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THE DOUGALL SITE

J.V. WRIGHT

The Dougall site (BdGu-2) is located on the west side of the narrows between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching, Simcoe County, Ontario. Mr. Bruce Dougall, the owner, has been developing the area for private residences and part of this development involved dredging artificial canals; the fill from which had been deposited over the major portion of the site. Indeed, only a small area of the site, approximately 70 feet by 40 feet, has escaped being capped with a thick layer of the heavy clay from the dredging operation. The small point on which the site is situated is described by residents in the area as being an extension of a long, low ridge that was originally flanked on both sides by swamp which was subsequently filled for house construction.

Four 10 foot by 10 foot units were excavated by my wife Dawn and myself with the frequent assistance of Mr. N.D. Clarke of Barrie, Ontario. Depth of deposit ranged from 5 inches to 13 inches with an average depth of 8.5 inches. Initial testing had revealed that the site contained a number of components and, therefore, strict recording controls were adhered to until it became obvious that the deposit had been subjected to considerable disturbance. In only two very local instances was the Middle Woodland deposit clearly separated from the later occupations. Although most of the Middle Woodland material occurred towards the bottom and most of the 18th and 19th century material was recovered near the surface, the relative superposition of deposits was not sufficiently marked to warrant retaining the one-inch levels and the horizontal and vertical recording of individual artifacts. The compromise controls consisted of three-inch and, later, six-inch levels, exclusive of features and discrete refuse concentrations. The shallowness of the deposit and the relatively continuous occupation of the site appear to have effectively obscured any meaningful stratigraphy or superposition. Subsequent mending of broken artifacts, particularly pottery, indicated that considerable vertical and lateral movement had taken place within the deposit. Tree-fall action, to judge from the irregular configuration of the subsoil floor, also played an important role in mixing the cultural deposits. Post moulds could not be distinguished in the dense clay subsoil although they may have been present. Regardless, the limited area exposed and the continuous nature of the occupation, would probably have limited meaningful settlement pattern data.

Despite the mixed nature of the cultural deposits, the Dougall site produced a considerable body of significant data. First, there is evidence that the site was used relatively continuously for nearly 2,000 years. Second, and most important, the site basically functioned as a fish camp and this specialized function has expressed itself archaeologically in a number of interesting ways. Interpretations will follow the descriptive section which begins with the earliest occupation. Due to the disturbed nature of the deposit most of the non-diagnostic stone and bone artifacts cannot be accurately assigned to specific components. They will be described at the end of the descriptive section and wherever possible comment will be made regarding their likely association.

DESCRIPTION

EARLY WOODLAND PERIOD:

Three Vinette 1 body sherds were recovered from the lower levels in two adjacent squares (Plate 1, fig. 1). Cord malleation on the exterior-interior are oblique-oblique (2) and oblique-(horizontal) (1). Two specimens possess coil breaks and thicknesses are 7 mm, 8 mm, and 11 mm. These three sherds are not regarded as definite evidence of an Early Woodland occupation at the site but more likely represent the survival of an Early Woodland pottery style into the Middle Woodland period. (Wright: 1967, 124-125).

A flaked feldspar disc (Plate 3, fig. 23), 24 mm in diameter and 3 mm thick is regarded as a gaming disc.

The single flake knife consists of a quartz flake bifacially flaked along one edge. (Plate 3, fig. 24).

Chipping detritus was represented by 404 flint flakes weighing 475 gr and averaging 1.2 gr, 48 quartz flakes weighing 65 gr and averaging 1.4 gr, five slate flakes weighing 15 gr and averaging 3 gr, and two quartz crystal flakes weighing 1 gr. The three cores, weighing 30 gr, 18 gr and 8 gr, exhibit random flake removal. One of these cores is Port Franks flint. Heat spalling was common with the flint suggesting that heat tempering was used to make the material more workable. Pebble cortex was apparent on 30 flint flakes and all three cores.

BONE AND SHELL ARTIFACTS

Bone artifacts are represented by the following: three worked antler items; two bone awls; one bird bone bead fragment; one gorge; one antler projectile point tip; one incisor chisel; and four unidentified worked fragments. One of the worked antler items (Plate 3, fig. 25) is tabular in form measuring 54 mm x 14 mm x 6 mm and has strong polish along one edge while the opposite edge retains clear score-break marks. The polish appears to have resulted from use rather than grinding and the tool may have performed some smoothing function, perhaps in association with pottery manufacture. The remaining two pieces of worked antler are fragmentary. One is roughly tabular in form being 26 mm wide, and 6 mm thick, and in excess of 94 mm in length. Grinding occurs along both edges. The remaining fragment possesses a strongly ground convex edge which is also convex in profile. Both bone awls appear to have manufactured from bird bone. The item interpreted as a gorge (Plate 3, fig. 27) is bi-pointed although both tips are broken off. An estimate of its length is 28 mm. The small tip fragment of worked antler that is regarded as a possible projectile point tip possesses a marked plano-convex almost trianguloid cross-section. Both its form and size would appear to exclude it from the awl category. The ground hog incisor (Plate 3, fig. 26) not only exhibits modification at the bit edge but was also scored and broken off at the root.

The single shell artifact consists of a disc bead (Plate 3, fig. 28) 10 mm in diameter and 2 mm thick.

