

## 9 | The Iroquoian Longhouse

### *Architectural and Cultural Identity*

MIMA KAPCHES

#### Introduction

IN NORTH AMERICA THE IROQUOIAN PEOPLES are unique. Well known and documented in the historic literature, their history extends several centuries into the archaeological past. One facet of the uniqueness of the Iroquoians is their specialized house form, the longhouse, and its important cultural symbolism for these peoples. The Iroquois of New York State called themselves the "People of the Longhouse" and much of their cultural and political imagery was an extension of the physical layout of the longhouses (Morgan 1969 [1851]). For the Iroquoian speakers north and south of the lower Great Lakes the longhouse was more than a dwelling style, it was a unique architectural feature with significant cultural identity. The working premise of this paper is that the Iroquoian longhouse, with its definable attributes, is an archaeologically recognizable indicator of cultural identity, i.e., *Iroquoian*. The corollary of this premise is that non-longhouse house forms, when found on sites adjacent to the Iroquoian area, or on Iroquoian sites, may *not* be Iroquoian. To discuss this premise it is necessary to identify the architectural features of an Iroquoian longhouse, and to define some aspects of architectural variability of that house form, and this is one of the goals of this paper.

Another theoretical approach to the study of archaeological architecture quantified the use of what was termed *spatial dynamics*, or the changes in actively used organized space within structures through time (Kapches 1990). The analytical approach of this paper, directed at architectural reality and cultural variability, is considered to be complementary. The challenge to archaeologists is to move beyond

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#### Parameters

To conduct this study (geographic and tribal) tribal developments at time periods and cultural

The first distinctive Lake Ontario in New York, or the Iroquois, Oneida, Onondaga, were also Iroquoian. They were not part of the Iroquoians, but are not Iroquoians. In the discussion to Iroquoians, not the Iroquoians,



Fig. 9.1. Map

the limited structural data and attempt to make the structures understandable within the human framework. By examining structural variability related to domestic architecture, as it changes through time, one is also expanding the boundaries of analyzing the social/cultural dimensions of structures.

**Parameters**

To conduct this study it is necessary to establish chronological and cultural (geographic and tribal) parameters. The Iroquoian chronology is lengthy, and the tribal developments are diverse and complex. It is therefore essential to define the time periods and cultural areas to be addressed.

The first distinction is that between the terms *Iroquois* and *Iroquoian*. South of Lake Ontario in New York State there existed the well-known League of Five Nations, or the Iroquois Confederacy. These Iroquoian speakers consisted of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca tribes. North of Lake Ontario there were also Iroquoian-speaking tribes, the Huron, the Neutral, and the Petun, who were not part of the Confederacy (fig. 9.1). These latter tribes are called *Ontario Iroquoians*, but are not called *Iroquois*, which is a name used to specify the Five Nations. In the discussion to follow, the archaeological focus will be on the Ontario Iroquoians, not the Iroquois south of the lake. This focus is because a survey of the

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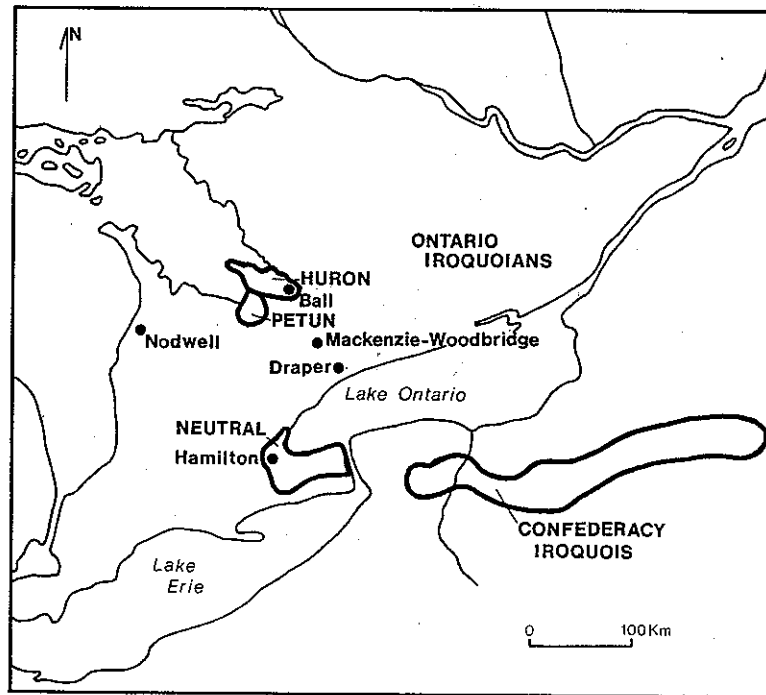


Fig. 9.1. Map of Iroquoia.

published literature from New York State reveals few well-documented, large-scale village excavations, in contrast to the wealth of data from Ontario. However, because observations and anthropological data about the Iroquois are pertinent they will be referred to in the course of the paper.

