

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK  
BULLETIN

ARCHAEOLOGY  
HISTORY

In  
Memory  
of  
Garrison C. Hollett

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY of  
CENTRAL NEW YORK

Believing that the many members of the Society would like to express their appreciation of the great contribution Harrison C. Follett made to the field of archaeology and to be with the Society in the expression of our feeling of great loss. The President, acting for the Editorial Council, wrote each member. It is not possible to print all of the letters. This bulletin brings some. Others will be printed in future editions.

EDITORIAL COUNCIL: President, Prof. W. K. Long  
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Archaeology and particularly Archaeology of Cayuga County has lost a friend and benefactor in Harrison C. Follett. His friends and co-workers have lost his enthusiastic, encouraging leadership. It is difficult for them to realize the loss of his personal guidance. Those who had the privilege and pleasure of working with him will miss his genial fellowship and his wise counsel, as well as his reliable judgement. The memory of his quiet, impartial teaching, his real sincerity, his helpful concern for those who sought his advice and his confidence in his friends and fellow workers will live in the minds of those whose lives he touched.

I believe his memory will be a source of recurring inspiration and encouragement to all. His extreme devotion to his profound deductions in the field of Archaeology has drawn forth genuine appreciation and will continue to influence those who carry on the splendid work he has started in Cayuga County. His desire to amend the wrongs and build on the factual truth as he spoke of the development of this section, will inspire others to rely on authenticity and further the doctrine of truth in recording the events of history.

Prof. Walter K. Long, President  
Archaeological Society  
of Central New York

In Memoriam - Harrison C. Follett

To my young son he was "Grandpa", partly because he never had a real grandfather, and partly because we liked to consider him one of the family. Having known him this well makes the writing of an epitaph the more difficult.

I first became acquainted with him when he was at Levanna. My visitations with him gradually became more frequent and more interesting. Soon came the organization of the A.S.C.N.Y. and it usually befell me to furnish him the transportation to and from Auburn; inasmuch as I was travelling from Geneva, I merely had to detour to Levanna to pick him up. But it did make it rather late when I arrived back in Geneva. I like to think that I helped him in this way, and also with the course in archaeology which he taught in connection with the Society, but of course he helped me immeasurably more than I helped him.

It was on jaunts which groups of us took with him that we really got to know Follett the man. For example, we journeyed to Lamoka for a week end on one occasion, staying overnight in the hotel at Penn Yan. It was here that we learned of the great wealth of archaeological knowledge which he possessed. As we drove along, every known Indian site would be pointed out to us, together with a story of his experiences with each and every site. The story of his excavations at the Lamcka site would be a large volume; of course, he has written a technical report of it, but the human side of the picture, his life in a tent, is most interesting.

In his writings, which have been voluminous, he has tended to be very critical of contemporaries and historians alike. Contemporaries are bound to resent the criticism and the late historians would resent the criticism if they were alive to do so. The fact that he did not fear the criticism of his contemporaries proves that he was absolutely certain in his own mind of the correctness of his statements. And they were not figments of the imagination, but were made only after exhaustive research. If two accounts of a historical incident did not agree, one of them must have been wrong and he would not rest until further research disclosed to him which was wrong. Naturally, that author was then subject to criticism. By continuing this principle through a considerable period of time, he arrived at a conclusion which to him was foolproof. The pieces of the jig saw puzzle finally



fitted perfectly; all of the errors neutralized out into a free flowing stream without any dams. It is too bad that his power of expression could not have been more persuasive; that he could not have included the details necessary to make the story as free flowing to the reader.

It would not be fair to say nothing about this criticism of contemporaries which would be classed as personal with an archaeological background. I have heard the stories which caused him to feel as he did toward certain individuals, and I do not blame him in the least for feeling as he did.

A great man and a great mind have left our midst. He tried his best to leave as much of his archaeological knowledge in the form of the written word which will continue to flow to all interested in the Bulletin.

Newton Farwell

Harrison Colvin Follett was a man whose efforts in archaeology, great capacity for research and many sacrifices for the work he loved were never fully appreciated or respected as they deserved during his life.

