



VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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A Brief Preliminary Report on the Cloverleaf Site (VT-BE-233) Bennington, Vermont

*by John A. Wolford and Belinda J. Cox
UMF Archaeology Research Center*

Since January, 1995, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) Special Projects Unit, under the guidance of Alison B. Church, Engineering Supervisor, and Mark O. Page, Project Engineer, has sponsored a series of archaeological investigations, anticipating the development of the Bennington Bypass Project, which will divert transient motor vehicle traffic away from the downtown sections of Bennington and Old Bennington. This field work is being done to alleviate any potential disturbance to the region's archaeological resources that may be caused by construction of the bypass, and is in conformity with both the Vermont Historic Preservation Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Previous archaeological investigations in advance of the proposed project have been conducted by the University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program, Werner Archaeological Consulting, and Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has primary oversight and review responsibilities for this project and all others of a similar nature. The University of Maine at Farmington, Archaeology Research Center (UMF ARC) is the contracting AOT consultant for this work.

Under the direction of Dr. James B. Petersen and the direct field supervision of Belinda J. Cox (both of UMF ARC), an archaeological phase I survey of the 10.7-mile (17.2-km) long project corridor was carried out during the Autumn of 1995 and Spring of 1996. Twenty-three newly identified archaeological sites were documented during this field work effort (17 prehistoric Native American and 6 historic Euro-American). Since early Summer of 1996, phase II testing at two previously identified and four newly identified sites (all prehistoric) has been completed, and work at four more newly identified sites is being considered for the Autumn of 1996. **see Cloverleaf Site →3**

The Mystery of the Mount Independence Musket

*by Scott A. McLaughlin
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum*

During the summer of 1992, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Texas A&M University began a two-year archaeological survey of the waters around Mount Independence. This military site, opposite Fort Ticonderoga, was designed as part of the Revolutionary War fortifications on Lake Champlain. The intensive underwater survey in 1992 located a cast iron cannon, mortar bombs, cannon balls, bar shot, entrenching tools, bottles, and a complete flintlock musket. The musket was temporarily recovered from the water, sketched, and photographed. The musket was then returned to the bottom of the lake.

Some individuals theorized that the musket was a Brown Bess; others believed it was a French Charleville or an American hybrid. From the sketch and photographs, it was difficult to tell what kind of musket it was, but we were all convinced, based on its context, that it was a Revolutionary War flintlock musket. It was found surrounded by other Revolutionary War military ordnance and equipment.

NOTICE

**VAS Annual Fall Meeting
Business, Reports, Elections, and Papers
Saturday, October 26
in South Burlington
Mark your Calendar Now
See Page 4 for Further Details**

The following year the Maritime Museum established a temporary conservation laboratory to stabilize and preserve the artifact collection located in 1992. During the 1993 field season, the survey area was increased in size and underwater metal **see Mt Indy Musket →5**

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State Coordinator, Vermont Archeology Week '97
(open)

Address general inquiries to the Secretary

Bruce Hedin New VAS President

With the resignation of Audrey Porsche last July, former Vice President Bruce Hedin moved up to VAS President. Audrey will continue on the Board until the end of her current term (1993-96).

Candidates for VAS Board

*by Ann Clay, Chair
Nominations Committee*

The VAS Nominations Committee, consisting of Ann Clay, Chair, and assisted by Marjorie Robbins, and William Murphy, has proposed the following four candidates for election to the Board for the 1996-99 term:

Bruce Hedin: Originally elected to the Board in 1991 and was reelected in 1994 to fill an unexpired term caused by a resignation. Bruce has headed our development operations, handled the design and printing of our current VAS brochure, was elected Vice-President last year, and became President this past summer.

Marjorie Robbins: First came on the Board in 1992 when she was elected to fill an unexpired term. In 1993 she was reelected to a full term and elected VAS Secretary. Marjorie's timely mailings of Board meeting notices and minutes and willingness to continue her efforts for a second full term reflect her strong dedication to the VAS.

David Starbuck: Previously served two terms on the Board from 1989 to 1995 and served as President during 1994-95. David, who needs little introduction to most of us, was former *VAS Newsletter* editor and edited the publication of our 25th Anniversary issue of *The Journal of Vermont Archaeology*. He will be succeeding Audrey Porsche, who is not running for a second term.

