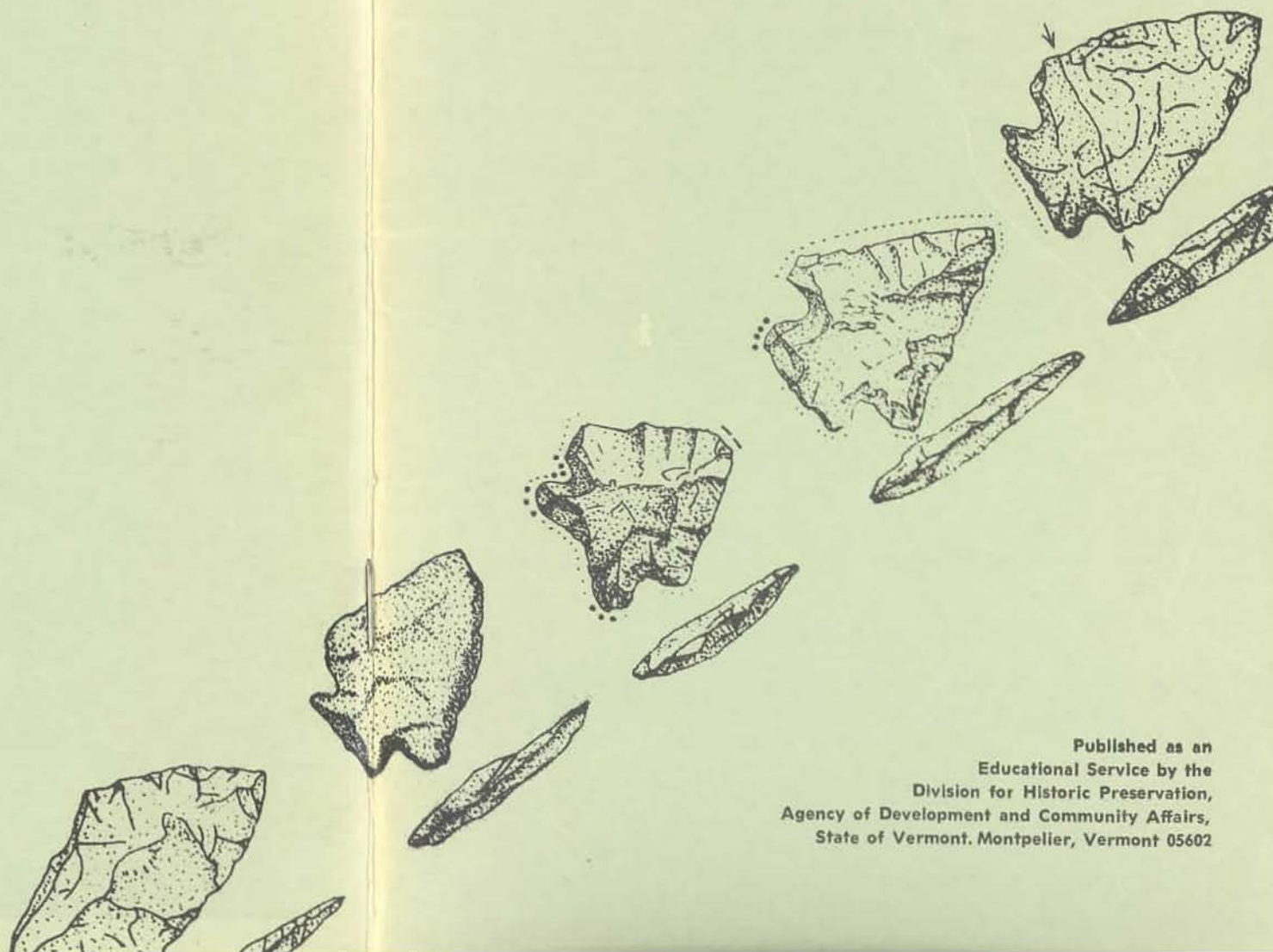


AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW OF VERMONT'S PAST

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeology in Vermont is still in a period of infancy, but is gaining increasing vigor. Aside from a few early site reports and a number of studies completed in the last few years, little of lasting significance has been published in books or journals. The bibliography at the end of this pamphlet contains the most useful source materials for further study. A tremendous amount of raw and generally untapped information exists in private and public collections, but it will take years to sort and organize the majority of these materials. The summary of Vermont's prehistory presented here, then, is of necessity brief and generalized. Information has been gleaned from reports of archaeological investigations in neighboring states (most notably New York and Massachusetts) and from archaeological surveys conducted in Vermont by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Vermont.

In dealing with the prehistory (the time before written records) of this state it is likely that only very general statements about past periods of cultural development will be applicable for Vermont as a whole. Even from limited studies, it appears that a number of cultural patterns reflected in the archaeological data are not homogenous throughout the state. Vermont's physiography, climate differentiation, soil types and other factors have resulted in the creation of vastly different environmental zones, particularly along any east-west axis. Thus, one might expect different patterns to have occurred in the Champlain Lowland, the mountainous region in the center of the state, and the Connecticut River Valley (See Figure 1). What this environmental variability suggests is that archaeological models which are generally accepted throughout southern New England will only partially explain human life in these more northern latitudes. It is likely that some facets of Vermont's prehistory will be unique within the Northeast. Therefore, an alternative framework for understanding past human adaptive strategies with respect to the varying regions of Vermont will have to be developed. In order to do so, archaeologists in Vermont are pursuing the commonly recognized goals of the profession: establishing cultural chronologies, describing the ways of life or cultural patterns of ancient populations, and finally, understanding cultural processes.

