

*THE HUMBER*  
*A Canadian Heritage River*

Conservation  
for the Living City

Canadian  
Heritage  
River  
Le Rivier  
du Humber  
du patrimoine  
canadien

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*Annie Veilleux, a graduate student at York University, explores the landscapes of Toronto's Carrying Places*

A preview of the 2011/2012 Lecture Series, hosted by the Toronto Chapter of The Ontario Archaeological Society

Also, upcoming events to remember!

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## President's Message

The 2010/2011 season of speakers for the Toronto Chapter of the OAS was expertly coordinated by Mima Kapches providing a variety of accomplished guest speakers who shared their knowledge and expertise with our members. Presentations encompassed a variety of topics from the significance of the War Exploit Paintings of the Plains Indians by Arni Brownstone last September to the discussion of field school exploits on a Meadowood lithic site on Grand Island in the Niagara River by Lisa Marie Anselmi this past spring. All of the speakers provided us with engaging tales of their archaeological exploits and introduced us to a broad range of topics. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Mima for organizing this key aspect of our meetings! Mima has booked another terrific slate of speakers for the 2011/2012 season who I expect will be similarly engaging. I am particularly excited to attend the first meeting of the season where Dr. Erik Seeman from the University of Buffalo will be speaking about the Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead. Please refer to our website for up-to-date speaker information and topic abstracts as they become available.

The Toronto Chapter has a new email address that will be posted on our website and Facebook page and will be used to communicate with our members. All correspondence from the chapter to the membership will now be forwarded from this address. Please feel free to contact any of the chapter executive through this address: [torontoarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:torontoarchaeology@gmail.com)

An upcoming bus trip exclusively for Toronto Chapter members is scheduled for September 24, 2011 to the Peterborough Petroglyphs! Reserve your spot by contacting the trip coordinator Marti Latta. See the full details in this newsletter.

The first meeting after the summer break is September 21, 2011. Join us for another exciting and informative year!

Janice

How do people come to know and ascribe meaning to landscape? This is a question that I have been grappling with as part of my research on ancient Aboriginal trails in Toronto. Prior to the imposition of artificial survey grids and straight roads, the landscape north of Lake Ontario was covered by a network of interwoven trails along which life was lived for thousands of years. Aboriginal peoples created these ancient footpaths through the accumulated imprints of countless journeys. The trails were simultaneously shaped by the natural topography itself, as travellers avoided swampy lowlands, rocky outcrops, and other natural impediments. Some of the most well-known trails include the footpath, now long hidden underneath the asphalt of Davenport Road, which followed the base of the 13,500-year-old shoreline of glacial Lake Iroquois. Well-known paths also include a series of north-south routes that connected Lake Ontario to the upper Great Lakes by way of Lake Simcoe, the best documented of which followed the Humber River valley. Better known as the Toronto Carrying Place, this trail followed the east branch of the Humber River northward over the Oak Ridges Moraine to the west branch of the Holland River. Sometimes known as the east branch of the Toronto Carrying Place, another trail extended from the mouth of the Rouge River northwards to the headwaters of the Little Rouge and over the drainage divide to the east branch of the Holland River at Holland Landing. Still another trail followed the Don River. I refer to these three north-south trails as the Toronto Carrying Places (Figure 1).

The history of these ancient footpaths begins with early Aboriginal peoples who inhabited and visited the north shore of Lake Ontario. For thousands of years, Aboriginal children learned by following and listening to their elders as they walked the trails that linked their settlements with hunting, fishing, and harvesting grounds, as well as trade routes that tied the north shore to northern Ontario, the Atlantic coast, and the Midwest. For European newcomers, explorers, fur traders, and settlers alike, the landscape north of Lake Ontario was entirely foreign, and those who ventured along its ancient trails experienced their new surroundings step by step. It can never be stressed enough that wherever Europeans travelled in what is now the City of Toronto they did so in the footsteps of countless others who went before. In fact, it was a Mississauga man nicknamed 'Old Sail' who advised Governor Simcoe and his crew to venture down the Don River trail, a route that he knew would be less difficult for the travellers who had initially ventured north via the Humber trail. What 'Old Sail' did not know, however, was that his recommendation would lead to the obliteration of a trail that had potentially

been used by Aboriginal peoples for millennia, as the Don River trail would ultimately become the basis for Yonge Street.

