

## ARTIFACTS ON AIR PROGRAM TRANSCRIPT

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**SPEAKERS:** Bill Fox, Heather George, Rick Hill, Jessica Hinton, Emily Meikle

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[MUSIC]

**RICK:** Here's what we believe. The Earth is nothing more than all of the decayed remains of everybody and all of the plants, the animals, the birds, and the fish, everything that lived here before, that's what becomes the soil. And then when we put our bodies into the ground it's to refurbish, to rejuvenate, to reinvigorate the soil so that hopefully this spring, the plants will come up again and be able to feed us. So there's an intimate connection between us, the people we put in the ground and the things that happen to survive in the future.

We're defending that connection, because without that things will change. So people need to understand that for about as long as humans have been walking this place, those are my ancestors. They created a relationship to place. They created a culture based on that, and that's what shapes my identity today. So to ignore that is almost to betray your inheritance. That's why we have to fight for this. At the same time, I kind of believe in this balance between archaeological inquiry and Indigenous reality. That if we bring these two things closer together, we will improve the field dramatically. For the sake of the future, we need to better understand the Native footprint, particularly here in Ontario. If people understand that, I think it would put a lot of issues into broader perspective.

**EMILY:** Archaeology has a difficult history in Ontario. The urge to learn from the material remnants of past cultures has often stood in direct opposition to the emotional and cultural needs of descendent communities, creating animosity on both sides. To try to build a better understanding of this

relationship, a group of experts gathered at the Westdale Branch of the Hamilton Public Library in March 2016 to discuss their ideas about how archaeologists and First Nations communities can work together. Rick Hill is a Haudenosaunee elder from Six Nations, who has worked throughout his life to help Indigenous communities regain control of and access to their own cultural heritage. He is currently the Senior Project Coordinator of the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic. Rick began the conversation by discussing the impact of archaeology at the Six Nations community.

**RICK:**

Our relationship with archaeologists has been a rocky road since I've been alive. It's been an up and down journey that all depends really on the nature of the work being done and whether human remains are uncovered in the work. I have to say at Six Nations on the Grand River, we've done a lot in the last I would say twelve years to improve our relationship with archaeologists. We've had a series of workshops and we've also done a lot of training of our cultural monitors in our community. So we've spent a lot of time becoming more attuned to the nature of archaeology. We realize it could be a great asset to our people. Previously, I worked over in New York state, mostly with archaeologists, trying to recover human remains and burial objects and trying to protect the graves of our ancestors. Because that still remains the number one problem, that somehow, Native remains are not often given the same respect, because usually archaeology is started because of the need of a contractor or developer and often the economic incentives override both the field of archaeology as well as the Indigenous concerns. So it really depends on a project by project nature of the relationship we have with the archaeologists, how well the work can collaborate on that and ultimately getting access to and utilizing what's found. Because oftentimes things are found, we might see them before they're cleaned up and taken to a lab and we never ever see them again and so a lot of our sense of heritage is not as strong as it could be.

One time we had to battle this one archaeologist in Buffalo who was uncovering - it was actually Erie remains. So whatever blood of the Neutrals and the Eries remains in the world flows through our veins today. We took a lot of people in and adopted them and then our cultures, it's kind of like the borg, we all become one. We all become Haudenosaunee. So we recovered well over 7000 remains over the time that I was serving over there, countless numbers of objects, and put them back in the ground. Now the old people, meaning people older than I was, insisted that part of our problem today as Native people is the torment caused by the fact that our dead people have been dug up and this restlessness that this created in them has reverberations back into our society today. So I took that seriously. The idea of putting things back properly, as properly as you could, which you know is very difficult sometimes, because archaeological collections get scattered sometimes. A skull will be here

and leg bones over here and on and on and on. So you have to be like a detective. Go through all the paper work. Reassemble it as best you can. Negotiate as best you can to put these back. But we also became aware that in order to protect them for the future, so that other archaeologists or these amateurs won't come back looking for the remains, that kind of got to me to tell you the truth, because I don't know who else here in Canada has to go to such great lengths to protect their dead people.

