

# ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE CONTINENTAL BOREAL PROVINCE: A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

Kenneth C.A. Dawson

*The personalities, backgrounds and contributions of the people who undertook archaeology in the Continental Boreal Province, the mid-north forests of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, are reviewed. Exploration began in Ontario in the mid-1850s, and was followed by investigations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan about a century later.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Continental Boreal Province (Figure 1) is part of the Boreal Division of the Circumpolar Domain of Canada. It lies west of the Eastern Boreal Province, south of the Lichen Woodland Province and north of the Great Lakes-St Lawrence Forest Province of the Humid Temperate Domain and the Western Boreal Province. It extends west from the Michipicoten and Moose rivers to the Kaministikwia River, then northwest to Lac Seul and west to the English

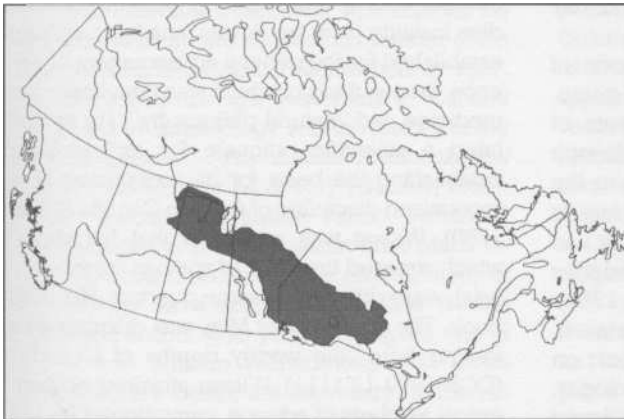


Figure 1. The extent of the continental boreal forest ecological province, circa A.D. 1500 (adapted from McAndrews and Manville 1987: Plate 17A).

River and Lac du Bonnet. From there it stretches north of Lake Winnipeg as far west as Lake Athabasca (McAndrews and Manville 1987).

The region is a rugged, glacially scoured Shield upland, covered with lakes, bogs, streams and coniferous spruce-jack pine forests. Arctic air prevails in the winter, while summers are short and cool. Fish are abundant, birds are limited and mammal populations are relatively impoverished. The environment differs from other regions, being marked by uncertain conditions: a high frequency of extensive forest fires, winter icing of feeding grounds and uncertain depth of snow cover. These conditions result in marked fluctuations in the dispersal and density of plants and animals, which bear directly on the distribution and availability of food resources. The unpredictable resource base was a critical factor limiting the size of human populations that the region could support. It sets the basis for a common subsistence strategy of highly mobile small groups that functioned within a broad habitually exploited hunting range,

and in which membership and gender roles were flexible. This pattern contrasts with the settlement and subsistence patterns of more sedentary communities further south (Dawson 1987a; Winterhalter 1981:47).

The history of archaeological field work in the area differs somewhat from other regions by virtue of the nature of the sites and their isolation; professional study commenced later here than in the south (Dawson 1977a). The goal of early archaeologists was stated to be the study of humankind, yet the

northern forest was ignored. The prevailing view, based on the *Jesuit Relations*, suggested that the forest was

occupied by an insignificant population of wandering nomads (Thwaites 1896-1901:66:107). The boreal forest was seen as unattractive, inhospitable and inaccessible. These factors discouraged investigation. Furthermore, most habitation sites were small and difficult to find, whereas in the south, they were extensive and in the vicinity of established institutions. Archaeological research, therefore, was initially concentrated in the southern regions of Canada. While there were limited investigations within the boreal forest in the nineteenth century, no systematic research was undertaken until the mid-twentieth century and even then it was restricted to the southern margins of the region (Dawson 1984).

Early references to archaeological sites may be found in publications of antiquarian and learned societies, and in the published records of eighteenth and nineteenth century travelers and explorers. There are also a significant number of anonymous newspaper articles, many of which can be found in the George Laidlaw scrapbooks held by the Royal Ontario Museum (Laidlaw 1874-1896). Some make reference to copper quarries, burial mounds, and finds of ceramic vessel fragments and stone tools.

Burials were of the greatest interest, both within and south of the boreal forest. Excavations were often undertaken by antiquarians who, in the name of science, were attempting to explain such monuments as the work of refugees from the lost continent of Atlantis, or the lost tribes of the Old Testament. Disemboweling of burial mounds in Ontario and Manitoba was rampant. Such diggings were often carried out by ordinary folk on sunny, summer Sunday picnics (Bell 1886; Kidd 1952).

By the mid-nineteenth century, reports of sites began to appear in the records of geologists and surveyors of the governments of Ontario and Canada. Robert C. Bell and Joseph B. Tyrrell, for example, recorded sites in the Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan forests (Geological Survey of Canada 1842-1910) and A.P. Coleman and Archibald Blue recorded sites in Ontario (Ontario Bureau of Mines 1921). While no formal excavations were undertaken, a few did take shovel to hand and report on their findings. The Ontario Provincial Geologist, Archibald Blue, for example, exhumed a flexed burial at Lac des Mille Lacs west of Thunder Bay in 1895 (Dawson 1983a).

## ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE NORTHEASTERN BOREAL FOREST

The earliest references to precontact sites in the boreal forest were to "Indian diggings" for copper on the shores of Lake Superior. A vague reference appeared in Champlain's journal of 1610, and there were many similar reports up to the end of the French regime, circa 1750 (Griffin 1961). In the middle of the next century, such sites began to appear in surveyors' reports, thereby attracting the attention of antiquarians (Logan 1863).

