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The Surma Site, Fort Erie, Ontario

INTRODUCTION

The excavation of the Surma Site, Fort Erie, Ontario, was carried out by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Toronto with the kind permission and helpful interest of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Surma, owners of the Queen's Hotel, Fort Erie (P1. I). The work was a salvage operation carried out from May 16th to May 26th, 1965, under the field directorship of Mr. William C. Noble. The excavation was made possible by a sponsoring grant allocated by the Research Committee in the Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Toronto. This site was designated Ar Gf-1, using the Borden System of Reference (Borden, 1952) .

Although the primary aim of the work was to salvage and recover as much material and information as possible from the area which was to become a parking lot and unloading area, the secondary, and perhaps most important objective of the work was to determine the sequence of peoples who had occupied this site near the Niagara River, and who had used it as a burial ground. By careful and controlled excavation we sought to reveal the stratigraphic series which would mark an important step in our understanding of the little known prehistory of this rich archaeological area of the Niagara Frontier.

THE SITE AREA

The site is located adjacent to the Queen's Hotel, at the corner of Queen Street and Niagara Boulevard in Fort Erie, not far from the Peace Bridge. The site lies upon a flat sandy plain 250 feet back from

PLATE I

Top—The Queen's Hotel, Fort Erie, Ontario, showing the east entrance and lawn facing the Niagara River and Niagara Boulevard. Beneath the front lawn there probably lie many Indian relics.

Bottom—The south side of the Queen's Hotel showing the excavation of Area A. Eleven individual burials were obtained from within the area enclosed by the snow fence.

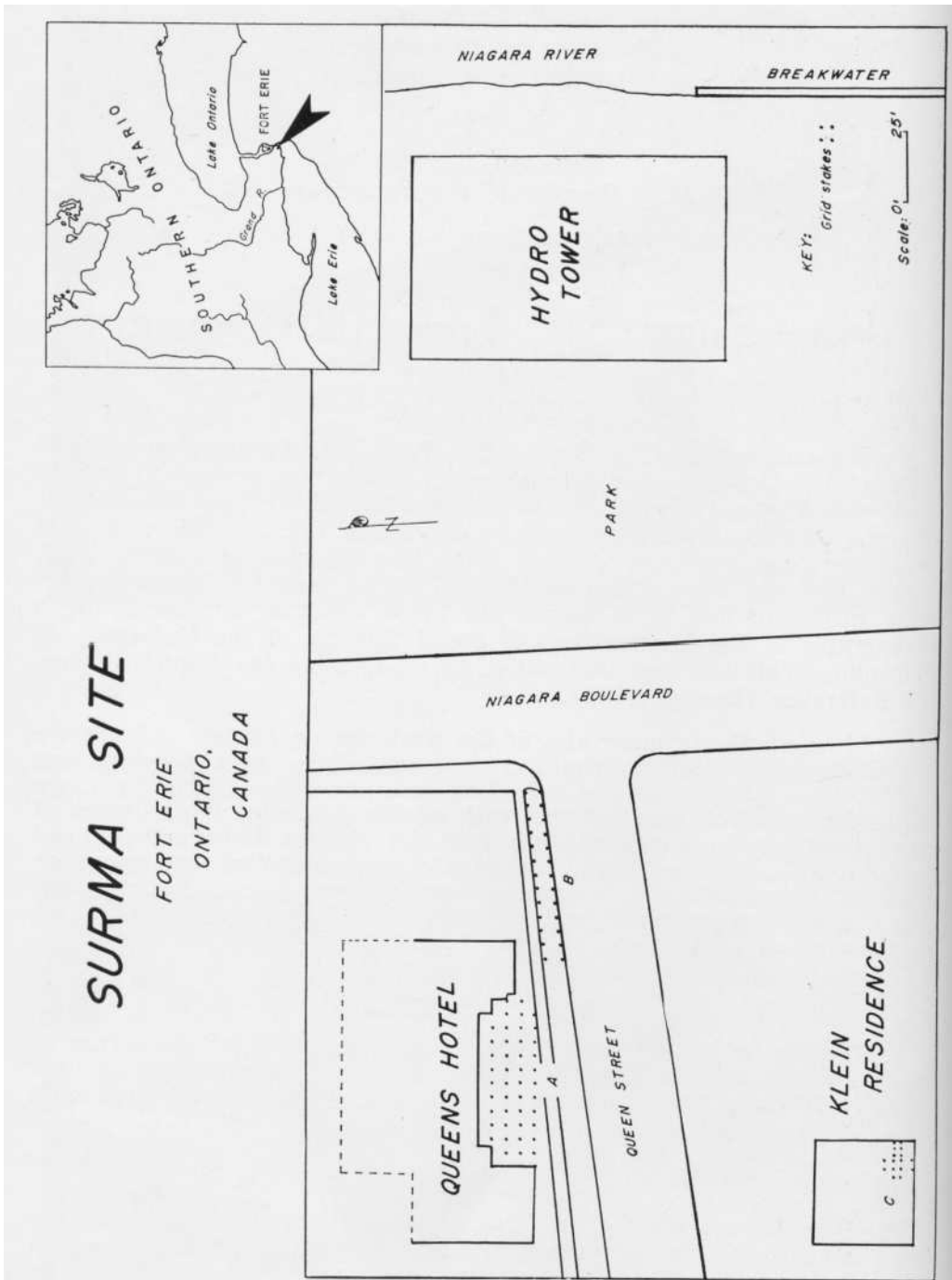


FIGURE 1

the Niagara River. The main burial area investigated was to the south of the hotel lounge (Fig. 1, Site Map, area A). The second area was located between the sidewalk and the Queen Street roadway (Fig. 1, area B). The third area was dug in the basement of the Klein residence directly across the street south from the hotel (Fig. 1, area C).

A grid system of five-foot squares was laid out and just over twelve hundred square feet of the site was excavated to sterile sub-soil (Fig. 2). The greatest depth of excavation was about forty inches.

