Indian tools at library

by DAWN DE BEERS

On the summer day in 1900 when William and Lee Haase dug out the ancient Indian burial mounds at Forest Home cemetery they discovered not only the renowned trade silver but also many fossils and artifacts.

The land on which they worked had been their father's for half a century and before he bought it Leon Bourassa had lived on the 160-acre tract. This half-breed trader had purchased the land from the United States government in 1839. Proof of this transaction still exists in the form of a deed personally signed by President Martin Van Buren.

Before Bourassa there were the Indians. For thousands of years they had camped on this stretch of the long sand ridge from Roosevelt road north along the Des Plaines river and east into Oak Park. The ridge itself was the work of glacial Lake Chicago, which existed eons ago during the last ice age.

Along with the silver, huge numbers of axes, arrowheads, pottery fragments and fossils were deposited in the cemetery office. For over 50 years they remained at Forest Home and in 1968 were donated to the library. Fifteen cartons were delivered to librarian Josephine Austin.

For assistance in identifying the artifacts in the collection, which had never been studied, Miss Austin called Mrs. Isabel Wasson, a professional geologist. With her husband, also a professional, Mrs. Wasson had discovered and investigated a snake-like Indian effigy mound north of Chicago avenue on the Des Plaines river. The Forest Home find was studied by this competent woman and an assistant, David Wenner. After concluding her work Mrs. Wassen designed the display now at the library.

The Wasson-Wenner study revealed that man-made objects unearthed at Forest Home cemetery ranged in age from 100 to 4,000 years old. Fossils which were shells and corals of local origin and mammoth teeth and tusks from some unknown area were found to be many thousands of years old.

Tools of vital importance to Indian life such as axeheads, mauls or mallets, and arrowheads form a major part of the collection. There are also sherds or fragments of pottery vessels in the library's display.

Our Indian heritage is very real and it's there to see any day at our library.
June 5, 1996

John:

I called Earl Locke yesterday and asked him about the effect of light from the west window on the silver. He said he is not really a conservator and suggested Chris Del Ray who lives in Oak Park and was formerly with the Field Museum.

He very kindly offered to contact her and see if she could actually stop in to see the location, or if she can't do that, he'll ask her to call me.

He doesn't think the silver would be harmed as much a the piece/pieces of cloth which the ultra-violet rays might cause to further deteriorate, but he still would rather have her give her opinion.

According to him the worst conditions for artifacts such as these are changes of temperature...back and forth from cold to hot, etc. One of the main things museums try to do is maintain a constant temperature at all times.

We have a brief meeting of the Historical Society Board scheduled for Thursday at 6 P.M. so I'll be able to give you more information Friday.
June 7, 1996

To: John and the library board members

From: Cora

Chris Del Re came in this morning to look at the proposed location for the Indian artifacts.

She had several suggestions that sounded good to me and she is going to write a proposal for what she thinks would best preserve the collection from light and fumes. She would have liked to have seen the floor of the glass case to ascertain the kind of wood used as even fumes filtering up can cause damage. We should be hearing from her in about a week.

Chris worked at the Field Museum for seven years before she left to start her own business in Oak Park. I am attaching her card.

She said she could also polish the silver to remove the tarnish that has collected over the years.
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE RE-INSTALLATION OF
THE NATIVE AMERICAN TRADE SILVER
AT THE FOREST PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

This document offers recommendations and precautions that should be taken into account when re-installing the Native American Trade silver collection at the Forest Park Library to insure its long-term stability and preservation. I viewed the exhibition case and its future location on the morning of June 7, 1996.

The first set of recommendations will address the dangers and vulnerabilities that the silver objects themselves are subject to; while the second set of recommendations are for the organic containing components of the collection: that is the objects that have hair, or textile in association with the silver artifacts.

I. Recommendations for the Long-Term Preservation of the Native American Trade Silver

A. Silver is subject to tarnishing from sulphur and sulphides which are present in the air (from car exhaust), in wool and hair, just to name a few of the more obvious sources. In order to protect the trade silver from tarnishing while on display, it is recommended that "Pacific Silver Cloth" be installed as a fabric on the bottom of the display case. This fabric, which is made by Wamsutta and available at most good fabric stores (or directly from the company for a lower cost), contains a chemical which scavenges or absorbs the sulphur at a faster rate than the silver will and therefore protects the silver. Since any time silver is polished, one is actually removing a little bit of the silver, it is always preferable to prevent the silver from tarnishing rather than have to polish it.
Install "Pacific Silver Cloth" in the exhibition case.

