



Newsletter of the VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Jim Petersen—a Remembrance

As most of you probably know, Dr. James Petersen was tragically murdered this past summer while on a field trip to Brazil. At the VAS Fall Meeting, Joe Popecki, VAS Treasurer, gave this moving tribute.

What can I say about Jim which hasn't been said in the media and heartfully expressed by his students, friends and colleagues?

I've never thought about archaeology in the Americas without having the image of Jim Petersen pop into my mind. Somehow, these two seemed a perfect fit, like a hand and a glove.

I knew Jim since his undergraduate days in the Anthropology Department of the University of Vermont. I had the opportunity to observe the man in the environment of the Vermont Archaeological Society. His ability to recognize problems and challenges, as well as look for reasonable solutions, made me mentally classify Jim as a "keeper." He was an academic achiever who left Middlebury College to major in Anthropology



at UVM. We saw him from time to time while he earned a PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, and later, while doing postdoctoral work at the University of Maine in Farmington. He showed his talent for organization and management by founding the Archaeology Research Center there.

All of the friends he had made in Burlington rejoiced when he chose to return to the Anthropology Department of his Alma Mater in 1997. It didn't surprise us or his students when Jim quickly moved up in academic rank and, in a remarkably short time, was given the opportunity to chair his department. It was pretty obvious that this guy was on a fast track to an outstanding career in his chosen academic field. At the same time, Jim engaged in a restorative adventure as he was elected to the Board of the VAS and served as its President.

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From the Editors Desk. . .

The following was submitted by VAS Board member Alden Oliver:

WHEREAS, Dr. James Petersen of the University of Vermont was recently killed in a tragic episode in the country of Brazil; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James Petersen, as an individual and as chair of the University of Vermont Anthropology Department contributed his time and expertise to assist the Village of Essex Junction relative to the display and future of the Marvin Ancient American Indian collection; and

WHEREAS, he along with others have proposed anthropology "kits" to be made available throughout the secondary school system of the State of Vermont incorporating a portion of the Marvin collection so that secondary students in the future may benefit from Dr. Marvin's collection; and

WHEREAS, his dedication as an outstanding educator and as a scholar will enhance the opportunity available to the students of the school system of the State of Vermont as well as the University of Vermont; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees of the Village of Essex Junction wish to offer to his family and colleagues the sympathy of the Village.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the educational kits to be distributed among secondary schools be hereafter known as "James B. Petersen kits" in his memory; and

That the contribution of Dr. James Petersen to the future of the Marvin Trust and collection and his dedication to appropriate display is hereby recognized and the Village of Essex Junction extends its best wishes to his family and offers its condolence at this tragic time.

Dated at Essex Junction, Vermont, this 23rd day of August, 2005.
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION BOARD OF TRUSTEES



As always, a membership application/renewal is included. Memberships are based on the calendar year. 2006 dues will be due soon. Use the attached renewal form to renew now.

The Board (and the Editor) welcome feedback from the members. Please contact any Board Member with your concerns or questions. If you have suggestions for meeting speakers or locations please let us know.

Georgeana Little, Editor
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In all the work he undertook, Jim Petersen proved to be a gentle man with energy, knowledge, an understanding of the human spirit, and the ability to focus all of these resources on the accomplishment of his objectives. We all wondered at how many tigers he could hold by their tails and emerge unscathed.

