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Rising From the Subsoil: Knowledge Construction and the Role of Avocationalists in Central New York Archaeology

Introduction

My interest in archaeology began during the fall of 2007, when I took my first anthropology course at Colgate University on the history of Native North Americans. After learning about the Iroquois confederacy, among other groups, I gained a new appreciation of the cultural past of America, and particularly of Central New York. Even though I have spent the majority of my life in the western portion of New York State, an area rich in Iroquoian history and surrounded by many contemporary Native American groups, I was never fully exposed to native culture, and I knew very little about the people who once occupied the area.

Driving through the winding back roads surrounding Colgate, accompanied by my newfound interest in the history of the region, I began to imagine what the area must have looked like hundreds, or even thousands of years ago. Longhouses would have dotted the hilltops, occupied by people who lived a very different life than my own. I wanted to know more about these people, and my curiosity led me to take an introductory course on archaeology. It was in this class that I learned how archaeology acts as a window into the past, helping to reconstruct cultures and ways of life through the excavation, examination, and interpretation of material remains.

After completing this course, I enrolled in “Field Methods and Interpretations in Archaeology,” a hands-on class which afforded students the opportunity to conduct fieldwork at an Oneida Iroquois site dating to the late 1500s. As a class, we excavated part of the Cameron site, in Oneida, New York, methodically screening the soil and searching for artifacts and cultural remains. It was a remarkable feeling to hold a piece of pottery, or a glass trade bead, or a projectile point, which likely had not been touched by another human hand in over 400 years. Once the fieldwork was completed, we carried out a lengthy process of cleaning and cataloguing artifacts. Finally, we wrote a report documenting our findings and interpretations, and eventually published our work in a local bulletin. The course allowed me to experience the full process of archaeology, and it intensified my curiosity in the native history and cultures of Central New York.

Before going into the field to begin our research, a man named Monte Bennett came to speak to the class and give a tour of the site. Bennett told us that he had been doing archaeology for years, not as a professional, but as an amateur. I soon learned that Bennett was not alone; there were many other avocational archaeologists like him, with local archaeological chapters across the state and around the country. The closest chapter to Colgate, and the one that Monte Bennett belongs to, is the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association, headquartered in Norwich, NY. Its members have spent years of their lives conducting fieldwork, recording their findings, going to meetings, and even publishing, despite the fact that most of the members are not professional archaeologists. Many have no formal training in archaeology, however their collective work has been paramount to the construction of knowledge about the native history of Central New York. I was intrigued by the fact that a group of non-professionals were actively conducting archaeological fieldwork, and I wanted to learn more about these people, the contributions they have made to re-constructing Native American life-ways, and how they fit into the greater field of archaeology.

My dual interests in archaeology and local culture, both historic and pre-historic, led me to pursue an investigation of local avocational archaeology groups and their impact on the area. In this analysis, I will argue that within their subjugated position in the field of archaeology, avocational archaeologists in Central New York have made vital contributions to the construction of knowledge about the history of the area and Native American life-ways, through meetings, participation in fieldwork, cataloguing and publishing, and collaboration with professionals and students. The practice of avocational archaeology has in turn played a fundamental role in the construction of the identities of those who participate, acting as a venue for social gathering and contributing to feelings of personal fulfillment.

In order to more accurately define the position that avocational archaeologists have within the field, and discover the role that they have played as constructors of knowledge, I will begin this paper with a brief definition of archaeology and an outline of its history in America. Next, I will place avocationalists within the field of archaeology by defining what exactly it means to be an avocational archaeologist. I will then focus on one avocational archaeology group, the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association, and its members. Through a series of interviews and surveys with professional and non-professional archaeologists, including an extended interview with Professor Jordan Kerber, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies at Colgate University, I have gained important data on chapter member demographics, field methods and chapter activities, identity formation, and relationships with professional archaeologists. Additionally, I have collected data on the possession of recovered artifacts and the importance of recording and publishing findings.

After presenting conclusions about the avocational group and its members, I will discuss how students of archaeology fit into the equation, comparing their methods of excavation, their role as producers of knowledge, and their placement within the hierarchy of the field, with the avocationalists. While students of archaeology are not considered professionals, their location within institutions of higher learning, and their instruction as to the proper methods of excavation, cataloguing and interpretation by professional archaeologists places them in a mediated position between professional and avocational. The comparison between avocational archaeologists and students will draw on my observations of, and participation in, Colgate University's "Field Methods and Interpretations in Archaeology" course during the 2009 field season. Finally, I will look at the prospective future of avocational archaeology in America, and analyze the changing nature of the craft.

The History of Archaeology in America

Defining Archaeology

Before delving deeper into the role that avocational archaeologists in Central New York have played in the construction of knowledge about the history of the area, and the subordinate placement of avocationalists within the greater field, it will be useful to first define archaeology and detail its history in America. Archaeology constitutes one of the four sub-fields of anthropology, which is broadly defined as the study of human kind, particularly focused on the similarities and differences of people across time and space (Binford 1962: 217). There exist a great number of archaeological disciplines, including classical archaeology, Egyptology, and historic and prehistoric archaeology. However despite its many forms, archaeological pursuits all contribute to the goal of anthropology by attempting to explain and reconstruct human behavior and past cultures through the excavation and interpretation of material remains.

Another commonality exists in the fact that all archaeological resources, the physical objects of study, are endangered, finite, and non-renewable. Due to the non-renewable nature of archaeological resources, practices of site conservation and stewardship are supremely important goals if archaeologists are to continue to learn more about the past. Therefore, the production of knowledge within the field of archaeology centers on the methodical excavation of material remains with an understanding of the finite nature of these resources, and the interpretation of excavated materials to reconstruct past cultures.

The Rise of Professional Archaeology In America

Archaeology was not established as a formal, legitimate field of study in the United States until well after the nation's founding, although early settlers and colonists began making observations about Native Americans and collecting artifacts almost immediately following Columbus's voyage. After America's independence, several noteworthy events sowed the seeds of what would eventually sprout into a flourishing academic discipline. One such individual was Thomas Jefferson. Before becoming America's third President, Jefferson systematically excavated a series of burial mounds on his Virginia property (Willey and Sabloff 1974: 37). According to Fagan (2009: 13), "Jefferson made careful note of the strata in the mound, making this the first stratigraphic excavation in the Americas." His methodical and scientific approach to dissecting the burial mounds is noteworthy in the history and progression of archaeology as a discipline.

Another ancestor of the field was Isaiah Thomas, a publisher who founded the American Antiquities Society in 1812. According to Willey and Sabloff (1974: 38), the Society's creation "was a reflection of a growing public interest in the history of North America...it gave the growing but diffuse interest in archaeological concerns a focal point." Other men, including Caleb Atwater and Dr. James H. McCulloh Jr. became important figures in the early development of scientific archaeology. Despite the increased interest in the history and native people of North America, Willey and Sabloff (1974: 40) note that, "As of 1840, American archaeology as a scholarly entity simply did not exist. There were virtually no full-time practitioners of archaeology and no professionals. There was no field methodology and the conceptual inventory was minimal."

During the next 70 years, archaeology would slowly make the transition from an unstructured, non-professional activity, to a more developed and legitimate discipline, with formalized methods and university-educated practitioners. Around 1914, a shift in the focus of archaeological work occurred, and stratigraphic excavation, with close attention to the chronology of artifacts, became a general practice (Willey and Sabloff 1974: 88-89). In 1935, the Society for American Archaeology was founded, and helped solidify archaeology into a professional, legitimate field. Further developments, beginning around 1940, placed a primacy on context and function, and encouraged archaeologists to reconstruct cultures and everyday activities through the items that they excavated (Willey and Sabloff 1974: 131). These advancements in thought, institutions, and methodology helped solidify archaeology into a legitimate and recognized professional field.

