

# VAS NEWSLETTER



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## FIRST CALL FOR THE SPRING MEETING

The Spring meeting of the VAS will be held in Burlington on Saturday, April 28, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Northeast Anthropological Association.

We are especially fortunate in securing the cooperation of the NAA in arranging the joint participation in the concurrent meetings. The NAA sessions, which run from April 27-29, will be held at the Sheraton Motor Inn; the VAS meeting is tentatively planned for the UVM campus.

The NAA has several sessions of interest to Northeast archaeologists, and many more if your interests run farther afield (see announcement on page 2.) All of the sessions are open to the public and we urge you to consider spending the entire day in Burlington on April 28.

Our meeting will begin in the late afternoon and will include a panel of distinguished speakers, supper, a social hour, and a business meeting. A schedule of events, registration form, and program for the two meetings will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter, due out in early April.

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE ST. LAWRENCE IROQUOIS

(Editor's Note: This is a condensation of the paper presented by Ms. Marjorie Burger at the Annual Meeting of the VAS in December. The paper presented by Dr. Peter Pratt at the same meeting will be summarized in the Spring issue of the Newsletter.)

The Iroquois were scattered throughout North America, splitting into five major groups classified as the Five Nations, the Huron, Tuscarora, Cherokee, and St. Lawrence. The French explorer Jacques Cartier first described these Indians for

Europeans during his first voyage of 1534. He wrote that "these men are well enough formed but untamed and savage. They wear their hair bound on top of their heads like a fistful of twisted hay, sticking into it a pin or something and adding bird feathers... They have boats which they go to sea made of birch bark, and from which they catch a great quantity of seal. Since seeing them I have ascertained that they are not natives of this place, but come from warmer regions to take seal and other things to eat."

(Editor's Note: It should be stated that Cartier showed an uncommon honesty about the New World. As Samuel Elliot Morison has written, "for most explorers, a scrawny wood is a noble forest, every

stretch of open country the richest soil in the world, every glittering stone a precious gem.")

While some linguists and ethnologists believe Cartier had met with Newfoundland Beothuk, who were great seal hunters, most identify the Indians as an Iroquoian tribe. Experts disagree as to which group of Iroquois they represent: the Five Nations, Mohawk, Oneida and/or Onondaga.

In 1535-6, Cartier returned to the St. Lawrence, guided by two Indians "invited" back to France during his previous voyage. He left a major portion of his crew at Stadacona (Quebec) for the winter, and took a smaller group upriver to Hochelaga (Montreal), a palisade-encircled city of over 50 longhouses. Hochelaga was under the rule of chief Donnaconna, but his tribal group has never been conclusively ascertained.

After Cartier's third voyage of 1538-43, internal problems in France effectively prevented further explorations of the St. Lawrence until Champlain's expedition of 1603. He found no trace of Stadacona or Hochelaga, and the Algonkin tribes along the river told him the former residents had departed for the interior.

In determining the reasons for the disappearance of the St. Lawrence Iroquois between the 1540's and 1603, it was essential to find out the ancestry of these tribes. Some anthropologists assert the tribes which Cartier dealt with are members of tribes which centered around modern-day Watertown, New York, and then expanded north to Quebec and Ontario. During the 1540's they migrated south and became the Oneida and Onondaga. However, the research of Professor Peter Pratt found evidence of Oneida settlement in Madison county from 1475 on, long before Cartier's voyages. Other studies have proven the Onondaga populated the Syracuse area as early as 1300.

Ms. Burger's excavations carried the concept of a separate tribe further as she established the existence of an Iroquois tribe developing on its own in the St. Lawrence area from 1350 onward. This tribe grew from a semi-sedentary, fishing culture in Quebec, to an agricultural society recorded by Cartier. Their development seems to have ended during the 1540's as they migrated to Ontario where they reappear along the Trent River.

Two major theories as to the disappearance of the St. Lawrence Iroquois took hold before excavation of their settlements. Some claimed the tribes left because of constant raids by neighboring tribes, and cite as evidence the incessant feuds among North American Indian tribes. Others note the debilitating effects of European contact, both in medical and social terms.

