

Carp rivers along the south shore seem less promising.

The Eastern Hinterland

The country bordering the Great Lakes is big and rough, and sites tend to thin out. Inland the lakes increase in frequency as the country scales down; but not till we get into the Gogama-Timagami areas do we find the thick spattering of lakes so characteristic of northwestern Ontario.

In the northwest corner of this hinterland, on the very edge of the Shield, I recorded a modest site at Terrier Lake. "A poor site . . . two handprints, a possible human, a few dots and lichen-spotted abstractions," my notes sum up.

Lumbering has been going on in

the region for many years, and a depressing number of sites, notably those at Manitowik, Horwood, and Lady Evelyn lakes, have been drowned out by lumber dams. Fortunately one of the major sites is still accessible, the Fairy Point pictographs on Lake Missinaibi.

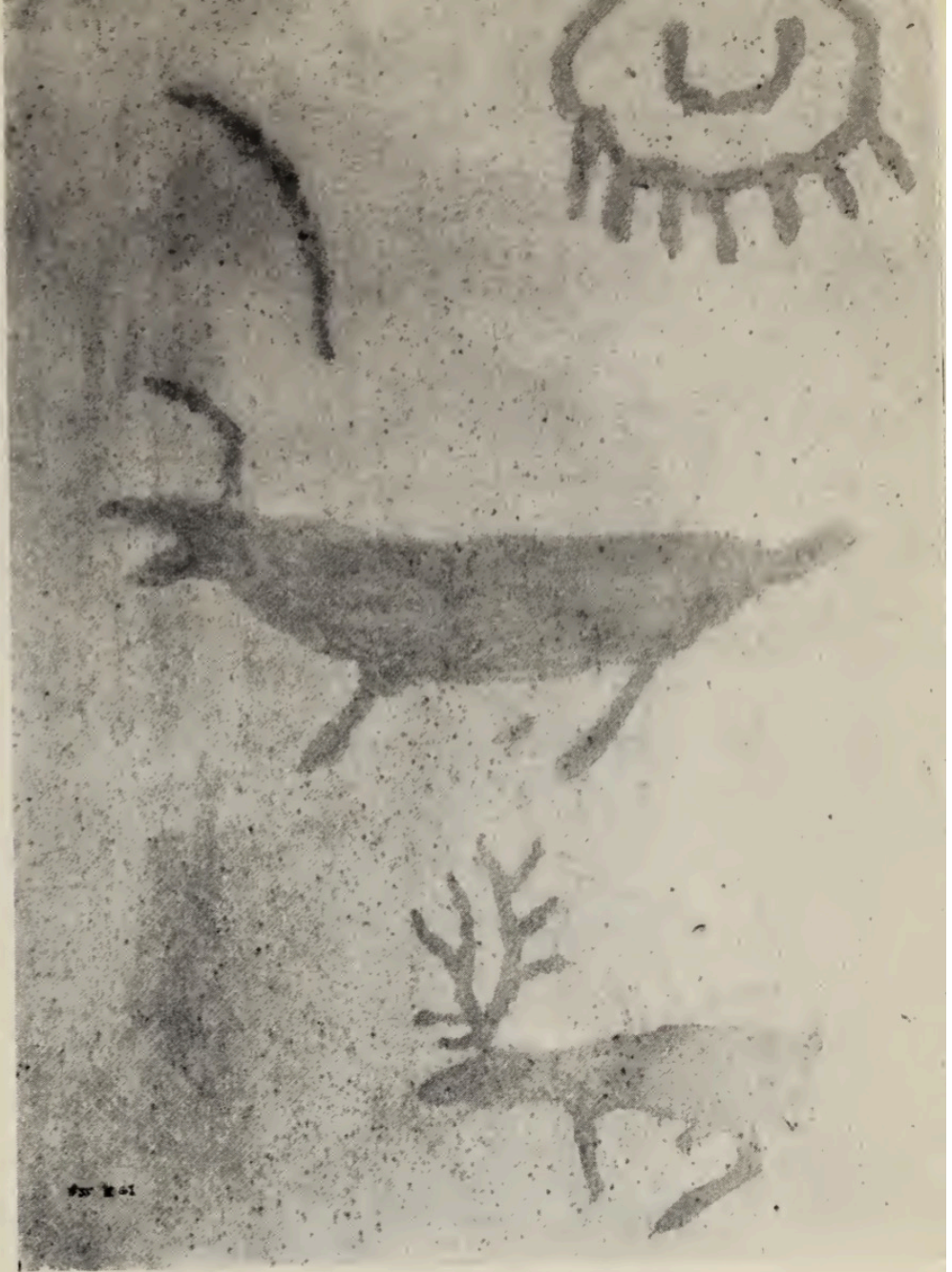
This was the site I had tried to sketch from the canoe on a trip with my wife. Seventeen years later I was back for a more serious effort. Vince Creighton, wild-life authority with a strong urge for archaeology, was with me, and Harry Tuvi, the local Lands and Forests ranger.

