



Caughnawaga's Fourth Site

by Wilfrid Jury

WHEN I left Caughnawaga last November (1955), I wondered if I would ever have the opportunity of coming back. Through the efforts of Father Béchar, it was possible for me to return again on September 5, 1956. Our President (University of Western Ontario), Doctor Edward Hall, kindly consented to my coming at the completion of a very busy summer.

The site was prepared in part thanks to the cooperation of the Seaway people and others interested in St. Francis Xavier IV.

Since we were rushed for time, as a time-saving device, we employed bulldozers, furnished by Jean Bédard, Ltée, Miron Frères and the Great Northern Construction Companies to take off the dense growth of rubble and weeds that covered the whole site. Luck was with us for we obtained good bulldozer operators who did not go below the plough's depth in removing the topsoil. This eliminated a great deal of heavy labor and we were able to go rapidly over the site. It was a large place. There were enough Indian houses to accommodate from eight hundred to a thousand people. We located only one longhouse in which the usual firepits with the sleeping bunks along the sides could be traced.

As soon as we arrived we gridded the site. This was done partially by the Seaway surveyors; then we started to relocate our last year finds, and continued digging in what was obviously the Jesuit residence. We completed it, retracing the fireplace and the outlines of the rooms. The marks of the logs in the ground

helped us discern the type of structure. We found many valuable relics that shed light on the condition of the time. The finding of the church sixty feet long partially under the roadway was an achievement that made me very happy indeed.

The breaking of the bones to extract the marrow, their number, in particular, the moose, bird and fish bones, gathered, prove that although the Indians were under the influence of the French, they still clung to their old customs and depended largely upon the hunt to fill their bill of fare. The lack of carbonized seeds, beans, corn, sunflowers can be easily explained by the old Jesuit grist mill that was in operation during the time the village was in existence.

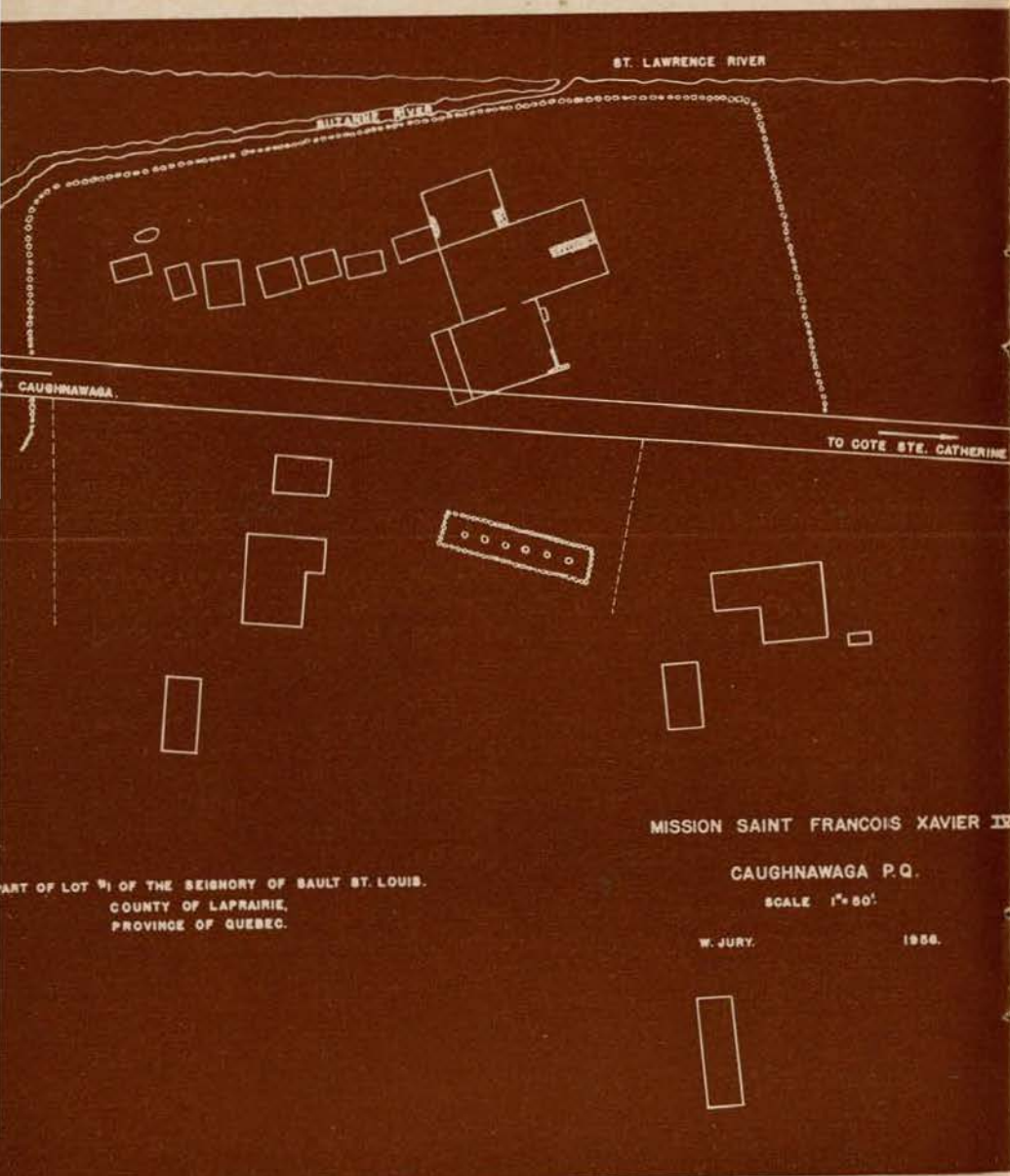
A few decorative pieces of pottery bear witness that the Indian pots had disappeared. No crockery of native origin was discovered. They used clam shells as spoons — a great number came to light. I presume that since we found no forks they used their fingers, although they certainly had a great number of knives.

The solace of tobacco was much enjoyed. Nearly every Indian must have been a smoker because many fragments of Indian pipes were unearthed and over a thousand five hundred fragments of the white man's pipe.

From the relics that ranged from the white man's guns, swords, doorlatches, iron tools, cooper cuttings, and the different Indian objects revealed, we know something of the life that the Indians must have led. We can also read into that story something of the hardship and endurance that must have been the lot of the Fathers who were their spiritual guides.

At the completion of this year's work at the lower end of Caughnawaga, we hope that another chapter in the early period of Canadian and American history will be revealed when a report is finally published. I am ready to say that we have a very fine display of relics. This year my wife accompanied me and catalogued over three thousand six hundred and forty-three relics and will help in writing the final report.

I wish also to thank the Jesuit Order for allowing me the privilege of working at the site of St. Francis Xavier IV.



1. Kanatakwenke, site of St. Francis Xavier IV
2. Bulldozing by Jean Bédard Léc, Miron Frères, and the Great Northern Construction Co.
3. At work : in the center, Mrs. Jury taking care of the field book



- 4 Digging at the Church site, along the road, parallel to the St. Lawrence
5. Foundation stones of the Church, facing the St. Lawrence
6 The left corner of the Church in the direction of the river



7. Across the road from the Church, to the right of the long-house, a volunteer carefully scraping an ash-pit
8. Messrs. de Escobar, S.J. Tey, S.J. and Mendoza, S.J. from Cuba doing their part ...
9. To the left of the long-house, workers unearthing hundreds of artifacts