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Cover Page Footnote

The author is grateful to Mr. G. Blomely for bringing the Floating Bridge site to his attention in 1980 and for guiding the author and staff of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture to the site. The late Dr. H. C. Burleigh and his son, Mr. J. Burleigh, are also thanked for permission to analyze and photograph the artifacts excavated in 1968 by Mr. Blomely and Mr. Burleigh. Mr. Phillip Wright, Regional Archaeologist, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, and his staff excavated at the site in 1981 and granted permission to analyze the artifacts from that excavation. Figures 2 and 3 were drawn by Mr. Peter Englebert, Field Archaeologist, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. Faunal identification was made by Ms. Ingrid Kritsch-Armstrong. The author's original report was prepared for and is on file with the Eastern Regional Archaeologist, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Ottawa. This article is a revision of a paper presented in Ottawa at the 1985 Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology conference and incorporates the data from the original report.

FRENCH OCCUPATION OF THE LAKES ONTARIO AND ERIE DRAINAGE BASINS 1650-1760

Donald A. Brown

Maps dating to the 17th and 18th centuries and written accounts are used to identify a number of contemporary posts en route from Montreal to Detroit/Pontchartrain which otherwise receive little or no mention in the historical record. Archaeological evidence from the undocumented mid-18th-century Floating Bridge site, near Kingston, Ontario, is interpreted as a possible trader's post/Métis habitation occupied following the destruction of Fort Frontenac and prior to the post-1763 British occupation of the area. Evidence is presented for its use by civilians, who selected the site primarily for its environment rather than as a point of intersection on well-travelled trade routes. It is suggested that this small fur trade habitation may be representative of other 17th- and 18th-century French Régime posts and hunting cabins on the Great Lakes' frontiers of New France.

Introduction

Very few 17th- or 18th-century documents exist for French Régime sites in the areas of southern Ontario and the western portions of neighboring Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. Consequently, historians have written relatively little concerning the social history of the French in this area. Instead, they have focused their attention on the more heavily-populated area of the St. Lawrence, or they have concentrated on the events of the western fur trade. As a result, the lay person is left with the impression that southern Ontario and neighboring areas, following the collapse of the Huron missions and the abandonment of Ste. Marie I in 1649, were a void through which late 17th- and 18th-century traders passed when travelling from Montreal to the distant posts on the western frontier. A few historians have attempted to compile all available documents for specific sites such as Forts

Rouillé (Robinson 1965), Frontenac (Preston and Lamontagne 1958), and Duquesne (Stotz 1958), and the areas of the Ohio, Niagara, and Detroit rivers (Severance 1917; Lajeunesse 1960). Most historians, however, have mentioned only briefly the French sites of this area as they broadly describe events on the frontier. Society, class development, and daily routine have been extrapolated from life on the St. Lawrence, with little actual documentation from areas beyond this point. With few exceptions (e.g., Eccles 1983; Trudel 1968), the events of the fur trade overshadow the lives of the people in the fur trade, the military personnel on the frontier west of Montreal, and of the men and women who provided auxiliary services to the fur trade.

In the last 20 years archaeological data have been supplementing the relatively few historical documents in order to enhance the picture of French settlements in this area. For example, Carruthers (1965) reported on Ste. Marie II, archaeological research on the 1658 Jesuit Mission of Gannentaha in New York state is in progress (Connors, DeAngelo, and Pratt 1980), and the major excavation programs at Fort Frontenac by Bruce Stewart (Stewart 1985) and Fort Niagara by Scott (Scott 1979; Scott and Scott 1981) will greatly advance our knowledge of these two most important French forts on Lake Ontario. The goal of this author's research has been to provide a fuller understanding of 17th- and 18th-century French settlement in the southern Ontario region (Brown 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1985). Given the dearth of historical documentation, the research strategy used here has been the location and excavation of undocumented archaeological sites in this area dating to the 17th- and 18th-century period. Lacking primary documentary data identifying these sites, an important component of the archaeological research has been the interpretation of each site's period of occupation, cultural affiliation, and function, as a basis for intersite comparison and the formulation of a cultural-historical synthesis. In this article, following introductory sections outlin-

ing our current understanding of the 17th and 18th centuries in southern Ontario, the Floating Bridge site will be discussed. This site, excavated as part of the research strategy outlined above, is a case study of an undocumented mid-18th-century habitation, perhaps occupied by one of the most poorly-documented social groups of 18th-century Ontario.

Seventeenth-Century French Occupations in Southern Ontario

The native American occupation of southern Ontario continued after the Iroquois expelled the Huron, Neutral, and Petun groups from the area and forced the abandonment of the French settlements of Ste. Marie I in 1649 and Ste. Marie II in 1650. Algonkian and Iroquoian speakers immediately began to exploit the hunting grounds of the former occupants. Villages of Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas were established along the north shore of Lake Ontario from approximately 1666 until their destruction by Governor General Jacques René de Brisay, Marquis de Denonville, in 1687 (Robinson 1965: 15-16, 58-59). Algonkian groups spread southward, and by 1700 the Mississaugas were living in the Hamilton, Toronto, and Kingston areas (Rogers 1978: 760-763). The southern tip of the province was reoccupied by both Algonkian and Iroquoian speakers, especially after the construction of Fort Pontchartrain in 1701. Both French traders and missionaries were attracted to these new settlements.

Following the 1659 abandonment of Ste. Marie de Gannentaha, a Sulpician mission was established in 1668 at the Bay of Quinté, near Trenton, Ontario (Lamontagne 1953; Preston and Lamontagne 1958). Although intended to duplicate the Jesuit mission of Ste. Marie I, the Quinté mission, when abandoned in 1680, comprised only a few buildings. This mission probably resembled the contemporary Marquette Mission at St. Ignace, Michigan (Branster 1983; Fitting 1966; Stone 1972). Fort Frontenac was founded in 1673 at modern Kingston, and a

cluster of civilian structures near the fort was recorded on maps as early as 1682. Although this trading post eventually grew into an important distribution point and military focus, little was recorded concerning the lifeways of the local population (Preston and Lamontagne 1958; Brown 1985: 287-289).

Madeleine de Roybon d'Allonne claimed to have lived on a site in the Collins Bay area, near Amherstview, Ontario, from ca. 1679 to 1687 (Burleigh 1973; Preston and Lamontagne 1958: 136-139). Her farm/trading post, initially identified as the Floating Bridge site, may represent one of the earliest independent establishments in the area. Known primarily from her correspondence requesting compensation for property destroyed, this intrepid frontierswoman has been romantically linked with Robert Cavelier de La Salle. A parcel of land was granted to her by La Salle as a subdivision of his Fort Frontenac area *Seigneurie*. In 1687 her establishment was destroyed by the Iroquois in retaliation for Denonville's attacks, and she was carried off as a prisoner. Although ransomed by the British in 1688, she never returned to her land, and she died in poverty in Montreal in 1718.