The water was even rougher than I had seen it on the previous visit. According to my diary Tuvi drove us close, "spattering spray and wallowing in the deep troughs. As we neared the cliffside it was obviously inhospitable, but we went close and I jumped on a wet, sloping rock with the rope in hand. A jerk on the rope from the boat—and it was let go, or go in. So I was marooned for five minutes till they could manoeuvre the boat close enough for me to jump back." Out on the railway years before they had warned Irene and me of frequent drownings off Fairy Point, of a big bull moose that had been "sucked down" at the place. When a brisk wind blows across the long southwest arm, building up big waves that bounce off the rock wall to make an ugly cross-chop, the tales don't sound so tall.

Faces VI and IX are illustrated here. On the latter it is not difficult to identify a caribou; the other animals are more debatable. The intriguing creature with open mouth,



Detail
of Face IX
Lake
Missinaibi



Fairy Point, Face VI

single, curved horn, and somewhat reptilian body I would guess to be a rendering of Mishipizhiw. On the other face there is little that can be understood.

Most of the symbols shown on these facing pages are mystifying, too. Is a feather head-dress indicated on the human figure, or rays of power? The little moose shows an attempt (as a sort of afterthought?) to render the two farther legs. The white crosses (not shown here) display the only white pigment outside of the Namakan site. On Face VIII there is a curious little figure that reminds me of the "centaur" on page 71. The figure with the three tally marks at the top suggests a horned man, but unfortunately is too vague for any reliable impressions.

I have already mentioned Jack Ennis, the prospector with the stories of Vikings on Lake Superior. I met him on my first paddle in to Lake **Missinaibi**, and it was he, on learning that I was an artist, who suggested that I look for the paintings on Fairy Point. On a later occasion when we had a few days together in a mining camp east of Heron Bay, the subject came up of the deep erosion fissures in the rocks along the Superior shore. It was then he told me of Indian traditions of having seen "red-haired men in big canoes who used to paddle right into the cracks in the rocks."

I suspect that the idea of red hair came from Jack's urge to prove the Viking stories. If one asks an Ojibwa a leading question like "Did they have red hair?", the answer is all too

Fairy Point, Face IV



likely to be a courteous affirmative, and if the interviewer is obviously naïve an Indian will get some quiet pleasure out of agreeing with anything he comes out with. In any case I have found that the Indians I have interviewed are much less concerned than I with such details; their verbal descriptions, like the pictographs, take it for granted that the audience will do some filling-in on its own.

I have yet to find an Indian who is not puzzled by the name of Lake Missinaibi. The Ojibwa prefix "miss" or "mish" means large or great, but the last two syllables seem meaningless. It's a long shot, of course, but my own theory is that "Missinaibi" is an abbreviation of *mu-zi-nu-pay-hi-gun*, a word Canon Sanderson of Red Lake gave me as the best

Ojibwa for a painted pictograph. In any case, so many things can happen from the time the surveyor asks a local Indian for the name of the lake to the time when it appears in print on a topographical map, that the wonder is that so many are intelligible.

An example of how easily one may jump to the wrong conclusion is provided by the name of the nearby railway station and Post Office, Missanabic. The assumption I made twenty years ago that this was a variant spelling of Missinaibi was corrected by an old-timer who recalled that the place was named after a Miss Anabic, a popular construction-camp nurse during the building of the railway.

One would expect, in the vicinity of such a large site as that on Fairy

Fairy Point, Face VIII



Point, to find other smaller ones. In nearby Little Missinaibi there are three such sites; and Manitowik Lake, where another site has been drowned out, is only a short hop to the south-east. However, flying over the country from Chapleau, I could see very few lakes where sites were even possible; and in fact over the past three years no further reports have come in.

The Little Missinaibi sites were reported by W. T. (Bill) Hueston, then District Forester at Chapleau, who took a strong interest in them. My diary refers to the scale map he sent me "on which all three sites were exactly pinpointed, so there was no

trouble but the wind, which made Site #76 particularly wet to work on."

Site #74 was not too exciting. It is interesting, though, to compare the clumsy human figure on it with the tiny Maymaygwayshi type on #75 underneath an enigmatic abstract combination.

The triangle of hinterland enclosed between White River, Sault Ste Marie, and Sudbury is strangely empty of pictograph sites, or even rumours of such. My wife and I searched vainly for a petroglyph site south of High Falls near the Vermillia River on a confusing series of rock ridges just south of that river. Bill Hrinovitch, who went with us, had seen it twice, while hunting in the fall.

Farther east, in the very heart of the eastern hinterland are the Ninth Lake and Scotia Lake sites, which are illustrated on the opposite page.

Ninth Lake, on the East Spanish River is a short air-hop east of Biscotasing, for several years the home of Archie Belaney, the fantastic character who as a small boy in England wanted to be an Indian when he grew up—and did, as "Grey Owl." One can still hear colourful stories about him at Bisco where he made his picturesque transition from white trapper to "Indian."

The current water level at Ninth Lake was so low that the tip of my steel tape, when I stood in the canoe stretching it up at arm's length barely reached the upper limit of the pictographs; and toeholds were too slim for climbing. So I could only measure and sketch the paintings, and had to take my photographs from an oblique angle. This is the site where, through



Little
Missinaibi
site

Comparison
of symbols