

Father Jones and the Petun

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Abstract

The ineffective search for the Petun by Father A. E. Jones is recorded.

Resumé

La recherche de la tribu Petun par le Père A. E. Jones qui ne menait pas à de bon resultat est enregistrée.

Maps, Photographs and newspaper text

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Introduction

Before conducting field work on the Petun in 1902 and 1903, the much respected Rev. Father Arthur Edward Jones, S.J., F.R.S.C., since 1882 Archivist of St. Mary's College in Montreal, compiled and published much theoretical information on them (Jones 1903:106-116). The subsequent field work consistently demonstrated that most of his theoretical constructions were wrong, largely the result of his uncritical selection of sources. Unfortunately, Father Jones was not able to recognise this, to bring himself to accept that his sources were at fault, or to accept the

proffered advice of more knowledgeable people. Such was his prestige, however, that many of his proposals, which his own searching failed to prove, have entered the literature as reliable fact, to the detriment of subsequent Petun research.

Particularly, Father Jones' uncritical acceptance of the 1660 map "Tabula Novae Franciae" by François du Creux, who was never in Canada, while ignoring Champlain's maps, misled generations of researchers into believing the Petun were at any time in the Bruce Peninsula (Garrad 1970, 1997a, 1997b), and himself into searching for their villages too far west of where they actually lay. His conclusions concerning the location of the rock and village *Ekarenniondi* (Garrad 1998, 1999b), the identity of the attackers of *Ehwae* in 1640 (Garrad 1973:109-111), the assumption that St. Matthias was a village rather than a mission territory (Garrad 1997c:6-7), the identity of the third missionary and mission among the Petun in 1649 (Garrad 1997c:7-8), the route taken by the Iroquois after attacking *Etharita* in December 1649, and the route and death place of Father Chabanel the following day (Garrad 1999a), are among the subjects the present writer has previously discussed in the references cited and elsewhere. The intention of this present Bulletin is to follow the actual routes taken by Father Jones in his fieldwork related to the Petun.

"Old Huronia" 1909

The Fifth Report of the Ontario Bureau of Archives for 1908 appeared in 1909. The entire substantial volume was dedicated to the writings of Father Jones titled "'8endake Ehen' or Old Huronia". Much of the work had appeared elsewhere previously (Hunter 1912:78). The section "THE PETUN OR TOBACCO NATION" (pp.214-249) had first appeared in 1903 (Jones 1903), but in 1909 was repeated unchanged. This contained his account of his search in 1902 for the rock and village EKARENNIONDI. A new section in 1909, not previously published, was titled "THE SITE OF ETHARITA, OR ST. JEAN AS YET UNDISCOVERED" (pp. 249-261) and reported his search for ETHARITA in 1903.

The 1902 Fieldwork

On Tuesday August 26, 1902, Father Jones, who had arrived by train at Stayner the day before, accompanied by Rev. Father Jeffcott, Father Quirk, Edward Kerby D.D. and John Purcell L.Theol. set out by a horse-drawn carriage westward to Duntroon. There, on viewing the distant rocky face of the Niagara Escarpment, Father Jones wondered "if it might not well be the rock we were in search of. On reflection, however, it occurred to us that many such bold prominences were likely to be found along this eastern fringe of the Blue Hills" (1903:132). This is indeed the case, but this was forgotten later in the day.

At Duntroon the party turned south towards Devil's Glen. This was probably because while still in Midland he had heard about this feature (1903:131) and because, inferentially, he was following the map and text published by David Boyle following his research in the area in June 1888 (Boyle 1889:4-15). Their first stop was the farm of William Anderson, to see some enigmatic earthworks first reported by Boyle (1889:11-12). Under the title "Old Indian Earthworks" Father Jones would report "Very little trace of the embankment is now observable; on the hillside it may be said to be entirely obliterated by frequent ploughing". Father Jones' assumption that the earthwork had once extended up the river bank to be subsequently "entirely obliterated by frequent ploughing" is wholly unjustified. Neither he nor Boyle queried why the visible earthworks were confined to the river

