

Archeologist unearths past, stays ahead of construction

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Staying one step ahead of an eager bulldozer operator who could unwittingly destroy a bit of history is part of the job for Charles Martinez, archeologist.

Martinez, 44, of West Bloomfield finds himself in the position of taking one last look at the remains of history before they are covered over with subdivisions, apartment buildings and office complexes.

Construction in the Farmington area has given him the chance to unearth some clues which tell about life in the cities during prehistoric times, when Indian groups began using the area as a fall and winter campground.

By 7000 BC, the area was occupied by a group called the Woodland Indians, who were a little more rooted to their living areas than the hunters who lived in the area before them. They had been preceded by Paleo-Indians, who hunted and gathered food in the area between 8000-7000 BC but remained nomads who moved as their food supply migrated on the hoof.

AFTER THE Paleo-Indian group, in about 7000-5500 BC, the area was occupied by a slightly more stable group of food gatherers, referred to as Archaic Man.

By the time the Woodland Indians arrived on the scene, Michigan had gone through some environmental changes. After 7000 BC, the state's shoreline was filling in with water, following a period of recession during an ice age. As the water levels increased, the state became too swampy to be an inviting homeland for groups like Archaic Man.

As the water level stabilized, Woodland Indians made their appearance in the Farmington area. By the end of their period, 1700 AD, they wintered in the Oakland County area and spent their summers in camps near the Detroit River so they could be near to the fur trade.

The lure of the fur trade and the need to move away from the water in the winter played their parts in making Farmington a crossroads for Indian paths.

Farmington had a nice terrain for hunting. The northwest and northeast sections of Farmington Hills were once open areas that contrasted with the tree-covered ground in the rest of

the cities' areas, according to Martinez.

THE PERSONS WHO lived there probably lived in oval huts made of twigs and trees. They liked the higher terrain of parts of Farmington because it afforded them a place to watch the approach of game and of enemies. Natural springs were attractive spots for these people because it afforded them with a place to wash, to cook and to drink.

As the prehistoric residents settled down and became more proficient at storing seed and farming, their diet changed from high protein foods to softer dishes such as maize and corn. Since the new diet omitted the gravel and stone that clung to the old hunt-

ing diet, the Woodland Indians began to have problems which are familiar to today's youngsters—cavities.

Another problem archeologists have noticed that might have afflicted the early residents was arthritis, according to Martinez.

But the remains of the group that he described are being lost as modern man constructs his own dwellings.

"WE'RE LOSING these areas so quickly for construction and municipal areas," Martinez said.

Archeologists who specialize in the type of urban work that keeps one step ahead of development are likened to combat surgeons by Martinez. They don't have the time to do the careful work they would prefer, so

they do the most precise work that is possible.

Most of them rely on reports from amateur archeologists or farmers who find artifacts and recognize their historical worth.

That's not always easy, according to Martinez. A hearth that once warmed a family group in 700 BC, now looks like a spot of ear oil on the ground, according to Martinez.

It takes a bit of digging to finally come across the pottery that is usually found near a hearth.

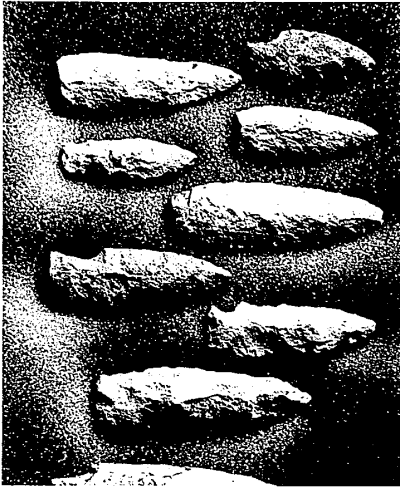
In order to get to the remains before the construction crews, archeologists rely more on cooperation from workers, city planners and officials.

Their job is to finish their work while not holding back a construction schedule without good cause.

If an archeologist comes to a site that has been damaged by a long ago fence post and is no longer valuable, the archeologist ought to allow construction to go on as scheduled, said Martinez.



Charles Martinez of West Bloomfield studies a reconstructed pot which was once used by Michigan's early inhabitants. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



Projectile tips (above) were used by prehistoric Indians in Farmington before the advent of the bow and arrow. The barbed object (left) is found primarily in Michigan and was used by Archaic Man as a tool. Farmers who found the objects originally thought they were used for skinning animals.



PROUD MOTHER

Commissioners tour Polish art

It was a meeting of two solutions. Marlow Belanger, of Farmington Hills, was looking for a tour for the Oakland County Cultural Commissioners, Fr. Walter Zebrowski, Art Gallery Director of Orchard Lake Schools wanted to make the commission aware of his collection of Polish painting and sculpture.

The two solution seekers met, recently and their problems disappeared as the Commission toured through a collection of traditional Polish art.

Most of the works the group viewed were collected for the school by Fr. Michael Koltuniak, who was a professor of classics at the complex's now closed college. Fr. Koltuniak collected the works in the 50's and 60's. His collection makes up 80 per cent of the Gallery's inventory.

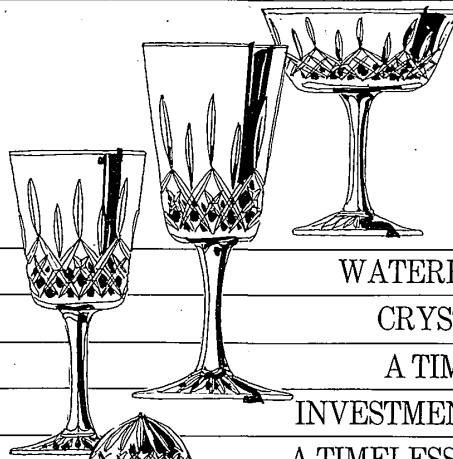
AMONG THE WORKS which were collected by Fr. Koltuniak is a oil done by Stanislaw Chlebowski, who lived between 1835-1884. Chlebowski was a court painter for the Ottoman Empire in 1865 when he painted the

portrait of the Proud Mother. In this case, the mother is a harem woman who lounges on a low sofa while her offspring shyly presents himself before her. The picture is typical of Chlebowski's oriental portraits and battle scenes.

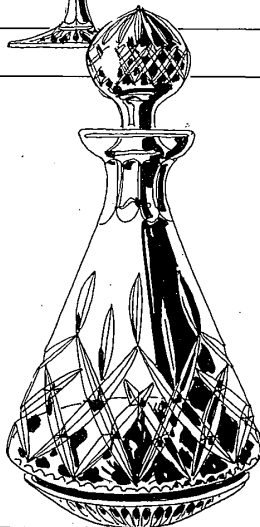
Another portrait of a man relishing his mug of beer by Wladaw Szymanski occupies the opposite wall of the Art Gallery, which used to be the college's classics chapel. The ruddy faced man is only one of Szymanski's creations. In his homeland, he is remembered for his statue of Fredrich Chopin. The statue was done in 1926, destroyed in 1940 and rebuilt in 1958, according to Fr. Zebrowski.

Also on the Commission's agenda was a viewing of the gallery's own bust of Chopin by Marian Owczarski, 42, artist in residence at the Orchard Lake Schools, which include a Roman Catholic boys preparatory school, a coed college and a seminary.

The tour was part of the Council's four trips to view gallery's and institutes in the county.



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