

Minnesota Archaeological Society

Fall 2023 - Winter 2023/2024 Biannual Publication



A Study of a Museum Collection: Precontact Ceramics from Grant County

By George R. Holley

An ongoing study of Minnesota's precontact ceramics was focused on a collection curated at the Grant County Historical Society Museum in Elbow Lake. The ceramics derive from an unnamed site, 21GR5 (identified herein as the Barrett Lake site), and the collection was prepared by William (Bill) F. Goetzinger, with the assistance of Elden Johnson. Patty Benson, director of the museum, kindly allowed me access to the collection. This collection of 67 sherds and rims are glued to a board for display, thus limiting a complete analysis.

The Barrett Lake site is a large scatter located on a peninsula of the eponymous lake and is located in the vast ecotone separating the prairies and forests of Minnesota. Although much discussed, the native use of the ecotone remains undefined.

The ceramic collection displays representative examples of a considerable time span and is important in developing an overall regional sequence for southwestern Minnesota and the ecotone in particular. I focus only on the two bookend periods for this occupation: Initial Woodland (ca. 300 BC – AD 300) and Late Precontact (ca. AD 1200 – 1700).

Three rims (see below) and assorted sherds likely relate to the Initial Woodland occupation. The circular punctations found on two rims, with horizontal and vertical cordmarking are unlike the well-known Fox Lake and Elk Lake complexes lying to the north and south. Rather connections are noted with Dahnke from the Red River Valley (Holley and Carr 2023; Holley et al. 2023). These two jars lack a well-defined throat or neck, which serves as a firm indicator for this early period. A third rim is perhaps later and is characterized by two rows of cordwrapped stick (CWS) impressions above large, obliquely placed CWS impressions. This presentation on a jar with a slightly formed neck is unlike any other known ceramic complex. Although lacking rims, there is evidence for net impressed surface treatments that could be linked to the Initial Woodland, however, recently dated ceramics forming the Kent phase in nearby Wilkin County and the accumulating dates to the south of the Elk Lake hearth are consistently later in time than the proposed early origins (e.g., Florian et al. 2020). These rims may signal a local expression that will help shape our understanding of the geography of style during the Initial Woodland period.



Initial Woodland vessels displayed at the Grant County Historical Society.

(Continued pg. 5)

Letter from the President - February 2024

By Dan Wendt (MAS Board President)

The letter from the MAS President is intended as a vehicle to inform the general membership of the Minnesota Archaeological Society of recent Board of Directors activities. The following is a brief recap of the events, discussions, and decisions that transpired during the past half year and future planning.

We were happy to send membership Volume 80 of the Minnesota Archaeologist which covered a variety of topics on Minnesota Archaeology. We are working on editing Volume 81 which will be a memorial volume to Doug Birk. There are seven great articles that highlight Minnesota Archaeology in the spirit of Doug Birk. Our Senior Editor, Danielle Kiesow, has now completed her fifth volume of the Minnesota Archaeologist. Danielle is looking to pass the Senior Editor role to a new editor. Please consider either a one volume guest editor role or picking up as Senior Editor of the Journal. We are very grateful to Danielle for her outstanding work as editor.

September was Archaeology Month and MAS was involved in five weekends of activities in support. Programs included Archaeology weekends at Fort Snelling, Split Rock Lighthouse, Jeffers, and Mille Lacs Kathio. Thank you to Jennifer Rankin and Mandy Wintheiser for stepping forward to plan and organize Minnesota Archaeology Month. During September we also had our MAS annual meeting, which we held at The Minnesota Historical Society's Archaeology Offices at the Kellogg Center. A big thank you to Mara Taft, Selena Bernier, Jennifer Rankin, and Mandy Wintheiser for organizing our annual meeting.

Spring and summer programs are coming with opportunities to get involved in Minnesota archaeology. Look for volunteer opportunities on our Facebook page. We will also have a return of the Snake River Fur Post Flint Knapping gathering, known by participants as the Pine City Knap-in.

