

# PAC Newsletter

Fall 2025

Volume 37, No. 2

## PENNSYLVANIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants"*  
-Sir Issac Newton

Dear PAC Members,

As my first message to our membership as President, I want to begin by acknowledging the outstanding work and tireless dedication of my predecessor, Ira Beckerman. During his two terms as President of PAC, Ira put the organization on solid footing, grew our membership, and reinvigorated the council. Any future success we achieve will be due in no small part to Ira's remarkable leadership.

While many of you already know me, I'd like to share a bit about my background. I grew up in western Pennsylvania, north of Pittsburgh, and spent summers in Clarion and on my grandparents' farm in Jefferson County. With a lifelong love of the outdoors and history, majoring in Anthropology/Archaeology at the University of Pittsburgh was a natural choice. After college, I worked as a "shovel bum" for several CRM firms in Pittsburgh and spent time as a seasonal archaeologist in the Allegheny National Forest. It was during graduate school at IUP that I first became involved with PAC. Through my Master's work, I learned the importance of professional societies and the responsibility we have as archaeologists—regardless of where we work—to contribute to them. Organizations like PAC and the SPA enable us to advocate for our shared heritage, support our partners in government, and raise awareness about the sensitivity of archaeological resources.

After graduate school, I left Pennsylvania for a time before returning, first to Harrisburg and then back to Pittsburgh. I currently serve as Cultural Resource Director at SWCA Environmental Consultants, which allows me to work throughout Pennsylvania and the surrounding region. While I consider myself a historic archaeologist with a particular interest in industrial archaeology, I function as a generalist in my day-to-day work. I also greatly enjoy the regulatory side of archaeology and consider myself a bit of a CRM policy enthusiast.

In my 18 years as a professional archaeologist, I can't recall a time

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with as many challenges facing our discipline as today. From a shifting regulatory landscape and rapid development across the Commonwealth to unprecedented workforce challenges, the role PAC plays—and the positive impact we can have—is critical to helping professional archaeology address these issues in Pennsylvania.

My objectives as President are threefold, and progress in one area will lead to success in the others:

1. Build on the initiatives Ira established, especially our engagement with federally recognized tribal nations
2. Grow PAC's membership
3. Advocate for professional archaeologists working in Pennsylvania.

On behalf of the board, and in recognition of the tremendous work Ira and previous board members have done for PAC, I encourage you to stay engaged with the organization. In the coming months, we'll be seeking volunteers to join PAC's committees and help form new ones to meet the current challenges facing our profession. I look forward to working with the Board and all of you to ensure that professional archaeology in Pennsylvania continues to thrive during these challenging times.

If you have any questions about the organization or would like to get more involved, please feel free to email me at [jlibbon@swca.com](mailto:jlibbon@swca.com).

Sincerely,  
Jon

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## PAC UPDATES

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### Consulting Party Committee

*Lisa Dugas, Big Pine Consultants LLC*

The PAC Consulting Party Committee (CPC) has three (3) members. Current members include Lisa Dugas, MA, RPA; Chris Kula, MA, RPA; and Mark Durante, RPA. If you have questions about the committee or want to volunteer, please contact Jon Libbon or Lisa Dugas.

PAC participates as a consulting party in the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1969, as amended. The CPC collaborates with state and federal agencies, including the Pennsylvania (PA) State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA). PAC also collaborates with cultural resource management firms, Native American Tribes, and other consulting parties to develop agreement documents, such as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and Programmatic Agreements (PA).

#### Carroll Cabin:

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is moving forward with the rehabilitation of Carroll Cabin, a historic structure dating back to the 1770s. The property was the focus

of a 2017 MA thesis by Katherine Peresolak, then a graduate student at Indiana University of PA (IUP). Her research determined that the log portion of the house contained elements that dated to between 1770 and 1775, making it one of the oldest standing structures in southwestern PA.

After determining its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, the agency developed several design concepts to restore and adapt the cabin for public rental use. Consulting parties were asked to weigh in on these designs, as well as unresolved elements like roofing materials, wall treatments, and exterior siding. Input was also sought on pricing, volunteer support, and programming ideas to ensure the cabin's long-term use and care.

### Membership Report

*Jonathan Burns, Juniata College*

Hello and happy Fall, Fellow PAC Members! It is that time of year when we at PAC review our current membership numbers, send out reminders about dues, and encourage you to invite your professional colleagues to join our organization. Remember that many hands make light work, and we surely have some work ahead of us this coming year! Any member of good standing may serve as an officer or a board member. Terms last for two years and new officers are installed during the PAC spring meeting. Nominations are solicited by the Nominating and Elections Committee during the fall of an election year.

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As you help to spread the word that we have three membership options (Professional, Student, and Sustaining), also let them know that becoming a member of PAC is a straightforward process. To apply for membership, please send a completed membership form and a CV or resume documenting that you meet PAC's membership requirements, as outlined in the constitution, either to the Vice President's email: jonathanburns915@gmail.com

Or via mail:  
Dr. Jonathan Burns (PAC VP)  
C/O Juniata College  
1700 Moore Street  
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Keeping up to date on membership dues is even more straightforward using the online link at [www.pennarchcouncil.org](http://www.pennarchcouncil.org)!

Please note that PAC is on social media (Facebook and Linked in) where we announce opportunities and information pertinent to advocating for archaeology here in Pennsylvania—so please feel free to follow along and be part of the conversation!

Looking forward to working with you this year!

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## AGENCY UPDATES

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### PA SHPO

*Justin McKeel and Kim Sebestyen*

#### Staff Updates

PA SHPO is excited to announce two new archaeology staff members. Clare Connelly joined SHPO in August as our new western region archaeology reviewer. Clare was most recently with the National Park Service. With the addition of Clare, Kristen Walczesky is now reviewing the central region, and I (Justin) am reviewing the eastern region. Nicholas Zeitlin also joined the SHPO in July as our new Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey coordinator. Nicholas was most recently with FEMA.

As many of you have heard, the former Section of Archaeology of the State Museum of Pennsylvania has been integrated into the SHPO. The Archaeology Curation section is now a part of the PA SHPO's Environmental Review Division. This section will be supervised by the Senior Archaeology Curator, when that role is filled.

