



THE MASSACHUSETTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Summer 2013 Newsletter: President's Report

This is my first report as president of the Society, so I thought that I would use it to introduce myself to you all. I am a Massachusetts native, although I am currently living in Connecticut. I became involved with the MAS in 2002 while I was an undergraduate student at Bridgewater State College (now University). Former Society president and current Bulletin editor, Dr. Curt Hoffman, introduced me to the Museum where I soon became a volunteer. Under the guidance of former president Ron Dalton, longtime Museum Coordinator Gene Winter, and the incomparable Jean-Jacques Rivard my understanding of archaeology was shaped in ways that would not have been possible without the Society or the Robbins Museum. After getting my MA from the University of Chicago in 2005, I returned to New England and, soon after, became a Trustee of the Society. I completed my PhD in

2011 and am currently working as a part-time professor while I search for a full time job. I am an Old World, prehistoric archaeologist and my area of specialty is the Neolithic through Early Bronze Age of Southwest Asia. Currently I am working on two large archaeological research projects in Israel. Both are at Chalcolithic (Copper Age) sites. My scientific specialty is archaeobotany: the study of ancient plants remains. My current research involves reconstructing ancient agricultural practices and daily life to investigate the origins of complex society. I normally excavate over the summers, so hopefully I'll be able to update you in a future newsletter.

I feel honored and privileged to be president of the MAS. I get to work with some really hardworking and dedicated people who all share a passion for archaeology. I cannot thank enough those volunteers who choose to serve as Trustees and Officers. Over the last 8 years, the financial health of the Society has improved and I am convinced it will continue to do so in the future. You, the membership, through your generous and continued support have not only kept the Society alive during this economic downturn, but allowed us to improve our overall financial health. As you may already know, there have been some improvements made to the Robbins Museum including adding heating units to the meeting room, doubling the size of the library, and building a new archaeology lab. In the lab, we have a new stereo-zoom microscope capable of 70× magnification that our members can use; simply come by during the museum open hours and ask the Museum staff to use the scope.

We are currently working on some new improvements to the Museum that we hope to have completed by the end of the summer. These improvements are being funded by a grant from the Frederick Lobl Trust. We are hoping to add some additional insulation in the museum to help lower our heating bill. We have

also planned improvements to the Luedtke meeting hall including new audio equipment, a podium with microphone, and some new chairs. Also in our future plans is making some changes to the front entrance to improve the flow of visitors to the Museum. One of our Trustees, McKayla Hoffman, is also spearheading a re-design of the Middleboro Little League site exhibit. I will be sure to let you know how this work is progressing.

In closing, I would like to thank the membership and all of the Society volunteers for your continued support. If anyone would ever like to drop me a line, you can reach me at my email address: archaeobotanyguy@gmail.com. Also, don't forget to 'like' our page on Facebook to keep abreast of not only MAS news but of archaeological stories from around the world.

Sincerely,

Philip J Graham

'Round Robbins

By Dave DeMello, Museum Director

The Building

The Read building that houses the Museum survived the winter with no permanent damage. Problems caused by the February 8th & 9th snowstorm were repaired by the Museum staff. However, work, as usual, continues on the building:

Electrical – we continue to replace old inefficient lighting and we are adding outlets to the new lab area to allow us to install the numerous devices required in a modern laboratory.

Heating – This was the first winter since the new heating system was installed in the library and the meeting room. The installation allowed our librarian to accomplish more in organizing that space than was possible in the past. It also allowed the MAS board to attend meetings without developing frostbite. There is a need to repair and replace some of the system's pipes and valves. Quotes are currently being obtained.

Insulation – We are looking into improvements to make the building more energy efficient. Two recent studies have described the deficiencies and possible corrections. We will be working on those recommendations as funds become available.

And in the Museum:

The William Whiting display – We continue our efforts to complete the additions to this display. The artifacts

have been selected and now the signage and text need to be determined and created.

The Little League Site display – This exhibit is being completely revamped. It will serve not only a site display, but also as an introduction to the archaeological process. MAS trustee McKayla Hoffman is leading the work in this area and her report follows in this Newsletter.