So when you're younger this sort of stuff bothers you a lot and as you get older, all of a sudden you get closer to being in the ground, you start thinking differently about this. What can we learn from our ancestors, both the good and the bad, about history, about culture, in order to protect it? So when we do a funeral today, they specifically mention, don't put any metal or glass or anything that won't decay with the body, whereas you know in the 17th century we were putting everything in because the belief used to be that the dead people are going to need everything - everything they need in this life, they're going to need in their journey to the sky world. So we wanted to make sure they would have that. Now think about this philosophically that we no longer do that? We put our dead people in the ground unprepared for that journey because we're so fearful that some archaeologist is going to come and dig them up. And when I had to bury my daughter, I thought about this a lot. Because unfortunately this archaeologist in Buffalo, they were digging up the remains and then he was paying his archaeologists with artifacts. Here, take this pot, take this thing over there. So it was a big job to get it all back. And needless to say I went into his office and there was a whole wall of boxes of remains. The first one I pull out is a baby, just about the same age as my daughter that died. So not only did it make my blood boil but I thought "what kind of people is this that does this? This is ghoulish." I could see if you accidentally uncover some remains and you've got to do something. But then to possess them as if it's cultural property, not a human remain and it doesn't have any dignity any more. So it was very difficult for me and my generation to want to play nice with archaeologists. Because we said the rules were getting in the way of constructive engagement. Their attitude was getting in the way. But I think what you highlight too is you can't paint the whole field with the same brush. There have been many really really good people working in archaeology and some people won't dig human remains, but sometimes you don't have a choice. They're right there in the middle and here's the bulldozer and they're planning to build these houses. But we always have to cave in and consent to move them. Very seldom will a developer or will the government then insist "there's too many graves there, we're going to move the road over here." So the question becomes how many is enough?

So we've tried hard to help train this next generation of Haudenosaunee people to say these are the realities of the situation. Maybe our ancestors'

remains are coming up to the surface to remind everybody who was here first. And we're everywhere. So when they do come up, just think about that choice. What are they trying to tell us? SO I think the Haudenosaunee at the Six Nations Grand River, we try very carefully to listen to that voice: what our old people say, what our ancestors say to us. So I get a little tired of the emotional roller coaster ride, being tugged this way and that way, trying to be the defender of the dead. So I had to stop doing that work and focus more on those of us who are still alive to learn a little bit more about what it means to be Haudenosaunee. But I have to tell you I've been deeply inspired by the archaeological even in some things that we won't condone today, but the information is there, so we have to take advantage of it.

Now, my biggest frustration is that very little of archaeological knowledge ever gets into public education or into the school system. People don't realize the great heritage that lies right in their back yard. So I think we're trying to highlight that. But because of what happened with Douglas Creek and this land matter that's been unresolved for two hundred years, our people are very strident now about protecting any archaeological site because what they're really saying is not one more inch of land should be taken or uncovered until we resolve these matters. So if the archaeological site becomes the flash point for that, our people will rally to defend that.

**EMILY:** Bill Fox is an adjunct professor at the Trent University Anthropology Graduate Program and has had a long career in archaeology, including serving as the regional archaeologist for Southwestern Ontario. Often this involved advocating for the preservation and care of endangered archaeological material and sites. One such site is the Sealey Site, located near Six Nations territory.

**BILL:** Sealey Site so-called is a fairly substantial Neutral Iroquoian Village. You have to understand that the Neutral as a confederacy were probably larger than all five Nations put together. They had consisted of upwards of eight different tribes that had consolidated their home territory around Hamilton north of Lake Ontario to Burlington and perhaps a little east of there and the entire Niagara Peninsula and over into New York State on the east side of the Niagara River. One of the dominant tribes of the Neutral evolved in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and we can follow their paired villages moving southeast-ward into the Big Creek drainage near Brantford. So towards the end of their time - they were dispersed in 1651 - there was a very large village called the Walker Site and the Sealey Site so-called and Sealey was a pretty good sized village too, not quite as big as Walker. Both of them had associated cemeteries which was traditional with these groups. So the Sealey site, like all 17th century village sites in this region, became known as a result of the clearing and breaking of the land during the early 19th century. So when the land was broken, there'd be very

substantial middens, so-called, dumps associated with habitation. Those would have been seen quickly and they were full of iron axes from the French trade, glass beads, pot sherds, bones of the animals they lived on, carbonized corn, everything you can imagine. In addition, these sites also had cemeteries which weren't necessarily identifiable when the land was first broken and ploughed because they were down a bit deeper and however oftentimes they were exposed by groundhogs who dug in and then threw the bones out, signalling the location of these sites.

