

# A SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDIES AT THE PROPOSED LAKESIDE SOLAR PROJECT

Holven, Adam and Abbie Kavouras – Tetra Tech, Inc. (July 2024)

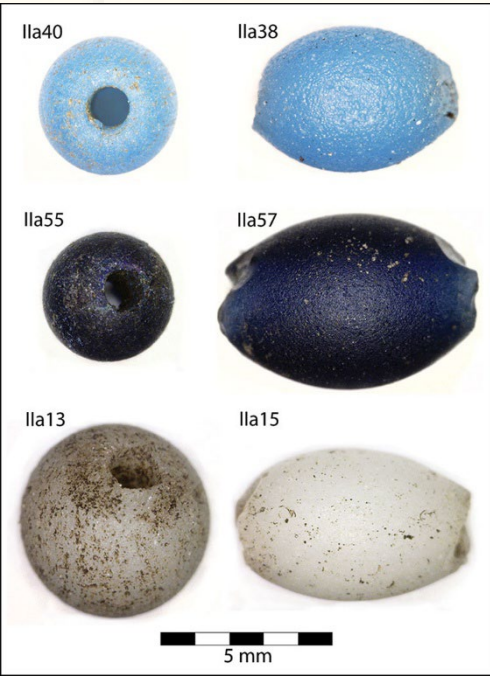
## HISTORY OF THE POTAWATOMI INDIAN VILLAGE

The reported location of the Potawatomi Indian Village (the Village) is based on historical references to the village in *The White Lake Area Historical District*<sup>1</sup> and *Saga of the White River*<sup>2</sup>. The article titled "Ancient Legend of Indian Point Massacre 1642" in *The White Lake Area Historical District* recounts details reportedly shared by a 100-year-old Potawatomi woman in the late 1800s. The woman stated that she had lived at a palisaded Potawatomi Village, which the article placed at the northern end of the Cockerill Farm in White River Township. The Village was located 500 feet northwest of a 20-acre pine grove, which was still recognizable in 1934 on the Ernst Cockerill farm<sup>3</sup>. A wide ditch flowed through the grove with laterals extending to numerous points. The main ditch traversed in a southeasterly direction from the Village and was also visible in 1934. The drainage supposedly flowed south of the pine grove, entered a ravine, and turned southwestward towards the Old Channel at Lloyd's Landing.



**Image 1:** Illustration of a typical 17<sup>th</sup> century palisaded village, which consisted of long, large houses surrounded by wooden palisade walls. (Courtesy of the Erie County Historical Society)

Based on accounts of French Jesuit missionaries, the Village was attacked in 1642 by an Iroquoian group that was friendly to Europeans known as the "Neutral Nation", or Neuters<sup>4</sup>. A 10-day siege took place at the Village, which ended when the Potawatomi fled after their water supply was cut off. This account was verified by the Smithsonian Institute and was likely part of the broader 'Beaver Wars' conflict in the mid-1600s<sup>5</sup>.



**Image 2:** Glass trade beads identified in the western Great Lakes region dating to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. (Courtesy of the Archaeological Institute of America)



**Image 3:** A stone tobacco pipe head used by both Native Americans and the French-Canadian traders. Identified at an 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial fort in Michigan. (Courtesy of Mackinac State Historic Parks)

## PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

The Muskegon Community College has conducted some archaeological excavations and has found very little evidence of the reported Village. In 2020, an initial archaeological survey of the Lakeside Solar Project was completed, including the reported location of the Village. Surveyors were unable to relocate the village nor were any cultural materials associated with the Village identified.

