

# VAS newsletter...

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Prudence Doherty, Editor

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## Abenaki Language Guide

Vermont History News reports that Gordon Day and Jeanne Brink have prepared a tape and study guide for the Western Abenaki language. "Western Abenaki is a language of the Algonquian family, spoken originally in the Western Abenaki homeland of Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, western Maine, and southern Quebec... The tape, spoken by Gordon Day, and study guide prepared by Jeanne Brink contain lessons and conversations. The package was planned and designed to help preserve and transmit the language to anyone interested in knowing it. The first printing of the tape and study guide was distributed in cooperation with the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, Title V Indian Education Office. Order additional copies through Jeanne Brink, 130 Tremont Street, Barre, VT 05641" (Vermont History News, vol. 42, pp.11-12).

## VHS to Return Abenaki Remains

The Center for Research on Vermont Newsletter notes that the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Historical Society has voted to remove Native American human remains from their collection. Remains which can be identified as Abenaki will be returned to the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi (Vermont). The board also passed a resolution to cooperate with representatives of the Abenaki nation in identifying sacred objects in the VHS museum collections and returning them to the Abenakis (Center for Research on Vermont Newsletter vol.16, no. 3, p. 8).

## Native Material Culture Subject of Winning Maple History Essay

Joellen Mulvaney, a grant developer for the Barre Museum at the Aldrich Public Library, has written the winning essay in the "Maple Sugaring in Vermont: New Vision of the Past" competition sponsored by the Vermont Maple Industry Council. Mulvaney's essay on the "Design and Use of Woodland Birch Maple Sugaring Tools and Equipment" examines the importance of maple products in Early Woodland Native American life. To prepare the essay, Mulvaney and folklorist Eleanor Ott researched birchbark containers in regional collections. The artifact survey was supplemented with historical research and oral history and traditions (Center for Research on Vermont Newsletter vol. 16, no.3, p. 1).

## IA Survey Continues in Vermont through 1990

Archival and field work in 1990 resulted in identifying 63 ironworks, charcoal, and lime burning sites as part of the continuing survey of IA sites in Vermont. In the field, attempts were made to find 47 sites. Eleven of these sites have been written up and submitted to the State Archeologist; at this writing, reports are being prepared for the 22 more. The remaining 30 sites (plus more that are sure to come to my attention in the meantime) are in the "in progress" field work category for 1991. A breakdown of the work accomplished is listed below.

Addison County Seven lime kilns and one forge site were identified through research. Field work at six sites yielded only two ruins at one lime kiln site.

Bennington County Seven lime kilns and one charcoal mound site were identified, although no lime kiln ruins could be found in the field. Dave Lacy (Forest Service) and Shelley Hight (DHP) found the charcoal mound.

Caledonia County One lime kiln site was identified but not visited.

Chittenden County Two lime kiln sites were identified. Field inspection at one of the sites indicated that no visible surface ruins or remains exist.

Franklin County Six lime kilns were identified and visited; nine ruins were found.

Lamoille County Four lime kiln sites were identified. No ruins or surface remains were found at the two sites visited.

Orange County No visible surface evidence was found at the one lime kiln site inspected.

Rutland County Five lime kiln sites and one blast furnace site were identified. Four of the sites were inspected, but the only surface evidence noted was slag at the furnace site.

Windham County Nine lime kiln sites were identified; ruins of six were found.

Windsor County Of 18 lime kiln sites discovered during research, eight ruins were found at the 12 sites which were visited.

The book on the history and archaeology of Vermont furnace, forge and kiln ruins that I have been working on since 1978 is being edited. I am now in the final stages of putting together illustrative material, which will include about 350 photos, line drawings, and maps. We hope to see the book printed about mid-1991.

by Vic Rolando

## CALENDAR

**April 20, 1991** Joint meeting of the Vermont and New Hampshire Archaeological Societies. To be held at Enfield Shaker village, Enfield, NH. Vic Rolando and David Starbuck will coordinate for the VAS. More details will be announced later.

**May 4, 1991** Northern New England Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology Spring Meeting. Hosted by Duncan Wilkie and Plymouth State College. Will include tour of Moses Pike steam sawmill archaeological site in Groton, NH. Contact Vic Rolando, 41 Lebanon St., Pittsfield, MA for more information.

**June 3-July 5, 1991** Nautical archeology field school will be offered through UVM's Continuing Education program. Contact them for more information.

## BOOK REVIEW

Sermons in Stone: The Stone Walls of New England and New York, by Susan Allport. W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1990. 205 pp. \$19.95.

