



VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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AmeriCorps and Salvage Archaeology in the Green Mountain National Forest

by David Lacy, Forest Archaeologist

Looters are rarely neat or subtle, so evidence of their labor is generally obvious once you are on-site. Since most of the hundreds of historic archaeological sites on the Green Mountain National Forest are located in relatively remote environs, we were disappointed but not surprised in 1992 to find evidence of such "bottle hunting" activity at the long-abandoned (now archaeological) 19th-century Sawyer Farm site in Granville, Vermont. Freshly unearthed pieces of glass, ceramics, metal, leather, and brick were strewn about the surface over a nearly 40-square-meter area directly behind the house site. The lack of either eye-witnesses or implicating evidence left at the site meant that there was little we could do in pursuing an ARPA case.

In the intervening three years since our unhappy discovery, President Clinton's National Service Corporation—commonly known as "AmeriCorps"—has come into being. The GMNF and Vermont Youth Conservation Corps have co-sponsored an "environmental management" AmeriCorps crew during 1995. Part of their mission is to assist the various Forest program areas in addressing back-logged resource management and protection needs. Mapping, collecting, and processing the surface scatter (and disguising the site disturbance to discourage others from following suit) was one of the several projects where we found a good fit between the AmeriCorps mission and Heritage Resources mandates.

The site itself is located half-way up a north-facing mountain road near the headwaters of the White River. It consists of a terraced house foundation and cellar hole with yard and orchard on the west side of the road, and three substantial outbuilding foundations (at least one barn) and partially reforested fields on the east side. The location of the building footprints and stone walls indicate that the

road (still used as a hiking trail) is in its original location. Because the farm does not show up on either the Whitelaw (1821) nor Walling (1857) maps of the area but is on Beers (1871), a post-1857 construction date is highly likely although we recognize that the maps are not infallible.

A crew of 12 AmeriCorps workers and supervisors accompanied Eric Bowman and David Lacy to the site in early July, 1995. They gridded the area off into 35 contiguous 1- by 1-meter squares, assigning each crew member (or pair) a unit to map. Collection of materials was limited to artifacts visible on the surface or clearly embedded in a disturbed matrix ("back dirt"). Artifacts were bagged by material type and provenience. Later in July, a portion of the field crew spent a week in the Forest's Rutland office/archaeology lab under the supervision of Sheila Charles, washing, inventorying, cataloging, and bagging/boxing the collection of 1,088 artifacts.

VAS Annual Fall Meeting Econo Lodge Conference Center South Burlington Saturday, October 28

In general, the collection is composed of late-19th- and early-20th-century domestic debris. Domestic-type artifacts (particularly shards of glass and ceramic table ware and kitchenware) constitute 69.21% of the collection.

Glass vessels, both food storage bottles and tableware (e.g., tumblers, serving vessels) constitute the predominated class of artifacts (465 specimens). Blown-in mold and automatic machine-made artifacts (post-1903) are present. Ceramic specimens (282 artifacts), constituting the second predominate class of artifacts, include white earthenware (post-1820), porcelain, and domestic salt-glazed stoneware with Albany slips (post-1850) manufactured in England (Staffordshire) and the United States (e.g., Vermont and New Jersey).

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Address general inquiries concerning the Society to the
Secretary

Some of the ceramic and glass fragments are fairly large and clearly numerous cross-mends and matches are present, although the fragments of the same vessels were recovered from dispersed units in then study area. Multiple vessels of the same type (e.g., Putnam "Lightning" canning jars, possibly manufactured c. 1875-1886 in Lyndeboro, N.H., pressed glass tumblers and serving vessels) and multiple vessels bearing the same pattern (e.g., a sepia brown transfer-printed floral motif) are also evident in the collection.

Some of the other household and personal items identified in the collection include zinc screw tops to canning jars, metal cans, glass lamp globes, glass, and leather shoes. In addition, pieces of iron buckets and/or barrels and a horseshoe were recovered.

Architectural and structural material comprise 23.62% of the collection. Window glass (189 fragments) dominates this assemblage. Machine-cut nails (common c. 1795-1885) and wire nails (predominate post-1885) are approximately equally represented. For the most part, this is a relatively small component of this historic assemblage. More information on the construction of structures and evidence of structural fabric would be found closer to the foundations.

