



Department of
Environment &
Conservation

Current Research in Tennessee Archaeology

32nd Annual Meeting

January 17-18, 2020

Sponsored by
Tennessee Division of Archaeology
and
Middle Tennessee State University

James Union Building,
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Current Research in Tennessee Archaeology

32nd Annual Meeting

January 17–18, 2020
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Organizers:

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Electronic Program
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Cover: Tennessee State Archaeologist Michael C. Moore, Window Cliffs State Natural Area, 2013.

MEETING INFORMATION

The Tennessee Division of Archaeology and Middle Tennessee State University co-sponsor the annual Current Research in Tennessee Archaeology (CRITA) event to promote the distribution of information about archaeological research in the state over the past year. In 2019 the event will take place on Friday, January 18 and Saturday, January 19 in the James Union Building at Middle Tennessee State University.

While professional archaeologists, avocational archaeologists, and students represent the primary targeted audience, the event is also intended to provide a showcase for the interested public to discover what has been “happening” in Tennessee Archaeology over the past year. The event is free and open to the public.

Please note: MTSU is an entirely non-smoking campus both inside and outside, there are no designated or approved smoking areas. Smoking (and vaping) is allowed inside personal vehicles parked on campus.

Parking

Parking on both Friday afternoon and Saturday is available for free on campus in any green or white-zoned lot. The closest green-zoned parking lots to the James Union Building venue are the Bell Street Lot (corner of E Bell St. and Middle Tennessee Blvd.) and the Lytle Street Lot (corner of E. Lytle St. and Middle Tennessee Blvd.). See map below for details.



Lunch

Participants and attendees will be on their own during the Saturday lunch break, from 11:30 -1:00 pm.

Lodging

Although there is no meeting hotel, lodging may be found throughout the greater Murfreesboro area. A list of hotels may be found via the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce web page: <http://web.rutherfordchamber.org/Hotels-Motels>

DAILY SCHEDULE

Friday, January 17

Tennessee Room, James Union Building

- 1:30 Tennessee Archaeological Advisory Council meeting
- 3:00 Tennessee Council for Professional Archaeology annual business meeting
MTSU Anthropology, 111 Wiser-Patten Science Hall
- 4:30 Tennessee Council for Professional Archaeology Reception

Saturday, January 18

Tennessee Room, James Union Building

- 8:25 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- 8:30 **The Old Town Heritage Project** - Kevin E. Smith, William H. Frist, Tracy Roberts Frist, and Sarah Lowry
- 8:45 **Preliminary Interpretations from MTSU's 2019 Archaeological Field School at Bledsoe's Lick in Sumner County, Tennessee** - Paul N. Eubanks, Madeline B. Laderoute, and Kevin E. Smith
- 9:00 **Accessing the Prehistory of Travellers Rest (40DV11)** - Sarah Durham
- 9:15 **On-Going Research from the West Tennessee Interior Uplands** - Kathryn R. Proctor and Andrew M. Mickelson
- 9:30 **Reconsidering the Nature of Middle Woodland Ceremonialism at the Cochran Site, Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park** - Edward R. Henry, Stephen B. Carmody, Ryan M. Parish, Bill Lawrence, and Casey R. Barrier
- 9:45 **Tracking Early Ceramics in the Western Tennessee Valley** - Brian M. Butler

10:00 - 10:15 BREAK

- 10:15 **Pinson: Pilgrimage, Processions or Rogations** - Cheryl Claassen
- 10:30 **TDOA Site File Update: Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future** - J. Paige Silcox and Satin B. Platt
- 10:45 **A Preliminary Investigation of the Montgomery Bell CCC Camp (40DS110), Dickson County, Tennessee** - Daniel W. H. Brock
- 11:00 **Feeding Families and Communities During the Mississippian Period in Middle Tennessee** - Tanya M. Peres
- 11:15 **A Summary of my Career with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology** - Michael C. Moore

11:30 - 1:00 LUNCH

- 1:00 **Hunting Elephants with a Newspaper: A Case Study in Digital Archaeology and Paleontology** - Kevin E. Smith
- 1:15 **Compton-Burton Farm Archaeology, A Project That Almost Died** - Samuel D. Smith
- 1:30 **Edward Palmer and the Earth Mother with Diamond Eyes: The 1882 Excavations of the Grassy Island Burial Mound (40OB2), Obion County, Tennessee** - Robert V. Sharp, David H. Dye, and James Krakker
- 1:45 **Archival Research, Geophysics, and Archaeology, TVA Norris Kiln (40AN218), Anderson County, Tennessee** - Marc Wampler, Phil Thomason, Steve Martin, and Marianne Shuler
- 2:00 **MTSU's Bass Street Community Archaeology Project: Results from Three Years of Excavations** - Andrew R. Wyatt, Clelie Cottle-Peacock, and Madeline Laderoute

POSTERS

- Archaeobotanical Investigations into the Logan Site (40DV8)** - Madeline B. Laderoute

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS AND POSTERS

Daniel W. H. Brock (Tennessee Division of Archaeology),

A Preliminary Investigation of the Montgomery Bell CCC Camp (40DS110), Dickson County, Tennessee.

