

Embowered in the solemn grandeur of a mighty forest of gloomy pine, old Lac Chaudière—our Lake Deschênes—was a fitting theatre for that weird ceremonial, the Huron Feast of the Dead. Resting on the old Algonkin camping ground at Pointe aux Pins—now the Queen's Park—some roving coureur de bois might have seen this great sheet of water fading away into the vast green ocean of foliage to the south, and witnessed from his point of vantage the uncanny incidents of the savage drama. From various points on the lake he might have seen, converging on the island, great war canoes, freighted with the living and the dead, the sad remnants of a passing race. He might have heard the long drawn out wailing cries of the living, as they floated in unison across the water, outrivalling the call of the loon or the dismal and prolonged howl of the wolf, as they echoed through the arches of the forest, and as the island rose before his vision, tenanted with its grotesque assemblage of dusky forms, engaged in the final rite of sepulture, he might have mused upon the mutability of human life, in its application to the red denizens of the wilderness, whether in the dissolution of a clan, a tribe or a nation.

We have now reviewed three distinct sets of evidence, which verify one another and sustain, collectively, the hypothesis of Huron occupation of the Ottawa Valley. We have Huron arrowheads and slate implements on Algonkin camping grounds, we have Huron pottery from ash-beds that smouldered, possibly, in Huron long-houses, for considerable periods of time, and lastly, we have ossuaries or communal graves, a mode of sepulture characteristic of the Huron people, and one which would indicate a permanent and somewhat lengthened period of occupation.

Of course, it will be urged that no band of Hurons would have built a village so near the river as the site of the old ash-beds at Gilmour's Mill, in Hull, but, as the Algonkins lived, sometimes, in the Huron country and adopted, to some extent, the customs of their confederates, might not the Hurons, if they came to live with the Algonkins on the Ottawa, have followed the usage of the latter in the selection of their dwelling places.

The evidence, so far obtained, seems to have given us fairly conclusive proofs of Huron occupation of the Ottawa Valley, and the beginning of a new chapter in the history of one of the great native races of Canada, but, as yet, we have no data that gives us a clue to the time of this period of occupation. Our two ossuaries, already referred to, yielded nothing that could be traced to the white trader; yet this is not negative evidence that the interments were made before European contact. The Wellington Street ossuary held quite a number of implements, while that on Aylmer Island had none. As Dr. David Boyle remarks: "The