Archaeological evidence uncovered by Pratt and Burger lends credence to the importance of meteorological changes in the region. The period 1450-1550 was relatively mild and was followed by a cold spell from c. 1550-1580. Crops grown by the St. Lawrence Iroquois required a 100-125 day growing season, which did not exist during the colder years. It is during this period that the tribe migrated to the warmer climates of the Trent River site. (Continued in the Spring issue of the Newsletter.)

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## NORTHEASTERN ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Burlington will host the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Anthropological Society on April 27-29, at the Sheraton Motor Inn. UVM Anthropologist Stephen Pastner is Program Chairman for the meeting and has put together a superb program. Of special interest to Society members would be sessions on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon on the Cultures of Canada, a Friday morning session of Mesoamerica, and a Saturday morning session on North-

eastern Archaeology. Registration for the entire conference is \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for students. With 31 different sessions including many familiar faces, the meeting seems an excellent opportunity to keep abreast of the work in your area of interest. Registration forms or programs are available through Dr. Stephen Pastner, Department of Anthropology, Williams Hall, University of Vermont, or from Jeffrey Aronson at the above address.

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## VAS ANNUAL MEETING

Fifty members from Vermont, New York, and Quebec braved miserable weather but found the fifth annual meeting well worth the effort.

The meeting was held on Saturday, December 9, 1972 at the Pavilion Building in Montpelier, which proved to be an ideal site for the informative and business sessions. Registration proceeded smoothly thanks to the efforts of Nancy Muller, and it was further enhanced by exhibits courtesy of the Vergennes and Burlington Chapters.

President Nick Muller opened the meeting with a brief welcome and then introduced the first set of speakers, Dr. Peter P. Pratt and Ms. Marjorie K. Burger. Dr. Pratt is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at SUNY-Oswego and Ms. Burger is a Lecturer in Anthropology at Ithaca College, currently working towards her PhD from Michigan. Their topic was the "SUNY-Oswego Excavations in Ontario Relating to the Disappearance of the St. Lawrence Iroquois". (The major points of the talk are outlined later in a separate article.) Their superb presentation began with a background narrative by Ms. Burger on the historical perspective of their excavation, and was followed by Dr. Pratt's thoroughly enjoyable slide presentation on the various sites excavated during their research. An interesting question-answer

period followed the talks.

The business meeting opened at 3:30 with several reports. Treasurer Ken Varney spoke briefly on the financial condition of the Society. Secretary Richard Adams delivered a report on the Vergennes chapter which summarized it's achievements. The disparities in age of the executive board of the Chapter continued as 16 year old Dennis Hall succeeded Karl Field as President.

Joseph Pollander will be Vice-President and Patricia Ganson will be the next Secretary. Richard Adams and Wayne Ganson were elected Field Coordinators. (A Newsletter entitled The Otter Creek Points will begin publication under Wayne Ganson.)

Ed Bacon delivered the report on the Burlington Chapter which appears as a separate article in this Newsletter, and Louise Basa of UVM presented some preliminary findings of her work at the James Rivers' farm. A report of her work will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Elections for the Board of Trustees followed and the slate of the Nominating Committee was accepted. Louise Basa, Robert McGuire and incumbent Darrell Casteel were elected to three-year terms, and incumbent Douglas Egeland was returned to a one-year term.

William Haviland moved the VAS appoint a liason to his VELCO Site Survey. Gordon Nielson of Hinesburg was nominated and elected by the membership. Mr. Nielson is an entomologist with the UVM Extension Service.

The meeting adjourned to the upper quarters of the building, courtesy of the Vermont Historical Society. While the members socialized and vied in a raffle for a copy of Huden's Archaeology in Vermont, the Board held a brief meeting to

elect officers for the coming year. The results were as follows:

- President - H.N. Muller III
- Vice President - Dr. Durwood Smith
- Secretary - Richard Adams
- Treasurer - Kenneth Varney

After dinner at the Tavern Motor Inn, Dr. Dean Snow of SUNY-Albany delivered a fine presentation of his historical restoration work at the Saratoga National Battlefield. He began with a background narrative on the movements of the decisive battle which took place in October of 1777. Dr. Snow also described the techniques used in excavation and interpretation, and related these to his future work in Central America. Once again an interesting question-answer period ensued.

