

PAPERS
OF THE
PEABODY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY
AND ETHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

VOL. XI. — No. 1

INDIAN BURIAL PLACE
AT WINTHROP, MASSACHUSETTS

BY
CHARLES C. WILLOUGHBY

WITH NOTES ON THE SKELETAL REMAINS BY
EARNEST A. HOOTON

FOUR PLATES AND TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.
PUBLISHED BY THE MUSEUM

1924

They are skilful in making good earthen pots which they harden very well on the hearth, and which are so strong that they do not, like our own, break over the fire when having no water in them. But they cannot sustain dampness nor cold water so long as our own, since they become brittle and break at the least shock given them; otherwise they last very well. The savages make them by taking some earth of the right kind, which they clean and knead well in their hands, mixing with it, on what principle I know not, a small quantity of grease. Then making the mass into the shape of a ball, they make an indentation in the middle of it with the fist, which they make continually larger by striking re-

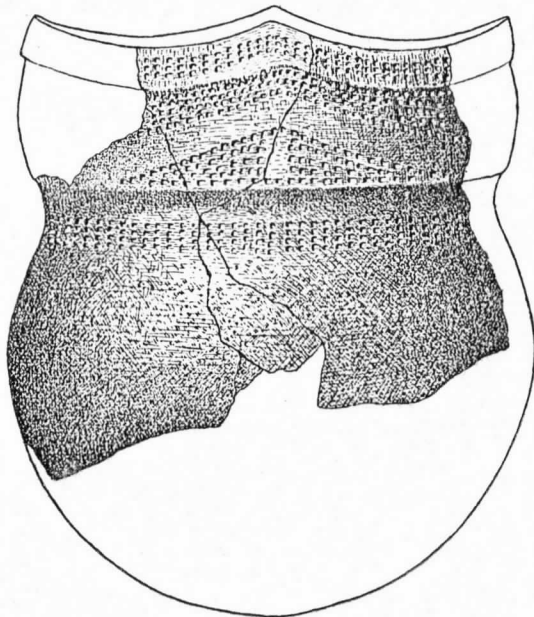


FIGURE 10
Pottery vessel, Grave 4. (1/2.)

peatedly on the outside with a little wooden paddle as much as is necessary to complete it. These vessels are of different sizes, without feet or handles, completely round like a ball, excepting the mouth, which projects a little.¹

Grave 3. Skeleton of a child about one year old, at a depth of 2 feet. No artifacts were found with it.

Grave 4. A shallow grave containing the skeletons of a man, a woman, and two children, in the positions shown in plate 3. Fragments of the pottery vessel, illustrated in figure 10, lay near the

¹ *Champlain's Voyages*, Prince Society Reprint, vol. II, p. 86, note.



Burial Place at Winthrop: Grave 4, showing skeletons of a man, woman, and two children, and a broken pottery vessel.

head of the woman. Beneath her head were 80 blue and white tubular glass beads, $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch long and of various diameters, also a few copper beads of about the same size. There were also found in this grave 148 white beads made from the columella of one of the larger univalves, probably *Fulgur carica* or *Fulgur canaliculata*, and a few small discoidal beads of mussel shell (plate 4). The white beads are of ancient type and were made before the common white and purple wampum became the vogue among the Indians of New England and the Middle States. This later commercial wampum, made principally from the shell of the quahog, was introduced into New England by the Dutch about 1628.

Grave 5. A much decayed skeleton of a man lay 2 feet below the surface. The earth at this point was less sandy than the other

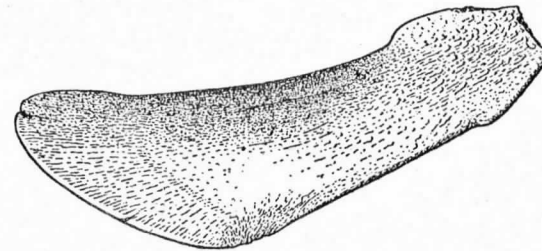


FIGURE 11
Spoon made of antler, Grave 9. (1/2.)

sections of the cemetery, and the dampness caused a more rapid disintegration of the bones. The only artifacts found were a few tubular white shell beads and five tubular glass beads which lay beneath the jaw.