ARTIFACTS OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN

Objects of European manufacture from the Dougall Site range in time from the early 17th century to the 20th century. Indeed, several beer caps still retaining their cork liners, were not included in the collection.

Cut-up copper kettle fragments are represented by four specimens; three rectangular and one irregular. The rectangular specimens exhibit use-wear on one or more edges indicating that they functioned as knives and scrapers. This secondary use of a European trade item suggests that the fragments relate to the early 17th century Huron occupation of the site.

A single copper bead (Plate 3, fig. 29) manufactured from a strip of copper kettle was recovered. It is also attributed to the historic Huron occupation.

A pentagonal pendant (Plate 3, fig. 30) made from a cut fragment of copper trade kettle possesses a single suspension hole. Strong use-wear along one of the edges of the triangular portion suggests that this item also occasionally functioned as a knife. It is assigned to the historic Huron occupation.

The single iron strike-a-light (Plate 3, fig. 31) is insufficiently diagnostic to attempt a temporal estimate.

It is not possible to offer a time estimate for the brass ramrod ferrule or pipe (Plate 3, fig. 32) as they "do not appear to be reliable temporal criteria" (Caldwell: 1960, 184).

Remains of two kaolin pipes were found; one relatively complete (Plate 3, fig. 33) and the other too fragmentary for analysis. On the basis of the 2 mm diameter stem hole the former specimen should belong to the late historic period of between 1760 A.D. and 1820 A.D. (Quimby: 1966, 78).

The four gunflints (Plate 3, fig. 34) are of English manufacture and are regarded as being diagnostic of the late historic period although they may also occur towards the end of the middle historic period, 1670 A.D. — 1760 A.D. (ibid, 75).

Glass trade beads are represented by eight specimens (Plate 3, fig. 35). In terms of manufacture all appear to be tube beads except for a small ovate, blood red specimen which is a wire wound bead (Kidd and Kidd: 1970). The tube beads conform approximately to the I a 19 and II a 11 varieties (ibid, 54 and 56). The wire wound bead probably falls within the range of the W I b form. Lacking cultural association, I do not feel qualified to suggest age estimates for these beads.

A single brass button with a plain face and BEST QUALITY stamped on the back should, on the basis of the soldered brass eye, date between 1785 A.D. and 1800 A.D. (Olson: 1963).

Other miscellaneous items consist of the following: two china sherds; one thin (1 mm) glass sherd; a lead rod grooved at one end for the probable function as a sinker; a flattened fragment of lead; a silver earring consisting of a hollow ball 5 mm in diameter with wire of the same material for attachment; three brass discs that resemble spark plug washers; six cut iron nails; five fragments of iron strapping; two angled fragments of iron rod; and three nondescript iron fragments.

FEATURES

The only constructed feature encountered at the Dougall site was a firestone hearth measuring 3.5 feet in diameter. An unusual aspect of this feature was the use of four large, flat limestone slabs to form the base upon which approximately twelve large igneous firestones rested. Both Late Woodland and Middle Woodland material was found in and around the hearth but the recovery of two plain Iroquois body sherds from under one of the limestone slabs suggests that the feature is late. It was not possible to determine with certainty what items were definitely associated with the hearth.

In addition to the previously described Middle Woodland concentrations there was a single Late Woodland midden concentration and three tree-fall features.

INTERPRETATIONS

For approximately 2,000 years the Dougall Site appears to have been occupied in a relatively continuous fashion. There can be little doubt that the rich fish resource in the narrows between Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe was the cause of this lengthy and continuous presence of prehistoric and historic peoples. In view of the resource it can also be assumed that the occupations were basically seasonal, most likely the fall. The earliest occupations pertain to the Middle Woodland period and specifically the Point Peninsula culture (Ritchie: 1965, 203-213). Although a small quantity of Vinette I pottery was recovered, these ceramics

PLATE 3
(1/2 natural size)

- Fig. 1: Modified Pinched-face effigy pipe.
Fig. 2: Iroquois Ring type pipe bowl fragment.
Fig. 3: Apple Bowl Ring type pipe bowl fragment.
Fig. 4: Plain, conical pipe bowl fragment (Pickering Branch?)
Fig. 5: Thick, flat-lipped conical pipe bowl fragment, probably non-Iroquois.
Fig. 6: Punctated pipe stem, probably Early or Middle Ontario Iroquois.
Figs. 7,8: Juvenile pipe bowl fragments.
Fig. 9: Finished clay beads.
Fig. 10: Crude clay beads.
Fig. 11: Gaming discs.
Fig. 12: Ceramic wastage.
Figs. 13,14: End scrapers.
Fig. 15: Side scraper on a wedge.
Fig. 16: Side scraper.
Fig. 17: Random scraper.
Figs. 18,19: Wedges.
Fig. 20: Arrowhead
Fig. 21: Unfinished stone bead.
Fig. 22: Worked catlinite.
Fig. 23: Feldspar gaming disc.
Fig. 24: Quartz flake knife.
Fig. 25: Worked antler item.
Fig. 26: Incisor chisel.
Fig. 27: Bone gorge.
Fig. 28: Shell disc bead.
Fig. 29: Bead made from copper kettle fragment.
Fig. 30: Pendant made from copper kettle fragment.
Fig. 31: Iron strike-a-light.
Fig. 32: Brass gun ferrule.
Fig. 33: Kaolin pipe.
Fig. 34: English gun flint.
Fig. 35: Trade beads.

