

the Community Archaeologist



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the Future
(and the past)**

OKLAHOMA PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY NETWORK

“Creating and connecting communities in service of heritage.”



Dr. Bonnie Pitblado
OKPAN Director



Delaney Cooley
Editor in Chief



Horvey Palacios
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About OKPAN:

The Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network, or OKPAN, is a program of the University of Oklahoma that serves as your connection to archaeology in the state of Oklahoma. We bridge all of Oklahoma’s communities with an interest in the past while promoting education, understanding, and outreach. At our heart, we aspire to promote a respectful exchange about Oklahoma’s past.

About the Magazine:

The Community Archaeologist is a digital magazine that highlights the heritage and history of Oklahoma’s many communities. The goal of the publication is to offer accessible, educational content that increases readers’ awareness of Oklahoma’s past and the many ways it intersects with the present. We foster a multidisciplinary approach to content creation that encourages contributions not just from professional archaeologists but also from students, traditional knowledge holders, and members of allied disciplines. We strive to elevate diverse voices and to center issues important to disenfranchised communities, particularly members of Oklahoma’s tribes and other descendant communities.

Front Cover: Debbie Cosey holding silver rings discovered at Concord Quarters. Photograph by Shawn P. Lambert.

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Letter from the Director

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the publication formerly known as [OKPAN Quarterly](#) and brought to you proudly now as *The Community Archaeologist (TCA)*.

TCA Editor in Chief and PhD Candidate Delaney Cooley and Associate Editor and PhD Student Horvey Palacios led the reconceptualization of everything from our look, to our publication frequency, to the sorts of stories we feature. Our focus remains the heritage that matters to Oklahomans, but we now emphasize stories about and by those who seek to eliminate the polarization—fundamentally rooted in power imbalances—that has too-often divided academics from non-academics, faculty from students, and archaeologists from descendants of the people they study. None of that ill-will and distrust needs to exist; not when we all care so much about our heritage and can learn about and celebrate it together.

In this inaugural issue, you will learn about a University of Oklahoma (Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network) program that introduces high school students from backgrounds historically excluded from archaeology to a discipline with many private-sector jobs to fill. You will meet new OU Native American Studies professor Lewis Borck, whose honesty and vulnerability will inspire students who might otherwise have thought the Academy lacked a place for them. Writer Justin Lund, who recently earned his PhD in Anthropology at OU and now teaches at Northern Arizona University, will captivate you with his clever use of Star Trek to show all anthropology students that the future belongs to them. And Mississippi State University professor and OU PhD Shawn Lambert shares his experience working with members of the Natchez, Mississippi, community to understand the history of the nineteenth century enslaved people at Concord Quarters, a local plantation.

We hope you enjoy these stories and the many more to come in *TCA's* pages. If you are an archaeologist or other heritage practitioner who works or is based in Oklahoma, we welcome your proposals to share your work with a broad audience. I am happy to answer your questions or to hear your thoughts, so do not hesitate to reach out to me at bonnie.pitblado@ou.edu. You may also direct queries and ideas to our editors at thecommunityarchaeologist@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Pitblado, PhD
Robert E and Virginia Bell Professor of Anthropological Archaeology
Director, Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network (OKPAN)

Letter from the Editorial Team

Dear Reader,

We are thrilled to introduce you to the inaugural issue of *The Community Archaeologist (TCA)*, an online magazine that seeks to explore the rich history and heritage of our communities. The publication aims to bridge the divide between professionals and the public by offering accessible and engaging narratives on anthropology, archaeology, and heritage work.

In 2018, the Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network (OKPAN) began publishing the [OKPAN Quarterly](#) as an online newsletter to keep readers up-to-date with the archaeological community of Oklahoma. Within each issue, we provided updates on OKPAN and featured pieces from and about archaeologists, students, and other members of the community who care about the past. However, as OKPAN evolved, we began to recognize the publication's potential to feature more accessible, educational content from diverse audiences, and in 2022, we started a year-long process restructuring the magazine into its current form.

TCA would not exist today without the wonderful support of our networks here at the University of Oklahoma and beyond. Over the last year, we met with faculty and staff from a number of units, including the [Native American Studies Department](#), the [Native Nations Center](#), [World Literature Today](#), and [The School of Visual Arts](#). Our new design is the result of one of our newly formed partnerships with Karen Hayes-Thumann and her Visual Communication students who competed in teams of two to produce the winning look. One of the winners is now our phenomenal graphic design intern, Zac Marino.

We hope this publication serves as a platform for people to connect with heritage, share ideas and perspectives, and engage in meaningful dialogue. To that task, we welcome any and all ideas, from readers and future authors, for how we can make this publication as successful as possible. We are always available at thecommunityarchaeologist@gmail.com. We also encourage everyone to provide feedback through a quick survey available [here](#).

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We look forward to building a community with you.

Sincerely,

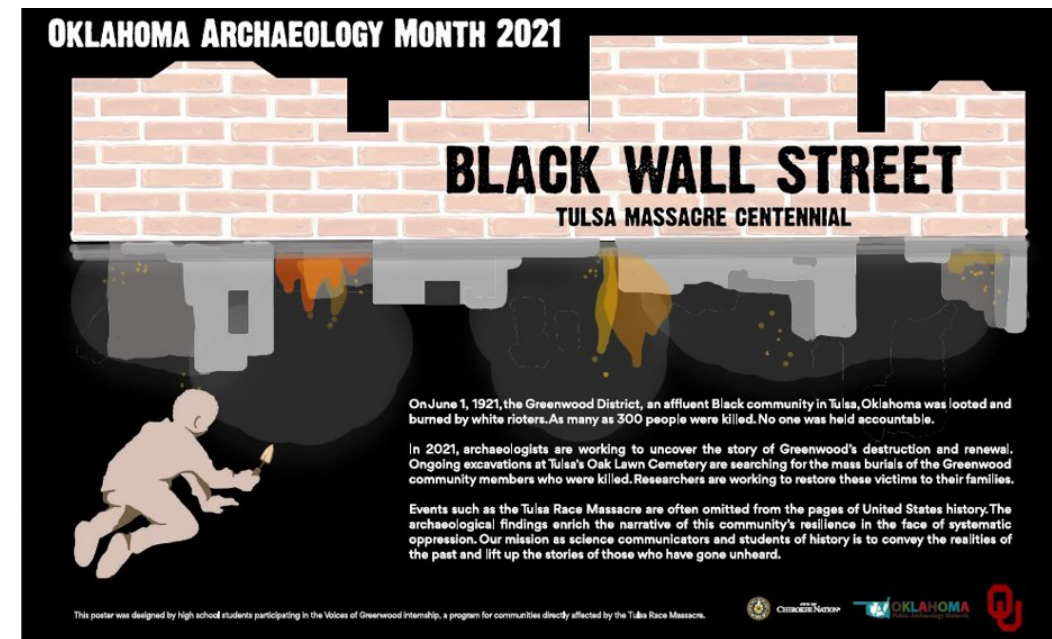
Delaney Cooley, Editor in Chief
Horvey Palacios, Associate Editor
Editorial Team, *The Community Archaeologist*

Voices of Oklahoma

Bobi Hill Deere,
Kaylyn Moore,
and Reagan Bieligm



From Left to Right: Kaylyn Moore, Candice Byrd, Rita Hawzitpa, Bobi Deere, and Reagan Bieligm.



2021 Oklahoma Archaeology Month poster by Voices of Greenwood Students.

In archaeology, whether you are looking at the academic, public, or private working sector, certain communities are severely underrepresented and likewise underserved. In Oklahoma, where archaeological inquiry inevitably connects the researcher with Native communities, this problem of representation is particularly glaring. Oklahoma has 39 federally recognized tribes with capitals within the state boundaries, and it is home to the largest tribal nation, population-wise, in the U.S. (Cherokee Nation). However, one could count the number of Oklahoma Native archaeologists with their available fingers, and there are fewer than five Oklahoma Native-owned Cultural Resource Management (CRM) companies doing private sector archaeological inquiry here. With Oklahoma's history as Indian Territory, and then as a thriving

territory for Black towns after the Civil War, it would only make sense to expect that the trained investigators in the archaeology of Oklahoma would be a diverse mix to ensure that descendant populations are represented in the preservation, or destruction, of their cultural heritage. But that is not the reality.