Graves 6 and 7. Unearthed by workmen. Exact locality unrecorded. No artifacts found with skeletons.

Grave 8. Skeleton of man, 2 feet below the surface, in the usual flexed position, and facing southeast. The only implement recovered was a bone awl lying about 4 inches back from the vertebral column.

Grave 9. This contained the skeleton of a child, two to three years old, at a depth of 14 inches, and judging by the objects found, it must have been a girl. Near the head were fragments of a pottery vessel of about the size and shape of the one illustrated in figure 7; also the antler spoon shown in figure 11. Nearby lay the

stone pestle (figure 12) with its upper portion carved to represent the head of an animal, also the small water-worn stone (figure 13)

which resembles the ordinary polishing or sharpening stone although it shows no sign of use. As one end of the stone somewhat resembles an animal head, it seems not unlikely that this may have been a toy. Near the knees

of the skeleton was found the small pottery vessel illustrated in figure 14. This also was probably a toy. The only other artifact recovered was a bone point, which may have been thrown into the grave with the earth when covering the body.

The pestle is of considerable interest as it represents a type not uncommon among the Algonquian tribes of New England and the eastern sections of the Middle States, but rare in the adjacent regions. Although no object of European provenience was found in this grave, the burial undoubtedly belongs to the same period as the others in this cemetery, which would indicate that pestles of this general form, with or without the terminating animal head, were used up to about the beginning of the seventeenth century. Judging from the collections from Massachusetts in the Peabody Museum, about five per cent of the more carefully wrought stone pestles terminate at one end in a knob or a more or less carefully sculptured head of an animal. The best example of this type known to the writer was found in the Kennebec Valley, and has a finely wrought human head at the upper extremity. These pestles are of various lengths, up to about 28 inches, and are commonly about 2

to 2½ inches in diameter. They are usually made of a variety of metamorphosed slate, and are generally gray or greenish in color.