According to Alice B. Kehoe (1999: 6), "The history of science in nineteenth century America, including the history of archaeology, can be described as a process comprised of...four phases: preemption of 'democratic' participation by credentialed specialists, institutionalization, legitimation, and...professional autonomy." Kehoe asserts that by 1900, archaeology had successfully met the criteria to officially be considered a profession. The trend towards

professionalization in archaeology will be key in this study. As the field transformed into a formal, scientific discipline, categories of professional and non-professional inherently formed. According to Hudson (1981: 132), “the more science a subject contains, the smaller the place there is in it for the amateur.” Those avocationalists or non-professionals who chose not pursue a degree or career in the field assumed a subjugated position in the archaeological hierarchy.

Defining Avocationalism

Distinguishing Avocationalists from Professionals, Pothunters and Collectors

After laying down the main principles of archaeology and the rise of the discipline in America, it is now possible to define avocational archaeology, and place its practitioners within the hierarchy of the field. In Brian Taylor’s essay (1995), “Amateurs, Professionals, and the Knowledge of Archaeology,” several characteristics are laid out which help distinguish an amateur from a professional in any field. Taylor draws his list of characteristics from Anleu (1992: 24), and it includes formal education and entry requirements, a monopoly over a body of knowledge and skills, autonomy over the terms of practice, collegial authority, a code of ethics, and a service ideal (Taylor 2005: 499).

According to Jordan Kerber, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies at Colgate University, the term avocationalist can be understood within an archaeological context as “referring to people who have an avid interest in archaeology. It doesn’t have to be fieldwork, just an interest in the past. And it doesn’t have to be any particular time period or any area of the world.” The term “avid” is essential to Kerber’s definition, as it reflects a patterned interest in the subject, developed over time. Gordon DeAngelo (1992: 28) also acknowledges the avid interest of avocationalists, writing that an avocationalist is a “serious student in his chosen topic.”

Kerber goes on to say that, “I would separate the avocational amateur archaeologist with the professional archaeologist on the sole basis of career in the discipline and a degree, it doesn’t have to be an advanced degree, it can be just a B.A. or a college degree.” Interestingly, Kerber’s definition does not contain one of the fundamental characteristics that Anleu and Taylor highlighted: a monopoly over a body of knowledge and skills. The intentional omission of this criterion is significant, and will be explored in the next section.

Apart from the distinction between professional and avocational archaeologists, a second important division exists concerning avocationalists and pothunters. According to Mallouf (1996: 198), “archaeologists usually apply the term ‘looter’ or ‘pothunter’ to people who carry out unregulated and unscientific ‘digs’ of archaeological deposits to obtain artifacts for their personal collections or for sale.” Masse and Gregonis (1996: 375) further elaborate on the differences between avocationalists and pothunters, writing, “The desire to preserve and protect the archaeological record is one of the two major defining principles that separate the modern professional and avocational archaeologists from the pothunter.” They claim that unlike pothunters, avocationalists and professionals share a goal of “interpreting and telling the contextual story of the archaeological record” (Masse and Gregonis 1996: 375).

While many avocational archaeologists, including members of the Chenango Chapter, do maintain personal collections of artifacts, they are not considered pothunters because their digs are generally scientific or partly scientific, and their ultimate goals are to record data, interpret their findings, and share information. Gordon DeAngelo (1992: 28) makes a clear distinction between avocationalists and mere collectors, writing that if an avocational archaeologist has a

collection, it is “provenienced and cataloged. The objects have been identified and researched.” Based on this information, it is clear that avocational archaeologists make up a unique category within the field, and must be distinguished from professionals, pothunters and collectors in order to fully understand the contributions they have made to the body of archaeological knowledge.

Placing Avocationalists in the Hierarchy of Archaeology

Before further examining the role that local avocationalists have played in constructing knowledge about the Central New York area, it will be useful to examine the professionalization of archaeology and the placement of avocationalists within the hierarchy of the discipline in terms of Bourdieu’s conception of profession and Foucault’s theory of subjugated knowledges. According to Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 242):

The notion of profession is...dangerous because it has, as always in such cases, all appearance of neutrality...To speak of ‘profession’ is to fasten on a true reality, onto a set of people who bear the same name...they are endowed with a roughly equivalent economic status and, more importantly, they are organized into ‘professional associations’ endowed with a code of ethics, collective bodies that define rules for admission, etc.

As archaeology transformed into a profession, it acquired the characteristics that Bourdieu describes. While some of these traits, including neutrality, or at least the appearance of neutrality, and a code of ethics, appear to be positive attributes of the field, the creation of collective bodies that define rules for admission placed those who had not met the criteria of a “professional” into a subordinate position within the hierarchy of the discipline.

According to Michel Foucault (1976: 210-211), a power hierarchy exists relative to the production of truth in any subject area. Those in power, i.e. those who have a degree and pursue a career within a given field, also have the power to create truth. Even amongst this empowered group, more ranking exists, distinguished by factors including practicing at prestigious institutions, the acquisition of tenure, and so on. Individuals who do not occupy positions of power constitute a class with subjugated knowledges, which Foucault (1976: 203) defines as “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.” Within the field of archaeology, avocationalists may be said to possess subjugated knowledges to a degree, as they do not meet the criteria of professional and therefore hold no *official* power with regards to the academic discipline. Joshua Sheldon, a member of the Chenango Chapter, recognized the subjugated position of the avocationalist relative to professionals, claiming that “Any time you have professionals in your group, you will base anything you do in that group around that professional’s opinion and their work in the field.” Additionally, Monte Bennett acknowledged the fact that professionals may have more connections within the field and occupy a different hierarchical rank, claiming, “a PhD can open doorways that you might not gain access to, because of the people they know...access...and the vast knowledge that they automatically have.”

However, despite their lower rank and lack of power, it will become evident throughout this study that avocationalists have been vital to the production of knowledge about the native history of Central New York. Michel Foucault not only recognized the existence of subjugated knowledges, such as those produced by avocational archaeologists, but he also explained the

usefulness of such wisdom. According to Foucault's theory of genealogy, consideration should be given to "the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory...and arbitrary idea of what constitutes science and its objects" (Foucault 1977: 83).

Similarly, Jordan Kerber intentionally does not use the term "knowledge" to distinguish between professional and non-professional archaeologists in his definition of avocationalism, claiming, "I don't use knowledge as a distinction between avocationalist and professionals. If it weren't for the avocational archaeologists, specifically the Chenango Chapter, we would have relatively very little information about Central New York archaeology." All professional archaeologists do not share this forward-thinking approach. However, by applying Kerber's definition and Foucault's theory, which both do not automatically disqualify information produced by avocational archaeologists or subjugated groups, one can begin to understand how local avocationalists have made accepted and legitimate contributions to the body of archaeological knowledge in Central New York.

Archaeological Societies

The following sections will explore the history and contemporary activities of archaeological societies, particularly in New York State and specifically with regards to the New York State Archaeological Association, which includes the Chenango Chapter. According to Carl H. Chapman (1985: 241), "The formation of amateur archaeological societies is one way to coalesce the various interests and skills of nonprofessional or avocational and professional archaeologists in the pursuit of archaeological knowledge." He goes on to claim that, "Such societies can take credit for providing the stimuli and the medium through which individuals developed the skills that have made vital contributions to American archaeology" (Chapman 1985: 247). While many individual avocationalists have made great contributions to the field, the archaeological society or association acts as a venue for individuals to gather, socialize, work together, and share their findings, making the society as a whole greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Societies and associations add legitimacy and credibility, offering the ability to share information with other avocationalists and professionals and potentially even publish. This legitimacy can be explained in terms of Bourdieu's definition of a profession, in which he claims that professionals are "organized into 'professional associations' endowed with a code of ethics" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 242). Even though local archaeological societies are typically made up of both professionals and avocationalists, the act of joining one of these associations, which are all endowed with at least a rudimentary code of ethics, adds credibility to all of its members. The existence of archaeological societies is crucial to understanding how avocationalists in Central New York have been critical to the production of knowledge in the area.

