

NYSAA NEWSLETTER



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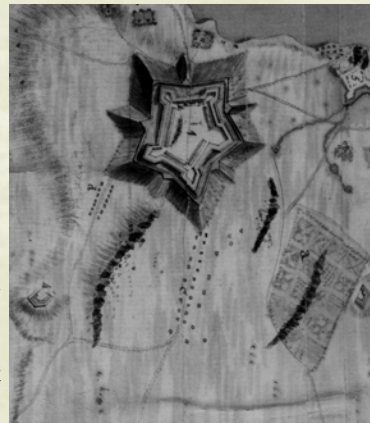
THE EDITORS ENCOURAGE ANY NYSAA MEMBER WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, LETTER, EDITORIAL OR NEWS ITEMS TO SUBMIT IT ELECTRONICALLY TO BILL OR LISA AT THE ADDRESSES LISTED ABOVE.

THE FRENCH VILLAGE AT CROWN POINT: HOW SHOULD EVIDENCE FROM THE 2008-2009 EXCAVATIONS BE INTERPRETED? By Paul R. Huey

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The archaeological research conducted in 2008 by the Archeology Unit of the Bureau of Historic Sites, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, was continued during August 2009 (see the *NYSAA Newsletter*, Volume 5, Issue 2, Summer 2009). The field crew consisted of the writer, Michael Roets, Joseph McEvoy, Susan Maguire, Sarah van Ryckervorsel, Galen Randall, and Jessica Nelson. Shovel tests were excavated at various locations suspected to be features, and five test squares 5 by 5 feet in size or larger were excavated. Four of the larger units were excavated in the known village area and the fifth was located close to the lake shore about 1400 feet (430 meters) to the north.

The unit near the lake shore revealed no walls or distinct structural features, but did yield a number of interesting French and English artifacts. A unit located at the edge of a linear shelf in the ground surface just to the north of the main village site revealed the partially built



#1. Detail from a map of Crown Point by Adolphus Benzel in 1768, showing the linear ridge that exists just to the north of the main village site. The land surface north of the ridge is carefully graded and flat, sloping upward gently toward the moat of the fort. The ridge runs in a straight line from Princess Amelia's Bastion (the "Southwest Bastion") of the British fort and marks the angle of change in the slope of the glacis had it been continued entirely around the fort to the southeast. Letter "d" indicates the "market place" which was the English village.

Annual Meeting, April 23rd – 25th

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The annual meeting of the association will be held at Honor's Haven Resort and Spa, Ellenville, NY, www.honorshaven.com. Please contact the hotel directly for accommodations and meals. Their toll free number: 877-WOW-HAVEN. The meeting is

hosted by the Incorporated Orange County Chapter, David Johnson, president, globaldj@optonline.net. The Saturday evening banquet speaker is James Adovasio. Walk-in registration accepted.



THE FRENCH VILLAGE AT CROWN POINT

glacis of the British fort of 1759. The glacis surface was constructed with a thick layer of large broken stone fragments, and extending deep below this was an extensive clay fill deposit. Below this clay fill was an organic occupation layer. In this layer there were more than 500 small pieces of broken clay pipe stems and a few pipe bowl fragments with the mark of Robert Tippet of Bristol, England. There were slivers of glass wine bottles and drinking glasses, and there were also some rib fragments from a lady's fan. Probably the material represents sweepings from a hard floor.

A unit was excavated in the edge of a depression presumed to be a cellar-hole adjacent to the house sites that were partially excavated 50 years earlier. The new excavation revealed a stratified sequence of fill and occupation layers. However, nowhere was there any clear trace of a wall or of postholes. There were countless fragments of English wine bottles, white salt-glazed stoneware, and delft, as well as Chinese porcelain. There were also fragments of English deep yellow cream-colored ware, some of which were mottled with green and brown decoration, evidently Whieldon-type ware. There was an English delft punch bowl base inscribed in blue "Come Sam Drink a

Bout." One small object was thought initially to be part of a watch key, but Chris Fox of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum has identified it as the upper portion of a brass fob seal similar to one excavated at Fort Ticonderoga.

