PRESIDENT’S LETTER

The summer has passed quickly and we soon will be entering the waning months of 2004. It has been a rather busy few months with various "digs" throughout the state. From West Haven to Woodstock, Dr. Bellantoni and his staff of "Volunteers" have explored Indian sites, historic houses, and burial locations. One of the more exciting digs is going on currently with the search for the Newgate Prison cemetery.

Probably no one is yet thinking about filing income tax returns for the current year, but that time will be coming up shortly. For volunteers who drive to these various "dig" locations, it is well to keep in mind the allowable tax deduction for mileage. If you itemize your deductions, you could take off fourteen cents per mile (for taxes filed in 2004) for travel associated with a non-profit organization. This deductible amount may increase for taxes filed in 2005, so be sure to check the filing instructions. To verify the amount allowable, maintain a record of the date of travel, the location and the total number of miles.

The site file project, designed to permit the electronic filing of site file reports that are to be maintained by the State Archaeologist, continues to move forward. An electronic form has been developed. In the next few weeks, a letter will be directed to those responsible for filing site file reports notifying them of the change and indicating that after January 1, 2005, all site file reports will need to be submitted in the electronic format. This step into the electronic age will eliminate the need to shuffle through paper files when attempting to determine whether previous work was done in a particular town or community.

For various reasons, the decision was made this year not to have a Fall picnic. With the activity moving forward on the Archaeology Center at UCONN, the Board decided to focus on celebrating the opening of the new Center and inviting FOSA members to that celebration. Your next newsletter will include more details on that event.

Another event that will be coming after the New Year will be the FOSA Annual Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday January 29th. We are very fortunate that Dr. Bellantoni has arranged to have Dr. Doug Owsley, head forensic anthropologist at the Smithsonian, as the featured speaker for the event. Dr. Owsley has most recently identified the eight crew members of the CSS Hunley. It was two years ago that Dr. Jon Leader spoke at the annual meeting on the retrieval of the CSS Hunley. More details will be forthcoming on this event but be sure to mark your calendars.

Roger Thompson

NICK’S NEWS

The new Connecticut Archaeology Center is moving forward! At the latest meeting with the university's facilities personnel, they indicated that construction activities to renovate the existing Hillside Road building will begin in September/October, with a finish date of early 2005! If you are familiar with the campus, our new building is next door to the new UConn Co-Op and two doors from Gampel Pavilion. So, it is a prime public area of the Storrs campus. By the time you read this, I will already have moved my office from the Horsebarn Hill complex to the new facility. We wanted to be there prior to the start of the new semester, and, before construction activities commence.

If you are in the area please stop by. We would love to give FOSA members a tour, and, to see our new exhibit, “MARK-ING TIME: People, Strategies & Motives Behind the Anthropological Collections,” Also, if you cannot come out to Storrs, we invite you to see our brand new website. Collin Harty, our exhibit designer, has done a wonderful job putting the website together. You will find a great deal of information on Connecticut Archaeology and the plans for the new Center. Visit us (at least virtually) at www.cac.uconn.edu.

The CT Archaeology Center will be hosting an Archaeology Expo on Sunday, Oct 17th. FOSA will be represented among many exhibitors, so please come by and enjoy the day.

Nicholas Bellantoni, PhD
State Archaeologist

FOSA ANNUAL MEETING

January 29, 2005

Save the Date!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Gobell, Rocky Hill
Kathryn Hoy, North Stonington
Nancy O'Donnell, West Cornwall
Frank Pearson, South Meriden
Jan Sweet, Haddam
John Vitale, Farmington
BELOW GROUND

Our first field work project in 2004 took place on March 8th. A light wet snow covered the ground which would be ideal for a snowball fight, but we had other objectives to keep us busy.

Jim Doolittle, a research soil scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service from the Philadelphia office, was here to assist Nick on several projects with his Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) equipment. Before using the equipment a grid must be set up over the area to be surveyed. This grid is used for control and is tied into known permanent points in the work area. Setting up the grid consumes the most time and it is here where FOSA members provide valuable assistance. After the grid is in place it is Jim's show.

On March 8th we were at the "Olde East Street Burying Grounds" in Plainville, Connecticut looking for unmarked graves of early black families that may be buried there.

The next day we journeyed to Brookfield, Connecticut, to the Gurski property which had recently been purchased by the local historical society. A small cemetery was located here, but many of the headstones were placed horizontal on the ground and covered with several inches of soil. Also on the property was the Gurski Forge. This was a small red framed building that contained a complete old time blacksmith shop. On entering it was a real time capsule.

