

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.



Winter 2014



This Issue

Uncovering The Past
In Minnesota p. 1

Letter From
The President
p. 2



Lithics Materials
Workshop
p. 3



Dates To Remember
p. 4



In Memory
Of Douglas
C. George
p.7



Uncovering the Past: Artifacts Paint Picture of Earliest Residents

By Mark W. Olson, editor@chaskaerald.com
<http://www.chaskaerald.com>



Local archaeological work is continuing to turn up rare artifacts and shed light on the Minnesota River Valley's earliest residents.

For the past several weeks, archaeologists have been busy excavating ancient campsites along County Road 61 in Chanhassen, near the Highway 101 bridge. They've discovered about 2,000 artifacts, including bison bones, the remains of an 8,000-year-old fire hearth, and a rare spear point, also dating back 8,000 years.

"The site is important because there are few 8,000-year-old sites in Minnesota that are so well preserved. The variety of artifacts from the site provides valuable information to help us understand ancient history, how people lived, and the environment at that time."

Frank Florin, Florin Cultural Resource Services

"The site is important because there are few 8,000-year-old sites in Minnesota that are so well preserved," stated Frank Florin, with Florin Cultural Resource Services LLC, which is conducting the work. "The variety of artifacts from the site provides valuable information to help us understand ancient history, how people lived, and the environment at that time."

The workers are racing against time. Next June, construction is scheduled to begin on a new, flood-resistant, \$54 million Highway 101 bridge, connecting Carver and Scott counties.

As part of a federally mandated process, Florin's crews conducted an archaeological survey of the future construction area. During these

November, December 2013 Letter from the President

The Minnesota Archaeological Society's Board of Directors met at Ft. Snelling on November 12, 2013, and December 3, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. Both meetings sustained attendance to constitute a quorum. Some new and significant business came before each meeting.

New Opportunity

Twin Cities Public Television Partnership Manager Tom Trow, who is executive producer at TPT and an archaeologist, attended the November meeting to discuss opportunities and ideas and to collect input toward proposed plans to produce a documentary for TPT on "Scientific Minnesota Archaeology: What We Know and How We Know It." The documentary would focus on discussions addressing certain pop-archaeology, and/or alternative history theories. The television show "American Unearthed" was cited as a prime example of the problem of fantastical theories of the past. He thinks there is a place for a rebuttal against this trend—and explanation of how archaeology actually works.

Extensive discussion followed, citing many examples of fringe archaeology, the Kensington Stone being the most prominent. Although it was noted that nothing is likely to change the minds of the "true believers," there may be an audience of younger people who do not have set opinions to whom we could demonstrate how critical thinking works.

Tom also noted that many of the documentaries produced by TPT's Minnesota channel find new life as DVDs distributed to schools. A program about archaeology might fit well with the current emphasis in schools on science and technology topics.

This proposed documentary, should it come to fruition, would be of significant interest to Minnesotans.

The Pipestone Occasional Publication and the Legacy Grant

You should all have received your copies of our recent Legacy-funded volume *The Red Pipestone Quarry of Minnesota: Archaeological and Historical Reports, Second Revised Edition*, from Alan Woolworth and Prairie Smoke Press. The Minnesota Historical Society has now informed us that the supporting grant is closed and that they are pleased with the work. Our many thanks to their funding opportunity and to Alan and Charlie Bailey of Prairie Smoke Press for all their hard work on a significant contribution to Upper Midwest material culture study. The Press was assisted with this important work by *MnArch* Editor Kent Bakken and Board Members Deborah Schoenholz and Anna Morrow.



MnArch

The 2013 volume of *The Minnesota Archaeologist* has been printed and should be arriving in your mailbox any day.

Nifty Quotes:

"THE GREATEST LESSON THAT ARCHAEOLOGY CAN TEACH IS ONE THAT PEOPLE CAN NOT, OR REFUSE TO LEARN. i.e. SOCIETAL COLLAPSE IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO POPULATION DEMANDS ON THE RESOURCES OF ANY GIVEN ENVIRONMENT". (Unknown)

Visit us on Facebook

Rod Johnson: President

For comments or suggestions, send a letter to President: Minnesota Archaeological Society, Ft. Snelling Center, St. Paul, Minnesota 55111 or email rodjohn33@msn.com

Uncovering the Past continued from page 1

test digs, workers found butchered animal bones and a range of tools, such as hide scrapers, cutting tools, grinding stones, hammer stones and a graver.

