

THE ABORIGINAL ROCK PAINTINGS
OF THE
CHURCHILL RIVER

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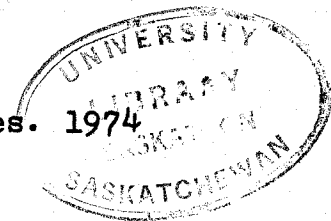
by

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May, 1974

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Abstract

This study is a comparative examination of the age, authorship and interpretation of aboriginal rock painting sites situated on the shores of the Churchill River of northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The twenty presently known sites were recorded in the years 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1969 by the author.

The study combines written descriptions of the sites and their settings with reproductions of the symbols found at each site. Techniques for recording and reproducing rock paintings, developed during the course of the field studies, are described.

Geographical and stylistic relationships of the paintings to other rock painting occurrences in the Canadian Shield are examined. Data derived both directly and indirectly from native Indian residents of the area is incorporated, along with historical observations on the occurrence and interpretation of the paintings.

Several sets of the Churchill River paintings are at least 150 to 200 years old, while others may be considerably more recent. Specific dates of origin cannot presently be assigned to most of the sites; the potential applicability of various dating techniques is discussed.

Evidence given supports an Algonkian (undoubtedly Cree) inspiration and authorship for these rock paintings, with religious observance being the basic motivation for their creation.

Acknowledgements

A grant to Dr. Zenon S. Pohorecky by the Institute for Northern Studies enabled me to begin locating and recording rock paintings in northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1965, with the good assistance of Wayne Morris.

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Because I did not always ask for or record the names of people who gave site reports or other assistance in

the bush, or other help, some people who did render assistance are not named here. My thanks are therefore expressed by thought to them.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Institute for Northern Studies, which awarded me a Musk-Ox Scholarship for 1968-69, and to The Canada Council, which provided a research grant for laboratory work for 1971-72. As well as funding field studies in 1965, 1967 and 1968, the Institute for Northern Studies provided some field equipment in 1966. The Canada Council also financially supported field studies in 1966. The Saskatchewan Department of Mineral Resources provided a canoe for the 1965 and 1966 seasons. The Pinehouse fishing Co-Op greatly facilitated the study of the upper Churchill River rock painting sites in 1967 by contributing a bush plane flight from La Ronge to Pinehouse. I was able to record the Opachuanau Lake sites while working on the Churchill Diversion Archaeological Project, initiated by the Manitoba Archaeological Society in 1969.

This thesis and much of my related work on rock art would not have been possible without the initial and continuing encouragement, stimulation and assistance of my thesis supervisor, colleague and friend, Zenon Pohorecky.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of problem and significance of the study area

This thesis is an examination of the aboriginal rock paintings of the Churchill River of northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The study incorporates the first presentation of a description of the symbols at all known and recorded sites along the river, and is the first systematic attempt to determine, as far as present information permits, the age, cultural affiliation and interpretation of the rock paintings of this part of the Canadian Shield.

The Churchill River paintings will be discussed in the context of their place in regard to the Canadian Shield rock art style, of which they are a regional manifestation, occurring in the northwestern part of the geographical range of the art style.

The rock art sites in this geographical area are of importance for the following reasons:

1. No systematic, comparative study has yet been published on the rock art of this region.

2. The rock art sites of the Churchill River constitute some of the most northerly and northwesterly occurrences of the Canadian Shield rock art style; the area is therefore a peripheral or "fringe" zone for this cultural trait.

3. The Churchill River is a major travel route today, as it was in the past, when it was the water highway

from Hudson Bay to the Northwest. No systematic study of the rock art of such a watercourse in the Canadian Shield has been undertaken previous to this one.

4. Many of the Churchill River rock art sites are major ones in terms of numbers of paintings, relative to sites in nearby adjacent areas.

5. Increasing incidences of visitation to the area and vandalism, coupled with the possibility of creation of two major power projects (one underway in Manitoba, the other yet tentative in Saskatchewan) or national or provincial parks in the two provinces, threaten a number of sites. (Churchill River Basin Group 1973; Dickson 1972). This demands that some cognizance of the historic and prehistoric "resources" of the area be taken, and that some permanent record of these sites be preserved.

1.2 Research done for this study

This thesis is based on field studies of sites on the Churchill River in the summers of 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1969, during which times I personally recorded each of the twenty known sites where rock paintings occur. A special emphasis in these studies was placed on developing suitable techniques for accurately recording and reproducing the symbols and their settings (see Chapter III). Ethnographic information relevant to rock art was obtained during the course of field trips in these and subsequent years from Indian residents of northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba communities.

This study also incorporates information from early explorers, geologists and others, and unpublished ethnographic information obtained by other observers from present-day native informants.

The Churchill River sites were recorded in the following order:

- 1965 - Island Portage Site, Noyo Onikup Bay Site, Stanley Rapids Site, Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #1, Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #2, Rattler Creek Site, Maple Leaf Rapids Site, Wasawakasik Lake Site, Conjuring River Mouth Site, Uskik Lake Site
- 1966 - Cow Narrows Site
- 1967 - Kinosaskaw Lake Site, Foster River Mouth Site, Silent Rapids Site, Wamninuta Island Site, High Rock Narrows Site #1, High Rock Narrows Site #2
- 1969 - Caribou Nest Site, Face Site, Oil Drum Site

I draw as well on my field investigation and recording of forty-six additional pictograph sites in the Canadian Shield country in northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba and north-western Ontario, and on comparisons between this body of information and that derived from visits to rock art sites in France, Spain, Finland, the American Southwest, and Alberta and British Columbia.

1.3 Previously available information on the rock art of the Churchill River

To place the present study in perspective, it is useful to enumerate and evaluate all the available documentation which has reference to the Churchill River rock art sites.

Published sources, first of all, are few in number, and vary from relatively complete site descriptions, to brief mentions of the fact that a site does exist, to simply a drawing or a photograph of a set of paintings. This is not to say that a particular, even brief, mention or illustration is of less significance than a more detailed study, because for many of the Churchill River sites nothing has been published. Therefore, even a single published photograph constitutes a step toward broader knowledge of these art occurrences.

1.3.1 Published Sources

Pohorecky and Jones (1968) presented a somewhat detailed description of the physical circumstances at the Silent Rapids site, and a discussion of the possible age of the site, relating it to Alexander Mackenzie's reference to rock paintings near Silent Rapids in the late 18th century. A 1785 map by Peter Pond, showing the approximate location of the site, two photographs of the outcrop setting of the paintings, a closeup of the paintings, and a photograph of a reproduction of the paintings illustrates the paper.

Brief mentions of sites are made by: Alexander Mackenzie (1927:83,84) concerning paintings on Sandfly Lake and near Silent Rapids; W.J. Wintemberg (1939) quoting a traveller who reported seeing either a pictograph or petroglyph site between Souris River Outpost and Stanley Mission; Olson (1961) noting a set of paintings on Black Bear Island Lake and supposedly another on Snake (now Pinehouse) Lake; Pohorecky and Jones

(1967b:32) making a brief comparison between a figure on Kipahigan Lake and one at Maple Leaf Rapids on the Churchill; Pohorecky (1970a:107) commenting on the historical significance of Mackenzie's earlier observation of the Silent Rapids site; Pohorecky (1970b:33) noting Mackenzie's reference to a painting on a bear-shaped rock on Sandfly Lake; and Dickson (1972:58,72) providing the geographical co-ordinates of each of the Opachuanau Lake sites, and a brief description of the symbols at each site.

Illustrations of symbols found at Churchill River sites are published in only five sources other than Pohorecky and Jones (1968). McInnes (Smith 1923:107, figs. 2-4) made three sketches of sets of paintings at Grave (now Stanley) Rapids, at the Wasawakasik Lake site, and at the Maple Leaf Rapids site. Dewdney (1963:8-9,7,10) published a drawing of the Cow Narrows paintings and a brief description of these (along with short reference to several other Churchill River sites). Campbell Grant illustrates one symbol from the Rattler Creek site, the Cow Narrows paintings (based on Dewdney's drawing), and a map of sites in the Canadian Shield done by Dewdney (Grant 1967: 145,147,146). Pohorecky has a photograph of the cliff and paintings at the Silent Rapid site and one of the reproduction of the paintings (1970b:19). Dewdney figures a small thunderbird (unidentified as to site, but it is from the Wasawakasik Lake Site) on page 21 of Dewdney & Kidd (1967). Pohorecky & Jones (1971) provide a photograph of a pictograph of a human from High Rock Narrows Site #2 on Black Bear Island Lake.

Stanley Rapids (D.-#180)
Wasawakasik Lake (D.-#200)
Maple Leaf Rapids (D.-#199)

The Royal Ontario Museum records include reproductions of the symbols, map locations, position of paintings relative to water level, and other notes and observations.

An unpublished paper by Steinbring et al (1969) presents a detailed description of the symbols and physical setting of the three sites on Opachuanau Lake, Manitoba, as well as a number of technical observations made at each site. The paper contains a map showing the site locations, and line drawings of each of the symbols.

To the writer's knowledge, this is the sum total of knowledge of rock painting sites of the Churchill River extant until the present study, excluding that possessed by knowledgeable Indian people of this region. It is certain that the major part of the ethnohistorical information pertaining to rock art traditions lies with such people, and is yet to be recorded by interested anthropologists and other scholars.

1.4 Art and the importance of rock art

All art involves a selection from the life experiences (both "secular" and "metaphysical", although many peoples make no such distinction) of the artist and a symbolization of this in a manifest form, such as in a song, painting, dance, or other artifact. Where strong social and/or religious strictures are placed on the behavior and beliefs of the artists of a particular society, we may see rigid, highly stylized productions which are immediately identifiable as belonging to that

group of artists, and none other. Where there are few cultural dicta, each work may be totally unique, and the cultural group from which the artist comes may not be at all recognizable. What is most common, perhaps, is the situation in which the art in a particular medium in a particular geographical region bears some sort of resemblance to each other example of that art (such as in certain symbolizations, mode of creation of the art, and so on), but there are also some differences in the individual works of the art. We see this latter set of circumstances in the rock art of the Canadian Shield (see Chapters IV and V).

Wherever it is possible for the art historian or the archaeologist to delineate an art style corresponding to a particular geographical area, it is plain that certain cultural commonalities or shared cultural traits (including an impetus to create that type of art, using that particular medium) have operated. The most likely problems to be answered then are: what ethnic group or groups created the art; when it was done, and how long such a tradition lasted; and why these people created the art.

Wherever rock outcrop, boulders or stones occur, a suitable medium for creating art also occurs, although the presence of rock in itself does not necessarily mean rock art will be present. The creation of drawings or various types of inscriptions on rock surfaces is the most widely distributed and most ancient form of art over the earth.

Parietal art is a special and unusual class of artifact,

in that rock paintings and carvings are not merely objects left behind by accident or lost by prehistoric peoples, but were purposely put onto rock surfaces, often with great care and sometimes enormous effort. Pohorecky and Jones have suggested that the choice of rock and of erosion-resisting pigment suggests that the artists meant their paintings to last for long periods of time (1971:16-17), although the fact that many rock paintings have lasted for centuries may have been fortuitous.

The extant literature on world rock art provides abundant evidence that almost all rock art results from meaningful impulses, and is purposefully done. Even where we consider "doodling" (making paintings or carvings to pass the time, or while waiting, and so on), such as reported to Leechman (Leechman et al 1955:39) it is useful to examine why certain symbols were made, and not others, and why particular cultural groups (or individuals of those groups) chose those particular visualizations, different from those of others. In other words, cross-cultural studies of graffiti can reveal something about each group in which it is utilized.

On the other hand, Ritter and Ritter in a recent paper (1973) contend that .. "many, probably a majority of the petroglyph and pictograph sites in (western) North America have medical significance. Medical significance employs both the primitive and modern concepts, the latter being more restrictive".

The rock paintings of the Churchill River are artifacts -

graphic artifacts - which express in a symbolic way modes of conceptualizing the physical and metaphysical worlds of their creators. Undoubtedly, at the time of creation of the paintings, those paintings dealing at all with the metaphysical or with important secular events in the life of the artist, were succinct and precise encapsulations of insight or belief or experiences of the painters.

As in interpreting other types of human remains, the ultimate goal of the archaeologist-anthropologist in his study of prehistoric rock art is reconstruction of human behavior-in-action. But there are certain problems in trying to interpret the significance of this type of artifact which are not usually encountered in the examination of tools and debris left behind by now-dead communities and societies. With passing time and the general decline of the traditional religious and social values of the peoples who made rock art, the same paintings usually present an enigma to the contemporary viewer. In the absence of the artists, most attempts at explanation of the paintings may therefore remain only attempts, forever.

But the attempts at interpreting rock art, if done in a careful and logical manner, can lead the aware latter-day observer into consideration of the non-material aspects of the life of prehistoric peoples, aspects often ignored by archaeologists working with other remains. Rock art alerts us to the fact that man does not live, and perhaps never has lived by or for "bread alone". Even if we gain only a little secure

insight into the reasons why paintings were made at locations along the lake and river shores of the Canadian Shield, we will achieve a broader perspective on how man has related to his diverse physical and social environments.

In North America, unlike many other areas of the world where rock art occurs, scholars are fortunate in that it has been possible in some instances to learn from native informants familiar with the traditions involved in this form of art, something of the reasons for creating pictographs and petroglyphs, and some of the meanings as well. It should be noted that even given the fact of the existence of such knowledgeable people, much of the once-existing information has been ignored and has now disappeared.

1.5 Terminology

The term "rock art" refers to drawings or figures on rock surfaces created in one of two ways (or rarely, by a combination of both): pigment may be applied to the surface of the rock, or part of the rock may be removed by various means, such as by pecking, scratching, grinding or incising, to create drawings.

Thus "rock art" means basically two-dimensional depictions on vertical or horizontal rock surfaces, which served as a "canvas" for the prehistoric artists. In many areas, unusual natural configurations of the rock background, such as protrusions, hollows and cracks, were incorporated as integral features of the artist's drawings, but in the rock

art of the Canadian Shield this practice is virtually non-existent.

The form of rock art which involves applying paint to a rock surface to make a drawing has often been called "pictograph" in North America, but is more accurately called "rock painting", the term used by many North American and most European and other scholars, since the term "pictograph" has long had common reference to drawings done on various other media, like animal skins, wood and bone.

"Rock engraving" is often used outside of North America to refer to the form of rock art involving removal of part of a rock face to make figures, but "petroglyph" is almost universally used by North Americans. "Rock carving" is a term commonly used as an alternative to "rock engraving" and to "petroglyph". Following usage well established in the literature on North American rock art, the terms "rock painting" and "pictograph" are used interchangeably in this study, both referring to symbols painted on vertical rock outcrop surfaces along the Churchill River.

The rock art of the Churchill River belongs to the class called rupestral or parietal art by European scholars, distinguishing it from portable art. Parietal art occurs on immovable rock surfaces, while portable art is that found on small stones or utilitarian objects made of stone or any other materials, which can easily be carried or moved about.

At the first meeting of the Canadian Rock Art Research Associates in Thunder Bay, Ontario, December 1969, a session

was held dealing with terminology as applied to rock art sites in Canada. Regarding individual paintings, various terms were suggested, such as "design element", "figure", "element", "motif", "pictograph", and "painting". For the sake of making a narrative more creative or varied, it was proposed that any of the terms be used interchangeably, as long as the meaning of the term in context was clear (Dawson & Taylor 1971:13-14). This is the practice followed here.

CHAPTER II

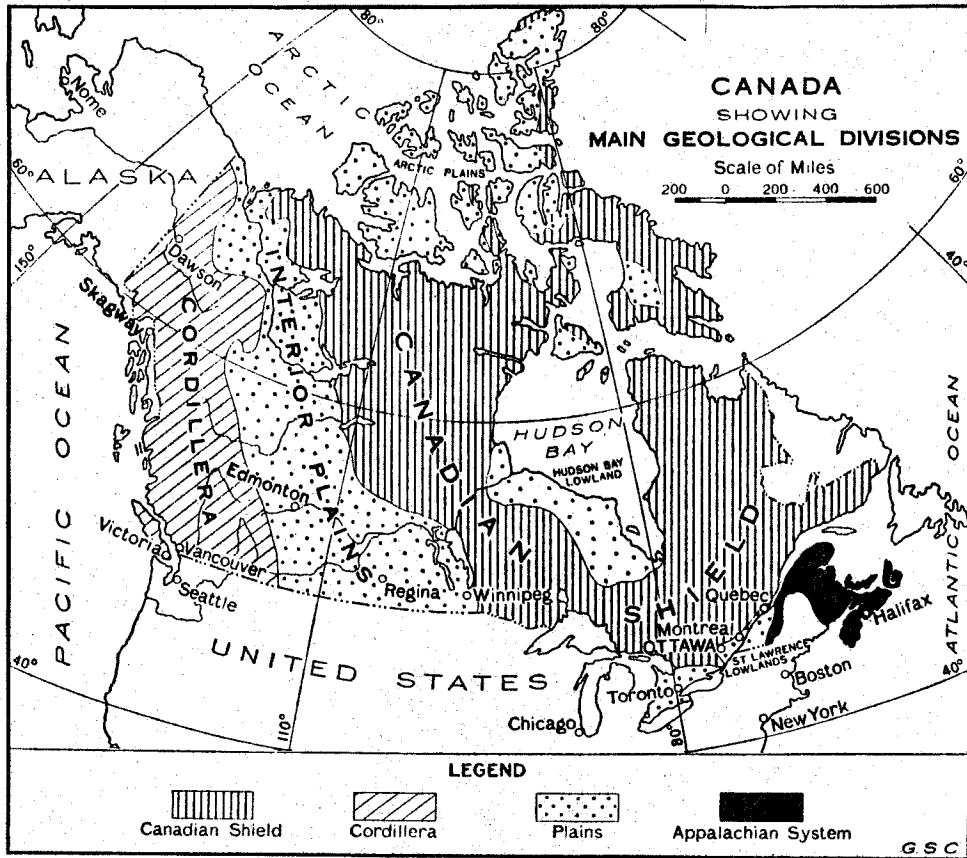
PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area lies entirely within the Canadian (often called Precambrian) Shield of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which is underlain almost entirely by rocks of Precambrian age.

2.1 Physiography

The Canadian Shield physiographic province is one of the six such provinces into which Canada is divided (see Map 1) and it encompasses about 1,825,000 square miles, about half of the total Canadian land mass of 3,797,124 square miles (Moore 1933:21).

The Shield extends in a great arc, from the shores of the Arctic Ocean in the northwest, down past the Great Lakes, up into Labrador and into the eastern Arctic Archipelago. The last retreat of the continental glaciers, which occurred between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago (Robinson 1969:38-39), depending on the locale considered, left the topography much as it is today - exposed crystalline bedrock, upon which is found a thin cover of soil or none at all, muskegs, marshes, lakes and streams. The streams flow either through marshes or over the bare fundament rock itself, and there has been virtually no downcutting through the rock, unless unusual conditions of formation of the igneous or metamorphic rock types that predominate have permitted this.



From Cooke (1947:2)

The Canadian Shield is an uplifted peneplain composed of about 80% coarsely crystalline banded gneisses (Moon 1970:18). These igneous rocks are intrusive into rocks of sedimentary or volcanic origin (Cooke 1947:17).

"In relief, the Shield is a crudely saucer-shaped upland plateau" with Hudson Bay the central depression in the "saucer". "Before the end of Precambrian time the process of erosion had brought all surfaces equally to the level of the sea. But now the plain stands, on average, 1500 feet above sea level." (Moon 1970:18). During its uplift in Pliocene times, "it was warped and faulted in places so that parts of it now stand much higher than others. Since its uplift the Shield has been somewhat dissected by stream action, particularly in the more elevated parts; and the topography has been further modified by the ice of the glacial period. This scoured away much of the soil and weathered rock of the pre-glacial surface, smoothed off the hills, filled the valleys with debris, and thus completely disorganized the preglacial drainage." (Cooke 1947:11).

The effect of this disruption was "to create a multitude of lakes, which spill at random across the lowest points in their rims ... In some parts of the northwest the number of lakes is so great that they constitute 25 to 35 per cent of the total area. The accidental irregularities of the ground determine the courses of the streams draining these lakes, with the result that they are a succession of quiet, lake-like stretches connected by rapids or falls." (Cooke 1947:14).

In fact, along much of the area near the Churchill River, in north central Saskatchewan and northwestern Manitoba, the most striking elements of the landscape as seen from the air are the bedrock, boreal forest and water expanses. Little soil has been left in most areas after the scouring of the glacial epochs, except in the Manitoba section, where extensive clay deposits remain from Glacial Lake Agassiz.

Toward the end of the glacial period, numbers of large lakes (such as Agassiz) formed around the edges of the receding ice, and persisted for hundreds of years. The silts and clays deposited in these ancient lake beds constitute practically the only land suitable for agriculture found in the Shield (Cooke 1947:14-15).

In northwestern Manitoba and northern Saskatchewan the higher hills average 1,300 to 1,600 feet above sea level, major relief features seldom reaching more than 500 feet above the surrounding terrain (Robinson 1969:12). Speaking of the Black Bear Island Lake area (the westernmost portion of the rock painting study area), Money says: "The area is one of low to moderate relief with few ridges and hills reaching more than 200 feet above the level of the nearest large lake. Maximum local relief is probably approximately 350 feet." (1965:5). This characterization is roughly applicable to the rest of the study area as well.

The waterways and forest-clad mainland dominate the topography from one's point of view from the ground or water.

Rock exposures, at times quite massive (from 5 to 100 feet or more in height) outcrop along the shores of the lakes and streams. It is such exposures that were utilized by aboriginal artists, who created rock paintings at diverse locations along the waterways of the Shield.

The Churchill River is a major physiographic feature of the northwestern Canadian Shield area, beginning outside the Shield and crossing it on its way to the ocean at Hudson Bay.

The river is approximately a thousand miles long (Robinson 1969:64). The Churchill River basin drains a large area, 115,000 square miles of northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and extends over six degrees of latitude (53° to 59° N) and 19 degrees of longitude (94° to 113° W) (Churchill River Basin Task Force 1972:5).

The western-most rock painting site on the river, on Kinosaskaw Lake, downstream from Needle Falls, is approximately 350 miles upstream from the eastern-most sites, on Opachuanau Lake, downstream from Leaf Rapids. Proceeding downstream from the first site, one drops about 425 feet in vertical distance by the time the last site is reached, and one has encountered over 50 sets of rapids and waterfalls, some of which can be run in a canoe, others which must be portaged around.

2.2 Climate

The climatic type into which the Saskatchewan section

of the study area falls is Cold Snowy 'Forest'-(moist) Short cool summer, according to Chakravarti (1969:52,60). There are less than four months over 50°F mean temperature, the frost-free period is less than 80 days, and freezing may be expected even in the warmest month of the year (1969:60). The Churchill River Basin Task Force Report describes the climate as "typical of continental taiga with long cold winters, low precipitation and short cool summers (1972:6). East of the mouth of the Reindeer River, the moisture balance is positive (that is, there is an excess of precipitation over yearly evaporation, and the area is classified as Moist Subhumid. This extends into Manitoba, and undoubtedly includes the Opachuanau Lake sites area as well. West of the Reindeer River the classification is Dry Subhumid, with an excess of evaporation over precipitation (Chakravarti 1969:52).

The exact precipitation figures for the study area are difficult to obtain, and vary from source to source. Robinson provides a map (1969:67) which suggests that precipitation in this region is somewhat over 15-16 inches annually. The Churchill River Basin Task Force suggests that the mean annual precipitation for the Basin is about 17.5 inches per annum, of which about one-third is snow. "Mean daily temperatures over the Basin range from 53°F to 63°F in July and from +0.5°F to -17.5°F in January." (1972:6).

"All lakes and most rivers of the Shield freeze over in the winter. The length of the frozen period increases

from south to north, being three or four months in the southern Shield and seven or eight months in the northern part." (Robinson 1969:67). Break-up and melting of the ice usually is completed by the third week in May, and freeze-up usually occurs by about mid-November.

2.3 Flora

The study area lies within the vegetational zone called Boreal Forest. Here, the dominating biological element is the extensive stands of coniferous trees, mostly spruce and pine, with deciduous species interspersed.

Rowe (1959:26) has characterized the area as being within the Northern Coniferous Section of the Boreal Forest Region:

On the southwestern part of the Precambrian Shield, from western Ontario to western Saskatchewan, is a section where climatic conditions allow reasonable tree growth and the development of closed forests wherever depth of soils is adequate. It is bounded on the north by the sub-arctic open forest... Black spruce (*Picea mariana*) is the predominant tree, forming stands on the thin soils of the uplands as well as on the poorly drained lowlands, and associated on these two positions with jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*), respectively. Frequent fires have favoured the spread of jack pine and are probably responsible also for the general though scattered representation of white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) over the majority of sites. In river valleys, around some of the lakes and on south-facing slopes, where more favourable conditions of soil and local climate obtain, white spruce (*Picea glauca*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and balsam poplar (*P. balsamifera*) form mixed stands of good growth... The deeper drift of slopes and valleys shows podzol profile development, while the less well-drained areas are peat-filled.

The "closed forest" character of the boreal forest is familiar to travellers in the bush or on the Churchill River,

and is perhaps the most striking feature of the landscape, along with the abundance of surficial water. "Getting bushed" is a well-known northern phrase, and is a distinctive and apt metaphor for depression, sometimes induced (aggravated?) by the relative sameness of such extensive expanses of trees, rocks and water.

As well as the large tree types mentioned, there is a range of environmental niches occupied by understory plants, according to individual soil, moisture and light preferences. A great number of perennial and annual woody and herb plants grow in the area, and these often played a major part in the food economy of the aboriginal peoples. Plants were used not only for food, but, as importantly, for a great variety of medicinal purposes. Downes (1943:45) took note of one spot on the north bank of the Churchill River, probably on Uskik Lake, where "the old Indians years ago were accustomed to resort to gather certain herbs and roots for their medicine bags".

2.4 Fauna

A general characteristic of areas in the high latitudes of continents is an abundance of individuals of faunal and floral species concomitant with the presence of few species, in contrast to low latitude areas, where there are great numbers of species but relatively fewer individuals of each (Maher 1969:82). The Churchill River area presents a situation somewhat intermediate between high and low latitude areas - there are relatively many species, as well as

moderate numbers of each.

The severe winter temperatures of the Shield have resulted in the most successful adaptations to the Shield environment being made by various fur-bearing animals.

Rogers (1962), Jenness (1963), Mason (1967), and others have delineated the far-reaching importance of the presence of fur-bearers to the Indians inhabiting the Canadian Shield subarctic woodlands region, and numerous writers have documented the inter-relationships between the Indians, European traders and the animals themselves (e.g. Innis 1930; Rich 1967; etc.) during the "Fur Trade Era" in Canada's history.

Other animals than those whose skins were used in trade were also very important to the native peoples of the Shield - most notably, the moose (Alces alces), woodland caribou (Rangifer tarandus sylvestris), and wapiti or elk (Cervus canadensis).

Of approximately 43 species of mammals that presently inhabit the boreal forest of the Shield in northern Saskatchewan (Maher 1969:82) the following rodents are included: various species of mice, voles, lemmings, squirrels, woodchuck (Marmota monax), beaver (Castor canadensis), muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus), and porcupine (Erethizon dorsatum).

Carnivores are represented by marten (Martes americana), fisher (Martes pennanti), Least weasel (Mustela rixosa), ermine (Mustela erminea), mink (Mustela vison), black bear (Ursus americanus), lynx (Lynx canadensis), wolverine (Gulo luscus),

timber or gray wolf (Canis lupus), otter (Lutra canadensis) and red fox (Vulpes vulpes) (Moon 1970:124,152; Maher 1969: 80-82).

The snowshoe rabbit or varying hare (Lepus americanus) is found throughout the area. The white-tailed deer (Dama virginianus) occurs sporadically in the area today (and may have also in the past), and the elk formerly ranged as far north as Reindeer Lake. Historically, large herds of barren ground caribou (Rangifer tarandus arcticus) are known to have come into the northeastern part of the study area, as far south as Reindeer Lake and the middle of Southern Indian Lake (McInnes 1913:7). The grizzly bear (Ursus horribilis) formerly was present throughout the province, and the buffalo or bison (Bison sp.) formerly ranged as far north as Lac La Ronge and Pinehouse Lake, just on the southern and western edge of the study area (Maher 1969:81). There is no present evidence that the plains or wood bison subspecies reached the Churchill River in the same area as the rock painting occurrences, but this is entirely possible.

Virtually all of the animals mentioned above were used as food, and skins and other parts of the bodies were used for clothing, tools, and other technological items by the Indians of the Shield.

Birds and fish of various species also played significant roles in the diet and technology of the Indians. Numerous species of fish occur in the Churchill River. Some of the major ones known to be utilized are the northern pike or jack-

fish (Esox lucius), burbot or maria (Lota lota), various species of "suckers" (family Catastomidae), whitefish and tullibees (family Coregonidae), perch (Perca flavescens), pickerel (Stizostedion vitreum), and sturgeon (Acipenser flavescens) (Symington 1963).

Of the "game" birds that presently breed or migrate through Saskatchewan, the following species are found in the study area or major parts of it: mallard, pintail, lesser scaup, white-winged scoter, green-winged teal, baldpate, American coot, gadwall, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, shoveler, blue-winged teal, Canada goose, bufflehead, common snipe, spruce grouse, red-breasted merganser, common merganser, sandhill crane, common goldeneye, ring-necked duck, snow goose, oldsquaw, black duck, and willow ptarmigan (Gollop 1969:85-88,90). Other species not listed, such as whooping crane and some shore and song birds, were undoubtedly eaten as well.

Finally, only one species of snake, the red-sided garter snake (Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis) is found in the study area, approximately in the area west of the mouth of the Reindeer River (Atton 1969:83; Cook 1966:28).

2.5 Present communities

The present study is not the place to detail the life and economy of the people living on the Churchill River itself and those who utilize and travel on the river from nearby communities. Map 2 shows the locations of the communities

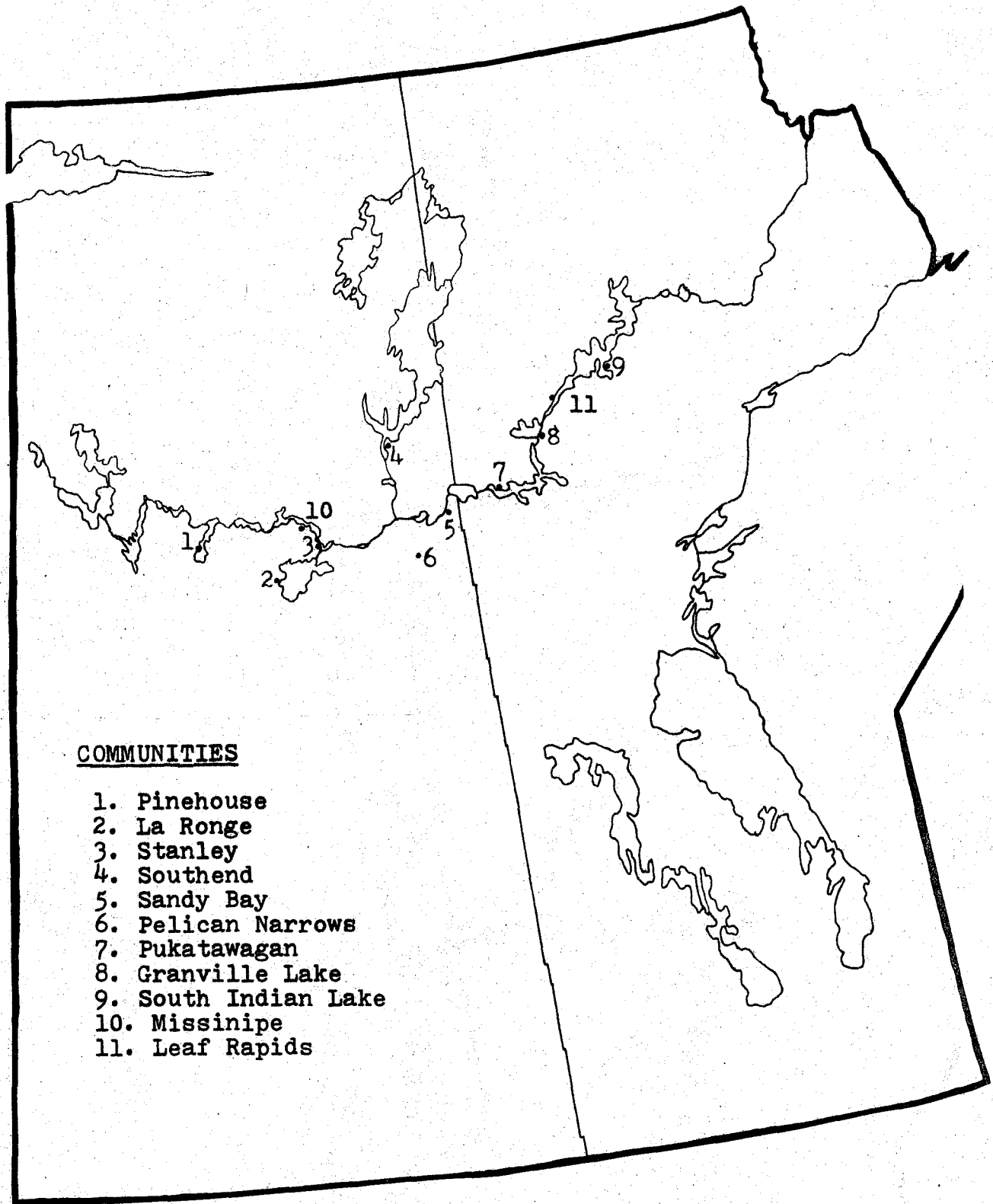
whose residents use the Churchill for various economic activities - chiefly commercial and household fishing, hunting and trapping - and for travel.

There is no one comprehensive published source of information about the region and its people. The most informed of the works that deal with the area is an account of a journey in 1939 by canoe from Pelican Narrows, through Reindeer Lake and into the Northwest Territories, written by P.G. Downes, a Boston school teacher. In this book, Sleeping Island, Downes deals with the geography, history and present people in this part of the north, discussing traditional aspects of the Cree people's life and that of the Chipewyans further north, and describing the process of culture change then occurring.

Reliable figures for the population of each of the communities are difficult to obtain, although a recent attempt has been made by the Institute for Northern Studies (1972) for the Saskatchewan settlements:

1. Pelican Narrows - 810 people (1971 census)
2. Southend - 275 people (Saskatchewan
Department of Natural Resources estimate)
3. Sandy Bay - 494 people (census)
4. Stanley - 916 (D.N.R. estimate)
5. Pinehouse - 427 (census)
6. La Ronge - 3513 (census and estimate,
including neighbouring reserves)

In Manitoba, there are about 1000 people at Pukatawagan, more than 600 at South Indian Lake, and around 100 to 125



Communities of the Churchill River and vicinity

at Granville Lake.

Except for La Ronge, where there is a large Euro-Canadian population, the majority group in each community (up to 90% or more) is Cree Indians, speaking one or other of the two main dialects of Cree (Plains Cree, or Wood or "Rocky" Cree (Wolfart 1973:38)).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Locating and getting to the sites recorded

Attempting to make records of pictograph occurrences in a wilderness or hinterland region such as most of the Churchill River presented certain problems. The first one was discovering where the sites were to be found, and the second was reaching them. Both presented some difficulties in the early stages of this research, since, although Selwyn Dewdney had recorded a number of the sites previously, other sites were rumoured to be found along the river and in adjacent areas.

While the twenty sites dealt with here are all the ones definitely known to (and recorded by) the author, there is a good possibility that other sites will be located in the future. For example, information about a possible site on Wintego Lake, a little-travelled part of the Churchill River between the Reindeer River mouth and Sandy Bay, has been independently reported twice. This may prove to lead to another set of pictographs.

3.1.1 Locating the sites

Almost all site locations obtained by the author and from other researchers are from local native informants, since it is they who know the country most thoroughly and intimately. The author obtained site locations in conversations with native people in the field, and some from non-

natives, who nevertheless invariably first were informed about these locations by native people. It should be noted that locating all the known sites in this and other areas without the assistance of the local people would have been impossible in the initial stages of the research.

Before entering the field for the first time, the author sent several hundred form letters over the province to members of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, Hudson's Bay Company stores in the north, tourist camp operators, and weekly newspapers, soliciting information on rock art sites in the province. This proved to be moderately worthwhile, since one or two previously unreported sites were located, and contacts were made with several people who provided other types of assistance in accomplishing the fieldwork.

One thing learned early was that some apparently reliable site reports proved to be non-existent when checked, for unknown reasons. After a few such "wild goose chases", the practice of questioning informants as much as possible about their reports was established. It was found that it was essential to determine several key answers: if the informant had actually seen the paintings himself; what the subject matter was, if they were done in red, and what the precise location on the topographical map was.

3.1.2 Getting to the sites

There are no sites in northern Saskatchewan or Manitoba which can be reached in any other way except from the

water. Consequently, the sites in the area of the mouth of the Foster River and on Black Bear Island Lake were reached by taking a canoe, motor and other equipment into Pinehouse settlement with a pontoon-equipped airplane, then canoeing downstream to the sites. All other sites recorded were reached by motorized canoe, travelling from roads which reach either Missinipe, Jan Lake or Tyrrell Lake, Saskatchewan, or Leaf Rapids, Manitoba.

The logistics problems are therefore quite different for this rock art area, as compared to others, but are overcome with some experience in the exigencies of wilderness travel, which include planning adequate food and shelter for extended journeys into the "bush", taking precautions for various emergencies (accident, poor weather), taking proper pictograph recording materials, and knowing how to navigate through the numerous rapids and the fast current encountered on the Churchill River. An alternative is for the researcher inexperienced in travelling in such terrain to place himself in the hands of a competent native guide, for travelling to sites.

Topographical maps produced by the Canada Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Surveys and Mapping Branch, with a scale of one inch equalling four miles (1:253,440), were used during the course of travel to all sites recorded, save those on Opachuanau Lake. It should be noted that this series is far more detailed and therefore superior to the newer series produced by the Army Survey Establishment, which

superseded the old series around 1966. The Army maps have a scale of 1:250,000. The Saskatchewan government has recently reissued a photo-copied version of the old series for canoe-route information.

3.2 Graphic recording and reproduction techniques employed

The comparative or interpretive study of rock art in a given area, or between areas, depends on the availability of adequate site records, especially of the appearance of the paintings or carvings themselves. This is particularly crucial if a researcher, for various reasons, is not able to personally investigate all sites in a region on which he wishes to base his studies. The more gaps there are, the more tenuous and imperfect the understanding of the totality of the rock art of an area will be.

Accurate reproduction of the symbols painted by the aboriginal artists is the most important single feature to be accomplished at particular sites, above anything else. Future pictograph researchers may have recourse to measurements of the rock faces where paintings were once found, the compass direction of such faces, and other features, but the content of the symbols was the most important thing to the artist, and as such, the art historian or anthropologist must first and foremost record the drawings as accurately as possible.

In the Canadian Shield Dewdney has recorded a great number of sites, and has added considerably to our knowledge of this art. But it is safe to say that more detailed,

regional distributional studies of symbols and site clusters need to be done to determine possible sub-areal correlations between ethnic locales and individual sites.

Good reproductions of symbols are essential for any such comparative studies, whether these are done on a very localized, or on a broad geographical level. Unfortunately, reproductions which faithfully record the appearance of original rock drawings in the Shield have often not been available. Particular sites may never have been recorded by any observer or researcher. Coupled with the relative isolation of the sites of the Canadian Shield, this can be a serious drawback. At other times some reproductions that have been made have been inaccurate or misleading. One documented example is that involving three separate published sets of drawings, by three different writers, of paintings at the large and important Tramping Lake, Manitoba site. Each set of drawings differs in its depiction of various of the symbols and each contains certain inaccuracies (Jones 1970). One of the key pictographs has since been partially destroyed. Unknowing use of such records by other researchers can result in more far-reaching errors in interpretation and comparison.

3.2.1 Method used for recording the rock paintings

The author's fieldwork has involved the testing and development of an inexpensive and simple method for accurately recording rock paintings, and these efforts have proved to be satisfactory (Pohorecky & Jones 1966; 1967a).

A transparent film material - either of the food-wrapping products Saran Wrap or Look! - has been used in making all tracings of rock paintings examined by the author. The film is fastened securely to the rock face by using pieces of masking tape. The corners of the film are taped first to the rock, to tauten but not deform the film, and then additional pieces of tape necessary to keep the overlay from moving in any direction are carefully placed along the edges of the overlay.

Then a fine felt or fibre-tipped marking pen with non-water-soluble ink is used to trace the figures visible under the film. Care is taken to ensure that the outer edges of the ink on the tracing correspond exactly with the outer edges of the paintings. Pens with red ink are used for this purpose, and blue-ink pens are usually used to delineate lichen or moss growths growing in the bounds of the area overlain by the tracing material, and black-ink pens for cracks, chips or other features in the rock face. Notations of special features are made on the tracing to avoid confusion in interpreting lines when examining the tracing at a later date.