The first area dug (area A) included thirty-seven five foot squares and yielded eleven burials with associated grave goods and several pits used either for storage or refuse.

The second area (area B) was a linear strip sixty feet long and eight feet wide between the Queen Street sidewalk and the roadway. No burials were encountered but the presence of refuse pits and post moulds suggested that this may have been part of a habitation area.

The third area (area C) dug in the basement of the Klein residence by Mr. William Boyd, of Fort Erie, produced refuse pits and projectile points but no burials.

STRATIGRAPHY

One very important objective of this excavation was to determine the sequence of peoples who occupied the Surma Site. This could only be understood in terms of a detailed knowledge of the stratigraphy found, in which three distinct levels or strata were encountered.

LEVEL I

This level was on the average twelve inches thick, represented the most recent occupation and can largely be attributed to the White Man from at least 1812 A.D. to the present. This level was made up of two layers, or definable zones. The top layer was made up of recent fill and gravel and varied from seven to thirteen inches thick. It contained no cultural material.

The second layer of Level I was a dark black sandy soil containing historic artifacts including brass buttons, broken glass, iron nails, china-ware, crockery and scrap iron. This layer also produced portions of an old red brick road or driveway.

LEVEL II

This level was sixteen inches thick on the average, extending from twelve to twenty-eight inches in depth. The soil varied from a dark brown to a sandy black soil. This level contained many Indian artifacts.

FIGURE 1

Location of the Queen's Hotel, Fort Erie, Ontario, in the grounds of which lies the Surma Site. Dotted Areas A, B and C indicate excavated squares.

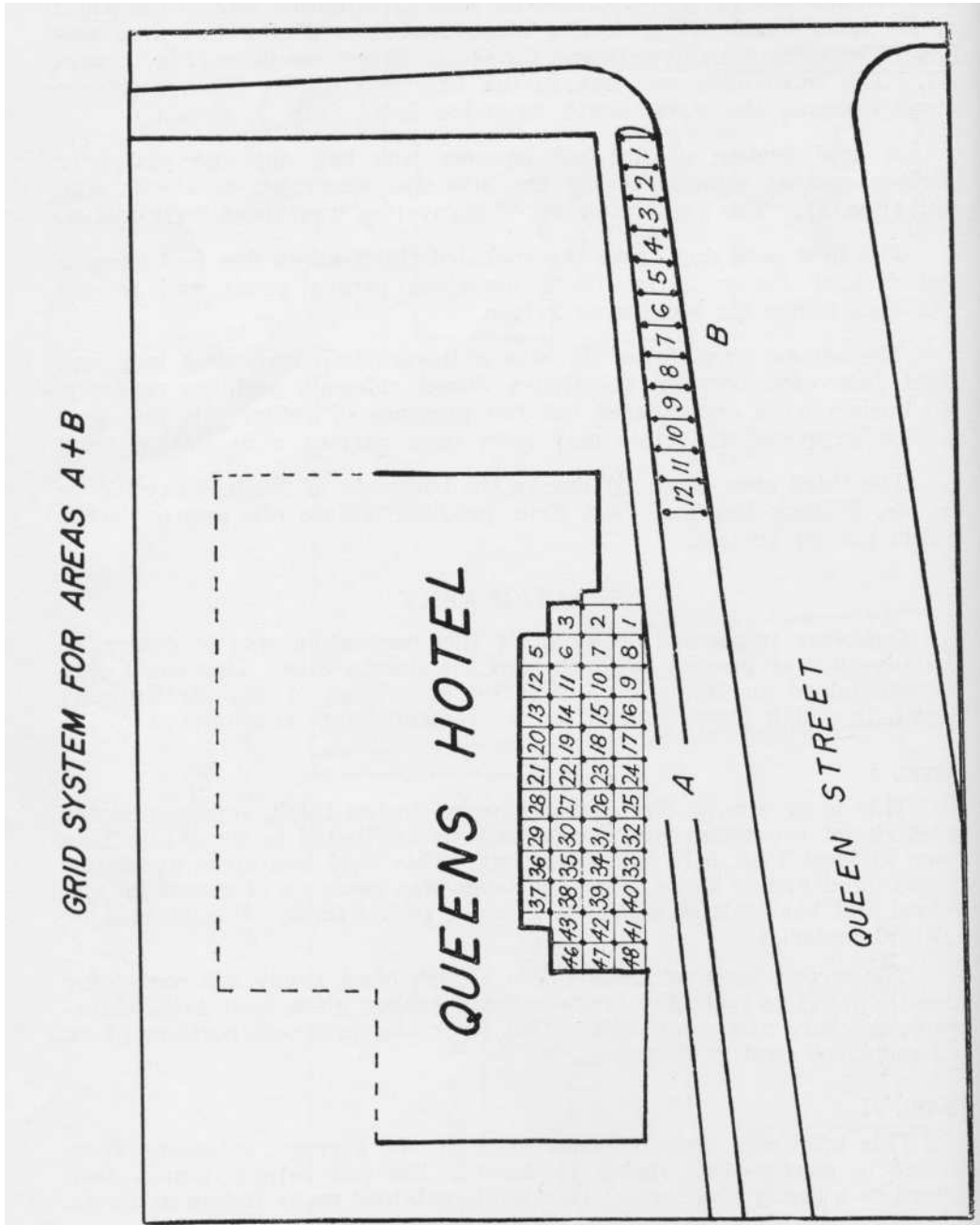


FIGURE 2

Plan of the squares excavated in Areas A and B of the Surma Site.

Burial pits containing skeletons and associated grave goods were dug into this level, and in some cases down through it into Level III. Refuse and storage pits were also dug into this level and in some cases contained historic goods.

Because the soil which filled the burial pits and the storage or refuse pits was the same colour and type as the soil characteristic of the level itself, it was not possible to state with confidence that such pits were intrusive into, and hence, later than the contents of Level II itself.

LEVEL III

This level was twelve inches thick on the average and extended generally from twenty-eight to forty inches in depth. This level was made up of a yellow sandy subsoil and contained no artifacts. However, a number of the burial pits did extend down into this level.

