

Minnesota Archaeological Society

The inscriptions below are from a 1,000-year-old pot that was discovered in 1957 near Red Wing, Minnesota by an MAS member.
The thunderbird motif is representative of Middle Mississippian iconography.



Fall 2010



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Recent Archaeological Discoveries at the New Lake Vermilion State Park

November 9, 7 P.M. Free Lecture at Fort Snelling!

Hundreds of historic mining features, a newly identified chert quarry and a lithic site yielding obsidian are some of the recent archaeological finds at the new Lake Vermilion State Park.

Although field survey of the new park is still underway and will be for several years, MHS archaeologist Dave Radford will give a summary of findings to date. Samples of chert from the newly identified quarry will be on display. Come see some photos of Minnesota's new state park!



Knife Lake Research Presented At Macalester

In early September 2009, archaeologists from the Superior National Forest (SNF) organized an interagency archaeological survey of high-probability locations in the vicinity of Knife Lake. Knife Lake is located in the central portion of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, on the International Border between the U.S. and Canada, in extreme northeastern Lake County, Minnesota. A unique survey strategy adopted for this project focused on landscapes located away from littoral areas that were recently exposed by SNF prescribed burning activities. The Early Precambrian bedrock (Knife Lake Group) around the Knife Lake area has been previously documented as an ideal location for prehistoric lithic procurement activities. To date, only one significant site of this nature has been located on the U.S. side of the Lake. The 2009 survey crew identified numerous exposed facies of high-quality metamorphosed Knife Lake Siltstone that exhibited ample evidence of quarry activity. The survey also resulted in the identification of numerous workshop areas scattered throughout the study area, some of which are located up to a ¼ mile from present day shorelines.



Unearthing Our Prehistoric Past

By Katie Humphrey, *Star Tribune*
September 25, 2010

A team of archeologists from the Science Museum of Minnesota uncovered more evidence this summer of prehistoric settlements at a park near Hastings.

There is a story in the ground at Spring Lake Park Reserve. It's told through fragments of pottery, chips of stone, arrowheads, bones and variations in the soil. It stretches back thousands of years through centuries of prehistoric settlement.

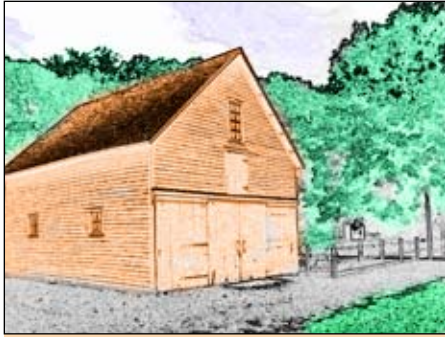
This summer, a team led by Ed Fleming, curator of archeology at the Science Museum of Minnesota, dug into the park to attempt to fill in missing chapters by building on research originally done in the 1950s. And even if the story is unfinished, each piece of pottery, each flake of stone, each unearthed fire pit, adds more detail.

"We know people were traveling through," Fleming said. "It's a story of the river being used for transportation and for commerce."

Pottery continued on page 6



Ed Fleming



2011 CMA Call for Papers/Posters

Farmsteads, Factories, Forts and Frontiers

February 18th and 19th

*Inver Hills Community College
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota*

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology solicits papers or posters to be presented at a two-day symposium on current archaeological research in the Upper Midwest. "Farmsteads, Factories, Forts and Frontiers" has been chosen for this year's theme. Although the main focus of the symposium is Historic in nature, papers on all regional subjects are welcomed from academics, cultural resource management archaeologists and stakeholders, so that we can collectively inform one another in an open, cooperative, environment. Graduate and undergraduate students are especially encouraged to submit papers. If a sufficient number of student submittals are received, the symposium committee will select one paper/poster to receive a student paper competition award.

Conference Specifics:

Papers: Theoretical, methodological, or data-synthesizing presentations focused on the Midwestern region. This also includes topical subjects based upon completed research. Presented papers should be no more than 20 minutes in length.

Posters/Media Displays: Wall mounted or freestanding exhibits with text and graphics, videotapes, CD/DVD presentations, etc., that illustrate ongoing or completed research projects are encouraged. Posters should be of a reasonable size (not larger than 4' x 6'). Wall space and tables will be provided; additional electronic equipment needed may be available upon request. Authors are expected to set up their own displays and be present at their display during poster session times, as well as provide their own tabletop displays and mounting supplies.

