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TWO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MICMAC

"COPPER KETTLE" BURIALS

by

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Two spectacular 17th Century Micmac burial pits were excavated recently at Pictou, Nova Scotia. Considerable information on burial customs was obtained from these, and a rich supply of artifacts recovered. These graves have an enhanced interest when the discoveries are related to certain 17th Century literary works. Several authors of that period discuss Micmac burial rites while describing Indian life and customs in the Acadian region. The principal writers on the subject are Champlain, Les-carbot, Biard, LeClercq and Denys. All of the literary accounts have some relation to the discoveries but those of Denys are of particular value. Published accounts of similar burials excavated in Nova Scotia seem to be non-existent. Most previously discovered Micmac burials from that period were along New Brunswick's North Shore at Tabusintac, Tracadie and Redbank; descriptions of these are sketchy.

Excavation of the first Pictou pit in 1955 was completed by K.B. Hopps, the property owner, his son Ralph, and George Crawford of Pictou. The material recovered was examined later by the writer and a report prepared.* A second pit located in 1956 was excavated by the writer with the assistance of Frederick Jack, John Berrigan, and other interested parties. A noteworthy feature of both graves was the preservation by copper salts of many organic and normally perishable articles; these were formed from the many copper kettles buried among the grave gifts. The following account will give a description of the graves, a co-relation of

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the findings with the 17th Century literary accounts, and a listing of the artifacts recovered.

Pictou is traditionally the centre of one of the seven tribal groups comprising the Micmac confederacy. While much Micmac material has come from Pictou County, no remains have been recovered in the vicinity of the Hopps property. The Hopps site is on a pleasant sandy loam plateau sloping gently to the southward at a 25' elevation and 300' back from the water's edge of Pictou Harbour. It lies 3-1/4 miles from the open Northumberland St. A sandbar curves out into the harbour in front enclosing a lagoon where fish abound, and where quantities of reeds, bulrushes and grasses of types used in Micmac basketry grow.

BURIAL PIT NO. 1 (Fig. 1)

Burial Pit No. 1 excavated in 1955, was divided into two distinct areas or sections. Section One was a circular depression of 6' diameter and 3' deep; it had been carefully prepared. A second depression, Section Two, lay to the north and slightly overlapped the first section. It was of the same depth, covered roughly the same area, but was irregular in shape; this second section was much less carefully prepared. Both portions had nearly verticle side walls.

The floor of Section One was covered with small branches and twigs. Over these a carefully prepared birch bark sheathing covered the entire floor, and then reached up along the sides to a height of 1'6" from the bottom. Sewing holes bordered some bark edges. Several fragments were irregularly daubed with red ochre; others had black patches on their surface, either of paint or the result of decaying organic material. Five layers of pelts lay above the bark on the floor. The final pelt layer lay with flesh side uppermost and was painted red. Three intact inverted copper kettles lay on the painted skin. Beneath each kettle was a very black layer of decayed organic material. A fragmentary human long bone, a single incisor, and a short jaw bone section retaining three molars, were embedded in the mass of fine twigs, rootlets, seeds and hair of which the black stratum seemed chiefly composed. Several grave gifts lay on the black stratum and were protected by the kettles from the earthen grave fill. These included a wooden bow, iron trade axe with handle, awls, fragments of

cloth, and a glazed pottery beaker. Moose skin covered Kettles Nos. 1 and 3, and a black bear skin, hair side down, covered Kettle No. 2. A few scattered articles such as a sword were thrown into the grave fossa around the kettles. Earth had been added until the kettles were covered, then a birch bark sheet laid over the fill at a depth of 1-1/2' from the grave floor; this was at the same depth as the upper edge of the bark lining along the pit sides. The remainder of the grave fossa was filled finally with stones and earth.

Section Two adjoined the first part on the northerly side. Seemingly the carefully prepared portion was not large enough to receive all gifts necessitating the hasty preparation of an extension. Bark and skin covered the bottom of this section's southerly portion only as a flooring for gifts. No such flooring was found under Kettles Nos. 5, 6 and 7. All kettles in the Second Section were mutilated; some were badly crushed by deliberate flattening under heavy pressure (jumped on?), and the balance were slashed with an axe (Fig. 3). All had been evidently "killed" to release the spirit of the dead at burial. Kettle No. 4 covered a black humus layer of the type found under the kettles in Section One. Fragments of carefully woven rush matting lay immediately under this kettle being the floor covering's top layer at that point. Very many French trade objects and some native artifacts thrown into the grave along with the kettles, were scattered about without definite order. Skin and birch bark covered the articles found in part of this Second Section, rush matting other portions, and in places there was no covering of any kind. Stones and earth completed the grave fill.

BURIAL PIT NO. 2 (Fig. 2)

Burial Pit No. 2 was a circular excavation with a total depth of 48" along the northerly side and 40" on the southerly; the floor was level and the difference in depth was the result of the sloping surface of the ground. The diameters at ground level measured 6'8" from north to south and 6'3" from east to west. Sides were virtually verticle to a depth of 34" when they sloped inwards to make a pit bottom measuring 68" x 63". The fill of Pit No. 2 as revealed in excavation may be most readily described by considering it as laying in three distinct strata. The lowest 14" contained skeletal remains from either three or four

bodies together with a compact mass of grave goods; in the next 15" were skeletal fragments from a single body together with two inverted copper kettles and stone and earthen fill; the third section, 11" deep, showed traces of two fires lit over the grave, evidently of a ceremonial nature.

Lowest Stratum - 14" (Figs. 2D, E, F, G)

A bulrush basket in the south west sector was the first object placed in the grave. The grave floor then was covered deliberately with a single thickness of copper sheeting obtained from opening up three kettles. A portion of the pit sides was lined with birch bark sheeting. Much of this was preserved along the easterly side where it reached a height of 16" above the grave floor.

