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Prudence Doherty, Editor

Eric Jackson: Early Student of the Original Vermonters

Some time ago this Newsletter reported that Kevin Dann was researching the background of the author of an early and unique study of Vermont's prehistory. Since then, Kevin has pieced together the following biography of Eric Jackson.

Eric Pearson Jackson (1899-1930), author of a 1929 dissertation entitled "The Early Geography of the Champlain Lowland", was a modern scholar who, like so many geographers and natural scientists of an earlier era, took the whole landscape and its inhabitants as his subject of study. That Jackson at an early date turned out this comprehensive and imaginative narrative on the archaeology of the Champlain Valley seems more serendipity than design, though. His research interests ranged from the history of fur trapping and trading in Wyoming to the historical geography of San Francisco. At the time of his premature and tragic death in 1930, he was pursuing study of the mountain geography of Europe. What brought Jackson to Vermont?

Jackson grew up in Fall River, Massachusetts. After graduating from Brown University in 1920, he did graduate work in mining engineering at Harvard. In 1923 he received an M.A. in geography

from Clark University, and his thesis topic was "The Trend of Land Utilization in Rhode Island and the Increasing Importance of the Geographic Factors". Though a chapter of this thesis is devoted to the land uses of Rhode Island's native inhabitants, Jackson's information came from oft-cited historical sources. He contributed no new information via archaeological or ethnographic field work, but rather summarized existing knowledge.

During 1923 and 1924, Jackson taught geography at a high school in Leominster, Massachusetts before being appointed instructor at Middlebury College in Vermont in the fall of 1924. How Jackson came to be at Middlebury is somewhat of a mystery, since no correspondence survives that would answer this question, but it may be that he came via the influence of Professor Raymond L. Barney (Brown University M.S., 1916; Ph.D., 1925) of the Middlebury Biology Dept., or of a man named Swett, whose place Jackson filled at Middlebury while Swett attended the Graduate School of Geography at Clark. The Middlebury Campus newspaper (9/24/24) stated that Jackson was "in charge of classes in geology and geography, and assistant in biology." Indeed, along with courses in general geology, introductory geography, and

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Shelburne Pond Yields Third Dugout Canoe

Another dugout canoe was found in June, 1984 in Shelburne Pond. It was discovered by Dr. Hubert W. Vogelmann, chairman of the Botany Department at the University of Vermont, while fishing.

The canoe was studied in situ on the south edge of the pond by graduate students from the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont. Vegetation and the relationship of the canoe to the edge of the pond were thoroughly studied and documented for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

In mid-October, the water-logged but still slightly buoyant canoe was dislodged from the mass of vegetation it was resting on at the south edge of the pond, and towed to the boat ramp for further investigation by the Champlain Maritime Society and the field naturalists (see Burlington Free Press, Oct. 21, 1984).

The canoe appears to be hewn from a single log. The wood is tentatively identified as

white pine. The wood of the canoe had a thin surficial spongy layer, but was solid within. The maximum preserved length of the canoe is 15 feet, 9 inches, with a maximum width of 1 foot, 11 inches. The gunwales and what appears to be the bow of the boat are mostly missing and seem as though they may have been thinner than the stern, which is fairly intact and is distinctly squared out on the inside. The inside bottom of the dugout has hack marks, possibly made when the canoe was manufactured. The marks are 2-3 mm deep.

A sample of wood was taken from the bow of the canoe and sent to Beta Analytic Inc. for carbon-14 dating. The results from the analysis indicate that the wood from the canoe is 510 ± 100 years old. This date suggests that this canoe may have been made and used before European settlement of the area.

After a detailed examination in October, the canoe was then sunk into the chilly waters of Shelburne Pond by members of the Champlain Maritime Society. Sandbags hold it in place, and the location was recorded for future reference.

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1 → JACKSON

economic geology, Jackson was teaching general bacteriology in the biology department. Somehow, between all of these teaching responsibilities, Jackson found time to become interested in the prehistoric geography of the Middlebury region. Who his mentor was in developing this interest is unclear, but it seems likely that Jackson corresponded and perhaps went into the field with George Henry Perkins, on whose work Jackson relied heavily in his Ph. D. dissertation.

