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A New Location for Carhagouha, Recollect Mission in Huronia

ABSTRACT

In a previous paper the author attempted a new reconstruction of the distribution of Huron villages and Catholic missions in Huronia. This study was made in the light of four 17th century maps and a careful reading of contemporary documents. One of the more radical departures from previous studies is the location of *Carhagouha*, which the author feels was located on Midland Bay, the position it occupies on a map believed to have been drawn by Father Bressani in 1657. This paper is part of a talk given at the March meeting of the Ontario Archaeological Society.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is an elaboration of certain aspects of a paper published recently in the *Cartographer* (Heidenreich, 1966, a). The purpose of the previous study had been two-fold : firstly, to discuss all known maps relevant to Southern Ontario, and specifically to Huronia, between the years 1615 and 1660; and secondly, to use these maps and other primary sources to attempt a reconstruction of the distribution of Huron villages and Catholic missions in Huronia.

Previous attempts at such a reconstruction, notably the work of Rev. A. E. Jones (Jones, 1908), had been based on only one of four known contemporary maps of Huronia. Because the three additional maps, and a re-reading of the original source material, furnished a considerable amount of new information, the resulting study differed in some respects from accepted theory. The proposed location for *Carhagouha* is a good illustration of the differences between this, and previous studies.

SOURCE MATERIAL

In using material such as *The Jesuit Relations* (Thwaites, 1959) or the journals of Sagard (Wrong, 1939) and Champlain (Biggar, 1922 to 1936), one soon runs into a host of problems whose solution requires a

certain amount of mental gymnastics and what can best be described as educated guesses. Since most of these authors were mainly concerned with the progress of the Church in Huronia, any precise geographical information that slipped into their writings did so only incidentally. Consequently, many statements regarding the location of villages are ambiguous and leave themselves open to different interpretations. Any distances given between villages were estimates, and should be treated as such. Rarely are any compass directions given. If we did not have the four contemporary maps of Huronia, a reconstruction of the spatial distribution of villages would be a hopeless task, simply because we would have no idea in what direction the villages and missions lay from each other. This situation is further complicated by the fact that the Hurons shifted their villages periodically to seek fresh soils and firewood. During such a move a village was sometimes split into two or more segments with each receiving a new name.

Thus far four maps relating to Huron in the first half of the 17th century have come to light. These are : (a) Du Creux's well known inset map *Chorographia Regionis Huronum (hodie desertae)*, engraved in 1660 for his book *Historiae Canadensis* (Robinson and Conacher, 1951 and 1952) ; (b) Another inset map *Huronum Explicata Tabula* engraved in 1657, (Figure 1). This map was probably intended for the *Breve Relatione* by Francesco Bressani (Thwaites, Vol. 38 - 40, 1959) ; (c) a manuscript map *Corographie du Pays des Hurons*, which has neither date nor author, but depicts Huronia between 1640 and 1647 and could have been the work of Jerome Lalemant (Figure 2). This map was evidently used by Du Creux to construct his inset map, and is in some respects more accurate; (d) another manuscript map, the *Description du Pais des Hurons*, with an original date of 1631 corrected to read 1651 (Figure 3). This map portrays Huronia during the same time as the *Corographie* but is not nearly as accurate nor as well drawn.

Without going into a lengthy discussion on the relative merits of each map, the author would like to demonstrate their use and the use of other source material in shedding new light on the location of *Carhagouha*. In this discussion the locations of *Quiéunonascaran*, *Cahiague* and *Tequenonquiaye* (the earlier *Ossossane*), will also be examined.

A great deal has been written on the subject of the league as used by Champlain and the Jesuits. The Bressani map offers the first really concrete evidence that the league as used in Huronia was about three miles. The scale on the map is given in leagues and Italian miles, showing that the French league was equivalent to about three Italian miles or 3.4 English statute miles. In other words the Jesuit Fathers were using the French land league or *Lieue d'une heure*, as Rev. A. E. Jones quite rightly surmised (Jones, 1908, p.p. 102, 114 - 115). This is roughly the distance a strong man could walk in one hour. Throughout this paper the author will therefore use the league as representing about three miles.

