

THE
BRODIE
CLUB



ROYAL ONTARIO
MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY

THE 1,027th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 1,027th meeting of the Brodie Club was held at 7:30 pm on February 17, 2009 in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Laboratories of the University of Toronto.

Chairman: Helen Juhola
Secretary: Ed Addison

The meeting was attended by 24 members and two guests:

- Brenda Gibson was a guest of Ann and Bruce Falls.
- Sharon Hicks was a guest of Jock McAndrews.

Several members sent regrets including Yvonne Bendell, Jim Bendell, Oliver Bertin, and Sandra Eadie.

The minutes were approved as written. There was no business arising from the minutes.

Bruce Falls announced upcoming meeting topics on Australia [Rosemary and Ed Addison], polar bears in Ontario [Dr. Martyn Obbard] and by Dr. Chris Darling in May. Rosemary Addison reported on and made available material sent to the club from Ontario Nature.

SPEAKER:

The speaker, Dr. Ronald Wilkinson was introduced by Jock McAndrews. Ron is the chief archeologist and managing partner for Archeological Services, Inc. [ASI] of Toronto, a consulting and research firm that he founded in 1980. He employs more than 30 people. ASI has directed over a thousand archaeological assessment, excavation, and planning projects throughout the Northeast. Ron earned a BA from the University of Western Ontario, MA and PhD degrees from McGill University and is an adjunct professor of anthropology at the University of Toronto. Ron has authored, co-authored, edited and co-edited a number of books, most recently in 2008 writing a chapter and editing "Toronto: An illustrated history of its first 12,000 Years." [ISBN 978-1-55277-007-8. James Lorimer and Company Ltd., Publishers.]

Ron had several copies for sale and all were purchased at a special 'Brodie Club price' of 25\$.

FROM PALEO-INDIANS TO PARLIAMENT; SERVING ONTARIO'S ARCHEOLOGICAL PAST

People were present in what is now the Toronto area as early as 9000 BC. Based on fluted points for spears and arrows, a Paleo-Indian period of 11,000-10,000 years ago has been established. These people are referred to as hunter-gatherers. Only a few sites show evidence of exploitation of large mammals. At the Hiscock site in New York State, both caribou and mastodon bones were found.

Many sites are now submerged under Lake Ontario. Evidence of this was found in 1908 during tunneling for a waterworks east of Hanlan's Point, seventy feet below present water level.

"a work crew came across 100 footprints in a layer of blue clay. The prints appeared to have been left by people wearing moccasins – 11,000 years ago. It was an astounding discovery, perhaps the first evidence of human habitation on Lake Ontario, but few recognized its significance.

"It looked like a trail ...," city inspector W. H. Cross said about what he saw that November day. "You could follow one man the whole way. Some footprints were on top of the others, partly obliterating them. There were footprints of all sizes, and a single print of a child's foot, three and a half inches..." He went on to describe the way the clay had shot up under the imprints of the heels, how the prints appeared to be heading north, and how he had tried to lift a piece of the clay to preserve the prints, but it broke away in his hand.

The group – likely a family, judging by the different sized prints – could have been walking from a hunting camp on the shore of Lake Ontario to what is now downtown Toronto. Back then, the shoreline would have been more than a kilometre further south.

Tragically, the prints were not preserved. The tunnel workers were in a hurry to complete the job, and simply poured concrete over the clay. "If they were found to be authentic, it would have been the only discovery of footprints of the first people of Ontario," says archaeologist Ron Williamson, who edited the book and wrote the chapter on pre-European contact. "It would have been amazing." Though it seems shocking that a find of such potential importance was unceremoniously buried, a similar attitude toward the archaeological history of First Nations people prevails, he says. Without seeing the prints, it's difficult to evaluate their authenticity, Williamson says, though there's no reason to believe that Cross and company were exercising a hoax.

Source: The star.com (23 November 2008)

There is a great deal of archeological evidence that small bands of Indians (likely Algonquian) were scattered throughout the city. Artifacts dating from 2,500 – 1000 BC (including lots of spear points) were recovered from the Eglinton flats. Older spearheads have been recovered throughout the city. One example is a 7,000 BC spear point that was found at the current location of the Film Festival at the corner of King and John streets.

About 1,700 years ago, Iroquoian speaking people around Lake Ontario introduced maize. Land needed to be cleared to allow enough maize to be grown. Many large villages grew along Lake Ontario in the 400 years after maize was introduced. At the Mantle site [Stouffville Sideroad on Duffin's Creek] 95 long houses (52 occupied at one time) were home to 1500 – 2000 people. The houses covered 42 hectares (10.4 acres). Over 100,000 artifacts were found there. 18,000 were from surface collection which date circa 1500 – 1530 AD. 60,000 palisade house posts, mainly cedar and pine, were documented.