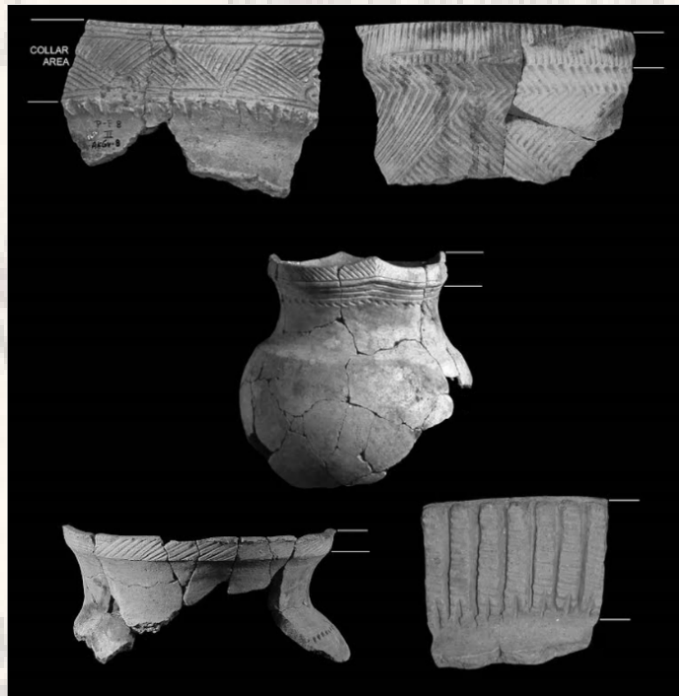
## SEARCHING FOR THE VILLAGE

Tetra Tech's efforts to locate the Village were based on a review of the historical landform references. The Village was reported to be located on the northern end of Ernest Cockerill's farm circa 1950. Based on review of the 1959 General Map Sales Company Plat, Ernest owned five parcels in White River Township in the vicinity of the Village. Peirson Drain was adjacent or in the vicinity of these parcels. Tetra Tech also reviewed 1953 USGS aerial photographs for evidence of drainages or wooded areas on the Ernest Cockerill parcels and within portions of the Project Area near Pierson Drain.



**Image 4:** The Potawatomi Indian Village sign installed by a chapter of the Future Farmers of America. (Photo by Tetra Tech)

Based on the review of historical maps, the reported location of the Village does not match historical accounts; no drainage ditches or wooded areas representative of the pine grove were present within the reported location. Tetra Tech created a survey model, which includes locations within the Project Area that most closely match the historical descriptions of the Village location. The survey model includes the reported location of the Village, the original 40-acre parcel owned by Ernest Cockerill, and wooded areas along drainages on or near the Ernest Cockerill property. Tetra Tech interviewed the landowner of the parcel containing the reported boundaries for the Village. The landowner indicated that they have found few artifacts on the property; including projectile points and prehistoric pottery fragments.

