

Newsletter



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New Wilkinson County Mound Exhibit Explores Mound Sites in Mississippi and Louisiana

by

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The Wilkinson County Museum in downtown Woodville, Mississippi, is home to a newly installed exhibit that discusses the pre-contact Native American occupation of the region. This exhibit was curated by members of the Smith Creek Archaeological Project (SCAP), a research project and archaeological field school run through the University of Pennsylvania, in collaboration with the Wilkinson County Main Street Association. It opened in June 2019 and is designed to educate both locals and tourists about Native American mound sites in Mississippi and Louisiana. It emphasizes the importance of protecting these sites and respecting past and present Native communities in the area.

Following test excavations by the University of North Carolina during the Mississippi Mound Trail project in 2013, SCAP has conducted three major excavation seasons at Smith Creek, a Native American mound-and-plaza center in Wilkinson County. Smith Creek was occupied at various times between at least 200 BC and AD 1300 and SCAP excavations have revealed an enormous amount about the range of activities that constituted daily life in what is now Wilkinson County over this extensive period of time. Much like the town of Woodville, Smith Creek and other surrounding mound sites were once thriving communities; the Wilkinson County Mound Exhibit is designed to connect visitors with the past inhabitants of their shared land by emphasizing familiar activities.

We encourage visitors to consider how a common landscape has led to similar lifeways through time, such as hunting, fishing, and cooking similar game, using familiar vegetation and natural resources, and constructing communal and ritual structures. There are three cases displaying artifacts from sites in Wilkinson County. One contains focuses on ceramics, one on stone tools, and one on artifacts related to food preparation activities. Two replica vessels – a pot and a plate – were created by Tammy Beane and help connect the fragmentary archaeological remains with recognizable objects. The cases are surrounded by a series of panels that lay out a timeline of moundbuilding cultures in the Lower Mississippi Valley from 6000 BC to the historical period. Each panel details changes in four key cultural traits – social organization, subsistence, architecture, and technology – as well as a case study of a mound site in either Mississippi or Louisiana. An exhibit brochure explains these traits, as well as SCAP and the Louisiana and Mississippi Mound Trails, and an activity booklet helps kids explore the exhibit through a series of fun activities. The exhibit is open and free to the public, so we hope you will go check it out!

Archaeological Conservancy: News from the Southeast

It's been a busy summer for Nikki Matson and me in the Conservancy's Southeast Region. It's fun as always but I'm glad to say goodbye to summer. We've been working on site acquisitions and traveling a lot. We had an interesting trip to Stallings Island in Augusta, Georgia where we are dealing with some recurring looting issues and had to arrange for a farrier to visit the four donkeys we have on the island. We also have a small herd of goats that are supposed to help with keeping the vege-

President's Letter

It's that time of the year again! October is Archaeology Month in Mississippi. I know I am looking forward to all the great things that will be going on all month long and I hope you are too. Be sure and check the website, www.msarchaeology.org, for events, details, and the latest updates.

I am especially excited for this year's Archaeology Expo, which will be held at the Batesville Mounds in Batesville, Mississippi on Saturday, October 5 beginning at 10 am. Nikki Mattson from the Archaeological Conservancy has put in a ton of hard work getting things organized for it, so if you're in the area (or even if you're not!), I hope you make a special effort to come on out!

The Expo is always a great way to spend a Saturday, but that is just one of many things going on, so again I encourage all of you to find an event to attend this month and support the archaeology of Mississippi.

Bradley Carlock

tation under control, but some kind of plant has taken over that they don't like to eat. Did I mention I'm ready for fall?

We've also had a few instances of theft from our Blanchard-Harris Mound site (22BO501) near Gunnison, MS. The site originally had four mounds, although one was in cultivation for years and has been mostly leveled. The other three mounds have a house, an old farm headquarters and a beautiful family cemetery located on and among them. The Lower Mississippi Survey visited the site in 1940 and suggested it was a St. Francis type village but admitted they really weren't sure. I'm told some stone "sun discs" were found there years ago, and John Connaway photographed them. Other than that, we know very little about the site. There is a small tenant shack and a barn that the family called a carriage house. Someone has taken it upon themselves to dismantle both buildings, apparently for their lumber. For a "Delta" farm, this one is old and probably dates to the early 1870's. We feel sure it's National Register eligible, so it's preservation is important.