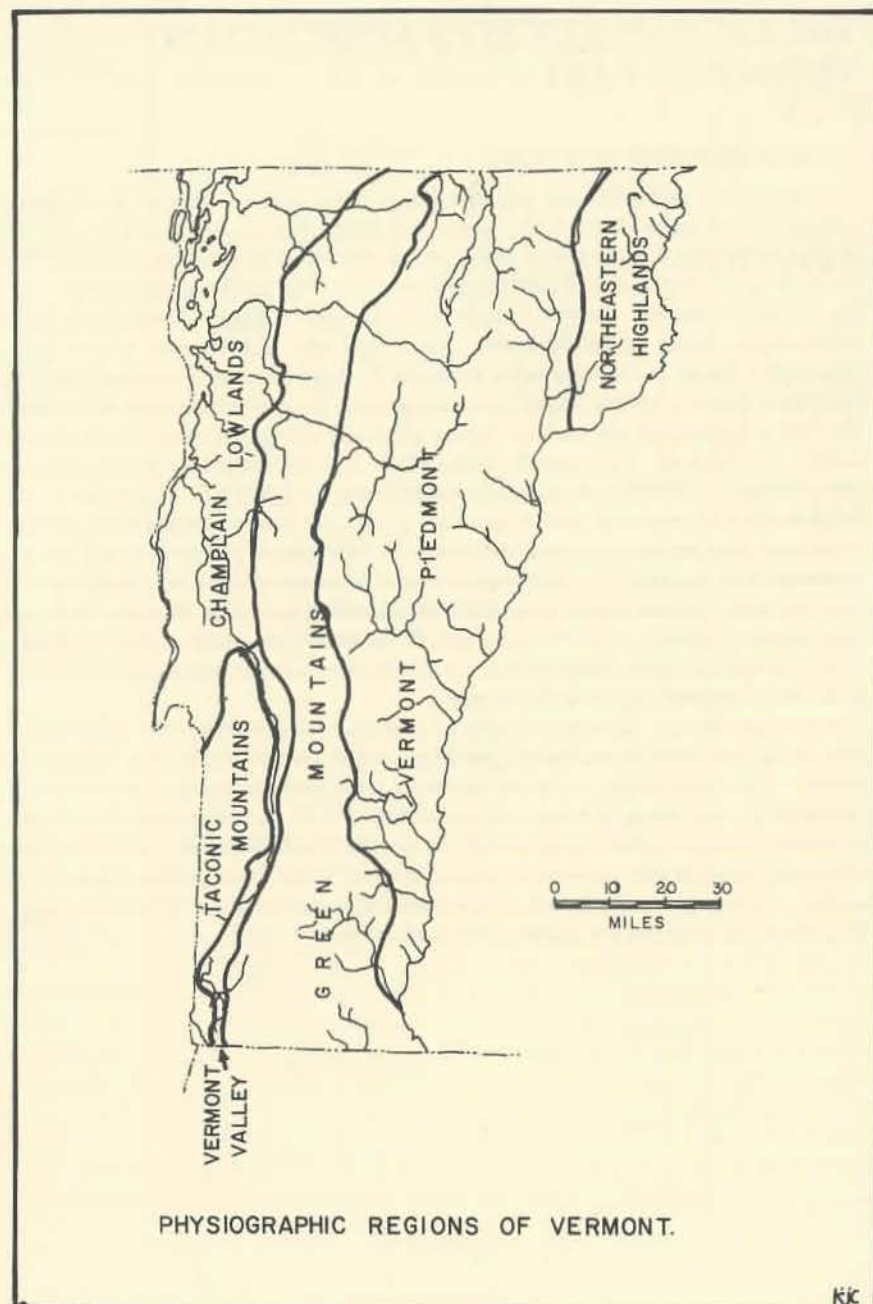


FIGURE 1

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S APPROACH TO VERMONT'S PAST

ESTABLISHING CHRONOLOGIES

Vermont archaeologists are still refining the first goal — that of establishing cultural chronologies. How is this done? Artifacts, those things made or used by people, reflect the stylistic ideals of the people who created them. Importantly, the styles of certain types of artifacts changed over time, just as in the more recent past the Model A, Model T and the Thunderbird represent changes in the styles of Ford automobiles. Stone projectile points (spear tips and arrowheads) exhibit such change (see Figure 2). Because most examples of styles or types of projectile points have been found at several sites in association with fire pits which have been dated by various techniques, the periods during which the points were used are generally known. In Vermont, for example, it is known that bifurcate base points date to about 6,000 B.C. while Vosburg points date to roughly 3,000 B.C. Therefore, it can be deduced that any sites where bifurcate points are found predate those where Vosburg points are encountered. Artifacts can thus help to order sites and the information they contain into meaningful cultural segments of time. It is important to note that as new types (styles) of artifacts are identified and more dates are obtained from sites in Vermont, archaeologists will be better able to interpret their findings. The historical summary presented later in this booklet is organized along the lines of a currently accepted, regional chronology.

Age is not enough. To simply know what point type preceded what other point type is shallow knowledge, indeed. Finding a 4,000 year old point in a field is exciting — no doubt about it. Alone, however, that point is nothing more than a curiosity; a pretty thing to hang over the mantle. When studied as part of a whole, in context with the other materials left by people, these clues can yield far more interesting and complex answers to questions asked about those people. Thus, once a basic chronology is established, the archaeologist must make a tremendous leap from the study of stones and bones to the study of people.

