

NYSAA NEWSLETTER



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Front Page: Broken Clock Site by M. Houston and D. Perrelli	1
Front Page: Annual Meeting	1
Volunteer Excavations	4
Facebook	5
Chapter Summary	5
NYSAA Library	6
Book Review	6

Broken Clock Site (UB 2488) Data Recovery Project

Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County, New York

By Mark Houston and Doug Perrelli

In the spring of 2008, the Archaeological Survey, State University of New York at Buffalo, conducted a large-scale data recovery (Phase 3) project at the Broken Clock site (UB 2488) located in the Town of Cheektowaga, Erie County, New York (Fig. 1).

Elderwood Senior Care sponsored the work in advance of construction of a new facility on the site. Excavations resulted in the recovery of diagnostic artifacts from multiple prehistoric components and a



Fig. 1

small number of contact-period trade beads. Based on the points, pottery and beads, the site was likely visited during the Late Paleo-Indian or Early Archaic Period, then again in the Late Archaic and throughout the Woodland Period, with a substantial Middle Woodland habitation represented, and some contact period material. The data

recovery project follows previous investigations by Eric Hansen (1989) and UB Survey (Salisbury 2002).

Setting. Broken Clock is located on an elevated, sandy stream terrace within 15 m (50ft) of the banks of Cayuga Creek, a navigable creek that flows into the Buffalo River and Lake Erie.

The sandy soils and stream setting are ideal for nut bearing trees and the fauna that subsists in such ecosystems. Cayuga Creek is his-

Annual NYSAA Meeting 2009



Woodcliff Hotel and Spa

The Morgan Chapter is hosting our annual meeting April 17-19 at the Woodcliff Hotel and Spa located southeast of Rochester near Victor, NY. The business meeting will take place Friday evening. There will be papers during the day on Saturday and on Sunday morning. The banquet speaker Saturday evening will

be Prof. Dean Snow, current president of the Society for American Archaeology. For more information, see our website and the Winter 2009 newsletter. Walk in registration is \$35.

BROKEN CLOCK SITE:

torically noted for having two seasonal high-water periods- early spring and late fall. These periods also coincide with fish spawning. During periods of lower water levels in the summer, fish and other resources are trapped in deep pools and channels. Both high and low water periods of Cayuga Creek present opportunities for the exploitation of a variety of resources in the creek. Cayuga Creek resource abundance and local topography clearly played a role in the development of this re- currently occupied site.

Field Methods. Phase 3 work involved the hand excavation of about 23 1x1 m (3.3x3.3 ft) test units on a 15 m (50ft) grid pattern across the site. Test unit excavations resulted in the identification of high concentration of artifacts along the stream edge stretching 60m (200 ft). Mechanical stripping of about 470 sq. m (5,050 sq ft.) resulted in the identification of 119 potential cultural features (Fig. 2).

Results. Of the 119 potential cultural features identified, 27 are post molds forming the walls of a small oval house likely dating to somewhere between A. D. 500-1000. Including the post molds, 87 features appear to be of cultural origin. The removal of the plowzone shows historic period

plowscars and considerable modern land use disturbances. Excavations resulted in the recovery of over 18,000 prehistoric artifacts (Table 1). Laboratory analysis is ongoing and no C14 dates are yet available.

Chert Sources. Jack Holland recently identified five types of chert from the site including Reynales, Seneca, Onondaga, Stafford and Edgecliff. Known outcrops of Seneca and Stafford cherts are within a one mile radius and perhaps much closer. Jack provided numerous insights regarding chert types, sources and stone tool technology.

Formal Stone Tools. Projectile points recovered from the site include; Hi-Lo, Lamoka, Meadowood, Levanna, and Madison types (Fig. 3&4). Along with the 13 projectile points 18 quarry blanks, thinly made bifaces, were also recovered.

Material analysis of the points and bifaces indicates possible shifts in prehistoric chert procurements in Western New York. Hi-Lo and Lamoka groups appear to have been less selective or more accustomed to using local chert, which is of somewhat lesser quality than other Onondaga types (Hansen 1989). During the Early, Middle, and Late Woodland a preference for higher quality

Clarence chert appears to be prevalent at the site, given the low percentage of Seneca chert used by these groups.

Pottery. A total of 640 pottery sherds were also recovered during Phase 3 investigations (Fig. 5). Analysis by Ammie Mitchell identified a minimum of 12 vessels in the assemblage. Two sherds are from possible Vinnette I and Vinnette II vessels. Two "Owasco" type vessels were also identified in the pottery assemblage. The remaining vessels are noted to have "Owasco" type decorative styles, while constructed with techniques more associated with the Middle Woodland period. This suggests a possible early Late Woodland occupation of the site, transitioning from what has been recognized as the Middle Woodland. Temporal data from sherd en-crustations may be used to explore these problems.

