



VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Vermont Archaeological Society Electronic Newsletter

**The long life of an
Etruscan City**
November 25 4:30 pm
University of Montreal

Greetings!

This lecture will present the results of a project of the Queen's University in the urban area of Caere, the great Etruscan city 45 km NW of Rome.

Complete information is available [here](#) .

Native American Archaeology Course Taught at Middlebury College during 2014 Winter Term

Reminder

A course in Native American archaeology was attended by 16 students during the 2014 Winter Term in the Department of Sociology and Archaeology at Middlebury College. This course, "Native Peoples of New England", focused on Algonquian cultures in the Northeast from the PaleoIndian period to present times. The curriculum was based on the study of Wabanaki peoples including the Western Abenaki, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Mikmaq. Reading assignments and classroom discussions explored the connections between major themes such as settlement and subsistence patterns, population increase and the development of horticulture.

All memberships renew at the beginning of the new year. You can renew on-line at www.vtarchaeology.org/members/ or download the membership application and mail it in. Please include your address and email so we can update our membership list.

Three outside speakers were invited to make presentations: Jeanne Brink, an Abenaki basket-maker, with the Vermont Humanities Council spoke to a college-wide evening public audience about the Abenaki culture and history; Giovanna Peebles, former Vermont State Archaeologist, presented an archaeological overview of research and CRM state contract work in Vermont; and Melody Brook, a Abenaki educator, talked about spirituality and the status of native women in Wabanaki society as well as the state recognition of Vermont Abenaki bands. All students worked on their own research projects and wrote a 15 page essay and made an oral presentation to the class. Research projects dealt with a wide range of topics covering such subjects as Peopling of the Americas; Wild plant domestication transition to cultigen horticulture; Native American impact on natural environments; Present-day Native myths and misinformation; Wabanaki Confederacy; and Government recognition of Native nations.

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Submitted by Duncan Mathewson

The Mind of a Collector

The following is an excerpt from the memoir of Charles Augustine Neff. Mr. Neff was an active collector of "Indian Relics" during the early years of the 20th century. I reproduce it here to give some insight into the mind of a collector of that era in the hope that it will help us all to understand.

For many years, in fact from about 1882 to 1912, I had been in the habit of spending my annual two-weeks vacations in the village of Swanton, lying on the Missisquoi river in Vermont, some six miles from where that river empties into Lake Champlain. At the village is a fall of some ten or twelve feet, which gave it its earlier name of Swanton Falls. During my short but pretty constant visits, always in midsummer, I formed the acquaintance of the local photographer, who in time I came to know was a collector of Indian remains. It is hardly necessary to say that he was an enthusiastic collector. As appeared later, he came by his enthusiasm honestly, for his father was a collector before and with him. He showed me specimens and descanted with what seemed disproportional earnestness on the characteristics and more or less problematical uses of the various objects, but failed to arouse in me more than a languid interest. From time to time I heard echoes of the unsympathetic voice of the villagers toward his fad. In fact, the popular attitude was summed up in the statement that he would do better to attend to his photographing and let relics go. I readily enough made this belief my own when on a certain occasion I sought him for professional services, found his studio closed, and was told the he had "gone down river hunting Indian relics." I distinctly recall pitying the "poor nut" who could so frivolously neglect business and the real concerns of life! My own hobby was neighing for me just around the corner but I did not hear him.

In the summer of 1911 I purchased a small motor boat and had it shipped to my son, then a resident of Swanton. He ran it on the river and lake that summer and the next. When I visited him in the summer of 1912 he showed me a most artistically-made arrowhead which he had found on the river bank.

My curiosity was but mildly excited; but the next time that we made a trip down the river we stopped where the relic had been found and hunted for more. It was then and there that the virus entered my veins, for we found a number of them of various sorts. The next day we resumed our quest and extended our field. Soon we had laid the entire stretch of the river from the village to the lake under tribute and had acquired the respectable beginnings of a "collection". That summer my two weeks of vacation were divided between, or rather mingled with, fishing and relic-hunting. To the hitherto all-sufficient boating and fishing was now added a third and more absorbing interest. We came to know every possible bit of



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bank where the lurking relic might be found, and explored all possibilities faithfully. The banks of the Missisquoi, especially the lower reach, are fluvial and are still being torn down and rebuilt by the river. Hence a heavy rain, or a stage of high water often opened to our eager searching a new domain. This is also true of a stage of low water which exposes a margin of dry edge; but our main help came from the tearing down of the banks. When no rain nor winds came to assist in this process, we still searched the old places again and again, even assisting the elements by superficial digging at the water's edge; nor could we ever seem quite to exhaust the store.

If there is interest in this article, I will continue to excerpt part of Mr. Neff's memoir in future issues.

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