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"Pusilla res mundus est nisi in illo  
quod quaerat omnis mundus habeat."  
— SENECA, *Naturales Quaestiones*

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## DATED INDIAN BURIALS IN MICHIGAN

GEORGE I. QUIMBY, JR.

THIS paper encompasses those facts which are pertinent to the significance of Indian burials of the historic period in Michigan and to their dating by means of trade objects associated with them. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to this subject, which may provide links between history and prehistory, and the documentation accompanying museum collections is extremely meager. In addition to establishing such links, this study may offer social implications of an accultural nature.

### I

In 1921 an extended skeleton of a young adult male (?) was excavated in a gravel pit one mile west of Tecumseh, in Lenawee County.<sup>1</sup> The lower quarter of the left ear has been preserved by the silver sulphide precipitated from two silver earbobs suspended from the pierced ear lobe. Associated with the skeleton were eight silver ornaments and a small ovoid glass mirror.<sup>2</sup> One of these silver ornaments is illustrated in Figure 9.

Artifacts of native manufacture are a medium-sized ovate, narrow, straight-base, chert projectile point with a straight to slightly contracting stem and a receding shoulder<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 8), found within the left chest of the skeleton, and small tubular shell beads among which, irregularly spaced, were the pierced metapodials, astraguli, and calcaneum of a cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus mearnsii*). Some of these bones are covered with red ocher (Fig. 11).

On the basis of datable trade-silver artifacts the earliest possible date for this particular burial is between 1784 and 1810. The silver

<sup>1</sup> Cat. Nos. 158-166, 5427-5428, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan. Other articles in this museum will be cited by catalogue numbers only.

<sup>2</sup> Other ornaments have been described and discussed in another paper by George I. Quimby, Jr., "Notes on Indian Trade Silver in Michigan," *Pap. Mich. Acad. Sci., Arts, and Letters*, 22 (1936): 15-24, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> Coe, Joffre L., University of North Carolina, "Classification of Chipped Stone Projectile Points." (*In manuscript.*)

is probably all of British origin.<sup>4</sup> The projectile point, which may possibly have been the cause of death, was doubtless only secondarily associated with the skeleton. The only artifact of native manufacture which could be attributed to this particular Indian is a shell and bone necklace with the red ocher.

## II

Near the center of Section 4, Clinton Township, Lenawee County, the burial of a young adult female was found in 1923 by the highway department in the course of road construction.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately no information is available concerning the position of the skeleton. Accompanying the burial were a pewter teaspoon and two silver armbands in a fragmentary condition. The latter were stamped with the Roman letters 'AS' in a rectangular cartouche.

This touchmark is not identified, but thus far there have been found in Michigan no silver objects manufactured before 1780.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the earliest documentary evidence dealing with the manufacture of Indian silver ornaments is dated 1750.<sup>7</sup> It is quite unlikely that this Indian was buried before 1780.

## III

At the Furton site in St. Clair County, about five miles south of New Baltimore, erosional forces recently exposed a burial in the sandy bank along Lake St. Clair.<sup>8</sup> Information concerning the skeletal material is lacking, but associated with the burial were the following objects: a brass tomahawk pipe, an iron strike-a-light, an iron knife blade, a white clay trade pipe with 'TD' stamped upon the stem side of the bowl (Fig. 1), a silver crown, sixteen miniature round silver brooches, and a medium-sized, double-barred silver cross made by Robert Cruickshanks of Montreal (Fig. 6). Also one potsherd, grit-tempered and with a cord-wrapped paddle impression, and a fragment of deer mandible (*Odocoileus virginianus borealis*) were found, but these probably were included in the fill of the grave and may be manifestations of an earlier occupation.

To judge from the identification of the mark upon the silver cross, the earliest possible date for this burial is between the years 1781 and 1809.

<sup>4</sup> Quimby, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Cat. No. 898.

<sup>6</sup> Quimby, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Gillingham, Harold E., "Indian Silver Ornaments," *Penna. Mag. of History and Biography*, 58: 97-126. 1934.

<sup>8</sup> Field Cat. Nos. F9-F20.