The History of the NYSAA

Archaeological associations exist across America and around the world, however for this study I will focus on the New York State Archaeological Association (NYSAA), and more specifically on its Chenango Chapter. According to its website (nysaaweb.bfn.org), "The NYSAA is a non-profit organization composed of people interested in various phases of archaeology in New York State...All who are devoted to historic and pre-historic archaeology

are invited to join.” It is important to note that there are no professional criteria in the form of degrees, publication history, or past experience required to join the Association.

The NYSAA was founded in 1916 and was initially composed of 48 charter members and one chapter, the Lewis Henry Morgan Chapter. By 1921, the Association had reached a membership of over 300 individuals. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, local chapters continued to form and were incorporated into the NYSAA. Today, the New York State Archaeological Association has 16 chapters across the state (Figure 1), routinely publishes a bulletin, and holds annual state meetings with distinguished speakers.

Throughout its history, the NYSAA has proven to be a sound model of how professional and non-professional archaeologists can work together to further the interests of the field. As of 1990, the Association had been responsible for more than five thousand pages of scholarly publications, clearly defining itself as a source of original research on the archaeological history of New York State (Hayes 1992: 48). Understanding the history of the NYSAA and its contributions to the field is paramount to understanding how one of its chapters, the Chenango Chapter, has replicated these achievements on a smaller, more localized scale.

The Chenango Chapter

After providing background information and a basis for my research, by defining archaeology and avocational archaeology, outlining the rise of each category in America, placing avocationalists within the hierarchy of the field, and detailing the importance of archaeological associations, it is finally possible to delve deeper into the principle focus of this investigation: the Chenango Chapter and its members. The Chenango Chapter was founded in Norwich, New York, in 1950, and is one of the oldest chapters in the NYSAA. Members of the Chenango Chapter attend regular chapter meetings and annual state meetings, participate in field digs, catalogue recovered materials, and publish their findings in the chapter *Bulletin*.

In order to fully grasp exactly what the chapter does, and more importantly how its members have constructed knowledge about the history of the area, I attended a chapter meeting, observed a group of avocationalists conducting fieldwork at the Cameron site in Oneida, New York, and interviewed and surveyed many of its members. I will begin this deeper investigation of the Chenango Chapter by first presenting basic demographic information gleaned from my surveys and interviews of chapter members. Next, I will outline some of the chapter activities, including chapter meetings, fieldwork and methodology, and the production of publications. Within this discussion, I will also focus on individual chapter members, examining their motivation for dedicating so much time and effort to their hobby, and looking more closely at how avocational archaeology has contributed to their identities.

Demographic Information

The demographic information for members of the Chenango Chapter is based on a survey, sent to the chapter’s president for distribution amongst its members, as well as data collected during interviews. Because the survey was not completed by every member of the chapter, and every member was not interviewed, the statistics are somewhat incomplete, however general trends can be observed in the data. Additionally, two of the survey respondents are not affiliated with the Chenango Chapter, and an additional two respondents are members of multiple chapters.

Of the 14 survey respondents and interview subjects, there are 3 females and 11 males (Table 1). Despite the fact that the survey results are not complete, the male/female ratio present

in the data seems to be representative of a greater trend amongst avocational groups. In an article by Jane Holden Kelley entitled "Some Thoughts on Amateur Archaeology," Kelley (1963: 395) noticed a similar pattern amongst all amateur archaeologists, writing, "Amateurism is primarily indulged in by males; however, a sizable minority of women and children accompany the man of the house..." At the Chenango Chapter meeting that I attended in Norwich, New York, the vast majority of members present were males, however the group that I observed conducting fieldwork at the Cameron site had an equal number of men and women. Although the survey data and previous literature both indicate a majority of males overall, it is clear that women do participate in avocational archaeology and join local chapters, and that they have made great contributions to the field. Within the Chenango Chapter, female members have held executive board positions, including the role of president, and have excavated sites, interpreted materials, and published articles along with their male peers.

A clear pattern also exists relative to the age of chapter members. Only one respondent was under 30 years old, and the average age of all respondents was 60 (Table 1). Again, although the survey was not completed by all members of the chapter, respondents and those interviewed commonly acknowledged the problems of an aging membership. One avocationalist claimed:

I guess my biggest complaint now is that we don't have any new members and we can't get any young people in. Where's all the people? Is there no more interest? There's too many other things going on, too much computers and all that. They think about doing something out doors, doing something outside, and its no fun anymore.

Another respondent wrote, "I am very worried about the future of the chapter and avocational archaeology. We have very few new members joining the chapter and our group is aging." Although many members shared the idea that an aging membership was a serious threat to the continuation of their group, Monte Bennett's view of the Chenango Chapter was somewhat more positive. Bennett explained that relative to other chapters, "we're one of the healthier chapters in the state. Some of the other chapters have 6 or 7 members and they're all 65 or older."

While age representation did not vary greatly between members, the professions of members showed considerable diversity (Table 1). Only one of the respondents is a professional archaeologist. Four members stated that they were retired, from professions including veterinarian, Chief of police, and teacher. Of those still working, occupations ranged from music teacher to the Chenango County Historian.

Based on the responses to the survey, it is evident that one does not need to have a job that even tenuously relates to archaeology in order to be an avocational archaeologist. One of the unique characteristics of archaeology as a discipline is that individuals from such a wide range of professional fields, skill sets, and ages can conduct original, scientific research and publish their findings. The question of how archaeology has contributed to the identities of avocationalists, and the diverse ways in which Chenango Chapter members gained an interest in the field will be explored in the next section.

Chapter Activities: Chapter Meetings, Fieldwork, Cataloguing, and Publication

Chapter Meetings and Identity Formation

Perhaps the best way to truly discern how avocational archaeologists in Central New York have actively produced knowledge is to detail the activities in which chapters engage. The primary venue for gathering and sharing information among members of the Chenango Chapter is the monthly chapter meeting, held at the Historical Museum in Norwich, NY. The meeting that I attended, in October of 2010, was conducted under a cordial yet formal atmosphere. Members congregated in a small room in the Historical Museum surrounded by a myriad of artifacts from around the world; a fitting locale for such an event. Led by the chapter's president, the meeting was comprised of two primary phases: the presentation portion, during which a current chapter member presented his original research in front of the group, and the business meeting.

Before the presentation began, one man stood up and requested a moment of silence for a chapter member who had recently passed away, remembering his friend as "a great, great person, a great archaeologist." The significance of this moment of silence is twofold. First, it demonstrates the camaraderie amongst chapter members, and the social aspects of being an avocational archaeologist. This camaraderie is evident in all of the chapter's activities, and grows from the sheer amount of time that chapter members spend together, in the field, in meetings, and while writing reports. In a survey response, one avocational archaeologist stated, "these are wonderful people who share my passion for central New York pre-history. It is a pleasure to meet with them and share our discoveries and learnings." Another respondent described the chapter as "a cordial group." After spending only a short amount of time with members of the group at their meeting, it is immediately clear that their shared interest and time spent together has led to deep-seated friendships.