Sir Daniel Wilson [1816-1892] was attracted by the reports on copper quarrying and in 1855, on one of his rare field excursions, he visited the precontact copper mines on the shore of Lake Superior (McIlwraith 1964). He produced the first report on a site in the northern forest to be written by an archaeologist (Wilson 1856). The son of a Scottish wine merchant, Wilson was always fascinated with the past, but withdrew from formal education at the University of Edinburgh to become a writer and illustrator. Wilson regarded artifacts as equivalent to the geologist's fossils and introduced the word "prehistory" to the English language in his publication on the archaeology of Scotland. The University of St. Andrews awarded him his only degree, an Honorary JIG (Wilson 1851; DCB 1990 12:1109; Ash and Hulse [editors] 1999).

Wilson joined the staff of University College in Toronto, in 1853, as Chair of History and English. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Canadian Institute (now the Royal Canadian Institute) established for the general advancement of science, the teaching of which was then limited to medicine and "natural philosophy". He articulated a scientific rationale for archaeology, establishing the basis for its acceptance as a recognized discipline of study in Canada (Kilian 1980). Wilson was surprised that his views, which stressed the unity of species (monogenesis), were ridiculed in some quarters. His 1862 book, *The Prehistory of Man*, was dismissed as issuing from "the woody depths of Canada" (DCB 1990 12:1111). Wilson attacked ecclesiastical teachers of science, campaigned for the right of women to attend university and defended native peoples as the rightful managers of

their own reserves and resources (Killan 1980). Wilson became President of University of Toronto in 1887. At the time of his death, his contributions to archaeology as a science and his influence on archaeological associates such as David Boyle were treated as incidental and ignored (Trigger 1966a).

A colleague of Wilson's was Sir John William Dawson [1820-1899], who as Principal of McGill University wrote a piece on the copper mines of Lake Superior (Dawson 1857; Trigger 1966b) and supported the view that archaeology was a legitimate field of study. Like Wilson, he was an Honorary LLD from Scotland who held divergent views, such as his belief that exploitative European culture ultimately threatened the natural environment of Canada (DCB 1990 12:234).

David Boyle [1842-1911] - fascinated by rock art - ventured into the boreal forest in 1906 to record the extensive pictographs at Nipigon Bay on the north shore of Lake Superior (Boyle 1908). Boyle was also a Scottish immigrant, the son of a blacksmith whose family came to Canada in 1856. Raised in rural southern Ontario and largely self-educated, he dedicated himself to teaching in all senses of the word. In 1871, he was appointed a school principal. His interest in archaeology stemmed from his studies in natural science. In 1884, he was appointed to the Canadian Institute Museum in Toronto, which became the Ontario Provincial Museum in 1896 with Boyle serving as its curator. The Ontario Provincial Museum collections later became part of the Royal Ontario Museum (Killan 1983).

Boyle, known as a raconteur who enjoyed his pipe and whiskey, was a founding member of the American Anthropological Association. In 1887, he established the first periodical in Canada dedicated to archaeology and the history of the original people - *The Annual Archaeological Reports for Ontario [A.A.R.O.]* (Garrad 1987). Boyle became Curator and Provincial Archaeologist in 1888, a position from which he laid the ground work for the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline (Noble 1983) and encouraged young proteges, one of whom was William Wintemberg. Two years before Boyle's death, the University of Toronto awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Law

William J. Wintemberg [1876-1941] produced the first map of archaeological sites in

Canada. Published a year after his death, the details are sketchy but it shows a few sites in the boreal forest in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Wintemberg 1942). Son of a blacksmith of German background (Jenness 1941) he, like Boyle, was a self-taught rural southern Ontarian. Wintemberg was a delicate youth with a strong interest in folklore whose antiquarian activities brought him to the attention of Boyle, who at the time was the Director of the Ontario Provincial Museum. Political intervention prevented Boyle from putting Wintemberg on staff, but he did engage him on a part-time basis. In 1911, the year Boyle died, Wintemberg joined the staff of the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa, later the National Museum of Canada, where he developed his remarkable skills. For three decades, Wintemberg - together with Harlan Smith, the chief archaeologist at the museum until 1937, and Diamond Jenness [1886-1969], one of the founding fathers of Anthropology in Canada - energetically fostered Canadian archaeology (MacDonald 1969; Collins and Taylor 1970).

In the 1950s, Thomas F. McIlwraith [1899-1964] began exploring the extensive and enigmatic stone pit formations known as Puckasaw pits located on the north shore of Lake Superior near Marathon at the southern fringe of the boreal forest (McIlwraith 1959; Epp and Sponsel 1980). After service in the First World War, McIlwraith did not return to his home in Hamilton, but stayed in the United Kingdom to obtain an undergraduate degree. He was later awarded an MA in anthropology from St. John's College, Cambridge, on the basis of his field work conducted among the Bella Coola in British Columbia. He joined the Royal Ontario Museum as Curator of Ethnology in 1925 with a cross appointment in Anthropology at the University of Toronto - the first such appointment in a Canadian University. Small of stature, assertive and rather fussy but pleasant, McIlwraith went on to establish the first Department of Anthropology in Canada. In 1938, he engaged the first archaeologist to teach in Canada - Phileo Nash, a recent PhD graduate from the University of Chicago (Noble 1972). The school attracted such students as Norman Emerson [1917-1978] and Ken Kidd [1906-1994], the latter of whom frequented the margins of the boreal forest at Thunder Bay and west to Quetico Park in his pioneering studies of rock paintings.