In summary, the physical evidence of the carefully recorded stratigraphy clearly indicates a dual occupation of the site, a White Man's occupation and an earlier Indian occupation.

The possibility of a third occupation based on the soil evidence cannot be ruled out, namely, that there was an early occupation by the peoples who produced the cultural materials in Level II generally, and that a second occupation may have produced the burial pits dug into Level II. The refuse or storage pits may or may not be contemporaneous with the burial pits. Thus possibly two, or even three Indian occupations cannot be dismissed.

At the time of writing this preliminary report it has not been possible to analyse the subtle relations between all of the pits and their contents and their relations to Level II. A consideration of the artifacts found sheds some light upon the problems.

ANALYSIS OF ARTIFACTS

The observations which follow and conclusions drawn from them are considered to be both tentative and preliminary. No attempt has been made to treat the whole range of material, for all the data have yet to be processed in the laboratory. However a reasonable sample of the Surma Site material, including the burial complex, is described below for what light it may throw upon the occupation of the area. (The material presented here is a combination of Mr. Noble's site report submitted in May, 1965, research upon the data by Mr. Robert McGhee, graduate student in Anthropology, and research by Dr. Emerson.)

Some of the most significant observations can be made from a study of the many projectile points found in the Surma Site. Sixty-six nearly complete, or definitely identifiable projectile points could be typed. Fifty-five of these are included in Plates II and III. Eleven points found with Burial 3 are not included.

It was at once strikingly evident that a very common type at the Surma Site was the Genesee Point. Fourteen complete and twelve broken points of this type are shown in Plate II. These comprise almost half

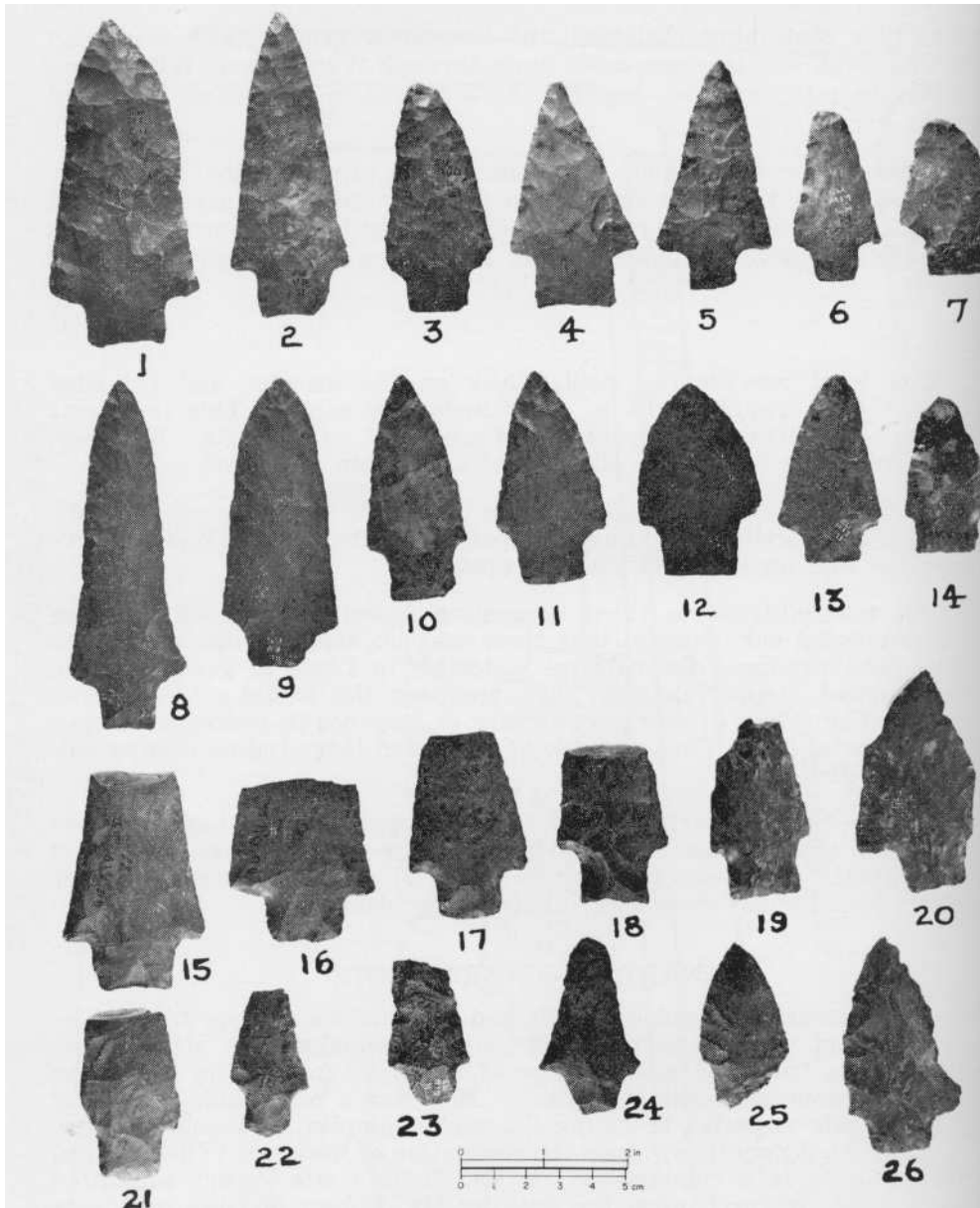


PLATE II—GENEESSEE PROJECTILE POINTS

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1—Sq. A 1, level II | 10—Sq. A 23, level II | 18—Sq. A 24 |
| 2—Sq. B 11 | 11—Sq. B 11, level II | 19—Sq. A 21, level I |
| 3—Sq. A 24, level II | 12—Sq. A 1, level V | 20—Sq. A 15, level II |
| 4—Sq. A 26 | 13—Sq. A 17, level II | 21—Sq. A 39, level II |
| 5—Sq. A 8, level III | 14—Sq. A 39, level II | 22—Sq. B 11, level II |
| 6—Sq. A 19, level II | 15—Sq. A 18, level V | 23—Sq. A 5, level II |
| 7—Sq. B 11, level II | 16—Associated with
burial No. 11 | 24—Sq. A 1, level III |
| 8—Sq. A 8, level II | 17—Sq. A 10, level III | 25—Sq. B 2, level VI |
| 9—Sq. A 8, level III | | 26—Sq. A 14, level I |