B. Silver is also subject to deterioration and corrosion from fumes given off by the materials that surround it: for
example, the wood product sheet that forms the base of the case that the silver will be displayed in can potentially give off fumes that will cause corrosion or tarnish the silver. The potential off-gassing of the wood-product base of the case can be avoided by using an aluminum/polyethylene barrier film on the wood product sheet that forms the base of the case: it is easy to iron the aluminum/polyethylene laminate film (Brand name is Marvelseal) to the bottom of the case. Install "Marvelseal" in the exhibition case.

II. Recommendations for the Long-Term Preservation of the Native American Trade Silver With Organic Components

A. The biggest concern for the long-term preservation needs of the organic components (the hair and textile fragments) is their exposure to visible and ultraviolet light. Both kinds of light exposure will cause the materials (the hair and textile fragments) to deteriorate and break down over time. The energy in the wavelengths of the light is strong enough to break-down the chemical bonds of both materials. Ideally these materials should not be exhibited in either daylight, or fluorescent light. However, if this is not possible, they should be exhibited behind a Plexiglas that will filter out the ultraviolet light (UV) so as to provide as much long-term protection as possible.

DO NOT EXHIBIT IN EITHER DAYLIGHT OR FLUORESCENT LIGHT.

If it is found to be necessary to display the organic components, do so behind UV filtering Plexiglas only. Measure light levels of display area and case if possible.

B. In order to actually monitor the amount of light that the artifacts will be exposed to while on display, use Blue Wool Fading strips in the exhibition case. These can be purchased from a conservation supplier such as University Products. These strips should be used even if UV filtering Plexiglas is used and the organics are not exposed to daylight. Install blue wool fading strips to monitor the light levels that the organics are exposed to.

Christine Del Re
June 13, 1996
August 1, 1996

To: John and members of the library board

From: Cora

Chris Del He was in yesterday to look at some of the Indian silver and she is going to write up a proposal on taking a couple of the pieces (an arm band and a brooch) to see if she can do anything to improve them. She thinks lacquer may have been used on the silver and if so, that is very difficult to get off. She also thinks some of the discoloration that we think is tarnish may be the alloy showing through and that is why she wants to try just a couple of pieces to see if there will be any improvement.

She is busy clearing up work on hand before she goes to a convention in Europe on August 19th therefore she suggests we go ahead and have Earl Lock come in to put the silver back into the case in the meantime. She says we can always open it up and take the pieces out again if necessary.

Chris has already sent Earl a copy of the list she submitted to us as to materials necessary for setting up the display again -- the silver cloth, etc. As for the organic material she suggests it be put on a piece of board and framed (similar to a picture) with the special glass to keep out the harmful rays which cause the deterioration. This way it would save the expense of covering the whole case with that special glass. Earl would be able to procure all the necessary materials and construct the "box" for the cloth and hair pieces.

She gave me the name of a conservator for the murals and the oil paintings if you're interested. It is Cynthia Kuniej Berry, Fine Arts Associates, phone number (312) 642-7300. She lives in the area and has worked with the Field Museum on projects. Chris also can give us the name of a conservator for the tapestry if you so desire.

If you decide to go ahead with this project now I can contact Earl for a proposal and check on his availability. Or, if one of you care to contact him his phone number is (312) 274-2831 and his address is 1740 W. Greenleaf Street, Chicago 60626.

It's OK with me to get going on the Indian case.

Thanks for all of your help. John.
9 August 2011

Mr. Rodger Brayden
Director
Forest Park Public Library
7555 Jackson Blvd.
Forest Park, Illinois 60130

Mr. Brayden:

Enclosed please find a summary of the Prehistoric and Early Historic materials currently curated at the Forest Park Public Library. Most of these items are associated with archaeological site 11CK36, located within the nearby Forest Home Cemetery property. Again, thank you for your multi-year assistance in giving us access to this important collection. I understand that the library’s Board of Directors is considering transfer of the collection to another as institution. If the Board and/or any institutions seriously considering accepting the collection need detailed information on one or more of the items, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Also, as per our recent phone conversation, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is very interested in accepting the collection. The University can provide professional curation facilities for the material as well as provide access to the collection to future academic researchers. Arrangements can also be made, if desired, for the Forest Park Library to display the items again in the future under a long-term loan agreement.