These landscape features are of great antiquity, yet they still continue to resonate with people today. They continue to be commemorated in the form of plaques and heritage walks, and a new book was just published on the subject (Heather Robertson's *Walking into Wilderness: The Toronto Carrying Place and Nine Mile Portage*). Believe it or not, the 'Toronto Carrying-Place Trail' even has its own Facebook page (though so far, only one person "likes" it)! How we experience these trails today, however, is worlds away from how they were experienced in the past. While it is impossible for us to re-live the sights, sounds, and smells that were experienced by those who walked its paths for thousands of years, the trails still hold meaning for many of us today. The aim of my research was to answer a seemingly basic question: what has the Toronto Carrying Place meant to the myriad of people who have walked its paths, either physically or in their imagination, from its earliest inception until today?

I suggest that people come to know and make sense of, and ultimately ascribe meaning to landscape by living it, by discussing it, and by imagining it. Knowing landscape by living it is defined by on-the-ground physicality, and the intimate sensuous knowledge that is acquired through work and play, or in the case of the Toronto Carrying Places, through walking. Knowing landscape by discussing it or communicating about it incorporates any story, narrative, place-name, scientific research, or debate, concerning the particular landscape features. Knowing landscape by imagining it is rooted in the realm of social memory and historical consciousness, and concerns issues of power and representation, iconography and ideology. There is no doubt that these three ways of knowing are inextricably intertwined and more than one can be at play at any one time. By differentiating between these ways of knowing, however, we can get a better understanding of the overlapping narratives of the Toronto Carrying Places.

Like many of the readers of this newsletter, my background is in archaeology. An exploration of the Toronto Carrying Places, however, necessitated a journey into other disciplines and the use of a number of various sources, from archaeological sites to exploration journals, from oral histories to commemorative plaques, and from seventeenth-century maps to twentieth-century drawings. Individually, these sources might offer only ephemeral information concerning the meaning of the trails at a certain time for a



certain people. Taken together, however, they provide an enriched narrative for the Toronto Carrying Places—one that encompasses the various historically-specific, individually-experienced, and culturally-constructed ways that people have come to know and ascribe meaning to these ancient landscape features.