Objects placed in this lowest section of the pit formed such a compact and closely packed grave goods mass that little earth had trickled in among them. Skeletal remains were noted at four points. A flat birch bark pouch containing fragmentary child remains with the second or permanent teeth erupting, was found in the north west sector directly over the copper flooring (Skeletal fragments 5). The head lay at the rim of the pit and the pouch extended to the pit centre. A cranium fragment lay on matting in the same sector at a 45" depth (Skull fragments 3). Conceivably several nearby grave objects may be associated with it. Principally these were strings of glass beads and a leather pouch filled with trade vermillion. A single lower jaw bone lay at the same level in the south west sector (Jaw No. 4). There is no indication as to whether or not it belonged with any of the recovered skull fragments. The upper part of an inverted skull and two long bone fragments lay at a 40" depth in the south west sector (Skull and Fragments 2). Considerable black decayed organic material lay around it together with beads, pelts and remains of kettles.

Gifts to the deceased placed with these skeletal remains showed no evidence of orientation, the only apparent purpose having been to distribute them evenly so that the top of the stratum would be relatively level. These gifts fall roughly into two categories, either articles obtained from the French in the fur trade, or articles of native origin.

Of the French trade goods, eight copper kettles, all crushed or completely smashed, were

distributed at fairly regular intervals. Two others were crushed but still retained a recognizable form. The rest were so fragmented that the only way to make anything like an accurate count was from the number of handles which were intact and found scattered among the sheeting fragments. Trade axes, chisels, scrapers, spears and other French iron material was similarly distributed without apparent orientation. Strings of glass beads were thrown in. Two woollen blankets, one folded, were placed without apparent orientation.

Native articles were similarly distributed in a haphazard fashion. Those of Micmac manufacture were principally several grass or reed baskets, only a small one being nearly complete. Two sections of sewn rush matting were recovered. A birch bark dish was practically intact, but two wooden fragments which could not be identified with certainty were possibly portions of bowls or boxes. Pelts and birch bark sheets collected by the natives were distributed throughout the entire level. At one point pelts lay in layers still 4" in depth. In the grave's southerly section, a birch bark layer covered five thicknesses of pelts which in turn were separated by another bark layer from a further three thickness of pelts. Rush matting lay beneath these layers of pelts and bark. Deer, moose, bear and squirrel skins were recognized among the many pelts in the grave, but because of their fragmentary nature no accurate count of the total number which had been consigned to the pit could be made.

A birch bark sheet lay over this 14" stratum. No traces of the bark covering were noted in the north east sector. Either there had never been any there, or a lack of copper in proximity to the bark had resulted in decay without leaving traces.

Second Stratum - 15" (Fig. 2C)

The only grave goods in this stratum were two inverted copper kettles, one in the south east and the other in the north east sectors (Fig. 4). That in the north east sector (Kettle No. 1) was intact and kept earth fill from skeletal material consisting of a large portion of a skull and several long bone fragments (Fig. 5). Traces of pelts lay over the kettle. That in the south east sector (Kettle No. 2) had been placed intact in the grave but now has a hole from corrosion allowing the earth to trickle into what had originally been a vacuum. Beneath this second kettle

was a half inch layer of black organic material, principally of vegetable matter and somewhat similar to the black layer in Grave Pit No. 1. A pile of beech nuts, conceivably a food offering, lay in the black layer. This kettle was wrapped snugly in sewn birch bark sheeting.

A few large stones and earth were filled in to just cover the kettles in the pit centre, but this fill was heaped higher around the pit margin forming a saucer shaped depression.

Third Stratum - 11" (Fig. 2B)

An ash layer from a fire lit over the grave lay in the saucer shaped depression. The fire had been extinguished, another 10" layer of earth added, and a second fire lit. A charred stick still remained in the ash of the second fire. Further earth was then placed over the second fire (Fig. 6).

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PICTOU BURIALS TO THE LITERARY ACCOUNTS

The foregoing brief descriptions of the two Pictou grave pits confirm in various aspects accounts of Indian burials in that district during the 17th Century. Some of the early writers were presumably eye witnesses of burials, and in the following an attempt will be made to correlate what they have said with what was actually found in the excavations.

Nicholas Denys who operated trading posts in Northern Nova Scotia as well as the Bathurst area of New Brunswick, has given an elaborate description of Micmac burial rites. He tells first of the sorrow at the time of death followed by funeral orations reciting the deceased's lineage, prowess and such like. A ceremonial feast or tabagie was then held, after which

"The women went to fetch fine pieces of bark from which they made a kind of bier on which they placed him (the deceased) well enwrapped. Then he was carried to a place where they had a staging built on purpose, and elevated 8 or 10 feet. On this they placed the bier, and there they left it about a year, until the time when the sun had entirely dried

the body."

Mourning during the year by the deceased's wives is described, and

"The end of the year having passed, and the body (being) dry, it was taken thence and carried to a new place, which is their cemetery. There it was placed in a new coffin or bier, also of birch bark, and immediately after in a deep grave which they had made in the ground. Into this all his relatives and friends threw bows, arrows, snow-shoes, spears, robes of Moose, Otter and Beaver, stockings, moccasins, and everything that was needful for him in hunting and clothing himself. All the friends of the deceased made him each his present of the best and finest that they had. They competed as to who would make the most beautiful gift. At a time when they were not yet disabused of their errors, I have seen them give to the dead man guns, axes, iron arrow-heads and kettles, for they held all these to be much more convenient for their use than would have been their kettles of wood, their axes of stone, and their knives of bone for their use in the other world.

" There have been dead men in my time who have taken away more than two thousand pounds of peltries ... All the burials of the women, boys, girls and children were made in the same fashion, but the weeping did not last so long. They never omitted to place with each one that which was fitting for his use, nor to bury it with him ..."