This presentation documents a preliminary pedestrian archaeological survey and examination of artifacts collected at a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp located within Montgomery Bell State Park, Dickson County, Tennessee. During the spring of 2018, unauthorized metal detecting was conducted at the camp. To rectify the situation, artifacts were provided to the Tennessee Division of Archaeology for analysis and curation. In order to provide context for the materials, a preliminary pedestrian survey was conducted at the site and a site number was subsequently obtained (40DS110). The overall goal of the project was to catalog artifacts collected at the site, identify any existing site features to associate with the materials, and provide historical background information with which to interpret the site.

Brian M. Butler (Southern Illinois University Carbondale)

Tracking Early Ceramics in the Western Tennessee Valley

Because of the scarcity of fieldwork done in the western Tennessee Valley since the 1940s, the Early (and Middle Woodland) systematics of the area are largely undefined. There are described and dated assemblages at the northwest Alabama and Kentucky ends of this valley segment but only a few dated finds in between. What can we say about the ceramic sequence(s) based on the limited data? This paper explores that issue and offers one possible scenario.

Cheryl Claassen (Appalachian State University)

Pinson: Pilgrimage, Processions or Rogations

Mainfort has proposed that Pinson was a shrine that attracted pilgrims. In this paper I will parse the differences between pilgrimage, processions and rogations based on my own participation in these ritualized group movements in Mexico with Nahuatl and Spanish speaking peoples.

Sarah Durham (Travellers Rest Historic House Museum Inc.)

Accessing the Prehistory of Travellers Rest (40DV11)

Numerous surveys and excavations of the Travellers Rest (40DV11) site have been performed over the years, beginning in the early 1800s, but the prehistory of the site is not always obvious to visitors. Recently, Travellers Rest has partnered with the Adventure Science Center to create a 3-dimensional digital image and printed replica of the anthropomorphic rim rider vessel, which was uncovered during an excavation in 1995. A grant from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee has provided funding for the radiocarbon

dating of a hearth from a house site that was excavated in the 1960s by the Southeastern Indian Antiquities Survey (SIAS). This hearth will be the centerpiece of a new exhibit focusing on the Native history of Travellers Rest.

Paul N. Eubanks, Madeline B. Laderoute, and Kevin E. Smith (Middle Tennessee State University)

Preliminary Interpretations from MTSU's 2019 Archaeological Field School at Bledsoe's Lick in Sumner County, Tennessee

In the summer of 2019, MTSU hosted its third summer archaeological field school at Bledsoe's Lick in Sumner County. The lick consists of several now-buried mineral springs, which were visited for thousands of years by game animals and the human hunters who followed them. Beginning around A.D. 1200, more than half a dozen mounds were constructed within a few hundred meters of the lick. It was during this time that the landscape immediately surrounding the springs hosted an array of ceremonial activities, including large-scale episodes of feasting. Although the mound site was abandoned in the fourteenth century, almost 500 years later, an inn and resort was built just to the south of the mineral springs. The resort boasted a number of attractions including a horse racetrack, a dance pavilion, and a bowling alley, but its main allure would have been the same mineral springs used by the site's prehistoric occupants. In this paper, we summarize the results of our 2019 field season and discuss the roles that these springs played during the prehistoric and historic periods.

Edward R. Henry (Colorado State University), **Stephen B. Carmody** (Troy University), **Ryan M. Parish** (University of Memphis), **Bill Lawrence** (Tennessee Division of Archaeology), and **Casey R. Barrier** (Bryn Mawr College)

Reconsidering the Nature of Middle Woodland Ceremonialism at the Cochran Site, Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park

The Pinson Mounds landscape is known for monumental earthen architecture and evidence of Middle Woodland ceremonialism. The built environment alone is indicative of complex sociopolitical relationships and labor organization at Pinson. In this presentation we expand understandings of event-centered ceremonial gatherings at Pinson by describing results of new research at the Cochran site, in the Western Precinct of the Pinson core. The Cochran site has previously been described as a locale where Middle Woodland groups lived during gatherings at Pinson. Our research builds on, and expands, this interpretation of Cochran as an area of temporary and periodic Middle Woodland dwelling.