A measurement is taken from any arbitrary point marked on the tracing to the water level, and this measurement and the date are recorded either in a note-book or on the tracing. Another essential item is the horizontal and vertical orientation of the group of paintings on a given rock face. To this end, a mark is made on the tracing, and a string with a line level is positioned flat against the tracing (and the

rock face), and the other end moved vertically until a position for the second mark is obtained, which then gives two reference points for drawing a horizontal axis when reproductions are made in the laboratory.

The best lighting conditions for making tracings of paintings occur when there is no glare-light striking the tracing material, and that is when the sky is overcast with cloud cover, or when the sun is temporarily obscured by scattered clouds.

If such conditions do not prevail, and there is a great deal of glare from the reflection of sunlight off the water or off light-coloured clothing worn by the recorder, a dark-coloured object (such as a dull-surfaced black site-report binder) is held between the film and the recorder. By positioning his line of sight and moving the dark-coloured object, the glare can be eliminated.

Where painted areas are larger than that of a single sheet of the overlay, additional pieces of overlay are attached to the first one by means of strips of transparent tape.

3.2.2 Method used for reproducing the rock paintings

The author's efforts to record the rock paintings of the Shield as accurately as possible resulted in the development of a new technique for reproduction of the symbols for display, storage, and reduced-scale reproductions for publication (Jones 1970:111-14).

A tracing obtained in the field is placed on a light-

table and taped down with masking tape in a manner similar to that in which the overlay was fastened onto the rock face - that is, tautened but not stretched.

A sheet of paper large enough to encompass the symbols on the tracing and suitable for serving as a stencil is taped to the table, and then the pictograph outlines are traced in pencil on it. A horizontal axis is drawn on the paper, using the two points determined and marked on the tracing in the field for that purpose.

The marked stencil paper is then cut, using a fine-point stencil knife. A piece of paper which will receive the ink is taped to a table, and the cut stencil is placed over this and also taped to the table, ensuring that the horizontal axis marked on the stencil is aligned parallel to that of the bottom and top edges of the paper to be inked.

The inking tool is a small shoe-brush of the type which has a circular clump of bristles at one end of a handle. The brush is tapped into a pad containing fast-drying stamp pad ink several times, then it is tapped lightly onto the paper through the stencil, transferring ink onto it. The amount of ink transferred can be controlled with little practice, and various degrees of fading of parts of a symbol can be indicated by transferring more or less ink to the corresponding parts of the reproduced symbol.

These full-sized reproductions can be photographed and reduced to any desired size for mechanical reproduction. All of the reproductions herein have been made in the manner just described.

3.3 Photographic methods employed

All sites investigated were photographed on colour transparency film, using either Kodachrome-II or Ektachrome-X (film speeds 25ASA and 64ASA respectively). Transparencies of Churchill River sites made by the author are in the collections of the Institute for Northern Studies and the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the University of Saskatchewan, and of the author. Duplicates of the Saskatchewan Churchill River sites are in the files of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Winnipeg, and originals of the Southern Indian Lake sites are in the files of the Churchill Diversion Archaeological Project and the Department of Anthropology of the University of Winnipeg.

Black and white film proved to be of little use in recording the appearance of the paintings, because there is usually little and sometimes no contrast between the red or red-brown paintings and the rock backgrounds on which they are found - both come out more or less as darker or lighter shades of grey on this type of film. Consequently, black and white film was used for pictures of the appearance of the outcrop and cliffs, and the general physical setting for the paintings. Where the background contrasted enough with the paintings, photographs were made with this film, but inevitably, colour film exclusively was used for the purpose of keeping photographic records of the paintings themselves.

Whenever financially possible, two or three exposures of important photographic subjects were made in the field so

that separate sets could be kept by different institutions. This practice has the advantage of minimizing the possibility that this type of important record might be lost through accident, fire, or similar circumstances. If this did happen to one of the sets, duplicates can be made. Original transparencies do have the advantage over duplicate ones in that there is more likelihood of colour changes in the subject matter (especially the paintings) occurring during the process of duplication, and it was therefore found best to make separate sets in the field.

Some understanding of the setting and general environment of each site is important, so an attempt was made to take a sequence of photographs at each site which would show this. A picture showing the appearance of the rock exposures from a distance was taken, then one from the medium distance, then one of the particular cliff or rock exposure where the paintings appear, then separate groups of paintings on individual rock faces, then closeup photographs of individual pictographs.

It was found that the best lighting conditions for illustrating the appearance of cliffs is when there is strong side-lighting, which will show cracks and crevices as heavily shadowed areas, setting them off from the lighter-coloured forward prominences of the outcrop mass.

For best photography of the paintings, however, the same conditions mentioned for tracing should prevail. Bright but diffused light is essential for photographing most rock

paintings. There is little point in taking pictures of these paintings when direct sunlight strikes them. In fact, some paintings are very difficult to see at all with the naked eye in bright sunlight, but will stand out clearly on an overcast, dull day.

In some instances where paintings are faded, splashing water over them results in a striking change in their appearance, and they become much clearer in relation to their rock background, and photographs may then be taken. But this does not always hold true, and the practice should be avoided to prevent more rapid erosion of the pigment, particularly where sites are visited frequently by visitors who have learned to try this technique.

Photography is an extremely important recording tool, in conjunction with satisfactory methods of graphically recording the symbols in black and white. The two methods are complementary. In fact, when making the inked reproductions, the colour transparencies must be constantly consulted in order to accurately duplicate the relative intensities of painted lines. At other times the tracings may have to be consulted to discern parts of figures or the positions of faint markings which may not be wholly clear in photographs.

In such cases, sketches were made of the paintings and other features of the rock face, if it was felt that there might be difficulty in interpreting both the photographs and the tracings.

3.4 Other data recorded

At each rock painting site a number of measurements and observations, relating to site features other than the paintings, were made. A copy of the site report form incorporating this other data is included as Appendix A. This form was used as a guideline only, and not all categories were recorded at each site if lack of time or poor weather or water conditions made this impractical.

In the following chapter relevant field data additional to the reproductions of the paintings is included in the description of each of the sites.

CHAPTER IV

SITE DATA

4.1 Locations of the sites

Map 3 shows the locations of the recorded pictograph sites along the Churchill River. For the purposes of this study, the sites are numbered serially from one to twenty, proceeding from west to east downstream, and have been given names as well. Where geographical features serve to identify the location of sites, these names have been assigned (e.g. Maple Leaf Rapids Site). The names for the Opachuanau Lake sites are those already used by Steinbring et al (1969).

Table 1 gives the name and the Borden Number assigned each site, excepting Site #14. The Borden Number is the official site number assigned to each archaeological site in Canada which has been registered by the Archaeological Survey of Canada, National Museum of Man, Ottawa (Borden 1952). The numbers listed here were assigned by the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History in Regina, and are on file there as well.

4.2 Site descriptions

The descriptions of the rock art sites herein consist of two parts: verbal descriptions of the symbols and information about each site and its paintings; and scaled reproductions of the paintings.

The particular information provided is considered to be the most important for the purposes of this study, and for basic gross comparative purposes. It includes a brief description of the physical setting, the degree of exposure of the paintings to erosional factors, the orientation of the rock face, presence or absence of lichen or other vegetal encroachment or patination, presence or absence of natural or human damage, the height of the paintings above the water level, and any other noteworthy characteristics of each site.

When a description is given of the position of a painting in relation to others, or of a part of an individual painting to the rest of that painting (for example an appendage of an animal), the viewpoint taken is that of the observer as he looks at the rock face.

The compass bearings given for each rock face refer to the direction in which the rock plane is oriented, but is not the same as the strike. Rather, it is the direction that a viewer would face if he somehow were inside the rock and looking at an angle of 90 degrees from the strike. The reasoning behind providing this reading is that the actual angle the rock surface with paintings presents to the sun, rain, waves and ice, may have a significant bearing on the extent of preservation or effacement of the paintings. For example, a compass reading of 135 degrees West of North would indicate that the rock face faces the southwest; conversely, a person would look northeast directly at the rock face.

Latin names are given for a number of lichens in the

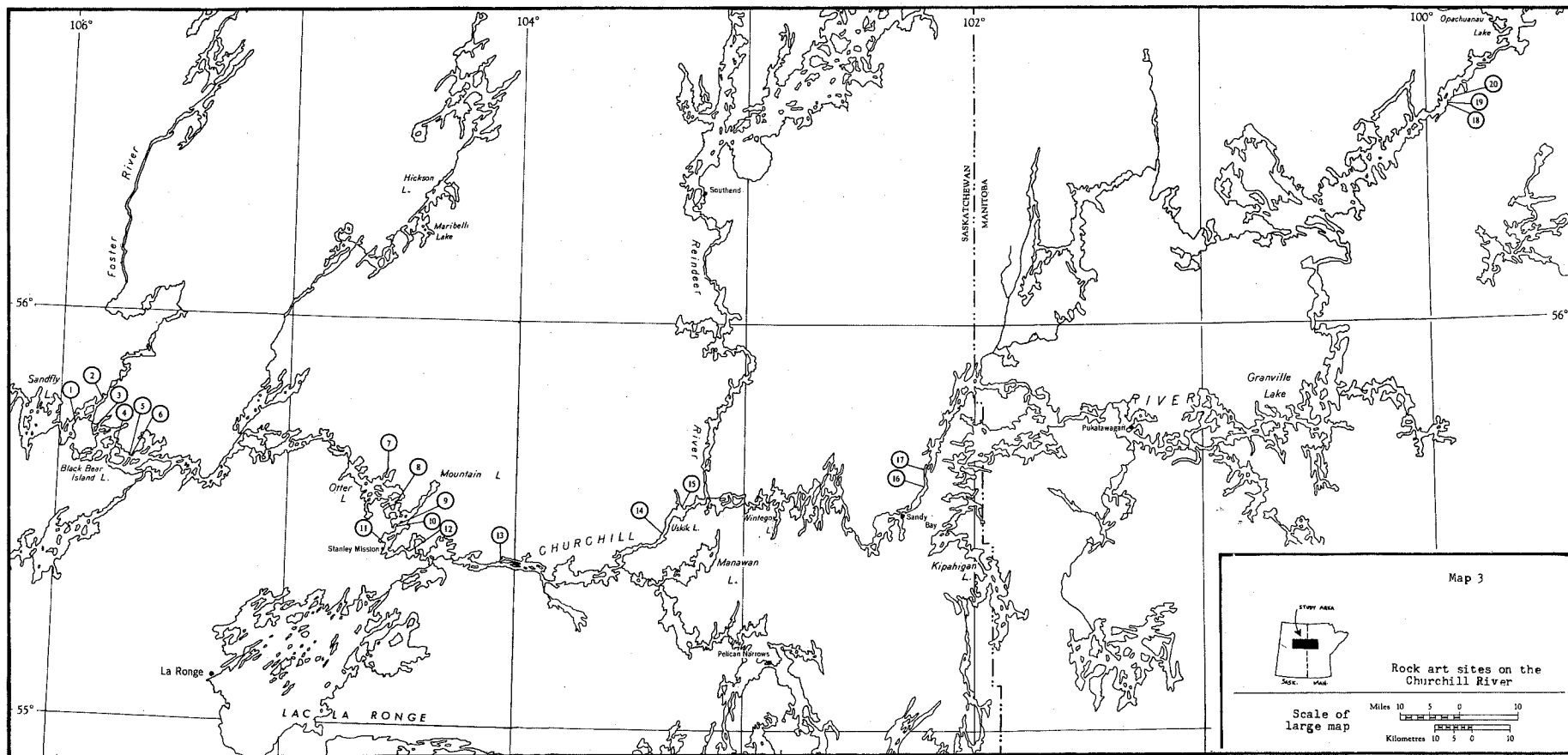


TABLE 1

Site #	Borden Number	Name
1	GkN1-2	Kinosaskaw Lake
2	GkNk-1	Foster River Mouth
3	GkN1-1	Silent Rapids
4	GjNk-3	Wamninuta Island
5	GjNk-2	High Rock Narrows #1
6	GjNk-1	High Rock Narrows #2
7	GjNd-2	Rattler Creek
8	GjNd-1	Cow Narrows
9	GiNd-3	Mountain Lake Peninsula #1
10	GiNd-2	Mountain Lake Peninsula #2
11	GiNd-1	Neyo Onikup Bay
12	GiNc-4	Stanley Rapids
13	GiNa-1	Island Portage
14		Uskik Lake
15	GjMt-5	Conjuring River Mouth
16	GjMn-2	Wasawakasik Lake
17	GjMn-1	Maple Leaf Rapids
18	HdLx-12	Oil Drum
19	HdLx-11	Face
20	HdLx-10	Caribou Nest

site descriptions. These were provided by Professor John Sheard, Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, upon examination of colour transparencies taken by the author. Lichens present certain taxonomic problems, some positive identifications requiring (for example) chemical tests of lichen thalli, so the scientific names herein must be regarded as tentative only. Lichenometric studies that may be done in the future on the Churchill River rock painting sites will of course require much more intensive study of the lichen colonies present at such sites, involving positive identifications of the species present.

The geographical co-ordinates provided are as accurate as can be derived from the map series most readily available to the public, using the simplest instruments which would be used in the field - that is, pencil and ruler. Three map sheets with the scale of 1:250,000 encompass the Churchill River pictograph site locations: Lac La Ronge (73P) - Sites 1 to 13; Pelican Narrows (63M) - Sites 14 to 17; and Uhlman Lake (64B) - Sites 18 to 20. The geographical locations provided in the site descriptions were derived by measuring site co-ordinates on these three maps.

Roman numerals designate separate rock faces containing paintings, proceeding from left to right as one looks at the cliffs from the water. The capitalized word "Face" refers to a single rock plane where one or more painting or paintings are found.

There are twenty sets of reproductions herein (Figs.

1-20). The Figure numbers correspond with the site numbers,
for ease of cross-reference.

Site No. 1 - Kinosaskaw Lake Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 43'$ N. Lat., $105^{\circ} 56'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 58° West of North

Rock type: The rock paintings along the Churchill River occur in general on finely-crystalline granites and gneisses. Exact mineralogical identification for specific sites is difficult because of the relative lack of geological work done on the river.

Recorded August 27, 1967.

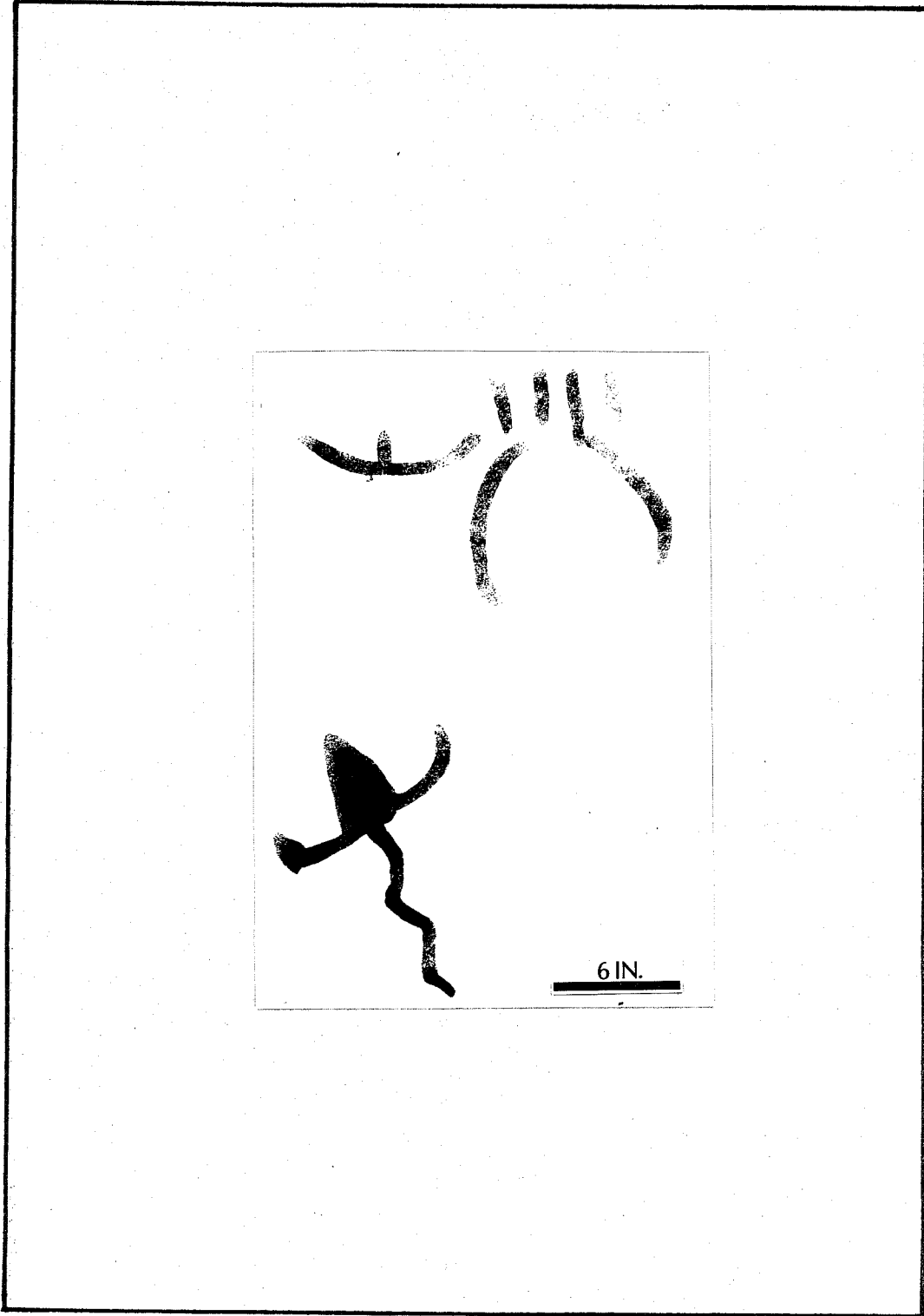
There is a single set of paintings here. The upper left figure is a curved mark with a short vertical mark joining it at right angles (a canoe?). Below this is a solidly-coloured creature (possibly a bird with a long, sinuous neck, depicted as diving). Four vertical marks comprise the upper right part of the group, and two curved lines are painted immediately below these (Figure 1).

The pigment is a deep red rust colour in all the figures. The upper paintings are more faded than the lower ones.

The paintings are reached by walking over rocks that have fragmented from the cliffs, consequently the vertical distance between the water level and the paintings could only be estimated. The paintings are about 20 feet above the water and some 20 to 25 feet back from the water's edge. The cliffs for about a mile along this shore are about 30 feet high, with great numbers of both large and small blocks of the rock lying below the cliffs.

The rock face with the paintings leans forward about 10

Figure 1



Kinosaskaw Lake Site

degrees from the vertical, and there is some protection from rain, but seepage of ground water from above is apparent. Patination of the rock surface from this seepage is quite extensive, and has made the rock a light bluish grey colour. There is some patina on the lowest figure and some on the left side of the upper left one, less on the other paintings.

Dark and light grey patches of lichen are present all over the rock face, and encroachment over paintings is most extensive on the upper right figures. Umbilicaria sp., Physcia sp. and Xanthoria sp. lichens are found here. There is also some probable blue-green alga of the type that imparts a black "stain" appearance to rock surfaces periodically supplied with seepage water from above.

There has been no vandalism or natural defacement of the rock surface here.

The paintings lie facing the main channel of the Churchill River three and one-half miles downstream from Needle Falls and four miles upstream from the Swimming Stone, a well-known local landmark to the native residents of the Churchill. Dewdney informed the author (personal communication, September 30, 1973) that he was told that moose horns were recently being left on the Swimming Stone as offerings.

Site No. 2 - Foster River Mouth Site

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 46'$ N. Lat., $105^{\circ} 50'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 70° E. of N.

Recorded August 27, 1967.

This site has three small paintings - an anthropomorphic (?) or tailed, four legged creature on the left; a little animal with two heads, or a head and a tail; and a cross below the animal. The cross and the "anthropomorph" are tilted to the left (Figure 2).

The paint is a faded orangeish brown rust with a tinge of red. The brightest figure is the small animal and the most faded is the upper half of the anthropomorph. The cross is intermediate to the other two in degree of fading.

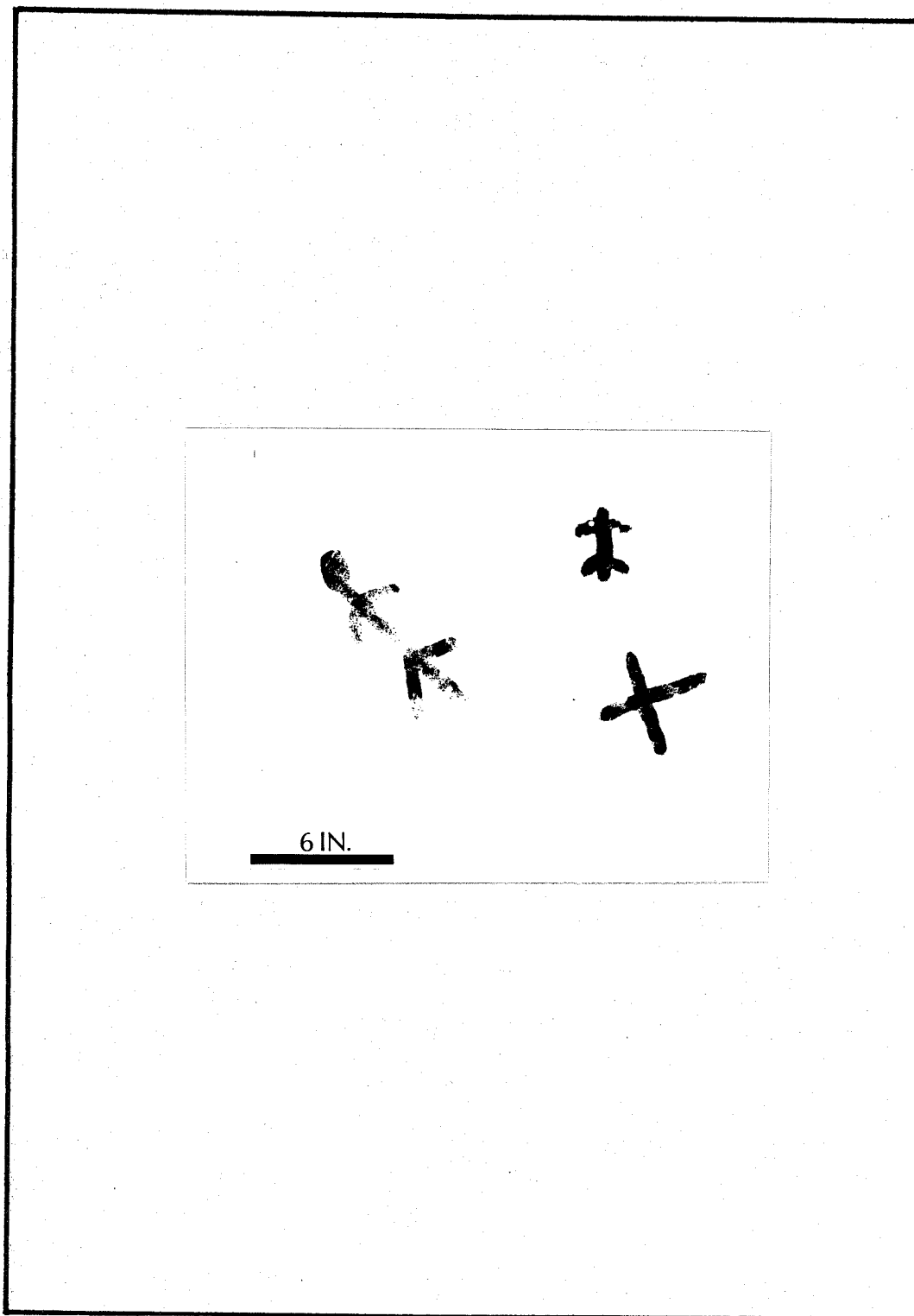
The rounded outcrop where the paintings occur is about 25 feet high, and the paintings are found on a flat surface formed by previous slabbing of the lower part of the outcrop. The painted face is almost vertical, leaning forward only 1 or 2 degrees from 90 degrees.

To record the figures, one stands on a small, flat, horizontal portion of a large slab of rock lying in the water. The left arm of the cross figure is at eye-level, and the water level was 7 feet, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches to the bottom of the cross.

The paintings are fairly well-protected from wind and rain by trees and large slabs of rock just north around the corner of the outcrop.

There is some lichen (mostly light grey foliose type - probably Physcia sp.) growing on each of the figures, the most being on the lower part of the anthropomorph, but the largest being on the right arm of the small animal. Orange Rinodina oreina and brown Parmelia sp. also are found on the face.

Figure 2



Foster River Mouth Site

There is no chipping of the rock surface affecting the paintings. A fresh-appearing chip about 3 inches by 5 inches below the paintings has many small colonies of light grey lichen growing in it.

Site No. 3 - Silent Rapids Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 43'$ N. Lat., $105^{\circ} 51'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 20° W. of N.

Recorded August 28 & 29, 1967

This site contains a large painting of an animal (or perhaps two animals in a composite figure), and a very faded figure (a bird?) above and to the left, with four round balls of colour between the two figures, and a slightly oblong dot of colour to the right of the "bird". The difficulty of interpreting the subject matter of this set of paintings has been explained by Pohorecky and Jones:

... The head of some animal is in the upper righthand corner. Dots suggest eyes, so that the face seems turned to gaze at the viewer, but other bits of pigment in the face ambiguously indicate a profile view with ears in twisted perspective. The remainder is even vaguer. Orange lichen colonies grow within an inch of a very faded figure that seems to emerge, barely visible, to the left and above what looks like the body of a large stick animal with internal organs shown through X-ray vision, or two animals in super-position, or something else again, because the inside of this large animal's body is smeared. Another animal is suggested by what seems to be a clearly defined back and what may be four legs.

Just above the back of the large animal are some short brush splayings, brightly pigmented still, and apparently running into each other as if to suggest a hairy hump (1968:32).

The colour of the paintings varies from a vivid to

fairly bright red-brown rust in the clearest parts (the upper portions of the large animal), to very faded in other areas.

The paintings occur on a large, more-or-less flat vertical rock face which measures about 18 feet long by 6 feet high. There is an overhang of rock extending about a foot over the decorated face, and a ledge below the face which averages some 20 inches in width. The top of this ledge was 31 inches above the water level on the date of recording. The distance from the bottom of the snout of the animal to the ledge was 17 inches, and to the water, 46 inches. The rock face has a forward lean of about 3 degrees.

The site is generally well-protected from the weather, and lies on the south shore of a narrow channel, one of the two main canoe routes across Black Bear Island Lake. The cliff exposure at this location is about 20 feet high.

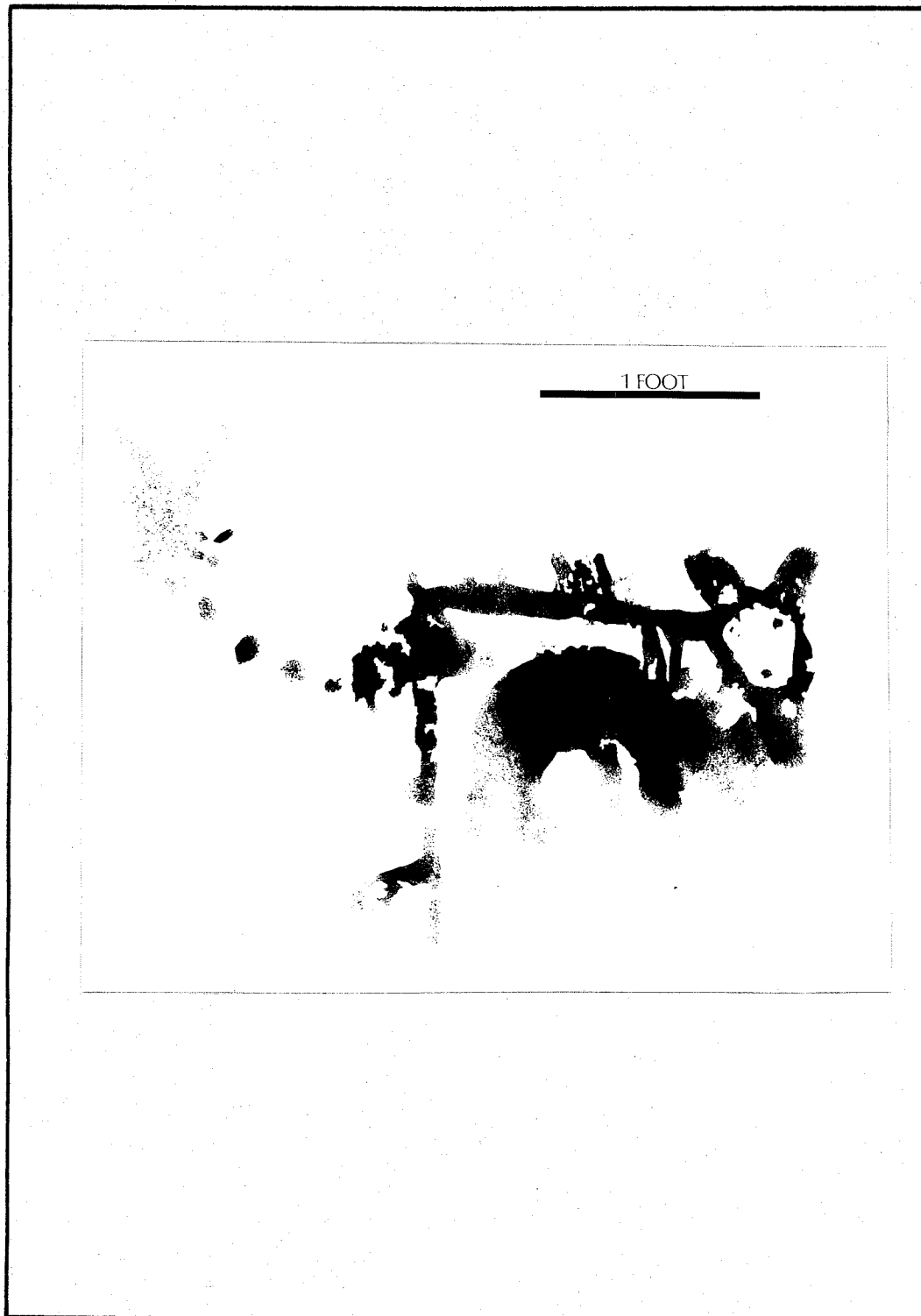
No lichens grow directly on any of the paintings, but there is some patination over the two balls of colour behind the animal, and over small parts of the animal's back.

A number of chipped parts of the rock which have removed some small parts of the paintings are observed, apparently resulting from some person pecking at the paintings. This may be discerned in the reproduction of the paintings in Figure 3.

Site No. 4 - Wamninuta Island Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 40'$ N. Lat., $105^{\circ} 46'$ W. Long.

Figure 3



Silent Rapids Site

Orientation of rock face: 2° E. of N.

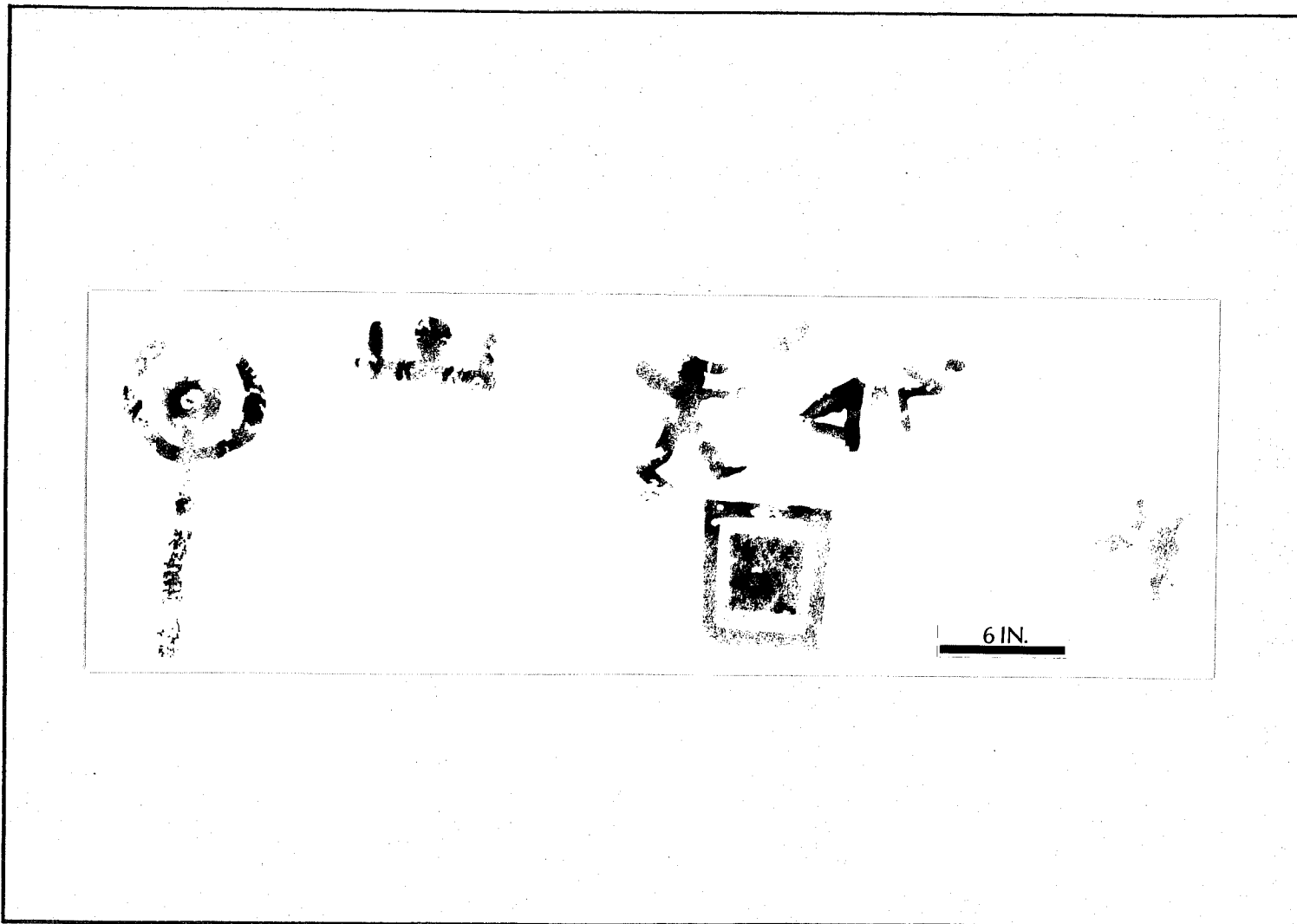
Recorded August 29, 1967.

There are eight separate discernible paintings here. Starting on the left, there is an upright line surmounted by a small hollow circle, which in turn is enclosed by a curved line which almost forms a circle, but is open at the top. Above and right of this is a horizontal line with an upright line at each end and an upright protrusion between the two. The next symbol is a human with outstretched arms and a line extending from the right side of his head, shown in the act of walking. To his right are two geometric figures, with a painted dot to the right of each. These figures are apparently part of the Cree Syllabarium developed by James Evans, a missionary at Norway House, Manitoba, in 1840.

Below the human/syllabic group is a solidly-coloured square surrounded by another square drawn in outline. To the right of the syllabics is a fragmentary patch of purple pigment. This same purple colour appears on the human figure and on places on the syllabic figures. This may be evidence of these particular paintings being "renewed" after they were first done. Finally, there is a faded reddish brown line of pigment above and between the human and the syllabics (Figure 4).

The first figures on the left are a reddish-brown rust colour. The squares are only slightly different in colour, a reddish orange-brown (therefore they may have been painted at the same time), but the human and syllabic figures are dis-

Figure 4



Wamninuta Island Site

tinguishably different in pigmentation - a somewhat faded dark purple-brown.

The painted rock face is vertical; it falls straight into the water, and the paintings are reached by canoe. The cliff where the paintings occur is about 15 feet high. The water level was 51-3/4 inches below the bottom of the right syllabic figure.

The rock surface is very rough, and there are gaps in the pigment in various parts of the paintings. Lichens grow in some of these pockings. The predominant lichens are brown-black foliose (Parmelia sp.) interspersed with grey (Parmelia sp.) and a yellow-green type (Ramalina sp.).

There is no overhang or other protection for the paintings, consequently, they are exposed to rain and seepage water. No patination over any of the figures was observed, however.

The tops of the initials "P.B." painted on the rock with tar (?) just touch the bottom of the square figures. A similarly-done arrow below and left of the initials points to the left (downstream).

Site No. 5 - High Rock Narrows Site #1.

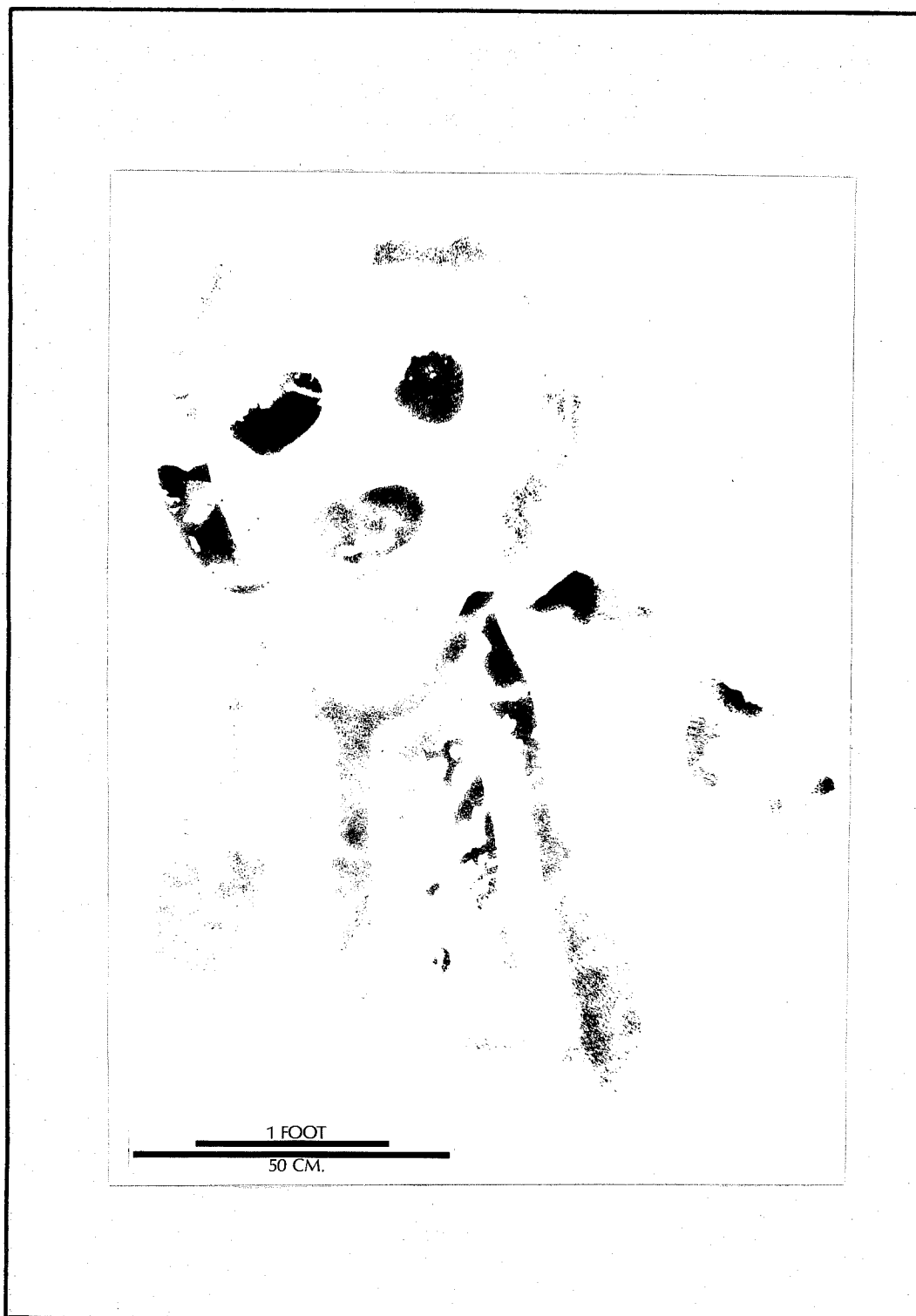
Geographical location: 55° 38' N. Lat., 105° 42' W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 165° E. of N.

Recorded August 29, 1967.

This site consists of a single figure, a very large anthropomorph, seen in face view (Figure 5). The pigment is

Figure 5



High Rock Narrows Site #1

a dull brown rust colour, and is very faded over most of the figure. Lecanora sp. and Parmelia sp. lichens obscure much; this and the rough rock surface also has contributed to the incompleteness of the lines. Rinodina oreina lichens are also found on the rock face.

