

JACK HOLLAND: PIONEER CHERT COLLECTOR

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ABSTRACT - This biography of John (Jack) Holland was presented by William Engelbrecht at the Eastern State Archaeological Federation's 75th Annual Meeting on November 6–9 in Lockport, New York, which attracted over 175 participants from the United States and Canada. The presentation was in honor of Jack Holland's work assembling and analyzing an extensive lithic collection and other contributions to the field of archaeology.

Jack Holland was born on July 10, 1926 in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. At Lock Haven High School he was captain of the football team and was on the wrestling and track team. Jack's track events were the broad jump, discus, and javelin. In his junior year he met Louise, whom he was to marry the following year (1944). That was 64 years ago and they remain devoted to one another and to their two children, Johnny and Mona, grand children and great grand children.

One thing that set Jack apart from his fellows was his early interest in archaeology. At age 11 he began walking the flood plains of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River looking for arrowheads. A Lock Haven, Pennsylvania dentist, T. B. Stewart, became an early mentor. Dr. Stewart's collection had been on display at Buffalo's Pan-American exhibition in 1901 and later at Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial celebration in 1925. Dr. Stewart was one of the founders of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology and had worked with Donald Cadzow, Pennsylvania's State Archaeologist.

It should be noted that Jack developed an interest in music in grammar school and learned to play the harmonica as a young teenager. This ability was used later to entertain many archaeologists as they sat around a camp fire in the evening. Jack also played the base drum with the Lock Haven junior drum and bugle corps until high school sports prevailed.

When Jack turned 18 he was called up for the draft but failed the physical due to eye problems. Wanting to serve in the war effort, he hitchhiked to Philadelphia where he joined the Merchant Marine and was sent to Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, New York. However, an old football injury to the cartilage in his leg caused him to be discharged. Shortly thereafter, physical standards were reduced due to a shortage of manpower and Jack volunteered and served for a year and a half in the Army Air Corps. For part of his service, he was assigned to the electrical section of the post engineers at various air bases.



After the war, Jack got a job with Sylvania as an electronics technician, later moving to American Aniline as an electrician's helper. Wanting to learn more, he enrolled at The Pennsylvania State University, taking electrical industrial correspondence courses. In 1953, he was recruited to work as an electrician at the Ford Stamping Plant south of Buffalo, New York, retiring in 1985 after 32 years there. While at Ford, Jack mastered the huge electrical control panels, having to trouble shoot malfunctions before they adversely impacted production. Sometimes this involved Jack's considerable social skills, as when he would figure out that a particular crew had temporarily sabotaged production in order to take a break. He would then quietly go up to them and say something like: "Why don't you flip that switch to see if that will start things up again." When minorities were hired, Jack was the one who could be relied on to be supportive and show them the ropes.



Jack and wife Louise at the 1969 meeting of the 44th New York Volunteers North-South Skirmish Association National Musket Team.

In 1958, Dr. Marian White was conducting salvage operations at the Kleis Site in Hamburg, NY, not far from where Jack lived in West Seneca. Jack volunteered his assistance and then worked with Marian White on a number of subsequent projects, including initial investigations at the Hiscock site. When the Houghton Chapter of the New York State Archeology Association (NYSAA) was founded in 1961 by Dr.

White, Jack became one of the founding members. He is now the only remaining founding member of the chapter.

In 1964, Jack decided he wanted to spend more time with his family. Along with his son Johnny he took up black powder shooting. He devised a number of innovations in this pursuit and these were to win him and his teammates numerous awards, including three consecutive national championships with the North-South Skirmish Association.

Fortunately for archaeology, Jack returned to the field in the early 80's. While still working at the Ford Stamping Plant, Jack entered Empire State College's individualized degree program. With credit given for his knowledge of electronics, Jack was able to focus on archaeology. Early on, Bill Engelbrecht was privileged to work with him on an individual basis, but he was quick to learn all that could be taught to him when it came to lithics. Between 1983 and 1985, Jack took courses in flint knapping from D. C. Waldorf, Frank Cowan, and Errett Callahan. On his own, he devised an elegant use wear experiment using 25 different types of chert, each type being used for the same length of time and the same tasks. He presented his results in Saratoga Springs where he received a statewide award. After graduating in 1986, he continued to read archaeology and practice flint knapping. He also took a course in stone tool manufacturing from Frank Cowan at the Center for American Archaeology at Kampsville, Illinois and he attended Errett Callahan's class in knapping at Glass Buttes, Oregon.

In 1982, Jack had also begun volunteering with Dr. Mike Gramly, then at the Buffalo Museum of Science. Jack worked with Mike Gramly at the Potts site in New York, in Dover Tennessee, at Ft. Laurens in Ohio, and at a number of other sites. In the process Jack met many other archaeologists. He also attended archaeological meetings. These further enlarged both his knowledge and his circle of archaeological friends. Jack helped organize the Buffalo Museum of Science's first knapp-in, which brought together the likes of D. C. Waldorf, Bruce Bradley, and Gene Titmus. After a few years this out-grew the museum and has become the

highly successful annual knapp-in at Letchworth State Park.

Jack became a good flint knapper and a superb explainer of the process. I could always rely on him for an excellent demonstration and lecture to archaeological field school students and archaeology seminar students. He also became an expert lithic analyst, a skill he also taught to his grandson, David. For the last twenty years, I have regularly conferred with him in my analysis of lithics from the Eaton site. Jack has been unfailingly helpful and taught more about lithics to Bill Engelbrecht than anyone else. Jack, the student, long ago surpassed this professor.



Jack demonstrating flint knapping at the Buffalo Museum of Science

With Jack's increased involvement in archaeology and interest in lithic sources came his realization that most archaeologists did not have a good handle on the sources of the lithic material on their sites. Furthermore, there was no major repository of lithic material in North America where one could compare a lithic specimen to known sources. When Jack visited the few institutions said to have lithic study collections, what he generally found were small, regional collections or collections of stone tools that were said to be made of specific cherts. If raw material had been collected from the source, the range of variability in the material was rarely

represented. Jack decided that a comprehensive North American comparative lithic collection was needed. Thus he embarked on his second career: chert chaser.

Jack would visit the actual geologic outcrop, taking multiple samples from different accessible areas and carefully recording the location of the specimens collected. This activity has taken him to all 50 states and he has amassed over 22,000 samples representing more than 1,500 named lithic types from the United States and Canada. Early on, Kevin Smith, then Curator of Anthropology at the Buffalo Museum of Science, saw the value of these efforts. Through Kevin's efforts, the collection is now housed in the Holland Lithic Laboratory of the Buffalo Museum of Science and Jack became a Research Fellow of the museum.

In trying to pin point outcrops of likely tool stone, Jack started systematically going through the archaeological and geological literature. What he found was chaos. Archaeologists and geologists often used different terms for the same source. Furthermore, a different outcrop of the same material might be given a different name, or the same outcrop might be renamed by someone unfamiliar with earlier work. So along with building a sample collection Jack started a reference bibliography with folders for every lithic source. Over the last few years, Jack produced a number of highly useful reference works for different states, listing the lithic sources for each state along with the alternate names each source is known by and the bibliographic references for each description of that source.

With the establishment of the Lithic Lab, Jack has been able to assist many archaeologists in the identification of the probable source of the samples they have brought or sent to the lab. His approach to identification is macroscopic and he relies on his encyclopedic memory in checking the samples submitted against those in the collection. Jack generally does this for no charge. He is happy to share his knowledge. He is interested in the information, not financial reward. He has also generously made his collection available to researchers for trace element and petrographic analyses, being open to testing his conclusions by any analytic method. He has

also loaned or given samples to both contract and academic groups for their use in sourcing materials.



New York State Archeological Association Award 1998

His expertise and generosity have been recognized by numerous awards. He received



Three generations at the Hiscock Site: Jack with son John (center) and grandson David (left)

the J. Alden Mason award from the Society of Pennsylvania Archaeology and he was made a Fellow of the New York State Archaeological Association.

In 2001 he received the Crabtree Award from the Society for American Archaeology in New Orleans and it was amazing to see the number of archaeologists who knew Jack or wanted to know him. In early November 2008, he was named a Pioneer of Science by the Hauptman-Woodward Institute in Buffalo, New York in recognition of his efforts to systematically collect and catalogue the cherts of North America.

Jack has single-handedly taken a giant step to put archaeology's house in order by the establishment of a well-documented and extensive lithic collection. Now it is up to us as a profession to ensure that this legacy is not lost.



Jack receiving his 2009 *Pioneers of Science* award from the Director of the Hauptman-Woodward Institute.