### SITE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

The Site Legislation held its first meeting at the University of Vermont on January 11, 1973. The Committee was established at the December meeting of the VAS to propose legislation for the protection of archaeological sites in Vermont.

Chaired by William Haviland of Jericho, the Committee includes: Wayne Gansar, Vergennes; Robert Johnson, Burlington; and Darrell Casteel, Lyndonville. William Pinney of the Historical Sites Commission, and Carolyn Nickerson of the Natural Resources Council, also participated in this meeting.

While the Committee agreed on the need for a State Archaeologist with some protective authority, members disagreed on the level of power which should be accorded to the position. Funding will be necessary to provide for tasks such as a registry of archaeological sites to assure the release of information. However, some members expressed reservations over the extent to which an individual can control the output from a site, and questions

how one could prevent excessive vandalism or simple publicity-seeking which interfere with a dig.

Other disputed areas concerned the administration of digs through a permit system and the potential problems this poses for the amateur. The group also discussed possible ways of inducing the flow of artifacts from unavailable private collections to individuals or groups willing to display the materials.

Darrell Casteel suggested Vermont might follow the lead of southwestern states in jurisdiction over artifacts. Several states have legislation which grant assigned agencies purchasing rights to all artifacts; thus if a private collection is to be sold, the state will have the first option on purchase. These states cannot preempt an individual's right to an artifact, but they can insure that artifacts do not become mere souvenirs.

The problems of staffing for a State Archaeologist were discussed as were the potential functions of the position. A State Archaeologist would have to establish a site registry and possibly a permit system to retain authority over digs. Legislation would have to grant the position the responsibility of surveying major public and/or private development for archaeological sites. The Massachusetts State Archaeologist contracts with the Massachusetts Archaeological Society for both surveys and excavations. The group noted the potential conflicts which would arise from exclusive agreements between the contractual organization and amateur archaeologists.

The following excerpts are from model legislation used in several states as the basis for the establishment of a State Archaeologist:

"The conservation of archaeological resources, while properly within the scope of a historic preservation program, presents problems quite dis-

tinct from those encountered in other areas of preservation. Unlike historic buildings or areas which can convey much of their historical significance merely by being preserved, this cannot be accomplished with respect to archaeological resources. Since the value of archaeological specimens and sites to contemporary society lies primarily in the scientific information they can provide, only the continued activity of an archaeological development program can enable a State to discover, investigate and evaluate its archaeological resources. Also, the means of protecting archaeological sites may often differ from those of protecting historic buildings and areas. In those cases, public knowledge, which is fundamental to protecting structures, may actually contribute to the destruction of an archaeological site. While it may undoubtedly prove desirable to place certain archaeological sites on the State Register prior to investigation, in many instances it will better serve the public interest to delay registration until a site has been investigated or even acquired by the State.

"Because of these significant differences, a State may find it desirable to establish or specifically recognize an archaeological protection and development program separate from, though closely coordinated with, the general historic preservation program of the State. Any legislation concerning a State's archaeological resources, regardless of where the authority for its execution lies, should include the following points. First, all significant archaeological sites, not just those on the State Register, should be afforded some degree of protection from adverse effects caused by State undertakings (Section 210). Second, a continuing program of archaeological research, development and publication should be specifically recognized and funded by the legislature as part of the State Historic Preservation Agency, a State university, the State his-

torical society or other appropriate agency, including one devoted exclusively to the archaeological program. This Part presents the components of a separate archaeological program for the reasons state previously. The choice between an independent program or one integrated into the general State historic preservation program under the authority of a single agency can best be determined by each State in accordance with its particular circumstances."

