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# Association of Professional Archaeologists

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NEWSLETTER, VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2, 1995

## *President's Message*

As I near the end of my second term as President, and after seven years on the APA Executive, I'd like to say a few things about professionalism in Ontario archaeology. Firstly, it has been a long struggle to persuade Ontario's archaeologists that they NEED a professional organization to help protect their interests and those of archaeology in general. Secondly, it has been tough to persuade those with entrenched attitudes (and sometimes important social positions) that the APA is both a knowledgeable and legitimate voice in Ontario. It is a VERY POSITIVE sign of changing attitudes, and a source of great pleasure to me personally, to see the inclusion of APA in major issues affecting Ontario archaeology together with a fantastic growth in the numbers of younger archaeologists in the APA and also in the general level of involvement by our members. Our membership is fast approaching 50 - a powerful segment of Ontario's archaeologists and arguably the LARGEST provincial organization of professional archaeologists in Canada!

It has been, and will continue to be, tough to get dedicated people to hold responsible, NON-PAYING Executive positions. However, more and more of us ARE getting involved - especially as new faces join our growing Executive. APA involvement will be

extremely important in the next few years as "Harris materialism" (and I'm not speaking of Marvin the anthropologist) cuts indiscriminately at valued social programs. Our colleagues in the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation and in the Ministry of Transportation may soon appreciate the voice of a professional AND business-oriented body like the APA. Clearly, in times of restraint and increased threat to archaeological resources, the APA has a MAJOR role to play.

I am greatly relieved, therefore, to turn over the APA Presidency to the capable and professional hands of Gary Warrick. Gary cares, as I do, about the future of archaeology in this province and I hope you will all give him your full support.

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## 1995 Achievement Award

The recipient of this year's APA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Archaeology is going to Nick Adams for his creation of the computer program "PREHISTORY OF ONTARIO: An Encyclopedia of Ontario Prehistory". Nick's program is well developed and will be a boon to all people working with archaeology in and outside of Ontario. Nick will be presented with his award at the Annual Business Meeting on December 2nd, in Port Hope, Ontario. **Congratulations Nick!**



(continued from page 1...)

Our new Executive, by acclamation, for 1996-1998 will include Gary as President, Dean Knight continuing as Grievance Co-ordinator, Alison Ariss as Secretary, Bill Fitzgerald as Treasurer, new member Arthor Horn as Director, Donna Morrison continuing as Director, and myself as Vice-President (which I hear from Phil Woodley is a relatively easy job!).

Both Phil and Bud Parker are taking a couple of years off from the Executive and I would like to thank them, on behalf of all our members, for their many hours of volunteer service. I hope to see them back on the Executive in 1998.

Two vacancies remain on the new Executive - Newsletter Editor and Director. Andrew Hinshelwood agreed, post-election, to take on the job of Newsletter Editor and new member Astero Kalogeropoulos has put forward her name as Director. Both positions are subject to Executive approval.

For those of you who actually READ the President's Message, APA membership now stands at 45 - an all-time high for the organization - with signs of continued growth as more new archaeologists help to forge directions for the future.

At the 1995 Annual Meeting, several suggestions for improved efficiency will be considered. Foremost among these is the institution of specific Directorial assignments and titles. We already have Directors who act as Grievance Co-ordinator, Newsletter Editor, and Membership Director. To these we would like to add an Advocacy Director to tackle the thorniest of issues

and a Public Education Director to address much-needed public outreach by the APA. The building of a fund to assist major advocacy and public education issues may also be a significant new goal, as is the reintroduction of our APA symposium. I will leave the initiative for these and other endeavours, however, to our new President. Byeee!

Submitted by Lawrence Jackson

## PUBLIC LECTURE

"Turn-of-the-Century Ontario:  
A Question of Significance"

On Saturday, March 25th, 1995, the APA presented a series of five lectures focused on some concerns surrounding historic archaeology, specifically late 19th century/early 20th century sites in Ontario. The speakers lectured at the Hamilton Public Library, all regarding separate sites and issues.

Don Mikel, a very involved avocational architectural historian (and criminologist by profession), spoke first about "19th Century Built Heritage: What Really Matters?" His review of changing building styles, and the amalgamation of numerous styles to form uniquely Canadian and Ontarian architecture gave the audience a solid foundation of information from which to learn more about evaluating historic buildings in Ontario. His focus on the basic styles and types of buildings, and what key features to look for in an historic structure to assess its age and significance were valuable to any archaeologist dealing with historic structures.