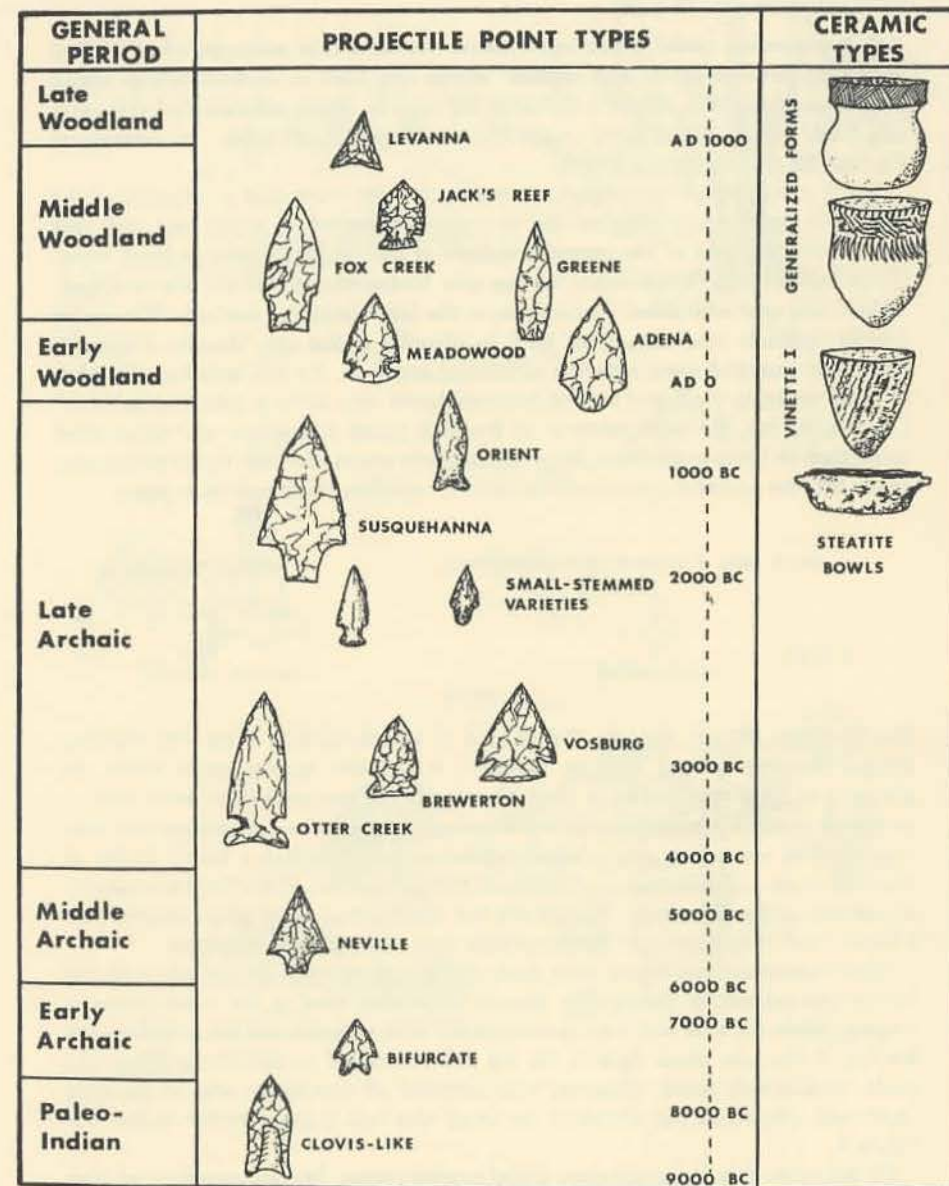


FIGURE 2

STUDYING WAYS OF LIFE

A hypothetical model is presented below, showing that artifacts, when studied within an environmental and cultural setting can lead to understandings about people and their lives. Figure 3 indicates the ways in which individuals 4,000 years ago might have utilized some major areas within a river valley, as determined through the archaeological record.

Site 1 is located on a pond which drains into the river and is adjacent to the upland regions. Archaeologists dug there over a period of weeks and each day found some remains of the material culture of the people who once lived there. Tools and features, (for example, storage pits, firehearths, postholes) were mapped, labeled and sent with other information to the laboratory for analysis. The use of specific artifacts was sometimes hard to identify at the site, thereby making it difficult to interpret some activities which had occurred. An axe, an adze, a number of worn scraping tools and several hammerstones were all in a concentrated area. Once in the lab, the wear patterns on the tools could be studied, and some sense could then be made of the data. By grouping tools which had been found in one area of the site, the archaeologists could deduce that woodworking had taken place.

axe + adze + scrapers + hammerstones



woodworking

(artifacts found)



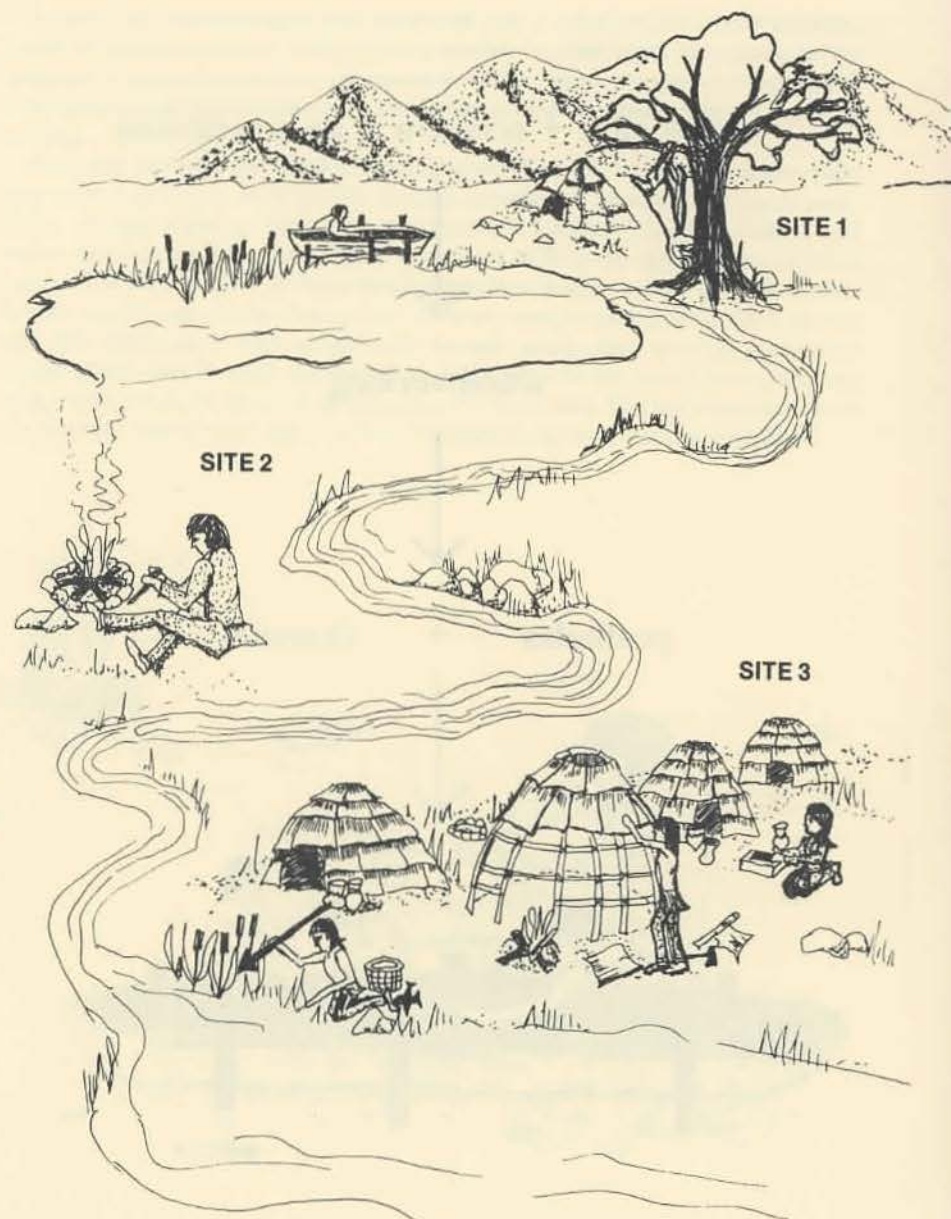
(activity inferred)

FIGURE 4

The questions remain, though: "What kind of woodworking? Were they building homes? Making spears? Making canoes?" A possible answer came when the grouping of tools was looked at in relationship to the features of that same area — two rows of postholes spaced over a distance of twenty feet — suggesting that they were holding something rather large in place. There was also a heavy scatter of charcoal in the soil, although no fire hearth was discovered. From that information, in addition to the knowledge that the site was located on a pond which drained into a major river, it was deduced that the people were making a dugout canoe.

