

VAS Newsletter

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Prudence Doherty, Editor

Archaeology Internships

David Skinas

Division for Historic Preservation

This fall, Dr. Fred Wiseman, Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Sciences, Johnson State College, began a mini-internship program with the Division for Historic Preservation. Two students, Chris Bisson and Pat McCoy, each put in more than 50 hours of work under my supervision.

Chris Bisson's primary duties focused on the Vermont Archaeological Inventory. His responsibilities included data entry of newly submitted archaeological site information into the Division's database, word processing of the narrative sections of the site survey forms, and plotting site locations on USGS topographic maps. He processed twenty site files into the inventory.

Chris also worked with prehistoric artifacts recovered from a Late Woodland period site located on the Otter Creek in Vergennes (VT-AD-642). He washed and cataloged faunal, lithic, and ceramic remains recovered from a refuse pit within the habitation site. Chris identified fragmented long bones that were modified and used as awls. His hands-on work with these materials assisted my analysis and provided Chris with a fuller appreciation and understanding of cultural materials recovered from archaeological sites.

Patrick McCoy chose to conduct field work. His task was to identify and map historic sites located in the Honey Hollow area of Camel's Hump State Park. The Camel's Hump Reserve Commission intends to establish an historic trail in the Honey Hollow drainage that will mirror the historic trails established within the Little River State Park in Waterbury. Earlier last year, the Commission and the Division prepared a grant to

fund an intern to conduct mapping and interpretation of the ten or so historic sites located in the drainage, but unfortunately it was not funded. Patrick's work began the process of preparing the Honey Hollow Brook historic trail. It also provided documentation for farm and mill sites that will be added to the state archaeological inventory.

Patrick learned how to use a compass and tape to accurately map cellar hole sites and their associated features. He was able to locate and identify other remains related to the various sites (wells, barn foundations, roads, mill dams, apple trees, and other ornamental trees or shrubs). Patrick's self-reliance and love of the outdoors made him a natural for this project. The maps he prepared and the level of documentation provided for each historic site were thorough and excellent.

Patrick also brought me to a historic site in Woodbury that he remembered as a child. The site is a small stone chamber used to store food. The roof of the structure was composed of three large limestone slabs similar to those found in other stone chambers located in central Vermont. An associated house and barn foundation were found across the dirt road. While Patrick's primary interest is in prehistoric Native American archaeological sites, he soon began to appreciate the significance and intrigue of Vermont's historic sites.

The Johnson State College mini-internships provided hands-on training about how archaeological sites are identified, documented and included in the state's archaeological inventory. The Division hopes that such internships will continue.

Green Mountain National Forest News

David Lacy
GMNF

The Cultural Resources Program on the Green Mountain National Forest had another busy and productive year in 1991. Shelley Hight and I anchored the program, with help for much of the year from Eric Bowman, and during the summer from Ed Hood (UMass/Amherst). We also had the on-going assistance of numerous folks on the Rochester, Middlebury and Rochester Ranger Districts.

Our primary thrust continues to be the identification and protection of sites within or near projects conducted on the Forest. This year we inventoried more than 10,000 acres (we're still adding them up ...), resulting in the identification of nearly 100 sites. The sites range from a large prehistoric site (the only Native American site located, although we guided many projects away from high potential areas) to nineteenth-century kilns, mills, roads, and farmsteads.

Beyond this basic level, we have tried to expand our repertoire in several ways.

--We have developed a working relationship with the Abenaki Research Project, which serves the dual purpose of sensitizing Forest personnel to Native American values and concerns and enhancing everyone's understanding of specific sites and general land use patterns by sharing information. One example was our work on the Molodeski site, as I reported at the VAS fall meeting.

--We have established broad-based inventory strategies which allow more insightful documentation of the context for individual sites. This approach has been made possible by increased funding for

inventory/survey work, and was discussed at the fall meeting by Shelley.



--We have laid the ground work for interpretive signing both on- and off-site via a Forest Service program dubbed "Windows on the Past". It is our intention to have posters with general and area-specific cultural resources messages at as many trail heads, parking areas, and other high use spots as possible.