The nearest this to his life long dream of being able to expound his theories in archaeology to the many interested people in this region came thru the BULLETIN of the Archaeological Society of Central New York.

The A.S.C.N.Y. was his pride and joy and his inspiration is, in a great part, responsible for the success and growth of the organization.

One appreciation for his efforts was shown several years ago when he was adopted into the Onondaga Indian Nation and given the name of Ga-hos-shop-do. He once wrote out the Indian name for me and from memory, I believe it means something like "Keeper of the Record", altho I am not certain.

To me, Harrison Follet was the "Grand Old Man of Archaeology" and a very good friend. I am most happy to have been able to have known him; I will cherish his memory always.

I truly believe, now that Harrison is gone, we will see more and more as time goes by evidences of his footprints in the archaeological sands of time".

Kenneth N.E. Wright

HARRISON C. FOLLETT TO ME.

My thoughts of Harrison Follett shall always terminate at a sign post in the fork of two roads. The first weathered wooden board bearing a fist and pointing finger, and the inscription "I WISH WE HAD" Road, and the other, "THE DAYS ARE SO FEW" Lane. To make out the faint inscription requires many years of familiarity with them, even if memory recalls when they were freshly painted. Such is my reaction to association with a very inspiring personality and friend of years.

It was in 1937 at the Levanna Algonkian Village site that I first asked his help. I had what I accepted as an honored and pleasant responsibility as Boy Scout Leader of the Cayuga County Contingent to the First National Jamboree in Washington, D.C. The National Office had instructed us to bring articles of local interest for the purpose of setting up a museum right on the gigantic camp site on the banks of the Potomac.

So I met a man whose enthusiasm matched and complemented mine. We hit it off like old timers at once. He suggested a food storage pit and a fire hearth in glass sided boxes that would display them just as they had lain beneath the grass of Cayuga County for fourteen hundred years. My eyes popped as we found a food storage pit, and then removed the soil from around a cube the size of the box, and slid the box over it and carefully turned it over. What a day! and what an introduction to Archaeology! Beside my prizes he suggested a bushel of reddish burned stones from fire hearths for the base of our council fire. The story of these stones spread among the twenty seven thousand kids at the big encampment and they became treasures to swap for bull whips and horned toads from Texas, and similar treasures from Maine to Mexico,

awakening who knows what interest in antiquity and Archaeology across the Nation and in the twenty six foreign countries also represented there.

And so when Harrison became instructor in the Adult Education class in Archaeology at Auburn, and I became a pupil, things had to progress again under this inspirer of men. The Archaeological Society was formed, and I tackled a bulletin for the group, filled principally as we all know with his interesting findings and the fruits of his great research of the past of our mutual friends the Red Men. I had trouble with his writings and the grammar and language of another generation. His kindness and fine cooperation with me made available to the public his most searching work, "Migration of the Cayugas in Cayuga County, N.Y." through the pages of the Bulletin.

But most of all, I seem to sense the regret that he never achieved the oft-talked-of overnight "bull session" on some blizzardy winter's night in the little house on the Levanna site, and also the mid-winter taken "Spring Tonic" of planning a surface hunt with Harrison and some of the others, plus a loaf of bread and a jug. A jug of what, they never learned, because we never made out in our plans. - - - and probably my fault.

Truly, I am back at the fork of "I WISH WE HAD" Road and "THE DAYS ARE SO FEW" Lane. Perhaps God will let us have our little "bull session" anon, which Harrison will record in his notes: "held in Heaven, Circa 19??".

Dudley F. Palmer

My association with Harrison C. Follett began in 1940, when I first visited Levanna. Fascinated by that restored site in its quiet setting, --made more interesting by the talk of Mr. Follett, and more attractive by his culinary efforts, I spent as much time there as possible, often camping out for several days.

It was a real pleasure to visit the sites with him, not only in Cayuga County, but in other counties as well, and these trips continued until fall 1953.

Well versed in practical archaeology, Mr. Follett was a prodigious writer and expressed himself exceedingly well. His voluminous correspondence attested

to his constant effort to describe the red man's occupation of New York State. He was not interested in artifacts or sites in themselves, but in their place in the complete story of that occupation. His companionship is missed.

