

“To Stimulate the Study of Archaeology...”: The Vermont Archaeological Society, 1968 - 1993

by Joseph T. Popecki

Vermont has a disadvantage. Smaller in population than many U.S. cities, achieving the critical mass necessary to provide essential services and develop community organizations often presents special challenges not characteristic of states with larger populations. Historic preservation and archaeological activity are no exceptions.

In the early part of the 20th century, a great many young people grew up on working farms. Following a plow that turned up artifacts of another age often hooked Vermonters into further archaeological activity. However, curiosity was not always a fair substitute for the knowledge essential to properly remove and document what their finds revealed to them. It is not typical of human nature to shrug off curiosity and resist the urge to “dig.” Some of the early amateurs managed to combine their archaeological avocation with other sympathetic careers.

The veteran Vermont archaeologist (with the possible exception of State Geologist George H. Perkins) was Leslie B. Truax of St. Albans who collected artifacts in Grand Isle and Franklin counties for a sixty-year period until his death in 1932. He excavated the cemetery on the Frink farm and contributed articles to several scientific magazines, as well as to the *Saint Albans Messenger*. As early as the 1920s, Bill Ross and Ben Fisher discovered what is now known as the Reagen site in East Highgate. Beginning in 1937, John Bailey excavated the Donovan site near Vergennes at the Dead and Otter Creeks. Amateur archaeologist and Game Warden Tom Daniels discovered an Archaic site on the Otter Creek, not far from Rutland. Assisted by Kathleen Rowlands of Poultney, he excavated at Ketcham’s Island until his death in 1962. For years, he had maintained a museum next to his home which was the repository for his collection and open to the public.

The Vermont Historical Society underwrote a survey of prehistoric sites in the state in the 1940s and sponsored archaeological investigations of a prehistoric settlement near Vergennes in the 1950s. At least two professionals

were active in the state during the entrepreneurial period of Vermont archaeology. In the 1950s, Gordon Day began his anthropological work and ethnographic analysis of the Western Abenaki using archival and anecdotal sources. His excellent article in a 1965 issue of *Vermont History* was a first effort to correct misinformation about Vermont Indians. Canadian amateur archaeologist Lois Callan, who summered in the Lake Champlain Islands, urged New York State Archaeologist William Ritchie to seek out glacial kame burials in Isle LaMotte. In 1959 and 1960, Ritchie worked with Tom Daniels and in 1966 returned to his KI site with assistant Robert Funk.

In the absence of a formal archaeological association in the state, the Fleming Museum of the University of Vermont served to knit together the community of amateur archaeologists. Many offered their collections to the Museum, including Truax. Director Horace Eldred described “Our Indian Archaeology Exhibit” in a January 1942 flyer. The Champlain Valley Archaeological Society was begun in about 1938. John Bailey, who was identified as the “Archaeologist for the Society,” described a slate-producing site near Vergennes in the second number of the Society’s *Bulletin* dated June 1939. He also surveyed “Archaeology in Vermont in 1938” in the February 1939 issue of the *Vermont Alumnus*. Payson Hatch excavated a burial site in Orwell for the CVAS in 1942, only to have it pillaged later in the decade.

William Haviland joined the staff of the Sociology/Anthropology Department of the University of Vermont in 1965. While fascinated with the prehistory of Vermont, he was appalled at the prevailing wisdom that “Indians never lived in Vermont.” During the sixties, his free time was occupied with completing the documentation of a ten-year program at the Maya site of Tikal in Guatemala. He did manage, meanwhile, to accumulate information on a number of known sites in the state. Having discharged most of his obligations to the Tikal project in 1967, Haviland turned his attention to resolving some of the problems endemic to archaeological activity in Vermont.

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The idea of forming a society of professional and amateur archaeologists originated with one of Bill's undergraduate students, Ralph Roberts. A small group, responding to word-of-mouth publicity, gathered at the University on May 14, 1968. Present at the birth of what would become the Vermont Archaeological Society were: Joe and Jeanne Popecki, Sheldon Maiboom, Ken Varney, James Manley, H.N. "Nick" Muller III, Charles Mullen, Durwood and Sue Smith, Charley Mansolillo, Mark Kennedy, Louise Basa, Bill Haviland and Ralph Roberts. The steering committee elected Roberts Chairman, Joe Popecki Vice-Chairman, Nick Muller Secretary and Durwood Smith as keeper of the Society's finances. Several planning meetings followed, usually in the shade of a tree at the rear of Williams Science Hall on the University of Vermont campus.

The committee, determined to create a not-for-profit corporation, set about drafting (with legal assistance) statements of purpose, name and powers, which were filed in June 1968. After twenty-five years, the objectives enumerated remain pretty much unchanged: to "... stimulate the study of Archaeology, particularly in Vermont; promote research; conserve archaeological sites, data, and artifacts; disseminate archaeological information; seek through education the promotion of intelligent archaeological activity; prevent commercial exploitation of archaeological sites and specimens; and, to foster public understanding of the aims of archaeological research."

As the Society emerged from its cocoon, the first slate of officers remained the same as for the steering committee with one exception. Ralph Roberts decided to attend graduate school, and VP Joe Popecki moved into the President's position, with Charles Morrissey becoming Vice-President. Word of the new Society went out to all known enthusiasts for Vermont archaeology. With all the energy characteristic of a new organization, the first meeting, an overnighter, was held at the Sugarbush Inn and was attended by sixty new members. Total membership at the end of the first year was 150. The principal speaker of the conference was Douglas S. Byers, curator emeritus of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation in Andover, Massachusetts. The evening session was marked by a vigorous "discussion" between Byers and junior member Clark Hinsdale III over the role of the Original Americans in adapting corn to harsh, northern climates.