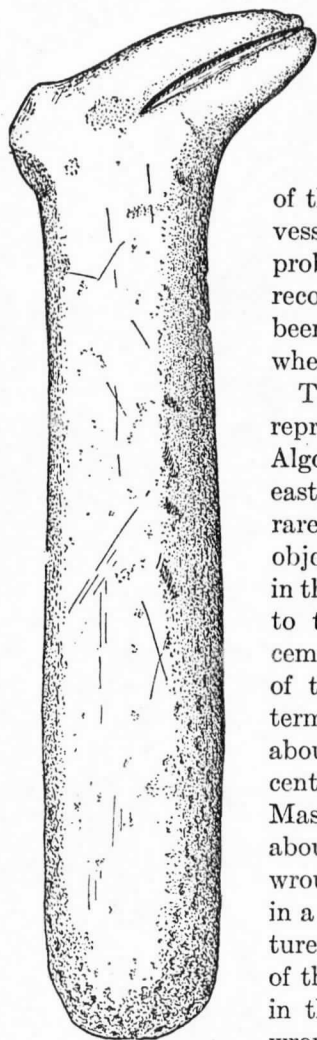
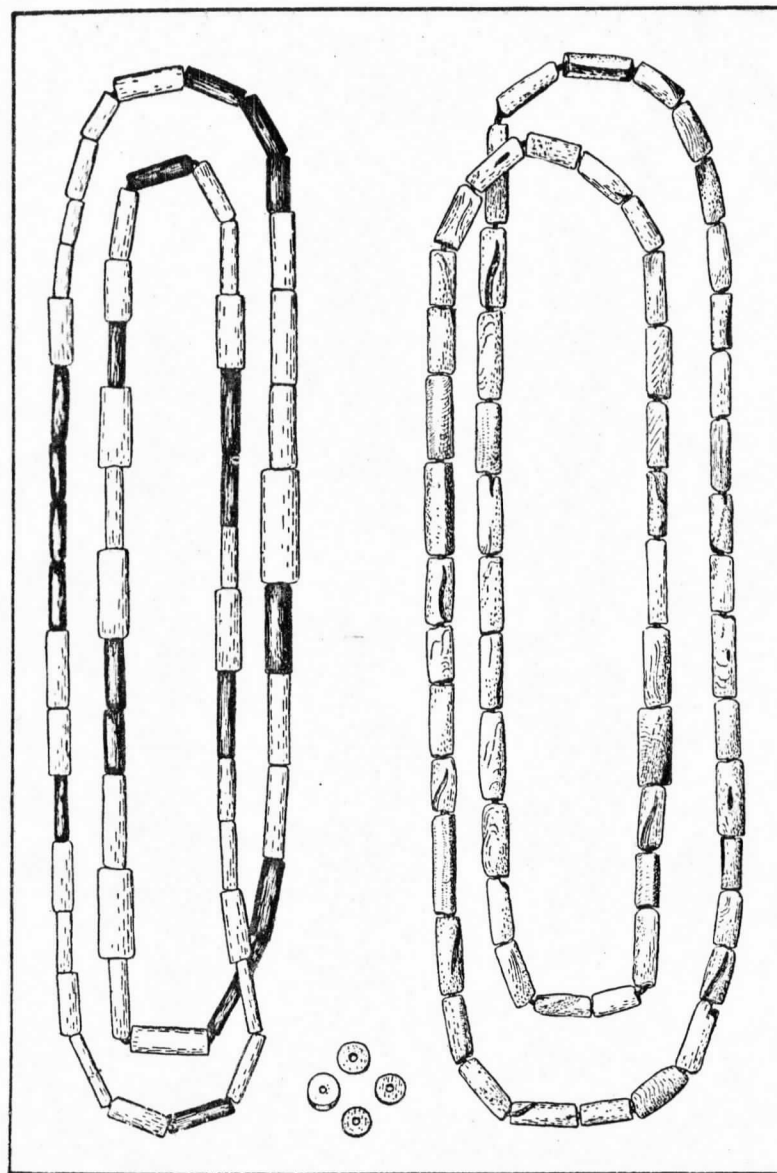


FIGURE 12
Stone pestle, Grave 9.
(1/2.)



Burial Place at Winthrop: Blue and white tubular glass beads (at left); tubular beads of shell, and small discoidal beads of mussel shell, all from Grave 4. (1/1.)

the head of a man or quadruped, neatly carved from greywacke, or compact sandstone, the mortar being also of the same material.

This reference has been widely quoted. It seems apparent, however, that Schoolcraft was describing a stone pestle found in the habitat of the Pennacook Indians in the Merrimack Valley which he figures separately, and that his accompanying drawing showing a woman using this same pestle is wholly ideal. Stone mortars of Indian origin, such as is shown in this drawing, if they occur at all in New England, are extremely rare.

Referring previously to the use of the spring-pole in connection with the mortar and pestle, Schoolcraft says (vol. III, page 467):

After the introduction of the iron axe consequent on the discovery, stumps of trees were excavated to serve the purpose of a mortar, a practice which com-

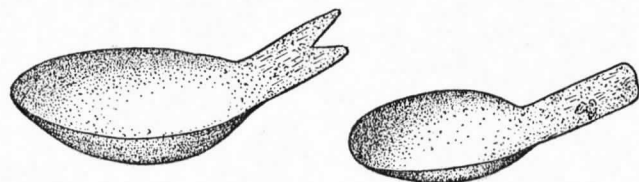


FIGURE 15

Spoons: the larger is made of sheet-brass, the smaller of sheet-copper, Grave 10. (1/2.)

mended itself to the early back settlers who improved on the idea by attaching the wooden pestle to a spring-pole loaded in such a manner as to lift the pestle from the block with but little effort.