Gordon K. Wright

I was deeply saddened with the news of the passing of our good friend Harrison Follett.

Anyone interested in Indian lore found it easy to be friendly with Harrison. For me it was the open door to a lovable character; a man always eager and willing to share his knowledge of sixty years or more of archaeological activity.

I shall always remember the many personal visits I had with him, our extensive correspondence and the pleasure of his companionship on field trips.

W. Glenn Norris

I knew Harrison C. Follett for many years and had both seen him and helped him many times in good and bad circumstances.

My active participation in field work goes back some 20 years, working with him on various sites around the Rochester area when I lived there... then down at Levanna when he lived down there... working around Howland's Island and especially at Lamoka.... He was a grand chap to work with and I have had many wonderful times in his company but as to all of us comes the time when we lay down our interests and our efforts and I know that I for one will miss him as will many others.

James V. Stwell



The passing of Harrison Follett will leave an unusual vacuum in our archaeology of the Finger Lakes. Learned chiefly in the school of practical digging, he was one of few natural born archaeologists. He was born with a nose dead 'in jins' and we shall all miss his kindly smile and friendly cup. It is to be hoped that his notes be winnowed and printed.

Dr. Erl Bates

We will all miss the old boy - he has taken something with him that can never be replaced. He was the last of the semi-professional archaeologists of New York State. His name should be placed on the roll along side of Clarke, Beecham and the others.

Harrison worked with me for two years back in the early thirties. It was his first venture off the home grounds and perhaps the most interesting of his career. We were working near Safe Harbor in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The sites were contact Susquehannock and it was not at all unusual to have 10 to 15 complete pottery vessels in sight in the ground at the same time. He taught the younger men in the party field technique and his enthusiasm was largely responsible for the success of the expedition. We catalogued 30,000 specimens.

It is certainly fortunate that the Society had the privilege of placing in print Follett's last writing. It represented the clear thinking and work of many years.

Donald A. Cadzow

It was my good fortune to have been in the company of Harrison Follett on several "digs" the last few years and each one was highlighted by his presence. His remarkable memory and knowledge of the archaeology and history of New York State, as his writings testify, was a fascinating and ever enlightening experience.

A couple years ago the clock was turned back for Mr. Follett when he returned to the Archaic site at Lamoka Lake for a day. This time he was not digging but sitting on his folding-camp stool, recounting the finds and adventures on the same site many years previous. It was most remarkable that his enthusiasm and interest had not dimmed despite his eighty years. It is thus he will be remembered and mourned by his many friends and fellow archaeologists.

Howard Lindell

Marion Wesp and I first knew Mr. Follett when he was at the Levanna site. We went over many times to talk with him and have him share a picnic supper. After going to Lima he always referred to us in his letters as "my dear sisters."

Our friendship had a frail thread of continuity but a deeply rooted sympathy that held over the years. I think we shall remember best about him the dreams he always managed to hold close despite frustration that often, I am sure, bordered on despair.

His last letter was full of plans for the summer's project at the Savannah site and in it he included a rough map giving us directions for reaching him. It was planned that we spend a day there with him.

His death will leave a gap that will not be easily filled but we should all be grateful that he could go with some of his dreams still ahead of him - with his spirit still eagerly looking into the future and the work he loved best.....

Lois O'Connor

A Regular Fellow and a True Friend. Need we say more....

Harry L. Schoff

My experience and field trips with Harrison Follett have been many. He was a man of great talent in the field of archaeology, also strong in his convictions of the things he had gained thru a life work. It is hard to express one's feelings on paper. But it is with regret to carry on without his leadership.

Arthur Seelye

It was with regret that I learned of the death recently in Rochester, N. Y. of Harrison Follette. A day or two thereafter I had occasion to pass by his old home east of Levanna. I saw Mr. Sherman, a former close neighbor of his and informed him that Harrison had passed on. Mr. Sherman remarked, "Harrison worked hard with his mind. He was a friendly man and a good neighbor." I thought this a grand tribute and may I add that Harrison was appreciative of any help or favor that came his way.