The village site ceramic assemblage is peculiar. There are no fragments whatever of red earthenware, slip-decorated buff earthenware, or coarse utility stoneware. There are also no fragments of the popular refined creamware developed and distributed by Wedgwood and others after 1762, and such refined creamware would be expected to be at an English site occupied until 1776. The other ceramics, including the Whieldon ware, that were found could as easily date from the 1730s or 1740s to as late as the 1770s. Some of the decorated English white salt-glazed stoneware excavated in the 1950s from the site, however, is typical specifically of the 1730s and 1740s. English wine glass fragments from the site, according to glass experts, are of a style that would date from the 1740s or 1750s. No English coins or other artifacts definitively dating after 1760 were found. The excavators in the 1950s nearby, however, recovered a British 60th Regiment button which would post-date 1767, but unfortunately its stratigraphic association is unknown. This is consistent, nevertheless, with the fact that this village is shown on maps of 1768 and 1774.

One possibility is that refined creamware did not reach Crown Point until 1768 or 1769, despite the fact that it was available as early as 1762. Recent research has suggested that creamware did not actually become widely popular in the English colonies until 1768 or 1769, when there was the "creamware revolution." Perhaps this house site was occupied by the English until after 1767 but was abandoned in 1768 or 1769 before the arrival of refined creamware.

A few French artifacts were also present in the unit near the presumed cellar hole. Two fragments of French faience were found, and there were numerous fragments of clear blue-green bottle glass from bottles made probably in Grésigne, Languedoc. The 1950s excavators found a French pewter spoon and a Spanish real dated 1734. Gilbert Hagerty in 1959 found part of a French knife at the site from Saint-Étienne, in the Dauphiné. But the question remains unanswered from the archaeological evidence whether this was a French village before it was English.



Could the French at this site have dared to use contraband English goods smuggled from Albany northward? This village site half a mile southwest of the French fort would have been just out of sight from the fort but was easily accessible to Bulwagga Bay, which was the known route used by smugglers. Perhaps the high-quality English white salt-glazed stoneware, delft, white salt-glazed stoneware, fine lead glass wine glasses, and other goods were thus more readily available than goods from France.

#2. Upper portion of a brass fob seal found in 2009. It has a glass setting with the images of a rose behind the glass settings on both sides. A complete fob seal recently excavated at Fort Ticonderoga has the same images and is of exactly the same design and size. The scale

CROWN POINT CONTINUED:

The clay pipe stems concentrated in the occupation layer deep beneath the fill deposited in 1759 to construct the glacis of the British fort, because they are Robert Tippet pipes from British, England, might be assumed to represent evidence of the encampment of the British army in 1759 immediately prior to the commencement of fort construction. The presence of the ribs from a lady's fan are a little incongruous, however, and this occupation layer might actually represent the pre-1759 French occupation of a village area that extended northward and was covered with the clay fill in 1759. The French may have smoked the Tippet pipes as evidence from two French shipwrecks of the period suggest.

In August 1752, Louis Franquet was sent to Crown Point to inspect the fortifications. He noted irregularities and controversies, which included excessive drinking by the soldiers and the fact that the commandant's wife had her own private store "of all kinds of goods, even those that are prohibited, which she obtained from New England by means of the Indians." Franquet also mentioned that in the King's domain around the fort there were "several cottages in the vicinity, to lodge a cowherd, wagoners, horses, and cows that are maintained there, which are useful to "...procure delicacies for all who are attached to the service." Franquet used the French word *douceurs* here translated as "delicacies," but it is a word difficult to translate. Franquet's placed the word for cows in quotation mark. This may have a double meaning, as the French word for "cow" was slang for a worn-out prostitute.