Museum Attendance

2012 saw an impressive increase in visitors to the Robbins. 744 people visited the Museum last year representing a 66% increase over the attendance in 2011. The number of Wednesday/Saturday walk-in visitors increased just slightly from 3.5 visitors per day open to 3.7, however, the number of people attending special events and group tours rose by 277%. Most of the visitors said that they learned of the Robbins from three main sources: the internet, word of mouth and from visiting our booths at off-site events.

Two of the areas that generated the greatest number of visitors last year were school tours and the Fall Lecture series sponsored by the Massasoit Chapter. The school tours are customized for the each group and have included videos and slide presentations as well as hands-on activities involving artifacts thousands of years old. The three talks in the Fall Lecture Series were so successful that we are currently working on upcoming series. Information on those lectures will be posted on the MAS website, massarchaeology.org.

The Little League Site Display

By McKayla Hoffman

MAS member Mara Smith and I are nearing the completion of the planning stage of the Little League Site display reconfiguration. Our goals for the exhibit so far are as follows: to give viewers an introduction to archaeology, using the Middleboro Little League Site to exemplify what archaeologists do; to impart to viewers the importance of archaeology and the preservation of cultural resources in this region; to make information about archaeology and the contents of the Museum accessible to anyone of any age; and to serve as an introduction to the rest of the Museum. Among other things, we aim to include information and displays concerning artifact types from the Little League Site, "Did You Know?" blurbs highlighting interesting facts, and a 3D model of an archaeological square with details about soil profiles. We are also planning to include an

activity towards the end of the display that involves artifacts and deciding what they might have been used for based on their modern associations. We hope that the additions and alterations to this important exhibit answer many of the public's questions about archaeology, as well as inspire them to learn more about the pre-contact history of this region.

Review of the MAS Spring Meeting, April 20, 2013

By Philip J Graham

The Massachusetts Archaeological Society held its semi-annual spring meeting at the newly renovated lecture hall at the Robbins Museum on Saturday April 20. The meeting was co-chaired by Susan Jacobucci and Phil Graham. Eight papers were presented on a wide array of topics stretching from the Early Archaic through the 18th century AD. The meeting was followed by a reception during which attendees chatted with the paper presenters and discussed various topics of interest.

In the first paper Tom Hart, of the University of Connecticut, discussed using cutting edge technology to study micro-botanical remains on stone tools as a way to help understand the diet of ancient people. The stone tools came from the famous Sandy Hill site (9,300 BP) on the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Reservation in Connecticut. Tom analyzed starch grains, tiny plant microfossils capable of surviving in the archaeological record, that he was able to extract from the stone tools, and found that at least two of the tools had been used to grub for roots and process leaf and/or stem plant tissue.

Tom's talk was followed by that of Sean Romo from UMass Boston. Sean talked about the construction of the Gore Place Greenhouse from Waltham, MA. In this interesting paper, Sean analyzed the remains from the UMass excavations to investigate how the greenhouse was constructed and how this building was a reflection of the way that the Gores conceived of their built architectural environment.

Sean's paper was followed by that of Aaron Miller, the chair of the Western MA chapter of the MAS. Aaron shared his experiences running a field project with High School students. The students excavated the former site of the Sanford Tavern, located in Hawley, MA. The artifacts recovered from the site were very interesting

but, more importantly, Aaron demonstrated that exposing High School students to archaeology teaches them important problem solving and critical thinking skills that they can apply to their other classes.

Our final paper of the morning was given by the incomparable Gene Winter who told us of his research into the history of the well-known Powwow Oak in Lowell, MA. Gene was able to trace the history of the tree back through history and show how it was narrowly saved from being uprooted in order to build a road. Gene speculated on how the famous tree may have originally gotten its name.

The afternoon session started off with a paper from Curtiss Hoffman and Cory Fournier, both from Bridgewater State University. Curt and Cory attempted to shed light on the much debated subject of Native American stone constructions in the Eastern US. As part of a long term research program, Curt traveled up and down the east coast to the offices of state archaeologists to record the location of stone structures. These data, consisting of the locations of over 3,000 stone structures, were entered into a GIS to look for spatial patterning in where the stone constructions are most densely concentrated. The authors presented only preliminary data here but demonstrated that there is a clear pattern to the location of these sites. Hopefully as this project continues to develop a new paradigm about these stone structures will emerge.

Our next paper was given by Tim Ives, the State Archaeologist of Rhode Island. Tim, an experienced flint knapper, discussed Middle Archaic projectile points. He talked about their use and how spent points may have been modified and re-worked in order to extend their use life.