--We have become active players in the project planning process so that we need not limit ourselves to reacting to management proposals which have already established goals and directions. In this way, we may be able to initiate more "pro-active" site enhancement or site-sensitive proposals.

(continued)

Forest Service, continued

Our goals for 1992 include continuing our broad-based inventory approach; expanding our relationship with the Abenaki; producing interpretive materials for the public; using archaeological data and methods to better inform Forest planners about the nature of the ecosystems they are attempting to restore; completing the National Register nomination of the Homer Stone Quartzite Quarry; and developing volunteer activities for VAS members to assist us in identifying, evaluating and analyzing sites through the Forest Service's "Passports in Time" program.

We have, in addition, a new challenge. During 1991, Congress approved a significant expansion of the Forest's "proclamation boundary" (the area within which we may purchase land), so that it now incorporates all of Bennington County. One of the many factors in determining whether a parcel should be purchased by the Federal government can be the presence of historic or archaeological properties. If you are aware of a situation or opportunity in the Bennington County or the Taconics area where we should pursue purchase of a parcel in order to preserve a site, please let us know.

If you have questions or suggestions about any part of our program, please get in touch! Our mailing address is USDA/Forest Service, Box 519, Rutland 05702.

California State Artifact

The American Anthropological Association's newsletter reports that California is the first state to designate a state artifact. The prehistoric symbol chosen is a 2 1/2-inch long, 7500-year-old chipped stone sculpture of a bear. The sculpture resembles the bear on the state flag. Any ideas for a Vermont state artifact?

Books

Reviews of these two books suggest that they will help provide a context for understanding the stone chambers and Celtic site controversies that have appeared in Vermont archaeology over the last two decades.

Feder, Kenneth. 1990. Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology. Mayfield Publishing Co.

Williams, Stephen. 1991. Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Archaeology. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Prepared as part of a new series on Native Americans, the following title should be in every school and town library in the state. Recommend it to your librarian.

Calloway, Colin. 1989. The Abenaki. Chelsea House Publishers, New York.

Vermont Archaeological Society Board Members for 1991-1992

Peggy Burbo (1992)
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Towns Show Interest in Learning About Their Archaeological Sites

Giovanna Peebles
Division for Historic Preservation

Over the last two years, we have seen more towns become more aware of their archaeological heritage. As tangible links to our past, archaeological sites are important educational resources. Many kinds of archaeological sites have outstanding interpretive value and can complement existing recreation or tourism resources and programs within a community or region.

Since 1989, I have prepared preliminary archaeological overviews for Shelburne, Weybridge, Duxbury, Stowe, and the Mad River Planning District (consisting of the towns of Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston). The overview for Weathersfield is also in process. Each overview summarizes why Vermont's archaeological resources are important and worth preserving; briefly discusses what is known about the town's prehistoric and historic archaeological sites; discusses previous archaeological studies conducted in the town, if any; lists any recorded sites in the town; explains the accompanying archaeological sensitivity map for the town and how to use it; and provides ideas for follow-up.

The archaeological sensitivity map is the most useful part of the overview for the town. The considers prehistoric Native American settlement sites only. Other types of prehistoric activities have different sets of environmental criteria and their locations are not easily predicted. The map does not include historic archaeological resources either, although each overview includes a copy of the mid-nineteenth century Beers map for that town.

Yellow highlighted areas on the sensitivity map mark those areas that are considered archaeologically sensitive. The map does not provide specific site locations nor does it suggest that prehistoric sites will extend throughout all portions of the sensitive areas. Archaeological field studies, conducted by a qualified professional archaeologist, will be

necessary to locate individual sites within the sensitive areas highlighted on the map. Until field studies are carried out, the location and characteristics of actual sites remain unknown.

The archaeological sensitivity maps can help the town in a variety of ways.

--The maps can provide an "early warning" to the municipality, or to a developer, that potential archaeological sites may be impacted by a proposed development project.

--The town can devise its own strategies for considering these archaeologically sensitive lands during reviews of development projects (such as establishing not-to-be-disturbed buffer zones, encouraging or requiring archaeological studies, and so forth).