"Section 203. The Director of the State Historic Preservation Agency or other agency responsible for the archaeology program shall appoint a State Archaeologist. The State Archaeologist shall administer the preservation and protection of the State's archaeological resources as hereinafter directed by this Article. The State Archaeologist may employ such qualified persons as may be needed to assist him in the performance of his duties."

"Section 206. The State Archaeologist may issue permits for exploration and field investigations to be undertaken on State Lands or within the boundaries of designated State Archaeological Landmarks to institutions which the State Archaeologist may deem to be properly qualified to conduct such activity, subject to such rules and regulations as the State Archaeologist may prescribe; provided that such activity is undertaken by reputable museums, universities, colleges or other historical, scientific or educational institutions or societies approved by the State Archaeologist, with a view toward disseminating the knowledge gained through their activities; and, provided that a summary report of such undertakings, containing relevant maps, documents, drawings and photographs be submitted to the State Archaeologist; and, provided further, that all specimens so collected under permit shall be the permanent property of the State and that the State Archaeologist shall make prior arrangements for the disposition of specimens derived from such activities

in an appropriate institution in or out of the State."

Bill Haviland of Jericho and Joe Popecki of Burlington are the VAS representatives to the Site Preservation Commission and would welcome comments on archaeological site legislation. It appears that the Site Preservation Commission might include archaeological sites in a legislative package to be presented this year.

## THE BURLINGTON CHAPTER

The chapter in its first year as a recognized unit has been active. We have thirteen members. This past summer and fall we established two "digs".

The first was at the University Horticultural Farm near the area where "Buck" Williams, one of our charter members, excavated a portion of a Woodland site. Surface hunting in a cultivated area revealed the presence of both archaic and later material. The area which the chapter opened up proved to be sterile save for a few chips on the surface.

Fortunately, right while we were at a low ebb, Bob Johnson revealed to us that a site was eroding from the banks of the Winooski and rapidly being lost (not only by stream action but by pot hunters as well.) With permission from the chairman of the group owning the land to excavate, we worked there into October.

We have a site with two definite habitation strata separated by an essentially sterile sand layer.

The lower zone has yielded pottery and points indicating a middle Woodland culture recognized by W. A. Ritchie in New York State as Jack's Reef dated circa 905 A.D.

The upper zone is more recent and incorporates a small amount of historic artifacts such as nails, pipe

stems, and lead musket balls. This may indicate a post contact occupation or simply natural mixing by natural means of a pre-contact occupation and superior historic materials.

This winter we are in the process of planning, cataloguing, and photographing the summer finds.

We meet the last Thursday of each month at 8:00 PM in the Anthropology Department's seminar room on the top floor of Williams Science Building. Work shop sessions are the same hour and plan on other Thursdays during the month.

Our officers for this year are:

President - Bob Johnson  
Secretary-Treasurer - Sally Andrews  
Program Chairman - Carl Swanson  
Site Director - Ed Bacon  
Ass't Site Director - Jim Breeyear

We can be contacted by dropping a note to us at the:

Burlington Chapter VAS  
& The Department of Anthropology  
Williams Science Building  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, VT 05401

We invite anyone interested in our activities to join us.

Last but definitely not least, Ken Varney, who has been most active in the VAS and started our Chapter on its way, has loaned us the material he excavated at the Auclair site for cataloguing and as a basis for a working educational collection. The Chapter wishes to thank him for his generosity and assure him his material will be put to good use in teaching others as he has taught so many in the past.

-Ed Bacon

"Happiness  
is a Hole  
in the Ground"

## HISTORICAL RESTORATION AT ROKEBY HOUSE

By Janet Williams

Editor's Note: Janet and Ted Williams are the curators of Rokeby House, the restored home of the Rowland Robinson family in Ferrisburg, Vermont. The techniques of historical restoration are of interest to all archaeologists, and a trip to Rokeby House (on Route 7) would be well worth anyone's time.)

The project involves restoring the old kitchen to its previous condition. We were inspired by a small, pale sketch drawn by Rowland E. Robinson (1833-1900) which pictures an ample kitchen fireplace, giving a partial view of the old brick baking oven on one side. The fireplace was immediately recognizable as the one in Rokeby's "dining room". In the place where the oven should be, however, there was instead a partition, separating the dining room from a modern kitchen. Some quick measuring of the rooms surrounding the fireplace showed that there was no space where the missing oven might be concealed.