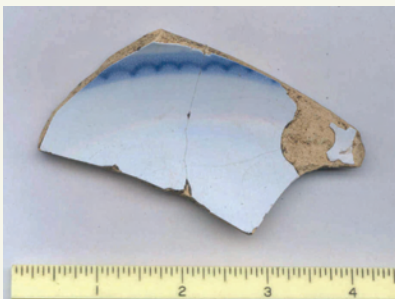
The map of Crown Point drawn in 1774 shows two villages. One is shown as a compact "French Village" settlement extending along the lake shore southeast of the French fort adjacent to the "Batteau Wharf" in the bay, close to or at the location of the new road to the ferry landing that has been constructed because of the closing of the Crown Point Bridge. The other, larger village is shown west of the British fort, and perhaps it was formerly the "French village" site southwest of the French fort that included the "canteens" for refreshment and recreation of French soldiers. There are still many mysteries and unanswered questions about both village sites. A careful analysis and interpretation of the artifacts excavated in 2008 and 2009 remains to be done; all questions will never be answered, but the results of these excavations promise to provide new and useful information about this site.



##3. A brass watch key from a collection France. It was fashioned from a broken fob seal of the same design as the Crown Point fragment. It is not known for certain whether it is French or English. This example has images of portraits behind the glass settings, unlike the Crown Point example.



#5. Fragment of a delft bowl decorated with the same design as on an intact English delft plate, made probably in London. (The plate is in a private collection.)



#4. French faience sherds excavated in 2009.

Newly Available

The Archaeological Society of New Jersey is pleased to announce the availability of a new 4-CD set containing past ASNJ Bulletins and Newsletters in searchable .pdf

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From the President

When I step down as president at the upcoming April meeting, I will also be resigning as newsletter editor. I want to thank everyone for their support over the last four years. Serving as NYSAA president has been a privilege.

It is commonly said that the NYSAA consists of both avocational and professional archaeologists. I suggest that there is a third, much larger group that the association should be targeting - the average New York State resident with an interest in local history or prehistory. If we are successful in this, our membership could be in the thousands.



Dioeciously Delicious: A Response to David Sorg

By James L. Murphy

In the Winter NYSAA newsletter, David Sorg quoted the 1656-57 Jesuit description of fruits found at Onondaga and suggested that the first 2 sentences in the following quotation describe the persimmon. Sorg and others suggest that the fruit described in the third sentence is the pawpaw.

Stoneless Cherries are found there. Fruits grow there which are the color and size of an apricot, whose blossom is like that of the white lily, and which smell and taste like the citron. There are apples as large as a goose's egg; the seed has been brought from the country of the Cats and looks like beans; the fruit is delicate and has a very sweet smell; the trunk is the height and thickness of our dwarf trees; it thrives in swamp spots and in good soil. (J.R. 43:256-259)

The first two sentences could refer to one or two plants. Although in the original French text, a comma follows "Stoneless cherries are found there," Thwaites replaced it with a period, doubtless realizing that three short declarative sentences were intended. Consider the actual description: "Stoneless cherries **are found there**. Fruits **grow there**... **There are** apples..." Further, size alone would seem to prohibit the "stoneless cherries" being the same fruits that are "the size of an apricot." I submit that that is pretty big for a cherry, stoneless or otherwise.

Briard (2005) presents a detailed account of the persimmon, including several French references pre-dating the possible 1656-57

description in the Jesuit Relations, so at least some Frenchmen were aware of the persimmon by this date. Interestingly, in 1694 (nearly 40 years after the 1656-57 account) Father Claude Chauchetière, a Jesuit priest at Montreal sent a piece of persimmon bread to his brother in Limoges, France that he had received from the Illinois country some 500 leagues away (Briard 2005:74).

After last having tasted a persimmon on Thanksgiving 1959 and being unimpressed, I was prompted to gather and eat some this fall after seeing a draft of David's article. I found them a delicious fruit and in virtually all cases seedless or with very undeveloped seeds. I think it could indeed be compared to a very large, seedless Queen Anne-like cherry. But that does not mean I think the persimmon was cultivated at Onondaga any more than was the pawpaw.

David and I agree that the persimmon does not occur naturally in northern Ohio, northern Pennsylvania, or New York, a natural occurrence being defined as one not aided or abetted, deliberately or unintentionally by man. Nor do David Sorg and I disagree that the persimmon can be grown beyond its natural range. That disjunct occurrences have generally been proven to be relict later plantings by pioneers is in itself strong evidence that the plant did not exist in the area previously. The fact that such relict occurrences have survived for several hundred years also provides strong presumptive negative

evidence that the cultivated plant did not exist in areas devoid of modern relict populations (Iroquoia).

