

837

THE BRODIE CLUB

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : Tuesday 16 February 1988

PLACE OF NEXT MEETING : Faunal Lab, South Borden Bldg.

SPEAKER : Dr. Peter Storck,
Curator, New World Archaeology, R. O. M.

SUBJECT : New Findings on an Old Subject : Palaeo-Indians
in Ontario

MINUTES OF THE 837th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

Held 19 January 1988 in the Faunal Lab, University of Toronto.

Chairman : Sherry Recording Secretary : Auger.

The meeting was called to order at 8.05 p.m. The roll was called and guests introduced. Present were 19 members and 6 guests (Gayle and Tony Mason guests of Savage, Ross Goudie guest of Auger, Margaret Bodsworth guest of Fred Bodsworth, Jennifer Young guest of Don Young, Heather Speakman guest of John Speakman, and Mary Tasker guest of Ron Tasker). Bertin, Churcher, and Bruce and Ann Falls sent regrets.

The Minutes of the 836th meeting of the Brodie Club were read, and after minor corrections, declared adopted by the Chairman.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Norm Martin announced that he had complimentary copies of the winter edition of the F. O. N. Journal available for members.

SPEAKER OF THE EVENING

The Speaker of the Evening, Dr. Trudy Nicks, was introduced by Savage. Dr. Nicks is basically a Westerner, having received her B. A., M. A. and Ph. D. in Anthropology at the University of Alberta, before coming to the R. O. M. as Curator of the Ethnology Department three years ago. Her subject this evening was Indians, Animals and the Fur Trade.

Dr. Nicks explained that her talk for the evening would encompass the spiritual relationship of the early peoples with the human and material worlds. Included were natives of the Arctic

and Northern Plains areas. The early native people believed that there was a sort of contract between themselves and the animal world in which they depended on supernatural forms or "gate-keepers" to release into their hunting areas enough animals to supply the needs of the tribes. They believed that the animals, such as bears, moose and buffalo would "give up" to the native hunters. In return, the deceased animals taken by the hunters received the utmost respect from the natives; their corpses were often decorated with feathers and garlands, and the unuseable remains were sometimes strung up in high branches of trees to protect them from disturbance.

This represented a form of animal conservation which is very different from the conservation beliefs of the white man. The earliest period of the Fur Trade saw changes in the native peoples' approach to their hunting, for evidence indicates that this trade either accompanied or was responsible for a huge increase in hunting for furs, hides and miscellaneous animal and bird parts.

Dr. Nicks illustrated her talk with some 30 slides showing various early native animal and bird artifacts, and also examples of early native art based on animal or bird life which were used as a protection for individuals. The use of these art forms or charms was generally regarded as applying the supernatural protective forms for the benefit of the user. In later times, it has become normal for these family artifacts to be reproduced for sale to the white man. Some of these art forms appeared as tepee designs painted on the outer walls. The native medicine men were actively involved in the use and creation of these artifacts, some of which they reserved for maintenance of their own powers in the tribe.

Some of the slides dating back to the early 1800's showed methods of hunting depicted by early artists and also evidence of the reverence for the supernatural forces involved in their traditional beliefs.

In conclusion, Dr. Nicks showed a slide of two of the well known Muppet television characters. When these were shown to an audience of native northern people, the overwhelming majority of the audience regarded Kermit the Frog as a turn-off, as they did also with Fozzy the Bear character, both popular with the white audience.

There followed a long and interesting question period, after which the speaker was thanked by the Chairman. The evening was a very nice and enjoyable evening.

MEMBERS' NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Speakman reported seeing a Virginia Rail walking on the snow in a marsh near Sunderland recently. He also reported a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, male and female, conducting a subdued duet at 4.30 p.m. lasting for five minutes, at which time the male flew off; a moment later, the female retired to her separate quarters for the night. He promised to keep us posted on future developments.

Savage reported the finding of some Atlantic Salmon bones at the Wade Site, which is on the escarpment in Ancaster Township, and dates back to 1300 - 1350 A.D. These bones are not infrequently found at sites near rivers draining into Lake Ontario.

Bodsworth reported the recent sighting of a Black Vulture at Hamilton, a Hawk Owl near Peters' Corners, and a Gyrfalcon near Claremont.

Bendell reported sighting a male Harrier between Sudbury and Innisfil recently. There was some inconclusive discussion as to whether or not it might have been a Goshawk.

The Meeting then adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Eliot Auger.