As we work to integrate the staff into the PA SHPO team, we are also working to integrate our processes. Please be on the lookout for updated related guidance in the future. The Archaeology Curation section will maintain offices in their current workspace. The Archaeology Curation section will also continue to collaborate with the State Museum of Pennsylvania, and the State Museum will continue to house PHMC's archaeological collections.

#### PA-SHARE Updates

Roll out of PA-SHARE 2.0 is nearly complete. Keep an eye on the [www.pahistoricpreservation.com](http://www.pahistoricpreservation.com) blog for a post about some changes to entering artifacts on archaeological site records in PA-SHARE.

### Archaeology Month Learn at Lunchtime (Virtual Workshops)

The State Museum of Pennsylvania and State Historic Preservation Office will host a Virtual Archaeology Month series with four online sessions in October. Speakers Melanie Mayhew, Kelley Berliner, Steven Brann, and Brian Fritz will highlight current events taking place in the field of Pennsylvania archaeology and will explore some of the efforts to preserve these unique resources for the future.

October 3 – Melanie Mayhew, curator in the SHPO Archaeology Curation Section, *Learning to See: Rock Art, Cave Art, and Stone Landscapes in Pennsylvania*

October 10 – Kelley Berliner, Eastern Regional Director of the Archaeological Conservancy, *Quarries, Fort, and Beyond: The Archaeological Conservancy's Preservation Efforts in Pennsylvania*

October 17 – Steven Brann, Principal Investigator at Stantec, *Protecting Civil War Treasures at Gettysburg National Military Park*

October 24 – Brian Fritz, Principal Investigator at Quemahoning, LLC, *How Buried Soil Horizons Form and Their Importance to Archaeology*

Registration is required to attend each free virtual program. Programs will begin at 12:15 p.m. and last approximate 20 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session.

For more information or to register, visit <https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology/>.

**2025 ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH**  
VIRTUAL  
**LEARN AT LUNCHTIME**

**MELANIE MAYHEW**  
OCTOBER 3  
LEARNING TO SEE:  
ROCK ART, CAVE ART, AND STONE  
LANDSCAPES IN PENNSYLVANIA

**KELLEY BERLINER**  
OCTOBER 10  
QUARRIES, FORT, AND BEYOND:  
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVANCY'S  
PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

**STEVEN BRANN**  
OCTOBER 17  
PROTECTING CIVIL WAR  
TREASURES AT GETTYSBURG  
NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

**BRIAN FRITZ**  
OCTOBER 24  
HOW BURIED SOIL HORIZONS  
FORM AND THEIR IMPORTANCE  
TO ARCHAEOLOGY

PRESENTATIONS BEGIN AT 12:15 PM AND LAST  
APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES FOLLOWED BY A  
QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED TO ATTEND THESE FREE, VIRTUAL PROGRAMS  
VISIT [STATEMUSEUMPA.ORG/PA-ARCHAEOLOGY](https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology) TO REGISTER NOW

State Historic Preservation Office  
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

The State Museum of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

### Precontact Probability Model

Penn State University recently completed a re-evaluation of the Pennsylvania Statewide Precontact Probability Model (PA SPPM) under contract to the PA SHPO. This report, interim task reports, and supporting documentation are available in PA-SHARE under report number 2025PR00305. To steal from their abstract, “[Penn State University] performed a quantitative re-evaluation of PA SPPM’s predictive accuracy using data from the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS) and generated performance metrics for comparison with those

published in the original study. Our conclusion is that PA SPPM has performed adequately on a statewide level, but that this scale also conceals considerable regional variation in model performance. Some regions exhibit above-average accuracy and sensitivity, while others are near-random. Overall, PA SPPM remains a useful tool that has likely recouped its initial cost several times over. However, the total loss of its codebase renders its results an inert record that cannot be iterated or improved upon.”

PA SHPO will be updating our data quality statement for the precontact probability model soon to reflect the

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results of this re-analysis. We also hope to add a data layer in PA-SHARE to illustrate the results of Penn State's analysis by region. We were already planning an update to the Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations in Pennsylvania, tentatively planned to be out early 2026, and sections related to the precontact probability model will be updated to reflect this most recent analysis by Penn State.

## PHAST

*Susanne Haney, PennDOT*

The Pennsylvania Highway Archaeological Survey Team (PHAST) had a busy 2025 summer field season. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) Applied Archaeology M. A. candidate, Eva Miller, took on and settled into her new role as PHAST field director. Eva graduated from St. Mary's College summa cum laude with a B. A. in Anthropology and a minor in Museum Studies. IUP graduate students Heidi Hepburn, Brenden Patterson, and Emily Briggs comprised the 2025 PHAST crew as PennDOT Science and Technology Interns (STIs). Heidi, a second-year M. A. student in IUP's Applied Archaeology program, graduated from Dickinson college summa cum laude with a B. A. in Anthropology and Archaeology. Brenden, a second-year M. A. student in IUP's Applied Archaeology program, graduated cum laude from Iowa State University with a B. A. in Anthropology. Emily Briggs, a second-year M. A. student in IUP's Applied Archaeology program, graduated magna cum laude from California University of Pennsylvania (CUP) (now Penn West University) with a B. A. in Sport Management and with honors from CUP with a M. S. in Exercise Science & Health with an emphasis in Sport Psychology. Emily is currently employed as a Navigator/Student Success Advocate at IUP, but has decided to follow her passion and work towards pursuing a career in archaeology.

With a line-up of slightly larger and more involved projects, we immediately jumped headlong into fieldwork. The 2025 list of projects included some with geomorphology studies and geophysical survey, and most of the projects either had potential for deep alluvial soils, a high potential for identifying sites, and/or the potential for high artifact counts and complex stratigraphy associated with Historic-Era sites. Phase I survey was completed for five PennDOT projects: two in Jefferson County, one in Snyder County, one in Tioga County, and one in Greene County. For the Greene County project, PHAST assisted Dr. Frank Vento with ground penetrating radar (GPR), conductivity, and magnetometer surveys in order to identify potential features associated with a recently razed early 20th century residence and springhouse. PHAST also participated in a scoping field view and geomorphology study for a sixth project in Clarion County for which we were slated to complete

Phase I fieldwork but were unable to as we are still waiting on a well-defined APE. Fieldwork for this project may take place this fall. During the 2025 season, PHAST excavated a total of 57 shovel test pits and 2 one-meter square test units that resulted in the recovery of over 930 artifacts, the finding of two Historic-Era features, and the identification of three sites: two Historic-Era and one Pre-Contact with an Historic-Era component. All but four of the 930+ artifacts were historic.