Deadline: Please submit an abstract no more than 200 words in length. Abstracts are due no later than December 19th, 2010. Electronic format (richtext, Word, or PDF file) is preferred.

Submitters will be notified no later than January 31st of the tentative schedule for their presentations.

Those individuals who submit a final copy of their presented papers (preferably in PDF file format), if interested, will be able to have their paper placed on a CMA Symposium CD which will be created one to two months after the symposium.

Session Schedule: The conference program chairs will group papers into four general sessions organized by time period, material, or topic. Conference on-line abstracts and general session schedules will be available for review by the end of January 2011.

Contact Information:

Jeremy L. Nienow (Jeremy.nienow@gmail.com)
Pat Emerson (Patricia.Emerson@mnhs.org)
Bruce Koenen (bruce.koenen@state.mn.us)

More information is available on the CMA website: <http://www.mnarchaeology.org/>.



Dates To Remember

Symposium To Be Held In February

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology will sponsor a two-day symposium on current research in Midwestern archaeology on Friday and Saturday, February 18th and 19th, 2011. The theme for this year's gathering is "Farmsteads, Factories, Forts and Frontiers". The emphasis will be on sites and topics related to historic archaeology, although research on other eras will be presented, as well.

The symposium, which will be free and open to the public, will be held at Inver Hills Community College in Inver Grove Heights. More information and a schedule of sessions will be available in January on the CMA website, www.mnarchaeology.org, and in the Winter MAS Newsletter.

The 2010 Minnesota Archaeologist Will Be Dedicated To Monroe Killy

Most of our members know that Monroe was one of the four people who actually founded the Minnesota Archaeological Society early in the 1930s. The first issue of the Minnesota Archaeologist appeared in 1935. Monroe remained a strong supporter until his death in January of this year, 2010, at age 99.

The MAS Board is also currently working on a memorial occasional publication to honor Mike Budak and the work that he accomplished for Minnesota archaeology until his untimely death in June of 2007.

The Minnesota Archaeologist is available on DVD and CDROM.

These include Volumes 1-48 (1935-1989) & Occasional Publications. You will want to add this to your library and we should note here that we have only 5 DVDs left in stock. The cost is \$100.00, which includes postage.

Check the label on the outer envelope of this mailing to find the year of your membership status. Please update your membership if it is not current. All the details can be found at www.mnarchsociety.org or contact Anna Morrow anmorrow@q.com 612-922-7006.

Minnesota Archaeological Society • Fort Snelling History Center • St Paul MN 55111



MAS Board Announces Lecture Support Program

The Board of the Minnesota Archaeological Society recently approved a new program, intended to provide support for archaeology-oriented lectures and events throughout the state. Local and regional historical organizations (such as county historical societies) can request assistance in planning and paying for talks and other programs by professional archaeologists. MAS will assist with finding speakers with expertise in the region, and will provide financial support up to \$300 per event for travel expenses and honoraria. No more than one event will be sponsored each quarter, and any given organization can only request support once every other calendar year. Interested organizations should contact a member of the Board of Directors for more information.

The Minnesota Historical Society's Archaeology Collection

Reprinted from the MHS website

The Minnesota Historical Society's archaeology collections contain more than 950,000 artifacts dating from ca. 11,500 years ago to the present. They are acquired through excavation, surface survey, and underwater recovery techniques in Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, portions of Canada, and through donations from private collections. The Society also serves as the repository for archaeological discoveries made on Minnesota public land by designation of the state archaeologist. Together these materials make up nearly 4,000 distinct collections, each representing a particular excavation or survey.

Archaeological collections constitute the historical record of long-ago Minnesota. For the more recent past, archaeological findings provide knowledge of architectural detail as well as living conditions and daily life styles not available from other sources. Some examples of the Society's holdings:

- ▶ Archaeologists working at the Bradbury Brook site near Mille Lacs Lake in central Minnesota found more than 125,000 artifacts, including stone tools, dating to 9220 B.P. (Before Present), making it the earliest dated excavated site in Minnesota.
- ▶ The Old Copper Complex of the Lake-Forest Archaic period, dating from 6000 to 3000 B.P., comes to life through a group of spear points, awls, knives, and other copper items collected in the 19th century by The Rev. Edward C. Mitchell.



Antler Awl Handle, ca. 1830. Accession No. 1998.163

Membership

Those who receive this newsletter by snail mail can check their label, which has their latest update. Everyone else can check with me if there are questions.