Kidd's rock art work, initiated in 1957, represents the first systematic field recording program in North America. In 1967, with Selwyn Dewdney, he published the first comprehensive report on the subject (Dewdney and Kidd 1967; Jamieson 1995). Raised in rural southern Ontario, Kidd joined the Royal Ontario Museum in 1935 with an MA in Anthropology and History from the University of Toronto and, under McIlwraith's direction, began his long and dedicated career in archaeology. In 1938, he accepted a scholarship to pursue further anthropological studies at the University of Chicago. Between 1945 and 1950, he was one of only three archaeologists working in Canada (Wright 1985:425). Not of great physical strength, he was a scholarly, gentle, artistic, quiet, and dignified person who stood in contrast to his contemporaries out of Chicago. Martha, his wife whom he married during his Chicago days, was to prove a great strength. His major interest was historical archaeology (Kidd 1952; South 1994). He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1950.

In 1964, Kidd founded the Department of Anthropology at the newly established Trent University in Peterborough. Here he created one of the first Native Studies programmes in Canada, establishing a remarkable rapport with the students, which helped to address the growing aboriginal antagonism towards archaeologists. After retirement both he and Martha were awarded honorary doctorates by Trent University. His work is being carried on by Susan Jamieson and Morgan Tamplin, both of whom, as graduate students, worked in the boreal forest in Manitoba.

J. Norman Emerson spent the summers of 1958 to 1960 on the north shore of Lake Superior, initially with McIlwraith, surveying and excavating Puckasaw pit formations (Emerson 1959; Noble 1979). He also excavated a Woodland site at the mouth of the Pic River that had been first investigated in 1957 by George B. Quimby of the Chicago Natural History Museum (Quimby 1961). At the time, Quimby and James B. Griffin of the University of Michigan had been investigating native copper sources in the Lake Superior region (Griffin 1961). In 1960, Emerson also conducted a preliminary study at the margin of the boreal forest in Manitoba at Grand Rapids (Mayer-Oakes 1970:3).

Born in Toronto and the son of an electrician, Emerson attended private school and then entered Trinity College, University of Toronto, attaining a BA in Sociology and, in 1942, an MA in Anthropology. He enrolled in graduate school at Chicago where he gained field experience excavating under Fay Cooper Cole [1881-1961], founder of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. On finishing his residency, he escaped his conservative roots and married a woman from Illinois (Noble 1979:241). In 1943, he was called-up for military service. Three years later, he joined the faculty of the University of Toronto as a Lecturer and Supervisor of Archaeological Studies. In 1954, he completed his PhD.

Emerson, who was noted for his innovative, mass student, weekend digs, was an affable, down-to-earth person. He could always be found at the fire, playing his guitar and singing. He was indirectly responsible for a great deal of northern research by encouraging graduates such as William Taylor, James Wright, George MacDonald, William Noble, Helen Devereux and Ken Dawson to venture north. In 1950, he was one of the founding members of the Ontario Archaeological Society and he was the founding Vice-President of the Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA), established in 1968 at Winnipeg. In 1975, he delved into intuitive archaeology with discourses on "psycho-ceramics" and dowsing. At the eighth CAA conference in Thunder Bay, Emerson chaired the only session on intuitive archaeology ever held. The symposium included a respected medicine man from the Albany River area, the late David Charles (Suganaqueb) and the noted Ojibwa artist Norval Morriseau. Emerson was awarded the CAA's Smith-Wintemberg Medal in the year of his death.

At the University of Chicago, Richard S. "Scotty" MacNeish was a friend of Emerson's, whom he described as a "drinking and digging buddy" who taught him archaeological techniques (MacNeish 1978:242). MacNeish ventured into the boreal forest when he was at the National Museum of Canada in the 1950s. In 1950, he excavated the first Palaeo-Indian site to be professionally investigated in Canada - the Brohm site located on the shore of Lake Superior, on Thunder Bay opposite the city (MacNeish 1952). He undertook surveys in the boreal forest in Manitoba, defining the cultural

sequence along the Winnipeg River and in Saskatchewan at Lake Athabasca (MacNeish 1951, 1958).

Born in 1917, MacNeish was a Golden Glove Boxing Champion out of New York. He was a person of great gusto, who in the winter was to be found occasionally in Mexico, even while still heading up the Archaeological Section of the National Museum. In 1963, with Richard Forbis, he established the first Department of Archaeology in Canada at the University of Calgary, although in 1969 he left to join the Peabody Museum. He was, like his colleagues Emerson and Quimby, a graduate of the University of Chicago, short in stature, a hard driving character, and a devoted archaeologist.

