

BIJBELTEGELS FROM THE EDEN HOUSE SITE

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The Eden House site (31BR52), situated on the western bank of the Chowan River across from Edenton, was investigated as part of a US 17 improvement project (TIP# R-2512). Initially located and identified through an archaeological survey along the Chowan River (Wilson 1977) and later assessed by NCDOT archaeologist Ken Robinson (1994), data recovery excavations were conducted at the site in 1996 (Lautzenheiser et al. 1998). During the data recovery phase, a small but meaningful collection of decorative, delftware fireplace tiles was found among the large volume of artifacts. These unique Dutch-made tile fragments depict biblical scenes set within a medallion.

Historically, Eden House is perhaps best recognized as the location of the dwelling and plantation built by Royal Governor Charles Eden in the early 18th century. Prior to Eden's occupation, however, an earlier late 17th-century settlement was built sometime after 1683 (Lautzenheiser 1998:131). Archaeological investigations revealed that this initial settlement consisted of three earthfast structures and a fence line or stockade (enclosure). The residents of these structures were comparatively affluent, as two of the structures produced evidence of leaded glass windows. One or both of these may have served as an original manor or dwelling house. What was termed Structure 2 by archaeologists also contained fragments of decorative delftware fireplace tiles. Recovered artifacts suggest Structure 2 may have been used initially as a kitchen with a Dutch-style jambless hearth with a brick backwall, wooden frame, and fire-hardened clay (Lautzenheiser 1998:221).

Thirteen individual tile fragments were found in a subfloor pit in front of this hearth, 11 of which contained part of an identifiable image (Figure 1). Archaeological evidence also suggests this structure was significantly renovated between 1718-1720, concurrent with Governor Eden's ownership. An additional large manor house, referred to as Structure 3, was built north of Structure 2 on the property (Lautzenheiser 1998:151-158). It remains unclear not only when Structure 2 was occupied (i.e., before or after the renovation) but also by whom (e.g., the initial property owners, house servants, tenants, enslaved Africans, or creolized African Americans). In addition to being decorative, fireplace tiles with biblical scenes may also have served a secondary function as educational aids, to visually represent or remind the viewer of lessons found in scriptures of salvation or damnation, especially to the lesser literate observer.



Figure 1: Eleven of the thirteen identifiable decorative, Dutch-made, delftware fireplace tile fragments from the Eden House site.

The best comparative examples of the designs on the Eden House fragments were found in published literature on tiles made by Dutch potters. The earliest biblical tiles produced in the Netherlands date to 1640. Main centers of tile production were in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Harlington, Makkum, and Bolsward, all of which produced

biblical tiles in the 17th and 18th centuries. The tile factories used pattern books that contained decorations they could reproduce, most of which were drawn from engravings. Given production was widespread, it can be difficult to determine the specific origin where a tile was manufactured. The best indicator for tile creation is the subtle decorative differences that appear in the corner motif. Extensive research by Jan Pluis has identified 54 unique examples, many of which were attributed to individual artists. The diversity and number of biblical scenes illustrated on tiles from the Netherlands far exceeds those produced on tiles from Britain. Horne (1989:75) notes there have been over 500 different recorded biblical scenes produced on Dutch tiles since their appearance in 1640 (cf. Pluis 1994:933), but only 130 such thematic scenes found on tiles produced in Britain, and more importantly, scriptural references on tiles do not appear until 1720 (Pluis 1994: 933-935). As such, it is no surprise that none of the designs shown on the Eden House tiles could be closely matched to biblical scenes found on historic British-made tiles from London, Bristol, or Liverpool manufacturing centers.

In addition, the overall size, thickness (in millimeters), and body color of the fragments are also within the ranges of tiles produced in the Netherlands during the 18th and 19th centuries (Korf 1964:34). Five tile fragments exhibit a corner design recognized as a foliate oxhead. Oxheads were and are the most common corner design on Dutch tiles and were also popular between the late 17th to mid-18th century on British tiles (Noël Hume 1969:290-291; Pluis 2013:537). The medallions on these tiles depict biblical scenes from the Christian Bible's New Testament as well as the Apocrypha, which appears as the Book of Revelation in most modern Bibles. Once sorted, mended, and researched, these eleven fragments comprised five different images, each of which contained a scriptural reference.

The first of the five images is from Matthew 2:13, when Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to Egypt to escape persecution from King Herod (Currid and Chapman 2005:1561). The three mended fragments comprise part of the image of Mary, holding the infant Jesus, seated on a horse or donkey, and being led by Joseph (Figure 2). Pluis (1994:414, 825) notes the image is most likely based on engraving #11 by Pieter Schutt as it appeared in Nicholas Visscher's *Sacred Histories* (ca. 1650). Attributed to Utrecht manufacturers during the third quarter of the 18th century, a tile of this image in a dark brownish purple color is currently on display at the Hannemahuis Museum in Harlingen and marked with an "11".

