

# VAS newsletter....

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

A number of books of interest to VAS members have appeared recently. To stimulate summer reading, a lengthy review of one of these books, and shorter descriptions of several others, are included in this issue. Please let us know your reactions to any of these books, and feel free to suggest others we might review.

## VAS MEMBERS STAR AS FEATURED SPEAKERS

VAS members have been actively spreading the word about archaeological activity in Vermont. Two VAS members spoke at the Northeastern Anthropological Association 21st annual meeting in March, 1981. James Petersen, a long-time member, now a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, organized and chaired a symposium on "Ceramic Analysis in the Northeast". Petersen's keynote discussion of past and present prehistoric ceramic research in the Northeast provided a contextual perspective for the other papers presented. Petersen also presented a paper co-authored with Marjory Power, anthropology professor at UVM, titled, "Three Middle Woodland Ceramic Assemblages from the Winooski site."

Martha Pinello, VAS member currently working in New York, presented a paper at the same symposium on her work with ceramic data from Fort Dummer in Brattleboro. Archival and ceramic data she collected indicate that the site has a history of human habitation for an estimated 400 years.

All the papers presented at this symposium will be published as Ceramic Analysis in the Northeast, Occasional Publications in Northeast Anthropology, No. 9, James B. Petersen, editor.

In April, 1981, at the 57th annual meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society, Jim Petersen and Marjory Power presented a paper on "The Western Abenaki Seasonal Round and Prehistoric Site Interpretation: A Study from Vermont".

Also in April, Gina Campoli, VAS Board member, spoke to the Massachusetts Archaeological Society on Vermont's prehistory.

Vic Rolando described his findings on Vermont iron furnaces at the national meeting of the Society for Industrial Archeology, held in May.

Peter Thomas, contract archaeologist at UVM,

## Spring Meeting Features Historical Archeology

With its theme of historical archeology, the VAS spring meeting on April 4, 1981 drew about 60 people to the Rutland Free Library. VAS members were joined by members of the Rutland Historical Society as well as the interested public to hear speakers on topics ranging from specific Vermont projects to an overview of industrial archeology in New England.

Suzanne Spencer-Wood opened the meeting with a presentation on her excavation of the Asa Knight General Store in Dummerston, Vermont. To measure the involvement of Dummerston residents in the national market between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, Spencer-Wood analyzed the ceramic and glass artifacts found at the site.

Michael Folsom described a potential historic and industrial site, the Ely Copper Mine near Vershire, Vermont. With photographs and maps showing the mine area as it was during operation and as it looks now, Folsom raised a number of questions about the information such a site might provide.

Giovanna Neudorfer, State Archaeologist, discussed two levels of site management - short and long term - using the Bellows Falls petroglyph site as an example.

A lengthy archaeological survey in Lowell Massachusetts, now a national urban park, was the subject of Robert Schuyler's talk after lunch. Schuyler stressed the importance of the Lowell survey, stating that Lowell, once a showcase for American industry, can provide data about unique technological innovations that occurred in nineteenth century Lowell, and also about the lifestyle of the various social groups that worked there.

Billee Hoornbeck spoke next, correcting a misstatement in the last Newsletter that no historic archaeologists are working in Vermont. (Sorry, Billee.) She divided the work being done in the Green Mountain National Forest under her direction into four areas: 1. training archaeological technicians, 2. developing a research strategy, 3. investigating sites, and 4. encouraging several graduate research projects on archaeology in the National Forest.

David Starbuck presented an introduction to industrial, archaeology in New England. Until

## 1 ▷ VAS Members Speak

contributed to the 8th annual Lake Champlain Basin Environmental Conference held in June. The conference focused on hydro development in the Lake Champlain Basin, and Thomas discussed the relationship between hydroelectric programs and considerations of prehistoric and historic cultural resources. Thomas used results from recent reconnaissance studies for hydro projects in the Missisquoi, Lamoille and Winooski River valleys. The paper will be included in the forthcoming conference Proceedings.

## 1 ▷ Spring Meeting

recently, Starbuck said, industrial archaeology was mostly description for the sake of description. Today there is increasing use of research questions and designs to structure IA projects. Starbuck outlined some of the directions that IA could go in the future, including the need to collect more information about small rural industrial sites in Vermont.

Kevin Crisman closed the program with a discussion of a nautical resource he is investigating, the Ticonderoga.