During the business meeting, the Board of the VAS appointed three committees: Projects (Ken Varney), Site



Plate 1. VAS members clear brush in April of 1969 to lay out the lines for the Society's first "dig" at Pine Island in Colchester. Photo by the author.

Survey (Haviland and Roberts), and Museum (Durwood Smith). The last committee was meant to find housing for collections of artifacts existing throughout the state and at the Fleming Museum, which, for lack of space, was no longer able to exhibit its archaeological materials. These concerns and initial activities inspired an earnest effort to establish a productive partnership between the VAS and the state's Division for Historic Preservation (DHP). At the time, the position of State Archeologist did not exist. Realizing that a high proportion of the VAS membership was not likely to be engaged in archaeological activity, the Board determined to begin a newsletter, which was initially edited by journalist Brenda Morrissey. The Vermont Historical Society (VHS) accorded the VAS the opportunity to increase its visibility by inviting it to provide the program for the VHS winter seminar in Montpelier on February 20, 1969. Nick Muller directed the presentation. Ken Varney and Joe Popecki appeared on statewide educational television to further increase the visibility of the fledgling organization.

Still flushed with early enthusiasm and success, the Society chose to hold its second annual meeting at the Bolton Valley Lodge on December 5-6, 1969. After re-electing the officers for another term, the members heard Dean Snow (SUNY Albany) on the subject of the relationship of the "Red Paint People" to the Laurentian tra-

dition. Louise Basa gave variety to the program with a paper on "The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in Slovakia." Bill Haviland reported on the Society's first significant activity, the excavations at "Pine Island" (VT-CH-1,2). This remnant of the Winooski delta stood fifty feet above the river. Contractors were preparing to move fill from that area for the first phase of the Burlington Beltline. They were persuaded to delay the haul until the origins of two mounds could be determined. The work of Bill Haviland, Madaline Gifford, Joe Popecki, Carl Swanson and Ken Varney determined that the mounds were remnants of a charcoal manufacturing enterprise operated by the Allen brothers. Publicity in the *Burlington Free Press* caused the site to be overrun on the next weekend, which gave the area the appearance of a Sunday School picnic. A number of artifacts were collected in other areas of the "Island," but the "dig" was something of a disappointment. (See Plate 1.)

The third *VAS Newsletter* (August 1970) carried a list of individual members for the first time. Of the total of 170, only the following are still active members in 1993: Louise Basa, Bill Haviland, Graham Newell, Jeanne and Joe Popecki, Sue Smith, Dean Snow (honorary), Joe Sullivan and Ken Varney. Several founding members have died. At the third annual meeting (Bolton) in September, there were few changes in the Board. Joe Popecki, Charlie Morrissey and Durwood Smith were re-elected to their respective positions of president, vice-president and treasurer. The Putney Town Clerk, Inez Harlow, became secretary. Nick Muller, Ralph Roberts and Cole Twitchell, MD, continued as Board members and were joined by Ken Varney, Inez Harlow and Ralph N. Hill.

Logic and necessity determined the early activity of VAS members. Ken Varney reported to membership on the findings at the Shelburne Pond site (VT-CH-3). Work started in the fall of 1969, halted in the winter, and resumed in April 1970 under the most adverse conditions — "mud season" in Vermont. Ken concluded that the site was probably Archaic (3-4,000 B.C.) and that the Society needed to develop better methods of site recording and artifact collecting. He also expressed his concern about the management of small groups in the field, complaining about the inordinate time spent in "running" the Society composed of mostly avocational archaeologists. His message was to be repeated many times in the future. A committee joined Vermont Board for Historic Sites (now DHP) director Bill Pinney at the Chimney Point Tavern to discuss using the main building as a museum to

house artifact collections belonging to the Society and the State.

Concerned about the operation of the Society by a group of people whose primary occupations were elsewhere, member Maurice Crandall recruited a volunteer, part-time executive director, George Leitch. The promising arrangement lasted just four months, and the problem of organizational operation survives to this day. At the October 23, 1971 meeting in Bolton Valley, Darrel Casteel, Doug Egeland, Dick Adams and Ed Bacon were elected trustees to replace Durwood Smith, Charles Morrissey and Cole Twitchell, all of whom resigned. The Board elected Nick Muller President, Dick Adams Vice-President, Inez Harlow Secretary, and Ken Varney Treasurer. Adams petitioned to start a Vergennes chapter, and Ed Bacon did the same for Burlington. Both were approved.

At year's end, the Society attained a certain stability by acquiring a Postal Service box address in Burlington and shed its "briefcase office" image. In the spring of 1972, the VAS initiated another tradition, that of holding a second meeting each year. Maurice "Doc" Robbins, just appointed State Archaeologist of Massachusetts, was the principal speaker. A generous crowd braved winter weather in April to attend the meeting at the Pavilion in Montpelier. This was also the time when Anthropology separated itself from Sociology at the University of Vermont and appointed VAS founding member Bill Haviland to be the first Chairman of the new Anthropology Department. At about the same time, the Fleming Museum transferred the 12,000-piece artifact collection from its attic to the Anthropology Department's quarters in Williams Science Hall. The bulk of the collection had been curated by George Perkins and derived largely from the Donovan and Rivers sites.

