

The Ontario Archaeological Society



ARCH NOTES edited by Nancy Powell

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May 1964

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THE MAY MEETING

WHEN:	Wednesday, May 6
WHERE:	Archaeology Lab. basement of Sidney Smith Hall, St. George St., west side, just south of Harbord
WHAT TIME:	8 p.m
WHO'S SPEAKING:	Father W. A. Russell (S.J.)
WHAT ABOUT:	The Huronia Project

For this month's meeting, the last before we break for the summer, we have been lucky enough to persuade one of our own members, Father Russell -- known to most of us more familiarly as Bill -- to tell us something about the Ontario government's plans to restore the 17th century village of Ste. Marie near Midland.

Many of us have probably visited the site as a general spectator and studied some of the remains of this earliest white settlement in Ontario. It was in 1639 that a group of Jesuit missionaries began to construct a settlement which was named Ste. Marie. They were received with great friendliness by the neighbouring Hurons but only a decade later the whole settlement was wiped out by the long standing enemy of the Hurons - the Iroquois.

It is most dramatic and tragic episode in our history and one which many of us would like to know more about both archaeologically and historically. Father Russell has been doing research into this field over the past nine years. For the last two summers he has been a field director on the Fournier site at Midland.

Father Russell will have some slides to show us and possibly some artifacts as well. I hope we will have a good turnout for what promises to be a fascinating lecture.

THE SPRING DIG

WHEN: Holiday weekend, Sat., Sun., and Mon.,
May 16, 17 and 18.

WHERE: Cleary Farm, near Barrie, Ont.

HOW TO GET THERE: The farm is located on the north east corner of the intersection of Highway 400 and the 10th concession road. As there is no turnoff from the 400 at this point it is necessary to turn on to the 10th concession from either Highway 11 to the east or Highway 27 to the west. If arriving by No.11, turn west along the 10th concession at Stroud. The farm will be just east of the 400 underpass on the north side of the road. If arriving by No. 27 turn east on the 10th concession which is about 2 miles north of Thornton and drive to the first farm east of the underpass on the north side of the road. Drive past the farmhouse and parking space is available to the left of the barn.

WHAT TO BRING: We will be starting about 9.30 each day. Your most important piece of equipment is a good 5" pointing mortar trowel. If possible also bring a curved grapefruit knife, a 1" - 2" paint brush, 6" ruler, pencil, notebook, whisk, dust pan and pocket knife. Plastic washbasins are useful, also some shovels and sodcutters.

N.B. Don't forget to pack a lunch as there are no nearby eating places.

TRANSPORTATION: If you can offer a lift to anyone or if you need one yourself phone me (Nancy Powell) at 481-9585 during the evenings and weekends and at 928-3673 during the day.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE SITE. This was first opened up by our members in the fall, and you might say we are breaking new ground (pardon the pun) by returning to this site for a second look. The fact is that the fall dig was beginning to look very interesting when we had to replace the soil and return home. The pottery found indicated it was the site of a former Indian camp site rather than a true settlement. Plowing had removed some of the vital evidence years ago, but we have established that our finds so far date from around the 13th century. The pottery was of the Lalonde classification, and one fair sized pot has been restored apart from a few missing pieces which we hope to recover on the coming dig.

AND TALKING OF POTTERY. This seems the most appropriate time to report that we will be holding a pottery session at Bill Donaldson's home in Oshawa on May 2. Objective of the meeting is to work on more pottery pieces recovered from the Cleary site. We'll be starting at 10 a.m. and continuing through to late afternoon. Please bring lunch in one form or another and the place to take lunch is 111 Riverside Drive North. I won't give more specific directions here because Oshawa is not all that large and a quick glance at the local map will put you on the track. Incidentally, Bill was the one who reconstructed the pot from the Cleary site and I anticipate it will be on show at his home. And those who were at the last pottery session at the Donaldson's will recall we all tried our hand at pot-making, the Indian way. Well, we'll be taking those queer shapes to the Cleary dig with us next month and we hope to fire them.

WHILE STILL ON THE POTTERY TRAIL, a number of you could speed up the business at the Donaldson's by helping us wash and clean the pottery fragments to be worked on. I have a whole box of recovered pieces and if you ring me I will make arrangements for a bag of pottery to be delivered to you. Or you may wish to collect it from me. Whichever way you offer, we thought you'd like some guidance on the proper methods of cleaning pottery. If it's

done badly, valuable pieces can be ruined. When it's done properly, the restorer of the pot has his task simplified and the final reconstituted pot is a much better job. So here, step by step, is the way the washing should be done:-

Have available an old toothbrush, medium hardness and a one-inch paintbrush. Also a wash basin and lukewarm water (no soap or detergent), old newspapers and scratch pad and pencil.