The chronological parameters of the paper are related to the Ontario data. In Southern Ontario archaeologists have assigned the date A.D. 1615 as the threshold of the historic period, in which literate Europeans first visited Ontario and began writing accounts of their experiences and described the peoples whom they encountered. The date of the arrival of Samuel de Champlain in Huronia is A.D. 1615, where he wintered at the Huron village of Cahiagué. Sites occupied before A.D. 1615 are categorized as prehistoric. In this presentation, both prehistoric and historic data will be included. Chronologically, the study will cover the late prehistoric to early historic Ontario Iroquoian periods, ca. A.D. 1350 to ca. A.D. 1640.

Culturally, the data will mostly be drawn from Ontario Iroquoian sites of the Huron continuum. Neutral data from the historic period will also be presented. Although architectural similarities will be presented for these different tribes, architectural variability will be highlighted.

By the conclusion of this paper several points will have been reviewed: the construction of houses, the layout of houses, the symbolism of houses, and the tribal variability of houses. Combined, these data will support the argument for the cultural and architectural definition of the Iroquoian longhouse.

### The Iroquoian Longhouse

The Iroquoian speakers north and south of Lake Ontario lived in multiple-family dwellings called longhouses. The longhouse was the focus of the Iroquoian matriliney. Descent was matrilineal, reckoned through the female line, and residence was matrilocal: daughters brought their husbands into their mother's home to live. Although there were some exceptions, this was the general rule for both the Ontario and the League Iroquoians (Trigger 1976).

The longhouse was intensively occupied from the fall to the spring, with many social and symbolic activities taking place. In the warmer summer months, the longhouse was less intensively occupied, as women and children left the confines of the structure to attend the crops in the adjacent fields and to live in less formal structures, smaller cabins, or lean-tos. During this season the men were often trading or hunting away from the village.

For the Ontario Iroquoians we have little information on the symbolism of the longhouse within the cultural sphere. The reason for this lack of information, which affects much that is known (or not known) about them, is the early date of their dispersal by the League Iroquois. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Ontario Iroquoians no longer existed as a distinct cultural entity in southern

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Ontario. They had been massacred, nearly completely annihilated, and driven out of the area by the League Iroquois (Trigger 1976). For this paper, the result of these wars is a lack of observation and recording of anthropological data on the Ontario Iroquois. In contrast, because of their continued existence, the data on the League Iroquois are more complete. It is not possible, however, to directly infer that all the data from the League can be applied to the Ontario Iroquoians.

The confederation of the League of Iroquois is thought to have occurred in the fifteenth century (Tuck 1978). The Iroquois "likened their confederacy to a longhouse, having partitions and separate fires, after their ancient method of building houses, within which the several nations were sheltered under a common roof" (Morgan 1969 [1851], 51). These "People of the Longhouse" were "one family . . . and these ties of family relationship were carried throughout their civil and social system . . . and bound them together in one common . . . brotherhood" (Morgan 1969 [1851], 60). There was no similar political/religious symbolism reported for the Ontario Iroquois. In Ontario it is apparent that the longhouse was the focus of cultural/symbolic activity, but it is not possible to assume the greater political/symbolic significance of the longhouse as seen by the League.

What activities were conducted in the longhouse? Sleeping, food storage, food preparation, storage of tools and raw materials, preparation of finished goods, childbirth, death, ceremonials, political meetings: in short, all activities. The longhouse had a nonspecific-function interior (Kapches 1990). This means that the range of activities could be carried out at any place inside the house, and there were no special rooms assigned for these functions. There were structural elements in the interior that demarcated space: the end-cubicle or end-storage area, and the platforms or benches along the sides of houses. In the central area of the house the fire pits, or hearths, were situated. The arrangement of families inside the house was not random. Each family occupied one side of one hearth; therefore each hearth had two families, on opposite sides of the longhouse. Each family had storage space for personal goods on their platform, and also space for hanging goods on the poles suspended from the rafters. In Ontario, in contrast to New York State, there is no clear archaeological evidence for interior partitions dividing the platforms and the central corridor space, as on the Iroquois sites. Although the storage of personal items seems to have been specific according to familial placement in the house, the storage of food and firewood was communal. Firewood was stored under sidewall platforms, and food was stored in huge elm-bark casks placed in the end cubicles.