the sample. Points of this kind have been carefully defined and studied by Dr. William A. Ritchie (Ritchie, 1961, p. 24) and have been assigned to the Middle to Late Archaic with associated radiocarbon dates ranging between 2980 B.C. \pm 260 and 1723 B.C. + 250. Ritchie (1965) assigns such material to the Brewerton Phase of the Laurentian Tradition (or culture) of the Archaic Stage of the Cultural Sequence in New York State. It is interesting that Dr. Ritchie (1961, p. 24), in describing the distribution of the Genesee Points, states that they are especially numerous in the Genesee Valley of New York and the Grand River Valley of Ontario." The reader will realize that the Surma Site is located almost at the geographical centre of this distribution and we believe that the concentration of Genesee Points found here is one of the largest, if not the largest, encountered to date upon an excavated site. This argues strongly that these points indicate a definite Middle to late Archaic occupation of the Surma Site with a date ranging between 3000 and 1000 B.C.

Five drill points with pronounced shoulders and rectangular stems were recovered from the Surma Site (Plate IV, 1-5). Such specimens are not common but Ritchie (1944: Pl. 123:30 and 147:79) illustrates similar ones from the Frontenac and Vosberg Phases, both being Middle to late Archaic. Thus these drills appear to confirm the diagnosis based upon the Genesee point analysis that there was a definite Archaic occupation of the site.

A second large group of projectile points obtained from the Surma Site were comprised of those known as the Levanna type. Nineteen of these are pictured in Plate III, 12-30. An additional eleven were found in association with Burial Number 3, one was found with Burial Number 6, three with Burial Number 5, and five with Burial Number 10. Thus there is a very clear association of the Levanna type point with the burial complex in area A of the site. It is to be noted that the Levanna type point composes almost 50% of the Surma sample studied.

Ritchie (1961, p. 31), in his analysis of the Levanna points, indicates that in New York State this type made its appearance in Late Woodland times around 700 A.D. but did not become a common type until the Late Woodland period about 900 A.D. This type was replaced by a similar but smaller triangular projectile point type, known as the Madison type, around 1350 A.D. Ritchie notes its presence in South-eastern Ontario. In New York some of the most important occurrences of the Levanna type of point are at the White Site, dated at 905 \pm

250 A.D. (Ritchie 1965, p. 259), and the Kelso Site, 1390 \pm 100 A.D. (*Ibid*, p. 309), which suggest that the Surma finds, as manifested by the Levanna type projectile points, may well be associated with Ritchie's Hunter's Home Phase or as late as his Owasco Tradition, that is to say, a late Middle to Late Woodland culture dateable to between 700 to 1350 A.D.

If we return to a consideration of the drill points, it will be noted that four expanded stem drills with concave bases were found at the Surma Site, Plate IV, 6-9. These are similar to ones illustrated from Point Peninsula at Oberlander II (Ritchie, 1944, Pl. 71) and from the Hunter's Home Phase (Ritchie, 1965, Pl. 88). At this stage in our