The second point of significance regarding the moment of silence is the actual wording of the tribute. It is important to note that the man was remembered by his fellow chapter members as a "great archaeologist." The inclusion of the word "archaeologist" as an integral part of the man's identity is worth emphasizing, as it is indicative of the fact that archaeology was a fundamental part of his life. Based on survey results, it is clear that archaeology has indeed played a central role in the lives of many avocationalists. Most chapter members have been involved in the practice for over 20 years, and several have been doing archaeology for more than four decades. For some, archaeology has been much more than an occasional pastime; it has served as an activity for family bonding, a basis for long-lasting friendships, a source of pride and achievement, and even a spiritual experience. For instance, in a description of her first time finding an artifact, one chapter member wrote, "[I found] my first projectile point while walking in a plowed field. It was more than just a 'find.' It was a spiritual moment in that it hadn't been touched by another soul in many, many years. One could only imagine the story that it held." Other respondents linked their passion for archaeology to childhood memories, solidifying the field within their identity as an integral component of their youth. One chapter member stated, "When I was a kid, I used to watch westerns with my dad and became fascinated with Native Americans and their culture...In 1971 I took my first trip to the 'West' to see real Indians and visited some archaeological sites. On my return, I started looking for Native American culture in New York." Monte Bennett summed up his experience with avocational archaeology nicely, claiming, "For me it's actually been a life... I like the time in the out-of-doors. I like the sun on my back. I like a few friends with me." For many chapter members, the

practice of avocational archaeology has indeed been a life-long hobby and an integral part of their identities. Even in death, avocationalists are remembered for their passion of archaeology and the contributions they have made to the field.

Following the moment of silence, those members in attendance at the meeting listened to a presentation on experimental archaeology by fellow Chenango Chapter member and avocational archaeologist Joshua Sheldon. Sheldon proposed a theory relating to the prehistoric evolution of Native American weaponry from the atlatl, or spear-thrower, to the bow and arrow. His unique method of research entails recreating native technologies using only materials and techniques that would have been available to the people he studies, and then testing the effectiveness of his theory with a physical application of the weapons he produces.

After a short video, which showed Sheldon constructing and testing the weapons, the floor was opened to discussion. Those in attendance questioned Sheldon on his theory and offered corroborating evidence from their own research. For example, one man contributed his knowledge of native life-ways from a different area of the world, stating “I think of this in terms of Mexico and Central American weapons technology.” This type of presentation, where both professional and non-professional archaeologists are able to present original research and discuss and defend their findings within the group is an integral way in which avocationalists are able to construct knowledge. The process, conducted in a formal and professional manner, adds credibility to the presenter’s research, and helps disseminate ideas and promote discussion.

The concluding segment of the meeting focused on chapter business, and included a report by the chapter’s treasurer, upcoming research presentations, and plans for future excavations. On the whole, the Chenango Chapter’s monthly meeting serves as a gathering place for all those in the area who are interested in archaeology, and as a venue for scholarly discussion. According to the New York State Archaeological Association’s website (<http://nysaaweb.bfn.org/>), the main goals of the NYSAA include, “to vigorously promote research into the lifestyles of the early inhabitants of New York State,” and “to interpret excavated cultures in a shared environment by lecture or publication...” As a microcosm of the New York State Archaeological Association, the Chenango Chapter accomplishes these goals through its monthly meetings, and serves as a setting for avocationalists to contribute to the body of knowledge about New York State archaeology.

Fieldwork

While the monthly meeting provides a space for research to be presented and discussed, it is the work that avocational archaeologists perform in the field that constitutes the primary source of data for their research. Members of the Chenango Chapter have been conducting methodical and organized fieldwork for over half a century, as is evident from publications in their *Bulletin* dating back to 1958 (Stanford and Whitney 1958: 1-5). By discovering and excavating sites across Central New York, these avocational archaeologists have made significant contributions to the local history of the area. This section will explore aspects of avocational fieldwork, including site determination, professional ethics, and methodology.

Before delving deeper into the actual process of fieldwork, it is important to note that the Chenango Chapter has historically had greater access and more unsupervised free-range over the excavation of sites than many other groups across the country. This is due primarily to its isolated position, both geographically and relative to major research institutions. Monte Bennett explained this isolation and the consequences that have arisen:

We happen to be kind of in a vacuum in our area here...So there's kind of a space in there, there are a few professionals...but they're actually more teaching students at universities, and they don't have either the funding or the extra time to do field schools and things like that, its very expensive...its actually probably helped us in a sense. (Interview November 12, 2010)

This vacuum has therefore made it possible for avocational archaeologists in Central New York to conduct fieldwork without the weight of professional oversight.

Additionally, a lack of laws preventing avocational archaeologists from digging in the area has benefited the Chenango Chapter. According to Bennett, "...the western states are more protected because of the...laws. Out there you've got to be a professional or on a college crew, or you don't excavate or dig." One such law is the American Antiquities Act of 1906, which forbids excavation of any historic or prehistoric ruin, monument, or object of antiquity located on government-controlled lands without a permit. As one might expect, permits are only given to institutions deemed "properly qualified to conduct such examination, excavation, or gathering...for the benefit of reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific or educational institutions" (www.nps.gov/history/local-law/anti1906.htm). Therefore, in areas where archaeological sites are located on government-controlled land, and are protected under the Antiquities Act, it would be very difficult for avocational groups to obtain a permit or to conduct fieldwork at all. The lack of professional credentials in the form of a degree or institutional affiliation has consequently hindered some avocational groups from digging in certain areas of the United States. However, in Central New York, the presence of many Oneida Iroquois sites on private land has allowed Chenango Chapter members to actively excavate native materials and cultural remains for decades.

The combined effects of geographical isolation and an absence of enforced anti-excavation laws have created the ideal conditions necessary for avocational archaeologists to conduct fieldwork in Central New York. Before the long process of scientific excavation can begin, sites must be located and the avocational group must obtain permission from landowners to dig. Site discovery is one of the primary ways that non-professional archaeologists have contributed to Iroquoian archaeology and to the body of knowledge about the area. For example, one survey respondent claimed to have discovered more than 35 sites in New York's Madison and Onondaga Counties. According to DeAngelo (1992: 29), "Avocationalists are often the best source regarding local sites. They can often produce actual objects to prove the existence of a site."

Sites are located and identified in a number of ways. Some avocationalists, like the aforementioned survey respondent, actively search for previously unknown sites of habitation. Other sites are found by farmers or by surface collectors. In one of the earliest publications of the Chenango Chapter (Wemple 1960: 2), a description of where to look for Native American sites is given:

The location of Indian sites is not wholly predictable but certain characteristics are common to most. If we look along the rivers and imagine them to have had a higher and more constant flow and observe where low ridges and benches would have been somewhat dry and protected, we will discover many occupied areas...the cracked stones of their fires and the black soil stain of their debris are also tell tale signs of their occupancy.

The same article also addresses the need to obtain permission from landowners before digging, stating, "Permission should always be obtained to even walk over the farmer's fields to search for artifacts" (Wemple 1960: 2). Seeking the permission of landowners is another way that avocational archaeologists maintain a professional and ethical approach to their work.

Once a site has been located, and permission has been obtained from a landowner to dig, the avocational archaeologists may begin their excavation, which can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few years. In order to better understand their field methods, I observed a group of avocational archaeologists as they excavated part of the Cameron site, a centuries-old Oneida Iroquois village located in Oneida, NY. The site has been heavily excavated for over 100 years by pothunters, amateurs and professionals alike.