## Vermont Academy Site of Historic Dig

by Dr. Allison W. Saville  
Vermont Academy

In September 1978, a chance remark by a history teacher at Vermont Academy to the school's librarian resulted in a major archaeological project for its students. The three-quarter acre site (120 X 30 meters), slated for bulldozing as a future apple orchard, was in Saxton's River folklore reported to be the site of this town's only dispenser of spirits in colonial times and thereafter.

**U**nder the guidance of the chairman of the history department, a team of some sixteen students began surveying, laying out and test trenching toward the 12 X 16 meter depression within the site that fall. Frozen ground and light snow closed out the first phase of the dig in late November, but not before the team had retrieved some 200 sherds of pottery, glass and china, hand wrought nails, broken brick and mortar, parts of white clay smoking pipes and a granite and fieldstone cellar wall.

The spring and fall of 1980 witnessed the partial excavation of the depression in two meter squares in the southeast quadrant of the site. Initially this covered the north, east and south perimeters along the anticipated run of the cellar walls to a depth of some 150cm below the EW center line (i.e. about 70cm below the top of the cellar wall.) At this level the team ran into a heavy concentration of large rocks and brick. The fill dirt above it represents our first dig level. Over 1,200

artifacts have been retrieved in that fill. Notable among them are a colonial copper penny, a solid gold button with the name of the English manufacturer on the reverse, a tin snuff box, numerous bowls and stems of clay pipes, a child's toy and a heavy run of broken glass, pottery, and china sherds. Accurate field recording, winter laboratory projects, historical research in the town records, working up a computer program for data storage and retrieval and some solid field experience in historical archaeology have highlighted the learning dimensions for Vermont Academy students.

## EWING SITE UNEARTHED AGAIN

Finally! VAS members have the chance once again to work on one of the most exciting sites excavated in Vermont. In the late 1970's VAS members dug the Ewing site (VT-CH-5) on Shelburne Pond. Lab work was begun in 1976. Since then, boxes and boxes of tools, lithic flakes, pottery and bone have been stored at UVM. On alternative Wednesday nights (we began May 27) from 7-9:00, VAS members are processing and analyzing materials ranging from flakes to bear incisor to cord impressed pottery to triangles and other projectile points. Who knows what else is hidden away in those boxes?

A new twist to the cataloging procedure is the use of a computer program for archaeology, ARDVARC, designed by Mitch Mulholland of the University of Massachusetts. VAS member Jan Warren is sharing her ARDVARC expertise with us. It's proving to be a valuable tool for managing the vast amounts of material we've collected.

All VAS members, especially those who dug at Ewing, are urged to join those already re-discovering the site. The current team includes some new student members from Colchester High School - Michelle Thibault, Anna Louko, Beth Proulx, and Dave DeBrul - as well as Prudence Doherty, Bill Noel, Lauren Kelley, Charlie Paquin, Jim Petersen and Jan Warren. Come join us on July 22 at the Anthropology Lab, Williams Hall, UVM.

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND, By Dean R. Snow. Academic Press, New York, 1980. xiv + 379 pp. \$32.50 (cloth)

One of the best archaeologists active in the northeast is Dean R. Snow, whose contributions to an understanding of the region's prehistory go far beyond his own careful field investigations in Maine and New York. Since 1968, he has authored a steady stream of innovative papers which have done much to overcome the existing theoretical naivete of northeastern archaeology. Therefore, it is cause for celebration that Snow has given us the first book-length synthesis of New England's prehistory since 1935. The publisher has risen to the occasion by giving us a book that is attractively designed, with numerous illustrations and free from all but a

very few printing errors. The price, though, is much higher than it had to be.

The organization of the book is straightforward. The first chapter is an introduction, in which Snow sets the stage by discussing the river drainage model that he uses for his reconstruction of the region's prehistory; why the Hudson and Saint John drainages must be included, along with Long Island, in "prehistoric New England"; the goals of modern archaeology, and how he stands in relation to them. Along the way, there is a brief description of New England's environment, and the chapter ends with an explicit dismissal of myths involving lost races, Celtic voyagers, and the like. The next chapter gives us a look at the native peoples of New England, circa A.D. 1600, with population statistics and capsule ethnographies for each of the drainage systems. These, of course, represent the historic outcomes of prehistoric events, and Snow has organized them so that they can be related to the prehistoric data. There follow six chapters which take us from the Paleo-Indians (Chapter 3) through the Archaic (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) and Woodland (Chapters 7 and 8) periods.

