

SKULL AND BONES

Church-street Discovery

PROBABLY ABORIGINAL

A human skull and several small bones were discovered yesterday afternoon in Church-street, on the hillside overlooking Newcastle Town Hall, where a block of flats are in course of construction on behalf of Mrs. L. E. Campbell. The remains, which were taken to Newcastle Police Station last night, are believed to be those of a male aboriginal. Steps will be taken to-day to have them examined by qualified authorities.

A party of workmen employed by Mr. J. C. Davis, building contractor, was excavating on the hillside, preparatory to laying the foundations of the flats, when the skull rolled out at their feet. It had fallen from the earth several feet above them, and at a point about six feet below the surface of the ground. The top of the skull fell away from the lower part as it came to rest.

The skull was in a remarkable state of preservation, and contained sets of large teeth, complete, except for two in the upper jaw. One of these appeared to have been taken out before their owner died, and the other had fallen out after his death. This theory is based on the fact that the bone around the former tooth had closed in. The other gap was in the shape of the missing tooth, suggesting that no growth had taken place after the tooth left its socket.

Added to the fact that the brow was of a receding type, and the skull was long and narrow, the absence of the centre tooth suggested that the bones were those of an aboriginal. It is thought that the first tooth may have been removed in the course of the ritual observed by many aboriginal tribes, of knocking out one top tooth when boys were initiated into manhood.

There is nothing to indicate to the inexperienced examiner whether the skull was that of a male or a female.

The workmen dug into the hillside for the other remains. They found several fragments of rib and other bones, and what appears to be a complete thigh bone—apparently that of a small man, or woman. Other bones may be in the ground, but they had not been found when digging was discontinued late in the afternoon.

The police are confident that the bones are those of an aboriginal. They took possession of them last night.