Other than the small settlement at Fort Frontenac, at present little is known archaeologically or historically of the French occupation of areas of Lakes Ontario and Erie from 1690 to 1720. Archaeologists and historians, however, have begun to shed light on the later 18th-century occupations in the area.

Eighteenth-Century French Occupations in Southern Ontario

The number of licensed and unlicensed traders who worked in the southern Ontario area increased in the 18th century, following the cessation of the Iroquois hostilities that had so plagued the 17th-century settlers. The movement of native groups in the 18th century, their realliances with each other and with the competing French and British traders, and the ever-growing effects

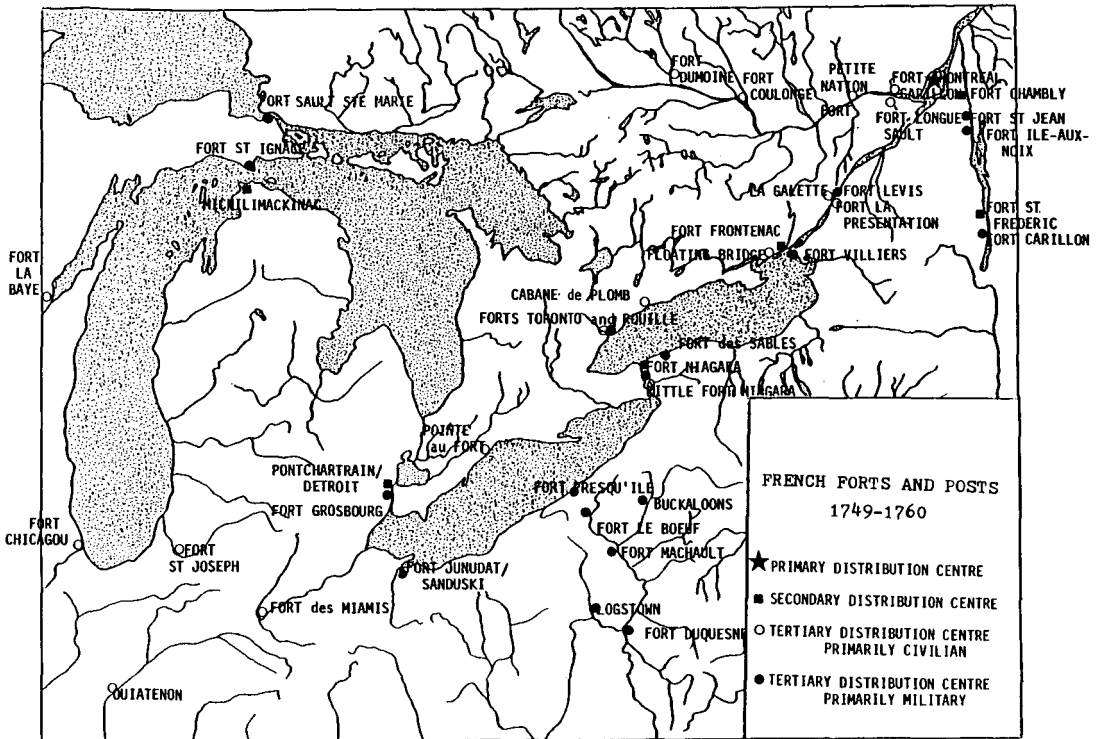


Figure 1. From 1749 until the surrender of New France, French military trading forts and both licensed and unlicensed civilian posts increased in size and number.

of European expansion in response to new military strategies, contributed to the establishment of a number of French enclaves in this area that was still controlled by the native inhabitants (FIG. 1). Some of these sites are briefly mentioned in official reports, and contemporary maps or plans of a few survive. For many, only their existence is known. The vast majority of the native sites and illegal French trader huts have gone unrecorded.

In 1720, three *Magasins Royaux* were constructed under government license: at Quinté and Toronto in Ontario, and at Lewiston, in New York state, upriver from the 1726 site of Fort Niagara. The excavation of the Lewiston post by McCarthy (1957) exposed a site that would have accommodated only one or two structures. The results of McCarthy's work illustrate what excavators at Quinté or Toronto might expect in terms of spatial arrangement: one or two buildings surrounded by a palisade, pos-

sibly with bastions, situated on or close to the main portage. Each probably had a complement of only four men (Brown 1985: 300-301); all three posts remained in operation until about 1730.

From 1750 to 1754, a series of military forts was constructed throughout the area: Rouillé at Toronto, Repentigny at Sault Ste. Marie, Presqu'Île and Sandusky/Junodat on Lake Erie, and in the Ohio River basin, Le Boeuf, Machault, Duquesne, and Chiniqué. Of these forts only one, Fort Rouillé, has been excavated. The results of the project revealed that Forts Duquesne and Rouillé were almost identical in layout (Brown 1983a). The other military trading forts were probably similar in size (approximately 29 m square excluding the bastions) and had five or six functionally-distinct interior structures that were utilized for housing, storage, trade, or military activities (Brown 1985: 292-300). Other French forts and military establishments of this period

have not yet been studied but have great potential research value; they include Fort Villiers (1756) on Cape Vincent, New York, the 1758 garrison and shipyard at Pointe au Baril, upriver from Ogdensburg, New York, and Fort Lévis, built in 1759 on an island in the St. Lawrence River near Prescott, Ontario (later renamed Fort William Augustus by the British).

A number of civilian sites are known from 18th-century maps, but historians studying French expansion into the lower Great Lakes area have rarely referred to them. On Deshayes' 1715 map of the St. Lawrence, a small site, "Cabane aux noix," is sited near the location of modern Summerton, Ontario. The areas of Prescott, Ontario, and Ogdensburg, New York, have long been known for their continuous occupation by the French under the name La Galette. L'Anse la Galette, also called La Vielle Galette, was on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River at Johnson, Ontario, and is recorded on several detailed 18th-century maps of the St. Lawrence (Anon. 1758; Johnson 1759; La Brosse 1759). The name La Galette is found on maps as early as 1715, and it is known that in the period 1689 to 1694, when Fort Frontenac was abandoned, the French enclave at La Galette also filled the role of military trading post. Pointe de la Galette, now Ogdensburg, New York, was the location of Fort La Présentation, which is best known by the activities of Abbé Picquet and his native converts. This primarily civilian fort was founded by Picquet in 1749 to protect the French native allies of the Ogdensburg area who remained vehemently loyal to the French during the Seven Years War. As interpreted from a 1752 plan, La Présentation, with its small garrison, provided a refuge for the natives in times of war as well as acting as a religious center, and was unlike any other French site in terms of spatial arrangement (Brown 1985: 308-309). Smaller, probably single-building trading posts were scattered along the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie. Some of these sites were officially sanctioned and initiated by the French authori-

ties. Examples include Fort des Sables, built on the south shore of Lake Ontario in 1744, and the 1750 fort built at the mouth of the Humber River prior to the construction of Fort Rouillé. Others were unofficial, but, as in the case of Cabane de Plomb, were nevertheless recorded by map makers (e.g., D'Anville 1755). Some posts also served as regular stopping places for canoes and boats, such as the structure at Point au Fort on Plum Point near Dutona Beach, Ontario, on Lake Erie. The ruins of this site were referred to by the British in the 1760s (Porteous 1939), and the location was also noted by the French cartographer Bellin in 1752. Some posts were of short duration, and local tradition or archaeological evidence alone records these sites (e.g., at Darlington, Ontario; Floating Bridge [BdGe-4] near Amherstview, Ontario; and possibly others at Burlington Bay and the mouths of the Rouge and Credit Rivers).

Two such small operations as described above have been located. On the basis of surface surveys by the author, Cabane de Plomb has been tentatively identified in the same location as the original farmhouse of United Empire Loyalist Benjamin Wilson, near the Oshawa Harbor. The positioning of this structure on the edge of a low cliff facing Lake Ontario is similar to that of Fort Rouillé. Only one of the above sites, Floating Bridge, has been examined by archaeologists.

The Floating Bridge Site (BdGe-4)

The area between the Quinté Mission and Fort Frontenac has played a major role in the history of the French Régime (Brown 1983b). Throughout the second half of the 17th and into the 18th century, the area was frequented by Iroquois and Mississauga hunters. The immediate area around the site was also part of the land granted to Madeleine de Roybon d'Albone by La Salle (Burleigh 1973: 10-19; Preston and Lamontagne 1958: 136-139). In 1968 local amateur archaeologists G. Blomely and Dr. H. Bur-

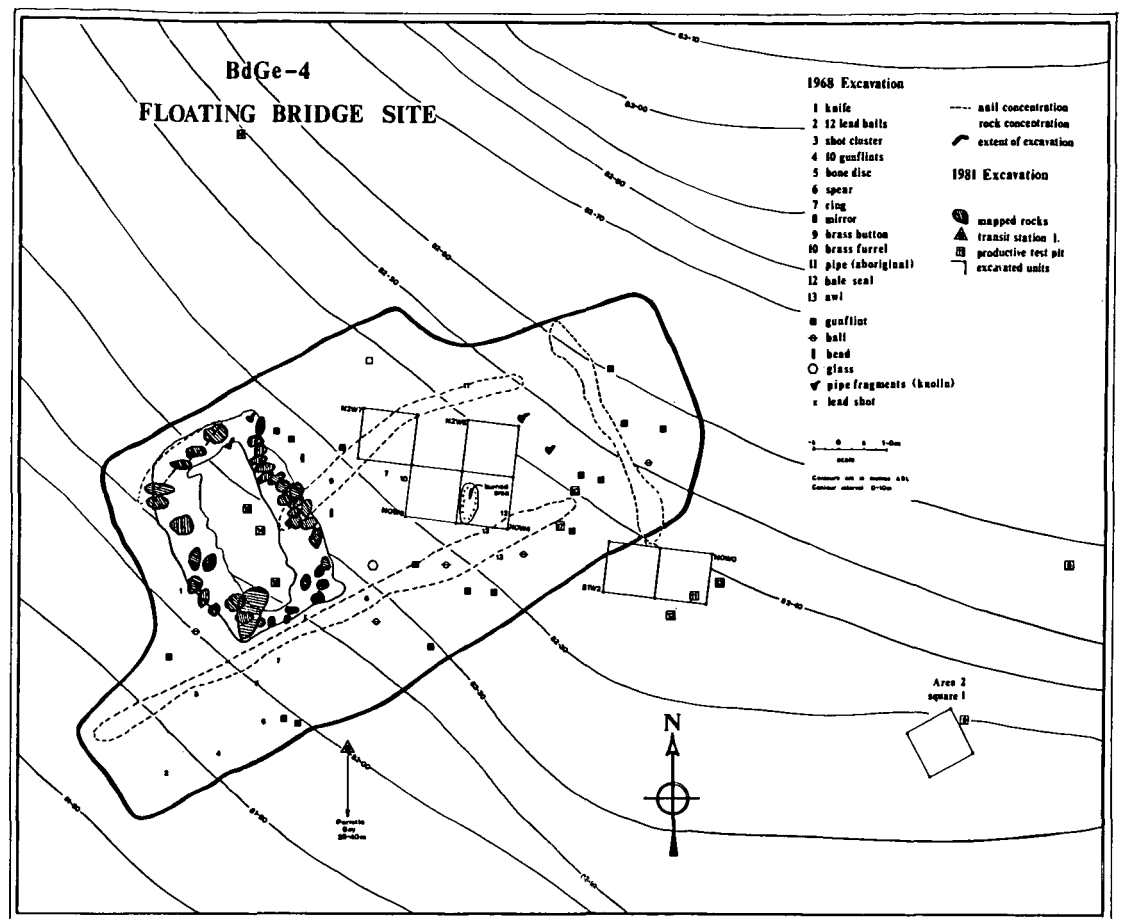


Figure 2. Floating Bridge is situated on the shore of a small bay, at the foot of a steep 4 m-high embankment.

leigh sought the site of de Roybon's residence, identifying it through excavations as the Floating Bridge site (Burleigh 1973: 19). A prehistoric component, now identified as Middle Woodland, was also noted.

While directing the initial testing of the Kingston Harbour Front site in 1980, the author was invited to examine the Floating Bridge assemblage. The artifacts were identified as mid-18th century French or possibly British and could not be from the site of de Roybon's residence. In an attempt to clearly delineate the site and to gain additional structural information, a crew led by Mr. P. Wright, Eastern Regional Archaeologist for the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, spent a week in 1981 first combing the area with a metal detector to

test for additional metal artifacts, and then excavating seven 1 m-square units.

In the course of excavation two possible structural features were recognized: a rectangular configuration marked by a course of unmortared, flat limestone rocks (readily available from the adjacent limestone cliff face), and an alignment of nails (plotted by Blomeley and confirmed by the 1981 excavations; FIG. 2). No post molds or builders' trenches were identified during either project.

As is shown in the following sections, the site dates to the mid-18th century, and many of its artifacts are frequently associated with the fur trade. As will be demonstrated, there is no documentation for a fur trader legally operating at Floating Bridge

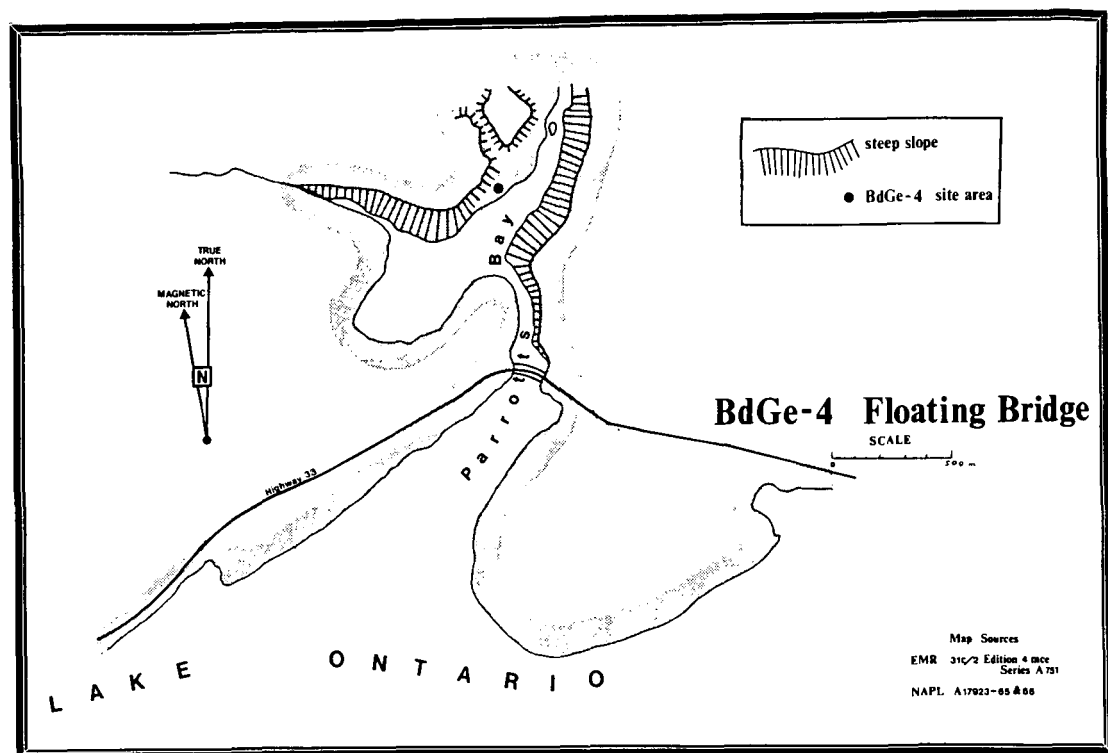


Figure 3. The dimensions of the structure(s) were derived from the arrangement of a rock foundation and scattered nails noted in 1968. Excavations in 1981 demonstrated that post molds, unrecognized in 1978, are in evidence.

during the mid-18th century. The site, however, is located on a sheltered bay well stocked with deer and aquatic resources. The site is hidden from view to those on Lake Ontario (FIG. 3) and is not situated along a river or other transport system. Therefore, the location of Floating Bridge suggests a selection for survival, not for trade.

The analysis and interpretation of the excavated assemblage for the purposes of identifying the cultural affiliation, date range, and functions of the site are presented in the following sections. It should be noted that the techniques employed during the 1968 excavation resulted in the mixing of some proveniences. Certain of the historical period artifacts, however, occurred in clustered groups that were recorded as such by the excavators. Interpretation of the cultural affiliation and occupation periods of

the site is made within the limitations imposed by the available data.

Floating Bridge and the Fur Trade

If the Floating Bridge site was a legal French trade post dating between 1750 and 1760, the operators would have been rigidly licensed and regulated (Eccles 1983: 146). The nearest permanent fur trade post was Fort Frontenac to the east. Fort Frontenac was maintained as a King's post, and prices were subsidized because of competition from British Fort Oswego (Innis 1970: 180). Illegal traders at Floating Bridge could have been supplied from Montreal or Oswego, but the proximity to Fort Frontenac would have made this a risky operation.

To be a trader working on the north shore of Lake Ontario during the mid-18th century meant coping with an unstable market

and the possibility of supply disruptions. The War of the Austrian Succession, 1744-1748, had strained French/Mississauga relations to the point that the Iroquois had begun to make overtures of alliance to the Mississauga (O'Callaghan 1855, Vol VI: 317, 321-322, 484, 545, 742). To add further to the French concerns of this period, a general Indian uprising in the Great Lakes was feared (Eccles 1983: 153). Therefore, in 1746, Sieur Chalet relinquished his six-year lease of the Lake Ontario posts and area fur trade from the French Company of the Indies after holding it only three years (Robinson 1965: 90-91). This was the last recorded fur trading license for the area.

Trade relations in the Great Lakes resumed after 1749. The French made a conscious effort to curry the favor of their native allies by maintaining military trading posts (King's posts) and subsidizing the cost of running these operations. Licensed or not, virtually everyone on the frontier participated in the fur trade to some extent. The 1756 French capture of British Fort Oswego not only removed their primary competitor but also released a temporary flood of captured trade goods. After Fort Frontenac fell in 1758 and Fort Niagara in 1759, trade goods in the Lake Ontario area would have been scarce, for the British army was interested primarily in military conquest rather than placating the natives on the north shore of the lake. The fur trade, however, continued vigorously in the upper Great Lakes area.

If Floating Bridge was the operation of a licensed French trader, one would expect the site to be located at a strategic position along a trade route. Because of the proximity to the lake, the site could have been supplied by shallow-draft boats or canoes. Alternatively, the site could be that of a trapper (French, native, or Métis) and/or a small-scale unlicensed trader dealing with local people who did not wish to trade at Fort Frontenac. After 1758, trade ceased at Fort Frontenac, and any structure visible from Lake Ontario would have been a potential

target of the British navy that then patrolled the lake.

When New France surrendered in 1760, the supply of French trade goods ceased. British traders, however, immediately rushed to fill the void, and the site could relate to one of these new traders or to a trapper. The Seven Years War continued until 1763, so occupation of southern Ontario by the British was not encouraged. Furthermore, from 1761 to 1763, the area of the Great Lakes was in turmoil with the Pontiac uprising, and no British soldier or civilian was safe.

