

EARLY INDIAN HISTORY IN SAUGEEN TOWNSHIP:

Since the name of our Township, "Saugeen" is of Indian origin, meaning "the mouth of the river", it has been deemed desirable to include in this Tweedsmuir History Book a sketch of early Indian habitation of Saugeen Township.

So far as we can learn, by careful study and investigation, early Indian culture, as it applies to S. S. #4, #5, and #6, (the area covered by this book), appears to be non-existent, but recent findings by archeologists in the vicinity of the town of Southampton indicate that a most interesting Indian culture existed in that part of the Township in the very early days.

The following article, prepared by Mrs. Grant Clazie, was obtained from the Owen Sound Sun Times, dated June 28th, 1958:

"Some ten thousand years ago, the area surrounding Southampton, like the rest of the northern part of the continent, was under the influence of a receding glacier. This last thrust of the Ice Age of America left in its wake the country as we now have it after changes in the terrain through erosion and weather. The pattern of the lakes and rivers were laid out during this period and remain basically the same.

Following the glacial period the first evidence of human habitation in the area appears to be the Indians of the Laurentian Culture, who lived here some 5,000 years ago. This was the Stone Age of America, as these primitive people used stone tools.

About 1500 B.C. a more advanced group of Indians, known as the Point Peninsula Culture lived in the area. These people had advanced greatly in their skills, using arrows, spears, pottery and had developed an early form of agriculture. As the years passed, various forms of Indian life have been known to occupy the land, and during the 17th century, the inhabitants were known as the Petun or Tobacco Nation.

These latter Indians were much more advanced in their mode of life than any of the other tribes that had occupied the territory. They grew tobacco and corn, lived in Long Houses and their tools and pottery were much better than the earlier ones that have been found. These Indians were of the Iroquois tribes, but were not included in either the Five Nation or Six Nation Indians.

The Petuns were living here when Samuel D. Champlain, Etienne Brule and the Recollect Father Le Caron visited their nation in the winter of 1616. Although the exact spot there Champlain visited the Petuns in their winter camp is not known, there is some possibility that it was in the vicinity of the present site of the town of Southampton. From this visit the Petuns, no doubt traded their furs to the French, which made them the allies of the French and the enemies of the Iroquois.

Later in the 17th century, the Jesuit fathers established two missions in what is now Bruce County. The more northerly one located somewhere in the present Bruce peninsula was St. Simon and St. Jude. Another mission, St. Peter and St. Paul was located south of the above mentioned, and may have been at or near the mouth of the Saugeen River.

The finding in recent years, of crosses and stones with crosses carved on them, tend to support this theory. One of the crosses and one of the stones with a cross on it, are now in the Bruce County Museum.

In his history of Bruce County, John McNabb relates that Indian graves excavated in the area contained crucifixes, which gave additional support to the theory of the location of the mission being in this vicinity.

On their way to the massacres at Fort St. Marie, the Iroquois ruthlessly annihilated all of the Indian tribes and villages on their way to the north. Thus in a very short space of time, the neutral Indians to the south and the Petuns in the centre were swept from the face of the earth before the Jesuit massacres, which also included the virtual extermination of the Hurons. The fate of the Indians in this area was the same as the others, and the only evidence left of a peaceful and industrious people is found in the archeological excavations of modern times.

Although the site has been known to exist for many years and much surface material collected, its importance was first recognized by Professor A.B. Shutt of the O.A.C. Guelph, and a summer visitor of Southampton who reported it to the National Museum. In the summer of 1960 excavations were made and the date of the site is between 500 B.C. and zero A. D. The occupants were a group of people known as Point Peninsula Indians. They were hunters who lacked knowledge of agriculture and probably followed a pattern of life similar to the historic Ojibwas of Northern Ontario. They would scatter into the forests in winter, and gather in bands at favourable locations during the spring and summer. These people were among the earlier ones using pottery and used the bow and arrow.

Material uncovered in excavations included burials, pits, a house structure. Artifacts consist of pottery fragments, flint scrapers, arrow heads and hammerstones. To date 13 burials have been uncovered and excavated to determine as much information as possible concerning burial practices and physical features of the people. Both adult and infant burials have been found. The Indians who lived on this site appear to