## IV

In 1923 workmen excavating for a cellar on the Captain Smith farm on Harsen's Island in Lake St. Clair exposed several Indian burials in a gravelly knoll. No data on the position of skeletons in the graves are available. With one of these burials were associated the following objects:<sup>9</sup> two badly patinated basal parts of pewter vases, two small brass pots, two gunflints, a bell-shaped brass nozzle, threaded at the base and filled with wood, a double-barred silver cross, a brass bracelet (Fig. 10), and a Stiegel glass bottle with decorations painted in white, black, green, yellow, red, and blue enamel (Fig. 14).<sup>10</sup> With this burial were included an ovoid implement of reddish chert and a wooden spoon with a bird carved on the handle.

Heinrich Stiegel of Manheim, Pennsylvania, the first to produce in America glass so decorated, made his enameled glass between the years 1772 and 1785.<sup>11</sup> Therefore the earliest possible date for this burial falls sometime between these years. Supplementary evidence for this date is the presence of the silver cross.

The only artifacts of native manufacture associated with this burial are the wooden spoon carved on the handle and the chipped reddish chert implement. It is possible that the implement represents an older occupation and was accidentally included in the grave fill instead of having been intentionally placed there, like the other artifacts.

<sup>9</sup> Cat. Nos. 740-752.

<sup>10</sup> This bottle is 15.2 cm. in height, 13.1 cm. base to shoulder, 6 cm. face to face, and 7.4 cm. side to side. It is octagonal in cross section, owing to four bevel-like areas connecting the two sides and faces. Enclosed within an egg-shaped outline in yellow, on either face, is a white dove surmounting a yellow cross-shaped twig rising from olive-green foliage. On each outside edge of this border are white frills. At the top is a solid green circle from which radiate leaves of red and white, yellow, blue and white, and red. A similar design is at the bottom of the oval frame. On either side is a floral motif consisting of a vertical white stem with leaves of red and white, red, yellow, and blue and white arranged symmetrically on both sides of the stem. Surmounting the stem is a three-petaled olive-green flower. The same design, white frills and yellow leaves, appears on all four of the short interfacial side areas. Encircling the shoulder area is a band of blue relieved by white dots and curved lines. Occasional parts of all the design motifs are sharpened by black lines. The pontil mark is elliptical and surrounded by units of parallel curvilinear grooves, the whole having been somewhat smoothed over.

The bottle top is of lead or pewter and may have been gilded. It screws on a fitting of similar material fastened to the upper rim and lip of the bottle.

<sup>11</sup> Knittle, Rhea Mansfield, *Early American Glass*. New York, 1927.

## V

In a sandy beach ridge along the shore of Lake Michigan between Cross Village and Goodheart in Emmet County Mr. L. P. Rowland between the years 1875 and 1900 excavated several Indian burials.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately he kept only a general record of his findings and, consequently, a number of his burials must be treated as one unit. Further, because of lack of documentation only a proportionately small number of objects represented in his large collection may be definitely attributed to these burials. From one of these graves came the skeleton of a woman.

Associated with the various burials were sixty-three marked silver ornaments, at least fifty of which were made in Montreal, one in England, and two in the United States. These ornaments were manufactured between the years 1780 and 1810. Therefore, on the basis of the silver, these particular burials would have an earliest possible date between 1781 and 1810.

Since the area including Cross Village and Goodheart has been continuously occupied by the Algonquian-speaking Ottawa and Chippewa or Ojibwa tribes since 1741, it is quite probable that these burials may be attributed to them.<sup>13</sup> That they were allies of the British is certainly reaffirmed by the amount of British silver present.

The artifacts associated with these burials are as follows: five square and round catlinite beads, a small skin bundle filled with vermilion paint (Fig. 7), a plain and rather crudely carved wooden spoon, a small round wooden bowl (Fig. 2), and a fragment of a shell gorget with a countersunk perforation (Fig. 4).

Trade objects other than silver associated with the Cross Village-Goodheart burials are three copper or brass pots, two of which have iron bails, large quantities of colored glass beads, and several fragments of cloth. Identification of materials and weaves<sup>14</sup> showed three types: (1) a brown woolen broadcloth of plain plaiting somewhat felted; (2) a dark wool cloth of twilled weaving (two strands over and two under); and (3) blue material with a weft of linen and a woof of silk. The third type of weave is now called "grosgrain" and is used in making ribbons.

<sup>12</sup> Cat. Nos. 989, 1033, 1035, 1039, 1054, 1055, 1057, 1058, 1060, 1063, 1067, 1071, 1083, 1087, 1116, 1130, 1139.

<sup>13</sup> Greenman, E. F., "History of the Indians of Michigan." (*In manuscript.*)

<sup>14</sup> Identification by Volney H. Jones, Ethnobotanical Laboratory, University of Michigan.