### Longhouse Construction and Raw Materials

The construction of most houses seems to have taken place during the spring and summer months, when the saplings and the bark were pliable. Descriptions of

the details of longhouses observed by the French include: the lodges had a bower or arbor shape, hence a rounded roof; they were covered with tree bark (cedar, ash, elm, or fir) with splints to hold this bark in place; there were no windows, no cellars, only one storey; no chimney—only a smoke hole in the ceiling protected by a bark flap; a door at each end; a platform about four to five feet (1.2–1.5 meters [m]) high along each side, beneath which wood was stored; the porches or end cubicles were for storing food; there was a passage down the center; and food and goods were stored in bark- or grass-lined pits, which were subsequently covered with bark and soil for protection from fire (Biggar 1929; Sagard-Théodat 1939 [1632]; Morgan 1969 [1851]).

Archaeologically, it is observable that longhouses are predominantly 22 to 26 feet (6.6–7.9 m) wide. The French missionary Brébeuf described “the usual width (of the house) is about four brasses. Their height is about the same” (Thwaites 1896–1901, 8:105–7). This description is most often interpreted as the width of the longhouse equals the height of the longhouse. There is considerable debate amongst Iroquoianists about the height of longhouses as reflected in reconstructions (Kapches 1992). This debate will not be reviewed in depth here as it is the subject of ongoing research by the author on construction materials and architectural techniques.

### Iroquoian Archaeological Terminology

The archaeological evidence for Iroquoian structural remains appears as features in the soil. These features are the result of human activity, and exist as remnants of the occupation. The main features are post molds, hearths, and pits. Building with stone is not known for Iroquoia, and all structures were constructed of wood, with posts placed directly in the ground. Post molds are the building blocks of Iroquoian archaeology. The term *post mold* is here used to describe the archaeological feature created by a post's being driven into the ground and then decaying, leaving a discoloration in the soil visible both from the surface as a circular stain, and in cross-section as the pointed straight-sided outline of the post. True post holes, with large holes dug to place smaller identifiable posts, are not recognized in Iroquoia. However, similar features, perhaps best termed *post pits*, with small-circumference pits dug for the placement of posts (which are not usually clearly identified) are present (Kapches 1990). *Hearths* are recognized by the occurrence of oxidized soil, reddish in color, and are irregularly oval in outline. Hearths are often shallow features, not extending below the plough zone, some 10 to 12 inches (0.25–0.30 m) below the surface. Being shallow, they are easily destroyed by agricultural activities, and their presence is often inferred by other features (a plethora of small post molds) associated with them. Finally, *pits* are holes dug into the ground of variable size and shape. Often pits have artifacts in them, and when

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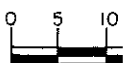


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### A Typical Archaeological Longhouse

Standard details of an Ontario Iroquoian longhouse are shown in figure 9.2. This figure shows House No. 7 from the prehistoric, mid-fourteenth-century Nodwell site (J. Wright 1974). "A" is the plan published in the report. It is included to