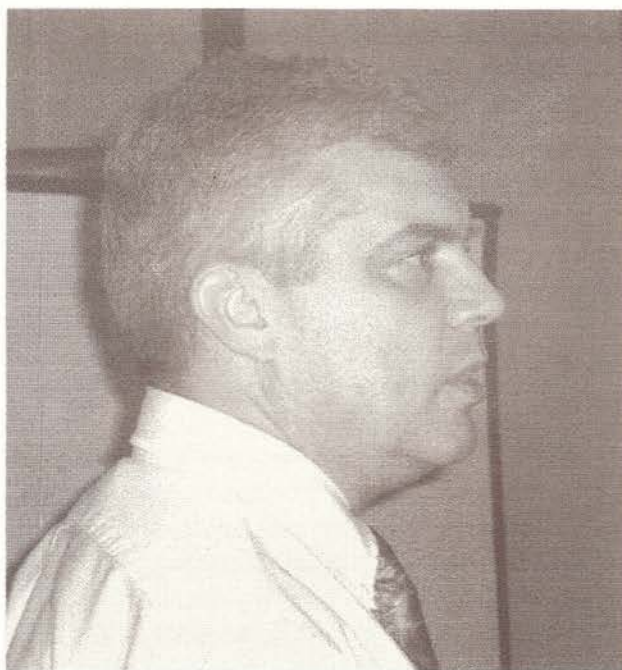
In an admirably human way, Jim had his "causes." He eloquently defended the rights of the First Vermonters and fiercely but respectfully disagreed with those public figures who would deny them the fruits of their heritage.

I will not forget the mind-numbing affect of Jess Robinson's e-mail telling us of Jim's death in the far-off workplace which captured his imagination and curiosity for many years. I wondered how the God I believe in could let such a promising career be ended so needlessly. I felt cheated. And I thought also about the many students who would never have the pleasure of learning from a master. I also knew how his friends and colleagues would be forever deprived of the stimulating and warm friendship they had come to enjoy. And finally, I came back to where I should have started, the painful loss to his wife and family members.

When I finished tussling with the problem of evil in this world, I asked myself what was it I most admired about Jim Petersen. The answer came quickly enough. Jim was teacher, not an educator—a teacher. I think I never had a conversation with him, or listened to a lecture at a VAS meeting, that I didn't learn something. And that learning was such a pleasure. We all will miss James Brant Petersen in our lives.

Ave atque vale!

—Joseph Popecki
VAS Treasurer



Millionaire archaeologists!



Well, not exactly.... After a one-year hiatus, we titled the ninth incarnation of Relics&Ruins—our field school for kids entering 5th through 9th grades—*Silas Griffith: Millionaire of the Mountains*.

Renowned as Vermont's first millionaire, Danby native Silas L. Griffith was a larger-than-life character who could be described variously as an innovator, philanthropist, one-man political-economic force, and part of the late 19th century tradition of powerful land barons. A generation after his death in 1903, a further footnote was added to his legacy as the remains of his estate in the towns of Wallingford, Mt Tabor, and Peru were purchased to become the core of the newly formed (1932) Green Mountain National Forest.

This year's edition of Relics&Ruins was conducted, as in years past, in partnership with the Hayes Foundation—and for the first time with the VAS as well! Our cast of (staff) characters remained the same, with educator Debra Gardner-Baasch serving as program director/coordinator. We had 13 students from 7 different towns, 4 staff specialists (see below), and a superstar volunteer in Vic Rolando.

The geographic focus of the field school was Griffith's most substantial mill village, located several miles upstream on the Big Branch in the town of Mt Tabor. Known originally as *Mill Glen* in the mid-19th century (e.g., as noted on the Beers' Atlas), it became *Griffith* by the 1870s, and finally *Old Job* after Silas' death. The village evolved over time, and at its peak consisted of at least two mills, 8 or 9 charcoal kilns, two boarding houses, a school, blacksmith shop, office, several residences and numerous storage and outbuildings. During the first half of the 20th century, an additional milling operation by the Bellows Falls Ice Company left some additional remains.



Vic Rolando showing how it's done!

Our goal, as in past years, is to integrate historical and archaeological inquiry with environmental science (habitat and critter studies) and the humanities (primarily arts and crafts this year). The hoped for end-result is a baseline appreciation on the part of our campers that there are multiple paths to learning about the past, and that there are profound connections between land-use, landscape, and environmental conditions—in the past and the present.