We set up a grid over the cemetery area and with the G.P.R. located a goodly number of buried headstones. One of the stones was signed by the carver who was E. Thayer. This cemetery was mainly of the 18th century period.

Later that day we traveled to Woodbury, Connecticut to the Glebe House. Here a large grid was set up in an effort to find refuse areas and foundations of outbuildings with the G.P.R.


Jim Doolittle sends Nick a complete report on all his findings on these projects within several weeks.

Other FOSA field work projects are as follows:

Speaking for Dr. Nick and ALL of the many volunteers that assist in the field and office, a "Many Thanks."

Ken and Bonnie Beatrice

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GRIMES HOUSE SITES
Rocky Hill, CT
This was strictly a salvage operation and our time limit was very short. Two historic houses owned by the Grimes family, one dated 1780 and the other 1820, were slated to be demolished and replaced with new housing. A small amount of artifacts and information was recovered from the early period of the dwellings.

PITKIN GLASS WORKS
Manchester, CT
FOSA members assisted Nick with two Manchester School groups on May 6th & May 12th. Further digs will be scheduled here.

BATES TAVERN
East Granby, CT.
Work was concluded here, but material from the early period of the tavern still eludes us. A few interesting fragments of kaolin pipes were recovered.

ASHER WRIGHT HOUSE SITE
Coventry, CT.
Preliminary work has begun here. Small amounts of ceramics and some kaolin pipe fragments have been recovered. See Roger Thompson's article in this newsletter.

NEWGATE PRISON CEMETERY
East Granby, CT.
See Paul Scannell's article in this newsletter.

HOLDEN-ALLEN TOMB
Woodstock, CT.
The Holden-Allen Tomb is a most impressive work of architecture. Built circa 1830 of native granite, it contains eight burials. New owners of the property wish to have the burials removed to a different location. As of this writing many ques-

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Asher Wright was the fourth son of Nathaniel and Irene (Sprague) Wright who owned the 80-acre farm abutting the property of Richard Hale, the father of Nathan Hale. Asher Wright was born in August of 1754 and Nathan Hale was born in June of 1755. Being close both in age and proximity, they grew up as boyhood friends, playmates and schoolmates.

Following the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Asher was recruited by Nathan Hale and presumably went off with him as a member of his company, going on to New York in April of 1776. Asher Wright replaced Hale's first waiter or orderly who had fallen ill of a fever. Asher continued in the role of orderly until the time that Hale entered upon his fateful spy mission. After a few days of anguishing suspense for Asher, Nathan's capture and fate became known; a crushing blow, but Asher "carried on" and it is recorded that he took part in the Battles of White Plains (October 28, 1776) and Trenton (December 25, 1776). It was in February 1777, that Asher was discharged from any further military service.

Following his return from the War, "acquainted with grief," Asher sustained his earthly pilgrimage some sixty-eight years longer. "Poor Asher," as he was known, represented a tragic if obscure figure in the countryside. The tradition is that Asher could rarely be induced - and then never without weeping - to speak of his friend. It is with some pleasure that one reads that Nathan Hales' family always befriended Asher.

Asher Wright passed away on June 20, 1844 at age 90. Asher had never married and was laid to rest only a few yards beyond the grave of his friend Nathan in the Hale cemetery in Coventry. Their graves lay in sight of the "Great Pond" where as boys they so often swam and fished together.

Following the death of Asher, his one-half share of the homestead was conveyed to his niece, Betsy Lincoln. Betsy passed away in 1851 and the property where Asher was born, raised and lived passed through a number of different owners. In 1914, the Honorable George Dudley Seymour of New Haven purchased the Hale farm and surrounding property that included the Wright homestead. When George Seymour passed away in 1945, his last will and testament called for the distribution of a large portion of his property to the State of Connecticut. Much of this land today comprises the Nathan Hale State Forest.

Roger Thompson

References

Documentary Life of Nathan Hale, by George Dudley Seymour, published in 1941.

Willimantic Chronicle, dated January 26, 1938.
A Recent Example of the "Archaeological Detective" at Work; Or, Where is the Lost Cemetery?

In March 2003, a letter was written to the president of the East Granby Historical Society by Betty Guinan, local town historian, asking if the Society could help in locating the lost prisoner's cemetery at Newgate Prison. The president knew of my association with Nick and asked if I could help to coordinate such an initiative. (Little did I know what I was getting into!).

