



North Carolina Archaeological Society

Newsletter

4619 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4619

<http://www.rla.unc.edu/ncas>

SUMMER 2004, Volume 14, Number 2



Dr. Joe Mountjoy, Senior Faculty Member Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina in Greensboro

Many of my interests can be traced back to my paternal grandfather Oscar Mountjoy, and archaeology is one of them. My grandfather was a hybrid seed corn producer in central Illinois, but he was fascinated by all things Indian and was an avid collector of Indian artifacts he found in the fields around my hometown of Atlanta, Illinois. He was locally famous for having built a fireplace in his farmhouse and imbedded his best Indian artifacts in the cement facade, in a variety of attractive patterns.

My grandfather started me collecting Indian artifacts as soon as I was big enough to walk the fields with him, and by high school I decided, for a school project, to investigate archaeology as a career by writing to the University of Illinois. My letter was answered by John McGregor, renowned Southwestern archaeologist, who

said the pursuit of archaeology as a career was pretty much an impossibly hard task, and archaeologists who succeeded barely managed to keep from starving.

So by the time I went to the University of Illinois in 1959 I had decided to go into geology, in part because my father graduated from the U of I in geology and worked in the New Mexico oil fields before returning home to save the family farm when my grandfather suffered an accident. I did, however, elect to take the introductory two-semester anthropology sequence my first year. John McGregor taught the archaeology/physical semester, and Morris Segal taught the cultural anthropology semester. Let me just say that I came out of the experience so enthralled with cultural anthropology that I decided to major in anthropology.

As I went through the anthropology program, though, because of my experience and interest in archaeology, the archaeology professors took an interest in me, put me to work in the lab, and took me along on weekend digs. So I sort of fell backwards into archaeology again. Everything might have been different, however, if I could have accepted the invitation of Oscar Lewis to accompany him on his "culture of poverty" research in Puerto Rico, but my father insisted that I had to spend that summer helping out on the farm.

I finally broke away from the farm for good during the summer of 1963 when after just graduating I spent the summer working in archaeology in the Rock Island, Illinois area with several U of I students under the direction of a great field archaeologist, Elaine Bluhm Herold. One of the other students was Don Johanson, who swore at the time that after graduating he was going to Africa to find the earliest fossil evidence of the human line. The rest of us would just smile and say "Oh sure you will, Don."

I had been accepted into the Graduate School at the University of Illinois, but was not enthusiastic about the prospect of spending several more years with the same professors. Because I had so avidly read Elaine's copy of Walter Taylor's *A Study of Archeology*, she suggested I explore the new graduate program at Southern Illinois University. I did so at the end of the summer, after returning from a tour of Europe with the University of Illinois Concert Choir. Walter Taylor interviewed me in Carbondale and offered to let me into that program "on probation." I accepted.

My plan was to go into French Paleolithic archaeology, and I passed that language exam in the first quarter. At my request, Taylor wrote his friend Hal Movius and got me the offer of a summer position on Movius' dig in southern France, but then Taylor refused to recommend me for that job because he desperately needed assistants for his summer project in Mexico. So I went to Zacatecas with Taylor in 1964, two introductory Spanish texts packed for the trip. That

summer was Taylor's last archaeology project in Mexico, and 40 years later I am still digging down there. I wrote to Walt to thank him before he died.

The few summers I spent in North Carolina I managed to carry out a few excavation projects: a Pee Dee/Siouan site in Moore County; a Late Archaic quarry site in Davidson County; a multi-component site in Guilford County; and the occasional registration and testing of sites that were brought to my attention.

But my first love has always been Mexico. I did my dissertation research on the archaeology of the municipality of San Blas, Nayarit in 1967-68, worked three summers at Cholula, got back to West Mexico doing site survey and mapping west of Guadalajara, then salvage archaeology in the Tomatlán river basin, followed by a return to San Blas in 1983. Then I spent nine years in the municipality of Puerto Vallarta, and after that, in 1996, I moved into the highlands east of Puerto Vallarta registering shaft tomb and petroglyph sites until 1999 when I was taken to a site near Mascota, Jalisco where a farmer had hit a (ca. 800 B.C.) cemetery while digging a silage trench with a bulldozer. We have been excavating at that site since 2000 with support from the National Geographic Society, having by now excavated the remains of 138 individuals from 30 burial pits, and hundreds of associated grave offerings, many of which tie the Middle Formative Mascota people to places along the Pacific coast as far distant as Guatemala and northwestern Peru.

