

WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

Spring 2018

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Lakeside Life in Prehistoric Europe

by Riva Berleant, Ph.D.



La Tène archaeological dig, September 1907

Wilson Museum Collection

INTRODUCTION

In February 1903 the newlyweds J. Howard and Georgia Wilson left for Europe on a wedding trip with an unusual goal: to gain a first-hand acquaintance with European prehistory. They established relationships with archaeologists and museum

curators, participated in excavations, and began to collect the artifacts of European prehistory that later became part of the Wilson Museum. The first part of their trip was spent exploring well known Old and New Stone Age sites in France. Later, toward the end of April, they arrived in Zürich, Switzerland, to visit Swiss prehistoric sites in the company of Swiss archaeologists. That visit was the beginning of the new Wilson Museum exhibition that opens at the end of May 2018.

Let us see what happened during the years between 1903 and 2018 that bears on the new exhibition. Two strands come together in the story. One is J. Howard Wilson's vision for the Museum and its collections, and the second is an historical phenomenon recently summarized in the term "Swiss Lakes Diaspora."¹ Dr. Wilson's vision was based on an evolutionary view of the development of human beings and human culture. The term "Swiss Lakes Diaspora" encompasses the excitement that swirled around Swiss archaeological discoveries in the nineteenth century and the widespread mania they aroused for collecting artifacts from the archaeological sites on Swiss lakes. These strands – Dr. Wilson's vision on the one hand, and the lakeside archaeological sites that captured the public imagination on the other – come together in the new exhibition.

MISSION

Building on the legacy of its founding family, the Wilson Museum uses its diverse collections and resources to provide learning experiences to stimulate exploration of the history and cultures of the Penobscot Bay region and world.

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J. HOWARD WILSON'S ORIGINAL PLAN FOR THE WILSON MUSEUM

Dr. Wilson himself explained his objectives for the Museum. In 1925 he wrote:

*The main purpose and plan of the arrangements of the collections are to show the antiquity of man and his cultural stages from the earliest geological times which show any evidence of his existence, down to our own historic and colonial times.*²

Museum visitors who are aware of this plan will find their experience of the Museum deepened and enhanced if they begin at the geological and Paleolithic exhibit cases just to the left of the sun porch entrance and move counter-clockwise around the Museum. The Museum circuit takes visitors first from earth history through the stages of human prehistory in Europe as they were conventionally conceived at the time, and still are in more complex ways: Paleolithic or Old Stone Age in the first exhibit case, and Neolithic or New Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age in the next. Prehistory and archaeology give way to ethnological exhibits from Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and exhibits of American colonial and later historic periods, just as Dr. Wilson himself explained.

The evolutionary and chronological framework of Dr. Wilson's plan was not unique to him, or even unusual. It was used in the classification and arrangement of specimens in other museum exhibitions of the time. Even today, when many museums favor interactive experiences and exhibits of life ways and environments over artifact displays, the evolutionary framework still prevails. An important difference today, however, is that we no longer equate evolution with progress. During the nineteenth century the idea that human cultural and technological developments were progressive was widespread, along with the concomitant notion that Western culture and society were the apex. With our new understandings and sensibilities, we have discarded these ideas.

Dr. Wilson had a predecessor and model for developing his museum vision. Coincidentally, his name was also Wilson. Thomas Wilson was the Curator of Prehistoric Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, working in the 1880s and 1890s. He too had been intent on illustrating for the public the stages of human prehistory and the evolution of human culture, especially technology or, in his term, industry. His overall plan for achieving that goal called for arranging exhibits according to geographic location, ordered and dated chronology from past to present wherever possible, and the maintenance of accurate sequence where dates were less certain. This plan was not the only one that museums followed. Some prehistoric anthropologists and curators favored exhibits organized on other principles, such as the functions and uses of objects, or around comparisons of objects from disparate geographical locations. In making his argument for his museum arrangement, Thomas Wilson wrote:

*I prefer to group all the objects and implements made or used by prehistoric man in a given locality, so that we may see at one glance everything bearing upon his capacity, condition, industry, and his social and political life.*³

That kind of grouping of objects, principally by geographic location and sequence, guided the acquisition of J. Howard Wilson's prehistoric European collections, and the subsequent exhibitions illustrating the Paleolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age in Europe. The European focus of J. Howard Wilson's collecting activities reflected his personal interests but was also conditioned by contextual factors. One was the prevalent Eurocentricity of the time that sent both professionals and amateurs toward European archaeology. Another was a fashion in the United States for undertaking trips to Europe to excavate and collect prehistoric artifacts. Still another was the almost universal Swiss lake-dweller craze, which we will come to soon.