Tim's talk was followed by that of Bruce Rusch, a trustee of the MAS. Bruce discussed Paleo-Indian settlement patterns from the Jefferson III site in New Hampshire. He investigated several characteristics of the site's loci including the occupation date range for each locus, the length of stay, the time of occupation, and whether each locus was inhabited at the same time or at different times. Based on his analysis, Bruce was able to argue convincingly for the function and landscape usage of each locus.

Our final paper was given by Brian Robinson from the University of Maine. Brian discussed the history of excavations from a site familiar to many MAS members, Bull Brook. This paper provided a very interesting perspective on this famous archaeological site by discussing how a group of determined avocational ar-

archaeologists were able to excavate the site ahead of bulldozers. Without the work of this dedicated group of individuals, referred to as the 'Bull Brook Boys,' we would have almost no information about this important archaeological site. In addition to detailing the history of the excavations, Brian also discussed the current thinking on what the function of the Bull Brook site may have been.

I would like to take a moment to thank all of the MAS members that came out to the meeting. I also want to thank the trustees, officers, and society volunteers who organized the meeting, refurbished the lecture hall, and provided refreshments for the morning and afternoon receptions. If you were unable to attend this meeting, I hope that you will come out for the annual meeting in October, which we also plan to hold at the Robbins Museum. You can keep up to date of all the happenings at the Museum by visiting our website (www.massarchaeology.org) or by liking our Facebook page.

Membership Secretary's Report

By Curtiss Hoffman

As of March 13, 2013, the Society's membership was 532, including all categories. The following members have joined or renewed their MAS membership at higher levels of contribution:

Patrons:

Shirley Blancke
Ashton Bradshaw
Marilyn Crary
Suanna Selby Crowley
Frederica Dimmick
Elinor "Fuzzy" Downs
Adrienne Edwards
Timothy Fohl
Elizabeth Greene
Curtiss Hoffman
Royce Kahler
Timothy Largy
Chuck & Peg Luedtke

Sheila Lynch-Benttinen
Joanne Miller
Jeffrey Moore, Jr.
Steven Pendery
Diane Pereira
Dorothy Robinson
Mark Simonitsch
Laurie Stundis
Arthur Tarlow
Catherine Taylor
Frederic Topor

Supporting:

Anthony Capozzi
Henry Hammond
Thirza Joost
Frederick Martin
Darrell Pinckney
Robert Scheer
Thomas Skibinski
William Taylor
John Thompson

Sustaining:

Harry Anderson
John Ausevich
Louis Barber
Ruth Carol Barnes
Esther Braun
Peter Burns
Bernard Cooper
Andrew Cormier
Linda Engelmann
Donna Frehill
Diane Gilbert
Fay George Hennebury
Vin Ioannilli
Susan Jacobucci
Lloyd Keyes
Ward Kraemer
Mark Lyons
Gerald Macomber
David McKenna
William Moody
Brona Simon

There have been 29 new members who joined MAS since March of 2012:

Kristen Acorn
Scott Acorn
Julie Bakoian

Robert Chartrand
David C. Cole
Robert Dalbec
Kathryn Doyon
Stuart Eldridge
Larry Ellis
Sara Gale
Elsie Goldstein
Paul Hanneman
Jameson Harwood
Tania Kouyoumdjian
Mary Ellen Lepionka
Leslie Masson
Olin Masson
Ian Masson
Dana Mastroianni
Ophelia Morgan
John Nove
Mary Owens
Thomas Siudak
William Swallow
Danielle Trull-Donahue
Deborah Tuck
Richard Tuck
Rebecca Wetzel
James Wilson
Jacob Yanovich

Wilfred Coutts
Freddie and David Dimmick
Timothy Fohl
Paul Gardescu
Dan Lorraine
David McKenna
Vic Mastone
Northeast Chapter MAS
Robert Scheer
Alan Smith
Laurie Stundis
Bob Trotta
Eugene Winter

Other Contributors:

Ted Ballard
Louis Barber
David Baskin
Ruth & Richard Bates
Richard Besciak
Esther Braun
Gino Buccella
Cecilia Carroll
Michael Cavanagh
Marty Dudek
Earline DeSalvo
Dena Dincauze
Kathryn Doyon
R. David Drucker
Larry Ellis
Donald Fulcher
Donald Gammons
McKayla Hoffman
Alex Houtzager
Alexandra Humphreys
Tim Largy
Carol McCarthy
Richard McCarthy
Jeffrey Moore, Jr.
William Napolitano
Andre Navez
Barbara Palson
Alan Prybylo
John Rempelakis
Dan Rourke
Bruce & Karen Rusch
Douglas Sharpe
Shirley Silva
Ninian Stein

Since the call went out in early November 2012, the Society's Annual Appeal has succeeded in raising \$6000. Thanks to our generous donors whose names are listed below, we will be able to implement many of our planned 2013 programs.