It seems doubtful, therefore, if the spring-pole was used by the New England Indians in ancient times.

Grave 10. Skeleton of a child two to three years of age, probably a boy. Near the foot of the grave were fragments of a pottery vessel. Near the extremity of the forearm lay a deposit consisting of two spoons, the larger made of sheet-brass and the smaller of sheet-copper (figure 15); 5 pendants and a disc having two perforations, all of sheet-brass (figure 16); a terra-cotta pipe (figure 18); the remnants of a bag of coiled netting which had evidently contained the pipe; and what may have been the remains of a second bag, probably of dressed skin, which perhaps had held the metal spoons. With these objects were several seeds, resembling those of a variety of the *Cornus*, having the ends ground down to the cavity, thus

forming a perforation for the purpose of stringing for use as beads. With the skeleton were also several glass beads, both blue and white, of the same kind as those shown in plate 4; and the iron adze blade illustrated in figure 17.

Roger Williams says that "generally all the [Indian] men throughout the country have a tobacco bag with a pipe in it hanging at their back." It was doubtless such a bag which was placed in this grave. It was of coiled netting (figure 19), a style of fabric used principally for bags by various tribes of both North and South America, and also found among the natives of Africa and the Pacific Islands. The foundation for the mouth of these bags was a cord over which the first coil of the bag was looped, as indicated in the drawing. This looped coiling was continued spirally downward, the

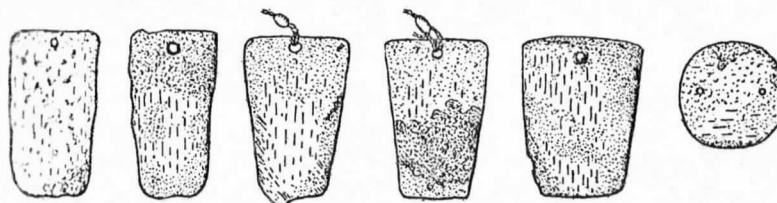


FIGURE 16

Pendants and disc of sheet-brass, Grave 10. (1/2.)

lower portions of the bag being drawn in gradually until the center of the bottom was reached. The texture is shown more open in the illustration than in the original, for the purpose of making the technique clearer. This is the first record of the occurrence of this fabric among the natives of New England.

So little remains of what appears to be a second bag that it is impossible to tell the material of which it was made. It was probably of dressed skin, however, and was apparently ornamented with the brass pendants and disc (figure 16); beads made from seeds; and a double fringe of hair, a section of one layer of which is shown in figure 20.

The tobacco pipe is of a type evidently fairly common at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and probably also at a much earlier date. It is of terra-cotta, and of a form occurring among the eastern Algonquians from Virginia northward, to and including the southeastern portion of New England. This specimen has its stem

and a few small beads have been found, wrought from native copper, nothing in the way of metal plates or large beads has been recovered in New England which was not made of European copper or brass. It has been suggested that much of the sheet metal was obtained from wrecked ships. It seems much more probable that it was acquired in trade with the early fishermen and explorers, many of whom undoubtedly skirted our New England shores in the sixteenth century. In 1535, Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence. It ap-

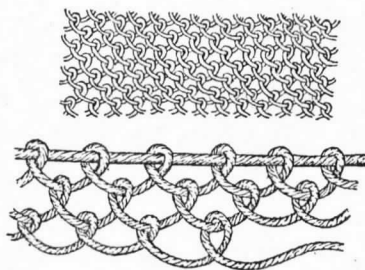


FIGURE 19

Section of bag of coiled netting, the lower enlarged drawing shows the technic more clearly, Grave 10. (1/1.)

