

A Brief History of an Archaeological Illustrator



An archaeological illustrator needs to take part in all aspects of archaeology to understand their work. The author looking for good things to draw in Turkey.

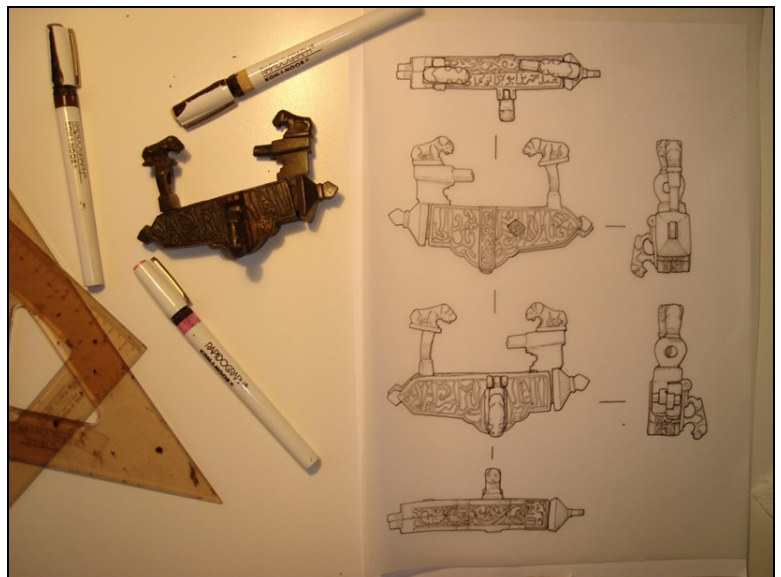
By Valerie Woelfel

www.archaeoillustrator.com

a well-established set of conventions and techniques that are consistent across the field of archaeology regardless of where a person works or what time period they study. This means that from my studio in St. Paul I get to work with the many scholars, researchers, and authors that populate the Twin Cities and my images can be found in publications ranging from children's' books to field reports. I have also spent the last 35 years working on sites from England to Egypt and from Italy to Ukraine. I obtained my training in London after earning a BA in Studio Art despite friends and family feeling obligated to warn me that an art degree was a self-imposed sentence of eternal poverty. Further study in archaeology may have convinced them I was a lost cause. *(continued on p. 4)*

When I tell people that I'm an archaeological illustrator I am usually met with a blank stare. How does an illustrator fit into the stereotypes of an archaeologist as the tweed-clad academic translating ancient curses in a musty office, or the whip-wielding action hero who fights the demons summoned by those curses? People familiar with the field of archaeology, however, know that we spend a great deal of our time recording what we're digging and what we've found. Accurate images and maps are a vital part of this process. That is where I come in as a member of a profession with its roots in the traveling, scholarly artists of the 19th century. These gentlemen (and ladies) with their watercolors and ink pens would pop their pith helmets if they saw what I now do on a computer.

Archaeological illustration is not just drawing pretty pictures of old stuff. There is



Illustrations should make the important details of an object visible and clear. Lock from Chersonesos, Ukraine.

Letter from the President

By Dan Wendt



The letter from the President is intended as a vehicle to inform the general membership of the Minnesota Archaeological Society of recent Board of Directors activities. The following is a brief recap of the events, discussions, and decisions that transpired during the past quarter.

Legacy Grant Update: We have completed Phase One of our video project entitled “Critical Thinking and Science in Minnesota Archaeology.” We have partnered with Twin Cities Public Television to complete the work funded by a Minnesota Legacy Grant. Jeremy Neinow has done a marvelous job as Project Manager keeping the project on schedule and completing Phase One on time and on budget. We have conducted five video interviews and three audio interviews that were used to develop a preliminary script. We have several extended video interviews with prominent Minnesota archaeologists that are a time capsule of a generational change in Minnesota archaeology. We hope to use these interviews in a variety of ways including selecting segments for upload to our web site.

Phase Two of the project will start late in 2018 assuming we get continued funding from the next Legacy funding cycle. Our intent will be to complete a 30 minute video that highlights how the scientific process is used in Minnesota archaeology. The program will be organized in three, 10 minute segments that can be used in educational contexts. The first segment highlights Minnesota’s rich archaeological record. The second segment discusses how science and critical thinking is used to build understanding of Minnesota’s history through an archaeological approach. The third segment focuses on how critical thinking can be applied to recognize pseudohistory and pseudoscience when they occur in popular media. The video will take a critical look at the Kensington Stone.

Fall and Winter Events: This fall we participated in Archaeology Month activities that occurred around the state. MAS participated in the Archaeology Fair at Fort Snelling State Park on September 9th and 10th. MAS also supported Archaeology Day at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park on September 30th. We were involved in flint knapping, lithic material sourcing and providing information on our organization.