In the same period, Selwyn Dewdney [1909-1979] commenced his systematic recording of rock paintings (Pohorecky 1979). Supported by provincial agencies from Quebec to Alberta, he spent thirty years roaming throughout the boreal forest to become the leading scholar of aboriginal paintings (Dewdney 1963, 1965; Dewdney and Kidd 1967). Born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Dewdney spent his youth in the lake-forest, crystalline rock country where he first observed rock paintings in the 1920s. Although he had graduated from the Ontario College of Art, he soon came under the influence of Ken Kidd, resulting in a dramatic change in the direction of his career. In 1969, he orchestrated the First North American Pictograph Conference at Lakehead University. Short of stature with a wispy beard, he was a warm, gregarious person who enjoyed the rapport of good company with a smoke and a drink until his computer (i.e., pacemaker) gave out.

Frank Ridley [1904-1985] was a self-trained archaeologist who was active in the boreal forest in the 1950s (Ridley and Ridley 1985). He was the first to work in the Abitibi Lake region at the eastern edge of the forest (Ridley 1956). In 1955, he carried out limited test excavations at the mouth of the Michipicoten River on Lake Superior at a site that had been first reported by the surveyor Robert Bell in 1897 (Ridley 1961). His work at the Michipicoten site marked the beginning of the study of the Woodland peoples of the Ontario boreal forest. Ridley's family emigrated from England to Manitoba in 1909. In 1926, he moved to southern Ontario and became a successful builder. With the support of his family, he began extensive field work

under the influence of Ken Kidd. Ridley was a tall, lean, no-nonsense, hard-working individual. He was supported by Paul W. Sweetman, a teacher and fellow Ontario Archaeological Society member and, on occasions, by J.V. Wright.

Walter A. Kenyon [1917-1986] was also in the boreal forest in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Finlayson 1986). Initially he excavated mounds in the Fort Frances region and then went north surveying along the English-Winnipeg River east of where MacNeish worked (Kenyon 1961). From rural southern Ontario, Kenyon often took a different path in life. He had drifted across the continent, playing his violin until 1947, when he returned to school. Later he studied under Charles E. Borden [1905-1978], married his wife Eva, a refugee from Poland who had arrived by way of China, and started a family which often accompanied him in the field.

In 1956, he joined the Royal Ontario Museum and enrolled in the University of Toronto. His was the first PhD to be awarded for archaeology in Canada. Apart from the notoriety he had achieved by excavating burials in 1976 without a license (Kenyon 1982) - which had become a requirement with the passage of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1974 - Kenyon strove to promote a greater public understanding of archaeology. He was the first archaeologist in the area to use the new medium of television. Full of spirit, wit and wisdom, he had a rollicking personality and was renowned for his distinctive turn of phrase. As he prospered, he grew rotund with a matching Santa Claus beard. In 1986, the year in which he succumbed to cancer, the Society for American Archaeology recognized him for his outstanding contributions to archaeology.

The 1950s also saw Thomas E. Lee [1914-1982], then with the National Museum of Canada, in the boreal forest recording collections in the Lake Superior region. In the 1960s, he shifted his focus to the Abitibi area and joined the University of Laval (Lee 1958, 1965). Raised on the shores of Lake Erie, Lee was introduced to archaeology in his youth by Wilfred Jury [1890-1981] of the Museum of Indian Archaeology in London, Ontario. He served with the air force in Burma and on returning, attended Wayne State College in Detroit and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Studying under James B. Griffin, he obtained an MA in Anthropology While a

quixotic personality, he was an excellent field archaeologist. At various times, Walter Hlady, George MacDonald, Bill Taylor, Jim Wright and I all worked in his shadow

James V. Wright, with the National Museum of Canada, spent a couple of decades surveying, "by shoe and canoe", the historic routes through the boreal forest to the northwest. In the years 1959-1961, he surveyed the north shore of Lake Superior, at times working with Emerson (Wright 1963). Their combined records resulted in the first publication of a scientific report on a habitation site in the region — the Pic River site (Wright 1967a). Wright completed additional excavations at the Michipicoten site where Ridley had worked five years previously (Wright 1969) and he surveyed inland on the English and Albany rivers at locations first reported by Bell in 1877. The years 1965-1972 saw him in Manitoba and Saskatchewan surveying Southern Indian Lake, Gods Lake and Lake Athabasca (Wright 1971, 1975). Wright was the first archaeologist to publish extensive analyses of the history of the peoples of the boreal forest (1968). This work included defining the Woodland Period Laurel Tradition and the Shield Archaic Period (Wright 1967b, 1972).

Following initial studies in southern Ontario, Wright graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a PhD. He is a giant of a man, who could walk over bush others would have to chop their way through. He thrived in it, a prerequisite for successful field work in a region of isolation and blackflies. A knowledgeable archaeologist who is undistracted by other interests, he epitomized the new generation of highly-trained archaeologists appearing in Canada in the 1960s. Wright held many senior positions with the Archaeological Survey of Canada and was the recipient of the CAA Smith-Wintemberg award in 1992.

William C. Noble was at Pic River with Emerson in 1960. He assisted Wright in his initial explorations in the Manitoba boreal forest, in 1965, at Southern Indian Lake. In 1967 and 1968, he conducted surveys at the edge of the boreal forest in the Athabasca area and, in 1974, he was on its eastern fringe at Hawley Lake in Ontario (Pollock and Noble 1975). From southern Ontario, Noble was full of drive and good spirits. A graduate of the University of Calgary, he went on to teach at McMaster University,

where he supported the exploration of the boreal forest through his encouragement of students such as Diana Gordon (Gordon 1985), John Pollock (Pollock 1977) and David Meyer (1983).