Next to speak was John Triggs, an archaeologist from Dundurn Castle in Hamilton. The thrust of John's lecture, entitled "Archaeology into the 20th Century", was how to go about excavating an historic site down to its origins without losing information about subsequent historic events that have occurred on a site. His primary examples were the 1994 excavations of an outbuilding on the Dundurn Castle grounds, now known to be a cock-fighting arena; and an Earthwatch Project at a fort site in the Carribean showing the changes in the use of the fort over time, **only** visible through archaeological excavation.

Ellen Blaubergs of the Ontario Heritage Foundation spoke next about late 19th and early 20th Century artifacts, particularly glass and ceramics. Her focus was on the pitfalls and pluses of trying to identify these artifacts when they are found on an historic site - how should we evaluate them? What do they say about the short- or long-term use of a site? How do we properly identify ceramic wares without confusing them with earlier period ceramics?

Bill Fitzgerald, from Wilfrid Laurier University, was the fourth speaker, and related his experience of trying to salvage information from a threatened 20th Century dump-site in Hamilton, through his talk, "If It Ain't Old or Aristocratic, It Ain't Worth Investigatin': The Urban Archaeological Experience". Bill's experience did have some positive repercussions within the city of Hamilton, and raised many questions regarding the designation of significance for historic sites in Ontario.

The final speaker was Alison Ariss of Northeastern Archaeological Associates. Her presentation, entitled "The Status of Archaeology in the World of Construction and Government", was based on her 1994-1995 excavation and monitoring of construction work at the Peterborough County Jail. Her talk focused on the experience of working closely with construction and engineering firms while removing human remains and historic features during an active construction project, as well as on the struggle to maintain archaeological integrity in a jointly managed project.

The lectures were well received and many questions were asked of all the speakers. Many thanks are extended to each of the speakers, and especially to Bill Fitzgerald and Bud Parker for organizing the event.

Submitted by Alison Ariss

### **APA MEMBERSHIP LIST**

*Since the APA Membership has risen to an all time high of 45, it is time to print our updated Membership list for 1995. If there are any address or telephone number changes, please contact Alison Ariss, and she will make sure they are included in the next APA Newsletter issue.*

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If you know of anyone who is interested in joining the APA, membership application forms are available from all Executive members.

## Are Heritage Resources From the Recent Past Archaeologically Significant?: A Poll's Results

Submitted by Bill Fitzgerald

### Introduction

The all too frequent sight of the destruction of Euro-Canadian heritage resources, be they architectural or archaeological, is a manifestation of the ignorance of what we lose when our recent past is not considered to be culturally significant. Once the connection with the past is forgotten, the cultural identity of those in the present becomes obscure.

Last March, a questionnaire was sent to 80 government, academic, and commercial archaeologists to get a sense of the "community's" feelings about the significance of late 19th and early 20th century archaeological resources. Of the 28 individuals (35.0%) who replied, 26 (32.5%) responded to all or most of the queries.

While a greater response was hoped for, the results should not be dismissed, especially since predictive modellers and samplers rarely use a sample that approaches this size to justify their "representative" results! Archaeologists of all stripes participated in the survey, some in support, some with contempt. This "Group of 26," perhaps more than the Minister's Advisory Group, should be considered representative of the archaeological community's views on the significance of heritage resources from the recent past.

## What does the Ministry Consider Significant?

### At Present

While the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation does not have official policies for assigning significance to 19th and early 20th century sites, there do exist vague guidelines that are implemented by field archaeologists and ministry personnel that are reportedly "based on the standards and opinions reflected in the decisions made by the professional archaeological community in this province." Essentially, the Ministry's position seems to be that since commercial archaeologists do not consider the sites of this era to be significant, they can only adhere to their wishes and declare them insignificant! On what grounds did "the professional archaeological community" base these "standards"? And who composed "the professional archaeological community" whose views the Ministry claims to be representing? At a 1985 conference for commercial archaeologists, Ian Kenyon, from the then Ministry of Culture and Citizenship, gave a presentation entitled, **"That Historic Crap!": Historic Archaeological Resource Management**. The title had been chosen by the author as a characterization of the cultural insignificance that he perceived the majority of the Ontario archaeological community placed on most 19th century archaeological sites.

The 1985 presentation and its 1986 published version were pleas for respect, and listed, albeit in exceedingly general terms, the factors that should be considered to designate the significance of a 19th century site. Alone, or preferably in combination, for a threatened site of this period to be worthy of investigation it would have to be "older," "in good archaeological condition," "artifact-rich," "occupied for a short duration," "unique in age or nature," or "a cultural curiosity."