The head of the anthropomorph is the clearest part of the painting, and the right arm is also fairly distinct, although faded. The left arm is represented by only vestigial traces of paint. Feet cannot be discerned. The figure is depicted as having two eyes and an open mouth, but no nose. A faint line appears to be drawn down the centre of the body from the neck to the bottom of the body cavity. (This characteristic may be seen also on Face V at the next site downstream).

The painting is found on a large, "thin" slab of rock which averages 2 to 4 feet in thickness, and is about 12 feet square. The slab rests on another one lying in the water; the upper part of this second slab serves as a ledge to stand on to reach the paintings. The ledge was 55 inches above the water on August 29, 1967, and the bottom of the painting, while very difficult to distinguish, appeared to be about 4 inches above the ledge.

There is no overhang of rock over the painting, and the little seepage water it would be exposed to would be that from rain falling directly on the slab the painting is on. There is no evidence of patination over the paint.

In a number of places ongoing natural exfoliation of the

granitic rock has removed some of the pigment.

Site No. 6 - High Rock Narrows Site #2.

Geographical location: 55° 38' N. Lat., 105° 41' W. Long.

Recorded August 30, 1973.

This is the largest of the upper Churchill sites, and is composed of a number of pictographs on seven separate rock faces in two distinct settings: next to the water, and up high cliff faces back from the water.

The first five faces are found along the water at a place where outcrop juts into a narrows on the canoe route across Black Bear Island Lake. This place is called High Rock.

Face I is reached by standing on a rock ledge that slants into the water. The only readily identifiable figure is a beaver depicted as viewed from above, with a dot on either side of the head. It is a dark brown-rust colour. Both chipping of the rock face and fading of pigment, and green paint applied in modern times obscure part of the other paintings here. There is some suggestion that the figure immediately above the beaver is similar to the central symbol at Site #20, a face with a neck with bars drawn across it. However, there are some differences, which can be seen in the reproductions of each, and the extreme faintness of parts of the painting here, and apparently intentional chipping of the rock, makes this comparison very problematic. The figure or figures in question here are a faded orangeish red-brown rust colour. Above this is quite a bit of very faded red rust

pigment running approximately horizontally and then upwards.

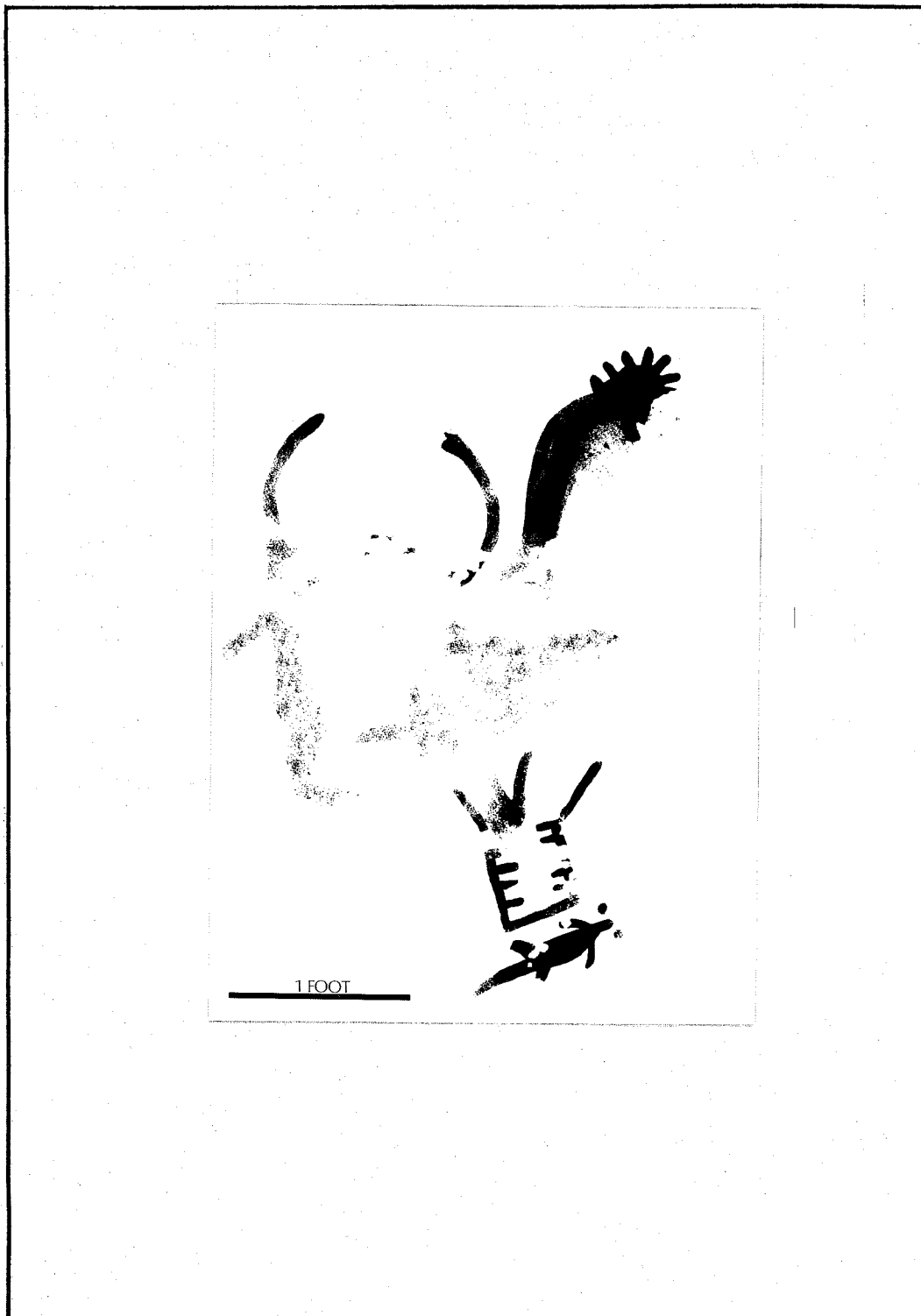
In the upper left portion of the face there are the upper parts of two distinct curved lines, but what they join is obscured by chipping, which is quite serious here.

To the right of these is a dark red-brown rust coloured figure which consists of a ball of pigment with a number of short protrusions extending from it, and two curved lines curving down to the left out of this. The lower part of the main mass of pigment is obscured by the presence of a light green paint applied to the rock (Figure 6a). There is no lichen encroachment or patination on the paintings, but umbilicate Lecanora sp. colonies are found to the right of the beaver.

The cliffs are some 10 to 12 feet high above the paintings, and the rock face is vertical except for a dishing of it where the upper left paintings are found. There is an overhang one foot wide over the painted face. The orientation of the rock face is 165° East of North, and the distance between the water level and the bottom of the beaver's tail was 54 inches.

Face II is a rock face that drops directly into the water 20 feet from the right side of Face I. There are six figures here, all small and faint. The upper symbol is a line with two "arms" extending down and to the sides. The water was 39 inches to the top of this figure. Below this is a short line, a longer line with a lateral line attached to each end, a mark like an upsidedown check mark, and finally, a pair of

Figure 6a



High Rock Narrows Site #2

short marks. These last marks, 38 inches right of the "check mark", are not reproduced.

These symbols are a faded orangeish rust colour, except for the left of the pair of marks on the right, which is a faded red-rust (Figure 6b).

The cliff is only about 7 feet high here, and the face leans forward about 5 degrees from the vertical. The orientation of the rock face is 165° West of North.

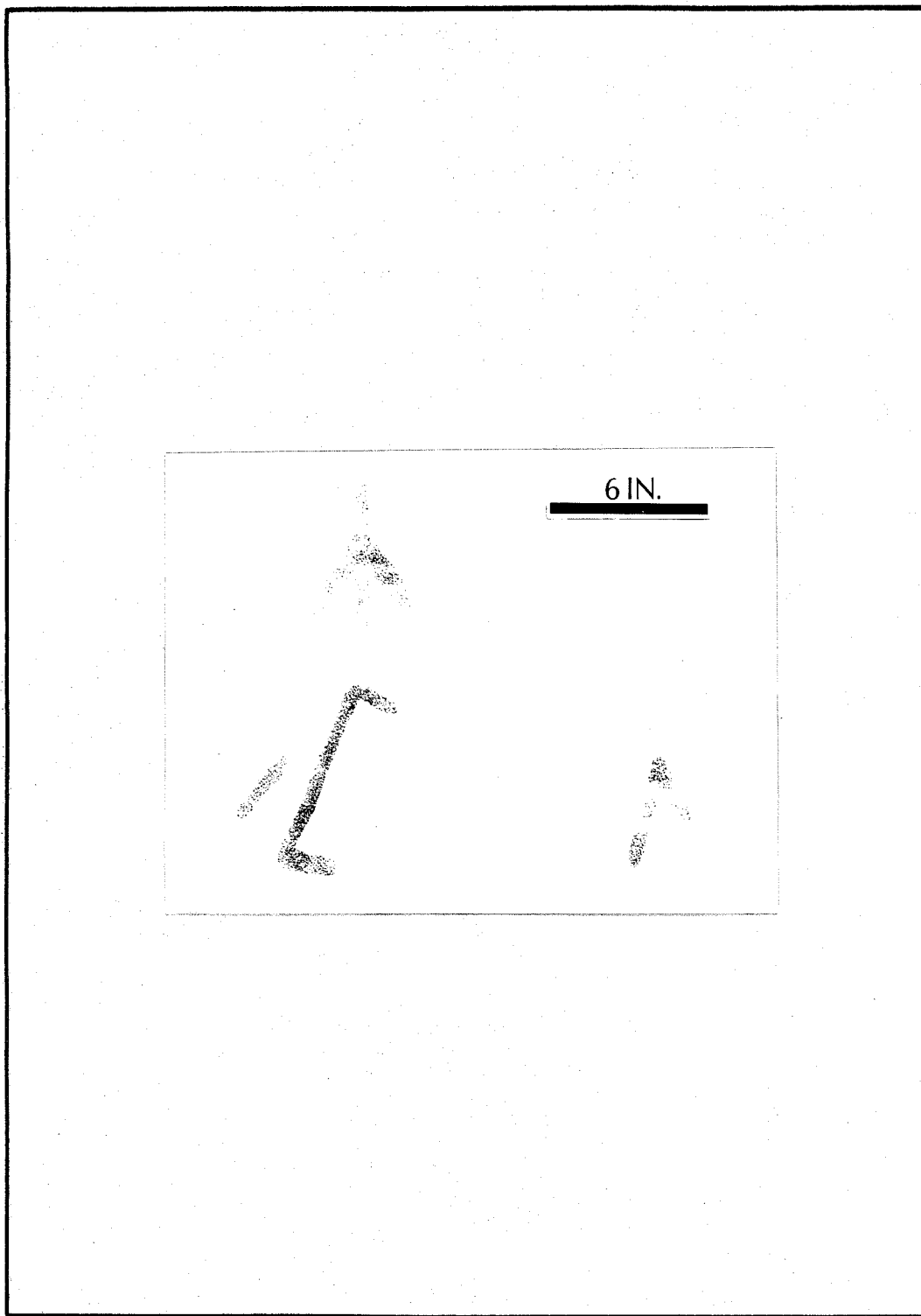
Face III is approximately 65 feet east of Face II. A small curved figure with a small oval below it are the only symbols here. They are a faint orangeish red-rust colour (Figure 6c).

Face IV is found approximately 34 feet east of Face III. Here there is a large curved line in a faded orangeish red-brown pigment, with two even more faded marks below (Figure 6d).

Face V consists of a single figure, an anthropomorph with horns, upraised arms, and a line down the centre of the body cavity (Figure 6e). It is on a rough surface and there are some gaps in the paint, but the outlines can be made out well enough. There is no overhang of rock, and it is open to the rain. The orientation of this face is 140° West of North, and the distance from the water to the top of the symbol's head was $54\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

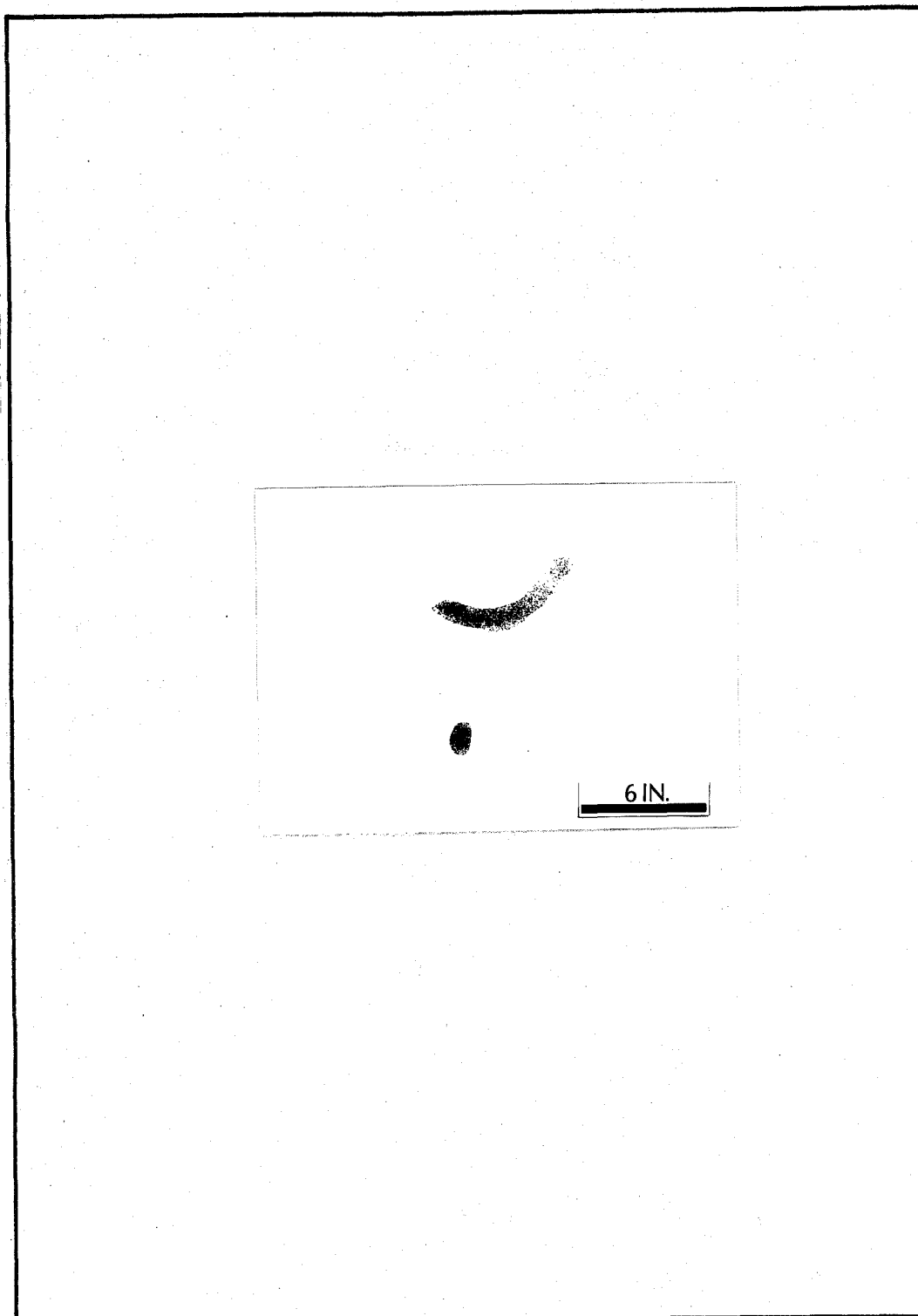
Lichens, light yellow (umbilicate Lecanora sp.) and yellow-grey (Rinodina oreina), were growing especially on the head and in recesses elsewhere.

Figure 6b



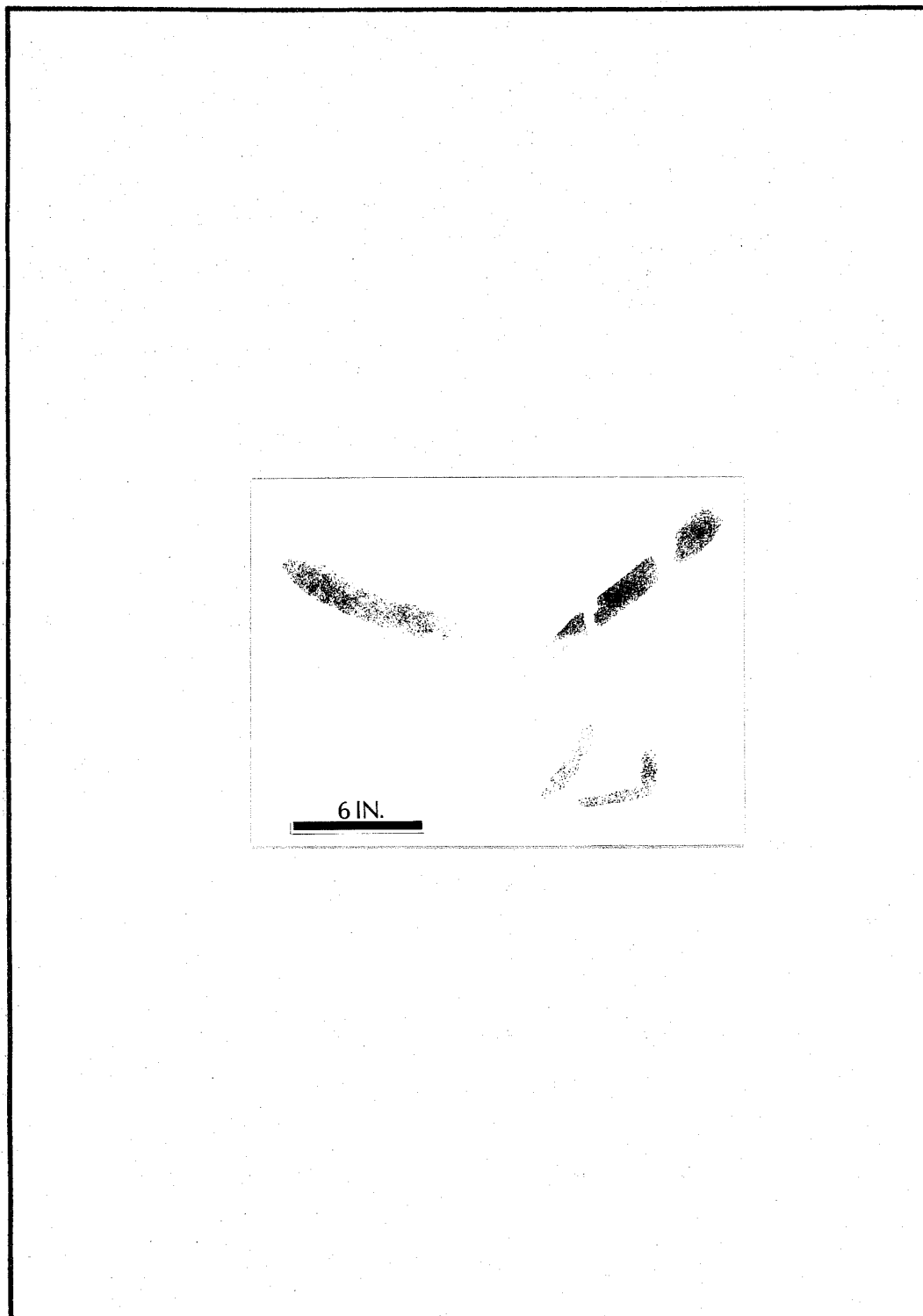
High Rock Narrows Site #2

Figure 6c



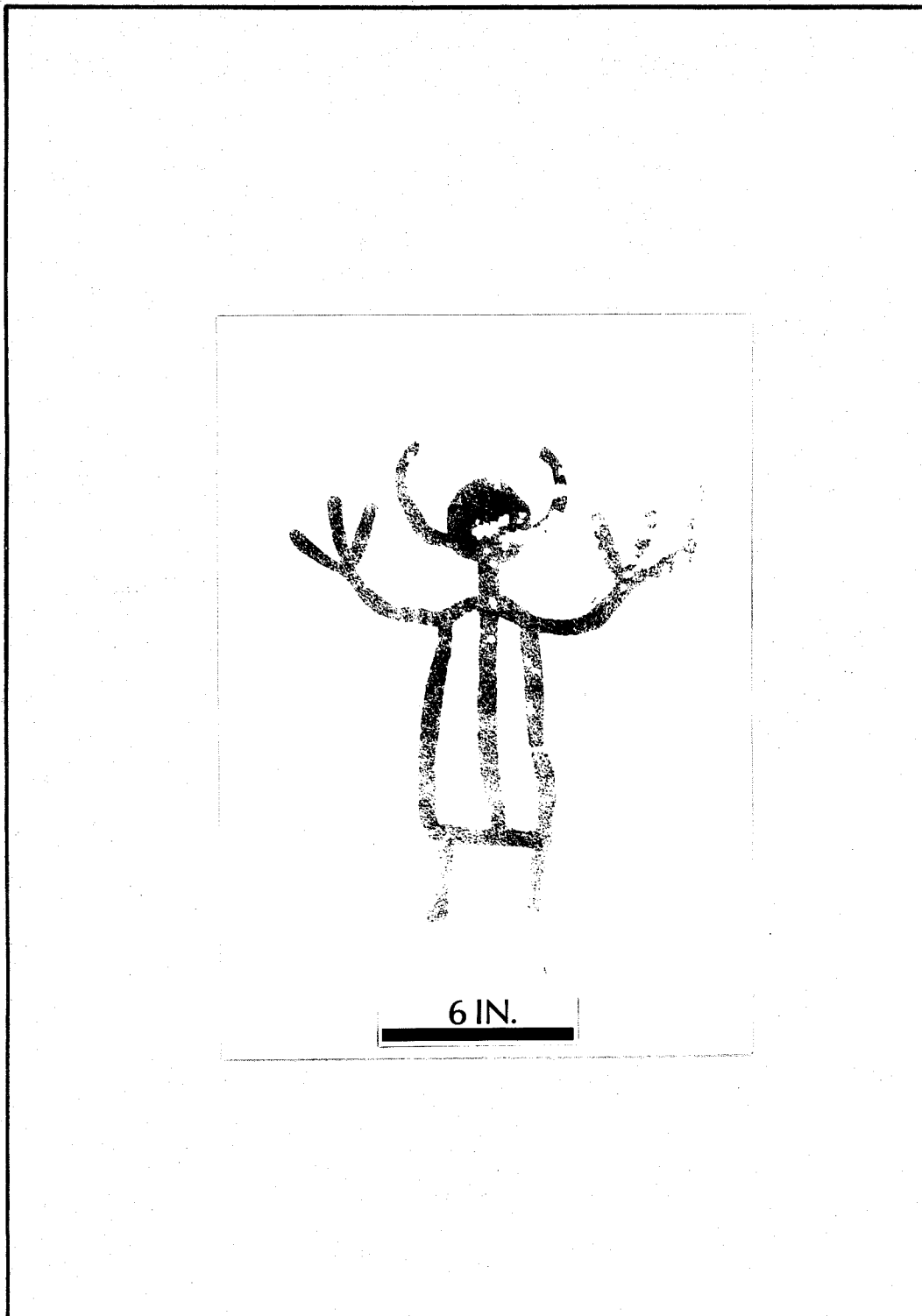
High Rock Narrows Site #2

Figure 6d



High Rock Narrows Site #2

Figure 6e



High Rock Narrows Site #2

This pictograph is about 20 feet east of Face IV. Around the corner east of the jointed boulder where this figure is found are the high cliffs which give this location its local name.

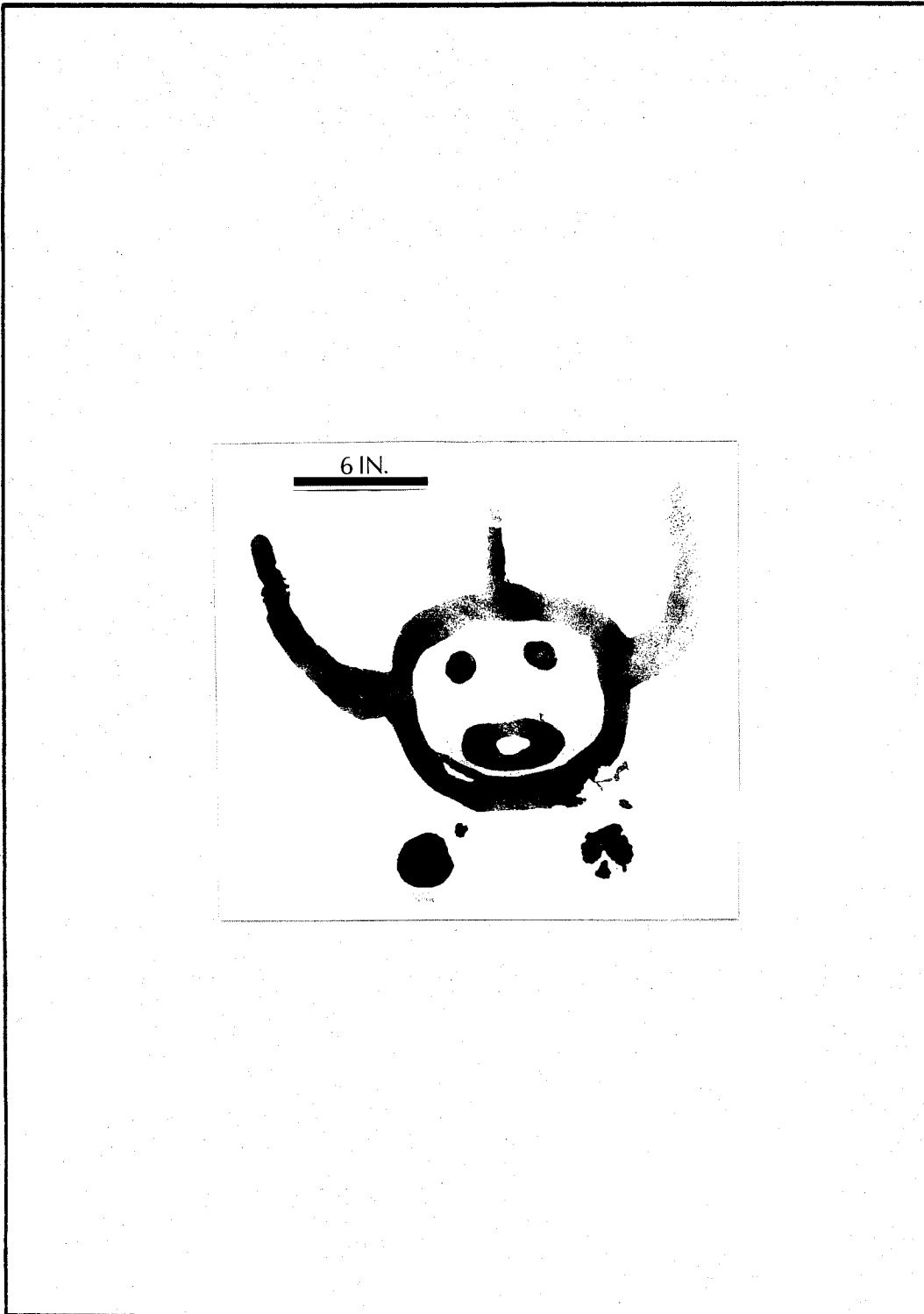
Faces VI and VII were "discovered" as the author and his field assistant on this recording trip, Noel Dyck, were preparing to continue down the river home, after recording the first five faces of paintings. These were missed by Selwyn Dewdney on his 1963 visit to the site. Face VII is one of the most striking and important groups of rock paintings found in the Canadian Shield.

These groups of paintings are reached by climbing over detached blocks of outcrop up the high cliffs back from the water. Face VI is situated above and to the west of Face VII, perhaps 15 feet further up the cliffs.

Face VI is a single large anthropomorphic head, with two balls of colour situated below. The head bears two large curved horns, and a line extending straight up from the top of the head. It has eyes and an open mouth, but no nose (Figure 6f). The upper right side of the head is more faded than the rest.

Face VII is an extraordinarily large group of paintings, six feet high by six feet wide. The pigment of these and the symbols on Face VI is for the most part very vivid (approximately a red rust colour), except for some fading of the lowest parts of the group. The pigment similarity and the general balance of elements on the rock face indicates that

Figure 6f



High Rock Narrows Site #2

these figures are indeed related to each other as a coherent group.

A large, three-sided enclosure open at the top forms a frame for seven paintings - a bird with long, sinuous wings situated above a circle with a cross drawn inside, two humans with upraised arms and dumb-bell-shaped torsos, an unidentified symbol below the left human, consisting of a line with three upright extensions, and a small bird with a long, snake-like line extending downward from the tip of its right wing.

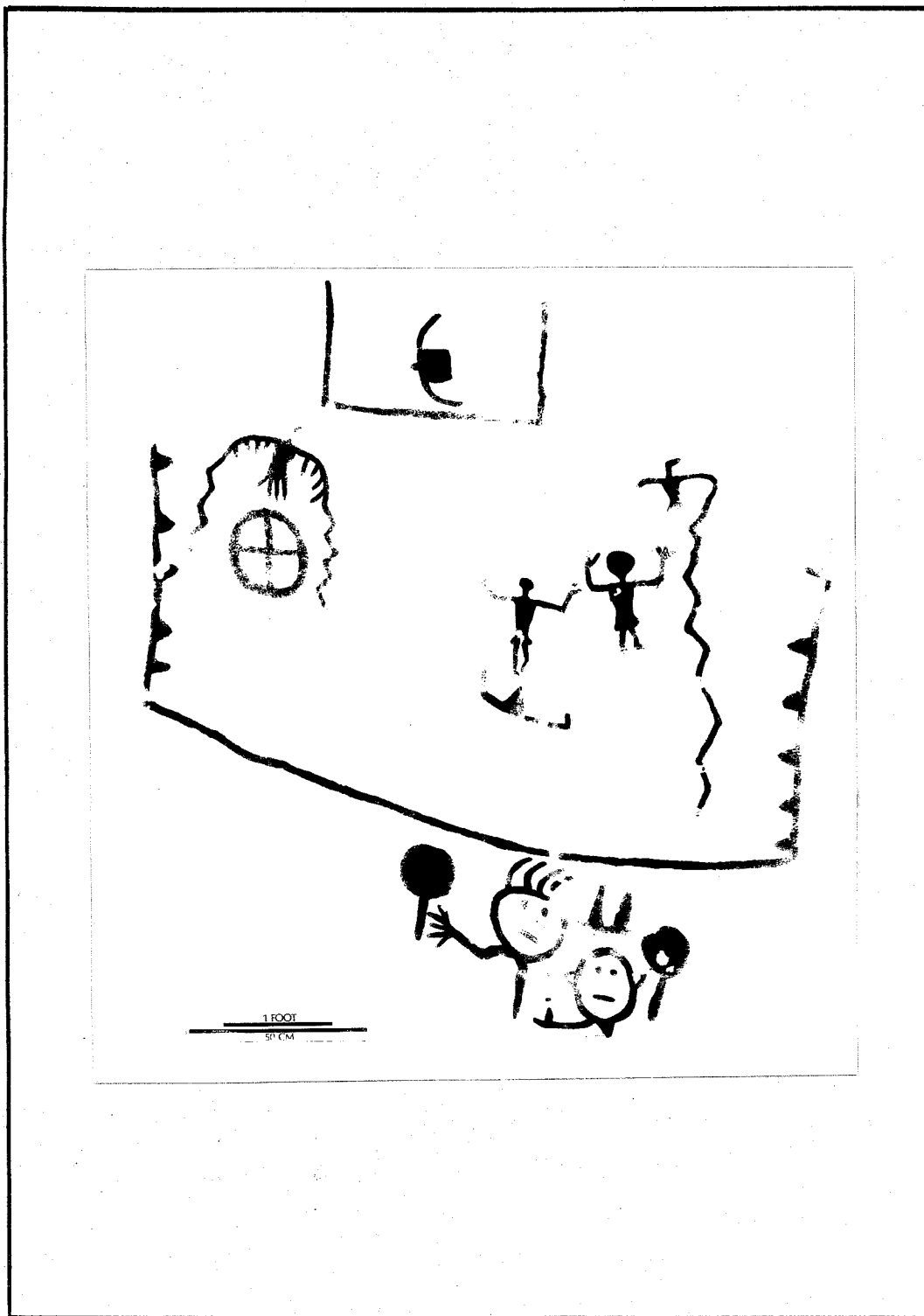
Above these is a three-sided box with a creature (perhaps aquatic?) with long arms, turned sideways, as if flying or swimming.

Below the large three-sided enclosure are found two highly stylized human figures, one touching an apparent medicine rattle, the other smoking a pipe. Another rattle is positioned to the right of this taller human, and an unidentified figure is positioned above his head (Figure 6g).

This set of paintings is reached by standing on a ledge immediately below the rock face which is only about four feet wide. It was estimated that this face was some 20 to 25 feet above water level and about the same distance inland from the edge of the rock talus below. It faces approximately the same direction as Faces II to IV.

In a number of places fairly sizeable chips of rock, including some to which paint was attached, were actively exfoliating from the granitic surface. However, in comparing

Figure 6g



High Rock Narrows Site #2

colour transparencies taken in 1967 with one taken five years later, no significant damage to paintings by this erosional agency was apparent.

Site No. 7 - Rattler Creek Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 38'$ N. Lat., $104^{\circ} 33'$ W. Long.

Recorded June 30, July 1 & 2, 1965.

This site is located just to the southeast of the confluence of Rattler Creek and a stream running from a small lake one mile to the northeast of the site. The outcrop is about 36 feet high, and four distinct groups and two single paintings may be distinguished here on four separate rock surfaces.

Face I contains two separate groups of paintings and a single painting, Face II a single painting, Face III a group, and Face IV, a group.

The first group on the left (the southernmost one at the site) consists of four figures, three of which are considerably faded. The clearest is apparently a caribou, judging by the configuration of the antlers and the general appearance of the body. Below it and left is another four-legged creature with a tapered, upturned tail, whose front half is very indistinct. To the right of the caribou are two other figures which are even less distinguishable because of considerable encroachment by grey lichens, and the dark background of the rock. There are two species of Physcia present here. The first figure to the right of the caribou looks something like an insect with seven "legs" along each side,

and the last figure like a creature with a tail, with legs extending to the sides (Figure 7a).

The rock face where these paintings are located slopes forward about 45 degrees. The caribou was painted on a previously patinated surface, and in turn a white patina has obscured major parts of the front of the body of this animal. The bottom of the paintings was approximately 30 inches above the water.

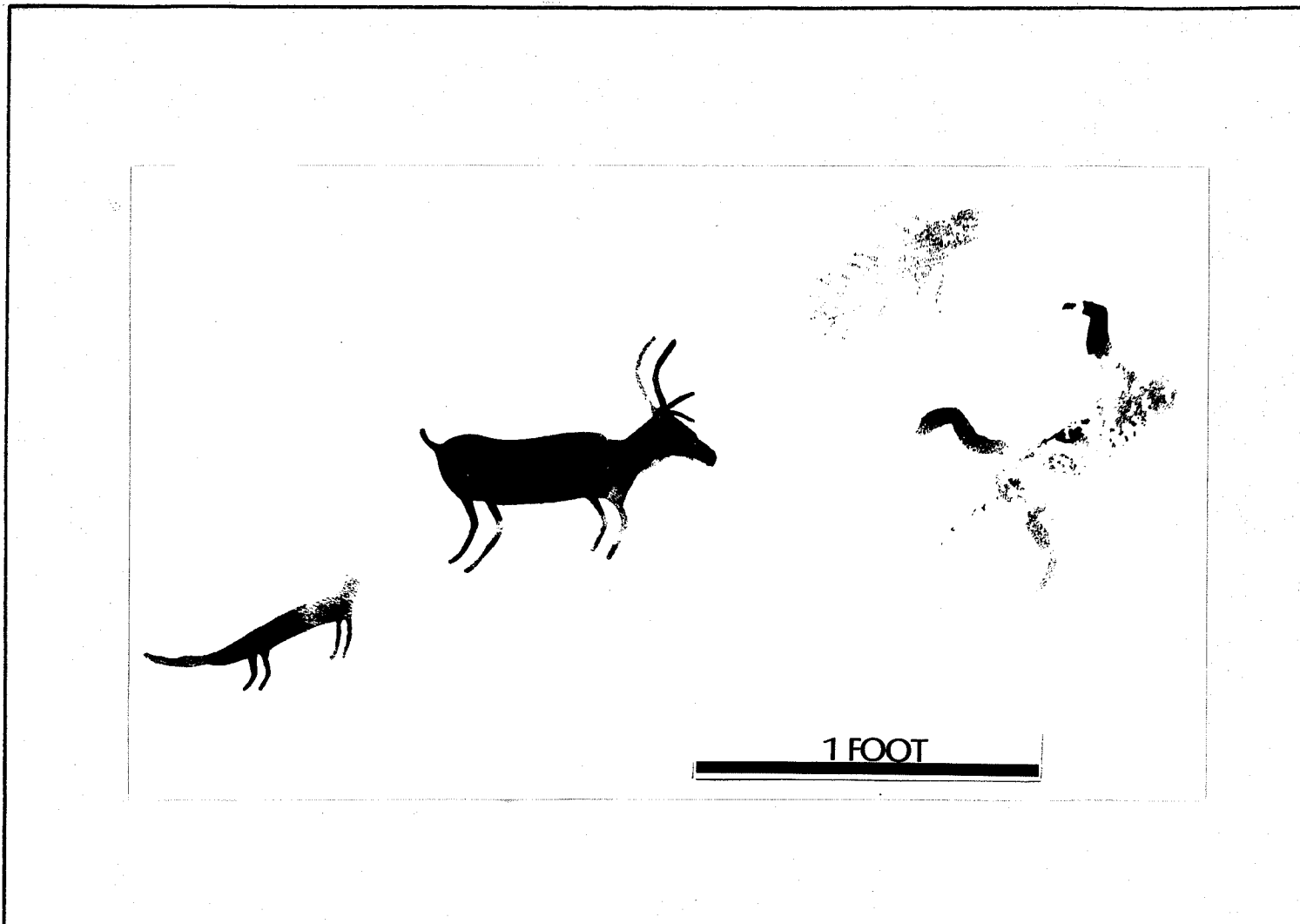
A small colony of black lichen touched the upper edge of the back a third of the way forward from the tail to the neck.

The second group on Face I begins $66\frac{1}{2}$ inches right of the first, and is a complex one. A vividly clear beaver seen from above is painted on the rock face above a composite of two structures with "fringes" and long curved lines attached. To the right of these is a faint front part of an open-mouthed canid (Figure 7b). The beaver has only touches of white patination, and no lichen encroachment. The large structures have considerable streaks of white over them, and are further obscured by lichen growths and staining. The canid is faded primarily from staining of the rock surface.

This group and faces II and III are on rock surfaces that lean forward about 30 degrees from the vertical.

Face II is separated from Face I by slabbing of the outcrop, and is a small surface in the same plane, but 16 to 19 inches forward of Face I. There is a single faint painting here of perhaps a small, tailed animal, highly stylized

Figure 7a



Rattler Creek Site

(this symbol is illustrated on the left side of Figure 7c). The left side of this symbol is 10 inches from the left side of the canid on Face I.

