NEW DISCOVERIES and a record number of volunteers highlighted another successful SVAS digging summer in 1973. Many independent volunteers contributed surface collections to the SVAS for study. More than 600 volunteers, twice the 1972 total, participated in the 1973 season. Several of the dig sites, particularly one in Southbury, resembled an army camp. The 4-star generals (Messrs. Pawlowski, Thompson and Swigart) presided (democratically, of course) over the lieutenants (Messrs. Hay, Hensel and Hill and the Misses Hansen and Kershaw). The lieutenants in turn gave instruction to the innumerable sergeants (veteran diggers) and their Platoons, made up of volunteers of all ages, in all stages of training.

Discoveries last summer were many. Highlights included:

I. Surface Finds:

A perfect Clovis point of light blue Tennessee chert. Date 10,000 BC. Yes, the Indians were clearly here THAT long ago!

II. Surface Finds and Excavations:

A culture using the Neville style of projectile points and dating back to 3900 BC to 5700 BC was found simultaneously at four different sites. (Two of the sites were excavated; two were surface-hunted.) Nothing had been known of this period before these discoveries.

III. Excavations:

a. Excavations resulted in the C-14 dating and confirmation of two cultures which had not been dated before in Connecticut. The dates of 1710 BC ± 150 years (G x 2878) for the Nettleton Hollow Site and 1715 BC ± 180 (G x 2592) for the Housatonic River Site date for the first time the large broad flint blade tradition of the “Snook Kill” culture. A date of 480 AD ± 200 (G x 3214) dated a beautiful cache of ten flint blades, one drill and one spear base of the Fox Creek period at another Housatonic River site. The latter site has so far yielded a row of nine excavated fire pits, parallel to the shoreline some twenty yards away. Many shell fragments in the fire pits indicate this may well have been a mussel-collecting and roasting site. Large mussel beds are still found in the river adjoining it. Strangely enough, very few cultures appeared to use or occupy this site. A piece of steatite and a few scattered projectile points of other cultures who probably only hunted the site, are all that have been found.

b. During the summer two caves and a field site were excavated in Southbury and New Milford.

New Milford Cave

The New Milford cave has some exciting possibilities including 18 fire pits. One of these may date an Adena occupation which has never before been dated in Connecticut. Numerous Sylvan Lake hearths, Levanna, Orient and Brewerton projectile points and fresh Bear Scat make this cave a place to remember.

A C-14 date of 1410 AD ± 110 (G x 2990) came from the second cave. This, together with two additional C-14 dates of 1380 AD ± 190 (G x 3212) and 1320 AD ± 150 (G x 3211), from a field site in Southbury have identified the time of occupation. The people who lived in these two fall and winter campsites were of recent Algonkin stock. Probably they were forerunners of the Pootatuck Indians who lived in that area during historic times.

No dwelling plans were found on the field site. This indicates that the people probably lived in temporary shelters or in caves. Bird, mammal and fishbone, hickory nuts and other food remains, preserved in the 50+ fire and trash pits, will give SVAS researchers a remarkably good picture of the diet of these people. In addition, over 2000 pieces of pottery, and 1200 stone projectile points, tools and other items, should provide a good cross section of the cultural life of these people as well.

Particularly noteworthy was the lack of agricultural produce, permanent dwellings and leisure-produced forms of art. The life in Southbury during the time and season that these two campsites were occupied must have been very difficult indeed.

(continued on p. 2)
After Hours
-with SVAS President Ned Swigart

A very exciting event took place last December 19th at our house. Nine concerned citizens from six area towns gathered to share ideas, based on their years of experience in widely varied fields of endeavor.

The beneficiary of this session is the American Indian Institute. The people attending represented such diverse fields as building, contracting, education, research, exhibit preparation, architecture, small and large management, and business. All are respected leaders in their fields. Each volunteered his special expertise to help plan the best and most economical facility of its kind in the region.

Few of those attending the meeting knew much about the Institute. But each had been asked to ponder what the Institute’s emphasis should be. The group was asked for recommendations based upon what each member sees as primary needs in his area of expertise.

To hear these experienced men speak from such varied backgrounds and arrive enthusiastically at a consensus within an hour was truly a wonderful experience. Their consensus described the very facility which SVAS directors had already felt was needed!

The consensus was:
- That the building use should be planned primarily for research and the proper storage of precious artifacts;
- That some educational exhibits for serious students of Indian history should be included;
- That the building must not become a center for commercial tourism.

The incredible talent and generosity of people is a constant source of amazement and joy to us. The meeting held at my house was such a clear example of the very best of America. It reflected deep concern for projects these people considered important, whether or not any financial remuneration was involved. There is no way SVAS can repay these individuals for their expertise.