In other Mississippi site news, we're still trying to negotiate a deal with Adams County for the IP Site (22AD588), which is the site of the early 1700's Terre Blanche Concession. The County and the Conservancy can't agree on the value of the land but we are trying to work something out. There are also two other sites in Adams County that I'm working on but can't say much right now. Stay tuned!

Nikki and I also had fun visiting Seth Grooms, Grace Ward, and Andrew Schroll from Washington University-St. Louis and their crew at the Jaketown Site in June and July. These folks continue to discover the coolest things about that site. Just a week out of the field, and they came back to Mississippi to present preliminary findings at the 40th Annual Mid-South Archaeological Conference at Hopson Commissary in Clarksdale in July. Jay Johnson, Tony Boudreaux, Sam Brookes and I planned it and I can't thank Nikki Mattson enough for helping. We had a really nice turnout and heard some great papers from a summary of all the years of work at Carson from Bo Pitts, to lots of new and interesting information about unembossed Mississippian copper bird images from Jeff Mitchem. All that copper stuff was news to me! We appreciate everyone coming. It was lots of fun.

I want to close by saying how saddened I was by the passing of Mark Dingeldein who had served as an archaeologist at the Winterville Mounds site for many years. He was such a great guy and so knowledgeable. I always looked forward to taking my Conservancy tours to Winterville and having the opportunity to watch him chat with the participants and then we would sit down and catch up with each other. It won't be the same without him.

University News

University of Mississippi

Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) Meeting, November 6-9

Jay Johnson, Tony Boudreaux and Maureen Meyers are busy planning the SEAC meeting for November 6-9 in Jackson.

Make sure to join us Thursday night at the Mississippi History Museum for a reception and Friday night at the conference hotel for the Business Meeting followed by the dance, a SEAC tradition. On Saturday, the mound tour led by Sam Brookes is sold out, but there is still room on the Blues Tour led by Scott Barretta. Over 40 book and craft vendors will be on site during the conference.

Registration for the conference and tours can be found here: <https://www.southeasternarchaeology.org/annual-meeting/details/>. Be sure to check out the many workshop opportunities that are available. Volunteers wishing to work at the conference should contact Maureen Meyers at: memeyer1@olemiss.edu; volunteers will receive a registration discount.

Delta Magazine Article

Tony Boudreaux and Maureen Meyers were interviewed for a July 2019 Delta magazine article on Augustus Davies, and specifically, the Walls Site collection of iconographic pottery that is housed at the University of Mississippi. See the write up online here: <https://deltamagazine.com/a-most-unusual-collector/>.

University of Mississippi Students: Past, Present and Future

A number of students defended their theses this past spring. These include:

Ben Davis, *Household and Changing Use of Space at the Transitional Early Mississippian Austin Site.* (Maureen Meyers, Advisor)

Hamilton Bryant, *Crafting Discords on the Frontier: Production and Identity in Southwest Virginia* (Maureen Meyers, Advisor)

Ariana Kitchens (Honors thesis), *Archaeological Investigations at Rowan Oak: Searching for Evidence of Antebellum Slavery* (Tony Boudreaux, Advisor)

Caitlin Stewart, *Minimum Number of Individuals: A Methodological Comparison using Human Remains from Caves Branch Rockshelter in the Cayo District of Belize* (Carolyn Freiwald, Advisor)

Hannah Zechman, *Investigations at a Mississippian Platform Mound Site in Lowndes County, Mississippi.* (Tony Boudreaux, Advisor).

Our second-year archaeology students were busy this summer. Jacob Harris is writing his thesis on Maya bone tool technologies during the Terminal Classic period. He is examining the construction of bone tools through individual production stages to determine a pattern of standardization for Maya bone tool technologies. Rachel Smith's thesis topic will focus on the study of migration using strontium isotopes to determine whether or not individuals found on Ambergris Caye, Belize migrated to the region. This summer she spent two months working in Belize for the Maya Research Program. Dakota Street's thesis involves ceramic analysis from the Mound A Enclosure at Carson Mounds (22CO505), and the seriation of ceramics recovered from the site, to better establish the timing of the occupation. This past summer he worked with Dr. Boudreaux and students of the Chickasaw Nation to excavate a possible structure at the Stark Farm site in Starkville, Mississippi. Wilson Utley's the-

sis is entitled "Ceramic Analysis of Pottery at the Stark Farm Site (22OK778) in Northeast Mississippi." This summer he worked at the Stark Farm Site, Ely Mound (Virginia), and the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians.

