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THE OTTAWA ARCHAEOLOGIST



GETTING *FIT* AT BONNECHERE PARKS

CELEBRATING THE FRIENDS' 20TH ANNIVERSARY WITH

FOOTPRINTS IN TIME

Ottawa Chapter
Ontario Archaeological Society, Inc.
PO Box 4939, Station E, Ottawa, ON, K1S 5J1
www.ottawaoas.ca

BACKGROUND

On June 30th 1971 the Ottawa Chapter of the OAS was founded by: Mrs. J. D. Bradford, Mr. David J.A. Croft, Clyde C. Kennedy, Barry M. Mitchell, Mrs. Glenna Reid, Dr. Donald S. Robertson, Mr. Michael J. Shchepanek, Mr. and Mrs. Iain Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Watson, Dr. James V. Wright, Col. and Mrs. Lou H. Wylie.

Since September 1976 The Ottawa Archaeologist has been the newsletter of the Ottawa Chapter. It is published 3-5 times annually. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee, the Executive, or the OAS. Other newsletters may reprint notes and papers with an appropriate credit line. Submissions are always welcome and very much appreciated. Please send to any address below!

2012 Executive Committee: Please contact us through contact@ottawaoas.ca
Ottawa Chapter, OAS, PO Box 4939, Station E, Ottawa ON, K1S 5J1

President: Glenna Roberts

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Any member of the Ontario Archaeological Society may join one of its local Chapters.

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Payable to:

The Ontario Archaeological Society Inc.

P.O. Box 62066, Victoria Terrace Post Office

Toronto ON M4A 2W1

Phone/fax: 416-406-5959

E-mail: oasociety@ontarioarchaeology.on.ca

www.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca

Cover Photo :

Jane Duff at Marker for the

Footprints in Time trail

Bonnechere Parks, Round Lake ON



PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

August looked like the busiest month ever for chapter activities. Quite a few members are away, but those who can are taking advantage of several opportunities to dig, thanks to Groupe de recherche archéologique de l'Outaouais at Parc de Plaisance and in Gatineau at Jacques Cartier Park. We look forward to reading reports in future issues of the *Ottawa Archaeologist*.

Chapter activities relating to "Public Archaeology" have taken varying forms over the years and had long-lasting effects. At Pinhey's Point on August 12 we met a high school history teacher who personified the influence of Helen Armstrong's classes in history and archaeology at the Earl of March High School in 1986, a programme which included an on-site dig. Phill Wright, Regional Archaeologist for Eastern Ontario 1976-1991, helped the chapter launch a series of Archaeology Days at Charleston Lake Park which included all-day presentations to the public on archaeologically related activities (as well as week-end group camping). Other Archaeology Days followed, such as those at Murphy's Point Park and more recently at Bonnechere Provincial Park. These have grown into ongoing events strengthened by enthusiastic Friends of each park. At Murphy's Point, Brenda Kennett and Jeff Earl direct the Archéo Apprentice program for local Grade 5 children, and at Bonnechere, following the lead of Tom Ballantine and more recently, Rory MacKay, the park staff and local OAS members are developing their own activities. Our chapter display tables at Heritage Day, Colonel By Day and Pinhey's Point, where members of the public flow from one organization to the next, tend to be less activity oriented. We use artifacts to encourage people to chat and ask question.

In 1996, the chapter launched an award for outstanding contributions to public archaeology, named in remembrance of Peggi Armstrong (1957-1997). Her mother, Helen Armstrong, and Charles Garrad, both educators, received the first awards in 1997. In 1998, a PAPA went to Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI), its staff, and in particular to Ron Williamson and Rob MacDonald. (See details on our web-site) Which brings us back to this year's August activities. You will read in this issue a revue of the latest major public archaeology project of ASI, "The Curse of the Axe." How wonderful that the company has continued to exhibit and interpret Ontario's archaeological past in new and imaginative ways! If you visit the theatre of the Toronto International Film Festival on King Street at John, you will see a display case of artifacts found on the site. I understand a case will be placed in the foyer of Toronto's latest high-rise luxury hotel, the Shangri La, which displaced a Victorian row house.

MESSAGE: Public Archaeology should not be something separate, but should be integral to the excavation process – the more archaeologists learn, the more their responsibility to inform the public. HURRAH FOR PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY.

Getting *FIT* at Bonnechere Provincial Parks

By Marian Clark

The Friends of Bonnechere Parks and their community partners have done it again – launching the latest enhancement to the Park – the Footprints in Time (FIT) trail - along the shores of the Bonnechere River. The trail showcases 12,000 years of cultural and natural history of the area and uses the structure of traditional Algonquin First Nation teaching to illustrate man's time on Earth, from the Ice Age to present day. Customized interpretation tools and activities lead hikers along the 2 km trail for some hands-on or self-guided experiences.

The trail provided the backdrop, on June 30, for the Friends annual gathering – a special one this year marking the 20th anniversary of the organization. The accomplishments of the Friends are many including fundraising over \$800,000 in financial and in-kind support for the Park. With that input they have worked with the Park staff and numerous partners to develop infrastructure projects such as the FIT trail, programming, research (such as our archaeology projects at Basin Depot and LaFleur Homestead) and publications (eg. the trilogy, *Spirits of the Little Bonnechere* by member Rory MacKay). Members, friends, families, campers and dignitaries joined in to help with the celebrations and the awards and presentations flowed throughout the morning. A delicious cake and lemonade topped it all off !!!!