Now, both in the Neutral area and the Wendat Confederacy area up in Simcoe County, and to a lesser extent in the Petun Area over by Blue Mountain, when these cemeteries were identified, they actually had cemetery digging bees - just like you'd have a barn-raising bee. People would crowd in and just have a picnic lunch and dig through these graves, which is, I mean what can you say. There's really no way of describing the wrongness of that. But that's what happened. So as a part of that, material was collected out of the graves and out of village sites by individuals who were interested. A lot of times there were like Victorian collectors, some of the high brow ones in the Toronto area who bought much material and they put it on display and were enhancing their prestige by the display of these kind of materials to other members of society. So this material would sometimes if we were lucky would be acquired by a respectable, responsible curatorial institution, and other times would be passed down to family members who tended to disperse them. Nowadays they tend to put them on eBay, which is a huge issue. So anyway, we have collections like the one at Sustainable Archaeology for the Sealey Site. I'm not sure how many different collectors are represented by the collection there, but there are very famous ones that dug in that area.

So that's how the material ended up. The Sealey Village was occupied in the 1630's into the 1640's. It was a time of terrible challenge and sadness to the Neutral Iroquoian peoples because that was the time of the epidemics. So the whole population of the region was being decimated. So there are voices in the material that speak to their connections to places as far away as Alabama through the Shawnee of the Ohio Valley, there's material that speaks to everyday life hunting deer, there's material that speaks to attempts to control the epidemics' terrible effects. There is a lot of different voices in the collections which tell us something about what life was like for these people and that we don't hear in the historical records

**EMILY:** In order to derive meaning from an object, we rely on context. Where is from, who made it, and when? This is especially important for archaeological collections, as the people who made the objects are no longer alive to explain them. Because of the Sealey Site's history of being looted, the majority of the material from the site is now without context,

making it difficult for archaeologists and communities alike to learn from it. The Sealey Site is far from alone in this sense as unethical collecting practices throughout North America have produced untold collections without context. How, then, can the cultural meaning of these objects be restored?

**RICK:**

Well what we've done in the past with major museum collections is we have to go examine them, but we have to go examine them, but we have to be very careful about it because people are very nervous about its context. If it came from a grave or nearby, there's just some cultural and spiritual ramifications with that. So we need to know as much of the data, even before we go and visit the collection to know what the deal is. But also I have to say many of our people are very intuitive about this and when they see something, it kicks off a memory, which kicks off some teaching that they learned before, which kicks off something else. So we can make connections to what that one little artifact can tell us, because it will either reaffirm something that we've been told - a part of our oral history - or it will manifest that oral history in a new way. Whether it's a piece of pottery or an oddly shaped stone, or whatever it may be. Sometimes we can provide a level of interpretation for that because we were raised within this living oral history and we can make connections. Sometimes they might be a little fanciful, but if you look at what archaeologists have written in the past, what we're going to conjecture is not going to be any more fancy than what's been said before. So we just want an equal opportunity to make fancy. So by examining the collections it's hard to say, but I believe we will both learn a little bit more about it and then we can make a decision about what should happen to that particular piece right there. We did a little project with the Red Hill Valley to recirculate some of the artifacts that were found there into our community. I was overwhelmed with the response. People just loved seeing what this was because also you look at the creativity, the ingenious way in which things are made and for our current generation of artists this can be very inspiring to see that. When you think about it, just walking around in a back field and you find something 2000 or 3000 years old and it's there all the time. Now the question's always, should you leave it there? Is it a gift to you? Is it a voice calling out to you? Maybe the voice just says "hey, leave me alone," but that's always the attraction because these objects do resonate with the memory of the people who made them and that's that voice he's talking about. I believe we can get in tune with that voice - you may be surprised that they actually speak English! Or that you can understand it!