**T**here are many good things about this book, not the least of which is Snow's willingness to stick his neck out on matters of controversy where silence or equivocation would have been easier and less risky. On the whole, he is fair about presenting opposing viewpoints, and stating his reasons for disagreement. Another strong point is Snow's

awareness of the importance for prehistory of historical linguistics. Throughout the book, he attempts to integrate linguistic with archaeological data. To be sure, there are difficult problems in doing this, and I don't always agree with his specific conclusions, (his idea that Frost Island rather than Lamoka represents the intrusion of Iroquoian speakers into the Northeast, for example) but we cannot ignore historical linguistics, as all too many archaeologists do. As two other examples of the book's strengths, I refer readers to the discussion of projectile points and their significance - which ought to be required reading for anyone interested in the archaeology of northeastern North America - in Chapter 4, and the presentation of population data on the Eastern Abenakis, in Chapter 2.

Given the book's many strengths, it is sad to relate that it also has some significant weaknesses. One of them is its frequent inaccuracy with respect to northwestern New England in general, and Vermont in particular. Space prevents full discussion of all of these here, but I can briefly summarize them:

1) On page 29, it is asserted that the Champlain Valley was dominated by Mohawks after 1600 A.D. The facts are otherwise; in spite of Mohawk raids across the lake, there is evidence for the continued existence of organized Western Abenaki communities on the east side of the lake all the way through the 17th and 18th centuries.



# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

NEW  
 RENEWAL

## 1981

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY OR TOWN \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
AGE \_\_\_\_\_ (If Student or Senior Citizen)

**DUES SCHEDULE (Please check category)**

Individual.....	\$ 7.50
Family.....	25.00
Student/Senior Citizen*.....	3.00
Contributing.....	15.00
Sustaining.....	50.00
Life.....	125.00
Non-profit Institutional.....	10.00
Institutional.....	15.00

\*Under 18 or over 65 years of age.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC., AND MAIL TO THE SOCIETY, BOX 663, BURLINGTON, VT. 05402.

2) Snow's estimate on page 33 of 8000 Western Abenakis in the upper Connecticut and Champlain Valleys is questionable. There seem to have been two main villages on the Connecticut and four on the lake, and the average population of a village seems to have been about 500.

3) The post-epidemic population of Western Abenakis given on page 34 (250) is certainly too low. For example the Sokokis, a western Abenaki group, were certainly affected by the disastrous epidemic of 1633, and yet Peter Thomas estimates that there were about 500 of them living at Fort Hill in the winter of 1663-64. And this was only one Western Abenaki village. Even as late as 1790, there were something like 150 to 200 Western Abenakis in residence at Missisquoi, with at least as many living along the upper Connecticut, and others in refugee settlements in Canada.

4) The assertion on page 69 that Western Abenakis were generally friendly with the English is at odds with evidence that they mistrusted them from the start. Nor is it consistent with the fact that, beginning in 1675, they fought the English with great tenacity for almost 100 years.

5) The suggestion made on page 71 that horticulture, by causing depletion of the soil's fertility, would have forced Western Abenaki communities to relocate more often than those of the non-horticultural Eastern Abenakis is at least debatable. In the Champlain Valley, the crops were grown on alluvial floodplains which are inundated with about the same regularity as those of the Nile in ancient Egypt, and with the same effect: natural renewal of soil fertility.

6) One page 72, Western Abenakis are portrayed as having communities made up of patrilineage. In fact, the weight of the evidence favors cognatic organization with small extended "totems" seem to have been little more than animal emblems. Several related families made up a village, which could probably be classified as an endogamous deme. There is reason to suppose that, with the development of the fur trade after A.D. 1600, the western Abenakis were on the way to becoming patrilineal, complete with totemic descent groups. I would guess that these developments, coupled with Snow's continued acceptance of the old "patrilocal band" model led him astray here. This model, incidentally, keeps cropping up throughout the book; for some reason, archaeologists are particularly fond of it, even though it was based on an old ethnocentric misunderstanding about hunters and gatherers operate, and never has had much basis in ethnographic fact. It's time we abandoned it.

7) On page 73, we are told that there has been no major excavation of Western Abenaki sites, and that by 1600 traditional pottery vessels had been replaced by copper kettles obtained through trade. In fact, Peter Thomas' excavations at Fort Hill represent an important

excavation of a Western Abenaki village, and he was able to demonstrate that, even as late as 1663, metal pots had still not replaced traditional pottery.

