



# North Carolina Archaeological Society

# Newsletter

109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2807

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## 1998 NC State Fair

The archaeology exhibit at the 1998 North Carolina State Fair, featuring the archaeological excavations at the Eden House Site in Bertie County, was a tremendous success. The Fair had an unbelievable attendance record of 779,356 this year. I think a record was broken for every day.

### About the Eden House Site:

Archaeological investigations conducted as part of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's environmental planning studies for widening US Highway 17 in the northeast part of the state resulted in discovery of a seventeenth-century settlement representing a previously little-known phase in the history of English colonization of America. During the four months of excavation in 1996, archaeologists recorded over 500 features and recovered artifacts dating from the late 1600s, when English settlements were just getting started in North Carolina, to the mid 1700s, when plantation life was well underway in the colonies.

Coastal Carolina Research, Inc., (CCR) out of Tarboro, North Carolina, was the consultant firm hired by NCDOT to conduct the archaeological and historical studies. They began extensive research into historical documents as the archaeological excavations were progressing. Scientific studies of charred seeds and animal bones provided additional details on the

environment of the region in the late 1600s and the plants and animals used as food by the inhabitants. The results tell a story of life in the Albemarle Sound region in the late seventeenth century that is far more complete and revealing of the region's cultural diversity than the information available through historic research alone.

Three periods of use were defined at the site, as well as a prehistoric Native American occupation. The prehistoric occupation showed the area had been used repeatedly from the Late Archaic (3000 - 1000 BC) to the Late Woodland period (800 AD to contact). The site was probably abandoned (an Indian "Old Field") when the first English settlers moved into the area from Virginia in the 1660s. The first settler on the property may have been Saint Mount Wells, who obtained the land by patent from Sir William Berkley in 1663 but sold it to Lewis Sheppard in 1665. The site passed through several owners until Charles Eden, Royal Governor of North Carolina, purchased it in 1718.

This first period of European settlement is marked by the construction (probably around 1680) of several buildings. A house built on posts in the ground served as the first dwelling. Slightly later a more substantial house with plastered walls, glazed windows, and a slate roof was built over a

stone and brick cellar. The settlers built another "earthfast" structure that may have been a barn, a well, and a series of fences or palisades around the structures. The earthfast house, similar to early seventeenth-century structures in the Chesapeake region of Virginia and Maryland, is the first to be found on a colonial site in North Carolina. Archaeologists recovered fragments of the decorative Dutch delft tiles that surrounded the hearth as well as fragments of English and Dutch ceramics and glassware.

Later periods mark the renovation of the original structures around 1718 when the property was acquired by Governor Eden, and the period preceding site abandonment in the mid-eighteenth century. These later periods mark the use of the site as part of the larger plantation owned by Eden and his heirs. Most of the artifacts recovered date to these periods and include English and European stonewares and earthenwares, Chinese porcelain, tablewares, wine bottles, medicine vials, and household utensils. The occupants of the site at this time would likely have been slaves working on the plantation, although it is also possible that the larger structure served as an inn associated with the nearby ferry landing. During the later part of this period (1741-1752) the property was owned by Governor Gabriel Johnston, who


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was the fourth husband of Eden's stepdaughter, Penelope.

Although the highway construction has obliterated this portion of the site, the public interpretation and exhibition of the

site and the artifacts is only beginning. The artifacts will be turned over to the Department of Cultural Resources for display in area museums and to be preserved as a research collection for future

scholarly studies. The final report should be ready for publication in 1999, and a non-technical report will then be published and distributed on the Department of Transportation's Internet site (<http://www.dot.state.nc.us>).



## Local Archaeologist to be Honored

The Archeological Society of Virginia plans to publish in 1999 a two-volume set of studies based on local archeological work by the late Richard P. Gravely, Jr. of Martinsville. The volumes will memorialize Gravely and his many contributions to Virginia archeology. The set will contain reports on seven sites tested or excavated by Gravely in the 1960-70s period with help from other local people. The reports are major contributions to knowledge of the late prehistory of the upper reaches of the Dan River, including Smith and Mayo Rivers. They complement similar reports on sites in the North Carolina parts of the valley, published by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Gravely's reports have recently been compiled by UNC archeologists, with important help from Virginia's Department of Historic Resources, administering funds provided for this purpose in 1996 by the Virginia General Assembly.

The Society has agreed to publish the reports in its series of Special Publications, and will provide some

funding from its resources. However, to keep the eventual selling price at a reasonable level, additional funding from other sources is needed. Colonel Howard MacCord, a retired archeologist, has undertaken to find donors for the \$12,000 needed. A single sponsor of the publication would be a welcomed windfall, if an industry, Foundation, business, or non-profit organization would claim the honor of underwriting this memorial to a local citizen, who was also an active avocational archeologist. Failing this, MacCord will rely on donations from the many friends and co-workers who knew Richard Gravely and wish to honor him and his work.

Contributions should be made payable to the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) and sent to Col. H.A. MacCord, Sr., at 562 Rossmore Road, Richmond, Virginia 23225. Mark your payment to go to the Gravely Memorial Fund. Such contributions are tax-deductible, since the Society has had non-profit educational status since 1963. Contact MacCord at his home (804/272-2128) for any further data needed.



## Future Events

1. January 24, Sunday, 1999 - 1:00 PM UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology  
NCAS winter board of directors meeting
2. May 22, 1999  
NCAS annual spring meeting in Raleigh  
Hosted by the Office of State Archaeology
3. August 22 or 29, 1999  
NCAS summer board of directors meeting
4. Mid October, 1999  
NCAS annual fall meeting  
Hosted by Coastal Plain Chapter  
Down east: Edenton

# 1998 Annual Fall Meeting

The fall meeting of the North Carolina Archaeological Society was held at the Holiday Inn in Cherokee on October 9-10. Friday evening started out with a Society board meeting and ended with a reception hosted by the Society and the Council.

Saturday morning began with a Society business meeting, followed by a welcome from Mr. Garfield Long with the Cherokee Department of Cultural Resources. Then we loaded the buses at the Holiday Inn and went to the Museum of the Cherokee Indian

where we toured the museum and the Cherokee house replicas that David Moore (OSA western office archaeologist) and his volunteers helped to build. After lunch we loaded the buses for the afternoon tours to three mounds (Birdtown, Nununyi, and Kituhwa) and two petroglyphs (Brinkley Rock and Judaculla Rock).

The 1998 Election of Officers was held at the Saturday business meeting where Jane Brown and Randy Daniel replaced Scott Ashcraft and Charles Ewen as new Board Members. Thank you Scott and Charlie for a job well done.

The meeting was well attended and enjoyed by all. A special thanks goes to Scott Ashcraft and David Moore who worked very hard to make the meeting and bus tour a great success.



Kituhwa Mound (1998 annual fall meeting)



Judaculla Rock (1998 annual fall meeting)

## 1999 Annual Spring Meeting

We have scheduled our 1999 annual spring meeting for May 22 at the State Capitol in Raleigh with the Friday night reception being May 21 at the Bailey-Tucker house in Raleigh. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

### 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
Summer Issue	May 31
Fall Issue	August 31
Winter Issue	November 30

### NCAS Officers

**President:** Bob Graham, 2140 Woodland Avenue, Burlington, NC 27215.

**Vice-president:** Michelle Vacca, 125 N. Elm Street, Statesville, NC 28677.

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

**Secretary:** Linda Carnes-McNaughton, Historic Sites Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807.

**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, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807.

**Executive Board Members:** Thomas Beaman, Danny Bell, Wayne Boyko, Jane Brown, Randy Daniel, Ricky Langley

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