We have a call for nominations for the 2024 Hill Lewis Award which recognizes outstanding contributions by avocational archaeologists in Minnesota. Nominations are due by June 1st. The award will be presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting in September. We are pleased to continue this important tradition of recognizing avocational contributions to Minnesota archaeology.

MAS lectures have become a virtual gathering point for our community to discuss regional archaeology topics, thanks to Michael Michlovic for planning and Mandy Wintheiser for moderating these meetings. In March, Mike Michlovic will choose a topic to highlight from his extensive career studying the archaeology of the Red River Valley. In April, Alex Hedquist will give a talk featuring her master's program research at Saint Cloud State University on stone tool technology in Minnesota. Please check the schedule on Facebook or the MAS website. Also, check out past lectures on our YouTube channel.

MAS Board of Directors

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Mission Statement: *Sharing, preserving, and honoring Minnesota's richly diverse archaeology and heritage through publication, education, and outreach.*

REQUESTS:

Call for New Editor

Danielle Kiesow, Lead Editor, The Minnesota Archaeologist

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time editing articles and learning about research that's occurring around the state, but it is time to pass the torch after a little over 5 years editing for The Minnesota Archaeologist. MAS is looking for a new Lead Editor for the journal with good communication skills, a keen sense for grammatical detail, and time to edit articles throughout the year to maintain annual publications. I am happy to walk the new Lead Editor through their first publication as my time allows. If there is a lot of interest in the position, it is possible to develop an editing team to help share the workload.

If you are interested in editing The Minnesota Archaeologist, please contact info@mnarchsociety.org.

MAS Hill-Lewis Award 2024: Call for Nominations

The Hill-Lewis Award is given annually by MAS to a living avocational archaeologist who has made outstanding contributions to Minnesota archaeology. The MAS Board is seeking nominations for the 2024 Hill-Lewis Award. Please forward your nomination to Dan Wendt, MAS President at Wendt001@gmail.com. The 2024 submission deadline is June 1st.

Nominees for the award should have made important contributions to our knowledge of Minnesota archaeology (prehistoric or historic) through original research or publication, collaboration with professional archaeologists, site stewardship, site preservation, public outreach, or exceptional K-12 teaching. Nominees do not have to be members of the Minnesota Archaeological Society. Nominators should submit a nomination letter detailing the nominee and their accomplishments, as well as at least one letter of support for the nomination. The Hill-Lewis Award will be awarded in September at our annual meeting during Archaeology Month.

The Hill-Lewis Award epitomizes the MAS goals of increasing public involvement in archaeology and in promoting the stewardship of the unique and irreplaceable archaeological record of Minnesota.

LOOKING FOR MORE WAYS TO BE INVOLVED?

MAS is seeking volunteers for:

Web Manager

Manage, update, and maintain our webpage

Editor

MN Arch Editor, assistant editors, and other roles available for journal production.

Auditor

Assist with audit of 2023 Treasurer reports and finances.

EMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION!

info@mnarchsociety.org

MAS Annual Meeting Recap

By Mara Taft, MAS Secretary

The Minnesota Archaeological Society Annual Meeting, held during Minnesota Archaeology Month in September, was a big success! It was our first time gathering together for an annual meeting, dinner, and lecture since our 2019 meeting before the Covid-19 pandemic. It was held at the Archaeology Department in the Kellogg Center in St. Paul, with about 50 people in attendance.

The evening started out with socializing over a delicious dinner provided by Winna Wota featuring bison sandwiches, wild rice, vegetable soup, and pumpkin bars. Following the dinner, we held our annual business meeting where the board went over some of MAS’s accomplishments and activities over the past year, including the publication of two volumes of *The Minnesota Archaeologist* and many public outreach events. MAS members in attendance then voted the board in for another full term. The MAS board held a raffle, with winners receiving books about Minnesota archaeology, Science Museum of Minnesota tickets and swag, and a Minnesota Historical Society annual membership.