According to one survey respondent who is also a professional archaeologist, "most of the state chapters use field methods demonstrated by Bob Funk in the 1970s (10 ft squares). Some groups...have changed to meters and follow professional methods. Other groups are still working on the 40-year-old model." While there is no standardized procedure for excavation amongst avocational archaeologists, the individuals that I observed at the Cameron site demonstrated experience in the field, and took a very methodical approach to their dig. Their process of excavation involved digging with trowels and shovels in a relatively large excavation pit, and then dumping the soil into a sifting screen. Using gloved hands, the individuals spread the soil out, pressing the dirt through the screen and searching for artifacts or cultural remains. All recovered materials were saved, and their locations were recorded.

In addition to undertaking a methodical and scientific approach, the avocational archaeologists that I talked with in the field also conveyed a strong preservation ethic, recognizing the importance of recording data and also of leaving some of the site undisturbed for future excavators. One individual expressed these ideas to me, declaring "there's always the feeling that some of it should be preserved for the future. You shouldn't dig the entire site."

In Anleu's list of characteristics distinguishing an amateur from a professional, a code of ethics is listed as a key professional trait (Anleu 1992: 24). A second ethical guideline that many avocationalists have adopted is a respect for burial remains and sacred funerary objects, specifically by avoiding the excavation of Native American graves. According to the U.S. department of the interior (<http://www.nps.gov/history/Nagpra/FAQ/INDEX.HTM>), "the excavation and inadvertent discovery provisions of NAGPRA apply only to Federal and tribal lands." Although the guidelines of NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, do not cover private collections or excavations on private land, Jordan Kerber explained that,

Many avocational archaeologists have backed away a bit from excavating human remains. I think that they may see the ethical issue surrounding that but I also think they may see complicating issues concerning the donation of their collection to a museum in the future. (Interview October 29, 2010)

One survey respondent substantiated this notion when he claimed, "there is a heightened sensitivity to digging, especially where burials are concerned...I fully agree to avoid burials and ceremonial sites." The preservation ethic and respect for Native American graves echoed by many avocational archaeologists in survey responses and in the field lends credibility to their work.

Because avocational archaeologists are not professionals by definition, and because most do not have a college degree in anthropology or archaeology, the question arises as to how these individuals learned the techniques and ethical responsibilities necessary to conduct suitable fieldwork. When asked whether they had any formal training in archaeology, the vast majority of survey respondents said that they did not. In Harold Mohrman's sentimental memoir of his life as an avocational archaeologist, he describes one of the unique aspects of archaeology that drew him to pursue it as a hobby. Mohrman (1985: 239) writes, "There is probably no other science or technology with the unique appeal of amateur archaeology. It is possible to become an expert through self-education."

Although it may be possible to learn the basic fundamentals of archaeology through self-education, Jordan Kerber maintains that "one of the best ways to teach archaeology is to do archaeology, and the doing of archaeology involves excavation." This principle of learning by doing has been applied by members of the Chenango Chapter for years. For example, in order to undertake his work in a more professional and legitimized manner, Monte Bennett explained that he and other members of the chapter learned proper field techniques by attending field schools led by the former State Archaeologist of New York, Dr. William Ritchie:

Dr. Ritchie came out to visit, and we were told, taught that really you want to be careful when you excavate, and this is how you excavate. You came out to Dr. Ritchie's summer digs, and you could go and participate and observe and watch, and this is how we slowly learned, not by going to college or college books, but hands-on. (Interview November 12, 2010)

The fact that Bennett and many other avocationalists did not go to college for archaeology has not limited their ability to conduct scientific, ethical, and meaningful excavations of sites across Central New York. However, by not obtaining a degree, one of the key symbols of the professional field, the knowledge they have produced through years of fieldwork may be seen as subjugated within the hierarchy of the field.

Cataloguing and Items Recovered

In addition to excavating materials in a professional and ethical manner, avocational archaeologists from the Chenango Chapter routinely catalogue the items that they recover, taking detailed notes, and thereby preserving the record for future study. This practice is a vital way that non-professionals have helped construct knowledge, and is one of the key features that distinguishes avocationalists from collectors or pothunters. When asked about the importance of cataloguing his collection, Monte Bennett replied:

If [an artifact] is not catalogued, I'm not going to say you should just throw it away or put it under your coffee table, but there's no provenience. And a student or a grad student who would like to study it, as a research problem, if there's no provenience the artifact cannot be used technically. Whereas if its catalogued, written about, then they can actually almost place that artifact back in the excavation unit at the proper depth. Once you dig that unit, you've destroyed a page of history, as they used to say, so it's very important. (Interview November 12, 2010)

Despite the fact that maintaining a personal collection of artifacts may seem unprofessional in some regards, avocationalists who keep their artifacts and catalogue their collections are still able to construct important knowledge about local history. By preserving all of the artifacts from a particular dig or site in a single collection, it becomes possible for future researchers to study the material and gain a fuller picture of that site. Therefore, the maintenance of collections with careful records of artifact provenience, or the 3-dimensional position relative to depth, space and time, has allowed Chenango Chapter members to act as a resource for professionals, students and other avocational archaeologists around the area.

Many avocationalists from the Chenango Chapter have recognized the importance of keeping their collections intact for future study, and have made preparations for the handling of their artifacts after they pass away. According to Kerber,

where the issue becomes difficult is what happens with those materials upon the death of that individual...We've seen a variety of occurrences. They range from the estates of those individuals having those materials sold at auction ...scattering those objects, which I think is a real tragedy, a real loss...Some individuals have set out in their wills to donate their materials to certain museums, and other individuals, it's still unclear what will become of those materials. (Interview October 29, 2010)

From survey and interview responses, it is clear that many chapter members have decided to take all the steps necessary to keep their collections intact once they are gone. One respondent said, "The items I have found surface hunting, I have...left in my will (with documentation) to the Historical Museum in Norwich." Some avocational archaeologists suggested more creative ways to pass on their collections. For example, one individual declared, "I think it'd be nice to put it in a place where students can use it. Not just in a museum where it can be looked at, but where students could really use the stuff rather than just throwing it away." Another chapter member has been in contact with contemporary Native Americans regarding his collection, and claimed, "The Oneidas have approached me in the past few years, that when I am ready to dispose of my collection before my death or afterwards, they would purchase the whole thing...they would keep it intact, because they're an entity that's going to be around." These quotes raise a critical point regarding the importance of passing on a collection to institutions that are likely to be in existence for a long time, including museums, universities and contemporary tribes. It also shows the ethical responsibilities felt by some avocationalists as stewards of the physical remnants of past cultures.

While present-day members of the Chenango Chapter have recognized the importance of carefully cataloguing their collections and artifacts, and passing on their collections intact, these practices are still relatively new amongst avocational archaeology groups. According to an article by Jane Holden Kelley (1963: 395), which looks at the status of avocational archaeology in the 1960s, "The field-laboratory ratio for amateurs is somewhat different. Many spend virtually no laboratory time, and even the better amateurs may spend one evening a month working on notes or cataloguing." Bennett acknowledged the fact that cataloguing wasn't always a standard practice among the Chenango Chapter, claiming, "some of the old diggers...were dying off in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. They never wrote anything down. It was pathetic... we have left at least a paper trail. So you can study, or someone can study someday, what we've done." Other chapter members reiterated this point in survey responses. For

example, when asked how the craft of avocational archaeology has changed over the years, one respondent wrote, “The avocational archaeologist is now aware that scientific digging and recording is very important.” Another claimed that the “responsible handling of artifacts has become a key issue in today’s archaeological world.” Based on these responses, it is evident that since the chapter’s founding, avocational members of the Chenango Chapter have made great strides in terms of the professional handling and cataloguing of recovered artifacts. This move towards better record keeping has been a fundamental way in which avocational archaeologists have helped construct knowledge and have contributed to a better understanding of the past.