Oneida people characteristically have well defined faces on their clay pots and some shards with faces were recovered here, suggesting bands participated in two or three larger social networks.

The Moatfield Ossuary was discovered in 1997 when fencing/lighting was being put in for a soccer field. It is located near Leslie Street and Highway 401. Work was halted and a detailed study carried out. This burial pit contained bones from 58 adults, 5 adolescents, 18 young children and 6 infants. Aboriginal leaders felt the spiritual nature of the original pit was damaged and wanted the bones relocated to a peaceful place.

Prior to Moatfield, ten or eleven ossuaries had been examined. Moatfield was mapped bone for bone. Bones were “co-mingled”, that is mixed together. Some bones were in bundles. In the top layer a diseased long bone with many draining orifices and with calcification was found. The only artifact found in the ossuary was at the bottom. It was a pipe with an outline of a turtle. In the creation story, the earth was built on the back of the turtle and Ron feels the placement of the pipe with all bones on top of it reflects this belief.

A detailed examination of the bones from the Moatfield Ossuary showed very high levels of nitrogen, suggesting a diet rich in fish. Intergenerational differences of corn in the diet showed most use of maize in the 20-29 year old group, indicating a rapid intensification of maize during that period. The story of this dig is recounted in “Bones of the Ancestors: The Archeology and Osteobiography of the Moatfield Ossuary”.

Around 1600 to 1650, Toronto was still surrounded by Algonquian speaking Indians. During those years, the Iroquois came in and established numerous villages. It is felt they were only there for about fifty-sixty years, when the Mississauga came south and occupied the same area. It was with the Mississauga people that the British government signed treaties. The European arrival brought disease and vast reduction in native populations.

The biggest threat to the artifacts of the Paleo-Indians was the urbanization of rural lands which followed the large growth in population after the First World War. Between 1951 and 1971 large numbers of sites were destroyed. Even with the Green Belt legislation in place, sites are still being lost. However, Toronto is now one of the busiest areas in North America for identification of sites before development (pre-contact). In addition, Toronto has some of the most comprehensive approaches to archeological feature conservation.

Types of Toronto Archeological Sites	Number of Sites
Villages	31
Campsite/cabin	45
Pre-Contact Find spots	33
Pre-Contact of Unknown Nature	8
Pre-Contact Burial	18
Euro Canadian	37
Total	172

When looking for potential sites, you look at distance to water (80% are within 250 m. of water- taking into account the shoreline of the time), slope, elevation and richness of soil.

Canada's third parliament building was under the CBC building.

For archeological sites to survive in downtown Toronto, areas establish "Interim Screening Criteria". Zones with great potential for sites must have a pre-development archeological survey. Zones determined to have the best potential through pre-contact modeling have yielded great artifacts. At Adelaide and University, stone walls were found just below the asphalt of a parking lot. Whole back yards were excavated, including oak lined cisterns typical of early Toronto buildings. Nineteenth century dolls, bottles, pipes etc were found in a stone-lined privy. Anna Jameson wrote on history and lived in one of these buildings.

Hospital grounds yielded lots of artifacts including an Irish harp badge and lice combs. Death or Canada describes the story of Irish Famine immigrants, their search for a new life in Canada, and how Toronto responded to this immigration wave in 1847.

Newspaper accounts reported a "murderers' graveyard" at the Don Jail. None was visibly apparent. A 1953 map provided a clue as "cemetery" was marked on one area. A dig resulted in 15 skeletons. Thirteen had cranial autopsies suggesting that anatomical studies had been conducted on brains to try to determine sources of the deviant behaviours.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Where do artifacts go, who owns them and are they shown?

"You've pushed my one button" was RW's reply. The province has some of the most advanced legislation yet some of the poorest policy on repository of artifacts. Ontario has no clue where artifacts are. The very large U of T collection and that of an Ottawa collector have been lost. There is no funding to house artifacts, yet they are supposed to be kept for "Ontario". Ron's firm has found ~ five million artifacts, yet it has been able to protect only about half. Toronto has no city museum.

Is there any evidence that syphilis was in the Native populations pre European contact?

Yes.

What is the situation at Hawk Hill?

An individual, with no authority, is trying to prevent others from accessing Hawk Hill on the grounds that some piles of dirt are burial grounds. Absolutely no legitimacy to this.

Tell us more about the isotope signatures.

When drinking water you will absorb an identifiable isotope from your place of origin. An isotope signature specific to that area will be laid down over time. Some bones from the people in the jail cemetery are being checked for isotopes.

At Jane Street and Teston Road in Vaughan a dozer went through the side of an ossuary. The dozer operator was a Mohawk who realized they may be on a site. Reconstruction of Teston Road was shut down for some time.

What time does it take to do this work vis á vis stopping construction?