From 1764 to 1774, four known European traders worked in southern Ontario, but it was not until 1771 that the western fur trade recovered from the Pontiac uprising (Robinson 1965: 151-154). During this period southern Ontario was not part of Québec, but regulations and licenses to traders were passed by the governors of Québec. From 1775, with the outbreak of the American Revolution until the coming of the United Empire Loyalists in 1784, no trader could leave or enter the region without a permit. No permits were issued between 1764 and 1784 that fit the description of the operations that have been identified at Floating Bridge; it is assumed, therefore, that any trader living at the site would have been illegal.

Artifacts

The cultural identification of the site was based on the high frequency of French-manufactured artifacts and the relative dearth of probable British artifacts. A determination of the site's date and purpose(s) was based on comparisons of the assemblage to other collections, placing this information within the historical framework of the area. Following this is a summary of the primary artifact information employed in making these identifications.

Of the 22 musket balls, 86% are 1.35-1.4 cm in diameter, which, according to Hamilton (1976: 33; 1980: 125-137), is typical of the size used in both French and British

trade muskets. Three musket balls, however, have a diameter of 1.75 cm, which is the size employed in a British Brown Bess (Grimm 1970: 109; Hamilton 1976: 33). Since two distinct musket ball sizes were used on the site (as indicated by flattening or rifling on two of the larger balls and nine of the smaller balls), it is possible that two types of weapons were employed, one of which was a British infantry weapon. The shot size is relatively large. Of the 122 Rupert shot specimens, 61% are 5.0-5.5 mm, 32% are 4.0-4.5 mm, and only 7% are 2.5-3.5 mm. Large shot was frequently used for hunting geese, swans, and fox (Hamilton 1980: 135; Karklins 1983: 149) and is common on French sites as early as the mid-17th century (Faulkner 1986: 85).

The sizes of the balls and shot recovered from the 1768-1769 François LeBlanc trade post in Saskatchewan (Kehoe 1978: 99-100) and the 1776-1780 Sturgeon Falls post in Saskatchewan (Barka and Barka 1976: 71) fall comfortably within the respective ranges of these artifact types found at Floating Bridge. The 1758-1766 British military site Fort Ligonier in Pennsylvania has a far greater range of sizes of balls and shot, and the clustering is significantly different from that of Floating Bridge and other French-related posts such as Michilimackinac (Hamilton 1976), St. Joseph (Hulse 1977) or Ouiatenon (Noble 1983; Tordoff 1984).

Three "blond" French blade-type gunflints (10% of the sample) were found. All were of the *fine* calibre that could have been intended as military issue but is common on most French-related sites, both European and native, and date as early as the mid-17th century (Faulkner 1986: 83). The remaining 27 are spall-type gunflints and are also probably of French origin, having a slight beige tinge (Hamilton 1980: 146-147). Half of the spall-type and all of the blade-type gunflints had been used in flintlocks and as strike-a-lights. Hamilton (1960: 74) has noted that French gunflints predominate on 18th-century North American sites, even those purely British. The absence of diagnostic British blade gunflints of

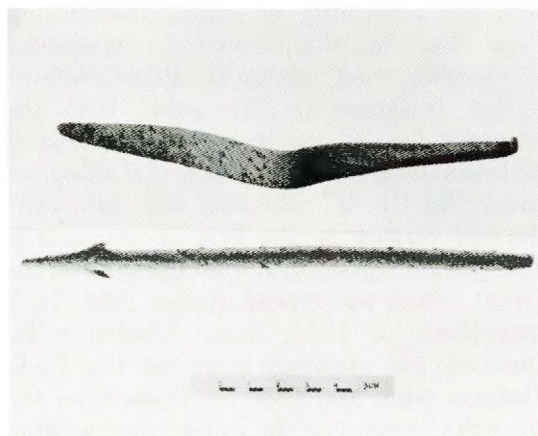


Figure 4. Both the "muskrat" spear and the flat broad spear have bent tangs, indicative of hafting.

Brandon flint helps to date the site to before 1780 (White 1975: 68-70).

Hunting equipment includes two iron spear heads (FIG. 4). The first is a 17.4-cm long "muskrat" spear, which consists of a 7.5 mm round shaft, two opposing barbs and the tip, and a square tang which has been bent at right angles to the shaft. A similar but not identical artifact came from the Snart Site in Manitoba (Tottle 1981: fig. 18). A second spear head is a flattened, double-edged, blade-like tool, with a tapering tail or tang. It is 20.4 cm long, 2.4 cm wide, and the blade is 3.5 mm thick and has a 5.5 mm wide square tang which is bent at right angles. This artifact has been deliberately folded in half and the edges are blunt; it was not possible to ascertain if this tool was used before it was bent. No identical spears of this type have been seen in the literature, although it resembles spears from the Archaic period. This broad spear could have been used to hunt beaver or larger mammals.

Fifty-six small fragments from a single bottle were found. They are probably part of a thin, olive-green cylindrical bottle of French manufacture, based on the shape of the kick-up and the unpronounced foot. Identical bottle bases are common on specimens found at Louisbourg (Smith 1981).

Two copper alloy buttons were recovered (FIG. 5). One is a flat copper button with

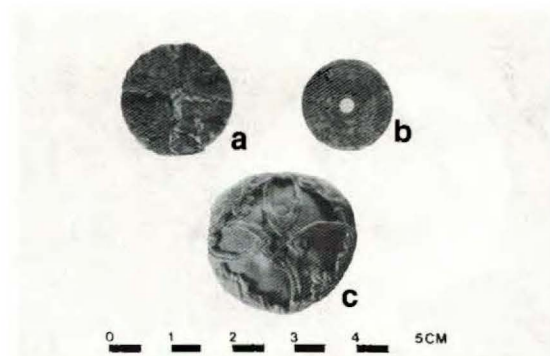


Figure 5. Buttons recovered are typical of mid- to late 18th-century civilian types: a, iron-inlaid copper button; b, bone backing; c, two-piece copper facing.

inlaid iron and a drilled shank. It is a variety of Stone's category CI,SB,T3 and is found only in French contexts at Michilimackinac (Stone 1974: 47). The second, a composite three-piece button, has been found mainly in French contexts but occasionally on early British sites in the area originally under French influence. Stone (1974: 47) refers to this ornate button face as category CI,SB,T2,Vb. Both buttons are civilian types. A single-hole, 1.5-cm diameter button backing was also found.