Betty Biesenthal, Director of the Friends & Glenna Roberts, 2011 Director's Award Recipient Present the 2012 Friend's Director Award to The Algonquin Way Cultural Centre, Pikwakanagan *



Bradley Fauteaux, Managing Director, Ontario Parks presents Canadian Parks Council Award of Merit to Ann Burchat, President of the Friends



Rory MacKay, on behalf of the Friends, presents Bradley Fauteaux with a gift of the hand made replica ceramic pot made by Mark Kelly

The Friends presented their 2012 Director's Award to the Algonquin Way Cultural Centre for the long time collaboration and ongoing consultations with the Park. Receiving the award in the above photo were: Aimee Bailey, Executive Director, the Algonquin Way Cultural Centre: Jacqueline Sarazin: Jim Mesess, Pikwakanagan Band Councillor: Ron Bernard, Pikwakanagan Band Councillor and President of Omamiwinini Pimadjowin, Michelle Gervais, Curator of Omamiwinini Pimadjowin, and Irwin Sarazin, Algonquin Elder

Jim Fraser – past Superintendent of the Park, provided a lively retrospective on the inputs and projects that the Friends had achieved over the 20 years.

Bradley Fauteaux, Managing Director, Ontario Parks, presented the Friends with the Canadian Parks Council's Ontario Award of Merit acknowledging excellence for the FIT trail programme. He detailed the trail's importance to guide other parks to study their cultural heritage and interpret it through such innovative programmes

Jason Mask, Acting Park Superintendent, provided some antic dotes and endorsement for the role of the Friends and the creative enthusiasm that gets projects underway.

MPP John Yakabuski, a local resident and true believer in the importance of the Park to the local community, proudly presented a Certificate of Congratulations from the Premier of Ontario on achieving their 20 year milestone.

Jacqueline Sarazin presented the Park with a photograph of her mother, Dorothy Sarazin who passed away this year and who provided knowledge, inspiration and support for many of the Park's public interpretation endeavours.

Letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper re Cut Backs at Parks Canada

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, pm@pm.gc.ca
copy to: Minister of Canadian Heritage, James Moore, James.Moore@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Ottawa Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society (OAS), I am writing with regard to the cuts in staff and research capacity at Parks Canada. We support the letters written by the Neal Ferris, President of the Ontario Archaeological Society and by many others, which foresee a disastrous impact on the mandate of Parks Canada from the recent budget. Rather than repeating these arguments, perhaps it would be helpful to describe who we are and why we feel it is necessary to send this message.

OAS was founded in 1950 drawing together academics and students, professional and non-professional archaeologists, journalists, amateur enthusiasts and the general public, all having an interest in Canada's heritage, both European and Aboriginal. These diverse components still make up the membership today, as the society has grown in numbers and added chapters across the province of Ontario. The eight chapters focus on archaeology and heritage in their own regions, but OAS also holds an annual meeting to present papers encompassing the province as a whole with attendance from other provinces and neighbouring American states. Canada's early pre-history and history do not recognize current political borders. This fact helps explain the strong interest in Parks Canada which has been expressed in letters to you from American organizations, in addition to messages from many Canadian institutions.

The Ottawa Chapter OAS has a strong interest in the archaeology of the valley of the Ottawa River, from its source in northern Québec to its confluence with the St. Lawrence at the Lake of Two Mountains. Our chapter comprises approximately 60 active members from Eastern Ontario and Western Québec. We are therefore particularly concerned about the diminution of resources for Parks Canada for the Rideau Canal Waterway and the research centre at Cornwall, Ontario. Both have served the interests of the public in heritage well beyond the discipline of archaeology. Each OAS chapter could cite similar concerns with regard to institutions in its own region.

We share with many other voices the hope that it is not too late for the Harper Government to rescind the disproportionate cuts to Parks Canada.

Respectfully,

Glenna Roberts, President Ottawa Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society.

New Light on Colonel By's Residence *By Peter Nayler*

As passers by, we the public may overlook the obvious. That is the architectural, social, and archeological history that is present around, above, or even below our feet. Although Canadian history is relatively recent, when compared to Europe, Asia, and Africa, one cannot ignore the fact that what lies beneath the concrete and pavement of our cities and towns lie the answers to our recent past. In Ottawa, our national capital, the common tourist may pass the obvious attractions, such as the Rideau Canal and the Parliament Buildings and not stop to realize that what lies beneath their feet are the archeological remnants of a 19th century military and business community. The significance of this to some may seem superficial, but to those in the archeological and historical research fields, such evidence is pertinent to the unlocking of the community's social, economical, and military past. For what lies beneath the tourist's feet, may contain a 19th century privy or even the foundations of a military or residential dwelling. The information provided by the artifacts associated with these sites thus becomes relevant in determining everything from the daily diet of individuals, the type of service ware used to eat and drink from, to the size, use, and construction of the buildings. However, artifacts are not the only evidence used to reconstruct the past. Although important in providing the physical evidence, historical documents and maps must be used in conjunction with the artifacts to retell the story of the site or artifact(s) being studied. It is for this purpose that the focus of this paper will seek to unlock the story behind the foundations of Col. By's dwelling located on Major's Hill Park, Ottawa.

The quest for answers began in the fall of 1972, when the National Capital Commission (NCC) requested archeologists from the National Historic Sites Service to locate and excavate the ruins attributed to Colonel John By's residence, on what is known as Major's Hill Park. ¹Between the 21st and 22nd of September 1972, A.W. Wilson of the National Historical Services Branch ²conducted a resistivity survey within the park's boundary. Aided by plans of Major's Hill dated from the 1830s, Wilson discovered the presence of an under surface anomaly, near an historical marker erected by the Historical Landmarks Association in 1915 to recognize Colonel By's engineering accomplishments. Based on the results of the survey, an archeological excavation was commenced on the 5th of October 1972. Besides revealing the foundations of By's residence, the dig uncovered a significant collection of architectural and residential artifacts, ranging from clay pipe fragments, 19th century glass, metal keys, brass door knobs, a door lock, a bone china tea set, as well as chamber sets.³ These artifacts divulged two important facts about the dwelling and its former occupants: (1) that it reconfirmed that the building had been destroyed by a fire during the first quarter of the 19th century and (2) that the

¹ J.V. Sciscenti, *17H By's House Field Notes*; National Historic Sites Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs., 1972, pp. 1-2.