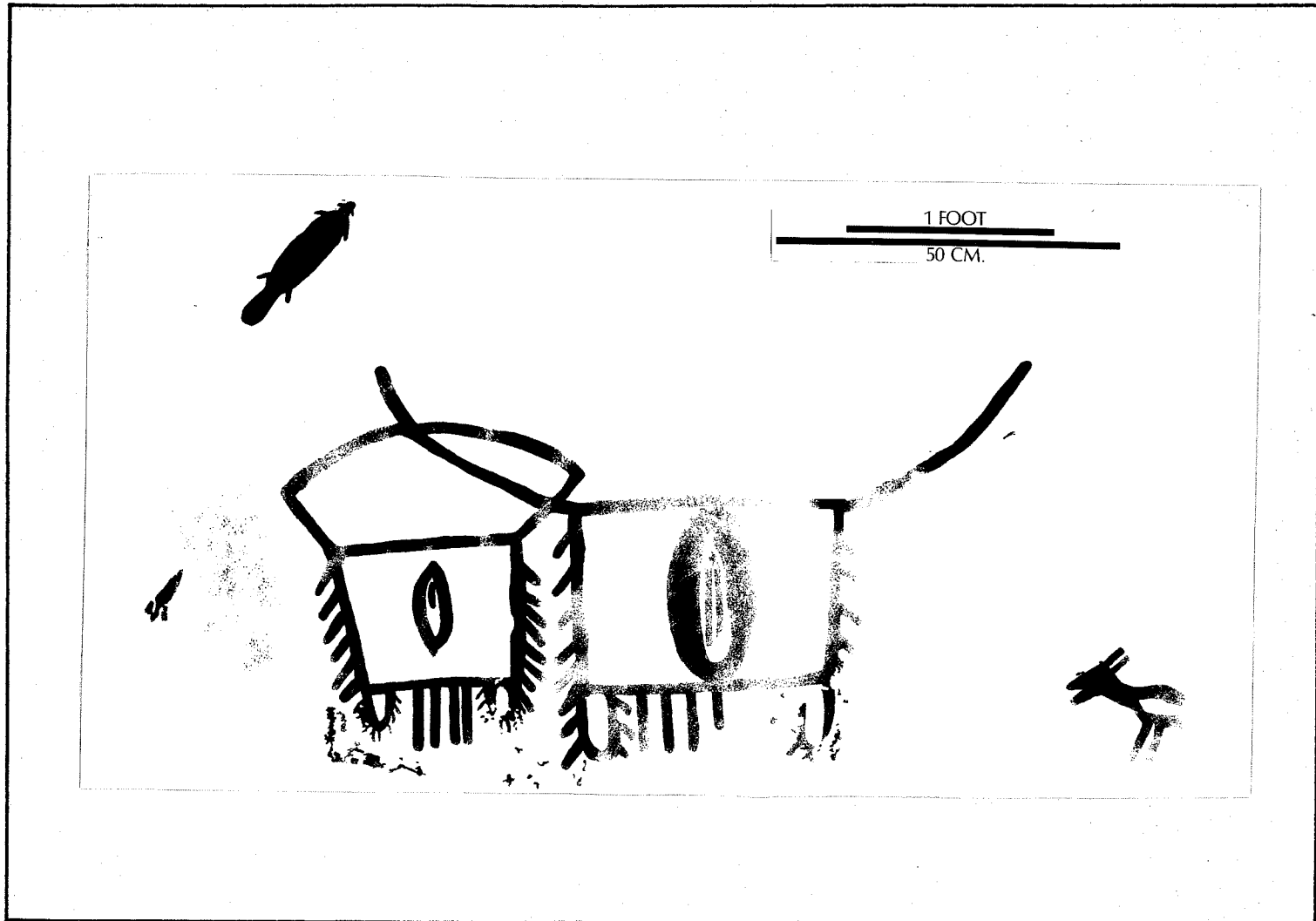
Face III begins 10 inches right of the stylized animal, and consists of two quite clear groups of interconnected lines and structures and two faded and indistinguishable painted areas to the right of these. There is much pigment on this rock surface, and the lines and structures appear to be painted over earlier paintings which have since smeared and faded. The presence of the two faded figures to the right suggests this also (Figure 7c). Patination does not appear to have affected any part of these paintings, and a small colony of light grey lichens was noted only in one place. The orientation of Faces I to III is 128 degrees East of North.

Face IV begins approximately 45 yards north of the right side of Face III, on the same cliff outcrop as the other paintings.

The main painting here appears to be a horned bovid with a pronounced hump, the horns appearing in twisted perspective. The rock surface is stained, possibly from previously-applied paintings. The bison (?) is very faded. The tail and upper half of the hind leg are fairly clear, as are the horns and part of the back. There are no lichens on this painting (Figure 7d).

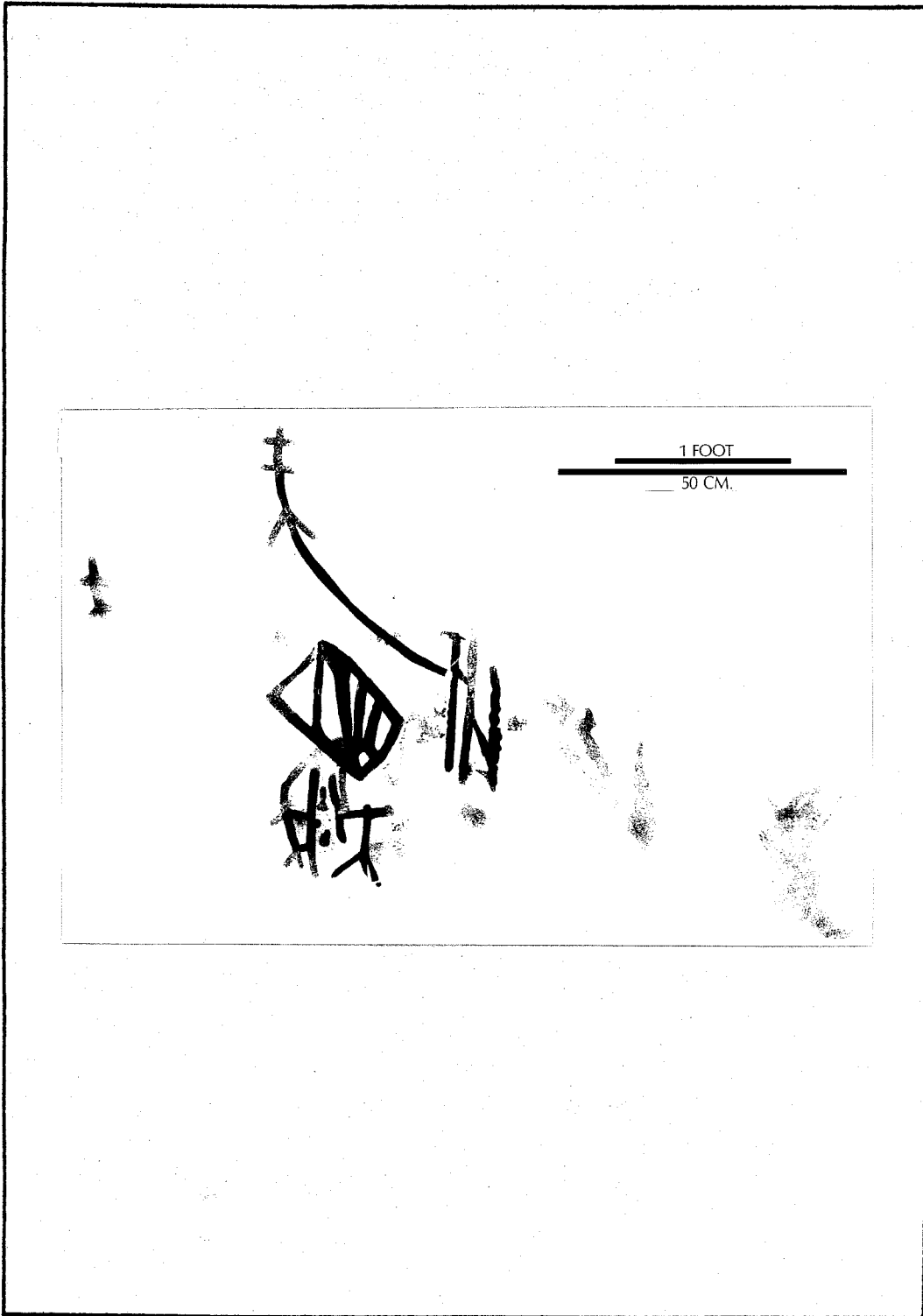
Above and to the left is a vivid patch of brown red rust on a rougher-textured portion of the rock face, which looks something like a three-toed human footprint. There are

Figure 7b



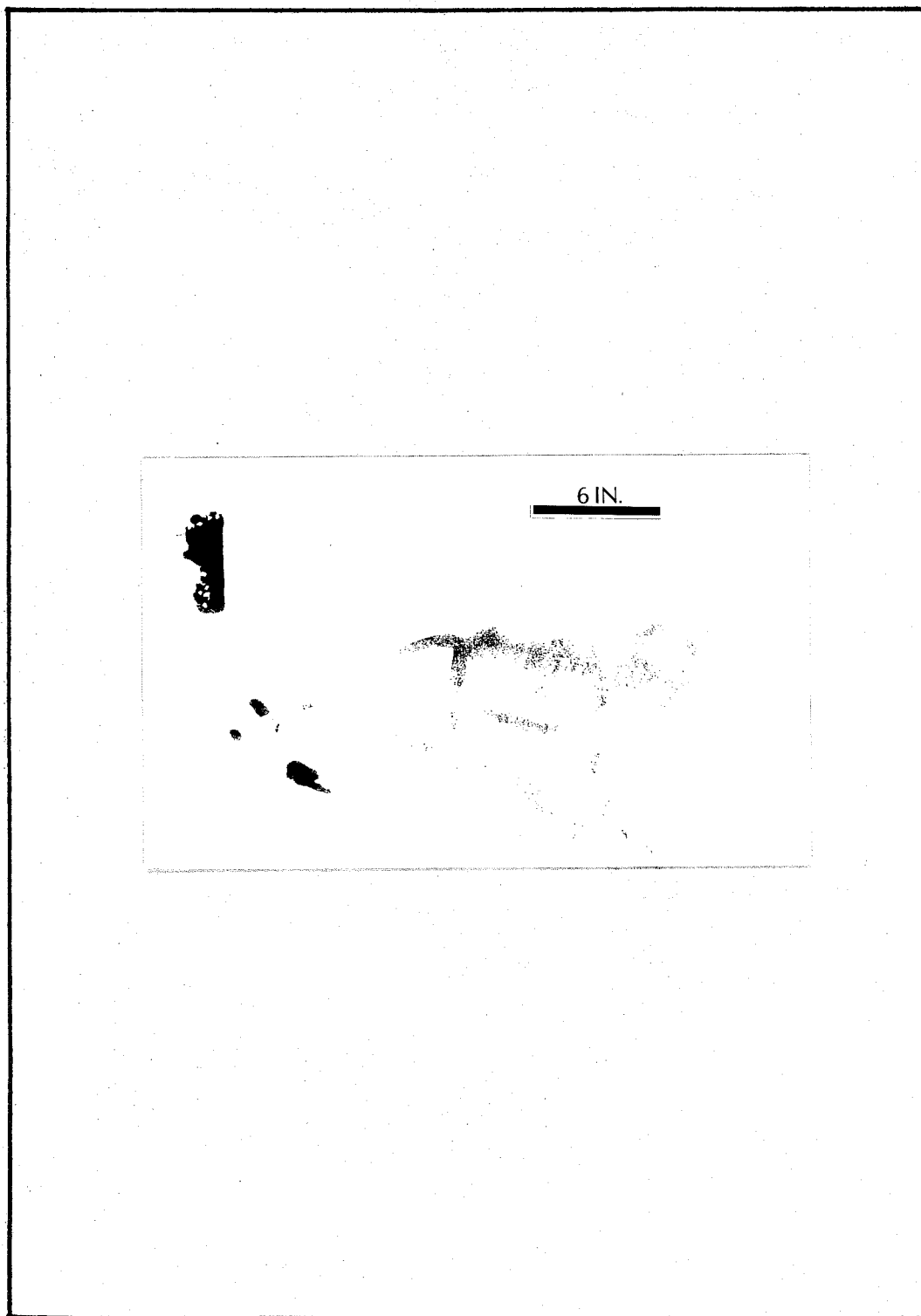
Rattler Creek Site

Figure 7c



Rattler Creek Site

Figure 7d



Rattler Creek Site

a few small growths of black lichen on this painting. Below this is more pigment, most of which is obscured by a greenish-grey patina.

The orientation of Face IV is 108 degrees East of North. The rock face leans forward about 3 degrees, and there is little protection for the paintings. It was 34 inches from the bottom of the "footprint" to the water on July 11.

There was no evidence of intentional or natural chipping of any of the rock faces at this site.

Site No. 8 - Cow Narrows Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 32'$ N. Lat., $104^{\circ} 32'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 172° W. of N.

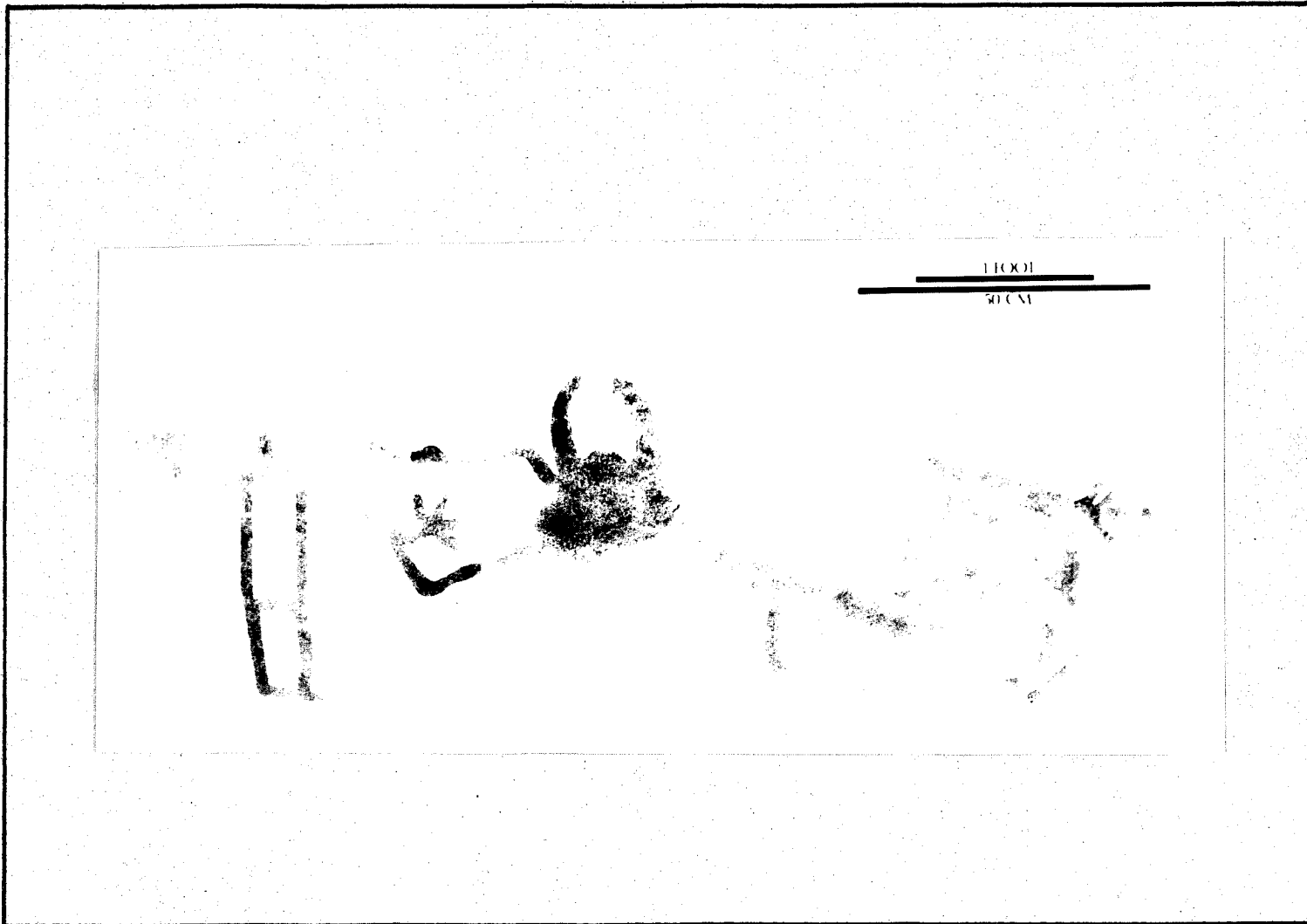
Recorded September 3, 1966.

Two large paintings, one of a human and one of a bison, connected to each other by two lines, are found on a low sloping rock surface on Cow Island, Mountain Lake (Figure 8).

This is a most unusual location for paintings, compared to the other Churchill River sites, and indeed, to other sites in the Precambrian Shield, because the paintings are fully exposed to sunlight, rainfall, and to seepage water. The symbols are very faded and stained from groundwater seepage, but the outlines can still be delineated fairly well. This cannot be said, incidentally, for various other more protected sites.

The plainest part is the animal's head. To its left and right the rock is stained black from seepage. The most staining is over the hump and part of the back behind the

Figure 8



Cow Narrows Site

hump, over the man's body, and between his right hand and the bison's head. The lower boundaries of the animal are faded out from the red paint staining downward.

Two lines join the two figures, one from the man's head to the base of the left horn, and one from the man's right wrist to the mouth area of the bison.

The glacially-rounded outcrop curves backward from the water a total of about 12 feet. The angle of the bottom of the part of the rock face containing the paintings is 45 degrees; it slopes further, to an angle of 50 degrees at the top of the painted face, then flattens out above. The paintings were traced by standing on a foothold about 3 feet above the water, and it was 8 feet 2½ inches from the water to the top of the left horn of the bison.

Site No. 9 - Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #1.

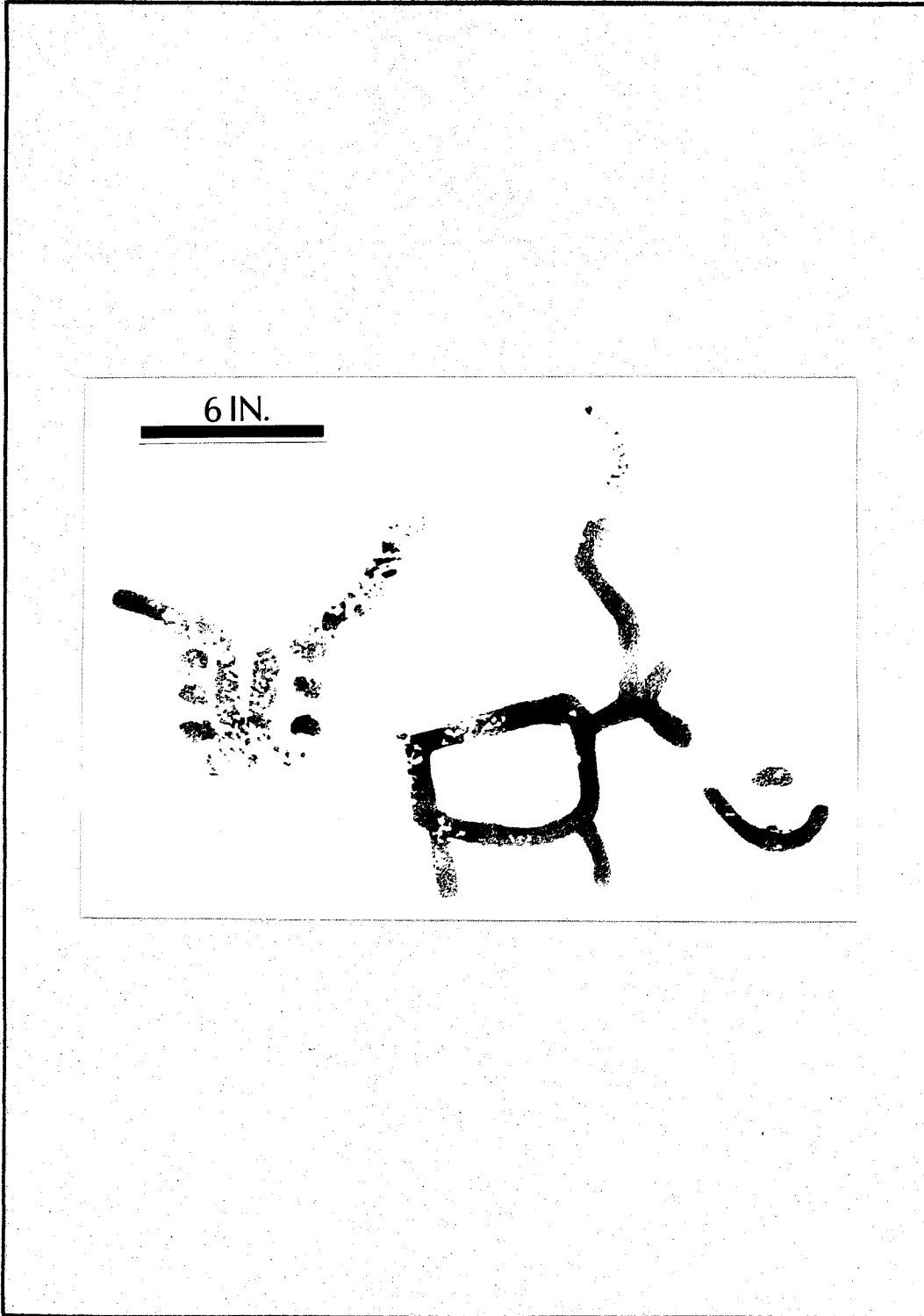
Geographical location: 55° 29' N. Lat., 104° 31' W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 128° E. of N.

Recorded June 25, 1965.

The paintings are in a group with four components. A stick animal unidentifiable as to species faces the right (north). Above its head extends a snake-like line. To the right and below the animal's head is a short mark curving upward at each end, with a small mark centered between each of these ends. Behind the animal is a figure composed of two vertical rows of three dots, with possibly two upright short lines between these rows, and two longer straight marks extending diagonally upward from the top of the rows of dots

Figure 9



Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #1

(Figure 9). The pigment of all the symbols is a reddish brown-rust colour.

There is no rock overhang protecting the vertical rock face. Lichen encroachment is very extensive here, and the upper part of the snake figure and the one behind the animal are particularly obscured and faded by minute brown (Acarospora sp.?) and Rinodina oreina lichens which form almost a film over these paintings.

This site occurs on a cliff varying from about 10 to 30 feet high which extends for some distance along the east side of this peninsula in Mountain Lake. The rocky shore along the base of the cliffs has been formed largely by rocks detaching themselves from the cliffs. The paintings were 5½ feet above the water on the date of recording, on a ten-foot high cliff, and were reached easily from good standing places on the rocks below.

The orientation of this rock face was omitted from the field notes but is approximately the same as Site #10, which occurs on the same peninsula.

Site No. 10 - Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #2.

Geographical location: 55° 28' N. Lat., 104° 31' W. Long.

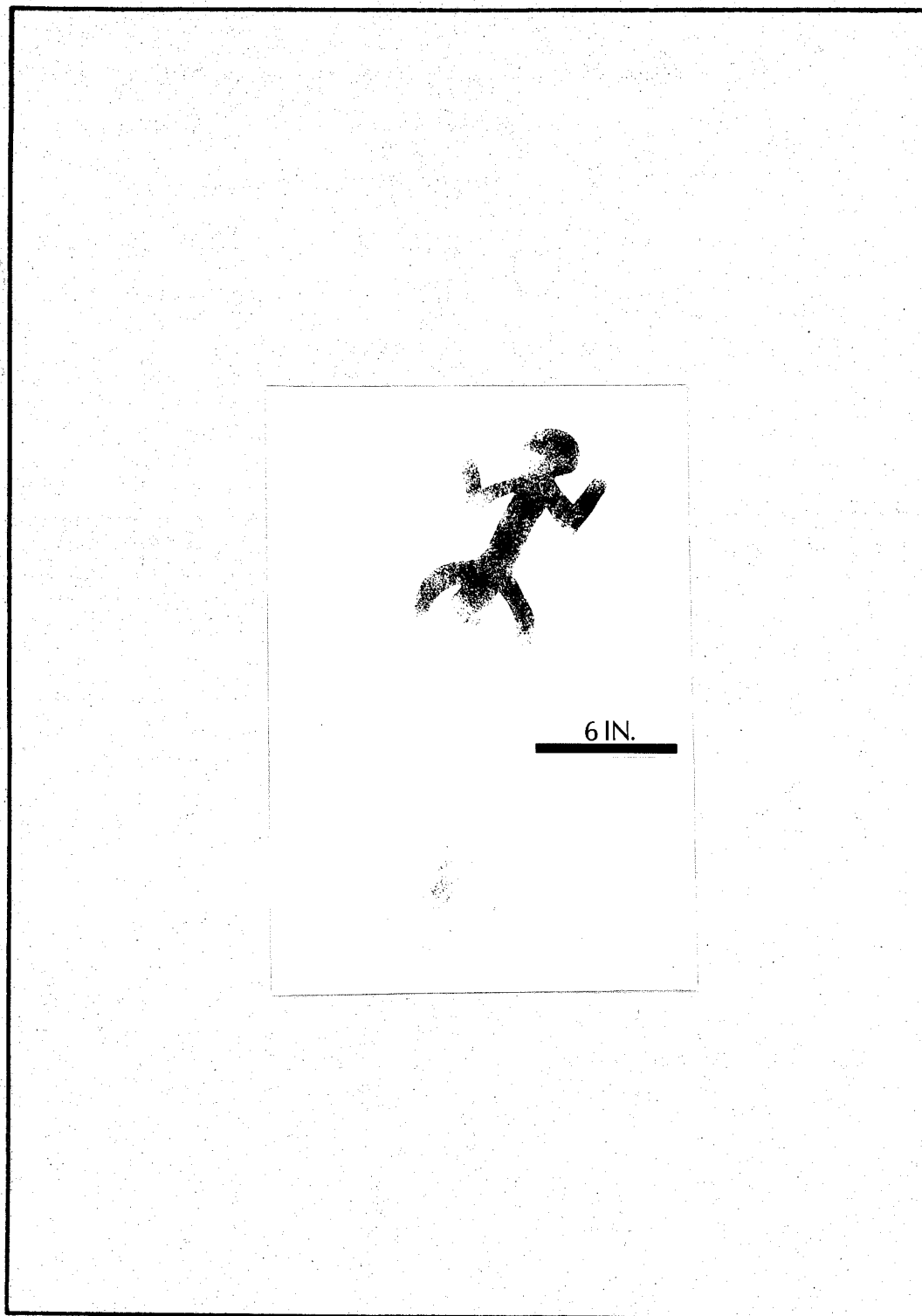
Orientation of rock face: 128° E. of N.

Recorded June 25, 1965.

This site is located about 50 yards south along the same set of cliffs as Site #9.

A single pictograph is apparently the only one here,

Figure 10



Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #2

although there is some evidence that a second similar figure may be painted eight inches below it. The painting looks like a human with a head at each end (Figure 10). It is a faded brick-red colour, and is painted on a brown-stained rock surface, making the outlines difficult to make out.

The second possible painting mentioned may simply be natural iron staining, which does appear in places all over the cliff face.

The painted rock face leans back from the vertical about 5 degrees, and there is a small overhang which affords little protection from weathering.

There was no lichen encroachment or rock chipping here, but there was patination on the upper head of the figure and on other parts of the body as well.

The painting is reached by gaining hand and footholds on the cliff face, approaching it by standing on rocks below. It was 8 feet above the water.

Site No. 11 - Neyo Onikup Bay Site.

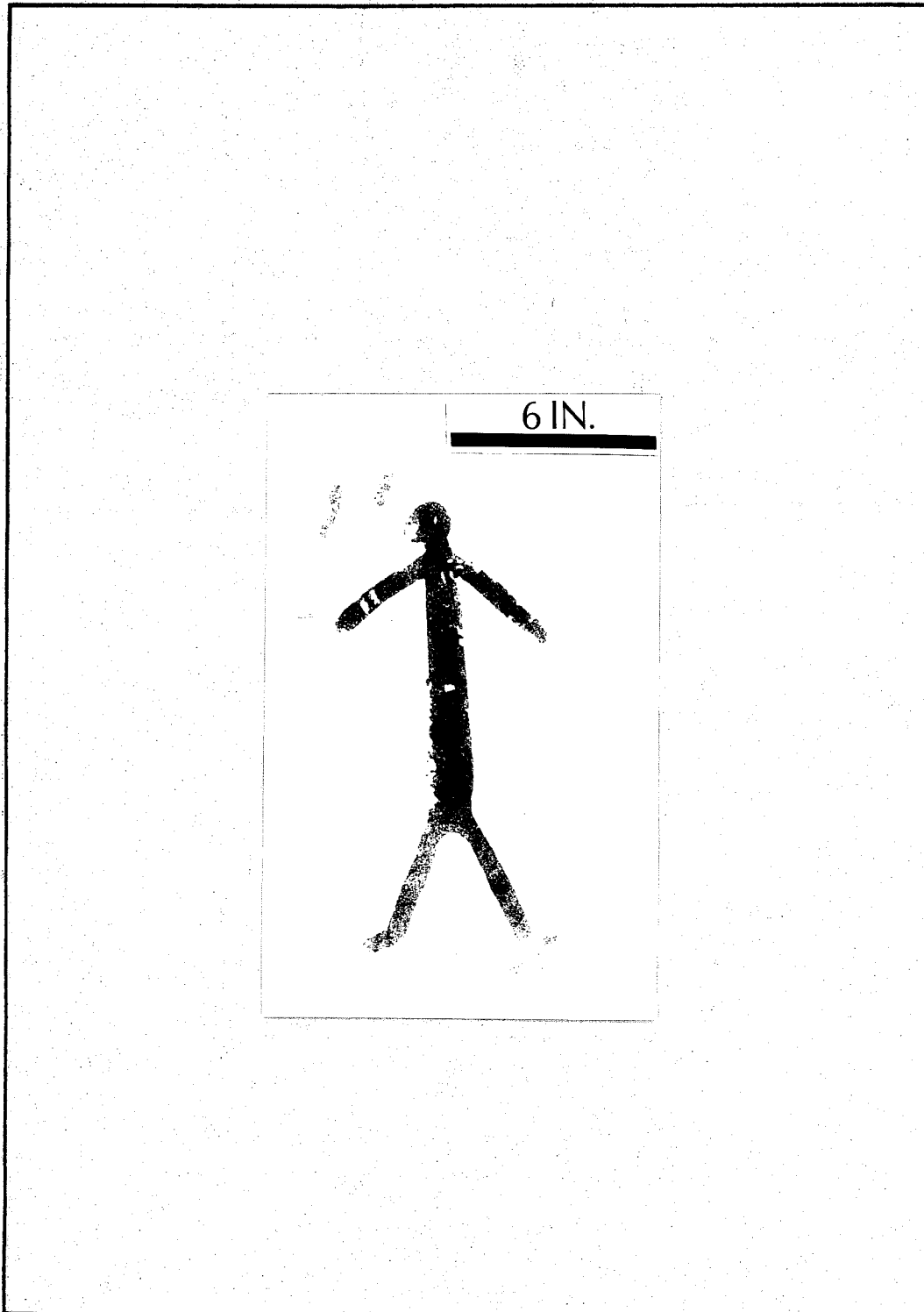
Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 27'$ N. Lat., $104^{\circ} 35'$ W. Long.

Recorded June 21, 1965.

A human with a greatly elongated torso and two faint short marks to the left of his head comprise the paintings here (Figure 11).

The painting is a red rust colour, the two marks possibly the same before they faded to the degree they possess today. The human is quite bright in colour, although the right foot in particular is somewhat obscured by white

Figure 11



Neyo Onikup Bay Site

patination.

Several very small colonies of black lichen dotted parts of the human.

The rock face is relatively smooth and was patinated before the paintings were made. The face slants forward about 40 degrees from vertical, facing a southeasterly direction, and is apparently quite well-protected from rain and seepage water.

On the date of recording, the pictographs were reached by standing on a rock slab lying in the water directly below the rock face, and were just over 6 feet above the water.

Site No. 12 - Stanley Rapids Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 26'$ N. Lat., $104^{\circ} 29'$ W. Long.

Recorded June 22, 1965.

Two almost square blocks of outcrop have provided the canvas for a considerable number of paintings at this site on a peninsula a few hundred yards upstream from Stanley (formerly Grave or Nepukituk) Rapids.

The left block is approximately 8 feet square, the right one 10, and they are separated by a six-inch vertical fissure.

Face I has five separate figures, Face II, sixteen, and Face III, six, including a large composite painting.

Face I is a bird-like symbol with outspread arms or wings, inside a curved arc, with a snake-like figure above the bird, and one to each side. The arc forms about a 7/10

complete circle.

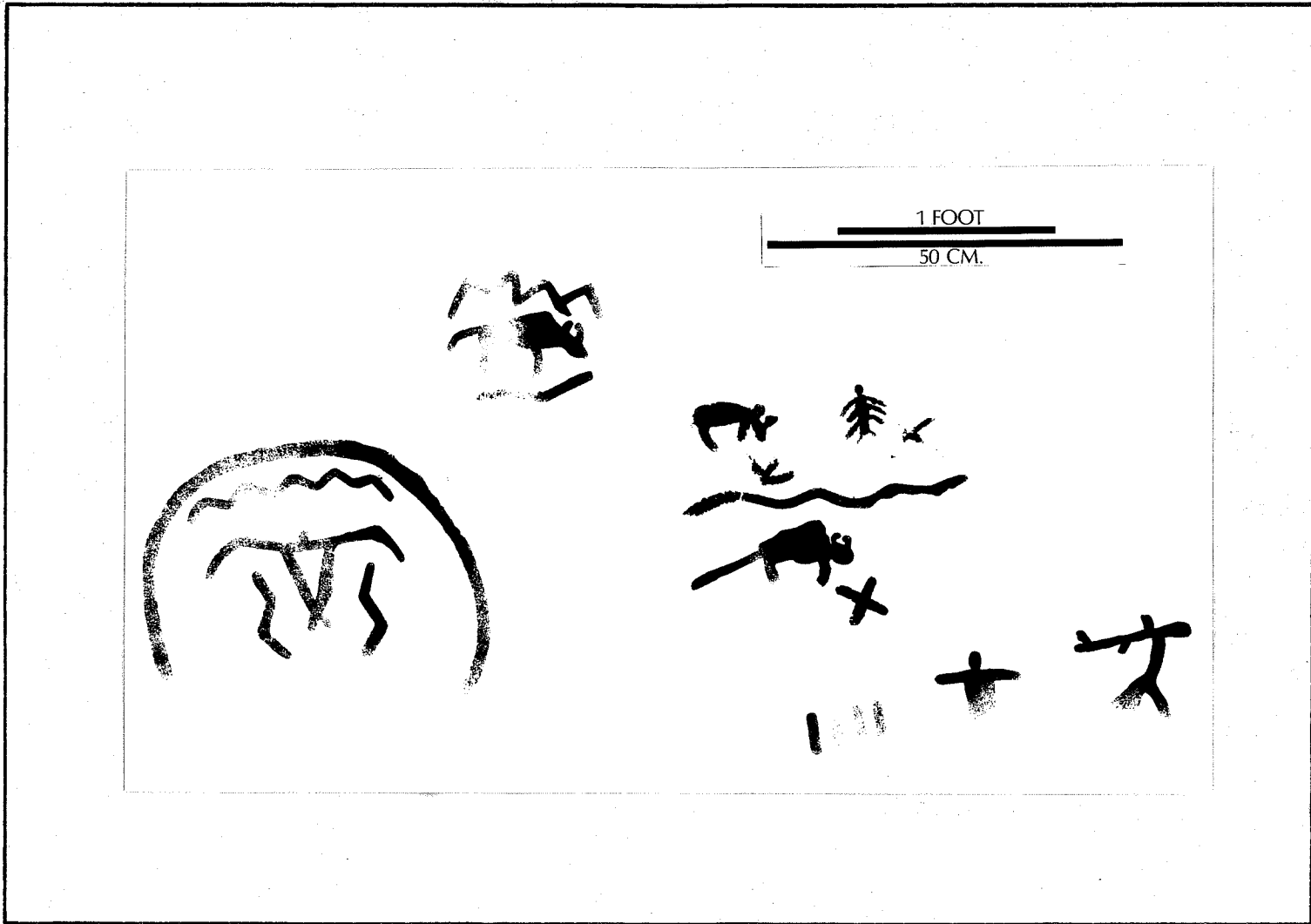
Face II begins with a small group on the upper left, a bison with a snake(?) above it and a curved line below. Below and to the right of this are seven figures - a small bear(?), a mark like a bird track, an insect-like figure, a curving horizontal line below these, and a bison and a cross-mark below the line.

Two figures, one of a small man with outstretched arms and another less identifiable, and four small, faint vertical marks to the left of the man, complete the Face II paintings. These are located on a small rock surface at the base of the large block of outcrop. They are more faded than any other paintings on the left of the two large blocks. All of the paintings on Face I and II appear to be approximately the same colour, a brownish red-rust, suggesting they were made at the same time by the same hand (Faces I and II are illustrated in Figure 12a).

No lichens were noted on any of these paintings, although fading is evident (especially of the left half of the uppermost three figures), and patination has started to cover parts of several pictographs. There is no rock overhang, so there is little protection from rainfall.

Face II has a forward lean of about 30 degrees from the vertical, and faces 128 degrees East of North. Face I is found on a separate rock surface formed by jointing of the outcrop, and faces more to the west. (No measurement of this difference was made in the field, but it is estimated that it

Figure 12a



Stanley Rapids Site

would be about 30 degrees, making the direction it faces 158 degrees East of North. As well, the rock face leans further forward, at about 45 degrees.)

The upper half of Face III depicts a man in the act of shooting a rifle at a running cervid, which is apparently being chased by a dog. The dog is very faded, and its outlines are very hazy. The man is somewhat more clearly made out, and the large animal is the clearest, although boundaries of parts of it (particularly the antlers) are not well defined. The general configuration of the body and of the antlers do not allow an exact species identification.

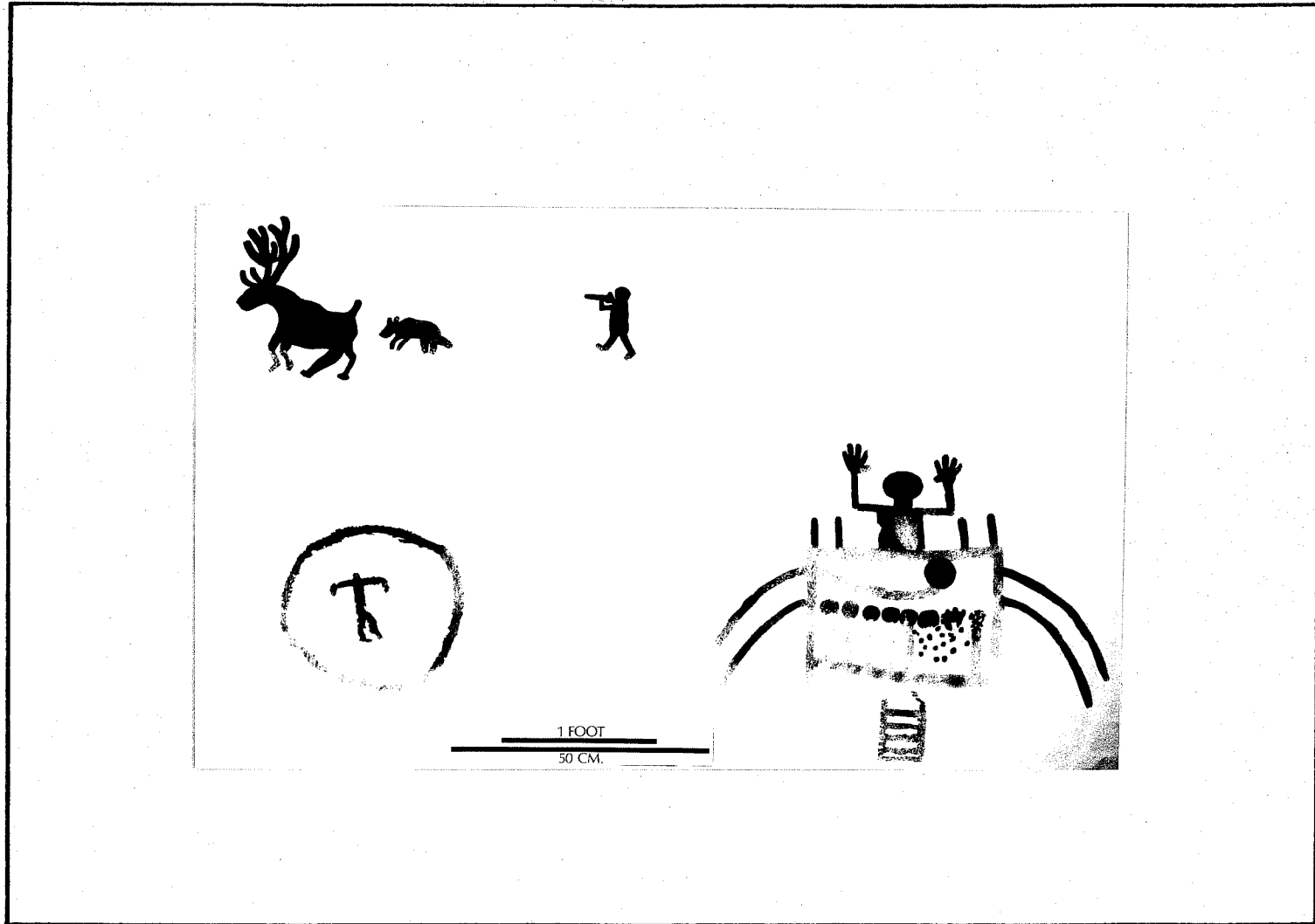
Below the cervid is a circle with a human inside. His arms are outstretched, and right knee slightly bent, giving him the appearance of dancing.

The last set of paintings is the most faded and patinated of any at the site, and is a complex composite. The most distinct parts are the half-bodied human with upraised arms, four long curved lines extending downward from the structure where the man is situated, four short upright lines going upward from this structure, and a solid ball of colour below the man. Below this a horizontal row of about nine smaller balls is found, and a small scalariform figure below these can be discerned (Figure 12b).

Fading and patination of the elements below the man, down the centre of the composite figure, is particularly severe.

Face III leans forward from the vertical about 5 degrees.

