

# VAS newsletter...



A Publication of the Vermont Archaeological Society, Inc.

## *A Message from Bill Murphy*

The Executive Board has either elected or dragooned me into being VAS President for 1989. This is not a responsibility I take lightly. I feel that our group has to expand in membership and activities, and with your help, cooperation, and most of all your enthusiasm, we can make this happen.

We need programs - programs that will give us a sense of accomplishment, be it a "dig", lobbying for archeological legislation, or supporting other organizations interested in the field.

The Executive Board needs your input. Write us, call us, or attend one of the board meetings. We do plan on putting the **Newsletter** back on its four times a year schedule, but even in that area we need material from you and your assistance.

With all the proposed activities this year, it should be a great one for archeologically inclined enthusiasts and after all, that's what most of us are.

Bill Murphy

*Bill*

## **It's the Same Everywhere**

An item in the "British Archaeological News" is mindful of some of the feeling toward archeological impact requirements in the U.S. It stated, "A correspondent writing recently under the pseudonym of "Caesar" to the Worcester Evening Post described archeological work in the City "as a waste of time, which did nothing more than provide excellent employment for a group of bearded weirdos for the next two years, who will probably come up with nothing more than than the history books tell us already." The letter concluded with, "So let's get the flippin' lot concreted over as soon as possible and the buildings up. Let's look to the future and give up this over-indulgence to the past."

The Council on British Archaeology footnote, in true understated British fashion, read, "Oh dear, we still have a long way to go."

## **VAS Members Attend Joint Conference in Baltimore**

VAS members Giovanna Peebles, David Skinas, David Starbuck, Art Cohn and Bill Murphy attended the first Joint Archeological Congress, held in Baltimore in January.

Giovanna and Dave S. gave a presentation on "Vermont's Underwater Historic Preserve Program: Challenges, Benefits and Problems." There were over 3,000 attendees, comprising members of the American Philological Association, The American Schools of Oriental Research, the Archeological Institute of America, and the Society for Historical Archeology.

The only problem was that there were so many interesting and diverse programs going on simultaneously that it was difficult to be selective. The interplay among the organizations and participants during the conference was the basis for holding a "joint" conference and the results were rewarding.

Announcing...

Massachusetts Archaeological Society

**50<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary Program

APRIL 15-16, 1989  
Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, Massachusetts

# Archaeology

## PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

— FEATURING —  
Internationally Renown Guest Speakers

**Dr. James Tuck**  
"Red Bay, Labrador — World Whaling Capital, A.D. 1550-1600"

**Dr. Robert McGhee**  
"Norsemen and Native Americans, or  
Why the Medieval Norse Didn't Settle in North America"

— ALSO —  
Local, State and National Speakers  
from New England and New York State Archaeology, State Archaeology Societies,  
Open Air Museums, Contract Archaeology, Museums, Heritage Parks

VIDEOS — EXHIBITS — SALES TABLES — FIELD TRIPS

Plan to attend. Watch for future announcements at the end of February. For more information  
write to Robbins Museum of Archaeology, 42 Union Street, Attleboro, Mass. 02703

## CAP Identifies Prehistoric Site in Shelburne Business Park

In May of 1988, the Consulting Archaeological Program at the University of Vermont conducted an archeological survey at the Shelburne Business Park for the Pizzagalli Investment Corporation as part of the project's Act 250 permit application.

The project is located next to Munroe Brook and not far from Lake Champlain. It has been demonstrated that there is a high potential for identifying prehistoric occupations at similar locations along Vermont's streams, and one was identified and evaluated at this project area. The small amount of stone artifacts found indicated that limited stone tool manufacture was conducted in a restricted area, possibly a temporary hunting camp. No evidence of other types of activity were found. The age of the site could not be determined from the artifacts recovered.

For further information, contact Peter Thomas, Director, Consulting Archeology Program, Department of Anthropology, University of Vermont, Burlington 05405, or phone 802-656-3884.

**This issue of the Newsletter was  
edited by Bill Murphy.**

## Porsche Appointed Historic Preservation Officer

Audrey Porsche has been hired by the Division for Historic Preservation to be the Historic Site Administrator for the Hubbardton Battlefield, Chimney Point, Mount Independence, and the Forestdale Ironworks.

Audrey's undergraduate work was at the University of Michigan in Archeology, and her graduate degree is in Museum Studies, from George Washington University. Previous to her arrival in Vermont, she was Curator of Collections for the North Dakota State Historical Society.