In September of 1972, Dr. Mary Burns, an historian with the National Capital Commission contacted Travis Swannack, Assistant Chief Archeologist with the National Historic Sites Service to seek his assistance to locate the exact location of Colonel By's residence in the Park.

² In 1972 the National Historic Sites Service was a branch of the National and Historic Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs.

³ A.E. Wilson, *"Resistivity Survey of Major's Hill Park": 17H Notes*, National Historic Sites Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs., September 1972.

last occupants not only had a family, but they held a prominent position in Bytown's social hierarchy. Although the excavation and its artifacts revealed significant physical data about the economical and social dynamics of the structures last residents, it failed to provide information on the cause or date of the fire, or the names of the last residents.

Prior to the excavation, little documented archival evidence had been uncovered to reveal the actual date of or cause of the fire. What was known was that the residence had been built by Colonel John By in about 1826, and according to an undocumented date, had been destroyed by a fire on January 11, 1849.⁴ In an attempt to rectify this problem, Catherine Sullivan a Material Culture Historian with Parks Canada's Archeological Services, had asked me to conduct additional archival research at the National Archives of Canada (NAC). It was here that documents pertaining to Bytown and the British Ordnance Department corroborated suspicions that the 1849 date cited as the date of the fire had been incorrectly documented. Although an archival citation within Finding Aid 362 of the Hill Collection referred to January 11, 1849 as the day in which the By cottage had been destroyed by fire, in closer inspection of the actual cited document it soon became apparent that the citation was in reference to a letter written by John By's brother, Henry from his home in England on January 11, 1849.⁵ The correspondence was written in response to a letter written at Bytown on the 13th of November, 1848, noting that he (Henry) regretted not having seen the cottage built by his brother John, since it had previously been razed by fire.⁶ This letter not only verified that January 11, 1849 date was incorrect, but it also suggested that the fire had occurred prior to November 13, 1848.

After having consulted with the archivists responsible for British Military and Naval Records (RG 8) and the War Office Papers (MG 13), the inventories for these records were examined to determine the content of the documents. It was here with in the files pertaining to the Ordnance Office that a claim submitted by the executors of Colonel John By's estate for restitution of houses belonging to By which were in the possession of the Ordnance Department were uncovered.⁷ These documents revealed that By had built his dwelling for a cost of Five Hundred Pounds and had purchased a cottage belonging to the same parcel of land from Lt. Pooley, R.E. for a cost of Three Hundred Pounds.⁸ They also revealed a map that had been

⁴ Lucien Brault, *Ottawa Old and New* (Information Institute, 1946), p. 298 and Robert Haig, *Ottawa City of Big Ears: the intimate, living story of a city and a capital* (Ottawa, Haig, 1970), p. 94.

⁵ Library Archives Canada (L.A.C.), Hill Collection, MG 24, I 9, Vol. 20, pp. 4931-4934., Letter written by Henry By from his home in England on January 11, 1849 to Seth Thomas in response to a letter written on November 13, 1848 in Bytown, referring to a fire that destroyed the former Colonel By residence.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ L.A.C., War Office Papers, Ordnance Office, MG 13, W.O. 44, Vol. 47, p. 2, microfilm reel B-1316, Letter written by Henry By to the Inspector General of Fortifications, re: restitution of houses belonging to Colonel By, which were taken possession of by the Ordnance Office., August 21, 1849.

Governor Lord Dalhousie advised Lieutenant Colonel By to choose a site on which to erect a dwelling for his family, and assured him that the ground [complete and absolute property] would be his. However, when Lt. Col. By was recalled from Canada to Britain in 1832, the cottage and property were seized by the Ordnance Department.

⁸ Ibid.

prepared for the executors, showing the location of the ruins of By's former residence, Lt. Pooley's cottage [used as servant accommodations], root houses, a summer house, an ice house, stables and coach house, as well as fences, and gardens..⁹ [see Illustration # 1]

Although the documents found in MG 13 did not reveal the date of the fire, further examination of the documents contained within C series of the British Military and Naval Records, the principal document that would document the date of the fire was uncovered. Titled "*A Report on the Proceedings of a Board Assembled at Bytown, on November 10, 1848 to investigate the claims of Captain Charles E. Ford, R.E., whose quarters were razed by fire on the 5th of October, 1848*,"¹⁰ the report chronicled the testimonies of Ford's domestic servants and military personal who were witnesses to the fire. [see transcription of the Enquiry in Appendix 1] The series of documents also provided an inventory of losses incurred by Captain Ford and his family in the fire, [see Illustrations 2 – 4], as well as the Board's deliberations on the cause and blame for the blaze.

Although the Board never conclusively identified the source of the fire, the evidence provided by eyewitnesses to the fire did support Captain Ford's opinion that the fire was the work of an arsonist. An opinion that the Board also agreed upon., but would not lend blame to any individual or group. What we do know was that there was strong resentment towards the Uppertown Tory establishment in Bytown, by Reformers who were dominated by the French and Irish Catholics of Bytown's Lowertown. This may have provided the later group with an outlet to target their distaste for British dominance in Upper Canada. An attack on a dwelling occupied by a senior British officer, that overlooked the tenant dwellings of Lower Bytown would have been perceived by those Reformers as a justifiable attack upon an "oppressive" British colonial government. Considering that within a year of the blaze that raised Ford's residence, on September 17, 1849, that Reformers rioted in the streets of Lower Bytown against the same Tory elite, killing one and wounding 30, in what became known as the Stoney Monday Riots.

This document also provided Parks Canada's material culture historians with the necessary date to document the archeological evidence, as well as inventory lists of the items lost in the fire that could be used to match artifacts recovered from the 1972 By archeological investigation. For social and military historians the information also provided an important insight into the daily life of a British officer and his family in 19th century, Upper Canada.