We are looking forward to the return of the biennial Lithic Materials Workshop which will occur March 2nd and 3rd at the Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center. This will be the fifth lithic conference that has brought together researchers and an interested community from across the Midwest and Canada. Lithic sourcing needs to be understood at this scale because a variety of natural and human processes moved lithic materials around the central continent. Understanding the story represented by a lithic artifact starts with a prerequisite of where this material occurs in bedrock and what were the processes that might have moved the stone to Minnesota. We have participated in the growth of a collaborative network that can get at some of the answers.

Board Changes: We have had a goal to get a new generation involved in the board of the Minnesota Archaeological Society. In October we added Mara Taft and Mandy Winheiser who are both Research Archaeologists with the Science Museum of Minnesota.

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Upcoming Events



Snowshoeing into the Past at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park Saturday, February 3, 2018 - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

After an indoor look at some ancient artifacts, archaeologists will lead us on a snowshoe trek to locations where they discovered evidence of a village from the 1600s and a "campsite" dating to over 3,000 years ago. Snowshoes and basic snowshoeing instruction are provided. Registration is required and is limited to the first 25 people. To register, call [320-532-3269](tel:320-532-3269) and leave your name, phone number and number of people attending. Meet at the Interpretive Center.

There is no charge for this program. However, a vehicle permit is required to enter Minnesota State Parks. Vehicle permits may be purchased at the park office. Cost of a daily permit is \$7.00. An annual permit, which allows entry into all Minnesota State Parks for one year from the date of purchase, is \$35.00. Mille Lacs Kathio State Park is located 8 miles north of Onamia, 14 miles south of Garrison, on U.S. Highway 169.

Lithic Material Workshop

**Friday March 2nd and Saturday March 3rd, 2018
Fort Snelling History Center, St. Paul, Minnesota**

This will be a two day event including the opportunity to present posters and/or papers on the subject of lithic materials and identification. It is meant to be a relatively informal gathering with plenty of time to visit and share lithic samples and artifacts. This will be an opportunity to view the ever-growing MHS lithic comparative collection, which now includes many regional lithics. Also available will be CDs with high-quality images of the comparative collection.

Participants are encouraged to bring samples of their own comparative collections to confirm identifications. Displays of common regional lithic materials will be available for examination. There will be a lithic exchange area for those wishing to trade samples. Bring along your unidentified lithic artifacts for some opinions on material types.

For additional information contact Office of the State Archaeologist, Ft. Snelling History Center St. Paul, MN 55111 (612.725.2729) mn.osa@state.mn.us or bruce.koenen@state.mn.us

Don't forget to check the MAS website for upcoming events (<http://mnarchsociety.org/events.html>)! Events include lectures, regional and national archaeological meetings, MAS events, and MAS board meetings. Keep an eye out for the Lake Superior Basin Workshop (March 16 and 17, 2018); the Gopher State Archaeology Show, Owatonna Historical Society (March 24, 2018); and the MAS Annual Meeting (coming in April 2018).

A Brief History of an Archaeological Illustrator *continued*

When my work began it was pencil, pen, and ink. My images still start with a carefully measured pencil drawing, but are now “inked” on a computer.

This means that I no longer spend my time cursing insubordinate tech pens that clog in the heat and dust and instead hurl my insults at recalcitrant software and incomprehensible error messages. One of the benefits of my work is that I

get to draw some truly beautiful artifacts and the images then become incorporated into my personal work as an artist. I do, however, sometimes find myself drawing rather odd things. For example, on one dig in Greece we were based out of a country taverna run by a loud, melodramatic woman with one arm and her quiet, shy husband. One day the lady of the taverna came to me and asked me to draw her portrait, something I managed to avoid doing. A few days later her husband came to me and asked me to draw a portrait of his pet sheep, something he seemed to think was more attractive than an image of his wife. I drew the sheep.

One of the most common questions I get is what does a person do to become an archaeological illustrator? Skill in art is useful and training in the conventions of archaeological illustration is vital, but also a knowledge of archaeology. The first thing I do when I pick up an object to draw is to try to understand the information it wants to give to an archaeologist. I never make stuff up or leave stuff



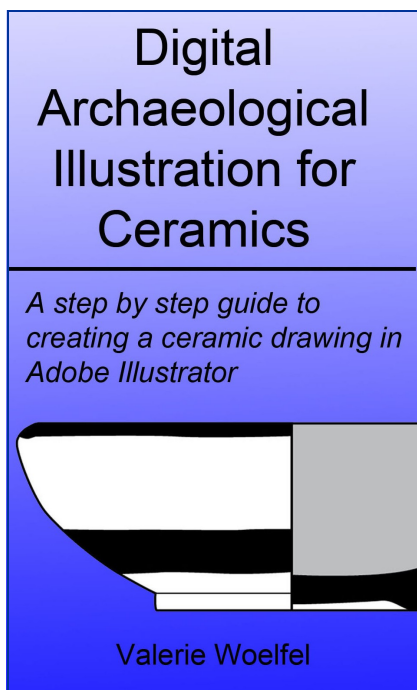
Roman aqueduct for the children's book *Daily Life in Bible Times: What Archaeology Tells Us*. I used my horse for scale in this image. That's him on the bridge.