Clovis Contributors (\$1000 and up):

David DeMello
Tana Palson (for Barbara Palson)

Eden Enabler (\$750)

Trustees of Pratt Free School

Bifurcate Benefactors (\$500):

Curtiss Hoffman
Charles and Peg Luedtke

Brewerton Backer (\$250):

Shirley Blancke

Vosburg Volunteers (\$100 and up):

Joseph Bagley & Jennifer Poulsen
Suanna Selby Crowley

Polly Stevens
Bill Taylor
John Thompson
Danielle Trull-Donahue
Xmas Tree Shops
John Zinkowski

We welcome additional contributions to the Annual Appeal, so as to support the Robbins Museum and its programs. You can do this on-line through our website (www.massarchaeology.org) or by sending a check or money order made out to MAS, P.O. Box 700, Middleborough MA 02346.

Chapter Report

Massasoit Chapter News

By Judy Macioci, Vice Chair/Program Chair

The Massasoit Chapter meets on the third Thursday of each month at members' homes. Our meetings include a presentation followed by lively discussions and refreshments.

Highlights from this year so far include: "Wild Recipes: Native Americans use of Native Plants" by Judy Macioci, "Medicinal Aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition" by Murray Hamlet, and " Archaeology/History of Clark's Island" by Eric Strom.

Our Chapter offered a Fall and Spring Lecture Series followed by a tour of the Robbins Museum. Our Fall and Spring Lecture Series were a huge success and we hope to make these a regular event at the Museum.

For more information, please check the MAS website.

Book Review

By Bill Taylor

The Swordfish Hunters

By Bruce Bourque

Copyright in 2010

Published by Bunker Hill Publishing, Inc., Piermont, N.H., 03779

This book describes the Red Paint People of Maine, who were one of the first maritime cultures in New England. Starting around 5,000 years ago they flourished for about 1200 years before disappearing. This culture reached its peak around 4,000 B.P. Large codfish and swordfish were the main prey for hunters in the Gulf of Maine. Instead of subsisting on easily caught codfish, these people chose to hunt dangerous and elusive swordfish. Mammals like deer, moose and black bear were the important food sources on land.

These Moorehead Phase People created Red Paint Cemeteries, with many beautiful and unusual artifacts that were common to their maritime culture. These included slate bayonets, exotic projectile points, bone harpoons and other remarkable artifacts. These cemeteries were located along Maine's major rivers, especially between the Kennebec and the Penobscot. This culture was also located in Labrador, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Many of their artifacts were symbolic, were made for ceremonial purposes and were nonfunctional rather than utilitarian in form.

Around 3,800 B.P. changes in the decreasing water temperature of the Gulf of Maine affected swordfish, which had come nearer the shoreline in earlier times. Previously plankton blooms supported populations of prey fish and squid, which swordfish fed on within in-shore waters. Indians in dugout canoes could reach these areas from coastal fishing stations, within 25 miles from shore. Swordfish during this era were very large, close to 1,000 pounds, and were harpooned. These bone and slate spears had detachable heads that remained embedded in the swordfish as the shaft was withdrawn. A line attached to a float was left within the prey until the swordfish tired, when it was retrieved. As the swordfish disappeared, seal hunting became the next popular ocean resource. Smaller fish like flounder, sculpin, dogfish and sturgeon became another important ocean food source.

Anyone who has studied the Red Paint People in Maine will be captivated by Bourque's explanation of this culture. I recommend this book as an explanation of this period of Maine's past.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Fohl,

Curtiss Hoffman's review of *Across Atlantic Ice: The Origin of America's Clovis Culture* is a disappointment to this particular member of the "general educated audience". Hoffman's opening declaration that the book is a "robust...far-fetched" challenge to the Siberian origin of Clovis sets the tone of his review. I suggest the membership of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society would be better served by reading the book's Foreword by Michael B. Collins and the Introduction by authors Dennis J. Stanford and Bruce A. Bradley (see Amazon.com's "Look Inside!" feature).

