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Sudbury man donates Indian artifacts found on area farm in 1920s to Paris

By Peter Fitzpatrick, Expositor Staff

PARIS — More than 60 years after digging it out of the soil near Paris, Frank Southern has returned his boyhood treasure to the town.

The 78-year-old Sudbury resident presented the Paris Museum and Historical Society on Wednesday with about 100 flint Indian arrowheads, spearheads and knives that he and his brothers found on their family's farm near Blue Lake where they grew up in the 1920s.

"It was something we found; it will be something for the Paris Museum. Something for people to come and see and know it was found in the Paris area by a Paris family.

"It's quite a collection, with quite a few varying shapes."

Mr. Southern still remembers the day he and his brother Howard, who died on active service in the Second World War, first stumbled on to the arrow heads.

"We were stooking wheat with father, and we were at the gate a few minutes before him, waiting to help unhitch the horses to go for lunch," he recalled. "I had heard about flint chips being a sign of arrowheads, and I remember looking down and there were some there."

Not long after that, the brothers began unearthing artifacts all over their property.

"Next thing we found one arrowhead, and then it was another, and then one after the other until we found 200 of them," he said. "There was no particular place — they were just scattered over a field, as if

they had just been dropped and left. We were pretty thrilled to find them at the time."

The field where most of them came from had sandy soil and sloped gently toward a small stream. Mr. Southern figures it was an ideal site for an Indian village.

He eventually left Paris and went to Sudbury to work in the Inco mines, retiring in 1978. During that time the collection languished in a box, but in recent months its fate began to worry him.

Although he has not lived in the town for half a century, Mr. Southern has returned to Paris almost every year. He offered the best preserved arrowheads to the historical society, and they were quickly accepted.

"We're extremely happy," said Fred Bemrose, the society member Mr. Southern contacted. "It's sort of a major thing. These artifacts of Indian arrowheads go back hundreds of years. They predate the Six Nations by several hundred years. It's quite significant."

Some of the arrowheads were probably made by the Neutrals, a flint-working tribe that once inhabited the area, he said. An archeologist at the meeting believes others may predate that era, and be from as far back as 2500 B.C.

Mr. Southern admitted that parting with the relics is an emotional experience for him, but he knows it's the right thing to do.

"They were found here. That's where they belong."

The artifacts will be on display in the historical collection in the Paris council chambers.