**EMILY:**

Just as our understanding of an object is influenced by its context, the way we relate to and access collections is determined by social context. Heather George is a Mohawk cultural heritage worker who is currently engaged in exploring Indigenous research methodologies. Jessica Hinton is an Anishinaabe master's student studying representations of Indigenous

heritage at McMaster University. Together, Heather and Jessica spoke about how relationships influence our understanding of heritage. When your cultural heritage is held by people outside of your community, who gets to access these objects and why? Who gets to tell their stories and whose ears do those stories reach?

**HEATHER:** So I should mention, my first access to my own cultural heritage was through the Encyclopedia of the American Indian and what it told me was essentially that my ancestors had killed everyone and that we were pretty bloodthirsty and I didn't know that we had our language still, I didn't know that we had our ceremonies still, I didn't know any of that growing up and that's I mean, something like 50% of Indigenous people live off reserve, so I'm not alone in that. And so museums can play a really important role as being an intermediary, but only when they work in relationship with communities and they can almost act, I think, as a middle ground between archaeologists and the Indigenous community, but one of the problems that I've seen a lot is we're talking about these fanciful interpretations that Rick mentioned, and presenting at conference, I think it was two years ago now, I watched a young archaeologist, she was probably a little bit younger than me, talk about a dig that she'd been working on and her fanciful interpretation. Sitting there and listening to her speak, she was talking about essentially what she thought were refuse piles, garbage and how the things that were in those piles were not very significant. Her reasoning behind thinking that they were just garbage piles was that there was a lot of ash found in them, and what I found upsetting about that was that it just made me realize how much she lacked a cultural context for those artifacts and those objects because we have ceremonies that incorporate ash, or we have cooking practices that also incorporate ash. And so if you had never eaten lye corn soup, which we still make today using hardwood ash, or if you didn't know about ceremonies, you would think it was just garbage. You would think, well, from a European perspective, we take our ash out of our fireplace and we throw it out in the backyard and that's a garbage pile or maybe if we have roses, we put it on the roses or whatever. It's not important, it's a waste product. And so because she only had her cultural perspective to bring to this and maybe some secondary sources that she had read by another archaeologist that had been studying this say sixty years ago, her interpretation of it could only be based on what she knew and so it lacked that cultural connection that really would have informed that knowledge and that artifact really well.

So the process of things going from an archaeologist, most of whom store their own collections - maybe they pass away and so they leave their collections somewhere or maybe it comes to a centre like the one at McMaster or maybe it goes to a museum - it's completely out of context at that point. Hopefully they've made really good field notes so that you have

some idea of what the context was, but then it might come to a museum where a person has no background in archaeology because they've avoided it or because maybe it's a museum where the person doesn't understand anything about Indigenous culture because like all of us, they grew up in a curriculum that was quite lacking in that, and so even though now it's in a safe environment, it's not actually helping people to learn anything. And I think that there's a really big disconnect between these different groups of people and different institutions and how we work together. And there's still a lot of fear, I think both from archaeologists and from museum workers that if they engage with Indigenous communities that they're going to lose things. But the reality of it is that those things don't belong to the archaeologists and they don't belong to the museum. And in a lot of ways they don't even necessarily belong to us as descendant nations. They belong to the people who made them and they weren't placed there with the idea that someone two hundred years from now was going to dig it up. Just like when someone buried their relatives today, you don't think that someone's going to come along in two hundred years and exhume their body and study it. Most of our artifacts of a personal nature, we don't think about where they'll be two hundred years from now. So there's a lot of work to be done in that way and there can be positive things that come from it, but this isn't a new discussion and I think that's what maybe worries me the most, is that probably what has caused a lot of attention to this type of thing is because of Truth and Reconciliation and one of its recommendations was for the Canadian Museum Association to work with Indigenous communities to develop new processes and new ways of working together, but in the museum world at the very least, right now there just isn't the available funds to do that. And this is especially true for small community museums.

So how do those types of institutions... you know it's really just based on the ethics of the people working there and whether they see that as something that's significant enough to do that work to put other things aside to actually build those relationships. We are overdrawn and while there are more young people in our communities that are becoming more interested in this work, it's also about an understanding that sometimes you might have to wait. As an institution, as an organization, you might have to wait a little bit longer than you would otherwise because there's a lot of people asking for time and knowledge from our communities. So that is another issue that sort of has to be dealt with, I think.