Beads. No Late Woodland vessels were identified in the Phase 3 assemblage. Two Hudson Bay Trade Beads were recovered from un-provenienced context (Fig. 6). These beads have production dates from 1480-1840. The beads likely represent use of the site by Seneca from the Buffalo Creek Reservation. Broken Clock itself is located less



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

BROKEN CLOCK SITE :

than a mile north of the reservation.



Fig. 5

Other Stone Tools. Non-diagnostic artifacts recovered from the site include netsinkers, hammer & anvil stones, and celts (Fig. 7). These tool types suggest the site was likely used for fishing, nut processing, and raw stone procurement and was likely a locus of substantial domestic activity of long duration. Netsinkers were recovered from features of the Early and Middle Woodland periods.

Interpretation. The Broken Clock site is the result of re-curent occupation, and resource exploitation, through prehistory. Results are preliminary, but the site was likely used the Late Paleo/Early Archaic period as a waypoint on a broader mobility pattern. Lamoka period occupation was likely by a small group, and brief. The Lamoka component is likely that of a procurement camp related to a nearby habitation encampment. Early Woodland appears to by small, family groups, and brief. Occupation during the Early Woodland likely occurred during the late fall

making use of the fall fish spawning period. The late Middle Woodland appears to be the most intense occupation of the site. A possible “Owasco” structure and affiliated pottery suggest a seasonal encampment by a family group or larger entity. The absence of Late Woodland pottery, and presence of trade beads and one stone Madison point suggest an ephemeral contact period use of the site.

The presence of multiple components will allow for the assessment of changes through time in technology and land use in the context of the site setting- on the banks of Cayuga Creek in close proximity to abundant river resources and primary chert deposits. Interestingly, a pattern of differential exploitation of local chert resources by different site occupants through time is suggested by the nature and condition of formal tools and debitage.

Public outreach is planned as part of the data recovery project and will include a long-term display of artifacts and information about the site at the Cheektowaga Town Hall. Developers and town officials alike are eager to have the expense and effort that went into the excavations be recognized by the community and the local interest and educational potential of these finds and the information they provide be realized. A large-scale volunteer dig is in the planning stages for this spring and summer.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Table 1:	
Artifact Type:	Count
Flake:	16959
Biface:	141
Projectile Point:	13
Core:	77
Ground Stone Tool:	19
FCR:	438
Pottery:	640
Trade Beads:	2
Bone:	89
Total:	18738

Volunteer Digging Opportunities in New York

The following listing does not constitute an NYSAA endorsement. The field schools listed accept volunteers.

Western

Hull House, Lancaster, Historic and McKendry Site, Irving, Prehistoric. Dates for both to be announced. Contact Doug Perrelli, SUNY/Buffalo Archaeological Survey, perrelli@buffalo.edu.

Hiscock Site, Byron, Paleontological/Paleo. Most likely dates: July 18-Aug. 8. Contact Richard Laub, Buffalo Museum of Science, rlaub@sciencebuff.org.

Mills Mansion, Mount Morris, Historic. Saturdays and Sundays in July and August, 10-7 (modest fee). St. John Fisher College. Contact Justin Tubiolo, jtubiolo@sjfc.edu, (585) 671-7886.

Bittner Farm, Rochester, Historic. June 11-25, Mon. – Thurs. 9:30-12:30, Monroe Community College. Contact Ann Morton, amorton@rochester.rr.com, H: (315) 986-3086.

Billings Blacksmith Shop, Canandaigua, Historic. July 27-Aug. 11, Mon. – Thurs., 9:30-12:30, Finger Lakes Community College. Contact Ann Morton, amorton@rochester.rr.com. H: (315) 986-3086.

Central

White Site, Norwich, Prehistoric. Tuesdays, Chenango Chapter. Contact Don Windsor (607) 336-4628, windsorda@roadrunner.com.

Miller Site, Cortland County, Prehistoric. SUNY Cortland. Contact Ellie McDowell-Loudan, SUNY Cortland, loudane@cortland.edu.

SUNY/Binghamton's Community Archaeology Program, Prehistoric. July 13-17 (\$150). See <http://cap.binghamton.edu/>.

Northern

Perch Lake Mounds, Watertown, Prehistoric. Tues., Wed., Thurs. every other week starting March 31, Thousand Islands Chapter. Contact Diane Coates (315) 222-3802, jndcoa@wildblue.net.

Storrs Harbor, Sackets Harbor, Historic. Weekends starting late Spring, Thousand Islands Chapter. Contact Tim Abel (315) 486-0030, tabel@twcny.rr.com.

British Fort, Fort Edward, Historic. July 6- Aug. 14, Adirondack Community College. Contact David Starbuck, dstarbuck@frontiernet.net.

Eastern

Schoharie Creek Site, Prehistoric. Saturdays from mid-May until late October, Iroquois Indian Museum. Contact Fred Stevens (518) 383-3107, chemical456@nycap.rr.com.

Long Island

Joseph Lloyd Manor, Historic. June 24-July 31. Hofstra. Contact Jenna Coplin (516) 463-7625, anthlab@hofstra.edu.