Her immediate goal is to establish the museum at Chimney Point, focusing on the prehistoric and French occupations, and she is in the process of cataloging the material on hand while the building is being restored.

[Since the above was written, her immediate goal has changed dramatically - on 8 February a son, Jason Andrew Porsche Alexander was born, and for the next few months her goal will be to establish firmly his place in the scheme of things. Congratulations!]

## VAS Board, 1989

The Vas Board of Directors for 1989 includes: Louise Basa (1991), Dee Brightstar (1989), Cindy Cook (1990), Fred Cowan (1991), Scott Dillon (1989), Prudence Doherty, Past President and Secretary (1990), David Lacey (1991), Bill Murphy, President (1989), Sharon Murray (1990), Sanborn Partridge (1990), Joseph Popecki, Treasurer (1989), and Vic Rolando, Vice President (1991). The dates in parentheses indicate time of term expiration.

## Archeological Publications for Your Reading Table

There are three relatively new publications from the Mackinac Island State Park Commission that might be of interest to VAS members who are into historical archeology:

"Archeological Completion Report Series, No. 11," entitled Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1983-1985; House C of the Southeast Rowhouse, The Solomon-Levy-Parent House; "Report Series No. 12", Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982; The Provision Storehouse; and, "Report Series, No. 13", Eighteenth Century Gunflints from Fort Michilimackinac and Other Colonial Sites. These and many other books and pamphlets can be ordered from the Mackinac Island State Park

Commission, PO Box 370, Mackinac Island, MI 49757.

A recent publication that focuses on the Abenakis is the recent novel, Metallak, His Legacy, by Alice Daley Howes. It uses historical background to tell the story of Metallak, spanning the time period from the 1720s to the mid 1880s. It relates the major transition of the north country native Americans from their culture to that influenced by the white man.

Metallak encompasses history, human conflict and change. For further information contact: Donna Jordan, PO Box 263, Colebrook, NH 03576.

For any member interested in gravestone studies and graveyards, two recent books published by the Association for Gravestone Studies are:

A Graveyard Preservation Primer, by Lynette Strangstad, written for those non-professional and professional preservationists involved in graveyard projects. Markers, Vol. VI, contains such articles as: "Afro-American Gravemarkers"; "Communities of the Dead"; "Tributes in Stone"; and, "United Above, Parted Below."

These are available from the Association at 46 Plymouth Road, Needham, MA 02192.

## *Looking for Experience? Dig these Opportunities*

Through its "Heritage '91" program, the Division for Historic Preservation is engaged in a major long-term effort to record and interpret its state-owned historic sites. VAS help and support is needed to make this a successful effort.

There are current plans for six archeological excavations this year. Between April and June there will be small scale projects at the Justin Morrill Homestead in Strafford, Hubbardton Battlefield, and the Forestdale Ironworks (which is described in greater detail elsewhere). In the fall, there will be two additional small projects at Chimney Point and Plymouth. The major project will be at Mount Independence, where David Starbuck will direct UVM's Summer Field School from 3 July to 11 August.

The Mount is probably the most rewarding Revolutionary War site in the northeast, and other than forays by artifact scavengers over the years, is virtually untouched. Native Americans also used the site for its chert outcrops over thousands of years.

The VAS is needed to make these projects viable and volunteers are required at all the sites. Also, up to six undergraduate or graduate credits are available through the UVM Field School. For further information, contact: The Archaeological Field School, c/o

Continuing Education, 322 South prospect Street, Burlington, VT 05401-3505.

This is a marvelous opportunity for those VAS members who have been looking for active participation in field work. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the projects, or if you need further information, contact David Starbuck, c/o VAS (Box 663, Burlington, VT 05402-0663).

## Spring Meeting

The VAS Spring Conference will be held at the Brandon Inn on the 22d of April. It will be a joint meeting with the Northern New England Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology. The meeting format will be slightly different this year, with a morning program devoted to papers and presentations, and after lunch, a field trip to the Forestdale Ironworks, described by Vic Rolando elsewhere in this issue. If late spring Vermont weather precludes the field trip, there will be an indoor afternoon program.

The tentative schedule is: registration, 9-9:30 AM; papers, 9:30-Noon; lunch, Noon to 1 PM; and, tour from 1-3 PM.

Costs and details will be developed by the Board and will be included in the April Newsletter, or in a special mailing. For the time being, mark your calendar for 22 April, and plan on attending.