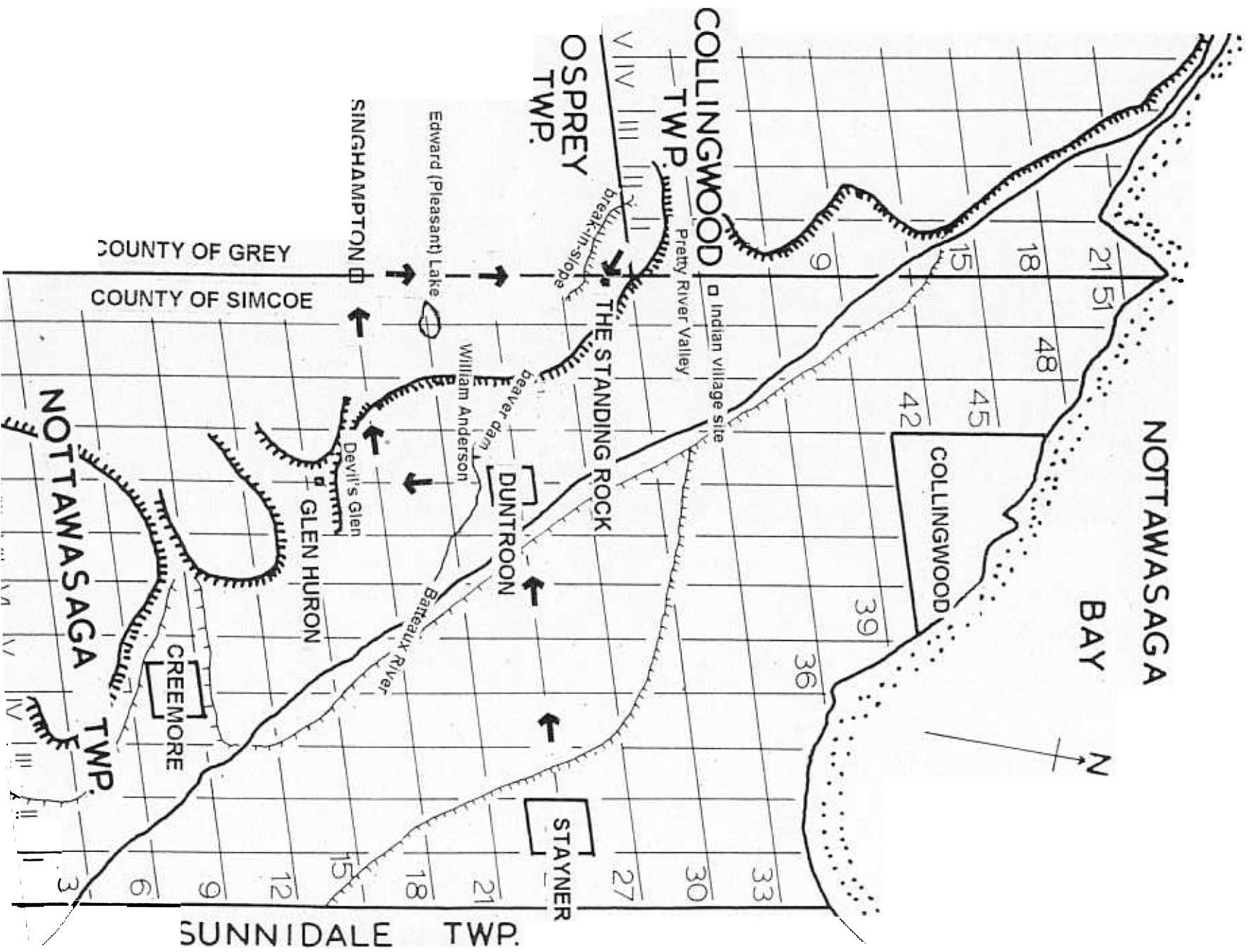
bottom, or even considered that these features were, in fact, the remains of old beaver dams (Garrad 1981:31-32). Unfortunately, they did not ask the cheerful and hospitable Mr. Anderson for his opinion, nor if there were any Indian artifacts to be found locally, and thus remained ignorant of the substantial village site on the adjacent lot south.

Continuing south on the 8th line, then turning west on the road to Singhampton, the party observed "for well onto a mile an exceptionally deep and narrow ravine .. the conviction grew upon us that we were in presence of the Devil's Glen; but in this we were mistaken. The Glen was miles away" (Jones 1903:133). The mistake is a mistake. This was in fact the Devil's Glen. What Jones later took to be the Devil's Glen was the Pretty River Valley.

