

FINGER LAKES EXPLORATIONS AT KEUKA LAKE

July 28, 2017 John Carroll Archaeological Prospection, Day of Archaeology 2017, Egypt, Excavation, Experimental Archaeology, Explore Posts, Fieldwork, Greece, Macedonia, Mesolithic, Palestine, Prehistory, Turkey



Background:

Located at the southern end of the last glacial advance, the Finger Lakes region is composed of a diverse landscape carved by consecutive advancements and recessions of glacial ice believed to have been from 2.4 – 3.2 Kilometers thick. Leaving behind large landscapes difficult to navigate by today's standards, the predominantly north – south orientation of hills and valleys, with several large navigable lakes at the north

end of the Susquehanna River system, lend themselves to the theory that humans made their way here from the Chesapeake Bay Area, which the Smithsonian Institute has collected data on over the past several years, indicating that humans may have used the waterway after crossing the Atlantic, as posited in recent years by Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian – even pre-Holocene – and thus challenging the Bering Strait theory that early migrations only crossed into the Americas from Asia.

Recent discoveries of Mastodon remains near the base of the Hudson River system (Bowser Road Mastodon Site, Kingstown area; <https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2016NE/webprogram/Paper272006.html>), also support the possibility that people arrived from either northward or eastward journeys as far back as 11k BCE. With known Mastodon remains found at Letchworth to the west of the Finger Lakes, and Clovis technology, found by William Ritchie at the Southeast end of Canandaigua Lake (considered to be some 13 kyo), it begs the question of earliest sustainable hunter-gathering in the region.

With the likelihood of sufficient numbers of large prey, the reality is also that earliest habitants, without large and accessible deposits of flint or obsidian material, used alternative stone technology for toolmaking.

Early site indications:

Uncovered, at the Northwest end of Keuka Lake (and fully south of the entirety of Canandaigua Lake) between Ritchie's find at the southeast end of Canandaigua Lake (due-west some 40 Kilometers) and the Lamoka site (southeast some 40 Kilometers), through non-archeological excavations (intended to address wastewater management and initiate a new water line past a shallow well) at the base of a hill on a kame terrace, near what once would have been at the shore of Keuka Lake, samples were obtained amidst 1-2 meters of topsoil and clay-based soil above the region's shale, with at least one storage pit beginning 1 m below the surface; a diverse range of ironstone, quartzite, and other assorted matter, with strata including layers of human activity, especially surrounding the well, with many pointed stones and flakes. Other deposits found at the northern end of the plot (near the wastewater management project) indicate stone worked with a Debitage Blank System of knapping typical of MSA shaping, or more specifically, for several ironstone points, an Acheulean-Levallois prepared core technique similar to that used in the Levant, the region surrounding the Eastern Mediterranean.

Today's objective:

Initiate first digital images with Localized GPS, and establish a grid for continued and specified exploration of exposed wastewater management ground at north end of the plot. With the weather finally indicating several days without rain in the forecast, today looks to be an excellent opportunity to begin looking again more closely at the site.

Images pending:

Map

Site

Artifacts if any found today

Images from previously uncovered samples:

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