out, but by using the concept of visual hierarchy I can bring forward the important information and let the less important slip into the background. I regularly run into enthusiastic young scholars who believe that they have discovered a magical concoction of Photoshop filters that will create an archaeological line drawing. The problem is that the software doesn't understand that the faint makers mark on a piece of pottery is more important than the jagged gouges created by the excavator's embarrassing shovel skills. If you want to do archaeological illustration, learn the software you need to create digital images, but also spend time handling artifacts, reading books, and getting dirty in the trenches.

Making maps has always been an important part of my work, whether drawing a single trench or an entire landscape. I love maps. They will tell you such incredible stories if you let them. The development of GIS has expanded our ability to ask new

A Brief History of an Archaeological Illustrator *continued*

questions with maps and I now work as a GIS research analyst and cartographer as well as an illustrator. With all of my adventures, people usually assume that I find Minnesota boring, but one of my favorite travels is the Midwest road trip. I collect historic maps before I hit the road and my fellow travelers have to suffer through monologs on how a certain road was part of the Red River Trail or that an early map shows a Dakota village just south of the gas station where we've stopped to use the bathroom. I'm just beginning to explore how I can use GIS with these old maps of my home state. My current project is creating an online map of the Minnesota graves of veterans of the War of 1812 based on the incredible research of a local, amateur scholar. I foresee a great road trip to get photographs to go with the project.



Digital Archaeological Illustration for Ceramics is available as an ebook on Amazon.com. The instructions in the book reflect the methods I have developed for creating a drawing of a ceramic vessel in Illustrator.



© Valerie Woelfel

My work has given me a chance to experience some amazing archaeology and history, but the greatest reward is the people I've met. Often, I'm working at camp while others are in the field. I get the chance to interact with local people and I am honored by the trust that has sometimes been gifted to me. Like the workman's wife in a tiny village in Turkey who asked me to take her picture. Through gestures and my poor Turkish, she had me come inside and close the shutters. Once safely hidden, she took off her cloak and headscarf to reveal that she was wearing a western style business suit of a gray skirt and jacket. She brushed her hair and put on a touch of make-up before posing. I offered to print the picture out for her when we were finished but she pleaded that I not do that and begged that I keep the photo only to myself and show no one. I understood the risk she was taking as a woman in this small, conservative village, but she wanted someone, somewhere to see her like that. I've kept my promise, so I can't show you the picture. I can, however, tell you that she is truly beautiful.

4 Questions with John Reynolds

What got you interested in archaeology?

I've always been interested in American Indian history, and the life of my ancestors. As I attended college after high school, I began to question which career will match best with my interests. After graduating with my B.A. from the University of Minnesota, I researched advanced degree programs, and chose to pursue cultural resource management. My perspective of archaeology since graduate school has changed considerably; I'm now very interested in tribal cultural resource management, and how it can differ from standard cultural resource management.

What question/research topic are you most interested in?

At the moment, I'm primarily interested in better understanding the types of houses utilized by Dakhóta, and Lakhóta people. My thesis is an archaeological and ethnohistorical analysis of the bark house, which was a very common type of house utilized in Dakhóta villages prior to the reservation period. Eventually, I would like to complete a similar study with the Dakhóta earth lodge. Many of these archaeological sites are within the Lake Mille Lacs area.

What was/is your favorite Minnesota archaeological project or site?

I don't necessarily have a favorite archaeological site, but I am interested in further researching additional aspects of the Wilford site, 21ML12. The Wilford site, I believe, was a Dakhóta bark house village, that was used for quite a long time, and probably provides one of the better archaeological examples of bark houses. Also, I am very interested in eventually determining the type of house identified at The Old Shakopee Bridge site, 21ML20. The Old Shakopee Bridge site is also a Dakhóta village, and may yield a great deal of information on house types not well understood.

What is the most interesting artifact that you have found in Minnesota?

I think how artifacts or significant archaeological features are thought to be found, can definitely change substantially as a person continues to conduct more fieldwork and research. The Wilford site

was excavated on more than one occasion, and for a multitude of reasons, not much follow-up analysis of the artifacts and features has occurred. I've looked at many of the lithic tools, ceramic sherds, and observed features at Minnesota's Office of the State Archaeologists archives. 21ML12's lithic tools are by far the most interesting artifacts I have ever encountered in Minnesota, even though I didn't necessarily find them in the field. Archaeology is no longer a young discipline, it has developed a multitude of theoretical orientations, and even conducts its fieldwork in several different capacities, such as: academic research, CRM, and tribal heritage programs. With different types of archaeology now regularly occurring, and for so many decades, most archives have amassed so much material, and are often full of unanalyzed artifacts and observed features. As archaeology has changed and developed, perhaps the idea of finding, or how finding is conceptualized, can be reassessed. Within archives, and places storing archaeological materials, artifacts can be found.