John Tomkins: A new face to the VAS, John is already an "old hand" in the inner workings of the Society. He is with Hunter Research in Wadhams, NY and has been Chairman of the VAS Education Committee since early spring '96. He will succeed William Murphy, who is not running for a second term.

Other nominations may be made if endorsed by five or more VAS members and submitted in a timely fashion to the Nominating Committee. Candidates and nominators must all be VAS members in good standing.

The Board is always interested in members who would like to serve. Openings on the Board occur from time to time due to resignations and term limits. If you are interested in going an extra mile for your society, contact any Board member. Board meetings are always open to the membership.

Cloverleaf Site (continued)

One of the newly identified sites, VT-BE-233, or the Cloverleaf Site, has excited immediate interest in the Bennington community on the basis of recent phase II testing discoveries. A brief sketch of the site's particulars is given here, based only on preliminary information prior to more extensive excavation and all laboratory analysis.

VT-BE-233 is a rather large site, approximately 10,000 (+) square meters in extent, lying close to a bend in the Walloomsac River on a flat terrace above the seasonal flood plain. Stratified site sediment deposits are fairly deep, on the order of a meter or more. During phase II testing, over 50 test pits, 11 test units, and two stratigraphic trenches (excavated both mechanically by backhoe and by hand) were placed across portions of the terrace in order to determine the general boundaries of the site, to better establish the kinds of artifacts that might be expected, and to reveal the stratigraphic sequence.

Numerous features were encountered, including two semi-subterranean house pit floors which were identified in the profile of one of the two trenches excavated. A series of 1.0m x 1.0m test units was excavated perpendicular to and to the north of this trench in the vicinity of one of the house floors to define the extent of the feature. This feature turned out to be a clear house floor, circular in plan view, approximately 4-5 meters in diameter, 10cm in thickness, and slightly concave in profile. The fill in the house floor appears to be accumulated organic matter from mats and living activities, and contains artifacts.

The excavated portion of the house floor yielded a Cheshire quartzite biface preform as well as a cluster of fire-cracked rocks situated near the center of the feature. A refuse pit feature, also identified in the profile of the mechanically excavated trench and located to the east of the house pit mentioned above, yielded a projectile point midsection, which has been tentatively identified as an Otter Creek type, dated elsewhere ca. 4000-3000 B.C. Several other quartzite biface fragments and preforms, recovered from excavated contexts throughout the site area, have yet to be analyzed.

No aboriginal ceramics have been encountered anywhere on the site, neither in excavated units nor surface collections, and this lends support to the preliminary assessment of an Archaic period occupation, although it is negative evidence.

Quantities of feature fill are currently being processed for further analysis; charcoal is being recovered from several features and these samples will subsequently be sent out for paleobotanical

analysis and radiocarbon dating. In addition, the vast majority of the other artifacts await processing and further analysis. So claims about the chronological placement of the site and assessment of its importance are to be taken as tentative estimations. If these features prove to be Archaic house floors, they join a very select group in the broader Northeast, and will be among the best documented from a stratified site with an undisturbed context.



UMF Archaeologists working at the Cloverleaf Site in Bennington (reprinted with permission, Rutland Herald. Photo by Peter Crabtree).

Vermont Archeology Week Needs Your Help

Suggested Donation: \$10.00
to the VAS, address on back cover
Contributions to VAW are Tax-Deductible

Historic Wrecks Discovered in Burlington Canal

by Vic Rolando

Inspection of the bottom of the long-abandoned Pine Street Barge Canal resulted in finding five relatively intact 19th-century shipwrecks, according to a *Rutland Herald* article dated August 7, 1996. They were found by divers in the turning basin section, in the northern part of the polluted canal, which is a federal Superfund site.

The wrecks were discovered during a preliminary environmental clean-up inspection. The EPA has spent 15 years and more than \$5 million studying ways to clean up the canal.

The wrecks are totally submerged and sitting in soft muck. Some of the wrecks are covered by up to four feet of silt. They are of the same class but appear to be made by different manufacturers. The wrecks will be documented and possibly uncovered, but there are no current plans to raise them or create an underwater exhibit.

