

# George Frederick Clarke

## Avocational Archaeologist



*Fundamentally the archaeologist is a romantic. If he weren't he wouldn't be an archaeologist.*  
- Dr. George Frederick Clarke

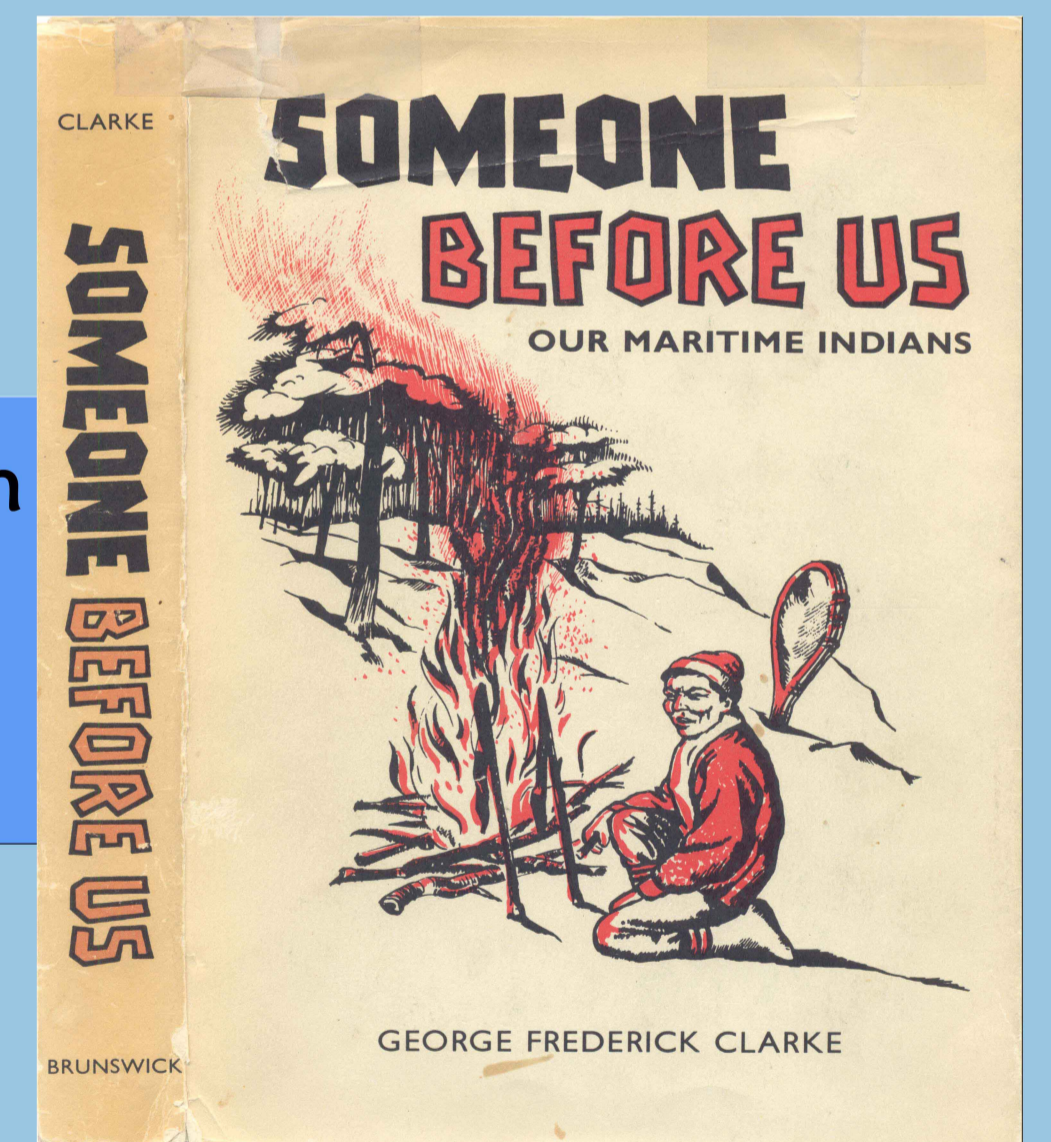
George Frederick Clarke (1883-1974), a Woodstock, New Brunswick dentist, was an avid sports fisherman, canoeist, conservationist, author, poet, amateur historian and most importantly here - an avocational archaeologist. From the 1920s to the 1950s, Dr. Clarke revealed the archaeological record of New Brunswick at a time when little professional archaeological research was being conducted. As someone who had a deep and abiding love for his home province, he approached its exploration with reverence, respect and appreciation for its natural and cultural heritage.



Along the middle St. John River valley and in the headwaters of the Miramichi River, Dr. Clarke discovered and excavated archaeological sites. His main goal as an archaeologist was to gain a sense of how the people of the Maritimes lived in the recent and distant past, not just to be a relic hunter or antiquarian. Clarke also collaborated with his long-time friend, Dr. Peter Paul, to conserve the Wolastoq'kew language, and shared a passion for aboriginal canoes with Dr. Paul and Edwin Tappan Adney. These efforts centered on rediscovering, preserving and sharing traditional and contemporary knowledge of the Native communities of New Brunswick.

## Someone Before Us

In 1968, Dr. Clarke published *Someone Before Us*, the first book-length narrative on New Brunswick archaeology. He focused largely on the Pre-contact archaeology of the Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq, as well as on early French settlements.



Clarke discovered many sites during the five decades he spent exploring the province and in his book described a dozen of them in detail. He illustrated in photographs the many artifacts that he found with his friends Noel Moulton, Tom Moulton, William Kesson, Ken Homer and John McClement. In addition to the archaeological information, *Someone Before Us* documents Dr. Clarke's interests in history, anecdotes, memoir, ethnohistory and his concerns about aboriginal rights.

A year after the publication of *Someone Before Us*, Dr. Clarke was awarded an honorary doctorate by UNB for his contributions to the culture and heritage of the province. In 2012, UNB named the George Frederick Clarke Archaeological Teaching Laboratory in his honour.