Chronologically, the next image depicts Matthew 4:11, known as "the end of the temptation of Jesus," the one fragment of which contains the scripture reference (Figure 3). The verse states that after the third attempt, the devil left and angels came to attend to Jesus with food and drink (Currid and Chapman 2005:1564), which is what the tile apparently depicts. This tile is likely part of the same set as the Matthew 2:13 tile, as it is also attributed to manufacturers in Utrecht in the third quarter of the 18th century. Also produced in a dark brownish purple color, a tile with this image is noted with a "16" and is on display at the Hannemahuis Museum in Harlingen (Pluis 1994:421, 828).



Figure 2. Three mended tile fragments depicting the flight to Egypt described in Matthew 2:13 overlaid on an image of the original tile.



Figure 3. A tile fragment from Matthew 4:11, the end of the temptation of Christ, overlaid on an image of the original tile.



Figure 4. Tile fragment of Jesus teaching Nicodemus from John 3, overlaid on an image of the original tile.

A single tile fragment labeled JOA (a Dutch abbreviation for “John”) Book 3, depicts Jesus teaching Nicodemus, a Pharisee of the Jewish Ruling Council (Currid and Chapman 2005:1724). While the tile fragment from Eden House shows only their legs, a duplicate historical tile with matching leg configuration and verse scripture was located in the literature (Figure 4). The historical tile is shown in purple and is attributed also to manufacturers in Utrecht during the first quarter of the 18th century. Pluis (1994:422, 829) denotes the image is patterned after engraving #60/21 in Pieter Schutt’s *Theater of Despair* and derived from engraving #16 in Jacobus De Bye’s (1598) *The Life, Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, which was based on a 1580s drawing by Maarten De Vos found at Gottorf Castle in Schleswig, Germany.

The remaining fragments comprise two different scenes of the Apocalypse found in the Apocrypha. Three fragments crossmend to illustrate Book 9, depicting the fifth angel blowing his trumpet and a star falling to earth that opened the Abyss; “smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace...and out of the smoke locusts came...On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces” (Figure 5). In the image, the figure above is the Angel of the Abyss, who served as king over the locusts (Currid and Chapman 2005:2058-2059). The overall image on this tile is one of the more impressively detailed feats of the scriptural texts showing many elements from the entirety of Book 9. This tile of Apocrypha Book 9 dates to the second quarter of the 18th century and is attributed to production in Utrecht. Around 1970, Marggraf (1973:46-49) notes finding an original of this tile in blue on a fireplace or stove in a farmhouse in Uelsen, Grafschaft Bentheim, Germany. A purple variant, with the same image, is part of the display at the Hannemahuis Museum in Harlingen and is labeled as tile “88”. An engraving of this image was also found circa 1869 (Pluis 1994:561, 891).

The final three tile fragments, two of which crossmend, depict the 16th Book of the Apocrypha (Figure 6) in which Verse 13 describes a dragon spewing evil spirits that look like frogs, and an aged king, whom scriptures describe as a false prophet (Currid and Chapman 2005:2066). It was produced in dark brownish purple in Utrecht during the second and third quarters of the 18th century, and an engraving of the image found was from 1876. A dark brownish purple example, numbered “92”, is on display at the Hannemahuis Museum in Harlingen (Pluis 1994:562, 893).

Given the historical information on Dutch tiles and the specifics associated with the fragments from the Eden House archaeological site, several commonalities became apparent. First, all of the tile fragments, as tiles, are attributed to manufacturers in Utrecht. Where Pluis’ weighty and extensive tome provides the same thematic images from different tile production centers, the ones from Utrecht are near perfect artistic matches to the Eden House tiles. Secondly, historical examples are all found in the Hannemahuis Museum, which is where Pluis’ images of these tiles are likely drawn. Third, all of the tiles contained scriptural references, which means they were likely produced after 1720, the period of Governor Eden’s renovation of the Eden House property, including Structure 2. Finally, given the production dates for these tiles, the two tiles depicting the book of Matthew were produced in the third quarter of the 18th century (ca. 1750-1775), later than most of the other tiles. If



Figure 5. Three fragments mended to show the opening of the Abyss and subsequent plague of locusts from the Apocrypha 9, overlaid on an image of the original tile.

all of these tiles were acquired for the Eden House property at the same time, they would suggest a TPQ of ca. 1750.