DISCUSSION

One of the most radical departures from previous work is a proposed location for *Carhagouha* on or near lots 111 or 112, concession one in Tiny Township. This is where the village is located on the Bressani map and it would be interesting if a reasonable case could be made for such a location. Jones placed *Carhagouha* on lot 20 concession 17 of Tiny Township, but, as will be demonstrated, made several mistakes in doing so (Jones, 1908, p. 41 - 45) .

From 1615 to 1616 *Carhagouha* was the home and mission of Father Joseph Le Caron, and went by the mission name St. Joseph. In 1623 when Le Caron returned to Huronia he re-occupied his old cabin at *Carhagouha* (Shea, 1881, p. 205). By this time *Carhagouha* was at the very least eight years old, and almost certainly older. Brother Gabriel Sagard, who had come to Huronia with Le Caron settled at *Tequenonquiaye*, later called *Ossossane*. After staying at *Tequenonquiaye* for a few months Sagard departed to visit Le Caron. He found him at *Quiéunonascaran*, about four to five leagues from *Tequenonquiaye* (Wrong, 1939, p. 76). When Sagard arrived at *Quiéunonascaran* a new cabin had to be built for the missionaries and the village was given the name St. Joseph. This sounds very much as if *Carhagouha* had just been moved and renamed. As was the custom, the mission name was retained but the Huron name changed. Since Sagard had no trouble finding the new site, *Quiéunonascaran* was probably very close to the old *Carhagouha*.

The only other person to have mentioned *Carhagouha* was Champlain, who stated that it lay fourteen leagues from *Cahiague*, a distance that he could walk in about a day (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 49).

It has now become crucial to find locations for *Tequenonquiaye*, *Cahiague* and *Quiéunonascaran*.

According to Champlain, *Cahiague* lay three leagues or roughly nine miles north-west of the "Narrows" of Lake Couchiching. (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 56) . The direction must have been north-west because Champlain was coming from the northern tip of Tiny Township when he was travelling to the "Narrows", and *Cahiague* lay along this route. Two other facts lend support for such a location; firstly the vicinity of *Cahiague* was a regular wintering place for the Algonquins, (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 94), which means that it must have been on the north eastern frontier of Huronia, near the southern limit of the Canadian "Shield"; secondly, Champlain mentions that he passed along part of the shore of Lake Couchiching before he came to the "Narrows", and could only have done so if he came from the north-west. There seems little doubt that *Cahiague* lay on lots 9 and 10 concession 14 of Medonte Township, the site presently being excavated by the University of Toronto. This site has all the characteristics of an early historic village and there are no other villages of comparable description anywhere within the area delimited by Champlain (Heidereich, 1966, b).

The distance of fourteen leagues from *Cahiague* to *Carhagouha* presents, what seems to be at first sight, an almost insurmountable

obstacle. Fourteen leagues is about 42 miles, and the whole length of Huronia from the northern tip of Tiny Township to the "Narrows" is only 38 miles. It seems then that Champlain exaggerate this distance. When Champlain estimated the length of Huronia he guessed at 20 to 30 leagues or 60 to 90 miles (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 50). With 38 miles as the correct length of Huronia, it would mean that some of Champlain's estimates must be reduced by roughly one quarter to one half. In reading Champlain's journals carefully one must come to the inevitable conclusion that he was very good at guessing short distances but not long ones. An important point to notice is that fourteen leagues is, about one half to three quarters the length that Champlain estimated Huronia to be. Translated into modern terms this would be 18 to 26 miles, which is about the same distance if one applied an error of estimate of about one third to Champlain's guesses. Thus *Carhagouha* could have been 18 to 26 miles north-west of *Cahiague*, which, taking winding trails and other physical obstacles into account, could mean that *Carhagouha* was located about where Bressani placed it.