So the next time you are walking down the streets of your town or city, take the time to look and think about what lies beneath your feet. The history that lurks within the earth's strata could provide an interesting look into your community's past.

Appendix # 1

Transcription of the Board of Enquiry

⁹ Ibid., L.A.C., British Military and Naval Records, RG. 8, C Series, Vol. 460, p, 256, microfilm reel C-2987, Statement Showing the loss of Public Property destroyed by fire at the District Commander R. Engineers Quarters Bytown on the morning of the 5th October 1848.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp, 250 -268, microfilm reel C-2987, A Report on the Proceedings of a Board Assembled at Bytown, on November 10, 1848 to investigate the claims of Captain Charles E. Ford, R.E., whose quarters were razed by fire on the 5th of October, 1848.

The final report of the Board of Enquiry included eye witness accounts of the fire, Captain Ford's submissions of personal losses, and the Board's final recommendations and conclusions about the cause of the fire. Presiding over the Board assembled on November 28, 1848 to examine witnesses to the October 5th fire included its president, Brevet Major Clements of the Royal Canadian Rifles (RCR) and assisted by Lieutenant Kerr, RCR, and Lieutenant Hollis of the Royal Engineers. In his presentation to the board, Ford was of the opinion that since he and his family had occupied quarters assigned to he Senior Royal Engineer, that he felt it was his obligation to furnish those quarters suitably and consistently with his position. Had he been allotted quarters suitable to an infantry officer of his rank, he would not have incurred the same heavy loss to his personal household goods.¹¹ In describing the extent of damage to dwelling he noted that:

The whole of the dwelling house from attic to cellar was completely destroyed, the walls alone being left standing, these however, are quite unserviceable. The outbuildings consisting of a small cottage for the accommodation of servants, a stable and coach house, root houses, ice house, and privies, together with the chief portion of the fences about the gardens are premises are uninjured. The wooden covering of the iron tank is destroyed, but the tank is perfectly good.¹²

Ford, however, was not the only witness to take the stand. The first witness to be cross – examined was Captain Ford's domestic servant, who had lived in the cottage adjacent to the one occupied by Ford. In her testimony she testified that on the evening of October 4th, she had left Ford's kitchen at about half past nine to return to her quarters.¹³ Before retiring to her residence, she informed the board that:

.. the fire in the kitchen stove was almost out. I took out no ashes that day, but if I had seen ashes left outside the house, they must have been put out [i.e. Extinguished]. For it rained all day. When the ashes were taken out they were usually done so in a tin pail and put outside the verandah. When I woke at the noise that night and looked out, it appeared to me that the fire was outside the verandah.¹⁴

Her husband, John Vern, Captain Ford's body servant gave the following testimony to the board:

On the night of the 4th of October I left the house to go to the cottage

¹¹ Ibid., Letter from Charles E. Ford dated October 25, 1848., p. 258.

¹² Ibid., Statement showing the loss of Public Property destroyed by Fire at the District Command Royal Engineers Quarters Bytown on the morning of the 5th October 1848., p. 256

¹³ Ibid., Proceedings of a Board assembled at Bytown C.W. on the 29th October 1848 by Brevet Major Clements R.C. Rifles, p. 261.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 261.

where I lived at about 1/4 to 10. I was awoke at about 1 o'clock by a cry of "fire". A rap came to my door. Immediately I got out of bed and saw the house on fire. I then proceeded to the house and assisted in saving what I could. When I first saw the fire it appeared to me to be in the kitchen part of the house. My wife and I had been sitting in the kitchen for about an hour previous to going to the cottage where I lived and there was scarcely any fire in the stove when I left it. The stove was a cooking stove with a good large pan base. The cook was engaged in raking up the ashes and screening the fire for the night. There was no appearance of fire on the verandah when I left the house.¹⁵

When questioned if he had observed the cook taking ashes from the stove at any time during the day or night, Vern informed the Board that he had not seen the cook do so. When asked how the fire started, he stated, "I have no idea, I do not think it could have originated from ashes on the verandah because it rained all day."¹⁶

The next witness to the enquiry, Ford's gardener recalled that:

I was sleeping over the kitchen on the night of the 4th of October. I was very lame at the time and could only just move with the help of crutches. Somewhere about 8 o'clock I went to bed that night. I awoke about 10 o'clock by an evening noise and thought it was wind, but afterwards heard a crackling noise like fire. I then got up and went to the window and I saw the flames outside at the corner of the kitchen. I then make my escape by crawling out of my room to Captain Ford's room in my night clothes in order to warn the family. My bed was centred directly over the stove in the kitchen and had the fire taken place in the kitchen it would have been destroyed. There was no appearance of fire or smoke in my room when I was awakened by the sound of fire.¹⁷

When questioned by the Board whether he knew how the fire had originated, he gave the following statement:

I have not. After having warned Captain Ford, I went around the erandah to call the other servants and distinctly saw the flames on the outside of the kitchen. They were just reaching the roof but had not yet penetrated the wall.¹⁸

The next two witnesses had been on duty on Barrack Hill on the night of the fire. Pat Wallen, a labourer on the locks, recalled that early on morning of the 5th of October:

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁸ Ibid.

I was on the Barrack Hill on the look out for boats on the night of the fire. At about 1 o'clock I heard an alarm of fire. I went and called the lock labourers and went down the street and alarmed the people and ran up to Captain Ford's house. The fire was in the verandah at the part of the kitchen when I got there. I then assisted in saving the art of Ford's servants to prevent such loss, and no circumstances in their power could have overcome the destruction of the house and damage to the property.¹⁹

When questioned about the source of the fire, Wallen, like Ford's servants was unable to comment on the origin of the blaze.²⁰ The next witness to appear before the Board was a Private with the RCR, who had been on sentry duty on Barrack Hill at the time of the fire. In his testimony, he noted that:

I had been walking about servicing a rifle at about 1/2 past 11. And I saw what appeared to be a lantern moving about in part of the house. At 12 o'clock I went on sentry and about 2 or 3 minutes before 1 o'clock I saw the fire at Captain Ford's home and gave the alarm to the Sergeant of the Guard.²¹

Captain Ford had the final word.