To address this lack of accurate representation in archaeology in 2021, Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network (OKPAN) staff members launched an internship entitled *Voices of Oklahoma*. The Voices of Oklahoma initiative introduces archaeology and Oklahoma heritage to high school students from underserved communities. The summer program offers students OU college credit, a stipend, field trips, the opportunity to create the annual [Oklahoma Archaeology Month](#)

[\(OAM\) poster](#), and mentorship.

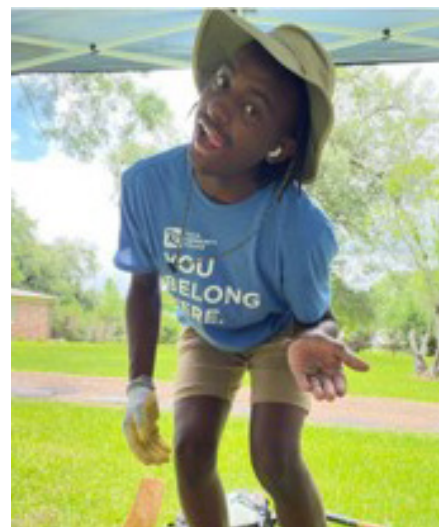
In 2021, the pilot year of the initiative, we focused on the centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre and students who were descendants of those affected by the massacre. These students spent the summer learning about archaeology, the relevance that it can have to communities throughout the state, and how archaeologically informed heritage can connect students to their own histories. The culminating project of the internship was the creation of the Oklahoma Archaeology Month poster. Producing the poster allowed interns to hone in on their main takeaways from the internship and the message they wanted to relay to the state's citizens. Due to the ongoing pandemic, students in that first cohort did not participate in field trips, and the course was held

fully online. Despite the limitations, two of the ten students followed up the experience with a paid internship with OKPAN. Subsequently, one of these enrolled at OU, has declared an anthropology major, and still works with OKPAN.

This past summer (2022), Voices of Oklahoma focused on Osage Nation and its art and history. The bulk of the internship followed the online format of summer 2021. Additionally, we incorporated a community teacher (Osage Nation citizen and art teacher Candice Byrd) who helped recruit, plan, write the curriculum, and support the students. We also incorporated field trips: one that focused on Osage traditions and one to the University of Oklahoma. The first field trip was a cultural outing to the In’Lonshka ceremonial dances at Grayhorse. While there, the students were invited to the Mason camp, where they ate a traditional meal and had meaningful conversations with others celebrating the dances. The second field trip included tours of the OU campus, [Oklahoma Archeological Survey](#),

and the [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#). This trip allowed the students to see archaeologists in their working spaces and to view an ethnographic collection of Osage artifacts not displayed at the museum. In their OAM poster creation, the students focused on concepts they had learned throughout the summer and what impacted them the most. In addition, the interns created and presented a professional poster about their experience at the 89th annual Plains Anthropological Conference in Oklahoma City, in October 2022 and then presented it again at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum Natural History’s OAM event, that time to a public audience of 200 visitors.

The Voices of Oklahoma internship aims to provide underserved students with an outlet to explore their cultural heritage through archaeology and other sources, including community knowledge. Each year, the communities vary, which creates an opportunity for each team of community teachers, students, and mentors to make the internship their own. During the past summers, we created long-term relationships that have led to support and new opportunities for the students. We hope to continue to weave together strong cohorts who can support one another in their futures. We cannot wait to see what summer 2023 brings!



Aaron Patton, Voices of Oklahoma alum, current student at the University of Oklahoma.

About the Authors

Bobi Deere is a PhD candidate in the University of Oklahoma Department of Anthropology.

Kaylyn Moore is a Master’s student in the University of Oklahoma Department of Anthropology.

Reagan Bieligk (Osage) is a high school student and alum of the Voices of Oklahoma program.

Reagan Bieligk Student Call Out

Most of my education surrounding Natives came from school, though I learned scattered things about my heritage from my mom. She taught me about my family history and that the Osage were brave warriors. School taught me I was an Indian and that we live primitive lives in tipis. The way my teachers spoke about Natives was entirely different than how my mother did; they taught misconceptions and generalizations that reinforced inaccurate stereotypes and led to many harmful experiences during my years in elementary school. When I was young, the other children asked if I lived in a tipi, mocked me with a white man’s version of a war call, and chanted “crisscross, apple sauce, sit like an Indian” around me. When I was younger, I never fully understood these comments, but the person I am today allowed me to realize the weight behind their words.

My mother always insisted on talking about her life growing up in Pawhuska on the Osage reservation. I was thrilled to join this internship to further my knowledge of these moments my mom talked about. Some of my favorite stories are those of the dances she attended. The dances, commonly called Powwows, are gatherings of Native Americans where we connect with and honor our living and past relatives by dancing, singing, and hearing the drum. During forced assimilation, the Osage lost many cultural practices but were able to salvage some, including In’Lonshka, which directly translates to “movement of the first son.” Each Osage community (Grayhorse,

Pawhuska, and Hominy) hosts their own, but all Osage people are welcome to attend. This summer, my internship took us to the Grayhorse dances for my first experience at an In’Lonshka. I was so grateful for finally being able to attend this event that my mother holds dearly to our heritage.

I came into this internship hoping to learn about Native history in an environment that wasn’t completely overshadowed by white people. We had many Indigenous guest speakers throughout the summer, and everything I learned from them surpassed my expectations. One of the teachers, Candice Byrd, explained the process of the In’Lonshka to the students while the event was taking place. Once we started class, Candice helped connect her knowledge of Native history to topics discussed in the course. Near the end of the summer, she taught us about the art of shell carving, which she learned from a man named Knokovtee Scott. While she taught us about the impressive process, she spoke briefly about its cultural history. The lessons that I learned from Candice were important to me because of the connection we both share as Native and Osage.

The internship last summer was a memorable experience that gave me a chance to expand my understanding of my tribal heritage. Being Osage has been an integral piece of my identity since I was young and will continue to grow with me. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn about my culture and pass on its knowledge. From older generations to future ones, everyone plays a pivotal role in the preservation of Osage’s history, and I am proud to be a part of it.

Am I an Activist?

Lewis Borck



Am I an Activist? Sure, But Aren't We All?

I have been told that I don't do real archaeology. That I'm an activist instead of an archaeologist. After job searches where I wasn't hired, I heard that the committees were concerned with what I would do on campus. I've had a university president step in and close a funding line that was being used to hire me. These were never explicitly mentioned as resulting from concerns over my research/activism, but it's hard not to draw conclusions.

Yet while only some work, like mine, gets accused of being activist, all research is inherently activism. Research involves choosing what questions to ask and how to approach them. Our experiences, values, life histories, and cultures influence these choices. Because I believe it's essential to be transparent about these influences and to actively work towards creating more equitable and inclusive practices, which are often very different from, even counter to, many researchers' experiences and values, that transparency is used against me and others who walk similar paths.



Black Trowel Collective Microgrants

The Black Trowel Collective Microgrants Logo.

Yes, my research is a form of activism that seeks to challenge dominant narratives and create space for marginalized voices and perspectives. I have seen the power of rigorous social justice oriented research to promote and create positive change in the world. Groups like the [Indigenous Archaeology Collective](#), [the Society for Black Archaeologists](#), [the Black Trowel Collective](#), [The History Underground](#), and of course, the [Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network](#) all demonstrate these values. But research clearly also has the power to colonize and oppress. To inflict violence and create trauma. To dismiss history. These attacks often emerge from implicit value judgments many are unaware they make. We hear this in present calls to teach “real” histories. This happens because these individuals' personal life histories are normalized, whereas others might not be. But erased or ignored histories are real too.