**JESSICA:** A lot of archaeologists who are working on Euro-Canadian sites, the archaeologists themselves are Euro-Canadian, but when you have archaeologists working on Indigenous sites, it's not Indigenous archaeologists. It's just about equity and fairness. It needs to change and we're working on it. But I think it's okay if we say no, now and then. Like saying "no you can't have access to this because you have for so long and



it's our turn now." It's not meant to be offensive and it's nothing personal, it's just you had it for hundreds of years and it's okay for us to take control over it now.

Often access is determined by opportunity and those who have access and opportunity to pursue higher education which will get us to positions like archaeologists and museum curators and university professors. And often times Indigenous people, because of real structural barriers - physical barriers like growing up in an isolated reserve community, financial constraints, even I've met some people who are often triggered simply by being in the education system because of the Indian residential school system. There are a lot of things - very real structural barriers that prevent Indigenous people from having access to our cultural remains.

So that was part of this too. I was pretty sure there wouldn't be that many Indigenous guests and I was thinking about is it fair that we bring these artifacts to this workshop where the ancestors of the people's remains are not present and they're largely not represented? So I try to think about equity and fairness and is it right, is it ethical to constantly be allowing non-members of a community to have access to things that aren't theirs while descendant communities lack access and opportunity? I had access to these things because I grew up off reserve. I'm white-passing and middle-class and I had a lot of parts of my social identity working in my favour in larger Canadian context. I easily went to university. I'm in grad school. I'm thinking about doing a PhD. These things are available to me. They're not available to everybody else. I can get hired at archaeology company, whereas maybe somebody who is not white-passing will not get hired. White-passing means that you're Indigenous, but it's largely assumed that you're of Euro-Canadian descent. And often because of the colonial context in which we live, we're afforded privileges that are also afforded to Euro-Canadians. When you're visibly not a part of the mainstream culture, you're going to be treated differently and we do see this in archaeology. I don't think it's necessary to expose non-Indigenous people to Indigenous cultural remains in order for non-Indigenous people to respect Indigenous nations. I don't think you have to hold something in your hand or know everything about the culture. I don't think it's necessary to possess a culture, essentially, in order to have respect for them. Anthropologists and archaeologists come into our communities and they tell us they're doing this work. Or they don't even come into our communities - they do the work around our community and we don't get a say. Just because you can't have our stuff, doesn't mean that we're not of value.

**HEATHER:** It's frustrating that you need to have archaeological evidence to validate history that we've been telling each other for thousands of years. We know it to be fact. We don't need to prove it through archaeology.

**JESSICA:** There's tons of examples. Two specific ones I can think of: there's one community in British Columbia and they were working with archaeologists and the archaeologists were saying "oh there's no village site, there was nothing complex and interesting going on" and the Indigenous community was like "yes there was, I think you need to look in the water, because the sea-levels have changed, obviously, over time" and once the archaeologists did, they did find very complex and interesting village sites. Finally once the archaeologists find these things, THEN it's valid, but it's only valid after being backed by scientific empirical evidence, not by oral tradition.

It's powerful, these things that are not taken seriously by non-Indigenous cultures, but they're valid and I don't think it's right to say that they're inaccurate just because archaeologists or historians are uncomfortable with it. I guess that's the issue with not having the ability to represent ourselves too. A lot of things that Indigenous knowledge holders and elders can contribute, they're being allowed to. I'm really interested in representation for that reason because there's a lot of misrepresentation and misinformation. I think people want it to change. Archaeologists want to change their relationship. There's a lot of good scientists out there. But it is still a fight, even in my own graduate program, to be able to say "no, this isn't accurate, this is the Indigenous representation and it's not fair that you're constantly seeing this with a Eurocentric lens and then you're presenting that view to the rest of Canada and we're largely silenced.

**HEATHER:** Actually, one of the things that when you were talking it makes me think about it, we were talking about this as a science, right and the thing about science is it has a methodology and a language of its own. So we talked about barriers. There are systematic barriers that we create for our knowledge holders in our communities by having these systems in place. So whether it be the way that we number something, what we refer to it as - it's an artifact. And so we take - and this happens in lots of fields - we take the things that were created by people and we take that knowledge. We take it into the academic world and we reinterpret in in a way that that person could not understand it and this is a huge issue and it happens across the board. And it really is something that people need to think about professionally in fields where whatever we're doing has a relationship to living people. We need to be able to understand things.

