

NORTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

109 EAST JONES ST., RALEIGH, N.C., 27601-2807

SUMMER 1992, Volume 2, Number 2

NEWSLETTER

Salvage Archaeology at the Cullowhee Valley School Cullowhee, Jackson County - April 22 - July 24, 1992

Construction of the new K-8 Cullowhee Valley School was complicated earlier this year by the discovery of significant archaeological resources (including human burials) on the planned school site. David Moore, archaeologist at the Western Office of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Asheville, directed the salvage excavations at the site which is located in Cullowhee, Jackson County, less than one mile from the campus of Western Carolina University.

The project began with the discovery of a feature by Joel Hardison, an anthropology student at Western Carolina University. Joel, who had often collected artifacts from the site, was examining an area of the construction site when he observed a dark pit partially exposed by the bulldozer. The disturbed soil contained pottery, charcoal, and bone, and Joel reported the discovery of a possible human burial to Anne Rogers, anthropologist at WCU, who reported it to David Moore.

David's examination of the feature revealed it to be a trash pit but he alerted the Jackson County School Superintendent, Dr. Charles McConnell, that additional features and human burials were likely to be present. Under North Carolina General Statute 70-3, it is illegal to disturb unmarked human remains. Therefore, with the cooperation of the Jackson county school officials and the grading contractor, David began a rushed investigation to identify and remove any burials present on the site.

Ultimately, the salvage project revealed that portions of three separate sites remained partially (see figure) intact despite the initial grading that had taken place. The first is a Woodland period village that probably dates to ca. A.D. 700-900. It is a palisaded village and is especially significant for what is believed to be the foundation of an earthlodge. Three burials were located within the village, including one in the middle of the earthlodge. Interestingly, the pottery found here is most similar to Napier pottery found in North Georgia. Sites of this time period are poorly known in the southern mountains and information gathered here will greatly expand our understanding of the cultures that preceded the Cherokee culture in western North Carolina.

The second site, located just south of the Woodland village, dates to the Pisgah (Cherokee ancestors) phase ca. A.D. 1500-1650.

Although most of this site was already graded away, portions of four palisades were discovered along with numerous features. The ceramic information gathered here along with the potential for radiocarbon dates makes it likely that this site will enhance our ability to date late Pisgah pottery and to discriminate it from early Qualla (Historic period Cherokee) ceramics. Also, an abundance of charred plant remains from features at both sites will enable researchers to compare diets from the different time periods.

The third site was represented by two features and dates to the early nineteenth century. Feature contents included Qualla pottery, glass beads, animal bone, a variety of buttons, bottle glass, and gun parts. This is likely to represent a Removal Era Cherokee homestead. Future research may reveal the names of the occupants of this home site just before they were removed on the Trail of Tears.

This project represented an enormous undertaking; an area of more than 7,900 square meters (71,100 square feet) was examined and mapped. One hundred, thirty-two (132) features and over 1,020 postholes were identified and more than 90 of the features were excavated. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the help of volunteers. David was assisted by more than 125 individuals who contributed more than 2,000 hours to the project. Volunteers came from WCU, the Cullowhee community and Jackson County, Asheville, Franklin, Charlotte, Marion, Chapel Hill, even from as far as Atlanta, Georgia. A special thanks goes to the archaeologists from the National Forest Service in North Carolina and Tennessee and to archaeology faculty and students at Appalachian State University in Boone.

The Office of State Archaeology is not funded to carry out such extended projects and therefore, without the help of these volunteers it is likely that more of the salvaged sites would have been lost.