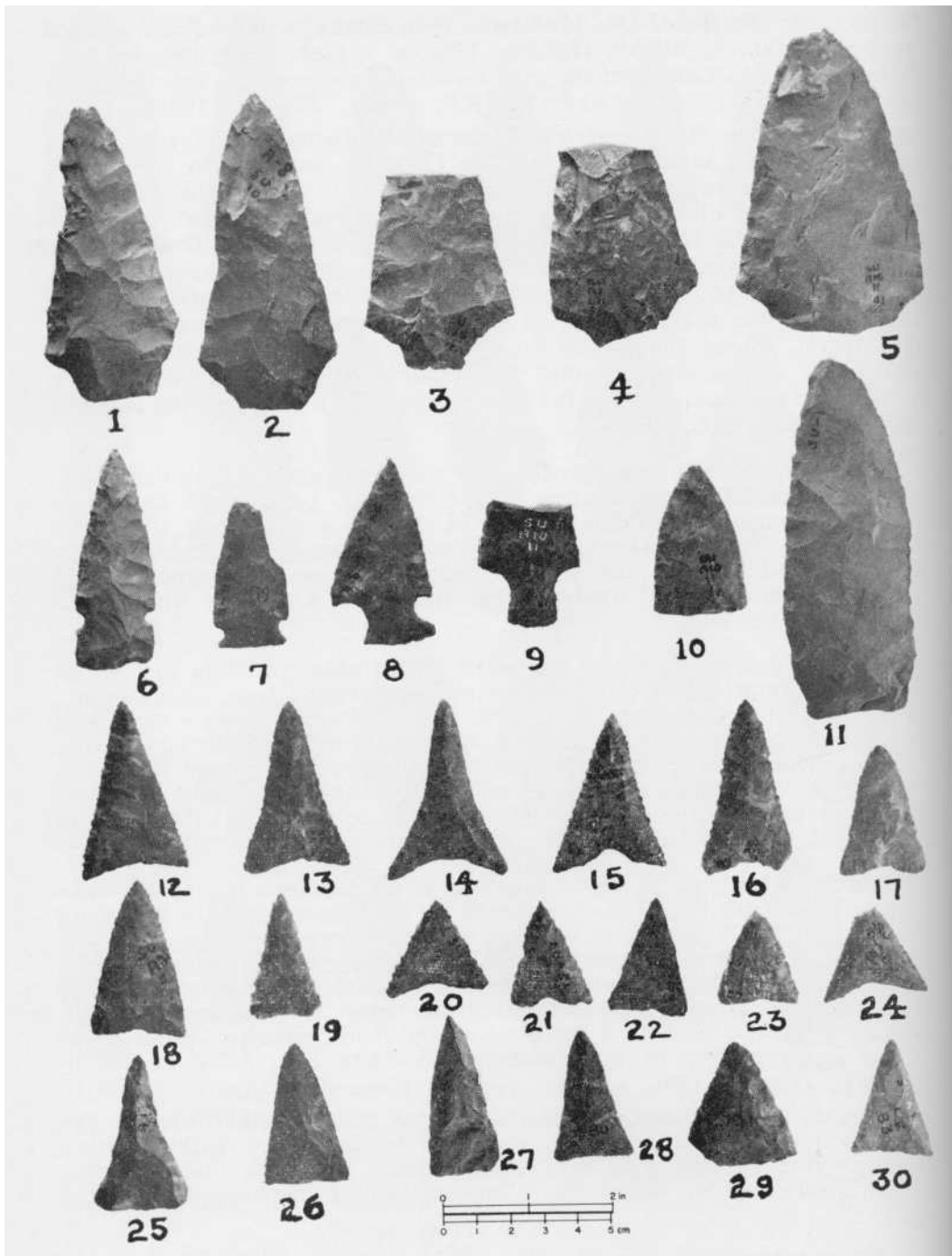


PLATE III

analysis, we have no particular reason to consider that these particular drills are associated with the Levanna points but, if this can be demonstrated, then the age of this occupation would tend to lie closer to a date of 700 A.D. than to 1350 A.D.

Five additional points (P1. III, 1-5) which are large, crudely made specimens that may be termed "basal corner removed" were found. These are not readily comparable to types described by Ritchie although they are most similar to specimens illustrated from the Snook Kill Phase, a late Archaic Phase in southern and eastern New York, (Ritchie, 1965, Pl. 49). A similar specimen also appears in the Meadowood Phase (*Ibid.*: P1. 64) of Erie County from the Riverhaven No. 2 Site.

The Meadowood Phase is transitional somewhere between the transition from Archaic to Early Woodland. In western and central New York the Riverhaven No. 2, Morrow, Oberlander No. 2, Vinette I, Pickins and Wray Sites are assigned to this phase. Radiocarbon dates range from 988 B.C. + 170 at the Oberlander No. 2 Site, (Ritchie, 1965, p. 163) to 563 B.C. + 250 at the Morrow Site, (*Ibid.*, p. 180).

PLATE III—VARIOUS PROJECTILE POINTS

1. "Corner removed" projectile point, Sq. C 4, level II
2. "Corner removed" projectile point, Sq. A 8, level II
3. "Corner removed" projectile point, Sq. A 25, level II
4. "Corner removed" projectile point, Sq. A 1, level II
5. "Corner removed" projectile point, Sq. A 15, level II
6. Meadowood point, Sq. 31
7. Meadowood point, Sq. B 11, level II
8. Jack's Reef, Brewerton or Vosbury point, Sq. A 35, level I
9. Possible Ashtabula point, Sq. A 35, level I
10. Triangular cache blade, Sq. A8, level II
11. Steubenville Lanceolate point, Sq. A 35, level I
12. Levanna point, Sq. A 31, associated with burial No. 10
13. Levanna point, Sq. A 21, level III
14. Levanna point, Sq. A 35, level II
15. Levanna point, Sq. A 31, associated with burial No. 10
16. Levanna point, Sq. A 15, level II
17. Levanna point, Sq. B 2
18. Levanna point, Sq. A 31, associated with burial No. 10
19. Levanna point, Sq. A 26
20. Levanna point, Sq. A 31, associated with burial No. 10
21. Levanna point, Sq. A 32, level IV
22. Levanna point, Sq. B 11, level II
23. Levanna point, Sq. A 24, level II
24. Levanna point, Sq. A 32 and 35, associated with burial No. 8
25. Levanna point, Sq. A 12
26. Levanna point, Sq. A 5, level II
27. Levanna point, Sq. B 2
28. Levanna point, Sq. A 20, level III
29. Levanna point, Sq. A 24
30. Levanna point, Sq. A 32

A beautifully made, finely chipped, classic Meadowood type point (Ritchie, 1961, p. 35) was found at the Surma Site (Pl. III, 6). A triangular cache blade (Pl. III, 10) was also found. Such points occur broadly throughout Early and Middle Woodland times, and it is perhaps important to note its occurrence in the Meadowood Phase (Ritchie, 1965, Pl. 61). When these isolated specimens are considered together they appear to argue strongly for an occupation of the Surma Site related to the Meadowood Phase with a date between roughly 500 and 100 B.C.

Various types of ovoid, trianguloid, and rectanguloid scrapers are illustrated for the reader's consideration (Pl. IV). However these tend to be widely distributed in time and space and thus have little diagnostic value. The sample is probably incomplete at this time and careful consideration will be given these items in a final report.

Three further points deserve passing comment. One specimen, (Pl. III, 11), a crudely made lanceolate point with a slightly concave base could be classified as Steubenville Lanceolate as described by Mayer-Oakes (1955, p. 140) associated with the Early Archaic in the Upper Ohio Valley. A second point (Pl. III, 9) could be a Genesee point but, because it has a slightly expanded stem, perhaps it should be classified as an Ashtabula point (*Ibid*, p. 62). The third specimen is finely made, triangular, thin and corner notched (Pl. III, 8). It could be a Brewerton Corner Notched, a Jack's Reef Corner Notched or perhaps even a Vosburg Point (Ritchie, 1961, pp. 16, 26, 55) on the basis of its formal characteristics. These last three specimens will become better understood when they can be analysed in their cultural associations.