Figure 12b



Stanley Rapids Site

It, like Faces I and II, has no protection from rainfall, but it appears that this face is more subject to groundwater seepage from above after rains. The orientation is 128 degrees East of North.

The paintings on Face II appear to be the same basic colour as those on Faces I and II, again suggesting possible contemporaneity (although the man in the circle is the brightest on Face III). No lichen growths were noted on any of the paintings on Face III.

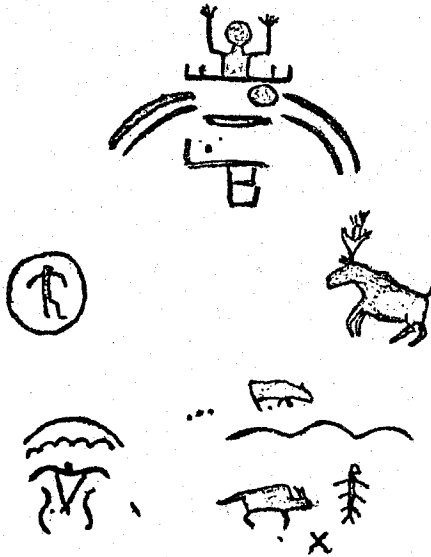
All the paintings were reached by standing on large flat slabs of rock lying below the cliff faces. The bottom of the lowest painting was $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet above water on the date of recording.

Although the Stanley Rapids Site is undoubtedly the most widely known and visited of the pictograph sites in the province, no evidence of vandalism was observed on visits to the site in 1965 and in September, 1966.

A sketch of the pictographs done on a geological reconnaissance of the Churchill River in 1908 by William McInnes (Smith 1923:107) provides comparison with the reproductions in Figures 12a and 12b. Figure 12c is a photocopy of the sketch from McInnes' field notebook, now in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa (McInnes 1908).

McInnes' sketch makes no distinction as to grouping of the paintings, but shows them all compressed together. He shows the curved line which almost surrounds the bird and snakes on Face I as only a short arc above. The complex

Figure 12c



From McInnes (1908: Notebook 1467)

Stanley Rapids Site
William McInnes' drawing of
the paintings

figure including the man, on the right side of Face III, shows the more clearly pigmented parts, much as seen today, and omits the fainter parts.

McInnes omits the small bison group to the top of Face II and the two bottom-most figures (these are the faintest ones today), misplaces the insect-like figure below the line, and, perhaps significantly, omits the hunting dog and the rifle-shooting man from the group at the top left of Face III (see section 6.1.2 on dating rock art).

Site No. 13 - Island Portage Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 25'$ N. Lat., $104^{\circ} 5'$ W. Long.

Recorded June 17, 1965.

This is a group of nine paintings on a single rock face. The left painting is a human holding a bow in his left hand. Next right is a circle, then an animal with an indistinct head. Above this animal is an undulating snake figure, possibly with a head with ears or horns. Below the circle and animal are two small marks, looking like the bird-track(?) pictured at the Stanley Rapids Site.

To the right of the animal is a large fragmentary painting almost totally covered by grey-white (Physcia sp.) crustose lichens and a black stain, formed from blue-green algae. Right of this is a small moose, which shows a distinct hump, bell, and hock on the rear leg. This animal follows a larger moose, apparently a cow, although the head is obscured by lichens and very faded. The hock is well-

defined especially on the rear leg of the cow moose.

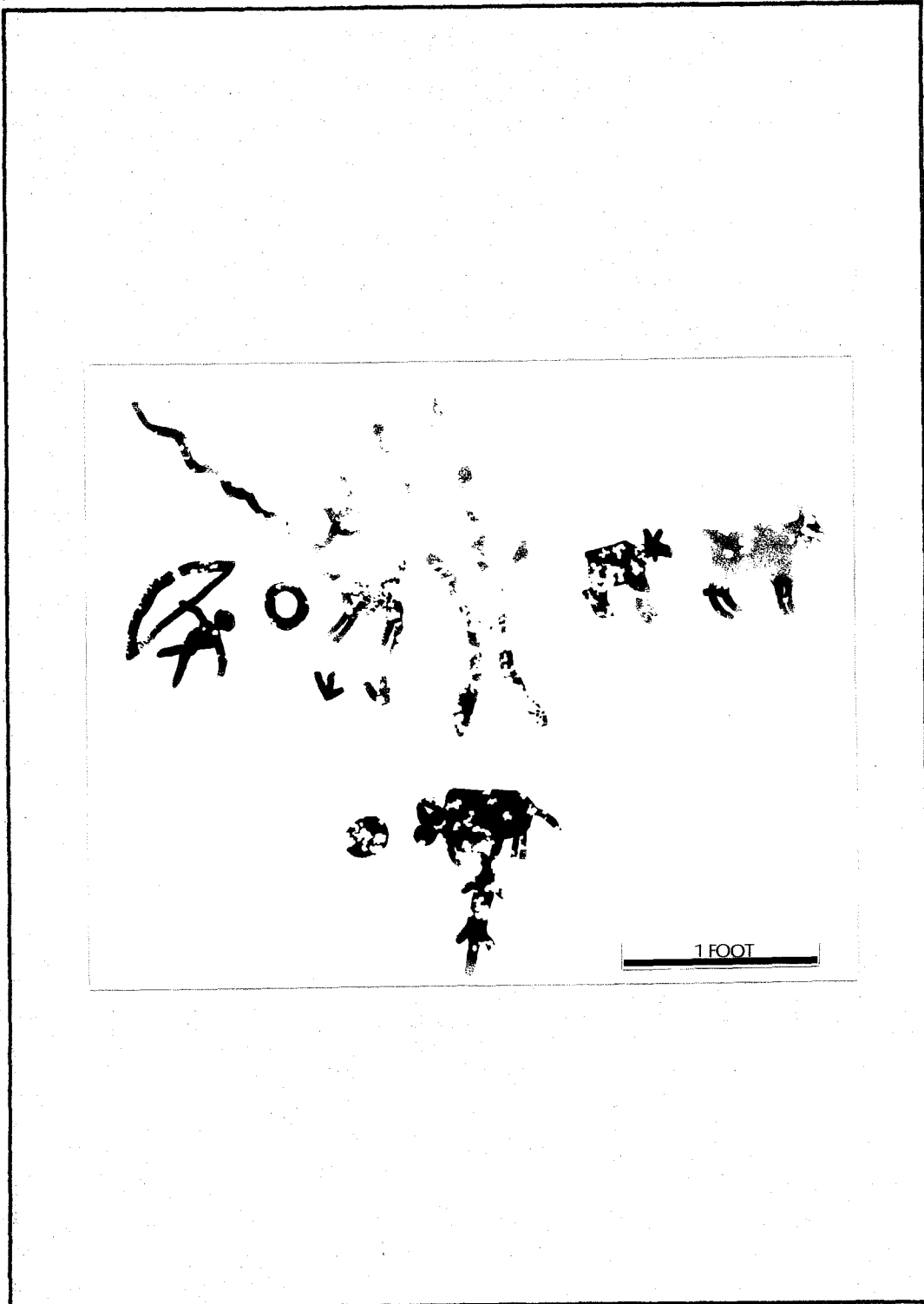
Below the above-mentioned pictographs, which are a brick-red colour, is a small group which is slightly more reddish brick-red. A bison facing the left has a tailed creature attached to the centre of its lower body. The general impression is that the creature is suckling on the bison. A solid ball of colour to the left of the bison's head completes the paintings (Figure 13).

The symbols are found on a slightly forward-leaning flat face of rock which has a dark khaki-coloured patina. There is no overhang over this face, and it is exposed to rain and seepage moisture. The face was reached by walking over rocks a short distance back from the water's edge. The paintings were 4-5 feet (estimated) above the water's surface on a rock face which faces south.

Lichen encroachment is as extensive on these paintings as it could be on other Shield sites. A grey crustose type is the predominant encroaching form here, covering about half of the lowest group and the cow and calf group, almost all of the figure left of the calf moose, and substantial amounts of the lower third of the snake and the animal below it. A black stain-type alga(?) also covers a great part of these last two figures, the upper third of the snake, and parts of the archer's bow, the back of the bison, and minor parts of other figures.

The only chipping noted was on the right of the pair of "bird-tracks".

Figure 13



Island Portage Site

This site is located on the north shore of Inman Channel, a narrow natural channel bypassing the rapids and the major body of the Churchill at Island Portage, above a rapids in the channel.

Site No. 14 - Uskik Lake Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 29'$ N. Lat., $103^{\circ} 22'$ W. Long.

Recorded August 18, 1965.

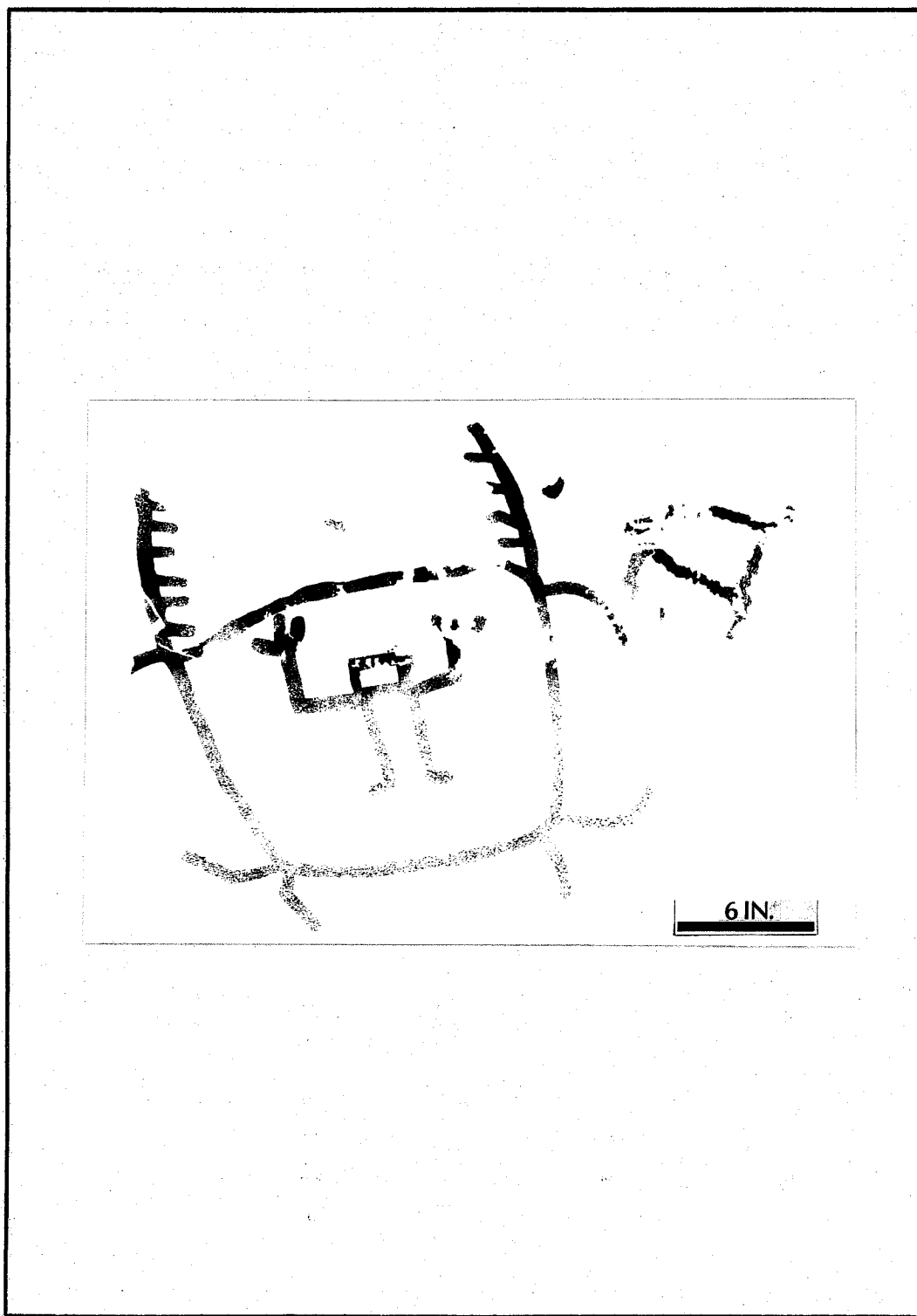
This site is comprised of two separate Faces about five feet apart. The different pigment and different styles of depiction makes it evident that two separate artists made each set of paintings.

Face I has, apparently, three figures. The left ones are the clearest, and they appear to be a stylized human with a rectangular head and upraised arms, inside a structure with upright lines extending above the structure with "fringes" on them. The right figure appears to be an unidentifiable animal obscured by lichens. In addition there is a small blob of colour between the two upright extensions of the structure, and a somewhat larger bit of colour to the right of the right extension (Figure 14a). The paintings were 31 inches above the water's surface.

The paint on these figures was not applied in continuously painted lines, making the discernment of now-faded lines more difficult.

The part of the human below the head and arms is very faded, and quickly fades to the point of disappearance, as does the structure enclosing the man. There is some faint

Figure 14a



Uskik Lake Site

evidence of pigment to indicate that the structure extends downward and boxes in the man.

The right painting gives the appearance of being quickly applied to the rock, only on the higher points of the rock surface.

All figures are the same colour, a dark red-rust, except for the blob of pigment between the upright lines, which is a more orangeish-brown colour.

Light green, light grey (Physcia sp.) and brown (Parmelia sp.) lichen growths obscure parts of the group. Brown, light green and light grey colonies cover about half of the man's right hand, and part of the right upward extension and the upper horizontal line of the enclosure. Light green and brown lichens touch the upper parts of the "animal", and light grey lichens the left juncture of the upright extension and upper horizontal line of the enclosure.

The rock is a fine-grained gneiss with the light and dark layers aligned along a vertical axis.

Faces I and II are on low cliffs some 15 to 20 feet high. Face I presents a flat face five feet high from the water's surface, while Face II is six feet. Both sets of paintings are reached by canoe. Face I faces 134 degrees East of North, leaning forward at about 10 degrees from vertical, while Face II faces 30 degrees further north (104 degrees East of North), and is vertical in relation to the water's surface.

Seepage water and rain can wet these rock surfaces

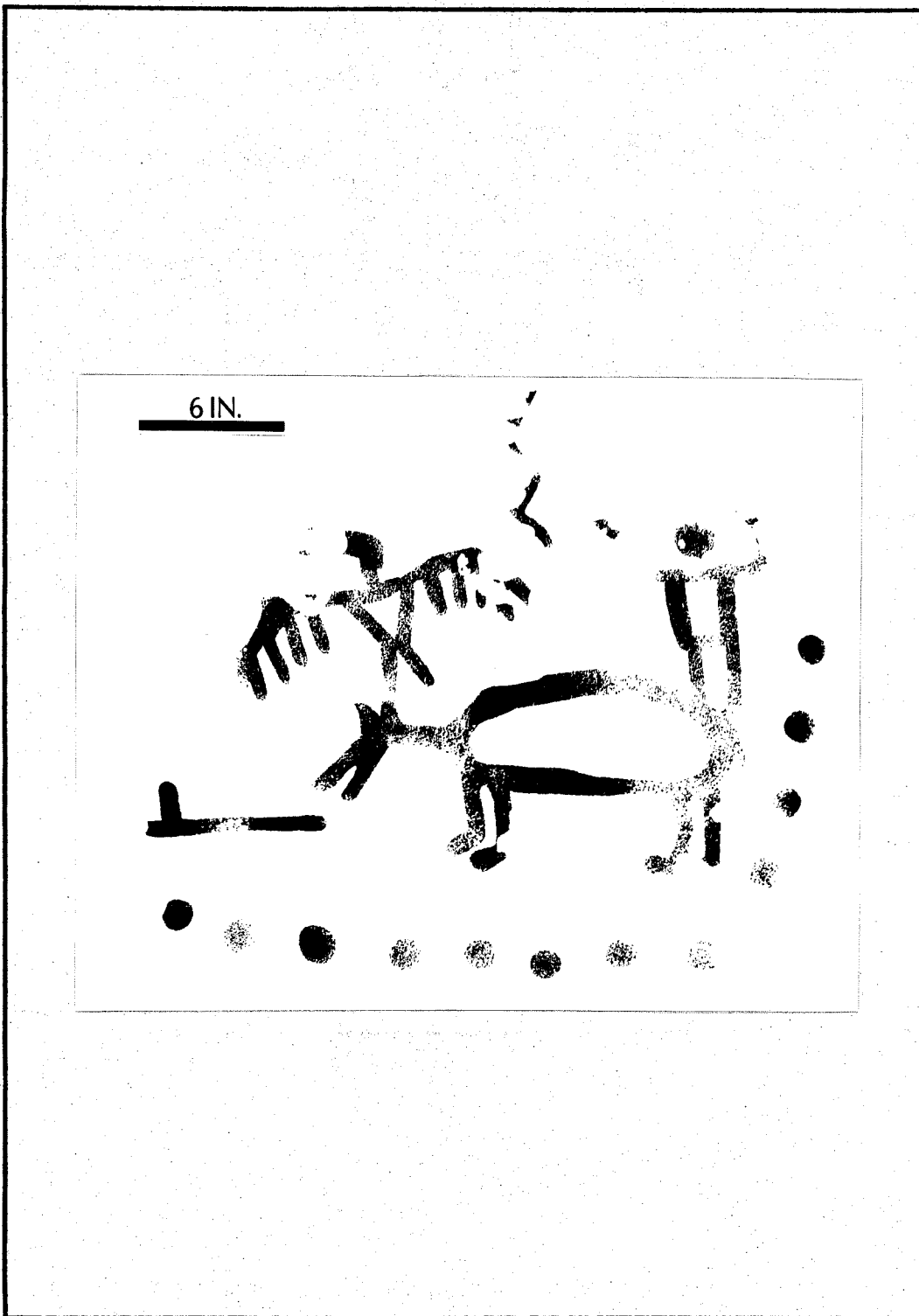
since there is no protection provided by rock overhangs here.

Face II begins five feet east (right) of Face I. The central figure is a wolf or other canid. The body of a bird extends upward from its right ear, and a human with upraised arms joins the animal's back just ahead of the tail. A smoking pipe is placed just left of the canid's open jaws, and a series of twelve balls of colour extend in a curving arc from below the pipe to the middle of the human's body, forming a "border" for the group. To the right of the bird's right wing an undulating snake extends vertically upward (Figure 14b). The water level was $39\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the bottom of the lowest ball of colour.

These pictographs are executed on a smoother-textured surface, which is darker than Face I, being in general a greyish-brown, while Face I has a bluish-grey, less patinated colour. The pigment of these symbols is a reddish brown-rust generally, and in some places, very faded.

Lichen encroachment is fairly extensive here too. Brown (Parmelia sp.) lichens covered the beak of the bird and the upper middle of the left wing, and the upper right of the right wing. This type also covers the man's left arm above the elbow, and part of his right arm. A light grey (Physcia sp.) foliose lichen covers part of the pipe-bowl and touches the stem portion in a couple of places, part of the man's head, and part of the rear end of the canid. A bright orange lichen (Xanthoria elegans) covers part of the man's head and body, and touches the right body line of the bird

Figure 14b



Uskik Lake Site

and the right front leg of the canid. An unidentified type of blue-grey lichen grows to the right of the group.

Some faint scratch-marks made by someone were noted on the chest of the canid in August of 1965, but these caused little damage. However, on a return visit on June 24, 1966, some person had pecked or hammered the body, head and right wing of the bird, chipping away a great part of the figure. As well, the initials JGC or JGO were scratched over the bottom part of the bird, the back of the canid, and the left side of the human.

Site No. 15 - Conjuring River Mouth Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 33'$ N. Lat., $103^{\circ} 15'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 110° W. of N.

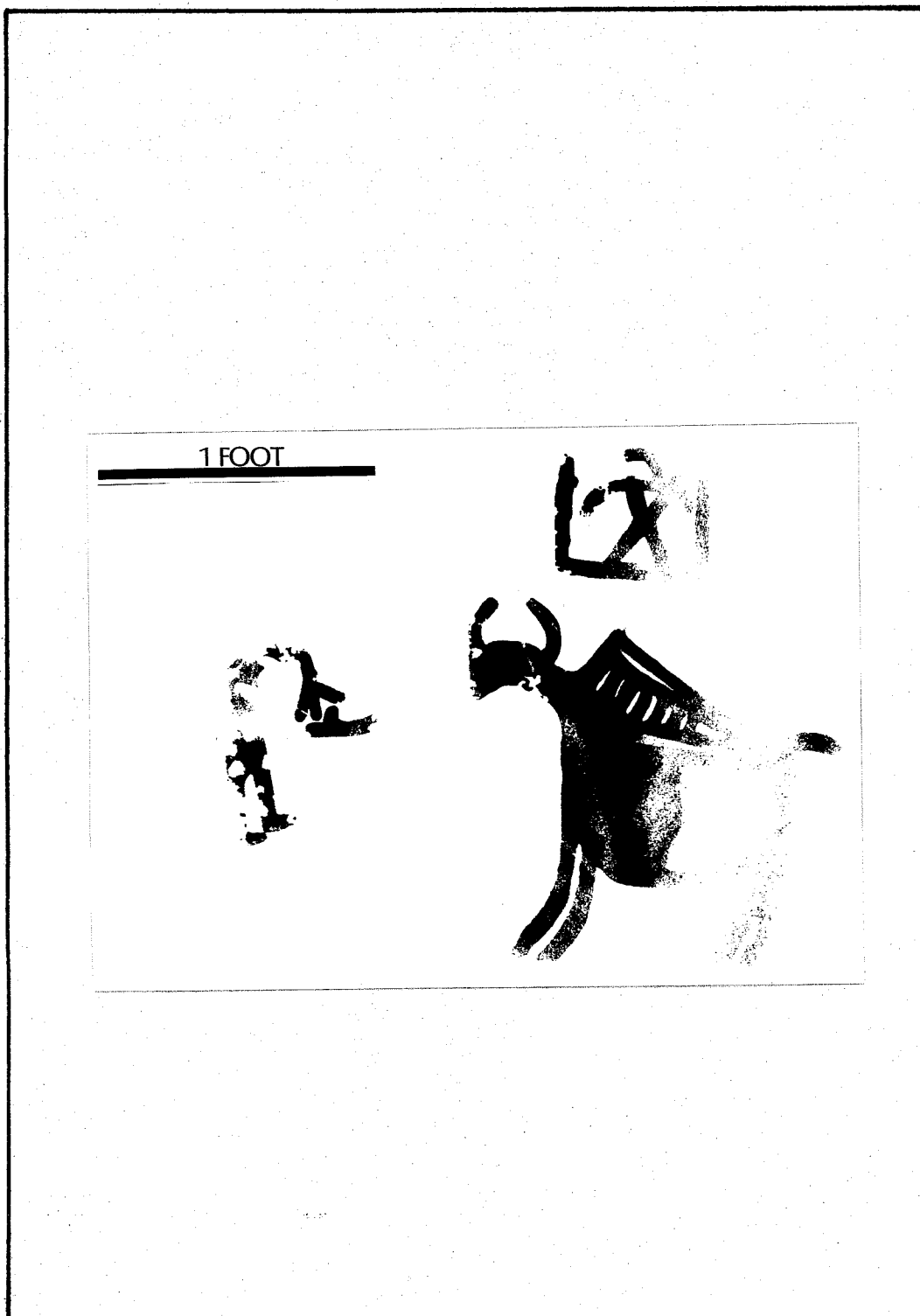
Recorded August 18, 1965.

This site is located on a low cliff of fine-grained gneiss on the east shore of Uskik (Cree for "kettle") Lake about two miles above Kettle Falls and about three-quarters of a mile south of the mouth of the Conjuring River.

There are five figures here - a human, an apparent pipe-bowl, a large bison, and a small bird in a three-sided box open at the top (Figure 15). They were about 40 inches above the water on the date of recording.

The painting of the human shows only the right side, and the pigment is very faded. The right arm ends in a hand with three fingers, and it bends downward, almost touching the pipe-bowl. No head or left arm was evident, and it was apparent that the extensive encroachment of light grey and black

Figure 15



Conjuring River Mouth Site

crustose lichens (and attendant erosion from seepage water) had contributed the most to its present state of clarity.

The pipe-bowl does not seem to be connected to a stem, although it is possible that it once was, and this has been removed by chemical action of seepage water. The part of the rock face between the pipebowl and the head of the bison is covered by extensive growths of light grey (Physcia sp.) and black (Parmelia sp.) crustose lichens. Umbilicaria sp. and Lepraria sp.(?) also occur on the rock face.

The bison is shown facing the human, and its horns are shown in twisted perspective. A striking feature of this animal is that an internal view of the upper part of the body is given, showing the ribs by means of leaving six or seven vertical spaces in the hump area, and a couple of longer spaces following the longitudinal axis of the body, behind the ribs. The head, front part of the body and the front legs have a light white patina, and the rear half of the body is very faded, making it uncertain whether or not a space was intentionally left in the body. (This appears to be the case.)

The right side of the bird and the open box are more faded than the left side, but the outlines can be made out adequately.

These upper figures have a very small rock projection above them - only two inches - but do not have lichen growths on them or any degree of patination. The other figures are more exposed to rain and seepage.

The rock face leans forward about 25 degrees from the vertical, and is a fine-grained surface with a bluish-grey colour, except where painted and patinated, where it takes on a light khaki hue.

There was an inconsequential bit of pecking at the paint below the hump of the bison, but no real damage was done by this.

The paintings were recorded by sitting in the canoe and holding the canoe into the rocks by extending a leg overboard.

Site No. 16 - Wasawakasik Lake Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 36'$ N. Lat., $102^{\circ} 13'$ W. Long.

Recorded August 3, 1965.

Nine separate rock faces were utilized at this prominent set of cliffs, called "Highrock" locally. Of these, the first and seventh are large continuous surfaces with several paintings each, while the remaining ones are small flat surfaces having only a single figure each.

Face I contains a large bird with open mouth and spread wings, holding some sort of object with its left wing. It is positioned over an approximately horizontal line with short lines depending from the lower surface. (There is a slight possibility this latter figure may be the body of a horned serpent - see Figure 16a). Another large figure, looking vaguely like a sitting bear, is left of the previous paintings, and a long curving line starts from the left end of the fringed line and curves upward, then bends left and down, over the sitting creature's head. This creature possesses a

long tail, which extends upward to the right, and crosses the bottom of the long looping line over the "bear", and touches the left end of the fringed line. The rock surface faces 134° East of North.

The head and upper breast of the bird are faded because of extensive light-yellow and grey crustose lichen encroachment, and perhaps because part of the painting appeared to have been done over small patches of lichen. The body of the "bear" has extensive growth of a light yellow crustose lichen on its upper arm, and one touching its stomach.

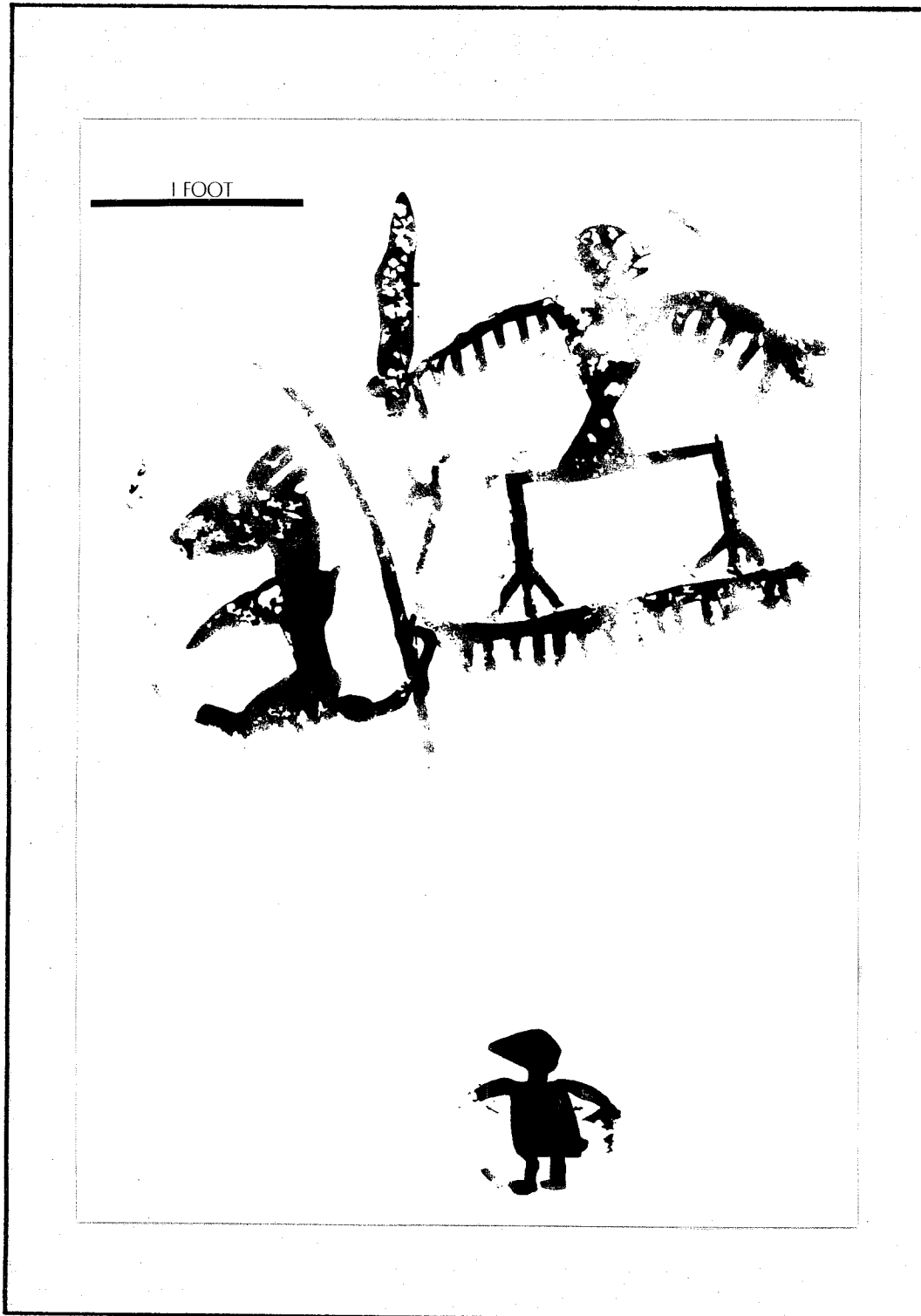
A squattish human figure with a cone-shaped face is situated twenty-three inches directly below the northernmost (right) toe of the bird's left foot, on Face II. This symbol has three fingers on the right hand. The left hand ends at a bump in the rock, and the left foot is drawn quite long (Figure 16a illustrates Faces I and II).

Seven and a half feet to the right is found a short line with three "fingers" on the top. This is Face III. Twenty inches directly below this figure is a pigmented area some ten by six inches, but nothing could be made of it.

Face IV starts $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches above Face III, at an angle of 45 degrees. There is a vividly painted figure, a red-rust colour, looking somewhat like the top half of an eared or horned serpent in profile, with its head extended upward (Faces III and IV are shown in Figure 16b).

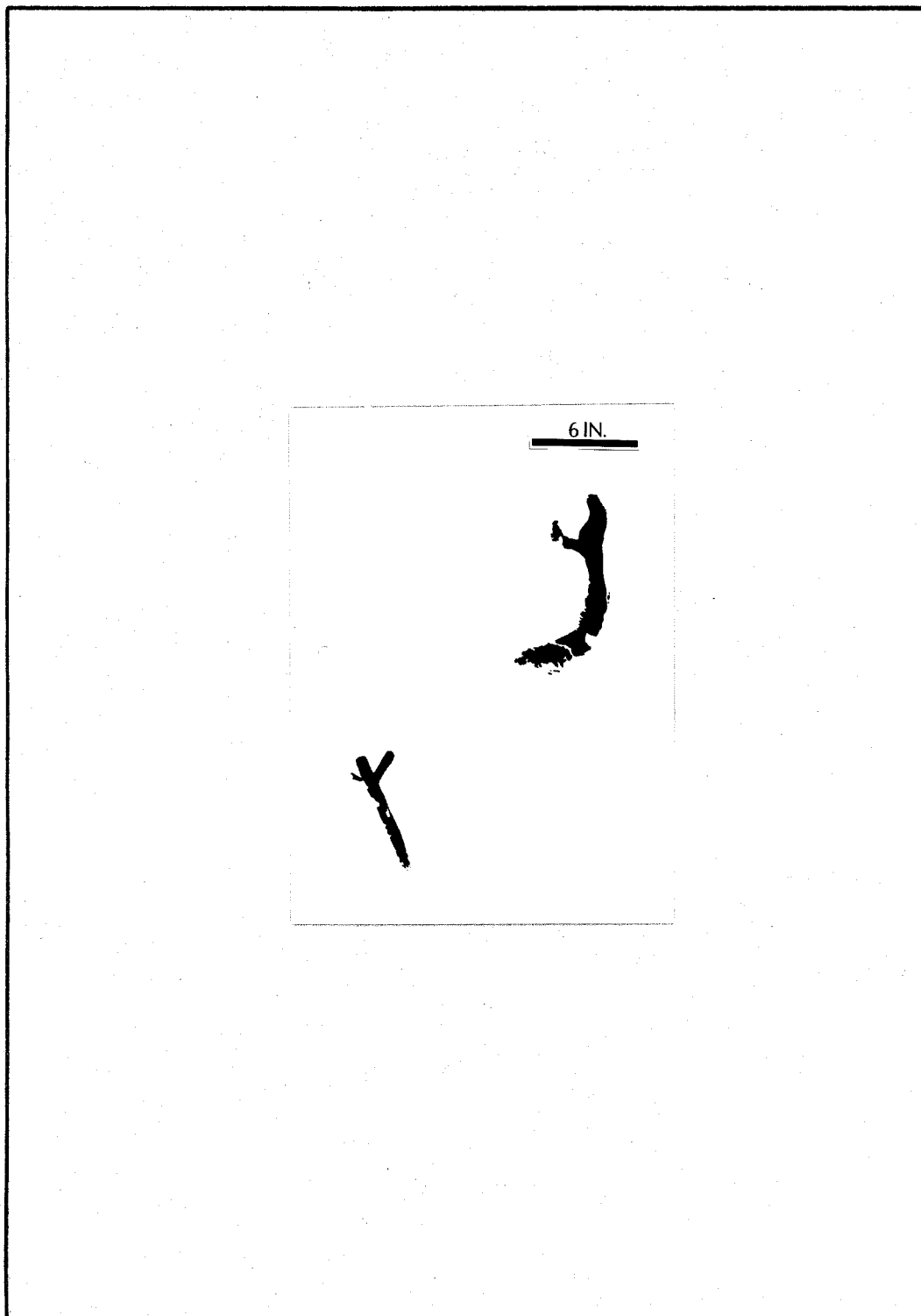
A vivid red rust smudge three inches long (Face V) is found 16 inches to the right of Face III, and a very distinct

Figure 16a



Wasawakasik Lake Site

Figure 16b



Wasawakasik Lake Site

little bird with feathers and three toes on each foot (Face VI) is situated 27 inches right of the smudge, on a small surface about a foot square, above Face VII. This bird is painted in a bright red rust colour similar to the paintings on the previously-mentioned Faces (with the exception of the symbol on Face II, which is an orangeish red-brown rust colour).

Face VII contains six distinct symbols and an indistinct smear in the centre of the face. The largest figures are on the left, a group consisting of an animal inside an oval-shaped line open at the bottom, and a vertical line extending through its body, with a "feathered" end at the top. There is a great deal of white patination down the centre of the group, covering portions of the painted outlines. To the right are three less-patinated figures, one having the appearance of a bird with a human-like body, another like a stylized bird(?), and the last, perhaps a stylized turtle(?). The noteworthy similarity between the three is the long neck and head-in-profile depicted as a crook at the top of the neck. Face VII faces 104° East of North.

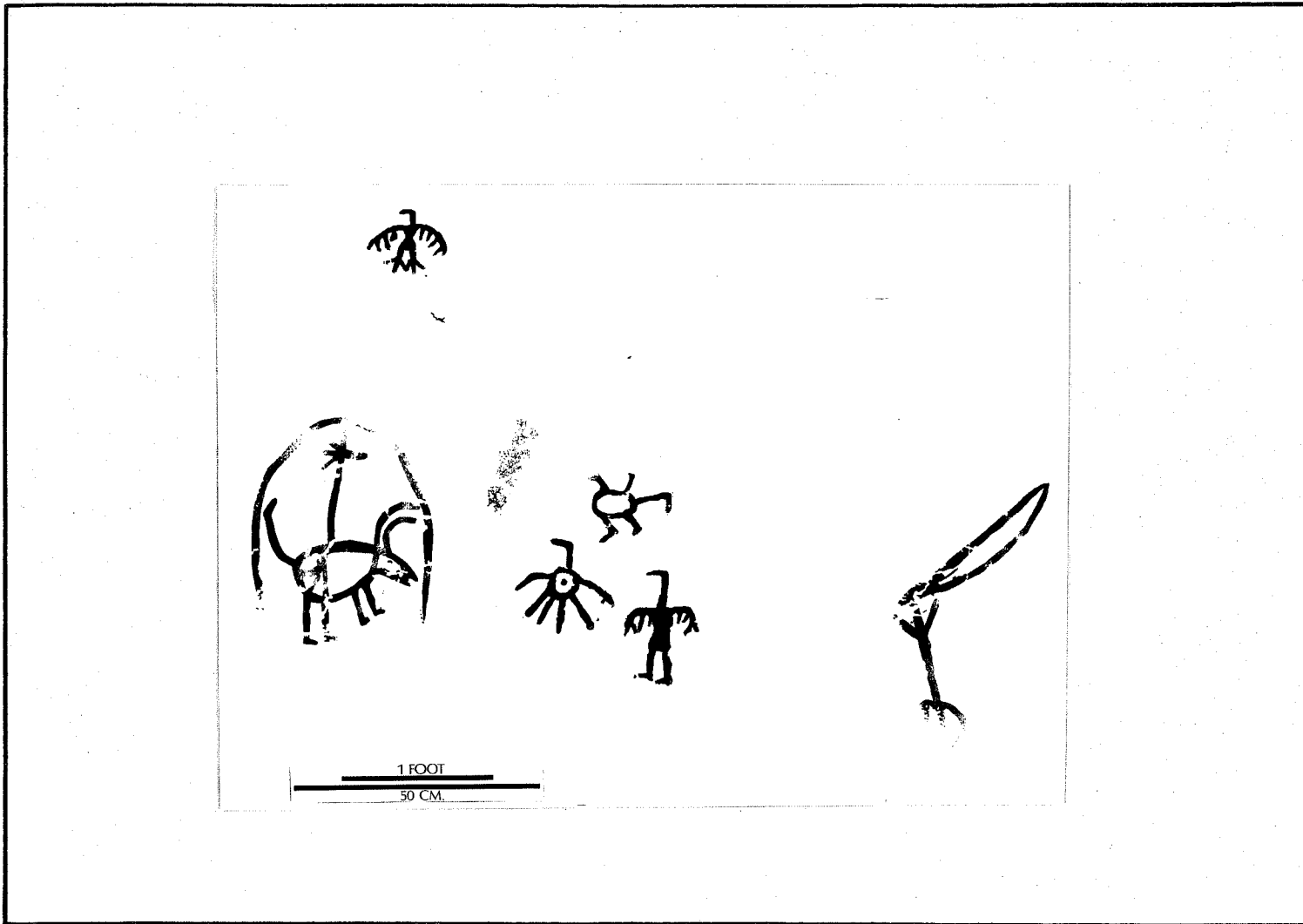
To the right, on Face VIII, is an upright line with three short appendages at the top and at the bottom of the line, with a long bow-like painting situated just above this figure. These pictographs can be clearly delineated, although there is a considerable amount of patination over parts of these. Face VIII is in a parallel plane to that of the surface of Face VII, but is about six inches behind it.

Faces VII and VIII are a vivid brown rust colour. This may reflect the fact that they were painted at a different time than the others at the site, or that the extensive patination has altered the colour of this pigment (Faces VI, VII and VIII are illustrated in Figure 16c).

The last painting, on Face IX, is situated on a rock surface around a corner in the outcrop to the right of Face VIII, and possesses a vivid red-rust colour. Despite the strength of the pigment, nothing could be made of the inter-connecting lines and smears, and it is suggested that this might represent an artist's random finger or brush cleaning on the surface of the rock. This rock surface faces 75° East of North.

The paintings at this site are reached by walking up a sloping rock ledge that slants upward to the left at an angle of 30 degrees and dips towards the left at about 40 degrees. They are 10 yards from the water, situated at the base of high cliffs where large and small angular blocks of outcrop have formed detritus below. There is some degree of protection for the paintings from rain, because the cliffs create an environment somewhat sheltered from wind and rain. However, seepage of water down the cliff faces is quite extensive in places, and has provided a moisture supply for lichen growths (as on Face I), and for patination (all Faces). No lichen growths were noted on any paintings except those mentioned on Face I. There was no evidence of vandalism of any of the pictographs here.