So Florin's crews returned this winter for a process called "data recovery," which means collecting artifacts and site information before it is destroyed by construction.

ARCHAIC

Florin's team, which includes 12 archaeologists, is excavating seven locations near the County Road 61 and Highway 101 intersection. The total cost of the archaeological project is \$290,000, according to Lyndon Rob-jent, public works director for Carver County.

"The site has several occupations that span from 8,000 to 3,000 years ago," Florin said. The recovered artifacts paint a picture of what is called the "Archaic Period," which lasted from about 6,000 to 800 B.C.

Artifacts from this time have been found in Minnesota before. However, they are rarely found in an intact setting, where scientists can study their context.

Of the handful of discovered Archaic Period sites, most are found by construction projects, said State Archaeologist Scott Anfinson, in an interview last summer. He said there are similar sites in Granite Falls and New Ulm. The Minnesota River Valley "truly is a time capsule and it's a time capsule that hasn't been dug up yet," Anfinson said.

The Chanhassen sites have yielded evidence of areas where animals were butchered. Animal remains discovered

Uncovering the Past continued on page 6



Lithic Materials Workshop

Friday, February 28 - Saturday, March 1

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
<http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Lithic.htm>



What is it? This free, two-day event is an informal workshop featuring posters, papers, displays, and a lithic material exchange, with plenty of time to talk.

Where is it? Cartwright Center (rooms 337 & 339) on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse campus. Directions to UW-L: <http://www.uwlax.edu/map/directions.html>. Campus Map: <http://www.uwlax.edu/map/>.

Who's invited? Everyone interested in regional lithics and lithic raw materials—archaeologists, collectors, flintknappers, students, or anyone else who likes to discuss rocks and how they were used.

Topics? We're especially interested in talking about identification and sourcing of regional lithic materials, but any lithics-related topics are welcome.

Presentations, posters and displays: Scheduled for Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. There will be plenty of time to talk, and we encourage participants to bring materials to show and discuss.

Lithic materials exchange: Saturday afternoon we'll have a lithic material exchange so people can view and trade samples of raw materials.

Flintknapping area will be available throughout the workshop.

Reception: Friday night, the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center will host a reception and open lab at UW-L's Archaeology Center and Laboratory, next to Cartwright Center.

Deli buffet lunch and luncheon talk: Saturday, "New Insights on the Earliest Americans," by Dr. Jessi Halligan (UW-La Crosse). Dr. Halligan is an underwater archaeologist and Paleoindian and lithics specialist who is working on Paleoindian sites in Florida sinkholes.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, February 28

1:00– 5:00 pm Poster and Paper Presentations and Displays
5:00–7:00 pm Reception at Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (hors d'oeuvres & cash bar)

Saturday, March 1

9:00–11:30 am Poster and Paper Presentations and Displays (coffee and snacks)
11:30 am–1:00 pm Lunch (deli buffet; priority given to those who sign up in advance)
Luncheon speaker (12:00–12:30): Dr. Jessi Halligan, UW-La Crosse
"New Insights on the Earliest Americans"—everyone welcome!
1:00–3:00 pm Lithic Materials Exchange

MINNESOTA HISTORY GETS BOOST FROM LEGACY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP



Up to \$5,000 Awarded to Researchers Advancing Minnesota History

The Minnesota Historical Society is pleased to announce a new Legacy Research Fellowship. This competitive fellowship is designed to support research on Minnesota history that is conducted at the Society's Gale Family Library. The fellowship is open to any post-college Minnesota scholar.

"The goal of the project is to support research on Minnesota history and cultural heritage, especially in areas where there is a scholarly gap" said Jennifer Jones, director of the Minnesota Historical Society's Library and Collections. "We are pleased to be able to advance Minnesota scholarship in this way."

Applicants can apply for a fellowship stipend of \$1,000 to \$5,000. The size of the award will be chosen based on the scope and duration of the research project.

The call for applicants is open until Monday, Feb. 3, 2014. For more information visit the website at sites. mnhs.org/library/researchfellows.

The Legacy Research Fellowship is made possible by the Legacy Amendment's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on Nov. 4, 2008.