David Moore hopes to raise funds for continuing work on the excavated materials. Funds will be

(continued on next page)

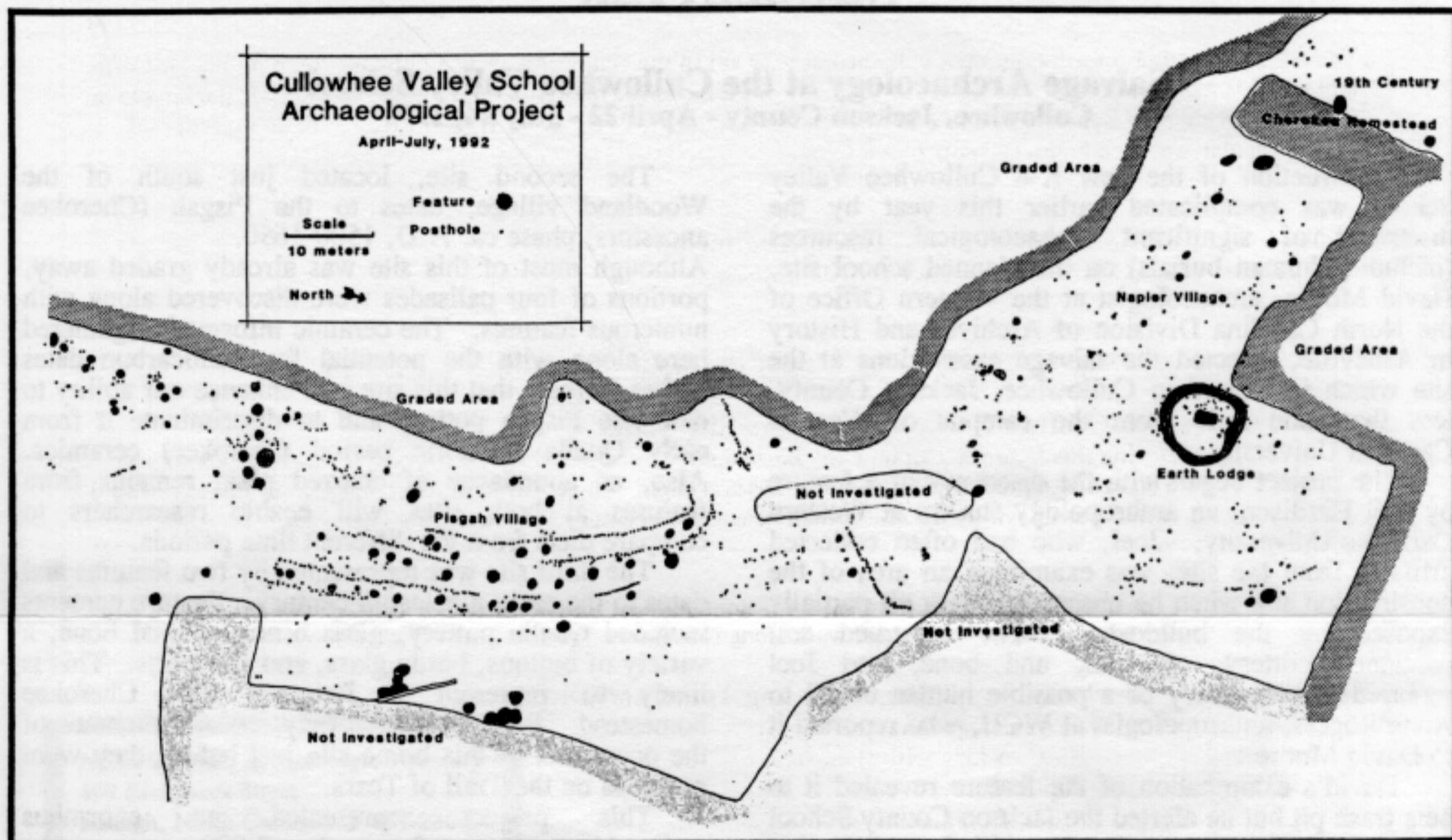
necessary for radiocarbon dates, analysis of the floral and faunal remains, and analysis of the human skeletal remains before a final report can be written. Volunteers will continue their valuable contribution as they wash and catalogue the excavated materials and help to analyze pottery, stone tools, and other artifacts.

Finally, it should be pointed out that according to the provisions of G.S. 70-3, the human remains will be studied under agreement with the Eastern Band of

the Cherokee Indians. Upon completion of the study they will be returned to the Eastern Band.

Already, construction of the Cullowhee Valley School has obliterated any trace of these archaeological sites. Despite the loss of two sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, we have gathered important information that should help us understand more of the past Cherokee culture in western North Carolina.

