


Navigating the Past

Dugout canoes were the primary form of water travel for Native Americans in the area that became Pennsylvania. Navigating waterways in these vessels was essential for hunting, fishing and trade. Constructed by chopping and burning out the interior of straight logs, typically white pine, archaeologists have recorded canoes ranging in size from 9 feet to 18 feet in Pennsylvania. Larger dugouts measuring over 40 feet have been recovered in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. Due to their size and weight, these canoes were stored in lakes and swamps for seasonal use, contributing to their preservation. Discovered buried in mud for hundreds or even thousands of years, these vessels enrich our understanding of the past and preserves the cultural heritage of Pennsylvania's indigenous tribes.

*Pennsylvania Archaeology Month
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The remains of this dugout canoe were recovered from Mud Pond (site number 36Lu102) in Luzerne County Pennsylvania. Radiocarbon dated to 1250 AD, its construction pre-dates the arrival of Europeans in North America. The craft measures nearly 17 feet long, one foot four inches wide and eleven inches deep. This canoe is currently on exhibit at The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

Sponsored by A.D. Marble, Cultural Heritage Resource Services, Inc., Heberling Associates, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Lotus Environmental Consulting, Navarro & Wright, Pennsylvania Archaeological Council, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Skelly & Loy and The Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology. Visit www.PennsylvaniaArchaeology.com to learn more about dugout canoes and get involved.