In 1993 the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation adopted a series of technical guidelines directed at standardizing the way in which commercial archaeologists ply their trade. Included in these guidelines are criteria that archaeologists should consider when assigning significance to threatened sites they encounter. This evaluation determines what additional investigation, if any, will be conducted. The 1993 criteria are identical to, and as vague as, those presented in 1985 - the "older" and "juicier" the better, unless cultural value can be ascribed to the site by any number of special interest groups. Unfortunately though, the Ministry has never defined how old a site must be to be considered culturally significant.

### In the Future

In April 1995 the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation issued "A New Ontario Heritage Act: A Draft for Discussion" and subsequently, in June 1995, a discussion paper on "Regulations on Protected Heritage Sites and Archaeological Licensing." Within the draft Act and Regulations three classes of heritage sites are identified: "protected", "designated", and "not protected".

In a nutshell, for an archaeological site to be recognized as a protected heritage site it must be greater than 100 years old and considered by the Minister to be culturally significant. Sites greater than 100 years of age but considered insignificant - on whatever bases such a determination is made - are not protected. Sites less than 100 years old may, however, be "designated" by the Minister or a municipality. Permits would be required to "alter" these sites.

Heritage sites that are not protected are those that are not considered by the Minister to be "truly vital to our knowledge of the past." These sites are thought to be of limited value or very common [for



example, deposits from multiple and diverse sources (municipal garbage dumps) and some kinds of standing structural ruins (barn foundations)], or sites that are still being used for original activities (such as long duration residential sites).

Euro-Canadian dump sites, the Ministry contends, cannot provide any useful cultural information. Such a notion is perplexing since a basic premise of archaeology is that the garbage that culture leaves behind is a mirror of innumerable aspects of that society, and dumps, regardless of their age, are the major repositories of material culture. While the Ministry does realize this for Native archaeological sites, they don't seem to think this concept applies for 19th or 20th century Euro-Canadian dumps. Maybe it is because Native garbage dumps are called "middens" while Euro-Canadian garbage dumps are called "garbage dumps"!

If the floating 100 year criterion is adhered to it would be to the advantage of developers to destroy, er... "alter" sites that are approaching that chronological threshold of significance. Shrewd developers could have heritage assessments undertaken (by a licensed archaeologist of course) for all properties that they plan to develop well into the future, identify what would now be considered by the Minister to be non-protected sites - those less than 100 years of age - and "alter" them before they would be considered protected sites. Remember, in 1995 sites dating to 1896 will not become potentially significant until 1996! "Alter" now and save later. This could lead to a whole new - and perfectly legal - specialty within commercial archaeology.

#### **Why Are the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries Not Considered Archaeologically Significant?**

As for the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, what may explain its

lack of support for the archaeological investigation of a significant portion of the late 19th and early 20th century culture of Ontario? There may be at least five explanations.

1. The provincial archaeological community is dominated by generations of archaeologists whose training initially revolved around the study of prehistoric and early contact period Native cultures - most notably the Iroquoians of southern Ontario. The interests of the majority have undoubtedly influenced what is now considered to be archaeologically significant. The "old dog" is having a hard time learning a new trick!

2. The late 19th and early 20th centuries are perceived as too close to the present, even though we are about to enter the 21st century. This is perhaps because for too many Ministry planners, and archaeologists in general, their birthdates are painfully closer to the turn of the 20th century than the 21st! Could this be a subconscious effort to deny the advance of time or, more seriously, could it be a case of cultural short-sightedness? Material and information that could be recovered today from these "recent" sites will serve researchers far into the future. If we do not gather the data from these sites now, it is unlikely our descendants will have the opportunity.

3. The belief that written accounts document this period adequately may be the case for certain segments and aspects of society, but not for the majority, and not for issues that can only be examined from anthropological and archaeological perspectives. Unlike history, archaeology can read and interpret those aspects of culture that are never meant to be read or interpreted.

4. Heritage has been used



throughout history to promote the agendas of elites and special interest groups. While this suggestion may seem a little sinister, it should not be summarily dismissed.

One of the Ministry's criteria for assigning significance to 19th century sites is that the site be associated with a notable personality - invariably a politician, businessman or some other high profile member of the community. Might it be that the promotion of these groups by the Ministry is an attempt to re-inforce the status of today's elites? Coincidence or conspiracy?

Furthermore, in a society that stresses multiculturalism, public funding for the archaeological investigation of mainstream Victorian Canada would not appear to be a high priority.