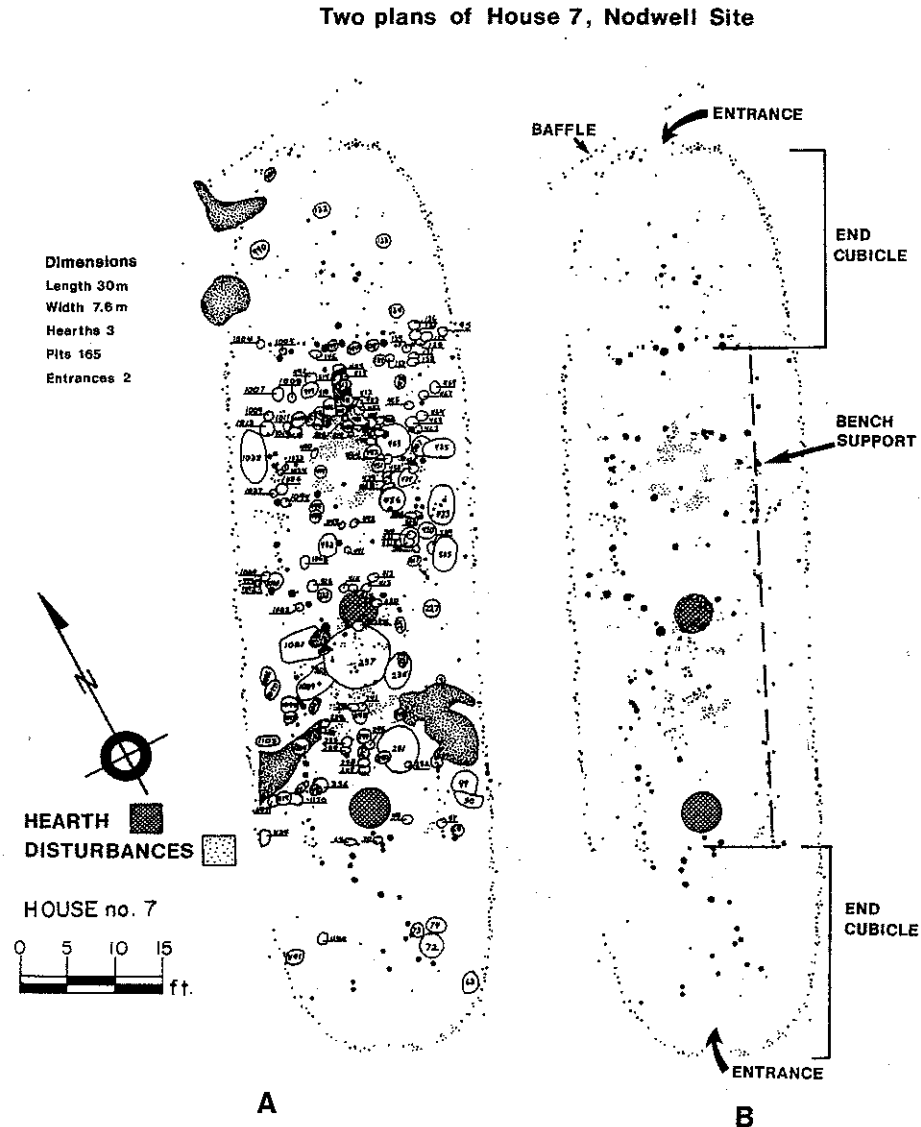


Fig. 9.2. Two plans of house 7, Nodwell site.

give an idea of the complexity of floor plans as they are published. This is a typical example of an Iroquoian longhouse. The house was 99 feet (30.0 m) long, 25 feet (7.6 m) wide, with end cubicles at each end of the house, sidewall benches at approximately five feet (1.5 m) out from the wall on each side of the house, one definite doorway at the end with an external protecting baffle (which is a rare feature), a possible door at the other end, one definite hearth, and two possible hearths located in the central corridor. The diameter of the wall posts was 2 to 3 inches (0.05–0.08 m), and the larger interior support posts were 5 to 8 inches (0.13–0.20 m) in diameter. There were 165 pits inside the house and these are situated, for the most part, in the central corridor area of the house.

Figure 9.2B shows House 7 with the storage pits excluded, because pits inside houses were covered with bark and earth, and so are not considered part of the construction of the house (see Kapches 1990 for a discussion of this). What remains are the details of the superstructure.

The side walls of the house are made of single and staggered rows of posts. It was thought that the bark walls were positioned firmly between these two rows, with additional exterior splint-work to fasten the bark. However, a brief reference to building mentions that the bark shingles were the last "to be put in place to finish" a house (Fraser and Jones 1909, 303). This reference suggests that the poles were staggered to allow for cross-members to support the exterior attachment of bark shingles. The bark, whichever variety of wood was selected, was prepared as large shingles, which were layered in an overlapping pattern. The grain of the shingle was vertical, allowing the rainwater to run off the house. The diameter of the posts indicates that saplings were selected for the walls.

Inside the house, there are larger support posts positioned at a distance of five feet (1.5 m) from the walls. These are bench-support posts and can be easily identified in the plan. They occur bilaterally down the center of the house. To support the sidewall benches, posts were placed horizontally between these supports: at Nodwell it was discovered that these cross-supports actually wedged very firmly, providing excellent support for the benches. Additional support for the bench was provided by attachment to the sidewall posts. These posts also provided support for the roof and allowed for the attachment of posts to provide space for hanging items in the rafters of the house. Note as well, by comparing with view A, that it is not usual for storage pits to occur underneath the benches.

At both ends of this house there are rows of posts that demarcate the end cubicle area from the rest of the house. The end cubicle area is often devoid of storage pits, as storage of food in these cubicles was in large bark casks.

The duration of the occupation at Ontario Iroquoian village sites was observed to be about 10 to 15 years. After that time the villages were abandoned, new locations chosen, and the village relocated. At some villages, archaeologists are now suggesting that the occupation may have been longer, perhaps as long as 30 years

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(Warrick 1988). Evidence for longer occupation may be discerned in the rebuilding activities seen in the walls of the houses. Villages occupied for a shorter period of time would not have a lot of rebuilding activities observable in the floor plans.

### Examples of Longhouse Structural Variability

Structural variability can be created by limitations of available raw materials and/or the effects of cultural factors, i.e., present only in houses of a particular tribe. For the Ontario Iroquoians there were no significant changes in the raw materials employed in the construction of houses for the time period under study. Therefore, it is argued that structural variability is the result of cultural factors. Those features that appear to be the result of architectural variability will be described employing examples of Ontario Iroquoian longhouses.