As always, included as part of the program are opportunities to broaden their experiences beyond doing Phase I CRM work. We managed to fit in an extended flintknapping session that included learning flake morphology and some basic lithic analysis. PHAST also spent two days in District 6-0 where they got a tour of the state-of-the art Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC). That was followed by a tour of the I-95 Archaeology Center. The crew was amazed by the collections there, which represent a minute portion of the 2,000,000+ artifacts that have been recovered from this ongoing project <https://diggingi95.com/project-information/project-overview/>. As is often the case, one of the highlights of the summer was participating in investigations at the Friendly Fire location as part of the 2025 Veterans Archaeology Program. This year was even more special due to Fort Ligonier's official public announcement that the Friendly Fire site location has been confirmed. With this announcement came a multitude of site visitors including journalists and news reporters, which provided the crew a good taste of public archaeology. This fall, as time permits around classes, the crew will work on wrapping up the reports and processing the artifacts for curation at the State Museum.



*The 2025 PHAST crew. From left to right: Heidi Hepburn, Emily Briggs, Brenden Patterson, and Eva Miller.*



*DCNR's Cultural Resources Field Survey Teams at Washington Crossing Historic Park (Left to Right: Abdul Jones [DHRT Field Director], John DeMann, Matthew Valenti, David Hay, Amanda Filmyer [Principal Investigator], Nathan Eller, Lauren Metzger, Emilie Kopf, and Isaiah Cullum [CRC Field Director]). Photo Credit: Kim McCarty.*

## **DCNR**

*Angie Jaillet-Wentling*

### **General Cultural Resources Program Updates**

To date, a total of 131 individuals at DCNR or consultants/contractors to DCNR (Student Conservation Association [SCA] and Indiana University of Pennsylvania [IUP]) have been delegated under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide cultural resources review at DCNR. DCNR's Cultural Resources Program and PA SHPO hosted a training in March 2025 for DCNR/IUP/SCA staff to take the two-part training module for delegates under the MOU. So far in calendar year 2025, 91 projects from the Bureaus of Forestry (76), State Parks (8), Facility, Design & Construction (3), Consultants (2), and other Agencies (2) have been processed as exemptions or findings of effect through this agreement. Many of our projects remain ongoing or are managed by consultants/other agencies for specific projects. It is highly recommended to consult with DCNR CRPs in advance of project submissions!

DCNR CR Staff, Angie Jaillet-Wentling, Joe Baker, and IUP Principal Investigator Amanda Filmyer, attended

and participated in sessions/forums at the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology and Pennsylvania Archaeological Council meetings in April 2025. In March/April 2025, DCNR hosted a historic cemetery preservation workshop as a training opportunity for DCNR staff, IUP's DCNR Heritage Resources Team (DHRT), and PA Outdoor Corps/SCA staff, and volunteers. The workshop's instructors, Dennis Montagna (NPS) and Joe Ferranini (Consultant), trained over 30 individuals at Boyd Big Tree Preserve's Stroh Cemetery over the course of three to five days in the basics of historic preservation, maintenance, and repair of cemeteries in state parks and forests. The success of these preservation trades workshops (October 2023 – wooden window repair and masonry; June 2024 – log preservation; April 2025 – cemetery cleaning and repair) has increased the demand for these types of training opportunities. The next offering is proposed to be a cemetery/headstone preservation workshop in the fall of 2025.

### **PA Outdoor Corps' Cultural Resources Crew**

In partnership with the SCA, the PA Outdoor Corps will be staffing its Cultural Resources Crew (CRC) in early 2026. So stay tuned! The CRC provides support to the DCNR CR program by helping to preserve, interpret,

and manage the shared public heritage of all people to the benefit of future generations, while also providing training and mentoring to aspiring archaeologists and preservationists helping them build successful careers in land and resource management.

The CRC is led by its veteran crew member, now leader, Isaiah Cullum. The CRC consists of: Emilie Kopf (BA, Art History), Nathan Eller (BA, History/Archaeology), and Lauren Metzger (BA, Archaeology). Operating since March 2025, the crew has completed over 15 individual projects ranging from Phase I archaeological survey to historic wooden window repair to cemetery preservation to historic document digitization to excavation to geophysical survey and curation. In addition to projects, the crew members are encouraged and supported in shadowing opportunities with professionals in various fields ranging from trades to conservators to curators to professional CRM practitioners. Their season ends in November, so they are planned to complete another 5-6 projects before the end of the year!

### **DCNR Heritage Resources Team/Indiana University of Pennsylvania Inter-Agency Agreement**

In July 2024, DCNR and IUP entered into a four-year contract to support DCNR's cultural resources field program. Under the current agreement, a Principal Investigator position (Amanda Filmyer, M.A., RPA), a Graduate Assistantship/Field Director position (Abdul Jones), and a summertime student field crew is hired through IUP's Archaeological Services (overseen by Dr. Bill Chadwick). Amanda serves as Principal investigator overseeing and coordinating the field and lab operations of both DCNR CR crews, PAOC CRC and DHRT. DHRT's crew consists of undergraduate and graduate students at IUP: David Hay, John DeMann, and Matthew Valenti. Operating from May to August 2025, the crew completed over 9 individual projects ranging from Phase I archaeological survey to cemetery preservation to metal-detecting to test unit excavation to geophysical survey and curation.

In addition, both crews helped support DCNR's Untold Stories initiative by supporting and pursuing research and investigation into sites like: Fort Ligonier's Friendly Fire Incident (working with students, veterans, and volunteers), Laurel Ridge State Park's Laurel Hill Settlement (cemetery and excavations of homesteads), Penn-Roosevelt State Park's Penn-Roosevelt Camp, Pymatuning State Park's Westford camp, and Susquehannock State Forest's Bark Shanty camp - all segregated Black Civilian Conservation Corps Camps (excavations and programming; <https://youtu.be/-gCojdgmqQY>), and research/StoryMap development into Ralph Brock (first formally-trained African



*CRC at Penn-Roosevelt CCC Camp (vicinity of Latrine/Mess Hall Buildings) (Left to Right: Emilie Kopf, Nathan Eller, and Lauren Metzger). Photo Credit: Amanda Filmyer.*

American forester). To say their contribution to our work is significant is to put it mildly!