The collection corresponds nicely with a post-1857 construction date and gives some indication of the likely abandonment date (not after 1920s?). Although historical information refers to a fire on the property in the 20th century, little evidence of this is encountered in the artifact collection. Future site work could productively address questions about the depth and breadth of subsurface deposits at the site, particularly as it relates to greater temporal variation (i.e., older stuff)—perhaps a task for a future AmeriCorps project. By collecting and organizing the collection, we also have created an opportunity to do additional research on the origins of some of the more diagnostic specimens to gain greater insights into the Sawyers' status and preferred/available market networks.

For the short term, we were able to salvage artifactual materials from the site, stabilize the disturbed area, and cosmetically repair the site's appearance to discourage additional disturbance, all at a minimal cost. We also, through discussion and hands-on experience, provided a positive perspective on Heritage Resources management that AmeriCorps members can carry with them as they pursue careers in various aspects of natural resource management.

**Vermont Archaeology Week '96
Needs Your Help.**
Suggested Tax-Deductible Donation:
\$10.00
to VAS, address on back cover



AmeriCorps crew working at the Sawyer Farm Site, Green Mountain National Forest, July 1995 (David Lacy photo).

VAS Annual Meeting on October 28

The Annual Fall Meeting of the VAS will be held on Saturday, October 28, at the Econo Lodge Windjammer Conference Center in South Burlington. Joe Popecki is working on arrangements and David Starbuck is putting together a program of speakers from throughout the Northeast. The final program, registration/lunch fees, and directions will be mailed to the membership in early October.

Candidates for VAS Board

The Nominating Committee (Marjorie Robbins, Bill Murphy, and David Starbuck) propose the following candidates for election to the Board for the 1995-98 term: Ann Clay, Jane Gibbons, Bob Sloma, and Gerd Sommer. Other nominations may be made if endorsed by five or more current VAS members and submitted in a timely fashion to the Nominating Committee. Candidates and nominators must be VAS members in good standing.

Ann Clay has served on the board since 1992 and chaired last year's Nominating Committee. Ann dug at Mount Independence and Rogers Island, and has served on the boards of Vermont Sugarmakers, Mount Independence Coalition, and state and local

advisory boards of the UVM Extension Service.

Jane Gibbons was appointed to the board in March 1994 (and elected in October 1994) to fill the balance of a vacated term and is seeking her first full term on the board. Jane currently chairs the Membership Committee. She worked with both the VAS and the UVM Anthro Department doing site survey and registration and dug with the VAS at Shelburne Pond, Boucher, and Winooski River sites.

Robert Sloma is seeking re-election to his second full term on the Board. He was VAS President in 1992-93 and has been with CAP since 1989.

Gerd Sommer is seeking his first term on the Board. He is a retired IBM Engineer who dug at the John Strong Mansion in Addison and Rogers Island and Whitehall, N.Y. Gerd is founder of the Hanafords Volunteers Fife and Drum Corps in Underhill.

Forest Plan is Published

Earlier this year, the Green Mountain National Forest contracted with consulting archaeologists Sheila Charles and Shelley Hight to assess the Forest's artifact curation needs. The resulting 90-page report—*Archaeological Curation and Collections Management Plan for the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest*—not only does an outstanding job of identifying needs, challenges, and possible solutions specific to the Forest, but summarizes the legal standards and professional guidelines the archaeological community as a whole should be striving to meet.

Copies of the report have been distributed to relevant agencies and institutions, but no comprehensive mailing has taken place. If you would like a copy, please write, phone, or fax your request to David Lacy at: Green Mountain National Forest, 231 North Main Street, Rutland VT 05701-2417. Phone 802/747-6719; fax 747-6766.

VAS Bus Trip to Albany and Troy, NY

The second annual VAS membership bus trip is scheduled for Saturday, November 4th. The bus will leave Burlington at 6:30 AM, pickup as necessary in Rutland at 8 AM, and arrive at the New York State Museum at 10 AM for about a 30- to 45-minute overview of the prehistoric collections and maybe an hour for personal touring of the museum. Afternoon will be a tour of the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway Museum in the old Burden Iron Works building in Troy. Fee is \$20 per person. Phone 802/759-2412 for reservations and/or information.