Select one, and we stress ONE, of the specimen bags. Copy the code number on the bag onto two pages of the scratch pad. Empty the contents of the bag onto a sheet of newspaper, together with one of the coded pages from the scratchpad. (Never mix the contents of two bags).

If artifacts have heavy encrustation of dirt, remove this with the paintbrush so that the water will not become too dirty during the washing. Sort the contents of the bag according to category -- pottery, bone, stone etc. Separate carbonised material such as corn, beans, plum pits, charcoal. Wrap these in soft tissue and replace in the specimen bag. This material is too fragile for washing and must be treated separately.

Begin washing artifacts ONE AT A TIME. Do not dump everything into the wash basin at one time. Pay special attention to the broken edges. A clean break will make a better fit during restoration. If the material is fragile or its surface is soft, DO NOT SCRUB. Use soft paintbrush to work dirt off. Change the water often.

Place the washed artifacts on several layers of old newspapers together with second coded sheet of scratchpad. When all the specimens from one have been washed, place the bag with the washed specimens which are now allowed to dry. Destroy first coded page of scratchpad, which was placed with dirty specimens. When the artifacts are dry re-bag and clean up the mess. You might also notify me as soon as your specimens are cleaned.

OUR LAST MONTH'S meeting ties in quite nicely with all this because our speaker was Bill Donaldson himself who discussed the Elliott site on the outskirts of Metro Toronto. His talk was illustrated in a most interesting manner and Bill hopes to have a report on this site to be included in one of the upcoming publications of the society. And as I have pointed out earlier, he brought along with him the reconstituted pot as recovered from the Cleary site.

HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING CHANNEL 6? If you have, you will, as our president pointed out at the last meeting, have seen a most interesting program of particular interest to our members. The speaker is Dr. William Mayer-Oakes, a former president of our society who is now on the Department of Anthropology staff of the University of Manitoba. His program, which will last into the summer, is reviewing archaeology with stress on techniques and is amply illustrated. After watching the program, I can certainly recommend that this Sunday at noon you tune in to watch "Live and Learn". If you miss any program at that time, you have a second chance on the following Wednesday at 6 p.m.

ANOTHER OF OUR MEMBERS, Mr. Murray Corbett, recently addressed the West Toronto Progress Club on some of the more general aspects of archaeology. From reports, it appears the talk was received with considerable interest by his audience. So who knows, we may, as a result, have more members.

OBITUARY

It is with considerable regret that we have to announce this month the passing of Professor T.F. McIlwraith, former head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto and Curator Emeritus of The Department of Ethnology of the Royal Ontario Museum. We knew him better as a long time member of our Society who gave of his time and knowledge most happily. He died last month in his 65th year. He had been teaching for 40 years and had just started a six-month leave of absence. I know that you will agree with the flowers we sent on behalf of our society.

MORE NEWS FROM LYNN SOUCY IN LOUISBOURG as she continues work on the excavation of a casemate. She explains that a casemate is like a "bombproof" shelter within the fortress wall itself. This particular casemate is on the Right Flank of the King's Bastion. It is proving to be not one typical of the bastion. The remains of a wooden floor have been discovered which makes excavating a slow and delicate operation. Eight different layers have been recorded in the first two feet of digging, and Lyn is busy trying to sort out the evidence. She reports that the most interesting finds to date have been two coins dated 1656 and 1697. As Lyn points out the coins must have seen long usage in the New World as the Fortress was not built until around 1730. She forwards a copy of an historical guide to the Fortress for our Library.

MEMBERSHIP DUES. May, as you know, is the month when we take a close look at our membership, particularly those who are not up to date with their dues. If they are still owing then we have no choice but to drop those names from our active list. I am sure that this is the last thing that any of you would want and that if you have not paid your dues -- only \$3 (\$2 associate) -- it is due to an oversight and my little reminder here is all that is needed to put the matter right. Sorry to strike such a sour note, but you will appreciate that collecting all our dues is a vital necessity for the future of our society.

And that really wraps up the first half of the 1964 season. We have our May meeting and pottery session and the spring dig still to come. After that people are beginning to slip out of town away to cottages and foreign parts. And so it is our practice to put the OAS to summer slumber and to revive our business in September. At this stage I can tell you that we have a number of interesting events being planned in which I hope you can all take part. I look forward to meeting you all then. And so, until September ... Bon chance.

The Editor.