Father LeClerc writing at almost the same time, but whose knowledge of the Micmacs was based on the Gaspé and the Miramichi and Restigouche region of New Brunswick, also describes burial customs. His version makes no mention of temporary platform disposition of the body as does Denys. He states only, in regard to temporary burials, that when an Indian dies during the winter at a place remote from the common burial place, the body was wrapped in bark painted red and black and left in a log shelter until

etched by the chief and young men in the spring when it was given a proper burial. He states that normally after death the body is carried to the nation's general burial-place and then

"It is placed in the grave and covered with bark and the finest skins. It is adorned also with branches of fir and springs of cedar, and finally they add thereto everything which the deceased had been accustomed to use. If it was a man, they added his bow, arrow, spear, club, gun, powder, lead, porringer, kettle, snowshoes, etc.; if it was a woman, her collar for use in dragging the sled, or in carrying wood, her axe, knife, blanket, necklaces of wampum, and of beads, and her tools used for ornamenting and painting the clothes, as well as the needles for sewing the canoes and for lacing the snowshoes. The grave is then filled with earth..."

He adds that the Acadian Indians never cremate their dead.

The making of gifts to the deceased for inclusion in the tomb is also described by both Champlain and Lescarbot. Diereville alone mentions gifts of corn placed in a dead Indian's grave. Presumably this would be a food offering.

Wallis has recently given an account of a Micmac tradition in the Pictou district. He says:

"I was told at Pictou that it was formerly the custom to leave the body on an elevated platform until the bones were exposed. They were then buried. The platform was made of small horizontal sticks, supported by four upright poles."

Clearly on a comparison of the excavated finds with the literary accounts, we have in Pictou secondary burials as described by Denys and confirmed by local oral tradition. It would seem that only fragmentary skeletal remains had survived for reburial from the period when the body was placed on the platform as a result of action of the elements, marauding animals, and the like. The burial custom

differed from that of the New Brunswick North Shore where excavated burials of the same period all contained skeletons from flexed inhumation burials; these latter graves evidently correspond with LeClerc's account based on Gaspesian Micmac customs. One notable respect in which Denys differs from excavated evidence is the presence of several bodies in one pit.

The use made of copper kettles to keep earthen fill from the bodies and certain grave gifts as found in both Pictou burials, possibly explains the motive for not "killing" or destroying them in such a way as to render unfit for further use. Father Biard writing in 1616 at a time when the copper-kettle burial complex would presumably hardly have begun, states that:

"When the body is placed (in the grave), as it does not come up even with the ground on account of the depth of the grave, they arch the grave over with sticks, so that the earth will not fall back into it, and thus they cover up the tomb."

Might it be that this protective covering over the body has been replaced by the much more durable and effective copper kettles?

Twigs found in Burial Pit No. 1 obviously were placed deliberately on the grave floor. While the preceding quotation mentions "sticks," LeClerc specifically mentions that the body "is adorned also with branches of fir and sprigs of cedar." Wallis was told at Pictou that in Micmac burials some bands of twisted yellow birch twigs were wrapped around the legs, the waist and the chest, while leaves from any variety of tree were placed under and over the body in the grave.

Use of red and black, the mourning colours among Micmacs, is mentioned widely. Skins and bark were both painted red in Burial Pit No. 1, and possibly the bark was daubed with black in the same grave. A large pouch of vermillion was found in Burial No. 2, and a few lumps of red ochre at other points among the grave goods. Denys makes no mention of mourning colours. Champlain says that a stake with the upper end painted red was set in the ground

over Indian graves; he probably wrote of the Port Royal district. He also saw the body of a dead Micmac warrior being wrapped in a red coverlet before burial. LeClercq says that for temporary disposition of a body during the winter that "those of his wigwam enwrap him with much care in barks painted red and black." According to both LeClercq and Champlain, the face was painted black as a sign of mourning, but Wallis was told at Burnt Church that it was painted red. Placing of red ochre in protohistoric grave in New England was widely practiced.

Extensive use of birch bark and skins in Micmac burials is described by several 17th Century writers. Denys tells of the use of birch bark in temporary platform burials, and as a fresh covering for reburial when skins were added to be used in "clothing himself;" the latter he says totalled "two thousand pounds of peltries" at times. LeClercq saw the body placed in the grave "with bark and the finest skins" and tells how in the temporary disposition of the body previously mentioned, bark was enwrapped around with much care. Champlain mentions wrapping the body in skin before burial. Wallis found a tradition in 1912 of wrapping the body in a white birch bark sheet to preserve it; this was practiced at Burnt Church. In Pictou he was told of a birch bark covering or a "kuwenuitc Rwedelaan" sewn together with spruce roots around the body "as bark encircles a tree."

Lighting of a fire over graves as part of the burial ceremony in the Acadian area is not mentioned, although there are references to burning the deceased's goods, and to ceremonial feasts or tabagie.

Both Denys and LeClercq say and Champlain implies that gifts to the deceased are appropriate to his sex. Skeletal material recovered in the Pictou excavations is very fragmentary and certain identification of the sex is possible in only one instance. A reasonable inference would be that Burial Pit No. 1 contained a male body since spear points, a bow, swords, axes and other tools were placed in it. Hunting equipment is probably the most significant in making this assumption. However beads and wampum are referred to as used by women and baskets are normally associated with that sex. On the other hand, bones of both sexes may be in Burial Pit No. 2. Skull No. 1 is certainly male, but the grave contains leather and

rush thongs, some of which may be women's tump lines. There are also numerous baskets and strings of beads. Could this be a family burial of a man, his wife or wives, and his child? There are references to burials of wives with husbands in the region of the Atlantic provinces at an earlier date, but apparently there is no contemporary description of a family multiple burial.

An examination of the literary works is also helpful in arriving at some approximation for the burial date. The two graves must be almost contemporary from the similar general character of the buried grave goods. The writer has assumed that European grave goods in such quantities as found in both pits was only probable with the advent of established traders operating from local Acadian bases as opposed to the 16th Century's sporadic or occasion trading such as was carried on in conjunction with fishing trips to the Grand Banks. In such a case the graves would not antedate the opening of the 17th Century. This dating might be advanced if the above supposition is incorrect. Certainly Acadia early received the full impact of the European fur trader. The presence of a wooden bow and the absence of fire arms is significant in determining a terminal date for the burials. Muskets rapidly replaced the bow after the European advent and once the French made them articles of trade. Acculturation progressed to a point where Denys implies that firearms were in universal use on the Canadian east coast by the third quarter of the century for by that time the natives used the musket

"more than all other weapons, in their hunting in spring, summer, and autumn, both for animals and birds. With an arrow they killed only one Wild Goose, but with the shot of a gun they kill five or six of them. With an arrow it was necessary to approach an animal closely; with the gun they kill the animal from a distance with a bullet or two."

