



North Carolina Archaeological Society

Newsletter

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Report on the Public Session presented at the 1996 SHA Conference

Mark Wilde-Ramsing

The public session "Historical Archaeology in Our Big Backyard--Cincinnati and Beyond," held on January 6th at the 1996 conference for the Society of Historical Archaeology (SHA) in Cincinnati, was a huge success. Although attendance from the outside was hampered by the cold weather and the threat of a very serious snowstorm, registrants from the community exceeded 200 and included 25 teachers. These numbers tell only part of the story since the session was well attended by conference attendees and at peak times there was standing-room-only with seats set up for 380 people!

Planning and organization of the public session was directed by David T. Clark, a Cincinnati native and professor of archaeology specializing in elementary education, and myself, education coordinator with the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Unit. Believing that the SHA's annual conference provides an excellent opportunity for historical archaeologists to "educate" the public, a program was designed for Saturday afternoon when the conference was winding down and the public was most likely to attend. The purpose of the session was to raise public awareness of historical archaeology by providing a light but meaningful program. The goal was to garner grass-roots support for

historical archaeology, leading to increased volunteerism, local funding, and political pressure.

The program combined an excellent agenda of speakers with numerous hands-on activities, visuals in the form of large hand painted murals, stunts, and home-baking to provide a memorable experience. Opening remarks from Donna Seifert, SHA president, welcomed the crowd and explained the what's, how's, and why's of historical archaeology. The following speakers' topics were designed to expose the audience to historical archaeology from three avenues. The majority of speakers covered archaeological and documentary research of local interest, which included recent work on outhouses, the Civil War; pottery production, and steam boating in the Cincinnati area. A second focus was on volunteers and their contributions to archaeological studies, which was well illustrated by volunteer efforts on historic tanyard excavations in Fairfax County, Virginia. The third angle used to interest the crowd focused on presentations of unique and spectacular projects from around the country. These involved excavations of two Afro-American cemeteries in downtown Philadelphia, recent discoveries at Custer's last battle, and investigations at a World War II B-17 bomber crash site in New Guinea. The intent of the

session was to offer short, varied, and non-technical slide presentations to excite the public and pique their desire for more.

The Pavilion room of the Omni Netherlander hotel was perfect since the large central seating area and stage were flanked on either side by a large number of tables. These were filled with displays featuring artifacts from the individual speakers, as well as a great number of hands-on activities. A large ominous-looking skull challenged people to guess what animal it was from. At other stations one could peer through microscopes at minute fish scales, examine excavated privy contents, or attempt to correctly identify all sorts of archaeological remains from basic material types to complex animal skeletal parts. For the latter activities, simply-constructed light boards signified the correct answer. Another part of the room was filled with display panels exhibiting photographs and maps showing Cincinnati in the old days.

The public's attention was captured at the very onset as a fully-clad SCUBA diver waddled from the back of the hall to the front of the audience, rose up to the podium by inflating his safety vest, and after catching his breath introduced the first speaker. A uniformed World War II aviator, a Union Army foot

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soldier, and a Confederate Navy sailor were also in attendance. At one point able-bodied Seaman Babits took center stage to explain the gear he was wearing. Throughout the session mystery slides were shown to test the audience's knowledge. This provided light fun, kept up interest, and for those who successfully identified the 10 slides a small home-baked cheesecake was given as a reward. When the final speaker had revealed the sobering finds at the B-17 bomber crash site, the session ended on a touching note as a barbershop quartet sang "White Cliffs of Dover" in honor of the aviators who had lost their lives in service for their country. The back doors were then swung open and a delightful reception ensued featuring home-baked cookies and sweets.

As people left the session and struggled driving through the snow to reach the warmth and safety of their own homes, they took something with them. Not only did they have the physical reminders—the folder with materials on historical archaeology, the buckeye candies given to them as they arrived, and perhaps a prize cheesecake—but more importantly, etched in their memories were images

of what historical archaeologists do and why. Rather than thinking archaeology is a stuffy subject, well-removed from the public, they learned that it is interesting, fun, enriching, and important for all. Furthermore, what was given to the people of Cincinnati was small compared to what they can give back to the profession by volunteering their services, teaching their children to be aware of the remains of their past, and lobbying their public officials at all levels of government to support historical archaeology programs. With this success it is hoped that a public session will become an integral part of future Society for Historical Archaeology conferences.

[Acknowledgments. Presenting the Cincinnati public session involved the hard work and support of many individuals. Many thanks go to the speakers: Donna Seifert, Bob Genheimer, Dan Roberts, Larry Moore, Jeannine Kreinbrink, Richard Allen Fox, Jack Custer, Floyd Mansberger, and David Clark. Logistical support from the conference organizers, Marcey Gray, Kim McBride, Bob Genheimer, and Jeannine Kreinbrink, was invaluable. Martha Williams, who chairs the SHA Public Information and Education committees, provided assistance in many

ways, including designing and producing the handsome session program. The staff and management of the Omni Netherlander not only went well out of their way to accommodate the equipment and set-up needs of the session but also largely financed the reception. Local involvement was truly the key to success. The Andersonville Township Historical Society provided volunteers to set up the displays and to man the very busy registration table. It should be noted that one member in particular, Ruth Clark (David's mother), provided a vast amount of baked goods, both for the reception and the prizes, from her own kitchen. As a matter of fact the entire Clark family, including Ivy Caldito and her teacher friends from Washington, DC, were instrumental in putting it all together. They spent countless hours painting the wonderful wall murals, copying materials for the packets, mailing numerous publicity flyers, wiring the light boards for the games, and so on. They had a mission to make the public session a success and through patience, love, and hard work, they ensured that it was. In the end, however, by far the most important person to recognize is David Clark, whose energy, persistence, and vision rallied his family, his community, and his fellow professionals to present a first-class public session on historical archaeology. He showed us how it should be done!]