The consequence of both these agendas is that the past heritage of large segments of today's society is not being promoted, protected, or investigated. The lifestyles and contributions of late 19th and early 20th century working class Ontarians, as they could be examined from an archaeological perspective, are effectively being ignored.

5. The investigation of the past costs money and archaeology can be seen by some segments of society as an unnecessary expense. If certain categories of heritage sites - be they Native or Euro-Canadian - can be deemed insignificant, contractors and developers may be appeased.

We all realize that not everything can be protected or thoroughly excavated, but there are few reasons why most everything cannot be sampled, especially if public funding is involved. Compared to the costs of other components of any development, the cost of archaeology is minimal. From the \$25 million budget to build a sewer overflow tank in the west end of Hamilton, archaeological assessment and sampling could likely have been done for less than what it would cost the contractors to rent

portable washrooms over the duration of the project. But then, many people might argue that washrooms serve a more tangible function than culture.

### Questionnaire Results

The results of this survey do not indicate what is significant, rather what is considered by Ontario archaeologists to be significant. Such a perception can be influenced by educational background, training, exposure, and existing criteria. Encouraging, however, is the generally high regard that the participants have for the remains of the recent past.

I am not going to attempt an in-depth analysis of the results that are presented below. Suffice it to say that the prevailing view tends to be one that is more protective and concerned than that currently held by the Ministry and outlined in the draft Ontario Heritage Act. So, if the Ministry genuinely wants to reflect in its criteria for significance the "standards and opinions" of the professional archaeological community it should take into consideration the results of this poll.

Ironically, however, as Ontario's archaeological community has come to realize the cultural insight that can be derived from the investigation of the recent past - a realization that has been made throughout the United States and in Quebec - Ontario's Ministry responsible for the protection of heritage resources seems not to have attained a comparable level of enlightenment. The only constant (unfortunately) has been the relentless destruction of most late 19th and early 20th century archaeological sites and the loss of information they contain. In the not-too-distant future, many aspects of the culture of this period will be inaccessible.

Until the Ministry recognizes that archaeological deposits can shed new light



on the Ontario of that era, our link with this period will continue to be diminished. Written records are like any other artifact - they are useful aids for interpreting the past. They are not, however, also like any other kind of artifact, able to provide, on their own, answers to all anthropological inquiries. Unless policies are developed by the Ministry that specifically address the investigation of sites from this era, ours undoubtedly will be the last generation that will have such an opportunity to procure types of information that will allow us and our descendants a broader understanding of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

#### Comments included with the Questionnaire:

*"Given that it was only 10-15 years ago that archaeologists demonstrated the value of earlier 19th century sites, I think there is a long road to haul. Like with earlier 19th century sites, I think someone (or several "someones") are going to have to do extensive work on these sites, and demonstrate why they're significant, and how they should be handled, before you'll get a "buy-in" from the archaeological community."*

*"19th and 20th century "history" is best portrayed by the written documentation. The few contributions from "archaeological" sites are rarely worth the money and effort."*

*"I think sub-surface archaeological sites from this recent period are less important than those from earlier periods simply because we know more about the recent past from documentary sources."*

*"I think that historians as well as museum personnel have done a reasonably adequate job of recording and preserving the recent past. Unless there is a demonstrable uniqueness to a site I do not think that a great number require protection(yet!)."*

*"Perhaps 1900 could be considered the cut-off date until the year 2025...Southern Ontario 20th century sites are insignificant unless they were occupied by a prominent (famous) person or family."*

*"We need to encourage study of working class sites, since "grand" sites seem to be over-studied."*

*"The amount of available documentary research for a site should become part of the evaluation process. Not every site is capable of providing the same "high level" information that is desired. I think there should be a set of objective criteria established with more categories than geographic location, site type and date."*

*"Urbanized areas should be somehow confirmed to have been stripped or impacted prior to re-development or at least monitored during re-development."*

*"We are rapidly losing information on the more recent past because of people's ridiculous attitudes towards things that are not more than 100 years old. In addition, we are losing the "living memory" aspect, as people who experienced the first quarter of this century are becoming few and far between. We know very little of how people really lived during this period, so the thought of any site from this period being assessed as not significant or important makes me wonder whether we will be lucky enough to have any left by the time most people get around to believing they are significant!"*

*"If we do not take note of our historic period sites now, and take steps to either preserve or mitigate them, they will be lost to us and to future generations. We, as Canadians, do have a "culture" although this seems to be a well kept secret rather than a source of national pride."*



**Questionnaire Results**

Generally, for the period 1875-1925, how would you rank the archaeological significance of the following categories of sites - 1 signifying least important, 5 being the greatest? [Note: One respondent added the value "0" to the ranking system. Since the other participants did not have the option to select "0", I took the liberty of bumping up that person's ranking to "1".]