## *Forestdale Project Needs Volunteers*

From 25-29 May, the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) will do an in-depth volunteer recording project at the Forestdale Ironworks. Led by VAS member David Starbuck and assisted by VAS VP Vic Rolando, the volunteers will record and survey this historic site.

As a field trip to the site is part of the spring meeting, prospective volunteers can get a good idea of the value of the site toward interpreting Vermont's early industrial history. It is imposing and should be a rewarding field experience.

If you are interested in participating, contact Vic at 413-442-5985 in the evening until 10 PM. Members of the Society for Industrial Archeology are also being informed of the project and it is expected that there will be a good turnout. So get your bid in early.

## Vermont Archeology in the News

The 11 December 1988 issue of the BARRE TIMES ARGUS carried a lengthy article by Steve Larose on archeology and development in Vermont. Despite its cute and perhaps misleading title, "Developers Don't Dig Archeology", the article summarized the process involved in using Act 250 to make sure development does not destroy Vermont's valuable archeological heritage. Unfortunately, the only developers interviewed were several who have faced difficulties in timing and budgeting for the necessary archeological investigations. Their comments illustrate their frustrations with the need to consider archeological resources, and ranged from complaints about having to pass associated costs on to the consumer to assertions that officials have used archeological concerns to stall development in the state.

Luckily, the archeologists quoted emphasized the need for early planning and for cooperation between developers, regulators and archeologists. They also conceded that more education is needed to let developers and the general public know why it is important to protect archeological resources as many areas of the state experience unprecedented development.

A BURLINGTON FREE PRESS article by Eloise Hedbor announced the results of an eight week survey conducted by David Skinas of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (DHP). The Phase I survey in parts of Milton and Williston was designed to gather information on site locations that could be used to help developers know in advance what kind of areas might be archeologically sensitive. Nineteen small sites containing a range of artifact classes and representing periods of occupation from 4,000 B.C. to 1,500 A.D. were identified. The article notes that Skinas hopes to receive sufficient funding to allow him to continue the project in the summer of '89 to "further refine the sensitivity model."

### HOWCUM?

According to spelling authorities, there are two ways of spelling the name of our profession or avocation. The "older" form is "archaeology"; the "modern" is "archeology". Some years ago, the VAS Board made the style decision to use the modern spelling except when quoting copy or titles verbatim in which the more archaic spelling is used. Thus, the name of our association is the "Vermont Archaeological Society, Inc.", but our interests revolve around archeology.

A similar situation prevails with the word "artifact", which can also be spelled "artefact". The former appears to be the preferred spelling among "archeologists".



## ANNOUNCING THE 1989 ANNUAL ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES CONFERENCE

& MEETING  
June 22 through 25

Governor Dummer Academy  
Byfield, Massachusetts

FEATURING TOURS OF ESSEX COUNTY'S EARLY BURYING-GROUNDS,  
WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND LECTURES

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals for presentations on any aspect of gravestone art and history, especially Essex County, MA, or ethnic tradition studies, are invited. Submit one-page abstracts by January 15, 1989 to:

Professor David Warren  
Department of English  
University of New Hampshire  
Durham, NH 03824

General inquiries:  
Michael Conish, Conference Chair  
199 Beasant Street  
Dorchester, MA 01921  
617/582-1811

Exhibits information:  
Rebecca Arnold, Exhibits Coordinator  
22 Wilbur Avenue  
Dorchester, MA 01928  
617/582-7040



## July 3-August 11, 1989 Archaeology Field School Orwell, Vermont

For more information  
and registration materials,  
please contact:

Archaeology Field School  
Continuing Education The  
University of Vermont  
322 South Prospect St.  
Burlington VT 05401-3505  
Phone: (802) 656-2085



## Forestdale Site Tour on Spring Meeting Program

### Vic Rolando will lead walk-through of historical archeology site.

John Smith's forge made iron at Forestdale in 1810 with ore that came from beds dug locally at Leicester Hollow. Around 1823 a blast furnace went into operation at Forestdale, smelting ore from beds a half mile away. The major output of the furnace was pig iron, but a variety of ornamental iron such as vases, statues, and chairs were also cast. In 1845 the output of the furnace reached 1200 tons, not including 800 stove castings.

By 1854 the Green Mountain Iron Company had been organized, and the Forestdale furnace works had been acquired. Parlor stoves were the mainstay of production, and many such stoves with their raised "G.M. Iron Co" lettering still grace homes in Vermont (including one that is part of the author's collection of cast iron Vermont stoves). The Company enlarged the stack's inside to fuel it with anthracite coal instead of charcoal, but the experiment was apparently unsuccessful because the furnace shut down the same year.