## VI

In 1900 a burial was excavated by graders at the site of the present post office in the village of Franklin, Southfield Township, Oakland County.<sup>15</sup> The skeleton was in a flexed position, and the following trade articles were associated with it: a bone-handled jackknife with a single blade, an iron tomahawk pipe, a silver armband with the stamped Roman letters 'CG' in a square cartouche, a silver armband with a snake engraved upon the face, manufactured by Robert Cruickshanks of Montreal, and two silver hair plates made by the firm of George Heming and William Chawner of London, England, 1781-82.<sup>16</sup>

Additional artifacts found with this burial were a shell gorget, a polished stone celt, and three medium-sized chert projectile points. The shell gorget is ovate; it is curvate in cross section. In the upper third of the gorget at each side are perforations which are countersunk.

The shapes of the projectile points vary. One is narrow and triangular, with a straight base and a contracting stem (or corner notch); the second, broadly ovate, with a convex base and a contracting stem (or corner notch); the third, narrow and triangular, with a straight base and a slightly contracting to straight stem.

Identification of the manufacturers of the accompanying trade silver places the earliest date for this burial between the years 1781 and 1809. The presence of the native artifacts is of particular interest.

## VII

On the farm of Miner L. Cook, near Cook's Bridge in Cascade Township, Kent County, the skeleton of a young adult female (?) was excavated from a gravel pit some years ago.<sup>17</sup> Beside the skeleton were a small copper kettle, a badly patinated iron strike-a-light, small white glass beads, a pair of iron scissors, heavily encrusted,

<sup>15</sup> Artifacts associated with this burial are in the Detroit Historical Society Museum.

<sup>16</sup> The touchmark, 'GH' over 'WC' in a square cartouche, was tentatively identified by John Marshall Phillips, Gallery of Fine Arts, Yale University. This identification was tentatively suggested by Mr. Harrold E. Gillingham of Germantown, Pa. Sketches and a written description of this mark were sent by letter to these two men.

<sup>17</sup> Cat. Nos. 112665-112674 in the Grand Rapids Public Museum (formerly Kent Scientific Institute).

four wooden button molds, miniature round silver brooches, and a medium-sized double-barred silver cross, stamped with the Roman letters 'CG' in a square cartouche.

Artifacts of native manufacture are a long, flat, curved bone needle, and the bone handle of an iron awl. The bone needle is about nine inches long, a half inch wide, and an eighth of an inch thick. Near its middle is a drilled hole, countersunk from both sides. One edge of the proximal end has three closely spaced shallow crenulations. The bone handle bears a decoration of incised straight lines obliquely placed, right to left and left to right, joining at each extremity.

Because of the presence of trade silver ornaments it is reasonable to assume that the earliest date for this burial falls between 1780 and 1815.<sup>18</sup>

### VIII

On the north side of Dowagiac Creek, about one mile east of its junction with the St. Joseph River (near Niles, Berrien County), a historic burial was exposed in a sand ridge during the excavation of a cellar in 1935.<sup>19</sup> Three skeletons came from this ridge. One of an adult female (?) lay in a flexed position. At its feet was a large brass kettle with an iron bail, and in its left hand was a polished stone pipe. Associated with this skeleton and to the east was that of a child with which were buried a number of miniature round silver brooches, two small brass "jingle bells" (Fig. 3), and a large iron spoon. Information about the position of the child's skeleton is lacking. About seven feet southwest of it was the extended skeleton of an adult female (?). Laboratory examination revealed fragments of trade cloth adhering to the bones.

The polished stone pipe with the female (?) skeleton is typologically related to the white clay trade pipes. The bowl extends obliquely from the stem, and at the bottom of the bowl is a spur (Fig. 5). It is interesting to note the retention of a native technique and its application to an introduced form.<sup>20</sup>

Although European forms of pipes to which the stone pipe is

<sup>18</sup> See note 6.

<sup>19</sup> Cat. Nos. 4590-4599.

<sup>20</sup> Mr. Peter Brannon, of Montgomery, Alabama, has noted similar examples from historic burials in the South (e.g. pottery kettles so faithfully executed after the European form that they have even the reinforcements with nonfunctional rivets where the bails are fastened).

related typologically may have been seen in this region at a much earlier time, the presence of the miniature round silver brooches suggests that the earliest possible date for this burial is between 1780 and 1815.