Madeline B. Laderoute (Middle Tennessee State University)

Archaeobotanical Investigations into the Logan Site (40DV8) [POSTER]

The Logan site (40DV8) includes the remains of a Mississippian town (A.D. 1250 to 1450) in the Belle Meade area of Nashville. Due to its prime real estate location and the large number of stone-box graves and associated grave-goods, the site has been regularly disturbed by commercial development and looting

since at least the 1950s. Following the construction of a shopping center in the early 1970s, the only undisturbed portion of this prehistoric village lay on privately-owned land. This land was sold to developers in 2015 who subsequently chose to disinter the remaining burials. The site's remaining stone-box graves were excavated by TVAR in 2017 while the TDOA was able to collect soil samples from non-mortuary features. This poster examines the contents of several of these features and serves as one of the few systematic investigations into a Mississippian site that has been destroyed.

Michael C. Moore (Tennessee Division of Archaeology)

A Summary of my Career with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology

My upcoming retirement at the end of January 2020 has provided an opportunity to reflect on my past 34 years with the Division. This presentation will summarize my Division career with a focus on research projects such as Rutherford-Kizer and Brentwood Library, as well as challenging topics such as NAGPRA.

Tanya M. Peres (Florida State University)

Feeding Families and Communities During the Mississippian Period in Middle Tennessee

During the Mississippian period in Middle Tennessee people practiced a subsistence strategy that included farming, gathering, and hunting, which enabled communities to lessen the potential for food shortfalls and uncertainty. I examine the animal portion of the diet from Mississippian period sites located in Middle Tennessee to determine how increased attention to farming that coincided with population aggregation into villages and changes in sociopolitical structure resulted in a shift in other subsistence activities (i.e., hunting, fishing) and food sharing.

Kathryn R. Proctor and Andrew M. Mickelson (University of Memphis)

On-Going Research from the West Tennessee Interior Uplands

Current research of the West Tennessee Archaeological Project, housed at the University of Memphis, has been collecting primary data on Mississippian settlement patterns within the west Tennessee uplands, an area largely devoid of archaeological investigation over the last few decades. The last 12 years of fieldwork at the 18,000-acre Ames Plantation land base, the Denmark site, and other locations, has produced a wealth of data concerning Early-Middle Mississippian period occupation at the scales of the town, hamlet, and farmstead. Settlement data was collected via systematic surface collections, magnetometry, and large-scale excavations. This presentation discusses the results of our on-going research projects, as well as anticipated future endeavors, including the refinement of a ceramic typology for the west Tennessee interior uplands.

J. Paige Silcox and Satin B. Platt (Tennessee Division of Archaeology)

TDOA Site File Update: Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future

Site File Curators will discuss lessons learned from the online site record submission project and how it has informed plans for creating a new and better system. This includes exploring ESRI solutions for streamlining data intake and remote database access. In addition, a brief overview of revisions to the current site record will be provided .

Kevin E. Smith (Middle Tennessee State University)

Hunting Elephants with a Newspaper: A Case Study in Digital Archaeology and Paleontology

On 23 Jul 1912, the *Nashville Banner* reported that “the way in which Mr. [W.E.] Myer secured the [mastodon] skeleton was most interesting. He saw a newspaper account of the finding of large bones... and immediately hurried there, feeling that they might be of more than usual scientific importance.” A century later with the creation of extensive digital newspaper archives, I initiated a project to systematically document and record as many Middle Tennessee sites as possible using this resource, including Pleistocene faunal locales. While not a new source of data, the ability to search thousands of newspapers simultaneously yields many local Tennessee stories that were not picked up by Nashville newspapers. Here, I focus specifically on mastodons as a case study of the method, caveats, and results.

Kevin E. Smith (Middle Tennessee State University), **William H. Frist** (Old Town), **Tracy Roberts Frist** (Old Town), and **Sarah Lowry** (New South Associates)

The Old Town Heritage Project

When you purchase a house and farm sitting atop of a major Middle Cumberland Mississippian mound center like Old Town in Williamson County (ca. AD 1100-1450), you can opt to ignore it in the name of progress – or you can accept the responsibility as stewards to actively preserve this part of Nashville’s prehistory while still maintaining a working farm and residence. In this case, we established a relatively unique partnership for Middle Tennessee between the private owners and scholars to create the Old Town Heritage Project (OTHP) in 2015. Over the past four years, we have collaborated on a series of projects, including: a) documentation, analysis, and reanalysis of all known artifacts held privately and at museums; b) a large-scale geophysical survey including both magnetic gradiometry and ground-penetrating radar; c) a workshop series bringing together the private and public land managers of all of these sites in Middle Tennessee to engage in developing a proposed “Middle Cumberland Mississippian Sites Trail”; and d) the recent launch of a comprehensive and rapidly expanding web page on Old Town and affiliated sites.