Harrison Follette and his work on the restoration of the ancient Algonquin village at Levanna became well known throughout Central New York. People came from near and far to visit this interesting Indian Site. Sometimes he would have gatherings. These would be well attended and I recall on one occasion Mr. William Wardor of Geneva brought over and erected a huge tent. Within this Harrison had booths, each with the name of some collector who he had invited to bring in for display their outstanding artifacts. He engaged a radio singing team for the day. Chief Cornplanter with a delegation of Senecas and Cayugas were there attired in native costume, and they entertained with song and dance. Refreshments could be had on the grounds. It was a gala event and I am sure everyone enjoyed the outing.

Then on another occasion there was held what Harrison called "The annual basket picnic." Dr. Bates of Cornell was speaker and delivered an inspiring oration on "The Federation of the Iroquois". This too was well attended. A meeting was held thereafter. This group organized an archaeological society. It was named the "Finger Lakes Archaeological Society". Professor Wood of nearby "Wells" was elected President; Harrison, Secretary and Treasurer. Membership fee was 50¢ a year and membership cards were issued.

Harrison did much in Cayuga County to promote an interest in local history and archaeology. He did considerable research on the movement of the Iroquois. I was impressed with his writings on the migration of the Cayugas.

You who have enjoyed the hospitality of Harrison Follette will long remember his quaint little cabin amidst tall trees. You may remember the deep ditch at the highway, bridged over with planks, the path that bore around to the right, the marker above the grave of his faithful dog, the hidden door on the side, the ramp-like passage that led up through his workshop and

into his study. There by the window an easy chair awaited you and Harrison would take his place at his study table, usually cluttered up with manuscripts, drawings and maps. Perhaps you will remember his oil lamp and its amber base or the open museum up in back where you saw so many interesting things.

You may have seen him at work on the site, removing top soil from a measured area, then whisking away the loose dirt and dust and on this earthen floor, you may have seen the outline in post moulds of a dwelling occupied by a people 500 years before Columbus discovered America.

Then came the time he made a decision. He left his little home in the grove. It seems he just went away, I never knew just why he left. It may have been advancing years, or perhaps lack of financial aid which was needed to complete his project. However, he did not lose interest in archaeology. He went back to his old haunts and met up with his archaeological friends in the land of the Senecas. He continued his writings at his daughter's home in Lima and sent in many interesting items for publication in "The Bulletin". By this time Harrison rarely attended our monthly meetings but he was there in spirit and took an active part through correspondence.

The passing of Harrison Follette is a great loss to the Archaeological Society of Central New York.

J. L. Ward

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Prof. Walter K. Long,  
President Archaeological Society  
of Central New York,  
203 Genesee Street,  
Auburn, N. Y.

Dear Professor Long:

It is with extreme regret that I record the death of Harrison C. Follett, whom you rightly term in your letter of 3rd July, "Dean of Cayuga County Archaeologists." His loss will be widely felt.

I know that the Society will memorialize him suitably, and I trust that this tribute to him on my part may be accepted in that connection. I know him well and have kept close contact with him since the year 1929, when he first came into this county and first conceived the interest he took in the Cayugas and the Iroquois lore of this community. At that time I was Chairman for Cayuga County under the state organization headed up by Dr. Alexander C. Flick, then the State Historian, and I had charge of all the activities that were conducted in the course of the Sesqui-centennial celebration of the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition against the Iroquois, in 1779.

One feature of these activities was the prosecution of explorations of an archaeological and historical character at various spots in Cayuga County, possessing an archaeological or historical interest, notably as concerned the Cayuga Nation. Mr. Follett came here under the direction and approval of Dr. Arthur C. Parker, then the head of that institution. He was accompanied by his friend and associate, George Seldon of Rochester, a relative of the famous automobile inventor and who was well known in the archaeological field. They submitted themselves to my guidance and direction as Chairman of the Cayuga County exercises, and set up their camp and base of operations on the Young farm in the Town of Ledyard, on the bank of Great Gully, a location which was already known as the site of a late Cayuga village, and to which in the first instance these scientists devoted themselves.