Publication

Perhaps the most important activity that the Chenango Chapter and its members participate in is the creation of their periodic publication, *The Bulletin of the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association*. Of all the ways that avocational archaeologists in Central New York have helped construct knowledge about the area, the publication of their findings and interpretations is undoubtedly the most significant, and best represents the professional standards of the group. According to the September, 2010 publication,

The Bulletin of the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association, begun in 1958 by Theodore Whitney, is an occasional publication of the Chenango Chapter and is distributed to all chapter members. The *Bulletin* includes articles primarily on the archaeology of Central New York, though related topics may be appropriate.

Since its first issue in 1958, the *Bulletin* has served as a way for avocational and professional members of the chapter to publish their original research about Central New York archaeology and disperse information throughout the archaeological community. It acts as an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the cultural history of the area, and has covered dozens of local sites.

Professor Jordan Kerber explained that the chapter publication is utilized by students and professional archaeologists who are looking for information on Central New York archaeology, declaring, “It’s really the Chenango publications that provides a wealth of documented information on this region.” He also maintained that the continual publication of a *Bulletin* dating back to the founding of a chapter is relatively uncommon amongst avocational groups, and that the Chenango Chapter’s sense of professional ethics is also “very rare.” Bennett agreed with Kerber, stating, “We probably have done a better job reporting than any chapter in the state.” The Chenango Chapter’s *Bulletin* represents the tangible culmination of a number of activities, including fieldwork and the cataloguing of artifacts. By detailing their findings within the pages of the *Bulletin*, avocational archaeologists have permanently preserved their work, and can provide hard evidence of their contributions to the field of archaeology.

A relatively large number of Chenango Chapter members have published in the chapter *Bulletin*, with some members publishing scores of articles, and some reporting on only a few sites. When asked whether or not their participation in avocational archaeology has contributed to the body of knowledge about the history of the area, two survey respondents specifically said “yes” due to the fact that they have published articles in the chapter *Bulletin*. During my interviews with chapter members, the topic of publication as a source of pride and legitimacy

was frequently raised as well. While observing avocationalists at the Cameron site, one excavator told me,

I've published on 3 sites that I worked on in Onondaga...and I've got a couple publications that I need to write for the Chenango Chapter this year. One is on an artifact that we found, and it's the history of just the artifact...The other one is probably about the fauna at this site" (Interview October 26, 2010).

In "Memoir of an Avocational Archaeologist," Harold Mohrmon presents a theory concerning what motivates so many avocationalists to spend vast amounts of time writing and publishing their research. Mohrmon (1985: 239) claims, "Few things give more satisfaction to individuals than to see their names in print." The idea of cementing one's name and legacy in print is an important motivational factor to consider in order to fully understand why non-professionals would spend so much time excavating, cataloguing, and writing.

Despite the fact that many have chosen to publish their work, there exists a group of chapter members who are less enthusiastic about the prospect of publication. One survey respondent claimed,

Even people who want to [publish] will not write because they say they are not good at writing. Writing can be a very torturous experience, because editors, critics tend to rip your article apart. This is not bad, as it makes better grammatical sense and clarifi[ies]...facts. But it is time consuming. And not as fun as being in the field.

This quote addresses, to an extent, the placement of avocationalists within the hierarchy of the field. Rather than viewing publication as a source personal pride and satisfaction, some members see the entire experience as "torturous," because of the formalized process of editing and rewriting. Some may be weary of the quality of their writing skills, which differs from professionals who likely have a relatively strong writing background due to their education and training. Even though the publication process disenchants some individuals, most chapter members recognize the importance of publication and actively write-up their research in detailed articles.

Although a generic template does not exist for all *Bulletin* articles, the typical report includes a description of the site studied, methodology of the fieldwork, a detailed explanation of cultural features and artifacts recovered, and interpretations of findings. Various charts, graphs, field sketches, and artifact photos or drawings are commonly included as well, and help substantiate the author's claims. This format can be observed in a number of articles, including most recently in a 2010 article by Bennett and Avery Young (2010: 27-63) on the Cameron site. Jordan Kerber has served as the editor of the journal, and he explained what characteristics he generally looks for in a publishable article:

There are certain standards of report-writing that I look for when I edit the reports, and there is a publication committee of the chapter...I'm looking for...a description of fieldwork and results, that is clear and understandable, by more than professional archaeologists but by the general public...I look for detailed information in terms of what was found, whether that information is provided by

way of maps, or tables, or graphs. And I look for a type of bibliography that would point an interested reader in areas that the person could further pursue that interest. (Interview October 29, 2010)

The fact that a professional archaeologist is the editor of a journal comprised primarily of avocational research is significant, and lends additional evidence to the supposition that avocational archaeologists occupy a lower ranking in the hierarchy of the field. If avocational research and reports are to be published in the *Bulletin*, they must meet a certain professional standard, determined and delineated by a professional archaeologist, along with a committee of chapter members. However, the inclusion of a professional archaeologist in the publication process is by no means an admission of subordination or inferiority on the part of the avocationalists. Rather, it lends credibility to their work.

Because the Chenango Chapter members have opted to have a professional archaeologist serve as the editor of their journal, their work takes on a more professional and polished tone. This professional tone is reflected in all of the principal chapter activities, including meetings, fieldwork, cataloguing, and publication. In an article about the Missouri Archaeological Society, Chapman (1985: 242) notices similar tendencies amongst avocationalists in that area as compared with the Chenango Chapter, writing, “As a result of Society meetings and publications, the indiscriminant digging for relics that had been so prevalent in the early 1930s began to subside and...was replaced by an interest in recovering historical and cultural data.” It is this professional standard in all arenas that has allowed the Chenango Chapter to produce meaningful, relevant information about the cultural history of Central New York, and to distinguish themselves from mere relic hunters or collectors. Without the hard work and years of dedication by chapter members, relatively little would be known about the area’s archaeological record.

The Relationship Between Professional and Avocational Archaeologists

Although an analysis of Chenango Chapter activities, including meetings, fieldwork, cataloguing, and publication, provides a general framework of how avocational archaeologists in Central New York have helped contribute to a better understanding of the cultural history of the area, there are still other ways that chapter members construct knowledge. The relationship between professional and avocational archaeologists sheds light on these other methods of knowledge construction, and will be examined in this section. In addition to looking at specific examples of relatively successful professional-avocational interaction in Central New York archaeology, I will also present the more widespread and mainstream views that professionals and avocationalists share of each other across the country. In some cases, a weak bond exists between professional and non-professional archaeologists, creating a tension that is beneficial to none and harmful to all. However in other cases, like that of the Chenango Chapter members and professional archaeologists in the Central New York area, professionals and avocationalists mutually benefit from a good rapport, and the field in turn benefits from their collaborative efforts.

National Viewpoints

Within the American archaeological community, there exist varying viewpoints regarding whether or not professionals and avocationalists can work together and mutually benefit from one another. In her article, “Some Thoughts on Amateur Archaeology,” professional

archaeologist Jane Holden Kelley explains how she finds it difficult to work with avocationalists, and how they have in fact been detrimental in many ways to the field. Kelley does not try to mask her stance, and candidly comments that, “It is my contention that archaeology as practiced by many amateurs actually is harmful” (Kelley 1963: 394). Her primary qualm with non-professional archaeology, specifically in the American Southwest, rests in the fact that any fieldwork, whether undertaken by professionals or avocationalists, is destructive to sites. As mentioned earlier, the physical resources that archaeologists study are finite. According to Kelley, some amateur archaeologists may not recognize the harm they are causing to the field through the destruction of sites, and fieldwork by professionals would therefore be more beneficial than that conducted by avocationalists. She claims that professional archaeologists “should become aware of the current scope of the destruction of the raw materials in which our discipline has a vested interest” (Kelley 1963: 396). However, as previously mentioned, many avocationalists, including members of the Chenango Chapter, maintain a strong preservation ethic and do not excavate sites in their entirety.