Historic Day at Town Creek

Linda Carnes-McNaughton

Sunday, December 10, 1995, will be a special day long remembered by those who came to the visitor center at Town Creek Indian Mound. The day was bright and beautiful albeit bitterly cold outside. Inside, amidst a crush of warm bodies, the chatter of happy voices, the fresh-cooked smells of sumptuous edibles, and the glow of soft lights, an historic event was in progress. At a corner table draped in burgundy brocade, decorated with fragrant orchids and candles, and situated beneath the skylight, sat the master excavator of Town Creek, Dr. Joffre Lanning Coe. He was there to autograph personal copies of his newly released volume, *Town Creek Indian Mound: A Native American Legacy*, which documents 50 years of research, exploration, and development at the prehistoric

ceremonial center, now a state historic site.

The day's event began with a welcome greeting by Jim Chavis, tribal elder for the Lumbee and member of the Friends of Town Creek board of directors. He was followed by the N.C. Division of Archives and History's director, Dr. Jeffrey Crow, who provided the appropriate historical dressing to the occasion. Next, Archie Smith, site manager, expressed his gratitude to those researchers and contributors to Dr. Coe's book. Dr. Coe responded with succinct yet meaningful words of his lifetime achievement, the Town Creek archaeology publication. Finally the moment all had been awaiting arrived—the auctioning of the first numbered volume of the first edition. Guided by the fervor of a professional auctioneer, the handsome

volume, sleeved in its uniquely-designed leather cover, fetched \$1000!

Following the auction, the slow-moving serpentine line of invited guests formed, waiting patiently for the opportunity to talk with Dr. Coe and get their books autographed. Guests included archaeologists, Native Americans, professionals, scholars, amateurs, and friends and family from all over the USA—New Mexico, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington DC. A specially created cake representing the book cover, a scene of the stockaded center, was featured and later consumed. By day's end, over 300 volumes had been penned. As we departed in the frigid evening night with stars glimmering, Sally Coe, summed up our day's activities in two words—euphoric and historic.

In Memory of Wayne Brooke 1913-1996

It is with our deepest sympathy that we announce the death of one of our longtime volunteers Wayne Brooke.

Wayne was an officer in the U.S. Navy and served in WWII. He was employed 40 years as an electronics engineer with IBM and was a very active member of the Raleigh Coin Club, The Raleigh Stamp Club, The Men's Garden Club, IBM Computer Club, the Genealogy Society, N.C. State Arboretum Club, and Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church, as well as one of the first members of the Friends of North Carolina Archaeology formed in 1984, now the North Carolina Archaeological Society. Also, Wayne never passed up the opportunity to talk archaeology at our booth in the Governor Kerr Scott building at the NC State Fair every year.

New Publication

The North Carolina Archaeological Council has recently published *The Mountain Potters of Buncombe County, North Carolina: An Archaeological and Historical Study* by Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton. North Carolina Archaeological Council Publication No. 26.

This report summarizes archaeological and historical surveys of 10 traditional pottery manufacturing sites in Buncombe County (vicinity of Asheville), North Carolina. Ten historic-era pottery-manufacturing sites were located and researched. Eight of these were selected for archaeological investigations, including site mapping, surface collection, and test excavation. Subsurface remains of kilns were documented at three of the sites. Over 11,000 artifacts were recovered and analyzed. The information and artifacts recovered from this study provide insights into a century of pottery-manufacturing activities by Buncombe County folk potters beginning in the mid-1800s.

Copies of the report are \$9.00 (postage included) and can be ordered from: N.C. Archaeological Council Publications, c/o Loretta Lautzenheiser, Secretary-Treasurer, 310 E. Baker Street, Tarboro, NC 27886, or the N.C. Office of State Archaeology, 109 E. Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807.

Study Tour to Yucatan

Chichen Itza! Uxmal! Labna! Sayil! Kohunlich! Rio Bec! Want to see the Mayan sites of the Yucatan peninsula? Western Carolina University's department of geosciences and anthropology is planning a study tour of these and many other Mayan sites. Scheduled to be held May 4-22, this tour will give participants an opportunity to see fascinating lesser known sites as well as those most often visited by tourists.

Limited to 21 people, the group will tour Mayan ruins, villages, and towns to give participants an unusual look at the life of the Maya, both past and present. Two anthropologists, Patrick Morris and Anne Rogers, will introduce participants to the archaeology and ethnography of the Maya. Lidia del Piccolo-Morris will provide instruction in Spanish. These WCU faculty members have conducted numerous tours of this area and are well acquainted with the culture and archaeology of the region.

All participants will be required to enroll in WCU courses for either six or nine semester hours credit, but those who do not need academic credit may audit the course. Non-students are welcome. The cost for in-state tuition (nine hours credit), airfare, lodging, transportation in Yucatan, and admission to archaeological sites is approximately \$2200. Deadline for application is March 1. For further information, please call Anne Rogers or Patrick Morris at 704/227-7268.

1996 Dues

If you have not already renewed your NCAS membership for 1996, please do so as soon as possible. Your continued support is appreciated.

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 March 31
Summer Issue June 30

Fall Issue September 30
Winter Issue December 31

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