VAS Annual Meeting October 26

Plans are well underway for the Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the VAS, set for Saturday, October 26, at the Windjammer Conference Center (behind the Econolodge, north side of Williston Road, just east of I-89 Exit 14E - plenty of free parking). Committee reports and elections will be followed by morning and afternoon paper sessions.

Papers already lined up include Art Cohn on Underwater Archaeology, Audrey Porsche will talk about Mount Independence, Kathleen Wheeler will present "The Privy as an Opportunistic Midden," and Sherry Mahady and Roland Smith will team up for "Digging in Hog Heaven." The final program will be available at registration (8:30-9:30 AM).

Plan to attend, meet old and make new friends, and have lunch with the speakers. For further information, contact Bruce Hedin (603 525-3701).

Twenty-five Years Ago in the VAS

William Pinney, Director, Vermont Board for Historic Sites, reported in August 1971 that the State had acquired the Tom Daniels collection.

The VAS Third Annual Meeting took place at the Bolton Valley Lodge on October 23, 1971. H. N. Muller was elected President, succeeding President Joe Popecki.

Dick Adams submitted a petition to form a VAS chapter in Vergennes, and Ed Bacon petitioned for a chapter in Burlington. A Shelburne Pond site progress report was given by Louise Basa.

Book Review

by David Lacy, US Forest Service Archaeologist

Murder in the Queen's Armes, by Aaron Elkins. Published by Warner Communications Mysterious Press, 1990.

If you're ready for some light-but-engrossing "archaeofiction," I think Aaron Elkins may be the author for you. *Murder in the Queen's Armes* is a mystery involving the personal and ethical shenanigans of some North American (and a couple of British) archaeologists in and around an excavation set in Wales. The hero, Dr. Gideon Oliver, is a honeymooning PhD archaeologist and (wouldn't you know it!) amateur "bone detective." The comfortable and seemingly accurate descriptions of the inns, pubs, and countryside that serve as backdrop to the story admirably off-set the occasional forays into sexist stereotypes (you wouldn't believe the tolerance of Oliver's betrothed). I also thought, especially in comparison to other popular fiction that purports to reflect some archaeological themes, that Elkins carried off the description of field methods, theoretical disputes in the discipline, quirky-but-stereotypical archaeological personalities, and famous name-dropping, quite well; in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he had a degree in anthropology.

Despite its age (the book was written in 1985), I would recommend it if you're looking for some involving fluff to take to the beach, keep you up if David Letterman is in reruns, or to get engrossed in if you just can't face reading something that you actually have to think about and remember.

If you can't find a copy in the local library or bookstore, drop me a line and I'll loan you mine. Elkins has several "Prof. Gideon Oliver" novels in print; perhaps I can check one out before the next Newsletter.



Mt Indy Musket (continued)



detectors were used to locate concentrations of artifacts. The underwater archaeologists located 11 features containing more than 900 artifacts.

Once recovered, the objects, including the musket, were placed in tubs of fresh water to keep them from dehydrating. Most of the objects were con-served at the museum during the summer and fall of 1993. The necessary treatment to conserve the musket was too complicated to perform at the museum, so the musket was taken to the Conservation Research Laboratory (CRL) at Texas A&M University. Once the musket reached CRL, it was drawn, photographed, x-rayed, and tested for its stability. The decision was to remove the corrosion by electrolysis and bulk up the wood by using an acetone/pine rosin treatment. During the conservation process, the name "POMEROY" stamped in a straight line appeared on the lock plate between the cock and frizzen spring.



After some research at the library, we discovered that Seth Pomeroy of Northampton, Massachusetts was a Revolutionary War general and gunsmith. Seth was the only gunsmith with the name Pomeroy producing arms around the time of the Revolution in America or Great Britain. The conclusion was clear. The gun was made at General Seth Pomeroy's gun shop in Northampton and was abandoned by an American soldier during the retreat of Mount Independence in July 1777.

A search was made to locate another example of Seth Pomeroy's muskets, but none were found. We began to question our quick conclusion when Jim Casco, a Revolutionary War reenactor and gun collector, suggested that the musket could be a later piece made by Seth's grandson Lemuel Pomeroy. With the assistance of Christopher Fox, Acting Curator of Fort Ticonderoga, a search was conducted for materials relating to Lemuel Pomeroy's muskets. With drawings, photographs, and descriptions in hand, we compared the Mount Independence musket to Lemuel's early State contract muskets. Upon close examination of the musket, we are now convinced that the gun is not from the Revolutionary War, but made for the State of New York between 1809 and 1811 by Lemuel Pomeroy.