In summarizing this discussion of a selected and probably representative sample of the Surma Site lithic material, there appears to be good evidence for the presence of artifacts typical of at least three I stages found in adjacent New York State, namely:

1. A Middle to Late Archaic Stage, Brewerton Phase of the Laurentian Tradition, manifest particularly by an abundance of Genesee points with an assignable date of between 3,000 to 1,000 B.C.
2. A Transitional Stage between Archaic and Woodland manifest by points and other items characteristic of the Meadowood Phase of the Early Woodland Stage in New York with dates of between 500 and 1,000 B.C.
3. A third series possibly related to the Hunter's Home Phase and characterized by the abundance of Levanna points. These would represent a Late Middle or Late Woodland Stage, the Hunter's Home Phase, with dates ranging between 700 and 1350 A.D.

The above statements suggests a triple prehistoric occupation of the site with an overlap or merging of the first two. However, until a complete study is carried out and conclusions can be determined, there is the possibility of Archaic "survivals" into Transitional and Early Woodland times. In his preliminary observations on the site, Mr. Noble tends to lean towards this point of view (Noble, 1965). p

BURIAL COMPLEX

Burials were recovered only from the area adjacent to the south side of the Queen's Hotel. Eleven individuals were excavated. To these may be added five more which were sent to Toronto in December, 1964. Mr. Barnhardt of Fort Erie also informed Mr. Noble of a child burial in a pit under the sidewalk at the Lounge entrance to the hotel off Queen Street. This was not excavated. However, this accounts for a total of seventeen burials from the area.

The general state of preservation of the bone was poor, because of water-logging and crushing, both from roots and from heavy vehicles which over-rode that area of the site.

The following synthesis of the burial pattern may be made :

1. The position of the skeleton was usually flexed, the individual lying on his back with the upper sections of the body in anatomical position. From the pelvis down, the legs had been folded over upon one another and drawn upwards (P1. V) .
2. All individuals were interred in shallow, single, oval graves from three to three-and-a-half feet in diameter, with depths varying from thirty to forty inches. Burial 10, in which the individual was dismembered, was three feet deep. The bottoms of all burial pits were flat and the burials were generally oriented east-to-west.
3. Dismemberment was present in Burials 6 and 10. In Burials 1 and 11, portions of the skeletons were absent.
4. A cursory examination of the dentition indicated that the teeth of adults were excessively worn, in some cases exposing the dentine and pulp chambers.
5. The racial and physical type of the skeletons most closely approximate the Early Middle Woodland population of the Donaldson Village Site (Wright and Anderson, 1963) .

Grave goods were associated only with males but not with all males (Table 1). Such goods were not numerous, but were comparatively elaborate.

The skeletal material is now in the Physical Anthropology Laboratory at Toronto and will undergo analysis despite its friable and fragmented nature. Mr. Noble's assignment of this material to a status similar to the Donaldson People probably will stand up under analysis and will draw closer together the archaeology and physical anthropology of both the Niagara and the Bruce Peninsulas.

A study of associated grave goods from the burial complex clearly indicates the relationship between these burials and people producing Levanna-type points. This again suggests a Late Middle or Late Wood-land period of between 700 and 1350 A.D.

A consideration of the other grave goods is instructive. These include:

1. Long, white, cylindrical conch-shell beads.

2. A polished stone platform pipe.
3. Polished slate pendants.
4. Turtle shell ornaments.
5. A bone spatula pendant.
6. Worked beaver incisor teeth.
7. Nodules of red ochre.
8. Pottery with cord-wrapped decorated exterior surfaces, including Vinette I ware.

BURIAL DATA

TABLE 1

Burial Number	Grave Goods	Sex	Location by Square
1	Polished stone semi-platform pipe	Male	A-11
2	Onondaga chert flakes	Female	A-19 & 22
3	Cylindrical conch shell beads, Polished slate pendant and eleven Levanna cache points.	Male	A-27
4	Whetstone	Male	A-15
5	None	Child	A-7
6	Levanna projectile point	Not determined	A-31
7	None	Male	A-31 & 32
8	Three Levanna projectile points	Not determined	A-32 & 25
9	Whetstone, beaver incisors and slate gorget	Male	A-25
10	Five Levanna projectile points	Unknown	A-31
11	Pottery, and shell necklace	Male	A-24

The Levanna projectile points seem to indicate the Hunter's Home Phase (700-1350 A.D.) as suggested above. The balance of the artifacts are in some ways suggestively Hopewellian. Ritchie (1965, Fig. 1) finds the strongest Hopewellian influence in Western and Central New York during the Squawkie Hill Phase, the radiocarbon dates for which range between A.D. 160 ± 80 at the Lewiston Site and A.D. 310 ± 100 at Kipp Island No. 2. There is also good evidence for Hopewellian influences in Ontario, particularly at the LeVesconte Mound (Ritchie, 1965, p. 217) and at the Serpent Mounds at Rice Lake dated by radiocarbon at 128 ± 200 A.D. (Johnson, 1958, 1958a, 1959, 1960). It is evident that Hopewell

is largely a burial cult emerging from Ohio which superimposed itself upon or was appended to many basic culture complexes at various time periods.

In his initial report on the site, Noble considers that a date of 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. would be reasonable for the grave goods associated with the Surma burials, which suggests Middle to Late Woodland times.

Even the date of 200 A.D. for these artifacts and the association of Levanna points with the Hunter's Home Phase, which possibly began about 700 A.D., presents a major problem for final analysis. The divergence in dates may argue strongly for the late survival of such items in the burial complex at the Surma Site.

The cylindrical conch shell beads found with Burial 3 are manufactured from the collumella of the conch *Busycon*, of which two large species are available on the Atlantic coast southward from Cape Cod. A survey of the shell beads indicates that small discoid beads far out-number the cylindrical ones in their distribution in space and time. In New York, the Rector Mound produced a cylindrical conch-shell bead (Ritchie, 1965, p. 225). This site is assigned to the Squawkie Hill Phase of the Hopewellian Tradition. Ritchie, discussing this later Phase, states that "Personal embellishments also included shell beads in large quantities and considerable variety. The small, thin, discoidal form was apparently less favored than tubular styles of lengths ranging from approximately one-half inch to over six inches, and in diameters from about one-fourth to one inch" (*Ibid*, p. 248). This description would seem to apply to the Surma Site, and suggests a date between 300 to 700 A.D. during post-Hopewellian times.

