

## NOTES ON SKULLS TAKEN FROM A PRE-HISTORIC FORT IN KENT COUNTY.

BY MR. ARCHIBALD BLUE.

*(Read 21st April, 1900.)*

THE Indian Fort on lot 59 north of Talbot Road, in the Township of Orford, is situated at the springs which are the source of Clear Creek, two-and-a-half miles from the shore of Lake Erie and a mile from the decayed hamlet of Clearville. Until twenty years ago the Fort stood in the midst of a dense forest of beech and maple, white oak and black walnut, and there were trees of large size growing on the walls and within the enclosure. The site was known to the early settlers, but none among them were archaeologically inclined, and the ground was not disturbed by them. It used to be said, however, and I think it is true, that one of my old schoolmasters, Galbraith the Phrenologist, was a frequent visitor there, and that he dug up some skulls to help in his studies. It was while he was employed as teacher in our school, in the years 1848-49-50, that he applied his spare hours to acquiring a knowledge of Phrenology, and from our school he went out on his long career of lecturer on the subject in this Province and elsewhere.

But the first serious attempt to explore the Fort was made eleven years ago by Mr. David Boyle, our archaeologist, who succeeded in getting six skulls which are now in the Museum of the Education Department. Mr. Boyle made measurements of the Fort, and a sketch and description of it together with an account of his exploration was printed in the Proceedings of this Institute for 1888-89.\* In Mr. Boyle's opinion the graves exhumed by him did not probably belong to the people who built the walls, but to subsequent possessors of the ground who had lost all knowledge of its former occupancy.† He suspects, indeed, that there were three successive occupations by different tribes separated by wide periods of time. The skulls secured by him were discovered in an ossuary on the highest plane within the walls, and had been interred with the limb bones only.

These Notes lend confirmation to Mr. Boyle's views, and being mainly a transcription of the entry in my notebook made upon the ground I can vouch for their accuracy.

It was on the 14th of August, 1889, about a month after the explorations made by Mr. Boyle, that I first saw the Fort, although I had known of it from childhood. I was accompanied by Dr. P. H. Bryce of this city and my brother, the late John Blue, jr., of Orford. The trees had been cut down and the timber removed at that time, but most of the stumps were yet fresh and showed that a number of the trees were of large size. In all other respects the site was practically unchanged. The walls or embankments of the Fort were in an excellent state of preservation, and oblong or nearly oval in form. As originally constructed they appear to have followed upon the north, west and south sides the edge of the bank of the creek and one of its small tributaries, and there are cross-walls from north to south which divide the enclosure into three unequal areas, two of which occupy benches of the creek, while the third is on the tableland of the country. Where intact, the walls are about ten feet wide at the base, three to four feet high, and about five hundred yards in the outer circumference. At the north-east angle there is a breach in the wall about twenty-five feet long, which may have been an opening to the midden-heap, and at the north-west angle is a low bit of wall about seventy-five feet long. There is a third opening midway in the

\* Annual Report of the Can. Inst., Session 1888-9, pp. 15-18.

† Notes on Primitive Man in Ontario, 1895, p. 20.