Amidst the vast file of eloquently descriptive Robinson correspondence, however, were repeated references to an extensive modernization of the "old kitchen", completed in winter, 1905, under the supervision of Anna S. Robinson, widow of the man who had made the sketch. It is around this time that the word dining room starts cropping up in family letters, and often the word kitchen is crossed out and replaced by dining room. Other times the word "dining room" appears in quotes, or with an explanation that the letter-writer is not yet used to calling the old kitchen such. It is interesting to note that a decade before the modernization, when the artist of the sketch was blind and so fond of the old house - it had been suggested that the Robinson kitchen wasn't "looking up". The challenge was met with a brand new nickel-plated copper tea kettle!

In 1905, on the other hand, the baking oven was torn off the side of the fireplace to make room for the suddenly obligatory refrigerator, stove, sink, and rows of kitchen cupboards. Also in this lust for modern kitchen space, a major supporting upright beam was sawn off and hastily tied into the studs of the new partition. Another bite was taken out of an adjacent bedroom, used by the lonely Anne King, who lived with the Robinsons throughout young Rowland's boyhood and adolescence, and as her papers reveal, had ten different recipes for cooking bread and beans in the brick baking oven.

Fortunately, portions of each of the destroyed structures were left to indicate where and how to reconstruct them: the oven retained its flue and part of one curved wall; the entry to Anne King's room, beneath two layers of plaster and three of wallpaper, was still framed by its original beaded woodwork; the missing beam had been sawn off rather than ripped out; above the oven, beneath a layer of new lath and plaster was a layer of original "split-lathe" and horsehair plaster with breaks in it -- indicating that in the room behind the kitchen there was an open space, neatly plastered, containing two shelves.

The work is nearly completed now as we wipe away the last of the fine white dust that lingers in the air, settling upon worn table-tops. Often in the afternoons, they say, the familiar sunlight swarms in through the west windows, trailing across the purplish carpet in the "south room" and slipping into the old kitchen to shine its thick yellow spotlight directly into the cavity of the newly repaired brick oven.

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### JANUARY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The meeting was opened by President H.N. Muller at 4:00 PM, January 25, 1973, at the University of Vermont.



Attending the meeting were the following members:

Richard Adams	Inez Harlow
Louise Basa	Joseph Popecki
Douglas Egeland	Kenneth Varney

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Treasurer Ken Varney submitted a financial statement which indicated a balance of \$424.70 as of January 27, 1973. Ken noted the figure compared favorably with balances from this date last year. The Board voted to accept the financial statement.

#### VAS EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

UVM student, Thomas Vogelmann, has produced a highly successful introductory film entitled "Preshistoric Life in the Champlain Valley". He wrote Nick Muller and asked if the VAS would be interested in purchasing a copy of the film. The purchase price, covering only the price of printing, would be \$85.00. Board members agreed the film was an excellent introduction to Vermont archaeology and would also prove useful in recruiting new members.

The group discussed the problems of operating film rentals but noted existing film rental outlets would be inadequate for our needs. Members felt the Society could always charge nominal rental fees to cover operating expenses if this were to prove necessary. Louise Basa reported she is preparing educational kits for schools which could be used in conjunction with the film. Nick Muller suggested, and the Board agreed, that the Society should purchase a copy of the film and promote its showing throughout the region.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Jeffrey Aronson presented plans for a VAS Monograph Series under a new format, beginning with an article written by William Haviland. The series would be 6" x 9" booklets and at present would be free to members. As outlets for professional writers already exist, the series will encourage amateurs to publish their findings and research. The cost per issue will run approximately \$200,

including mailing costs, but the Board agreed with Nick Muller that this was an essential function of the Society, and that additional financial arrangements should be made to cover costs.