1996 Marks 20th Anniversary of Vermont's State Archaeologist Office

Guide to Projectile Points Available

The Oklahoma Anthropological Society wrote that their *Guide to the Identification of American Indian Projectile Points* by Robert Bell and Gregory Perino is still available. The 4-volume set was first published by the OAS between 1958 and 1971 and includes descriptions, dating, and geographic distribution of 200 dart and arrow point types, ranging from the earliest Paleoindian Clovis points to Historic period metal arrow points. The 428-page set illustrates 1,789 projectile points, is considered a classic of North American archaeology, and has been reprinted 19 times in the past three decades. Price is \$39.50 postpaid, from the OAS at RR 1 Box 62B, Cheyenne OK 73628-9729.

Book Review

Rising from the Ruins
by Daniel Peters

reviewed by William Haviland, UVM

Random House, 1995, 316 pp., \$24.00 (cloth).

Ever wonder what it's like, being part of a major archaeological project in an exotic place? Here's your chance to find out. Although this is a work of fiction, its author is one who knows his subject. The fictional "dig" is at a major Maya site, and Dan Peters knows the Mays, having written an earlier novel

about them (*Tikal*, part of a "Precolumbian Trilogy." The other two are *The Luck of Huemac*, about the Aztec, and *The Incas*; I heartily recommend them all). And he has done his homework for this one, having "picked the brains" of four informants who have been members of archaeological projects at large Maya sites. As one myself, I can attest that Peters got it right. He has brilliantly captured the complexity of human relations among the staff of such a project, and his depiction of the research questions and debates that are a project's reason for being are quite representative of what's going on in Maya archaeology today.

The novel starts out in fine style with a frustrated author, with time on his hands, while his sociologist wife awaits word on whether or not she will be granted tenure in a major university. To relieve his boredom, he steals "lawn elves," pink flamingos and the like, for a collection of artifacts representative of U.S. suburban culture in the cellar of his rented house. His boredom is relieved when an old friend and recent Ph.D. invites him to the site of "Bactun" in the Chiapas rain forest to gather material for a novel. He accepts, and then the fun begins. I don't want to give the plot away, so I will say no more. Read it! You'll enjoy it!

David Starbuck Honored

VAS president David Starbuck was recently elected a Fellow by the New York State Archaeological Association. To be elected, the candidate must be nominated by an NYSAA chapter member and have publications recognized by the profession as significant contributions to the field.

Congratulations, David!

Forest Dale Blast Furnace Ruin Undergoing Repairs

by Victor R. Rolando

Work started Monday, July 17, on the long-awaited repair of the c. 1854 blast furnace ruin at the Forest Dale State Historic Site in Brandon (see article about the furnace in *VAS Newsletter*, No. 60, March 1989). The work is being done by contractors from Middletown, Conn. (Joseph Mazzotta & Sons), who are working 10-hour shifts from Mondays through Thursday. I have been monitoring progress twice a week, taking slides and B&W (over 250 at this writ-



Repair of the casting arch proceeds at Forest Dale State Historic Site (Vic Rolando photo).

ing—August 29), and collecting various artifacts as they appear. Scott Dillon and John Dumville of the Division have also been seen making periodic inspections.

The contractors are paying particular attention to rebuilding and repairing the casting (north) arch, which was dynamited by mistake in the early 1950s and has crumbled bit by bit ever since. The arch was reinforced with steel scaffolding on July 21 and cleared of most of its stone breakdown by August 4. On August 8, I laid down a carpeting of fiber fabric to protect the floor of the arch as work progressed on the overhead portions. Meanwhile, the other three arches have been cleared of breakdown, rebuilt as needed, and pointed.

In the course of the work, Dumville located a pre-1950s photo, which, upon enlargement, gave fuzzy hints of what the inside of the main arch might look like. Using this, the workers are reconstructing the upper hearth wall and arch. But all the heavy machinery and steel supports needed to do the job, plus the piles of stone, brick, and dirt lend an atmosphere of heavy construction to this otherwise sensitive site. My head almost hurt the first day I saw how chewed up the site had become.

While patching the inside lining of the stack, one worker noticed something hanging out over the edge

inside the top of the stack (the furnace top is roofed so the inside of the stack is dark). A 45-foot climb up the outside by ladder revealed one of the two large, heavy cast-iron rings up there had cracked or separated. A loose end of this plus an approximately 2-by 2-by 4-foot stone were both hanging precariously in over the edge, directly over those who had only moments before been repairing the lining below. Remarkably, no one has been injured by the stones, bricks, and debris that sporadically fall or are removed from the stack.