In research fields like archaeology, we're told to keep ourselves out of the research, our voices out of the article. Indeed, this is how the scientific method is taught in K-12, even undergrad: you take a hypothesis, you test it with the goal of nullifying it, and then you take those results, modify your original hypothesis, and start over. That's the simplified version, but as it turns out—well, as we've always known—it's hogwash. Bilge. Full-on flapdoodle.

A scientific method separated from real-world interests and influences is an impossibility. Such an idea requires what I call the virgin birth of science—the immaculate conception of a hypothesis. Hypotheses must come from somewhere, and that somewhere is the brains of researchers.

To better understand our research and the types of values we accidentally become activists for, we need to understand ourselves better. Perhaps most importantly for this piece, to better understand others' research, we need to understand the researcher better. Rarely are we allowed that chance.

Many fields (like Native American Studies) recognize this and call for an intuitive understanding of you as a person: the histories, cultures, morals, and relationships that make you who you are. This understanding helps us not just to be aware of our own biases but also what unique perspectives we bring. Understanding yourself as a researcher isn't just about producing more objective work. Instead, it's about understanding the subjectivities that impact your work and finding other subjectivities that might counter those to build stronger, more complex research processes. There's even a name for this. It's a feminist concept called strong objectivity, and it's regularly ignored in favor of what we might call naïve objectivity within Western science.

In reading this, you'll get something you don't normally get in a piece about archaeology or history. You're going to get a glimpse into me, the author, and how my history has informed my work. Hopefully, you'll think through your own life experiences as you read and start to see why I argue that everyone is an activist researcher.

All things being equal, I should not be an archaeologist.

Or a professor. In some ways, yes, absolutely, I should be. I'm a decent-looking white male with good teeth. Research shows those four traits are positively correlated with your ability to find and retain a good job because they are linked with the perception of your intelligence and competence. Put another way, unexamined value judgments influence perception. And these traits are echoed in the U.S. university system. [As of 2020, white males account for 32% of assistant professors, 39% of associate professors, and 51% of full professors.](#) The decreasing proportion of white male faculty at each stage is mostly balanced by increases in white female faculty (38% of assistant professors are white females). That university systems don't often find value in the research that women conduct and are dismissive towards mothers is reflected in the finding that a lower proportion of white women are full professors.

More broadly, the total number of faculty from all minoritized groups (Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American) across both sexes remains relatively constant: 30% are assistant professors, 25% are associate professors, and 21% are full professors. These statistics make two things clear. There hasn't been a lot of change in how many minoritized faculty are hired, and—statistically—someone who looks like me is more likely to be hired. In the 2020 census, white individuals of both sexes accounted for 57.8% of the total population of the United States. They are heavily overrepresented in universities' tenure-track faculty.



Lewis Borck talking about Indigenous hip-hop and archaeology at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Even ignoring demographics, it's still a surprise I ended up a professor. I have a lot of tattoos. A suit and tie can't cover some. Getting them was my choice, sure, but these choices that fit within my cultural milieu do not fit within the university system. I've been in jail three times, but only one was because of an actual arrest (and no, that's not legal). More importantly, I don't have any convictions, because I was never breaking any laws. Long stories accompany all of these, but our society doesn't often listen to these long stories. The reality is I regularly get stopped by police, border patrol, customs agents, and the TSA. I even get followed by store security. Even though movie bad guys are often covered in tattoos, that's just not the way things are. Yet we live in a world of perceptions that feed unexamined judgments. I've been told by a former colleague that I look more like I'm selling drugs to the faculty than a part of it. I've been out for lunch with a different colleague and had the server mention they liked my tattoos, only to have my colleague respond, "Can you believe he's a professor?" These are all instances of microaggressions, the university world letting me know I shouldn't be there. And these situations are often much worse for my Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) colleagues.

While I am now doing well, I was not raised in a financially stable environment. Growing up, I never knew what my schoolmates would make fun of each day. Was it my off-brand tennis shoes? My sister's hand-me-down winter jacket that my mom dyed brown but still had a purple zipper? My pencil case with the duct-taped lid? I've always been baffled that we shame folks for being poor in a system that requires poverty instead of being ashamed that we've created that system. For example, [the U.S. has such low levels of social and economic mobility, that the most significant predictor of whether you will achieve financial success as an adult is if you come from wealth.](#) In a 2020 study, we came in 27th out of 82 countries studied for social mobility. One key reason is that university education, trade schools, and really any schooling past K-12 in this country is expensive.

So, for me, the only way to even get a bachelor's degree was to take on a significant amount of debt,

as the cost of a university education skyrocketed in the 90s and 00s. Luckily, there was a community college near me during my first decade after high school. I picked away at courses while working in nightclubs and entertainment management. During those courses, I realized I was pretty good at school. I might be smart. That was unclear to me during my first 18 years because our K-12 education system is not set up to let folks without specific types of brains thrive.

Community college showed me a new side of learning. And so I started thinking about getting a bachelor's degree. And somehow, I did it. In high school, graduate school was not on the table. No one in my family even talked about it. I didn't know anyone with a graduate degree. But as I found myself managing a large-scale research project in undergrad (one that my advisor mentioned should probably have been a master's degree), I suddenly started thinking about grad school. And somehow, I did it, this time with the help of my spouse at the time and our children. And when I say "somehow," it was with a lot of pain and debt. Penny-pinching became something of an art form. Keeping my children, my spouse, and myself clothed and fed was a magic act. My ex and I became economic magicians navigating the costly world of being poor. Everything costs more when you're poor. It's one of the great unacknowledged hypocrisies of our world.

As I struggled to feed my family during grad school, the urgency of my situation drove me to dig deeper into the world of dumpster diving. That's how I stumbled upon [Food Not Bombs](#). This nonprofit organization is dedicated to feeding our unhoused neighbors with food obtained through dumpster diving. I eagerly joined their cause.

Food Not Bombs equipped me with new tools and strategies to provide for my family better. As a poorly paid graduate student with expensive, inadequate insurance, I constantly struggled to make ends meet. Without the supplemental food I obtained dumpster diving, I would have had to drop out of grad school. For many, the idea of scavenging through dumpsters for food is unsettling, if not outright repulsive. But again, it's all perception. Dumpster divers look for sealed foods, fresh produce, and bakery items that are discarded because they're ugly, returned, or past their "best by" dates (which are not expiration dates). The popular image of someone looking for a half-eaten scrap of pizza is created by ignorant individuals. Almost a third of food in the U.S. is thrown away. Dumpster divers are often activists working against that waste.

When discussing poverty, I've noticed I also must be prepared to challenge societal assumptions that contribute to the idea that poor people have failed. I have to contest stereotypes of laziness, financial irresponsibility, and intellectual deficiency and instead get people thinking about how a society's limited resources are unequally distributed. Those false values led me to start doing what many in archaeology don't: look for historic cases where people tried to make egalitarian and equitable societies. In archaeology, these social movements often get dismissed as



Food Not Bombs helping the community.



Lewis Borck teaching how to use an atlatl at Steam Pump Ranch outside of Tucson, AZ.

civilizational collapses. I instead ask if the rise of elites and kings isn't the enforced collapse of intentionally created and hard-won societies focused on values of sustainability and community care.

In part, approaching old questions with these new frameworks comes from being neurodiverse. This has its own set of unique challenges and advantages. Like shirts, I have many diagnoses. Unlike shirts, I can't just wear one or two at a time. Neurologists label my major diagnoses as developmental disabilities. Some can be quite severe, including difficulties with executive function, working memory, and sensory processing.

However, my disabilities are not immediately visible to others, which means a substantial portion of my life is spent on things like masking, or the use of extra emotional and mental energy and labor to fit in with what's considered typical. I need to expend extra energy in social situations to interpret non-verbal cues, keep track of multiple conver-

sations, and filter out sensory information. Neurodiverse individuals do this so that they are not judged for what many consider to be shortcomings. When you disclose your challenges, there's always a fear that people will underestimate your abilities and decide not to offer you opportunities out of concern that you won't be able to handle them: "Oh, everything takes Lewis longer, and he's pretty busy, so we shouldn't ask him."