President Muller selected Jeff Aronson, a University colleague, to be Secretary and Editor of the *VAS Newsletter*. At the same time, he appointed a committee to overhaul the Bylaws. Founding member Ken Varney resigned as trustee and treasurer in anticipation of retirement to Florida, and Ed Bacon took over his position. The spring meeting was held jointly with the Northeast Anthropological Association on the campus of the University. It was at this meeting that the first public signs of a confrontation between the VAS and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation became evident. The "rivalry" was based on disagreement over the need for site protection by law, and the failure of the DHP to appoint a State Archaeologist as required by federal legislation. The

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Burlington Chapter's Bob Johnson, one of several VAS members doing survey work in the area, called attention to the serious erosion of the Winooski River's banks in that city.

In the meantime, there were rumblings of unrest in the Society itself. It was a time when young people innately distrusted adults over age 40. At only five years into its institutional life, the VAS began the process of "reinventing the wheel," an exercise it would doom itself to repeat on a cyclic basis. President Muller appointed Louise Basa chair of a task force to "spearhead planning for the Society's future." Starting with issue #10 of the *VAS Newsletter* (April 1974), fourteen were "written largely by enthusiastic members of the Task Force rather [than] by a few trustees ...". Ten percent of the membership answered a questionnaire composed by Louise Basa which solicited guidance on what direction the Society should take. At the following Spring Meeting (1974), Louise reported that the responses listed these preferences: education, frequent publication, a repository for artifacts, and a paid full- or part-time director. Muller discounted the validity of the study and presented his own list of tasks for accomplishment: meetings, field work, financial support for excavation, publication, and raising public awareness about archaeology in Vermont. The tension between popular opinion and enlightened logic would prevail for years. With several professionals and well trained amateurs available among VAS members, the question of responsibility for directing a variety of archaeological activities became a concern of the Society. The position of State Archaeologist was still unfilled, but the University's Anthropology Department was staffed by professionals who could press into service whatever students might be required for a project. Tom Vogelmann spent the summer of 1973 surveying the archaeological potential in the proposed path of Interstate 91 through the Northeast Kingdom, and Louise Basa was excavating an Adena-related site in Highgate. Just after President Nixon signed the Archaeological Conservation Act of 1974 (May 24), Basa left the University to teach at Johnson State College. She was replaced by Marjorie Honerkamp Power. The Board chose Dick Adams of Vergennes to be President and admitted that the "vision" of what the Society should be was still very murky.

The April 19, 1975 (spring) meeting at the Lincoln Inn offered an enticing agenda (see Plate 2). The membership approved the recommendations of the Bylaws Revision Committee, Chester Liebs presented the first program on industrial archaeology, and Clark Hinsdale III reported on

his experience working at the famous Koster site. Carl Swanson and two associates were asked to redesign the Society's logo, while Armand Beliveau was asked to find a home for the VAS. News from Middlebury indicated that the Historic Archaeological Alliance, under the direction of Bill Murphy, was planning an excavation on the site of the Benjamin Lawrence Gunsmith and Blacksmith Shop.

A few weeks later, founding member Durwood Smith was claimed by death. After some discussion about how to create a proper memorial, the Board decided to set up a revolving fund to support Society publication. Carl Swanson got the assignment of organizing a benefit auction to raise the initial money. While Carl, Ray Precourt, Dee Martin (Brightstar), Jane Gibbons and Joyce Adams made plans and gathered auctionable items, the political scene was heating up. Members of the Society had been pressuring the Division for Historic Preservation and key legislators to appoint a State Archeologist, noting the potential loss of thousands of dollars in federal preservation funds. In frustration, the Board issued a statement to the press suggesting that, since the State was not living up to its mandate, the National Park Service should reconsider funding historic preservation projects in Vermont. There was steam rising from Montpelier, but the move got State Government attention and provoked appropriate action.

Ed Bacon was elected President by the Board following the annual meeting in 1975, and Reuben Sherman assumed responsibility for the *VAS Newsletter*. The Bixby Library in Vergennes, which served as the museum for the Vergennes Chapter's artifacts, was also named repository for the VAS archives. As membership in the Chapter began to decline, archival materials were actually retired to the Anthropology Lab in Williams Science Hall at the University. By 1976, Louise Basa had much to report about her activities at the Boucher site. Ed Bacon resigned the presidency in anticipation of moving out-of-state, and Basa took an archaeological position in state government in Albany. Bill Haviland and Joe Popecki were invited to serve on the selection committee for a state archaeologist. Giovanna Neudorfer (now Peebles) won committee approval. (See Plate 3.)

