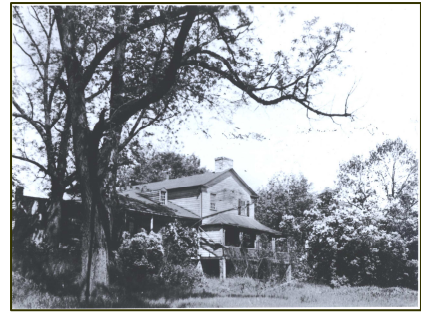


The Museums of Mississauga oversee two archaeological collections in addition to their substantial artifact collections. The two collections are referred to as Cherry Hill and Benares after the locations of the homes where the excavations took place.

Cherry Hill Archaeological Collection

Cherry Hill House was originally located at lot 11 Concession 1 N.D.S. at the northwest corner of Cawthra Road and Pinkeny Drive, which ran parallel to Dundas Street. The house was moved in 1973 to its present location at 680 Silvercreek Boulevard, where it is now an upscale restaurant.

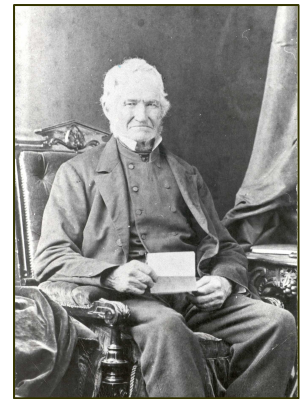


In 1972, Dr. Howard Savage conducted a test excavation at Cherry Hill to retrieve any information about the Cherry Hill House site prior to its move due to major road redevelopment. From their findings (over 2,271 artifacts), Dr. Savage felt that further exploration was necessary which resulted in a five week excavation by the Ontario Archaeological Society and a two week excavation by Erindale College students. These excavations resulted in a major



collection (30,000 artifacts) of glass, ceramics, pottery, metal, bone and miscellaneous material. This collection and its research were turned over to the Bradley Museum in 1986. While not on permanent display, the Cherry Hill collection is often highlighted through rotating temporary exhibits.

The land that was excavated was originally part of the 'Mississauga Tract', land that was purchased from the Natives in 1805. Jane and Joseph Silverthorn received this property in a land grant in 1807. Three generations of the Silverthorns lived in this location making the archaeological findings unique as they truly capture information on the lifestyle, health and aspirations of this family.



Benares Archaeological Collection



In 1991, the Ontario Heritage Foundation conducted an archaeological excavation at Benares Historic House. Basically, the excavation's biggest finds were in areas used as refuse dumps by the Harris family. These historically significant sites around the property helped to provide insight into the life of the Harris family.

Some of the areas excavated included the perimeter of the house, the wine cellar, summer kitchen, carriage shed, dairy/ ice house, bake oven, potting shed and the privy (out-house). The potting

shed (40%) and privy (26.8%) proved to be the two richest areas for artifact concentration; 25,411 artifacts were found in the privy area in only four feet of fill. Items included glass, ceramics, buttons, bones, shell, lighting devices and lost treasures like a silver pen and some coins.



The most mysterious item found during the excavation was an Egyptian Shawabti or guardian figurine. Dr. Donald Redford of the Royal Ontario Museum identified the object and believes that the inscription painted on the front reads either “Overseer of the Fortress” or “Overseer of the Vizirate”.



This shawabti would have been one of very many which were placed in the tomb of a highly placed military commander or in the latter case, the Prime Minister, as a small servant figurine that would accompany the dead to the next world. This may have been collected by Captain James Harris while he was an officer with the 24th Regiment of Foot. He served in India and may have passed through Egypt on his way to the posting.

In total, 94,616 artifacts and fragments were found. The Benares Archaeological collection and the excavations conducted there are the inspiration for the educational program entitled *Digging up the Past*.