Kelley also criticizes avocational societies, claiming that they are “little more than trading centers” (1963: 395). Furthermore, she advises all professionals to be wary of supporting local chapters, writing, “Currently I have deep-seated doubts about the advisability of encouraging an interest in archaeology through amateur associations” (Kelley 1963: 396). Kelley’s article emphasizes the subjugated position that avocationalists have within the hierarchy of the field relative to professionals, and exemplifies the negative reputation that can arise when non-professionals are stereotyped. Although Kelley’s claims may be justified to an extent in the context of a particular group or set of circumstances in the area that she was most familiar with, the American Southwest, her assertions about non-professional archaeology as a whole are not consistent with work done by the Chenango Chapter and other societies around the state and across the country.

Despite the fact that Kelley’s article portrays avocationalists in a rather negative light, a prominent view exists within the archaeological community that there is much to be gained from a strong collaboration with avocationalists. One of the most important functions that avocationalists can serve is to act as mediators between professionals and the general public (Masse and Gregonis 1996: 367). In this way, new discoveries, up-to-date ethical and conservation guidelines, and field techniques can be shared with and understood by people outside of archaeology circles. According to Masse and Gregonis (1996: 371),

Avocational archaeologists can and should play a critical role in helping professional archaeologists identify and protect significant archaeological resources, and they can and should play a vital role in helping to communicate the story of archaeology to the general public.

Through programs at local schools and libraries, as well as collaboration with farmers and property owners, avocationalists from the Chenango Chapter have successfully helped educate the public about archaeology, thereby bridging the gap between professionals and the general public.

Masse and Gregonis (1996: 382) also illuminate another advantage of professional-avocational collaboration, writing, “Professionals who work with avocationalists are privileged. They are exposed to new and fresh ideas that are not filtered through academic dogma. These different perspectives often encourage professional archaeologists to rethink theories and try

different analyses.” Still another example of successful professional-avocational collaboration exists in the form of archaeological society meetings. In an article about the Missouri Archaeological Society, Carl H. Chapman explains how professional archaeologists helped form the amateur society, and through shared efforts with avocationalists, accomplished many feats. According to Chapman (1985: 42), “meetings had been held at which amateur and professional archaeologists presented papers and discussed mutual interests.” This description reflects a similar forum that took place at the meeting of the Chenango Chapter that I attended, with both avocationalists and professionals discussing common interests and sharing ideas.

Chenango Chapter Members and Professional Archaeologists: A Sturdy Collaboration

The relationship between professional and avocational archaeologists in Central New York, specifically with regards to the Chenango Chapter of the NYSAA, has been highly successful. Professionals and avocationalists have worked together for decades, mutually benefiting from a shared interest in the cultural history of the area, and joining together to establish a better understanding of past life-ways. Avocationalists have profited from this symbiotic relationship by learning proper field methods, improving cataloguing and publication procedures, and discovering vast amounts of information about the field and the past from professional archaeologists. For example, Monte Bennett explained that when he attended state meetings of the NYSAA, the professionals that he encountered “imparted a lot of knowledge, eager to share, and they wanted knowledge from you.” Chenango Chapter members also learned accepted field techniques from New York State Archaeologist William Ritchie, and were taught the benefits of shovel test pits by Professor Jordan Kerber. According to Monte Bennett, avocationalists from the Chenango Chapter in turn help professional archaeologists in the area by acting as a resource for professionals and students who want to know more about Central New York archaeology. Bennett explained how avocationalists have become so knowledgeable about archaeology in the area, claiming, “I think the expertise of the avocational over the professional is, if you’ve spent a lot of time, many years, excavating a certain time period, you get very professional at what you’re doing.”

A prime example of an avocationalist acting as a resource for a professional occurred during the course of my research. While excavating the Brunk site in Lincoln, New York, Professor Jordan Kerber’s team from Colgate University uncovered a four-centimeter tube of rolled metal (Figure 2). The presence of a metal artifact directly contradicted the presumed occupation time-period of the site, which dated to the pre-contact era, before metal was utilized by the Oneida Iroquois Indians who once occupied the land. After contact had been made with European explorers and settlers, the Oneida used metal in a variety of ways, including in the construction of decorative rolled beads that looked very similar to the tube discovered at the Brunk site.

Aware of the contradiction in dates, Kerber questioned whether or not the metal tube was indeed an Oneida bead. He decided to enlist the help of Monte Bennett, who has been excavating both pre- and post-contact Iroquois sites for years. Because of his familiarity with Native American artifacts, gained from a lifetime of excavation and research, Bennett was able to determine that the tube was a native-made bead. This scenario represents a perfect example of how avocationalists can act as a resource for professional archaeologists. Even though Bennett does not have a degree in archaeology or a job in the field, he has become an expert in the artifacts of the area. Bennett told me that this type of consultation occurs frequently, stating, “I don’t know how many phone calls I get over the winter right out of the blue. Some professor

from Cornell will call, ‘I’m researching this, do you know this?’ And once again, I think, ‘[I’m] the resource.’”

Avocational members of the Chenango Chapter and professional archaeologists in Central New York serve as a model for how the two groups can work together to further the goals of archaeology and increase the historical and cultural knowledge of a given area. By educating the public about archaeology, acting as a resource for professionals and students, and participating in the full gamut of archaeological endeavors, avocationalists have made great contributions to a better understanding of the past. Although some professional archaeologists are still apprehensive about enlisting the help of avocationalists, there is much to be learned from the success of the Chenango Chapter and its members.

Fitting Students of Archaeology into the Equation

Up to this point, I have shown how avocational archaeologists in Central New York have been paramount to the construction of knowledge about the cultural history of the area through their involvement with the Chenango Chapter of the NYSAA, participation in various chapter activities, and collaboration with professional archaeologists. However, one category of archaeological knowledge-constructing individuals has still not been examined in detail: students of archaeology. In order to analyze how students fit into the archaeological hierarchy, specifically in relation to the placement of avocationalists, it will be useful to first review Foucault’s theory of knowledge and power, and expand upon its application to this discussion, which was presented in an earlier section.

In his essay outlining several of Foucault’s principle ideas, Larry Shiner (1982: 384) explains, “In Western societies...‘truth’ is centered in scientific discourse and institutions. In this system of truth there are many forms of excluded and subjected knowledge. Those who occupy the lowest status in various institutions or conditions of life...all find their knowledge discounted.” Shiner’s analysis is applicable to this investigation in a number of ways. First, it substantiates the argument that avocationalists occupy a subjugated position within the field of archaeology because they are not part of the scientific institutions that have the power to produce truth. Second, it leads to a hypothesis that students of archaeology, in fact, occupy a higher position in the hierarchy of the field relative to avocationalists due to their association with collegiate institutions.

This hypothesis in no way reflects the amount of experience or knowledge that students may possess relative to avocationalists, nor does it mean that students have produced more meaningful or important information through their research. The hypothesis merely posits that under the institutional structure and system of truth production that Foucault defines, students inherently carry a higher status position than individuals who have not had any university training in archaeology. Evidence for this theory can be found in the wording of certain laws and regulations, including the Antiquities Act, which afford special status to universities and other accredited institutions, while excluding avocationalists (www.nps.gov/history/local-law/anti1906.htm). To further support this hypothesis, I will draw on my observations of fieldwork conducted by Colgate University’s “Field Methods and Interpretations in Archaeology” course.