### IX

During landscaping operations in the State Park, West Allis Township, in Presque Isle County north of Onaway (southeast shore of Black Lake), a number of historic burials were excavated in 1934.<sup>21</sup> Because of insufficient data these burials must be taken as one unit. Skeletal material includes bones of males and females, young and middle-aged adult. Associated with these burials were nine silver ornaments, fragments of copper kettles, a badly encrusted jackknife, three heavily patinated iron knives with wooden handles, one gun-flint, two fragments of strike-a-lights, colored glass beads of various shapes, sizes, and colors, one white clay trade pipe with bowl extending obliquely from stem and spur at bottom, fragments of plain-plaited (somewhat felted) brown woolen broadcloth and green-blue plaited silk, and a small rectangular mirror. There were no artifacts of native manufacture associated with these burials.

Again, on the basis of the trade silver ornaments, the earliest possible date for this burial is probably between 1780 and 1815.

### X

In 1922 a very poorly documented burial or burials collected from an unknown site in Leelanau County revealed the following trade artifacts:<sup>22</sup> two iron knife blades, badly encrusted, three fragments of white clay pipe stems of European form, one of which has a green glaze, one iron needle, a fragment of a medium-sized brass sleigh bell, one fragment of green pressed glass (Fig. 16), one fragment of blue and gold lusterware china (Fig. 13), the basal part of a glass bottle which has a rough pontil mark (Fig. 15), a large fragment of a mulberry-colored Staffordshire teapot (?) (Fig. 12), and a number of blue glass beads.

Artifacts of native manufacture are one deer antler projectile point, a fragment of charred bone with an incised crosshatched design upon it, a large piece of worked antler, and a fragment of a stone

<sup>21</sup> Cat. Nos. 4601-4603, 4722-4724, 4734-4736, 5411-5426.

<sup>22</sup> Cat. Nos. 124-127, 1369.



pipe bowl. Possibly these artifacts are camp or village refuse from a previous occupation which was accidentally included in the grave fill. Since there are no data concerning skeletons or positions of skeletons, or relationship of artifacts to the burials, very little trustworthy information can be secured in this case.

Using for a chronological aid the mulberry-colored fragment of Staffordshire-like china which has an oriental motif for decoration, one finds that the earliest possible date for this burial would be c. 1830, for it was not until then that the English potters had access to the lithographing process which enabled them to print cheaply colors other than blue.<sup>23</sup>

## XI

In 1935 excavations by a farmer on his land west of Port Austin in Huron County revealed several burials of the late historic period.<sup>24</sup> Accurate information concerning the skeleton is lacking, but associated with this burial were the following trade artifacts: eleven gun-flints, the fragments of a flintlock gun, including lock, barrel, and German silver fittings, two lead balls (shot), a number of small glass beads, and fragments of brown, plain-plaited, woolen broadcloth, somewhat felted.

None of the trade artifacts give any clue to the date of this burial, but in a letter to the Museum a very old lady who was an early settler in the region claims that this was the burial of the "Cheaf," and that he died in 1862. She claims, further, that her mother, the local missionary at that time, preached the funeral sermon, and the "Cheaf's" first gun, a flintlock, was buried with him.<sup>25</sup>

The skulls from these Indian burials of the historic period, taken as a group, are round. The range of the cephalic indices is from 78.15 to 88.64, and the mean cephalic index for the group is 82.19. The skulls as a group are hypsiceranial (high-vaulted), and the eye orbits are of medium proportions (mesoconch). The nasal proportions are variable, some mesorrhine, one chamaerrhine, and some hypochamaerrhine. All the skulls are undeformed.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Camehl, Ada Walker, *The Blue China Book*. New York, 1916.

<sup>24</sup> Cat. Nos. 4726-4733.

<sup>25</sup> Her claim is not beyond the realm of possibility, and I include it for what it may be worth.

<sup>26</sup> On the basis of limited cranial measurements and observations made by Mr. Georg Neumann upon skulls Nos. 159, 591, 754, 898, 1268, and 4722-4724.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The dates of manufacture of the various kinds of trade objects found in Indian burials of the historic period in Michigan give a reasonably accurate clue to the earliest possible dates for these burials. Use of this method reveals that such dates for most of the burials studied are between the years c. 1780 and 1815, although it is possible that any one of the burials occurred at a much later time. Some burials seem to have been made at least after 1830.

