



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Mel Brown studies an Indian arrowhead to determine its approximate age. He recently found one believed to be 5,000 years old.

He rebuilds past

• from SIFTING on page 1

"I was begging to go," Mr. Brown recalls, "and, of course, he needed my help."

To prepare for the project, the former fishing tackle salesman started reading all the material about archaeology he could get his hands on.

His biggest opportunity came in the early 1970s when Mr. Finlayson began a study on the native presence at Crawford Lake Conservation Area, where findings indicate that Iroquoian-speaking people lived between 1200 and 1650 A.D.

The project for the London Museum of Archaeology snowballed to other areas of Halton as new Indian settlements were discovered, many by Mr. Brown. Various digs now span an area from Flamborough to north of Speyside.

Last year, Mr. Brown convinced his wife Martha, a city girl at heart, to move from Toronto to Campbellville so he could be closer to his research.

"It's thrilling to realize that you're standing on the same spot they did 950 years ago," Mr. Brown says.

The occupation of southwestern

and south-central Ontario by Iroquoian-speaking people is divided into three major periods — early (1000-1300 A.D.), middle (1300-1400 A.D.) and late (1400-1650 A.D.), Mr. Finlayson writes in a museum newsletter.

During the late Iroquoian period, southwestern Ontario was occupied by Neutral people while the Hurons dominated south-central Ontario.

In the 17th century, both the Huron and Neutral were visited by Europeans, such as the Jesuits, who left detailed accounts of their interactions, particularly with the Huron.

The Crawford Lake vicinity is a "fascinating" area in which to study the Iroquoian occupation of southern Ontario because it's located along the boundary between the Huron and Neutral people, Mr. Finlayson writes.

While Mr. Brown still has amateur status and is considered a volunteer, he admits he knows a lot about archaeology, and his findings prove it.

Just last week near Flamborough he dug up an arrowhead he believes is 5,000 years old. The weapon is made of chert, which isn't native to the area, indicating



the Indians either brought the rock or the hand-made tool from others areas.

"It's enjoyable to find something because it may answer something," Mr. Brown says.

After 30 years, Mr. Brown has many of the answers he was looking for. The Indians fed themselves by growing such staples as corn and squash. They also grew tobacco, and hunted deer.

When a site is discovered, he can determine what group settled there by studying the age and style of pottery.

Evidence indicates the Indians settled in one place for about 20 years — using up the area's resources — and then moved on.

"We found a lot of things we didn't know we would find," he says. "We have a lot of answers."

But now new questions have arisen about relations between the different groups and villages. And, at age 60, Mr. Brown, who suffers from diabetes, says he will keep searching for the answers as long as he's able.

Allegations against trustees finally at courts next month

By TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

Conflict of interest allegations leveled against five Halton Board of Education trustees will finally find their way into a court. Wednesday, Sept. 18 in Milton is the expected first hearing for the case.

Burlington resident Dave Houston, an executive member of the outspoken Taxpayers Coalition Halton watchdog group, is on record as the individual who has lodged the complaint against the board members.

The members in question are board Chair Linda Glover and Trustee Joe Pavelka, both of Burlington, Oakville Vice-Chair Penny Siebert, Trustee Ethel Gardiner of Georgetown, and Milton's Flo Belford.

The Taxpayers Coalition has cited the possible

breach of Municipal Conflict of Interest regulations, in relation to the board's 1996 budget deliberations, since the five trustees named have family or other relatives working for the Halton or Peel school boards.

The coalition had expected court action to commence a couple of months earlier, but court documents improperly filed back in June caused a delay.

"I'm just looking for a ruling. We're testing the law here," Mr. Houston said. Previous calls by the coalition for the five individual's resignation or removal are still in line with his goal. "It's the general sentiment (of the coalition) and the rule of the ministry of education" in cases of conflict of interest, he said.

"I have no comment about the quality of trustees as trustees. In most cases they have been good," Mr. Houston noted.

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