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**A MIDDLE HISTORIC PERIOD BURIAL
FROM ST. IGNACE, MICHIGAN**

James E. Fitting
Michigan History Division

During the past several years, there has been an intensive archaeological effort in the area around St. Ignace, Michigan. This has included both intensive survey (Fitting and Fisher 1973) and excavation (Cleland, editor, 1971, Stone 1972, Fitting n.d., Fitting, editor, n.d.). This archaeological effort has also put us in the position where new small discoveries can be fitted into a larger regional context. In September of 1973, a burial was uncovered during excavating on Church Street in St. Ignace and the material recovered from it, and its place in St. Ignace area archaeology, is the subject of this paper.

On September 25, 1973, Jack Tyner was excavating a trench on Church Street for Salta Construction and Excavating Company of Skandia. This trench was being opened to lay cable for the new Michigan Bell Telephone Company building. A burial, with grave goods, was encountered in front of 165 Church Street. The burial, which was that of a small child, was left in place but Alicia Mackin and Jack Tyner sifted the disturbed soil by the burial and recovered 198 items. The collection is now in the possession of Alicia Mackin and I was able to study it in November of 1973.

One flint flake was included with this material. It was a primary decortication flake of red beach chert. This could be a natural flake. However, this red discoloration of chert has been demonstrated at other sites in the area to be a result of low temperature heat alteration. It is assumed to be a cultural item although its inclusion in the assemblage may have been accidental.

All of the other items were beads. There were thirty-seven beads of white wampum. These were shell beads which were circular in cross section. Shell wampum was found at both the Marquette Mission site (Fitting n.d.) and the Lasanen site (Buck-

master and Canouts 1971). The few specimens from the Mission site were rectangular in cross section while those from Lasanen were primarily round like the ones with the Church Street burial. The ones with the Church Street burial ranged from .5 to .8 cm in length and .3 to .4 cm in diameter.

Four tubular collumella beads were with the assemblage. They were 5.5, 3.5, 3.2 and 2.8 cm in length and .6 to .8 cm in diameter with a center drilled perforation. Beads such as this have been reported at the Lasanen site (Buckmaster and Canouts 1971) and the Gros Cap Cemetery (Quimby 1966:130) although they were notably absent from the Marquette Mission site and among the aboriginal material from Fort Michilimackinac reported by Maxwell (1964).

Large glass beads included one simple dull red bead .9 cm long and .8 cm in diameter and nine compound beads with a blue core and a dull red surface. They averaged .7 cm long and .7 cm in diameter. Beads similar to the dull red form have been found at the Marquette Mission, the Lasanen site, Gros Cap Cemetery and at a site on Ryerse Hill which is presumed to have been the late 17th and early 18th century Ottawa Village. Forms similar to the compound specimens have been found at the early 18th century Gros Cap site although other compound beads have been found with late 17th century associations at the Marquette Mission and Lasanen site (Stone 1971).

The remaining 146 items were all seed beads. There were 43 dull black, five shiny black, three blue-green, five dark blue, thirty-six light blue, four white and two red simple seed beads. Compound seed beads included forty with red cores and traces of a thin white exterior surface and ten which were red with blue cores.

While this assemblage clearly belongs to what Quimby has called the Middle Historic Period, 1670 through 1760, it is difficult to date it more precisely. The relatively large frequency of wampum might indicate a pre-1700 date but this is still speculative.

The nearest village site occupation is the Norge Village site (Fitting and Fisher 1973, Fitting and Lynott n.d.) located one block away from the burial. This was a very low density late 17th century occupation and the similarity of the ceramics to the contact period on Summer Island (Brose 1970) has lead us to speculate that it might be a Potawatomi encampment. If this was the burial of an individual belonging to one of the groups that were not regular inhabitants of St. Ignace, it would explain its isolated position in between the Richardson burial area on the north side of St. Ignace (Greenman 1958) and the Lasanen site to the south (Cleland, editor, 1971).

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