Lemuel Pomeroy, like his grandfather, was a blacksmith. He manufactured plows and sleighs in Springfield, Massachusetts, from 1799 until 1805. In 1809, he received a contract with the State of New York for 1000 muskets. Pomeroy was advanced \$5000 on this contract in late November 1809. By March 1811, he had completed most of the muskets and had delivered them to New York's state arsenal at Albany. The musket found at Mount Independence is identical in design and specifications of Pomeroy's New York contract muskets.

Pomeroy's contract specified that his muskets were to be similar to those produced by Eli Whitney under an earlier New York State contract. Pomeroy's New York State contract muskets have many of the same features as Whitney's 1808 muskets. They also exhibit features of muskets produced at the Springfield Armory in Springfield, Massachusetts, between 1807 and 1809. Similar to Whitney's guns, Pomeroy's muskets have a 42-inch barrel, a 6+inch lock plate with a rear profile that

arcs to a point, a top jaw with a convex upper front profile, and is equipped with a brass pan. The pan differs though in shape and orientation from Whitney's muskets. The pan is mounted horizontally rather than inclined and has a fence at the rear. The pan's configuration and the other external lock components are similar to those of the Springfield Armory muskets.

If the musket is now believed to be from after the Revolutionary War, this raises a number of questions. How did the musket get to be in 4 feet of water, 12 feet off Mount Independence? The musket was found on a soft mud bottom with a beat-up butt plate and without a trigger guard. The gun also may be loaded, as it was found in the half cocked position. Theories of how the gun ended up on the bottom of the lake are endless. It is possible that the gun was dropped in the water by a hunter leaning over the edge of a boat. The hunter may have been walking on the ice and fell through losing the gun. We may never be able to answer this question, but it certainly adds to the interesting history and lore surrounding Mount Independence.

Unfortunately the musket will not be a centerpiece of the Revolutionary War exhibit at the new Mount Independence Visitor Center. However, the musket will appear in an exhibit discussing the archaeology of Mount Independence. We welcome any ideas or suggestions in solving the mystery behind the origin of this curious object.

This project was made possible with the assistance of the Fort Ticonderoga Association, Institute of Nautical Archaeology, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Mount Independence Coalition, Texas A&M University, University of Vermont, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

(editor's note: Lemuel Pomeroy also operated a gun factory in Pittsfield, Mass. in 1808, per J. E. A. Smith, *History of Berkshire County*, 1885)

A Sailing Ship, the U.S. Brig *Niagara*

by Joseph Delecki

During the months between the first snowfall and sap run, I enjoy sitting in my favorite armchair at home planning the upcoming boating season. Those who have been bitten by the sailing bug can appreciate this affliction. It was during this time last year, while browsing through the crew listings in the boating magazine, *Cruising World*, that I

noticed a request for deck hands to crew on a replica of a 19th-century sailing vessel of the type used during the War of 1812. The listing further described the ship as a reconstruction of a brig, the *USS Niagara*, flagship of Oliver Hazard Perry, being 123 feet long and having a mainmast height of 110 feet!

By chance, I happen to live not far from the hill on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain where spectators sat to watch the Battle of Plattsburgh, fought on September 11, 1814. I've also had the opportunity to visit the maritime museums and archaeological exhibits in our region that also interpret the local military engagements of that war. So, from the archaeological and historical point of view, I felt an interest to learn more about the *Niagara*.

Ultimately, the very thought of having an opportunity to be a crew member on a working, period sailing vessel of this size was too hard to resist. That day, I mailed out my sailing resume along with a request for more information.

Shortly thereafter, I received a phone call from First Mate Angus McCamy of the *Niagara*. From Angus, I learned that the brig was actually a relatively new ship constructed in 1988 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission with assistance from the Flagship Niagara League, a non-for-profit local citizen's group. Further, the ship's mission was to enhance the public's understanding of the War of 1812 by means of presenting a quality tour of the ship to visitors in port as well as being a living history in the sailing of the vessel.