With the strong legislation, construction has no say. Examination takes as long as is needed; could be 2 months, 3 weeks, 6 months. The legislation is so effective that developers are beginning to get their pre-assessment done before beginning development and many are avoiding investing in “high risk” areas. We have done an A-1 job of finding sites and destroying them. We have not done as well at identifying sites and protecting them.

If I find an artifact do I have to turn it in?

No, but it helps to contact an archeologist and let him/her know. It will help them identify areas of interest. The Crown has ability to confiscate a collection but generally leaves them alone. The province can't deal with collections. There are lots of private, personal collections.

Can you sell artifacts?

No, you are not supposed to. They are not for commercial trade.

Is there still a need for additional identification of sites when you have learned so much already and when you are working in the same area and time period as all of the excellent data collected to date? Is it adding to our community and culture?

Government bureaucrats are wanting more done, especially with 19th century homesteads, than ever before. Ron's firm doesn't want to look at any more 1830-1860

sites. One looks like the next. However, with aboriginal sites, the same does not apply. Ron has never seen two Iroquois sites that are the same. Discussions about when and when not to invest in excavating a site happens often.

With the whole human genome mapped, are you getting relatedness information?

Yes, we are starting to look at genetic data for 4000-2000 year old people. Not nearly refined enough to say much now but will probably know a lot more in fifty years.

The speaker was thanked by John Riley.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS:

John Speakman went to the Dominica to see two endemic parrots. With the help of a guide he saw both the Imperial parrot (only about 200 remain) and the most spectacular bird he has seen, the Red-necked parrot.

Helen Juhola reported that since last month when she reported evidence of beaver cuttings along the waterfront, the city has caged all trees with wire. The shrubs are now being nipped off so it would seem at least one animal is still at work.

Trudy Rising made a motion to adjourn at 9:06 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on March 17, 2009 in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories. The talk will be by Club members, Rosemary and Ed Addison who will speak on "Landforms and Fauna of Australia".

Some Birds Seldom Seen

By Yorke Edwards

Our Western Correspondent

Through many days looking about into many birdy places, at homes as well as in forests, fields, over waters. and often along city streets, many of those birds below are seldom seen.

Glaucous Gull: In some days of the fall these gulls come to us from their Arctic areas, and through some winters they live with the many glaucous-winged gulls that we see daily..

Skylark: Once I saw one flying low across fields of hay. It was living near our city, and some may still be living there. Someone had it and probably brought it from England.

Parasitic Jaegers: When their groups go flying south from the far north, they go across the sea, stopping at times to rest and eat. At last they will arrive onto small islands beside Australia.

Burrowing Owls: On Okanagan's bit of desert (a small part of B.C) is a small dry and treeless area. Rare owls there live in the small treeless place, nesting in a hole in the sandy ground.

Cliff Swallows: Sometimes in the fall a few fly about going high and low around our house catching many insects. Some of their nests are on the walls of rock beside some roads.

Common Poorwills: They are rarely seen on their trees through daylight but through night they call through the darkness saying many loud and clear, 'poorwill'.

Chukars: Once in the Okanagan's area I saw a new bird .It was just a few yards from the USA, going slowly across a small and treeless area, a bit of desert but not far from scattered trees.

Red-legged Kittiwakes: Once I was on a beach with ten black-legged kittiwakes, and beside them saw two rare red leg ones. That red kind has only a few nests on small islands beside Alaska

Crested Myne: It is a bigger and blacker 'starling' that I once saw in Vancouver. Some may still be there. It had yellow bills, white legs, and bits of white spots on their heads.

Heermann's Gulls: Sometimes late in summer a few of those gulls come flying by near our shore going south into the USA . They come to stay near to us until late in the fall.

Sage Thrashers: Like some other birds which live beside a bit of treeless area where only a few trees are scattered about beside a small dry and sandy area, really a bit of desert.

Black Scoters: Once in late summer I once saw an adult with her young ones passing by on the water. The little ones were not yet able to fly south.

Soras: When I was a young I often went into an old farmer's field with a stream and pool. Going into reeds I found many nests of red-winged blackbirds, and also one sora's nest .

Great Horned Owl: When young and working on a farm, one day in a small forest I found a young owl on the ground. I took it home but it died the first night.

House Sparrows: When I was young in Toronto, sparrows were noisy near their nests daily and often awakened me, so I soon learned how to go up ladders. That stopped their noisy calls.

Bald Eagle: On top of a tall pole by the sea there is an eagle we see daily. It leaves its tall pole at dawn to get food, then just stays on the pole all day except in the morning light.

Starlings: We see these most numerous birds often in groups, except after nesting in early summer. Today in August I saw a crowd of 40 passing by my window.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Once in the fall there was a little owl going south that came to sleep in our garden of small plants. In morning it stayed a while before it went away going south.

American White Pelicans: Once as I drove by I saw six large white birds beside a line of trees behind a small lake. Their whiteness was most attractive with many dark trees behind them.