In the 1960s, the faunal analysis laboratory at the University of Toronto was established by Dr. Howard G. Savage [1913-1997] and Norman Emerson (Friesen and Stewart 1997). Savage, after his retirement from medical practice, operated the laboratory for over thirty-five years, training many students and thus ensuring the continuation of zooarchaeological research. His meticulous and detailed analyses of the archaeological faunal material from archaeological sites, and those of his students, have contributed substantially to our knowledge of the environment along the margins of the boreal forest.

Until the 1960s, archaeology was the domain of men, but Emerson, in his own inimitable way, encouraged women, and in particular Helen Devereux, to pursue a career in archaeology. In the mid-1960s, after studies at the University of Calgary, Devereux joined the staff of Laurentian University at Sudbury where she encouraged students to work in the boreal forest. A number of them worked on material recovered from a series of sites excavated by others at Michipicoten (Brizinski and Buchanan 1977). Patrick J. Julig, a graduate of the University of Toronto has undertaken extensive excavations and surveys of the old strand lines at Thunder Bay bringing together for the first time an array of information on the early Palaeo-Indian occupation of the area (Julig 1994). He has replaced Devereux and continues Laurentian's boreal forest research.

William E. (Bill) Taylor Jr. [1927-1994], in his capacity as head of National Museum of Man and later as Director of the Social Science Research Council of Canada, was very supportive of boreal forest research (Pilon 1995). With a PhD from the University of Michigan, he was a jocular, witty, energetic, decisive person who became, by the toss of a coin, an arctic specialist studying under Henry B. Collins. Commenting on the first decade after the war, he said that while there was a trickle of undergraduates emerging from universities with degrees in archaeology (including himself, Tom Lee, Dick Forbis, Jim Wright, Don Abbot and I), a meeting of Canadian archaeologists could

have been held in a station wagon (Taylor 1976:153). In the tradition of many archaeologists at the time, he hosted a party at the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology in New Mexico which brought a squad of police to close it down. Such flamboyant activities received much public attention and directly assisted in moving archaeology out of the ivory tower. He was awarded the Smith-Wintemberg Medal in 1992.

Another Toronto graduate, with a PhD from Yale University, is George F' MacDonald. He spent time with Wright on Lake Superior and the English River. A big person whose main interests were in the west coast of Canada, he went on to become the Executive Director of the Canadian Museum of Civilization where he continued to support northern research (MacDonald 1982).

Although archaeology continues to be an expensive undertaking in the north, detailed surveys of the northern boreal forest river systems were begun in the late 1970s and 1980s (Noble 1982). This campaign of research was pursued in Ontario in anticipation of resource development and it challenged the resourcefulness of many graduate students, including Nick Adams, David Arthur, William A. Fox, Scott Hamilton, David W. Helm, Andrew Hinshelwood, C. Gordon Hill, Pat Julig, Grace Rajnovich, C.S. "Paddy" Reid, Bill Ross, David K. Riddle, and Sheryl A. Smith. The fruits of their labours appear in *Studies in West Patricia Archaeology* (Reid 1980; Reid and Ross 1981; Ross 1982) and in the local Regional Conservation Reports.

#### *My Years in the Forest*

I am a descendant of an Irish family who arrived in Ontario, in 1820, to take up a land grant northeast of Toronto. Together with related families, my ancestors felled the oak, walnut, maple and elm trees to transform the landscape into farmsteads surrounded by split rail, stone and stump fences. In retrospect, it appears that with the arrogance of ignorance, they supplanted the original peoples. Growing up in a sparsely populated area with a strong respect for the people of the land whose lives were often at variance with those of the expanding urban population, I became a secure, hard-working, independent person who liked to collect relics. On the farm, and the grazing lands in

the transitional forest to the north, I acquired an awareness of weather conditions, the nature of the bush, and knowledge of plants, animals, insects, predators and firearms that enabled me to make an easy transition to life in the boreal forest.

Schooled in West Toronto where my mother's Welsh family lived, I enlisted in the Air Force in 1942, and spent the rest of the war camping throughout western Europe, which later proved useful when fielding 'digs'. On returning to Canada with a quest for knowledge, I took up the ethereal academic life through the study of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Thomas F McIlwraith and G. Gordon Brown, who had lived with peoples of Africa and the Pacific, provided me with a broad cultural approach. This was balanced with a strong grounding in archaeology imparted to me by Norman Emerson, Ken Kidd and Edmund S. Carpenter, a protegee of the renowned New York archaeologist William A. Ritchie [1903-1995] (Funk 1996).

I learned meticulous excavation techniques under Kidd, mass excavation techniques under Emerson, and survey methods with Tom Lee, all for the joy of a tent and food. At the time, archaeology was considered an occupation only to be enjoyed by the establishment, or by esoteric academics who lived in garrets. Being neither, and being married with a family when I attained my MA in 1951, I found that it was necessary to reassess my life. Otherwise, I would have had to continue to earn my keep as a taxi driver who catered to those indulging in the night life of the city. It became apparent that revealing the highly specialized nature of my studies was of no advantage in seeking conventional employment. As a veteran who had taken an array of courses, however, I could stress my familiarity with economics or the study of government. Eventually, fortune smiled on me when I turned to business and for a decade, I enjoyed a successful career in finance, culminating in 1961, when I opened the Industrial Development Bank in Thunder Bay.