I refuse to be defined solely by what many would label as my pathologies.

While I recognize that I have unique challenges that most people don't face, I also thrive in ways that most people don't. My neurodiversity gives me a unique perspective on the world. For example, my mind lacks an information filter, which has many downsides, including perpetually feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. But lacking that filter has its

advantages. My brain doesn't unconsciously prioritize what information to retain and what to let pass, so I often don't have the same tunnel vision that others do. This can allow me to see connections that may not be obvious to others. Being neurodiverse has allowed me to develop creative problem-solving skills and deep empathy for others facing life challenges. Ultimately, I consider my neurodiversity a blessing. I thrive because of it, not despite it.

I want to be clear that this isn't a Horatio Alger story. I didn't pull myself up by the bootstraps. Those stories ignore all the things actively working to see you fail and the people that help you along the way. There are thousands, millions, of folks who just didn't have the random chances or the privileges that come with being a straight, white male coded as able-bodied by most who meet me.

In the end, recognizing just how difficult it is that I ended up in the position I'm in, even with the traits that give me advantages, it became abundantly clear that work needed to be done to reduce barriers and socioeconomic violence within academic institutions for those who are even more affected by the system than I was.

Numbers are difficult to obtain, but studies over the last decade indicate that between 85% and 99.2% of archaeologists identify as white. [In 2020, Dr. William White wrote that he worked for a decade in archaeology before he ran across another Black archaeologist. As of 2021, members of the Indigenous Archaeology Collective noted there were only 33 Native Americans with PhDs in archaeology in the United States.](#) This imbalance becomes even more problematic when you acknowledge that the origins of most archaeology investigated in the U.S. is Indigenous.

Outside perspectives can be important in research. But for a century-plus, that's about all we've had, and it's led to a system that essentially enforces a Western and colonial (and patriarchal and heteronormative) system on archaeological findings and the historical stories we tell. As I've previously argued, this value system impacts the heritage we protect, dramatically skewing "the future history" we are building towards one reflecting colonial values. What is this, if not activism?

To protect the past from colonial erasure, we need a diversity of voices in archaeology

that, for the most part, we just aren't seeing. This is a failure on the part of archaeologists who have been unwilling to acknowledge both the scope of their tunnel vision and the violence, discomfort, and trauma minoritized/marginalized individuals deal with in the spaces archaeologists have created. I detailed the aggressions and discomforts I dealt with because mine, while feeling extensive to me, are minute compared to those felt by folks entering institutions and disciplines that are built "upon the bodies, bones, and material culture of Indigenous peoples," as described in 2021 by the archaeologist Dr. Ora Marek-Martinez (Diné/Nez Perce). We can extend that description to Black, Hispanic, and Asian bodies as well.

While we all have unique histories and backgrounds, seeing only a few people with similar sorts of experiences isolates students and drives them away from fields like archaeology. Not sharing cultural and experiential touchstones with your colleagues when working in a field that is very much centered on creating networks and coalitions can make building those relationships near impossible. Groups like the Indigenous Archaeology Collective, the Society for Black Archaeologists, and the Black Trowel Collective help create spaces for those who otherwise feel very alone. Along with the other groups I mentioned above, they lead the drive towards restorative practices through actions that center care and friendship to empower instead of harm.

Finding and creating groups like these is important because humans have never been successful as individuals. It's one of the great misdirections of evolutionary research. Humanity's success has always been our ability to socialize and apply our diverse experiences to complex problems. The solution, it turns out, is collective.

While being open in this manner is personally and professionally frightening, I think it's important to let folks know there are many more paths of life, types of brains, and diverse cultural histories functioning in this space than it might seem. Knowing about my journey, I hope, can help others realize that there is a dramatic need to change how we think about access to education

and research. I hope this lets some students know that there are people here who can help support them. And who knows, maybe this will help more of my colleagues start sharing the experiences that have impacted their research and activism. As someone recently reminded me, sometimes the only way to fill the dance floor is to get out there and do your weird dance on your own. Other feet will soon follow.

And this is where I'll leave you, with a fist bump and a smile, so that you can ponder, search, and think about where you best fit within humanity's collective answer. What kind of coalition can you build? Where can you participate? And always remember what type of tree you want to grow when you plant your seed of mutual aid. No one gets a willow from an acorn.



CC-BY Colleen Morgan for the Black Trowel Collective. #archink

Lewis Borck is the Horizon Chair of Native American History and Culture at the University of Oklahoma, a cofounder of the Black Trowel Collective and their microgrants program, and the founding President of The History Underground.

Public Archaeology, History, and Life at Concord Quarters

Shawn P. Lambert,
Debbie Cosey, and
Aaron Patton



Concord Quarters Bed and Breakfast

Public archaeology is [not an accessible area of archaeology to define](#), but for this article, I define it as the use of [multiple perspectives and voices](#) among professionals, the public, and descendant communities to better understand the past. In this way, archaeological professionals are no longer the harbingers of all knowledge, and archaeology becomes more active and relevant today. However, public archaeology can also make archaeological practice surprising and organic as we begin to break down traditional hierarchical barriers of the discipline. I make it a point to always wear my “public archaeology hat” when I visit new places, and people, and interact with objects of the past. This keeps me open to possibilities I never thought possible and extends my social networks far beyond traditional archeological methods. This was the case when I met Debbie Cosey, the owner and conservator of the Concord Quarters, a late eighteenth century plantation site in Natchez, MS.

The funny thing is that when I first met Debbie Cosey, I did not know the historical and cultural significance of the famous Concord Quarters. Initially, I was in Natchez with Jessica Crawford, an archaeologist for the Archaeological Conservancy, to conduct ground penetrating radar on a Woodland period mound site in collaboration with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Jessica knew a great deal about Natchez’s history and the best places to stay overnight. This happened to be the [Concord Quarters](#), which Debbie and her husband Gregory Cosey turned into a bed-and-breakfast. Once our mound project was complete, I met Jessica and quickly became entangled with the stories of Concord from Debbie, whose ancestors were once enslaved there.

I think it is essential here to make a quick but relatable caveat. If you are reading this article and are interested in public archaeology, there are two attributes that you always need to carry in your “archaeology hat.” Those are transparency and trust. As community-oriented archaeologists, we need to be transparent about who we are and our objectives for any project. The more transparent we are and the more we involve the broader public and/or descendant communities in our research agendas, what culminates is an equitable distribution of trust among all stakeholders. It is at these moments that we see the power of more engaged archaeological practice, and if I may be so bold as to say – it just makes archaeology so wonderfully fun!

It did not take long for Debbie and me to distill this type of trust and friendship, probably sometime between her homemade blackberry muffins or Gregory’s freshly pressed coffee. Debbie, Jessica, and I talked for hours about the history of Concord. I soon realized how special this place was and was surprised that no archaeological work had been conducted there. Debbie had heard about other public archaeology projects in which Jessica and I participated, and she saw the benefits of a public-oriented archaeology project for Concord. When Debbie is excited, the entire room and people within a mile radius can feel that excitement. I shared her enthusiasm when she asked me if I would be interested in holding a field school there the following summer. I quickly said (maybe screamed a little) yes and began working with Debbie, Natchez communities, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Archaeological Conservancy, the Natchez Historical Society, and the National Park Service to co-develop one of the most publicly immersive field schools of my professional career.