--The mapped archaeologically sensitive lands can be incorporated into the Town's plans for preserving natural resources (such as wetlands, wildlife habitats, etc.) or other special lands (such as open space and agricultural lands).

--These sensitive areas can focus future archaeological studies of prehistoric Native American life which may be funded by grants or through donations.

The overview provides other ideas for using the sensitivity maps and for follow-up.

--If a project needing a local permit is proposed within the archaeologically sensitive lands on the map, the town can let the applicant know that archaeological issues may arise during any Act 250 review

and/or during federal review if the project involves any federal monies, loans, permits, or licenses.

--Local planning within highlighted areas on the map can consider archaeological sites. This may include: carrying out archaeological studies to locate and inventory sites; nominating inventoried sites to the National Register of Historic Places; and using conservation tools to protect discovered sites. These activities can be accomplished in phases over a period of years.

--A town may want to develop long-term plans to inventory and protect prehistoric and historic archaeological sites within the highlighted zones on the map. Based on the importance of these sites, appropriate conservation methods can be used to encourage their protection.

--Since historic archaeological sites exist outside the highlighted sensitivity zones on the map, plans to inventory these sites can be developed. Using the criteria for inclusion in the State and National Registers, significant sites can be made part of local planning and protected.

Towns have pulled information together in a number of ways. Burlington compiled an archaeological sensitivity map with the help of an intern who worked closely with the Division. Williston hired the Archaeology Consulting Team of Essex Junction to prepare their overview and sensitivity maps. Bennington is now in the process of preparing an overview, and has hired a consulting archaeology firm, Hartgen Associates of Troy, New York, to do the project.

There are also many ways in which community members can begin to identify and record archaeological sites. The information gathered can serve as the town's preliminary inventory of archaeological sites. Since identifying and recording archaeological sites is indeed a lengthy, on-going

process, all activities that contribute to this effort are worthwhile.

The following idea list, which is incorporated into each town overview, suggests different "no cost" ways that townspeople can begin to locate and record sites.

--Interview residents to identify and record find spots or sites at which prehistoric Indian artifacts were found. This type of informant research often expands our current knowledge of lands expected to be archaeologically sensitive.

--Record collections of Native American artifacts and historic artifacts associated with a particular site or sites recovered by community members.

--Study nineteenth- and twentieth-century maps of the town to determine where buildings and structures no longer exist today. All sites that no longer exist above ground may remain as archaeological sites if the area has not been severely disturbed by grading or cutting.

--Identify a historic theme of particular interest (for example, industry, education, farming, etc.) and focus specifically on locating and documenting all sites relating to a single theme (i.e., grist mills, sawmills, schools, hilltop farms, etc.).

These projects can be carried out by many community participants: teachers and students; historical society members; senior citizens and retired members of the community; civic organizations; professional or avocational historians and archaeologists and collectors; Native Americans in the community; conservation commission members; and anybody else who may be interested.

Once some preliminary inventories have been compiled, more detailed archaeological studies can be carried out by consultants with help from community members. Funding may be available through various grant programs.

Abenaki Research Project

Dee Brightstar

(At the VAS fall meeting in October, 1991, Dee Brightstar described the Abenaki Research Project. She has prepared a summary of her remarks for this issue of the newsletter.)

The Abenaki Research Project began from the increasing need to respond to calls to our Tribal Headquarters regarding burials being discovered and increased development threats. A few people got together to answer these inquiries and thus our project began.

We presently have five very active members. We usually are not paid for our work and consultations. We provide our own transportation and funds to complete our projects. We work with federal and state government agencies, the Division for Historic Preservation, and consulting archaeologists. Some of the developers we have dealt with include Green Mountain Power, Vermont Electric, Vermont Gas, and the Village of Swanton.

One of our goals is to protect ancient Abenaki sites, burials and sacred places. We are very concerned about our burial grounds which are daily being desecrated, along with the associated artifacts. We have never used headstones or markers, therefore our graves are not easily recognizable. We also have many sacred places that are at risk--herb gathering grounds, ceremonial grounds, special hunting and fishing places, and many others.