However note that Thomas Pichon writing about the Micmacs of Cape Breton Island as late as 1750 mentions that they still had bows, arrows and stone hatchets which are produced at the time of declaration of war although such a use may be merely a retention of an

obsolete article for ceremonial purposes. The large quantity of grave goods at Pictou is such as belonged to great ceremonial burials described by Denys and which he says were no longer being held in 1672. With spear points, caulkers, axes and other objects closely paralleling material excavated on the site of Fort La Tour in Saint John (1630-1645) and Fort Ste Marie in Huronia, Ontario (1639-1649), the whole complex would seem to date from the mid 17th Century. Further research on bead types and other excavated articles will be necessary before such a date can be confirmed completely.

GIFTS TO THE DEAD IN THE PICTOU BURIALS

This concluding section will re-list in greater detail than in the preceding the individual articles found in the two burial pits. Quite possibly the French trade items were supplied from Deny's trading posts, while the articles of native Micmac craftsmanship were no doubt of local manufacture.

French Trade Goods

Kettles: Copper kettles in the form of large open cauldrons with iron handles and iron reinforcing rims around the rim, were much the most spectacular items in the two graves. Nine came from Pit No. 1 and thirteen from Pit No. 2. They are of more than passing significance in Micmac life, for they were used on all ceremonial occasions and considered as having a spirit of their own. It was common practice to bury such kettles with the dead. Denys makes some interesting comments on such use; in great detail he describes French attempts to deter the Indians from wasteful burial of pelts and trade goods. The French opened a grave to prove to the Indians that any belief of such things being useful to the dead in the after world was mere folly. One gift found on opening the grave was a copper kettle which when struck no longer had a ringing sound. The native attributed this to the spirit of the kettle going to the other world for, the Indian said:

" ... with respect to the kettle ...
they (the deceased) have need of it,
since it is among us a utensil of new
introduction, and with which the other
world cannot (yet) be furnished. Do

you not indeed see, said he, rapping again upon the kettle, that it has no longer any sound, and that it no longer says a word, because its spirit has abandoned it to go to be of use in the other world to the dead man to whom we have given it?

" It was indeed difficult to keep from laughing, but much more difficult to disabuse him. For being shown another which was worn out from use, and being made to hear that it spoke no word more than the other, - "ha", said he, "that is because it is dead, and its soul has gone to the land where the souls of kettles are accustomed to go." ... They have abandoned all their own utensils, whether because of the trouble they had as well as to make as to use them, or because of the facility of obtaining from us, in exchange for skins, which cost them almost nothing, the things which seemed to them invaluable, not so much from their novelty as for the convenience they derived therefrom. Above all the kettle has always seemed to them, and seems still, the most valuable article they can obtain from us. This was rather pleasingly exemplified by an Indian whom the late Monsieur de Razilly sent from Acadia to Paris; for by passing by the Rue Aubry-bouche, where there were then many copper smiths, he asked of his interpreter if they were not relatives of the King, and if this was not the trade of the grandest Seigniors of the kingdom.

This little digression must not make me forget to say here, before finishing this chapter on funerals, that to express a thing such as it is when it can be no longer of use, they say

that it is dead. For example, when their canoe is broken, they say that it is dead, and thus with all other things out of service."

Eight copper kettles have rim diameters of approximately 27", one is 24", one 18", one 15" and one 4". Two specimens not crushed have depths of 14-1/2" and 13". All are provided with iron loops for handle attachment, but the handles themselves are of three distinct types. In a single specimen, the handles project like a bar for 6" from the outer rim and terminate in knobs. This provided a convenient hand hold by which two men could lift the kettle when full, or for its support on solid blocks over the fire. Two specimens have somewhat shorter projecting bars without terminal knobs. Handles of all other specimens terminate in a simple loop. One oval kettle measures 9" x 11" at the rim. Similar specimens to all except the oval type have been found in New Brunswick graves and on Huron sites in Ontario pre-dating 1649.

Axes: Grave Pit No. 1 yielded five and Grave Pit No. 2 eleven French trade axes of conventional 17th Century types. All are so badly corroded that no maker's mark could be located. The specimens range in length from 6-1/2" to 9". Two in the first pit retain portions of wooden handles, apparently straight sticks.

Miscellaneous Iron Objects, Grave Pit No. 1:
Grave Pit No. 1 provided in 1955 a wide variety of articles. While described and illustrated in a previous report, the list is repeated to give completeness to the inventory. Iron objects in the grave were as follows:

- 225 double bladed spear points;
- 91 double pointed awls, of which 16 had wooden end tips;
- 19 so-called "spoons" or "caulkers";
- 1 spear or arrow tip, double barbed small flat point;
- 5 curved fish hooks with barbed tips;
- 1 wide chisel or wedge;
- 1 wide iron blade set in a wooden handle;
- 4 knives, slightly curved, of a kitchen type, rivetted wooden handles;

- 2 knives, very similar but shorter without rivetted handles;
- 1 heavy single edged sword blade;
- 5 single edged sword, 4 with leather scabbards;
- 1 single edged sword with elaborately decorated grip;
- 1 heavy double edged sword with double medial groove on blade.

Miscellaneous Iron Objects, Grave Pit No. 2:

In general the 1956 finds were characterized by a much less prolific number of iron articles, there being no spear points, awls or swords. However five small adzes or choppers were of very considerable interest (Fig. 7e). In each case, a flat iron blade with a tang projecting from the side was set into a curved handle of very hard wood and in some and probably all cases held in place with thong lashings. A heavy chisel was found with a length of 15", blade width 1-1/2", and shaft diameter 3/4". One iron spoon or caulker had been deliberately bent, apparently to be used as a scraper. One arrow point, a small knife, and several much corroded pieces of iron of indeterminate use completed the list of iron objects from this grave pit.