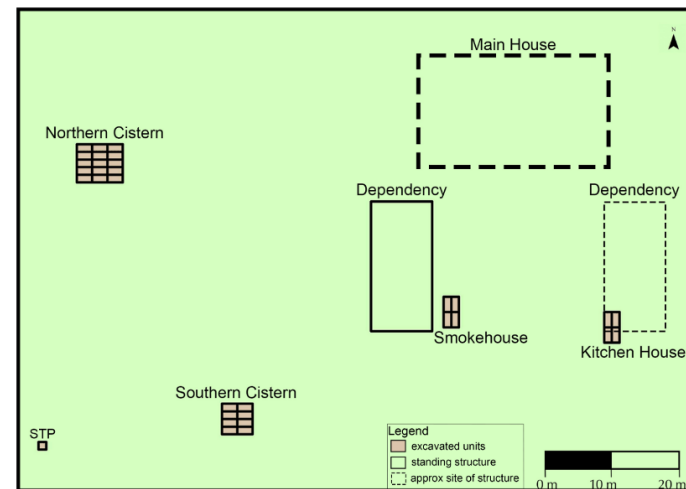
The Beginnings of Concord's Public Archaeology Field School

I remember calling Debbie to report that the field school had been approved. She physically had to sit down because of her excitement and disbelief. She told me that in the back of her mind, she did not think this would come to fruition. However, it soon sunk in that the field school would happen in June 2022. Soon, local newspapers, journalists, and news stations began to advertise the field school and that it was open to the public to participate in discovering the history, especially the enslaved histories, at Concord. It did not take long for Debbie's bed-and-breakfast to be booked solid for the entire month during the field school.

Once our student housing was established (which was graciously provided by the Natchez Historical Society), Debbie, Jessica, and I needed to determine which areas of the site the field school would investigate. Debbie had four primary goals for the field school: (1) find the footprint of where the main house stood; (2) locate any cisterns; (3) excavate the smokehouse; and (4) locate any evidence of the enslaved dependency, often referred to as the kitchenhouse.

A Brief History of Concord Quarters

The Concord Quarters site was constructed in 1794-95 by Manuel Gayoso, the first Mayor of Natchez, and his wife, Margaret Cyrilla Watts, who were granted 1,242 acres of land to build the main house called Concord. After the death of Gayoso, an old friend and ally, Stephen Minor, and his wife, Katherine Minor, purchased Concord Quarters. In 1819, the Minors added a colonnade around the house and the two brick dependencies behind it. At one point, the Minors had over 160 enslaved individuals who lived and worked at Concord. In the early twentieth century, a fire of unknown origin destroyed the main house and one of the adjacent dependencies (the kitchenhouse), leaving one standing dependency and a single column base that was uncovered during excavations. Debbie and Gregory Cosey turned the standing dependency into a bed and breakfast.



Planview map showing Concord Quarters layout and excavation units.

Public archaeology moments at the Concord Quarters field school; community gardening and beautifying historic features.



Public archaeology materials used to talk to the public about the history of Concord Quarters.



Elementary students helping to sift and find artifacts.



Learning from Descendant Communities and the Public

Collaboration with landowners whose ancestors were enslaved at Concord and local communities was vital to holistically understanding the history of the lives of enslaved individuals. Each Thursday at the field school, the public was invited to the site to learn more about Concord and those who lived and worked there. They could also contribute to the excavation process and interpretation of the site. We hosted over 2,000 visitors throughout the field school, many of whom brought their histories, stories, and photographs of Concord. Many of the historical photographs had never been seen by the archaeological community. For instance, several photos showed the exact location of the Concord Quarter's main house, which was previously unknown. These photographs and testimonials were recorded and are now stored at the Natchez Historical Society.

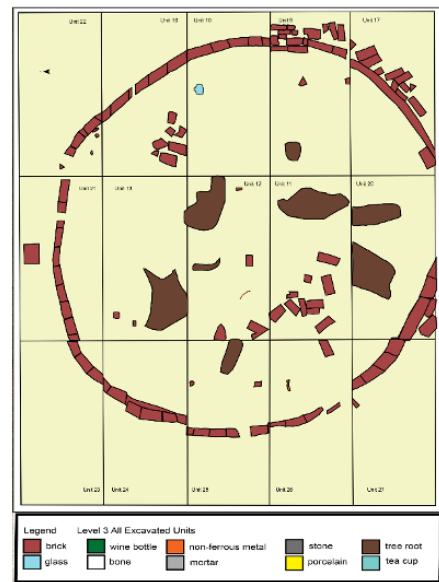
Public Archaeology Discoveries

As Debbie hoped, we uncovered much about Concord's history and material culture that had never been seen before. We discovered unknown features associated with enslaved life at Concord Quarters, which included two large cisterns that were buried and forgotten, a smokehouse directly associated with the standing dependency, and the last remaining column base from the second dependency (also referred to as the enslaved kitchen house) that burned in the fire of 1901. The features were so well preserved that the Coseys decided they wanted them to be permanently opened so visitors could directly see and learn about the history of Concord.

It is important to take some time here to discuss each feature, because the public and descendant communities helped not only excavate and sift through endless soils but also locate the features with their memories, stories, and photographs. The northern, bell-shaped cistern is one of the largest known cisterns in Natchez. The cistern had sand or gravel on the bottom, filtering the water until the early 20th century when it was no longer used and was backfilled. Artifacts uncovered include ceramic sherds, oyster shells, milk bottles, glazed bricks, and bricks with fingerprint indentations of likely enslaved youth tasked with producing bricks on site.



Photo and planview map of the large cistern in the northwest area of the site.



The cistern in the southwest area of the site is approximately 50% smaller than the northern cistern and nearest to the enslaved dwellings. Artifacts uncovered from the southern cistern are similar to those found in the northern cistern but also included an early nineteenth century iron chisel and lead bullets likely used by Union soldiers stationed near Concord during the Civil War.

The Concord Smokehouse, constructed in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, was in front of the last standing enslaved dwelling, now the bed and breakfast. Historically, smokehouses were used to preserve and store meat for the occupants of the main house. Historical and archaeological evidence indicates that the smokehouse continued to be used until the early twentieth century. Recovered artifacts showcase the range of activities in which enslaved individuals participated. Artifacts include domestic objects, such as cut animal bone, jewelry, children's toys, ceramic serving vessels, and a possible silver mourning locket. Other twentieth century artifacts include makeup, medicinal containers, and ointment bottles that indicate that the smokehouse was used in some capacity through the 1930s.

The second dependency that burned in 1901 was an enslaved dwelling, representing a place where people lived, worked, and raised their families. This place was most important to the Cosey family, as there are no known photographs and very little historical information about it. Moreover, the area between the two dependencies has been dramatically cut back in the last two decades to make room for other structures and the construction of a side road. Thus, initially, we believed that the burned kitchenhouse was completely destroyed and removed from history. However, ground penetrating radar and excavations revealed that the last remaining southwest column base was preserved.

The feature and associated artifacts showed evidence of intense burning, likely related to the 1901 fire that destroyed the kitchenhouse. Thousands of early nineteenth century cut nails were found and looked like they had been buried. Evidence also showed that the bricks of the column were so intensely heated that the bricks re-vitrified and became glazed. Glass medicine bottles were melted around bricks and other building materials.



Photograph and planview map of Concord Quarters' most southern cistern.



Photograph of the Smokehouse and planview map of the smokehouse floor.

Material Culture Emphasizes Enslaved Life at Concord

Other artifacts showed the complex lives of enslaved people at Concord. With the public's help, we discovered children's toys, elaborately decorated lion head metal straps, glass mineral water bottles, and a mixture of inexpensive and expensive ceramic wares. One of the most surprising discoveries from the kitchenhouse was two wonderfully preserved handmade silver rings. The rings appeared to have been made from leftover silver from kitchen utensils and were hand hammered. This suggests these rings were made and owned by enslaved individuals. Perhaps with more research, we will be able to discover the owners of these rings. I remember as Debbie held these rings, she became quite emotional. She believes these rings were owned by a married enslaved couple living and working at Concord.



Debbie Cosey holding the silver rings discovered in the kitchenhouse and a closeup view of one of the rings.

Making a Lasting Impression at Concord

As the field season was coming to an end, Debbie, Jessica, and I wanted to do something that would allow the public and future visitors to continue to learn what we discovered and the history of Concord through the voices of its descendants. Therefore, we came up with the idea to plant a garden in each of the five areas we excavated that would draw people to these spaces. Next, field school students, Debbie, Jessica, and I designed permanent interpretive panels at each of these spaces to create an interactive walking tour of Concord. Visitors continue to enjoy these today.



