

The Journal of Vermont Archaeology

The Vermont Archaeological Society
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David R. Starbuck, Editor

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COVER: A drawing by Kevin J. Crisman illustrates nautical archaeology being accomplished on the Burlington Horse Ferry wreck. See *Lake Champlain Nautical Archaeology Since 1980* by Kevin J. Crisman and Arthur B. Cohn, page 153.

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Preface

I am indebted to the Board of Directors and Officers of the Vermont Archaeological Society for their support of this book throughout its preparation, and special thanks go to President Vic Rolando who helped with much of the letter-writing and phoning to solicit articles from prospective authors. Dennis Howe designed and printed this volume, and we are grateful to him for his efforts to produce a publication which will be of lasting benefit to the people of Vermont. Finally, thanks go to State Archaeologist Giovanna Peebles who has prepared a foreword to this volume, describing some of the advances that have occurred in Vermont archaeology since the State Archaeologist's position was created in 1976.

The Vermont Archaeological Society was established in mid-1968 to study and promote the practice of archaeology in the State of Vermont. After twenty-five years of activity in the form of meetings, publications, exhibits and projects, we are pleased to be publishing this anniversary volume which will make the results of research by some of our members available to professionals and avocationals alike. This volume does not present everything that has been learned from archaeology as practiced in

Vermont, but it does attempt to create a "base line" for what is known in the year 1993. With the issuance of this volume, the Vermont Archaeological Society is now looking forward to having an increasingly active publications program in the years ahead, and we anticipate that additional volumes such as this will be published every few years in the future.

The contents of this book rightly suggest that Vermont has an extremely rich prehistoric and historic past, and we are indeed fortunate that 15 professional and avocational archaeologists have prepared written contributions. Some of these articles discuss how the field of archaeology has developed in the State of Vermont over the past century; some are syntheses of what has been learned from prehistoric, historic, industrial, and nautical archaeology over broad regions of the state; and most present detailed examples of what has been learned by conducting research at specific sites. While the authors certainly differ in their perspectives and emphases, all have made a very important contribution to our understanding of Vermont's cultural heritage.

David R. Starbuck, Editor
The Vermont Archaeological Society

Foreword

by Giovanna Peebles

The articles in the Vermont Archaeological Society's 25th Anniversary issue chronicle many of the discoveries, themes, and issues that have been part of my life for seventeen years. In 1976 I was hired as State Archaeologist. I was fortunate to have been in at the beginning of modern Vermont archaeology. Participating in the birthing of anything tends to give one a sense of closeness, familiarity, a certain proprietorship, and considerable involvement of the heart. Frankly, I feel emotional -- with delight and satisfaction -- about this journal that summarizes and highlights the fruit of so many people's individual or collective labors across the years.

Passage of the 1975 Vermont Historic Preservation Act marked the beginning of Vermont's archaeological flowering. Archaeology stopped being an antiquarian pursuit and got serious. The 1975 Act rapidly brought Vermont archaeology into the twentieth century. It revolutionized the way that state government thought about the State's archaeological heritage, at the time believed by many to be a slim, and probably unimportant, heritage indeed. Among its many key mandates, the 1975 Act declared the importance of Vermont's archaeological sites, both on land and underwater, vowed to protect them, and gave the newly created Division for Historic Preservation the womanpower of one to begin to turn the legal declarations into reality. Once a pushy archaeologist entered the bureaucracy, many federal agencies were confronted with discovering and protecting Vermont's archaeological resources. Within a few years, archaeological studies became a regular (if sometimes suspect) part of doing business for those federal and state agencies that could do the most harm to these types of resources. If we know as much as we know about Vermont's prehistory -- as summarized in Peter Thomas', David Lacy's and Frink, Knoblock and Baker's articles -- and history, we must credit those government agencies who took their responsibilities seriously. The Federal Highway Administration, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and the USDA Forest Service deserve much credit for dramatically changing what Vermonters thought they knew about Vermont's long history.

In the 1980s we began to actively protect sites through Vermont's Act 250 process, which regulates many types of private development, including all major subdivisions, special projects, and other developments. Our workload at the Division went from very busy to very frantic (by 1986 there were two archaeologists at the Division, the same number we have in 1993). But our ability to discover new sites and protect many was greatly improved through the regulatory involvement and cooperation of private developers and landowners. Much of the data in Frink, Knoblock, and Baker's article resulted from Act 250-related archaeological studies.

