



# VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**January 2015**

## **The Vermont Archaeological Society Electronic Newsletter**

Greetings!

### **The Mind of a Collector**

by Charles A. Neff

*I received positive feedback from the first installment of Mr Neff's memoir so I will continue to include excerpts. I came across this memoir while transcribing family papers for a friend. None of this information has been published and the artifacts which Mr. Neff collected over many years were destroyed in a fire. However, he left this narrative and photographs of his collection.*

In the spots favored of the Indians (supposed to have been Iroquois) were to be found rather finely cracked stones which had unquestionably been brought there, for no entirely satisfactory reason that I have heard adduced, for the average size of such stones is about that of the ordinary "road material" used today. They appear not to have been reduced by fire but by what must have been laborious cracking, for they bear few original surfaces. However this may be, they were the unfailing sign of aboriginal occupation. These favored sites varied in length from a rod or two to a quarter mile and were almost invariably confined to places where the bank was of more than average height. An exception is a low shore which today marks a "carry" for canoes from the river by a short cut to the lake and which we may believe was so used by the Indians.

Tradition has it that the Indians visited this river seasonally, probably in the Spring, coming down from the frozen North for the early fishing. This stretch of the Missisquoi has an average width of perhaps two hundred feet. As it flows northerly it broadens and just before it enters that part of Lake Champlain known as Missisquoi Bay divides into three branches, with a delta

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#### **New Forest Service Archaeologist Announced**

Timothy Watkins has been hired to replace long-time Forest Service archaeologist David Lacy. Tim is coming to Vermont from Arizona where he worked most recently for the BLM as an archaeologist, and before that for the Gila River Indian Community.

Tim's reporting date is January 12th. We expect he will be a friend to the VAS. Keep your eye on future additions of the Newsletter for more information.

#### **Apologies**

The company which hosts our Web site recently did an update. As often happens at such times, the update caused problems. The Web site is showing large numbers of error messages. We believe the various parts all work, but the error messages can cause confusion. We have contacted the host company and hope the problem is soon resolved. In the meantime, if you find that

much like that of the Mississippi. Both in lake and river a fairly varied fish population is found. Until within a few years the spearing of fresh-water sturgeon from the bridge just below the dam was a regular Spring event, and even today they are occasionally so taken. The wall-eyed and ghostly pike too is freely caught in the Spring, with the going out of the ice, and an occasional mascalonge is taken even within the village limits, both above and below the dam. His small but no less tigerish brother, the pickerel, of several species is to be found in both lake and river plentifully. We mainly fished for them with trolling spoons, and on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion my son hooked and with my assistance landed one which scaled 11 1/2 lbs., measured 40 inches in length and 13 inches in circumference. His struggles in the boat broke our favorite spoon, but we did not hold it against him. Black bass, both large- and small-mouth are there, but not plentifully at all seasons. That citizen of the world, the yellow perch, is there of course, ready to bite at anything that bears the semblance of life, whether a worm or a spoon. The humble but succulent "bullpout" (catfish) is there, with the eel and a number of other species. The aristocratic trout is conspicuous for his absence.



As I have said, up to the year 1912, fishing and boating had as I believed filled to the full my vacation activities. Thenceforth the newer interest of hunting Indian remains had the preference. When I returned that year to Brooklyn where I lived, filled with the zeal of the convert, I looked about to see how I might continue my new pursuit within accessible distances. I learned that the New York Museum of Natural History was actively engaged in investigating Indian remains in New Jersey in cooperation with the authorities of that State. From Mr. Kinner, of the Museum's staff, some useful hints were obtained as well as some publications of the results of surveys of the vicinity of New York City and of the State of New Jersey issued by the State Geologist of that State. However, it was not until 1913 that I was able to annex, as it were, personally, productive sites of my own. Henceforth Sundays and holidays became sacred to the quest of the never-too-plentiful "artifact", as Indian relics are modernly known. The state of the weather became a subject of the liveliest concern about Friday afternoon, and one or two slips on the part of the weather man during that first year, when the new convert's zeal flames brightest, seemed nothing less than a personal affront.

*To be continued...*

something isn't working, please let us know by contacting [rgtle@stoweaccess.com](mailto:rgtle@stoweaccess.com).

## Reminder

All memberships renew at the beginning of the new year. You can renew on-line at [www.vtarchaeology.org/members/](http://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.

## Officers and Board 2015

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Brennan Gauthier  
[brennan.gauthier@state.vt.us](mailto:brennan.gauthier@state.vt.us)

### **Vice President**

Alden Oliver  
[aloahsi8@aol.com](mailto:aloahsi8@aol.com)

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[christie.ertel@gmail.com](mailto:christie.ertel@gmail.com)

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Georgeana Little  
[rgtle@stoweaccess.com](mailto:rgtle@stoweaccess.com)

### **Board of Directors**

Yvonne Benney Basque  
[ybbasque@gmail.com](mailto:ybbasque@gmail.com)

Jacob Clay  
[jclay1776@gmail.com](mailto:jclay1776@gmail.com)

Brigitte Helzer  
[bahelzer@gmavt.net](mailto:bahelzer@gmavt.net)

Shayna Lindquist  
[shaynalind91@gmail.com](mailto:shaynalind91@gmail.com)

## Membership Application 2015

**All VAS memberships are renewable as of January 1st.**

### Membership Application/Renewal

*When renewing please include address, telephone number, and email even if you are a long-time member. We are trying to assure the accuracy of our records.*

New                      Renewal                      Address Change

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Category (please circle one):

**R** Individual-\$15      **F** Family-\$25      **SE** Senior-\$10 (65 or over)  
**ST** Student-\$10 (must be full-time; include photocopy of student ID)  
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Make check (US Funds) payable to: The Vermont Archæological Society  
Mail to: PO Box 663, Burlington, VT 05402-0663

You may print and mail this form to the address above or you may also renew on-line at [vtarchaeology.org/members](http://vtarchaeology.org/members) or download an application [here](#).

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.

Anyone wishing a membership card, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Shirley Paustian  
[sphavetrowel@comcast.net](mailto:sphavetrowel@comcast.net)

Niels Rinehart  
[niels\\_rinehart@hotmail.com](mailto:niels_rinehart@hotmail.com)

Sarah van Ryckevorsel  
[sarah.van.ryck@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.van.ryck@gmail.com)

**Journal Staff**

Niels Rinehart  
[niels\\_rinehart@hotmail.com](mailto:niels_rinehart@hotmail.com)



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Georgeana Little  
Vermont Archaeological Society