THE NEW EXHIBITION AND THE THREE AGES

A renewed and updated Paleolithic or Old Stone Age exhibition opened at the Wilson Museum in 2008. Now, ten years later, a rejuvenated exhibition will give the European Neolithic or New Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age collections a chance to shine. The original basic three-ages plan is preserved, but pieces that have been stored unseen for decades have been brought into the light. These formerly stored artifacts include tools and ceremonial objects in stone and metal; ceramic ceremonial and household goods; personal ornaments in metal, shell, amber, bone, and stone; status and prestige goods; and other material expressions of life in central Europe from between 5,500 to 4,500 B.C.E., depending on their location, through 50 B.C.E. These dates encompass the earliest arrival of food-production – as distinct from food hunting and gathering – in Alpine central Europe, the introduction of metals, and the end of European prehistory with the Roman conquest of the region. These innovations were part of a set of profound changes in human societies.

The sweeping temporal, cultural, and societal range of these changes is brought into a manageable focus for a small museum by one of Thomas Wilson's express principles that J. H. Wilson followed: the principle of grouping material by geographic location. In this case, the location is Switzerland, further circumscribed by the focus on lakeshore settlements.

Let us begin a brief explanation of the New Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages in Europe with a timetable. The dates are close, but not precise, and the onset and duration of each age differ from one part of Europe to another as innovations diffused outward.

Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages in Europe⁴

Neolithic Duration: c.7000 to 2300 B.C.E.

Aegean:	c.7000 to 3200 B.C.E.
Italy:	c.5500 to 2500 B.C.E.
France:	c.5000 to 2300 B.C.E.
Britain:	c.4500 to 2300 B.C.E.
Alpine:	c.4000 to 2300 B.C.E.

Bronze Duration: c.3000 to 1000 B.C.E.

Aegean:	c.3200 to 1200 B.C.E.
Italy:	c.2500 to 1140 B.C.E.
France:	c.2300 to 1000 B.C.E.
Britain:	c.2300 to 1000 B.C.E.
Alpine:	c.2000 to 800 B.C.E.

Iron Duration: c.1200 B.C.E to 800 C.E.

Aegean:	c.1200 to 550 B.C.E.
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Italy:	c.1000 to 200 B.C.E.
France:	c.800 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.
Britain:	c.800 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.
Alpine:	c.800 to 50 B.C.E.
Scandinavia:	c.500 B.C.E. to 800 C.E.

The three-age plan for classifying the diversity in cultural practices, technology, and other forms of material culture that is found in the archaeological record was codified by a Danish scholar in the early nineteenth century. Christian Jürgensen Thomsen hypothesized stone, bronze and iron ages from the collections of artifacts he was organizing for the Danish National Museum, then in its founding period. The idea of these ages has a long history as conjecture, but Thomsen was the first person who proposed these ages from the study and examination of archaeological specimens. He may well have been influenced by the Roman poet-philosopher Lucretius (first century B.C.E.) whose speculative prehistory of human beings included developmental stages of stone, copper or bronze, and iron. The scheme has undergone refinements with continuous research and new understandings. Thomsen's Stone Age was divided into two: the Old Stone Age or Paleolithic and the New Stone Age or Neolithic. A transitional stage from the first to the second was also added, the Mesolithic.

A technology using raw materials of stone, bone, antler, and horn characterized the Neolithic or New Stone Age period, as well as the preceding Paleolithic. But a fundamental and far-reaching change in livelihood marked the onset of the New Stone Age. Paleolithic livelihood was based on food-gathering: hunting, fishing, and scavenging wild animal species and collecting wild plants. Food-gathering required temporary camps and the seasonal movement of small bands. Neolithic peoples continued these subsistence activities, but added another that had revolutionary consequences for human societies. That innovation was food production: the purposeful domestication and raising of crops and livestock. Food production led to another great change: life in settled villages and a consequent increase in population and population density. Other innovations included the transformation of substances: firing clay into pottery; spinning plant and animal fibers into thread and yarns; and using micro-organisms in brewing, yeast baking, and fermented milk. The process of plant and animal domestication also transforms species genetically as human beings select for breeding the physical and behavioral qualities they seek in these species. This

set of innovations, so significant for succeeding human life, spread into Europe from the Near East. It developed elsewhere on the globe as well. Each region had its own native species available for domestication, as for example the maize, beans, and squash of the Americas. But here we will focus on Europe, and especially on the Alpine regions of the Swiss lake dwellings, as these are the heart of the new exhibition.



Bronze Age Engraved Bronze Bracelet from Swiss Lakes
Wilson Museum Collection

The Neolithic period gave way to the Bronze Age, when the metallurgical knowledge and technology of combining copper and tin into bronze alloy spread into Europe between 3200 and 3000 B.C.E. It appears that mobile groups traveling through Europe, usually called Bell Beaker people because of the characteristic pottery vessels they carried, were one important means of bronze diffusion into central and western Europe. The use of bronze was not the only innovation. The food-production economy in Europe also changed. The Neolithic small-scale, small-plot cultivation and keeping of livestock for home use gave way in some areas to larger farm plots and to the expansion and intensification of cattle breeding. The expansion of cattle pastoralism and the seasonal movement to and from pastures that cattle pastoralism involves led to deforestation and the spreading of grasslands.