On the evening of the 4th of October my family and all the household retired at about 10 o'clock. Between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning I was aroused by the cry of fire proceeding from one of my servants. On getting up to awaken the family, I met my servant Hans on the stairs who told me that the fire was outside the house. I came down stairs and out at the front door and preceded towards the back of the house by the verandah when I discovered a portion of the verandah near the kitchen door in flames. The side of the house had not been caught but as the fire grew larger then I could not hope to extinguish it without assistance and without water (the tank having been drained the day previous for the purpose of being cleaned out). I went back and previous to entering the house I gave the alarm by crying out fire to the sentry on the Barrack Hill and instructed my servant to do the same. I then went into the house and after providing for the safety of my family preceded to save what I could of my furniture and effects. Whilst thus engaged assistance arrived namely my servant, lock labourers, the firemen and almost with the troops, who all endured every assistance in their power. By the time the assistance arrived, the flames had extended

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

so much that without water it was impossible to save the building and I am of the opinion that with water the cause would have been doubtful.²²

When questioned about how he thought the fire started, Ford provided the following response:

It originated from outside the house near the kitchen, but from what cause I cannot say. Although from the fact of my being the first to see the exact portion and extent of the fire and having also examined my own servants on the subject I am convinced in my own mind that it originated from no carelessness on their part and can therefore only suspect it to have been the work of an incendiary.²³

The Board members, having heard the testimonies of the witnesses, concluded that no blame was to be attached to Captain Ford or to any person belonging to his establishment for the unfortunate destruction by fire of a building belonging to the Ordnance Department.²⁴ Every effort had been made to prevent the loss for which indemnification was claimed, proper care and attention had been employed to prevent the fire.²⁵

²² Ibid., pp. 265 – 266.

²³ Ibid., p. 267.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Continued next page

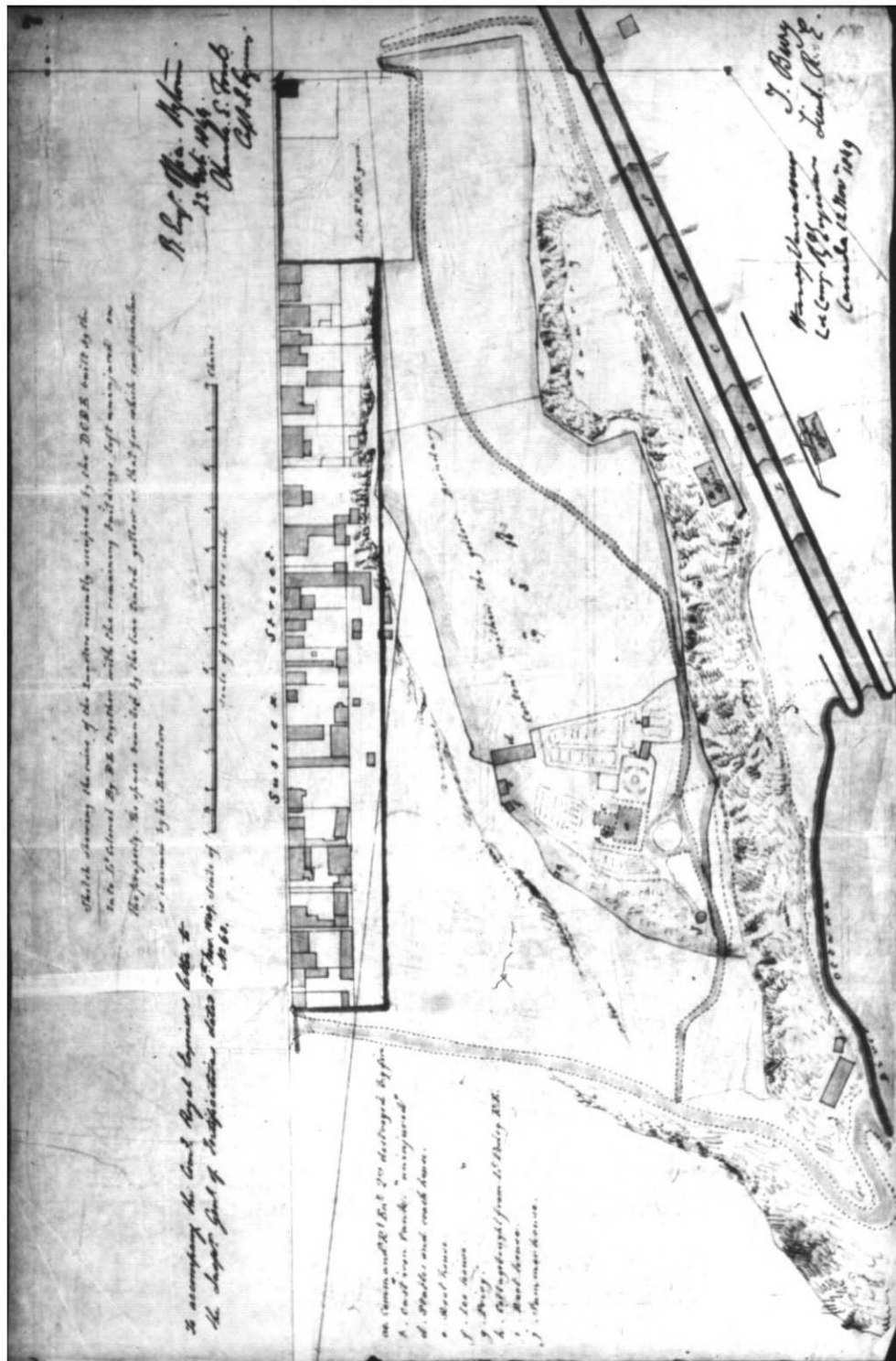


Illustration 1: L.A.C., MG 13, W.O. 44, Vol. 47, p 7, microfilm reel B-1316, Sketch showing the ruins of the quarters recently occupied by DCRE, built by the Late Lt. Col. By, R.E. together with the remaining left uninjured.