The occurrence of Vinette I pottery with the burials is also instructive. Ritchie (1965, p. 33) indicates that Vinette I pottery was introduced into the Transitional Stage in New York around 1,000 B.C. This ceramic type has a wide distribution in New York, but, for our comparative purposes, the following occurrences seem to be the most significant. It is strongly represented in the Meadowood Phase at the Oberlander No. 2 Site and the Vinette Site with a radiocarbon date of 998 B.C. +

100 and also at the Riverhaven No. 2 Site which lies geographically close to the Surma Site. The Riverhaven No. 2 Site is located on the eastern-most promontory of Grand Island in the Niagara River (*Ibid*, p. 189) and is associated with the Meadowood Phase. There is considerable evidence at the Surma Site for this phase also.

In Ontario, the occurrence of Vinette I pottery at the Burley Site (Jury and Jury, 1952) and the Donaldson Site (Wright and Anderson, 1963) with radiocarbon dates of 668 B.C. \pm 220 and 519 B.C. \pm 60 respectively

suggest a temporal lag in the introduction of this ware into Ontario.

The presence at the Surma Site of platform and elbow pipes ascribed to Hopewellian influences suggests the Squawkie Hill Phase where there is "the first concrete evidence of a definite Hopewellian linkage" (Ritchie, 1965, p. 214). However, the strongest influences of Hopewell appear in the Kipp Island Phase dated 310 A.D. + 100 to 630 A.D. \pm 100 at

Kipp Island. Ritchie (1965, p. 228) suggests that the most intense influences were felt in New York and Ontario about 500 A.D. The increase in complexity of the problem may well argue for the late survival of artifacts like Vinette I pottery at the Surma Site.

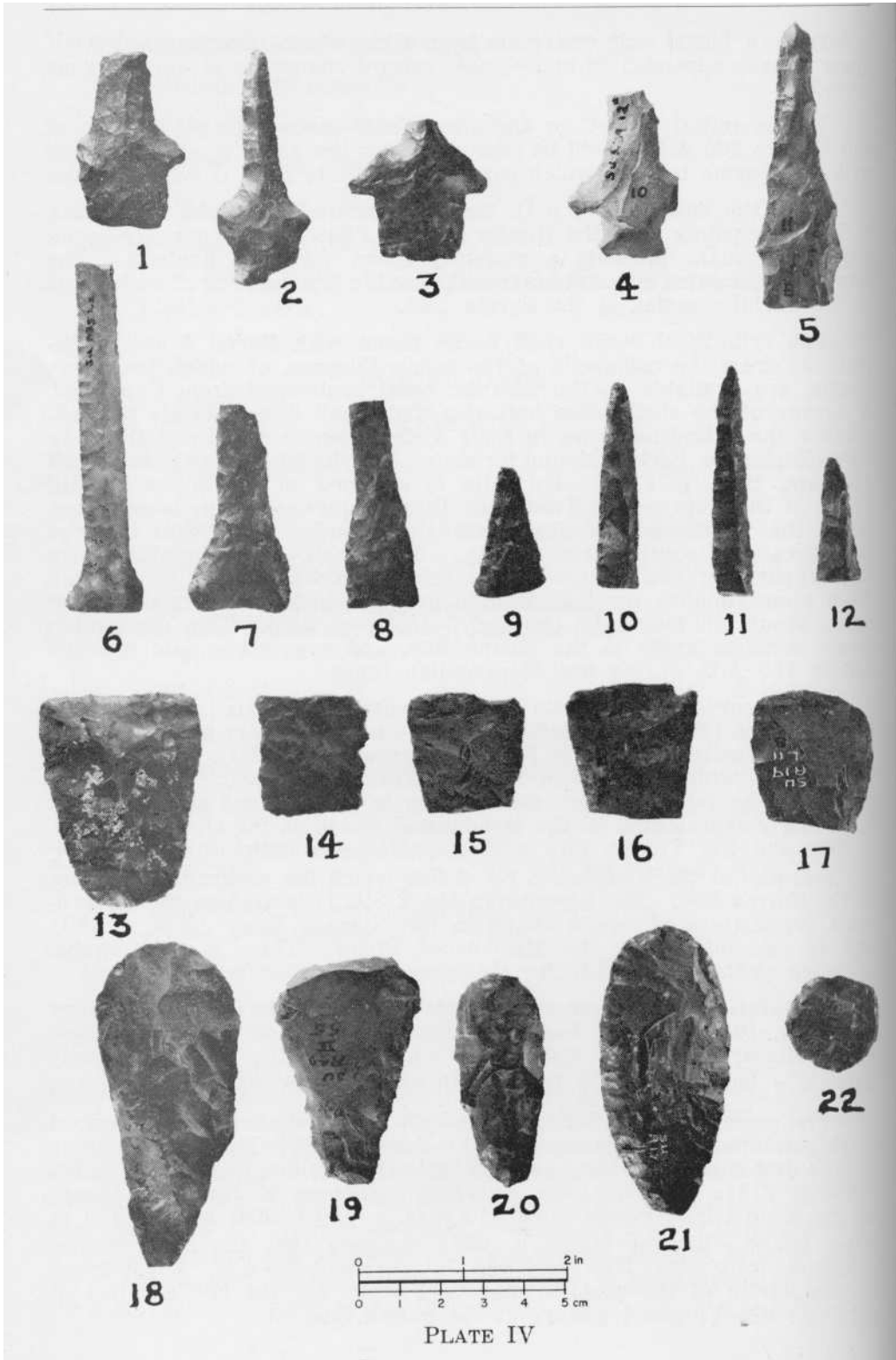


PLATE IV

The other grave goods, (e.g., beaver-incisor tools and slate gorgets) are more difficult to interpret because of their wider distribution in time and space (Wright, J. V., 1962). These tools are equally likely in all stages from Meadowood to Kipp Island (Ritchie, 1965, p. 211) and perhaps even later.