By 2000 B.C.E. the societies and economies as well as the biotic environments of Europe were transformed. The kind of small, egalitarian farming villages that characterized the Neolithic persisted, but their presence in the archaeological record is less evident. It appears that settlements were scattered and have not been preserved, the exceptions being lakeside and riverside settlements. The archaeological record consists more often of burials, cemeteries, and ritual deposits or hordes. These tell us about the privileged strata of society. Material prestige goods and warrior goods that marked class and status differences appear in burials: swords, lances, and personal ornaments. Some of these may be seen in the new exhibition, as shown in the bracelet pictured above.

Caches of rich goods turn up frequently, especially in hilltop hoards, in burials, and in wet places such as

rivers, lakes, and bogs. These hoards and deposits include all kinds of goods. Most prehistorians interpret them as ritual or votive offerings to deities. In addition to ritual deposits, hoards and burials, the archaeological record shows social and economic features of Bronze Age society: specialization of labor and craft work,

mining, long-distance trade, systems of weights and measures, and a range of metallurgical techniques.⁵ Long-distance trade moved prestige commodities such as gold, copper, tin, amber and finished metal goods from the Aegean into central and western Europe. Horses and chariots also appeared, diffused from the steppes. Warfare was widespread and frequent. Homer's *Iliad*, the writing of which is dated to about 800 B.C.E., gives us some idea of warfare at the end of the Aegean Bronze Age, around 1200 B.C.E. In western, northern, and central Europe the Bronze Age persisted for two or three centuries longer, until the use of iron replaced the use of bronze for tools, weapons, and everyday objects. Bronze was reserved, with gold and silver, for prestige goods.

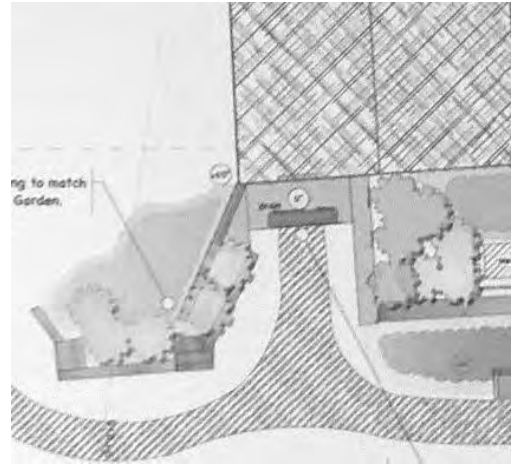
Iron and iron technology came to Europe, probably from Anatolia, the area of what is now Turkey around 1200 B.C.E. Iron has advantages over bronze. Iron ore is found locally in many places, whereas the tin necessary for making bronze had to be traded over long distances. Iron tools have sharper cutting edges than bronze. Between 800 and 700 B.C.E. iron technology spread through central and western Europe as far as Britain. By 400 B.C.E. weapons and everyday objects were made of iron everywhere in Europe. Bronze did not disappear. Artists and crafters continued to use bronze, gold and silver for decorative and prestige objects of high value. What brought the Iron Age to an end in Europe was not so much a change in technology as the advance of the Roman Empire through Europe and the onset of written history. The Iron Age persisted the longest in Scandinavia, until 800 C.E. The end of the Iron Age in Europe is not determined by technological change – of course the use of iron endured – but by the social, economic and political changes wrought on European societies by the imperial conquests of Rome.

(continued on page 9)

Building & Grounds

Storm Windows

Last fall before the snow flew, the new storm windows were installed on the downstairs windows of the Perkins House. As can be seen by the photo, they are quite unobtrusive yet offer much needed protection to the historic sashes.



A section of a proposed plan for a path to the Perkins House lower level.

Perkins House Lower Level

Progress, progress. The hidden bits that one will never see when the project is completed are nearly done. Insulation as well as wiring for electrical, telephone, security and internet are now hiding among the studs, which are hiding behind the sheetrock which is hiding behind a coat of paint.



Campus Landscaping Plan

The Building and Grounds Committee is working with Surry Gardens to create an overall landscaping plan to tie the campus together. Preliminary ideas being floated include a path to the Perkins House lower level in keeping with the Colonial nature of the historic home, a more efficient design for the parking area behind the Hutchins Education Center and a walking path along the waterfront – all with the idea that projects can be done in small steps over time to accomplish a cohesive and beautiful campus. Stay tuned, we'll keep you informed as ideas change and discussions progress.

Fundraising Events

Collecting Castine 2018

Please join us for a special one-night exhibit and sale of Castine fine art on Monday, August 6, from 5 - 7 p.m. at the Hutchins Education Center as we honor Castine artist and ship model maker John Gardner.