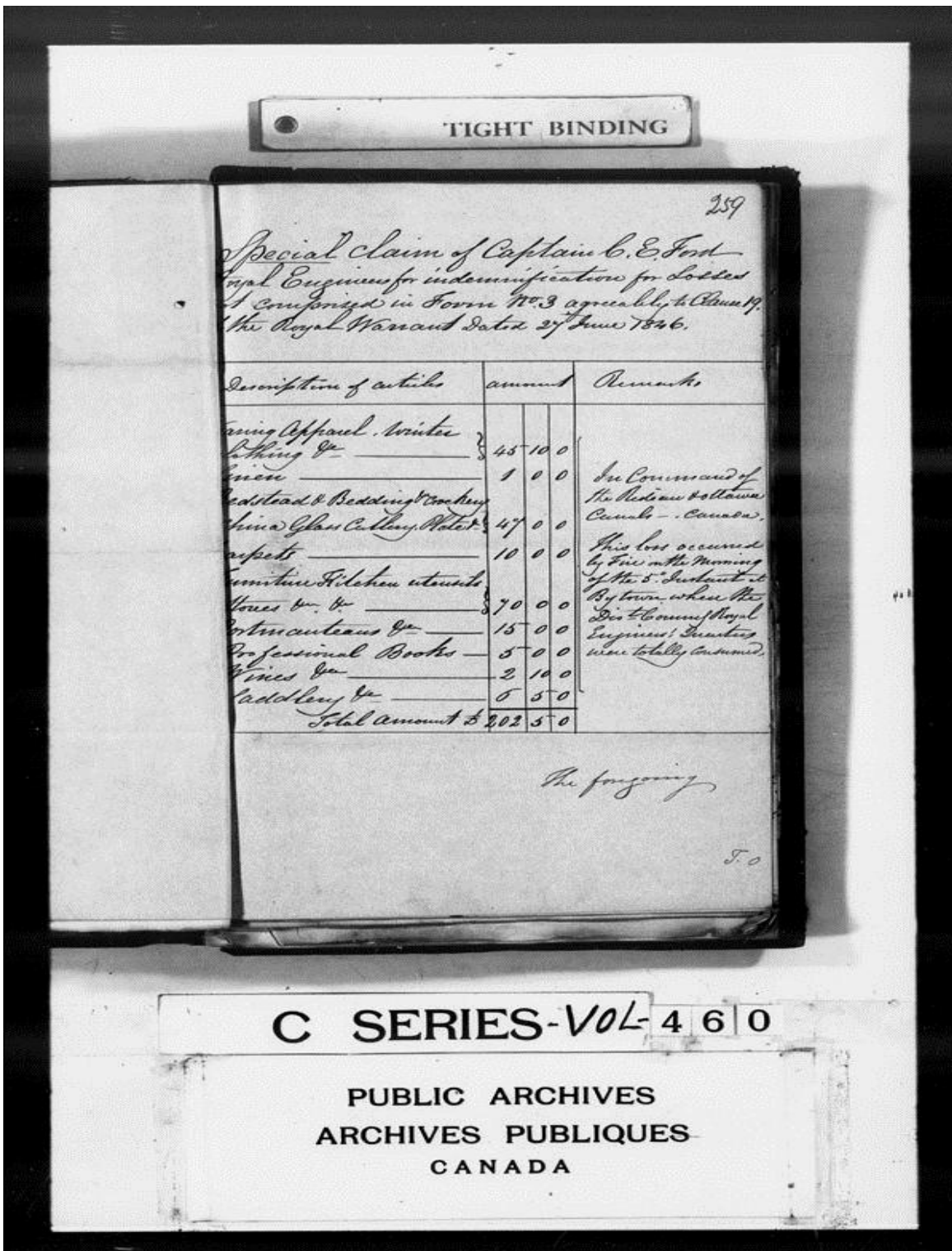


Illustration 2: L.A.C., British Military and Naval Records, RG. 8, C Series, Vol. 460, p. 259, microfilm reel C-2987, A Special Claim of Captain C.E. Ford, Royal Engineers for indemnification for Losses..., prepared by Captain Ford, October 25th, 1848.

