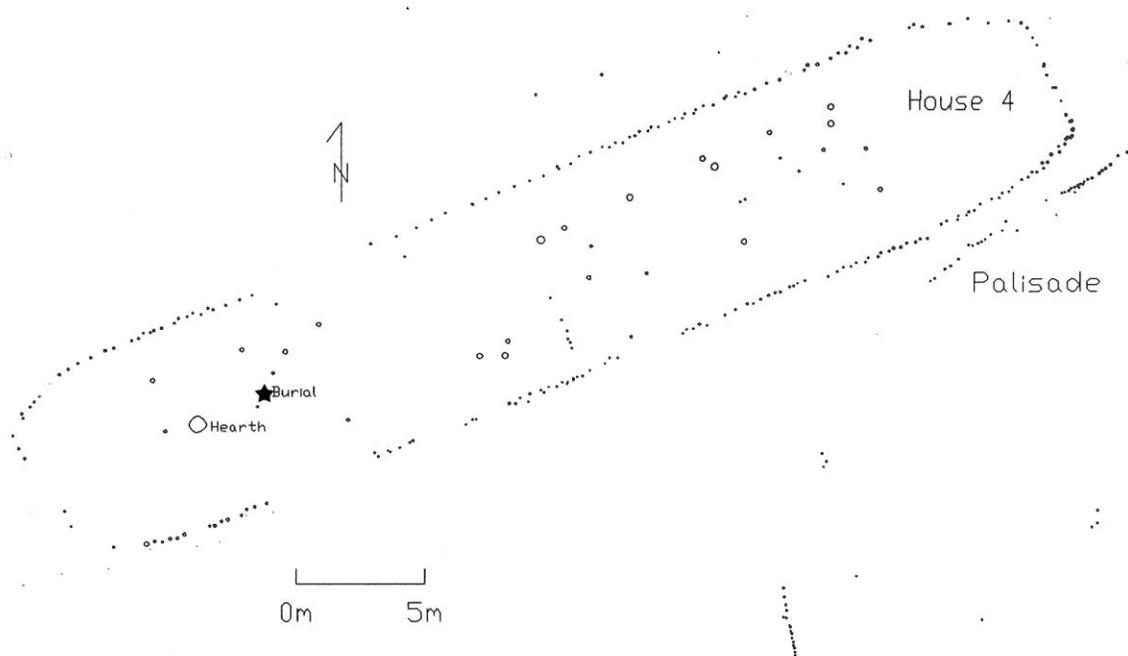


Figure 2: Map of House 4 Showing Burial Location.

The body had been buried at or shortly after death, before any extensive decomposition had taken place. The distal phalanges of the hands and feet were in their proper positions.

The skeleton is that of an infant. The two deciduous mandibular left molars could be evaluated in the system of Moorrees et al. (1963a). The first molar is at the CR $\frac{3}{4}$ stage of development and the second at Coc (cusp outline complete). The age assigned by Moorrees et al. (1963a) to this level of development is about 2-3 months, but it must be remembered that this system tends to overestimate age, and that the development of the mandibular molars is more variable than that of the other deciduous teeth (Saunders and Spence 1986:51). In the system of Krause and Jordan (1965) the second molar would be at stage XX, placing the infant slightly after birth.

The diaphyseal lengths of the long bones (Table 1) allow placement in the Ontario Iroquoian sequence of Saunders and Spence (1986: Table 5). The Watford infant is about the size of the Perry site burial, at the upper end of the concentration that seems to mark birth. The Scheuer et al. (1980: Table 4) linear regression formulae for the femur, humerus and radius indicate an age of 42-43 weeks, only a few weeks after birth (see also Scheuer and Black 2000). The infant, then, is in the neonate category and had probably survived no more than three weeks after birth. Deaths in this age span are generally due to physiological and congenital causes, rather than environmental causes like malnutrition or infection (Saunders and Spence 1986:52).

OTHER HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS

In 2004 I examined all the bone from the Watford site. Scattered additional human elements were found. None of these was an actual burial. The elements and their contexts are:

1. no. 960255 – from Midden 54, by the north part of the palisade. A small segment of an adult parietal bone.

2. nos. 950483, 950556 – from a pit outside the northeast end of House 4. Several conjoining fragments of an adult frontal bone.

3. no. 960494 – from a House 3 feature. An adult metatarsal.

4. no. 950312 – from an interior post in House 3. Twelve calcined (burned blue or white) bone fragments. Although most could be human, only three are identifiable: a complete adult right first cuneiform, a small fragment of adult rib, and part of the right side of an adult thoracic vertebral arch.

5. no. 950004 – from a pit a few metres west of the palisade and south of House 4. The poorly preserved right half of a maxilla of a child about 6-8 years old. The teeth include the deciduous first and second molars and the permanent second incisor, canine, premolars and first molar. Age by Ubelaker's chart (1978: Figure 62) is 6 years \pm 24 months, and by the Moorrees et al. (1963b) system for permanent teeth is 7-8 years. There are no caries but the presence of four hypoplasia lines on the canine indicates a series of episodes of ill health.