This is a fundraising event with a twist. Attendees will enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres and an open bar, view an outstanding exhibit of original artwork created by living Castine artists or artists with a long association to Castine, have the opportunity to purchase an original piece of art, and (here's the twist) cast a vote for the People's Choice work of art to be added to the Wilson Museum's collection. Following the People's Choice award, all other artwork will be available for purchase, silent auction style, with proceeds from the commissions and donations used to grow and care for the Wilson Museum's collection and the event.

~ Your Chair is Waiting ~ Only 15 left!

Have you attended an event recently at the Hutchins Education Center and sat in one of the comfortable mission-style folding chairs? Wouldn't it be fun to call one "your own?"

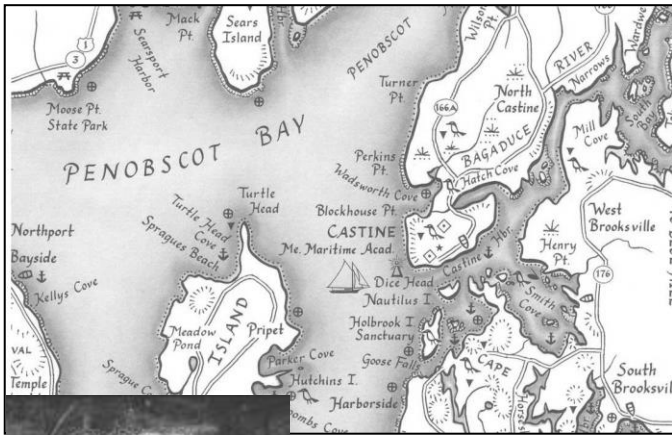
For a donation of \$125 a brass plate will be purchased with your name or the name of a loved one engraved upon it. It is a lovely way to honor the memory of a departed friend of the Museum! This will be attached to one of our sturdy hardwood chairs. With only 15 left unnamed, this opportunity is bottoming out. Hurry, your chair won't be waiting much longer.



Exhibits

Neolithic, Bronze & Iron Age Exhibit

As the subject of our lead article in this *Bulletin*, we trust you have enjoyed learning more about the Swiss lake-dwelling people, but don't miss the rest of the exhibit or the chance to hear Dr. Riva Berleant speak about the culmination of this two-year labor of love as well as her remarks about the people and ages represented. Join us for the opening of the newly rejuvenated exhibit at our Members' Reception on June 15 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. It will be a great evening for expanding your ancestral knowledge as well as socializing with other friends and supporters of the Wilson Museum and its mission.



Map Sleuthing: Exploring Coastal Hancock County

Test your detective and map reading skills, be a way-finder, treasure hunter or map sleuth. The Wilson Museum has partnered with local mapmaker, Jane Crosen, to develop an exciting

interactive mapping exhibit focused on coastal Hancock County. On display will be some of Jane's beautifully executed maps as well as other gems of cartography. Starting May 27 and continuing until the Museum closes at the end of September, a new challenge will be available each week. By completing the challenges using land maps, nautical charts, atlases, and gazetteers, individuals and families are invited to learn about sailing, geology, geography, history, trekking, getting lost and finding the way. Everything needed to complete a weekly challenge will be available in the Museum's Map Room (also known as the sunporch). Prizes will be awarded for successfully completed challenges. Visit once or every week to hone your map sleuthing skills.



Maritime Display

Because there are several small boats “in hiding” at the Wilson Museum, including a dory built by students at the Adams School, a rowboat by Jake Dennett, and a peapod by Mace Eaton, an enthusiastic group of Trustees led by David Wyman, Donald Small, and Temple Blackwood has instigated a plan to add wings to the Museum's Wood Shop. The additions will house and display these small-craft and any future acquisitions (see rendering above). Space will also be provided for building small traditional boats (see an article elsewhere in this *Bulletin* on the boat to be built this summer). At the time of writing, volunteers are busily at work making this plan come to life. By the time the Museum opens for the season on May 27 we expect the “wings” will be either complete or close to it. Come check it out, and if not done, feel free to lend a hand – they plan to work every Wednesday and Saturday until complete.

Room to Swing a Cat and Other Ways to Measure

In 1787 at their first town meeting Penobscot (now the towns of



Brooksville, Castine & Penobscot) voted David Howe as the official Sealer of Weights and Measures. He served in that capacity for seven years. Find out why a town would need a Sealer of Weights and Measures and what his job would involve as well as see some of the tools he might have used. To measure means to “ascertain the size, amount, or degree of (something) by using an instrument or device marked in standard units or by comparing it with an object of known size.” [Google Dictionary] Highlighting various and sundry measuring tools from the Museum's collection, this exhibit is made to measure!

Programs

This year we are offering several ongoing activities interspersed with more traditional speakers and events. All of our programs and events can be viewed at www.wilsonmuseum.org/calendar.