David G. Moore



Joint Annual Meeting of the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association

In commemoration of the quincentenary of Columbus's discovery of America, the theme of the joint annual meeting of the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association will be "Before Roanoke: The Spanish Presence in the Carolinas." The foremost historian of the Spanish reconnaissance of the area north of Florida, Paul E. Hoffman, will deliver the keynote address. A professor at Louisiana State University, Dr. Hoffman is the author of *A New Andalusia and a Way to the Orient: The American Southeast during the Sixteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990). Complementing Dr. Hoffman's address will be David Moore's slide/lecture "The Archaeology of Sixteenth-Century Spanish Exploration in North Carolina." Mr. Moore is an archaeologist with the Western Office of

the Division of Archives and History. Both talks will be given in the House Chamber of the State Capitol in Raleigh. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m.; registration will begin at 12:30 p.m. The evening session of the joint annual meeting will be held at the Woman's Club of Raleigh; Doris Betts, president of the N.C. Literary and Historical Association, will be the after-dinner speaker. All talks and award presentations will be made on Friday, November 20. For more information contact Rita A. Cashion or Elizabeth F. Buford at 919-733-7305. There is no charge for the afternoon session; the evening registration fee is \$26.00. Checks (made payable to the federation) should be sent to Rita A. Cashion, Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies, 109 East Jones Street, Room 305, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807 no later than Monday, November 16.

From the President

Thanks to each of you who have worked to see the merger of ASNC and FNCA become a reality. The past year has been exciting, lots of adjustments and changes that indicate a positive future for NCAS. The transition has been due to an enormous cooperative spirit from all concerned. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm building in NCAS. I would encourage all of you to become more involved. No matter where you live or your interest in North Carolina archaeology, there is much to be done. Let us hear from you with any positive suggestions or comments you may have.

Notice in Volume 1 Number 2 of the newsletter, we have included a membership form. Please help us by making sure you get that form in. We need everyone's support especially in this first year of transition.

Two new board members will be elected at the October 31st Fall meeting. If you have any suggestions for candidates, please write or call me at NCAS, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27601-2807 or 919-733-7342.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Fall meeting.

Kirby Ward

Indian Heritage Festival

Town Creek Indian Mound will host the Indian Heritage Festival on November 7th and 8th. Help is needed running the festival and they would also like to have more exhibitors. The festival will include: Indian dancers, Indian arts & crafts, exhibits, demonstrations, films, traders and food vendors. For more information call Janet Manuel or Carolyn Plowman @ (919)439-6802.

1992 North Carolina State Fair

The State Fair is upon us again and, as we have in the past years, NCAS will sponsor an exhibit booth in the Kerr Scott Building. The sites to be displayed will be Broad Reach (Coastal), Hunting Creek (Piedmont), and Cullowhee Valley School (Mountains). The booth will run October 16th through the 25th. Make an effort to stop by.

NCAS 1992 Fall Meeting Saturday, October 31, 1992 at the Schiele Museum of Natural History

We are planning our annual Fall meeting on Saturday, October 31st at the Schiele Museum in Gastonia. An agenda/reservation form (with a map on the back) are enclosed. Please plan to attend and get your lunch reservations in by **October 15th**.

Participate in Archeology Brochure

The new brochure *Participate in Archeology* aims to provide the public with better access to archeological information, while supporting Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan's heritage education goal.

"Archeological sites can be damaged by careless treatment. This brochure will help people learn the hazards of casual destruction," Ridenour said. "Improving public education and awareness of archeology and the importance of archeological preservation is one area of focus in the National Strategy for Federal Archeology that Secretary Lujan announced in 1991."

The brochure provides an overview of the available opportunities for learning about archeology - videos, journals, and books that offer detailed information about archeological topics and issues. The brochure also presents opportunities to become involved in archeological fieldwork.

The Archeological Assistance Division of the National Park Service produced the brochure in cooperation with the Public Awareness Working Group, an inter-agency organization whose goal is to improve public awareness of Federal archeology. The agencies contributing to the production of this brochure are the Department of Defense, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Copies of *Participate in Archeology* are available free by writing: Publications Specialist, Archeological Assistance Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington DC 20013-7127.

National Park Service