To this end, we integrate (or at least link):

- historic photos (primarily from descendant John Griffith's personal archives, supplemented with some of Vic's);
- historical accounts (diaries of Old Job's longtime foreman, in possession of great granddaughter Barbara Davenport);
- archaeological surface collection, testing and excavation at 3 sites (supervised by Dave Lacy, Sheila Charles, and Vic Rolando - the last IN a kiln!);
- systematic documentation and artifact analysis in the lab (with Sheila);
- 19th century craft techniques in woodworking (crafting walking sticks with draw knives and rasps) and pen-and-ink drawing/rendering (of plants, animals, people and artifacts) with Steve Halford, creative structures teacher at Rutland High School; and

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A Passion for Archeology

Note to Readers: The following is a slightly revised version of a "Commentary" that was published in several Vermont newspapers in September to celebrate Jim Petersen's contributions to Vermont archeology and to promote Vermont Archeology Month. With Archeology Month behind us, I updated the Commentary to reflect Archeology Month in the past tense.

Several months ago, our beloved friend and colleague, University of Vermont professor and archeologist Jim Petersen, was murdered in Brazil. He would have appreciated the frequency with which the words "archeology" and "anthropology" appeared in Vermont newspapers. Archeologists are generally not very good at sending out press releases about their research and discoveries; Jim's tragic death certainly put archeology on the front page.

September was Vermont Archeology Month, a time when archeologists (and others) had a chance to tell stories about their discoveries, a time to get Vermonters and visitors excited about local history, both Native American pre-contact history and Euro-american history. While preparing for my Vermont Archeology Month kick-off lecture at Chimney Point State Historic Site, I recently reread various articles that Jim wrote about his Vermont and northern New England research. While his revolutionary Brazilian research has gotten a lot of attention, the research he did in Vermont and his passion for Vermont's extraordinary archeological heritage didn't get much write-up. While at the University of Maine Farmington, Jim discovered the earliest farming site in northern New England. In Springfield, Vermont, along the Connecticut River, Native Americans cultivated corn, beans, and squash by 1120 AD, nearly 400 years before Columbus invaded the Americas. His study of the Boucher cemetery site in Highgate, Vermont, revealed that Abenakis—or proto-Abenakis—were brilliant weavers, producing lovely and delicate textiles 3000 years ago, in this case garments and shrouds interred with their dead. Jim was the foremost expert in the Northeast on 3000 years of Native American pottery. His love of ceramics was born when he excavated the Winooski site, along the Winooski River, as a 24 year old kid. A

generation of archeologists learned to read potsherds the way male teenagers (forgive the stereotyping) can read cars. Pottery distinguishes different cultural groups and allows archeologists to track communities of people across the landscape and through time. Jim's research has helped tell the story of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians' presence in Vermont in the late Late Woodland period, living next to, and sometimes within, Abenaki communities, revealing the complexity of cultures and cultural interactions in pre-European Vermont. Jim would want me to clearly say that his research and articles were, invariably, collaborations with other colleagues, that he didn't do it alone.

One of the many things we have learned as Vermont archeologists is that for 12,000 years, native people survived, and adapted to, changing climates and environments, food scarcity, loss of key resources, cultural upheavals, disease, and Vermont winters. Archeology tells the stories of survival, adaptation, change, and endurance. These stories are especially important when calamities occur, such as what befell the Gulf Coast and the City of New Orleans. We can try to find hope and lessons from history—that people can and will endure.

Connecting with Vermont's past during Vermont Archeology Month—through lectures, exhibits, films, site tours, and "hands-on" fun across the state—educated and entertained Vermonters at the same time. It was a time to learn more about Vermont's recent and ancient past, the thrill of archaeological discovery, Vermont's Native Americans, and re-discovering forgotten chapters of the last 200 years of Vermont history.