*Anna Morrow
anmorrow@q.com or 612-922-7006*

Costs are Individual \$25.00

Senior or Student \$15.00

Household \$30.00

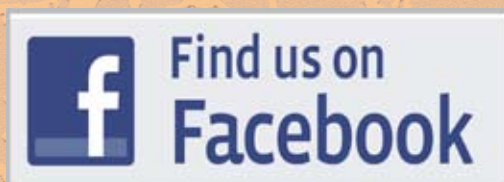
All Institutions \$40.00 US

Thanks!

Newsletter

Send your MAS news & notices to the Editor:
Michael Brey mike_2@mkbrey.com

www.mnarchsociety.org



- ▶ Materials recovered from the Grand Portage National Monument tell us about the French and British fur trade, which thrived between about 1680 and 1816.
- ▶ Excavations at Ft. Snelling, a U.S. Army post active between 1819 and 1946, aimed at collecting data to assist in the reconstruction/restoration of the 1825 era of the fort, in addition to this eagle insignia also turned up animal and fish bones--evidence of the soldiers' diets that provides a more complete picture of life at the fort.
- ▶ Artifacts from excavations of the milling district near St. Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River reveal Minnesota's rich industrial history.

These archaeological collections present exciting research opportunities as the Society's holdings continue to grow and new methods of analysis provide fresh perspectives. Learn more about the curation of archaeology collections.

www.mnhs.org/collections/archaeology/curation.htm

From Site to Story: The Upper Mississippi's Buried Past is a valuable resource for those interested in the archaeological research being conducted in Minnesota.

<http://www.fromsitetostory.org/>

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In the '50s, before the park was established, local boy Ken Klink piqued the curiosity of archeologists when he began showing them the artifacts he collected in the area -- arrowheads, tools and pottery. The Science Museum excavated and documented a number of sites but never fully completed work on one parcel known as the "Ranelius Site." A collection of artifacts was preserved by the museum, but that was it. There was no formal story to go with them.

"We've always sort of wondered about the Ranelius site," Fleming said. And so, in July, with grant funding from the Legacy Amendment, they went to check it out again. The project was relatively small and specifically targeted.

The team first used high-tech equipment to check for varying characteristics of the soil to pinpoint locations that could yield artifacts or ground conditions that indicated a fire pit or a structure. One spot they identified turned out to be a fire pit. Now, a bag of charred rock and burned animal bones is evidence that whoever was there ate large mammals, although Fleming noted, "It's so crushed up that it's not really identifiable."

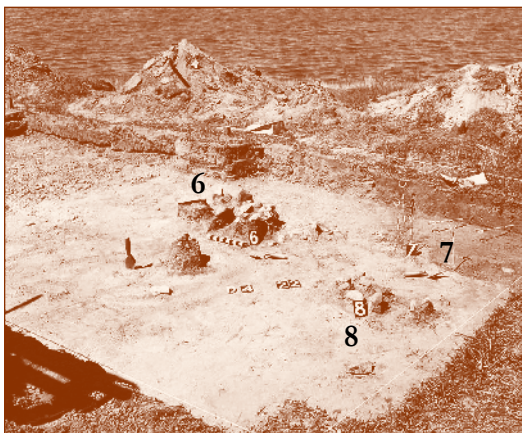
To the 1950s collection already at the Science Museum, they added stone flakes -- evidence of tool making -- and projectile points, more commonly known as arrowheads. They also found bits of pottery that, based on its composition, came from sometime between 800 and 1400 A.D.

One thing that they didn't find, however, was evidence of permanent housing. That leads Fleming and other archeologists to believe that the Spring Lake area may have been more of a temporary campsite than a village. But the area is large, and there are more places to explore. It would make sense to eventually find housing, said State Archeologist Scott Anfinson, because there are burial mounds at another site near the lake. "It takes a village to raise a mound group," Anfinson said David Wiggins, park ranger at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, said he always tells river visitors about the prehistoric settlements along the waterway. "This is a nationally significant area," Wiggins said. "The larger Upper Mississippi story is in these sites."

The sites, although in a park, are relatively remote and tough to reach. There is no trail yet, but there could be someday when there is a better understanding of what is out there and needs to be protected, said Bruce Blair, manager of facilities and development for Dakota County Parks and Open Space. "It's still more of an undiscovered resource. There's still a long way to go, for us as a managing agency, to understand what we have," he said. "We were very grateful of Dr. Fleming's and the Science Museum's interest in the site."

For now, park visitors can get a taste of the prehistoric settlement at the park, believed to stretch back 8,000 years, in interpretive displays at the Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center. "There's lots of stuff out there," said Klink, the original discoverer of the site, who's now 76 and living in Hastings. "I would like to see lots of excavation going on out there."