8) Perhaps the prize "blooper" of all comes in Chapter 7: "With the end of the Late Prehistoric period... the entire Champlain drainage appears to have been occupied by no one but traveled by everyone" (page 308). This is compounded in Chapter 8: "The older Algonquian-speaking inhabitants of that drainage were probably partly absorbed by the Mahican of the Hudson drainage, while others may have joined communities in the upper Connecticut and Merrimack drainages..." (page 342) In fact, the Champlain Valley in Vermont is just loaded with sites dating in Snow's Late Prehistoric period, and some survived late enough to be mentioned in historic sources. Furthermore, there is ethnohistoric evidence for the movement of fugitive Pennacooks and Sokokis from the upper Merrimack and Connecticut into the Champlain Valley after 1600, and Mahicans are known to have arrived at Missisquoi from the upper Hudson; while many of them eventually moved on to Odanak, some may have been absorbed by the Missisquoi Abenakis. The idea that the valley was "... occupied by no one but traveled by everyone" is a myth, and the research of John Moody has uncovered documents that pretty strongly point to Ira Allen and his associates in real estate dealings as the perpetrators of that myth.

**A**lthough this book is not a reliable source of information about the archaeology of Vermont, or even that of northwestern New England, it is well worth reading nonetheless. It does provide good information on the rest of New England, and it does represent an approach to its subject that is much needed in northeastern archaeology.

by William A. Haviland

LUCY: THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMANKIND, by  
Donald Johanson and Maitland Edey.  
Simon & Schuster, New York, 1981

If any of your friends wonder why you are enamored with sifting through dirt or cataloging artifacts, hand them this book. In the prologue, Johanson does one of the finest jobs of sharing the thrill of archaeological discovery I've ever read. The rest of the book clarifies the muddle of information available on human evolution. Popularizing any scientific realm is hard to do, and even harder to do well. Simplifications are necessary in a book for the general public, and a scientist risks his reputation on such a venture. Johanson does a fine job of making the complex understandable, especially in areas of dating methods and species identification via fossils. He is sometimes gossipy, sometimes defensive in his interpretations, but is generally fascinating as he presents his solution to part of the mystery of our human origins.

(reviewed by Lauren Kelley)

THE ORIGINAL VERMONTERS, NATIVE INHABITANTS  
PAST AND PRESENT, by William Haviland  
and Marjory W. Power. The University of  
Press of New England, Hanover, N.H.

Much misinformation about Vermont Indians - including the idea that there weren't any! - is rectified by this book. Aiming for synthesis rather than detail, the authors make available to general non-professional readers and scholars alike what anthropologists have learned, and are still learning, about Vermont's native inhabitants from the time of the region's first settlement down to the present. Careful use of photographs, maps, and other drawings enhance the book's appeal for all ages.

The authors offer a general statement about how people lived in Vermont before the arrival of the Europeans, why they lived the way they did, and what has been their fate in the wake of foreign intrusion and domination. Particular attention is paid to the Abenakis, who have recently reasserted their ethnic and cultural identity in the face of strong pressures to renounce their cultural heritage.

In addition to a variety of published sources, the book utilizes unpublished manuscripts, recent archaeological impact reports prepared for various agencies, lesser-known artifact collections, and conversations with those engaged in original research. Bibliographical essays accompany each chapter as tools for further research.

This 320 pp. book (65 illustrations, 6 tables) costs \$20.00 and is available to VAS members for a 10% discount. Order prepaid from the publisher.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NEW YORK STATE,

by William Ritchie.

If you tried to purchase a copy of this book in the past few years, you were probably disappointed. The most comprehensive study of the material culture of the prehistoric occupants of New York State spanning the period from the initial entrance of man to European Contacts has been out of print for nearly seven years.

The current edition is basically the second revision published in 1969 with a new preface, an updated foreword on recent excavations and publications, and a different, easier to read format. Despite changes in the theoretical orientation of American archaeology during the intervening years since the book's first printing, basic data have not changed. This book is still one of the best summaries of the material culture of the northeastern United States. Although the focus is primarily on New York State, many references are made to cultures and sites in adjacent states and sections of Canada.

This new edition, in hardback, is available for \$22.50 plus \$1.00 postage, from the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Inc., Roger W. Moeller, Treasurer, Box 63, Washington, CT 06793.

EARLY AND MIDDLE ARCHAIC CULTURES IN THE  
NORTHEAST, by David R. Starbuck and  
Charles R. Bolian. Occasional Publica-  
tions in Northeastern Anthropology, No.  
7, 1980.

This collection of papers is the product of a symposium held at the Northeastern Anthropological Association annual meeting in 1977.

A brief description provided on an order form states that "The papers which are presented here, by Barber, Bolian, McManamon, Starbuck, Thomas and Turnbaugh, represent quite divergent methodological and theoretical approaches, as well as spatial coverage over quite sizable areas of southern and central New England. Each, with the exception of McManamon, presents information on previously unpublished (or nominally published) sites, and each makes its own distinctive contribution to our understanding of the Early and Middle Archaic Periods."

