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*Iroquoian Settlement and Subsistence Patterns
Near Crawford Lake, Ontario*

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Crawford Lake is a small meromictic lake located on top of the Niagara Escarpment approximately 30 miles northwest of Toronto, Ontario. Palynological studies conducted on varved sediments from the lake bottom have been carried out by McAndrews and Byrne during the last few years. One of the results of this work was the recovery of maize (*Zea mays*) pollen in the sediments dating from 1330 to 1500 A.D. During the past summer, a project was initiated to further study the geology, soils, vegetation, and the nature of the settlement and subsistence patterns of the prehistoric Iroquois who inhabited the area adjacent to the Lake in the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries A.D.

Five weeks were spent conducting test excavations at the Crawford Lake site (AiGx-6) which is located less than one half mile NNW of the Lake. These investigations were carried out under the direction of Finlayson and were supported by the Royal Ontario Museum, the Canada Council and the Halton Region Conservation Authority. The excavations were aimed at determining the size of the site, and at collecting subsistence data, primarily through the use of flotation techniques. In order to accomplish the former objective, two test trenches, 144 and 126 meters long and three meters wide were cut parallel to one another across the probable site area as determined by preliminary investigative methods such as surface collecting. These trenches cut across six longhouses and provided no evidence of a palisade. The house walls were delimited by means of trenching which allowed the precise delimitation of three of the houses and an estimation of the length of a fourth. The two remaining structures could not be completely defined since they

were partially inaccessible due to the presence of recent features such as barn foundations and roadways. The width and length of the houses are: 22.0' x more than 142.0'; 21.5' x 140.5'; 23.0' x more than 104'; 24.5' x 94 ± 3'; 25.0' x 79.5'; and 22.5' x 111.5'. Four of the houses are located more or less parallel to one another and are oriented generally in a north-south direction. The two remaining houses are oriented roughly in a WNW-ESE direction. One of the houses was completely excavated.

Subsistence data was collected by subjecting samples of fill from pit features and a badly disturbed midden to screening and a flotation technique. The floral and faunal remains recovered by these methods are still being identified by specialists. However, field examination of some of the samples indicated the presence of relatively large numbers of raspberry seeds (*Rubus* spp.), elderberry seeds (*Sambucus* spp.) walnut and butternut fragments (*Juglans* spp.) and maize (*Zea mays*). All of these were carbonized, and their presence suggests their use as a food resource.

The sample of artifacts recovered from the excavations was small but is diagnostic of the Middleport substage as defined by Wright (1966). In terms of the existing chronology for the Ontario Iroquois Tradition (ibid) it would appear that the site was occupied sometime between 1350 and 1400 A.D. Whether the corn fields associated with the site are responsible for the initial introduction of the maize pollen into the Lake remains a subject for further investigation, but certainly they would have been responsible for at least a portion of the maize pollen in the lake sediments.

In an attempt to further study the Iroquoian settlement of the area, Mr. Peter Ramsden of Archaeological Research Associates is undertaking a brief archaeological survey of the area within a three or four mile radius of the Lake. At the time of writing of this report, the work was still in progress and its results cannot be fully assessed. However, there is some indication for the presence of two Uren substage sites (Wright 1966) within the survey area.

To date no Late Ontario Iroquois sites have been encountered although most likely at least some remain to be discovered (Ramsden, personal communication).

During and after the archaeological excavations at the Crawford Lake site, a study of the vegetation and soils in the area adjacent to Crawford Lake was undertaken by Byrne while McAndrews undertook the investigation of the geology of the regions and directed the identification of the carbonized plant remains including the wood charcoal which had been recovered from the excavations.

A final report on the summer's investigations is in the process of being prepared. This should contribute a great deal to our understanding of Iroquois settlement and subsistence patterns in at least this limited region of southwestern Ontario and should provide a basic background for further work in this area.

Wright, James V.

1966 The Ontario Iroquois Tradition. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Canada*, no. 210. Ottawa.

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Back River Survey

A week (August 4-11) of brief field examination was carried out on the middle Back River, northern Barrenlands. Field survey was accomplished through low altitude aircraft reconnaissance and a 2-man kayak. Aerial survey was limited to the area between the junction of the Bailey and Back Rivers (western boundary of Thelon Game Sanctuary) and the McKinley and Back River confluence, in addition to the flat glaciated region between the major lakes of the Back and Thelon River systems. Boat and foot exploration was conducted between McKinley River and the abandoned R.C. mission on