### **Upcoming Dates/Events**

On October 4, 2025, DCNR's Bureaus of State Parks and Forestry will be hosting a historical and cultural program at M.K. Goddard State Park near Sandy Lake in Mercer County, Pennsylvania. Echoes Across the Water will feature Stories and Artifacts from Mercer County's Past where attendees of all ages can learn about history through exhibits, activities, and history hikes. DCNR's CR program and crews will be there so come check us out!

As we work towards further developing our cultural resources program at DCNR, we look forward to working with other partners in preservation to ensure that our actions align with our intent. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding DCNR's Cultural Resources Program, please contact Angie Jaillet-Wentling via email at [ajailletwe@pa.gov](mailto:ajailletwe@pa.gov) or by phone at 717.798.2753.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH AND OTHER EVENTS

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### Camp Security Presentation

**Penn State York Graham Center, Polli Hall  
Thursday, October 23, 12:15 – 1:15 pm**

Please join the Friends of Camp Security as they welcome archaeologist John Crawmer to give a presentation on the history and ongoing excavations of York's Camp Security, a Revolutionary War era prisoner-of-war camp that held upwards of 800-1200 British soldiers from 1781-1783. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided!



### Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology (CNEHA) Annual Conference

**Hotel West & Main, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania  
Friday, November 7 – Sunday, November 9**



The Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology (CNEHA) is excited to hold its annual conference at the Hotel West & Main in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, November 7-9, 2025. This year's theme is titled *Ahead of the Curve: Innovations in Archaeological Theory and Practice*. Tours and workshops centering on archaeological sites, methods, and artifact identification will be held on Friday, November 7. Lectures and poster sessions will take place on Saturday, November 8 and Sunday, November 9. A special open house of the I-95 Archaeology Center also being offered on Sunday, November 9, and showcases the archaeology conducted for PennDOT's I-95 Girard Avenue Interchange Improvement Project. We look forward to your attendance. Registration and additional information can be found at <https://cneha.org/conference.html>.

### Archaeology of an African American Settlement in Johnstown

**Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Richland Campus, 101 Community College Way, Johnstown  
Saturday, November 15, 1 – 4 pm**

This is an opportunity to see the results of the archaeological investigation at Browns Farm in Laurel Ridge State Park. This event is free and open to the public! The presentation will consist of:

- Meet the archaeologist
- Learn why we are excavating this site
- Overview of the results from the excavation
- Artifact Display
- Q&A

Registration is encouraged but not required. Please see the QR code on the flyer at the back of the newsletter.

## Upcoming Conferences and Events

Compiled by Gary Coppock, Skelly and Loy, Inc., A Terracon Company

Organization/Event	Location	Date	Web Address
<b>PHMC Archaeology Month</b> Lecture: <i>Protecting Civil War Treasures at Gettysburg National Military Park</i>	online	October 17	<a href="https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology/">https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology/</a>
<b>Archaeology Day @ Meadowcroft Rockshelter</b>	Avella, PA	October 18	<a href="https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/event/archaeology-day-2025/">https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/event/archaeology-day-2025/</a>
<b>PAC Fall Business Meeting</b>	online	October 24	<a href="http://www.pennarchcouncil.org/">http://www.pennarchcouncil.org/</a>
<b>PHMC Archaeology Month</b> Lecture: <i>How Buried Soil Horizons Form and Their Importance to Archaeology</i>	online	October 24	<a href="https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology/">https://statemuseumpa.org/pa-archaeology/</a>
<b>37<sup>th</sup> Annual Jumonville French &amp; Indian War Seminar</b>	Hopwood, PA	October 31 - November 1	<a href="http://braddockroadpa.org/">http://braddockroadpa.org/</a>
<b>Eastern States Archaeological Federation (ESAF)</b>	Lake George, NY	November 13-16	<a href="http://esaf-archeology.org/">http://esaf-archeology.org/</a>
<b>Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology (CNEHA)</b>	Conshohocken, PA	November 7-9	<a href="https://cneha.org/">https://cneha.org/</a>
<b>Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)</b>	Detroit, MI	January 7-10, 2026	<a href="https://sha.org/">https://sha.org/</a>
<b>Middle Atlantic Archaeological Council (MAAC)</b>	Gettysburg, PA	March 11-15, 2026	<a href="https://maac10.wildapricot.org/">https://maac10.wildapricot.org/</a>
<b>Society for American Archaeology (SAA)</b>	San Francisco, CA	April 29-May 3, 2026	<a href="https://www.saa.org/">https://www.saa.org/</a>
<b>PAC Spring Business Meeting and Symposium</b>	DuBois, PA	April 10, 2026	<a href="http://www.pennarchcouncil.org/">http://www.pennarchcouncil.org/</a>
<b>Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology (SPA)</b>	DuBois, PA	April 10-12, 2026	<a href="https://www.pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com">https://www.pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com</a>
<b>Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA)</b>	Norfolk, VA	May 28-31, 2026	<a href="https://www.sia-web.org/">https://www.sia-web.org/</a>

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## RESEARCH UPDATES

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*The 2025 Veterans Archaeology Program Crew.*

### **2025 Friendly Fire Incident Project, Westmoreland County**

*Jonathan Burns, Juniata College*

The 2025 Veterans Archaeology Program (VAP) was conducted during the second week of July to document the location of Friendly Fire Incident of November 12, 1758, involving two Virginia regiments after an initial battle between George Mercer's troops and the opposing French marines and their Native American allies. The week-long battlefield investigation was based out of Fort Ligonier and carried out on private property, located 1.5 miles west of the fort on a tributary of Loyalhanna Creek named Two-Mile Run.