—Giovanna Peebles

State Archeologist

VT Division for Historic Preservation

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First Books from New Archaeology Publisher

New academic publisher Left Coast Press, Inc. released its first two archaeology titles this month. Thomas King's *Doing Archaeology: A Cultural Resource Management Perspective* and David Whitley's *Introduction to Rock Art Research*—the first two books published by Left Coast are both supplemental textbooks for undergraduate courses. Launched in March 2005 by Mitch Allen, founder of AltaMira Press, Left Coast will publish two additional archaeology books this fall, including one by Brian Fagan. New book series on American material culture, CRM methods, and indigenous issues are also being launched, along with a series sponsored by the World Archaeological Congress. Left Coast Press, Inc. books are distributed by University of Arizona Press. Further information on the Left Coast, based in Walnut Creek, California, is available at www.LCoastPress.com.

A specialty press, Left Coast will produce scholarly works, professional books, advanced textbooks, journals, and products in other media for the global archaeological community at modest prices. Other lists will be developed for museum professionals, archivists, anthropologists, public historians, and environmental professionals.

Brian Fagan's *Writing Archaeology: Telling Stories About the Past*, a guide to writing for the general public, will be available in November, followed in December by *Ancient Starch Research*, a collaborative work edited by Robin Torrence and Huw Barton, outlining the uses of starch in archaeological analysis. In future years, books are expected by such well-known archaeologists as Claire Smith, William Rathje, Barbara Little, and Sarah Milledge Nelson.

The World Archaeological Congress Research Handbook Series, edited by George Nicholas and Julie Hollowell, will produce extensive summaries of major subfields and issues. Larry Zimmerman, Sonia Atalay and T.J. Ferguson will be developing the series indigenous issues in American Archaeology. Jeff Atlschul will launch a series of practical guidebooks to doing CRM archaeology. Carolyn White and Tim Scarlett will edit a series of identification guides to American artifacts.

Publisher Mitch Allen created Left Coast after leaving his position as Publisher of AltaMira Press. Books he sponsored have won the SAA book award in each of the last three years. The Left Coast name is not a political banner, but reflects the geographical and cultural position of the press in the San Francisco Bay Area, a locus of innovative ideas and organizations.

Membership Renewals

If the code on your membership label reads "04" or "05" you need to renew now.

Please use the form in this Newsletter to renew your membership.

In addition to the Newsletter, your membership (once renewed) entitles you to a copy of our yearly Journal.

To maintain your membership and receive the Journal RENEW NOW.

New members are also encouraged to use the enclosed form to join in order to keep abreast of archaeology in Vermont.

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- habitat inventory studies and live-trapping of small critters with Brad Frohloff, biology teacher at Otter Valley Union High School.



By choreographing a dance between the observations and conclusions in different areas of inquiry we could demonstrate at a local level a pattern we feel to be true at a broad level: that is, as people (by necessity) live on and use the land, the landscape changes; these changes (visual appearance, mix of species, habitats, water courses, air quality, etc) are a reflection of a shift in the environmental conditions of an area - something that can be measured, evaluated and, if necessary, corrected over time.

Take home lessons include some sense of conservation/preservation (i.e., if we can learn from archaeological sites we shouldn't destroy them), and making informed choices about land use (i.e., how, and how intensively, to use the land should be a conscious choice). The National Forest lands stand as a good example of such a trajectory of decision making over the last 100 years—from a cleared and largely degraded landscape around Old Job by 1900 back to a healthy forest today.

While this all sounds potentially academic and geeky (and to a certain extent it is), it was also good fun having 13 teenagers out in the woods for two weeks. Insightful questions, long hikes, new learning, hard work, creative products, and lots of laughter and storytelling added up to another great field experience!

Finally, Thanks to the VAS Board for stepping up as a partner and helping to administer the program!