Turning north at Singhampton until the road ended at a cliff top, the party found itself "on an elevated ledge, with deep *crevasses* penetrating at acute angles the wall of rock. Underfoot, they seemed to be bridged over by roots and accumulated mould .. at our feet .. countless huge rocks .. the whole was bare of vegetation; no moss, nor fern .. Across these rocks lay prone, in every direction, whole trunks of trees bleached by alternate rain and sunshine .. Stark from the field of hapless ruin, and on the steep slope of the hill, detached from all around, rose a rectangular mass of rock of monumental proportions .. It was, in fine *ekarenniondi*, or the Standing Rock of the Petuns (within the) Devil's Glen" (Jones 1903:135-136)

Father Jones' dramatic account of the excitement of the find makes persuasive reading. However, an enquiry would have been of assistance concerning the lack of vegetation on which he remarked, which enabled him to see the rock. This was the result of a fire some years before which had burned along the mountain slope destroying the forest. This condition, and the gradual recovery of the vegetation, are illustrated in a fortunate series of several photographs. The first of two included by Father Jones (1909: facing p.247) well illustrates the stark conditions he described so well that prevailed at the time of his visit. The second, sent to him later by David Williams of Collingwood, was taken in 1907. It is comparable but shows some little recovery (Jones 1909: facing p.248; Lawrence 1916:41; OHS 1907:43; photo 1 in this Bulletin). A photograph taken by Jay Blair in 1915 shows the forest making an obvious recovery (Garrad 1982:60). By 1973 the recovery process was nearly complete and the rock barely visible (photo 2 in this Bulletin). Today, the forest has fully recovered and the rock cannot now be seen through the mature trees from the point where Father Jones stood in 1902, nor from the Pretty River sideroad below and to the north.

Although the rock, when visible, certainly met the expected appearance of a Standing Rock, it failed to meet the presumably necessary further identification criteria of a nearby trail and village site, implied by the Jesuit writings (Garrad 1998). As Father Jones himself wrote "many such bold prominences were likely to be found along this eastern fringe of the Blue Hills". That this was so was quickly pointed out by local farmer Fred Birch who was more knowledgeable about the area and who identified a rock more than five miles to the north at what is now the Scenic Caves where there was a village site nearby (Birch 1904a, 1904b). No other researcher agreed with Father Jones, and although other rocks had their champions, the balance of credible opinion has favoured Birch (Hunter 1912; Lawrence 1909:62-65; 1916:40-48; Lawrence, Gaviller, Morris 1909:16-17; Wintemberg 1923). Hunter, in support of Birch, was the most scathing: "He (Jones) first seeks a meaning for *Ekarenniondi*, the Indian name of the place, giving "Standing rock" as its English equivalent. Then he finds in Nottawasaga an outstanding splinter of limestone rock and thereupon claims the "identification" is complete ! He does not enquire whether or not an actual village site, with remains, is anywhere near the spot" (1912:80).



Map 1 - The Route of Father Jones and party on Tuesday August 26, 1902

(RIGHT) Photo 1 - The Standing Rock, as so designated by Father Jones in 1902, photographed in 1907. It is still surrounded by mainly dead vegetation from an earlier forest fire.



(BELOW) Photo 2 - The Standing Rock, as so designated by Father Jones, photographed in 1973, almost concealed by new vegetation.



STANDING ROCK, AS DESIGNATED BY
Photo by National Geographic

Father Jones found his rock not in the Devils' Glen as he thought, but which he had passed miles back on his tour. He was at the edge of the Pretty River valley. He published the location of the rock as both lot 29 and lot 30 (Jones 1909:233, 248, and photo caption facing p.248, 265).

His 1902 fieldwork did not result in Father Jones seeing or finding any Indian earthwork, nor the rock *Ekarenniondi*, nor any village site, nor even an Indian artifact. It did result in an awakened interest in the search for *Ekarenniondi* by other researchers.

Perhaps it was on learning that there was a village site about a mile and a third distant that Father Jones felt this was corroborative evidence enough to be sure he had the right rock and to resume the search in 1903. For this reason he included photographs of the village site and adjacent area sent to him by David Williams in 1907, which he himself never visited (1909: facing p. 241, facing p.242, between pp.244-245).

