

# Spanning the Gap

## **Park Profile:**

### **Archeologist Herbert Kraft (1927-2000)**

*Dr. Herbert Kraft, Professor Emeritus and curator of the Museum of Archeology at Seton Hall University, died on October 31, 2000. Dr. Kraft devoted 50 years to the academic study of the prehistory of the Delaware River Valley and was an acknowledged authority on the Lenape/Delaware people.*

## **Memories of Herb Kraft as a mentor and peer**

*By David Orr*

I first met Herb Kraft through my old University of Pennsylvania mentor John Cotter, in the summer of 1973. Right away, I was impressed by Herb's infectious enthusiasm, a gift that I believe is a real blessing for archaeologists. Herb was always interested in my work in the then-fledgling field of industrial archaeology and he was constantly asking me to speak about it in various New Jersey venues, which I humbly agreed to do. I gave my first talk in New Jersey when I was a young professor in the Department of American Civilization at the University of Pennsylvania. I will always remember Herb diligently manning the slide projector for me.

Herb generously shared with me his considerable knowledge about New Jersey's past, and when I came to the National Park Service in 1977, I had the opportunity to work with Herb in a more formal manner. He was an excellent sounding board for park service plans at the recreation area. When we finally secured funding for an archaeological



U.S. Dept. of the Interior  
National Park Service

*Spanning the Gap*  
The newsletter of  
Delaware Water Gap National  
Recreation Area  
Vol. 23 No. 1 Spring 2001



*(Above) Dr. Kraft at the Browning Site in his most typical field attire. (Below) Explaining the Browning site.*

overview of the park, Herb offered many suggestions which we incorporated into the five-year survey.

Herb has long been a friend of the park's archeology and ethno-history and his critiques have been well-intended and welcome. His article for our 1989 Delaware Water Gap Symposium entitled *The Minisink Indians*, is an excellent retrospective piece. In the first paragraph of that article Herb sums up the archeological significance of the recreation area in one sentence



*(Below)* The "Longhouse Dig". Archeological investigation at Miller Field Site within the recreation area revealed evidence for Minisink longhouses approximately 60 by 20 feet. *(Right, above)* Another view of the site, after additional excavation. *Right, below)* Dr. Kraft at the site with park staff.



During the last few years, the tide of mortality has collected John Cotter, James Deetz, and now, Herb Kraft. All of these individuals will be sorely missed. Like Cotter and Deetz, Herb was filled with a powerful humanistic force which drove his curiosity about the past. From a personal standpoint, he was always willing to help me out when I needed some assistance and I will cherish the memory of such



Dog skeleton at the Browning

intellectual generosity.

Yet, in the end it was the depth of his research which fascinated me the most, as Herb would proudly display his field notes from almost a half-century past. They impressed me: these meticulous, well-written, and clearly legible observations, measurements, and detailed drawings; the whole work bound in long brown covers. They constitute an important record for all of us to examine.

In my mind's eye I can see myself visiting the Seton Hall "catacombs" -the basement offices where Herb labored like a troglodyte in the service of the past cultures he loved so much.

It was once opined that if, as scientists, we have made any contribution at all, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants. Herb Kraft is such a giant-and I use the present tense because giants are immortal. Their work lives after them. New Jersey archaeology, and the Lenape Natives in particular, have lost an important advocate.

***David Orr was formerly Mid-Atlantic Region Archeologist for the National Park Service and is now director of the National Park Service's Valley Forge Center for Cultural Resources.***

***The region now designated Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is a rich source of archaeological evidence for the Native American peoples who inhabited this abundant and wonderfully scenic region from about 12,000 years ago to about A.D.1758, when the last of the Minisink Indians were forced to leave. Herbert Kraft***

### **An appreciation of Dr. Kraft's field work in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area**

***By John R. Wright***

In the early 1960s, Congress authorized the U. S. Army Corps Engineers to construct a dam at Tocks Island on the Delaware River. Since the National Park Service would administer the lands

Site 1967.



Carving from a tobacco pipe found at the Minisink Site in Warren County.



Clay tobacco pipe with a carved effigy face. *(Drawing courtesy of John T. Kraft)*

surrounding the reservoir, Mid-Atlantic Region Archeologist John Cotter enlisted Dr. Fred Kinsey of Franklin and Marshall College and Dr. Herbert Kraft Herb of Seton Hall University to recover what archeological data they could from the prehistoric sites which were soon to be inundated by the river. In 1964 Dr. Kinsey undertook the survey of the Pennsylvania side and Dr. Kraft the New Jersey side.

Dr. Kraft began summer fieldwork at the Miller Field Site in Pahaquarry Township, Warren County, and continued archeological survey and excavation at specific sites until 1975. His last field work in the recreation area was a preliminary survey of the suspected site of *Fort John* (also called *Fort Shapnack* or *Fort Johns*), headquarters fort for the New Jersey colonial defense line during the French and Indian War (1756-1763).

Dr. Kraft continued in the scholarly pursuit of Delaware River valley archeology through publications and monographs on his archeological excavations in the valley between 1967 and 1975. One of his final works, *The Dutch, the Indians and the Quest for Copper: Pahaquarry and the Old Mine Road*, concerned the legend of the Pahaquarry copper mine, located in the recreation area along Old Mine Road in New Jersey. This 1996 volume is sold in park bookstores, and, like Dr. Kraft's other works, is still bought by college students and teachers, as well as by park visitors. His passing is indeed a loss which will long be felt by his colleagues, students, family, and friends.

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(Above) Dr. Kraft sorts through shells, part of the day's finds at the Seton Hall University dig at Harry's Farm, in Warren County NJ in 1971. Archeologists believe that these shells were placed together as part of a funerary gathering.