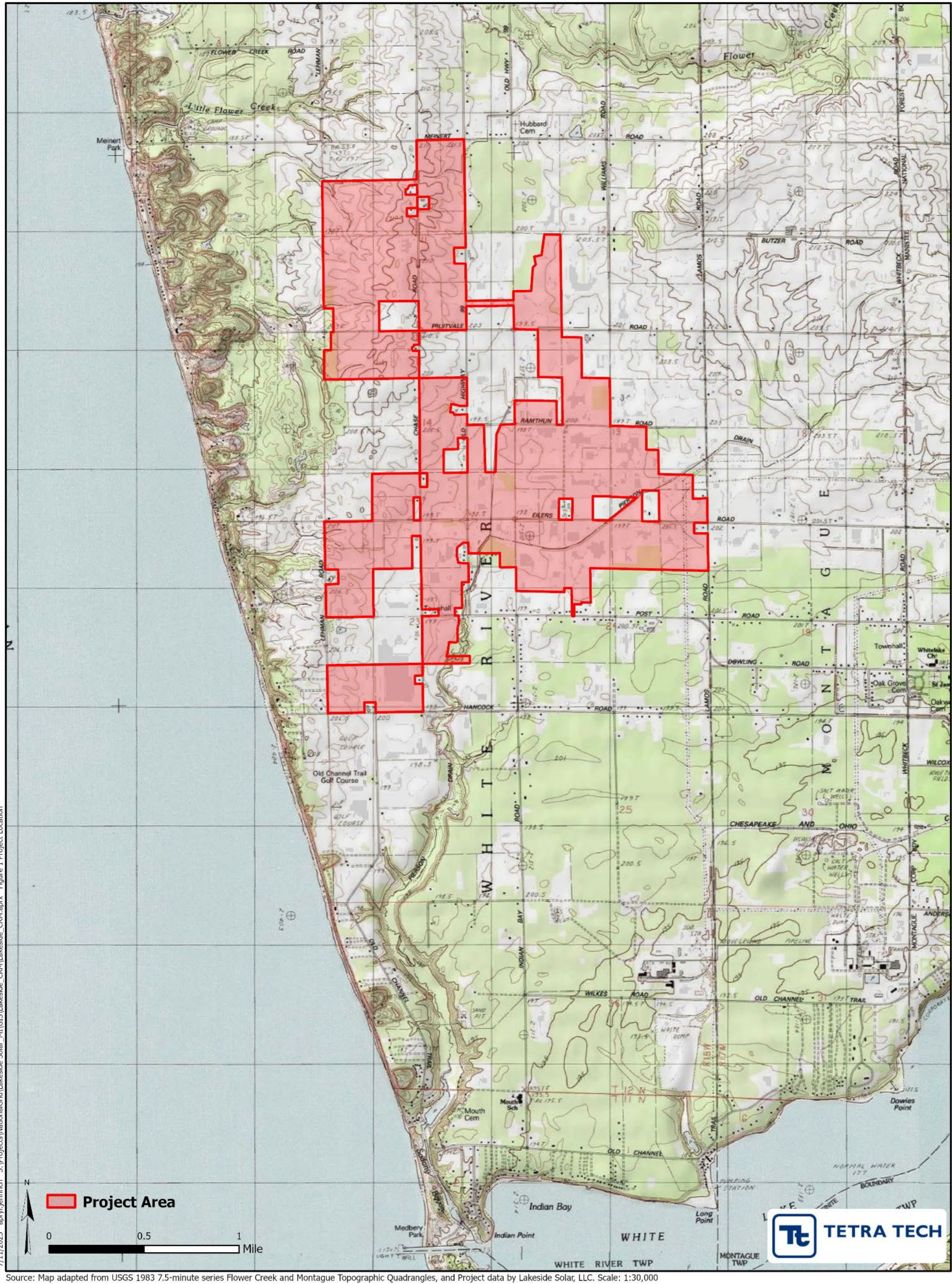


**Images 5 and 6:** Examples of Native American pottery from the Great Lakes region (left), dating between the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century and the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a Native American kettle point (right), commonly used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. (Courtesy of John P. Hart and Plimoth Patuxet Museums)



## RESULTS OF THE PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

No archaeological materials were identified during Tetra Tech's 2023 pedestrian survey within the survey model at 50-foot interval transects, including within the reported location of the Village at 16-foot interval transects. Large habitations such as a palisaded village would leave a large archaeological footprint, including dense surface artifact scatters consisting of lithics, pottery, charcoal, bones, and various trade goods. Based on the absence of archaeological material, it is Tetra Tech's opinion that the Village is not present within the reviewed portions of the Project Area.



1: White Lake Area Historical Society. 1978. *The White Lake Area Historical District*. The White Lake Area Historical Society, Montague, Michigan.  
 2: Lipka, Wendell L. 1979. *Saga of the White River*. Montague Museum, Montague, Michigan.  
 3: *The Muskegon Chronicle*. January 8, 1934. "Indian Legend of Fight True".  
 4: Thwaites, Reuben Gold (editor). 1898. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610 – 1791, Volume XXVII*. The Burrows Brothers Company, Cleveland, Ohio.  
 5: Barr, Daniel P. 2006. *Unconquered: The Iroquois League at War in Colonial America*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut