

LAKE GEORGE MIRROR.

"THE QUEEN OF AMERICAN LAKES"

LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK, September 27, 2024

More Colonial-Era Remains Found in LG Village

By Thom Randall

SPECIAL TO THE LAKE GEORGE MIRROR

Colonial-era human skeletal remains were unearthed Sept. 19 from beneath Mohican Street in downtown Lake George as workers were excavating in order to cap off water and sewer pipes serving the Adirondack Pancake House prior to the building's demolition.

The discovery of two historic

prompted state, county and local officials and archeologists to gather at the site on Thursday to examine the bones and the soil in which they were found.

Bryan Rounds, proprietor of Rounds Paving & Excavation of Warrensburg was on site, in the rectangular trench in Mohican Street fairly near its intersection with Canada Street, monitoring the excavation work of his employee as the bones were

"I was in the hole with a shovel doing test digs to make sure we weren't getting too close to the sewer main," he said, noting that an archeologist from Hartgen Associates of Rensselaer exclaimed "hold on" after a shovelful taken from the trench contained what appeared to be a bone, and another similar bone jutted out from a wall of the trench. The latter bone was later

retrieved. The excavation hole is about eight feet long, six feet wide, and not quite that deep.

Rounds said that according to his and the archeologist's initial inspection, it was presumed that the partially uncovered bone — located in the darker, compacted soil — had been there undisturbed for many, many decades.

The discovery prompted Lisa Anderson, Curator of Bioarchaeology for the New York State Museum, to travel to the site within an hour or so for an initial assessment.

Lake George Town and Village Director of Planning Dan Barusch, who has coordinated the retrieval of historic bones and their pending reinterment, also responded to the scene. Warren County Sheriff Jim LaFarr and a county Medical Examiner were both called to the scene as well as representatives of the state Historic Preservation Office.

Nearly one year ago, human skeletal remains were found on the northern side of Mohican Street between the roadway and the sidewalk, while the bones unearthed this past Thursday were about 20 feet or so away, under the south lane of Mohican Street which carries eastbound traffic.

Unlike last year's discovery when an individual's entire skeletal remains were removed, most all of the bones of the skeleton discovered Thursday were left undisturbed and the site was covered with a tarp, backfilled with dirt, and covered with a layer of gravel — while Anderson took the two tibia bones to the state Museum for examination, Barusch said.

Barusch said tentative plans call for officials to return to the site after the Pancake House is demolished — perhaps in late October — and conduct painstaking archeological work, likely unearthing and recovering the rest of the remains at the site.

"The hypothesis at this point is that the site is an American military burial ground," Barusch said, adding that the bones found Thursday might be the remains of a soldier who fought in either the Revolutionary War or the French

and Indian War 15 to 20 years earlier, in the mid-1750s through 1763.

In February 2019, skeletal remains of at least 44 individuals dating back to the 1700s were uncovered one and three-quarters blocks west on Mohican Street off Courtland Street when excavation for an apartment complex had been conducted. Those remains were determined to be primarily of smallpox victims who died and were buried

during the Revolutionary War era when a hospital was active at Fort George and thousands of civilians suffering from the dreaded disease - and wounded soldiers - were sent there from the Ticonderoga-Crown Point area.

Barusch said the remains to be recovered both under or along Mohican Street and Courtland Street will likely be reinterred at the memorial plaza that is now envisioned for Battlefield Park.



Lisa Anderson, Curator of Bioarchaeology for the New York State Museum, center, and at right, Dan Barusch, Lake George's Director of Planning and Zoning, who has coordinated the retrieval of historic bones and their pending reinterment. Photo by Thom Randall.