Hoffman concludes his review proposing that perhaps it was seal hunters from the New World following the Gulf Stream that established the Solutrean cul-

ture in Europe. He adds that this explanation is “no less plausible than that of the authors--and certainly it is more relevant to, and more respectful of Native peoples”. The dismissal of the Solutrean hypothesis advocated by Stanford and Bradley with Hoffman’s simplistic (caustic?) reversal of theory seems grossly unprofessional. The closing patronizing comment alluding to “respectful of Native peoples” is an embarrassment to dedicated scientific research.

Sincerely yours,

Richard J. Besciak
Member MAS

Hoffman replies: I recommend that Mr. Besciak read the July 2013 issue of *Mammoth Trumpet* for a much more caustic professional rejoinder to the Solutrean Hypothesis than my attempt at even-handedness provided. Skeptical inquiry into new theories is at the very heart of the scientific endeavor. As for his last point, the days when archaeologists, under the pretense of doing science, could blithely ignore the beliefs of Native Americans (for example, freely excavating burials) have long since passed. Most professional archaeologists nowadays respect Native views and Native wishes concerning the exploration of their ancestors’ past.

New Booklets

The Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation are pleased to announce a set of three public booklets:

Roads, Rails and Trails: Transportation-Related Archaeology in Massachusetts. This book discusses transportation archaeology and highlights major projects from the last three decades.

The Indian Crossing Site in Chicopee, Massachusetts. This book presents a Late Woodland Period archaeological site in Chicopee, MA and how it contributes to our understanding of Native American life in the Connecticut River Valley about 1,000 years ago.

Ancient Winters: The Archaeology of the Flagg Swamp Rockshelter, Marlborough, Massachusetts. This book discusses the excavation of a well preserved rockshelter site occupied by Native Americans in Marlborough 4,000 years ago.

Digital versions are available on MHC’s website at www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcarch/archidx.htm.

EDITOR: Tim Fohl
681 South Street Carlisle, MA 01741
tfohl@tigco.com (978) 369-5649

Print copies are available upon request to the MHC, please contact Jennifer.Poulsen@sec.state.ma.us.

YouTube Interviews

By Tim Fohl

On May 22 Sheila Lynch-Bettinen, codirector of the meeting house discovery project in Duxbury Massachusetts, interviewed Bill Taylor and Dave DeMello and published their interviews on You Tube. They can be viewed by searching their names on You Tube. Bill gave some very interesting insights based on his experiences in the Taunton River region. He also showed examples from his collection which is on display in the Robbins Museum. His entire collection contains about 12,000 artifacts, most of which he excavated or surface collected. The artifacts date from the Early Archaic Period (9000 years ago) through to the early 19th Century. He also discussed what can be learned from these concerning lifestyles and migrations.

Also on May 22, Ms Lynch-Bettinen interviewed Dave about the Bull Brook Exhibit and the Whiting Collection. Dave made the point that the Whiting Collection is the work of William W. Whiting’s work in the Plymouth area. His careful notes are an invaluable record of archaeological finds during a period when little formal work was being done. Of course this work is not repeatable so this collection is of key importance.

Dave also described the fascinating history of the Bull Brook excavations, the results of which are on display at the Robbins Museum. The excavation was a salvage operation in the early 1950’s, mostly done by avocational archaeologists including several members of a single family, the Vaccaros. It dates from about 13,000 years ago and is still the largest known Paleoindian site in New England. Much work has been done in subsequent years to interpret the extensive data the “Bull Brook Boys” collected. The collection at the Robbins Museum is on loan from the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, MA. The focus at PEM has changed away from archaeology in recent years so the examples at our museum are probably the only place in which artifacts from this site will be on display.

**The Newsletter is published by the
Massachusetts Archaeological Society
P.O.Box700, Middleborough, MA
02346-0700
www.massarchaeology.org
(508) 947-9005**

The Massachusetts Archaeological Society, Inc.
Robbins Museum of Archaeology
P.O. Box 700
Middleborough, MA 02346-0700

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