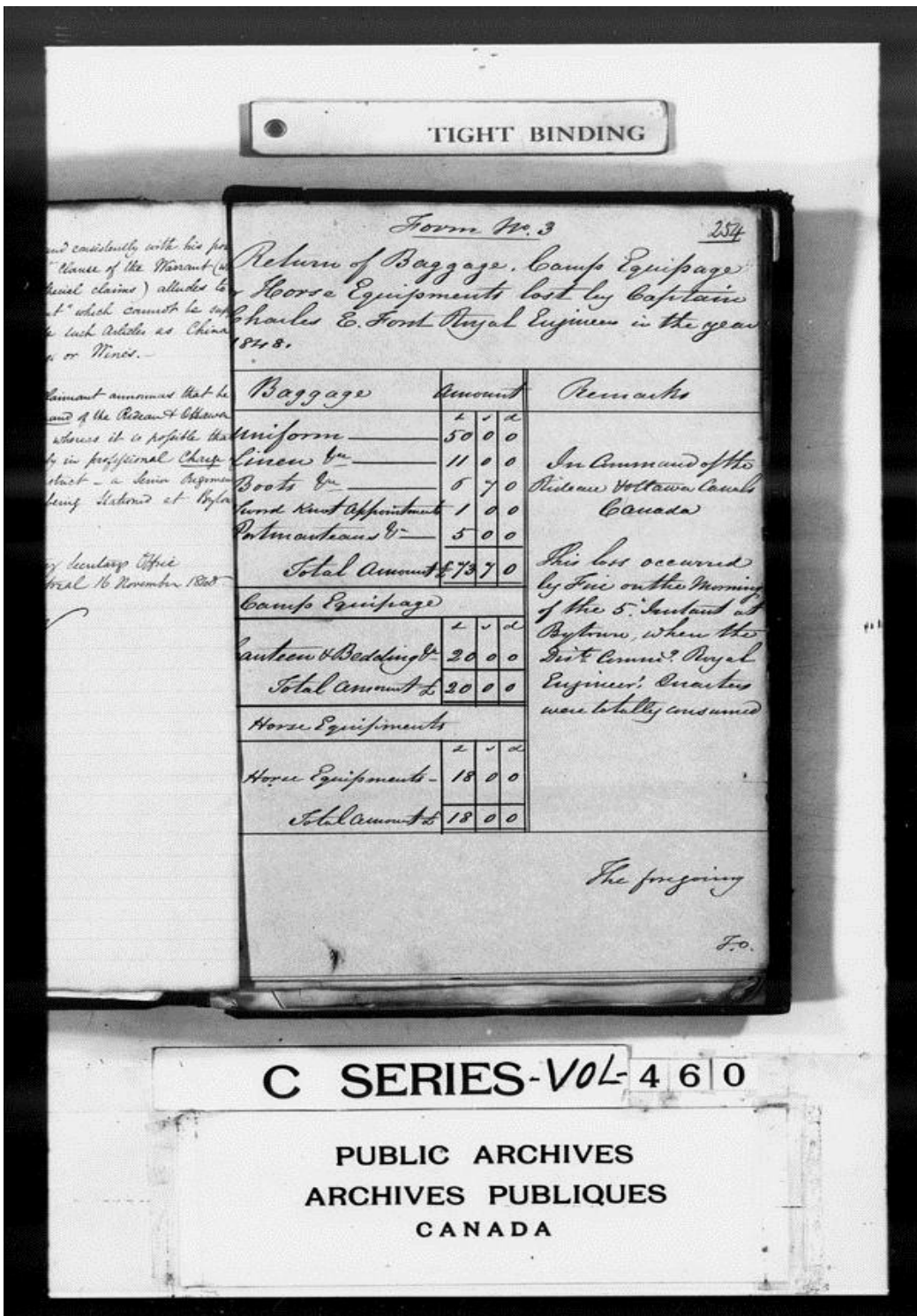


Illustration 3: L.A.C., British Military and Naval Records, RG. 8, C Series, Vol. 460, p. 254, microfilm reel C-2987 Return of Baggage, Camp Equipage, Horse Equipments lost by Captain Charles E. Ford, Royal Engineer in the year 1848

