

2020 STUDENT SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

Friday, March 27, 2020

9:30-9:45am

Reconstructing the Waterfront: An Archaeological Examination of Washington, NC's Nineteenth Century Waterfront

William Nassif, East Carolina University

The purpose of this paper is to gather historical and archaeological data to illuminate potential relationships between economic and social trends in the construction of wharf structures and enhance our understanding of the multitude of factors that drive the growth and decline of port communities. To do this, the coastal town of Washington, NC, situated along the Tar-Pamlico River, will be used as a case study. The nineteenth century witnessed the town, and its surrounding communities, experience economic prosperity due to its importance as a waterfront community. Goods exported from Washington, some brought down the Tar River from Tarboro, were sold in the markets of New York, Boston, and throughout the West Indies. The expansive commercial activity of Washington, NC brought goods and produce from throughout the Atlantic and beyond which, in turn, brought wealth and prosperity to a relatively minor port city. This project plans to visually demonstrate the economic trends which helped develop Washington through a variety of interactive maps and models. Historical and archaeological information will be gathered from several sources and will be assessed for correlation.

9:45-10:00am

Enslaved Maritime Commerce at Somerset Place

Mackenzie Mirre Tabeling, East Carolina University

This paper will discuss and analyze the maritime movement and activities of Somerset Plantation's enslaved population in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to historical documents such as the Collins Family Papers and the Lake Company Records, the presence of enslaved labor proved vital to the business ventures of three generations of the Collins Family. This paper will reference the historical documents' specific mentions of the involvement of enslaved peoples in maritime business and access to the water routes in between the plantation at Somerset and other Collins' properties in Edenton, NC. Lastly, this paper will discuss the level of enslaved agency on the success or failure of these businesses to contribute to the overall examination of North Carolina's enslaved maritime activity.

10:00-10:15am

Trades and Crafts Aboard Queen Anne's Revenge: An Analysis of Hand Tool Artifacts

Kendra Lawrence, East Carolina University

The artifact assemblage from Queen Anne's Revenge represents one of the most rich and diverse shipwreck collections from the early eighteenth century. Ongoing conservation of the artifacts continues to reveal new and compelling insight into the work and lives of sailors aboard this vessel. Among the collection is a selection of hand tools which include hammers, gouges, files, crowbars, and other implements. Using historical, archaeological, and ethnographic evidence, this research aims to determine the function of these tools, the types of work they would have allowed sailors to perform, and when possible, individuals that may have used these artifacts. This presentation aims to discuss some highlights and discoveries made throughout the research process and summarize the conclusions that can be drawn from the selection of tools recovered from the site thus far.

10:15-10:30am

Past, Current, and Future Archaeological Research at a Colonial Tavern

Mackenzie Mulkey, East Carolina University

In the late 1950s, Stanley South began archaeological excavations at Colonial Brunswick Town, a colonial port site located just south of modern-day Wilmington, North Carolina along the western shores of Cape Fear. Dr. E. Lawrence Lee Jr. began the overall clearing of the town and identifying foundations until Stanley South took over with excavations. South excavated a large portion of the town but also left many sections to be furthered studied by future archaeologists. Multiple field seasons through East Carolina University's Anthropology department, under the direction of Dr. Charles Ewen, has continued South's work and building the history of Brunswick Town. The previous field season of Summer 2019, architectural walls and foundations were discovered on Lot 29, known for another structure on the lot called Nath Moore's Front. It has been hypothesized that the foundations found on Lot 29, could potentially be remnants of a colonial tavern site. Current research will be conducted to analyze the countless artifacts discovered, architectural configuration, and compare the findings to documented colonial taverns to determine the nature of this structure.