Sincerely,

Paula J. Porubcan, RPA
Field Station Co-coordinator
District 1 Archaeologist
Northern Illinois Field Station
Illinois State Archaeological Survey
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
6810 Forest Hills Road
Loves Park, Illinois 61111
815-282-0762 (office)
262-215-3712 (cell)

cc: Thomas Emerson, Interim Director, Illinois State Archaeological Survey
    Dale McElrath, Statewide Survey Coordinator, Illinois State Archaeological Survey
    Laura Kozuch, Curator, Illinois State Archaeological Survey
11CK36: Summary of Materials Curated at Forest Park Library

Trade Silver (ca. 1780-1820)
9 Arm Bands (raised edge style, 6 are engraved w/ geese, turkey, fox/dog, seated human figure) (Touch marks include "PH" for Pierre Huguet of Montreal, "IS" for Joseph Schindler of Quebec, "NR" for Norcisse Roy of Montreal, "CA" for Charles Arnoldi of Montreal, and "PM" for Paul Morand of Montreal)
11 Wrist Bands (raised edge style)
5 Disc Brooches (unperforated)
8 Disc Brooches (perforated)
1 Crescent Gorget
1 Round Gorget (wolf engraving)
13 Earrings (6 pair, all classic ball-and-cone earring style), (2 pair and 1 additional single earring attached to human earlobes)
1 Earrings (pair, Double-barred cross style)
12 loose small ring brooches (probably once attached to fabric)

Fabric/Silver (ca. 1780-1820)
1 thick fabric strap w/ leather loop on back and fringed edge (contains 2 vertical rows of 38 small ring brooches and at least 5 horizontal rows of 14 small ring brooches)
1 Leather fragment w/ 7 copper ‘Hawk’ bells strung together on thin leather cord
1 printed cotton fabric fragment (red and white banded on back, geometric designs on colored bands on front)
1 printed cotton fabric w/ side double seam and sleeve/arm pit or neck section. At least 77 small ring brooches remain attached in vertical rows (evidence of many additional ring brooches once attached but now missing)
1 printed cotton fabric w/ one double seam. At least 60 small ring brooches attached (evidence of many additional ring brooches once attached but now missing)

Braided Hair/Silver (ca. 1780-1820)
4 Sections of braided human hair with twisted leather cords and small ring brooches attached. Total of 11 small ring brooches on three sections. Forth section has stained porous substance adhered to hair fragments and no ring brooches.

Miscellaneous (ca. 1760-1820)
1 Thimble (gilded, pierced tinkler ornament)
1 Micmac Pipe
3 Brass Kettles (French, dog-ear style handle attachments, heavily mended with rivets, some mend patches are copper)
2 Iron Axes (both appear to be French style, ca. 1700-1800)
1 Iron Broad Axe (with wood handle)
1 Iron Adze (with wood handle)
1 Bead Necklace (twisted cotton w/ 96 shell tube beads, 4 blue faceted Russian beads, 1 brass bead) w/ Pendant (lead? w/ copper sheeting)
1 Loose bead (black, glass, Russian faceted?)
1 piece of brass kettle scrap
### Wood Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wooden Spoons/Ladles (1 with scrolled end and evidence of handle repair with 2 iron nails/tacks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wooden Bowl Rim Fragment (simulated rolled rim)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ceramics (ca. 1200-1400)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Grit tempered, cordmarked or smoothed-over cordmarked sherds representing 7 vessels (decoration types on rim sherds indicate Langford type vessels)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Groundstone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>¾ and full grooved axes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>cels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chipped Stone Tools (Early Archaic, Late Archaic, Early Woodland, Middle Woodland)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>projectile points (types include: Hardin Barbed, Thebes, Kirk Corner Notched, Raddatz, Godar, Tipton, Snyder, Manker, Stueben, and a number of reworked side notched points) (all are chert; most are Silurian cherts; most are heat treated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>drill, Silurian chert, heat treated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDIAN ARTIFACTS

ARROWHEADS

One of the most essential things the Indian made and owned was the arrowhead. The arrowhead was most vital because the Indian hunted his food with it, killed enemies, and played games with them. Most arrowheads were made from the following stones: Obsidian, Chert, and Flint. Arrowheads are very hard to make, and even the Indian had some hard times making them. There are three types of arrowheads. Bird points were used in killing birds for food and for feathers. Next the hunting points, which were used for killing game for food. And finally the war points, which were used for wars. Often, the war point was attached loosely to the shaft because if an enemy was struck with an arrow, the victim would try to pull out the shaft and the arrowhead would still remain in the wound.