VAP is a collaboration between our research team and Fort Ligonier's staff—the purpose is to involve military veterans in historically significant battlefield archaeology providing professional training and creating the opportunity to aid in the discovery. Additional volunteer archaeologists included Scott Shaffer (PennDOT), Scott Padamonsky (Tetra Tech), and Susanne Haney (PennDOT). Archaeological excavation teams were provided by PennDOT's PHAST crew: Eva Miller (field supervisor), Emily

Briggs, Brenden Patterson, Heidi Hepburn. The IUP DHRT crew consisted of: Abdul Jones (field director), David Hay, John DeMann, and Matthew Valenti. The PAOC CRC crew consisted of: Isaiah Cullum (field director), Nathan Eller, Emilie Kopf, and Lauren Metzger. Geophysical services were provided by Jim Stuby (Stuby Subsurface, LLC). Volunteer Chris Barner assisted with recording and site mapping.

VAP program veteran instructors included David "Ranger Dave" Williams, Mark Beckler, and Mike Strausner. The field crew was joined by Dr. David Preston, a professor of military history and a subject expert at The Citadel in Charleston, SC. This season's military veteran program participants included: Jeff Brock, James Cawley, Vance Dunbar, Jason Hartman, Yvonne Hartman, Sandra Johnson, Chuck Leseman, Steve Levin, Asa McQueen, Jack Merchant, Chris Sapolu, John Stango, Kathleen Swaim, Eureka Vaughn, and Greg Williams.

The objective of the 2025 VAP session was twofold: 1) to further recover and document battlefield artifacts during the metal detection survey, and 2) to document the construction of the property's original barn foundation with the excavation of test units. A total of

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fifty-seven artifacts were recovered during metal detector survey. Five test units were excavated; two of them were excavated to test K-9 hits and/or geophysical anomalies, and three targeted the stone foundation of the barn ruins.

Arriving on site early in the week, the core team (J. Burns, S. Padamonsky, D. Preston, D. Williams, M. Strausner, and J. Stuby) focused on gridwork, and the layout of test units aimed at better evaluating previously collected geophysical data. The team received excavation assistance from the DCNR and PennDOT crews on our second day in the field to our fifth, with supervision by archaeologists Angela Jaillet-Wentling and Susanne Haney. Five GPR grids aimed at refining the IUP GPR data were collected using 1500 MHz antenna and analyzed in the field by Jim Stuby to guide the investigations. Test unit excavation continued until the weekend when the balance of the military veteran participants arrived for the weekend program for training and intensive metal detector survey.

Although the project began in 2022, it took until this season to amass the data to convince a panel of military historians that the site had been located. Fort Ligonier and the team officially announced the battlefield's discovery this past July with a press release, followed by a site tour, and finally a formal dinner presentation of the findings. The 3.5 hours of footage was aired on C-SPAN's webpage (see link below). Visitors can see many of the artifacts recovered during the project on display at Fort Ligonier (200 S Market St, Ligonier, PA 15658) in their updated Washington Gallery.

Lastly, we were saddened to learn that our VAP team member and good friend, Retired U.S. Army Colonel Mark M. Beckler, died in a diving accident on 9/20/25. A valued leader, he was a tireless advocate for involving military veterans in archaeology—Mark will be dearly missed.

[Web link to July 11, 2025 | America 250 | George Washington's French and Indian War "Friendly Fire" Incident – 1758.](#)

## **A Preliminary Update on the 2025 Investigations at the Shoop Paleindian Site**

*Kurt W. Carr, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Retired; Joseph A. M. Gingerich, Ohio University; Sharon McDonald, Robert Ronngren, Joseph P. Vitolo, Friends of Fort Halifax*

The Shoop Paleindian site (36Da20) is the largest Paleindian site in Pennsylvania and one of the largest non-quarry sites in the Middle Atlantic region. Witthoft

(1952) characterized the site as an Early Paleindian hunting and processing camp, and the Onondaga chert quarries of western New York as the source of 98% of the artifacts. Based on an analysis of over 100 fluted projectile points, it is thought to be a single component manifestation, covering a limited number of visits during a relatively short time frame within the Early Paleindian period (circa 12,700 – 13,000 calendar years ago). The lingering problems are community patterning and chronology; specifically, when was it occupied – before or during the extreme cold of the Younger Dryas episode; and how was the site occupied, the type of social groups and, especially the number of occupations/visits. The answers to these issues have implications for the nature of Early Paleindian adaptive strategies; how were these people exploiting the environment?

Witthoft (1952) identified eleven artifact clusters situated on slightly elevated areas in plowed fields. Unfortunately, these were never mapped, and their location, size, and respective artifact assemblages are unknown. Fogelman (1986) conducted interviews with collectors and added several more clusters increasing the number to over twenty, covering 38 acres. Do they represent separate visits by extended families as part of the seasonal round as suggested by Witthoft or do these concentrations represent a combination of habitation spaces and associated processing zones from a more limited number of visits, possibly five or seven, by large social groups?

Beginning in 2021, a group of avocational and professional volunteers focused on the investigation of an unplowed woodlot situated on a rocky, north facing slope along the southern edge of the site to address these issues. The property is part of a farm owned by Scott and Theresa Miller. They have been very cooperative hosts.

Over the past five field seasons systematically placed shovel test pit (STP) transects have been employed at 5 meter and 2.5-m intervals. This strategy has been immensely successful for generally assessing the location of activity areas at Shoop, locating two large artifact clusters along with numerous smaller clusters. Block A was located near the base of the slope on a colluvial bench at the edge of the Miller property. This 3 X 6-meter block excavation recovered 1900 artifacts but few tools. Block B is located 50 meters up slope from Block A and was discovered by an STP containing 133 artifacts. It is approximately 5 by 6 meters in size and is currently being excavated (Figure 1). The plan for 2025 is to finish Block B down through Level 4 and to continue testing around the positive STPs at 2.5-meter intervals.

