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BUS TOUR OF CHEROKEE HERITAGE SITES A BIG SUCCESS

by
Theresa Shebalin

On April 23, twenty-nine NCAS members and guests attended the 2016 Cherokee-area bus tour. With the Great Smoky Mountains as the backdrop and signs of spring everywhere, we could not have asked for a more perfect day! Tour guides Brett Riggs and Jane Eastman, who together have more than four decades of experience working in Cherokee archaeology, took us to visit three major sites and pointed out many more along the way.

The day began in McKee Building on the campus of Western Carolina University, where participants enjoyed refreshments, looked at artifacts in the University's collections, and received an overview of Cherokee history and local geography. From there Dr. Eastman led us to the Cullowhee Mound site, the remains of a Cherokee village and mound that was destroyed in the 1950s during a campus construction project. She described her 2003 field school excavations of the re-deposited mound fill and subsequent laboratory analyses.

The next stop was nearby Judaculla Rock, a soapstone boulder used for quarrying bowls during the Archaic period and subsequently covered in Mississippian-period petroglyphs. Even to those who've seen them many times, the rock's mysterious designs are awe-inspiring, but they were especially so given that they had just been carefully restored after having been vandalized with spray paint less than a month before. Dr. Riggs suggested that the palimpsest of lines, circles, figures, and other symbols carved into the rock represent a single composition rather than multiple depictions superimposed upon each other. With this interpretation in mind and towering peaks surrounding us, it was not hard to imagine the slant-eyed giant Judaculla of Cherokee legend scratching the rock as he jumped upon it from above.


Those willing to dodge cow patties then trekked across a pasture to explore some other petroglyphs along Caney Fork while our skillful driver figured out how to back the bus up so that we could continue on our journey. The hour-long ride to our final destination, Kituwah, featured some spectacular scenery along the Tuckasegee River corridor. Dr. Riggs and Dr. Eastman kept our attention by pointing out various sites and landmarks as we passed.

We enjoyed a relaxed lunch under a shady old airplane hanger, and then Dr. Riggs told us about Kituwah, the original town of the Cherokee people. At its center stood Kituwah Mound, now visible only as a slight rise in the landscape. After explaining the significance of the eternal flame said to still burn deep within the mound, Dr. Riggs told us about his test excavations at the site shortly after the land was acquired by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in 1996. Out of reverence for the sacred site, we viewed the mound only from a distance.

Back at Western Carolina University at the end of the afternoon, the verdict seemed unanimous — the 2016 Cherokee-area bus tour was a success! The only thing missing was Dr. Ben Steere, slated to have been our third tour guide, who was home sick with the flu. Before participants parted ways, there was talk about organizing a similar tour in another couple of years. With so many interesting sites to choose from in western North Carolina, a second tour has the potential to appeal to NCAS members who attended this year's event as well as those who missed it.

Special thanks to Dr. Riggs and Dr. Eastman for making the tour a memorable one!

(Editor's note: This year's bus trip was organized by past NCAS president Theresa Shebalin. Thank you Theresa!)


IN REMEMBRANCE OF
STANLEY AUSTIN SOUTH
February 2, 1928 – March 20, 2016

I was born a mountain groundhog... and have been digging for a lifetime.
 (Stanley South, *An Archaeological Evolution*, pg. 1)



Stanley Austin South, one of America's most renowned historical archaeologists, passed away on Sunday, March 20, 2016 in Columbia, South Carolina, his home since 1968. He was 88 years old.

His was a diverse career from the beginning. As a native of Boone, he returned there following a stint in the U.S. Department of the Navy, serving as a Seaman. He graduated from Appalachian State Teacher's College with a degree in Education in 1949. This experience enhanced his writing skills, honed his penchant for pupils to teach, and gave him the beauty of the western mountains to photograph. He found a teaching job at Proximity Junior High School in Greensboro, where he shared his love of science and social studies with his students until 1952. During this time he researched Native American cultures and was influenced by Douglas Rights' *The American Indian in North Carolina* (Duke University Press, 1947). Never one to shy away from discovery, he conducted