The 1903 Fieldwork

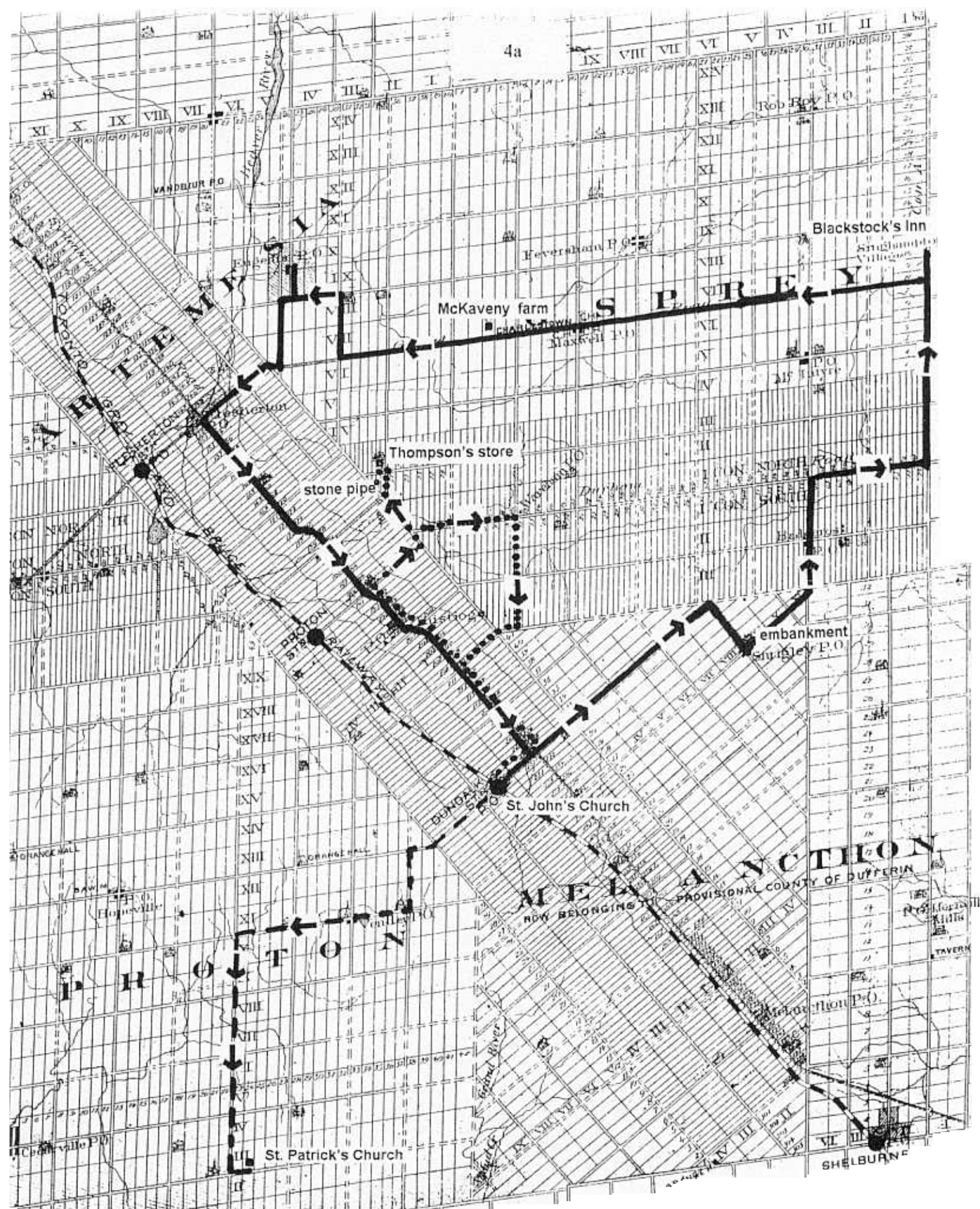
When Father Jones' report of his 1902 explorations was published in 1903 (Jones 1903) he was contacted with information by several informants, particularly Fred Birch of Wodehouse, P. Foggett of Toronto, and David Williams of Collingwood (Jones 1909:253, 261). Because a critical deficiency in accepting Jones' rock as *Ekarenniondi* was the lack of a nearby associated village site, he was encouraged to learn from David Williams of the existence of a large village site on the far bank of the Pretty River about a mile and a third from Jones' rock. Although this distance was probably too far for an association, and Fred Birch provided ample evidence identifying the true rock and village *Ekarenniondi* further to the north, Jones returned in 1903 to prove he had found the right rock by locating the further village of *Etharita*.

