Sustainable Organic Agriculture - A Menominee Legacy

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Menominee Reservation Land-use and Extraordinary Preservation
Research History and Evolution of the Research Design

• 1990s Usufruct Rights Litigation
• Barrett & Skinner 1919-1921
• State of Wisconsin’s position: R. J. Mason 1997 MCJA-Menominee were recent migrants to Wisconsin having arrived only a few generations before European contact
• Menominee Tribe’s position: there was no data in support of a recent arrival and the archaeological data was open to multiple interpretations
Left-Alanson Skinner and Amos Oneroad, Cornfield, Oconto County, ca. 1921-1922; Right-Samuel A. Barrett, ca. 1910
1999, 8.3 acres (3.36 ha)
2012, 1.7 acres (.69 ha)
2013, 10.3 acres (4.17 ha)
2014: 20.3 acres (8.22 ha)
East beds, Joe Dick Road (47ME0107)
Sepaxticum Site (47ME0012), bed 1
Big Eddy West Garden Beds (47ME0167)
Excavation in 5.0 cm levels following ditch and planting surface contours

Matrix Samples (bags of dirt)

Flotation for carbonized plant remains (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)

Phytoliths, Starch Grains, Pollen (Smithsonian Institution, Midwest Ethnohorticulture LLC)

AMS Radiocarbon Dating (UWM-Illinois Geological Survey)

Soil Chemistry, micro- morphology, Trace-element analyses, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Planting surface
Mixed fill
Planting Surface
Mixed fill
Buried A Horizon
Neo-boreal Climatic Episode
Baerreis & Bryson (1965)
What do we think we’ve learned?

• Raised fields did not likely function as frost-drainage systems
• They are much more complex than we anticipated—
  – System began by about A.D. 1000 and persisted post-contact, ca. A.D. 1650, into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century
  – Manage soil fertility and chemistry
  – Manage soil moisture
  – Altered the landscape
  – Raised fields scattered throughout expansive communities
  – Late Prehistoric Population considerably larger than estimated

Still considering multiple scenarios—warfare, climate change, and introduction of European diseases may all have played important roles.