Interestingly, Jacquelin Nash's history of the property yields a possibility for when the tiles were acquired and installed. Following the death of Royal Governor Gabriel Johnson in 1752, he willed the Eden House property and other tracts in North Carolina to his daughter Penelope. Penelope Johnson eloped at age 18 with John Dawson, who was from a prominent family in Williamsburg, Virginia. They moved onto the Eden House property in 1758. What is most significant about this union was that Dawson's father, uncle, and maternal uncle were all ministers in the Anglican Church, as well as being Presidents of the College of William and Mary (Lautzenheiser et al 1998:38-44). While it cannot be firmly established if these *bijbeltegels* were added to Structure 2, (and perhaps other structures not yet excavated) by John and Penelope Dawson and their descendents during their tenure at Eden House (1758 to ca. 1845), familiar association with prominent religious figures, the manufacturing dates of the tile fragments, and the change in historical ownership do strongly coincide.



Figure 6. From the Apocrypha 16:13, three fragments showing a dragon spewing evil spirits that look like frogs, overlaid on an image of the original tile.

Acknowledgements: This study is not the sole effort of an individual but a collaborative endeavor, for which the author is most grateful and hopes this study reflects well on everyone's efforts. My appreciation goes to the North Carolina Department of Transportation Archaeology Team for access to and use of the image of the Eden House tile fragments. Tremendous thanks go to my friend Drake Patten for her assistance in translating the Dutch and German texts associated with these tiles. I would also like to thank Reverend Dr. Douglas Murray, Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church in Wilson, and Michael Cogdill, Dean Emeritus of Campbell University Divinity School, as well as faculty members Barry Jones, Alicia Myers, and Andy Wakefield, for their enthusiastic insights and interpretations on the biblical motifs on the Eden House tiles. My friend Brian Oliver provided excellent Photoshop assistance in the creation of Figures 2-6. As always, Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton and Pam Beaman provided valuable editorial assistance, for which it is much improved. Finally, additional thanks go to Paul J. Mohler, Editor of the North Carolina Archaeological Society *Newsletter*, for his editorial support to see this manuscript in print.

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2022 Dues Reminder

Wow... 2021 came and went in the blink of an eye! Although some may think 2022 is a bit worse than 2020 (from a vision perspective), let us hope our eyesight isn't worsening and that we collectively can see the light at the end of the tunnel... Please consider renewing your membership today to stay current with the Society's latest news and events. Membership types include: Student (\$10), Regular (\$15), Family (\$20), Sustaining (\$25), Institution ((\$25), and Life (\$250). Please submit your dues payment to: North Carolina Archaeological Society c/o Mary Beth Fitts, Office of State Archaeology, 4619 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4619. If you wish, you may also renew your membership online via PayPal at <http://www.ncarchsociety.org/membershipoptions>.



The Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) held in Durham, NC, this past October, went off without a hitch (except for that random pop-up lunch-time monsoon). North Carolina Archaeology was very well represented throughout the numerous and varied symposia. SEAC recognized RLA faculty (Margie Scarry, Heather Lapham, and Steve Davis) for their outstanding service as annual meeting organizers and for their labors to pull off an in-person conference in the middle of a pandemic.



NCAS Crossword: “My Winter Wonderland Library?”

Many moons ago when I worked in Massachusetts, we would schedule all of our fieldwork for the Spring, Summer, and Early Fall because, come Wintertime, the ground was too hard to dig. During the Winter months, we would be focused on warm, indoor activities like research, artifact identification, and frankly all the busy stuff one doesn't want to do when the weather is so nice outside. Can you fill in the authors/editors based on what research materials I may have on my cubicle shelves, insulating me from Old Man Winter? Answers will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.



The crossword puzzle grid consists of 31 numbered starting points for clues:

- 1: Down, 5 letters
- 2: Down, 3 letters
- 3: Down, 3 letters
- 4: Across, 5 letters
- 5: Down, 3 letters
- 6: Across, 5 letters
- 7: Down, 3 letters
- 8: Across, 5 letters
- 9: Across, 5 letters
- 10: Across, 5 letters
- 11: Across, 5 letters
- 12: Down, 3 letters
- 13: Down, 3 letters
- 14: Across, 5 letters
- 15: Down, 3 letters
- 16: Across, 5 letters
- 17: Across, 5 letters
- 18: Across, 5 letters
- 19: Across, 5 letters
- 20: Down, 3 letters
- 21: Across, 5 letters
- 22: Down, 3 letters
- 23: Down, 3 letters
- 24: Down, 3 letters
- 25: Across, 5 letters
- 26: Down, 3 letters
- 27: Across, 5 letters
- 28: Across, 5 letters
- 29: Across, 5 letters
- 30: Down, 3 letters
- 31: Across, 5 letters