Personal items include parts of a small square mirror glass. A 1.7 cm clay marble, commonly found on frontier sites (Noël Hume 1970: 320; Grimm 1970: 80; Stone 1974: 154), possibly was used for gambling or as a toy. There are also two brass tack heads that may have decorated a box or some other wood or leather object. Other personal items include the tobacco pipes and possibly some of the artifacts listed as trade items. All ball-clay smoking pipes are plain and unmarked, with the exception of parts of two bowls. The first has a horizontal T/D on either side of a flat, moderately pronounced oval heel. This type is British and dates from ca. 1755 to the 1770s (Walker 1971: 31). A second pipe bowl fragment has traces of an indeterminable design. At least four pipes were broken on the site, based on pipe ends, and all of the 38 pipe fragments show evidence of use. The author suggests that the pipes were all British, not uncommon on

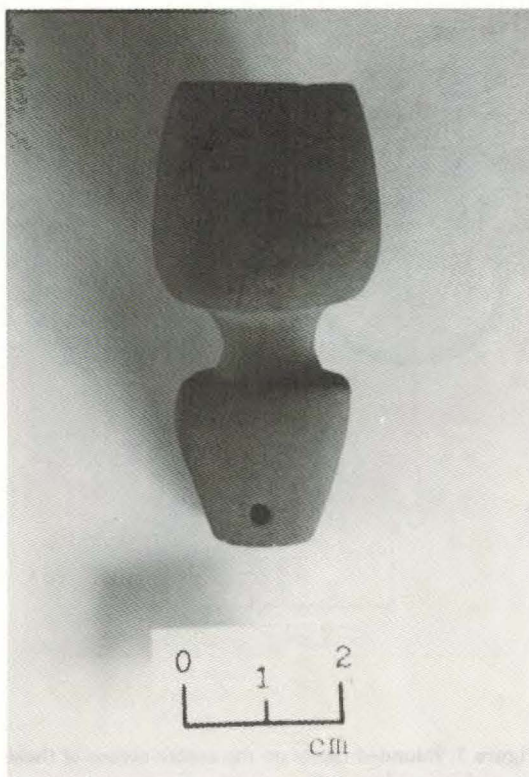


Figure 6. Similar "Micmac" pipes of siltstone, clay, or soapstone date from the mid-17th to the late 18th centuries.

French sites of this period, and that they were used on the site by the occupants themselves.

A complete reddish siltstone "Micmac" pipe was also recovered (FIG. 6). Similar pipes date as early as 1650 at the Moot Site (Bennett 1973: fig. 10), and as late as ca. 1780 at the Snart Site (Tottle 1981: fig. 19). They are found as widely scattered as Sturgeon Falls, Saskatchewan (Barka and Barka 1976); Fort Beauséjour, Nova Scotia (MacLean 1971); Fort Albany, northern Ontario (W. Kenyon, Royal Ontario Museum, personal communication); and the Guebert Site, southern Illinois (Good 1972: plate 1).

Two glass-inset copper rings are identical to those found at the Enderle Site in Ohio dating to ca. 1760-1781 (Seeman and Bush 1979: 6-7), at Pine Fort in Manitoba dating to ca. 1767-1781 (Tottle 1981: fig. 66h),

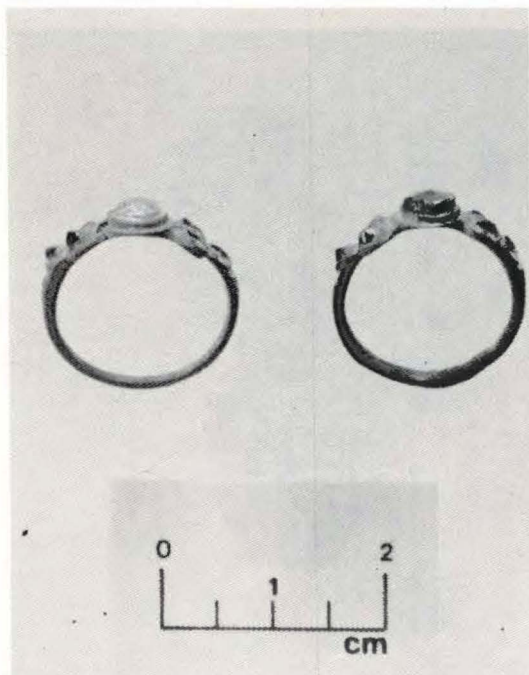


Figure 7. Rounded facets on the center stones of these rings show evidence of use-wear.

Stone's category CI,SA,TI at Michilimackinac, dating to ca. 1750-1781 (Stone 1974: 123-126), and Santa Rosa, also in Michigan, dating to 1722-1752 (Herrick 1958: 7). The single center stones on the two 1.45 cm copper bands consist of six-faceted glass pieces, one green and one white. Both stones are flanked by three six-faceted blue-glass pieces (FIG. 7); the center stone and several of the flanking stones have rounded edges, possibly from wear.

Two bale seals, which represent the functional category of trade items, were found (FIGS. 8, 9A). Both represent the single knob method of attachment (Stone's SA,TI; Stone 1974: 281). The larger seal is 3.0 cm in diameter. The obverse has a pronounced SF, a rectangular net-like design below, and is surrounded by a roulette pattern; the reverse has incised numbers 353/21. The smaller is 2.3 cm in diameter. The partially-obliterated pattern on the obverse may have been the letters IS, with a flower-and-bow

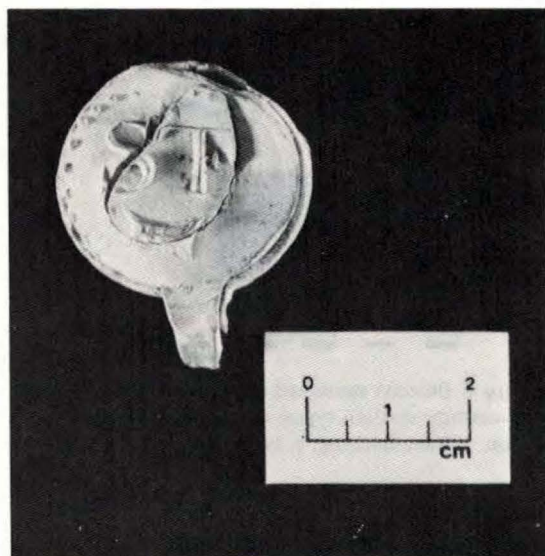


Figure 8. One of two bale seals found on the site.

motif above and below the central letters or design; the central motifs are encircled with a rope-like pattern. The reverse side of the seal is missing. No similar bale seals have been seen in the literature, although the rectangular pattern on the larger seal is similar to part of a seal recovered from Fort Rouillé (Brown 1983a: fig. 47b).

Other trade items include 118 seed beads (68% dark blue tubular, 20% white tubular, and 12% white round) and two 5 mm round black beads (all of which are common in Quimby's Late Historic Period; Quimby 1966), one piece of apparently used vermillion, and two crushed tinkling cones (FIG. 9C).