In a poor state such as ours, avocationals are considered to be a valuable commodity. Avocational archaeologists and historians, and other volunteers, quietly and humbly, went about their "hobby" of archaeology and history and contributed what money can't buy. This Journal's contributions by Joe Popecki, William Murphy, Dennis Howe, Marjorie Robbins, and Victor Rolando are testament to the invaluable labors of dedicated volunteers in Vermont. From divers to artifact collectors, from history buffs to bottle washers, we could not have learned so much, so fast, without them. (It's remarkable that some of our most dedicated volunteers aren't even Vermonters. One got so tired of commuting from Massachusetts that he finally moved here!)

From the early 19th century, Vermonters left the state to find jobs, training, and better weather. Although that pattern continues, we are blessed by former Vermonters, such as Scott McLaughlin, who have had to leave for their advanced training but kept their commitment to Vermont archaeology. Although the Vermont educational system has thus far failed to support a graduate program in archaeology, out-of-state graduate students (and post-graduate professionals such as Kevin Crisman) continue their Vermont labors.

The great majority of Vermont's archaeological sites are on private land. If it were not for the cooperation and interest of the landowners, many of the discoveries report-

ed in this journal and the accompanying learning would not have happened. We've learned that landowners, with rare exception, are the most important stewards of our archaeological sites. They are the front line of protection. We need to accelerate our efforts to work with landowners using non-regulatory tools to protect the sites. This journal will help these Vermonters better understand the importance of the sites for which they are the stewards.

As we move forward toward a better understanding of where we came from as a people and how we can take better care of our land and our dwindling resources, we must work more closely with Vermont's Native Americans. Ancestors of the Abenaki were the first on this land, and they adapted very well over 10,000 years of changing climate and changing resources. Vermont's earliest Euroamerican settlers would not have been so hardy without all the help and training they had from the Abenakis. We can learn a great deal more about our prehistory and

history from Vermont's modern-day Abenakis than we can hope to discover through archaeological techniques and from the written record.

The information in this volume vindicates all of us who, from the beginning, believed Vermont to be an undiscovered and unappreciated archaeological treasure trove. From the tops of the Green Mountains to the bottom of Lake Champlain, and in all places in-between, we have discovered a tremendous number of archaeological sites, some remarkably intact, revealing Vermont's Native American prehistory and 300 years of history. But many sites are no longer intact, and most sites haven't even been discovered yet. This Journal challenges us to keep on discovering, understanding, and teaching about this remarkable heritage. In fact, we have a duty to future generations of Vermonters to accelerate our efforts in carrying out these vital tasks if we are to enter the next century with a well-appreciated, well-recognized, and well-protected archaeological heritage.

Introduction

by David R. Starbuck

Many archaeologists have labored in Vermont over the past century, and even in 1994 we continue to learn much that is old and exciting about this state. The archaeologists who practice in Vermont today include several who work for state and federal agencies, a few who teach at colleges and universities, a rapidly growing number who are employed in cultural resource management, and a large, indispensable base of avocationalists who participate in field projects and surveys. Never before has there been so much public interest in the discipline of archaeology, yet within Vermont there are few museums or historic sites which display archaeological materials, there is not one graduate program for training archaeologists, and relatively few archaeological excavations have been fully published upon.

This condition is not unique to Vermont because modern archaeology has few secure, "comfortable" jobs, and in difficult economic times fields such as archaeology, history, and historic preservation are among the first to suffer. Still, archaeology has had a distinguished history in Vermont, and there is much in which we may take pride. Many of Vermont's most significant prehistoric discoveries are expertly described in *The Original Vermonters*, written by William Haviland and Marjory Power (1981), and several excellent syntheses have also been prepared which describe specific time periods or cultural practices in Vermont, including the Paleo-Indian period (Loring 1980), the Early and Middle Archaic periods (Thomas 1992), and the mortuary ceremonialism of the Early Woodland period (Loring 1985).