The soil profile of the wood lot has been studied and described by John Wah, John Stiteler, Dan Wagner



*Shoop site, Block B excavation soil profile, west wall. Isolated rectangular sandstone blocks aligned with the slope are common in the top 10 cm of the Bt1.*

and Brian Fritz. It is generally similar across the hill slope and consists of three main soil horizons (Figure 2):

- A thin dark root mat/A horizon - 0 -7 cm below surface
- A tan sandy silt BE horizon - 7 – 30 cm
- A reddish silty clay Bt1 horizon - 30 - 45+ cm

Based on their studies, this land surface was formed by low energy colluvial deposition. The Bt1 soil is very old, possibly pre-Wisconsin. The BE soil was deposited over the past 18,000 years. This was the land surface occupied by Paleoindians and it has remained stable for the past 13,000 years. There has been very little post depositional horizontal movement of artifacts – essentially, they are lying where they were dropped an estimated 12,700 to 13,000 years ago. Artifact associations, such as refits, strongly support little or no horizontal movement in the assemblage. The Paleoindian living surface is at or within 10 cm of the current surface. However, bioturbation has caused some vertical movement of artifacts of small artifacts. Below the thin root mat/A horizon, the excavation is conducted in 10 cm levels using 1/8-inch screening. Level 4 (situated in a silty clay Bt1) produced 10% of the artifacts but all of these are less than 1 centimeter in size and frequently smaller. Although point proveniencing of artifacts is the ideal, due to the small size of 80% of the artifacts, each one-meter unit is divided into sixteen 25 cm sub-units.

In May and June, we were assisted by the Jack Cresson/Steve Nissly flint knapping team and the Ohio University archaeological field school directed by Joseph Gingerich, Ph.D. Their contributions were greatly appreciated, and they were able to accomplish in five weeks what took us two seasons. Thirty, one-meter units were excavated through Level 3 in Block B and the number of close interval STPs was doubled to 62. Three seasons of work in Block B produced 13

endscrapers, 8 side scrapers, 3 very thin retouched and utilized cutting tools, 2 channel flakes and a late stage biface tip, 2 wedges, 4 small chisel like pieces, a hafted drill, a possible flake shaver midsection in petrified wood and over 2000 flakes (Figure 3). Clearly this was an intensively used activity area. Microwear studies are planned for as many of these tools as can be afforded.

Based on positive STPs excavated in 2023, a 15 meter by 15-meter area east of Block B was blanketed with units at 2.5-meter intervals. The results bracketed an area of high-density units surrounded by low density units (less than three artifacts per STP) (Figure 4). The artifacts have yet to be catalogued but the density of flakes and the number of tools is lower, representing something different than in Block B. Initially, the small number of positive STPs at 5-meter intervals in this



*Endscrapers recovered from Block B.*



*Limace from west of Block B.*

area did not suggest much activity. However, close interval testing demonstrated just the opposite. Considering the intensive activity in Block B, such as hide processing, it is not surprising that smaller, less intense, support activities are located in close proximity. These would have been missed at 10-meter intervals and underappreciated at 5-meter intervals.

At the north end of this cluster of positive STPs, two adjacent STPs produced 34 and 61 artifacts including possible pieces of FCR. This was designated Block G.

The Ohio field school opened a 1 X 3-meter unit to investigate this area, especially the FCR, but the results were inconclusive. After the Ohio field school left, three additional units were placed adjacent to the block. These exposed more rocks, with five broken in place, suggesting that they were fire cracked. Two of these rocks were reddened (Figure 5) on the inside adding to the interpretation that they are fire cracked. Unfortunately, charcoal is practically non-existent so data supporting the hearth or non-hearth scenario is still inconclusive. As of mid-September, the excavation is continuing, so maybe a fluted point, or a beer can will turn up to resolve the problem.

Finally, the eight STPs placed to the west of Block B, each produced one to six artifacts. These are not large numbers but one STP contained a jasper limace (flake shaver), a second produced an endscraper and a third, produced a late stage biface mid-section in an exotic lithic material, possibly metarhyolite. The limace is 9.9 cm long, found lying flat at 27 cm below surface and was truly a spectacular find (Figure 6). Carly Wisner, an Ohio University graduate student currently excavating an early *Homo erectus* site in Africa, was astounded as this was exposed with the flick of her trowel at the end of a very rainy day.

In conclusion, Block B represents a significant activity area that includes a variety of tools, with endscrapers being the most common type. To the east of this block, dispersed over a 10 m X 10 m area, is a group of smaller clusters possibly representing support activities for the work in Block B. The size and artifact

assemblages of the B Block cluster and the smaller clusters to the east can be used as a model to begin to interpret the large area of artifacts collected in the adjacent plowed fields that were not mapped.

Considering the undisturbed context of the artifacts, this woodlot represents an excellent laboratory for the investigation of Paleoindian community patterns. The archaeological context is similar to sites such as Shawnee-Minisink but community patterns at Shoop are far more accessible compared to the deeply buried floors at Shawnee-Minisink.

For the remainder of this season, the goal is to finish the additional units in Block G. If time allows, additional STPs will be placed along the perimeter of the eastern area.

If anyone, especially students and SPA members, are interested in joining us, please contact Kurt Carr at [paleocarr@gmail.com](mailto:paleocarr@gmail.com).

### Acknowledgements

We are incredibly grateful for the cooperation of the landowners, Scott and Theresa Miller. Without their gracious permission allowing access to their land, this new research would not be possible. Ronald Lebo and Robert and Robin Holtzman are adjacent landowners and have also been very supportive.