Samuel D. Smith (Tennessee Division of Archaeology, retired)

Compton-Burton Farm Archaeology, A Project That Almost Died

A long career in archaeology often ends with some work left unfinished. While I was able to complete most of the things I had intended by the end of my active career with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology, there was one unfinished project that continued to nag at me in retirement. In 1984 I directed a volunteer based salvage excavation on the site of what had been one of Davidson County's more affluent 19th-century farm or plantation operations, which we called the Compton-Burton Farm. This tract of almost 200 acres was soon after developed as a massive Nashville commercial and residential complex that destroyed essentially everything of an archaeological nature. An initial promise from the developers for some financial assistance to help with post-excavation analysis failed to materialize, and the artifacts and collected information had to be put aside in favor of more pressing projects. Early last year I was granted permission to attempt as a retirement project a periodic return to the Division of Archaeology to work with the 1984 artifact collection and to salvage what I could from this long dormant salvage project. This presentation summarizes what has been completed so far. The Compton-Burton Farm site was notable for containing remains representing one or more prehistoric periods, farm-plantation operations spanning a period from the early 1800s to the early 1900s, a substantial slave to tenant-farmer African-American presence, an important role in the 1864 Battle of Nashville, and at the beginning of our work, a standing mansion started about 1812 that was also lost to the development

Robert V. Sharp (Independent Scholar), **David H. Dye** (University of Memphis), and **James Krakker** (Smithsonian Institution)

Edward Palmer and the Earth Mother with Diamond Eyes: The 1882 Excavations of the Grassy Island Burial Mound (40OB2), Obion County, Tennessee

Edward Palmer completely excavated a Mississippian burial mound in 1882 at Reelfoot Lake's Grassy Island as part of the Smithsonian Institution's Mound Survey. The Grassy Island site represents the administrative and ritual center of a small, short-lived, late-thirteenth-century Mississippian polity. Palmer's excavations reveal the construction, conflagration, and capping of a ritual structure. Ceramics associated with the interred individuals—including an Earth Mother effigy bottle as part of a skull bundle—directs our attention to the introduction of an Earth Mother ritual sodality. We argue that an aristocratic cohort from the Cairo Lowland arrived at the Grassy Island locale and established a social house and ritual sodality among a local Woodland culture population. The purposeful and ritual destruction of the shrine and capping of the mound record the demise of the Mississippian social house, its associated religious sodality, and the polity itself.

Marc Wampler, Phil Thomason, Steve Martin, and Marianne Shuler (Wood Environment and Infrastructure)

Archival Research, Geophysics, and Archaeology, TVA Norris Kiln (40AN218), Anderson County, Tennessee

In 2018 and 2019, Wood Environment and Infrastructure conducted thorough archival research, a geophysical survey, and archaeological investigations over a

portion of the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Engineering Lab Complex, formerly the Norris Ceramic Research Laboratory facility in Norris, Anderson County Tennessee. Construction of the research laboratory facility began in 1935 with the purpose of the Ceramics Laboratory being to research and create high temperature electrically fired kilns to produce high quality and low-priced vitreous dinnerware from locally sourced ceramic materials. During demolition of a lightning damaged building in 2018, the intact remnants of the large brick tunnel kiln were encountered. A geophysical survey revealed anomalies in direct relationship to the tunnel kiln and former laboratory facility. Excavations documented foundation remnants and feature fill relating to kiln clean out events. Additionally, nearly 450 ceramic plates were recovered that represent test firings of the kilns. This presentation will summarize the findings of the archival research, excavations, and plate analysis.

Andrew R. Wyatt, Clelie Cottle-Peacock, and Madeline B. Laderoute (Middle Tennessee State University)

MTSU's Bass Street Community Archaeology Project: Results from Three Years of Excavations

For the past three years, the Bass Street Community Archaeology Project has been conducting excavations at the site of one of the earliest African American neighborhoods in post-Civil War Nashville. The Bass Street Community was located on the north side of Saint Cloud Hill, the site of Fort Negley, a Civil War era fort constructed by the Union forces in Nashville. Formerly enslaved persons who joined with Union forces were pressed into service to construct the fort, forming settlements on the slopes of Saint Cloud Hill that developed into permanent neighborhoods following the end of the Civil War. Following the reconstruction of Fort Negley as a WPA project, the neighborhood was demolished, and little information has been documented either historically or archaeologically. As an assignment for Introduction to Archaeology at MTSU, students have been conducting archaeological excavations and historical research, and have been collecting oral histories of the area. This presentation will provide an update regarding the fieldwork that has been done thus far on the project and will present the preliminary findings from the lab work and artifact analysis.

NOTES