Experimental archaeologists have made similar canoes with the ancient tools and have produced similar debris. The heavier tools were used in the initial stages of shaping, while the adze was used in conjunction with scrapers and fire to hollow out the log. A fire was made right in the log and controlled so that the gouging was made considerably easier. Charcoal was scattered all around the area as chipping continued. The whole log, about 24 feet long, was held in place by the stakes. See Figure 5.

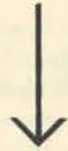
On the other side of the site were found broken points, knives, scrapers and deer bones. Again, in the laboratory the archaeologist looked at the total tool assemblages, trying to establish relationships among them. The large bones were, for the most part, off to one side, while the scrapers were grouped a few feet away. It appeared that there were really two activities occurring — butchering game and processing hides.



HYPOTHETICAL SITES IN A WATERSHED

FIGURE 3

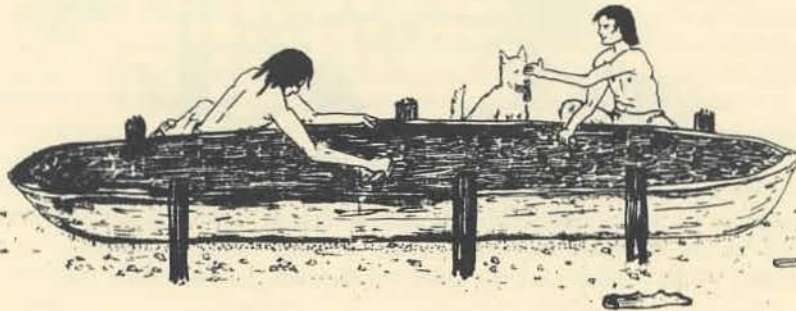
axe + adze + scrapers + hammerstones



woodworking



postholes + charcoal



MAKING A DUGOUT CANOE

FIGURE 5

In sum, the archaeologists who excavated Site 1 could explain some activities based on the association of tools with one another in relationship to features. In this instance, it was not possible to determine in which season the site was occupied or how many people lived there, much less the more esoteric questions involving belief systems.

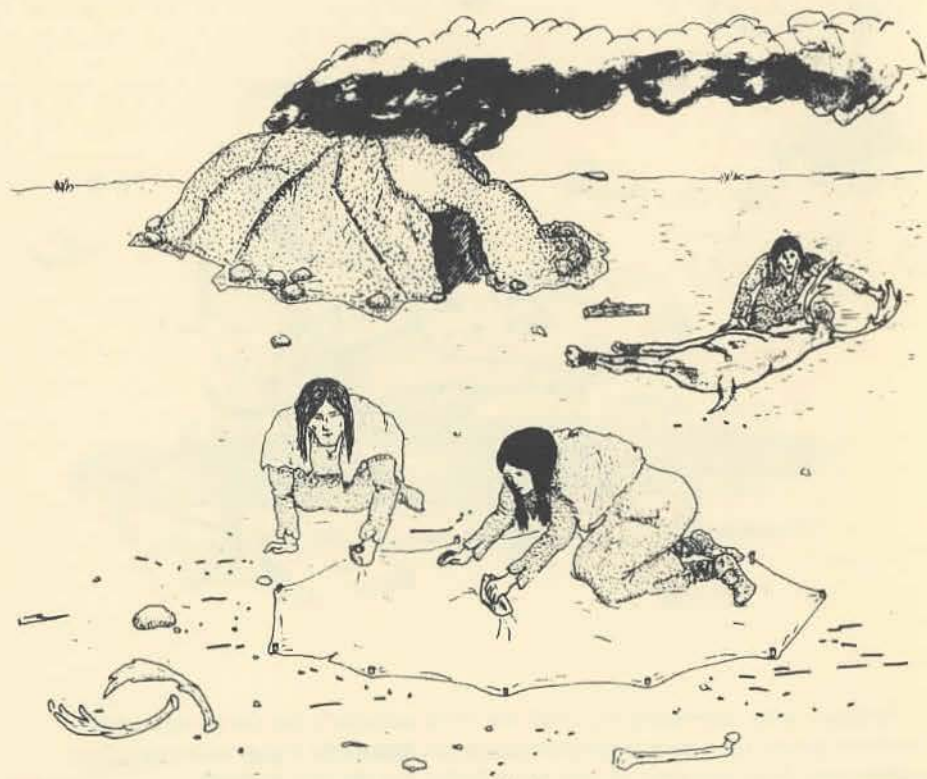
Site 2 was located a few miles downstream (see Figure 3). It contained some tools, such as broken points, an antler tine and a hammerstone, in addition to many small flakes of chert (flint), a firehearth and firecracked rocks. The hammerstone and antler were known by archaeologists to be basic tools in the manufacture of stone points. The high number of flakes and the presence of spear points which had been broken would support the theory that someone was producing stone tools at this site. The flintknapper had undoubtedly brought along some partially completed points which were finished at this spot since the site was not near a quarry and the stone chips produced from his efforts were of a small size. The fire hearth indicates the hunter(s) stayed overnight and the firecracked rocks may indicate cooking.



Archaeologists excavating this small site could accurately say that it was used by very few people for a very short period of time. Again, the bigger issues remained unanswered. Why was there so little debris? Why was the stay so short?

Farther downstream, near the mouth of the river, a third site was excavated (see Figure 3). It was quite large, four acres in size, containing many artifacts and features. Postholes were excavated in all areas of the site and patterns were very hard to discern. Artifacts, too, were dense in some places and seemed to be grouped together: chipping debris, tool blanks produced from exotic cherts, hammerstones, antlers and broken points; knives, points and scrapers. These, of course, appeared to be work stations. In the areas where post holes were associated with firehearths and storage pits, there were unusually interesting artifacts: soapstone vessels, slate pendants, shell, beads and copper. These post holes usually formed circles and seemed to indicate houses. Perhaps of greatest interest is that many of the patterns overlapped, indicating that the site was occupied several times, with new homes being built on top of old locations. People came to this site time and time again.

Although a very complicated site, it appeared to the archaeologists that this site was a village area where many people lived over an extended period of time and were involved in many different kinds of activities. Inferences could be made that at least some of the people living there either had contact with or had actually been in areas of the Midwest, because of the presence of items made from exotic cherts and copper.