For 2½ months of the summer of 1925, Jackson visited most of the known occupation sites in the Champlain Valley, from Lake Dunmore north to Swanton. Though he did not do any archaeological work himself, Jackson was thoroughly familiar with the artifactual evidence of prehistoric occupation via the publications of Perkins. Despite (or perhaps because of) the lack of original field work, Jackson's dissertation is a masterful synthesis of the geographical, historical and archaeological information that then existed. The thesis, though wholly descriptive and non-quantitative, succeeds in painting a picture of the Champlain Valley's "aboriginal geography".

Academic life moved Jackson to the University of Chicago after his summer of field work, and then the following year (1926), he was appointed Associate Professor of Geography and Geology at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. His thesis was not completed, nor his doctoral degree granted, until 1929, and in that same year Jackson was awarded an American Field Service Fellowship to do advanced study at L'Institut de Geographie Alpine of the University of Grenoble. At the end of that year of study, in June, 1930, Jackson was returning to Grenoble from La Berarde, in the Alps, when a huge boulder was dislodged by a severe storm and struck the truck in which Jackson was riding, killing him and several others.

Though Jackson's contribution to Vermont archaeology was small and somewhat ephemeral, his research approach (visiting prehistoric occupation sites in an effort to reconstruct past environments, transportation routes, and land usage) was unique. The same breadth of interests which kept him from specializing (and hence remaining in Vermont to do further work) also lent a perspective which makes his work on Vermont's prehistoric geography a valuable document.

Partial Jackson Bibliography:

1929 Indian occupation of the Champlain Lowland. Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters Papers 14.

1929 Early geography of the Champlain Lowland. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Geography, University of Chicago. (Microfilm copy available at UVM library.)

1930 Mountains and aborigines of the Champlain lowland. Appalachia 24(4):121-136.

--by Kevin Dann

1 → DUGOUT CANOE

Storing a wooden artifact underwater is the best way of preventing decomposition, according to Art Cohn of the Maritime Society. The canoe will remain underwater until proper care and a final resting place can be arranged for it.

It is interesting to note that in the summer of 1982 the same canoe was found by the son of Chris Kapsalis of Shelburne, Vermont. It was reported to the Division for Historic Preservation and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Vermont. The canoe was measured, photographed and documented at that time. Somehow the canoe disappeared between then and the summer of 1984, when it was rediscovered by Dr. Vogelmann at the opposite end of Shelburne Pond.

It is speculated that the canoe must have floated across the pond sometime during the last two years. To determine that the canoe found in 1982 was the same canoe found in 1984, the Champlain Maritime Society compared detailed photographs and measurements taken both years. The dimensions and distinctive markings of the 1984 canoe were almost identical to those recorded in 1982. The Champlain Maritime Society and the field naturalists have concluded that the 1982 and 1984 canoes are one and the same boat.

This canoe is the third dugout canoe to be found in Shelburne Pond in the last seven years. The first, found in November, 1977, was radiocarbon dated to 100 ± 70 B.P. (years before present; VAS Newsletter, May, 1978). The second dugout canoe was found in the pond in October, 1979. It produced a carbon date of 440 ± 60 B.P. (VAS Newsletter Jan., 1980 and Aug., 1980). The more recent canoe may have been used by local residents at the turn of the century to hunt muskrats or waterfowl.

According to the University of Vermont Dept. of Anthropology, wooden dugout canoes were not used for extensive travel by the local Indians, who favored the lighter birchbark canoes. Wooden canoes were kept parked on a local body of water for local uses such as hunting, gathering and fishing.

The second canoe to be found in Shelburne Pond is currently on display at the Fleming Museum, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont as part of the "Original Vermonsters" exhibit which will be showing until next August.

Dr. Ian Worley, a wetland and bog specialist from the UVM Botany Dept. speculates that the three canoes may have floated up out of the layers of peat in Shelburne Pond. The peat environment tends to preserve organic material fairly well as the absence of oxygen in the peat at the bottom of the pond slows down decomposition.