- Glass Trade Beads: Glass trade beads were found in both grave pits. During 1955 a single
- spherical dark blue type represented by 112 specimens and of 1/16" diameter, was found. On the other hand there were several types in Grave Pit No. 2. Very
 - dark blue ovoid beads of about 3/8" length were most plentiful; they were strung on a two-ply and very fibrous thread, fragments of which still remained.
 - A second string of beads were of a translucent ice green colour, spherical in shape, and of a slightly smaller diameter. Most of these beads had already crumbled to a greenish powder when found or, if they still retained their shape, turned at once to dust when touched. A suggestion has been advanced that originally these may have been of red glass and undergone a colour change as a result of chemical action; an analysis of the powder might be desirable. Several ovoid beads were of about one-half the size of the larger blue ones; they were of a dark purple
 - fabric and decorated either with lengthwise or diagonal opaque white stripes. The final type in
 - Grave Pit No. 2 were minute dark purple ovoid beads of less than 1/16" diameter.

European Textiles: Grave Pit No. 2 yielded remains of at least two and possibly three twill-woven woollen blankets with a thread count of 18 or 19 to the inch. The fragments are now stained a rich brown but with dark lines of parallel stripes of patterning still visible. The original colours can not now be ascertained but the stripes were possibly red, a favourite colour with the Indians. Grave Pit No. 1 had fragments of twill wooven cloth with a thread count of 50 to the inch. It appears to have been originally a brownish colour (or red oxidized?). One fragment, 7-3/4" wide, has three hemmed edges and resembles the end of a sash or loin cloth. Is this some type of grave clothing? Father Biard refers to clothing the body before burial and Wallis, without quoting his source, describes the occasional wrapping of a body with a long sash.

Ceramics: A single pottery beaker of pale reddish fabric, green glaze on the interior and upper part of the exterior, was placed under a kettle in Grave Pit No. 1. It may have held a food offering.

Vermillion: A leather pouch containing what is evidently trade vermillion lay near skeletal remains in Grave Pit No. 2. It shows a purple hue in places, evidently the result of adulteration. The pouch is almost certainly of native manufacture.

Native Articles:

Woven Baskets and Mats: Many woven fragments employing bulrushes and grass fibres came from both burials. Some were undoubtedly parts of baskets, others possibly were mats of a type described by Father Biard as used for shedding summer rain from the houses. A basic twine weave technique was used in production of all specimens in which two weft threads were carried across simultaneously in such a way that they are twined around each warp thread. A soft basket of hemispherical form with diameter 6", depth 3", and made from coarse sedge grass, came from Grave Pit No. 2 (Fig. 7c). The specimen was sufficiently complete to allow of a complete analysis of its construction. The two first stems of fibrous grass went from rim to rim right across the bottom of the basket; they thus formed four warp threads or spines of the basket. To these stems six additional

warp threads or stems were bound at the bottom so that the first circle of weft twining at the bottom of the basket was carried around ten warp threads or spines. As further circles of weft twining encircled the basket, more warp threads were added by binding the lower end of each in the same loop as a warp thread which already existed, but on the next round of weft twining, it was bound separately. The proper flare to the sides was thus obtained. A total of thirteen rows of weft threads completed the basket but with the last two rows on the rim being very close together to give a firm finish. Portions of two other baskets with a similar weaving technique but differing in material came from the same burial pit; they are made from a two-ply twisted twine made by the Indians from fine grass. One of these baskets was lined with a very fine pelt, possibly that of a squirrel.

Fragments of woven bulrush mats or baskets came from both pits. Two variants of a twining technique were used. In one type, the warp threads lay parallel to each other with two weft strands twined around them as in the case of the previously described basket. A decorative border was introduced into one by crossing over pairs resulting in a row of holes in what was otherwise a tightly woven surface (Fig. 7b). In the other variant, warp threads were bound in alternating pairs so that the warp was forced into a diamond pattern.

Sewn Bulrush Mats: Bulrush mats of two types were recovered. In Grave Pit No. 1, the bulrushes were sewn together at six inch intervals with a two ply twisted thread, the sewing going right through the thin part of the leaf blade. With the leaves threaded tightly on the twine, the resultant mat was the thickness of the width of the blade which was sufficient to have considerable cushioning qualities. However in Grave Pit No. 2 mats were made in which thread was sewn through from side to side the width of the bulrush blade (Fig. 7a); the resulting sheet is only the thickness of the thin part of the blade. Several of these thin sheets were then lightly sewn together to give a mat of some thickness. Such mats must have been used on the floors or on couches since they would be impractical for shedding rain.

Thongs or Tump Lines: Several types of thongs come from Grave No. 2; either they were used to tie up bundles of pelts or as tump lines. One group are made of plaited heavy bulrushes; the ends were bound with a two-ply twisted cord to prevent ravelling. A second group are simply flat leather thongs about one-half inch wide. A third group are leather thongs, cut slightly wider, and then rolled into a tubular form.

Bark Dish: A remarkably well preserved birch bark dish measuring 3" x 8" and 3-1/2" high was found in Grave Pit No. 2 (Fig. 7d). A rectangular sheet of bark, 19" x 15" and at least ten layers thick, was folded to give the two sides and bottom. The ends were then folded in without cutting and held in place by stitching with what appears to be root strands.

Burial Pouch: A flat birch bark pouch with overall measurements of 12" x 33" containing child skeletal fragments, came from Grave Pit No. 2. A large piece of bark was folded over twice with edges overlapping; the resultant flattened pouch has a total width of 12". The bottom of the pouch was closed by twice splitting the bark and folding in the two outer sections to give a V-shaped bottom (Fig. 7f). A birch bark collar was next sewn onto the upper edge of the pouch with thin leather thongs. This end of the pouch was left open.