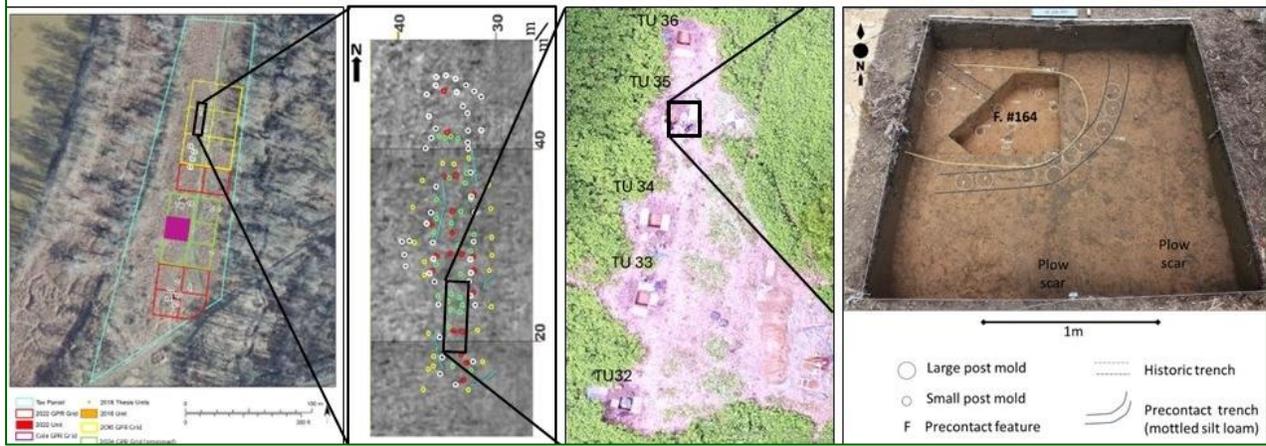
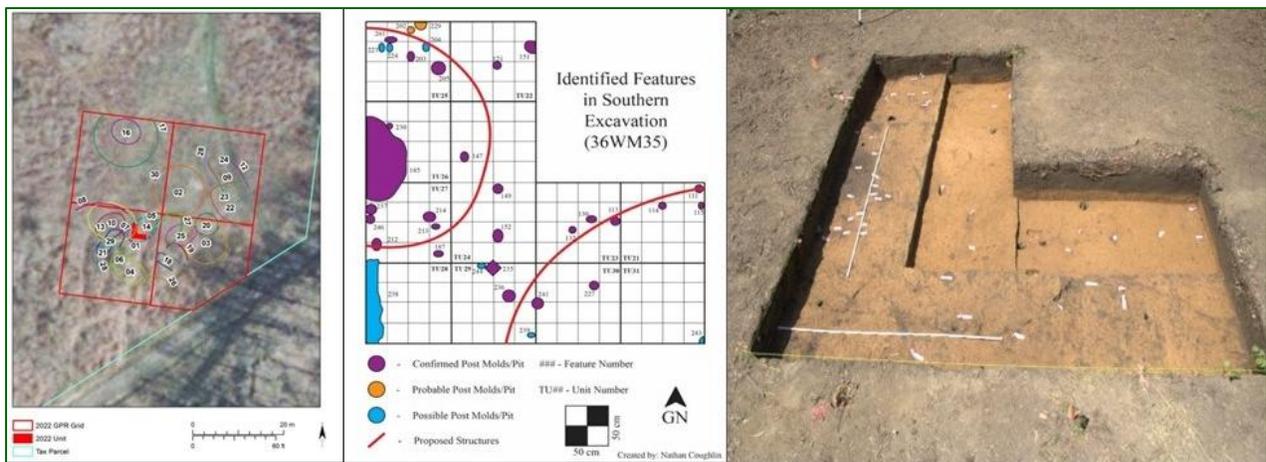
Separate visits to the site by John Wah, Dan Wagner, John Stiteler and Brian Fritz provided basic descriptions of the soil profile and invaluable insights into the pedological history of the site.

Steve Nissly's assistance with analyzing the tools and debitage from a lithic technology perspective was very helpful and educational.

And especially to the dedicated citizen scientists, Joe Vitolo and his wife Vicki, Sharon McDonald, and Robert Ronngren who have consistently contributed to this project over the past five years in so many ways.

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Overlapping circular structures in the southern portion of the Squirrel Hill site (top) and rectangular anomaly in middle portion of the site (bottom).

## Squirrel Hill Site Update

Lara Homsey-Messer, IUP

The 2024 Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) Archaeological Field School took place at the precontact Squirrel Hill Site (36Wm0035) under the supervision of Lara Homsey-Messer and William Chadwick during the summer of 2024. The site is a Middle Monongahela village (ca. 1250-1590) located along the Conemaugh River near the modern town of New Florence, Pennsylvania.

Squirrel Hill has been known to archaeologists since the 1950s. Because it has been heavily collected by local residents for decades, The Archaeological Conservancy (TAC) purchased the property in 2005 in order to protect it from further damage and minimize the loss of data. Despite being listed in the National Register of Historic Places, many research questions remain to be answered, including characterizing the internal arrangement of houses, plaza, and stockades (the latter two which have not yet been located, if indeed they exist); contextualizing its relationship with other Johnston Phase sites; and reconstructing the

paleo-landscape and environmental change through time.

In partnership with TAC and the Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI), the IUP Anthropology Program began to investigate these questions as part of our annual summer Archaeological Field School. Field school students are trained in a combination of traditional archaeological methods—such as shovel testing and test unit excavations—coupled with minimally invasive geophysical survey and geomorphic augering. Artifacts recovered include Conemaugh cord-marked and McFate incised pottery, lithic debitage, copious fire-cracked rock, groundstone, and over 150 features, such as post molds and storage pits. Excavations indicate that occupation of the site was much more complex than initially believed. Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey has revealed a complex array of overlapping circular habitation structures and oval storage pits, suggesting reoccupation of the site over time, as well as rebuilding episodes. Of particular interest, GPR survey also identified a large rectangular structure significantly different in both size and shape from typical Monongahela domestic structures, but consistent in size and shape to a longhouse.

The results of the 2024 field season highlighted three important discoveries. First (1), the site is much larger than previously believed—nearly 8 acres—making Squirrel Hill the largest recorded Monongahela site in western Pennsylvania. It is certainly possible that other Monongahela sites are larger than recorded as well, so while we cannot say it is the largest site, it raises the question of whether some Monongahela site sizes have been underestimated, or if Squirrel Hill site is exceptional in its large size.

Second (2), AMS dates suggest that the site has multiple components: two Middle Monongahela occupations—one conforming to the known Late Middle Monongahela Johnston Phase (1450–1590 AD), the other reflecting an Early Middle Monongahela phase (1250–1450 AD.)—and an ephemeral Middle Woodland occupation (ca. 400–550 AD). AMS dates also indicate possible occupation after 1600 AD, though no European goods have been recovered. The village appears to have begun in the south, based on the earliest dates and proximity to two Middle Woodland sites immediately south of the site, then grew northward over time, sandwiched between a paleochannel to the west and another drainage to the east.