Here are a few highlights:

Start 'Em Early – Activities for Our Young Visitors

Drop by the Wilson Museum's Hutchins Education Center on Thursdays any time between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. throughout the summer for age-appropriate (ages 3 - 6) games, science experiments, and crafts. Parents should plan on joining their preschoolers for a varying series of activities that will encourage exploration and enhance the whole family's Museum experience. Activities may include water beads, puzzles, story times, homemade ice cream, outdoor shaving cream paints, simple science projects, and flower potting to name a few. Some activities may be messy (dress for mess). Join us any or every Thursday; stay for fifteen minutes or a couple of hours. Activities for the day will be announced on Facebook, so follow us or take potluck – either way, it's sure to be educational and fun. And, it's free!



Pack a Pint of Pickles with Patty

August is the perfect season to pick produce and put it up for the long winter ahead. Wilson Museum's Director Patty Hutchins will lead a four-part series of hands-on pickle workshops on Thursday and Friday, August 23 and 24 and another batch the following week on Thursday and Friday, August 30 and 31 from 1 - 4 p.m. each day at the Hutchins Education Center. Pickles to be processed include mustard pickles, dilly beans, sour pickles, relish, bread and butter pickles, spiced crabapples, and dill pickles. Participants will relish taking home one to two pints of pickles per day. Program series is \$50 for the whole batch of 4 classes. Class size is limited to 10.



Fireside Cooking

The kitchen of the John Perkins House is transformed into a warm, fragrant and homey place when fireside cooking is demonstrated (as part of a guided tour), this year on: July 11, July 25, and August 15, from 2 - 5 p.m. Guided tours of the John Perkins House begin on the hour and are \$5 per person; tour visitors may enjoy some tasty treats from the day's fare.



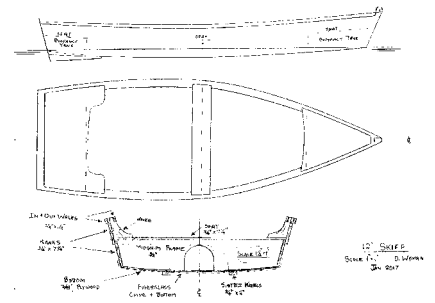
Outdoor Cooking

Nothing whets the appetite like an ocean breeze with the fragrance of wood smoke and baking bread wafting through the air. Visit the back yard of the John Perkins House from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on July 16, July 30 and August 20 as Director Patty Hutchins demonstrates the outdoor bake oven, the fire pit, or a combination of the two. There might be bread or pizza, bean-hole beans or stew, we're leaving it up to the weather and the whim of the cook. Bring your own favorite loaf to pop into the oven – it's big with room for several loaves (or a pie might be nice). Outdoor cooking tips are free of charge with impartial taste-testers always available.



Skiff Building

Join David Wyman, Don Small and others as they construct a David Wyman designed, flat-bottom skiff in the newly constructed



Maritime Display area on Wednesdays and Sundays during July and August from 2 - 5 p.m. Lend a hand or enjoy watching, it'll be fun to see it take shape and you could be the lucky person to take it home. Raffle tickets will be sold with drawing to be held in the fall. Proceeds will allow the Museum to purchase materials for next year's boat.



Collections Conversations

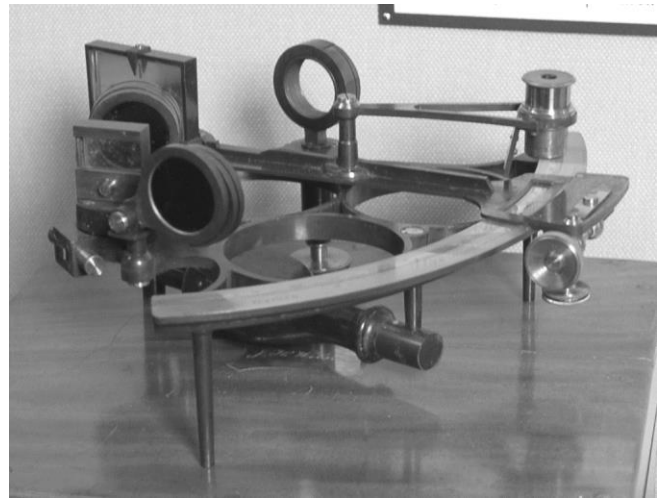
Abby Dunham, Collections Manager

While planning a new summer exhibit on measurement, the realizations of the ways in which various measurements appear in everyday work and life were striking. I'm often using measurement in my job, from my routine tasks with collections, like measuring artifacts, determining the age of something, and monitoring temperature and humidity levels to more occasional work such as reviewing the light specifications for a new exhibit space. The common connection of measurement shows its importance in daily life now and throughout history.