a survey of prehistoric archaeological sites in his home county of Watauga (1951–1953). His resultant study was then sent to Joffre Coe at UNC, whom Rights acknowledged as the local authority. This earliest introduction to archaeology whetted his appetite for more. Keeping his photographic skills in the picture, he worked as a professional photographer in Boone until he entered UNC-Chapel Hill in 1954 in Anthropology, under the mentorship of Coe. Photography, archaeology, and former military experiences put them on common ground. South was joined by classmate Lewis Binford, and together they searched for prehistoric populations in North Carolina. Under Coe's critical eye, South published a seminal article in his first year, titled "Evolutionary Theory in Archaeology" (*Southern Indian Studies*, 1955). He and Binford shared this keen interest in evolutionary theory, which made for long conversations during their Roanoke River Basin Survey project in 1955. South stuck to prehistory for his master's thesis, completed in 1959. Then, while still in graduate school, he found additional work with the NC Department of Archives and History (a precursor to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources), and worked as the on-site manager for Town Creek Indian Mound, the first state historic site, purchased in 1955. At Town Creek he was responsible for oversight of all on-going archaeology (done through the RLA-UNC) and reconstruction of the temple atop the mound. In 1959 he published *Indians of North Carolina* (NC Dept. of Archives and History) for teachers and the general public. His duties as a state archaeologist, along with his proclivity in historic sites research, set him on a course for dozens of more important projects designed to develop some premier state-owned archaeological sites into public historical parks.

In tandem with historian Lawrence Lee, Stan South began his systematic explorations and excavations at colonial period Brunswick Town and adjacent Russellborough, along the Cape Fear River.

This site also contained the remains of Fort Anderson, a Civil War earthen fort. South set about excavating multiple foundations of the colonial period site and did some testing of the barracks area. In all, he exposed 23 of the 60 known ruins. The results of this work provided content for his *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology* (Academic Press, 1977) which also employed his new techniques of analysis (including his button and ceramic typologies, mean ceramic date formula, concepts of pattern recognition, and the use quantitative analysis). He was an energetic and dedicated researcher, balancing his time at Brunswick Town with excavations at Historic Halifax, Historic Bath, the Civil War site of Fort Fisher, Fort Dobbs (a French and Indian War period outpost), the James K Polk cabin site, and other non-state-owned historic sites including Ringware House, George Hooper House, McFayden Mound, Bell House, David Caldwell House, Hezekiah Alexander House, Swain-Lane House, and part of the Confederate Arsenal in Fayetteville. From 1963 to 1968 he conducted periodic excavations at the colonial Moravian settlements of Bethabara and Old Salem, which produced another seminal text, *Historical Archaeology of Wachovia* (Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 1999). His work there exposed the pottery shop site of the premier potter, Gottfried Aust. This was just the first two decades of his prolific career which he spent in North Carolina before relocating south of the border to Columbia, South Carolina. There, his brand of archaeology sustained an active discovery period spent at Santa Elena (the 1566–1588 Spanish town and forts on Parris Island), Fort Moultrie, Charles Town Landing site, British military sites, numerous plantation sites,

and Cain Hoy pottery site, while he also continued to hone his dating chronologies, evolutionary thinking, and field methodologies, and write multiple books, articles, reports, and stories. He was a prolific writer and researcher who produced important volumes and articles on archaeological topics in both North Carolina and South Carolina, as well as major theoretical works in historical archaeology. He was a modern Diogenes who carried a lantern of archaeological science that helped lead historical archaeology from being a “handmaiden to history” into a scientific paradigm. It has been stated that many archaeologists learned what things were, what they might mean, how to excavate them, and how to present the results of their research either directly from Stanley South, from his reports and books, or from someone he trained or influenced. We learned from him that the material record tells a truer story of the human past than documents alone.

Never without his brass pig belt buckle, rings on his fingers, cowboy boots, and hawk/owl/guinea feathers in his straw hat, those of us who knew him or had the pleasure to work with him will greatly miss his soft spoken wit, poetry, and stories told of his past excavations and exploits. While his candle has been extinguished, his lantern of archaeological science and scholarship will continue to burn as a guide for future generations of archaeologists. He was a “gritty genius” and a searcher of truths, both real and envisioned. We have lost one of North Carolina’s most renowned archaeological treasures, and we owe him much.

Submitted by Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton
and Thomas E. Beaman, Jr.



STEVEN MILES WATTS

July 25, 1947 – March 21, 2016

The learning and practice of aboriginal skills can help us all get in touch with our own roots, no matter what our particular heritage may be. If we go back far enough in our own pasts, we discover that we are all aboriginal people at some time in some place. The stone age is the great common denominator of humanness. “Primitive” (“first”) skills are our shared heritage. – Steve Watts, 1985

Steve was a lifelong Gaston County resident who grew up in Cherryville, where he learned scouting, camping, and woodcraft from his Dad, Olin Watts. Steve completed his undergraduate education at Appalachian State University in 1969 and received his Master’s Degree from Duke University in 1971. “He

was a consummate, curious educator who was consistently opening other doors and exploring new things in depth,” said Ann Tippitt, Executive Director of the Schiele Museum of Natural History (Michael Barrett, *Gaston Gazette* March 23, 2016).