Two pocket knives recovered may be of either French or British manufacture; both types have been found on French and British sites (FIGS. 10, 11B). Identical filagree-handle knives were found at Pine Fort (Tottle 1981: fig. 73) and are labelled as French at Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974: 267). The clasp knife is similar to handles shown from Fort Ligonier (Grimm 1970: 146). The bone pistol-grip knife (FIG. 12) and the four-tined iron fork (FIG. 11C) have been dated to the mid- to late 18th century (Eileen Wood-

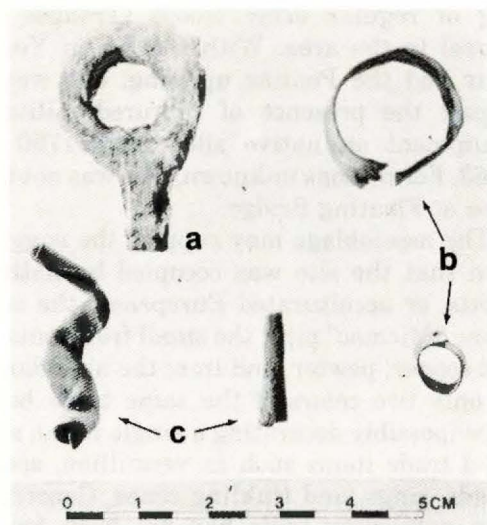


Figure 9. Miscellaneous small finds used on the site a, discarded bale seal; b, copper pieces shaped into rings or bands; c, crushed tinkling cones.

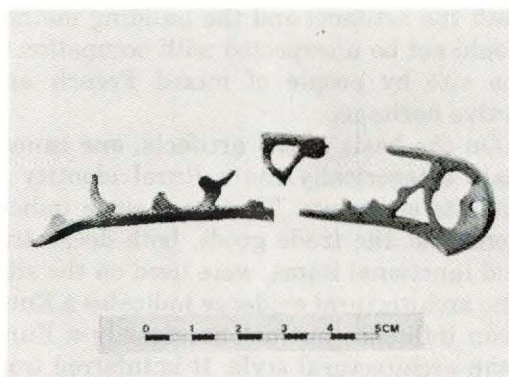


Figure 10. Pocket knives from both French and English mid to late 18th-century sites have similar filigree decoration on their handles.

head, Parks Canada, Material Culture Section, personal communication).

Certain items common on British fur trade sites dating from 1760-1780 are absent: items such as silver trade bangles, trade brooches of silver or pewter, large inlaid beads, plain flat pewter or brass buttons with soldered wire eyes, or Turlington's Balsam bottles. It is inferred, therefore, that

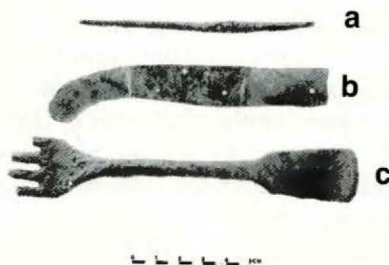


Figure 11. Tools used at Floating Bridge: a, curved sewing needle with broken eye, used on leather or canvas; b, half of a pocket knife handle; c, typical late 18th- to early 19th-century iron fork.



Figure 12. A bone-handled table knife common to the late 18th century.

the site was not occupied or supplied by British traders.

Boats or canoes were repaired with pitch or resin, of which six pieces were recovered. A 10.1 cm curved sewing needle, like Stone's category CI,SA,TI (Stone 1974: fig. 85B; Tottle 1981: figure 77f) may imply hide-working, resewing of sailcloth wrappings around bundles or goods in transit, or repairs to sails (FIG. 11A).

Few construction-related artifacts were found. With the exception of two wedge-ended nails, all of the 186 identifiable nails were of the rosehead, pointed type. Ninety percent of the nails measured 5.0 to 10.0 cm—that is, common construction sizes and forms. Only 7% were small (3.0-4.5 cm), and 3% were large (10.5-12.0 cm). Approx-

mately 7% have been bent out of shape by hammering, 9% were bent during nail extraction, 39% were straight, and 45% were clinched at a 20- to 40-degree angle. Based on the common angle of clinching, the nails may have been driven into the planks on an angle and clinched on the underside, a technique appropriate for construction of a roof or the sides of a boat. All of the clinched nails measured 3.0 to 6.0 cm from the top of the head to the bend, which may indicate the thickness of the planks.

Cultural Identity

The site of a French trapper or trader of the period 1755-1760 could be expected to include evidence of permanent architecture, such as nails obtained from Fort Frontenac or Oswego. Other building hardware such as hinges, pintles, staples, locks, etc., would not necessarily be recovered, for all iron objects would have been expensive, and space on freight canoes was at a premium. The destruction of Fort Oswego by the French in 1756 and Fort Frontenac by the British in 1758 may have provided sources of free building materials, especially nails, for a resourceful scavenger. The lack of building hardware other than nails at Floating Bridge indicates that this site itself may have been scrounged for any items of value.

Although certain artifacts and types such as the gunflints, bottle fragments, and possibly the metal buttons are of French manufacture, these are also frequently found on British sites. The ball-clay pipes and the three large musket balls are identifiable as being of British manufacture. All other artifacts could be of either British or French origin. On the basis of the absence of certain artifact types normally found on British-related sites (e.g., trade silver, specific medicine bottles, British clasp knives, flat buttons), however, the site is interpreted as French-related.

There is no evidence of military equipment except for the three large musket balls. This is important, for there was a heavy French military presence on Lake

Ontario, especially after 1755 with the coming of regular army troops (*Troupes de Terre*) to the area. With the Seven Years War and the Pontiac uprising, one would expect the presence of captured military equipment on native sites from 1756 to 1763. For reasons unknown, this was not the case at Floating Bridge.

The assemblage may support the suggestion that the site was occupied by native, Métis, or acculturated Europeans: the siltstone "Micmac" pipe; the small fragments of cut copper, pewter, and iron; the abundance of only two colors of the same trade bead type (possibly decorating a single item); and used trade items such as vermilion, spear heads, rings, and tinkling cones. Construction employing nails has not been found previously for the Mississauga of the period 1750-1760, however, even though a number of Iroquois sites in New York state demonstrate European-style house construction. Both the artifacts and the building method would not be unexpected with occupation of the site by people of mixed French and native heritage.

On the basis of the artifacts, one cannot state categorically the cultural identity of the site occupants. There are some indications that the trade goods, both decorative and functional items, were used on the site. The architectural evidence indicates a European influence but not necessarily a European architectural style. It is inferred from the evidence that the site was occupied by a small group or family of acculturated Mississaugas.