Further thought on the exhibit also revealed ways in which measurement ties to other major projects going on at the Museum this summer. You'll see some of these mentioned in the *Bulletin* and learn more when you visit us in person, including the rejuvenated Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age exhibit; the weekly map activities; and the new boat display and boat-building demonstration area.

As referenced in the article on lake-dwellers, there were systems of weights and measures in the Bronze Age. Measurement systems were developed by cultures all over the world. The clash of different systems has gradually led to the acceptance of some universal standards of measurement. This creates a transferability of understanding on a global scale across languages and cultures, critical in fields like science and business which depend on measurements.

Maps also rely on measurements. Accuracy in map making requires accuracy in measuring the world, and one's ability to read a map depends on the accuracy of translating the map's measurements back into the physical world. This has led to the development of specialized measuring equipment for surveying and methods for representing the physical world in a reduced form. The variety of map types also require different methods and tools; think of the differences in road maps, globes, and nautical maps.



Sextant with inlaid plaque reading J. H. Wilson.

Wilson Museum Collection

Early shipboard methods of navigation depended on sailors being able to determine where they were and what speed they were going. This was especially important for transoceanic voyages where there were no landmarks. With the advent of nautical charts paired with an ability to take exact measurements of angles and time, accuracy and safety improved. Today, people no longer need to take many of these measurements for navigation as electronic systems do most of it. Maritime measuring of a different sort will be highlighted at the Museum this summer in the form of boatbuilding calculations as a flat-bottomed skiff is constructed. Careful measurement is always important in boatbuilding so that a vessel is watertight and seaworthy.

Some of the measurements I've mentioned above are measurements of size, weight, temperature, humidity, light, distance, angle, scale, direction, speed, and time. Other things that are measured include volume, pressure, rotation, acceleration, velocity, loudness, amplitude, variation, strength, density, growth, knowledge, progress, and more. What do you regularly measure?

Board Member Elected to Fill Vacancy

On December 5, 2017, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to elect Dr. Barbara Jackson to fill the unexpired term through 2019 of a resigning Board member.



Barbara Jackson – is an Associate Dean and Professor of Anthropology Emerita from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) with a specialty in Mexican and Native American cultures. She has been a consultant to the Children's Museum of Indianapolis and served three previous terms on the Wilson Museum's Board of Trustees as well as serving on the Education Advisory Committee. She divides her time between Maine and Indiana.

(continued from page 4)

It is important to remember that, like the previous Stone and Bronze Ages, the Iron Age is part of a nineteenth-century organizational scheme imposed on European prehistory to bring order to archaeological materials and museum exhibitions. For most of European prehistory we have only a few indications of how people thought about and identified themselves, people who are visible to us only through material remains we dig out of the ground or the water, and then call archaeological sites. There is more information about and more clues to the nature of European societies and cultures in the Iron Age, their diversity, and the peoples they enfolded. We have, in addition, written commentaries that supply information. The Iron Age peoples of Europe did not record these observations about themselves. They were the work of Greek and Roman foreigners, who were not always sympathetic or unbiased. The Greeks called these peoples beyond their borders “barbarians” and lumped them together under the name “Kelttoi,” much as the European intruders into the Americas called all the diverse peoples with their cultural variety “Indians.” Neither were Roman writers unbiased, motivated as they were by imperialist and expansionist ambitions. They lumped together the diverse peoples of central and western Europe under the names Gauls or Galatians, and Germans.

In any case, rich Iron Age tomb burials reveal complex stratified societies focused on rank, warfare, horses, and chariots – societal features that had arisen during the Bronze Age. The livestock and crop complex of the Bronze Age also persisted. Wealth from salt mining and salt trade supported war and social hierarchy. Some settlements became larger as they functioned as economic centers for trade and the production of finished goods. More regional differences and distinctive cultures developed, but at the same time human migrations and exchanges broadened networks of cultural and material interaction.⁶

In central and western Europe, including the Alpine area, the Iron Age is conventionally divided into two periods, the Hallstatt

from about 800 B.C.E. to 450 B.C.E., and the succeeding La Tène, from 450 B.C.E. to 50 B.C.E. The salt-trading settlement of La Tène on Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland is one important source of knowledge about the Iron Age in Central Europe. It thrived between 450 B.C.E. and 50 B.C.E., when the Roman conquest ended prehistory in this part of Europe. The name *La Tène* refers both to the archaeological site and its ritual deposits and to the specific period within the Iron Age in central Europe from 450 B.C.E. to 50 B.C.E.

Most of the Wilson Museum's Iron Age collection, acquired by purchase, comprises La Tène objects taken from Lake Neuchâtel. The kinds of objects that J. H. Wilson purchased were all iron objects. Some were for everyday use at home or in farming, such as sickles, garment fasteners, and nails. Others are warfare items: horse fittings, swords, and daggers. But Iron Age Europeans also made fine pottery, sculpture, textiles, and decorative metal work in gold, silver, and bronze. Their chariots, burials, and ceremonial art display a characteristic art style that extended throughout pre-Roman Europe. The remains of La Tène towns are found throughout Europe. They show a complex society heavily invested in war, trade, mining, and social stratification, as well as in ritual and the making of enduring art. These peoples are often called *Celts*, and their arts, culture, and languages called *Celtic*.