Figure 16c



Wasawakasik Lake Site

William McInnes sketched some of the symbols at this site in September of 1908 (Smith 1923:107). He drew the large bird on Face I, but not the bear-like creature or the curved line over its head. (See section on dating.) The object the bird holds in its left wing was drawn like two balls of colour, one on top of the other. As well, he drew the painting on Face IV, the one on Face VI, and the three figures with the bird-like neck and head on the right side of Face VII. None of the other pictographs were drawn. (Figure 16d.)

Site No. 17 - Maple Leaf Rapids Site.

Geographical location: $55^{\circ} 38'$ N. Lat., $102^{\circ} 13'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 84° E. of N.

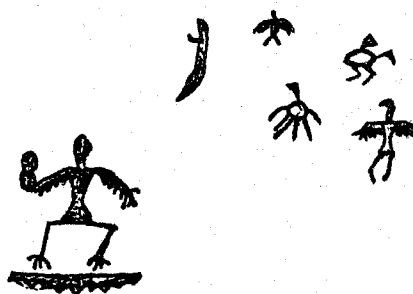
Recorded August 1 & 2, 1965.

There are two rock faces utilized here, but the figures evidence the same pigment and degree of fading, and are considered to form a coherent grouping. There are eight distinguishable separate symbols, but they are all very faded, some parts to the point of having almost totally weathered away.

The centre of the group is formed by a large, rectangular-bodied anthropomorph shown smoking a pipe, and a large bull-like animal with an effaced head standing inside a 3-sided enclosure which has V-shaped projections from the bottom, below the anthropomorph.

Left of the anthropomorph is a bird with feathered wings, very faded because of its exposure to a grey-khaki patination. Extending from just above its head (or possibly just touching its head), up and to the right, near the head of the anthro-

Figure 16d



From McInnes (1908: Notebook 1466)

Wasawakasik Lake Site
William McInnes' drawing of
the paintings

pomorph, is an undulating snake figure.

On the right side of the group, on Face II, is another bird figure, and another pipe, extending to the right from just next to the beak of the bird. This bird figure is plainer than the left one but patination has faded it as well. Below these are some iron stains on the rock, which may be pictograph pigment (Figure 17a).

The paintings are a brown reddish rust colour. No lichens were noted on any of the paintings. Patination appeared to be the main fading agent.

The rock faces have an overhang of about two feet, providing fair protection from rain (except rain blown from the east), but little protection from seepage.

There is a forward lean of about 5 degrees. The paintings were reached by climbing onto rocks from the canoe, and utilizing natural foot-holds on the cliff face below the paintings, which were just over 11 feet above the water's surface.

William McInnes sketched these paintings in 1908 as well as the Stanley Rapids and Wasawakasik Lake pictographs. (Smith 1923:107). He shows each of the figures, with certain differences from the author's reproduction, and omits the enclosure around the "bull" (Figure 17b).

Site No. 18 - Oil Drum Site.

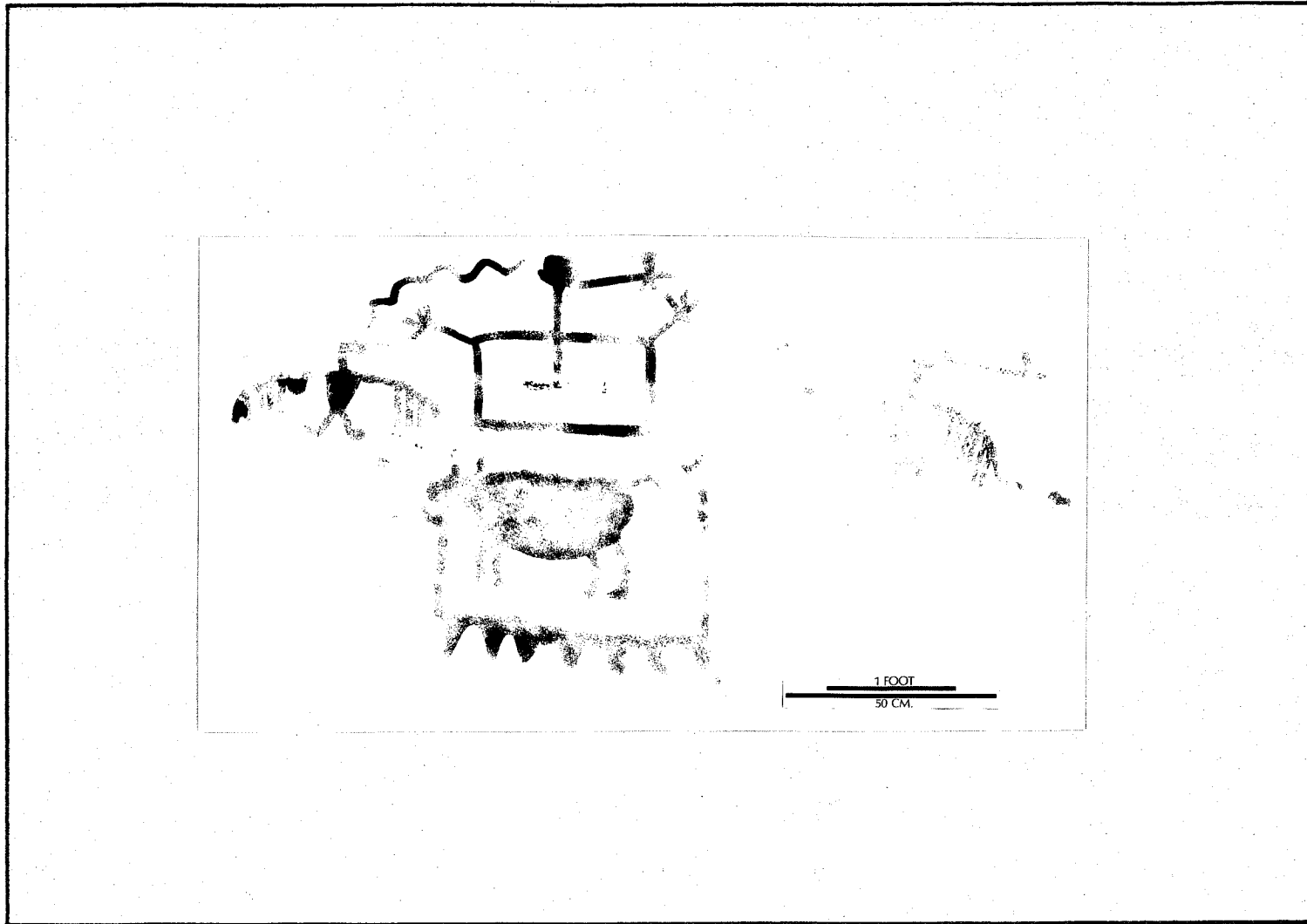
Geographical location: $56^{\circ} 30'$ N. Lat., $99^{\circ} 55'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 115° W. of N.

Recorded July 8, 1969.

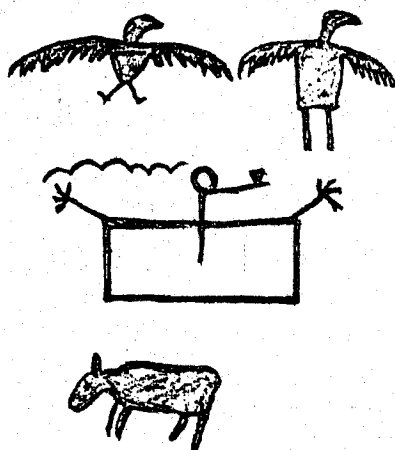
This site is small, consisting only of a bird(?) with

Figure 17a



Maple Leaf Rapids Site

Figure 17b



From McInnes (1908: Notebook 1466)

Maple Leaf Rapids Site
William McInnes' drawing of
the paintings

two oval dots above it (Figure 18). The color of the "bird" is slightly darker than the dots, and a different colour. It is a dark red-brown rust, while the dots are a faded reddish brown khaki rust. The paint is not especially weathered, but hard to make out on the bird because it has been applied very thinly and incompletely on the medium-rough textured rock.

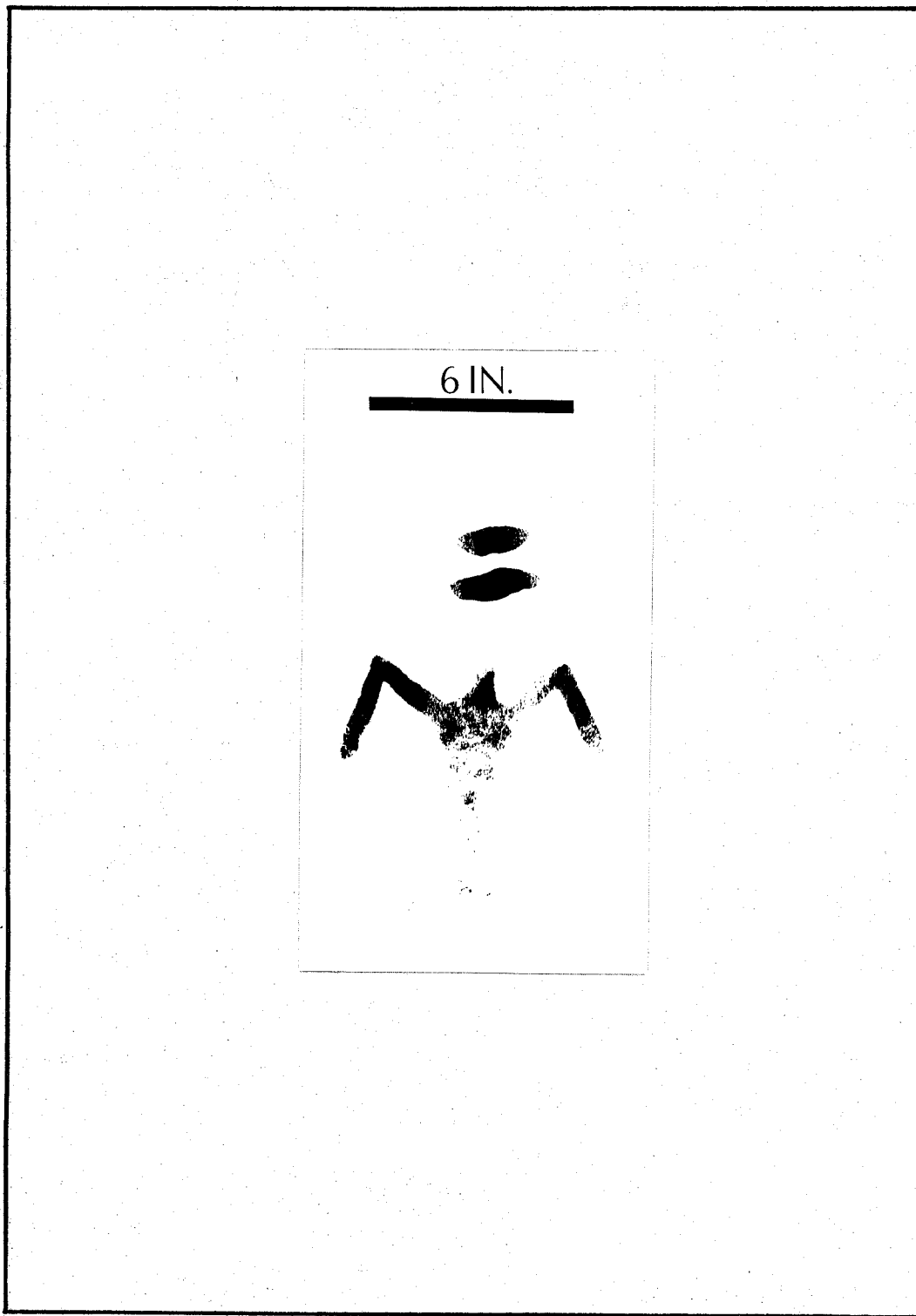
The rock appears to be essentially the same as the other site on the same set of cliffs, which is approximately 200 yards around the corner and to the north.

There is some protection in the form of a small overhang of about one foot, over the paintings. Seepage, while it can occur, does not seem to be serious. There seems to be only a slight touch of khaki patina over parts of the dots and the tip of the right arm or wing. A slanting rain from the south could touch the paintings, but they should dry quickly.

The rock face slopes forward about 30 degrees from vertical and is flat except for a slight bulge in the center. There is a small crack through the bird and below it.

There seems to be a "fish-tail" type of tail at the bottom of the body, but this is evidenced only by touches of pigment on the rock, perhaps due to haste in the painting. The head too is unclear; it may turn to the right in a beak. It does seem to bend upwards and to the right slightly, to about the level of a line drawn between the bend of each arm. This is seen when the painting is wet. Also when wet the sparse, faint pigment touches on the tail can be seen just a little more distinctly. There is no lichen encroachment.

Figure 18



Oil Drum Site

Poplars and spruce grow up above; rock tripe, black crustose, grey green crustose and some orange lichens occur above and nearby. From the water to the bottom of the lower dot was 9 feet. It was about 14 inches to the top of the upper dot above head level when the author stood on the sloping rock from which the painter painted. The dot was 39 inches above one high water level mark.

The cliffs are about 20 feet high here and there are many angular blocks, some with quite fresh-looking breaks, all along the cliff face.

Site No. 19 - Face Site.

Geographical location: $56^{\circ} 30'$ N. Lat., $99^{\circ} 55'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 115° W. of N.

Recorded July 8, 1969.

The face is about 45 feet from the water across a low jumble of angular rocks characteristic of most of the shoreline of this area. There are four paintings on a single face below an overhang that extends out over the painted face about five feet. There is good protection from rain, since they were traced and recorded under the ledge in a heavy rain. There is poor protection from seepage, however, since almost the left half of the face and ribbed neck of the large central figure is obliterated by black seepage algae. There is no lichen encroachment.

Patination has made the rock face a dirty grey colour and has also put a film over the right side and left wing of the left thunderbird, all of the central figure and the

mouthpiece and bowl parts of the pipe, and over the left wing of the right thunderbird. None have completely escaped patination, though, and there is a greyish cast over everything, giving the paintings an appearance of being old.

The face tilts backward from the vertical slightly, about 2 degrees or so, although there are unevennesses in the face. There are several small rocks on which to stand; the paintings are at about head level or slightly above. The water level was 11 feet 11 inches to the bottom of the ribbed neck.

Unfortunately, the inside of the left thunderbird is not too clear. There seems to be three separate dots inside the body cavity. There are at least two (on the left). There are also a few lines and "smears" of pigment inside the body space, and, combined with patination and some running of paint, it is not wholly clear.

This apparent running of paint occurs elsewhere, especially on the central figure, and makes the boundaries blend out into the patination. The seeping of the patina over the face may have caused some slight dissolving of paint. Complete dissolution of paint is seen at a small lake south of Kenora (Blindfold Lake), where the center of the body of an animal has been completely eaten away by a solution seeping down the rock face.

The head and neck of the central figure is most faded and is most patinated. The first "rib" or bar on the neck may possibly be a dot, but is probably rather a bar, with the

joins obscured. The left side of all of the bars is likewise obscured, but there is some pigment here to indicate that there is a vertical line, comprising the left side of the neck. With water splashed on them they are considerably plainer.

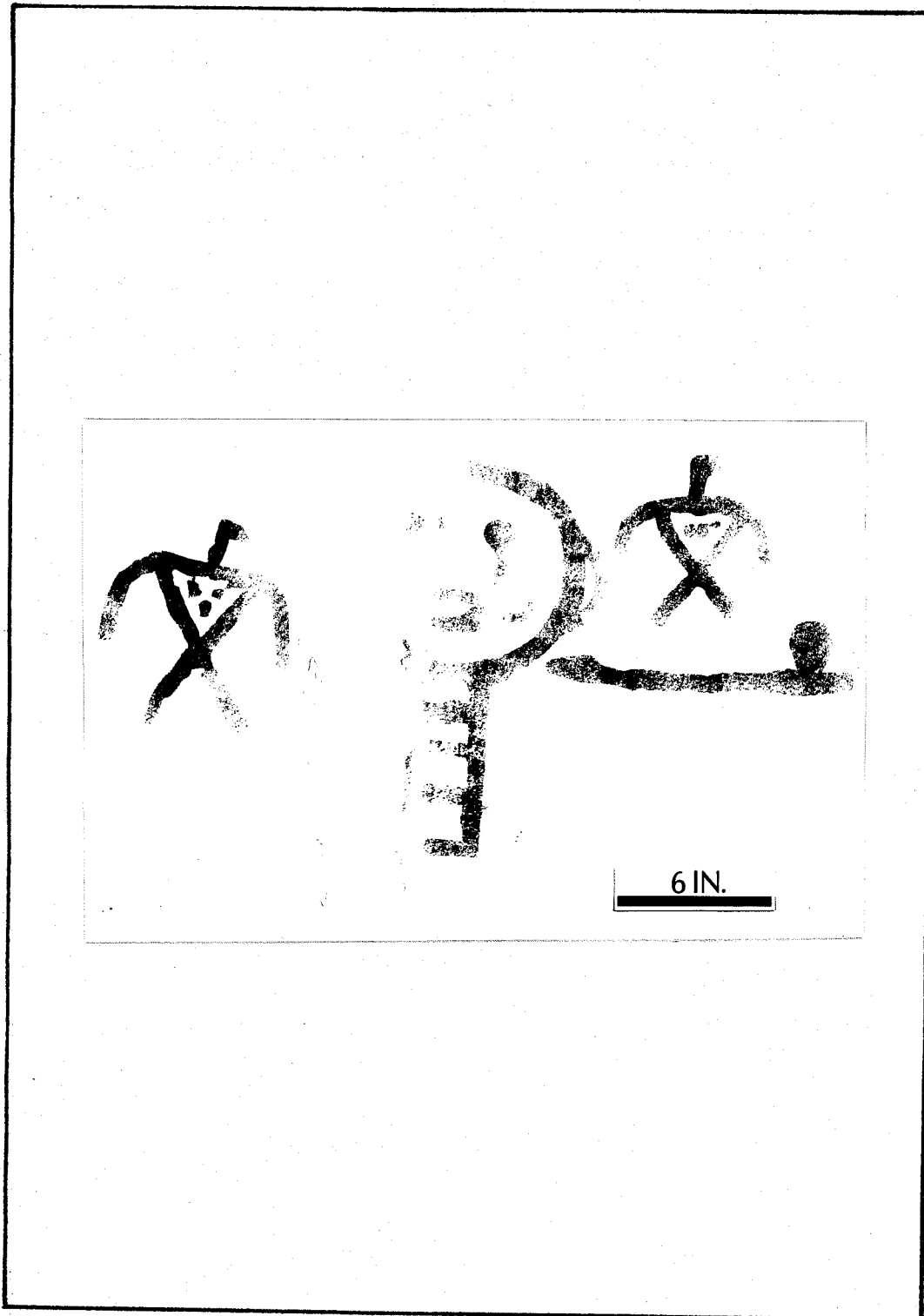
There is some pigment below the right eye, which may be a "tear" line, intentionally painted, or it may be some running of paint caused by the patination. There is also a small curved area of pigment to the right of the mouth, which does not seem to join the mouth. The left eye may be barely made out as faint pigment beneath the black stain, and the left line of the head cannot really be seen at all, except as similar pigment in the bottom portion.

There is a slight bulge on the inside of the body of the right thunderbird, below the head. This bulge does not seem to extend into a line. The pigment is a purple-reddish-brown ochre, more purplish where patinated.

The shape of the pipe bowl is different from others seen on the upper Churchill River - it has a roundish or oval bowl and an apparent mouthpiece (Figure 19).

This site is about a third of the way south along the cliffs from the north end. This is in about the best-protected spot, although there are quite a number of other suitable painting surfaces.

Figure 19



Face Site

Site No. 20 - Caribou Nest Site.

Geographical location: $56^{\circ} 32'$ N. Lat., $99^{\circ} 53'$ W. Long.

Orientation of rock face: 168° W. of N.

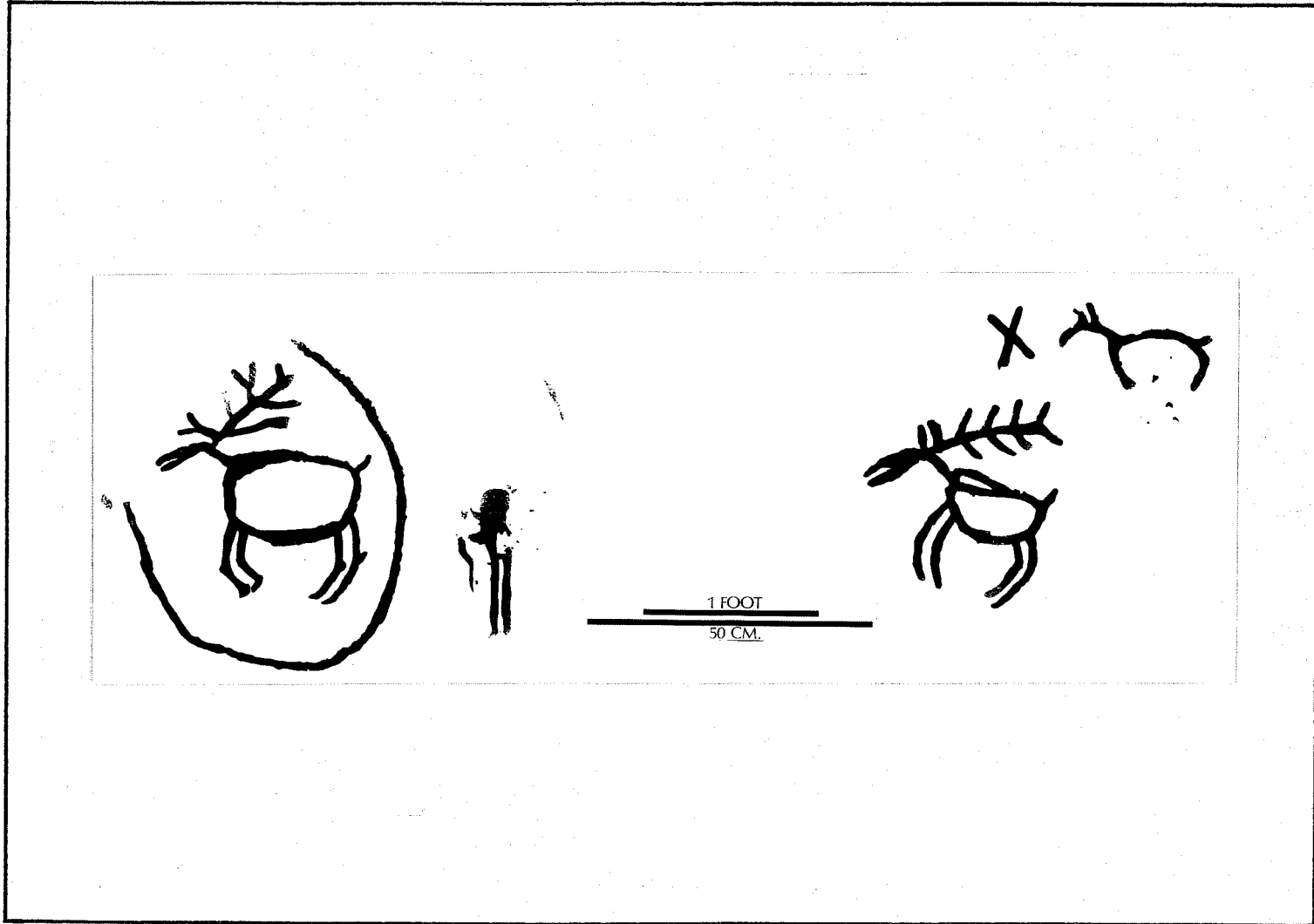
Recorded July 7, 1969.

The figures seem to be two caribou (one encircled by three-quarters of a circle). Both have open mouths and shoulders depicted. One shoulder is solid; the other is open. The "circled" caribou shows the front feet, and the rear legs show the hocks, like the moose at the Island Portage Site. The outside rear leg of the other big caribou may have a hock, since there is an apparent join at the inside bend of the rear legs, although there is no hock on the outside of the rear leg. Directly above this caribou on the right is an X, quite plain, and just behind this there is an animal with two ears, a tail and an incomplete body line. Below this and behind the caribou is some very faint pigment (Figure 20). The top of the small animal has black seepage lichen on the head, neck and front part of the back. There are some small black colonies of crustose lichen on various of the figures.

There are streaks of off-white patination on the circled caribou, across the middle of the head and through the centre of the body. There is another faded and patinated figure outside the circle and to the left, but it could not be made out. Only a couple of parts of the pigment were traced.

There is a good standing place below the paintings, sloping upward from the water. It is about 3-4 feet above water and slopes up from there. The vertical distance from the

Figure 20



Caribou Nest Site

bottom of the circle to the water was about 69 inches.

There seems to be a man with an open body (the legs are definite), with an arm perhaps holding a bow, to the left, and a solid head (with horns?). The part above the legs is very unclear due to the greyish patina covering the upper part, and the indefinite manner of painting; there being irregular dots of paint. It shows up much better when wet (Figure 20).

The rock surface leans forward about 5 degrees. There is no protection from rain or seepage. The painting is a somewhat sun-faded dark purplish red when dry; red-brown ochre when wet. All figures are of about the same intensity, although the X is slightly brighter.

The rock is a khaki brown with grey colour and quite smooth; it is also quite flat. The outside part of most of the lines, though, is quite irregular. The man and the top part of the circled caribou's antlers are difficult to delineate - the man more so. The area where the top of the antlers are is pitted and has tiny specks of black lichen so the top lines are not wholly clear.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE PAINTINGS AND SETTINGS

5.1 Characteristics of Churchill River rock art sites

The Churchill River sites have a number of features in common, some of which they share with others in adjacent regions to the east and south.

5.1.1 Physical circumstances of sites

All of the Churchill River rock paintings are located on usually very flat rock planes, in a position within 10 degrees or so of 90 degrees (vertical). These rock faces occur either directly next to the water, or a short distance back from the water's edge.

In seven cases, paintings were recorded from a sitting or standing position in a canoe, while in eight others, one has to walk back from the water on rocks lying below the painted rock faces, reaching the paintings at a normal standing position, and in six other instances one has to climb a number of feet above a normal standing position one would assume simply by getting out of a canoe onto rocks that have fallen below a rock face. All the paintings are visible from the vantage point of a canoe, and all face the water.

This type of setting for rock art is found across the Canadian Shield. This is a unique type of situation, and apparently found only on the Northwest Coast of North America in addition to the Shield.

In some cases there is present some sort of overhanging ledge over the rock faces which offers some degree of protection from direct rainfall or seepage water dripping down over the rock faces. Various biological and chemical-physical erosional agencies are the major ones effacing the paintings along the Churchill River. Vandalism or man-made environmental alteration has as yet affected few of the sites existing along the river in prehistoric times.

Lichen, algae, and moss growths can and do affect certain of the paintings, but an important characteristic that many of the sites on the Churchill share is that they face an approximately southerly, southwesterly or southeasterly direction. The great amounts of insolation that these painted rock faces receive relative to those that might have been painted on rocks facing other directions has resulted in relatively more lichen-free surfaces. This circumstance will tend to limit the common effects of some lichens, which secrete acids that may operate to disintegrate the rock surface below by either chemical or physical processes, or both (Lamb 1959:156; Beschel 1961:1054). In a lichenometric study in the Colorado Front Range, Benedict (1967: 820) measured "very low rates of growth ... on south and west - facing rock surfaces, where intense sunlight and dry westerly winds limit the amount of moisture available for lichen growth".

This placing of paintings on southerly facing rock surfaces has in a number of cases aided in their preservation,

perhaps for considerable periods of time, from other erosion-
al factors (such as acidic ground-water run-off) as well as
vegetal growth deterioration. It is not clear whether only
such rock faces were used by all or almost all aboriginal
artists, or if north-facing outcrop surfaces were used,
whose paintings disappeared after a short time due to the
more rapid erosion of surfaces with moister micro-climates.

The rock paintings of the Churchill River are in
various states of preservation. While some symbols are
extremely faded, others have the appearance of being as vivid
as they must have been when first applied to the rock surfaces
by the artists. Too, well-protected paintings may be so
faded and weathered as to be indiscernible, while some that
are very much more exposed to the elements are almost un-
affected. Various micro-climatological factors come into
play here, and it may be that the existing paintings found on
the river represent a significant span of time and the work
of different social or ethnic groups of people.

At times of high water levels paintings along the base
of vertical outcrops that fall into the water may be sub-
jected to water and ice action. In almost all shoreline
areas on the Churchill River somewhat vegetation-free surfaces
can be discerned in horizontal bands one to three or more
feet above the present water level. These bands represent
periodic submergence and consequent killing of the lichens
and mosses that cover many outcrop surfaces. Until the once-
flooded surfaces are recolonized by these plant species,

fairly well-defined horizontal marks representing the upper extent of the effects of the water can be seen. The rock paintings are often found next to the water, in such cleared areas. Unfortunately, water-level records in key places along the Churchill near rock painting sites have not been kept, so it is difficult to establish any rates of erosion of periodically flooded paintings found below such high-water markers, or how old such markers actually are. (See section 6.1.1).

The Churchill River rock art sites are all readily visible from the water, if not always very prominent. Only one site inland from a body of water has been reported to the author (near the Conjuring River), but this was not found, and may have been another false report. What is clear is that the sites were undoubtedly painted by water-travellers (with the possibility that a given site could have been done from the ice in the winter). There seems to be no evidence that paintings were made in other, hidden locations in the bush - purely accidental discoveries by prospectors, surveyors or trappers would probably have come to light by now. We therefore find almost a diametrically opposite approach to location and secrecy for painters to that found in the Franco-Cantabrian cave art, where paintings and carvings may be found several kilometres inside caves, with various obstacles (narrow passageways, rock piles, streams to wade through) in the way.

It should be emphasized here that the choice of location

by the painter often does not conform to what might appear to latter-day observers as being "ideal" places for making paintings, or that the "best" surfaces were used at particular sites where paintings are found. There is a hiatus of sites in the area of the river between the High Rock Narrows Site #2 on Black Bear Island Lake, and the Cow Narrows Site on Mountain Lake. Although a number of sites have been reported, they have been searched for, without success. There are great numbers of suitable rock exposures in this stretch of the river, but apparently none containing paintings.

5.1.2 Pigment, binder and application of paintings

Pigment

Ochre (various oxides of iron) was used perhaps universally as a pigment by the North American Indians, and was also used widely by other peoples around the world. Rock paintings in the red-brown spectrum are usually made from iron oxides, applied either in their natural state, or heated to change the natural colour, usually to a redder hue.

A number of early writers have remarked on the use of red ochre as an aboriginal paint widely used by various Indian tribes in north-western North America. Daniel Harmon (Lamb 1957:191) recorded its use in 1817 near Rocky Mountain Portage:

.. along the side of the river, there is a kind of marsh where earth, of a beautiful

yellow colour is found, which when burned, becomes a pretty lively red. The natives use it as paint, for which it answers tolerably well. We, also, use it to paint our forts and houses.

Yellow ochre was quarried on the northeast side of Punk Island on Lake Winnipeg and burned to produce a cinnabar red. This ochre was used by the Indians (either Swampy Cree or Ojibwa, or both) in both yellow and red states as a pigment (Hind 1860,II:18).

Bernard Ross reported the procurement of "Ochres, red and blue" at several points in the Mackenzie River district by the Chipewyans, who painted their snowshoes and sleds with it (Ross 1862:135).

Ochre occurs naturally in various shades of yellow and red. Early European settlers also used ochre as a wood preservative and paint, and in a large commercial deposit in Quebec around 1850 four natural ochre colour variants were obtained: red, yellow, purplish, and blackish-brown:

The yellow is a hydrated peroxyd of iron, the purple also is probably in some peculiar state of hydration, but the red is the anhydrous peroxyd. By exposure to a sufficient heat in the furnace, the water of combination is driven off from the yellow and purple, and both becoming anhydrous peroxyd, assume the tint of the natural red ochre ... The blackish-brown variety is scarcer than the others and affords colours of a more valuable description; purified from roots without fire, it is sold under the name of raw sienna ... When subjected to fire, it assumes brown of less intensity, and it is sold as burnt sienna. As it does not turn red from burning, it is probable that there may be in this ochre, an admixture of manganese (W. Logan, quoted in Hind 1857:60).

Canadian Shield rock paintings are, with rare exceptions, composed of a colour varying from a dark chocolate brown to a bright vermilion red. Most of the paintings in the Shield and all those along the Churchill River seen by the author are of a "rust", "rust-red", or "rust-brown" colour, most often closer to the red end of the scale, rather than the brown.

Selwyn Dewdney reported the use of white at two sites, yellow at one, and black at another, out of slightly over a hundred sites in Ontario and Minnesota. All other paintings he recorded up to that time were done in various shades of red (Dewdney & Kidd 1967:6).

An old Cree man from Pelican Narrows, just south of the Churchill River, told the author in 1965 that red paint was obtained from Wathaman (now called Ellis) Island on Deschambault Lake. The soil obtained from this place was heated to obtain the red colour. Wathaman is the Wood Cree word signifying ochrous soil.

Another old man from Pelican Narrows told Doug Evans that ochre was the pigment in rock paintings, and very importantly, that there was a ceremony involved in the removal of the ochrous soil, in which tobacco offerings were left in the hole (personal communication, May 20, 1968).

People at Norway House and Cross Lake are well acquainted with the use of red ochre as a pigment, and with its apparent use in rock paintings found in that region of northern Manitoba. The author was given a small bottle of ochre of a

red-brown colour from the Hairy Lake area north of Norway House, and was told locations of other quarries in localities surrounding the Norway House - Cross Lake region.

Selwyn Dewdney reports the use of "earth from a deposit on the Churchill River" made red by heating it, told him by a man from La Ronge (Dewdney & Kidd 1967:21).

The author in his travels has noted numbers of locations along the Churchill River in northern Saskatchewan and on adjacent waterways, where iron oxides occur naturally as staining either in soil deposits, or in rock outcrops. A few occurrences are substantial ones, but there are many small ones which would have been equally suitable as sources for aboriginal pigment.

For example, a massive deposit of ochrous soil on Royal Lake on the Reindeer River, a fairly extensive outcrop and soil-stained area near the mouth of the Foster River, and a small ochrous soil deposit on an island on Nipew (Dead) Lake, above Otter Lake on the Churchill River, were seen on pictograph-recording canoe trips. Any or all of these deposits were easily accessible to Churchill River travellers, and any could have served as sources of paint.

The Reindeer River occurrence is particularly large. A very steep peninsula rising about 100 feet above the level of the river, and extending about 300 yards into it, is prominently visible from the river. Most of the thin soil cover is deeply stained with weathered iron oxide to a bright, red-brown rust colour, and there is also a substantial

amount of yellow iron-stained soil here. Most of the red ochre from this source is intense enough in colour to correspond with the colour of various observed pictographs along the Churchill River and nearby waterways.

Binder

Kidd has noted that: "Although preliminary tests have been made to determine the nature of this binder, it remains unknown ... At any rate, good binders were certainly available to the Indians, and beyond a doubt they used one or more of them, and possibly all." He suggests that beaver tails, fish roe, and the hoofs of moose or deer could have been boiled to make glue, and that gull eggs, bear grease, or fish or rabbit skins could have been used also (Dewdney & Kidd 1967:169).

There is little in the way of direct ethnographic evidence regarding the identity or identities of the exact binder or binders used in the manufacture of rock paintings, but there is some present evidence which suggests one consistently well-known and suitable source.

In 1972 a Swampy Cree informant at Norway House, Manitoba, told the author that an old man had told him that wanamam (red ochre) was mixed with "something from a sturgeon" to make a paint that was used in rock paintings. This man did not elaborate on what this substance was, but a number of writers have provided some clues.

Alanson Skinner in 1908 described the use of red ochre mixed with isinglass, a glue obtained from the inner membrane of the swimming bladder of the sturgeon, by the "Eastern" (probably Swampy) Cree. Men in the summer wore trousers extending only to the knee. The lower parts of the legs were painted with this mixture, which would not wash off. "When once put on it had to wear away." (Skinner 1911:23).

Skinner's recording of a Northern Saulteaux legend obtained at Martens Falls Post on the Albany River in north-western Ontario provides evidence that this closely-related group of people also obtained isinglass from the sturgeon, although no mention is made of its use as a binder in this legend (Skinner 1911:171). James Stevens relates a legend from the "Cree" (actually Ojibwa - Wolfart 1973:51) of Sandy Lake, Ontario, in which an old shaman gave a young man "a powerful glue that had been made from the marrow of a sturgeon backbone", with which he covered his hands and feet, enabling him to climb up an otherwise impassable cliff to the dwelling place of the Thunderbirds (Stevens 1971:89).

James Isham in the 1740's reported that "the Glue the Natives saves out of the Sturgeon is Very strong and good, they use itt in mixing with their paint, which fixes the Colours so they never Rub out &c". (Rich 1949, quoted in Dewdney 1970:22).

Dewdney had described to him by a Wood Cree informant from La Ronge, Saskatchewan. B-Amos Ratt, Ratt's technique for making a paint for his canoe paddles and log cabin, around 1963:

... he took earth from a deposit on the Churchill River, reddened it by bringing it to a white heat in a frying pan, then mixed it with oil rendered from whitefish gut. The reddish-brown paint that resulted had been used to waterproof his log cabin and paddles, and dried with a slight gloss. (Dewdney & Kidd 1967:21).

Isinglass can be obtained from the swimming bladder of fish other than sturgeon, although isinglass from this source is acknowledged to be superior to that of others (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1879:134). It may very well be that Dewdney's informant was actually obtaining a glue from the swimming bladder of a whitefish, following a traditional aboriginal technique for preparing a strong red paint suitable for application to a number of different surfaces, such as wood or rock.

It is clear that the use of certain parts of the sturgeon to make a strong glue used as an effective pigment binder was well known to Algonkian peoples (Cree and Ojibwa) in parts of the Canadian Shield where rock paintings are found, and it is therefore possible that a binder for these paintings was obtained often from the sturgeon.

There are no other strong associations between ochre and any other paint binder other than sturgeon glue in the ethnographic literature concerning the Northern Woodlands peoples.

It is also possible, it must be noted, that other as yet unrecorded binders may have also been used, or no binders at all. In a paper presented at the Third National Conference on Rock Art in Canada in Peterborough, Ontario (November 2-4, 1973), J.M. Taylor of the Canadian Conservation Institute indicated that no evidence of an organic binder had been found in the first series of x-ray diffraction and scanning electron microscope analyses of five pigment samples from Ontario and Quebec rock painting sites. It is possible that binders may have disappeared, leaving only the iron oxide behind on the rock, or that only water was used in some cases to apply the paint. A much more extensive series of pigment tests will have to be done to establish with what other materials paint was applied to the rocks.

Applicators

The instruments used in making the rock paintings are not definitely known, although a number of things could have been used. The presence of handprints at a small number of sites in the Canadian Shield (on Tramping Lake, Manitoba and Lake of the Woods, Ontario) suggests that hands were indeed covered with paint, and many lines are about finger-width, suggesting that fingers may have been commonly used as a convenient paintbrush.

But the fineness of some lines and the sharpness of outline of a great number of paintings shows that a brush or fine applicator was used at least in a number of cases. This

is seen at the Rattler Creek site especially, where the legs and rack of the small cervid figure are very delicately done, with the lines less than 4 millimetres in width. Fur (Lamb 1957:256), sharpened pieces of wood or bone (Mallery 1886:50), or plant fibres have been used by Indians in areas outside the Shield, and all could easily have served. Small, fine, accidental lines, such as would be produced by the splayed bristles of a paint brush, were seen both at the Tramping Lake Site (south of the study area), and at the Silent Rapids Site on the Churchill.

A man from Pelican Narrows informed Doug Evans that rock paintings were made with fingers or with an eagle feather bent over the finger (personal communication May 30, 1968). While any number of natural or slightly modified objects could have been used to make rock paintings, it may have been the case that only certain ritual equipment (such as an eagle feather) was supposed to be used, conferring even more importance on the action of painting.

5.1.3 Style of depiction and subject matter

One of the most striking characteristics of the Churchill River rock paintings is the simplicity and effectiveness in the way that the paintings are executed. The lines and outline shapes are seldom crudely done, a very difficult technical task when one considers the often very rough texture of the rock surfaces used. Careful examination (such as is necessary when tracing the symbols for reproduction) shows that the lines are mostly true and executed in an efficient,

smooth manner. The paintings were done in the simplest manner that the media and materials allowed.

Two basic modes of depiction were used. One was to indicate the outside dimensions of a figure with the use of lines only, not painting the area inside these lines. Another was to paint the whole area solidly inside the outer boundaries of the figure. The first type may be called "stick figures" or "outline figures", and the second may be called "silhouette" figures. Some paintings display combinations or modifications of these two basic types, such as the solidly-coloured head on the stick figure of the human at the Uskik Lake Site (Face II), and the inside of the body of the bison at the Conjuring River Mouth Site. In a number of cases lines, dots, or other appurtenances are painted inside the body cavity of stick figures, such as at the Face Site, High Rock Narrows Sites #1 and 2, and the Silent Rapids Site.