According to Worley, there was a change in drainage of the pond between 1920 and 1950 when the outlet became blocked with organic debris. Subsequently, the pond level rose, which may have caused vegetation mats to float up off the peat. If the canoes were between the mats and the peat, they may have been set free, Worley speculates.

Many other archaeological sites have been found at Shelburne Pond over the last 40 years. Over 31 sites have been found in the area, docu-

SHELBURNE POND DUGOUT CANOE



E. Nelson 1984

menting over 8000 years of nearly continuous use by aboriginal people, according to a May, 1984 report by James B. Petersen.

The graduate students in the Field Naturalist Program are compiling a detailed site analysis with management recommendations with the advice of the Champlain Maritime Society, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and Dr. Ian Worley. The report will be submitted to the Vermont State Archaeologist, Giovanna Peebles.

Contributions for carbon-dating were arranged by Chris Kapsalis of Shelburne, Vermont. IBM

provided the funding for the analysis through the Shelburne Museum.

Any person/organizations with ideas or facilities for the treatment, storage or internment of the canoe should contact the State Archaeologist at the Division for Historic Preservation in Montpelier, of the Field Naturalists, Botany Dept., UVM.

--Carol Savonen
Field Naturalist Program
Botany Dept., UVM

Vermont Represented at SHA & CUA Meetings

Vermont topics and Vermont speakers were well represented at the annual meetings of the Society for Historical Archaeology and the Conference on Underwater Archaeology, held recently in Boston.

Arthur Cohn of the Champlain Maritime Society chaired a symposium on "Current Events in Lake Champlain Underwater Archaeology".

This session included the following:

- Overview of Current Events, by Giovanna Peebles, State Archaeologist
- Revolutionary War Gunboat Construction: the Lake Champlain Continental Gondolas of 1776, by William A. Bayreuther III
- The Fort Ticonderoga French and Indian War Vessel Excavation, by Art Cohn
- The Construction and Rigging of the 16-Gun Sloop BOSCAWEN, by Kevin Crisman
- BOSCAWEN: The Artifacts, by Heidi Miksch

Giovanna Peebles presented a paper on Vermont's underwater archaeology programs at a symposium on

"The Best in State Historic Shipwreck Programs".

James Petersen presented a paper titled "European Influence during the Early Historic Period in Northern Maine". Shelley Hight, from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, spoke on "Bias in the Historical Record: The Crafts Brothers' Pottery in Whately, Massachusetts, 1806-1860". Finally, Scott Heberling and Suzanne Spencer-Wood (Univ. of Mass., Boston) reported on an aspect of their excavations in Windsor, Vermont in "Ceramics and Socio-economic Status of the Green Family, Windsor, Vermont 1788-1956".

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List on pages 5, 6.**

BOOKS: Timely Reviews of Two by Prof. William Haviland

The New England Indians: An Illustrated Source Book of Authentic Details about Everyday Indian Life. C. Keith Wilbur. Globe Pequot Press, Chester, CT. 1978. 103 pp., illus., index. \$10.95 (paper).

Having seen this book for sale in several Burlington-area bookstores, often to the exclusion of all others pertaining to Indians of the region (save perhaps Huden's obsolete Archaeology in Vermont), I decided to have a look at what may be the most readily accessible source of information on New England's original inhabitants that the public can get its hands on. As one bookstore proprietor put it to me: "It's such an interesting and easily understood book for the general public." On the back cover are the inevitable "blurbs", from Maine Life: "Highly recommended ... a fine important book"; from the Bangor Daily News: "A treasure-trove of facts about every facet of Indian life"; from Early Man Magazine: "A gem of a book ... thorough but succinct ... virtually a whole museum between two covers." So I thought: "Let's see what sort of information the public is picking up these days; maybe things have improved since the "cowboys and Indians" era."

I am sorry to report that, if this book is representative, things haven't improved. This self-proclaimed "source book of authentic details" is not only loaded with misinformation and errors of fact, it perpetuates a number of inaccurate stereotypes. Here are three examples to illustrate what I mean.

