



Northwest of Fort Frances and also accessible by road and outboard is a granite formation on Burditt (or Clearwater) Lake where the paintings are so severely weathered and over-painting has so clearly occurred that I am sure some of the paintings are of quite early origin. The unique feature is the quasi-human form reproduced here. I would guess that the upper projections from the head, made by dragging the paint outwards with four fingers, were intended to represent supernatural power emanating from a shaman's mind. The lower circular projections may possibly be ears; but on no other Shield painting have I found human ears represented.

The water route out of Burditt brings one through a wild rice lake and on to Footprint Lake, out of which a short, easy portage passes over into Jackfish Lake. Where this portage climbs over a hump of bedrock I found the answer to a question that had plagued me for eight years, ending a hope I had had, but demonstrating what tricks the mind can play with its own memories and observations. In 1957, a Fort Frances informant told me about the tracks of a man and a dog in the living rock, and others said they had heard of these. But no one could locate the place. I did not take the report too seriously until two years later when Peter and I found petroglyphs carved in a reef in Sunset Channel on Lake of the Woods. The commercial fisherman who pin-pointed the site said he had seen "moose tracks" there. ("Painted on the rock," his wife said, but he contradicted her.) That same sum-



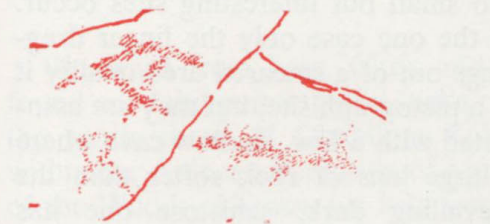
Burditt Lake,
Site #196

mer, talking to the people on Northwest Bay Reserve, I was told of a man's and a moose's tracks on the portage out of Footprint Lake. What an idiot I had been! Man and moose, or man and dog, this was surely a

petroglyph site! Arriving there at last I soon found the "footprints." Alas, there was only one of each, and both were obviously caused by the weathering out of pockets of softer rock, requiring in either case a high degree of wishful thinking to be interpreted as anything else.

But wishes die hard. A case in point is a Minnesota correspondent who sent me his photographs of a single giant human footprint in solid Precambrian rock, along with the complaint that his photographs were totally unsatisfactory for reasons he could not understand. A glance sufficed to make it clear that the "footprint" was the result of natural erosion. But how does one convince a person against his will that what the physical eye beholds may differ radically from what the mind's eye projects? Indeed, in comparing photographs of the cave paintings in southwestern Europe with the seemingly meticulous copies by dedicated scientists one is uneasily aware of many subtle projections which stray from a strictly objective rendering. But the camera has its strict limitations too, and in my opinion there is no adequate substitute for a study of the original painting, *in situ*.

South of Footprint, a mere stone's throw from the Ojibwa settlement at Northwest Bay, is a rock so smeared with pigment that I was tempted to designate it as a site. This, and a paint-smeared rock on Eagle Lake, are the only instances of smearing unaccompanied by at least a handprint or two. At Northwest Bay I was told that the paint had "always been there."



Jackfish
paintings,
Site #195