The first benefit auction for the "Smith Fund" (publication) was held under the direction of Carl Swanson on June 5, 1976, at Saint Paul's Cathedral. The Board decided that the Fund monies could be used for any kind of publication except the *VAS Newsletter*. Clark Hinsdale III was named President, and Jim Griffin (President of Central



Plate 2. *Charles Paquin gives a demonstration of flint-knapping to members attending the VAS Annual Meeting in October of 1975. Photo by the author.*

Vermont Public Service Corporation) was elected Vice-President at the end of the annual meeting. The Board approved paying the 20% local match of federal funds to hire two college work/study students to catalog artifacts and prepare site data for the Auclair and Ewing sites which had been accumulating in the Anthropology Lab. The new State Archeologist took over maintenance of the Site Survey from the Society and proposed a joint venture with the VAS to certify amateur archaeologists. The University's Anthropology Department took a major step toward assuming responsibility for contract archaeology in the state by completing surveys on Routes US2, US7 and I91. Concern about the native rights and identity of the Abenakis was frequently expressed by many Vermonters. The *VAS Newsletter* reprinted Jane Baker's "Report to Gov. Thomas P. Salmon ... Regarding the Claims Presented by the Abenaki Nation."

Trustees expressed alarm at the drop in membership to 42 by the middle of 1977. Joe Popecki presented a plan to the Board for the improvement of intra-board communication and effectiveness to replace the restlessness and enthusiasm for reform that was the hallmark of the "Young Turks" in 1974. The spring meeting featured one of the finest presentations it has ever offered when Gordon Day (then senior ethnologist at the Museum of Man in Ottawa) spoke on "The Western Abenaki of Quebec and Vermont." Carl Swanson directed a second benefit auction for the "Smith Fund," raising another \$1,000. Participation by VAS members was minimal and marked the end of auc-



Plate 3. *State Archaeologist Giovanna Peebles speaking at the VAS Spring Meeting in 1986. Photo by the author.*

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tions as a method of raising operating funds outside the collection of dues. For the second summer, the Anthropology Department offered a three-credit, ten-day field school directed by Marjory Power. The Society had continually agonized over its role in providing archaeological services. Board members frequently noted that, by its nature and the character of its membership, organized response to need was frequently most difficult. Now the State's DHP began issuing regular contracts to the University for archaeological services.

Frank Cowan petitioned the Board for more work/study money to arrange for lab work on the collections from the Auclair and Ewing sites, and now the prolific Winooski (VT-CH-46) site. Trustees elected at the annual meeting (1977) did not become known to the membership for nearly a year because of a lapse in newsletter publication. Carolyn Kerson became the first member recognized by the "Vermont Certification Board," earning the title, "Basic Lab Technician."

As the VAS began the observation of its tenth anniversary, a number of exciting things were about to happen. Mr. and Mrs. John Boucher presented to the University the artifacts from their homesite (VT-FR-26), excavated in 1973 by member Louise Basa and associates. The site represented the first complete excavation of an early Woodland, Adena-related cemetery in the Northeast. It also contributed to a revival of the controversy over the removal of Native American grave remains. At the spring meeting, held in June at the Shelburne Museum, a program of four seminars in archaeology was announced, jointly sponsored by the VAS and the DHP. They were scheduled at bi-monthly intervals in Brattleboro, Rutland and Burlington, and the featured leaders were Dena Dincauze, Marj Power, Robert Funk (recently retired as the New York State Archaeologist) and Bill Haviland. At about that time, Bill was awarded a two-year fellowship to write a cultural account of Vermont Indians. On July 3, Peter Thomas from Massachusetts joined the staff of the University's Anthropology Department to manage contract archaeology projects.

By late summer of 1978, Jim Petersen was able to report that salvage operations on the Winooski site (VT-CH-46) were nearly complete. As with the Boucher site, the work was performed by Anthropology Department staff and students, as well as by other members of the VAS. At the annual meeting in October, the Board elected Jim Griffin President and Gordon Nielsen VP. Joe Popecki was re-

elected Treasurer and Sue Smith Secretary. Bill Bayreuther took over the *VAS Newsletter* from Davis Koier. A new arrival on the Vermont archaeology scene, Vic Rolando, spoke with authority on his specialty, "Stone-built Blast Furnaces in Vermont, and the Iron-making Industry." Members were also becoming accustomed to regular reports from State Archeologist Giovanna Peebles. At the annual meeting, she appealed to membership to urge the appropriate Congressional subcommittees to approve reauthorization of funding for Public Law 93-291. Without it there would be no public archaeology program and no State Archeologist. In mid-fall, two students found a dugout canoe in Shelburne Pond. Frank Cowan and his crew moved it to an apple warehouse in Addison County to await restoration treatment.

By spring 1979, eleven co-sponsored seminars were held at various sites around the state. Leaders in the second series were Vic Rolando, Gordon Day, Charles Bolian, H.N. Muller III, and David Switzer. Issue #28 of the *VAS Newsletter* carried the updated text of Vermont's Historic Preservation Act of 1973.

It had been some time since the Society had published anything except irregular issues of the *Newsletter*, so when Jim Petersen finished his report, *Middle Woodland Ceramics of the Winooski Site, A.D. 1-1,000*, it was published (1980) by the VAS as New Series Monograph #1. Members were treated to a free copy. The year 1980 also marked another development on the archaeological stage, the founding of the Champlain Maritime Society in June. The first President was VAS member Arthur Cohn. Another VAS and CMS member, Kevin Crisman, enlivened several articles in the *VAS Newsletter* with his fine maritime illustrations. Lauren Kelley, a teacher in the Colchester School System and also a VAS member, previewed her Project Outreach slide show at the spring meeting. By the time the annual (fall) meeting rolled around, Peter Thomas began a series of regular reports on his survey work which started with the Lamoille and Mississquoi River watersheds. Gordon Day gave one of his rare presentations sorting out the various Indian groups who peopled New England. And Les Foshay found another dugout canoe in Shelburne Pond. Bill Bayreuther was named the new leader of the Society. When Giovanna Peebles reported to members on the state of archaeological affairs as viewed from the perspective of the DHP, she also announced the publication by the Vermont Historical Society of her book, *Vermont's Stone Chambers* (Neudorfer 1980). It was one of the high points in a two-year controversy and debate with the late Warren Cook

of Castleton State College over the origin of the mysterious low structures built of field stones and located throughout the state. In her publication, she carefully documented the surviving physical remains of stone chambers in the state and concluded that there was no structural evidence for Europeans visiting Vermont in Pre-Columbian times.