SOUTHERN ONTARIO	N	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	MEAN (max.5)
1. Domestic sites Short duration (<25 years)							
-working class	25	4.0	8.0	24.0	24.0	40.0	3.9
-upper class	25	4.0	16.0	20.0	28.0	32.0	3.7
-prominent citizen/notable event	25	8.0	4.0	24.0	16.0	48.0	3.9
Long duration (>25 years)							
-working class	24	25.9	8.3	25.9	25.0	8.3	2.8
-upper class	24	25.0	12.5	33.3	25.0	4.2	2.7
-prominent citizen/notable event	24	12.5	12.5	16.7	37.5	20.8	3.4
2. Commercial/Industrial operations							
-short duration	25	4.0	4.0	28.0	28.0	36.0	3.9
-long duration	26	15.4	7.7	42.3	30.8	3.8	3.0
-innovative/unique service/technology	23	4.3	4.3	17.4	30.4	43.5	4.0
3. "Social" sites (churches, schools, inns)							
-short duration	25	4.0	8.0	24.0	16.0	48.0	4.0
-long duration	25	16.0	16.0	24.0	20.0	24.0	3.2
-prominent citizen/notable event	25	8.0	4.0	24.0	24.0	40.0	3.8
4. Community landfills	24	37.5	29.2	12.5	4.2	16.7	2.1
5. Cultural landscapes/neighbourhoods							
-working class	24	4.2	16.7	25.0	20.8	33.3	3.6
-upper class	25	4.0	16.0	28.0	32.0	20.0	3.5
-commercial	24	4.2	25.0	16.7	33.3	20.8	3.4
NORTHERN ONTARIO							
1. Domestic sites Short duration (>25 years)							
-working class	25	4.0	8.0	16.0	32.0	40.0	4.0
-upper class	25	0.0	4.0	28.0	36.0	32.0	4.0
-prominent citizen/notable event	25	4.0	4.0	12.0	24.0	56.0	4.2
Long duration (>25 years)							
-working class	24	16.7	16.7	8.3	50.0	8.3	3.2
-upper class	24	12.5	20.8	20.8	37.5	8.3	3.1
-prominent citizen/notable event	24	8.3	8.3	12.5	37.5	33.3	3.8
2. Commercial/Industrial operations							
-short duration	23	0.0	4.3	13.0	39.1	43.5	4.2
-long duration	23	8.7	8.7	34.8	43.5	4.3	3.7
-innovative/unique service/technology	23	0.0	4.3	13.0	26.1	56.5	4.3
3. "Social" sites (churches, schools, inns)							
-short duration	25	4.0	0.0	12.0	32.0	52.0	4.3
-long duration	25	12.0	8.0	20.0	32.0	28.0	3.6
-prominent citizen/notable event	25	8.0	4.0	8.0	36.0	44.0	4.0
4. Community landfills	24	33.3	29.2	16.7	4.2	16.7	2.4
5. Cultural landscapes/neighbourhoods							
-working class	25	4.0	8.0	28.0	20.0	40.0	3.8
-upper class	24	8.0	12.0	32.0	24.0	24.0	3.4
-commercial	24	4.2	20.8	20.8	20.8	33.3	3.6

**General Questions**

1. In regards to the potential for obtaining archaeological data, do you consider presently urbanized or developed areas to offer: N = 24

Less than presently rural areas: 29.2%

As much: 45.8%

More: 25.0%

2. How would you rank the archaeological significance of the following time periods?

	N	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean (max. 5)
<b>Southern Ontario</b>							
1875-1900	25	4.0	8.0	28.0	24.0	36.0	3.8
1900-1925	25	20.0	16.0	32.0	20.0	12.0	2.9
1925-1950	24	33.3	25.0	33.3	8.3	0.0	2.2
1950-present	24	66.7	20.8	12.5	0.0	0.0	1.5
<b>Northern Ontario</b>							
1875-1900	25	4.0	4.0	8.0	28.0	56.0	4.3
1900-1925	25	8.0	4.0	36.0	28.0	24.0	3.4
1925-1950	25	20.0	28.0	28.0	16.0	8.0	2.6
1950-present	25	52.0	24.0	24.0	0.0	0.0	1.7

3. For non-19th/20th century specialists, in relation to your area of specialization, do you consider late 19th - early 20th century archaeological resources to be:

N = 20

Less important: 50.0%

As important: 50.0%

More important: 0.0%

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(Effective January, 1996)

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