The illustration below, a silver vessel deposited as an offering in a Danish bog, exemplifies late Iron Age art motifs and highly skilled work in metal. The man's

head shown between two hyenas is a typical representation. Similar ones are found elsewhere.

Iron Age, La Tène, and Celtic: Can these terms be used interchangeably? *Celtic* is probably the more commonly known term. Even though it is now often used to refer to Irish language, art, and culture, *Irish* is not its only meaning. There were indeed people spread across Iron Age Europe who were known by their contemporaries as Celts. They spoke related languages and created art



The Gundestrup Cauldron exemplifies late La Tène or Celtic art style and skilled work in silver.

It is dated around 150 B.C.E.

National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen

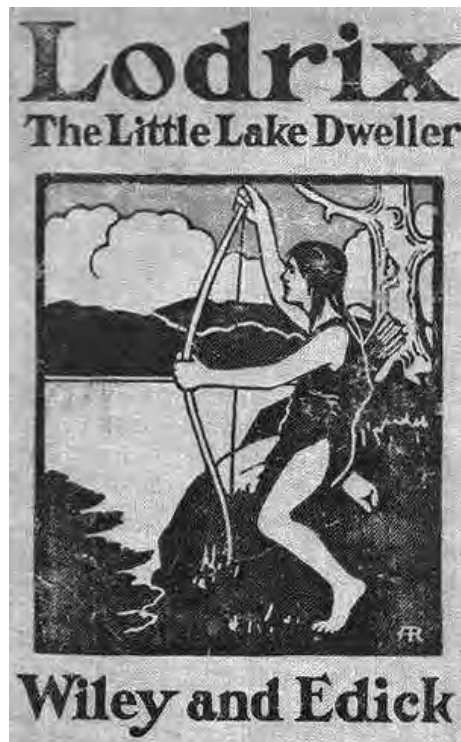
Photo: Roberto Fortuna and Kira Ursem, CC-BY-SA

and material goods in a recognizable style. *La Tène*, as we know, denotes both a specific period of the Iron Age in central and western Europe (c.450-50 B.C.E.) and the culture that prevailed. *Iron Age* is the name archaeologists give to the period when human beings developed and used iron technology. It includes both the terms *La Tène* and Celtic.

THE WILSON MUSEUM SWISS LAKE-DWELLER COLLECTION

In carrying out his plan of exhibiting the development and evolution of technology in his new museum, Dr. Wilson concentrated his acquisitions of European Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age materials in Switzerland. At least two factors converged in this decision. One was the great wealth and abundance of documented archaeological materials available for purchase. Another was the almost universal fascination that the Swiss lakeshore archaeological sites exerted on the public imagination for nearly a century.

In 1853, after a winter drought, the water levels in Swiss lakes fell to a new low. Ancient shores, newly exposed, revealed the remains of settlements that had been preserved under the water for centuries. At first these settlements were thought to have been built over the water on platforms resting on piles sunk into the lake bottom. They are now interpreted as settlements built on the shores and later submerged by changing



A children's book from 1905 illustrates the lake-dweller fad that seized the popular imagination.

lake levels. Recent work has shown that even though individual settlements were not always occupied continuously for long periods, the lakeshore environment attracted settlement from late Neolithic times to the end of the Iron Age, about 4300 to 50 B.C.E.⁷

Many more lakeside settlements were discovered. The first long reports on these discoveries, written by Dr. Ferdinand Keller, were translated and published in English in 1866.⁸ Meanwhile the popular lake-dweller mania developed further, moving thousands of artifacts to museums and collectors outside of Switzerland and spawning news articles, novels, children's books, and popular items such as calendars. This diffusion of artifacts has been called the "Lake-Dweller Diaspora."⁹

The lake-dweller fever had subsided by the mid-1950s. But during the preceding century evidence from the lake sites accumulated and prompted new understandings of European prehistory, understandings that displaced the classical world as the fountainhead of Europe and recognized Europe's prehistoric foundations. After several decades of neglect there is now a resurgence of interest in wetland peoples, not just in Europe but also everywhere in the world.¹⁰ The Wilson Museum is proud to participate in this resurgence and to offer a rejuvenated exhibition of three-ages Swiss lakeside life.

ENDNOTES

¹ Arnold, Bettina. 2013. The Lake-Dwelling Diaspora: Museums, Private Collectors, and the Evolution of Ethics in Archaeology. In *The Oxford Handbook of Wetland Archaeology*. F. Menotti and A. O'Sullivan, eds. Pp. 875-891. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² Castine Scientific Society. 1985 (orig. 1958). *The Wilson Museum*. Castine, ME: Castine Scientific Society. p. 8.