Dates To Remember

Anthropology Colloquium

2-07-14, 3-4:30 pm **"The Lord of the Hunt: Animal Mastery and Elite Status in Iron Age Europe,"** Prof. Bettina Arnold, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee; Location: 235 Blegen Hall, Room 235; Cost: Free; Sponsored by: UMN Anthropology; Contact: Marjorie Schalles, magid001@umn.edu, 612-624-6579



Lithics Materials Workshop (see page 3)

2/28/14 - 3/1/14 Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. <http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Lithic.htm>

Eighth Biennial Conference on Battlefield Archaeology

3/11/14 -3/11/16 **Fields of Conflict 2014**, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina

Catch Rod Knapping

3/11/14, 1-2 pm *Demonstration:* Anoka Public Library, Crooked Lake Branch Coon Rapids MN

Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference (MAAC)

3/13/14 - 3/16/14 Location: Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. We meet annually, in early spring, for three days of papers, discussion groups, special workshops, our business meeting, and, of course, a party to catch up on what all our colleagues have been doing for the past year! Anyone interested in the archaeology of the area from New York to Virginia, and from the Atlantic coast to West Virginia, is welcome. You do not have to be a member to register for the conference and hear about the latest of a wide variety of archaeological sites dating from the earliest Paleo-Indian sites to 20th-century sites. Come join us! <http://www.maacmidatlanticarchaeology.org/>

<http://www.dulutharchaeologycenter.com/page8.html>

Join the Minnesota Archaeology Society

USA

Standard: \$30.00 (one person)

Household: \$40.00 (two or more)

Senior: (65 plus) \$15.00

Active student: \$15.00

Institution: \$60.00

Both USA and Canada

Sustaining: \$100. (Receive free MAS mugs.)

Benefactor: \$250. (Receive free MAS mugs plus a seat at the annual dinner meeting as an honored guest.)

Canada

Standard: \$40.00 (one person)

Household: \$50.00 (two or more)

Institution: \$70.00

Did you receive your Occasional Publication *The Red Pipestone Quarry of Minnesota: Archaeological and Historical Reports*? If not, please let me know.

Thanks so much. Anna Morrow, anmorrow@q.com

Newsletter

Send your MAS news & notices to the Editor: Deborah Schoenholz
schoe030@umn.edu

www.mnarchsociety.org



TN Cave, Rock Art Offers Prehistoric Perspectives

Author: Jamie McGee | Source: *The Tennessean* 1/26/14

There are more than 100 caves and rock sites in Tennessee that reveal forms of prehistoric art, and University of Tennessee archaeologist Jan Simek says he plans to find many others. Archaeologist Jan Simek examines cave art found in Marion County, Tenn. [Credit: Alan Cressler/The Tennessean] “There is a lot more out there to discover,” Simek said after presenting his team’s recent findings at the 2014 Current Research in Tennessee Archaeology meeting at Ellington Agricultural Center. Simek, a distinguished professor of science at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and a team of archaeologists in recent years have made several new cave and rock art discoveries in the Cumberland Plateau, the Smoky Mountains and the river valley in East Tennessee. Some pictographs are underground and others in the open air, many dating back 6,000 years. Simek presented illustrations of geometric shapes, crosses and circular structures with lines projecting from them made with liquid



paint, as well as geometrical tracings found on cave walls. The rock art is religious iconography and portrays how people may have viewed the universe within three layers: the upper world; the middle world, where humans live; and the lower world, he said. Paintings that illustrated the upper world are painted high above the ground on bluffs, for example. With each discovery, Simek said, archaeologists are better able to determine where other drawings may exist and to help discover and preserve those sites. “These are cultural heritage treasures that belong to all of us,” he said. “They are something to document, to save, to protect.”

A precontact history of Minnesota that reveals the relevance of archaeology to our understanding of the world today

ARCHAEOLOGY OF MINNESOTA: The Prehistory of the Upper Mississippi River Region

By Guy Gibbon

University of Minnesota Press
| 2012

ISBN 978-0-8166-7909-6 | \$34.95

From archaeological materials, Guy Gibbon reconstructs the social, economic, and political systems—the lifeways—of those who inhabited what we now call Minnesota for thousands of years before the first contact between native peoples and Europeans. Gibbon shows how the study of Minnesota archaeology is relevant to a broader understanding of long-term patterns of change in human development throughout the world.

For more information, including the table of contents, visit the book's webpage: <http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/archaeology-of-minnesota>



Uncovering the Past continued from page 3

include bison, fish, turtle and clams. The archaeologists have also found “lithic workshops” where tools were made, as evidenced by chipping debris. The type of 8,000-year-old spear point is uncommon in Minnesota, and found more frequently in the southeastern United States, Florin said.

