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Experiential Learning: Museum of Ontario Archaeology and the Vindolanda Field School

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A Rich History of the Maple Harvest

Archaeologists can encounter a lot of problems when looking at the archeology of maple sugar. Since archaeologists study material remains from human activity, logically there needs to be material remaining to study. Unfortunately, the seasonal and temporary nature of sugaring activities leaves often leaves little for archaeologists to analyze.

That is why archaeologists can find themselves categorizing a site based on what isn’t there instead of what is. For example let’s look at a site that was excavated in the 1980’s in Glencarry County which was dubbed a pre-historic Iroquoian sugar bush site. This wasn’t done because there was a wealth of information pointing towards the camp being used as such, but because of the lack of post-European contact trade materials, or really any materials for that matter. The absence of artifacts led the archaeologists to think that it was used seasonally instead of continuously. Also, large deposits of ash were thought to indicate the extensive use of hearths in the area.
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