He began by stating that the village of *Ekarenniondi* "was but a very short distance north or west of 'Standing Rock'" and that *Etharita* "lay four leagues, or about twelve miles .. to the south" (Jones 1909:249). Measured from his rock this came to near to Badgeros in Osprey township and Shrigley in Melancthon township (1909:250). For this reason Dundalk was chosen for headquarters, where his host was Father George Murphy.

Friday August 21, 1903

On the morning of Friday August 21, 1903, Fathers Jones and Murphy with Mr. J. D. Morgan set out by carriage from Dundalk, via Proton, Melancthon township to the Toronto and Owen Sound road, then south-east to Shrigley. "Here at the cross-roads we noted what appeared to be the remains of an embankment or intrenchment, but of comparatively small dimensions. It did not seem to be a freak of Nature in the level fields, but had all the marks of an artificial formation". From Shrigley their carriage took them to Badgeros, the Durham road, and to Singhampton for lunch. At this point "With the exception of the low embankment at Shrigley" nothing had been seen "like a site of a populous frontier village" (Jones 1909:254). The return journey through Osprey, Maxwell, Eugenia Falls, and Flesherton to Dundalk, stopping here and there to enquire about Indian remains, was similarly non-productive.

From the description of the low "embankment or intrenchment" a number of possibilities occur. Features matching the description have been found locally, resulting from people hunting foxes by



Map 2 The routes Father Jones and party Friday August 22nd and Sunday August 23, 1903



(TOP RIGHT) Photo 3 - The remains of Port Law General Store (Thompson in 1903) seen in 1985 following a recent fire

(CENTRE) Photo 4 - St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Proton, where Father Jones preached in the morning of Sunday August 23, 1903

(RIGHT) Photo 5 - St. John's Catholic Church, Dundalk, where Father Jones preached in the evening of Sunday August 23, 1903

digging down to their dens, an inexpensive technique popular at a time when a cash bounty was placed on these animals. Alternatively, since the feature was at a cross-roads, it might simply have been intended for drainage.

Saturday August 22, 1903

After spending the morning talking with local "oldest inhabitants" the party set off in the afternoon on the Toronto-Owen Sound road to Inistoge, to the Durham road at Proton village, then "to the little hamlet called by its inhabitants 'Fort Law'" to visit the general store (photo 3) whose owner, Mr. Thompson, had once found a stone smoking pipe. This was not available for inspection, and the search of a supposed Indian site nearby where "children had picked up many curiosities of Indian make", but which Mr. Thompson was unable to describe, was equally unproductive. The party continued through Wareham back to Dundalk.

Sunday August 23, 1903

Father Jones preached in the morning in Father Murphy's church in the extreme southern part of Proton township. This was St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, built in 1881, still an impressive structure (photo 4). To reach it required considerable time and travel, through Ventry, and return. In the evening he spoke again in the "chapel" at Dundalk. This is presumably the present St. John's Catholic Church of St. John the Evangelist (photo 5). On both occasions Father Jones took the opportunity to seek information, but there was none to be had (Jones 1909:257-258).

Monday August 24, 1903

On this day Fathers Jones and Quirk left Dundalk to return to Toronto. A fortuitous meeting with the local Anglican minister at Dundalk station led to the hope that the Anglican congregation would be appealed to for information. No mention is made in Father Jones' 1909 account of any result from this hope.

Newspaper publicity

On September 17, 1903, under the title "Hunt for an Old Indian Village", the Economist newspaper, of Shelburne, Ontario, carried a news item about Father Jones' search, citing as its source the Dundalk Herald (p.5a). A search for the original item in the Dundalk Herald was not successful. From the style and vocabulary employed, the piece was perhaps written by Father Jones himself, or based on one of his writings.

The Result

Father Jones's 1903 research did not result in any discoveries, or even the site of, any Petun village sites or artifacts. That this was because he was searching in the wrong area, based on measurements made from the wrong rock, is apparent. Many of the "Pointers for Searchers" he lists (Jones 1909:260-261) are valid enough, although some he introduces as "certain" are not so.

Hunt for an Old Indian Village.

Away back in the days of the past, when the Indians were the only human occupants of this country, their villages were very numerous in some parts of the country.

When the French came and the Jesuit Fathers made their way into the depths of the wilderness to do missionary work, they found these villages and gave them French names.