(continued on page 5)

Scenes from the 2016 Cherokee-Area Bus Tour



Archaeologist Brett Riggs explains the significance of Judaculla Rock to NCAS members.



Judaculla Rock. Note the ancient symbols carved onto the rock surface and “stumps” from two Late Archaic bowls carved from the bottom-right edge of the boulder.



NCAS members on the viewing deck to see Judaculla Rock (behind the railing at right).



Archaeologist Jane Eastman explaining the petroglyphs carved on boulders along Caney Fork near Judaculla Rock.



NCAS members listen to Brett Riggs tell the story of how the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians re-acquired and now protect the sacred site of Kituwah.



View of the Kituwah site with NCAS members in the foreground. The low rise in the center of the field is the remnant of the Kituwah townhouse mound.



Steve directed the Aboriginal Studies Program at the Schiele Museum in Gastonia and was preparing to do a children's program in the reconstructed Catawba Village when he became ill before passing away in a Charlotte hospital on March 21, 2016. He was the first (and only) Native American program specialist at the museum when hired in 1984. He offered Native American and early human cultures programs for K–12 school students and an annual series of primitive technology and classic camping workshops for museum professionals, teachers, archaeologists, historians, and other interested adults. His replicas of prehistoric tools are featured in museums throughout the United States.

“He was the kind of person you just want to be with, travel with, and be friends with,” said Dave Wescott of Idaho, a personal and professional friend, camper, and survivalist who has taught and written books with Watts since 1988. “He was a master of getting people to understand this idea that nothing we

do as human beings is by itself — that everything we do relates” (*Gaston Gazette* March 23, 2016).

Between 1995 and 1999, Steve served as a consultant on the Twentieth Century Fox film *Cast Away*. He has also consulted for and appeared in several History Channel series, including *Extreme History* (2003), *Digging for the Truth* (2005), *Modern Marvels* (2008) and *101 Fast Foods That Changed the World* (2013).

In addition to places throughout the Carolinas, Steve's workshops were conducted across the United States (for example, Rabbitstick in Idaho) as well as in Europe. During the summers of 2005, 2006, and 2009, Steve received research grants to undertake experiential/experimental/replicative projects at the Lejre Experimental Archaeology Centre in Denmark. He related upon return from the 2009 trip the thrill of visiting the home and village of Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa*). This is only one of a number of examples of his visits to places he described as his cultural heroes.

Steve authored many articles on history, aboriginal culture, and technology. A collection of his writings, *Practicing Primitive: A Handbook of Aboriginal Skills*, was published in 2005 by Gibbs Smith Publishers. He also was a research associate with the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina and a founding board member and past president of the International Society of Primitive Technology (1996–2007), which publishes a biannual journal *The Bulletin of Primitive Technology*.

Steve's legacy will continue through his students from the Schiele Museum of Natural History in Gastonia, where he was employed for over 30 years, and through the workshops he conducted all over North America and Europe.

Submitted by Alan May

NEWS FROM THE RLA

Vin Steponaitis, director of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology since 1988 and former NCAS executive secretary, has been elected Secretary of the Faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill. On July 1, he will step down as director to assume his new role in faculty governance. He will keep an office in the RLA and remain active in both teaching and research. Vin's successor is **C. Margaret Scarry**, a professor of anthropology at UNC. Margie specializes in paleoethnobotany and has research interests in North

Carolina, the greater Southeast, and the Mediterranean. She is a longtime NCAS member.

Lisa-Jean Michienzi, RLA departmental administrator and NCAS business manager, has accepted a part-time position in the UNC Chemistry Department in order to spend more time with her family. Until a new administrator is hired, all NCAS dues payments and other business-related matters should be directed to: **Steve Davis**, Research Laboratories of Archaeology, Campus Box 3120,

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3120.

Finally, **Heather Lapham** has accepted the position of research archaeologist, formerly held by **Brett Riggs**, and will join the RLA in July. Dr. Lapham received her PhD from the University of Virginia in 2002. She previously worked at the Smithsonian Institution and is currently Curator and Associate Scientist at the Center for Archaeological Investigations at SIU-Carbondale. She is currently doing research on animal use at the Berry site, the location of Spanish Fort San Juan and the Native town of Joara near present-day Morganton, NC. Previously she explored the seventeenth-century deerskin trade in the southern Appalachians.

We welcome Heather to North Carolina and look forward to her becoming involved with the NCAS.

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NCAS Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members should submit articles and news items to Steve Davis (rpsdavis@unc.edu) for inclusion in the Newsletter. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Winter Issue – January 31

Summer Issue – July 31

Spring Issue – April 30

Fall Issue – October 31

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