In 1981 the Society held a joint meeting with the Rutland Historical Society at the city's public library. The Board set fixed meeting dates for the spring and fall (annual) meetings, but the schedule has rarely been observed since then. Another notable site in Franklin County, the John's Bridge Site, yielded what has become known as the "Swanton corner-notched point." At the fall meeting, Bill Haviland shared his experiences in writing *The Original Vermonters* (Haviland and Power 1981). Membership had now grown to just over 100, five of whom were Life Members. (See Plate 4.) Dues had been increased in the previous year to \$7.50.

The spring meeting, held in the Anthropology Lab at the University of Vermont, was a bare-bones, almost ascetic affair with limited food and refreshments. The presentations, however, were imaginatively titled. Bill Haviland spoke on "Skeletons in the Archaeological Closet;" Peter Thomas talked about "The Tyranny of Ants, Worms and Grubs;" and geographer Aulis Lind introduced members to the techniques of exploration by remote sensing with her "Looking For a Needle in a Haystack." Now that benefit

auctions were a thing of the past, Prudence Doherty introduced a new, small-scale fund-raising project with the sale of souvenir T-shirts. The Large and Extra Large sizes proved most popular! Joe Popecki's re-election as Treasurer prompted some wags to name him "Treasurer for Life." In November of 1982, members Sandy Partridge, Peter Thomas, Prudence Doherty and the late Warren Cook served as delegates to the Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage held at the VHS headquarters in Montpelier. At the annual meeting in October 1983, President Bill Noel announced that the Society had made the transition from an excavation-oriented organization to one more occupied with education outreach. This reality proved troubling to many members. Once again, a Bylaws revision was approved by members, and the Publications Committee agreed to "limited publication" of the text by Thomas and Robinson entitled, *The John's Bridge Site Report* (1980). While many copies of Petersen's excellent writing on the Winooski Site remain in storage, the John's Bridge report is out-of-print. No formula has been discovered for predicting publication demand.

On April 14, 1984, the archaeological societies of three states — Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont — held a joint meeting at New Hampshire College in Manchester. Members John Moody and Peter Thomas provided the Vermont contribution to the program. Shortly thereafter, the DHP published *Seasons of Prehistory: 4,000 Years at the Winooski Site*, authored by members Marjory Power



Plate 4. Four of the Vermont Archaeological Society's Life Members at the Spring 1986 Meeting, left to right: the late Gordon Day (honorary), William Haviland, Fred Royce, and Sanborn Partridge. (David Lacy is seated in the left foreground.) Photo by the author.

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and Jim Petersen (1984). There were other member activities of note: David Lacy (a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Massachusetts) was appointed Forest Archaeologist for the Green Mountain National Forest by the U.S. Forest Service; Shelley Hight was hired by the DHP as Assistant State Archeologist; Charlie Paquin earned a DHP grant to study the artifact collection of Gordon Neilsen, which had been gathered from over 70 sites in the Little Otter Creek watershed; and Jim Petersen began a report synthesizing the work at thirty-one sites around the Shelburne Pond, Ewing and Auclair sites.

The 1984 annual meeting happened at the Fleming Museum on October 13, 1984, coincident with its "Original Vermonters Symposium and Exhibition." It proved to be excellent publicity for the publication of Haviland's and Power's new book, *The Original Vermonters*. Another event worth noting was the election by the VAS Board of its first woman president, Dee Brightstar. The UVM Consulting Archaeology Program (CAP) added 51 county sites to the State Inventory as members completed reconnaissance of the route recommended for the Chittenden County Circumferential Highway. The Board also mandated a "get tough" policy with members who regularly paid their dues only every two or three years, but enjoyed the services of the Society on a continuing basis.

In 1985, just after completing a sound-slide film teaching kit intended for school use, Steve Nelson enlisted in the Peace Corps. VAS Newsletter editor Prudence Doherty resigned as she and her husband prepared to move to Maine. Scott Dillon was appointed to succeed her, but no more issues appeared that year. An old institutional concern began to surface again — the future of VAS programs. Treasurer Joe Popecki mailed a "delphic exercise" to members soliciting their expectations and preferences for VAS activities. The results were used at an October workshop and published in issue #53 of the Newsletter (April 1986). Board President Doug Frink staked out a new field of interest with his group project, "A Statement of Ethics." Clearly, Frink was deeply concerned over the preoccupation of many members with excavation to the exclusion of other projects and values. By the end of the year, there were nine trustee vacancies.