Interpretive walking tour at Concord Quarters.

Discussion

During our excavation at Concord, numerous artifacts were uncovered that highlight the distinct lives of enslaved people and the cultural heritage connections of descendant communities, which retain meaningful historical and ancestral ties to Concord. Without them, our understanding and discoveries of the history and lives of Concord would not be complete. Bricks made on the Concord property by enslaved individuals show clear indentations of fingerprints left in the soft clay before firing, while other material culture, like animal bones and oyster shells, helps to shed light on enslaved people's food habits. Focusing on these objects offers an often-overlooked perspective on the lives of all inhabitants, including the untold stories of the enslaved individuals who resided there. As Debbie held a brick with a child's fingerprints, an object she and Gregory had always wanted to find, she stated she felt close to the spirit of her ancestors. I think moments like this show the power of objects of the past when they are reconnected with descendant communities who have such strong connections to people, places, and things.



Brick with a central thumbprint of an enslaved youth, likely denoting the number of bricks made that day.

Conclusion

Working with the landowners, Debbie and Greg Cosey, along with the broader Natchez community, created an opportunity to understand how archaeology can benefit descendant communities, and, more importantly, how archaeologists can learn, appreciate, and incorporate descendent voices and ways of knowing. The community-based work at Concord was an honor and a privilege and an opportunity to contribute to, as Debbie Cosey would say, “bringing light to the spirits” (personal communication, 2022). The involvement of many communities and voices at the beginning of field school development emphasizes a more equitable archaeology. It is the most innovative way of gaining new knowledge (e.g., archaeologists learning from descendant communities). The Concord Quarters field school shows that drawing on the rich resources of descendants is key to promoting a more engaged and active archaeology. Welcoming the voices of descendants, like Debbie and Gregory Cosey, to better understand the meaning of enslaved life and the strands of memories and experiences still so heavily connected within contemporary familial and community-centered contexts significantly improved archaeological practice empirically, conceptually, and methodologically. This approach has also made many of us realize that it is not just interdisciplinary collaborations that need to be at the core of archaeological inquiries but also that we need to work harder to develop intellectual partnerships with descendant communities.



Group photograph of field school crew and Debbie and Gregory Cosey at Concord Quarters.

About the Authors

Shawn Lambert is a University of Oklahoma alum and assistant professor in the Mississippi State University Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures.

Debbie Cosey is the owner and conservator of Concord Quarters in Natchez, Mississippi.

Aaron Patton is an undergraduate student at the University of Oklahoma and alum of the Voices of Oklahoma program.

Aaron Patton Student Call Out

Natchez Mississippi's Concord Quarters was a deeply enriching archaeological experience through which I gained important archaeological skills, such as excavation, documentation, teamworking, and mapping. I also received first-hand knowledge of the history and material culture of nineteenth century African American enslavement in the Southeast. In the first few weeks in the field, I spent much time excavating the southern brick cistern. Another student, Andrew, and I uncovered various artifacts and features, such as ceramic, brick, and iron artifacts, including nails from the previous standing dependency. We meticulously recorded the findings in our field journals daily, and mapped features and soil profiles. We also learned the importance of carefully storing artifacts in our labeled site bags to be later washed (during days excavation was not possible) and examined.

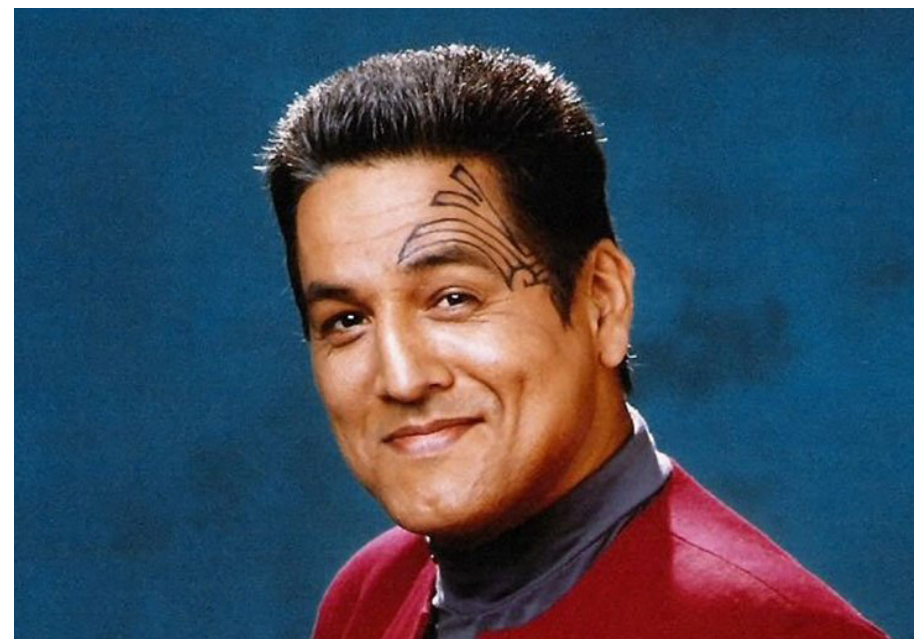
We visited many historic sites and other contemporaneous enslaved plantations, including the Melrose Plantation, to better understand possible activities and organization at Concord and the architectural layout. These trips were incredibly insightful in learning the reality of the enslaved lives they lived, worked, endured, and resisted. The second half of the field school would be spent behind the current standing dependency, where we excavated units to unveil the remains of a previous standing smokehouse, which was

likely used by past enslaved individuals to store and prepare food products. Our findings in these units were filled with ceramics and other domestic objects that spanned over 150 years.

During our community archaeology days, sharing our findings with local Natchez youth, school children, and descendant communities was a privilege. This allowed us to engage with the general public and let them get their hands dirty to uncover more of the site's incredible history.

Anthropology of the Future *(and the past)*

Justin Lund



Robert Beltran as
Commander Chakotay
Star Trek Voyager (1995).

In the 1990s, Star Trek: Voyager inspired me to think about a Native man's place in the future and to consider what my role might be as an Indigenous scientist. Voyager's Commander Chakotay was perhaps one of the few times a Native American was spotted in the future and the first time I had ever seen a Native American man or woman in a scientific role, real or fiction. Many times, Natives are portrayed as things of nature. Science and Indigeneity are not often defined within the same realms of understanding. However, Star Trek has made every attempt to represent all people into the future, and the impact of representation within Star Trek has not gone unnoticed. It's no wonder the show is owed so much credit for inspiring a generation of diverse scientists that we can all see today.

The impact of a cultural tradition like Star Trek cannot be overstated. If you surveyed a sample of scientists, you would find that many science professionals, myself included, discovered our interest in science through science-fiction. For women and people of color, the 1960s Star Trek pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable for U.S. audiences. The show told of a future where women could work alongside men and people of color held positions of authority, which was intentionally not familiar then. Despite the efforts towards inclusiveness, the show has been critiqued for presenting a future envisioned by the dominant society where inclusion was still a foreign and novel concept. Nichelle Nichols, the African American actress who played Lieutenant Uhura and is credited (along with William

Shatner) with the [first U.S. televised interracial kiss](#), is also known for speaking out against how she was tokenized for her blackness on set and in production. It was Martin Luther King, Jr. who convinced Ms. Nichols to persevere and continue her role for the importance that it represented. Although nowhere near perfect, her presence on screen has undoubtedly inspired many people of color to see their existence and potential in the future.

“Star Trek has made every attempt to represent *all* people in the future



Justin Lund working at an archaeological excavation (2018).