Among the better site reports are those which describe the Winooski site, located on the Winooski River (Power and Petersen 1984; Power, Cowen and Petersen 1980; Petersen 1980; Petersen and Power 1985); the Boucher site in Highgate (Heckenberger, Petersen, Cowie, Spiess, Basa, and Stuckenrath 1990; Heckenberger, Petersen, and Basa 1990); the McNeil Generating Plant site in Burlington (Thomas 1980); the Skitchewaug site in Springfield (Heckenberger, Petersen, and Sidell 1992);

the Shelburne Pond area (Petersen, Wolford, Hamilton, LaBar and Heckenberger 1985); the KI site and Otter Creek No. 2 site (Ritchie 1968, 1979); and the John's Bridge site in Swanton (Thomas and Robinson 1980). Reports such as these demonstrate that while there continues to be some reliance upon artifact typologies and cultural chronologies that were first developed in other states, Vermont archaeology has nevertheless contributed much to our understanding of the larger region.

Thanks to articles and books such as the ones mentioned above, our knowledge of Vermont's earliest inhabitants is rapidly growing. Much information has also been summarized in contract reports prepared for state and federal agencies, although these clearly have a smaller circulation. There also is much that has been learned from ethnohistorical sources and from more recent interviews conducted with Vermont's Abenakis. The late Gordon Day published a great many superb articles on the Abenaki (1965, 1971, 1978 and others), and now Colin Calloway has written several books and articles that richly add to our knowledge of Vermont's first people (1984, 1990, 1991, 1992 and others). Thanks to the efforts of Day, Calloway, John Moody, Jeanne Brink and others, our knowledge of the ethnohistory and history of Native peoples in Vermont has advanced immeasurably within just the past forty years.

Unfortunately, very little has been published in Vermont in the newer field of historical archaeology, and there are relatively few good site reports and virtually no syntheses that describe the sites of European-Americans who have lived in the state. Arguably the first historical archaeology project in Vermont was work conducted at the Asa Knight General Store in Dummerston by Suzanne Spencer-Wood (Elliott 1977); and this was followed by excavations at the 1724 site of Fort Dummer (just south of Brattleboro) in 1976 (Harrington 1978; Pinello 1985) and at the 1775 site of the Selleck Cabin (Hubbardton Battlefield) in 1977 (Bower 1978). At about the same time, a systematic survey was conducted by Giovanna

Neudorfer (Peebles) of Vermont's stone chambers (popularly referred to as "beehives" or "root cellars"), culminating in Vermont's first book on a historical archaeology topic (Neudorfer 1980). Since then, historic site excavations have been conducted at the Wright Roberts site, an 18th-century residence in West Rutland (Doherty 1985); the Peter Ferris homestead in Panton (Starbuck 1989); and very extensive work has been undertaken at the Revolutionary War encampment of Mount Independence in Orwell (see the articles in this volume). Other historic site excavations have been conducted, notably at the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington, at Chimney Point State Historic Site in Addison, and at the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, but few results have been published. Increasingly, the majority of historic site excavations have been the result of cultural resource management activities, rather than taking the form of more traditional, problem-oriented research.

Vermont has also benefited greatly from the efforts of Art Cohn, Kevin Crisman and their colleagues at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum who conduct nautical research in Lake Champlain. With assistance from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M, the Maritime Museum and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation have obtained invaluable knowledge about the shipwrecks in Lake Champlain, making this one of the best-known historic waterways in the United States (see Cohn and True 1992; Crisman 1986, 1987; Krueger et al. 1985; Shomette 1989). Notably, Vermont's Division for Historic Preservation also manages one of the very few systems of underwater historic preserves in this country so that sport divers may visit and appreciate underwater wreck sites in Lake Champlain.

Finally, even industrial archaeology in Vermont has achieved regional and national recognition, thanks principally to the surveys conducted by Victor Rolando and his colleague Robert West at Vermont's iron, charcoal and lime sites (see Rolando 1991, 1992a, 1992b). There are still a great many other sites of early Vermont industry that await archaeological documentation, including quarries, sawmills, grist mills, bridges, and factories, but Rolando's work stands out as being uniquely comprehensive and useful.

Vermont archaeology has thus developed into an extremely vigorous field. While many might wish that more sites had been located and tested, and more predictive models developed to understand the behavior of past Vermonters, we nevertheless have already learned a great deal about our

state and eagerly anticipate having the opportunity to continue doing exciting research in the future.

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