Analysis obviously has raised more problems than it has answered and makes clear the necessity of a complete and detailed study of the relationships of all the items *in situ*. Moreover, it emphasizes the desirability of further controlled excavation at the Surma Site. The basic problem is to determine whether we have sufficient evidence for a complex and multiple occupation of the Surma Site as indicated by artifacts representative of the following cultural traditions and phases:

	STAGE	TRADITION	PHASE	DATED CIRCA
I.	Archaic	Laurentian	Brewerton	3,000-1,000 B.C.
II.	Early Woodland		Meadowood	500-1,000 B.C.
III.	Middle Woodland	Hopewellian	Squawkie Hill	100- 300 A.D.
		Point Peninsula	Kipp Island	300- 600 A.D.
			Hunter's Home	700-1,350 A.D.

PLATE IV—VARIOUS DRILLS AND SCRAPERS

1. Expanding shoulder and rectangular stem drill, Sq. A 10, level II
2. Expanding shoulder and rectangular stem drill, Sq. A 23, level II
3. Expanding shoulder and rectangular stem drill, Sq. A 20, level I
4. Expanding shoulder and rectangular stem drill, Sq. A 39, level I
5. Expanding shoulder and rectangular stem drill, Sq. A 20, level III
6. Expanded base drill, Sq. A 35, level I
7. Expanded base drill, Sq. A 8, level III
8. Expanded base drill, Sq. A 26, disturbed area
9. Expanded base drill, Sq. A 1, level II
10. Broken drill tip, Sq. A 7, level III
11. Broken drill tip. Unknown
12. Broken drill tip, Sq. B 10, level II
13. Trapezoid shaped scraper, Sq. A 39, level I
14. Trapezoid shaped scraper, Sq. A 34, level I
15. Trapezoid shaped scraper, Sq. B 1, level IV
16. Trapezoid shaped scraper, Sq. A 10, level III
17. Trapezoid shaped scraper, Sq. A 1, level II
18. Trianguloid scraper, Sq. C W S, level I
19. Trianguloid scraper, Sq. A 40, level II
20. Trianguloid scraper, Sq. B 5, I
21. Ovate scraper, Sq. A 8, level III
22. Round scraper, Sq. A 20, level III



PLATE V—BURIAL NUMBER 3

This burial is lying on its back with the knees partially flexed, in a posture that was typical of the Surma group of burials. Note the numerous fusiform conch shell beads near the neck and elbows. These beads derive from the columella of the shell of *Busycon*. Scale in inches.

It would be elegant to demonstrate a clearly-defined occupation of the Surma Site by such an impressive series of peoples and cultures. Yet in the sample it is only the Archaic, Hunter's Home and possibly Hopewell which produce any significant number of diagnostic items in the series studied.

Thus the problem to be solved is to what extent it would seem reasonable to see here the merging and survival of a number of traits which could suggest prehistoric occupation by two or, at the most, three phases, with an Archaic and two Middle Woodland Phases (Squawkie Hill and Hunter's Home) being likely. The analysis for a final report will seek to answer this problem.

IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL OF THE SURMA SITE

The foregoing analysis has revealed the possible occupation of the Surma Site by three major groups: an Archaic group datable roughly between 2,000 and 1,000 B.C., a second occupation attributed to Middle or Late Woodland times, roughly 700 to 1,350 A.D., and a third European occupation with a possible date centered around 1812. There still exists the possibility of a fourth occupation by the people who dug the burial pits not being the same people who occupied the very similar soil into which the burial pits were dug. The need of further excavation to clarify this point is evident.

However much or little we have learned from this controlled salvage work, it is important to see it related to the general background of archaeological work in the Niagara Peninsula. There are few areas which are richer in archaeological remains and less investigated than the Niagara Peninsula. Archaeological survey work was done here in the early 1900's by men such as David Boyle, Rowland B. Orr and George Allison. There are rich collections from Wellington, Lincoln and Welland Counties in the Royal Ontario Museum. The Annual Archaeological Reports for Ontario, published by the Provincial Department of Education, describe many finds and give useful information related to the Niagara Frontier.

During the 1940's and 1950's, much valuable survey work was done by the late W. Douglas Bell of Binbrook and Waterford and his associates, the Wills Brothers of Ancaster, as well as the late Rutherford Smith of Mount Hope. This work produced sample collections, particularly for the Twenty-Mile Creek Valley. These very useful collections are now at McMaster University and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto.

Systematic site excavation has been minimal and is largely confined to the Guyatt Site by Douglas Bell (Bell, 1963) and work done in the area by the Ontario Archaeological Society at the Fletcher and Martin Sites. Frank Ridley, of Islington, has done considerable work on Neutral Sites in the area (Ridley, 1959, 1961) .

Published material dealing directly with this area is largely confined to the basically ethno-historic work of Gordon Wright (Wright, G. K., 1963) and the archaeological work of Ridley.

Previous to the excavation done at the Surma Site, comprehensive work was done by Dr. Marian White of the University of Buffalo and Mr. William Noble for the National Museum of Canada. This was the excavation of the Marianaccio Site, also at Fort Erie and was also a salvage operation which was carried out during the summer of 1964. The primary material from this site was a huge concentration of skeletal material, probably belonging to the Ontario Neutral Tribe of the Iroquois-speaking peoples. Nearly five hundred individuals were recovered and these are currently being reconstructed, preserved and studied at the University of the State of New York at Buffalo. At the same time, excavation of portions of the site referred to as the Orchid Site were dug which yielded information somewhat comparable to the Surma Site. This material is still under study.

The controlled excavations at both the Orchid and Surma Sites should form a good basis for separating this vast wealth of mixed-up material into its proper cultural groupings. The sifting, collection and analysis of this material would be a gigantic task, but one eminently worth while and productive.

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