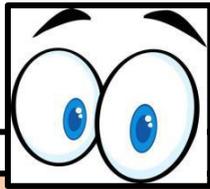
Clues for the NCAS Crossword:

Down:

1. Reading the Past
2. Ceramics in America
3. The Dividing Line
5. Bottle Makers & Their Marks
7. Hidden History
9. North American Farmsteads
12. A New Voyage
13. Transactions
15. Sticks & Stones
19. Native American Log Cabins
20. Method & Theory
22. Time Before History
23. North Carolina Counties
24. Southeastern Indians
25. Findings
26. The Way We Lived
30. Turners and Burners

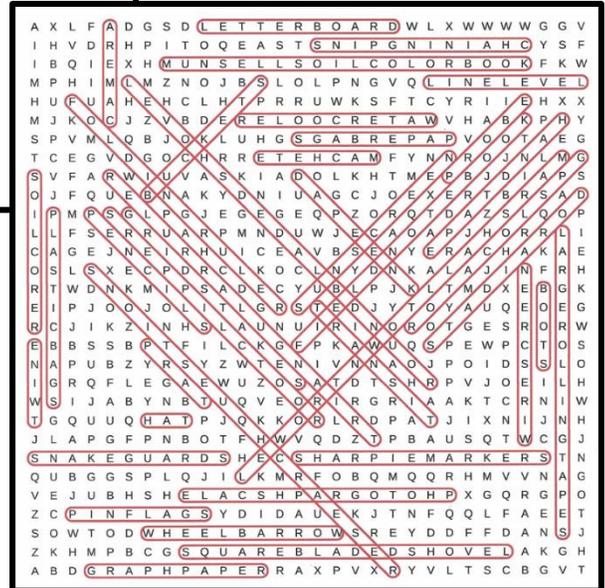
Across:

4. Phantom Pain
6. In Small Things Forgotten
8. Traces of the Past
9. Look to the Earth
10. Through Four Centuries
11. Hardaway Revisited
14. Postbellum Tenant Plantations
16. Digging through Darkness
17. Carolina's Historical Landscapes
18. Stories in Stone
21. Sunken Prize
25. Sherman's March
27. Colonial America
28. Buried Truth
29. Waterman's Song
31. Urban Landscapes



Congratulations to STEVEN GRAY (Sylva, NC) for submitting the best guesses for last issue's Word Find; I do believe some nice NCAS swag is on its way, and just in time for the holidays!

Answer Key for Summer Issue Word Search



IN SEARCH OF – Anyone who has been keeping track knows that 2022 marks my last year on the NCAS Board as Newsletter Editor. With that in mind, I would like to put forth at least two candidates for my replacement in next year's elections. If you would be interested in serving on the NCAS Board and like putting together editorial commentary and fun, little puzzles, then I have the job for you! Please contact me at pjmohler@ncdot.gov for more details.



**Digital Spotlight:
"15 Questions with an Archeologist"**



<https://15questionswithanarcheologist.libsyn.com/>

"15 Questions with an Archeologist" is a podcast interview show, conducted by the National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center (NPS SEAC [the other SEAC]), which explains the spelling of archeology. The show seeks to ask as many archeologists as possible the same 15 questions that are designed to cover the areas in which archeologists are most often asked. They are also designed to provoke thought and commentary on our profession.

Ways to subscribe to 15 Questions with an Archeologist. Click here to subscribe via [iTunes](#), [RSS](#), or [Stitcher](#). Connect via: [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).



In addition to the standard "breaking the ice" type of questions like "What do you do?" and "What's the coolest artifact you've found?", topics cover not just where you went for your education (and, more importantly, why) but also mentorship within the discipline, opinions on how CRM is handled in other parts of the world, volunteerism, and even what's the best *and* worst part of being an archeologist. **If anyone would potentially like to generate content for the NCAS and, in doing so, learn more about the people doing archaeology across North Carolina, please contact the NCAS Board.**

Congratulations to Jane Eastman

Dr. Jane Eastman, Associate Professor of Anthropology won the 2021 Paul A. Reid Distinguished Service Award for Faculty at Western Carolina University.

Congratulations, Dr. Eastman!

NEW NCAS BOARD MEMBERS

Please extend a warm welcome to the society's newest board members: Jane Eastman, Kelsey Schmitz, and Theresa McReynolds Shebalin. We would also like to offer our appreciation to not only Danny Bell and John Krizmanich for their service as they rotate off the board, but also Linda Carnes-McNaughton for her continued efforts as our organization's Secretary and Shane Petersen for his leadership and guidance through such a tumultuous time for everyone.

THANK YOU!

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NCAS Newsletter

Publication Schedule

All NCAS members should submit articles and news items to Paul J. Mohler (pjmohler@ncdot.gov) 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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