**RICK:** There's this great fear that something that's critical to understanding human nature is going to be missed. So a lot of these collections... when I was doing work for the standing committee, we visited all the major museums. There were drawers and drawers and drawers of a million objects and sometimes archaeologists gets so "oh this flint flake is too valuable to get rid of". So they do study the minutiae, that's for sure - the

thickness of the wall of pottery, what it's made of. All that kind of stuff. They're developing this record. But where they've, in the past, made a critical mistake is trying disassociate that process of making from the human element. And as we know in the archaeological world, their favourite way of dealing with something that doesn't fit this formula is to call it an anomaly. This doesn't fit, so it must not be real. So terminology is important. Think about if we never used the word artifact again and instead called it art. If we never listed anything as an archaeological specimen, but called it human. If we change our way of thinking about this, we actually may do more to advance the concept of human society. By the same token, if you go to school, one reason why I think there's not a whole lot of native archaeologists (you would think it would be a natural field - "well let's go and take over like everything else") but it's because of this premise of having to go in and disassociate yourself from the people so that you have this disinterested point of view. You can analyze, you can critique. You can dig up human remains. Because you're doing something in service to humanity. Most native people would say "how can you deny humanity to do something in service to humanity?" So there really is an ethical barrier I think to all of this.

So I think for Native people, we're on this voyage of rediscovery. By seeing this art that our ancestors did and redeveloping some kind of relationship to it, I think it will help heal. What I'm getting at is I've seen objects from cultures all over North America and I don't understand them all sometimes, but there's something that reverberates with it and me. Resonates, because we have something similar to that. And it's reassuring somehow, to see something from the people in Northwest Coast, the Hopi people in Arizona, the Cherokees in North Carolina and the Haudenosaunee that this talks about this underlying Indigenous unity. Visual, spiritual, and I believe cultural unity. That's kind of significant. But in working in our museums - the tribal museum, the local museum, the national museum - you're always editing the culture and we're stuck. We often have to cite what a non-native said to prove what a native thought was true. Just like today, most dissertations that are done in Indigenous knowledge, will quote one of three non-Indigenous people who define what Indigenous knowledge is. It's become the standard in the field. But if I was to say, "this is what my grandmother said" people would say "can you verify that?" I'd say no, because none of those people ever talked to my grandmother. It's hard sometimes because we over-intellectualize Indigenous knowledge, thinking that we're going to be competing in the academic marketplace and at the same time to give archaeologists their due, they spend a lifetime looking at this material culture and a few are inspired deeply by it.

Ultimately the majority of archaeological information is not intentionally kept from us, but because we don't have the academic standing - you have

to be a certified archaeologist to see certain materials - we don't even know sometimes where these sites are. We may have a memory about that. So what we're trying to do know is change that. For us to avoid having to be out in the middle of the road protesting the bulldozer, let's work together. You know where the sites are. Let's come up with a predictive model and begin to say "yes, in all likelihood, this area should be avoided." If you do it together in advance, it saves a whole lot of time. So there's different issues here. One is how do we protect what's in the ground and maybe should stay in the ground? How do we learn the most from what inadvertently comes out of the ground? But also, we have to go aback and look at the archaeological record of the past, because there's a whole lot of - if you really think about it - a mountain of paper, of photographs of objects that I think we need to do some rethinking about. And who knows what would come out of that?

Right now goodhearted, good-minded archaeologists and even-minded Indigenous people, we can work wonders together, but seldom do we have that opportunity. We've got to be creative about how we do that, because as we also know, there's a conservative element within archaeology at times that it still wants to hide. There's still a lot of racist dialogue going on about our cultures saying that we're so acculturated that our knowledge is not valid. So we'll have time to wrestle with all of that. But if we can find people who are willing to engage and then we co-publish together, I think that's going to be really critical in the future, because then we're both saying we've invested in this for a product - this interpretive analysis of Ontario and I think that will go a long way to help reduce the ignorance in the field.