Blydenburgh Co. Park, Eastern Suffolk Co. BOCES. July 20-23, July 27-30, 8am-noon. Open to elementary and high school students. Adult volunteers accepted. Contact Gaynell Stone, gaystone@optonline.net.

NYSAA ON FACEBOOK

Tim Abel has created a page on Facebook for the NYSAA. Tim's hope is that chapters will use it for outreach, interaction, posting links and speaker information. It is open to anyone, and anyone can post for now. The link: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=70642497368>.



NEW ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Lisa Marie Anselmi (in red) and her students participating in a pottery firing experiment at Buffalo State College's Great Lakes Field Station, Spring 2008

Dr. Lisa Marie Anselmi is taking over from Sissie Pipes as Associate Editor of this newsletter. Lisa is vice-president and immediate past president of the Houghton Chapter and an Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Department at Buffalo State College. Bill Engelbrecht remains the editor and submissions should be sent to him. A big thanks to Sissie Pipes for giving our newsletter a more professional look.

NEW NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON

Dr. Martha Sempowski has resigned as Chair of the NYSAA Nominations Committee. We are grateful for her years of service on this committee. Karen Hartgen has agreed to take over as chair. In the next few months she will be reconstituting that committee and seeking nominations for our election in March of 2010. Open positions include those of president, corresponding secretary, and treasurer.



Karen Hartgen

AURINGER - SEELYE CHAPTER

by Carolyn Weatherwax, Chapter Treasurer

We are alive and well and growing. The Chapter has now grown to 12 members including two students. We have monthly programs with several visitors and prospective members. Our speakers have been very interesting, from Alaska to Mozambique, the Hudson and finally the Adirondacks. A field trip is planned for the end of April as well as a summer picnic. Programs will continue in the fall when we move our meeting from Saratoga Springs Library to Clifton Park, NY. Our officers have remained the same with one exception, Niels Rinehart has taken over as secretary.

NYSAA LIBRARY

By Ellen Barcel

The Southold Indian Museum (owned and operated by the Incorporated Long Island Chapter) houses not only our chapter library, but the collection of the NYSAA in the Stanton Mott Memorial Library located in the museum building at 1080 Main Bayview Road, Southold. In addition to books, journals and magazines on archaeology, anthropology and history we have many original site reports, field notes and photos from local digs.

Our late chapter secretary, David Detrich, had been working on cataloguing the NYSAA's library, when he became ill. We are currently in the process of completing the cataloguing of that collection as well as the chapter's library using the Library of Congress system. We hope to be able to post the catalogue on the museum's website (www.southoldindianmuseum.org) at some point in the future.

We will be happy to make the library available, to anyone who wishes to consult it. The library itself is open during our regular hours (Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 pm year round, except major holidays and Saturday and Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 pm during July and August) and by appointment. In addition, requests for specific material can be made by mail, phone or email.

We would prefer not to loan out books/journals from the state's collection, especially rare ones, but would be happy to photocopy sections for a nominal fee. If an entire book is needed, we might be able to make special arrangements. The chapter's library does not circulate but visitors are welcome to consult publications as needed. Original site reports, etc. do not circulate, either, but may be photocopied, as well.

We do accept donations of books, journals and other relevant publications as well as funds to help support the library. Anyone who has material to donate, please contact Ellen Barcel at EBarcel@aol.com (631-585-9199) or the museum at IndianMuseum@aol.com (631-765-5577) first or send mailed correspondence to Southold Indian Museum, PO Box 268, Southold, NY 11791.

U P C O M I N G M E E T I N G S

April 22-26 Society for American Archaeology, Atlanta, GA.

May 28-31 Society for Industrial Archaeology, Pittsburgh, PA

June 4-6 Conference on New York State History, SUNY Plattsburgh, Info: conferencechair@nysha.org.

B O O K R E V I E W

At the Font of the Marvelous: Exploring Oral Narrative and Mythic Imagery of the Iroquois and Their Neighbors. Anthony Wonderley. Cloth \$29.95s 978-0-8156-3207-8. June 2009. 224 pages, 6x9, 7 black and white illustrations, 4 maps, references, notes, index.

The folktales and myths of the Iroquois and their Algonquian neighbors rank among the most imaginatively rich and narratively coherent traditions in North America. Mostly recorded around 1900, these oral narratives preserve the voice and something of the outlook of autochthonous Americans from a bygone age, when storytelling was an important facet of daily life. Inspired by these wondrous tales, Anthony Wonderley explores their significance to the Iroquois and Algonquian religion and world views.

Grouping the stories based on common themes and motifs, Wonderley analyzes topics ranging from cannibal giants to cultural heroes, and from legends of local places to myths of human origin. Approached comparatively and historically, these stories can enrich our understanding of archaeological remains, ethnic boundaries, and past cultural interchanges among Iroquois and Algonquian peoples.