By the time of the annual meeting in 1986 (Middlebury), six standing committees were created or revitalized. The Finance Committee was charged with the development of an annual budget, a process which had fallen into disuse. The program was devoted entirely to historical

archaeology, guided by Prudence Doherty who had returned from Maine. A tour of the fine Sheldon Museum followed a box lunch, the latter being a sign that economy was still the dominant flag on the VAS pole. Jim Petersen was awarded a grant to obtain Carbon-14 dates of select samples from the Highgate sites. The Board reacted with little enthusiasm to overtures from the Center for the Study of Man in Maine to develop cooperative ventures.

Founding member M. Coleman Twitchell, MD, died in Burlington at age 74. Kevin Dann earned a grant from the Cecil Howard Charitable Trust to complete a biography of ethnographer Gordon Day. The Society simultaneously awarded Day honorary Life Membership in recognition of his considerable accomplishments in documenting the languages of Northeast Indians, especially Vermont's Abenakis.

Cindy Cook, a VAS member since high school, was named "Compliance Coordinator" at the DHP. At the same time, the Division published Kevin Crisman's *Of Sailing Ships and Sidewheelers: the History and Nautical Archaeology of Lake Champlain* (1986). Joe Popecki was given the task of preparing for the observance of the Society's twentieth anniversary, which would be the subject of the annual meeting in October 1988. Sharon Murray was named Newsletter editor by the Board, beginning with issue #58; this was yet another attempt to inject the Society's principal product with the quality of regularity in publication. There continued to be an abiding concern that few VAS members publish on a regular basis. Life member Sanborn (Sandy) Partridge gave 200 shares of Ski Ltd. stock to the Society for the purpose of enriching its fund for publication. Upon its liquidation in September 1986, the stock yielded about \$2,000, which was invested in a conservative instrument that could be readily accessed to support a publishing venture. The stock, plus its accumulated earnings, still waits to be used.

Following the fall 1986 meeting in Middlebury, the Board elected Prudence Doherty President and Vic Rolando Vice-President. When drawing up its 1987 speakers' list, the Vermont Council on the Humanities and Public Issues included a Native American History Program. John Moody of Sharon, long-time researcher of Vermont's native heritage, was to give several presentations. The DHP announced the hiring of David Skinas as its Survey Archeologist, and the reassignment of Shelley Hight to the management of the Bennington Monument.

Trudging through the wet underbrush of a Vermont spring in 1987, Vic Rolando and Bob West unexpectedly discovered a rare rectangular stone charcoal kiln near Leffert's Pond in Rutland County (VT-RU-156). The structure remained partially standing.

A proposal to the Vermont Council for the Humanities to fund work in the Highgate Falls Archaeological District and on the Mississquoi River was rejected. The plan included eight one-week field schools, five evening lectures, six Sunday afternoon workshops, guided site tours and a slide show. However, Jim Petersen obtained funding to accomplish a few of the objectives from the Cecil Howard Charitable Trust.

After the 1987 annual meeting, Prudence Doherty, Vic Rolando and Joe Popecki were re-elected President, Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively, and Bill Murphy agreed to serve as Secretary. The Board agreed to award a grant of \$175 to Mike Heckenberger to make about 100 slides of textile remains from the Boucher site. The slides are the property of the Archaeological Society.

In early 1988, member Kevin Crisman, a nautical archaeologist for the Basin Harbor Maritime Museum (now the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum), published *The Eagle, an American Brig on Lake Champlain During the War of 1812* (Crisman 1988). VAS Newsletter editor Sharon Murray appealed once again for contributions from members. In the same issue, Bill Murphy editorialized on the problem saying, "I am disappointed at a Society that seems to have lost its sense of purpose." Vic Rolando turned a personal project into an institutional one by extending the indexing of the VAS Newsletter to begin with issue number one.

The April 23, 1988 spring meeting featured a most profound self-examination entitled, "The State of Vermont Archaeology, Past, Present and Future." The panel, moderated by David Starbuck, included members Rolando, Murphy, Thomas, Power, Frink, Haviland, Peebles and Cohn. The Treasurer's report noted that membership was down to just 44 (paid) of whom ten were Life Members.

In mid-1988, the Division for Historic Preservation hired Audrey Porsche to be regional historic sites administrator for the Hubbardton Battlefield, Chimney Point State Historic Site, Mount Independence Historic Site, and the Forest Dale Ironworks. Her immediate goal of establishing a museum in the former tavern at Chimney Point was

achieved in 1991. The museum opened that year and now presents an overview of Vermont prehistory as well as exhibits about Vermont's French and Native American heritage, past and present.

The October 15, 1988 (annual) meeting at the Sheraton Burlington Inn marked the 20th Anniversary of the Society. The program was an all-member one featuring six speakers and a report from the State Archaeologist. Joe Popecki distributed a souvenir publication to meeting attendees entitled, "A Brief History of the Society, 1968-1987, Drawn from Its Newsletters and Trustee Meeting Minutes." After dinner, Kevin Dann, biographer of Gordon Day, talked about the ethnologist's long relationship with the Vermont Archaeological Society. Day was presented an honorary Life membership, the only one given by the Society to date. Joe Popecki covered twenty years of VAS history in a sound/slide show which captured pictures and voices as far back as the first meeting at Sugarbush and photos of the first VAS excavation at Pine Island.

The twelve-member VAS Board elected Bill Murphy President for 1989. He also edited issue #60 (March) of the VAS Newsletter in which he made yet one more plea for member involvement. Members Peebles, Skinas, Cohn, Starbuck and Murphy attended the first Joint Archaeological Congress held in Baltimore in January 1989. Giovanna Peebles and David Skinas presented a paper on Vermont's Underwater Historic Preserve program.