Third (3), ground truthing of the rectangular GPR anomaly identified in 2016—a possible Haudenosaunee longhouse—confirmed that the structure is precontact and is characterized by a domestic assemblage of lithics, fire-cracked rock, and ceramics. The material culture is consistent with the Monongahela Cultural Tradition, although the structure size and shape is not. Unfortunately, no charcoal was recovered for AMS dating. Artifacts density was exceptionally light, and individual artifacts quite small (<2cm), suggesting that the structure was cleaned before abandonment. A truncated B horizon below the plow zone suggests that historic plowing has obliterated the former land surface.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, each field season seems to leave us with more questions than answers, but, of course, that is half the challenge of archaeology. Our final season, tentatively set for 2027, will focus on finding the central plaza and/or site stockade (if indeed they exist), filling in the gaps in GPR survey in order to estimate population, and getting a better understanding of cultural amalgamation and/or cohabitation at the site. We anticipate that many master's and undergraduate theses will be directed toward answering these questions in the years to come!



*Reconstruction of Squirrel Hill landform from the 3.2 ft Digital Elevation Model (left) and members of the 2024 IUP Archaeological Field School (right).*

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## THE BACK PAGE

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### Mystery Artifact

Kimberly Sebestyen, PHMC

This unusual artifact in the Fred Veigh collection has been entered into the PHMC on-line collections (Argus: Collections - Object (sydneyplus.com – Object number 36WM0022/1). It was recovered at the Hendricks Creek Site (36WM0022), a multi-component site that contains Early Archaic and Woodland period projectile points as well as 19th & 20th century artifacts.



### What's It??

The small brass disc stamped “SAMPSON BRASS PLUGS” “PAT.APR.19.98.SEP.5.99” is the cap portion of a pneumatic tire puncture closure for repairing holes in bicycle tires in the late 1800s-early 1900s. (photo source: [https://thecabe.com/forum/threads/sampson-brass-tire-plugs.178128/#google\\_vignette](https://thecabe.com/forum/threads/sampson-brass-tire-plugs.178128/#google_vignette))

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## PAC Newsletter, Fall 2025, Volume 37, No. 2

**Compiled by:** Gary Coppock, Skelly and Loy, Inc., A Terracon Company ([gcoppock@skellyloy.com](mailto:gcoppock@skellyloy.com))

**Design/Formatting by:** Hannah Harvey, PennDOT

*The PAC Newsletter is published twice a year to update members on PAC happenings, agency updates, announcements from firms and universities, and current research from around Pennsylvania.*



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- A professional interest in Pennsylvania archaeology. Interest must be documented by the applicant and should clearly demonstrate how the applicant's professional activity has contributed, or may contribute, to the advancement of Pennsylvania's prehistoric or historical archaeology. This documentation may include:
  - a. Authorship of professional or archaeological publications.
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**Please Note:** All members of the Pennsylvania Archaeological Council must also be members of the [Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology](#).

## How to Apply

To apply for membership, please send a completed membership form and a CV or resume documenting that you meet PAC's membership requirements, as outlined in the constitution, to the Vice President:

Jonathan A. Burns, Ph.D.  
Director, Cultural Resource Institute  
Juniata College History Department Affiliate  
[jonathanburns915@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanburns915@gmail.com)

The Membership and Ethics Committee will review new applications as they are received. Once your application has been approved by the Board, you will be contacted by the Secretary/Treasurer with a welcome message, including an invoice for dues—which must be paid in order to finalize your membership. New members will be announced at the PAC business meetings.

Payments received by July 1 will be applied to that calendar year. Payments received after July 1 will be applied to the next calendar year.



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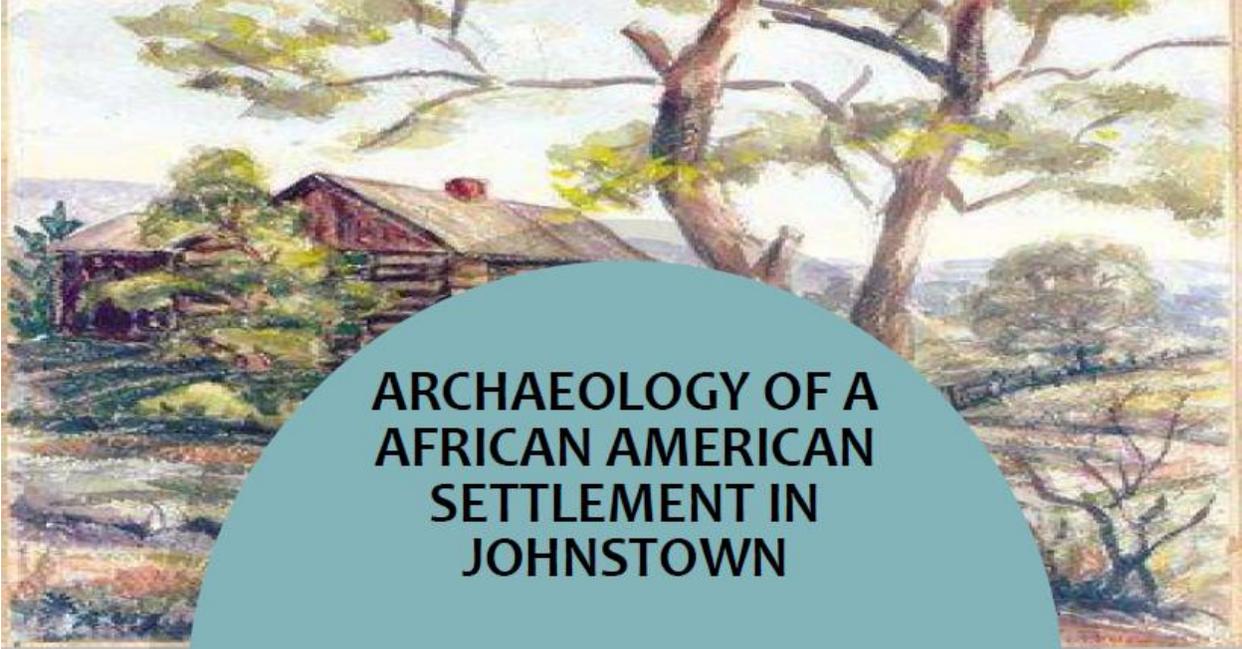
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101 Community College Way

Registration is not required but is encouraged!



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1pm – 4pm