Arranging for two months yearly time off during this decade, I managed to continue field work with my new wife Irene. This included a visit to the mystical Puckasaw pits, an adventurous canoe trip with four local aboriginal people down the Gods and Hayes rivers to Hudson Bay, and excavations with Walter Kenyon at the

Hudson's Bay Company Post at the mouth of the Albany River (Kenyon 1962).

As the manager of the first commercial bank in the region, I was soon familiar with local business people and members of government, which was later to prove very fruitful when seeking funding for field work. This was enhanced by my appointment to the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board, in 1965, to the chagrin of archaeologists in Toronto, none of whom at that time had been asked to serve. I was also appointed to the Ontario Heritage Foundation, when it assumed an advisory role to the government with respect to licensing and regional funding.

From my arrival in Northwestern Ontario, I inaugurated a publicity campaign concerning the importance of archaeology the success of which was facilitated by the head of the local newspaper, who happened to be an old friend from my days of military service. The campaign included presentations to the various chambers of commerce and other groups on the potential of archaeology for tourist promotion. This was enhanced by radio interviews with such well-known personalities as Peter Growski and Arthur Black. In concert with the Indian Eskimo Association and the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, I publicly supported the local aboriginal people and their concerns. By this time, I was also serving with the local Lake Superior Scottish Regiment. It was the period of the "Cold War" and as a Field Officer, I was called upon to establish a weather fallout centre, a process which introduced me to municipal officers from across the region. This would eventually prove to be useful as many of these people knew local artifact collectors. I was also fortunate in having the opportunity to fly over the territory with the compliments of the Ontario Air Service and Ontario Central Airlines, the latter of which was owned by Barney Lamm, a customer of mine. Later, using Lamm's aircraft, I took members of the Minnesota Historical Society on tours of Churchill, Povungnatuk and L'Anse aux Meadows.

In the 1960s, I began research in Northwestern Ontario as the first "resident" archaeologist in the boreal forest. In 1962, with support from the National Museum of Canada, I carried out excavations at the McCluskey habitation site Whitefish Lake, west of Thunder Bay Based on

the strata containing Blackduck ceramics and which yielded early radiocarbon dates, I considered the site and its material culture to be a product of Ojibwa occupation (Dawson 1974), in contrast to the prevailing view in Minnesota and Manitoba, where such ceramics were considered to originate with the Assiniboine (MacNeish 1958; Wilford 1955). The next year I was involved in the opening of test trenches at a vast Palaeo-Indian workshop, the Cummins site, located on the glacial strand lines of Lake Superior, and dated to 8480 B.P. (Dawson 1983c).

In 1965, Lakehead University was established under the Presidency of the former head of the Chamber of Commerce, at which time I joined the staff as Director of Northern Area Studies and Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Psychology and Sociology. The University provided laboratory facilities and support staff to permit the undertaking of archaeology on a full time basis. They had not considered Anthropology as part of their academic programme, but enrollment surged and within two years a new Department of Sociology and Anthropology was established. Within the decade, a separate Department of Anthropology was recognized. I spent the first year visiting museums and universities in Siberia, but on returning I found myself a full Professor and Chair. A program of Native Studies under a separate Director was established. The teaching of native languages was introduced as well as a course in "Taiga Studies".

With the establishment of the Mid-Canada Development Corridor Foundation in the 1960s, public attention was focused on the boreal forest for the first time. Senior business people toured the region with a cadre of academics, including myself as a representative of archaeology. Another industrial interest group was the Quetico Foundation, which supported Kidd, Kenyon, and I in our researches. In 1967, the Federal government underwrote the First National Northern Research Conference, which initially involved Bill Taylor, William Mayer-Oakes, Tim Jones and I.

To address the absence of recorded sites in the boreal forest, I initiated exploratory surveys both to the west (Dawson 1983a) and east of Lake Nipigon (Dawson 1976a) followed by the excavation of habitation sites (Dawson 1978, 1980, 1981a, 1987b). For the most part, local students were employed for this work since



volunteers from the city proved unstable in the isolated environment.

Under grants from the province, I conducted excavations at the Long Lac and Fort William fur trade posts (Dawson 1969, 1970) and carried out underwater explorations of the nearby rivers and along the Lake Superior shore (Dawson 1975). William D. Finlayson, the future director of the London Museum of Archaeology at the University of Western Ontario, was one of the scuba divers during one field season. Paul Sweetman of the Ontario Archaeological Society served as head of the field party for one of the four seasons of excavations at the site of old Fort William in the CPR rail yards. This project culminated in a multi-million dollar reconstruction of the post as a major tourist attraction in Thunder Bay.

From 1967 to 1969, I undertook a survey of the Albany River, with the financial support of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This work documented, for the first time, the presence of extensive habitation sites in the northern reaches of the boreal forest, a discovery later reinforced by the results of additional research (Koezur and Wright 1976). In 1971, I directed the National Museum of Canada's youth project — the "Wawa Big Dig" at the Michipicoten River. The Canadian Army provided logistical support for over a hundred students and an equal number of transients, while local aboriginal people provided security. The area was extensively surveyed and several sites were excavated to produce much new information on the precontact peoples of the north shore (Dawson 1971, 1976c; Brizinski and Buchanan 1977). Others were attracted to the area that year as well. Peter Storck of the Royal Ontario Museum examined a collection from a site located further upriver (Storck 1974) and William M. Hurley of the University of Toronto attempted a lake shore survey, although his report suggests it was more of an exercise in survival (Hurley 1971). In 1979 and 1980, using a tug boat and plenty of spirits, our crew successfully surveyed the Lake Superior coast for Parks Canada (Dawson 1979).