As an anthropologist, I cannot help but consider how shows like *Star Trek* reflect and shape our society. Anthropologists have studied and documented the stories of cultures, both ancient and modern. We refer to some of these stories as myths, legends, or oral traditions; they can be spoken or written and, at times, they can even be artistic creations. We interrogate these oral (and sometimes written) traditions for insight into social histories, generational messages, human experiences, and moral philosophies. Many oral traditions speak of timeless events

that could have been taking place in the past or the future. For those storytellers and audiences, these types of timeless stories represent knowledge production and replication and exude both qualities of historicity and science-fiction.

Narratives that speculate about the future challenge storytellers and audiences to explore the limits of their realities and to apply life experiences to effect change. These narratives are a glimpse into the social imagination of a human future. For the Western world, narratives of future times are called science-fiction. However, the timeless traditions of certain cultures often fall outside the genre.

*Nichelle Nichols as Lieutenant Nyota Uhura on *Star Trek* (1967).*



Similar to how we interrogate Indigenous oral narratives, the same scope can be applied to Western science-fiction traditions. Many scholars and artists have pointed out that science-fiction has developed within a particular social framework that has the potential to continue to present marginalized identities and communities in disrespectful ways. Not only that, but stories about expansions into space often carry a colonial tone where space is the commodity, and its resources are open for pillaging. It should come as no surprise then that space colonialism and imperialism may not reflect a future we all hope for or envision. In response, feminist, Afro-, and Indigenous futurisms attempt to create literary,

artistic, and cinematic visions of future times with respect to their communities' unique histories. The various futurisms center and reflect a history and future inspired by their creators' social and political ideals.

I believe that most human narratives, mythological or scientific, present a reflection of the storyteller and the audience. Scientific non-fictional narratives are no exception. Academic knowledge values certain questions and research, privileges the experiences and health of certain people, and is often funded by government institutions or private corporations. That social framework imposes boundaries on the knowledge production process that can be implicit and explicit. Knowledges

are socially constructed institutions that shape themselves to cultural norms. To point to an interesting example, it was not too long ago that archaeological narratives of the past failed to account for the contributions and experiences of women in any meaningful way. The increase in the number of female archaeologists also brought about an increase in the visibility of women in the ancient past. As society matured through civil rights and women's movements, archaeology's understanding of the past became more sophisticated using the expertise and experiences of its newly found membership. Science-fiction is also maturing and evolving to include the voices and perspectives of diverse groups of people.

For these reasons, a class that boldly takes students into fantastic futures full of exploration, encountering new cultures while reflecting on what it means to be human, is an ideal gateway to the field of anthropology. For the past year, I have explored these issues with students in an introductory anthropology class titled *The Anthropology of Star Trek* at [Northern Arizona University](https://www.northernarizona.edu/). The stories and characters of the Star Trek franchises have been a captivating presentation of space anthropology for nearly 60 years. In this class, we attempt to understand how U.S. culture is reflected in our creations of the future. The Anthro of ST challenges students to use the Star Trek “texts”

to explore how present-day and past concerns of society and science are presented to public audiences within a single continuing narrative about the future. Star Trek’s longevity provides ample content for students to analyze and compare recent changes in social dynamics that have become entangled in an idealized on-screen universe. The franchises present a mythos for human existence, a dream for our future. And like any dream, there are often traces of ourselves woven into that story. As a space for present-day anthropological focus, Star Trek represents a collection of narratives, vetted by the public, that expose society’s concerns and interest in language, culture, exploration, and science.



Starship Enterprise
Star Trek Movies.

The Anthro of ST course uses Star Trek to present tangible examples of anthropological issues. In fact, the show and certain characters were deeply tied to anthropology: Captain Picard fancied himself an archaeologist, Captain Janeway often commented on genomics, and Captain Sisko was entrenched in the culture and religion of a vulnerable population in the process of recovering from brutal colonization. With the launch of *Star Trek: Discovery* in 2017, it became clear that the Star Trek universe was not finished commenting on society and our ideal future. The recent additions to the canon have begun to address the critiques of past franchises. The course is designed to

give undergraduate anthropology majors a specialized topic to explore and to provide non-anthropology students with examples of the diverse potential of anthropology to help us understand humanity and humanity’s challenges.

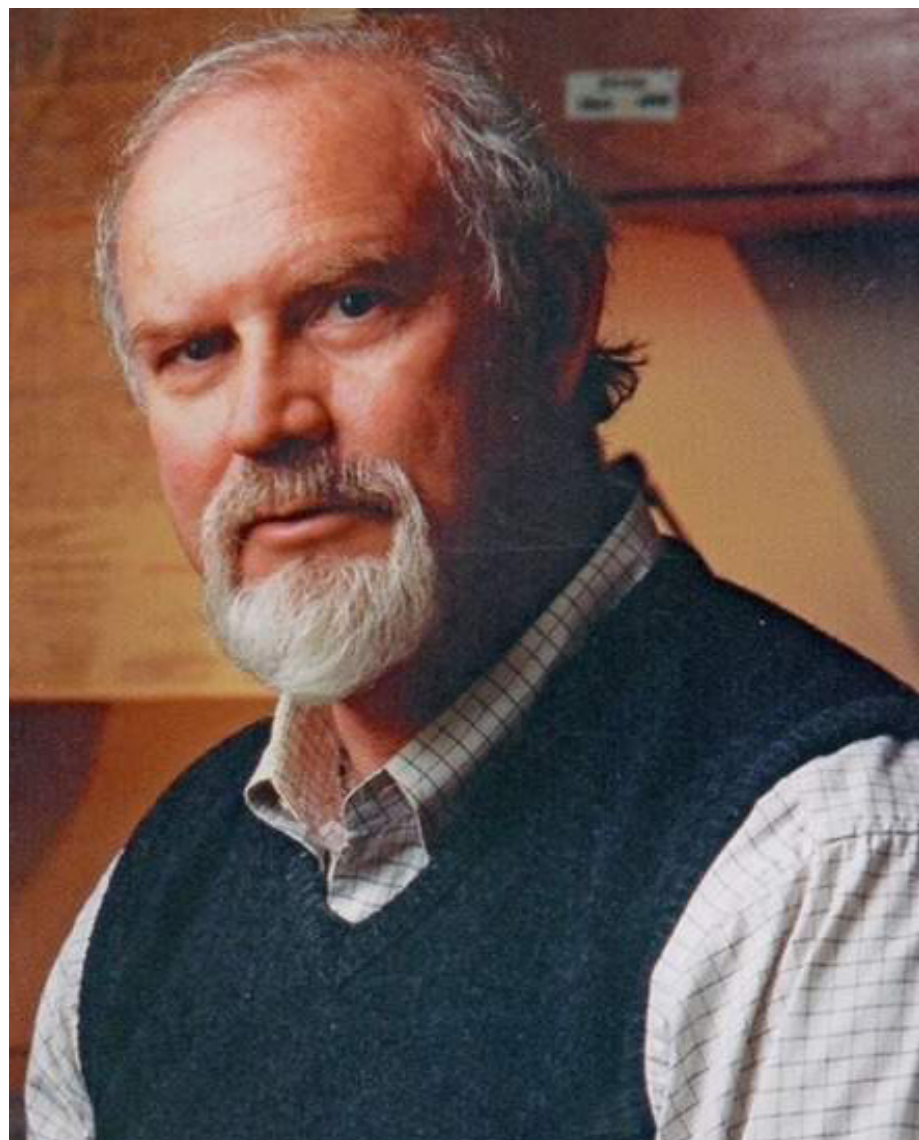
The Star Trek course is a space to encourage students to deconstruct and decolonize certain human stories. The Anthropology of Star Trek is more than a “blow off” course and is certainly not an easy ‘A.’ We reflect on the mythos of the dominant society and compare it to our own individual dreams of the future. We explore how all human narratives are shaped by their authors and society. And finally, we apply this knowledge to attempt to understand the future, the past, and our role as anthropologists in the present. So as you can see, Star Trek isn’t just a collection of stories about aliens and space exploration, it’s a fictional tradition that reflects the dreams and values of our society. It has impacted generations with more to come.