“Permanent Residence” from *Dahcotah or Life and Legends of the Sioux* (1995)

John Reynolds currently serves as the Compliance Officer within the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office. He is completing an M.S. in Cultural Resource Management Archaeology from St. Cloud State University. During his coursework there, he worked for two consecutive academic years as a Graduate Assistant, with Anthropology faculty, and other CRM graduate students. Prior to enrolling, he graduated from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, with a B.A. in American Indian Studies: Dakota Language Focus, and an A.A. from Haskell Indian Nations University. In 2015, Plains Anthropological Society awarded him its Native American Scholarship. He is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Hill—Lewis Award: Call for Nominations

The Hill – Lewis Award is given annually to a living avocational archaeologist who has made outstanding contributions to Minnesota archaeology, by the Minnesota Archaeological Society. MAS is now seeking nominations for the 2018 Hill - Lewis Award. Please forward your nomination to Dan Wendt, MAS President at Wendt001@gmail.com. The 2018 submission deadline is February 1, 2018.

Nominees for the award should have made important contributions to our knowledge of Minnesota archaeology (prehistoric or historic) through original research or publication, collaboration with professional archaeologists, public outreach, or exceptional K – 12 teaching. Nominees do not have to be members of the Minnesota Archaeological Society. Nominators should submit a nomination letter detailing the nominee and their accomplishments, as well as at least one letter of support for the nomination. The Hill – Lewis Award will be awarded at the Minnesota Archaeological Society Annual Meeting in April.

In 1881, A.J. Hill, a Civil Engineer and T.H. Lewis, a surveyor, initiated the Northwestern Archaeological Survey to collect and preserve information on prehistoric earthworks throughout the Upper Midwest. For the following 15 years, Hill and Lewis gathered data on more than 14,000 mounds and

amassed an archival record that preserved these data for future generations.

Although neither Hill nor Lewis was formally trained in archaeology, they set standards of commitment and excellence that still inspires us today. The MAS is reinstating an Institute for Minnesota Archaeology tradition that started in 1985 to recognize a lay archaeologist in Minnesota whose dedication to the archaeological record of the state follows Hill and Lewis.

Elaine Redepenning, of Duluth was a recipient of the Hill - Lewis Award in 1986. The nomination cited “Mrs. Redepenning is the kind of dedicated citizen-archaeologist who is a credit to that group of people. Her surface collections from the Island Lake area west of Duluth were very carefully recorded, find spots were plotted on maps, and always made available to professional archaeologists for study and analysis. In fact, in the later case, she made overtures to the professionals as she recognized the significance of her finds and knew that it should be reported in the literature.” A volume has since been published by the University of Minnesota Duluth.

The Hill - Lewis Award epitomizes the MAS goals of increasing public involvement in archaeology and in promoting the stewardship of the unique and irreplaceable archaeological record of Minnesota.

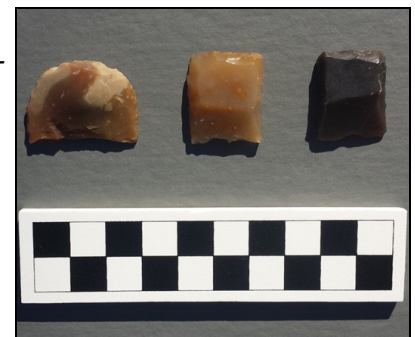
Featured Artifact by Leroy Gonsior

Early Gunflint Recovered from Upper Red Lake

An early, Dutch spall-type gunflint was recovered from the Waskish site in the campground of the Big Bog State Recreation Area that appears to be associated with an early history Ojibwe presence on the eastern end of Upper Red Lake. James Grant wintered at the mouth of the Tamarac River in 1784 and Joseph Reaume wintered at the same location in 1794-95 and a later 1806 Northwest Company post is also thought to be in the area. Dutch spall-type gunflints are produced as a single flake or spall removed from a core. Later gunflints used in Minnesota include first the French, and then English varieties that were produced in mass quantities by

striking long blades and reducing those into multiple gunflints. French (generally blond-colored) were trimmed around the edges removing most demi cones that are diagnostically apparent on black-colored English gunflints.

Examples of gunflints from the Minnesota Historical Society's archaeological reference collection include from left to right Dutch, French, and English gunflints (photo courtesy of Stacy Allan).



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

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