Evidence of the 8,000-year-old campfire came in the form of “a dark circular stain that formed from decomposed charcoal, along with cracked rocks,” Florin said. It was found in an area with animal bones and chipping debris.

DEEP SITE

The campsites that yielded the artifacts would have stood near a large lake in the bottom of the Minnesota River Valley, Florin said.

After the artifacts were deposited, a dry climate was followed by increased precipitation and cooler temperatures. The lake basin expanded, filling the site with wetlands and resulting in peat deposits that covered the artifacts. When settlers began clearing and farming the land 150 years ago, more soil was deposited on the site.

“This site is unique in that it is very old and buried over 10 feet deep in some places,” Florin said. “Also it is unusual to find sites in wetlands. However, the wetland formed after the site was occupied. So part of our job is to understand the past landscape and setting.”

CHALLENGES

The cold, wet conditions pose particular challenges to the archaeologists.

Because the wetland excavation site continually fills with water, it is pumped out every morning, and then every hour.

The workers, sometimes wading through water and mud in subzero temperatures, wear thick clothing. To keep the site from freezing, insulation is placed over the ground, and then removed while the soil is slowly skimmed with a shovel.

Small heated plastic tents are set up at the site, where workers push the thick clay soil through a screen, searching for artifacts. The process resembles kneading bread or giving a deep-tissue massage. Each artifact is labeled and placed in a plastic freezer bag.

Work will wrap up shortly this season, with one more area to excavate in the spring, according to Florin.



In Memorium: Douglas C. George

Doug George mapping historic features at Interstate Park, December 2012. Photograph courtesy of David Mather.

One of Minnesota's premier historic archaeologists passed away on December 4, 2013. Doug George, long-time archaeologist for the Minnesota Historical Society, died at the age of 65 after a brief illness.

Doug obtained his degree in anthropology from Hamline University in St. Paul, and was hired by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1971. He conducted field investigations at numerous locations around the state. His work was particularly focused on historic sites managed by MHS such as Fort Ridgely, Lower Sioux Agency, Birch Coulee, Grand Mound, Upper Sioux Agency and Oliver H. Kelley Farm, among others.

Doug left MHS in 1981 to enter the graduate program in archaeology at Boston University. While there, he conducted field investigations in the region and worked for a time as staff archaeologist at Plimoth Plantation. Doug returned to Minnesota in 1988 and was re-hired by MHS to work on cultural resource management in State Parks and recreation areas managed by the Department of Natural Resources. In his 25 years as a State Parks archaeologist, Doug identified, documented, researched and evaluated archaeological sites, historic structures, cultural landscapes and other historic properties statewide.

Doug was widely known for the depth and breadth of his knowledge about historic archaeology, material culture, historic architecture and the history of archaeology in Minnesota. He was rigorous in his approach to archaeology, setting high standards for research and analysis. Doug published several monographs in *The Minnesota Archaeologist*, presented many papers at conferences, did numerous public talks and was always happy to share his knowledge with colleagues and the general public. He was a colleague, mentor, and friend to many, and will be sorely missed.

Minnesota Archaeological Society
www.mnarchsociety.org

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



50+ Years of The Minnesota Archaeologist

\$100

CD Set in 48 volumes(1935-1989)

includes all nine Minnesota Archaeological Society

Occasional Publications in Minnesota Anthropology:

1. *The Objjway Indians Observed: Papers of Fred K. Blessing Jr.* 1977.
2. *Some Studies of Minnesota Prehistoric Ceramics: Papers Presented at the First Council for Minnesota Archaeology Symposium.* 1978.
3. *The Lake Bronson Site (21KT1): A Multi-Component Prehistoric Site on the Prairie-Woodland Border in Northwestern Minnesota.* 1978.
4. *The Alton Anderson Site (21WW4), Watonwan County, Minnesota.* 1983.
5. *A Handbook of Minnesota Prehistoric Ceramics.* 1978.
6. *The Dead River Site (21OT51).* 1979.
7. *Ojibwewi-Ikidowinan: An Ojibwe/English Word Resource Book.* 1979.
8. *Bibliography of Ojibwe Resource Material.* 1981.
9. *Current Directions in Midwestern Archaeology: Selected Papers from the Mankato Conference.* 1981.



Contact Anna Morrow at anmorrow@q.com or 612 922 7006