I have dealt at length (Murphy 2001) with what I consider the unlikely proposition suggested by Keener and Kuhns (1997) that the Iroquois not only introduced the pawpaw to central New York but did so in droves sufficient to engender entire groves or "orchards" of this semi-tropical fruit. The thrust of my paper was that a combination of animal endozoochory and distribution by water (both methods undisputable) furnished sufficient means for extension of the range of *Asimina* into Ontario and western New York. I took the simple expedient of offering some pawpaws to a few captive deer. I made no claim that the success of this experiment proved anything other than that deer today will eat pawpaws. I averred (contra Wykoff 2009) that the question remained open but concluded that Iroquoian propagation and cultivation of *Asimina* was not necessary to explain the rare occurrence of this plant in Ontario and New York.

The problem with paradigms is that once they get established they tend to take over. Wykoff, who has been quick to dismiss the Keener and Kuhns vs. Murphy debate as unsophisticated could serve as a classic example of this intellectual trap. In an early paper Wykoff (1991) presents a reasonable case for the black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) being introduced to central New York by the Iroquois.

Although he acknowledged that each plant has a separate history and deserves extended treatment, even then he argued: “Black walnut, pawpaw, probably some hickories and oaks, several cultigens, weeds, and medicinal plants were quite likely introduced into New York before the arrival of Europeans” (Wykoff 1991: 16). More recently, Wykoff (2009) expands upon this paradigm by reiterating R. Neal Peterson’s idea that the post-glacial range of the pawpaw was extended northward by now extinct giant herbivores, with ancient relict pawpaw stands being preserved by Paleo-Indians.

Unlike that of the black walnut, the distribution of the pawpaw in New York does not support the paradigm of Iroquoian “plant-hunting.” David Sorg is simply furthering the spread of the “Iroquoian plant-hunter” paradigm by suggesting that because the persimmon can be grown beyond its natural range it probably was. Both he and Wykoff ignore an important and very basic tenant recognized by students of seed dispersion. As Cain, Milligan, and Strand (2000: 1219) observe, in studying seed dispersion and plant distribution it is definitely wrong to assume that a plant species reaches all areas of suitable habitat.

Conclusion

David Sorg asks for archaeologists to be particularly aware of the importance of any discovery of pawpaw or persimmon seed on New York prehistoric or Historic Indian sites and I could not agree more, although, as even Wykoff admits, the discovery of pawpaw seeds in archaeological context might indicate the use of the fruit but would not be proof of cultivation. Picking up pawpaws or persimmons is not the same as planting them. There is very little likelihood of finding persimmon seeds in archaeological context in a region where they are not known to have been indigenous and where if grown they very likely did not produce seeds.

Wykoff presents no real resolution to the Keener and Kuhns/Murphy debate. Even identifying the parent source of the rare pawpaw trees found in western New York is unlikely to demonstrate the precise mechanism(s) by which the trees reached Iroquoia. How much less capable will it prove in the case of the persimmon, which does not grow naturally in the region and, if it ever did, is unlikely to have left archaeological or paleontological remains?

Briard, C. M.

2005 The Common Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*, L.): The History of an Underutilized Fruit. *Huntia* 12(1): 71-89.

Cain, M. L., B. G. Milligan, and A. E. Strand

2000 Long-distance Seed Dispersal in Plant Populations. *American Journal of Botany* 87:1217-1227.

Keener, Craig and Erica Kuhns

1997 The Impact of Iroquoian Populations on the Northern Distribution of Pawpaws in the Northeast. *North American Archaeologist* 18(4): 327-342.

Murphy, James L.

2001 Pawpaws, Persimmons, and ‘Possums: On the Natural Distribution of Pawpaws in the Northeast. *North American Archaeologist* 22(2): 93-115.

Wykoff, M. William

1991 Black Walnut on Iroquoian Landscapes. *Northeast Indian Quarterly* 8(3): 4-17.

2009 On the Natural Distribution of Pawpaw in the Northeast. *The Nutshell* March 2009: 23-32.