There are three things I like most about archaeology: (1) it is a thoroughly engrossing process of scientific discovery unlike any other; (2) it allows me to work outdoors in rural settings in close association with nature; and (3) it brings me into contact with some very nice and incredibly valuable people I would not likely meet otherwise. There is a downside to this career. In a way, John McGregor was right. There are a lot of skinny, stressed out, archaeologists running around, but it is because their passion for the subject manages to consume so much of their energy, time, and personal finances.

Exciting New Exhibit: Santa Elena's Kiln

The upcoming Santa Elena exhibit at the North Carolina Pottery Center in Seagrove will open on Saturday, October 2, 2004, in tandem with the North Carolina Archaeological Society's Fall Meeting. Dr. Chester DePratter will be the keynote speaker for the exhibit opening. Admission to the Center will be FREE that day and the exhibit will run until January 29, 2005. It features a beautiful scale model of the kiln as it may have looked, based on the archaeological footprint and conjectured, researched drawings by Jim Legg. Reconstructed pottery vessels and architectural pieces excavated in 1993 from the kiln will be included in the exhibit. A history of the excavation and interpretative text on the process of pottery making will be shown. Several replica pieces (the alembic assemblage and the cantero) are being made by Hal Pugh, a local potter and

will augment the exhibit. For opening day, there will be activities related to prehistoric and historic pottery identification and pottery making offered outdoors on the grounds. We hope to have a simulated prehistoric pit firing going along with the wood-fired chamber kiln currently on the Center's grounds. Tables staffed by local experts will also be on-hand to identify your historic and prehistoric pottery pieces. The registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. with the keynote lecture by Dr. DePratter to begin about 10:30 a.m. or thereabouts. See announcement in this newsletter for lunch arrangements and check the webpages for the NCAS and NCPC for updated information. You may also contact Dr. Linda Carnes-McNaughton (curator for the exhibit) at carneslf@bragg.army.mil for further information. We welcome all "jugheads"!

Army Archaeologists Honor Native American Heritage With Earth-week Excavations

Archaeologists with Fort Bragg's Cultural Resources Program (CRP) hosted an open excavation at Fox Ridge, a prehistoric Native American site located in Hoke County. This weeklong event was the second annual Open Archaeology Dig offered by Fort Bragg to celebrate Earth Day/Week. The event ran from April 19-23, 2004 and during that period 162 visitors and amateur archaeologists participated. Visitors ranged in age and experience from home-schooled children to seasoned veterans of volunteer service. Local representatives of Native American tribes, including the Tuscarora and Cherokee Nations, also visited the site. No experience was required and volunteers worked with professional archaeologists on every aspect of site investigation. In addition to participating in excavations and receiving instruction in archaeological techniques, visitors were introduced to the prehistory of the Sandhills through artifact exhibits, primitive cooking demonstrations, and interpretation of artifacts.

The Fox Ridge Site is a multi-component site with episodes of site occupation occurring during the Archaic (8000-500 B.C.) and Woodland periods (ca. 500 B.C.-A.D. 1100). Located in a mixed-pine and deciduous forest bordering the wetlands of Rockfish Creek, the site presents an exciting opportunity for research into Archaic and Woodland period cultures in the Carolina Sandhills.

Excavation revealed the remains of seasonal campsites suggesting several residential shelters and cooking hearths arranged along the terrace edge overlooking a small spring during the Woodland periods of occupation. Of particular importance at this site are several types of prehistoric pottery, including Yadkin (crushed-quartz tempered), Cape Fear (sand tempered), and Hanover (grog tempered) series. In some cases, many pieces of the same pottery vessel were found and will be reconstructed by volunteers in our curation facility at Fort Bragg. Archaeologists hope that this pottery may also be used for thermoluminescence (TL) dating, thereby providing important information about the sequence of prehistoric pottery types and the periods of site occupation. Opportunities for radiocarbon (¹⁴C) dating also exist as charcoal was recovered from several hearths along with calcined (burned) animal bone.