Cultural chronologies were complete enough in the area for the archaeologists to identify time frames for each of the three sites, based on the stone points found. All appear to have been occupied during the same time period — about 4,000 years ago. If looked at in isolation, archaeologists would arrive at different conclusions about what life was like then. At Site 1, the scientists might conclude that "4,000 years ago people lived in small family groups and hunted and gathered in small territories." At Site 2, they might deduce that "4,000 years ago people were always on the move, searching for food and relying on the skills of the hunter for survival." Site 3 specialists might disagree, of course, and claim that "4,000 years ago people lived in semi-permanent villages, had skills in many areas and were involved in a vast trade network."

Actually, all three conclusions are true — when taken together. In addition to considering each specific site, archaeologists must study how that site relates to people's use of the surrounding territory. Since it can be hypothesized from existing archaeological and environmental data that prehistoric people lived in groups of differing sizes depending upon the time of year and moved seasonally within territories as large as several thousand square miles, archaeologists must look beyond the individual site to the group's annual exploitation patterns. Studying the three sites discussed above as a part of that annual cycle gives a new interpretation of the data from each.

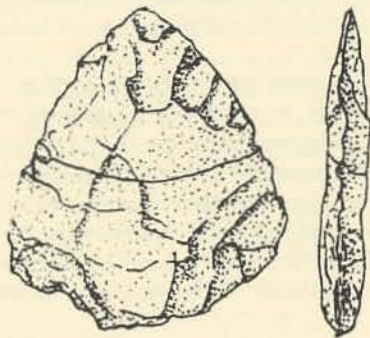
Site 1 appears to reflect an extended family (10-30 people) grouped in a hunting camp near the uplands. Here they could hunt mammals living in the woods, fish in the pond and river and prepare hides for clothing. Undoubtedly several houses once clustered near the pond; their remains are long gone.

Site 2 represents a camp used just once while a hunter (or several) was tracking game far from home (which was then Site 1). When stone spear tips broke during the hunt, the wooden shaft of the spear was kept and reused. The broken point bases were carried back to camp until they could more leisurely be removed from the shaft and replaced.

Site 3 was the gathering point for many extended families, as up to 200 people banded together in the spring. It was located in a rich area for collecting wild plant foods and reeds for basketry. The waterfalls slightly upstream made the fishing easy. Small mammals were abundant for hunting. It was an ideal spot to support a large group of people. Thus, spring was a time of celebration with feasting, dancing and the exchange of goods.

It becomes obvious that there is an interrelationship between the environment, a society and its subsistence patterns, but its essence is not yet understood in Vermont. Unfortunately, what paleoenvironmental data exist are limited and archaeologists are not able to define precisely what environmental conditions meant to human adaptations. In our model, then, we cannot determine in which months people were at each site, although we know these three sites made up part of their annual cycle.

It is, perhaps, encouraging to know that a particular environmental setting does not determine how people will respond to it. Geographic and climatic conditions, of course, can limit options, but it is of great interest that even within the same kinds of environmental zones people chose to respond differently. This observation leads archaeologists to the final goal of archaeological investigation: to answer the question, "why?"



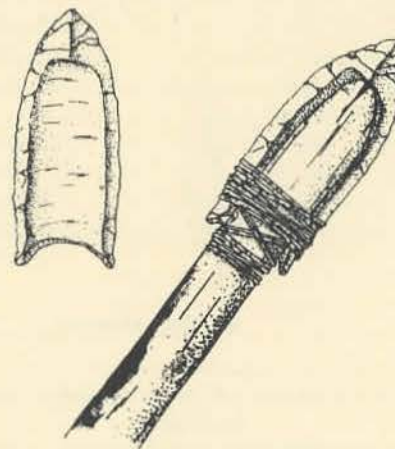
UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL PROCESSES

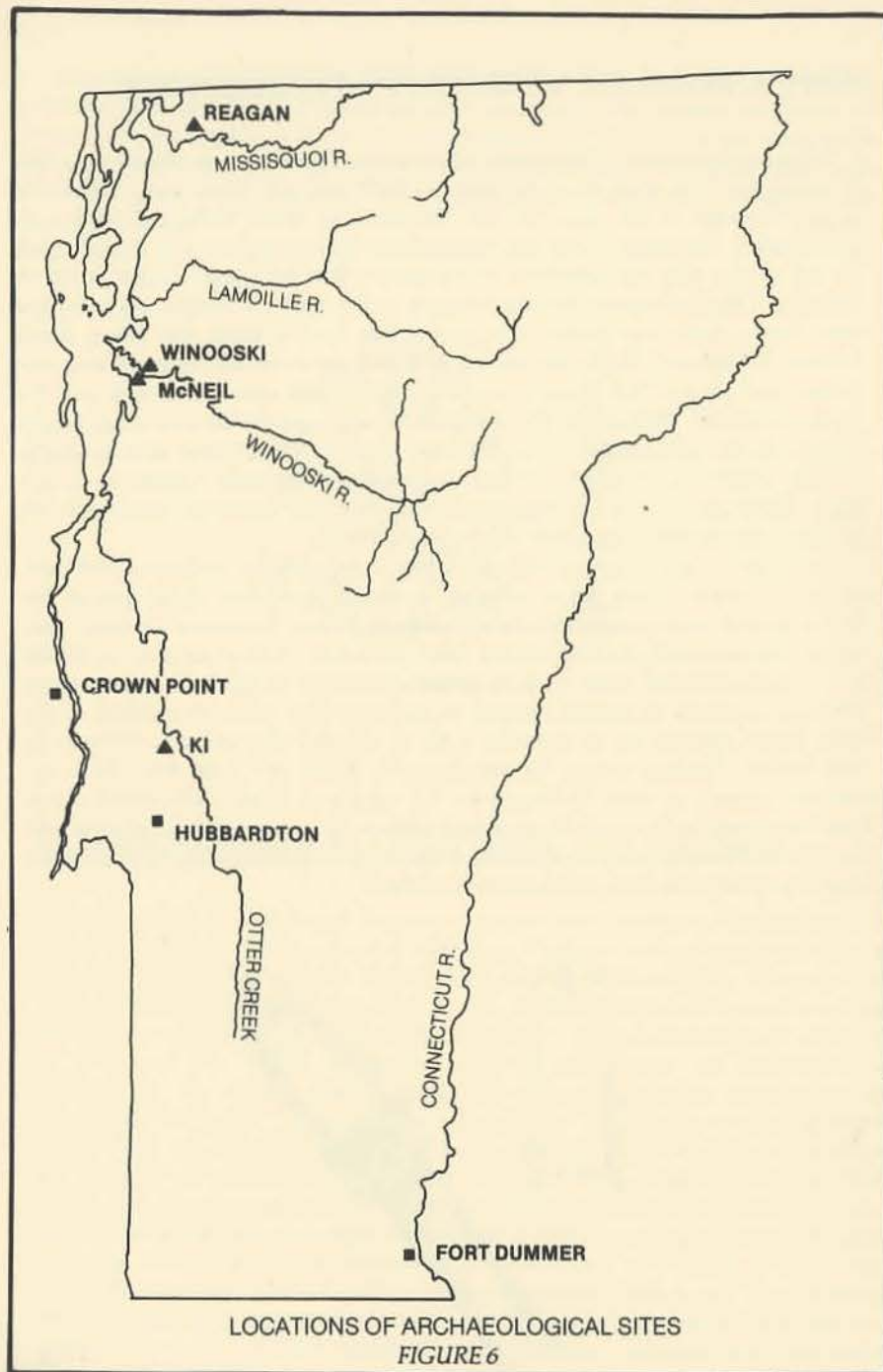
At this point, archaeologists begin to study cultural processes. Essentially, they begin to ask truly anthropological questions. Vermont archaeologists are a long way from being able to address these types of problems. For example, although over 700 prehistoric sites have been identified in Vermont, fewer than ten have been adequately excavated and reported. Even the basic cultural chronology is in a state of flux and the annual subsistence patterns still elude the archaeologist. Nonetheless, the ultimate goal is still to answer anthropological questions — to understand the "why's" of patterns of human culture. Why did Site 3 develop where it did? How did exotic items of copper from Michigan and chert (flint) from Ohio get there? It was not essential for Vermont-based hunters to have chert from Ohio — they used local quartzite both before and after Site 3 was abandoned. It is tantalizing to realize that exchanges of information were occurring with the exchange of goods. What was here in Vermont that filtered west in exchange? What ideas about life went back and forth? Many such questions are being posed, but obtaining their answers must wait until the first goals of establishing chronologies and understanding the more basic subsistence and settlement patterns, are more completely achieved.