There followed extensive explorations on the site, scientifically conducted, resulting in the discovery of many structures and artifacts possessing genuine interest, some of which were removed to Rochester, but replicas were left here as the property of the Cayuga County Historical Society. Notable exhumations were made, developing burials of various sorts, including some interesting mass burials which attracted widespread attention during this exciting summer; and a great exhibition of the discoveries was staged by Mr. Follett and by Mr. Seldon on a Sunday during that autumn, which gave to the thousands and thousands of visitors who came to attend it from all points of New York State an idea of Iroquois burials and of the position of the bodies and mortuary accompaniments buried with them at this period. A complete record of these excavations was made, I remember, and probably reposes now in the archives of the Rochester Museum.

Among other things, the site was identified as the

probable location of the Upper Cayuga village of the Cayugas mentioned in the journals of the Expedition, and one of the settlements destroyed by Colonel Butler's troops. Later, Mr. Follett came to reverse himself in this opinion, but for the first time in our recorded history the identification he made became definite.

There were other sites in the community that were excavated and excited a great deal of attention. The archaeological work ended, however, before the Sesqui-centennial exercises were completed, but Mr. Follett's interest in the community received a great stimulus, which was enlarged by the wide circle of friends who gave him appreciation and help in the work that he undertook in the succeeding period.

This later work featured the development of the Algonkian site east of Levanna. This development work Mr. Follett undertook largely by himself, under the sponsorship of the Cayuga County Historical Society. It was most extensive and elaborate. In it Mr. Follett made many novel discoveries, which he exhibited. They attracted tremendous attention. Among other things, the complete site of the ancient village was uncovered. The post-holes and other structures connected with the Long House were revealed for the inspection of all concerned, and a tremendous number of structures, such as fireplaces, and especially of animal effigies, as Mr. Follett and other authorities maintained, were uncovered, described, exhibited and photographed. We have in the Cayuga County Historical Society archives these photographs and many of these descriptions. Mr. Follett occupied this site for several years. It was on the Sherman farm on the Levanna-Scipioville Road; and he even built a cottage on the site, where he lived during this occupancy.

Later still, after the organization of the Archaeological Society, for which he was largely responsible, Mr. Follett took direction of the work of the Society, made many examinations of sites, wrote extensively as respects the Cayuga villages, the various Cayuga migrations over several centuries, and endeavored, vigorously, through a study of maps and historical data, and other personal measurements and investigations, to correct certain misapprehensions which he maintained had been made in the course of time as respects certain of these features. Many of the reports of these investigations stirred up controversy, much of which remains unsolved. In many cases, however, he confirmed tradition and the previous records.

He was a strong antagonist and was a skillful builder up of all the arguments he adopted as the result of his own investigations and discoveries.

He made many firm, enduring friendships in this community. His repute, skill and fidelity as a scientist was generally recognized. Many tributes came to him from various authorities. It is to be regretted, I maintain, that facilities did not exist for the recording of this work that he did, and putting it into shape for preservation.

His interest and his activities included a showmanship that was of itself notable. He staged an unusual celebration at Levanna before ill health forced him, some years ago, to close his cottage and depart for Canandaigua and Lima, to live with his relatives. Moreover, he was disappointed, in that efforts to acquire for the county of Cayuga this Levanna site broke down. For reasons not yet fully explained, this failure represented considerable disappointment within the county, because the negotiations were on the verge of success when they finally crumbled. This celebration featured speeches from representatives of the Tuscarora Nation, the Senecas and the Cayugas of the Western New York Reservations, and there attended many students, scientists, and authorities, representatives of all the Six Nations, from as far away as Canada. The Sunday on which these exercises were given was a notable date in the story of the Cayuga County Historical Society and of the Cayuga County Archaeological Society. It was Mr. Follett's ambition to arrange yet other entertainment of the same sort, but he had to confine his efforts to meetings of the Archaeological Society, to a large extent, thenceforth.

These two societies to which his efforts contributed so much shall ever hold his memory in respect and affection. He was a kindly man and a lovable character. His information was wide, and he won repute in many quarters, some of them far distant from Cayuga County. The Rochester Museum must yet record with gratitude his services to it, and many amateurs, numbering hundreds if not thousands, will never fail to remember the help he gave them and the interest he supplied in their notable work.

Yours respectfully,

Richard C. S. Drummond,  
Secretary Cayuga County  
Historical Society,  
Cayuga County Historian.