The Fort Bragg CRP encourages those interested in archaeology and prehistory to participate in this unique "outdoor classroom" offered to the general public each year during Earth Day/Week. For more information on Fort Bragg's cultural resources, visit our webpage: www.bragg.army.mil/culturalresources. We look forward to seeing you next Spring!

NCAS Grants-in-Aid Program for 2004-2005

Randy Daniel and Dave Moore

Co-chairs, NCAS Endowment Committee

This fall, the North Carolina Archaeological Society will continue its Grants-in-Aid Program designed to fund research pertaining to North Carolina archaeology. At least one grant of up to \$1000 will be awarded each year. Applicants must meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) a graduate or undergraduate student actively pursuing a degree in archaeology or a related field; (b) an individual enrolled in an internship program with a museum, a state historic site, an archaeological park, or a Native American group (with state or federal recognition); or (c) an avocational archaeologist who is a member of the North Carolina Archaeological Society and has over time demonstrated a concern for the protection or study of archaeological resources within the state. The next deadline for proposals is November 1, 2004. Full details and

application instructions appear on a flier enclosed with this newsletter and also can be found on the web at <http://www.rla.unc.edu/ncas/Grants/index.html>.

Grant recipients will be selected by the NCAS Endowment Committee, whose members currently include Randy Daniel (co-chair), Rick Langley, Dave Moore (co-chair), Ken Robinson, Vin Steponaitis, and Ann Tippitt.

The grants are underwritten by the NCAS Endowment Fund. This endowment was established in 2001 from the proceeds of the sale of the "Blue Banks" property near Greenville, which took place largely through the efforts of then-president Robert Graham. We owe him our thanks for making these grants possible!

Announcing a New Publication from the NC Archaeological Council

**Restoration Excavations at Somerset Place
Plantation State Historic Site, 1994 and 2001**, by Carl Steen, North Carolina Archaeological Council Publication No. 28. Published jointly by the North Carolina Archaeological Council, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, and the Somerset Place Foundation, Inc., 2003. x + 246 pp., color illus., tables, biblio. \$20.00 (paper).

Somerset Place was a rice plantation established in eastern North Carolina during the 1780s, and is now a partially restored state historic site. This research report documents archaeological findings at five structures—a chapel, a hospital, a kitchen, and two slave quarters—and focuses on the African-Americans who lived and worked there as slaves. Steen describes and interprets the remains of these structures and their associated artifact assemblages, and richly illustrates those findings with nearly 200 color photographs.

To order, please send a check for \$20 (made out to NCAC) to Paul Webb, NCAC Secretary-Treasurer, TRC Garrow Associates, 501 Washington St., Suite F, Durham, NC 27701 (pwebb@trcsolutions.com).

2004 Election of Officers

The 2004 Election of Officers ballot is enclosed. Please return the ballot to Dee Nelms, NC Archaeological Society, 4619 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4619 by September 24th. As in last years, we will take nominations from the floor at the members meeting at the North Carolina Pottery Center on October 2nd. You will get a chance to cast your vote at the meeting if you do not send it in by mail.

NCAS Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members are encouraged to submit articles and news items to Dee Nelms, Associate Editor, for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Spring Issue	February 28	Fall Issue	August 31
Summer Issue	May 31	Winter Issue	November 30

NCAS Officers

President: Tom Beaman, 5210 Carr Road, Wilson, NC 27893.

Vice-president: William E. Covington, III, 245 Broadmeade Drive, Southern Pines, NC 27387.

Treasurer: E. William Conen, 804 Kingswood Drive, Cary, NC 27513.

Secretary: Linda Carnes-McNaughton, Dept of the Army, Public Works Business Center (AFZA-PW-E) (Carnes), Fort Bragg Garrison Command (ABN), Installation Management Agency, Fort Bragg, NC 28310.

Editor: R.P. Stephen Davis, Jr., Research Laboratories of Archaeology, CB# 3120 Alumni Building, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3120.

Associate Editor: Dee H. Nelms, Office of State Archaeology, NC Division of Historical Resources, 4619 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4619.

Executive Board Members: Linda France Stine, John Hildebrand, John Mintz, Terri Russ, Archie Smith, Ruth Wetmore

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