10:30-10:45am

The Archaeology of the Social Safety Net at the Pitt County Poor Farm

Muriel Grubb, East Carolina University

The Pitt County Poor Farm, also known as the Pitt County Home, was established in the early 19th century to feed and house the local poor population of Pitt County, North Carolina, prior to the establishment of the federal welfare system. Three seasons of archaeological work on the site have expanded the interpretation of what life in rural eastern North Carolina was like for this underprivileged, disenfranchised population. Archaeological investigation of the Poor Farm site could also provide local museums with more information and artifacts to give a more complete interpretation of farm life in the area to the public. The findings from Pitt County Can be compared to other poor farm sites throughout the country to find similarities and differences on the living conditions of the poor during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

11:00-11:15am

Excavating Historic Oberlin Village

Paige Knapp, Kiana Fekette, and Connor Seaton, NC State

Historic Oberlin Village, located along present day Oberlin Road, was a well-established community of emancipated slaves who bought property along what was then New Hillsboro road. The earliest cemetery, houses, churches, and schools in Oberlin Village are recorded by census and a Civil War map as being constructed in the early 1870s. In 2018, a field school excavated in Oberlin Village and the collections were moved to North Carolina State University for analysis. Students cataloged and analyzed the Oberlin collection in Fall of 2019. Significant findings include diagnostic ceramics and glass that can be used to date the excavated deposits. In addition to this, ammunition for hunting, and items for recreation such as marbles and doll fragments, were found. This project hopes to contribute to the scholarship on late 19th – early 20th century African American communities, and the ongoing heritage preservation and education efforts within the local community.

11:15-11:30am

Reconstructing the Childhood Diet of an 18th to 19th Century North Carolina Land-Owning Family

Corinne Taylor, East Carolina University

Breastfeeding and weaning practices can impact a child's immune system development and nutritional status and cause long-term health effects. Here we explore the potential relationship between the weaning process and childhood frailty in a late 18th and early 19th century land-owning family in coastal North Carolina. Data was obtained from individuals from the Gause Family Cemetery, including children under the age of eight. Incremental $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ of dentin collagen of 10 teeth along with 10 bone samples provide a record of dietary and trophic level shifts that occurred during the weaning and post-weaning periods. The incremental dentin indicated that the weaning process ceased before 2 years of age and breastmilk was supplemented by C_4 sources, likely maize products, while adult diets had a stronger signature from marine and C_3 sources. When comparing the weaning processes experienced between subadult and adult individuals, only slight differences are found in their childhood diets and weaning practices, indicating these factors are not linked to childhood mortality in this sample. Overall, this evidence will identify the weaning practices and dietary supplementation of "elite" land-owning families in the Lower Cape Fear region and their potential impact on population frailty.

11:30-11:45am

Tuberculosis and Asheville: An Archaeological Study of the Winyah Sanitarium

Denise Folz, Warren Wilson College

This paper presents a preliminary analysis of artifacts from a trash dump associated with the Winyah Sanitarium in Asheville, North Carolina. The Winyah Sanitarium and Von Ruck Medical Research Laboratory were built in 1888 by Dr. Karl Von Ruck as a private hospital and convalescence home for people suffering from tuberculosis. The collection is comprised of 272 bottles and glass fragments, 112 ceramics and fragments, and a few miscellaneous artifacts. I propose that this assemblage of artifacts represents objects used by higher class tuberculosis patients who were not local to the southeastern United States. I will attempt to demonstrate this by combining my observations of the archaeological assemblage with available documentation of the Winyah Sanitarium.

11:45-12:00pm

Night at the Museum 4: Does the Mini Museum Perpetuate Illegal Antiquity Trading?

Grace Fawcett, East Carolina University

The Mini Museum provides collections of small artifacts (ranging from ancient Egyptian beads, to a piece of Steve Job's turtleneck, to "Pangea Fragments") encased in acrylic that are available for purchase online (minimuseum.com). Products like the Mini Museum are making it easier for those who cannot attend a regular museum to hold unique historical objects in the palm of their hand, but doing so likely represents the buying, selling, and trading of looted antiquities. This project examines how the Mini Museum website directly and indirectly contributes to unethical or illegal trading, as well as how it misrepresents and embellishes its products to the consumer. This investigation grants new insight into how examples like the Mini Museum can be useful in teaching the ethics, legality, and accessibility of trading objects of cultural importance.

1:30-1:45pm

First Aid in the Field: Developing a Conservation Protocol for Brunswick Town Artifacts

Brandon J Eckert, East Carolina University

Since 2015, East Carolina University has conducted its summer field school in archaeology at the 18th century settlement site of Brunswick Town in North Carolina's Cape Fear region. After multiple field seasons, thousands of artifacts have been recovered. Following their retrieval in the field, many of these artifacts are at risk of significant deterioration if not properly recovered and stored. To address this issue, a "first-aid" conservation protocol is being developed. These procedures will ensure that future field school students have the tools and methods required for proper on-site conservation and storage of at-risk artifacts immediately after recovery.