The 1970s also saw the direct entry of the provincial government into archaeology. A deluge of studies commenced in the interior hinterland, with many newly-trained archaeologists taking an interest in the region. Summer field work continued with an archaeological

investigation of the first road built from Fort William to the Red River Settlement. Many local citizens from the shores of Ke-che-gumme and members of the Historical and Field Naturalist Societies volunteered for the field work. In addition, many other forms of local support were forthcoming: municipalities provided equipment such as shovels and wheel barrows; businesses contributed vehicles for transporting crews, compressors for scuba diving, and a metal detector for historical site exploration.

During the amalgamation of Port Arthur and Fort William as Thunder Bay, I helped persuade officials to turn over the redundant Registry Offices to the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, which would provide a permanent home to these collections. A few years later, under a National Museums of Canada program, the first art gallery was built. Following Bill Taylor's comments concerning the fact that the National Museum had much undisplayed aboriginal art, and his suggestion that the Thunder Bay gallery would be ideal for travelling exhibits, it was expanded to accommodate an Indian Art Centre. I sat on both Boards and acted as a facilitator as I knew both the political and civil administrators. At other times I sat on City boards such as the Centennial Committee, the Lakehead Regional Conservation Authority, Arts and Heritage Board and others. I was also on the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute Board in Wisconsin. On occasion, I visited the arctic under the Polar Gas Environmental Program (Schledermann 1978) and the west for the Saskatchewan Nipawin Reservoir Study (Meyer et al. 1981). In the 1980s, after the Indiana Jones movies, objectionable as they might have been to archaeologists, I received an abundance of information in the bars from prospectors and the like on possible sites in the north. I continued to produce papers on the history of the original peoples from an anthropological theoretical stance and using an individualist approach. These cultural ecological studies were aided by working in territories where the original people still resided and where the environment was still relatively unchanged (Dawson 1977b, 1982, 1983c).

Every seventh year I took advantage of sabbatical leave provisions to visit the world. In Africa, I stayed in villages and communities to attain a broader understanding of the peoples' way of life and their environment. At other times

I visited museums and sites in India, Pakistan, China, South East Asia, Australia, South America and Antarctica. Since retirement, I have worked in Fiji and Maui in the Pacific, and despite poor health, I frequently appear as an expert witness in aboriginal hunting and fishing cases in support of my new wife, Mary, who is a native rights lawyer in Thunder Bay

## ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE NORTHWESTERN BOREAL FOREST

In Manitoba, the boreal forest stood as a barrier to archaeological exploration until 1949, when the Manitoba Museum fielded a small crew to undertake a cursory examination of the region between Lake Winnipeg and the Nelson River. They recorded a few sites, one of which yielded Blackduck ceramics. After traversing eighty-five sets of major rapids it was concluded that: "...the area was not conducive to human occupation." (Hlady 1949; Lytwyn 1993). While detailed investigation under the direction of MacNeish commenced in the southern regions in the 1950s, and in the northern regions in the 1960s under the direction of Wright, it was not until archaeology programs were established at the universities in Manitoba that there was any continuity in regional research.

Walter M. Hlady [1924-1986], who returned from the Second World War severely wounded, became a driving force in the province (Steinbring 1988). With a wide range of interests, he was very active in the Archaeology Society of Manitoba, which was established in 1961. Under his inspired leadership, work commenced at Baker Narrows and Southern Indian Lake in the 1960s. Of Ukrainian background, Hlady married, started a family, and became a school teacher and government administrator. He edited a comprehensive publication on the archaeology of Manitoba (Hlady [editor] 1970) and other publications followed shortly afterwards (Hlady 1970; Hlady 1971). In 1972, he attained an MA from the University of Manitoba. When the Churchill dam project was announced, Hlady fought for a thorough investigation of the threatened lands. For thirty years he reported on archaeological activities in the region, as well as publishing on the disposition of the original peoples (Lunn 1987).

In 1960, the dynamic Dr. William J. Mayer-Oakes burst onto the Manitoba scene to head a major archaeological field project at Grand Rapids (Mayer-Oakes 1970). In the first season, he engaged his old colleague Norman Emerson. Appointed head of a new Department of Anthropology at the University of Manitoba in 1963, he began a survey of the relict shores of Glacial Lake Agassiz (Mayer-Oakes 1967). He departed for Texas in 1970, but during his short stay he influenced such graduates as Susan M. Jamieson, David Meyer, Ronald J. Nash, Leo Pettipas, Leigh E. Syms and Morgan J. Tamplin to mention only a few imbued with an affinity for the north.