We do need to have agencies and archaeologists contact us **before** a site is touched, even before the limited archaeology of a site identification survey. We need to be there first in order to assess what is there. We need to be on site as soon as a project is proposed. We want reports sent to us as the work progresses. We need to be included in long-term monitoring once the project is completed.

We spend a lot of time visiting museums and institutions that may have burials or artifacts that need repatriation. We have had some interesting

meetings with institution staff members to facilitate these matters. Most contacts have been cooperative and informative.

We have a project funded by a grant that is allowing us to inventory and photograph baskets in local antique stores and private collections. We try to buy baskets to use for our future reburials and/or to return to appropriate persons or families.

We spend a part of our time working on our fishing and subsistence rights, which has gone to the Supreme Court at this time. Our people still need to fish and hunt in order to survive--many are without jobs and are financially unable to provide for their families.

The State of Vermont has provided some funding that we will help us return our ancestors' remains to a proper burial ground. We are currently negotiating for the Boucher land in Highgate for the appropriate cemetery. We are also working on a fundraising project to help us purchase the land.

We are involved in recordkeeping, family histories, oral histories, genealogies, and working on building a cultural center where we can teach our cultural heritage and make and sell crafts.

An important part of our work is federal acknowledgment. We are trying to decide whether to work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs or go through other channels. Our Nation is trying to judge which way of recognition would be better for our people.

We are very pleased with the work that is happening at present, and want to thank everyone for being a part in this important aspect of a history all of us share.

Legislative Study Committee Considers Historic Resources

Act 93, passed during the last legislative session, required that a study committee be formed to "evaluate the existing system... for reviewing construction projects for impact on historic and archaeological resources, and... recommend any improvements to the system in a report to be submitted... to the governor and the general assembly."

The committee was composed of a number of legislators from various committees, representatives of the state agencies of Development and Community Affairs (including the Division for Historic Preservation), Transportation, and Natural Resources. The committee held three meetings, and heard testimony from a professional archaeologist, an engineer who represents many developers on Act 250 permit applications, an individual who is involved with development within historic structures, and an Act 250 district coordinator.

The committee's draft report includes twelve recommendations to make the review process smoother. Two of the recommendations in particular will be of interest to VAS members:

1) The DHP should expand its public outreach component: letting the public know what the resources are and where, letting developers and state agencies know state and federal requirements. This should involve pamphlets and, as resources allow, travelling presentations.

2) The DHP ought to brainstorm for ways within the confines of existing resources and staff time, to enlist the assistance of local and regional organizations and individuals, and to increase coordination with them.

Correction Giovanna Peebles, State Archaeologist, asked us to print the following. "The 6-week underwater archaeological field school mentioned in the last newsletter in "Notes from the State Archaeologist" was also cosponsored by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. I apologize for inadvertently omitting the Museum's important role in the project."

CALENDAR

"Encounter in Norumbega" Exhibit and Reading Programs

A number of Vermont libraries and other institutions have been hosting the exhibit "Encounter in Norumbega: The Hidden Story of Early New England Maps", which shows how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mapmakers portrayed knowledge of North America that was exchanged between explorers and Native American peoples. The exhibit will be accompanied by a reading and discussion series.

Recommended readings include Colin Calloway's Dawnland Encounters: Europeans in Northern New England; William Cronon's Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England; and Neal Salisbury's article "Squanto: Last of the Patuxets" in Struggle and Survival in Colonial America (edited by David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash).

Discussions will focus on the relationships between the native peoples and the Europeans who came to explore, trade, and settle.

The exhibit and reading program will also be presented at the Vermont Historical Society, the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury and at the public library in Swanton. Contact those organizations for details and schedules.

Abenaki Lecture

"Flatlanders? Natives?" William Haviland will talk about the original Vermonters at the Waterbury Village Public Library, March 11, 7:00 PM.

Spring Meeting

The Board of Trustees has scheduled the VAS Spring meeting for Saturday, May 9, 1992 in Rutland. Mark your calendars and watch for future announcements.