This is neither an ordinary book on how to build a stone wall nor a romanticized version of the pretty, tumbled-down stone walls that dot the New England countryside. This book traces the origins of stone walls in this country, noting that walls of stone actually followed fences of wood. After the forests became depleted and fence posts became scarce, the available rocks that were being continuously plowed up became the fencing material. Susan Allport tells us that in 1871 there were 252,539 miles of stone walls in the Northeast, enough to circle the earth ten times. Today, stone walls are the most visible reminder of the Northeast's agricultural past.

The story unfolds with the Ice Age and its affects on the countryside, introducing the fact that the book deals as much with stone itself as with the stone walls. The conflicts over origins of glacial erratics, stone alignments, and standing stones are addressed and explained. The reasons for the stone walls and the methods and politics of early construction are also discussed. Who, exactly, were the wall builders of early and post-colonial America? And why did these very same stone walls, so laboriously built to separate cattle from crops in New England's small patchwork farms, eventually discourage the use of modern farming machinery? Case studies of the unique characteristics of some selected stone walls are presented. The book closes with the twentieth century stone walls of affluence, and with the Irish and Italian stone cutters and wall builders who built the mansions of the wealthy.

From the archaeologist's point of view, this book is more than just easy, entertaining reading, but highly instructive in what to look

for when studying stone walls of any configuration and purpose. Do you know how the size of lichens on stone walls might contribute to approximating the wall's construction date? Can you explain how various markings on cut stone can indicate the tools and techniques of quarrying and might also aid in dating a stone wall. Do you know what the species of tree can tell you about the type of agriculture that formerly took place on the land? And do you know how old and where what might be the longest, continuous stone wall in the world (84 miles long and fully double-wall thick by four feet high)?

If you are interested in anything made of stone, from stone walls, stone chambers or stone cellar holes, to stone furnaces and charcoal kilns, and would like to leisurely read about it in bed, as I did, a few chapters at a time, then I highly recommend this book.

by Vic Rolando

### **Ethan Allen Homestead Seeks Volunteer Archaeologists**

The Ethan Allen Homestead Trust, which operates Vermont's the Ethan Allen historic site in Burlington, is looking for people to help with its 1991 archaeological investigation. Volunteers may sign up for any of 3 two-week sessions between July 1 and August 9, 1991. Participants will work with professional archaeologists learning basic excavation and laboratory techniques and helping make new discoveries about life at the site since the 1700s.

Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age and able to perform outdoor work that can be strenuous. Work will take place between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

During the 1990 excavation, volunteer excavators found complex soil layers and thousands of artifacts. The 1991 work will build on those discoveries to reveal more about changing ways of life and uses of the land.

The site was Ethan Allen's last home and was farmed continuously from the 1780s until the 1980s. Before Euro-Americans settled here, Native Americans occupied the site more than once over a 5,000-year period.

The Homestead, which belongs to the Winooski Valley Park District, is a public park open year round. The Ethan Allen Homestead Trust conducts education programs and tours of the historic site from May through late October, and at other times by appointment.

For more information about the dig and other Homestead programs, call 865-4556.

## 100 Centuries of Living in Vermont

On Dec. 4, 1990, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) held the final public workshop on the state preservation plan. Information about Vermont's archaeological resources was presented by DHP staff and other speakers. Public comment was solicited on the preservation of prehistoric and historic archaeological sites during small group sessions.

Suzannah Zirblis's (DHP) slide presentation, "A Rich and Ancient Heritage: Vermont's Archaeological Sites" provided the audience with an excellent overview of the varied types of archaeological sites that exist in Vermont. The slide show will be available for presentation to the public at no cost in the future.

Michael Roberts (President, Timelines, Inc.) provided the keynote address. Roberts stressed that he sees himself as an archaeological salesman. In keeping with the times, he suggested that archaeological resources can serve successfully as tools for economic development, in tourism, marketing and public relations.

Small groups were formed to help participants develop goals for archaeological resources, and to propose activities to insure that the goals are met. The results of the small group discussions will be used to help set state, regional and local policy and guide the DHP in program development.

After lunch, three sessions on important issues facing archaeological resources were held. Jim Petersen (Univ. of Maine-Farmington), Peter Thomas (UVM) and Giovanna Peebles (DHP) discussed how archaeological sites are currently threatened and what protection measures exist. Jack Wilson (UVM), Prudence Doherty (UVM) and Joellen Mulvaney (Aldrich Library, Barre) illustrated the wealth of archaeological and artifactual information that exists about the earlier years of historic period settlement. John Moody and Jeanne Brink presented an overview of Abenaki history and shared their concerns for threats to sacred and traditional Abenaki sites.

The final section of the workshop focussed on how Act 250 can be used to help protect archaeological resources. Ed Stanak (District Environmental Commission V), Giovanna Peebles (DHP) and Doug Frink (Archeology Consulting Team) guided the audience through the Act 250 process as it relates to archaeological resources.



# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

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\* Under 18 or over 65 years of age.

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TO

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