"The squaw became the backbone of this change in life styles [Late Archaic to Woodland], quietly assuming the skills necessary to produce clayware. She also carried on the back-breaking chores of farming from planting until the last ear of corn was harvested. Sizeable villages grew about the cleared fields. When this bounty brought raids from envious neighbors, stockades were erected for defense ... The former stone craftsmen--the men of the tribe--became warriors. Through the years, they pursued a bloody course of destruction. Long before the first white settler's came to New England's shores, intertribal wars were tearing apart the very fabric of Algonquin [sic] life." (p.27)

Behold: The "bloodthirsty redskin" stereotype! To be sure, warfare was not altogether absent in prehistoric times; in fact, human skeletons from New York state with projectile points embedded in them testify to the existence of armed conflict even before the Woodland period (contrary to what is implied in the above passage and more explicitly stated elsewhere). But what Wilbur does in this passage is to vastly overstate the extent and destructiveness of Indian warfare prior to the coming of Europeans.

Another stereotype perpetuated by the passage just quoted--that of the poor squaw, working herself to the bone while the men indulge in non-productive

orgies of death and destruction--is reinforced and added to elsewhere, as in this description of villages (pp.45-46):

"The wigwams were clustered about an open center space. Here the men and boys gathered for their games and ceremonies. There was more time for leisure since the men of the tribe had given over many of the old Indian crafts to the squaw. The women, in turn, bent their backs in the gardens that surrounded the living quarters."

In other words, the men, having fobbed off all the hard work on the women, indulged in fun and games when not out "beating up" on others.

Here's another little gem:

"When the Pilgrims gained their Plymouth toe-hold in 1620, any misgivings between the two races faded from memory. Those high-minded Englishmen brought with them a deep and sincere friendship for the natives that endured for over 50 years. Well before the Puritan settlement, the Ceramic-Woodland culture had fallen on hard times. Their early creative thrust had been blunted by centuries of bloody warfare. Then the great plague of 1616-1617 riddled much of the remaining Indian population ... Old enemies fell on their weakened neighbors. The tribes of New England were well on the trail to self-destruction." (p.73)

I am overcome. Granted that not all Englishmen were bad, that native communities included within them individuals whom Indians today might call "Uncle Tomahawks", and that efforts at accommodation between native and colonial populations were made from time to time, the first 50 years of coexistence were marked by a good deal of suspicion and distrust as those "high-minded Englishmen" put into practice a number of often devious tactics, up to and including genocide (as in the Pequot massacre of 1637) to increase their holdings at the expense of the Indians. More disturbing than the gross inaccuracy of Wilbur's description of the situation, however, is the element of racism that runs through this and the previously cited quotations. The Indian race, bent on their own destruction, are saved from themselves by the coming of the obviously superior White Men. That this sort of simple-minded nonsense should appear in a book published in 1978 is incredible! Furthermore, the examples just cited are not merely occasional, unfortunate lapses; rather, the book is loaded with this sort of thing.

The numerous, often silly, errors of fact with which the book is riddled pale in comparison to the perpetuation of false, and often racist, stereotypes, but they are important nonetheless. Here are some examples: Paleo-Indians first came to New England by crossing Long Island Sound in canoes (p.2); the stone from which fluted points were made was nowhere to be found in New England (p.3); no "right-thinking hunter" would try spearing a mammoth (p.5--why not? spearing elephants is a regular practice on the part of pygmy hunters in the Ituri

Forest of Africa); caribou were not hunted until Early Archaic times (p.7); "There were no containers for liquids--no cooking utensils ..." until the Late Archaic (p.12)--I could go on and on but I won't. Enough has been said to establish that this book is essentially worthless. Too bad, for it would be nice to have a book with as many illustrations as this one has that really is a reliable source of information on the crafts and techniques of New England's Indians. It is too bad as well to perpetuate old misconceptions, which can only be done by ignoring the tremendous progress that has been made over the past 15 years or so at improving our knowledge about New England's original inhabitants.