Angus went on to say that to sail a vessel of this size requires a crew of 40 people. The *Niagara* has a full-time professional crew of 16 and utilizes 24 volunteers to fill out the remaining crew positions. Both male and female volunteers are accepted who are at least 16 years old with no apparent limit on one's seniority. However, before signing on, a prospective crew member must have passed a general physical within a prescribed time limit depending on one's age.

As a new volunteer member to the crew, I would be an apprentice deck hand. In the overall hierarchy of ship life, a deck hand is at the entry level. Angus mentioned that I would assist in the sailing, interpretation, maintenance, and operation of the vessel, and in return would receive my daily meals and a hammock to sleep in.

Last summer, when I was aboard, the vessel was berthed in Lake Erie. In previous years the ship has sailed the Great Lakes as well as the east coast. This upcoming season (1996), they are again planning a voyage along the New England coast

with visits to the major ports.

At the end of our conversation, Angus suggested that I choose which three weeks I would like to be aboard the ship. The initial on-board duty requires a minimum commitment of three weeks in order to be properly trained before becoming a useful crew member.

When the time came, I drove out to Erie, Penn., the home port of the *Niagara*. Upon arriving, I was truly impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment the residents of Erie have for this ship and the period of history it represents. I learned that the ship was built at a cost of several million dollars and that construction was underway for a new dock and maritime museum to be open in 1996 on the shores of Lake Erie. When the ship is in port, it is open to the public as a tourist attraction presenting numerous opportunities to chat with the well-informed visitors who talked about the War of 1812 as it were fought yesterday.

Yes, we did sail about Lake Erie through fair and foul weather, trying to experience the life of 19th-century seamen. It was fun to steer such a large vessel when under sail and not so much fun having to help carry coils of rope that weighed 100 pounds. One can forever read stories about sailing aboard a vessel this size without really understanding the experience.

Hopefully, this article will inform anyone interested in that period of history about this impressive resource floating around the waters of the Northeast. If you feel that being a crew member on the *Niagara* might be in your future, I suggest you contact the Flagship Niagara League, PO Box 862, Erie, PA 16512, or phone them at (814) 452-2744, or me at (802) 372-5877 for further information.

From the Editor

I recently received a phone call from a new VAS member who was somewhat dismayed that she read news of an archaeological find in Stowe, not in the *VAS Newsletter*, but in the *Burlington Free Press*. Wish that we could have the reporting and publishing resources of the *Free Press*, it none-the-less points up a fact relatively unknown to most of our membership: almost all the information published in the *VAS Newsletter* (a one-person production) comes from very few members. I feel lucky to get one major lead-off article for each issue. Other items of interest come from a handful of regular contributors.

If you hear or read of an archaeological event in Vermont, please do not assume we all know about

it. Drop me a note or send me a newspaper clipping and its source (Vic Rolando, 214 Jefferson Heights, Bennington Vt., 05201), phone me (802 442-0105), or email me (vic.rolando@juno.com). Newsletter policy is to accept items that pertain primarily to archaeology in Vermont, then to archaeology elsewhere, and if there is space, anything else related to archaeology or membership interest.

Upcoming Activities and Meetings Around the Greater Northeast

October 18-20: Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology, Ramada Inn, Broadway, Albany, NY. Contact is David Starbuck (518) 747-2926.

October 19-20: Historic Ironmaking Conference, Skylands Manor Annex, Ringwood, NJ. Contact is Ed Lenik (201) 492-8525.

October 26: VAS Fall Annual Meeting, at the Windjammer Conference Center, South Burlington, Vt. Contact is Bruce Hedin (603) 525-3701.

October 26-27: Industrial Archeology recording session, site of early 19th-century Saratoga Graphite Products mine and mill complex, Wilton, NY. Contact is Matt Kierstead (617) 237-5952.

Welcome New VAS Members

Dean Bachand, Bristol
Paul Bock and Dawn Noyes-Bock, Jefferson, N.H.
Mark Brockman, Farmington, Me.
Thomas Buchanan, Auburn, Me.
Kim Butterfield, Williston
Sandra and Erin Button, Middlebury
David R. Callum, Brandon
Jean Callum, Brandon
Patricia Dorr, Bristol
Ruth Gibbud, Rutland
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