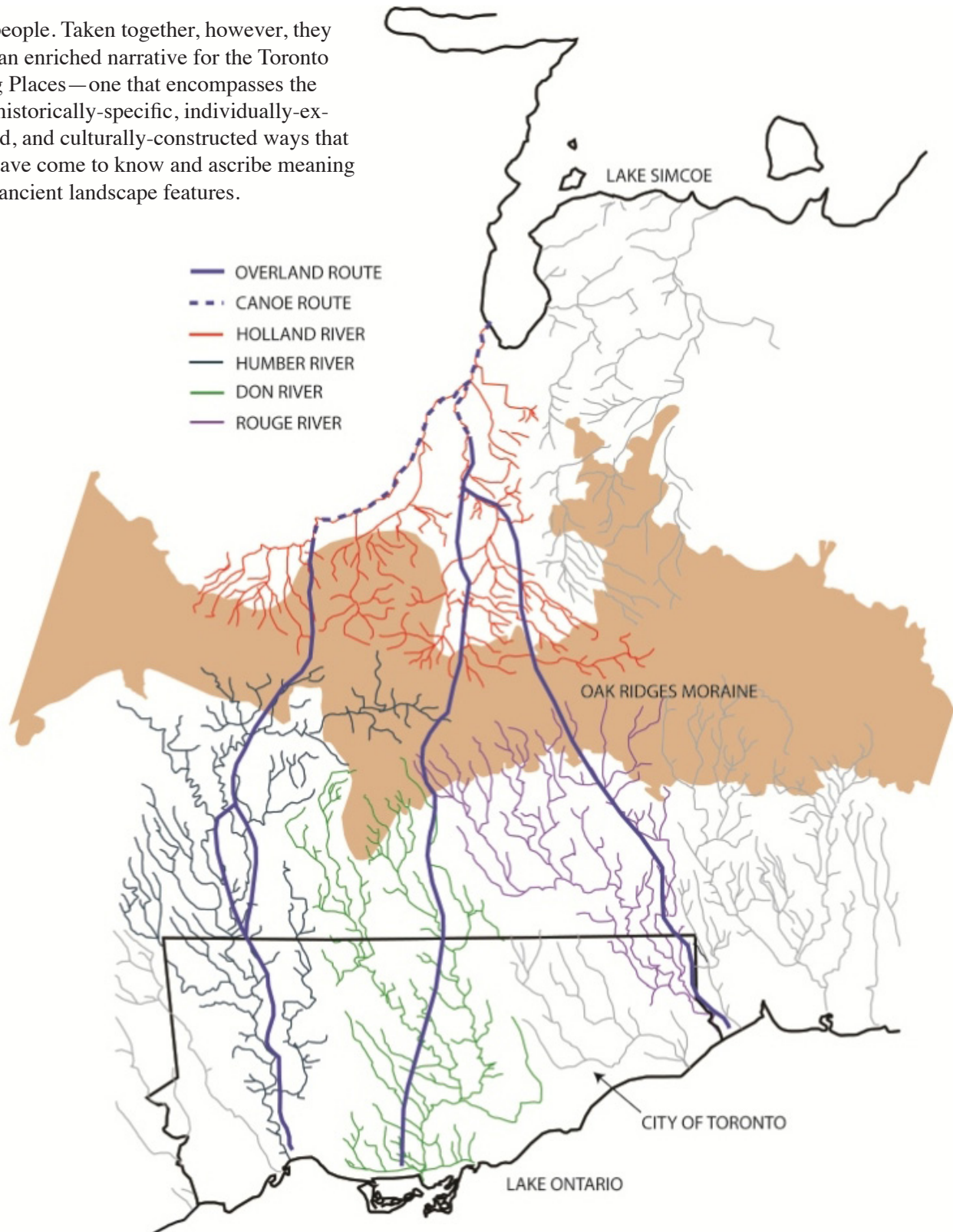


Figure 1: Toronto Carrying Places

Annie Veilleux is a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at York University and a Cultural Heritage Specialist for the Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage Landscape Planning Division at Archaeological Services Inc.

# 2011/2010 Lecture Series

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**September 21, 2011**

“The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead”

Dr. Erik R. Seeman, Professor, University of Buffalo.

The Feast of the Dead was a ritual of extraordinary power for the Wendats (Hurons) of present-day Ontario. Every decade or so they lovingly scraped the bones of their deceased friends and relatives, whose bodies had decomposed on scaffolds, and reburied the dry bones in an enormous pit. The French Jesuit missionaries who witnessed this ritual were impressed by the Wendats’ devotion to their dead.

This talk uses the Feast of the Dead – and mortuary practices more generally – as a way to understand French-Native encounters in the seventeenth century. Wendats and French Catholics had surprisingly similar attitudes toward death and human remains. These similarities allowed for communication between the two groups, even as both used death practices to define the differences with the other. Deathways were thus at the very heart of the colonial encounter.



**October 19, 2011**

“Archaeology and the Revitalization of the Don Valley Brick Works” David Robertson, Archaeological Services Inc.