Miscellaneous Native Material: Grave Pit No. 1 yielded a portion of a wooden bow, several pieces of wampum, and some leather fragments, possibly parts of moccasins. Grave Pit No. 2 contained several rolls of birch bark, two pieces of wood that may have been portions of boxes or bowls, and fragments of what appears to have been a woven rush basket. A cluster of small feathers was possibly part of an ornament.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1: Plan of Burial Pit No. 1 excavated in 1955.
- Fig. 2: Plan of Burial Pit No. 2 excavated in 1956.
- Fig. 3: Kettle from Burial Pit No. 1 showing slashes by an axe before burial.
- Fig. 4: View of Grave Pit No. 2 during excavation with Kettles Nos. 1 and 2 and top of the main mass of grave goods visible.
- Fig. 5: Skull fragments left exposed on lifting of Kettle No. 1 in Grave Pit No. 1.
- Fig. 6: Profile of the centre walls of the north east quarter of Grave Pit No. 2 during excavation, showing layers of ash in upper portions of the pit as indicated by black arrows. The top of Kettle No. 1 is visible.
- Fig. 7: Line drawing of some of the artifacts recovered in Grave Pit No. 2.

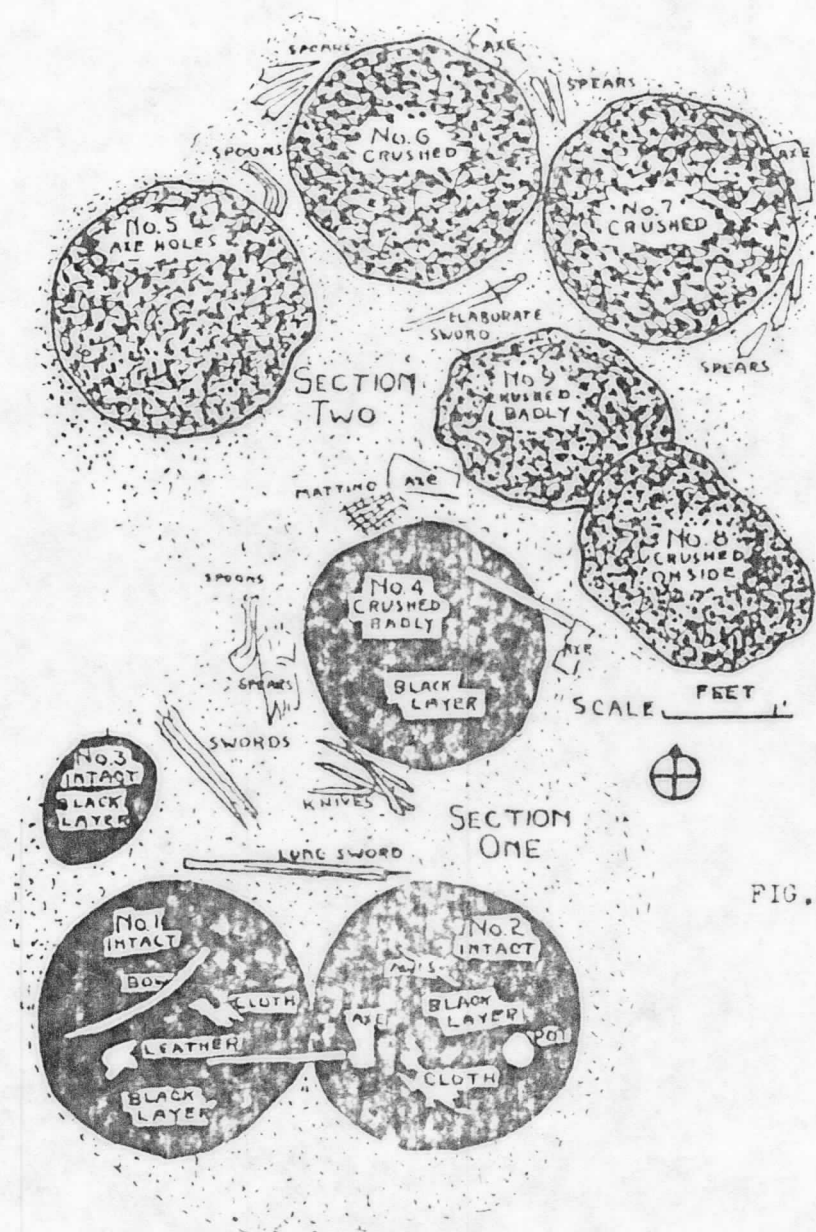


FIG. 1

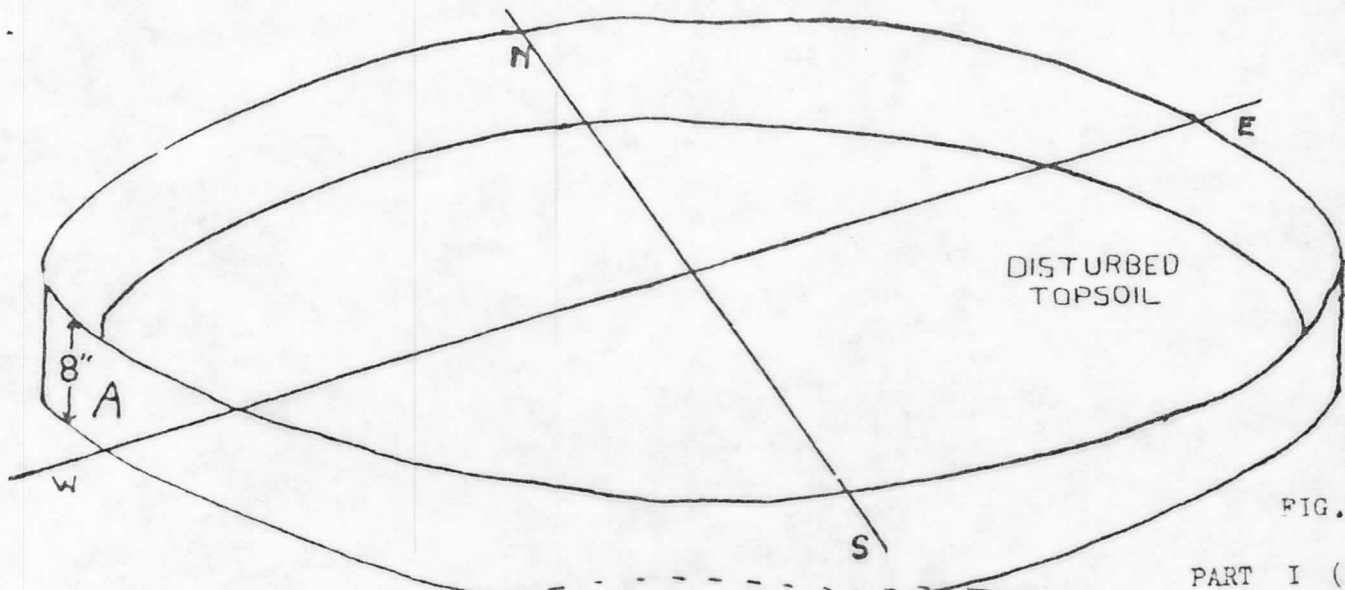


FIG. 2

PART I (Top)

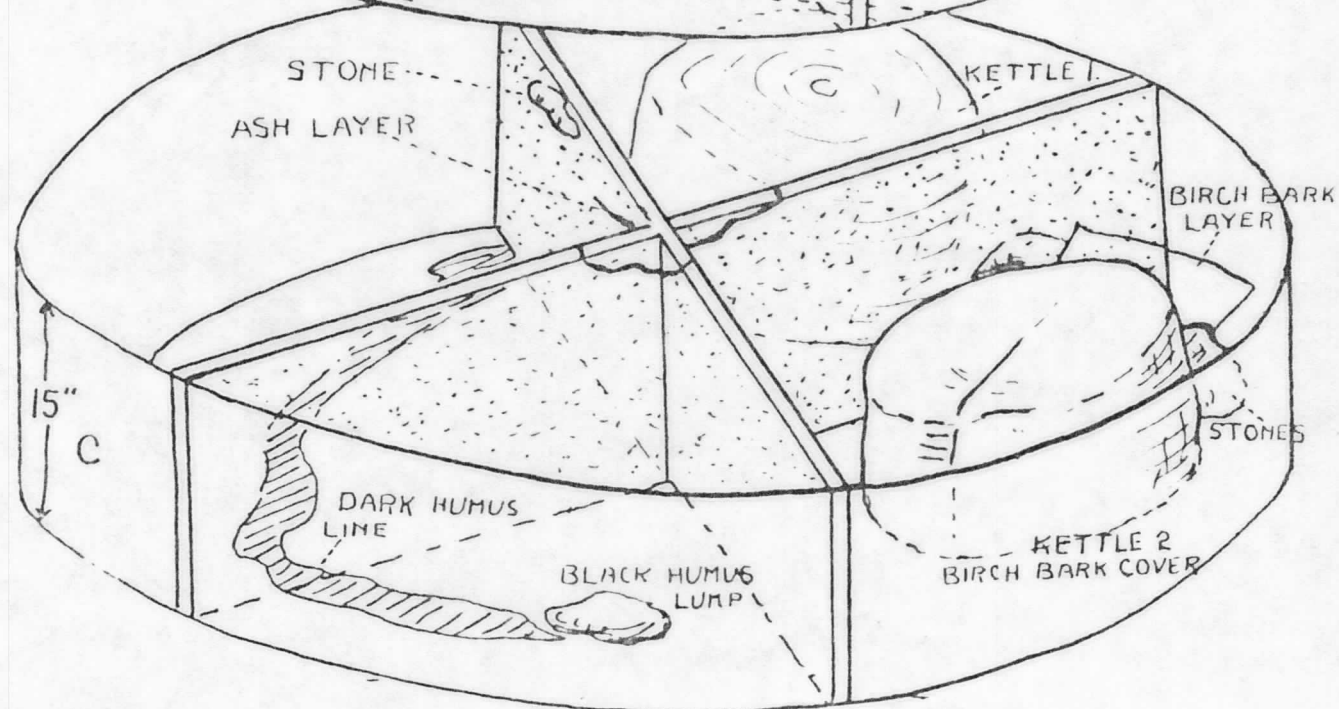
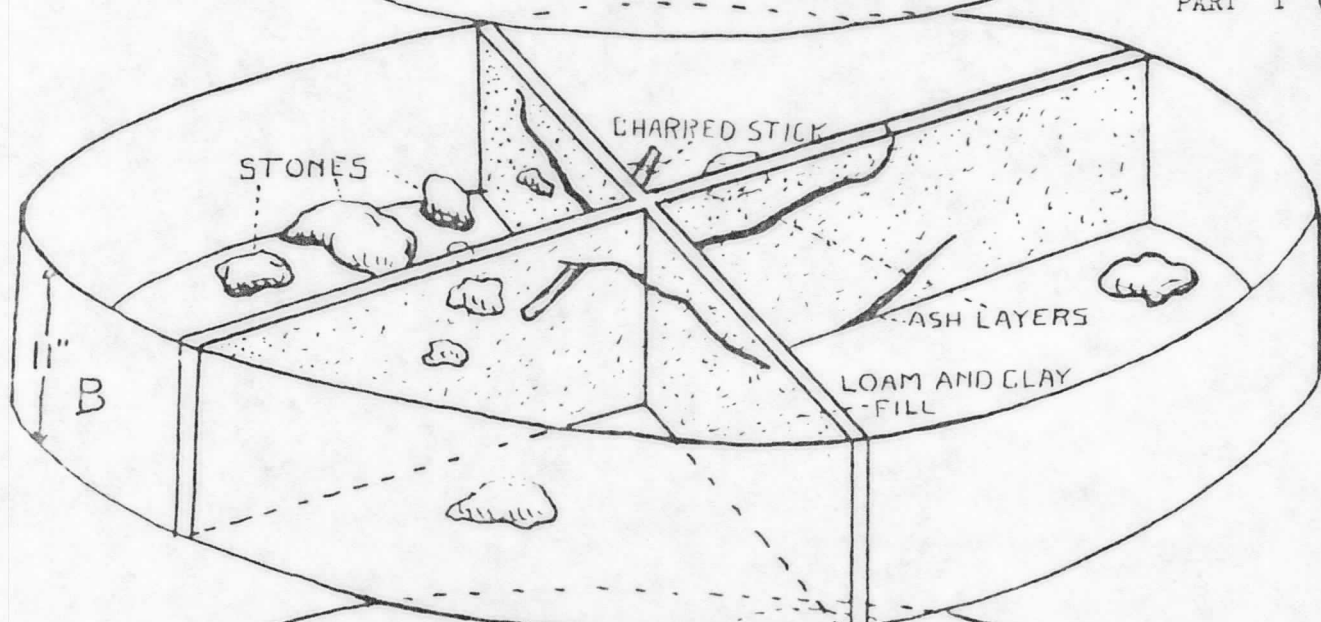