The VAS Newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis beginning in March. The possibilities of combining the Newsletter and Monograph Series into a quarterly journal will be further explored. Jeff Aronson will edit the Newsletter and Joseph Popecki will continue to handle the publication and mailing.

#### SPRING MEETING

As requested earlier by VAS trustee Darrell Casteel, the Board voted to explore the possibilities of holding the next general meeting in Lyndonville at Lyndon State College. Nick Muller will work with Darrell and report back to the Board at its next meeting. If the Lyndonville site is not feasible, the meeting will be held in Vergennes.

#### SUMMER ACTIVITIES

A brief discussion was held on the summer activities of the Society. Richard Adams reported the Vergennes Chapter might hire a professional archaeologist to direct a dig of selected sites in that area.

Louise Basa reported on a tentative site survey of the Interstate 91 route. Talks are presently being held with the Department of Highways to arrange for a federally-funded \$2,400 grant to pay for the survey. Local groups would have to contribute 10%, or \$250, of the total cost. Louise Basa will report back to the Board on the progress of the proposal.

#### CHANGES IN BOARD

The Board accepted with regret the resignation of Ken Varney, who is fleeing Vermont for the warmth of Florida. His enthusiasm and considerable expertise will be sorely missed. While Richard Adams will retain his seat on the Board, he resigned as Secretary to become Membership Chairman. The Board accepted



the move and thanked Dick for his past efforts. The Board voted to seat Jeffrey Aronson as Secretary, filling Ken Varney's unexpired term. Trustee Ed Bacon will assume the position of Treasurer.

#### REVISION OF BY-LAWS

Nick Muller appointed a sub-committee composed of Joseph Popecki, Richard Adams, J. Robert McGuire, and Jeff Aronson to codify and update the existing by-laws, and to propose any necessary changes in time for the next general meeting.

No date was set for the next Board meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual of the Human Skeleton. William M. Bass. Special Publications, Missouri Archaeological Society, 15 Switzler Hall, University of Missouri. Columbia, 1972. 270 pp. figures, tables, selected bibliography (paper).

Human skeletons from prehistoric burials and other contexts have long been recognized as important sources of information about the past. In the first place, they indicate who was living at a particular site. Beyond that, though, a good sample of skeletons can tell much about the population structure of a group of prehistoric people: What their life expectancy was, what the sex ratio was, and so forth. They can also tell us much about the health status of the population. They can even help us to gain an idea of the relative status of the sexes in an ancient society, and whether or not that society was class structured. My own study of human skeletons from the ancient Maya site of Tikal, for example, has not only shed light on all these things, but has also helped establish the presence of ruling dynasties at that site, and has helped isolate some of the factors which caused the collapse of Mayan Civilization.

Most archaeologists do not have the training to do a detailed analysis of human skeletons themselves. However, if they have a basic understanding of what the human skeleton looks like, and particularly the things that are important to a "bone-man" in his study, they will be more likely to do a good salvage job on human remains should they be encountered. Bill Bass has provided an excellent book for this. Not only is it thorough in its coverage, but it is clearly and concisely written. Bass himself is as well qualified to write the book as anyone; he studied under the master of "bone detection", Wilton M. Krogman, and has been excavating and studying American Indian skeletal material ever since.

The book is divided into four sections. The first covers basic: terms, the bones of the Skeleton, how to handle them, and how to estimate age, sex and stature. Particularly good here is "What Bone is it? Steps to Follow in Identifying Bones," and "Care and Treatment of Bone..". The second section deals in detail with the skull, the third with the rest of the skeleton, and the fourth with teeth. Not only are the features of the various bones and teeth described in detail, but such matters as how to tell right from left, male from female, old adults from young adults, and so forth, are discussed more thoroughly than in the first part. The book ends with three appendices, the first dealing mostly with terms, the second listing all the bones, and the third detailing the proper and improper ways to excavate and treat human remains.

The book can be recommended to the arm chair, as well as practicing archaeologist. There is the sheer fascination just to see what the human skeleton can tell someone who knows what to look for. For the practicing amateur archaeologist, Appendix III will prove invaluable.

Reviewed by William A. Haviland.

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FROM

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