The perspectives used are those which best show the salient features of subjects that were intended to be depicted realistically. The cervids and bovids are painted in profile, showing the bulk and proportions of the body, size of the legs, antlers or humps (if present), and the lateral shape of the head. Beavers are shown in two instances from above, the only way to illustrate the distinctive features of that animal - the long body, and especially the long, flat tail. Human figures are usually shown from the front. Thunderbirds or birds are also usually drawn in front profile with wings extended to the sides and the head turned to one side.

Subject Matter

The perceptual and iconographic categories of other peoples are often very different from one's own, making interpretation and understanding of their art very difficult. This problem becomes readily apparent to the students of this form of art, for the attempt at classification immediately raises doubts about the likelihood of coincidence of the artist's, and the interpreter's categories for understanding. (See Section 6.3). For this reason, it is likely that future attempts at a computer-assisted motif distribution for the Canadian Shield area will be limited only to those symbols easily susceptible to interpretation. Various of the symbols called "geometric" in Table 2 cannot be identified or readily interpreted, and many occur only once or twice on the river or in the whole region.

Some symbols defy ready classification into motif categories. The clearest example of this lies in whether one calls bird depictions "birds" or "thunderbirds" - in other tribal areas on the continent, the Thunderbird deity was shown much as one would draw a stylized eagle or indeed most other birds from the front (Wintemberg 1928). Therefore in some cases an "ordinary" bird may have been intended, while in others the powerful Thunderbird may have been. Since birds are shown occasionally (rarely) on some Shield sites, and are shown in side profile, and since evidence from Ojibwa birch bark scrolls, folklore and other shield sites points to the Thunderbird, this is how they are regarded in the Churchill

River area. Not all such figures look the same, however. Some are small and simplified; others are large with feathers hanging from the wings, with toes, and so on.

In some cases certain figures can be said to be human, since they bear resemblance to the human body, rendered in a stylized way. In other cases, though, such as that in which only a human-like face is drawn, or only the top half of the body, it is less clear that we are dealing with the human animal, or other, human-like, perhaps mythological beings.

Table 2 gives a breakdown of the distribution of the symbols at each of the twenty Churchill River sites. Footnotes, indicated by letters instead of asterisks, are found after the table. The length of this list of descriptions illustrates the problem of classification alluded to above. The categories included in the table indicate the commonest and/or identifiable symbols, as well as providing some indication of the occurrence of unidentifiable animals and objects (or concepts symbolized by abstract figures).

TABLE 2
SYMBOL DISTRIBUTION

SITE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
SUBJECT MATTER																				
HUMAN OR ANTHROPOMORPH		c		*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	v	*		*	z ²
-face depicted					*	*													*	
-horns depicted						e														
-other					e	h														x
ARTIFACTS																				
-bow													*			* ²				
-rifle												*								
-pipe						*								*	*		*		*	
-rattle						*														
-bag							*													
-canoe	*																			
-other																	t			
SYLLABIC WRITING				*																
SNAKE					*			*			*	p	*		w	*				
BEAVER					*	*														
BISON						*	*				*	*		*						* ²
MOOSE												*								
OTHER CERVID						*					*									*
CANID						*					*	*								
BEAR											*									
THUNDERBIRD					*						*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
BIRD	a ²		* ²																	
"BIRD TRACK"											*	*								
UNIDENTIFIABLE ANIMAL	a	c	*		g	i		*			o	q	*		s					y
PLAIN 3-SIDED ENCLOSURE					*									*						
"FRINGED" 3-SIDED ENCLOSURE					*								*				*			
GEOMETRICS																				
-small dot or oval			*		*		*				*	*							*	
-solid ball											*	*								
-complete ring											*	*								
-cross		*									*									*
-other (unidentified object)	b			d	f	j	k	l	m	n	r				u					

NOTES FOR SYMBOL DISTRIBUTION CHART

- a. - either horned serpent with large head and small body, or diving bird with elongated neck (such as a cormorant).
- b. - two curved upright marks with 4 short marks above (Something to do with canoe, such as fish trap, barrier in river, etc.?).
- c. - two figures that could be tailed quadrupeds (e.g. salamander, or small mammal), or stylized tailed (or phallic) humans.
- d. - solidly-coloured square outlined by another.
 - small circle and arc on an upright line (stylized human with upraised arms?).
 - line with 3 upright extensions (stylized head, shoulders and arms of human?).
- e. - line down the centre of the body cavity.
- f. - curved lines.
 - head of animal with rays, or comet, or design?
 - remnants of human face with ribbed neck?
 - "tally marks", curved lines, line with diagonal lines attached, line with short line at each end.
 - line with two upright extensions above a human face.
 - cross drawn inside a circle.
- g. - swimming or flying creature.
- h. - one human with hair or feathers(?), one with ears.
- i. - four-legged creature shown in side profile.
 - four-legged, tailed creature shown from above.
 - insect?
 - a four-legged stick figure or geometric abstraction.
- j. - a complex of curved and straight intersecting lines
- k. - lines connecting man and bison.

- l. - curved mark below small oval.
 - dots and curved marks.
- m. - two "tally marks".
- n. - complex geometric structure below "half-man".
 - 4 "tally marks".
 - arc above thunderbird and snakes.
 - object or creature(?) to right of stylized human and tally marks.
- o. - possible insect (or plant?).
- p. - this serpent appears to have horns.
- q. - tailed four-legged creature suckling(?) on bison.
- r. - unidentified, faded curved lines.
- s. - stylized bear?
 - turtle?
 - stylized thunderbird with dot inside circular body.
 - stick animal with line extending through back inside oval enclosure.
- t. - club(?) or bag held by large thunderbird.
- u. - horizontal line with "fringe" on bottom (possibly horned serpent?).
 - ellipsoid line extending over "bear" (representing shaking-tent structure?).
 - figure with 3 short lines on top and bottom, with bow positioned above.
 - figure possibly formed by cleaning paint applicator on rock.
- v. - human body with cone-shaped face.
- w. - possibly a horned snake in profile.
- x. - face with eyes and mouth, ears, and neck with bars.
- y. - partial animal - possibly another cervid.
- z. - may be a very faded human figure.

Humans or human-like figures are the commonest pictographic representations found, occurring at 14 or 15 of the 20 sites. In descending frequency of occurrence we find thunderbirds (at 8 sites); snakes (at 7 or 8 sites, including one or two examples of horned snakes); small dots or ovals (at 6 sites); bison (at 5 or 6 sites); tobacco pipes (at 5 sites); canids, cervids, rings, crosses, 3-sided enclosures with "fringe" marks, human faces with eyes and mouth depicted (all at 3 sites each); and solid balls of colour, plain 3-sided enclosures, "bird tracks", beavers (all at 2 sites each).

A number of other symbols appear only at single sites, including horns on humans; moose; syllabic writing; medicine rattles; carrying bags; canoe; a human with hair or feathers; archer holding a bow; bear; human shooting rifle; thunderbird holding an object; and a possible bird in profile.

Two of the sites with human faces have ears, and two have vertical lines drawn down the centre of the body, but none have noses.

The most frequent associations are between humans and thunderbirds (at 7 sites); between humans and snakes (5 or 6 sites); and between humans, pipes and thunderbirds (at 5 sites). Snakes and thunderbirds occur at 4 or 5 sites together, as do bison and humans. Three-sided enclosures are found at 4 sites with humans, thunderbirds and pipes. Snakes and three-sided enclosures are found at 3 or 4 sites together. Snakes, pipes and humans are found at three sites, and bison and thunderbirds at 2 or 3 sites.

5.2 Relationship of Churchill sites to other areas in the Canadian Shield

The Churchill River is the major water feature in the portion of Saskatchewan where pictographs are found. While there are 17 sites on the watercourse in Saskatchewan, there are comparable numbers of sites both north and south of the river. Whether or not this latter fact relates to relative ease of access into these areas from the Churchill remains to be seen. In the Manitoba section only a couple of (now-drowned) sites have been reported north of the Churchill; others are found south of Opachuanau Lake.

Despite the presence of at least fairly suitable rock surfaces for painting in the study area (and beyond it, both farther east and west on the river), painting activity seems to have been more common in some areas than in others. Thus, we see five areal concentrations of sites on the Churchill River:

- six sites in the Foster River Mouth/Black Bear Island Lake area (Sites #1-6).
- six sites in the Otter/Mountain Lakes area (Sites #7-13).
- two sites on Uskik Lake (Sites #14,15).
- two sites on Wasawakasik Lake (Sites #16,17).
- three sites on Opachuanau Lake (Sites #18-20).

5.2.1 Geographical relationship and its significance

These sites cannot be seen in isolation from other rock art occurrences. Map 4 indicates the locations of northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba sites in the Shield. It is interesting to note in passing that with the possible exception of the south end of Reindeer Lake, rock painting sites are not found on the shores of large lakes on or near the Churchill.

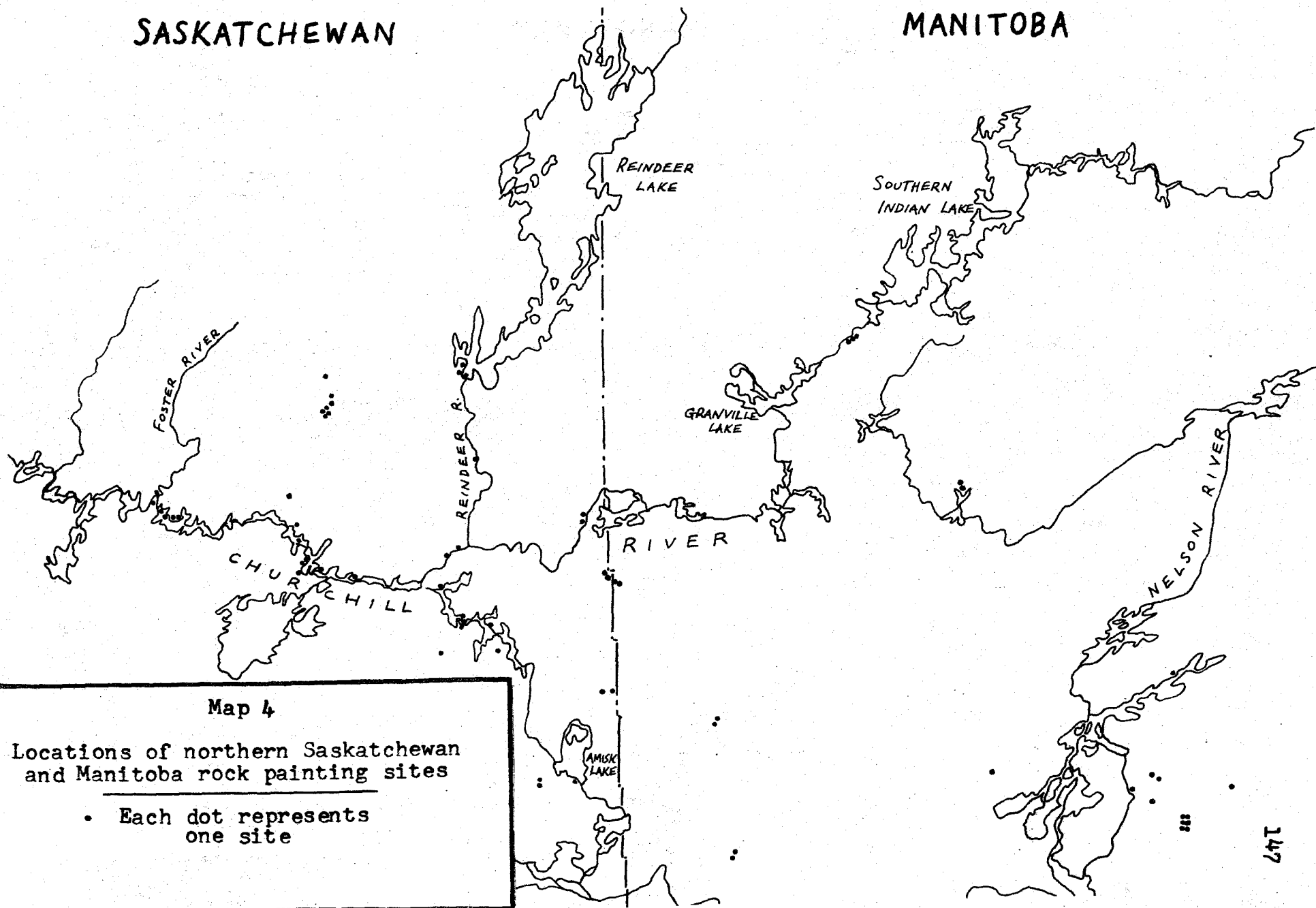
No petroglyph sites are known to occur along the Churchill nor, in fact, anywhere in northern Saskatchewan or Manitoba, or in Ontario north of Lake of the Woods. The absence of such occurrences further north suggests different cultural traditions, or regional or temporal influences felt only in the southern Shield.

Map 5 shows the approximate areal distribution of the Canadian Shield woodlands rock art style, after Grant (1967), who calls this art area the Northern Woodland.

The rupestral art of the Canadian Shield comprises one of the most widely distributed aboriginal art styles in North America. Pictographs have been found in Quebec, Ontario, Minnesota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and in an isolated instance near Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. The geographical centre of distribution, based on the great numbers of occurrences, appears to be in the lake country to the west and north of Lake Superior and Lake of the Woods; the westernmost occurrences (other than the Fort Smith site) appear to be just east of Pinehouse Lake on the Churchill River in Saskatchewan.

SASKATCHEWAN

MANITOBA



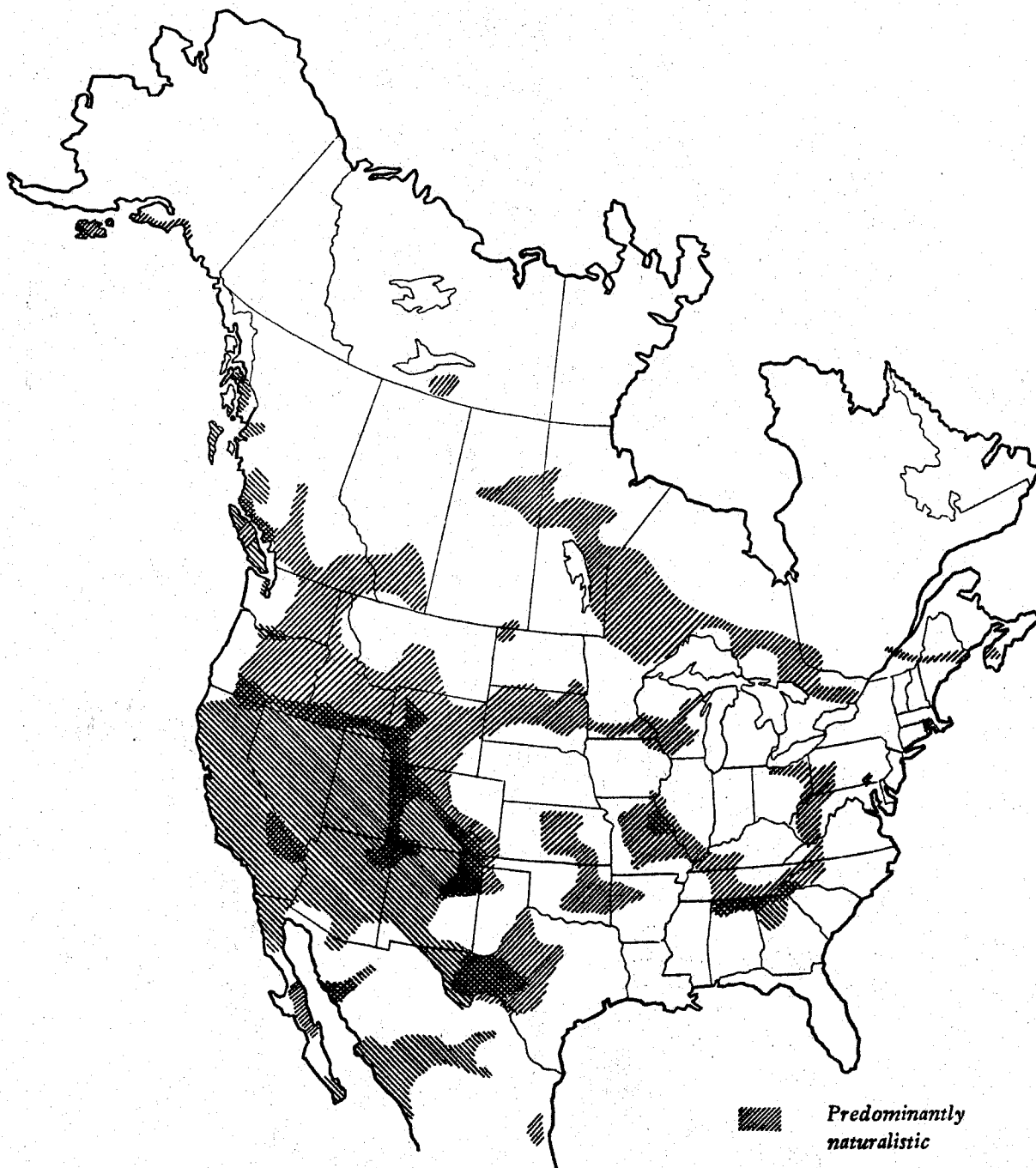
Map 4

Locations of northern Saskatchewan
and Manitoba rock painting sites

- Each dot represents one site

There are certain basic lines of unity and similarity between the sites found in the southerly boreal forest areas of the Canadian Shield, from Saskatchewan to Quebec, notwithstanding particular regional clusters of symbol types and absences in other areas that may exist (although such distributions have yet to be documented and delineated adequately). (See Section 6.2.2).

Map 5



North American rock art styles.

From Grant (1967:22)

5.2.2 Stylistic relationships

Several of the sites on the Churchill River have enclosures in which either thunderbirds, bison, humans, and other creatures are painted. This device is not found further southeast in the Shield, as far as the author is aware, nor is the painting of horizontal lines to apparently separate creatures into separate domains (seen at Larocque Lake, some 15 air miles north of the Rattler Creek Site, and at Amisk Lake, 72 air miles south of the Wasawakasik Lake Site).

The addition of a "fringe" or V-shaped protrusions to such enclosures or to lines is also a noteworthy local motif peculiar to this northwestern area of the Shield, especially characteristic of the Saskatchewan Churchill River sites.

Thunderbirds occur at 6 successive sites in the eastern part of the Churchill in addition to the quite widely separated occurrences upstream, at Stanley Rapids and at Site #6. Tobacco pipes occur at 4 of the 6 sites and at Site #6 as well, thereby suggesting a significant co-distribution of these motifs (see Section 6.3). The frequency of occurrence of these symbols is greater than in other similarly distributed geographical locations to the south and east.

The drawing of eyes and mouth, showing the human face, is rare in the rest of the Canadian Shield, but 5 examples from 3 sites are found on the Churchill, 3 of the faces at High Rock Narrows Site #2. The only other sites showing

similar faces in the region are at Sandy Narrows, south of Pelican Narrows, and at the Hickson-Maribelli Lake Site.

The two humans with horns at Site #6 are the only ones on the Churchill, and this is a regional difference from areas to the east in the Shield, where this being is more common.

The extremely large size of the human or anthropomorphic figure at Site #5 makes this figure unique.

The presence of hair or hair-like appendages on the head of a human at Site #6 is found only at one other place in the northwest of the Shield rock art area, at the Hickson-Maribelli Lake Site, and is rare elsewhere.

The ribbed neck seen at Site #19 on Opachuanau Lake is unique in the Shield, but is found with only slight variations in rock paintings in Pictograph Cave, Montana (Mulloy 1958: 127,130), on a petroglyph boulder from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and carved on outcrop near St. Victor, Saskatchewan.

The human holding the bow at Site #13 is rare in the Shield, and the only other site in the northwest is downstream and across Frog Portage on Manawan Lake, only some 25 miles away. Dewdney and Kidd note only two other archer figures, at Fishing Lake, Manitoba and Frances Lake, Ontario (1967:116-117).

Other types of weaponry are extremely rare in the Shield rock art (unlike such areas as Writing-On-Stone in southern Alberta, for example), and the scene of the man shooting a rifle at a running moose or elk (which is being chased by the dog) is seen nowhere else except in one other possible instance,

at Darky Lake, Ontario (see Dewdney & Kidd 1967:36).

There appears to be only one more example of a medicine rattle being associated with a human, recorded by Steinbring (1972:fig. 2) on the Rice River in southeastern Manitoba.

The large figures with looping lines and fringes around the edges at Rattler Creek would appear to be carrying bags of a design not seen elsewhere in a rock painting.

The figure called a canoe at Site #1 is so classed based on this interpretation by Dewdney and Kidd (1967). This is a quite widespread symbolization, presenting a highly schematic view of a person (the upright line) in the canoe. In other examples, there may be several such upright lines or passengers.

The syllabic writing found at the Wamninuta Island Site is the only such example found on the Churchill, and is found very uncommonly elsewhere. The site on Written Rock Creek near Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, recorded by Dewdney, has an inscription in syllabics painted in ochre, below a thunderbird-like pictograph. Possible syllabic figures are found at the Kipahigan Lake Site, 12 air miles south of the Churchill, and at the Hickson-Maribelli Lake Site.

Snakes occur quite commonly in Shield rock art sites, but horned serpents are a special motif relatable to Algonkian cosmology (as are thunderbirds). It is not clear whether snakes without horns should be classed along with the horned ones.

The two clearly defined beaver found at Sites 6 and 7

suggest the painting of one may have been inspired by the existence of the other, particularly since the symbol is not a common one, either in the northwest or to the east. Another definite beaver is seen at a site in Proctor Narrows on Kipahigan Lake. Dewdney and Kidd do not indicate its existence in rock paintings east of Saskatchewan.

Bison paintings are found in the central part of the study area, as well as near Medicine Rapids on the Sturgeon-Weir River, on Tramping Lake in northern Manitoba, and in southeastern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario in a number of occurrences. All these areas bordered on the former range of the animal in pre-contact times.

Only two animals that can be definitely identified as moose, both at the Island Portage site, are found on the river. It may well be that some other animals which have been classified as unidentifiable here were intended by the artists to be moose, or other cervids, such as caribou, but stylization or generalization of characteristics (such as the animal at Mountain Lake Peninsula Site #1) does not allow one to decide one way or another. Moose are most readily characterized by the "bell", a loose, elongated piece of hair-covered skin hanging below the lower jaw, and where this creature is intended, a bell is usually drawn. Moose paintings occur infrequently in the northwest, being found more south and east of Lake Winnipeg.

Small dog - or wolf-like animals are found at Sites #7 and #12, and as a larger, central figure at Site #14.

A small figure at the Stanley Rapids Site bears more resemblance to a small stylized bear than anything else, and a large figure next to a big thunderbird at the Wasawakasik Lake Site may represent a bear or a mythical bear-like(?) creature. Bears are found in some sites in northwestern Ontario.

At the Uskik Lake Site a series of dots below a grouping of other paintings seems to form a sort of frame for the group, but at other sites dots or ovals are found as isolated occurrences or as parts of other figures. At other places in the Shield (e.g. Dewdney & Kidd 1967:35,72,76) such figures are seen, and may represent tracks of travel of animals or humans.

The lines connecting the man and bison at the Cow Narrows site are not found anywhere else on the river or in the region. They resemble more than anything else representations of magical manipulation or control possessed by shamans, seen often in Ojibwa birch bark pictography (e.g. Hoffman 1891:255).

The apparent complete absence of paintings of fish in the northwestern part of the Canadian Shield should be noted, since fish probably played a major part in the diet (and religion) of the peoples who have lived in the area, for centuries.

Also absent are other symbols which would indicate European influence, such as ships or forts, or obvious European artifacts (with the exception of the rifle at Site

#12), such as are seen in other rock art areas, including northwestern Ontario.

We see no Underwater Panthers in the whole northwestern area, while they occur in Ontario Shield sites. No turtles are found in the north (except possibly at the Wasawakasik Lake Site), while they are found in boulder effigies and petroglyphs on the Plains to the south, and in Ontario rock paintings.

The humans with the rattles at Site #6 are undoubtedly depictions of humans with sacred paraphernalia, and the pipe one of them is smoking also probably falls into this category. Other pipes seen along the river may represent sacred ceremonies. Certain ceremonial artifacts, such as medicine bags formed from animal skins, are found further east in the Ojibwa area, and are probably connected with the Midewiwin ceremony there. The apparent fringed bags at the Rattler Creek Site may be ceremonial, or secular carrying bags. They are similar in appearance to a Cree bag dating from before 1840 from the Lake Winnipeg Cree found in a German collection (Benndorf & Speyer 1968:46, plate 13).

CHAPTER VI

AGE, AUTHORSHIP AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CHURCHILL RIVER ROCK PAINTINGS

6.1 Evidence for age

Two basic types of dating of prehistoric human remains are used by prehistorians: absolute dating, involving attempts to establish specific points in time at which events occurred or artifacts were produced, and relative dating, involving the establishing of when human activities took place relative to other activities. It is not always possible to arrive at dates, but certain clues may nevertheless reveal that one artifact was made before another particular artifact, or that whole series of cultural traits preceded others in time.

Since rock paintings wherever they occur are very difficult to place in archaeological context - most are not buried and therefore excavatable - they have been largely ignored by prehistorians. A number of possible alternatives have been considered in the light of what knowledge they might provide about when the rock paintings of the Churchill River were made, and if there are differences in the age of particular sites relative to others.

6.1.1 Physical dating methods

Radiocarbon dating

A commonly-used method for dating prehistoric remains,

the radiocarbon method, was considered. This technique involves the measurement of the rate of radiation of Carbon-14 still remaining after a half-life sequence of approximately 5,500 years, using a suitable sample of organic remains contemporaneous with the remains one wishes to date.

However, it is evident that the rock paintings now contain little or no organic material. Even if there were still carbon present in any of the paintings, it would require from 50 to 100 grams or more (depending on the percentage of organic material still present in the sample) of a carbon-poor sample, to permit dating. An absolute minimum of about 3 grams of carbon is needed to proceed with dating (A. Rutherford, Saskatchewan Research Council Radiocarbon Laboratory, personal communication, November 9, 1973).

The amount of pigment needed to create a painting is negligible in relation to the area capable of being stained and coloured by ochre, and to obtain enough for a sample it would be necessary to remove many paintings, which may all be of entirely different ages. This method does not appear to be a promising approach at present, although more refined techniques using much smaller samples may make radioactive dating feasible.

Lichenometry

In the Canadian Shield, rock lichens (as well as the other types) are ubiquitous. Lichens are composed of two organisms in a close symbiotic relationship: an alga and a

fungus. The alga may belong to the blue-green algae (Cyanophyceae), or the green algae (Chlorophyceae). The fungal member usually belongs (except in a few tropical fungi), to the sac fungi (Ascomycetes). Because the algal component is a photosynthetic plant, the fungus is able to obtain food from it, without being dependent on decaying organic matter, as many other fungi, which are parasites (Lamb 1959:144).

The cell walls of lichens are thickened and gelatinized, enabling them to survive prolonged periods of drought (Lamb 1959:144). Observations of the occurrence of lichens and their relationship with the occurrence of pictographs are worth noting. Where a rock face is supplied with a fairly regular or plentiful supply of water through direct rainfall, seepage or the lapping of waves against it, lichens are usually less tenaciously bonded to the cracks and irregularities in the rock. Where lichens occur on an entirely exposed surface, with intermittent provision of moisture, they have a more tenacious grip. This characteristic is dependent also on the species of lichen. Paintings tend to be found on surfaces where there is or at least was a minimum of lichen growth. Some faces may have been cleaned of lichens before paintings were made. Many painted rock surfaces have, however, been encroached upon by lichen growth.

Lichens often live in extremely harsh habitats, and their growth rates are very slow. Lamb states that certain lichen colonies have been estimated to be more than 2,000

years old (1959:144). Certainly the habitats where lichens are found growing on or near rock paintings on the Churchill River are very harsh, and some lichens here may be of a comparable age.

Beschel suggested that certain species, such as Alectoria, Parmelia, Stereocaulon, Umbilicaria, Rinodina, Lecanora, and some others, can be used to date time of exposure of rock surfaces for many decades, and even a few centuries.

"Several species of the crustaceous lichen genera Rhizocarpon and Lecidea, however, continue to grow for much longer time periods. Their largest thalli seem to be about 600 to 1300 years old in the Alps and 1000 to 1500 years in West Greenland. Perhaps these values are exceeded in high arctic or antarctic regions." (1961:1047)

Benedict (1967:817) states that the completed growth curve of a particular species, Rhizocarpon geographicum, is believed to be suitable for dating deposits at least as old as 3,000 years.

The late Roland Beschel, a pioneer in the use of lichen growth measurement for dating various glacial and other phenomena, summarized the possibilities and aims of the technique of lichenometry. Although it refers to glacial moraines, the principles apply to other, potentially datable rock surfaces:

If one assumes the largest disc-shaped thalli of the

commoner species on a moraine to be contemporaneous with the substrate, one can draw the following conclusions:

1) If the age of the substrate is known, one can ascertain the rate of growth for the species concerned within a certain area.

2) From a known growth rate, one can determine the age of an undated substrate from the maximum lichen size.

3) From the differences in growth rates in different areas, certain conclusions can be drawn as to climatic factors, given identical edaphic conditions. (1957:6).

Since some lichens have an extremely slow growth rate, this encroachment may in some instances indicate that the paintings underneath are of great age. Growth rates, and as importantly, growth patterns are not precisely known, so measurements of increments to a lichen colony to date paintings under the increment (by determining how long it would take this part of the colony to cover the portion of the painting that it covers), is presently not fruitful. Neither is the method of removing (for example) a ten-year increment and C_{14} -dating it to isolate this increment in a definite time period. The imperfect knowledge of just how quickly a lichen grows precludes these last two methods, although it seems that these might prove valuable with advances in the study of the physical chemistry and the morphology of lichens.

The Wasawakasik Lake Site, about eight miles downstream from Island Falls dam and Sandy Bay on the Churchill River,

may evidence an apparent unconcern for the presence of lichens on the rock face on the part of the painter. The upper portion of the large thunderbird at this location has been painted on an uncleared face, apparently over small lichen colonies. This circumstance was seen only at one site on the Churchill River.

It is the opinion of a number of lichenologists that lichenometry may have great potential in dating emergent rock surfaces that have been subsequently colonized by lichens. But there are certain problems connected with the method which have to be resolved by lichenologists before it can be hoped that these plants' growth rates may aid in dating rock art.

As mentioned above, the variables in growth of lichens are as yet not fully understood, and this is exacerbated by the fact that growth rates for some species are so slow that it is difficult or impossible for an individual researcher to measure significant growth in a lifetime. Beschel reports (1961:1046) that an observer photographed lichens that did not change their appearance in twenty years.

Probably the major drawback to ready use of the method is the fact that each rock face on the Churchill River has a separate set of micro-environmental conditions which will either hinder or promote growth rates relative to other surfaces. Despite the fact that most of the rock surfaces containing paintings are basically arid micro-environments, some do get regular supplies of seepage moisture from the

terrain above the site.

The most reliable method for dating rock faces by use of lichens is by comparing such faces with ones with known dates of exposure. Such dated emergent rock surfaces do not exist in the study area, except perhaps below the Whitesand and Island Falls dams, where rock outcrops were left exposed by impoundment of water over 30 and 40 years ago, respectively. But whether the exposed surfaces were colonized, and whether the lichens have not been removed by subsequent flooding remains to be studied in the field.

A number of other problems are associated with this dating method, but it may be possible sometime in the future to apply this technique to dating the rock paintings after more is known about lichens and their rates of increase in size.

Weathering

There are many variable factors involved in a study of the relative or absolute age of a particular rock painting, such as the nature of the pigment and mixing medium, the rock base, chemical and mechanical erosion factors, and so on. Dewdney recently presented a case for studies involving all the weathering factors, to the end of arriving at a method for measuring and dating the erosion (1970).

The Canadian Conservation Institute of the National Museums of Canada has begun part of its work in conservation and research in art in Canada with an attempt to date Shield

rock paintings. The first, preliminary study results, on granitic rock surfaces, suggest that many of the Shield paintings may have been painted on a thin layer of colloidal silica deposited on the rock face by the action of organic acids seeping down from vegetation above and acting as a solvent for silicon. This deposition of colloidal silica is continuous, being deposited before the paintings are made on the rock, and afterward. An insoluble surface coating is thus formed over the paintings, sealing them in.

If this pattern holds true for greater numbers of samples from different rock types from different parts of the Shield, rates of deposition may be arrived at. Therefore means of dating when a painting was made may be developed for the Churchill River and other sites, or some of them.

Water Level marks

As mentioned earlier, water-level marks indicate that either paintings were made below high-water levels after an exceptional flooding of the shoreline, or on such a surface periodically subjected to flooding. Records which include water flow variations for the Churchill River have been kept only since the 1930's at the Island Falls dam. Records correlating the positions of the rock paintings relevant to these fluctuations are non-existent. William McInnes noted, on Southern Indian Lake, not far downstream from the Opachuanau Lake sites, that

"Fresh water-worn surfaces 4 feet above

present high water level, on which the lichen and moss are only beginning to grow, as well as accumulations of old drift wood, indicate an older high water level perhaps 50 years old, when the volume of water carried by the river was greater than now." (1909:89).

Unfortunately, the potentially useful information provided by McInnes is nullified by the absence of data concerning the position of the Opachuanau Lake paintings in 1908, or by the position of this high water mark today.

Pigment differences

One noteworthy characteristic of the major Churchill sites (considered so because of relative numbers of paintings) is that most of the paintings, but not all, have bright pigmentation. In the major sites category may be included High Rock Narrows Site #2 (Site #6), the Rattler Creek Site (Site #7), the Stanley Rapids Site (Site #12) and the Wasawakasik Lake Site (Site #16).

Dissimilarity in pigment colour of symbols at a particular site may indicate that an individual artist may have mixed two or more separate paint formulations to make two or more differently - coloured figures; that two or more artists may have painted simultaneously at a site, or that two or more artists painted their symbols at points more or less distantly separated in time.

At each of the major Churchill River sites we see some indication of different formulations of paint being used by the aboriginal artists, and some other indicators of difference in age, such as erosion and faintness of pigment and patination over paintings. In each of these sites the brightest paintings are relatively little affected by patination, fading, or lichen growths: Face VII at Site #6 (Figure 6g); the beaver on Face I at Site #7 (Figure 7b); Faces I, II and the man inside the ring on Face III at Site #12 (Figures 12a, 12b); and Faces I, II, IV, VI, and the three "bird-necked" symbols on Face VII at Site #16 (Figures 16a, 16b, 16c). (The exception to the general rule is Face I at Site #16, where large lichen colonies are found in the bodies of the two animals (see Section 6.1.1, Lichenometry).

The relative absence, or rather, the as yet slight effects, of erosion evident on these paintings suggests that they may be somewhat more recent than the other paintings at these sites. It must be noted that this vividness may be due primarily to fortuitous circumstances of less exposure to the elements of erosion than neighboring rock faces. At any rate, two observations may be made. First, some of the largest individual paintings and some of the largest groupings may have been made in more recent times than the earliest paintings. Second, it is apparent that at some sites where paintings already existed, later artists added their symbols to the rocks. This possibility is supported by the presence at some sites of very faded symbols or smeared ochrous areas over

which clearer paintings have been made. This is evident at a site near Southend on Reindeer Lake (Churchill River Basin Group 1973:7), and on Face III at the Rattler Creek Site (Figure 7c).

This last possibility is really part of the superimposition principle of chronology - that is, a painting done over already existing paintings will be younger in age than them. In some other areas of the world such superpositioning of carvings or paintings over others has provided good dating clues. In the Great Basin rock art area of North America, for example, rectilinear abstract designs are often found over those in curvilinear abstract style, and are therefore more recent (Grant 1967:45).

In some regions ritual obliteration of existing paintings and the repainting of the same surfaces was undertaken. This is found in Hopi ceremonial kiva structures, where plaster was reapplied over existing paintings on plaster, and new paintings made (Grant 1967:45). In other areas such as the Canadian Shield, superimposition is extremely rare, and the paintings are generally made on completely separate rock faces. There are only two possible examples on the Churchill River of a painting being made over others: at Face III at the Rattler Creek Site, and on Face I at the Wasawakasik Lake Site. In the latter case, the end of the tail of the unusual stylized bear(?) figure crosses another line. However, the pigment appears to be the same colour as the painting it crosses (although the section of the line it crosses is more

faded, and the superimposition is evident).

Amino acid dating

Among future possibilities that may prove to be applicable to dating the Churchill River rock paintings should be mentioned the new field of amino acid dating, in which absolute dates are calculated by the loss of amino acids from paint binder. In South West Africa E. Denninger has completed a series of dating experiments on 155 rock painting samples, recognizing at least 5 groups of dates, the oldest being about 1,500 years (King 1973:357).

Again, this method depends on there being enough of an original organic binder (if used) to provide a sample for dating.

6.1.2 Evidence from subject matter

Indicators of age are derived from the subject matter of several of the rock painting symbols on the Churchill River. Several other symbols may be used as time markers if and when their archaeological contexts are more fully studied and documented.

The syllabic writing at the Wamninuta Island Site and the man shooting the rifle at the animal running away from him at the Stanley Rapids Site are two maximum time markers. The syllabics cannot be older than 1840 A.D., the date of the introduction of the Cree Syllabarium to the Swampy Cree people at Norway House, northern Manitoba, by James Evans. The use

of this writing system spread to other areas and became widely used on the continent. Its appearance in rock paintings in the aboriginal ochre pigment is uncommon (being found at only 3 or 4 sites, in the northwest), although occasionally inscriptions are found scratched in lichens on rocks near rock paintings throughout the north.

The rifle-shooting man above Stanley Rapids is somewhat more difficult to determine a likely maximum age for, because the precise time of entry of rifles (or accounts of their use) into this locale are unknown. The most likely route of diffusion of this European trade item was from Hudson Bay, where English traders set up their posts around 1680. The first trading post on the Churchill inland from Hudson Bay was built by Joseph Frobisher in 1774 at Frog Portage, and the first one at Lac La Ronge in 1799, by Etienne Waden (Morton 1939:290, 334). The use of the rifle was probably earlier in the Stanley area, since Mackenzie reports that Frobisher went to Frog Portage to intercept Chipewyans who had been travelling to trade with the Hudson Bay Company at Churchill. However, the use (or stories of its use) can extend back to only about the latter part of the 17th Century to the establishing of Churchill, thus giving a maximum date for this group of paintings. Mandelbaum (1940:177) states, "Although in 1670 they are noted as having only the bow, in 1690 Kelsey remarks that the Cree and Assiniboin, armed with guns, have turned the tables on their enemies and have put them to rout. They soon had little use for the bow."

A possible additional clue is provided by a detail evident on the rifle - a small bump on the top of the rifle above the trigger area, possibly meant to represent a percussion cap or flint-striking platform. Flintlock rifles were used in the north, so far as the author is aware, in the last century, possibly up to and after the turn of the 20th Century in some areas of the Shield.

Of course, the maximum ages which can be assigned to these two particular groups of pictographs cannot be used to date all the other Churchill River paintings - perhaps none of them. Other artifacts depicted on the shores of the river do not evidence any European or other acculturative influences.

The bow seen at the Island Portage Site (and the nearby Manawan Lake Site just south of the Churchill) may, on the other hand, indicate that these paintings were done before European contact. However, it must be noted that this is not necessarily so. The use of bow and arrow is noted by Matthew Cocking in 1773 among the Indians on the plains to the south (Burpee 1908). Both bows and guns are seen in battle scenes in petroglyphs at Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park, Alberta, and old Indian informants in northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba recall the use of bow and arrow for hunting when they were youths. The contemporaneous use of both weapons thus militates against pictographs of archers being necessarily prehistoric. But the possible assignment of relatively earlier dates to the Manawan and Island Portage Sites than to the hunting scene at Stanley Rapids should be taken into

account when these sites are included in future relative chronologies for the rock art of this region of the Shield.

The Saskatchewan Churchill River sites with pipes (Site #6, 14, 15 and 17) depict pipes of a type most commonly found in the Plains area. This type has not been found either in excavation or as a surface find in the Shield of northern Saskatchewan or Manitoba so far as the author knows, although the extent of survey or excavation in the area to date is scanty indeed. A pipe bowl of the "Micmac" type (a bowl on top of a base square or rectangular in lateral profile, whose height is usually larger than its width) was found in an excavation at the Yaskowich Lake site on Little Mari Lake north of Flin Flon, by Dennis Anderson in 1968. The portrayal of the platform-type pipe in the rock paintings may represent contact with people from the Plains. The Face Site in Manitoba (Site #19) has a seemingly different type of pipe-bowl, (rounded) and stem, perhaps with a mouth-piece.