FIG. 2

PART II (Bottom)

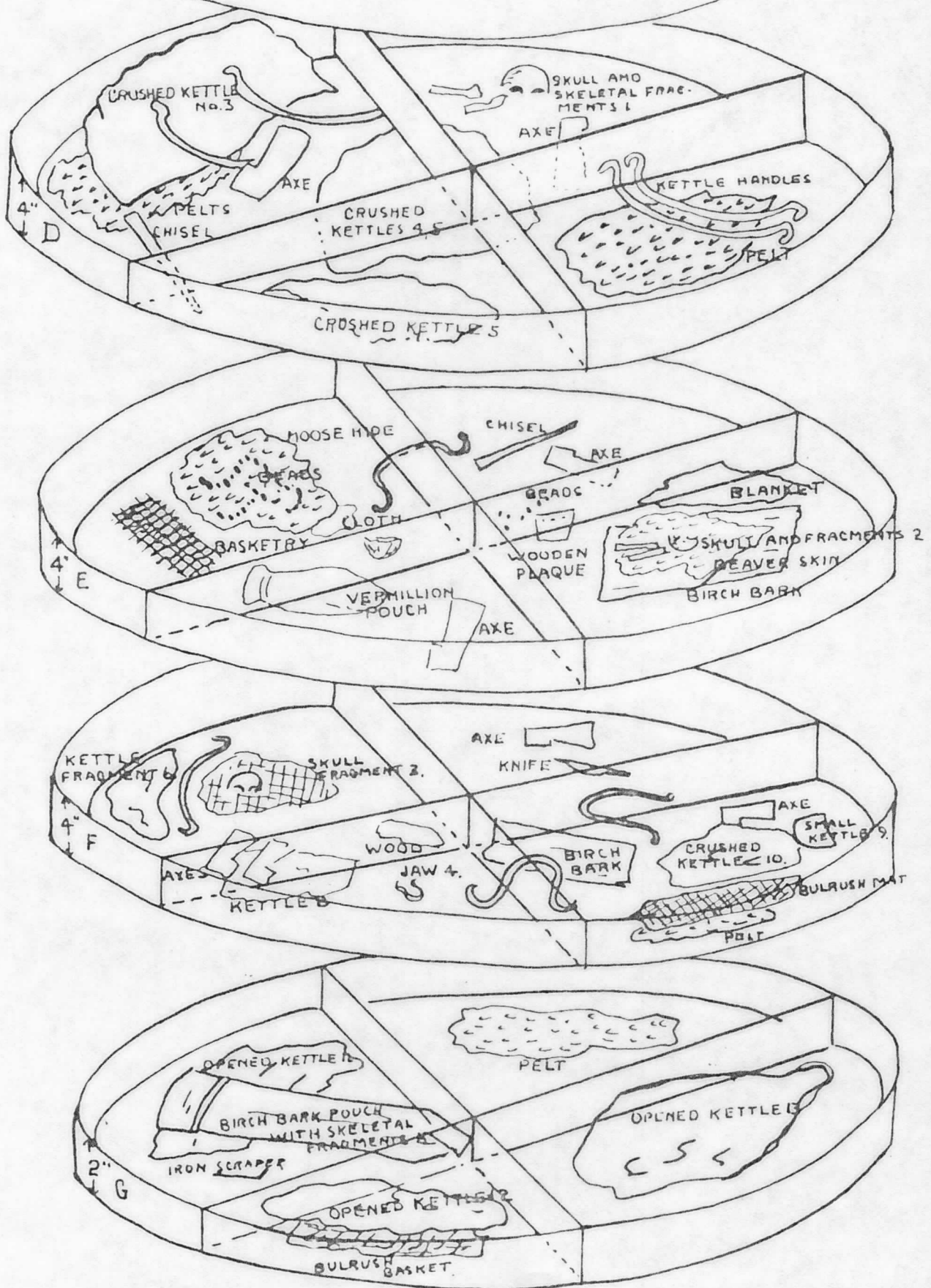


FIG. 3

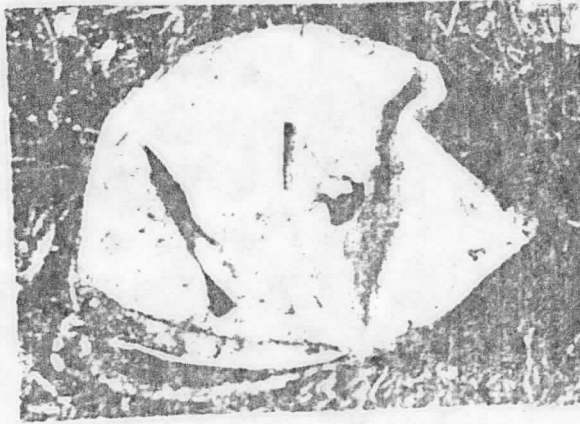


FIG. 4