House 4 from the prehistoric, proto-Huron, Draper village site, ca. A.D. 1450–1550, is presented in figure 9.3B (Finlayson 1985). This house has been lengthened two times at each end, four times altogether during its occupation. The original house was 36.7 meters long; when the expansions were complete the house was 62.8 meters long. It is usually thought that houses were expanded rather than retracted. As families grew in size, or as in the case of the Draper site, as the community grew, the houses were lengthened to encompass more people. The expansion episodes are evidenced by the tapered rows of posts that appear inside the house. Also visible are the support posts for the sidewall benches, as well as the lack of pits underneath the benches, and the similar lack of pits in the end cubicles. Of note is the observation by the excavating archaeologist that as well as two doorways in the ends of the house, it is likely that there were doors at midpoints on either side of the house. Observe the overlapping and crowded rows of post molds constituting the walls; these suggest rebuilding of the walls, and further suggest a longer period of occupation of this village. See in House 6 at the top of the figure the complete rebuilding and moving of the wall of a house. In this figure the several rows of posts in lines below House 4 are palisade rows.

Figure 9.3A is House 12 from the prehistoric Draper, proto-Huron village site (Finlayson 1985). It is possible to determine several features of this house: limited storage pit presence on the sides and the end of the house, doorways at the ends, and complexity of central corridor feature concentration including many hearths and small pits. There are two aspects of this house that will be pointed out as examples of architectural variability. The first has to do with the lack, in some areas of the house, of obvious large posts along the sides, which would have provided support for the benches. There are at Draper, and at other sites, small circular or oval pits on the floors in the position where a support post would ideally have been situated. At some sites there are no bench wall support posts, just a distinct row of small pits. It is argued that these pits, termed *post pits*, were dug out for the placement of support

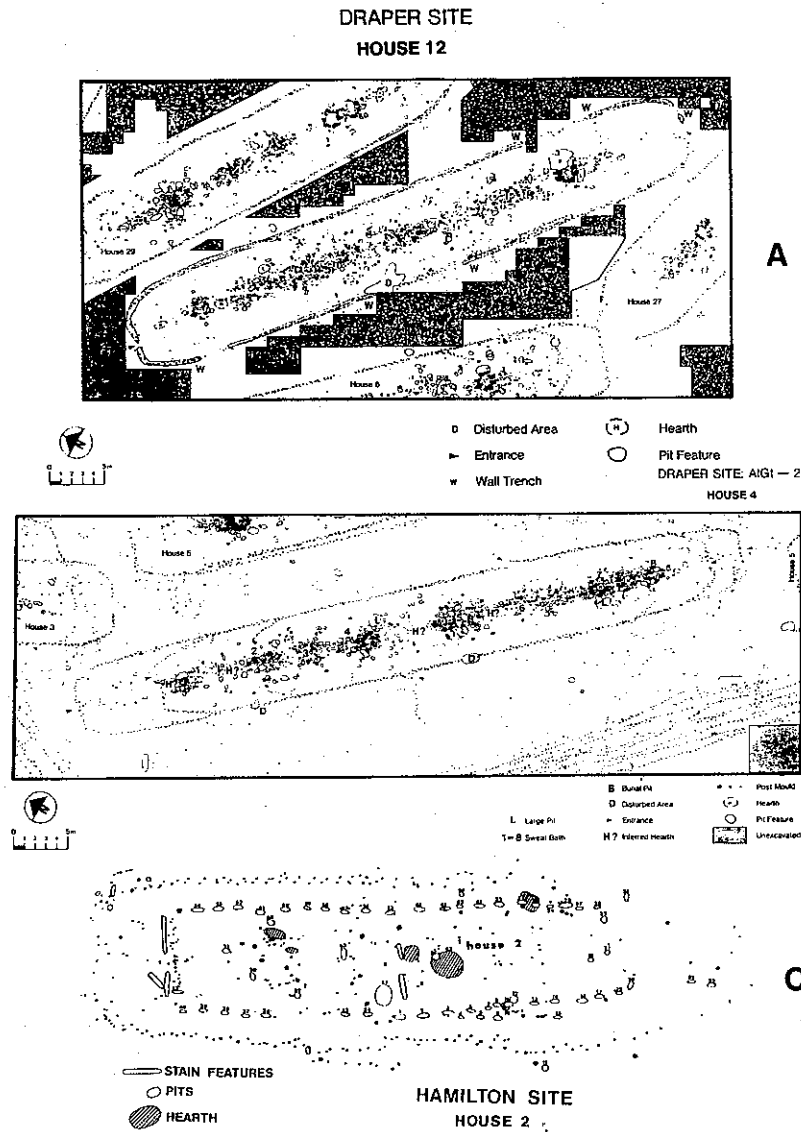


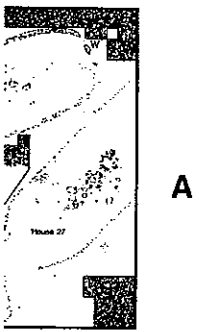
Fig. 9.3. Top: house 12 at Draper site. Middle: house 4 at Draper site. Bottom: house 2 at Hamilton site.

posts for the benches and the superstructure. The other major variation in the plan of House 12 is the presence of a trench dug along the wall of the house. Wall trenches have post molds at their bottom. They can be shallow or deep, and are quite variable. There are several ideas concerning the presence of these (see Kapches 1990); the accepted architectural rationale is that they were dug to aid the deeper positioning of the sidewall posts, and that they allowed the bark siding to be placed into the ground to assist in the prevention of drafts, and that the excava-

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tion of these features allowed for the planning of the layout of the structure during its construction. Culturally, it has been suggested that these features may indicate a Mississippian house-construction technique imported into Ontario Iroquoia (Kapches 1990).