A number of interesting findings/discoveries have

been made. One is the variety of marks and dimensions of the bricks. Many unidentified iron castings were found in the breakdown that was cleared from the archways. But the most exciting was to see inside the casting arch after having been buried under tons of stone and brick for 40 years, and have some idea of what the hearth looked like. There are pairs of iron rods sticking up from the floor that miraculously survived the crush of heavy stones. One pair might have supported a cross-piece, maybe to control the hearth tap? And extending the length of the archway floor is U-shaped iron casting, possibly a runner for molten iron or slag? Archaeological work after the arch is rebuilt should answer many questions we've had about the furnace.

Work is expected to end by mid-September, but in case you've missed seeing it, attend my slide-illustrated program on the project at the October 28th annual meeting.

VAS Dig at the John Strong Mansion

by William Murphy

"It's that time again." From September 5 thru 16, thousands of artifacts trapped under the unyielding soil of Addison County at the Strong Mansion will be brought to light and their meaning and

relationship to the site analyzed.

The team leaders admit that kickoff date is lousy timing, being the day after Labor Day and the day that school starts, but it was the only period that we could work around other projects. We are not asking for your commitment but we would like your participation for any time you could spare.

This year's plan is to focus on the two foundations that were uncovered last year and see if we can possibly identify their function. The one at the south end is the most perplexing and we plan to completely uncover that area.

The NEAT REPEATS Resale Shop in Middlebury has again graciously donated money for a canopy over part of the site to provide an outdoor artifact cleaning area and provide some shelter in the event of any inclement weather. We are more than pleased that Susan Dugan is going to be able to join us and, along with Ann Clay, supervise the Lab. If this year is anything like last year, Susan and Ann will be plenty busy.

We already have a class of youngsters from Vergennes who are planning to visit the site sometime during the second week, and many adults have called to see if they may come to see archaeology in action.

Check your calendar and see if you can work the project into your schedule—we need you! If it's in the cards, give the team of Bruce Hedin, Frank Schlamp, and Bill Murphy a call at 802/388-7577.

Twenty-five years ago...

VAS Newsletter No. 3 dated August 3, 1970 reported that the annual meeting held December 5-6, 1969, at the Bolton Valley Lodge "proved a comfortable and economical place to have the meeting...but many members who did not come objected to the date and to the snow." Speakers were Bill Haviland, Louise Basa, Dean Snow, and Ken Varney. Elected were Joe Popecki, President; Charles Morrissey, Vice-President; Durwood Smith, Treasurer; and H. N. Muller, Secretary. The Old Tavern at Chimney Point was discussed as a possible VAS Headquarters, the treasury stood at a healthy \$569.75, and membership was about 175. The fall 1970 annual meeting was scheduled for September 18 at the Lodge.

Archaeology was the Springboard

*by Louise Ransom, President
Mount Independence Coalition*

Back a few years ago, a band of amateur diggers took Dr. David Starbuck's course in Field Archaeology sponsored by the University of Vermont. We spent six intensive instructive weeks on that beautiful plateau overlooking Lake Champlain known as Mount Independence. We learned to survey, to measure, to test soil, to map, to sift, and to methodically slice away layers, always in pursuit of buried treasure—the elusive artifact.

As everyone seems to know, Mount Independence is the site of the largest Revolutionary War fort and military hospital ever built by the Americans. At the height of its glory, which only lasted a year, it held as many as 12,000 troops, who lived there under the almost unendurable conditions of a Vermont winter.

With more still to be learned of a soldier's life on the Mount, this small group of diggers found themselves irresistibly hooked on the history and natural beauty of the place. We determined to band together to forge an organization that would commit itself to the preservation and protection of the Mount and at the same time make its educational possibilities more accessible to the general public. And thus was born the Mount Independence Coalition.

We were far from the first to have these goals. Many before us found themselves recognizing the significance of the site and were similarly committed to its preservation. We learned from them by studying their investigations; we worked closely with the owners of the site—the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Fort Ticonderoga Association. We talked with the people of Orwell and with legislators, and wonder of wonders, with a lot of help from many friends, in July, Governor Dean broke ground for a new Visitor Center/Museum to be built with funds appropriated by the Legislature, scheduled for completion in July 1996.