6.1.3 Historical observations and extent of archaeological knowledge

Historical observations

William McInnes' sketches of pictographs at the Stanley Rapids, Wasawakasik Lake and Maple Leaf Rapids Sites in 1908 give us the most secure information regarding the minimum age of some of the Churchill River sites. The figures he depicts are therefore a minimum of 65 years old.

McInnes' drawings of symbols at the Wasawakasik Lake Site done 65 years ago (Figure 16d) does not include the bear, suggesting that the bear was done subsequent to his visit, especially since McInnes often omitted fainter figures in his field sketches of pictographs (see also Dewdney & Kidd 1967: 69) and the bear is as striking in pigment brightness as the thunderbird next to it. The apparent superimposition of the tail of the bear here over another painting (despite the similarity in colour) adds support to the possibility that the bear is less than 65 years old.

We have minimum dates for the Maple Leaf Rapids and the Stanley Rapids Sites thanks to McInnes' sketches of the paintings there. Unfortunately, we are not necessarily illuminated as to the minimum age of the rifleman at Stanley Rapids, for, although it or the hunting dog does not appear in McInnes' drawings, both the dog and man are very faint today, and may simply have been omitted or ignored by the geologist. He also omitted some of the bright pictographs on Face II which would appear to be done in the same pigment as others he did draw, implying that they were done at the same time.

Among the many explorers who must have noticed or had pointed out to them by native guides, rock paintings in the Canadian Shield, Alexander Mackenzie was one of the few to record their occurrence. Such records are invaluable, in that they at least give some clue as to the time depth of this art.

In either 1787 or 1792, on one of his two major exploration expeditions to the north and northwest, he noted two rock

painting locations, one on Black Bear Island Lake, and one on Sandfly Lake:

... it (Black Bear Island Lake) is, however, improperly called a lake, as it contains frequent impediments amongst its islands, from rapids. There is a very dangerous one about the centre of it, which is named the Rapid qui ne parle point, or that never speaks, from its silent whirlpool motion (Silent Rapid). In some of the whirlpools the suction is so powerful, that they are carefully avoided. At some distance from the silent rapid, is a narrow strait, where the Indians have painted red figures on the face of a rock, and where it was their custom formerly to make an offering of some of the articles which they had with them, in their way to and from Churchill ...

In this traverse (Sandfly Lake) is an island, which is remarkable for a very large stone, in the form of a bear, on which the natives have painted the head and snout of that animal; and here they also were formerly accustomed to offer sacrifices (Lamb 1970: 122-123).

These two sites therefore are at least 181 to 185 years old, and Mackenzie gives the impression that the paintings were there for some time before his observations.

It should be noted that there are five known pictograph sites near Silent Rapids which could fit his vague description of the location, only one of which he notes. Either some of these other paintings could have been done subsequent to his visit, or only one site was pointed out to him by his guides. Pohorecky and Jones (1968) have discussed the significance of Mackenzie's record, identifying the Silent Rapids Site (Site No. 3) as the one he saw, but this is not a certainty, because of the vagueness of his account. However, while correlations of symbols or style may not be made with other

sites, the existence of two sites of rock paintings on the Churchill dating from about 200 years ago, is a valuable clue for our understanding of the age of such phenomena.

The unusual bear-shaped stone with the head features painted on it has not yet been discovered on Sandfly Lake, although the author searched for it in 1967.

Outside of the Churchill River area other observations have been recorded which now give some idea of the time depth of Canadian Shield rock paintings and which will eventually have to be considered when researchers attempt to relate lines and times of influence between the other, far-flung regions of the Shield where rock art occurs, and the Churchill region.

Crossing the Painted Stone Portage, the height of land between the Hayes and Nelson Rivers in northern Manitoba in 1819, Sir John Franklin noted (n.d.:41) that "It is said that there was formerly a stone placed near the centre of this portage on which figures were annually traced and offerings deposited by the Indians...."

Also in northern Manitoba, Robert Bell, a geologist, saw paintings on Molson Lake, which he was told were painted by the father of the then chief of a band of Swampy Cree people that had moved to Fisher River from the Norway House area a few years previous to Bell's visit, which was in 1879 (Bell 1881:7c). This would place such paintings about 30 (?) years previous to that, to around the middle of the 19th Century.

In Quebec, an apparent reference to rock paintings is found on a map of the "Domaine du Roi en Canada", which was

drawn up in 1731 by Pierre Laure, a Jesuit missionary, as a birthday gift for the Dauphin of France. "On it he wrote a notation beside a lake situated between the Rivière aux Outardes and the Manicouagan River, to the effect that: 'on voit sur les rochers de ce lac différentes figures peintes au naturel et ineffaçables'." (Personal communication from Charles Martijn, Service d'Archéologie et d'Ethnologie, Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Québec, 1970).

Archaeological evidence

The western and central portions of the Churchill River (and indeed, most of the boreal forest and Shield areas of Saskatchewan) may be regarded as an archaeological hinterland. No substantial publication has ever dealt with the archaeology, either survey or excavation, of any location in the whole northern half of the province.

Several publications have resulted from research in the adjacent Shield area of northern Manitoba (Wright 1968a,b, 1970; Nash 1970; Hlady 1970; Dickson 1972), but none attempt to assign an age to rock paintings in the region.

A survey of the upper Sturgeon-Weir River as far as Trade Lake on the Churchill River was conducted in 1961 by James A. Brown of the University of Chicago, the work being concentrated in the Pelican Narrows area. He outlined a tentative early to late sequence consisting of eight archaeological horizons:

- a complex containing stemmed points, thickly lenti-

- cular in cross section;
- a microtool industry containing microblades, microburins, flake scrapers, Oxbow side-notched points, and heavy choppers and cleavers, mostly of crystalline quartz;
 - a complex characterized by small side-notched points, large flake scrapers, large plano-convex end scrapers, and large cleavers;
 - a component marked only by thick, cord-marked pottery "unlike other ceramic types previously found in the province";
 - a component apparently directly related to the Anderson focus of southeastern Manitoba, containing dentate-stamped Laurel pottery;
 - a component characterized by Manitoba focus pottery;
 - Selkirk focus artifacts representative of the prehistoric Cree; and
 - early historic materials associated with Selkirk focus pottery and Cemetery Point corded wares (Woodbury 1962:120).

No interpretive or descriptive analysis other than that provided above has been forthcoming, so there is little that can be said regarding placing rock paintings into any one or more of the artifactual assemblages given by Brown.

Two points found in the Churchill Diversion Archaeological Project survey of Southern Indian Lake (conducted by Oscar Mallory of the University of Winnipeg) have been tenta-

tively identified as late or terminal Paleo-Indian types, similar to Pryor Stemmed Points dated at 6200[±] 350 years B.C. in Montana (Dickson 1972:33). Other materials are considered as representing the Middle Prehistoric Period, and the late Prehistoric Period.

It is probable that archaeological studies in northern Saskatchewan will reveal similar prehistoric depth to that outlined by Nash, Wright, Hlady and Dickson, and assign some dates to the sequence sketched by Brown. A survey of proposed hydroelectric dam reservoir areas in northern Saskatchewan was started only in the summer of 1973 along the central portion of the Churchill River. The first season found remains dating from the very recent to a point similar in style to the Besant type, about 2,000 years old on the Plains (Epp & Khaladkar 1973:3).

There has been one attempt made to date a rock painting by use of archaeological remains (Steinbring & Elias 1968: 499-501). The authors of this study correlate a mean water-level rise occurring around 1350 - 1400 A.D. with the partial dissolution of a painting of a moose on the Bloodvein River in southeastern Manitoba, and the presence of moose bones in the Lockport excavation dating from around 1000 B.P. Steinbring and Elias conclude that the painting was made between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1350 (1968:500).

Artifactual offerings have undoubtedly been left at a majority of the Churchill River sites (see section 6.3). None, however, have been recovered. Once chronological

sequences of archaeological assemblages are established, it may be useful to attempt to recover such offerings as have survived (for example, pipes, chipped stone, or other imperishable artifacts), in an attempt to relate dated artifact types from excavations with those left at pictograph sites. Skin- or scuba-diving may be the most practical way of doing this. It should be emphasized that if materials are obtained for study in this way, they should be afterwards returned to their original locations in the water, for reasons that will become apparent below.

6.1.4 Ethnographic evidence for age

Most Indian people questioned about the age of rock paintings in the Churchill River region state that they were made long ago in the past. No one mentioned particular paintings made by particular people to the author (who did not seek out such information in the course of conversations about pictographs), but Doug Evans was told that certain named families now living in Pelican Narrows painted rock paintings (personal communication, May 30, 1968). We may infer from this that this was carried on in the memory of present people and the practice therefore continued into recent times - if not on the Churchill River itself, at least in the immediate area.

Another bit of information bearing on the age of Churchill River region sites relates to the largest of the four sets of paintings just above Medicine Rapids, about 10 miles northwest of Pelican Narrows and about 24 miles southeast

of Frog Portage (see Dewdney 1963:5 for illustration). Bishop Richard Young, on a tour of the Church Missionary Society's Missions in Saskatchewan in 1897, had pointed out to him ... "an old rock painting. The oldest man in the district said that this had been there beyond the memory of the aged people of his youth." (Young 1897). If this old man was 80 years old and we take his "youth" to be around the age of 10, the oldest people's memory would go back perhaps 70 years before that. This would make this set of paintings date to before about the middle of the 18th Century.

Several of the dating methods discussed may offer time determination techniques encompassing several thousand years, probably encompassing the extreme periods of rock painting creation. We have some idea of some of the parameters of age for more recent eras, provided principally by historic observations and subject matter of several of the Churchill River sites.

It is clear that rock painting traditions, perhaps some of those connected with Churchill River sites, continued into modern times, and it is clear as well that some in the north-west region of the Canadian Shield rock art style are at least 200 years old. It is possible that some of the physical dating methods discussed earlier will provide specific absolute dates for some sites. These, coupled with increased archaeological knowledge of cultural groups living in those areas at the time when paintings were made will allow a much fuller comprehension of the life styles and values of those

peoples than we now have.

6.2 Evidence for authorship

6.2.1 Historical and ethnographic evidence

Non-native observers have recorded several instances across the Shield where the creation of rock paintings is ascribed to specific individuals. Native informants have originally provided most such recorded information. Also incorporated here are a number of explanations of authorship (and some indication of age) for certain Shield sites, including several on the Churchill River, collected by the author and others, from Indian people in northern Saskatchewan.

Bell (1881:7c) was told that paintings at Molson Lake, Manitoba were made by the father of a chief; the latter was still living. Since there are a great number of paintings at this site, in different styles and different pigments, this man undoubtedly was adding his representations to a place long regarded as important, and painted by a number of other past artists. Unfortunately, a potential dating and interpretational clue is lost, because no one recorded which symbols the man painted, or why he did them.

Jack Steinbring obtained information in 1969 from older informants at Hole River, Manitoba, about paintings in blue of two serpents facing each other, separated by a turtle, painted by a Mide priest in 1905, which subsequently disappeared in the 1920's, probably from erosion (Steinbring 1972:7-8).

Irving Hallowell recorded that one of the sons of a man named Wawasan (Lightning), who had assumed leadership at Jack Head on the western side of Lake Winnipeg, was named Manzi-napkinewinini - the man who is painting the rock, Hallowell said that he thought this man might still be alive in 1936 (Hallowell 1936:47).

A middle-aged man at Norway House told the author in 1972 that he had seen a painting in his youth on Bigstone Lake southwest of Island Lake, Manitoba, said to have been made by a man apparently living in the generation previous to his. He said that the painting was made with blood and some other substance, and was said by the people at Island Lake to be still evident.

As noted above, Doug Evans told the author that he was informed by a man living in Pelican Narrows that certain families there were noted for making paintings. Since the Pelican Narrows people travelled widely north of that community (to the Churchill and Reindeer Rivers, for example) in the past, as they do today, some of the Churchill River sites could conceivably have been made by these people.

An old man in his 70's (?) told the author in 1965 at Stanley that it was people long ago who made the paintings, and that stories told by the old people to him said that "the 'really old-timers' dreamed of these things we see on the rocks, like down at Stanley Rapids, where you see something that looks like a plane. One old-timer dreamed of something that was flying, very big, up in the sky, so that's why he

painted that, and he said, 'A hundred years from now you'll see something flying in the sky'. So it was figured that he dreamed of this, because there were no planes then."

(This figure is undoubtedly the one described as a "cross" in section 4.2 (Figure 12b)).

According to the stories the old people told him, the people who did the painting were just a few men - just a group - who travelled all over. The informant's grandmother told him about a man who made three paintings up the river from Stanley, below Twin Falls. She said that there was an old fellow who painted these, who was just passing through up the Churchill, and he was alone. There were people there to watch him paint this. This old fellow, after he finished painting, told this group of people that was watching him that the painting he did there was only going to last as long as he lived. But we just wonder, he says, if this fellow is still living or not, because the painting is still there. This was over a hundred years ago, and the man was old then.

A third-hand bit of information was passed on to the author about the origin of the paintings in Cow Narrows. An old lady told Bob and Lois Dalby of La Ronge that a long time ago some people were travelling along the Churchill in the vicinity of Cow Narrows when they saw a cow(?) swimming across, with moss on its back. The painting was made to commemorate this event (personal communication, Doug Whitfield, July 31, 1968). This site, incidentally, is on the same lake (Mountain Lake) as the previous one, but there are three other

known sites on Mountain Lake (Sites #9,10 and 11) as well.

An important reference both to the age and authorship of rock paintings in the area under consideration is provided by Douglas Leechman, et al (1955:38-9):

The late Dr. William McInnes, of the Geological Survey of Canada, speaking of the Western Cree, said that pictographs were said to have been 'done long ago by a powerful shaman, who made them without effort simply by putting his hands on the rock, and that other Indians say that they were made by boys during the fasting period at the time of puberty and represent various animals and objects dreamed of at that time'. In either case, he continues, 'these Indians know these pictographs were made by their own ancestors and do not attribute them to a mythological period'.

By "Western Cree" McInnes undoubtedly meant the Wood Cree living along the Churchill River and areas adjacent to the study area, since his travels in the west where he noted rock paintings in his notebooks were on the Churchill River.

Both Dale Russell (personal communication, November 11, 1973) and Doug Evans (personal communication, May 30, 1968 and September 12, 1973) have passed on to the author somewhat fragmentary details of a story or stories from informants at Sandy Bay, which may bear on the origin of the paintings along the Churchill and/or their use by the first person or persons who travelled up the Churchill River from Hudson Bay. Both stories were passed on to me from memory, so this must be taken into account - a future fuller recording of the story or stories will clarify this.

One version is that the first man to travel up the Churchill painted the pictographs above rapids (possibly

after a dream) at each place where they are seen today.

The other is that a group (the first group?) of people to travel up the river stopped at places where they saw paintings on the rocks, and slept overnight there. At night they dreamt (the next part of the journey?). This was repeated a number of times until they reached their destination.

P.G. Downes, in his book Sleeping Island, talks about rock paintings at Medicine Rapids and at a now-drowned site in Birch Narrows on Reindeer Lake, which he visited in the 1930's with Indians from Pelican Narrows. He states them to be ... "of considerable antiquity. They represent dream-figures, objects seen in dreams by a man seeking his puagan or 'spirit-power' long ago". (1943:41,66-67). Downes does not say where he got his information, but his later reference to the Cree concept of puagan suggests that he obtained the information about rock paintings and the vision quest from the people he travelled with and met. Since Sleeping Island has been long out of print but nevertheless contains some important knowledge of Cree cosmology, this section is included as Appendix B. In Downes' own words, "The practice which gave rise to these pictographs deserves more than a passing reference, for it represents the very crux of the ancient Cree spiritual life and has received scant attention from professional recorders of these people" (1943:67).

Bishop Richard Young, seeing one of the sets of paintings above Medicine Rapids, commented, "Presumably the whole

design represented the artist's 'powakun' or familiar spirit." (Young 1897).

A La Ronge man 79 years old in 1965 said to me that the paintings are found at the place where dreams occurred to the painters and represent the gods of these painters. Whenever in need of assistance, the painter could go to these places, where the spirits resided. Each Indian had a personal spirit which could act as a guardian from harm caused by others' spirits. As well, a friend's spirit could intercede to protect him.

One old man at Southend told me, also in 1965, that the Memekweciwuk (see below) painted the rock paintings. Further east, at Cross Lake and Norway House, this explanation was given most often regarding authorship of pictographs (Jones & Jones 1972).

6.2.2 Evidence provided by geographical location of peoples and ethnographic comparisons

The reference to Ojibwa (or Saulteaux) (Hallowell 1936; Steinbring 1972) and to Swampy Cree (Bell 1881) artists making paintings have been included to demonstrate the unity across at least the central and northern regions of the Canadian Shield, in terms of association of rock painting traditions with ancestors of the present-day Algonkian-speaking inhabitants of the rock art area. It is true that all of the territory where Shield rock paintings are found

today is occupied by Cree and Ojibwa peoples.

There are only two exceptions to this: the site recorded by Dewdney near Forth Smith, which is in present Beaver Indian (Athabaskan-speaking) territory, and a rumoured site south of Lloyd Lake on the Clearwater River, Saskatchewan, which is in territory presently occupied mostly by Chipewyan people. (This latter site is interesting in that it is the only site reported to me as being of Chipewyan authorship. A man from La Loche told me in 1968 that the story told about this place was that a young Chipewyan boy was being pursued by water by some Crees. The Chipewyan youth came to a place on the river where there was a flat rock face that went straight into the water. He painted some figures on the rock, and continued on. The Cree came to the place, and the figures on the rock came to life, frightening them, and they fled back from where they came.)

Strong supportive evidence for Algonkian authorship of the Churchill River paintings is provided by comparison with data from the central and eastern Shield area, where the important body of material that Dewdney and Kidd have provided points to Ojibwa origin for most of the sites. Further north, north of Lake Winnipeg, we find stories of rock paintings being associated with the Memekweciwuk. Informants say that many of the paintings were meant to communicate things that would transpire in the future, and that sometimes the Memekweciwuk created the paintings. People

in this area did not attribute the origin of the paintings to any other, unknown group of people.

In the Churchill River area and in the rest of the northwestern peripheral zone of the Canadian Shield pictograph occurrences, we find striking similarities, in a number of particulars, with more easterly and southerly rock art sites. These include the general appearance of the settings, where we find small red or red-brown ochre paintings in groups, on vertical rock faces immediately next to or readily visible from the water; similarities in subject matter over large areas (such as horned serpents, thunderbirds, snakes, humans, moose, and so on); the practice of leaving propitiatory offerings; association of sites with Memekweciwuk and/or other people predicting the future through the paintings; and authorship attributed to shamans or others depicting vision-symbols.

James Wright provides a long-term, archaeological perspective of the peoples who presently inhabit the Boreal Forest region of the Canadian Shield:

...within the Archaic stage, the Middle Woodland period, and the Late Woodland period, there exists a degree of spatial homogeneity unknown farther to the south except at a very early time level. This condition appears to prevail throughout the Boreal Forest of western Quebec, Northern Ontario, northern Manitoba, and in part, adjacent Saskatchewan. A number of factors are probably involved in this unusual cultural continuity over large areas, but, in my opinion, the dominant factor is environment. Referred to by a colleague, as "the infertile crescent" the region under consideration placed stringent demands upon its occupants and the small nomadic bands,

ranging over large tracts of land in order to survive, are a necessary prerequisite for the apparent cultural similarities seen over extended areas. It is significant that the horizontal cultural homogeneity reflected by the archaeological record is maintained by the distribution in the northern forests of the linguistically and ethnologically related Cree, Ojibwa, Algonkin, and Montagnais-Naskapi (1968b:67).

Wright (1968a) places the Cree at Southern Indian Lake, in the eastern part of the study area, from at least the 10th Century A.D. onward (Nash 1970:78), but we have as yet little evidence of the archaeological time depth of the Cree in the Saskatchewan part of the Churchill River region. Jenness assumed that the Cree tribe was in 1725 A.D. "separated from the Chipewyans by Churchill River, which was certainly the boundary in the middle of the century". (1963:424, map). Between 1750 and 1780, the Cree reached their greatest expansion west and north, expanding as far as the Rocky Mountains and down the Mackenzie River to the delta (1963:424).

If the Churchill River was indeed the boundary between these tribes before 1750, we must question the Algonkian authorship of many of the paintings, and their age. If the paintings were done only by the Cree, Jenness' placement of them relative to the Chipewyan would imply that all of the Churchill paintings are only as old as 1750 A.D. at the earliest. A number of other possibilities exist; first, that Jenness' boundary must be moved further north and west if the paintings were done only in Cree territory by Crees; second, that travelling Crees, perhaps in small raiding parties, made paintings in Chipewyan territory; third, that two-thirds of

the 50 or so known pictograph sites in Saskatchewan are of Chipewyan creation; fourth, that some of the Churchill River and more northerly sites are of Chipewyan origin, with probable diffusion of this culture-trait from the Algonkian areas to the east.

Various combinations of these possibilities and others are possible. However, the various lines of comparative evidence weigh heavily in favour of Cree (or Proto-Cree(?)) inspiration and authorship for the Churchill River pictographs, and the possible presence of culturally closely-related groups in the area for at least a millenium raises the possibility that some of the paintings may approach that age.

6.3 Cultural interpretation and significance of the rock paintings

James Swauger has pointed out the difficulties encountered by contemporary observers of rock art who wish to understand it, noting that even the earliest attempt at a continent-wide study of North American aboriginal rock art, by Colonel Garrick Mallery, met with considerable difficulty:

"Understanding petroglyph sites will be realized primarily by interpretation of petroglyph designs. This will not be easy. Nearly ninety years ago Garrick Mallery detailed the difficulties of interpreting pictographic and petroglyphic symbolism of even living tribes (Mallery, 1886, p.16;

1893, pp. 45, 46). Interpreting such symbolism for people known only archaeologically is infinitely more difficult..." (Swauger 1973:5).

Grant, too, cautions those eager to "interpret" the pictographic symbols of long-dead artists, when he contends that only the original artist or shaman "would know the precise meanings of the pictures, and it is doubtful if many of us would understand him if he were here to explain". (1967:152).

Henry Schoolcraft (quoted in Mallery 1893:35) said that the Ojibwa possessed two types of pictography, which they termed Kekeewin (things generally understood by the tribe), and Kekeenowin, or teachings of the medas or priests and jossakeeds or prophets.

The knowledge of the latter is chiefly confined to persons who are versed in their system of magic medicine, or their religion, and may be termed hieratic. The former consists of the common figurative signs, such as are employed at places of sepulture or by hunting or traveling parties. It is also employed in the muzzinabiks, or rock-writings. Many of the figures are common to both and are seen in the drawings generally; but it is to be understood that this results from the figure alphabet being precisely the same in both, while the devices of the nugamoons or medicine, wabino, hunting and war songs are known solely to the initiates who have learned them, and who always pay high to the native professors for this knowledge.

Mallery's words on the difficulties of interpretation of rock art are still among the most appropriate:

Symbolism was of individual origin and was soon variously obscured by conventionalizing; therefore it requires separate study in every region. No interpreting laws of general application to petroglyphs so far appear, although types and tendencies can be classified. It was hoped that in some lands petroglyphs might tell

of the characters and histories of extinct or emigrated peoples, but it now seems that knowledge of the people who were the makers of the petroglyphs is necessary to any clear understanding of their work. The fanciful hypotheses which have been formed without corroboration, wholly from such works as remain, are now generally discarded (Mallery 1893:35).

We see, from the information assembled so far, that the reasons given why certain Churchill River pictographs were made, fall into five broad categories:

1. Memekweciwuk painted certain paintings.
2. Certain paintings were made by individuals, who depicted future things or events.
3. Shamans made the paintings.
4. Individuals painted personal guardian spirit symbols seen in visions.
5. Some paintings were intended as markers for travellers.

We must anticipate that these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, in that paintings of visions may have depicted personal guardian spirits, but they may also have been prophetic of things that were to happen in the future.

We note as well that "dreaming" or seeking visions is commonly associated with the Churchill River paintings. The vision quest, widespread among North American Indian tribes, was strongly developed among the northern Algonkian tribes.

One of the distinct characteristics of Canadian Shield rock art sites is their individuality (Pohorecky & Jones 1971;

Dewdney & Kidd 1967). As Dewdney has already stated, it is probable that most of the Shield rock paintings represent dream symbols (Dewdney 1963:11). Possession of this knowledge does not really reveal much to the interested anthropologist or other observer who is not thoroughly imbued with the culture of the symbol-makers. This individual quality makes understanding, no matter how empathetically motivated or anxiously sought, most difficult.

It is apparent from the knowledge we do have of religious practices of the Algonkians, that they, like various other North American Indians, had an involved and complex cosmology relating, ultimately, all things in their universe in a comprehensible way to humankind. It is clear that this cosmological understanding was not universal among all the members of a particular society, but was possessed by only certain members, generally called priests or shamans. These specialists acted often as interpreters or intermediaries between the everyday human, and the metaphysical, spheres.

Our present understanding of Northern Cree religion is very limited, and largely superficial, but it is apparent that there are a number of basic, underlying similarities to the religion of their linguistic relatives, the Ojibwa (as well as other tribes throughout a much wider area). For example, certain individuals who obtained particularly powerful visions were considered to have had special knowledge or power conferred on them.

We must therefore, considering Schoolcraft's information

regarding symbolism and guarded possession of special knowledge by some people, look to the possibility that certain symbols utilized by the Cree in their rock paintings may have meant entirely different things to the uninitiated, and to the tutored, eye.

It is obvious that most of the paintings are not subject to ready analysis. In the absence of much more information offering comprehension and explanation of the origins and meanings of paintings by old, knowledgeable Indian authorities, it is doubtful that the reasons for the creation of the majority of these rock art sites will ever be known again.

The extent of ethnohistoric knowledge of the Wood and RockyCree people inhabiting the Churchill River area today, or who may have lived there in the past, as mentioned, is not great. Certainly little of it bears on traditions immediately connected with the rock paintings. But the few people who have done any systematic questioning of older Indian people in Stanley, La Ronge, Southend, Pinehouse, Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay, Pukatawagan and South Indian Lake about their history and culture have found a rich residuum of knowledge of the Cree people's universe still resident with the people. It is here, if anywhere, that meaningful interpretations of this surviving form of religious art will be found.

However, there are various levels of "meaning" that may be sought by latter-day viewers of this art. It may be that the conjunction of certain symbols or the presence or absence of specific motifs in a region will reveal something of the

life and environment of the painters.

For the Churchill River area, for example, we see an apparently curious absence of moose, a very important game animal in historic times, but greater numbers of bison. Did this mean that the moose was rare in the area and bison more common, therefore depicted more often, or the reverse - that bison were rare occurrences in the boreal forest and moose so common as not to be worth much note?

The occurrence of smoking pipes in a great percentage of the Churchill River sites would suggest particular attention to ceremonial motivations in making paintings, for smoking was perhaps universally regarded by North American Indians as a sacred activity. The undoubted presence of the thunderbird deity in many paintings also suggests a religious approach in the creation of these paintings.

Too, we may surmise something of the practices of the artists's culture when we see what is quite evidently a man's hunting dog assisting him in the chase, painted at Stanley Rapids.

We have no interpretation of meanings of specific groups of symbols at any of the Churchill River locations, nor has the author heard of any such interpretation.

The highly individualistic nature of these rock painting sites (the unique combination of symbols found at each given location) suggests that although certain recurring motifs appear at sites widely separated from each other, we are dealing with the religious art of peoples that held

certain cosmological and theological concepts in common, but also encouraged or required individual revelation and symbolic expression.

Many who have written on the rock art of prehistoric and more recent non-literate peoples have suggested (or assumed) that most or all rock art is directed towards activities concerned with the hunting or gathering of food, by magically assisting in the fertility and increase of game animals, by painting animals being killed, or drawing pregnant game animals, and so on.

On examination of the subject matter of the Churchill River paintings it may be proposed that the form and substance of the art was conditioned not so much by attempts to maintain or increase their mastery over subsistence activities (although this motivation may be seen in a few examples), but by other concerns about the artist's environment - social, economic and spiritual. The "hunting magic" found in many other areas appears to be almost totally absent here (Pohorecky & Jones 1971:16).

Some arguments may have it that everything must ultimately relate to "filling one's belly", and that the propitiation of spirit powers or depiction of dreams are only steps removed from the major needs of mankind - shelter, food, warmth - and must be seen as relating to an individual's ability to obtain these basic things for himself. It is nevertheless clear that many human responses may accomplish these ends, and that people may take quite different paths

to these ultimate goals. The art of a people demonstrates this principle of "different paths" perhaps most clearly of any of the characteristics unique to human beings, for it is a concretization of each society's way of expressing, through symbols, cosmological relationships as they see them. Where religious art exists, we may gain some insight into some of the more crucial concerns of groups of people, or individuals, which would not otherwise be evident, especially if centuries separate the artist and his audience.

Present significance

A common tradition of the Algonkian-speakers of the Canadian Shield is the leaving of offerings at rock painting sites and other locations inhabited by spirit powers - rapids, waterfalls, high cliff faces, caves, and other special places in the environment of the Cree and Ojibwa.

David Thompson, the early map-maker and explorer, says that the Cree regarded Manito Fall on the Black River as the residence of a manito ("god", or "spirit") and made offerings to it. Even his Chipewyan guides, who "make no offering to anything were so awestruck that the one gave a ring, and the other a bit of tobacco". (Hopwood 1971:137).

Harmon gives the most complete explanation of the Cree practice of leaving offerings at special places:

The Indian physicians never fail of leaving in the place where they collect the roots, herbs, &c. which they use as medicines, some trifling article,

as a recompense to the guardian spirits, that preside over these substances, for what they have taken. An omission of this would, in their apprehension, destroy most, if not all the efficacy of their medicines (Lamb 1957:234).

There are also certain large rocks and caves, which they never pass without leaving at them some trifling articles; for they suppose that they are the habitations of some good or evil spirits. Indeed they think that almost every lake, river and mountain has its tutelary spirit, whom they attempt to propitiate, by some offering (Lamb 1957:230).

Although Harmon does not specifically mention offerings being left at rock paintings by the Cree, these sites have been long regarded as "the habitations of ... spirits".

Alexander Mackenzie gives the earliest historic evidence that the people left offerings at rock paintings (section 6.1.3), and the practice has been observed at several sites on Lake of the Woods (present Ojibwa territory) by Dewdney (Dewdney & Kidd 1967:44, 41, 154) and by the author.

I have not seen any evidence of offerings being left by people today at any of the Churchill River sites, but I have seen offerings left in other places in northern Saskatchewan. Dale Russell has indicated that offerings had been left at the Sturgeon Stone (recently?), which is at Pickerel Rapids, between Sandy Bay and Maple Leaf Rapids on the Churchill

(personal communication, November 11, 1973), and Selwyn Dewdney was told that moose horns were recently being left on the Swimming Stone in the upper Churchill as offerings (personal communication, September 30, 1973). These examples give some idea of the strength of this aspect of traditional Cree religious observation, and suggests that rock painting sites on the Churchill River are very likely considered to be sacred places at least to some Indian people. The extent and nature of any contemporary religious observation at these sites is not presently known, probably because of the fact that much of the traditional Cree religion went "underground" in order to survive the Christianizing impulses of the European immigrants to this land, and has remained mostly secretive.

Memekweciwuk should certainly be mentioned as well, for there are a number of stories associating them with many rock painting sites across the Shield (see Rogers 1962:D43; Jones & Jones 1972:4,5; Dewdney & Kidd 1967:13-14). The Memekweciwuk are a type of human being usually described as being small, often having no nose (or no cartilaginous part of the nose), possessing powerful medicine and knowledge of medicinal matters, whose homes are in rocks, the water, or other places. Importantly, many people say that these human beings lived long ago, before the Indians (that is Cree) lived here, and stories are common about Cree people obtaining medicines or being trained in medical knowledge (in a broad sense of the term, encompassing spiritual power, and so on) from the Memekweciwuk in the past. A well-known limestone cave north

of Lac La Ronge on the Montreal River was the home of some Memekweciwuk, and old Indian men used to go there to obtain medicine from these people.

Memekweciwuk are well-known to present-day Cree people throughout northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and some people attribute the creation of rock paintings to them. Downes (1943:55-57) repeats a story told about three of them in a tiny canoe seen by three youths from La Ronge many years before, near Southend, and the author has been told a number of stories connected with these unusual beings, although only one attributing the making of paintings to them in the study area itself.

The practice of leaving tobacco in places where the Memekweciwuk are known to reside is widespread, and is for them to smoke.

In passing, we may look at the pictographs of human faces found in two of the upper Churchill River sites and others at the Hickson-Maribelli Lake Site, noting that noses are not depicted, speculating whether or not these may have been intended as representations of these medicine-people.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has pointed to the Cree authorship of the rock paintings of the Churchill River, to the likelihood that creating pictographs on rocks has existed for at least several centuries in the area, and to the religious motivation of these people in making the paintings.

Most information from native informants and from observations recorded by non-Indians relating to the art of the area strongly supports the idea that the origin of the paintings is based in depiction of visions by shamans and other persons seeking or obtaining spiritual power. Explanations of what the paintings depict given to Young (1897) and Downes (1943), or deduced by them from their understanding of traditional Cree conceptions of the "soul", appear to be the most tenable for this area, and are most compatible with the as yet rather limited information obtained from living Indian people.

Functional analyses and attempts at interpretation of the rock art of the whole Canadian Shield must be undertaken on a wider basis than heretofore, as already stated by Steinbring and Elias (1967:3-8). From a technical point of view, though, there must be more information on specific pictograph sites and symbols available, if comparative studies of any significance are to proceed. It is absolutely essential that accurate data be published if such studies are to have validity.

To date, only two detailed site-report studies of Canadian Shield pictograph sites have been made which are readily available to other researchers. The first (Pohorecky & Jones 1967b) deals with the four sites on Kipahigan Lake, just south of the Churchill River on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border, describing each group of paintings and their settings, geographical relationships of Kipahigan Lake to regional water-routes, and discussing possible relationships with other known rock paintings in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The second such study (Steinbring et al 1969) gives detailed descriptions of the paintings and settings at the Opachuanau Lake sites in Manitoba.

The absence of similar detailed records of other Shield sites, as long as the situation exists, will hamper future analytical comparisons. Conversely, more detailed recording and subsequent analysis of the rock paintings of each region of the Shield, involving all the complex social, environmental and chronological factors necessary for understanding this aspect of prehistory, will reveal more about the early Algonkians than is now known by ethnologists and archaeologists.

Indian people living in the north state that the rock paintings seen on the shores of the lakes and streams of the northern woodlands are very ancient. Every evidence indicates that this is true for most of them. For the Churchill River region we have some idea of the more recent parameters of age - some maximum, and some minimum dates -

based on historic observations, ethnographic traditions, and subject matter of a few of the paintings. Notably, there are very few motifs seen at rock art sites along the river that can definitely be tied to the historic period, suggesting that most were done prior to European contact, or that there was minimal influence on the art if many paintings were made after contact.

Comparisons with other Shield areas reveal that several historically documented occurrences of pictographs are at least 150 to 250 years old. There are presently no suitable techniques for determining the upper time limits of this complex of traditions, and we must await possible breakthroughs in one or more of the physical dating methods discussed above. Preferably, more than one such method will be susceptible to use, as a check on other methods potentially offering dates.

Chronological studies of Shield pictography also must await some of the results of archaeological excavation in this northwestern area, which may provide evidence and dates for such things as artifact-assemblage changes, which might signal an influx into the area of bearers of differing cultural traditions. Demographic movements of prehistoric Shield peoples are not sufficiently known to suggest patterns of dispersal of rock painting traditions, or when such diffusions may have occurred from centres of intensive activity (revealed by concentrations of sites within a regional geographic compass).

Based on a simple diffusion model, it is suggested that archaeological studies may reveal evidence of such changes coming from the east through the Shield, since it is in the Shield country of northwestern Ontario where we see the greatest concentration of pictograph sites. If the dates of such movements can be determined, it may be possible to correlate them with the various time periods in which rock paintings were made - as noted above, there is a time span of a number of centuries during which the practice lasted.

Kenneth Kidd, speaking of research on rock art in the Canadian Shield at the Second National Conference of the Canadian Rock Art Research Associates (Saskatoon, December 4, 1971) said, "We are still in the recording stage - analysis will come later." While an attempt has been made in this study to go somewhat beyond the stage of assembling physical field data pertaining to the Churchill River pictographs, it is certain that Kidd was at least partly right. Attempts at analyzing pictography from a position outside the perceptual and cognitive frameworks in which the symbols were made may very well be less than fruitful.

One specific example may illustrate this. The syllabic inscription painted on Wamninuta Island was tentatively translated from the Cree as "far" in English. The man positioned next to these figures is painted in the same colour, and these symbols obviously form a group. The man is shown as walking or in motion, and a line projects

from his head. Two interpretations could be made: first, that the artist had gone some distance on the river, and recorded the fact of his journey; or, second, that the symbols illustrate a shaman's spirit journey, in which his personal spirit-power had left his body and travelled far, perhaps to battle with a malignant person or other being.

The "Kilroy was here" motivation for making a painting is quite different than that of a shaman engaging in a life-and-death struggle. Each "interpretation" must therefore be carefully considered.

It has been indicated that there is still, despite great pressures from the dominant European cultures for several centuries now in Canada's north, a body of knowledge concerning native religion possessed by some surviving Indian people. The "recording stage" concept must apply to learning some of this knowledge, as well as to discovering and recording all "new" pictograph sites found in the hinterlands of the Canadian Shield. Elucidation of the various levels of significance and meaning of the rock paintings can come only from these people.

Coupling this understanding (or at least attempts at understanding) with more technical information obtained in other ways - through motif distribution studies, evidence of artifactual change in the archaeological record, dating of paintings through physical means, and so on, we may learn more about the chronological, ecological and inter-societal relationships of peoples living and travelling throughout

the northern forests. We will also learn something more of their spiritual relationship to their environment as they proceeded through time and space.

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APPENDIX A

Rock Painting Site Record

Form Categories

ROCK PAINTING SITE RECORD

FORM CATEGORIES

Master map

National Museum of Canada Site #

1. Field no.
2. Name
3. Map name, no. and scale
4. Geographical location
5. Aerial photo no. and scale
6. Access to site
7. Dangers of access
8. Informant(s), address(es), other leads
9. Owner
10. Nearest pictograph or other site
11. Nearby landmarks
12. General topography
13. Nearness to historic portages, travel routes, etc.
14. Sketch nos.
15. Photos: b/w, colour
16. References (journals, etc.)
17. Previous work or collection
18. Physical circumstances
 - rock type, colour
 - height of cliffs
 - presence or absence of overhang

- protection from weather
 - bearing of face in degrees
 - position of paintings in relation to water level
19. Lichens
- extent of encroachment
 - colours, types
20. Patination
- colour
 - extent, degree of obscuration
21. Defacement
- natural chipping or breaking
 - vandalism
22. Superimposition
23. Colour of pigment, degree of fading
24. Recommendations for protection or other action
25. Description of design elements, remarks

APPENDIX B

P.G. Downes on the Cree

"Puagan"

P.G. DOWNES ON THE CREE
"PUAGAN"

Few writers seem to realize the tremendous importance of dreams and the dream-life in the world of these northern hunters. The latter was so intimately bound up with the waking life that the entire religious concept of the Cree centered around it. To the pre-Christian Cree a well-defined theism was quite lacking. The "Great Spirit" motif of popular fancy did not exist with either great effect or conviction. Vague conceptions of a "Great Spirit" were held to some degree, but as the great spirit was no doubt, good, i.e. not harmful, little attention was paid to it.

However, to the Cree mind, all the world was spirit-bearing and animistic - every tree, every animal, every insect, and even the rocks and sand and water. His life was spent in placating and observing a host of spirits. He and the world about him were a completely dual world of the physical and its spirit counterpart.

To help in his struggle in this world of spirits, each individual possessed a very secret, personal guiding and helping spirit which he could call upon in time of stress, which often visited him in dreams, which was his and his alone. It might be the spirit-half of anything - a certain animal, a sunbeam, the rainbow, a grain of sand, an unknown human, in fact, anything in the world. This was a man's "puagan". On the strength of a man's puagan rested his success in the physical world about him and his survival against the evil which the spirits of enemies might direct against him.

I knew of one man whose puagan was a skeleton, another a sunbeam, another an old man with glass mocassins and a plug hat. Of great significance was that fact that as a man became older and approached actual senility, his puagan likewise lost its power.

To obtain and recognize his puagan, the individual, just following his adolescence, secreted himself from his fellows for an indefinite period of fasting and intensive dreaming. It was often the custom to go off and construct a sort of nest high up in some secluded spruce tree.

Gradually from the dreams, hallucinations possibly brought on by the self-imposed starvation, one figure or one dream object would disentangle itself and become increasingly clear and dominant. When this dream object became so fixed that the neophyte could establish a rapport with it, it was recognized as the lifelong, personal "manitou", power, god, spirit - in short, the puagan. (1943:67-68).

