

# Artifacts Update

By Brenda McEnery

I'm writing this followup letter since the publication of "Brenda McEnery Rocks," to present up-to-date thoughts and more on the research regarding the first inhabitants of the Village of Erin.

It's a very perplexing, controversial and test of patience, surrounding any discoveries, preservation, storage and true historical representation of Indigenous archaeology of Ontario. That being said, I am in full support of the Indigenous truth and reconciliation movement. Indigenous archaeology has been wrongly explained and presented within settler museums, major settler publications, and settler respect towards artifacts. Indigenous artifacts are regarded as their ancestors and possess spiritual significance and are not regarded as innate articles. It is for these reasons that our local museum, the Wellington County Museum, is not accepting Indigenous artifactual articles at the present time.

It is my personal hope that progress between settlers and Indigenous people can be accelerated surrounding Indigenous archaeology, due to the rapid development of many towns and villages in Ontario. I know the village of Erin sits on tremendous Indigenous history which has never been documented or respected. The Ontario government does not want artifacts removed and collected in a personal capacity, yet the government allows development to go forward without proper archaeological studies and in this area, gravel pits are literally crushing Indigenous history. I see this as a digression as opposed to a progression of documentation of ancient civilizations, which I feel is important on a large scale, i.e. global as opposed to just the province of Ontario.



Brenda McEnery, centre, with Rachel Robson, left, and Taylor Flynn. PHOTO BY MARIA ROBSON.

It would be very controversial to state that the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is using this state of political impasse to fast track development without proper archaeological third-stage analysis.

I have retrieved Indigenous artifacts within the village of Erin from construction and landscaping sites where they would have been once again buried. I have reported these sites to the Ontario government where they have been registered as "site leads." The government and the Indigenous nations The Mississaugas of the Credit as well as Six Nations of the Grand, know I hold these artifacts for some day to be either repatriated or placed in a museum.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention two young women, Taylor Flynn aged 16 and Rachel Robson aged 23 of Erin, who showed sincere interest, encouragement and help with my research surrounding this topic. We spent many hours in the field trying to understand what exactly inhabitation of Erin was like many thousands of years ago. Having such young friends show huge sincere interest in the subject of Ontario's ancient civilization is what gives me hope and inspiration that the vast undocumented Indigenous history will soon be realized. Taylor is of Mi'kmaq descent with several of her Newfoundland relatives having their status recognized.



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