

THE SOUTHWOLD EARTHWORK AND THE COUNTRY OF THE NEUTRAIS.

By JAMES H. COYNE, B.A.

That part of the township of Southwold lying between Talbot Creek and the most westerly bend of Kettle Creek included several Indian earthworks, which were well known to the pioneers of the Talbot settlement. What the tooth of time had spared for more than two centuries yielded, however, to the settler's plow and harrow, and but one or two of these interesting reminders of an almost-forgotten race remain to gratify the curiosity of the archæologist or of the historian. Fortunately, the most important of all is still almost in its original condition. It is that which has become known to the readers of the transactions of the Canadian Institute as the Southwold Earthwork. Mr. David Boyle, in the Archaeological Reports printed in 1891, has given the results of his examinations of the mounds, and there is now in the possession of the Institute a carefully prepared plan made from actual survey by Mr. A. W. Campbell, C.E., for the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute of St. Thomas, and presented by the latter to the Canadian Institute. Mr. Boyle's reports and Mr. Campbell's plan will together form a valuable, and, it is hoped, a permanent record of this interesting memorial of the aboriginal inhabitants of south-western Ontario.

The writer of this paper has been acquainted with "the old fort," as it was called, since the year 1867. At that time it was in the midst of the forest. Since then the woods have been cleared away, except within the fort and north of it. Indeed, a considerable number of trees have been felled within the southern part of the enclosure. In the mounds themselves trees are abundant, and there are many in the moat or ditch between. The stumps of those which have been cut down are so many chronological facts, from which the age of the fort may be conjectured with some approach to accuracy. A maple within the enclosure exhibits 242 rings of annual growth. It was probably the oldest tree within the walls. A maple in the outer embankment shows 197 rings; between the inner and outer walls a beech stump shows 219 rings, and an elm 266. Judging from the size of these stumps, it would be safe to calculate the age of the forest at about 200 years, with here and there a tree a little older. The area enclosed is level. In the field south there are numerous hummocks formed by the decayed stumps and roots of fallen trees. The walls were manifestly thrown up from the outside. There is an exception on the south-east. Here the ground outside was higher, and to get the requisite elevation the earth was thrown up on both walls from the intervening space, as well as on the exterior wall from the outside. Each of the walls runs completely round the enclosure, except where the steep bank of the little stream was utilized to eke out the inner wall for five or six rods on the west side, as shown on the plan. Opposite the south end of this gap was the original entrance through the outer wall. The walls have been cut through in one or two other places, doubtless by settlers hauling timber across them.

The writer accompanied Mr. Campbell on his visits in the spring and fall of 1891. The members of the Elgin H. and S. Institute made a pretty thorough examination of a large ash-heap south-east of the fort. It had, however, been frequently dug into during the last score or two of years, with ample results, it is said, in the way of stone implements of various kinds. There still remained, however, arrow-heads and chippings of flint, stones partially disintegrated from the action of heat, fragments of pottery whose markings showed a very low stage of artistic development; fish-scales, charred maize and bones of small animals

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