House 2 in figure 9.3C is from the historic Neutral Hamilton site, ca. A.D. 1640 (Lennox 1981). The double staggered row of post molds forming the walls is obvious; however, the walls are poorly defined and even absent in some areas of this house. This absence is owing to difficulties during excavation. Following previous examples where there are support posts for the benches, at Hamilton there are linear and oval pits forming the border edge of the bench. As can be seen by comparing the distribution of these to those at the Draper site, these pits, called "slash pits," are more regular in plan view and in positioning. Another type of pit distinctive to Neutral sites is a "linear stain feature." These features can be seen at one end of the Hamilton house, to the exterior of the interior cubicle partition. As well, there are two stains in the central area of the house, interpreted as resulting from the disintegration of bark insulation flaps in the ground. The reason offered for the linear stain in the center of the Hamilton house is that it indicates an expansion event had occurred. These two stains, then, represent a partition of the end cubicle area of the original, pre-expansion house. The linear stains and slash pit features are tribally distinctive to the Neutral.

The Ball site, an historic Huron village, ca. A.D. 1615, provides another interesting structural variation seen in House 16 (fig. 9.4A) (Knight and Cameron 1983; Knight personal communication 1988). The posts of this house are paired and in single rows. At the north end, the house has been expanded. The absence of features at the two ends of the house suggests small storage cubicles. At Ball there is little definition of hearths in the central corridors of the houses, and thus the presence of hearth areas is inferred from clusters of small posts and associated pits. As at Draper House 12 there are no bench support posts. However, similar to the slash pits at the Hamilton, Neutral site, there are small pits positioned regularly in the house, at a standard distance from the walls, indicating the presence of sidewall benches. A unique feature of this house is the presence of definite interior partitions. Two interior partitions, along with the end cubicle partitions, divide this house into five compartments, three for living space and two for storage. The presence of partitions is more typical of houses of the League Iroquois (i.e., the Eaton site; Engelbrecht 1992). There is no indication that this house was occupied by any other than Huron peoples. This interior partition feature is not common at the Ball site.

There is a unique structure often found on Ontario Iroquoian villages: the cabin. The cabin is a small structure that is not a longhouse and is not a short longhouse (Kapches 1984). Before discussing cabins, the length of houses can be reviewed. The average length for longhouses was once estimated as 24 meters

Draper site. Bottom:

major variation in the plan wall of the house. Wall shallow or deep, and are the presence of these (see that they were dug to aid the allowed the bark siding to rafts, and that the excava-