During the fall of 2009, students from Colgate University excavated a portion of the Cameron site in Oneida, New York, under the guidance of Professor Jordan Kerber. According to an article published by several members of the class (Katznelson et. al. 2010: 65),

The purpose of the class was to gain an understanding of the basic archaeological methodology and techniques commonly practiced in the field and laboratory. The curriculum of the class involved excavation, data classification, analysis, interpretation, and the presentation of findings, which included a research paper and a thorough discussion among the class participants.

Throughout the semester-long course, students were taught the standard, professional techniques necessary to perform archaeological research. With regard to excavation, the methodology involved setting up fourteen shovel test pits, each measuring 50 by 50 centimeters, along a pre-established transect line at the site. As a class, the students carefully removed soil in ten-centimeter increments, screening the material through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch screens. This tedious process ensured that as much cultural material as possible would be extracted from the soil.

The excavation process utilized by students from Colgate University differed in many ways from that of the Chenango Chapter members that I observed in the fall of 2010. Although avocationalists from the Chenango Chapter have used shovel test pits in the past, they more frequently excavate larger swatches of land at a time. Additionally, the use of a double-screen by Colgate students differed from the single-screen that was employed by Chenango Chapter members. In general, smaller test pits and multiple screens ensure a more thorough and accurate sampling of the site, while also displaying a preservation ethic.

After the excavation, students returned to Colgate University's archaeology laboratory to clean and catalogue all of the recovered cultural material through a formalized process of sorting, counting, weighing, and sketching the items. The fact that students had access to a laboratory, and could utilize scientific instruments to acquire precise measurements, can be seen as an advantage over avocational groups, who might not have access to such facilities. Following the cataloguing process, students were instructed to write a report detailing their methodology, findings, and interpretations, and then compare their results with previous research. The laboratory contained hundreds of journals and books, as well as collections of artifacts from previous excavations, which were all utilized by students as they composed their articles. Again, these resources may not be available to all avocationalists who wish to write and publish, and the students' ability to utilize the laboratory facility gave them an inherent advantage relative to avocational archaeologists.

It appears that the Colgate students have greater life-chances, in the Weberian sense, within the field of archaeology than avocationalists. Not only are they taught up-to-date excavation techniques by professional archaeologists, they are also permitted to utilize an entire laboratory of resources during the cataloguing and writing process to ensure the highest-quality results. Whether students choose to pursue archaeology as a career or not, they still occupy a relatively higher status in the archaeological hierarchy by virtue of their experience and instruction within the walls of a powerful institution.

Despite their differing positions within the archaeological hierarchy, avocationalists and students have successfully worked together in Central New York and have mutually benefited from this collaboration. For example, Monte Bennett enthusiastically led students on a tour of the Cameron site before their excavation began in 2009, and shared his own archaeological background with the class. Additionally, he lent his collection of artifacts to Colgate so that students could compare their findings with previous excavations. In their article "A Look Back on the Historic Cameron Site," Bennett and Avery Young (2010: 38) write about their interaction

with students from Colgate's "Field Methods and Interpretations in Archaeology" course, stating:

At the end of every field season, the students gave the writers their findings and artifacts. Thus, we could add their information to our notes. On two occasions, the class presented programs at the Chenango Chapter meetings...This was most interesting to all. Also, we were presented with students' reports of their findings which were helpful. Everyone benefited from this experience and added knowledge to the Oneida cultural history.

Just as avocationalists from the Chenango Chapter have been willing to act as a resource for professional archaeologists in the area, so too have they been eager to share information with students and assist them in any way possible. It is this spirit of camaraderie with all those interested in archaeology that has allowed members of the Chenango Chapter to successfully interact with the general public, other avocationalists, students, and professional archaeologists. By forming these collaborative bonds, and by participating in chapter activities, avocationalists have constructed a wealth of information about Central New York's cultural past.

Conclusion

After a long morning of digging and screening at the Cameron site on a chilly October day, avocational archaeologists from the Chenango Chapter of the New York State Archaeology Association took a break to have lunch. Sitting in a circle on cheap plastic chairs, enjoying their carefully packed meals and leisurely puffing on cigarettes, they fondly reminisced with one another, sharing stories and memories from years spent doing archaeology together. Instead of playing golf, or fishing, or pursuing any other hobby that the majority of retired Americans predictably participate in on a fall afternoon, these individuals decided to once again trek out into a densely wooded forest and do what they have done for years: excavate yet another Native American site. Avocational archaeologists, like those I observed at the Cameron site, have made the creation of knowledge their leisurely pursuit. Like a volunteer helping distribute meals at a soup kitchen or raising money for charitable organizations, the avocational archaeologist's pastime has far-reaching benefits that extend well beyond personal satisfaction. By joining archaeological societies, identifying sites, participating in fieldwork, cataloguing items, publishing their work, and collaborating with professionals and students, avocational archaeologists in Central New York have made invaluable contributions to the body of archaeological knowledge about the area. Without the years of hard work and dedication that countless avocationalists have put in over the years, the cultural heritage of Central New York would still be buried under the soil, and the life-ways of an important segment of humanity would be far less clearly understood.

Based on survey responses and interviews, it is likely that current avocationalists will continue to be active in the future, although there is some concern that younger generations of Americans have lost interest in archaeology. Additionally, unlike their predecessors, many avocationalists today recognize the ethical responsibilities that they share with professionals and students with regard to site preservation, respect for Native American graves, documentation of artifacts, and publication. In a sense, these ethical guidelines have made the process more tedious and perhaps less attractive to individuals who are simply looking for a "picnic alternative," as Kelley (1963: 396) describes the hobby.

One option that the Chenango Chapter has pursued to combat the lack of interest in avocational archaeology, which seems to resound in America's youth, is the implementation of educational programs in primary and secondary schools. However to fully experience the excitement and spirituality of uncovering objects that haven't been touched in centuries, one must physically visit a site and gain first-hand exposure to the process of archaeology. A greater emphasis throughout the professional field on community archaeology and public excavations would provide this exposure, and could help the Chenango Chapter and other archaeological societies around the country gain more members in the future. The question of what other tactics could be utilized by avocational societies to increase their membership is an interesting topic to consider for further study. Regardless of whether or not membership is increased beyond its current level, as long as avocational societies persist in any capacity, non-professional archaeologists will continue their tradition of constructing meaningful and legitimate knowledge about the past within their subjugated position in the hierarchy of the discipline.

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Figures and Tables



Figure 1: Location of NYSAA Chapters
(From http://nysaaweb.bfn.org/images/chapter_majpg)



Figure 2: Rolled Brass Bead (Courtesy of Jordan Kerber)

Table 1: Demographic Information for Selected NYSAA Members

| Name | Gender | Age | Profession | Chapter |
|-------------|---------------|------------|---|--------------------------|
| M.B. | Male | 59 | VP Thacker Caskets, Inc. Student, | Beauchamp |
| J.A. | Male | 15 | Volunteer | Chenango |
| D.W. | Male | 77 | Music Teacher | Chenango |
| D.M. | Male | 37 | Archaeologist | Upper Susquehanna |
| G.M. | Female | 62 | Histologist | Chenango |
| D.W. | Male | 76 | Biologist Veterinarian | Chenango |
| G.H. | Male | 81 | (retired) Chief of Police | Chenango |
| R.M. | Male | 57 | (retired) Chenango | Chenango |
| P.E. | Female | 58 | County Historian | Chenango Chenango and |
| E.G. | Male | 82 | Retired Teacher | Beauchamp |
| P.F. | Male | 69 | (retired) | Beauchamp |
| M.B. | Male | 68 | - | Chenango |
| S.A.Y. | Female | - | - | Chenango |
| Average | - | 62 | - | - |