

VAS newsletter....

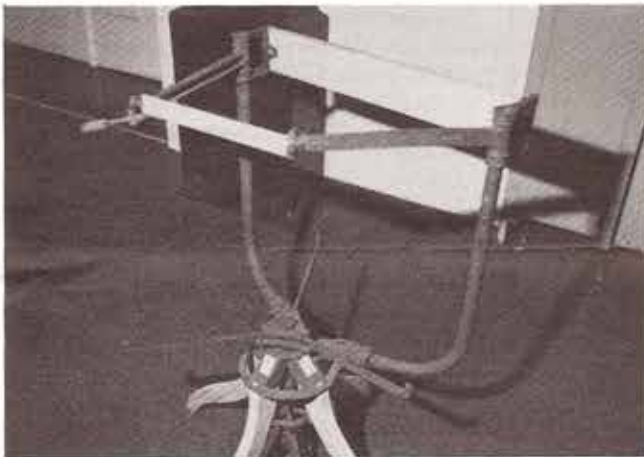
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Prudence Doherty, Editor

Colvin Uncovers Mystery Artifact

The artifact in the photograph was recovered by Representative Edwin Colvin in the high country around Shaftsbury, Vermont. It was an isolated find, half buried in the ground, and found in the general vicinity of several charcoal kilns. Representative Colvin brought the



artifact to Montpelier early in 1981 and asked me if I could help identify it. Phil Ewert at the Vermont Historical Society could not shed any light on the matter, so I proceeded to direct inquiries to several historical and industrial archaeologists, including to the National Museum of History and Technology at the Smithsonian Institution and to the Canadian National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. Everyone was baffled. A notice of my inquiry finally appeared in the Fall Newsletter of the Society for Industrial Archeology. The only response to this came from Jack Grey, Associate Director of the Canal Museum in Syracuse, who delights in the challenge of solving "mysteries" such as these. On the basis of several photographs I sent him, he initially identified the artifact as a reciprocating or swing washing machine, dating circa 1905-1912, and illustrated in the 1908 Sears catalog. Grey has since confirmed that the item is a gravity washer manufactured by the 1900 Washer Co., 435 Henry St., Binghamton, N.Y. It was probably manufactured between 1910 and 1912.

Another suggestion has been made directly to Representative Colvin that the artifact may

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VAS Joins Support for Archaeological Conservancy

"Preserving the past...for the future" is the motto of the recently established Archaeological Conservancy, a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the best of the remaining sites of prehistoric cultures. The Archaeological Conservancy has three main objectives: to identify the most important remaining prehistoric sites that must be preserved; to permanently protect the sites through either gift, purchase or by assisting government; and to educate the public about the destruction of our cultural heritage and how best to preserve what is left.

The Conservancy turns over most of the sites it acquires to public agencies for permanent conservation. Such agencies include universities, museums and governments. To insure permanent protection, the Conservancy places very stringent legal restrictions on the property. Archaeological research is permitted, but only within strict limits that

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From the Editor...

It has become traditional for the editor of this Newsletter to remain anonymous. We have decided to end that tradition and let you know who is responsible for these pages. From now on, the current editor will be identified below the title. We hope that readers will communicate with the editor: please send your comments, criticisms and compliments!

This year's Spring Meeting will also depart from tradition. It will be more informal and active than in the past, as well as shorter (no evening session) and less expensive (no dinner, no major speaker). A special exhibit of Ewing site artifacts is being prepared, and the new VAS T-shirts will be on sale. The meeting is being cosponsored by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Vermont. A wine and cheese gathering will follow the talks, and we hope to see many of you there.

-Prudence Doherty, Editor

Box 85, Westford, VT 05494

1 CONSERVANCY

insure the site will be permanently preserved for future generations to study and enjoy.

The work of the Conservancy has been summarized in a recent article by Mark Barnes. "The Conservancy sees its role as a middleman juxtaposed between the archaeologist on the one hand and the potential funding sources and curatorial agencies on the other. This philosophy is that all sites not currently permanently preserved are endangered, even if they do not immediately appear threatened. Many sites are lost because archaeologists have neither the expertise, time, nor resources to secure their acquisition. The Conservancy concentrates on establishing the acquisition strategy for a site, helping raise the necessary funds, doing the negotiating using its expertise in tax law and other business aspects of this activity, and then developing a management plan for the site in conjunction with local archaeologists".