By no means can we take credit for the new building, but as a coordinated citizens group with consistent goals, we helped. The contribution of the Coalition has been recognized and we have been honored to form a public/private partnership with the Division to develop funds to supplement what the state has already allocated. These funds are needed for exhibits in the museum, educational programs, interpretations, further research, and an archaeology master plan. We are also entrusted with

the development of a viable volunteer program and extending our membership state-wide.

And it all began with archaeology!

(Editor's note: On November 15, 1990, the "Friends of Mount Independence" VAS committee was formed by Louise Ransom, which in early 1991 merged with the Mount Independence Action Coalition to form the Mount Independence Coalition.)

Letter to the VAS

April 27, 1995

To: VT Archeological Society:

I would like to tell you about something I found although I do not know how much help it would be—but I'm writing just in case it either adds to, or confirms some knowledge you already have about prehistoric people in Vermont.

South of Newfane on West River is a bend with a small area on west side of river that is flat, sandy soil covered with grass, no rocks in there to speak of. The soil without rocks is deep because ice action in break-up time is eroding it pretty fast. I say that because about 3 or 4 years ago we first found this spot for fishing and noticed a rectangular hole dug with straight sides, as if someone who "knew what they were doing" was digging for artifacts. Now that hole is closer to the edge of bank through ice erosion. I do not know who dug the hole. If it was someone of your affiliation and he (or she) did not find anything they may have been "off" a little west from where they guessed something might be.

About 50 feet east of that just out of curiosity, because I saw all the recent erosion the other day while fishing with my son, I looked at the cut-away bank all along there, and about 2 feet down from surface I saw a fairly small area of charcoal in the dirt—about a half-foot deep and only a couple of feet across, like a small campfire. I am sorry now, but because I was curious to see if that was charcoal, I poked at it, but I stopped when I saw that it was and there is more of it at the spot back in the bank. About 10 or 15 feet west of it I saw another area of charcoal which looked bigger, was much further down (about 5 feet from surface of bank where grass grows) and it is eroding now to the point of pieces falling down the bank. I did not touch that one because I realized they are charcoal. I did not see any more on bank, but given the location I would not doubt it there are more under there farther back, since the level area is maybe 1 or 2 acres before hill begins, like a good campsite.

I did not see any rocks around the charcoal so al-

though I didn't know a lot it would seem to me perhaps it was just a stay-over spot, not a base camp. I heard there was a base or extraction camp (don't know which) at Jamaica, perhaps it was a well-used stay-over spot. I think there were several fires at different levels underground, judging how I saw the charcoal, so maybe people used the spot for a long time. I will quit speculating (not an expert)....

I'm sorry I disturbed the 2-foot one but I was curious to see if that was charcoal. The lower one is already very disturbed by erosion or whatever but there's more of both back in bank. I quit touching it when I realized it may have been a fire. It's only in these spots, not continuous such as a forest fire.

Hope this info can be of a little bit of help.

Sincerely,

Lee Patricia Barbour
Saxton's River

P.S. Found nothing else but did not look that hard.

(Editor's note: specific directions to the site are omitted from the above letter. The full letter was forwarded to Giovanna Peebles.)

Upcoming Activities and Meetings

September 5-16: Archaeology dig at DAR Strong Mansion, Addison; sponsored by VAS and DAR. Contact: William C. Murphy, 802/388-7577.

September 29 - October 1: Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology annual meeting at Fortress Louisbourg National Historic Site in Nova Scotia. Contact: Amdree Crepeau or Charles Burke, Fortress Louisbourg, PO Box 160, Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, B0A 1M0 CANADA. Phone 902/733-2280.

October 19-22: Society for History of Technology annual meeting at Charlottesville, Virginia. Contact: Bernie Carlson 804/924-6113.

October 28: VAS Fall Annual Meeting, South Burlington.

November 4: VAS bus trip to Albany and Troy, NY. See associated article on page 4.

January 2-7, 1996: Society for Historical Archaeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact: Dr. Kim McBride, Program Coordinator, Anthropology Department, 211 Lafferty Hall, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506. Phone 606/257-1944.

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Application for Membership or Renewal

NEW RENEWAL

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