

For a corrected version of the Washington Times story, read below (my comments are italicized in brackets):

Tiny museum connecting D.C. with B.C.

Palisades' prehistory dates to before Christ

Timothy Warren (Contact)

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In a city that boasts some of the greatest museums in the world, it's no surprise the Doug Dupin's Palisades Museum of Prehistory is off the tourist maps.

Its leafy Northwest neighborhood, on the bluffs of the Potomac River, is little known outside the region, and Mr. Dupin's museum is really little more than a shack beside his home.

Still, it provides visitors a rare opportunity to see artifacts from the area, some dating as far back as 7000 B.C.

"I find it fascinating that people actually lived in this environment," says Mr. Dupin, 42, whose carefree demeanor quickly betrays his San Francisco Bay Area roots.

Mr. Dupin, a videographer, says he fell in love with archaeology purely by chance, recalling his time digging and identifying interesting pieces while working in road construction in Hawaii more than a decade ago. [*Actually, I worked for an archeology firm contracted to the Bishop Museum. Most of the work was in North Halawa Valley, Oahu.*]

His museum in the District was originally supposed to be a wine cellar. Then Mr. Dupin uncovered an arrowhead, which led him to excavating at construction sites and parks in the area. [*More to the point – When I learned of the American Indian heritage of the neighborhood, I often visited excavations in progress at construction sites. I perform no excavations, but I like to watch!*] (Though he scrapped the idea of the wine cellar to create the museum, Mr. Dupin still makes his own wine and beer from homegrown grapes and hops.) [*I still have a wine cellar, which occasionally doubles as exhibition space.*]

Mr. Dupin says the key to finding historical pieces is looking for such telltale signs as flaking on rocks that reveals they were shaped by hand, or finding stones that are not

common in the area.

"The older I get, the more interested I get in history," said Mr. Dupin, who moved to the District 15 years ago.

He primarily shows his findings to neighbors, local experts and other amateur archaeologists. Some use the collection as a teaching opportunity.

"His work reminds us that people were coming to Washington, D.C., before there was a Washington, D.C., and that in addition to occupying a historic city we walk in the midst of prehistory," said Michael Dolan, a neighbor and adjunct history professor at Catholic University who annually brings his students to the museum.

Mr. Dupin, who is married and a father of three, had hoped the museum would provide a small source of income. He even created a board and wrote a monthly newsletter to keep those interested apprised of his findings, though he since has stopped writing his newsletter.

Mr. Dupin's wife, Rebecca, is not nearly as infatuated with the museum as he is, though she is "amused" by it, he said.

The District does not offer a public museum for ancient artifacts, and the archaeologist for the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, Ruth Troccoli, has yet to see Mr. Dupin's collection, he says.

As a result, Mr. Dupin has not been able to see many of the artifacts held by the District, making a comparison with his collection much more difficult.

Palisades, in the far northwest corner of the city, just north of Georgetown, was popular among the region's early settlers because the river becomes narrow there, making fishing much easier. *[It is actually the beginning of a long spawning area starting from Little Falls and extending to Great Falls. Besides that, the river changes as tidal forces cease at Little Falls. This "fall-line" directly impacted river navigation.]*

While he is not certain, Mr. Dupin thinks most of his collection comes from the Susquehannock and Algonquin Indian tribes. *[No. Although it's impossible to say with certainty, I am quite positive most of the collection is not from these tribes. The reporter may have gotten confused when I said during the Contact Period this was a border area between the Susquehannock and Algonquin tribes. Most of the collection is probably from the late archaic – probably many precursors to the aforementioned*

tribes.]

Most of the 150 pieces in his collection are projectile points thought to be from 2500 B.C. to 500 A.D. One object, a scraper, is thought to be from 7000 B.C. [*The triangular projectile points in the collection are assumed more recent 500 – 1500 AD.*]

The museum, just 50 or 60 yards from the river, provides a fascinating glimpse into the life and the development of the natives of the area. Several pieces, for instance, show the progression of early inhabitants moving from flat, square stone bowls to pottery, right around 1800 B.C. [*Actually, I am going to stop saying “actually”. My museum is about a ¼ mile from the Potomac River.*]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/feb/16/tiny-museum-connecting-dc-with-bc/>