—David Lacy and Sheila Charles

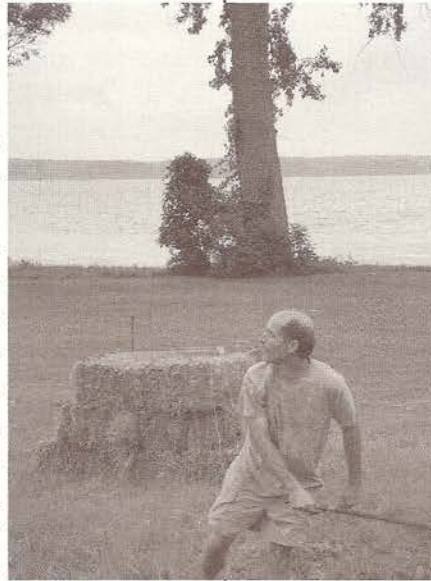


Atlatl Championship Results Chimney Point State Historic Site

The Chimney Point State Historic Site in Addison held the tenth Annual Northeastern Open Atlatl Championship on Saturday, September 17, 2005. Sixty-four competitors, men, women, boys, and girls ages 6 years through retirees, gathered at Chimney Point from all over Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island to test their skills in distance and accuracy using the atlatl, an ancient spear-throwing device. This was the largest field of competitors since the championship started in 1996 and drew top atlatlists from all over the northeast. About seventy-five spectators also came, to watch the fun. The event is sanctioned by the World Atlatl Association and co-sponsored by the Vermont Archaeological Society. It is one of the highlights of Vermont Archaeology Month.

VAS members Scott Dillon, Charles Knight, and David Lacy were the championship judges and Jess Robinson, VAS President, helped out as range master. Brigitte Helzer, Alden Oliver, and Victor Rolando hosted the VAS informational table, giving out VAM programs and other information. Charlie Paquin demonstrated pottery making and flint knapping, Native American artist Jeanne Kent demonstrated making decorative gourd rattles, and champion atlatlists Bob and Cheryll Berg of Thunderbird Atlatl showed a very interested public their atlatls, darts, and how to make cording from flax they had grown themselves. Langdon Smith was missed this year and it is hoped he will be in fine form to share his exhibits again next year. Matt Boulanger was very helpful earlier in the year, promoting the workshop and competition on a number of Web sites focusing on the primitive arts.

Last year's atlatl competition and workshop were featured on the Maine PBS Quest science series, shown this spring. Perhaps this and Matt's extra web publicity helps account for the greater interest in the contest this year.



Douglas Bassett during accuracy part of Atlatl Championship shoot out

On Friday, the day before the competition, the Bergs gave their annual atlatl-making workshop, complete with Bob's great storytelling. A record 11 people, from young children to retirees, participated in the workshop. One attendee came from New Jersey while another drove in from the Bronx. Mike Milovich, silver medalist in the boys category, made his atlatl and darts at this atlatl workshop.

Leicester, New York, resident Douglas Bassett, an avid atlatlist, captured both the men's gold medal and the Grand Championship award in a shootout with the top woman, boy, and girl. Gold medalist in the women's category was Elizabeth Haartz of South Woodstock, Vermont, and the gold medalist in the girl's category was Tirzah Hescok of Shoreham, Vermont. Leicester, Vermont, resident Lewis Fox repeated his victory of last year to win another gold medal in the boy's category.

Students who designed and constructed their own atlatls for John Peterson's popular anthropology class at Rutland, Vermont, High School achieved admirable scores as first-time competitors.

Douglas Bassett was also tops in the International Standard Accuracy Competition (ISAC) on Saturday and Sunday. This standard target consists of rings worth 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 points. Local favorite Greg Maurer of Vergennes and John Morris of Grand Isle also did very well in ISAC.

Next year's competition will be held on September 16 and 17. Do join us.

The Chimney Point State Historic Site is located in Addison, on Lake Champlain at the intersections of Vermont Routes 125 and 17.