AN OUTLINE OF VERMONT'S PREHISTORY

While much remains to be learned, the excavations of a few sites allows a number of statements to be made about Vermont's 12,000 year past (See Figure 6). The first people to come to the area we call Vermont are called Paleo-Indians by archaeologists. The entire world was experiencing climatic reactions to the last great ice age at the time the ancestors of Vermont's first inhabitants came to North America. They had hunted the large animals of the tundra in Siberia. As more and more ocean water was frozen into glaciers, the land bridging the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska became exposed and was eventually covered with low grasses and plants. The animals wandered and grazed across this land and the hunters followed. Patterns of life remained the same; people lived in small family groups and pursued animals over thousands of acres. Their homes were probably tent-like affairs, covered with the skins of mastadon, mammoth, caribou or smaller game. Edible plants were an integral part of the diet; trial and error, combined with an oral tradition identified those which were nutritious.

The dates of man's earliest arrival in North America are unknown and controversial. There is little direct evidence; some of the earliest dated sites in the Americas have used questionable dating methods. It must be assumed, though, that people had been in this hemisphere for quite some time, perhaps as early as 35,000 B.C., before the fluted point made its appearance about 10,000 B.C. A spear point which has a groove or channel chipped on each side of it, this tool is unique to the Paleo Indian hunters and so identifies a site of this period whether in Vermont or New Mexico. Nothing similar has been found in Russia or China; the cultural innovation appears to have developed on this continent. Over thirty fluted points have been found in Vermont. From these findspots, it is assumed that Paleo Indians lived in the Champlain Lowlands along the saltwater Champlain Sea or subsequent Lake Champlain and along the major river valleys.





PALEO INDIANS IN VERMONT

In addition, William Ritchie has presented an analysis of Paleo Indian tools recovered from the Reagan Site in Highgate, Vermont. The site, which sits high above the Missisquoi River (elevation ca., 380 feet), allows a panoramic view of the surrounding country. Over a number of years, artifacts were recovered there as they were exposed by wind erosion from sand dunes which were attributable to beach deposits of the Champlain Sea. The artifact collection contains four fluted and several pentagonal-shaped points, side and end scrapers, graters, flake knives, bifaces, and several soapstone pendants. The total inventory is not large, even when the chert debitage (the stone flakes left behind where tools were made) is included. Therefore, it is felt that Reagan represents a small camp which was utilized only once or twice.

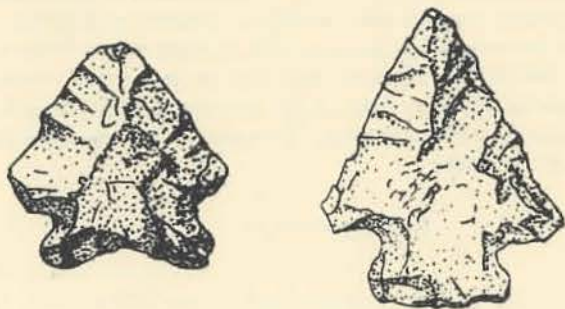
If the locational information with respect to the fluted points found in collections is correct and the artifacts have not been moved from the sites at which they were discarded, it is likely that these early hunters and gatherers were exploiting western Vermont both during and just after the epoch of the Champlain Sea. A number of the find-spots appear to be clearly associated with the Champlain Sea margins, while several others are well below the Sea's maximum shore line. On the basis of artifact style, it has also been suggested that the Reagan site was utilized some time after 8,000 B.C. If so, the Champlain Sea had already receded and Lake Champlain had begun to form west of the site.

What little data there are suggest that the initial Paleo Indian exploitation of the Champlain Valley began soon after 10,000 B.C., with the establishment of the Champlain Sea. Spruce woodlands, with a heavy lichen ground cover, supported seasonal herds of caribou along the shores, while both forest and tundra within the region may have supported woodland musk-ox, mastadon, moose-elk, as well as bear, deer, moose, wolf, beaver, and smaller animals. In the Champlain Sea during the open water season in summer, seals and walrus were probably available for exploitation, while seals could have been taken through the ice once the arctic waters had frozen over in winter. Fishing may also have been possible. By roughly 8,000 B.C., the Champlain Sea had been replaced with a fresh water lake and many of the large animals characteristic of an earlier time may have moved farther northward. Some woodland caribou may have remained and populations of more typical forest species, such as deer and bear, became increasingly common. In trying to model the subsistence patterns characteristic of the Paleo Indian Period (ca., 10,000 - 7,500 B.C.), therefore, one must be aware that, through time, the adaptive strategies followed by Paleo Indian populations exploiting the Champlain Lowland may have varied considerably. The same general trend will probably hold true for the rest of Vermont.