³ Petraglia, Michael and Richard Potts. 2004. *The Old World Paleolithic and the Development of a National Collection*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology, no. 48, p. 17-19, quotation on p. 19.

⁴ Table compiled from these sources: Fowler, Chris, et al. eds. 2015. *Oxford Handbook of Neolithic Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Harding, A.F. 2000. *European Societies in the Bronze Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kristiansen, Kristian and Thomas E. Larsson. 2005. *The Rise of Bronze Age Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; McIntosh, Jane. 2006. *Handbook to Life in Prehistoric Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Kristiansen 2005:110-113.

⁶ Compiled from these sources: Cunliffe, Barry. 1997. *The Ancient Celts*. London: Penguin Books; McIntosh 2006:80-83, 88-92; Wells, Peter S. 1999. *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁷ Compiled from Coles, Bryony and John. 1989. *People of the Wetlands: Bogs, Bodies, and Lake Dwellers*. New York: Thames and Hudson, p.117-125; Trigger, Bruce. *A History of Archaeological Thought*. 1989. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 83-84.

⁸ Keller, Ferdinand. 1866. *The Lake Dwellings of Switzerland and Other Parts of Europe*. Translated by John Edward Lee. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

⁹ Arnold 2013.

¹⁰ Coles 1989.

Resources You Might Enjoy All of these are written by specialists, but intended for non-specialist readers.

Anthony, David W. 2007 *The Horse, The Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Linguistic and archaeological research brings new ideas about the steppe origins of European languages and the European Bronze Age.

Coles, Bryony and John 1989 *People of the Wetlands: Bogs, Bodies and Lake-Dwellers*. New York: Thames and Hudson.

The story of the discovery, archaeology, and ways of life of wetland peoples in Europe and North America, both seashore and inland dwellers.

Cunliffe, Barry 1997 *The Ancient Celts*. London: Penguin Books.

Beautifully illustrated introduction to Iron Age Europe.

Hedges, John W. 1984 *Tomb of the Eagles*. New York: New Amsterdam Press.

First farmer life as interpreted from rich excavations at Orkney, Scotland.

Price, T. Douglas 2013 *Europe before Rome*. New York: Oxford University Press.

European prehistory from the earliest human arrival to the end of the Iron Age, recounted and illustrated through discussion of outstanding archaeological sites.

Spindler, Konrad 1994 *The Man in the Ice*. New York: Harmony Books.

The archaeologist who first studied the famous "Iceman," nicknamed Ötzi, recounts the discovery of his body in an Alpine glacier and describes what Ötzi's body, garments and equipment tell us about Neolithic life 5000 years ago.

Website: <http://www.palafittes.org>

Find out more about Swiss lake sites and dwellings.

*Day One
Boat Display building
project with volunteers
hard at work.*



IN MEMORIAM

We remember the following members and staff of the Wilson Museum who believed in the Museum's mission and gave of themselves to further its outreach. Their legacy will live on.

Rosemary Begley
1954-2018

Paul Cyr
1929-2017

Richard Gay
1932-2018

Sylvia Muszala
1927-2018

Howard Myers
1939-2018

WILSON MUSEUM
P.O. Box 196
Castine, ME 04421

WILSON MUSEUM

May 27-September 30
Weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays 2-5 p.m.

JOHN PERKINS HOUSE

July & August
Wednesdays & Sundays
Hour-long tours at 2, 3 & 4 p.m.

**THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH
& WOOD SHOP**

July & August
Wednesdays & Sundays 2-5 p.m.

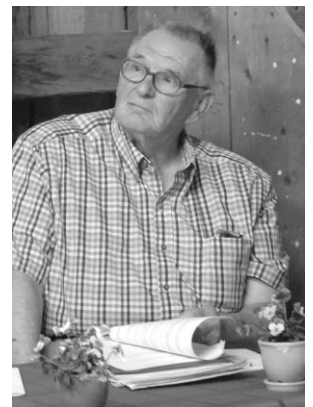
BAGADUCE ENGINE CO.

May 27-September 30
Same hours as Wilson Museum

Volunteer Hero

Edson Blodgett

In 2012 the Wilson Museum approached local historical societies of the Majabigwaduce region (Brooksville, Castine & Penobscot) with the idea of creating a game for grades 5-8 as a fun way for students to learn about the history of the place where they live. Edson, as a member of the Brooksville Historical Society, jumped right in



with ideas for questions, answers, background and images. Since then, he has been an avid supporter, attending most monthly sessions in Brooksville as well as many of those in Castine and Penobscot. He has also served as a judge nearly every year for the Brooksville Semi-Final Competitions and the grand Tournament of Champions. Edson is not only our Volunteer Hero, but a Champion of Champions!