Many of the Fathers suffered martyrdom, but their lives live after them, in the shape of accounts of their work among these Indians.

But the years have come and gone, the Indian has almost disappeared, the country that once knew him knows him not, and of his ancient habitations there is scarce a trace.

The Ontario Archaeological Department has been trying to locate the sites of many of the old Indian villages mentioned in the Jesuit Relations, and with fair success in Simcoe county, where the old-time Hurons made their home.

Coming further south-west, however, into the land of the Petuns, or Tobacco Nation, there has not heretofore been as good success met with. But last year Father Jones, of Loyola College, Montreal, who has taken much interest in the subject, located the Standing Rock of Ekarenniondi, or the Standing Rock of the Petuns, one of the landmarks of the Tobacco Nation, in the Devil's Glen, which rests partly in Nottawasaga township, Simcoe county, and partly in Osprey township, Grey county, the Rock itself being in Nottawasaga. This rock marks the site of the Indian village of

St. Mathias, occupied by the Deer tribe of the Petuns.

This summer Father Jones has been attempting to locate the site of St. Jean, occupied by the Wolf tribe of the Petuns, stated by the Relations to be something like twelve miles south or south-west of St. Mathias, and at which place Father Charles Garnier, a Jesuit missionary, was murdered by Iroquois, in 1649. Father Jones expects to find the site in Osprey township, to the south-west of the site of St. Mathias, and this would seem especially reasonable when it is considered that it would throw it directly in the line of the Grand River, which stream the Indians from the north-east used from a point near River-view, in Melancthon township, to make their way to Lake Erie.

Father Jones started from Dundalk in his quest this summer, accompanied by Father Quirk, Father Murphy (Dundalk), and J. D. Morgan (Dundalk).

The Dundalk Herald says: — "The records give St. Jean as about four leagues southwesterly from St. Mathias, or anywhere within the triangle marked by Singhampton, Shrigley, and Port Law. The recent tour of enquiry was not without results, and it will be followed by a more thorough search later. It might be stated that at both Shrigley and Port Law observation and enquiry brought to light evidences of Indian habitation. Ash-beds, pottery and bones usually mark the old village sites of the Indians, and excavations in other localities bring up the relics from a depth of 7 to 22 inches, and sometimes beneath the roots of very large trees. If any farmers within or near the district named, who have found any traces of the work of the red men would make their discoveries known, much valuable information and history might in this way be revealed."

His mentioning "the village sites, *evidently of Petun origin* (writer's emphasis), which have been discovered in the region lying between Kirkville, Heathcote and Clarksburg", probably reported to him by Fred. Birch, who assumed they were Petun, claimed by Peter York to be Mohawk, indicates that Jones was not in touch with Andrew F. Hunter, who had long before examined these sites and concluded they were Odawa (Ottawa), an interpretation with which modern researchers agree. On the other hand, Jones cast doubt that the village sites within the township of Nottawasaga, claimed by Hunter to be those of the Petun, were "of undoubted Indian origin". This attitude toward Andrew F. Hunter may have been conditioned by Hunter's recent summary of some of Jones' 1902 research: "Utterly without proof or probability .. It looks learned, but it is a bag of wind" (Killan 1983:194).

Father Jones concluded his last words on the Petun by listing the theoretical and supposed location of six Petun Village Sites, affirming unchanged his earlier theoretical interpretations (1909:225-240, 265). The location of all six are now known as the result of more recent research. None of Jones' proposed locations are accurate within miles. However, this was the state of knowledge at the time. His work inspired others to take an interest, possibly to form the Huron Institute in Collingwood, and lead, however indirectly, to the present state of knowledge of the Petun today.

Acknowledgements

The item from the Shelburne, Ontario, newspaper "Economist", dated September 17, 1903, titled "Hunt for an Old Indian Village" was kindly brought to the writer's attention and provided by Steve Brown, Archivist, the Dufferin County Museum and Archives, Rosemont, Ontario.

Isabelle Contant, of the Archives de la Compagnie de Jésus, Québec, kindly searched through the surviving documentation assembled by Father Arthur E. Jones, S.J. in the hope of locating the mentioned letters from Fred. Birch of Wodehouse, and P. Fogget of Toronto, without success. Persons by the name Fogget in the current City of Toronto telephone directory advise the name P. Fogget is not known to them.

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