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

The once subarctic climate grew more temperate, allowing an increase and diversity of plant and animal species throughout Vermont. People developed new methods of adapting to the gradually changing environment. Gone were the megafauna and other tundra resources; gone, too, were the diagnostic fluted points. Once people began making and using new tools, archaeologists give the time period a new name: the Archaic Period. The period may be subdivided into Early (ca., 7500 - 5800 B.C.), Middle (ca., 5800 - 4000 B.C.), Late (ca., 4000 - 1500 B.C.), and Transitional (ca., 1500 - 1000 B.C.), based on stylistic changes in artifacts and hypothesized environmental adaptations. Here, we will deal with the time period as a whole, tracing major developments.

There is disagreement among archaeologists concerning the presence of Native Americans during the early years of the Archaic Period. Some feel most of the people moved north to colder areas, following the large animals as they had always done. Occasional forays into the rich Vermont areas would account for the presence of the few Early and Middle Archaic points found. More and more evidence, however, is pointing to a settled distribution of Early and Middle Archaic peoples throughout the Champlain Lowlands and perhaps the Connecticut River Valley. The distinctive bifurcate base points, early corner-notched points and Neville points are being identified in a number of artifact collections from western Vermont. (A site carbon dated to 5600 B.C. was recently excavated along the banks of the Missisquoi River.) What is intriguing is that identified sites are located in a diversity of environmental zones. These include the broader portions of the large Missisquoi, Lamoille, Winooski, and Otter Creek Valleys, interior ponds and lakes along the foothills of the Green Mountains or in more lowland areas, and less frequently, along the margins of Lake Champlain. The number of environmental zones within which these sites appear suggests that human exploitation patterns were geared to a broad resource base, rather than to an intense exploitation of any one environment. More complex questions involving the actual season of site occupation and what people were doing at these sites have clearly not been answered. The general pattern of site diversity and multiple resource utilization in the Champlain Lowland is indistinguishable from the Early and Middle Archaic patterns hypothesized for southern New England.



Late Archaic Period archaeological patterns in Vermont continue to exhibit a general conformity with adjacent areas in the Northeast. Information derived from the excavation of a few sites suggests that there was a continued reliance on hunting and gathering. There is clear evidence of nut harvesting having taken place. Locally, fish and other aquatic resources were incorporated into the human diet. The identification of a small circle of post holes at the KI site by William Ritchie, suggests that, at least seasonally, the social units were small and that occupation was of a transient nature. The house was about fifteen feet in diameter, framed with deciduous trees and covered with either skins, bark or packed with soil. It was situated on an island in a swamp adjacent to Otter Creek, an area rich in resources. Tools from the period indicate woodworking and the probable use of dugout canoes. Nets and sinkers were used to catch fish and flocks of migrating ducks. Fish, fowl and game were plentiful; plant foods abundant. Because many more sites have been found in Vermont which date from the Late Archaic Period, it might be assumed that Vermont's population expanded fairly dramatically between 4000 and 1500 B.C.

It would be a mistake to picture Indians of the Archaic Period as spending all of their time hungrily and anxiously searching for food. A wide variety of tools, handsomely made from many kinds of materials indicate that people had a fair amount of leisure time to creatively and efficiently live in the world around them. They had time for play, for religion and for travel. Elaborate ceremonialism developed and the importation of exotic trade items, frequently used as burial goods, was common late in the Archaic. Copper axes and spear points manufactured in the upper Michigan Peninsula, for example, have been found in Grand Isle and at a site in Colchester. Populations grew as more and more resources were utilized. Methods of food preparation and storage included the grinding of seeds into flour, storing dried foods in pits, or suspending foods from the house frame. It was in the Transitional Period that the people began to carve soapstone vessels, which allowed them to cook directly in the fire with more ease than previously had been possible.



THE WOODLAND PERIOD

Once people learned to make and use pottery, the time in which they lived is, by convention, labeled the Woodland Period. This period lasted from about 1000 B.C. until the Europeans arrived 350 years ago. Aside from the introduction of pottery, however, there is no clear differentiation in the basic subsistence and settlement patterns which can be identified between the Late Archaic and Early Woodland (1,000 B.C. - A.D. 100) Periods. Even the elaborate ceremonialism exhibited by the incorporation of copper beads, effigy figurines, gorgets, large stone blades and red ochre within a number of burial sites from the Early Woodland Period is clearly developed from the Late Archaic mortuary complexes of the greater Northeast. One such cemetery, the Boucher site, is located along the north bank of the Missisquoi River. The site dates to approximately 200 B.C. Copper beads and awls from Michigan, tubular stone pipes from Illinois, "Adena" blades made from exotic Ohio cherts, a boatstone, banded slate gorgets, pendants, celts, a plummet, shell beads from the Gulf of Mexico, notched beaver incisors, textile and leather items were included as grave goods.

Living sites from this period are extremely rare through all of the Northeast and presumed habitation sites in the Champlain Basin are known only from scattered finds of Meadowwood points and Adena blades. A cooling trend in the Northeast some 3,000 years ago correlates with this apparent decrease in the number of known sites. It could be that during the Early Woodland Period, Indian populations spread to new environmental zones to utilize a greater number of resources, but subsistence was still based on hunting and gathering. People continued to live in bands and build structures similar to those of the Late Archaic Period. Movements of families from resource zone to resource zone was not willy-nilly. Rather, people had a well devised system designed to utilize most efficiently the available plants and animals. Although exact patterns are not yet understood, it is certain that life was much more than a mere struggle for existence.



Patterns of life during the Middle Woodland Period (ca., A.D. 100 - 1,000) are somewhat more clearly defined. A seasonal round is suggested on the basis of the distributions and feature contents of sites in New York and Vermont. Hunting - fishing - gathering activities were incorporated into an exploitation cycle.

In comparison to the New York data, one fact stands out with respect to Middle Woodland sites in the Champlain Basin. Most of the Hudson Valley sites are fairly small; a number of Middle Woodland sites in Vermont are very large and heavily utilized. Additionally, limited work in Vermont also indicates that artifact styles are different in the Hudson and Champlain drainages. Middle Woodland sites in the Champlain Lowland contain ceramic assemblages with close affinities to those in the St. Lawrence Valley to the north. Such a contrast, both in site size and artifact content, may hold a key to long-term cultural processes in the Northeast, although the implications have not yet been developed.