Part of the problem, of course, lies with us professionals by making what we write inaccessible to the general public. We do this by writing for each other in journals difficult for non-professionals to get their hands on, and even if they can, we make what we say inaccessible by loading it with unnecessary jargon, and assigning special meanings to commonly used words that are often at odds with their accepted meanings. As long as we continue these practices, the kind of nonsense that is so plentiful in Wilbur's book is what will continue to pass as "authentic details" about New England's Indians among large segments of the public. Indians and non-Indians alike deserve better from us.

Seasons of Prehistory: 4000 Years at the Winooski Site. Marjory W. Power and James B. Petersen. Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, VT. 1984, i + 22 pp., illus., bibliography. Free (paper).

After wading through Wilbur's dreadful book, it was sheer pleasure to read this one. This is a little gem, and it proves that professionals can make what they have to say accessible to the general public. This book is well illustrated, written in straightforward language without a lot of "baffle-gab", and it is informative. It describes the work and findings of UVM's 1978 excavations at an important Middle Woodland site in the city of Winooski. These excavations have made the Winooski Site probably the best known Middle Woodland (A.D. 0-1000) site in either New York or New England.

The booklet begins with a one-page reconstruction of human activity at the Winooski Site, up until its final abandonment. There follow seven sections: site discovery and history of research, archaeology in Vermont and the role of the Winooski Site, artifacts and features (an archaeological record of activities), making a living (hunting, gathering, fishing and the seasonal round), trade and interaction, change and continuity, Winooski and the Winooski Site--an ethnographic sketch. In short, the authors get us beyond the business of projectile points and potsherds to real human beings going about the business of living as best they know how, but not without adequately indicating why and how the site was investigated, what was there, and how it tells us what it does.

What the authors have to say is sound, and I would not dispute any of it. On the other hand, a couple of their statements raise questions in my mind:

1) On p.16, they suggest (with all appropriate caution), that a late Middle Woodland shift to exclusive use of local stone for tool making might reflect a cultural and ethnic boundary between peoples living on either side of Lake Champlain. Indeed this is so, but if they mean to imply that such a boundary was just emerging, I am not so sure. The boundary may have been there all along, but was not reflected by material goods until exchange networks between regions were disrupted.

2) On pp. 21-22 they say that the Winooski Site is not Winooski, a village in the same general area mentioned in early historic documents. If we think of a village solely as a place where people live, then their assertion is certainly true. If, though, we think of a village as a corporate entity that can move from one locality to another (as Iroquoian villages are known to have done), then the Winooski site could indeed be an earlier manifestation of Winooski. Perhaps that's what they had in mind when they say: "This site may represent a non-agricultural precursor of the historically known villages ..." (p.22).

The previous questions in no way detract from the worth of this booklet, which I recommend most highly. Adults will find it both informative and pleasurable to read, and it should be a godsend for high school, and perhaps middle school students as well, for they could have no better guide to this era of Vermont's past nor, for that matter, to what archaeology is all about. To get it, all one need do is write the Division for Historical Preservation, Agency of Development and Community Affairs, Montpelier, VT 05602. And it's FREE!

VAS Board Changes Policy on Dues Payment

At its most recent meeting, the VAS Board decided to change the long-standing policy of carrying members who had not paid annual dues for six months or even a year. Members will be allowed a period of three months to pay dues after notice. Such notice will be a separate form included with the last Newsletter issue of the previous year or the first issue of the new year.

Below is a list of member status as of December 10, 1984. If the VAS record is not in agreement with yours, drop a note to the treasurer at: VAS, Box 663, Burlington, VT 05402, or call Joe Popecki (802-863-4121) after 5:30 PM or on weekends.

After each name below is listed in parentheses the type of membership (e.g., IND= Individual; CON= Contributing, etc.). The next figure is the dues year for which you are paid. If the figure is 83, you owe dues for 1984 and 1985; if it says 1984, you owe for the coming calendar year, 1985. If it says 1985 or later, you do not owe any dues

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5- MEMBERSHIP

at this time. This is also true of "Life" members. Should your dues be paid up, you might want to consider a contribution to

further the work of the Society.

Again, if you owe dues for 1985 and have not paid them by the time the second quarterly issue of the Newsletter is published, your name will be removed from the mailing list.

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