6. no. 960532 – from backdirt from an open area inside the palisade, west of House 2. An adult right fibula.

7. no. 950605 – from an artifact-rich pit by the east part of the palisade. A nearly complete left first rib from a child of about 5-9 years.

None of these widely dispersed elements has cutmarks and the only evidence of burning is with the House 3 post remains (context 4). Disregarding provenience for the moment, the Minimum Number of Individuals is two: one adult (contexts 1-4, 6) and one juvenile of 6-8 years (contexts 5, 7). However, the wide distribution of contexts makes it likely that there are more than two individuals. If all the contexts represent separate events, there are five adults and two juveniles.

Some contexts are probably sorted deposits, consisting of skeletal material that was discarded during the sorting of exhumed primary burials to select the major elements for inclusion in secondary burials (Spence 2011). Contexts 3 (a metatarsal), 6 (a fibula) and 7 (a child rib) are likely examples, and context 5 (a partial child maxilla) may also be a sorted deposit. Contexts 1 (a parietal) and 2 (a frontal) could represent disturbed burials or executed captives.

The heavily burned items of context 4 are difficult to interpret. Among the later Historic period Huron, those who froze to death or drowned had their flesh and internal organs removed and burned while their bones were buried (Trigger 1976:51). However, there is no indication in the Jesuit account that the bones had also been burned. At the Springbrook site near Brampton, also dated to AD 1450-1500, a deposit of calcined bone fragments was found in the extended end of the site's largest house (Poulton et al. 2010:207-209). Although animal bones were present in the deposit, it also included elements from at least four humans: an infant, a child, a young adult male, and another adult of unknown age and sex. This and the Watford context 4 material may represent an alternative mortuary track, perhaps triggered by some peculiarity of condition or status, that either escaped the attention of the Jesuits or was no longer practiced when they arrived.

Some of these contexts are at or beyond the edge of the village (1-2, 5, 7). Only two (3-4) are inside a longhouse, both in House 3, and one of these is the anomalous burned deposit. If most of the contexts represent the processing of primary burials for secondary reburial, as seems likely, then those steps in mortuary processing may have involved the participation of a larger segment of the community than just the residents of the longhouse where the deceased individual had lived. The retained elements from the primary burials were presumably included in secondary burials somewhere beyond the village.

Table 1: Infant Metric Data (mm)

L = left, R = right, X = unobservable

<u>element</u>	<u>length</u>	<u>height</u>	<u>breadth</u>
femur	85L, 84R		
tibia	XL, 70R		
fibula	XL, 68R		
clavicle	46L, 46R		
humerus	72L, 71R		
radius	XL, 57R		
ulna	XL, 66R		
scapula		39L, 37R	33L, 32R
ilium		XL, 33R	38L, 37R
pars basilaris	18		17
pars lateralis	26L, XR		

CONCLUSIONS

Ramsden (1990) has explored the question of longhouses located outside the palisades of Huron villages. He suggests that a palisade was not simply a defensive structure or a windbreak, but also acted as a powerful public statement about who was, and who was not, part of the community. If so, the people occupying such exterior houses may have

been strangers or distant relatives allowed to live in the area but not yet accepted into the community. Another possibility is that some of these structures may have been built outside the palisade for some sort of specialized use, like a shaman's house or a temporary residence for women during their menses.

House 4 was apparently, like most longhouses, a multi-family residence. There were no specialized structures inside it and it had a lengthy set of sleeping platforms along one wall. The presence of an infant burial also indicates family residence. Kapches (1976) believes that longhouse infant burial was meant to ensure the reincarnation of the deceased infant, a practice described by the Jesuits. Although the Jesuits were referring to burials on trails outside the village, Kapches suggests that burials inside longhouses would have served the same purpose. In fact, Steckley (1986) points out that an infant burial in the mother's longhouse would carry the added advantage of ensuring that the infant's soul would enter the womb of a woman of the same kin group.

Watford may have been a warm season, special purpose site, with only some of its seven longhouses in existence at any one time (LMA 1997). Nevertheless, mortuary processing was occurring there, with some residents apparently dying and being prepared for secondary burial. This suggests that the community was something more than just a temporary seasonal offshoot of a larger village. To resolve this question we need to look closely at other such sites. Detailed examination of all faunal material, to locate any minor human skeletal elements that might inform us about the nature of mortuary activity in the community, would be an important part of this study.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to the London Museum of Archaeology (now the Museum of Ontario Archaeology) and to Robert Pearce for the opportunity to work on this interesting site. I also thank Six Nations and the Cemeteries Branch for permission to exhume and analyze the burial. The infant was then reburied at another location in Richmond Hill.

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