Justin Lund (Diné) is a University of Oklahoma alum and a postdoctoral scholar in the Northern Arizona University Department of Anthropology.



the man.
the myth.
the legend.

Don Henry

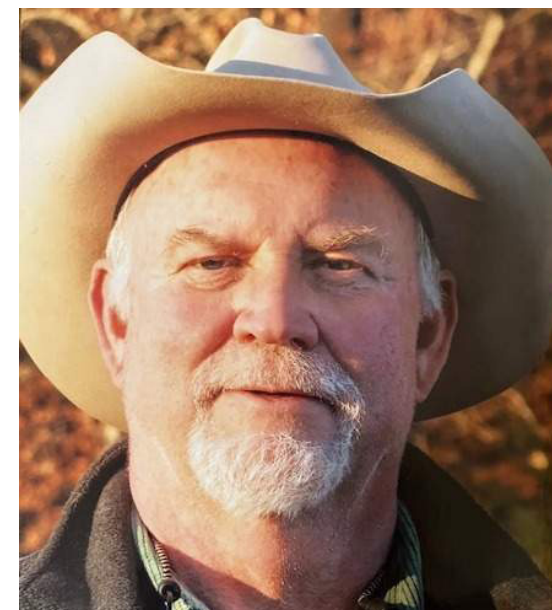


**Colleen Bell and
Veronica Mraz**

**Colleen Bell is the Deputy
Tribal Historic Preservation
Officer with Osage Nation.**

**Veronica Mraz is a research
archaeologist at the
University of Iowa Office
of the State Archaeologist.**

On March 15, 2023, the archaeological world dimmed with the passing of Don Henry. Tributes have poured forth since then, many focusing on Don's incredible contributions to Jordanian archaeology. While these are all true, Don was also highly active on the Southern Plains of North America. It is hard to find any area in Oklahoma where Don's boots and FJ were not felt. Most projects in Oklahoma include either a site Don recorded or a survey he conducted. During Don's large-scale Cultural Resource Management (CRM) surveys in the late 1970s and early 1980s along Birch Creek, he was adamant about including a new form of archaeological analysis: geoarchaeology. Because of this insistence, we all have a better understanding of what the environment used to look like in Oklahoma. While Don recognized the importance of keeping up with modern technology, he knew better than to always rely on it in the field. He would



**Dr. Donald (Don) Henry
1945-2023**

instill in his students the skills necessary to have low-tech backup methods for when modern technology ultimately fails, which of course, is when you need it the most. And sometimes, the low-tech answer is the best solution, like using a standardized woven basket to calculate house volume size.

However, recording sites is not what made Don a good archaeologist. It was his incredible desire to teach the next generations of archaeologists. As a professor at the University of Tulsa, Don recognized the extreme importance of students getting hands-on training. Learning from a written document will only get you so far. In all of Don's graduate classes, he found ways to include hands-on activities, whether working with actual artifacts, making maps around campus, or taking field trips around Green Country. But even that is not Don's most significant contribution. As an advisor, he always made time for his students. They never felt like they were an afterthought or that they had to compete in order to get his time. Anyone who has ever been in a graduate program before knows that school is hard enough without others trying to make it harder for each other. When a problem would arise, instead of saying, "Here's a problem, now you have to deal with it," it would always be, "Here's a problem, and this is how we are going to deal with it." Don's unique ability to take the most panicked graduate student and calm them down within a matter of minutes was one of the rarest gifts we have ever encountered and experienced. Don will be truly missed. We are also saddened to know that his dream of training marmots to aid in archaeological surveys will not be realized by him. The next time you are in a pub, please raise a black and tan and take a moment to think of Don.

Q & A



Artifact found in Oklahoma.

Q: Are natural disasters visible in the archaeological record?

A: Yes! Floods, droughts, and earthquakes are only a few examples of natural disasters that leave an archaeological footprint. Archaeology can reveal how people dealt with the aftermath. Think Pompei or the 1905 Snyder tornado!

Q: Where do artifacts go after a project?

A: Before any professional project occurs, archaeologists must have an agreement with a repository, or a place that curates collections and makes them accessible to archaeologists, descendant communities, and the public. In Oklahoma, this is typically the [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#). Artifacts can also be returned to descendant communities.

Q: What are examples of well known archaeological sites in Oklahoma?

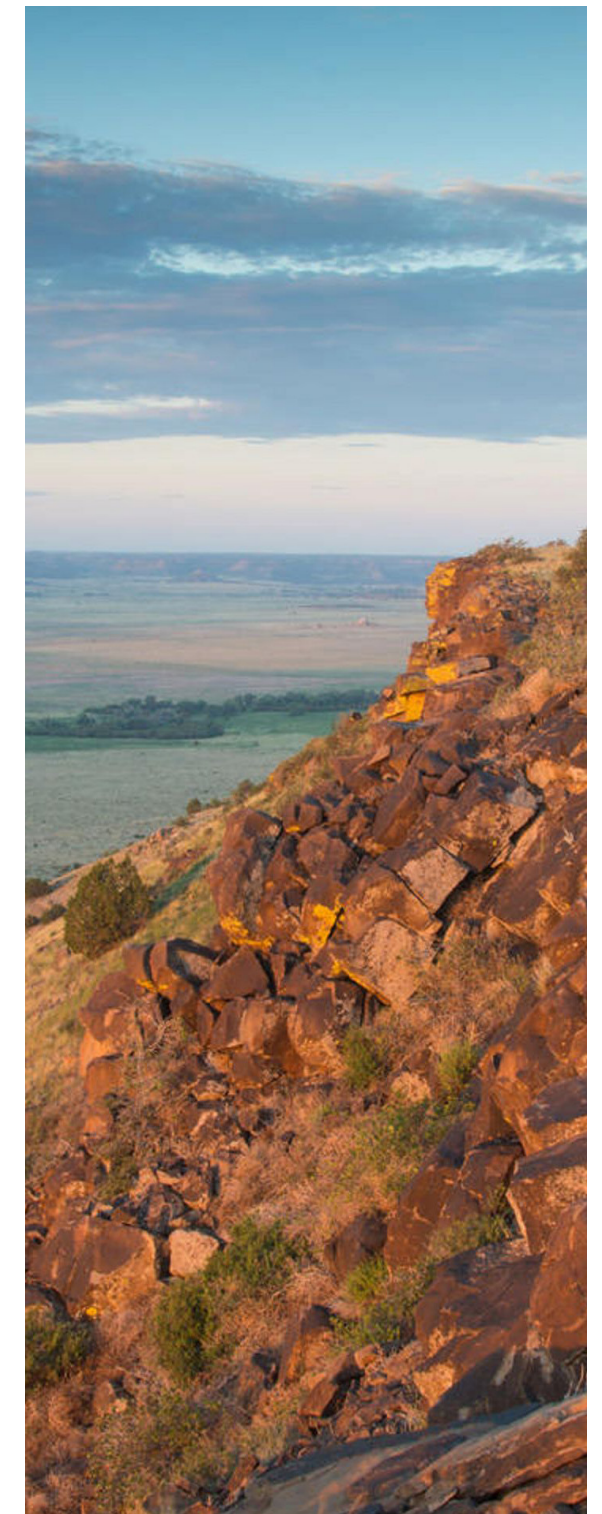
A: Oklahoma has a rich and diverse history that has left behind thousands of archaeological sites, but several well-known locations include [Spiro Mounds](#), a Mississippian site made by the ancestors of Caddoan-speaking peoples, and [Honey Springs Battlefield](#), the location of the largest Civil War battle in Oklahoma. For more information about history across the state, visit the [Oklahoma Historical Society's website](#).

Q: What are some potential challenges archaeologists could face in Oklahoma?

A: Some of the biggest challenges are dealing with extreme weather conditions or knowing who to contact for fieldwork permissions.

Q: How do archaeologists get permission for fieldwork?

A: Archaeologists typically ask permission for surveys and excavations from landowners, government agencies, tribal nations, and/or descendant communities.




Black Mesa, Oklahoma.





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