
FRENCH RELICS FROM VILLAGE SITES OF THE HURONS.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THESE RELICS IN THE COUNTIES OF SIMCOE, YORK, AND ONTARIO.

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The French traders of the seventeenth century brought amongst the Huron Indians of Ontario large quantities of articles of European manufacture in exchange for the Indians' furs. The metal portions of these articles are found in abundance at the present day in those parts of the province inhabited by the Hurons at that time.

The most abundant relic of this kind is the iron tomahawk, thousands of which have been found in various parts of the province, but more especially in North Simcoe; and at the west end of Lake Ontario, where the Neuters dwelt. These tomahawks are of various sizes, but almost all of the same well-known shape, each bearing three crosses in relief on one side; their appearance is, however, too well-known to require a description.

Copper and brass kettles are also numerous, and are almost invariably found in the ossuaries. In nine cases out of ten these kettles, which were formed of sheet metal, were rendered useless by blows from a tomahawk upon the bases of the vessels. This practice of rendering useless every article deposited with the dead was, however, common to many tribes, the apparent object being to remove any temptation to desecrate the graves.

Besides tomahawks and kettles, there are iron knives, earthen and glass beads, copper bracelets and ear ornaments, and many other articles. The various kinds of French relics are well represented in the Museum of the Canadian Institute, where they can be minutely examined at any time, so that they do not require further notice here. We shall now proceed to the special subject of this paper—the geographical distribution of these relics over the Hurontario isthmus. The analysis by townships of the Huron village sites and ossuaries in the three counties of Simcoe, York and Ontario, which is given in the table accompanying this paper, shows certain evident facts regarding the geographical distribution of French relics. The information supplied by this table has been obtained from catalogues opened by the writer for each of the counties mentioned, in which details of each village site, ossuary, etc., have been collected and recorded. A majority of the sites were personally visited.

The Huron custom of settling in village communities and remaining for a considerable time, makes it an easy task to recognize the remains of one of their villages. These are indicated by abundant accumulations of charred soil and ashes, broken relics, etc.; complete relics are, unfortunately, becoming rare. In preparing these catalogues, therefore, although many sites were visited, it was almost impossible to obtain any relics. In most cases, accordingly, all that the writer