Nor is there any way it can repay the 600-plus volunteers who commuted from as far away as New Jersey and Massachusetts to aid in the summer dig program.

Nor is there any way SVAS can repay the 700-plus donors whose trust, confidence and interest have enabled us to raise the $300,000 needed to make the American Indian Institute a reality.

Nor can SVAS repay its many friends—except to share with them a faith and a dream. We believe that human history is precious and of inestimable value. We dream that the history of the Connecticut Indians may offer viable cultural and ecological alternatives to modern man.

But there is much more to be done. So we must ask one more favor of our volunteers and friends—help us find still others to join us in our quest.

SVAS and its American Indian Institute are potent instruments for discovering a lost human history. Future, like past goals will be achieved as the number and involvement of dedicated volunteers continues to grow.

MARCH 1974 THROUGH MAY 1974

March 7, 1974
President Swigart and members of the Society will hold a workshop to which members may bring artifacts for “expert” identification.

April 4, 1974
John Pawloski, Chairman of the SVAS Education Committee, will present a program entitled “The Development of Man in the New World.”

May 2, 1974
A “discussion-debate” dealing with white attitudes toward Indians and Indian attitudes toward whites in Colonial New England.

Artifacts

Published quarterly for members of the Shepaug Valley Archaeology Society, Washington, Conn.

Editors: Norman Shidle Ruth Giantz

SVAS Officers and Board Members: President, Edmund K. Swigart; Vice President, Tate Brown; Treasurer, Elmer Browne; Secretary, Mrs. John Sheehy; Mrs. Albert Atwood, Mrs. J. H. Deutschmann, Kenyon Greene, Harlan Griswold, Sidney Hessel, Rutherford Lilley, Adelephina Logan, Leonard Sperry, Lloyd Young.


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'73 DIGS (continued from p. 1)
c. The excavation of the Aspetuck River Site revealed a post mold of a possible dwelling dating back to 2500 BC. If future excavations prove this to be true, it would be the earliest dwelling plan found in the state. Previous dwelling plans dating back to 1500 BC and 1000 BC were unearthed by SVAS members in 1970. These were the first found for these cultures in the New England area. Dwelling plans for the 2500 BC period have been found in eastern Massachusetts.

d. Further excavation of the Nettleton Hollow site added significantly to the many important 1972 discoveries at this site. What would appear to be the first Connecticut clay-lined storage pit dating back to 2325 BC has been tentatively identified by David Hill, soil scientist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station by Douglas Jordan, Connecticut State Archaeologist.

1974 Plans

While the story of 10,000 years of Indian history here in Connecticut has begun to emerge from the mists of time, SVAS planners are mapping what high-priority site will be excavated in 1974. And while they plan, the news constantly reaches them of yet another site threatened or destroyed by construction.

SVAS President Ned Swigart will be the principal speaker at the Annual Dinner of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society on April 12 in Bourne, Massachusetts.
Institute Soon To Be a Reality

With more than $300,000 already in hand, final plans for the American Indian Institute are being implemented. Building Committee recommendations and SVAS Board policies are being integrated and, hopefully, construction will begin early in the summer.

The most immediate need in Connecticut appears to be for an ultra-modern facility designed primarily as a research center. This center would furnish, under one roof, as large a collection of Connecticut artifacts as possible. The collection would be so stored as to be easily accessible for research. It would be protected from decay by a humidity-and-temperature-controlled room; and from theft by a most modern protection system. As funds permit, data information would be stored on a computer to facilitate study of the collections.

Research Space

The most space - probably about 1500 square feet - will be allocated to storing of collections for use by researchers. Included in this area would be work space (table and counter), plus an area which would be convertible to a mini-classroom for meetings up to 20 people.

The Board and the Building Committee both feel strongly that an exhibit area should be included as a second aspect of the building. Through the exhibits, visitors would be kept informed of on-going SVAS efforts to learn about Connecticut Indian history. About 100 square feet of building space therefore is scheduled for allocation to presentation of a series of changing exhibits. These would include miniature and full size dioramas, paintings, artifacts displays and slide presentations - using the basic theme: "The Earth as a Story Book."

Utility Area

In addition to research and exhibit space, about 500 square feet will be given over to office, utility and other service needs.

The SVAS Board and the Building Committee are firm in their belief that this planned facility will attract students and adults who wish seriously to pursue the study of Indian history. Already schools are talking to SVAS about plans to have individual students and faculty use the Institute as a source of specialized information. Also, Bryn Mawr College is making arrangements to send a research team to help in the summer excavation program.