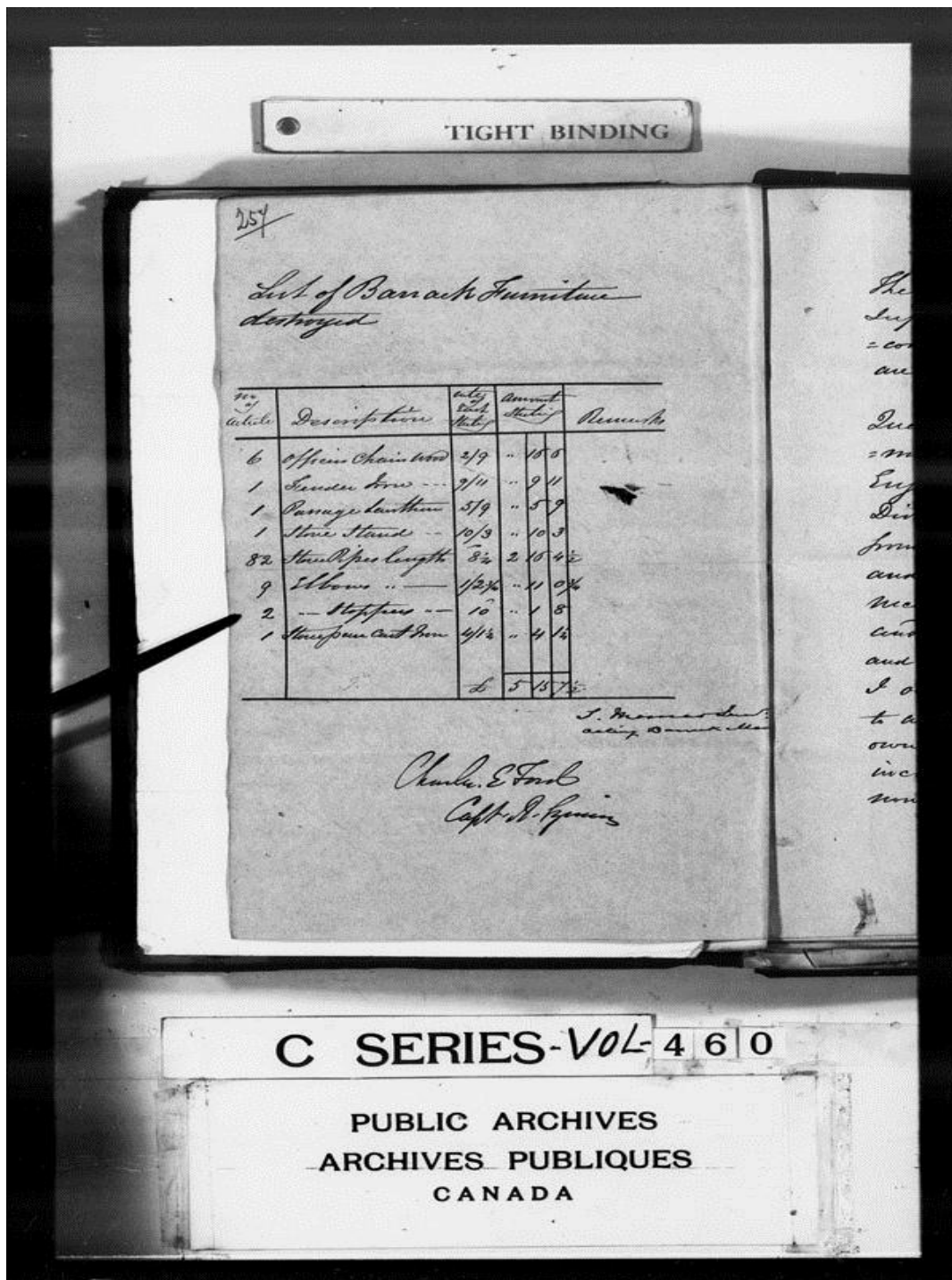


Illustration 4: L.A.C., British Military and Naval Records, RG. 8, C Series, Vol. 460, p. 254, microfilm reel C-2987 List of Barrack Furniture Destroyed. Submitted by Charles E. Ford, Capt. R. Engineers

CURSE OF THE AXE

A documentary film made by Robin Bicknell,
Produced by YAP Films

Review by Mel Massey

On Tuesday, August 7, a large and enthusiastic group of archaeology enthusiasts (and I suspect more than a few ‘professionals’) viewed a showing of *Curse of the Axe* at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The principal actors, archaeologists Dr. Ron Williamson and Andrea Carnevale, were present as was the film maker, Robin Bicknell. For me it was the presence of Luc Lainé, representing the Huron Nation at the viewing which made the dramatic story of the film so poignant.

In brief, excavations at the Huron-Wendat site (called ‘Mantle’) north of Toronto at Stouffville in 2003 unearthed some 20,000 artefacts dating from the early sixteenth century. These items and physical signs evidence the existence of a Huron settlement which housed some 2,000 Huron-Wendat occupying 98 long houses behind a three row palisade. Amazingly, corn probably supplied 62% of their diet which necessitated cultivating corn on an area surrounding Mantle larger than downtown Toronto; the graphics are impressive!

Mantle was a trading hub for Eastern North America and contained artefacts, particularly ceramics, from many of the First Nations of the time as attested by experts who have examined the finds.

Key to the story is the knowledge that little more than a century after the burial of the fragment of iron which is the centerpiece of the film, and a few decades after first contact with Europeans of the Huron-Wendat Nation, three quarters were dead. Diseases carried from Europe by explorers and missionaries were to blame, aided by the attacks of other Nations, notably the Iroquois. Tragically, post contact decimation by European diseases was a common fate of the First Nations. The survivors of the Huron-Wendat fled to Wendake near Québec City where their descendants still live.

The *Curse* is the story of the unravelling of an archaeological mystery; how did a shard of iron of European provenance come to be buried in the Huron-Wendat compound a century prior to first contact and thousands of kilometres from the coast? Why was it buried? Readers familiar with the *Time Team* show (and recently *American Time Team*) will be familiar with the methodology.

There are consultations with specialists (industrial x-ray examination, paleo-odontology, medieval iron utensils) and travel. However the film deals with intimate and domestic Canadian history, links it with historic peoples and trade patterns (Basque whaling camps in Newfoundland). It is Canada’s history and that makes it special.

The film borrows from the reality-show format, showing the cast’s real time responses to discovering critical information. While there is speculation about the significance of the piece of wrought iron carrying scary mystical overtones relating to the later near demise of the Huron-

Wendat, the attempted explanations do animate the narrative, giving it a ‘flavour’, and will certainly provoke the imagination of young viewers.

The overall presentation is superb. The narrative shows the hard work involved in excavating the vast site and the crowds of young volunteers. The film also showcases the conduct of responsible archaeology. The iron would not have been preserved and its location known if Dr. Williamson et al. had not been meticulous in supervising the project and in maintaining accurate records. This aspect of the excavation could have been emphasized.

I found that the realistic costumes and acting animated the drama and made the people who lived then seem more immediate. The film shows reconstructed images of the past which are contrasted with the site today – now a subdivision closely packed with suburban homes and garages. The film also shows contemporary Huron-Wendat children and Luc Lainé told us that busloads of their kids are participating in excavating smaller Huron-Wendat sites in Ontario. He told us that hands-on experience with the past was giving the Huron children historical continuity with their ancestors and with their culture.

He said that they were proud of the Huron-Wendat’s accomplishments, the large village and the work it took to construct the palisade and houses with stone implements. It is the ‘closing of the circle’ through time which made the production special. It is our domestic history and descendants of the principal actors are Canadians living among us. Post-show questions established that metallurgical studies of the iron and ecological research on the environment of the time will continue, and we also know that in the future the kids will be visiting their Nation’s ancestral sites.

NEWS, NOTES AND UPCOMING EVENTS A Busy Season Coming Up!

September 15 Saturday, Ceramics identification workshop with Susan Ploussos, Parks Canada Bonnechere Provincial Park, \$50, reply to Rory MacKay, rmackay3@cogeco.ca

September 20 Thursday, Canadian Museum of Civilization, tour of "Secrets of the Maya" with Jean-Luc Pilon, meet at main entrance at 6:00 p.m.

October 4-7 “By Land or By Sea, Changing Worlds” Annual Meeting, Council for North Eastern Historical Archaeology, St. Johns Newfoundland,

October 11 Thursday, Routhier Centre, 7:30 p.m. Ian Bagley, Archaeologist, National Capital Commission "Challenges in Cultural Management"

November 10-11 OAS Symposium, Windsor Ontario (see OAS web site)

November 29 Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Canadian War Museum, “1812 shipwrecks” with Jonathan Moore

December 13 Thursday, Ottawa Chapter OAS AGM and Seasonal Celebration.