The March 1989 issue of the VAS Newsletter included an article which previewed a feature of the spring meeting at the Brandon Inn — a walking tour of the Forestdale Furnace. An afternoon walk around the site, portions of which date back to 1810, was led by Vic Rolando and David Starbuck. On the following Memorial Day weekend, thirty people (mostly members) participated in a recording session there.

Prudence Doherty re-assumed at that time the editorship of the VAS Newsletter which was still bedeviled by a membership reluctant to communicate. She returned to the spelling of "archaeology" in the text of the Newsletter. (The Board had decided a dozen years before to use the more modern spelling of "archeology.")

While the VAS did not sponsor any site projects in 1989, members were urged to help make the State's "Heritage '91" program a success by participating in one or more of

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six archaeological projects. The major one was at Mount Independence where David Starbuck directed a UVM Summer Field School from July 3 to August 11.

By mid-year Scott McLaughlin, assisted by UVM students working for the Consulting Archaeology Program (CAP), undertook a descriptive inventory and analysis of the more than 1,000 artifacts housed at Chimney Point State Historic Site. The largest of the collections being curated at Chimney Point is that of the late Tom Daniels which was purchased by the State from his widow in 1971. Two smaller collections originated with Millard Barnes, a former owner of the Chimney Point site, and his neighbor Richard Watson. Ethan Allen Homestead Site Manager Scott Stevens appealed to VAS members to volunteer for summer work at its VT-CH-96 and VT-CH-136 sites. There were two major components which needed to be tested, one prehistoric (estimated to be Late Archaic and dating between 3500 and 2500 B.C.) and the other historic. The latter project focused on former outbuilding locations.

U.S. Forest Service Archaeologist David Lacy, one of the newest members of the VAS Board, drafted a policy entitled, "An Action Plan for the Treatment of Human Remains on the Green Mountain National Forest." Lacy was responding to a national concern by Native Americans over the disposition and respectful treatment of prehistoric and historic period human remains.

The December 1989 issue (#62) of the *VAS Newsletter* contained a lengthy article reviewing the work of the U.S. Forest Service in identifying and preserving the cultural resources of the Green Mountain National Forest. In the same issue, David Starbuck reported in detail on the significance of the Mount Independence site, reviewing the results of the first summer's work, much of it by VAS members supervised by crew chiefs Bill Murphy, Dennis Howe and Sherry Mahady. About the same time, Starbuck also led a four-day excavation at the Hubbardton Battlefield.

Members Doug Frink and Ruth Sprague earned the Third Place award of \$100 from the Chittenden County Historical Society to assist in writing a booklet for children on archaeological excavation.

Late 1989 meetings of the VAS Board focused on the perennial *Newsletter* problem; the possibility of publishing Vic Rolando's nearly finished book on industrial archaeology; and the need to coordinate with the programs and

objectives of the Division for Historic Preservation. The Board requested a meeting with DHP Director Eric Gilbertson and State Archeologist Giovanna Peebles. The agenda was to include: the status of preservation law in Vermont; the place of archaeology in the celebration of the State's bicentennial observance; the DHP agenda for legislative activity; and the development of VAS volunteer programs to aid DHP projects. The meeting took place on January 11, 1990 and, considering the infrequency of such interchanges, had to be considered of historical importance. Board members present were Vic Rolando, David Lacy, Louise Basa, David Skinas, Fred Cowan, and Cindy Cook, along with longtime VAS member Dee Brightstar. The Division was represented by Gilbertson, Peebles, Alan Yale and David Skinas (wearing two hats). Lyn Blackwell sat in as a VHS observer.

Gilbertson concluded that State budget cuts would have a significant negative impact on the Division's work, and all agreed that letters to key legislators might result in funding for DHP temporary staff. Peebles discussed House Bill 689, which makes the State's site inventory confidential, subject to official discretion. The Board felt this matter also merited VAS support. Division projects for 1990 were limited pretty much to Heritage '91 projects, but there was an urgent need for volunteers to process materials gathered at Mount Independence. Discussion about networking with related organizations and of finding support for a part-time executive director inspired Rolando, Basa and Murphy to volunteer to follow up on these ideas. The suggestion to send all issues of the *VAS Newsletter* regularly to all state legislators was placed on the Board agenda. Louise described a move by the Massachusetts Archaeological Society to create a nationwide alliance of amateur societies under the umbrella of the Society of American Archaeologists. The President promised to make known the decision of the Board after it had the opportunity to discuss the idea. It was suggested that amateurs be given letters of appreciation for their work or certificates of acknowledgement, which could be the basis of certification at a later date. Lyn Blackwell promised to follow up on the suggestion of a VAS-VHS joint spring meeting. That meeting, held in April in Manchester, was attended by only six VAS members.

About this time, VAS members were closely following press publicity on a proposed gas pipeline through the State of Vermont and the results of early findings by archaeological surveys in its projected path. At the third annual Conference on New England Industrial Archeology held February 3, 1990 at Plymouth State

College (New Hampshire), VAS members Rolando Starbuck, Tenney and Yale presented papers on various industrial archaeology projects in Vermont. The first Archaeology Day at the Statehouse was set for March 27, 1990 and featured land and underwater site displays in the Card Room all day. The evening presentation was on the Abenaki cultural heritage and included speeches, a slide show, and a panel discussion. The event was repeated in 1991. This time, all exhibitors wore VAS badges; back issues of the VAS Newsletter were distributed, along with a brochure on VAS activities. Vic's slide show on Vermont's iron, lime, and charcoal ruins ran continuously; Bill Murphy displayed hardware remains from his Middlebury excavations.