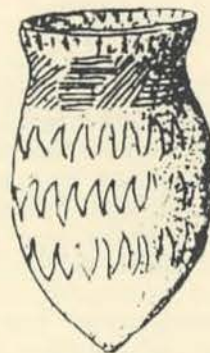
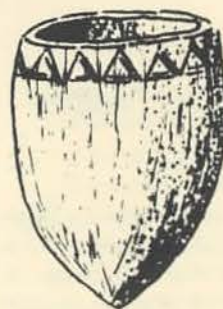
Data from recent excavations suggest that the Middle Woodland Period in western Vermont is not one of relative stability, but of considerable dynamism. The following are seen as tentative trends related to cultural processes, although they should be taken as working hypothesis, rather than fact.

First, given the general scarcity of Early Woodland Period sites in the Champlain Lowland or elsewhere and the growing evidence of extensive Middle Woodland occupation, it seems apparent that between roughly 1,000 B.C. and A.D. 1,000 Vermont's populations expanded rather dramatically. Small bands continued to hunt, fish, collect plant foods and quarry stone for their tools in a number of different environmental zones across the state, then gathered seasonally into larger communities in areas where greater quantities of food could be obtained.

Second, while it is tempting to think of these early people as having a limited geographical perspective of the world — much like that of the Europeans before Columbus demonstrated that the world was not flat — it is becoming increasingly evident that some of them maintained consistent contact with other communities some 200 - 500 miles away. Two Middle Woodland sites in the Burlington area, the Winooski and the McNeil sites, have recently been excavated (see Figure 6). Each contains several distinct levels of occupation. The high incidence of tools made from imported chert at the Winooski site and of Pennsylvania jasper tools at the McNeil site in levels dating from approximately A.D. 200 - 700 indicate that long distance social and political networks were operating. These were partially maintained through trade. Due to increased communication, one might also expect a fairly rapid appearance of similar artifact types, particularly ceramic design elements, within the region of greatest social interactions, since people who meet regularly will tend to share a greater number of ideas. An analysis of pottery styles found at the Winooski site seems to reflect such a trend, because decorative motifs are similar across the entire region.

Third, at some point between roughly A.D. 700 and 1,000, the pattern of intensive regional interaction seems to have been shaken. One finds in the upper (more recent) levels at both the Winooski and McNeil sites a heavy shift towards the use of local cherts and quartzite. By A.D. 1000 when the triangular, Levanna-type projectile points are common, long-distance trade in chert and jasper had virtually ceased. Although clearly within the late Middle Woodland time frame, the decorative elements found on pottery in the upper levels of the Winooski site exhibit considerable diversity as well. What both patterns seem to imply is a collapse of the earlier social, economic and political networks by A.D. 1000, an increasing regionalism in people's outlook, and perhaps a growing concern for demonstrating community identity, reflected in the use of decorative motifs on pottery which vary quite widely at a regional level. Which factors brought on this reordering of priorities is unclear and there is not likely to be a simplistic answer.

The Late Woodland Period (ca., A.D. 1,000 — the arrival of the European colonists) is characterized by the continuation of a number of late Middle Woodland patterns and by the development of a number of new practices. With respect to cultural artifacts, for example, the triangular Levanna points are found throughout the period, while globular pots, with broad collars and incised design patterns, replaced the earlier Middle Woodland forms. Hunting-fishing-gathering activities continued to provide a large percentage of the subsistence base, yet maize horticulture, after considerable experimentation, seems to have grown increasingly important in Vermont by A.D. 1400. With the availability of storable foodstuffs (corn, particularly), families could now gather into larger communities for a number of months of the year.



About this time, the construction of palisaded sites indicates that raiding, whether to acquire individual prestige or additional horticultural land, also became a fact of life in some regions. When Champlain arrived on Lake Champlain in July of 1609, he was informed by his Algonkian guides that the eastern shore of the lake had been abandoned. Algonkian populations had lived there for centuries before and would return later, but this period of abandonment may have been only one of a number of such episodes of intermittent warfare and community instability during the Late Woodland Period.

The coming of the Europeans caused the most drastic and visible cultural change, perhaps the only one during a 12,000 year period which happened virtually overnight. It has been documented in some areas of New England that between 75-90% of the Indian population was killed during epidemics of European diseases to which they had no immunity. Trade wars between the Indian tribes, as well as the colonial wars for empire between the French and British resulted in rapidly decreasing populations, a breakup of communities, a loss of oral histories, and the establishment of new ways of life. During the seventeenth century, Abenaki Indians living in the Connecticut Valley went north to join with other families in the safer areas of Canada and northern Vermont. By the end of the eighteenth century the few who stayed in northern Vermont were carrying on marginal social and economic interactions within the white communities. Gradually Abenakis intermarried with the descendants of European colonists. One should not lose sight of the fact, however, that for a number of individuals, the transmission of traditional "Indian" concepts within the family contributes strongly to the way such individuals view the world today.

THE LAST TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW

For studying the history of the last few hundred years, written sources, whether congressional records, diaries or letters, have proven invaluable. A great deal is known about important events and the prominent men and women in America's history. Recently, however, historians have begun to conduct intensive research related to a number of social and economic changes which took place in communities across this country. In many instances, there has developed a clear recognition that the written record does not always contain the types and depth of information needed for such studies. More and more, researchers have been turning to archaeologists to provide complementary information. As new historical questions are raised, the contribution of the archaeologist will increase.

Archaeology changes with the times. Historic archaeologists in Vermont, as elsewhere, devoted much of their early efforts to excavating French and British forts (Crown Point and Fort Dummer) or sites related to Revolutionary War battles (the Hubbardton battlefield). Now, energies are increasingly being spent on addressing other significant historical issues. Through research conducted at early farmsteads across Vermont, for example, a much clearer picture of what life was like in the often remote, rural settings will be gained. By studying the garbage and other debris left behind by settlers, questions can be answered about family diets, health standards, the growth of the farmstead, and the extent of contact which people had with the greater American market. It is rare, indeed, when one finds an early farm journal with these types of information.

While, on the one hand, Vermont may have remained rural in its outlook, a segment of the population in nearly every community engaged in endeavors to industrialize their town during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Almost every town in Vermont contains the remains of early saw and grist mills. Others contain iron furnaces, copper mines, marble and textile mills. What roles did these enterprises play in the towns' developments? Were Vermont millwrights innovative in their construction techniques? Were the technological advances which were made in the highly industrialized regions of the United States incorporated into Vermont's mills and factories? To understand the economic and social development of this state, answers to such questions as these must be obtained.

In brief, whether one is dealing with military history, the life of the "common man," or the industrialization of Vermont and its towns, archaeological sites of the more recent past may hold the keys to understanding a number of significant historical issues. As with sites of the prehistoric period, the preservation of significant sites of the last two hundred and fifty years is crucial if a greater understanding of this state's rich cultural and historical heritage is to be gained.

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