The MAS board celebrated our Hill-Lewis Award 2023 awardee, Randy Beebe of Duluth, Minnesota. Randy is an avocational archaeologist with a special interest in diving, shipwrecks, underwater

and historical archaeology. Randy was in attendance with his family and was presented with a plaque honoring his commitment to Minnesota archaeology.



Randy Beebe accepting the 2023 Hill-Lewis Award. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.



Attendees listening to Dr. Heather Walder and Marvin Defoe's lecture. Photo Courtesy of Mara Taft.

Finally, attendees listened to a fascinating lecture held by Dr. Heather Walder and Marvin Defoe titled “Gete Anishinaabe Izhichigewin Community Archaeology Project, Gaa-Miskwaabikaang (Red Cliff, Wisconsin)” about their collaborative Indigenous community archaeology project at Frog Bay Tribal National Park in Wisconsin. It was a fascinating lecture, and great to hear about such a successful, truly collaborative project.

MAS would like to thank all those who attended for helping us to enjoy a great evening of socializing together, enjoying delicious food, learning about archaeology, and for your support of MAS! We hope to see you at the next annual meeting.



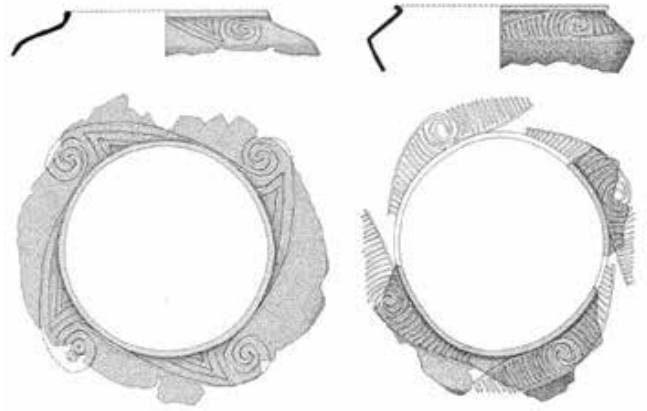
MAS Annual Meeting Planning Committee with guest speaker Dr. Walder. Left to right: Jennifer Rankin, Mara Taft, Dr. Heather Walder, Selena Bernier, and Mandy Wintheiser. Photo courtesy of Selena Bernier.

(Continued from pg. 1: *A Study of a Museum Collection: Precontact Ceramics from Grant County*)

I pass over a considerable interval that is represented by a variety of Woodland types to focus on the Late Precontact period. A large fragment of a broad incised jar (below left) forming what appears to be a variant of the scroll design is of interest. Broad incising is associated with the Cambria core along the Minnesota River (Mollerud 2016). Cambria is best understood as Initial Northeastern Plains Village (INEPV) in association (Henning and Toom 2003) and linked with numerous locales across the Upper Midwest and Plains that were influenced by the Cahokia horizon style, based in southwestern Illinois and centered at the Cahokia site.



Broad Incised jar, Barrett Lake site, on display. Vessel is shellacked.



Examples of scroll motif on Ramey Incised Jar, Cahokia site.

The rim is thinned with a short, vertical neck, and rounded shoulder. The design on the shoulder is that of a scroll, a trademark of the Cahokia horizon (see above right). However, the rounded shoulder is not typically associated with the scroll design found elsewhere among participants in the Cahokia horizon. Given that the vessel may represent the northwestern most appearance of this Cahokia trademark, the relaxed goodness-of-fit is understandable. Late Precontact ceramics are firmly part of the NEPV complex, yet lacks a significant presence of Sandy Lake, Oneota, or shell temper in general. Such ceramics are typically encountered in the Red River Valley and associated rivers (Holley 2021; Michlovic 2008). I am unsure if this void is due to time, i.e., the absence of occupations after AD 1400, or isolation.