This 137-page publication is available for \$12.00 (\$15.00 outside the U.S.) from:

Man in the Northeast  
Department of Anthropology  
Franklin Pierce College  
Rindge, N.H. 03461

VERMONT'S STONE CHAMBERS: AN INQUIRY INTO  
THEIR PAST, by Giovanna Neudorfer, pub-  
lished by the Vermont Historical  
Society, Montpelier, Vermont, 1980.

This publication is based on an article which first appeared in Vermont History, and includes expanded notes, additional charts and pictures, and a forward by William Fitzhugh of the Smithsonian Institution.

Vermont's Stone Chambers is available for \$4.50 (plus 90¢ postage and handling; Vermont residents add 3% sales tax), from the Vermont Historical Society, 109 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont.

## COMING EVENTS

EWING SITE WORK SESSIONS - 7-9 PM, August  
5, 19 (and probably into September) in the  
Anthropology Lab, Williams Science Hall, UVM.

VAS ANNUAL MEETING - October 10, 1981,  
Holiday Inn, South Burlington. So far, the  
program includes: Barbara MacMillan from Dart-  
mouth, who will speak on Paleo-Indian sites in  
the Upper Connecticut Valley; Jan Warren on  
conservation of underwater artifacts; Ned  
Sweigart on the prehistory of southern New  
England; and Peter Thomas on historical data  
on prehistoric occupation of the lower Winooski  
watershed. The afternoon and evening meeting  
will include a dinner. More details on the  
program, the dinner menu and a reservation  
form will appear in the next issue.

ESAF ANNUAL MEETING - will be held November  
6, 7, 8, 1981 in Harrisburg, PA.

FIRST ANNUAL CHAMPLAIN VALLEY SYMPOSIUM -  
will be held October 17, 1981 at the State  
University of New York College at Plattsburgh.

Sponsored by the Clinton County Historical Association. The prehistory of the region and the War 1812 will be discussed in two formal sessions. Speakers will include Dean Snow, whose talk is entitled, "The Lake George Project: A Perspective from the Champlain Headwaters", and William Haviland, who will speak on, "The Development of Indian Villages in the Champlain Valley in Pre-Columbian Times." For further information, contact: Dr. Bruce Stark, Special Collections, Benjamin Feinberg Library, State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, New York, 12901. (802) 564-3180.

## SIA Chapter Established in Northern New England

On July 26, 1980, an organizational meeting for a Northern New England Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology was held in Concord, New Hampshire. At that time, officers pro tempore were elected, and \$5.00 membership dues were established. The chapter was recognized by the SIA National Board in August. The first official chapter meeting was held October 25, 1980 at the Shaker Village in Canterbury, N.H., when approximately 55 people toured the complex Shaker mill and dam system in pouring rain.

The chapter's next meeting was held May 16, 1981, and included tours of Harrisville, N.H.

Membership in the Northern New England Chapter is \$5.00, which may be mailed to: Christine Fonda, Treasurer, NNEC-SIA, N.H. Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 586, Concord, N.H. Membership includes a newsletter produced jointly with the Southern New England Chapter. To join the Northern New England Chapter, one must also join the national Society for Industrial Archeology. Write to:

Society for Industrial Archeology  
Room 5020

## VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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TO

Giovanna Neudorfer  
P.O. Box 1115  
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National Museum of History & Technology  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC 20560

## Educational Resource Program Includes Archeology

Each year the Vermont Department of Education selects a small group of educators to share their particular knowledge and expertise with other teachers. This year, the developers of two archaeology programs have been chosen to participate in the Vermont Resource Agent Program. Lauren Kelley, social studies teacher at Colchester High School, will be the resource agent for prehistoric archaeology. Dr. Allison Saville, chairman of the History Department at Vermont Academy, will provide information on methods for teaching historic archaeology. Kelley's successful Education Outreach project has been described at the 1980 annual meetings and in the January 1981 Newsletter; Saville directed his students in excavating a tavern; details about his project are presented elsewhere in this issue.

## ESAF Looks for Financial Aid from Member Societies

Muriel Farrington, the VAS representative to the Eastern States Archaeological Federation meeting in October 1980, reports that ESAF is having financial problems. One way ESAF hopes to solve its economic difficulties is by urging members of state archaeological societies to join ESAF as individual members. Individual dues are \$12.00, and should be sent to E. K. Swigart, A.I.A.I., Washington, Connecticut 06793.