Two VAS members, among the last of the authentic Abenaki speakers, Gordon Day and Jeanne Brink, produced a tape and study guide on the Western Abenaki. It was developed for distribution by the Indian Education Office, Title V, of the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union. An Abenaki dictionary is anticipated.

The June 1991 (#66) issue of the *VAS Newsletter* included a sheet labeled "Volunteer Opportunities 1991," along with an application form to be returned by interested members to Louise Luchini, VAS Project Volunteer. In the following issue, David Skinas announced abandonment of VT-FR-8, the Monument Farms site in Highgate. Stabilization of the ancient Abenaki habitation and burial site, on the water edge, would have cost \$70,000 to meet Army Corps of Engineers requirements for such protection. The Vermont State Legislature appropriated only enough money to acquire the site. Volunteers employed an alternative salvage technique of planting 500 cuttings of willow, box elder and silver maples on the riverbank. The work was carried out jointly by DHP staff, members of the VAS, Nature Conservancy and the Abenaki Tribal Council.

At the October 12, 1991 annual meeting, President Vic Rolando reported to the membership that his book, *200 Years of Soot and Sweat: The History and Archeology of Vermont's Iron, Charcoal, and Lime Industries*, would be published by the Vermont Archaeological Society, although major publishing costs were underwritten by the author. He noted that the book, which represents fifteen years of his own soot and sweat, was being professionally edited and would be available in 1992. Vic also announced his retirement from his GE position in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Other reports at the meeting included Dee Brightstar on the Abenaki Heritage

Project, an update on the Chittenden County Circumferential Highway (CCCH), digs at the Ethan Allen Homestead, and David Starbuck on the Rogers Island excavation at Fort Edward, New York.

At the 1992 Spring Meeting, the CCCH progress report detailed the outreach efforts of the survey team which held several open houses and offered guided tours to the public. Vic told of work done by him, David Starbuck, Krista Jackson and others at the Pittsford Iron Company Furnace Site (VT-RU-57) to demonstrate that the foundations of these "juggernauts" employed the best design information available. Vic also announced the appointment of David Starbuck as editor of the *VAS Newsletter*.

Vic Rolando's *200 Years of Soot and Sweat* went to press in September 1992. Some financing for the 300-page book came from a Vermont Statehood Bicentennial Commission grant secured by the VAS. Shortly thereafter, Vic was appointed an Associate Member of the Center for Research on Vermont by Howard Ball, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Vermont.

Duncan Wilkie, recently hired as staff archaeologist for the Vermont Agency of Transportation, shared his job description with members attending the annual meeting on November 7, 1992 in Burlington. Jack Rossen, archaeologist with the Soil Conservation Service, discussed emerging research issues in Vermont prehistory. Jim Garman explained his work at the Brook's Quarry site in Saint Albans. Peter Thomas and Bruno Frolich talked about a little known aspect of the profession, the role of archaeology in homicide investigations. After the regular meeting, the Board met and elected Robert Sloma President for 1993. The other item on that agenda was the celebration of the Society's 25th Anniversary. It was decided to observe the anniversary at the Society's 1993 annual meeting on November 6, with David Starbuck preparing an edited collection of papers in time for the anniversary meeting. Sloma made it clear to the Trustees that he expects to increase opportunities for VAS members and the general public to become involved in operational and planning issues necessary to protecting our cultural heritage. In his inaugural message in the *VAS Newsletter* for March 1993, Sloma described his philosophy as "Zukunft Bund," or "future [continuous] cooperation."

On January 14, 1993, UVM's Consulting Archaeology Program hosted a meeting of twenty-four Vermont archaeologists representing eight organizations and

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including the VAS and several consulting firms. The group attempted to define the activities they would like to see achieved during the next decade. Many of the proposals involved outreach and education at all levels.

At the January 21, 1993 meeting of the VAS Board, discussion centered on the need for a dues increase, the distribution of newsletter issues beyond membership, and the need to find a repository for materials owned by the VAS. The Special Collections department of the Bailey/Howe Library at the University has agreed to house the archives of the Society.

VAS member John Moody, an ethnohistorian who lives in Sharon, gave the first of two presentations on the "Native Americans of Western Vermont" at a regular meeting of the Saint Albans Historical Society on March 5, 1993. Moody is a graduate of Dartmouth College with a degree in Native American Studies and Anthropology, and he is also a member of the Abenaki Research Project. The VAS chose the Basin Harbor Club for its spring meeting on May 15, 1993. Presentations included the "History in Our Backyard Program" based at Williston Central School, a talk by Duncan Wilkie on burying archaeological sites under highways, and Jack Rossen on the "Archaeology on the Farms" project. David Starbuck described "An Archaeological Tour of Egypt and Its Antiquities." The day ended with a guided tour of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. As the Society celebrates its 25th Anniversary, there are questions in need of answers: are we happy with what we've done in two and a half decades? Do we have any idea of what we want to accomplish in the next 25 years? Will the aims and purposes of the Vermont Archaeological Society, elicited twenty-five years ago, continue to be fulfilled?

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