1:45-2:00pm

The Reconservation of Sugar Treated Wooden Canoes from Lake Phelps

Tim Smith, East Carolina University/Office of State Archaeology

In 1986, four canoes were recovered from Lake Phelps in Pettigrew State Park in eastern North Carolina. These canoes were treated with sugar as a bulking agent to prevent serious damage upon drying. After many years of being stored in uncontrolled conditions, some of these canoes have become unstable with sugar leaching to the surface and crystallizing. This causes major concerns for the long-term preservation of these artifacts. Michell Gilman, a graduate of East Carolina's Anthropology Program, researched and devised a method for treating this problem. A topical application of reagent alcohol and water has proven effective at dissolving the sugar back into the canoes. This presentation will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of treating waterlogged archaeological wood with sugar, using the Lake Phelps canoes as a case study, reviewing their history, treatment, and re-treatment.

2:00-2:15pm

When Stones Speak: An Analysis of Mississippian Period Lithic Artifacts from the Warren Wilson and Berry Archaeological Sites

Liam J Gardiner, Warren Wilson College

This is a preliminary report of research for a senior thesis on Mississippian lithic raw material usage in western North Carolina. I employ a detailed visual analysis of characteristic mineral traits to identify the raw materials (lithics) of Mississippian chipped stone artifacts from both the Warren Wilson and Berry sites. In the southern Appalachian region, raw materials for the production of chipped stone artifacts include local materials such as quartz, quartzite, and cherts, as well as jaspers, rhyolites, and metavolcanics from outside the region. Lithic tools are defined here as any tool made of stone that has been intentionally shaped by chipping or knapping, including forms such as projectile points, scrapers, drills, and cores. My sample is drawn from Pisgah phase (A.D. 1000-1500) features at the Warren Wilson site and Burke phase (AD 1400-1600) features from the Berry site.. Patterns of raw material usage may provide insight into local decisions regarding raw material procurement through trade or other cultural factors.

2:15-2:30pm

A Study of the Hugh Gilliam Collection of Native American Pottery from McDowell County

Lia Purdy, Warren Wilson College

Amateur artifact collector, Hugh Gilliam, compiled a surface collection of Native American artifacts including more than 3000 pieces of pottery from southern McDowell County, North Carolina, and brought them to Warren Wilson College for study. There are few sites recorded in the area where Gilliam collected and this assemblage of pottery is unique for the region, consisting of Pisgah, Connestee, Swannanoa, and some examples of Napier and Swift Creek types. This paper describes my preliminary analysis of the Gilliam collection.

2:30-2:45pm

Findings of the 2019 WCU Summer Archaeological Field School at the Norton Field Site (31JK615), Jackson County, Cullowhee, NC

Etta Farlow, Kaley Kelly, and Austin Peters, Western Carolina University

In this presentation we summarize the results of the 2019 summer archaeological field school at the Norton Field Site (31JK615) on the campus of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. A systematic shovel test survey and targeted test unit excavations produced evidence of significant Archaic, Pisgah, and Qualla phase occupations at a previously unrecorded archaeological site on campus. The results of this fieldwork shed important new light on the rich Cherokee cultural heritage of Western North Carolina University.

2:45-3:00pm

“Fetchez la vache”: The Potential Pastoral Provocation for the Neolithic Adoption in Ireland

Connor Seaton, NC State

The utilization of domesticated animals is one of the key features of what is termed as the “Agricultural or Neolithic Revolution.” At the time that this so-called “revolution” reaches Ireland during the start of the fourth millennium BC, scholars can show that the adoption of these animals, and the Neolithic package as a whole, happens. What is still a mystery is the “how” and “why” of this adoption. Comparing published faunal data and unpublished faunal assemblages from ritual and domestic sites dated to the period of the Neolithic transition on the island, I will suggest that early domesticates occupy a place of ritual significance following their initial appearance in Ireland, and the need to maintain a supply of these important animals is what necessitates the overall adoption of Neolithic agricultural practices on the island. In doing so, I will also posit that this ritual significance afforded to the domesticated fauna situates them as active participants in the changing practices that develop during this period of time.