Barnes also lists some of the important sites that the Conservancy has been preserved in its first year of existence. These include sites in Missouri, Ohio, Kentucky and Arkansas. For the over 20 projects initiated by the Conservancy, it has been awarded the Heritage and Conservation and Recreation Service Achievement Award from the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Funds for Archaeological Conservancy activities comes from various sources, including membership dues, individual contributions, foundation grants and government grants. Dues are \$25 a year, which includes a quarterly newsletter. For further information, write :

The Archaeological Conservancy
415 Orchard Drive
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Reference cited:

Barnes, Mark
1981 Preservation of archaeological sites through acquisition. American Antiquity 46:610-618.

Other information from Conservancy brochure.

1 MYSTERY ARTIFACT

have been a machine used to band wooden barrels together; the barrels were needed to hold lye made from the wood ashes that resulted from the charcoal manufacture.

Which is the right explanation? The second one would best satisfy the context in which the artifact was found. Obviously, more research is needed on the Shaftsbury charcoal kiln site. Did people live up there, and maybe had a use for a washing machine, or was it only a work site? What kind of equipment was standard at a charcoal manufacturing site? For example, were barrels frequently made on-site?

Considering that it wasn't so very long ago, it still comes as a surprise that we can't

always identify artifacts deriving from the nineteenth century or even early in this century. But as we already know, our historic memory is short and rapid technological changes over 150 years have not made our ability to remember things any easier.

Giovanna Peebles

NGS STUDY OF VERMONT STONE CHAMBER COMPLETED BY PETER REYNOLDS

In the spring of 1980, the National Geographic Society (NSG) contracted with Dr. Peter Reynolds, Director of the Butser Ancient Farm Research Project in Hampshire, England, to prepare material which could be used for an article on the stone chambers of Vermont. Dr. Reynolds was no stranger to Vermont, having spoken, along with Dr. Anne Ross of Southampton University, at the conference on "Ancient Vermont" held at Castleton State College in October 1977. In an article published in Antiquity in 1978, they concluded that "there are numerous anomalous features in the New England landscape which need to be carefully documented, explored and analyzed." Now Dr. Reynolds was to have his chance. He decided to arrange a short-term but intensive excavation of a stone chamber and its context, plus the excavation of three other chambers as part of a general survey of the central Vermont area from prehistoric times to the present.

To assemble an excavation team, Dr. Reynolds turned to Eleanor Ott and Sig Lonegren of the Goddard Archaeological Research Group to act as team coordinators. The 12 person team included Dr. Reynolds; Dr. Diana Reynolds of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, Edinburgh, Scotland; Dr. Bruce Lutz of the Public Archaeology Laboratory at Brown University; Steve Pendary, a graduate student in historic archaeology at Harvard who directed archival and deed research; 3 persons trained by the field school of the University of New Hampshire and experienced in excavation in N.H. and with the New England Antiquities Research Association; and 6 students and faculty with minimal field experience.

The National Geographic Society, under the direction of Taylor Gregg, sent Kurt Wentzel as chief photographer, Dennis Kane, as well as Norris Brock and Kenneth Love of Metropolitan Pittsburgh Public Broadcasting for audio and video coverage.

For the major excavation, Dr. Reynolds chose a site in central Vermont which was not only abandoned but which had received little attention in the controversy and so had been less disturbed than the others. (This is chamber no. 9 in Neudorfer's 1980 publication Stone Chambers.) Auxiliary excavations were carried out on the interiors of three other chambers in the vicinity.

The excavation occurred during June 1980, preceded and followed by archival research. Dr. Reynolds excavated on the premise that "any structure is locked into its landscape; it has

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VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
SPRING MEETING

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1982

Anthropology Department, Williams Hall
University of Vermont

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES

1-1:30 REGISTRATION

1:30-5 PRESENTATIONS

BONES: Skeletons in the Archaeological Closet,
Prof. William Haviland, Anthropology
Department, University of Vermont.

SOILS: The Tyranny of Ants, Worms and Grubs,
Prof. Peter Thomas, Anthropology
Department, University of Vermont.

