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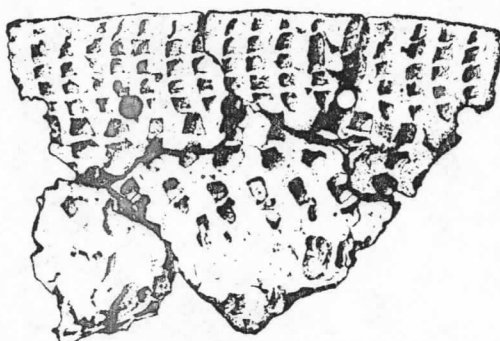
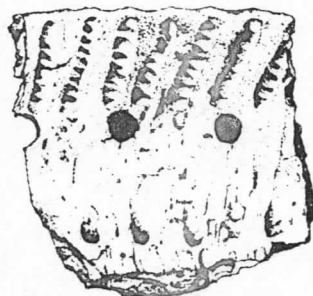
THE POTATO ISLAND SITE, DISTRICT OF KENORA,
ONTARIO

POLLY KOEZUR AND J. V. WRIGHT

✓ ALBANY RIVER SURVEY, PATRICIA DISTRICT, ONTARIO

K.C.A. DAWSON

pp. 52-106



Abstract

The report describes recoveries from sites discovered during surveys undertaken during the late nineteen sixties north of the height of land in the Boreal Forest - Canadian Shield of Ontario. Based on these finds and other known discoveries, it is concluded that, in favourable ecological niches in the area, there was a sparse Archaic Period occupation followed by an expanded Woodland Period occupation.

Late Laurel tradition ceramics mark the beginning of the Initial Woodland Period. This is followed by transitional ceramics with mixed Blackduck-Laurel attributes which, in the Terminal Woodland Period, develop into the Blackduck ceramic tradition. The latter appears to be, at least in part, contemporaneous over an extended time depth with Selkirk ceramics, both of which appear to continue into the early Historic Period. This mixture is seen as a product of the Northern Area Algonkian culture of the Cree-Ojibwa peoples.

GHOST POINT SITE

retouched 14 mm. margin. The biface fragment was a fire fractured tip, possibly a projectile point or drill (Pl. 1, Fig. 5). The flake tool was 26.4 mm. long, 14 mm. wide and 4.5 mm. thick. It was bifacially retouched along a 22 mm. straight margin and retouched along the dorsal edge of the rounded margin which was 8 mm. across, 2 mm. thick and had an angle of $39 \pm 5^\circ$ (Pl. 1, No. 8). Two cores and 14 flakes, all of local flint, were also recovered.

TRADE GOODS

On the south side of the point, in direct association with ceramic and lithic recoveries, 101 very small beads were recovered. Thirty-seven were opaque white, 32 were clear oyster white, 13 were bright copen blue, 12 were clear turquoise and seven were ruby. These are very late type beads which is consistent with a late Historic contact.

CONCLUSION

The present population refer to themselves as Cree; however, their spoken Algonkian is, according to Stevens and others, a mixture of Cree and Ojibwa (Stevens 1971:1; Bishop 1975:197). Stevens records the Little Crane and Red Sucker Bands inhabiting the general area since the contact period (ca. 1800) settling only at Sandy Lake about the beginning of the twentieth century (*op. cit.*) Carl Ray states that his people were originally from Island Lake, Manitoba. This lake lies about 65 miles to the northwest. They moved first south to Deer Lake and then to the community of Sandy Lake settling at Ghost Point about 30 years ago. Stevens indicates that these are the Little Crane Band. It is of interest to note that the present community is trifurcated, apparently representing the two bands recorded by Stevens plus an earlier population.

The pattern of mixed Cree-Ojibwa occupation is reflected in the two Terminal Woodland Period prehistoric ceramic traditions at the site. Blackduck ceramics are considered a product of the Ojibwa, while the Selkirk ceramics are considered a product of the Cree. While this ceramic combination is characteristic of Northern Area Algonkian culture sites (Wright 1972a), the dominance of Blackduck ceramics suggests stronger affinities with the Ojibwa to the south and east than is characteristic of sites in the heartland of the Selkirk tradition in northern Manitoba (Hlady 1971; Wright 1968a).

The plain Laurel vessel suggests a sparse, late Initial Woodland occupation, while the transitional ceramics indicate a substantial time depth of occupation out of which the Blackduck ceramic tradition appears to have developed suggesting the latter's presence at the site prior to the Selkirk tradition. It could not be determined whether one replaced the other or whether they were in part contemporaneous.

In contrast to many small camp sites common to the area, the Ghost Point site appears to have been a village site. Assuming the small camp sites represent winter sites, then this site was probably occupied during the spring to summer seasons. While the artifact recoveries indicate a long time depth of occupation, which existed into Historic times, the thinness of the deposit suggests that it was an intermittent occupation.

INTERPRETATION

The area of Ontario surrounding Hudson and James Bay and extending south to the height of land above Lake Superior has not until very recently been the subject of archaeological investigation. It has been