Between 2005 and 2010, Archaeological Services Inc. carried out a series of studies in support of the Evergreen Foundation’s ambitious plans to transform the largely derelict Don Valley Brick Works site into a natural and cultural heritage site. This work involved both archaeological excavations and monitoring of general construction activities in order to document the buried remains that had accumulated on the site over the century it was in operation.

*(Kiln Toronto Brickworks, Photo courtesy of David Robertson, ASI)*



# 2011/2010 Lecture Series

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## **November 16, 2011**

Dr. Gary Crawford, University of Toronto, Mississauga  
TBA

## **January 18, 2012**

Members Night, Please contact speakers coordinator.

## **December 2011**

Chapter party, date to be announced.

## **February 15, 2012**

Dr. Holly Martelle, Timmins Martelle Consultants,  
TBA



## **March 21, 2012**

Dr. Max Friesen, University of Toronto  
“Across the Top of North America: The Thule Inuit Migration from Alaska to Arctic Canada”

One of the central events in the Arctic past revolves around the migration of ancestral “Thule” Inuit from Alaska to Canada and Greenland around 800 years ago. Traveling by boat and dogsled, these early Inuit moved across an entire continent in only a few decades, learning about their new environments as they went. In this paper, I will report on new research which is leading to a re-thinking of when and why this migration occurred, and how the earliest Canadian Inuit lived.

## **April 18, 2012**

Dr. David Smith, University of Toronto, Mississauga  
TBA

## **May 16, 2012**

Dr. Conrad Heidenreich, Professor Emeritus, York University  
TBA

# Notice: Toronto Chapter Bus Tour

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TORONTO CHAPTER OF THE OAS MEMBER EVENT

PETERBOROUGH PETROGLYPHS PARK – BUS TRIP

SEE OUR WORLD HERITAGE PETROGLYPH SITE!  
LUNCH AT LAKEFIELD -- VISIT KAWARTHA COUNTY WINES.

DATE: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 9:00 A.M.

MEET AT FINCH SUBWAY STATION, (EAST PARKING AREA, YONGE AND BISHOP STREETS),  
NEAR THE HOTDOG STAND.

PLEASE RESPOND TO [mlatta@sympatico.ca](mailto:mlatta@sympatico.ca) (OR PHONE 416-222-4346) BEFORE SEPTEMBER  
5 TO RESERVE YOUR SEATS.



# Upcoming Events and Notices

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**September 2011**

**NOTICE**

For update, notice, and newsletter distribution purposes, please update your current, active, non-firewalled emails with the Toronto Chapter. Any bounced emails are referred to the Treasurer for follow-up, but this wastes club resources. If we cannot contact a member by phone, the Treasurer has to send an inquiry by post-age and that takes time. If the individual does not respond, their e-mails continue to bounce. We would like to ensure that all members are receiving appropriate information in a timely fashion. Thanks so much!

**September 21, 2011**

**Upcoming Lecture**



The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead

The speaker will be Dr. Erik R. Seeman, Professor at the University of Buffalo.

**Saturday September 24, 2011**

**Bus Trip**



An upcoming bus trip exclusively for Toronto Chapter members is set for the Peterborough Petroglyphs Park! Join us for lunch in Lakefield, a tour of the Petroglyphs, a visit to Kawartha County Wines, and a whole lot of fun! Details to be posted on the chapter website [toronto.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca](http://toronto.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca) as well as on our [Facebook page](#)

**October 13-16 2011**

**2011 OAS Symposium**

Mark your calendars for the annual OAS Symposium “Waterways Through Time, Recognition and Celebration” being held in Ottawa this year from October 13 to October 16. . Refer to the OAS website for more details: <http://www.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca/OASSymposium/2011Symposium.php>



# Contact Us!

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## Come Visit Our Website

Website: <http://toronto.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca/>



Also, don't forget to join the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society **Facebook Group** for all the up to date information about meetings and interesting links. Information is also posted on the Chapter's webpage.