REMOTE
SENSING: Looking for a Needle in a Haystack,
Prof. Aulis Lind, Geography Department,
University of Vermont.

AND MORE!

5-6 INFORMAL WINE & CHEESE GATHERING

REGISTRATION: \$1, Members \$2, Non-members

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL PRUDENCE DOHERTY, 656-3884

**This Meeting is Co-sponsored by the University
of Vermont Department of Anthropology**

2 STONE CHAMBER

a context." * Thus, excavation proceeded on the interior and exterior of the chamber, including its earthen overburden, as well as adjacent stone walls, stone foundation walls, and other features.

In addition to the excavation, the team spent one day making a survey sweep of the valley below the hillside on which the chamber is located. This survey placed the site in its broader geographical and historical context. Subsequently, June Potts, one of the team members, studied this valley and the hill from all perspectives as part of her Masters' work at Goddard College (Potts, 1981, Dairy Hill, manuscript on file at the Division for Historic Preservation office, Montpelier). There are a number of other stone features within this context which time did not permit the group to examine in detail.

As the excavation proceeded, the hypothesis emerged that the site represented a farm complex with the rectangular stone foundation as the house area. Several team members dug a large number of slit trenches in the woods in front of the chamber and house foundation to look for plow soil. These trenches reveal that the wooded area had once been an agricultural field, as plow marks are clearly visible on the sides of the slit trenches. The build-up of forest detritus averages 1 to 1½ inches, or approximately 100 years since the field was last plowed. This probably indicates when the farm was abandoned.

It became apparent that the stone chamber was tied into the wall running down to the left. The large stone slab roof was covered by rubble stone and a mounded earthen overburden which in fact helps support the left and rear wall of the structure. The right hand wall is almost entirely natural rock, which as Dr. Reynolds describes it, "has been exposed, cracked and is still in situ."

A study of the sod in the capping mound suggests that it is the original cover of the chamber, and that it is commensurate in age with or slightly older than the profile of forest detritus in the field slit trenches, being no more than 200 years old.

According to Steve Pendary, the artifactual evidence from the chamber, house foundation and foundation of a possible outbuilding all correlate to the period of 1760-1860. This was later expanded by Edward Lenik, then President of the N.J. Archaeological Society, who stated that "Clearly most of the artifacts obtained from the excavations date to the 19th and 20th centuries, although a few might possibly date to the late 1700s (Lenik, 1980, Report of Excavations at the Eagle Site, manuscript on file at the Division for Historic Preservation).

The NSG was also interested in several other aspects of research being carried on at the site not specifically under the direction of Dr. Reynolds. One project was part of a larger survey of all known Vermont and New

England chambers to ascertain if the direction of their longitudinal axis has any correlation with any astronomical event, such as a winter or summer solstice sunrise or sunset.

The second project involved an attempt to verify the claim made by numerous dowers that at many stone chambers dowers find a kind of energy, possibly electromagnetic in nature, which seems to be associated with the structures in some way.

In conclusion, all members of the team agree that the intensive excavation of a single site, or even of several sites, considering that there may be some 400 stone chambers in New England, does not justify sure conclusions--if these are ever possible in archaeology. What this field work did accomplish was to considerably extend the data base from which future conclusions may be drawn. If the hypothesis that this is a late 18th-19th century farm complex with attached stone chamber is correct, the information uncovered does not unfortunately suggest to what use the chamber might have been put. This still remains the burdensome question for even those few of the 400 or more stone chambers that have been carefully studied. Considering that perhaps only 1% have been excavated in any detail, there is still much work to do. As Dr. Reynolds emphasized throughout his work on this site, regarding a stone chamber more or less as an isolated unit in the landscape leads to distortion of the data and to premature conclusions.

Moreover, we do not begin to know enough about Vermont hill farm complexes from 1800, or even from 1860, to determine the function of the stone chambers as they are found in various sizes and shapes throughout the state. As Dr. Reynolds concludes, "Stone chambers have a record of attention which has divorced them from their context. I see studying them as a totally fascinating exercise, regardless of whether or not, as we seem to have found from the documentary and archaeological evidence, that this particular site is approximately 100 to 150 years old."