**HEATHER:** Nobody's objective. Not the person who made the artifact or the art, not the person who's interpreting it, not the person who's reviewing the article that interprets it, not the person who is then viewing it within a museum. We all come to things with our own cultural context and our own social and political views that we bring to that engagement. So, it's actually almost more important to understand why. Why is that thing significant to you? And is the significance you place in it more valuable than the significance that someone else might place in it? And I think for a lot of archaeological artifacts and the people that are working with or have access to them, the answer is actually no.

Everybody has an ancestry somewhere and whether the Romans invaded and took out your ancestors or whether it was the British that did it, we all come from somewhere and the things that we leave behind are reflections of that and I think it's really important that the people who are of those things and of that place have first access and that that sort of ethics goes into all of the work that we do as archaeologists or as museum workers or

whatever it is. That we recognize that and that we work to make that happen.

**BILL:**

So, I was hoping to bring out a piece of art as an example and to have and to hold. I'll tell you a story about it as an archaeologist. It's heavy. It's made out of... as a geo-archaeologist, I would say that it's made out of something called gabbro. It's shiny over most of its surface. It seems to have what was formerly a cutting edge at one end. It's blunt at the other end. So, as an archaeologist, I would look at that and say, first of all, where was it found? What is this material it's made from? What does its form tell us? What this form tells me is that this used to be a longer piece of art, probably almost twice as long. It tells me that whoever made this spent a great deal of time making it. It's not a soft stone and it's been pecked into shape over countless hours to make this. I don't imagine they were too thrilled when it broke. The fact that it did break, tells me that it was in probably a solid hardwood haft that was used heavily for cutting and actually broke the piece in half due to the torque using it. But the other thing I notice is that it doesn't have a rough break. It's rounded. Why would it be rounded? Well let's go to the cutting edge and have another look. If I look at this, what appears to be the cutting edge, I find that it's beat up along the edge here. I see that on one face it's got polish and striations that run the length the tool. On the other face on the other hand it's got that same pattern, except right here on the edge where the striations run crosswise, which is kind of unusual. So what's going on here? So, this other end, that's got rounded fractures suggests very strongly that it's been used on a soft material. Perhaps it's been repurposed after its breakage into a tool that was used for working a softer material. Based on all of these attributes, I would say, well let's see. This piece comes from Windsor, near the Detroit River based on the type of stone and the form of this, it's an axe. It's been broken and probably dates to what we call the Archaic period when they worked this really tough stone into axes. So maybe 4000 years old.

And now I'll tell you another story and the other story has to do about a young boy ninety years ago who was cycling home and for some reason stuck his hand down a fence post hole and found this. And he brought it home and his mother said yeah that's really interesting, but I think I'm going to use it as a meat tenderizer, which she did. And the young boy grew up and had a son and told this son about this mysterious thing. Called it a tomahawk. Now the young son was "wow, grandma's got a tomahawk, a pipe tomahawk, war of 1812! Man, this is gonna be great!" So when he eventually gets to visit grandma in Windsor, she points to the back garden and says it's out there. He goes out and he finds it finally amongst all the other rocks in the rock garden and is pretty considerably disappointed, not surprisingly. It's not a pipe tomahawk, it's not iron, it's not brass, it's just a piece of rock. But he realizes that, you know, it's

probably real, it's probably made by a person. So he brings it back home and gets tree branch and wraps it around and tries to chop down a tree with it, with limited success, but he does manage to bash away the bit end fairly badly. Then he goes down to his dad's workshop and with a grinding wheel, tries to re-sharpen that edge, but with limited success and thereafter it sort of sits on a shelf for a long, long time. Now of course, that somewhat destructive young lad was myself. It was my father who found it, my grandmother who used it as a meat tenderizer. Was it owned by my grandmother? I don't think so. Or my father? No. Or myself? No. I don't think so. We remember our part of the story. But we don't own it.

[MUSIC]

**EMILY:** *Artifacts on Air* was created by William Fox, Heather George, Richard Hill, Jessica Hinton, and Emily Meikle in collaboration with Sustainable Archaeology McMaster. The Music included in the program is titled *Theresa* and was created by Melody McKiver and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported license. More of Melody McKiver's work can be found online at [soundcloud.com](https://soundcloud.com).

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