*Waterwheel pit at Forestdale; the state highway department shed is directly uphill (right).*

Three bloomery forges and a 1500-pound trip hammer were also built at Forestdale in 1864 by the Brandon Iron company. They were located about 400 feet east of the furnace. The forges, working ore beds that were located a half mile away, produced 85 tons of bar iron during their brief two months of life in the spring of 1865.

The blast furnace, also fired up for the first time since 1854, made 784 tons of cast iron. By year's end, however, the forges and furnace were quiet, never again to operate. These, as well as other buildings of the Brandon Iron Company (not to be confused with the Brandon Iron & Car Wheel Co. of Brandon village) are shown on the Beer's 1869 map. The map also shows the shafts of the iron mines a half mile south, where ore was at that time being processed into paint pigment.

The blast furnace today stands at Forestdale, however precariously, in the midst of growing underbrush. From dimensions taken in December of 1983, the stack measures very close to 31-1/2 feet square. The north wall, which contained the casting arch, is collapsed, revealing the in-wall and bosh wall. Arches in the west, south, and east wall measure 7'8", 7'11", and 7'11", respectively, at ground level. The narrower west arch is probably the result of shifting and settling of the walls, which are laid-up rough stonework. This west archway extends 10 feet into the base of the furnace to an iron ring in the ceiling. Open stonework at the interior end of the archway allows partial visibility diagonally to the right, across the inside corner into the end of the south archway. It is unknown if this was an original design feature. In 1983 the tuyere holes were visible inside the three archways, and by means of a hand-held mirror, the interior bosh and hearth linings could be inspected. Collapse of some brickwork since then hides the tuyere holes, although a new opening inside the east archway allows the unsqueemish to crawl into and stand up inside the stack.

The furnace and approximately 10 acres of furnace grounds were donated to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) by Mr. and Mrs. Welland Horn; and in 1974 the blast furnace property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places through the efforts of Chester Liebs (with some assistance by the author). The stack was fenced off following

continued deterioration of its north wall. Since then, DHP has been unable to do much toward stabilizing the ruin due to budget constraints. Trash along the stream reflects the numbers of campers who annually use the grounds at will; in the cellarhole of one of the works' tenements is a plastic sheet "tent." But renewed interest in the furnace and property by DHP could lead to significant activity there in 1989.

Under the direction of Audrey Porsche, recently assigned by DHP to administrate the Forestdale furnace site, and the leadership of our own David Starbuck, a major volunteer effort by NNEC/SNEC-SIA membership is being looked for early next spring by the DHP in the form of a thorough week or weekend recording session.

The current plan is to cut back the foliage in advance, followed closely by the recording week/weekend. Results of the session should go a long way toward providing DHP with what it needs to interpret the site, and hopefully they will soon be able to stabilize the furnace stack.

Vic Rolando  
Pittsfield, MA



*West wall of the furnace stack in the fall of 1983.*



## Gifts of the Earth: Metals and Ceramics in America, 1650-1940



*An interdisciplinary college credit course offered by Johnson State College in conjunction with the Shelburne Museum. Weekends in March and April.  
March 18-19, April 8-9 & 22-23, 1989, 8:30 am - 5 pm.*

*American Iron and Steel (March 18). Covers the discovery and perfection of iron and steel technology; and, fabricating and finishing alloys and "tinplate".*

*American Brass (March 19). Covers the historical geography of brass ores and development of copper-based alloys through 1700; developments in Anglo-American brass founding; stylistic evolution of brass and its household uses.*

*American Pewter and Britannia (April 8). The distribution of pewter's constituent metals; the history of processing them into useful and beautiful wares; and, the social context of pewter use.*

*American Silver (April 9). Development and refinement of the silver trade; design antecedents for American silver; and, the handcraft and mechanics of silversmithing. Tours.*

*Ceramics in America (April 22). The minerology, geography and science of ceramic bodies and glazes; use of ceramics in America and their interaction with the British industry; British ceramics in America; and, the development of American pottery and porcelain traditions. Tours.*

*American Glass (April 23). European prototypes of American glass; origins and development of American glassmaking style and technology. Tours.*

*To register, call Cathy Wood, Shelburne Museum, 985-3346*

**Vermont Archaeological Society, Inc.  
Box 663  
Burlington, VT 05402 0663**

**First Class**

**TO**