* Note: quotations are taken from a transcript of the final seminar given to the team members in June 1980 by Dr. Reynolds.

by Dr. Eleanor Ott
Goddard College

VAS T-shirts ready soon! The first of several fundraising projects will be available within the next several weeks. The T-shirts will be a light color with dark lettering, and will say "Vermont Archaeological Society" across the front. Decoration will include the Society's logo--the Colchester pot--and a surprise! The shirts come in sizes small, medium, large and extra large. They are 100% cotton. The price is \$6.00, plus \$.45 postage charges. Help us fill the coffers, and order now from:

Box 663
Burlington VT 05401

Petersen Proposes Ewing Site as Subject of New Research

VAS member Jim Petersen, a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, has prepared a research proposal that will use the Ewing site (VT-CH-5) to examine the prehistory and paleoenvironments of Shelburne Pond. Both paleoenvironmental and archaeological research have been conducted in the past at Shelburne Pond. The archaeological research, which has been conducted at a series of sites on the pond, has remained unsynthesized and reported in only a summary fashion. The proposed study will combine analysis of the existing data with analysis of additional information to be recovered through excavation at the stratified, multi-component Ewing site.

The primary hypothesis of Petersen's research is that under conditions of relative diversity, as reflected in the archaeological record by subsistence remains, diffuse hunter-gatherer subsistence systems are resistant to basic change (such as transition to a horticultural economy). As a means of addressing this hypothesis, the relative continuity and change in subsistence systems, measured with a series of quantitative indices, will be closely correlated with the material culture and paleoenvironmental sequences at the Ewing site.

The Ewing site offers a unique opportunity to reconstruct prehistoric subsistence and related economic systems on a noncoastal, interior site in the Lake Champlain drainage basin of northern New England. This opportunity is afforded by excellent conditions of preservation due to soil, bedrock and water table conditions in a region where organic remains are rarely preserved in open sites.

The proposed research will consist of three main parts. First, limited fieldwork will be done to ensure systematic retrieval of floral, faunal, pedological and material culture remains from the Ewing site. Second, all recovered samples will be studied and interpreted using standard techniques of ceramic, lithic, geological and subsistence analysis. Particular attention will be given to analysis of seasonality, resource diversity and micro-environmental zones of exploitation. Third, these data will be correlated in the context of local and regional prehistoric cultural systems.

Petersen feels that on a local level the significance of this research lies in the better definition of poorly known prehistoric cultural systems, in particular those represented in lacustrine environments of known importance to aboriginal populations.

The proposal is in an early stage of presentation. Petersen hopes to apply to various funding sources and begin work in the 1983 field season.

(This article was adapted from Petersen's "The Prehistory and Paleoenvironments of

Shelburne Pond, Chittenden County, Vermont: A Research Proposal", prepared in Fall, 1981.)

NEWSBRIEFS

C-14 DATING

Renewed energy: first Ewing, and now Boucher! Under the direction of Louise Basa, Steve Nelson is selecting 20 samples from the Boucher site (VT-FR-27) for C-14 dating. Bill Haviland will help in finding funds to finance the dating project.

1982 SUMMER FIELD SCHOOL LISTS

Two lists of field schools for the 1982 season are available.

One is available from the American Anthropological Association, and includes a guide to summer field schools in all branches of anthropology, a comprehensive description of field activities, and details on dates, locations, entrance requirements, tuition and credits. To order send \$2.50 accompanied by a self-addressed business envelope bearing \$.37 postage to: 1982 Summer Field School List

1703 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

The Archaeological Institute of America publishes an annual Archaeological Fieldwork and Opportunities Bulletin. This list includes volunteer activities as well as field schools. The 1982 Bulletin is available for \$3.00 (members) or \$5.00 (nonmembers) from:

Archaeological Institute of America
53 Park Place
New York, N.Y. 10007

THE FOREST SERVICE WANTS YOU!!!!!!

Would you like to do an archaeological project this summer? Do an historical research paper? Perhaps attend a field school? The job of surveying the Green Mountain National Forest is an ongoing project--if you have some time that you would like to spend doing some meaningful and interesting research, please contact

Billee Hoornbeek
USFS
Box 638
Laconia, NH 03246

Training is provided.

1982 DUES ARE DUE

SEE PAGE 6

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TO

Giovanna Pebbles
P.O. Box 1115
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FIRST CLASS

