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Stouffville This Month invites readers to submit questions on local history

By Nancy Hopkins
Stouffville This Month

If you have a question concerning the people, land or history of this community, we invite you to submit it via e-mail or snail mail (see the editorial page for addresses) and we will do our best to provide answers.

Lemonville resident Monika Strak asks: Were there Native people and settlements in the Stouffville area?

Whitchurch-Stouffville has a strong Native heritage. The remains of numerous Indian villages, mission churches and burial grounds can be found throughout the township. Items unearthed include human remains, bronze crucifixes and other religious ornaments, as well as stone axes, flint arrows, spear heads and crockery.

Relics from Paleo-Indian inhabitants in the Lake St. George vicinity date as far back as 7500-9000 B.C. In more recent times, according to a 1918 archaeological report published by the Royal Ontario Museum, a Native fort approximately seven acres in size once stood at Vandorf and Kennedy Roads. It is the only archaeological site in the township to be officially designated with a number by the Ministry of Culture.

When Euro-American settlers arrived in the 1700's the Mississauga Indians laid claim to portions of Whitchurch land that they used for hunting

and trapping. Records show there were at least three local Native trail systems in use at the time. Water travel was the major mode of transportation in this pre-road era and Natives travelled the Rouge River tributaries, portaging over land to the various Native forts and encampments before continuing north along the East Holland River ways.

As late as the 19th century it is believed that Native families set up encampments on the

Bartholomew Mill property near the railway tracks in Stouffville, where they would make and sell baskets to the local villagers. In 1923, the south-central Ontario Mississauga Indians ceded Whitchurch territory as part of the Williams Treaty.

While the preservation of the community's Native heritage does not appear evident on the surface, more and more information is being unearthed all the time. Individuals such as Fred Robbins of the local

historical society continue to research this important but little known component of our past. Mr. Robbins has spoken on this subject to students at Summitview Public School and can be reached at 905-640-6781.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Stouffville Public Library at 905-642-7323 or Whitchurch Stouffville Museum at 1-888-290-0337. A comprehensive history of the area, entitled *Whitchurch Township*, can be purchased at the Museum.



The Living Nativity, presented by members of the congregation at Stouffville Missionary Church, was a major feature of last year's Festival of Lights. This year church members will once again present a Living Nativity at the Clock Tower in the town square.

Holiday Menu Planning Made Easy -

Christmas shopping should include a trip to Goodley's Fine Meats in Markham. A crucial partner for your holiday menu planning, John Konidis, owner, and his staff are taking special orders now for their fresh free-range turkeys and capons, honey-glazed whole or half hams (they'll even pre-slice for you), racks of lamb, boneless legs of lamb and prime rib.

And, for the rest of the holiday, Goodley's has homemade Tortieres, steak pies (baked ready for heating or bake yourself from the freezer), sausage rolls and Cranberry sausages. Stock up from the wide selection of frozen items including chicken fingers, lasagna, stew, shepherds pie and meatballs, and you'll always have something on hand. Pick up fresh eggs, milk, cream, Balderson and empire cheese, and gourmet sauces while you are shopping.

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