Identification of the place of manufacture indicates that most of the trade objects were of British origin, and probably belonged to Indians who were friendly toward the British. This is apparent from the silver ornaments alone, since both Americans and British used silver for gifts and for trade. There is the possibility that the silver may have been captured from the British by Indians friendly to the American colonists, but if this is so, one would expect to find in the burials a reasonable proportion of silver ornaments manufactured in the United States. Therefore it seems that most of the burials reported upon in this paper belong to Indians who were well disposed toward the British throughout the period from 1780 to 1815. The tribes in Michigan which fit into this category are the Ottawa, the Chippewa, and the Potawatomi.<sup>27</sup> Documentary evidence indicates that the Ottawa and the Chippewa occupied the Emmet County site previously mentioned.

Some of the burials of this period contained artifacts showing prehistoric technique and form, and one burial had an artifact which illustrates prehistoric technique applied to a historic European form. All the burials had trade objects, although the cultural pattern of the burial itself was prehistoric. This culture pattern was so widespread and its manifestation so general during prehistoric times that there is little chance of identifying the tribe by means of the position of the skeleton and the relationships of artifacts within the historic burials.<sup>28</sup>

Mr. Neumann pointed out that skulls associated with trade materials in the upper levels of the Fisher Site, Will County, Illinois, also conformed to this type, and had tentatively been identified as Potawatomi by means of the direct historical method. All the trade silver from this site that I have examined at the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, was made between 1780 and 1810.

<sup>27</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, XII: 553a.

<sup>28</sup> Griffin, James B., "Aboriginal Mortuary Customs in the Western Half of the Northeastern Woodlands Area." (*In manuscript*.)

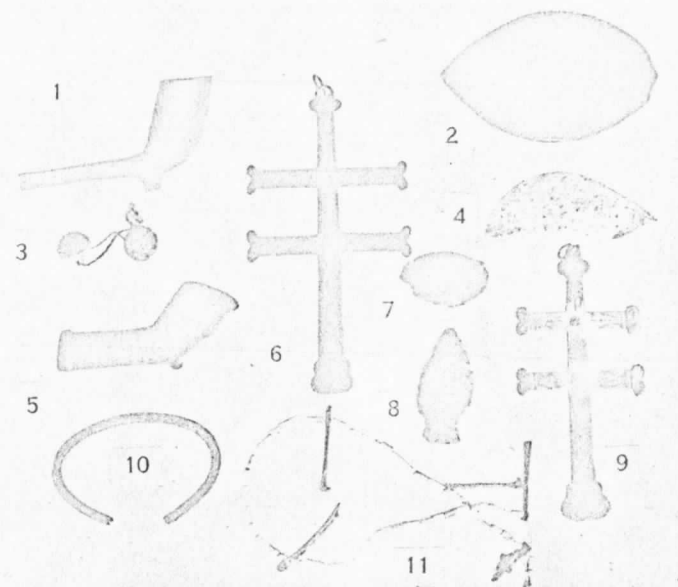
Ethnological studies of primitive peoples in the process of culture change and archaeological investigations of historic sites in other regions have shown that, with the type of contact which occurred between Indians and white groups, the aboriginal technological culture changed before the social culture. The facts presented in this study, namely, that grave furniture of white manufacture was substituted for native grave furniture, although the cultural concept of placing objects within the grave remained the same, agree with or conform to the results of studies made in other areas. Further, there is the possibility that old techniques were employed in producing new forms (in the technological culture) when these forms, once having been observed, were not available to an individual.

Considerable work in this subject remains to be done in the laboratory as well as in the field. In addition, there exists the strong probability that links between history and prehistory will be discovered through such a study. There is also the possibility of revealing facts of interest in the study of continuous first-hand contact between groups possessing different cultures.

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QUIMBY

PLATE I



#### ARTIFACTS WITH HISTORIC INDIAN BURIALS

1. Clay trade pipe from Furton site
2. Carved wooden bowl from Cross Village, Goodhart burials
3. Brass jingle bells from burial near Niles
4. Fragment of perforated shell gorget from Cross Village, Goodhart burials
5. Stone imitation of white man's clay pipe, from burial near Niles
6. Double-barred silver cross found with burial at Furton site. Manufactured by Cruickshanks
7. Skin-covered packet of vermilion from Cross Village, Goodhart burials
8. Chert projectile point from burial near Tecumseh
9. Double-barred silver cross from burial near Tecumseh. Manufactured by Arnoldi
10. Brass bracelet found with burial on Harsen's Island
11. Necklace of shell beads and rabbit metapodials from burial near Tecumseh