

ANNUAL REPORT: US (CT) - MOHEGAN 2017 FIELD SCHOOL

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The 2017 Mohegan Field School working on an eighteenth-century Mohegan homestead.

Excavation, Survey, and Videography at the 2017 Mohegan Field School

The 2017 Mohegan field school completed excavation of a late-eighteenth century Mohegan homestead and surrounding areas. The field school defined the extent, shape, and nature of a major sub-surface feature found at the heart of the site. We learned that the feature is stone-lined, square in plan, and approximately 9 square meters in size. The pit is over a meter and a half deep and was filled with charred floor boards, charred botanicals (including maize, beans, squash, and potato), other structural debris (e.g., nails), and household and personal items (including ceramics, smoking pipes, beads, and buttons). Around this central feature, we discovered high densities of artifacts and other smaller features. Artifacts uncovered include charred botanicals, ceramics, smoking pipes, architectural debris, glass artifacts, items of personal adornment, stone tools, and unmodified quartz crystals (that we believe were intentionally placed by the site's eighteenth-century occupants). Features discovered include many postholes, one of which contained large sherds of European-produced ceramics such as feather-edged creamware and delftware, and several other yet-to-be identified features.

At this stage in the excavation, we were happy to backfill the site in anticipation of many future years of analysis. At some point in the future, our laboratory analyses might present questions that require further fieldwork at the site. However, at this point in the excavations, we are satisfied with the amount of data collected from this particular homestead. We were careful to leave a large portion of the site (more than 50%) intact and preserved for future generations of Mohegan archaeologists.

In addition to the excavation, this year's field school completed archaeological survey (in the form of shovel testing) of two areas of the reservation. The first was an extension of a previous survey area to help define the boundaries of the site described above. The second survey took

place in a new area of the reservation, where eighteenth-century traces have been detected in the past. We will use these survey data to help inform future excavation plans.

Finally, just before the start of the 2017 season, our project received funding from the *Royal Ontario Museum* and the *Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research* to support videography of the field school. We hope to use the video to help promote our research and teaching, but also to ethnographically analyze our process as we collaborate and combine multiple different perspectives, including Indigenous knowledge, sensitivities, and interests.

Plans for Dissemination

Project staff will present on this summer's field results at two archaeological conferences. The first of these is the 2017 Ontario Archaeological Society Meetings in Brantford, Ontario (November 17-19). We were invited to contribute a paper on the challenges and complexities of studying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indigenous archaeological sites. Craig Cipolla, James Quinn, and Jay Levy will write and deliver the presentation. The second presentation will be a poster at the 2018 Society for Historical Archaeology Meetings, to be held in New Orleans (January 3-7). James Quinn, Craig Cipolla, Jay Levy, and Mike Johnson will design and present the poster (and possibly a short video teaser available on a tablet computer) on our collaborative work together, particularly the videography project described above.

Additionally, Craig Cipolla, James Quinn, and Jay Levy are in the process of writing an academic article on incorporating Indigenous knowledge into archaeological research and teaching; the article is based on the 2017 field school as well as past iterations of the field school. We hope to send the article out for review in later 2017.

Student Involvement

The Mohegan field school students performed a majority of the fieldwork described above; this includes survey work, excavation, and some basic post-excavation artifact processing. Although staff members do participate in the fieldwork to some degree, the majority of our time is spent instructing and supervising. We find it important to allow our students to lead the way in their assigned excavation areas; this means that staff members refrain from entering excavation units unless instructing or helping guide special procedures. We want our students to discover artifacts and features first hand!