SVAS hopes to move into its new home by the Spring of 1975. From time to time, volunteers are needed to help address special mailings or to do ad hoc clerical jobs. To register as an available volunteer, call Mrs. Sheehy.

EACH SINGLE PRECIOUS ARTIFACT (right) is a piece of history . . . of the history of Connecticut Indian cultures dating back for thousands of years. SVAS diggers have already unearthed, carefully catalogued more than 30,000 such artifacts.

(Below) The line of SVAS diggers below (excavating a 1973 site in Southbury) is typical of the several sites at which SVAS diggers labored effectively in 1973.

(Bottom) Here science professor Ned Swigert combines teaching with digging as a group of youngsters unearth artifacts at a 1973 site . . . Such young people comprise less than 5% of the 600 SVAS diggers. But, according to Swigart: "They have turned out to be among the most productive workers."
The $300,000 necessary to make the SVAS American Indian Institute a reality has been raised. Last December 13, SVAS wrote to the Kresge Foundation (donor of a $50,000 challenge grant):

"The Shepaug Valley Archaeological Society has 254 cash gifts and signed pledges totalling $250,478. These together with your Challenge Grant will achieve the $300,000 goal — i.e. the goal which had to be reached before the end of 1973 to insure receipt of the Kresge challenge gift."

Details of this SVAS financial achievement reveal the depth of impact of the Institute concept throughout Connecticut — and also in neighboring New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Gifts from individuals throughout the area accounted for almost 84% of the $250,478 total.

To December 13, 1973, 68 gifts and pledges for $1000 or more amounted to $227,705. Gifts and pledges for less than $1000 totalled an additional $22,775.

Since then, more contributions have continued to arrive, especially from foundations, funds and companies. Last December 13, grants had come from 18 such organizations. By the end of January 1974 the total had risen to 23. These gifts were from the following funds and foundations: AKC Fund, Challenge Fund, H. L. Bache, J. Walton Bissell, Howard & Bush, Coe, Edgerton, Fred L. Emerson, Hillsdale, Knapp, Meek, Porter Trust, Anne S. Richardson, Grace Richardson, Walsstrom, Wyo-omissing ... and from the following companies: George L. Lilley, Sendzimer, Torin, Torrington and Unimore.

Exceeding set goals for this first unit of the American Indian Institute is fortunate as well as gratifying. Cost inflation is continuing at a rate higher than predicted by most economists. So something like $330,000 seems likely to have to be spent in 1974 to build and endow a facility estimated conservatively a year or so ago at $300,000.

At the beginning of February 1974, Treasurer Elmer Browne reports, SVAS assets consisted of $115,000 in Treasury bills; $10,000 in savings banks, and 15.2 acres of land on which the AII will be built. Additional assets include gifts of more than 250,000 unique artifacts, conservatively appraised at $32,000.

Four Directors who have been active participants on the Board since SVAS was started more than three years ago are (left to right): sitting, Kenyon W. Greene and Marie P. (Mrs. John) Sheehy. Standing, Elmer T. Browne and Lloyd Young.

Marie Sheehy, SVAS Secretary, brought to SVAS unique experience and talents acquired over many years in public service. She served in the Assembly and was on the Connecticut State Central Committee for six years. She has been active on the Washington Republican Town Committee, a president of the PTA and was Clerk of the Probate Court for the District of Washington. She has probably contributed more hours of fruitful service to SVAS than anyone except its ubiquitous president, Ned Swigart.

Kenyon W. Greene, a practicing attorney in Washington Depot, was twice elected to the Connecticut General Assembly from Washington and is currently chairman of the Shepaug Valley Regional School Board. He is a graduate of The Gunnery, of Brown University and of the Harvard Law School. Like most other Board members, he became active in SVAS "because Ned asked me."

Elmer T. Browne, SVAS Treasurer, became interested in SVAS through being a fishing companion of President Ned Swigart. He moved to Washington in 1969, following a career in industry which he completed with 10 years in the International Division of Mack & Co., pharmaceutical chemical manufacturers. During that period he lived in England and Belgium for eight years. He is presently associated with Edward Tierney, realtor, in the Washington, Connecticut office. He was graduated from Dartmouth with an AB and from Harvard Business School with an MBA.

Lloyd Young became interested in diggin when sitting with Ned Swigart at Lions Club one night; asked "do you need help?" Ned said "Yes" and -- He taught at The Hill School for many years and later was a designer of industrial machinery for 12 years. He was graduated from New York University with a degree in Industrial Arts. After retirement (!) he taught at Watertown High School. He lives in New Preston.