TOMAHAWKS

The tomahawk of the Indian was used in his daily life and in war. Most of the tomahawks used were of the grooved type. There was also a type of tomahawk without a groove. The groove was made by obtaining a piece of rawhide, wetting it with sand, and rubbing it on the stone where desired. Keep this up until the groove is all around the sides and the bottom, and that's how the Indian made his tomahawk, or the war club stone, as some people call it.

DRILLS

The Indians made drills out of any hard stone that would not break easily. These drills are about two to four inches long. When freshly chipped these drills were very sharp and could drill very good. These drills were used for drilling holes in stone and bone to make beads. Of course, the drill was used for many other purposes. Drills are far harder to chip than the arrowhead.

KNIVES

Many people mistake knives from spear heads. Knives are usually long and thin, while spear heads are usually shorter and wider than knives. There are many other types of knives than stated here.

SCRAPERS

There are but two types of scrapers that I know of. They are the hide scraper and the fish scraper or scaler. The hide scraper was used for the Indian style of curing skins. The fish scaler was used for preparing the fish for food.

By JOHN A. ILKO, JR.
CANADIAN TRADE SILVER FROM INDIAN MOUNDS

found in

FOREST HOME CEMETERY, FOREST PARK, Illinois

In the early nineteen hundreds two Indian mounds, located in Forest Home Cemetery were leveled to raise a swampy part of the cemetery. At least thirteen skeletons were uncovered along with a quantity of artifacts, some of which are exhibited in this case.

Dr. James W. VanStone, Associate Curator of Anthropology of the Field Museum of Natural History, borrowed the silver ornaments in this case. He had them cleaned by means of a glass bead technique. The following notes are drawn from his paper, "Canadian Trade Silver from Indian Graves in northern Illinois" to be published shortly.

These ornaments are of laminated sheet silver. They were made by silversmiths in Montreal and Quebec mostly. Many of the specimens have initials stamped on the back which identify the silversmith, as "PH" for Pierre Huguet (1749-1817), a Montreal silversmith; "CA" for Charles Arnoldi (1734-1810) also a worker in Montreal; "IS" for Joseph Schindler (1767-1786), a Quebec silversmith. From these and other identifying marks Dr. Van Stone dates the graves in Forest Home Cemetery between 1780 and 1820. In northern Illinois the tribes, such as Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatami were British allies rather than American. This allegiance explains the large proportion of Canadian silver ornaments found here.
WRISTBANDS - four inches long, one-half inch wide, drilled at either end for insertion of thongs. Smaller ones were used by children.

ARMBANDS - Three inches long, two inches wide, bordered by longitudinal ridges, were worn just above the elbow by men. In each case the designs which were engraved on the silver, indicate that the band was cut into two by the Indian in order to make two bands out of one. In several cases a long-necked bird was cut in two, matching halves of which are in the collection. In order to attach the shorter band to the arm, paired perforations were made at either end for insertion of thongs. The band was then worn on the outer side of the arm only.

BROOCHES - All of them have a hinged pin across the central opening, or a hole through which the pin was formerly attached.

1. Some of the brooches are smooth circles with engraved designs as a tracery.

2. Some are star brooches with nine or eleven point stars.

3. Some have smaller perforated designs with triangular, oval, diamond or semi-lunar openings.

4. Most abundant are small, narrow circles of which 225 are attached to garment fragments, 11 attached to braids of human hair, and 31 attached to braids a narrow strip of leather. The garment fragment is wood-blocked printed cotton. The largest piece is probably part of a woman's dress.

GORGET - These are lunar or circular in shape with two suspension holes for wearing as a breast ornament.

EARRINGS - 1. Cone-shaped pendant suspended from a circular piece of wire.