

The Ontario Archaeological Society



ARCH NOTES edited by Nancy Powell

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It has been almost four months now since we last met and it will be at least another four weeks before our next meeting is due and as this seems an over-long time without some communication between us, I thought I should at least circulate among you in spirit, as it were, with this newsletter.

Most of it will bear on things that have happened since we last met. However I will try and make some guesses as to what will be taking place this fall. But first things first, and that leads me back to a report on our last meeting in May. The very good attendance will recall that we had a talk and discussion led by Father Russell (S.J.) on the Huronia project at Midland. Father Russell, one of our long-standing members, has done considerable research in this area, one of the earliest settled by Europeans in North America. This settlement was established by the Jesuits in 1639 and destroyed only a decade later by the Iroquois. Little was known about the settlement until excavations were undertaken in earnest within the last ten years. Now there are plans afoot to reconstruct the fort as it once was. However, it is felt that there is a great deal more excavation and research necessary before an ideal reconstruction programme can be carried out. It is not my intention to become embroiled in this controversy but I may say that our May meeting was one of the most thought-provoking we have had. There is no doubt that we will be hearing a lot more about this site and the implications in its restoration.

The first extensive digging at Fort Ste. Marie was done by Mr. K. E. Kidd who until recently was attached to the Royal Ontario Museum. He is now head of

the new Anthropological Department at Trent University in Peterboro. Present work on the Ste. Marie site is now being carried out under Dr. Wilfred Jury, who is head of the Museum of Indian Archaeology at Western University in London, Ontario.

London now has a very active archaeological society about which I have written before. This summer we received the first issue of what promises to be a most interesting bulletin. It includes illustrated reports on various sites and descriptions of particularly interesting artifacts and an amusing and informative article on paperbacks available for the interested amateur archaeologist. A copy of this bulletin may be consulted in our Library by getting in touch with our Librarian, Mrs. Mary Davie.

And further west another archaeological group is growing in strength. The Manitoba Archaeological Society reports in their summer newsletter that there is a definite possibility that other chapters of the group will be formed outside Winnipeg. Members have been active in field work in various parts of the province and an exhibit of some of their finds was on view in the Downtown Branch of the Winnipeg Public Library. The Manitoba newsletter may also be looked at in our Library.

While I am referring to the digs of other people, let's not forget to put on record the success of our own spring dig in May at the Cleary farm near Barrie. Many of you will recall that just a year ago we opened some squares and did some tentative exploratory work on this site. It seemed so promising that it became the subject of our annual spring dig. Let me say thank you to those who did come along despite the occasional heavy downpour. Bill Renison was in charge of the dig and under his direction, we came up with a number of interesting finds, although there was nothing exceptionally unusual. There was also an attempt on this dig to discover just how the Indians fired their pottery. You will remember that in the spring a pottery class at Bill Donaldson's turned out some handworked pottery without the use of a wheel. The second half of the experiment - the firing - was unfortunately not as successful. We lacked the able guidance of Miss Devereux and Dr. Emerson.

Your executive has been getting about, if not always on archaeological business. Phyllis Bowland, our President, has been touring around Russia. But I think she had some opportunity to visit museums and we shall look forward to seeing her pictures and hearing her tales. Dr. Churcher has also been on the other side of the Atlantic visiting various European museums in connection with his palaeontological research. Your Corresponding Secretary is about to depart for the Aegean Isles, with a side trip to Cairo.

Our Vice-President, Dr. Clarke, has been sticking closer to home. In Algonquin Park he has had the opportunity to examine some pre-ceramic material. And even closer to home, in Scarborough in fact, Dr. Clarke has discovered a promising looking site that could possibly be a midden. It certainly calls for further investigation but it is unfortunately located in a rather unpromising location - a used car parking lot!

Elsewhere in Ontario, Bill Noble has been working with Jim Wright in the Lake Superior Area. Members will recall two papers by Jim Wright that were circulated in the spring, one of which dealt with his survey work along the north shore of Lake Superior. Copies of both these papers are still available and will be sent out upon request. New members will receive copies with this issue of Arch Notes.

Dr. Emerson again conducted a small school at the Champlain fort at Cahiagué. Dr. Robert Dailey and Bill Renison had an opportunity to visit the site. Bill also took a trip with Dr. Gord Edmund of the Palaeontology Department of the Royal Ontario Museum to Fort Erie to examine an ossuary there. Investigation has since gone on there by the University of Buffalo under the direction of Dr. Marion White.

Further afield again Lyn Soucy has been continuing her work at the historical Louisbourg site in Nova Scotia. We hope to have her back with us this fall to take up her studies at the University of Toronto. Dr. Jim Anderson was also out at Louisbourg this summer as well as doing some further work in Mexico.

Well, I have only briefly mentioned a few people and their activities this summer. I would like to hear from as many of you as possible so that I can report on your news in future bulletins. I believe that only by sharing our experiences will the society grow in numbers and strength. At the moment we are more than 70 strong and I hope to see us multiply to a record membership. Just in case you wonder who are all these other members, I am attaching a full list of the membership. You might just check your own name to make sure that I have the correct address and telephone number for you.

See you in a month.

The Editor.