We also welcomed five new students into our program this fall. Raychel Durdin earned her B.A. in anthropology at the University of Mississippi in 2017. Her interests include biological anthropology, bioarchaeology, cranial pathologies, contact in the Americas. Taylor Greene is a Kentucky native who earned a B.S. in Anthropology from the University of Kentucky in 2017. His primary research interests are Precontact occupation in Appalachia and ritual in Mississippian Society across the Southeastern United States. His current research topic is the analysis of a structure at the Carter Robinson site in Southwestern Virginia. Bryce Krumcke graduated from Mississippi State University in 2018 with a B.A. in Anthropology. His research interests include historical archaeology in the southern United States. In particular he plans to work at Prospect Hill, a plantation site near Natchez, MS to locate its slave quarters. Daniel Shawl graduated from Mississippi State University in 2017 with a B.A. in Anthropology. He has worked on a variety of field projects in the Southeast and has worked with the Office of Public Archaeology at MSU for the past three years. Shannon Wooten graduated from the University of Mississippi in 2017 with a B.A. in Anthropology. She will examine two frontier sites in Southwest Virginia to understand communication through the change in ceramic style.

James Ford Historic Marker

Progress has been made on the James Ford marker. After some delay, the application was approved by MDAH and sent to the foundry in Ohio. The marker is now made, and payment by SEAC, MAA and MAPA is in the process of being sent. Meanwhile, Maureen Meyers gave a presentation to the Water Valley City Council, who happily approved the marker. She is working with the city to secure a place, probably near the railroad station and downtown square area. Once a place is secured, plans will be made for marker installation and ceremony and those will be shared in this newsletter.

Miscellany

Maureen Meyers will represent EA at a meeting September 19 at the offices of the American Anthropological Association to discuss creating standards for professional organizations with regard to sexual harassment reporting and offenders. Also present at the meeting will be representatives from AAA, SAA, the Society for Historic Archaeology, and multiple other organizations.

Carolyn Freiwald is on sabbatical this semester. She is spending her time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Zoological Museum and Department of Anthropology doing research.

Mississippi Archaeology Month

The schedule for this year's Mississippi's archaeology month in October has been slow to develop so nothing will be

reported here. We encourage everyone to monitor the MAA's website and Facebook page for the schedule of events.

New LAS Bulletin

The 2017 issue of *Louisiana Archaeology*, the bulletin of the Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS) has been published. This volume, No. 44, is dedicated to the Monte Sano site (16EBR17) in Baton Rouge, La. This site, consisting of two conical mounds and a nearby midden, was perched near the edge of a Pleistocene terrace on Mississippi River. The mounds were leveled and the site destroyed in the spring of 1967 to make way for the construction of a chemical plant. Emergency salvage excavations were directed by the late Dr. William G. Haag of LSU, with the assistance of James A. Ford, Carl Kuttruff, and others. A suite of radiocarbon dates, as well as recovered artifacts from Mound A, suggest that this is the oldest known prehistoric mound in North America. Artifacts associated with the mound also point to construction during the Middle Archaic period.

A posthumously published article by Haag and Kuttruff details the results of the excavations, while articles by John Connaway, Sam Brookes, and Dennis Jones present analyses of artifacts recovered from the site and the implications of the Monte Sano site for archaeology in the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Southeast.

This bulletin will be available for distribution to LAS members at the SEAC meeting Nov. 6-9 in Jackson, MS as well as the LAS/MAA meeting Feb. 2020 in Natchez, MS. Copies will be on sale to non-members at these conferences as well as from the LAS website: www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org. Bulletins cost \$5 at conferences and \$8 by mail.

Obituaries

Robert Connolly, an education/museum professional and archaeologist, died August 20, 2019 at his home as a result of complications from cancer. Robert was born on March 26, 1952 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He completed his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and during his academic career taught at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He did fieldwork as an archaeologist for the State of Mississippi and later became the Station Archaeologist for the Poverty Point Site in Louisiana. There he worked to facilitate its designation as a World Heritage Site.

Mark Dingeldein passed away on August 27, 2019. Mark worked as the site archaeologist at Winterville Mounds for seven years and contributed to all aspects of the site's programming, public outreach, and education. Mark was a great source of knowledge for Southeastern archaeology and history, which he loved sharing with visitors and youth from across the Delta. We will miss his stories and his camaraderie and we thank him for his service to Mississippi archaeology.