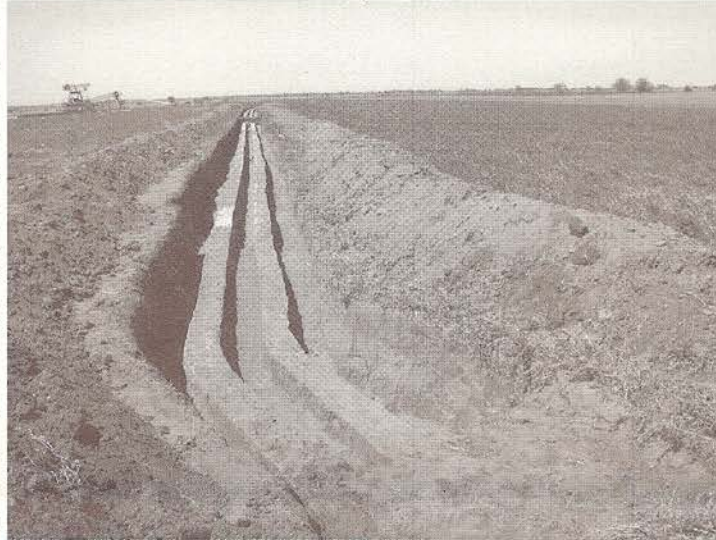
—Elsa Gilbertson
*Regional Historic Site Administrator
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation*

Viminacium Archaeological Field School Summer Sessions, The University at Albany

The University at Albany Viminacium Archaeological Field School is a joint U.S.-Serbian research project involving students and professionals from the University at Albany, The State University of New York, The Archaeological Institute, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Science and the Center for New Technology, Belgrade University.

The program operates out of the Department of Art (Mediterranean Archaeology Program), College of Arts and Sciences, The University at Albany and the Viminacium Project Field Headquarters in the village of Kostolac, Serbia. The general purpose of the archaeological research is to examine the role of the Roman army in the political and economic development of this northern province of Moesia Superior on the Danube frontier of the Roman Empire. Field School students are integrated into the continuing, long-term research activities of the Viminacium Project. The Viminacium Project, under the direction of Dr. Korac, includes the identification, investigation, conservation and presentation of the archaeological remains at the Roman legionary camp, provincial capital city, Danube port and outlying cemeteries and farmsteads of the cultural complex known as Viminacium. Field School students are introduced to the wide range of Roman material culture, including architecture, frescoes, mosaics, sculpture, pottery and coins which are recovered during the research. The UAlbany Field School is conducting a specific series of exploratory excavations in the extra-mural area of the legionary camp where the students are directly involved in supervised oversight of the excavation process. Experience is also provided in up to date survey and mapping techniques, methods of remote sensing from satellite and aerial photography to ground penetrating radar and magnetometer surveying.

Students process and catalogue the artifacts which are recovered in their excavation area. The exceptional state of preservation of remains at Viminacium, which is an open-field site without any post-Roman occupation, allows for an intensive introduction to complex culture archaeology in a rural area near the Danube River.



Portion of Aquaduct—Viminacium

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Membership Application/Renewal

☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change

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Phone: _____

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Category (please check one):

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| R | <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual—\$15 |
| F | <input type="checkbox"/> | Family—\$25 |
| SE* | <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior—\$10 |
| ST* | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student—\$10 |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contributing—\$50 |
| L | <input type="checkbox"/> | Life—\$250 |
| P | <input type="checkbox"/> | Philanthropic—\$1,000 |
| IN | <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-profit Institutional—\$25 |
| IP | <input type="checkbox"/> | For-profit Institutional—\$50 |

*Senior: 65 years or over

†Students must be full-time and provide photocopy of active student ID card.

Make check (US Funds) payable to The Vermont Archaeological Society and mail to P. O. Box 663, Burlington, VT 05402-0663

NOTE: The VAS does not sell the use of its membership list. However, we occasionally allow its free use by select organizations with announcements of specific interest to VAS members. Do you authorize us to share your mailing address with such organizations ☐ YES ☐ NO

Anyone wishing a membership card, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
You may photocopy this form.