Fleming plans to publish a report of his findings in a local archeological journal. He hopes to someday get back out to Spring Lake and explore more areas. "There's a great potential to learn more," he said, noting that the site is relatively undisturbed for being so close to the metro area. "There's little pockets of areas like Spring Lake Park Reserve where it hasn't all been bulldozed yet."



The picture left is a Science Museum excavation unit, which is 10 feet in length and width. This unit is located on the eastern side of the terrace at Ranelius. Within the unit are 3 features, labeled as Feature 6, Feature 7, and Feature 8. Feature 6 and Feature 8 consist of a pile of rocks that show evidence of being exposed to high temperatures. These fire-cracked rocks are surrounded by charcoal and burnt earth. Johnson's notes suggest these features are the result of material being removed from a fire pit.

Lost Artifact

By Michael Brey, Champlin Historical Society

At one time there were many burial mounds of all different ages, sizes and shapes in Champlin, Minnesota. By the late 1880's, there were over 11,000 recorded prehistoric and early historic Native American earthworks and burial mounds in Minnesota alone. Most were mapped by Theodore H. Lewis. Lewis's notes and mound plats were assembled into a book for the Minnesota Historical Society entitled the "Aborigines of Minnesota" and was published in 1911 by Newton K. Winchell and Jacob V. Brower.

November 16, (1940?) the Anoka Union printed a photograph of a figurine Mrs. A. S. Kimball of Champlin, Minnesota unearthed in her yard. The Union at that time stated the figurine might be an archaeological find of value. It was evidently a doll, minus arms and legs, which had been broken off, and which was made of baked clay. The eyeball sockets are hollow and the pupils a longitudinal slit. This figurine was sent to the State Historical Society by Mrs. Kimball and in a feature article in the Minneapolis Times-Tribune of March 15 (1941?) headed "History on Parade" telling of the Hennepin County Historical Society, many articles are pictured. One paragraph was as follows:

"Oldest of the museum pieces is an ancient figurine dug up in the front yard of a home at Champlin near the Mississippi River. Estimated to be more than 1,000 years old, the figurine belonged to a middle Mississippi culture originating in South America."



The Kimball figurine of baked clay was unearthed in the front yard of Mrs. A. S. Kimball of Champlin in the mid 1930's. It is estimated to be over 1000 years old.

Maybe it's a lost cause, but I've been on the hunt for this artifact. During the process of editing the book "Champlin on the Mississippi" for the CHS, I came across a statement that the artifact was given, date unknown, to the Hennepin County Historical Society. They didn't have it. The Hennepin County Historical Society was founded in 1938 through work done by the WPA. The first location was in St. Louis Park. If the figurine was sent to MHS, did they deaccession it and pass it on? I also chatted with Daniel Cagley at the MHS. He couldn't locate it in their archives either.

So I'm just throwing it out to see if anyone might have a suggestion as to possible sources I could use to find this small piece of local history.

mike_2@mkbrey.com



- *MAS members who would like to put in some hands-on time have several opportunities.*
- *To get more information about these current projects, please contact the individuals listed.*

Treasurer Needed: The Minnesota Archaeological Society is seeking a conscientious, detail oriented individual to take on the duties of Treasurer. This is a volunteer position without compensation. The individual should have an aptitude in finance, and be a member of the M.A.S. willing to attend a monthly Board meeting. (Typically 1st Tuesday each Month) Interested candidates please contact:

Rod Johnson, President: rodjohn33@msn.com or
Pat Emerson, Vice President: patricia.emerson@mnhs.org

MAS Offers Support for Local and County Archaeology Presentations

The Minnesota Archaeological Society is actively looking for lectures and presentations throughout the state that need support for speaker fees and travel expenses. We will be contacting local historical societies and other agencies in the future to see if some arrangements can be made. In the meantime, any readers who are interested in such a collaboration are invited to contact President Rod Johnson at rodjohn33@msn.com. Outreach and education are the twin missions of MAS and we are happy to entertain ideas toward such goals through archaeological activities, lecture series, site tours, interpretive talks, and other hands-on learning experiences.

Become a Fan of MAS by joining us on Facebook. You can submit photos of your collections, ask questions, or leave comments. This is a place to connect with others interested in Minnesota Archaeology. We hope to see you there! If you have questions please contact: Debbie Pommer at 651-430-0137 or pomme001@umn.edu

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