These bookend ceramic periods from the Barrett Lake site reveal an awareness of and participation in local traditions during the Initial Woodland period and engagement in subcontinental styles during the Late Precontact. Much awaits to discover in the museums that dot the state.

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Minnesota Archaeology Month

By Mandy Wintheiser, MAS Membership, Social Media & Communications

September is Archaeology Month in Minnesota and The Minnesota Archaeological Society made sure to celebrate! We participated in several events throughout the state and hosted our annual meeting and dinner at the end of the month. We were invited by the Minnesota Historical Society and Mille Lacs Kathio State Park to share information and help with demonstrations; we brought copies of the Bound by Earth documentary to each event along with newsletter copies, membership information, and journal copies. Each event had a different theme and a variety of demonstrations, activities, and information for all ages.

We started the month at Historic Fort Snelling. The activities and demonstrations focused on the ways objects, records, and histories can illuminate lives and stories of the past. Visitors were able to examine artifacts and historic maps plus join an atlatl competition.

Next, we were at Jeffers Petroglyphs. MAS President Dan Wendt demonstrated flint knapping and shared a lot about stone tool technology. Activities here included a prairie bingo walk, pottery making, and learning about drones and other remote sensing and mapping tools. These activities focused on ways archaeology can teach us about the things people made and used, but also the plants and animals of the surrounding environment too. Using the knowledge gained through archaeological research, we can better understand, preserve, and share historic places.

Our third stop was at Snake River Fur Post. Highlights at this event included pumpkin carving with stone tools, making stratigraphy vials, and practicing excavations techniques on cookies. These activities were designed to get people thinking about archaeology and creativity.



MAS President Dan Wendt flint knapping at Jeffers Petroglyphs. Photo courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser.



MAS Board Member John Reynolds at Snake River Fur Post. Photo courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser.

We also participated in Archaeology Day at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park (see page 7) The month wrapped up with our annual meeting, dinner, and lecture. See page 4 for a full recap! Even more events took place throughout the state than we were able to attend in 2023. We're already thinking about what this year will bring. Make sure to check our webpage and social media for announcements about Minnesota Archaeology Month 2024!

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park's Archaeology Day 2023

By Erin Fallon, MAS Newsletter Editor/Park Naturalist

The Minnesota Archaeological Society, St. Cloud State University's Anthropology Collective, and MNDNR Parks & Trails co-sponsored Archaeology Day at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park on Saturday, September 30th, 2023. Fall colors along with people's curiosity to learn more about the area's rich heritage, drew roughly 500 visitors to the annual event. Ongoing demonstrations and displays allowed people to interact with presenters from various organizations - Minnesota Archaeological Society, Minnesota Historical Society, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Maritime Heritage Minnesota, and St. Cloud State University's Anthropology Collective.

Dan Wendt skillfully demonstrated flintknapping while Mara Taft informed people about the benefits of MAS membership. Children tested their own skills with help from Minnesota Historical Society staff at a pottery decorating activity and cookie excavation. SCSU students helped park visitors try their hand at an atlatl range and screening demonstration. Staff from MLBO THPO and MN SHPO came together to demonstrate archaeological cooking techniques, which included stone boiling and cooking in a replica pot. Maritime Heritage Minnesota had a display showing how they conduct archaeology below the water's surface.

A special thanks to all the hard-working volunteers and DNR staff who made this day a success, the event would not be possible without their help and expertise. Whether you have attended the event in the past or have never been, we hope to see you at Kathio's Archaeology Day in 2024!



SCSU student Sean Dilley at the Anthropology Collective informational table. Photo courtesy of Professor Debra Gold.



Visitors discussing underwater archaeology. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.



A crowd gathered around the archaeological cooking techniques demonstration. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.

Have an idea for the next newsletter?

We would like to hear from you! Send your MAS and archaeology related news and notices to info@mnarchsociety.org.

For archaeology news, events and more ... follow us on social media!



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Thank you for supporting the Minnesota Archaeological Society!