Functional Evidence

Hunting appears to have been an important activity at the site. Two types of guns were probably used, as suggested by the two sizes of spent musket balls. Many of the balls are flattened and have cut marks that originate from on-site butchering of animal carcasses. Rupert shot of a size used for hunting such animals as swans, geese, and fox was also found. Almost half of the balls, shot, and flints were unused and may have

been intended for use on the site or for trade. The barbed spear could have been used for hunting muskrat, beaver, or fish, while the flat spear could have been used for hunting beaver or deer, or as a defensive weapon.

Excavation techniques from the 1968 work and sampling bias at that time precluded the recovery of many smaller animal remains. In addition, the original excavators had not kept the faunal collection from the upper 18th-century level separate from the lower ca. A.D. 200 to A.D. 800 Middle Woodland Period Point Peninsula Tradition component (P. Wright, personal communication). One can assume, however, that the species of wild animals recorded would have been available for both the prehistoric and historical periods of site occupation. Most of the mammals noted from the sample of 235 identifiable bones lived in or near marshy areas or lakes (75.3% white-tailed deer; 3.4% beaver; 1.7% muskrat; 1.3% black bear; 0.9% river otter; 0.4% martin; 0.4% fisher). Black bear, martin, and fisher are now extinct in this part of southern Ontario. The single woodchuck element and the deer remains are indicative of mixed wooded areas and open spaces, environments that are common immediately beyond the area of Parrot's Bay. (United Empire Loyalists first started to farm the shallow soils of the area in the late 1780s.) Painted, musk, and blanding turtles (3.0% combined), fresh-water drum and channel catfish (3.0% combined), and migratory Canada geese and mergansers (2.1% combined) are still found in the area.

The faunal evidence shows that domestic animals (7.7% of the identifiable sample) were either kept on the site or that parts of these animals were brought to the site. Six adult cow bone fragments, teeth and small bones from one three-month old piglet, three adult sheep tarsals, and one horse incisor were recovered. Provided that the domesticates are not 19th- or 20th-century intrusions to the assemblage, the faunal analysis indicates that the diet of predominantly wild animals was supplemented with domestic foods. In addition to food animals,

horses may have been used for transportation.

Although no flotation was done during either of the archaeological excavation projects, plant resources from within and around the edges of Parrot's Bay, the surrounding mixed forests of the Canadian-Carolinian Biotic Province, and crops that could be grown in the relatively poor soils of the area undoubtedly supplemented the diet of the historical period occupants of the site that is indicated by the faunal evidence.

The collection exhibits no indication of a military presence, except the possible indirect evidence for a British musket. The evidence of civilian activity, however, is varied. Clothing is represented by two fancy buttons and a bone backing, all similar to those found on frontier settlements such as Ouat-enon, St. Joseph, or Michilimackinac. Although ornate buttons have come from native burials as early as ca. 1670-1700 in the Great Lakes area (e.g., Lasanen; see Cleland 1971: 25-27), metal buttons are not common on native sites in the area during the French Régime.

Items related to foodways are limited. Parts of a single wine bottle were found, although the container may not necessarily have contained alcohol when in use at the site. No ceramic or metal vessels were found, with the exception of a 14 × 8 cm piece of a copper kettle. The handles of pocket knives represent the common eating utensils on the frontier. On the other hand, assuming that the fork and bone-handled knife are not intrusive, these artifacts reflect the latest eating styles of the capital, Québec. Moments of leisure are conjured up by the "Micmac" and ball-clay pipes and by the clay marble.

A relatively high percentage of the assemblage (20.4%) consists of items associated with the fur trade: glass beads, tinkling cones, and glass inset rings. The pipes, sewing needle, vermilion, mirror, spear heads, buttons, pocket knives, musket balls, shot, and gunflints could all have been intended for the fur trade. Many of these items, however, show evidence of having been used or

broken at the site. The presence of bale seals demonstrates that bundles of goods were opened at this location. Pine Fort, a slightly later trading post in Manitoba (Tottle 1981) has a very similar assemblage of artifacts. That site differs in that later, strictly British items such as Brandon gunflints, flat pewter buttons, and trade silver were present.

The most difficult activity to interpret from the available evidence is that of construction. Although nails represent 32.7% of the assemblage, evidence of structures offers little information for reconstruction models and can be interpreted in several ways. The 4.3×3.0 m arrangement of limestone slabs may represent a very small hut. If so, this would be significantly smaller than most small French-period houses (on the evidence of archaeological plans from throughout New France), which tend to be approximately $9\text{--}12 \times 6$ m in size. It is suggested, therefore, that the stone arrangement does not necessarily represent a French habitation structure but instead may be a storage structure or part of a larger structure that was not fully exposed by the excavators. Alternatively, it may be a non-French design such as Mississauga or Métis. Unfortunately no details of mid-18th-century Mississauga or Métis domestic architecture have been reported.

A second large feature or structure is marked by alignments of nails that suggest a structure approximately 12.0×4.5 m (FIG. 2). If these nails indicate a long building, it is unusually narrow for houses found on French frontier sites. To further complicate the structural interpretations, the nail configuration overlaps that of the stonework. It is possible, therefore, that the nail configuration and the stonework are both part of the same structure. The length of the stone foundation may be the width of the building, and the alignment of nails indicates that the stone foundation was incorporated into a longer building, forming a structure approximately 4.3 m wide and 9–12 m long. The resulting dimensions are in keeping with those of typical French frontier-period houses.

Summary

On the basis of the above evidence, it is suggested that the Floating Bridge site is French or French-related, dating approximately 1758–1763. This was a time of limited availability of manufactured goods at non-military settlements because of the capture of the French Forts Frontenac and Niagara, and of a paucity, but not absence, of British goods. It is further suggested that two structures are represented: a possible storeroom on a stone foundation, and a second, larger building. These two structures may have abutted one another. Lastly, it is proposed that the site was occupied by a poorly-stocked independent French or Métis trader. Alternatively, Floating Bridge may have been the base camp for a small group or family of Métis or acculturated Mississaugas, for the site was selected on the basis of the natural resources of the area rather than as an ideal location within a trading network.

Conclusion

The Floating Bridge site is only one example of many unrecorded temporary trading posts and habitations in the lower Great Lakes in the 18th century. Small numbers of legal and illegal traders are known to have frequented the region. We must also consider, however, the majority of the permanent occupants of the area—people who traded with those supplying manufactured necessities. These people were part of the trading network, but trapping and trading were only one aspect of their daily lives. If the lives of these individuals cannot be recreated through the use of historical documents, these small sites such as Floating Bridge must be sought and interpreted. Only then will late 17th- and 18th-century southern Ontario cease to appear as a cultural void.

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