Quieunonascaran was situated two leagues from *Ihonatiria* (Thwaites, 1959, Vol. 13, p. 125). On the Bressani map *Ihonatiria* is placed on the northern tip of the Penetang Peninsula opposite Giants Tomb Island, a location that agrees so well with the other sources that there is little point in discussing it. It is a great tribute to Rev. Jones that he came to the same conclusion without the Bressani map. We know further that *Quieunonascaran* was about half a league from the head of a deep bay which opened to the north in the direction of the islands in Georgian Bay (Wrong, 1939, p. 191). The only bays close to two leagues from *Ihonatiria* are Thunder Bay and Penetang Bay. Of these, Thunder Bay is less than two leagues from *Ihonatiria* and more than the four to five leagues that Sagard estimated between *Quieunonascaran* and *Tequenonquiaye*. A site for *Quieunonascaran* at the head of Penetang Bay seems much more likely.

Two of the maps, the Bressani map and the *Description*, place *Tequenonquiaye* just south of Spratt Point on Nottawasaga Bay. This location must not be confused with the locations this village had during the Jesuit period when it was called *Ossossane*. *Ossossane* was moved in 1613 and again in 1640 ; both times the move was less than one league up the shoreline (Thwaites, 1959, Vol. 10, p. 53; Vol. 10, p. 291 - 293 ; Vol. 21, p. 159; Vol. 26, p. 207). If the village was moved twice during the Jesuit period it must have been moved at least that many times in the preceding nineteen years between 1615 when Champlain first visited it and 1634 when the Jesuits arrived. Soils studies in the area confirm that with Huron agricultural practices it is doubtful if any medium sized village could have remained on the same site for more than eight years. The loamy sands inland from shore of Nottawasaga Bay are the least fertile in the whole of Simcoe County and do not give a descent return after three years of continuous cropping without fertilizer. Thus an earlier location, further south from Ridley's Jesuit *Ossossane* is more than highly probable (Ridley, 1967). A location near Spratt Point does not seem to far out, but needs archaeological confirmation. The distance from Spratt Point to Penetang Bay is roughly four to five leagues.

Thus, taking the various description into account, *Carhagouha* could have been located on Midland Bay near *Quiéunonascaran*, where Bressani placed it.

The location given to *Carhagouha* by Rev. Jones is wrong on several counts. Jones identified *Carhagouha* with *Arontaen*, which all the maps put about two miles south of Thunder Bay (also called *Taruentutunum*) (Jones, 1908, p. 52). This mistake arose from a slip of Champlain's, when the explorer wrote *Carantouan* instead of *Carhagouha*, (Biggar, Vol. 4, 1932, p. 2.10). *Carantouan* was a village among the *Andastes* and had little to do with Huronia, (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 215). This slip does not occur in the earlier edition of Champlain's works, (Biggar, Vol. 3, 1929, p. 49). Jones assumed that *Carantouan* was synonym for *Carhagouha* and was linguistically related to *Arontaen*. Hence he placed *Carhagouha* on the site of *Arontaen*. Jones made a further mistake when he took Champlain's fourteen leagues between *Carhagouha* and *Cahiague* literally and compounded his error by identifying *Cahiague* with St. Jean Baptiste, (Jones, 1908, p. 68). He then located St. Jean Baptiste near Hawkstone on Lake Simcoe, when in actual fact all four maps place it near the "Narrows" of Lake Couchiching. What Jones overlooked was that Sagard mentioned that *Cahiague* had been split into two villages and moved sometime before 1623 (Wrong, 1939, p. 92). St. Jean Baptiste and *Cahiague* could not have been the same village because they did not exist at the same time. Thus fourteen leagues from St. Jean Baptiste to *Carhagouha* does not make sense on several counts.

In conclusion I would only like to add that the subject of the location of Huron villages and Jesuit missions is by no means closed. Like Rev. Jones, this author would be the first to admit that this subject is so fraught with pitfalls that it is easy to overlook some evidence. Only constant re-examination in the light of new material and well documented archaeological research will bring us to a fuller understanding of the geography of Huronia. Such a long term project could *very* well be undertaken by the members of this Society.

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