

Preserving History Through Archaeology



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GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

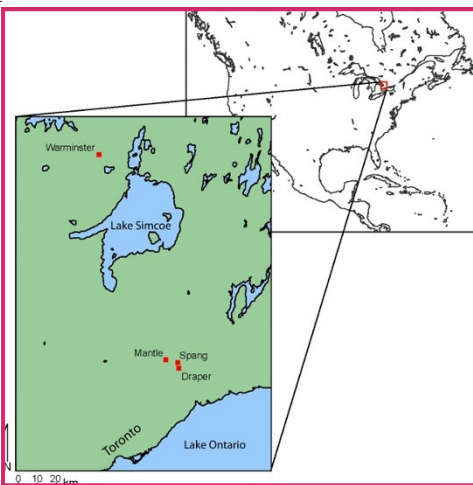
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Redating of Contact-Era Iroquoian History

Introduction excerpt of article written by Sturt W. Manning, et. al., in [Science Advances December 5, 2018 issue](#).

In the earlier to mid-second millennium CE (all dates Common Era) Northern Iroquoian societies of the northeastern woodlands of North America underwent several major cultural transitions. These include the intensification of agriculture, the development of settled village life, endemic warfare and coalescence into towns, confederacy formation, colonialism, and in the 16th century contact period entry into the global political economy. The complete excavation of dozens of sites (combined with a vast ethnohistoric literature by early 17th-century explorers and missionaries) makes the Lower Great Lakes region one of the most robust archaeological datasets for theorizing social processes in nonstate societies. Site durations equivalent to one to

two human generations make this record ideal for interrogating how the lived experiences of individuals and communities articulate with long-term, macroregional histories. Precise temporal control and the de-



Map showing the locations of the four sites investigated in this study in southern Ontario, Canada.

velopment of fine-grained chronologies are critical to developing and defining community and regional scales of analysis. However, despite a historically informed general narrative, direct historical associations with most sites are lacking for northeastern North America. One notable exception comes from the visit in 1615–1616 of S. de Champlain, an iconic figure of contact-era northeastern North America whose accounts are central to (re) considerations of violent colonial European interventions. He visited a village he named Cahiagué,

which has often (but not always) been identified with

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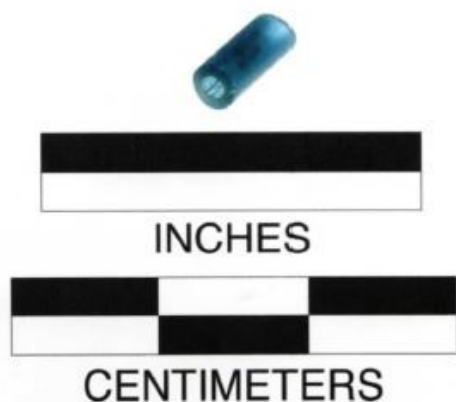
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the Warminster archeological site (*see picture on Page 1*). Otherwise an assumed refined chronology for the late prehistoric period has been based on the initial appearance and then the abundance of types of European trade goods (e.g.; presence/absence of types of metals and presence/absence of types of glass beads). Relative order of sites before and into the contact era has also been determined from archeological indicators—such as changing percentages of neck and incised decoration on ceramics and types of ceramic smoking pipes. Standard cultural, social, demographic, economic, and political histories of the Iroquoian peoples; our understanding of indigenous versus European contact dynamics; and associations of these processes with wider forces (such as climate change) are written and interpreted on the basis of this accepted chronology. The general absence of a direct, independent, and verifiable time frame for this key prehistoric-historic contact era in northeastern North America is problematic, and critical attention is long overdue. Research seeks to check and better define this contact-era timescale.

The appearances and distribution of European trade goods have conventionally formed the basis of chronology

-building from the mid-16th century onward in northeastern North America, and therefore, underlie archeological analyses of all aspects of social, economic, demographic, health, and political change. It has been argued that European metals appeared on Iroquoian sites in the mid-16th century and were later followed by glass beads (*similar to the one pictured left*), copper kettles, and other goods that were traded to and otherwise acquired by indigenous individuals and groups. Quantities and types of European materials on indigenous sites have been used to construct timelines such as the glass bead chronology or to make assumptions about the chronological ordering of sites based on occurrences and frequencies of European goods. Although the dates of manufacture and shipment of certain goods can be identified using European documentary records, associated archeological frameworks are based on the assumption that trade goods were distributed in a distance- and time-transgressive manner. Contemporary perspectives on contact in the 16th and early 17th centuries recognize that there were different modes of participation in, and access to, trade networks. These variations resulted in unequal distribu-



French trade bead found at the Creekside Rock Shelter on the Elisha Winn House property. This bead would have been similar to ones found throughout the northeastern North America.

tions of European-derived goods within and among Iroquoian communities, including the outright rejection of European goods and influences, rendering such trade good chronologies suspect as region-wide, generalized criteria and frameworks.