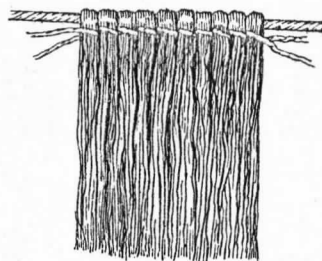


FIGURE 20

Section of layer of fringe, probably a part of bag, Grave 10. (1/1.)

pears that the English trade "out of England to Newfoundland was common and frequented" as early as 1548.¹

In 1578, Anthonie Parkhurst wrote a letter to Richard Hakluyt, a portion of which is as follows:

Now to answer some part of your letter touching the sundry navies that come to Newfoundland or Terra nova, for fish: you shal understand that some fish not neere the other by 200. leagues, and therefore the certaintie is not known; and some yeres come many more than other some, as I see the like among us: who since my first travell being but 4. yceeres, are increased from 30. sayle to 50. which commeth to passe chiefly by the imagination of the Western men, who thinke their neighbours have had greater gaines then in very deed they have, for that they see me to take such paines yeerely to go in proper person: they also suppose that I find some secret commoditie by reason that I doe search the harbors, creekes and havens, and also the land much more than ever any Englishman hath done. Surely I am glad that it so increaseth, whereof soever it springeth. But to let this passe, you shall understand that I am informed that they are above 100. saile of Spaniards that come to take Cod besides 20. or 30. more that come from Biskaie to kill Whale for Traine. These be better appoynted for shipping and furniture of munition, then any nation sav-

¹ Hakluyt's *Voyages* (Glasgow Edition, 1904), vol. viii, p. 9.

ing the Englishmen, who commonly are lords of the harbors where they fish, and do use all strangers helpe in fishing if need require, according to an old custome of the cuntry, which they do willingly, so that you take nothing from them more then a boat or twaine of salt, in respect of your protection of them against rovers or other violent intruders, who do often put them from good harbor, &c. As touching their tunnage, I thinke it may be neere five or six thousand tunne. But of Portugals there are not lightly above 50. saile, whose tunnage may amount to three thousand tuns, and not upward. Of the French nation and Britons, are about one hundred and fiftie sailes, the most of their shipping is very small, not past fortie tunnes, among which some are great and reasonably well appointed, better then the Portugals, and not so well as the Spaniards, and the burden of them may be some 7000. tunne. Their shipping is from all parts of France and Britaine, and the Spaniards from most parts of Spaine, the Portugals from Aviero and Viana, and from 2. or 3. ports more. The trade that our nation hath to Island maketh, that the English are not there in such numbers as other nations.¹

From the above we learn that at this date there were evidently nearly 400 European vessels engaged in taking fish or whales, and probably a portion of them incidentally trading for furs, in an area 600 miles in diameter in the vicinity of Newfoundland and Cape Breton. The New England coast was doubtless within this 600 mile area, and there seems to be no reasonable doubt that it was visited by many of these ships and that there was more or less intercourse between these vessels and the natives. This seems to be the most reasonable explanation of the origin of the quantities of copper and brass objects recorded by early writers as in possession of the Indians of this region, and it doubtless explains their presence in early proto-historic graves of the tidewater region. It may also explain the presence of certain unusual forms of porcelain and glass beads.

In September, 1907, the attention of the writer was called to the finding of an Indian cemetery on the slope of a hill in Ipswich, Massachusetts, where the land was being graded. One or two graves were uncovered, and with the burials were found a terra-cotta pipe similar to the one illustrated in figure 18, but without the brass binding on the stem; a bracelet of small beads of sheet-copper strung alternately with blue glass beads; a necklace of small white porcelain beads of oval form; and the bronze brazier shown in figure 21. Only a few fragments of bone were recovered.

Obtaining permission, in behalf of the Museum, of the owner of

¹ Hakluyt's *Voyages* (Glasgow Edition, 1904), vol. viii, pp. 9-11.