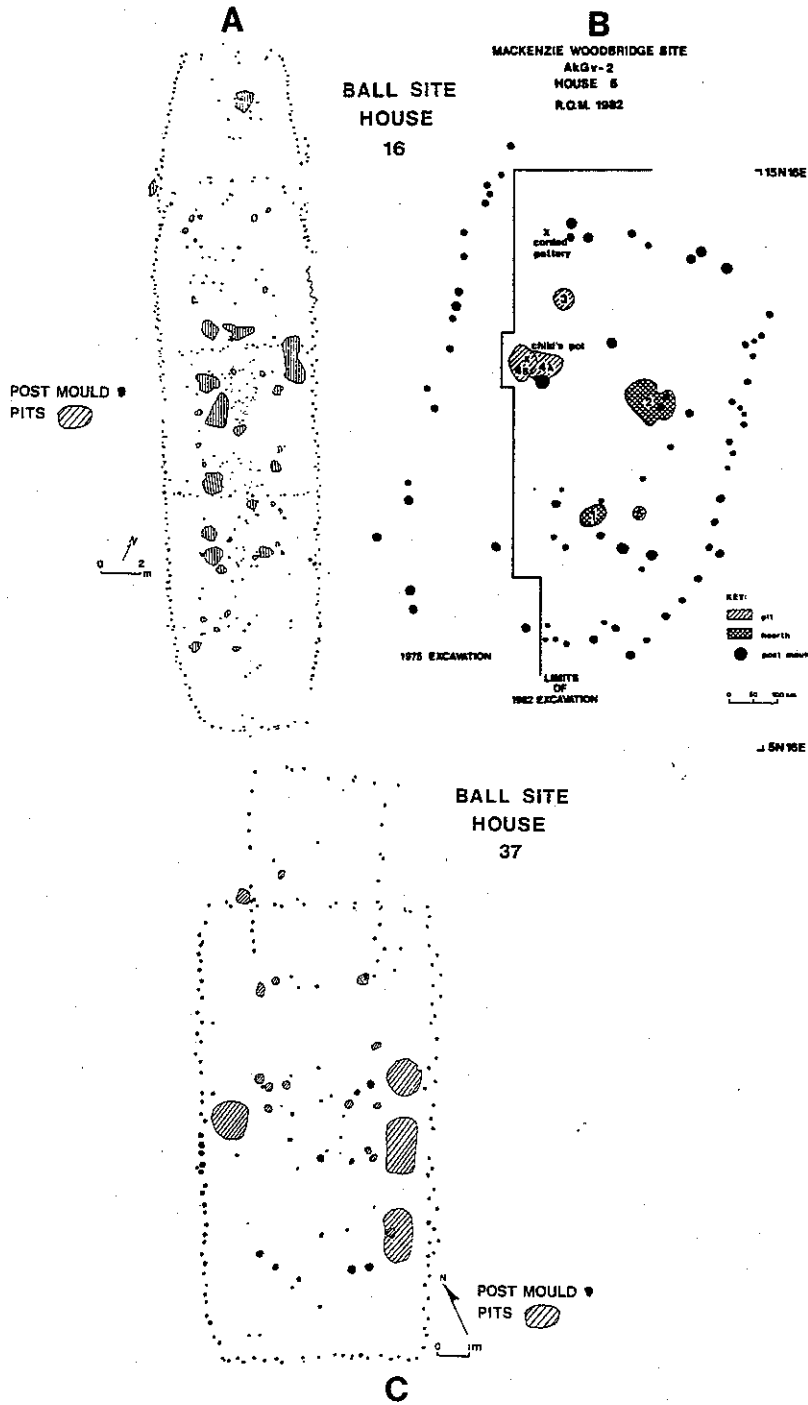


Fig. 9.4. House 16 (top left) and house 37 (bottom) from Ball site; house 5 from Mackenzie Woodbridge site (top right).

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(Heidenreich 1971). Now, with a larger sample of excavated houses, it is apparent that there is considerable variability in house length even at one site. One longhouse excavated in Ontario, at the Moyer Site, is over 300 feet (91 m) (Wagner, Toombs, and Riegert 1973). Longhouses, by definition, are longer than they are wide. The average Iroquoian longhouse is 7 meters wide. Based on data estimating a width-to-length ratio (W:L) for longhouses (Kapches 1984), longhouses have a length that is two times greater than width (1:>2); short longhouses have a length less than twice the width (1:<2) but a length greater than the width and one-quarter (1:<1.25). Cabins are smaller structures and have a length that is less than the width and one quarter (1:<1.25). Cabins are considerably smaller than short longhouses. Short longhouses have the interior structural details of long longhouses, while cabins have considerable variability.

House 5 from the Mackenzie-Woodbridge site is a cabin (fig. 9.4B). It is 7 meters long by 5 meters wide. It has doorways in corners, a possible small platform on one wall, and a partition at one end. Cabins are found on late prehistoric and historic sites, both Huron and Neutral (Kapches 1984). They may have served as shelter for single families, or visitors, or were used by shamans for ceremonials. Despite the small size of cabins, they still exhibit some of the features of Iroquoian construction, such as hearths and pits in the interior area, away from the walls.

What is clear from these examples, and within the context of this paper, is that these are not longhouses. Small non-longhouse structures on Iroquoian sites must be considered individually because they are not Iroquoian on the basis of architectural attributes. That Iroquoians knew how to make cabins, and did so when needed as special-purpose structures, is not at question. What is at question is the ethnic identity of these structures. Cabins are known to have been constructed by Algonquians (Murphy and Ferris 1990; Reid and Rajanovich 1991), and Algonquians are known to have wintered on the outskirts of Iroquoian villages. The presence of cabins in the village is not usually assumed to indicate an in-village Algonquian presence. The difficulty of assigning an Algonquian identity to such structures on Iroquoian village sites leads instead to the conservative assessment that these houses are special-purpose structures built by Iroquoians.

The final structure that will be presented for review is House 37 at the Ball site (fig. 9.4C). This site is argued by Fitzgerald (1986) to be Cahigué, the village where Champlain wintered in A.D. 1615–16. This assertion is based on the chronology of the glass trade beads at the site in comparison to other sites in the vicinity of the Ball site. There is some debate concerning Fitzgerald's analysis, as the excavator, Dean H. Knight, does not support this interpretation (Knight personal communication 1991). An examination of the architectural features of House 37 sheds some light on the impact of Europeans at that site. Although architecture may not assist in resolving the particular question of site identity, this structure has elements of European influence that provide another view of cultural attributes of architecture.