More widely, there is now a rethinking of contact processes and indigenous consumption of foreign materials across North America. Such studies invariably identify complicated histories of differences both within (e.g.; variability among lineages and by rank) and among indigenous communities; thus, in this research, we argue that it is important to use an alternative time frame based on independent evidence—from dendrochronologically calibrated radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating—avoiding interpretative assumptions and logic transfers. Elsewhere in the world independent absolute chronological time frames (especially ^{14}C) have repeatedly challenged the assumptions of relative chronologies built on expectations about normative chronological distribution patterns and often scarce and nonrepresentative data from trade and cultural exchange. We therefore test the material culture-based assumptions concerning chronology for contact-era northeastern North America and provide a start toward an independent high-resolution time frame. ■ SA

You can read the complete article on the [Science Advances Web site](#).

GARS/FDF News

- **GARS Officers Election:** At a special-called business meeting during the annual Christmas Party Gwinnett Archaeology Research Society (GARS) President Delana Gilmore presented the nominations for officers, which were approved. Delana Gilmore and Vice President Jenna Tran will continue in their positions, and Kay McKenna was elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer. *Congrats, Kay!*
- **FDF Annual Meeting: *The Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, January 20 at Fort Daniel beginning at 3PM. The meeting is opened to the public.***
- **GARS Meeting:** There will not be a GARS meeting this month due to the FDF Annual Meeting. However, GARS members are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting. The next GARS meeting will be on Tuesday, February 19. Guest speaker Dr. Kate Deeley, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Georgia Gwinnett College, will be speaking on the recent archaeological investigation at the William Harris Homestead.
- Last month FDF member and University of North Georgia student Tyler Holman participated in an archaeological excavation with Jannie Loubser in Jackson County. The dig was at a Native American site west of Nicholson, Georgia, and was sponsored by Jackson County Government and Stratum Unlimited—in conjunction with the Watson Brown Foundation. More details are forthcoming!



Dr. Deeley with GARS volunteers during one of the archaeological investigations at the William Harris Homestead.

More Diggin's



- **AUTHOR LECTURE:** *New York Times* bestselling author **Brad Meltzer** will be speaking about his latest book, *The First Conspiracy*, on **Friday, January 11 at the Atlanta History Center beginning at 7PM**. In this historical page-turner, Brad Meltzer teams up with American history writer and documentary television producer, Josh Mensch, to unravel the shocking true story behind what has previously been a footnote in the pages of history. Drawing on extensive research, Meltzer and Mensch capture in riveting detail how George Washington not only defeated the most powerful military force in the world but also uncovered the secret plot against him in the tumultuous days leading up to July 4, 1776. Tickets are \$40 for general public and \$35 for members. **Each ticket includes a copy of *The First Conspiracy*.** For more information or to get tickets visit the [Atlanta History Center Web site](#).
- **GENEALOGY:** Gwinnett Historical Society will be hosting a **Genealogy 101 Workshop on Thursday, January 17 at the Lawrenceville Female Seminary beginning at 6PM**. Join **Elizabeth Olson**, professional genealogist and GHS Genealogy Chairperson, on how to get started researching your family tree. The event is free, but registration is required. To register go to [gwinnettparks.com](#) with code LFS18105 or call (770) 822-5178.
- **MLK DAY CELEBRATION:** Enjoy FREE Admission Day at both Atlanta History Center campuses in Buckhead and Midtown on Monday, January 21. Featuring special programming highlighting the contributions and stories of African-Americans in Atlanta, Atlanta History Center guests will enjoy immersive museum theatre performances and inspiring activities for all ages. For more information and a schedule of events visit the [Atlanta History Center Web site](#).

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Off the Grid: Ossabaw Island, Georgia

Excerpt from the Off the Grid column written by Marley Brown in the [Archaeology Magazine January/February 2019 issue](#)

Draped in Spanish moss and overrun by the wild descendants of hogs introduced in the 16th century, Georgia's Ossabaw Island is both a time capsule and rural oasis. Just 20 miles south of Savannah by water, Ossabaw spans 26,000 acres. Among its hundreds of archaeological features—representing at least 4,000 years of human habitation—are shell rings and burial mounds left by the earliest inhabitants, remains of precontact Native American villages, and 18th-century indigo plantations. According to archaeologist Victor Thompson of the University of Georgia, Ossabaw may have been abandoned at some time before the Spanish arrived on the Georgia coast in the 1540s. Archaeologists hope to determine when and why the island's indigenous people, the Guale, left. Ossabaw was in



private hands until 1978 when its owner, the now 105-year-old Eleanor Torrey West, sold it to the state with the stipulation that it be protected as a cultural and environmental preserve. Ossabaw is only accessible by boat, and visitation is limited. Fortunately for history buffs and nature lovers, the nonprofit Ossabaw Island

Foundation offers tours and overnight stays and hosts public events throughout the year. The foundation has also restored several buildings belonging to the island's North End Plantation, including three mid-19th century tabby cabins (pictured left) that were originally houses for enslaved people. They are named for their

unique construction style, which uses a type of concrete made of oyster shells, lime, and sand. Their West African cultural traditions (now known as *Gullah Geechee*) continue to thrive across the Georgia and South Carolina Lowcountry. ■ **AM**

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To keep up with the latest digs and activities from GARS follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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