In the 1970s and 1980s, extensive new work was undertaken in the boreal forest of Manitoba (Pettipas 1980). At the University of Winnipeg, J. H. 'Jack' Steinbring was appointed as head of the Department of Anthropology. Steinbring, who had attained a PhD in Minnesota, was a tenacious, messianic personality with a marked interest in rock paintings, Old Copper finds and the living populations of the region. He undertook studies on the Bloodvein River (Steinbring 1978, 1980; Steinbring and Buckner 1980) and provided facilities in support of the vast Churchill River Water Diversion survey under Oscar Mallory. This massive project (Kroker 1990) involved Garry A. Dickson, Margaret Hanna, Tim E. H. Jones, Michael E. Kelly, David K. Riddle, Mary Ann Tisdale, Wayne E. Wiersum and W James Wood to mention but a few notables in this emerging and energetic archaeological community. Steinbring was also involved in the Caribou Lake-Winnipeg River-Great Falls project, with field researchers such as Patrick H. Carmichael, A. P. 'Tony' Buchner, Stanley G. Saylor and Clint J. Wheeler, whose work can be found in the Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation publications. Steinbring retired in 1994, but Tony Buchner, who completed the doctoral program at the University of Calgary, now continues the work.

One researcher who warrants special mention is David Riddle, who has been involved in boreal forest surveys in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan since the 1960s. He is the quintessential northern researcher, living and breathing archaeology and like the early archaeologists in Canada, he is largely self-taught (Riddle 1972, 1980). Leigh Syms, formerly at University of Alberta and now with the

Museum of Man and Nature in Winnipeg, is also distinguished for his meticulous research and innovative ideas (Syms 1977).

In Saskatchewan, archaeology developed even later than in Ontario and Manitoba (Hanna 1970; Kehoe 1963; Pohorecky 1973). Systematic studies of the Continental Boreal Forest were initially limited to the Lake Athabasca region (Jones 1978), although P.G. Downes, a teacher, had recorded pottery at Reindeer Lake as early as 1936 (Dowries 1938), and MacNeish recorded sites at Fond du Lac in 1949. A decade later, Robert Nero, an ornithologist, collected artifacts from Lake Athabasca. Wright and Noble, in turn, followed Nero to Lake Athabasca.

The Saskatchewan Archaeological Society was established in 1963. In 1964, Zenon Pohorecky, of Ukrainian background and a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, joined the new Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Saskatchewan as the lone, stoic professor of archaeology (Jones 1978:23). His first interest was in rock paintings. In this work, he was fortunate to have the support of Tim Jones, a keen-eyed observer of detail and a confidant of Selwyn Dewdney. Together, they inaugurated an extensive pictograph survey in the late 1960s (Pohorecky and Jones 1967). Since 1982, Jones has been Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society.

Research in Saskatchewan expanded rapidly with the advent of contract field work under the dynamic leadership of the late J.F.V. (Jim) Miller [1921-1994] (Noble 1996). A PhD graduate of the University of Calgary, who had before-hand acquired extensive experience in the north by taking part in mining explorations, Miller joined Pohorecky at the University of Saskatchewan in 1969. Under his auspices, Michael Forsman undertook field work in the Montreal Lake area and in 1972, Sheila Minni began a three year excavation program at Black Lake in the Athabasca area (Minn 1976).

In 1967, David Meyer, a young, energetic and capable archaeologist, who was a graduate of the universities of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, commenced work in the southern fringe of the boreal forest at Deer Lake with Dennis Anderson. In 1973 and 1974, his field work moved to the north as part of the Churchill Basin Study (Meyer and Smailes 1975). While James Brown from Chicago had undertaken a cursory survey in

1961, and Thomas and Alice Kehoe had also visited the area in the 1960s (Woodbury 1962), this was the first major expedition to be undertaken in the region (Meyer 1978). The construction of roads to allow for the exploitation of northern resources led, in turn, to more archaeological surveys undertaken throughout the forest as far north as Key Lake in 1979 and 1980 (Meyer 1981). This project, and a plethora of smaller studies revealed much new information. Meyer completed his PhD at McMaster University and became a Director of the vast Nipawin Reserve Heritage Project in the 1980s. He is now at the University of Saskatchewan continuing the work begun by Pohorecky.

## IN RETROSPECT

Early archaeological field work in the Continental Boreal Forest Province was undertaken by people of diverse character with many interests that were at times contrary to the correct political view. Their primary interest was in recovering data. Where applicable, they gave free rein to intuitive insight in a manner which seems to stand in contrast to the current emphasis on science, an emphasis that—at times—appears warped by the linear thinking of Western culture.

With the marked growth of university enrollment after the Second World War, attitudes changed. Archaeology was no longer seen as just an esoteric interest and larger numbers of dedicated students took up the study of anthropology and its related disciplines. As a result, serious investigation of the vast interior hinterland by trained archaeologists became common. Much of this work was carried out under the aegis of federal and provincial agencies whose roles were expanding to accommodate a new world view.

A plethora of studies began in the 1970s when provincial governments claimed stewardship of all cultural remains below the ground, and participated directly in archaeological work. Some of this work involved impact studies and salvage excavations that were, for the most part, related to the exploitation of natural resources. The work was often promoted by expediency in the face of a culture driven by a "cargo cult" mentality, creating new types of archaeological bureaucrats and consultants. Archaeology gained prominence in the

non-academic world as cultural resources were evaluated during the course of broader environmental assessment studies.

The last quarter of this century has seen a phenomenal expansion of archaeological field work undertaken by scores of graduates, many of whom have gone on to more than prove their worth at universities, museums and government departments. Their story has yet to be told.

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