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House 37 is described as 48 feet (14.6 m) long, by 30 feet (9.1 m) wide, with a possible door space along one wall, and with a small addition at one end (Knight and Cameron 1983). This structure, in comparison to those previously presented, shows distinct differences: right-angle corners, a rectangular shape; an addition with squared corners, also with a rectangular outline; the arrangement of pits, of which there are few, along the sides of the house under the sidewall bench area. House 37 is quite different from the Iroquoian longhouses and small Native-made cabins of Iroquoian and Algonquian origins in southern Ontario (Murphy and Ferris 1990; Reid and Rajanovich 1991). Because of the distinctive right-angle corners it has a European appearance, one that suggests that it had a true frame for the superstructure.

What is known about the structures built for Europeans at this early time period? From the eyewitness accounts it is known that Father Joseph LeCaron and other Frenchmen (soldiers) wintered with the Huron at the same period that Champlain did. Father LeCaron had a structure, a little cabin, built for him, where Champlain stayed when he visited him at Carhagouha, some distance from Cahigué. In A.D. 1623–24 when Father LeCaron returned to Huronia with the lay brother Gabriel Sagard, Sagard detailed a structure built for them. He described it as a small lodge, or cabin, 20 feet (6.0 m) long by 10 to 12 feet (3–3.6 m) wide. It was a hut divided into two: on the door side there was the eating, sleeping, and meeting area. There was a partition to a small chapel, "an inner room" with an altar, and there was a small room between these two rooms for the storage of personal items. This description fits the layout of House 37. A large room with a door, a small added-on room for the altar, with a small vestibule or storage area separating the two rooms.

Although it is argued here that House 37 may have been for the occupation of the French during the existence of the site, there are other points to be considered before stating this without reservations. First, there are no unusual artifacts from House 37 that suggest it may have had other than nonnative occupants. This absence is not surprising, because the Europeans at this time, although some trading was involved, were not expressly in Huronia to trade. This was an exploration and a missionary trip, and intensive trading commenced much later, so at this early date little trade material is expected. Also, the Europeans were not self-sufficient. As guests of the Huron, they received their subsistence support and personal goods from the Natives, and therefore they existed with the use of Native-made items such as pottery vessels, furs, mats, and wooden bowls.

Another factor to be considered was that in the literature there are two cabins described as being built for Europeans, and both of these were built at some distance from the village, and therefore not in the village proper. This fact is of interest because House 37 is in the midst of the village, not on the periphery. However, the cabins built away from the village were for the French missionaries, who chose not to live in the village proper. Rather than accepting this situation of cabin construc-

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tion as the only acceptable norm, it is suggested that intra-village construction was a variation. Indeed, it appears that Champlain and his soldiers wintered inside the village of Cahigué, not in a cabin on the outskirts. Considering the political importance of Cahigué as the major village of the area, it is unlikely that a guest of such importance as Champlain would have been allowed to reside outside the protective confines of the village palisade, especially considering this was a time when active warfare was being waged against the Huron by the League Iroquois.

A final point to be considered is that Atironta, one of the main headmen of the Arendarhonon tribe of the Huron, whose village was Cahigué (and whose guest Champlain was), visited Quebec with Champlain in 1616. At Quebec Atironta stated that he wished to have Frenchmen live among the Huron (Trigger 1976). House 37 may have been constructed at Atironta's request, based on the structural designs he saw at Quebec, in order to accommodate Frenchmen. In this interpretation House 37 would be a Native architectural view of a European structure. It is tentatively concluded that House 37 may be evidence of a structure built on an Iroquoian village in the European fashion.

### Conclusions

Certain standard features of longhouses are repeated through time and in different tribal areas (Dodd 1984). These standardized features clearly culturally define the architecture of Iroquoian longhouses. As well, there exists considerable variability that can be associated with cultural expression, associated with tribal influences and introduced European architectural concepts.

It is critical to an understanding of archaeological architecture to be aware that vernacular structures are not immutable; they change according to various internal and external influences over time. That Europeans affected elements of Iroquoian architecture is expected and is apparent in an ongoing study on the longhouses of the contact-period Ontario Iroquoian sites. The Ball site, an early site in the European contact period, is a transitional site where the effects of European interaction in structural variability are limited. Further, just as the Native architecture changed, so did the European architecture, as seen in the earliest European buildings in Ontario (also part of a study currently being undertaken).

This paper has been an introduction to the architecture of the Ontario Iroquoians. Ongoing research will attempt to evaluate variability in the architecture of the Confederacy Iroquois and other Iroquoians of Northeastern North America not located in Iroquoia heartland. Also being evaluated is the architecture of adjacent peoples to determine the interaction of Iroquoian peoples through the presence or absence of the Iroquoian structures so essential to the definition of Iroquoian peoples.