Nick was enthusiastic about the project and agreed to visit the site within the next couple of months. It quickly became apparent that the historical documentation about the location of the cemetery was weak and contradictory. We began with the information that the cemetery was somewhere behind the house at 165 Newgate Road in East Granby. On one occasion three elderly residents came out to the site, determined to show us where the cemetery was located, and each went off in a different direction, with no evidence of the cemetery's location. Diplomacy of the highest order had to be implemented. The terrain in back of 165 Newgate Road was much more extensive than at first realized. It consists of open fields, wooded areas, wetlands and electrical power lines cutting diagonally across the property. The area is about ½ mile north of Newgate Prison. Talk about looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack.

Historical research was ongoing and included work at the East Granby and Granby town halls, State Archives, Connecticut State Library as well as the Connecticut Historical Society. Participants in the research effort were Betty Guinan, East Granby town historian; Roger Thompson, president of FOSA; Bill Keegan; Arend-Jan Knutte; Stephen Cotton, local land surveyor; Ruth Shapleigh-Brown of the Connecticut Gravestone Network; as well as myself. Helping in the search effort was the discovery of an 1895 photograph of the prison cemetery, as well as a hand drawn map by local resident Clifford Gosslee (now deceased) indicating the approximate location of the cemetery.

By reviewing the history of land deeds of property around the prison, we were able to narrow down potential locations of the prison cemetery. The process was hampered by the growth of heavy vegetation including patches of poison ivy. Several abortive visits were made to the area in back of 165 Newgate Road. We were about to give up on the project until another local native, Ken Seymour, stepped forward to inform the group "we were looking in the wrong spot." I went back to the area with Mr. Seymour and walked the length of a stone wall, which measured 830 feet from Newgate Road going in a westerly direction. (The wall was actually measured by Roger Thompson and myself). The wall became a marker and actually was visible in the 1895 photograph. It looked like we were in business again. Nick and his group of volunteers returned to the site early in the summer of this year and a cluster of about 20 vertical field-stones were discovered under the vegetation and debris. There were no inscriptions on the stones.

On Friday, August 20th, Nick's army of volunteers descended on the site once again with the focus being on widening and deepening "trench #2." In the early afternoon the first coffin nail was recovered from the soil at approximately 42" depth. This was followed by the discovery of six additional coffin nails at approximately the same depth. The lost cemetery at Newgate prison has been FOUND! Congratulations to Nick, Dave Cooke and numerous members of FOSA, as well as several members of the East Granby Historical Society. A word of thanks goes out to several staff members of the National Resource Conservation Services, who provided Ground Penetrating Radar on this same date.

Paul Scannell, FOSA member

FIRST Annual Connecticut Archaeology Expo

On Sunday October 17, 2004, from 12 noon 5 pm, the 1st Annual Connecticut Archaeology Expo will be presented by the new Connecticut Archaeology Center and the Museum of Natural History at UConn in cooperation with the Office of State Archaeology and the State Historic Preservation Office. Location is Rome Commons Ballroom, Uconn South Campus, University of Connecticut, 626 Gilbert Road, Storrs. Admission is $5.00 for non-members. Call 860.486.4460 for more information, or check the website: cac.uconn.edu.

Scientists, specialists and enthusiasts from all over the state will assemble for this one-day public event to share their fascinating research and preservation work with people of all ages. This new Archaeology Week event will feature hands-on activities for children and families and presentations by experts in the field. Noted archaeologists Dr. Ken Feder, Dr. Bruce Clouette, and Dr. Warren Perry will give lectures open to all that attend the event. There will also be demonstrations of ancient technologies, informative displays from archaeological and historical organizations, vendors and refreshments. We hope you will join us for this unique new learning experience.

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut recently announced its new Connecticut Archaeology Center. The new Center will be a unique and exciting educational destination with a variety of exhibits and programs. The facility will also provide a home for the state's collection of 600,000 Connecticut artifacts and will bring new academic programs to the University community. While the building undergoes renovation, visitors can visit and enjoy a small changing exhibit area and participate in scheduled programs for children and adults. The Museum and Archaeology Center location is 2019 Hillside Road on the Uconn campus in Storrs. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9 am to 4 pm, Sunday 1 to 4 pm (closed Saturdays and holidays). Admission is free. Information is available by calling (860) 486-4460 or at the website: http://cac.uconn.edu.
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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Please make your check payable to:

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*FOSA has 501c3 tax-exempt status
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**INTEREST INVENTORY**

Please check areas of interest for volunteering:

- Work with OSA
- Art Work
- Committee and Board of Directors Work
- Education
- Computers
- Fund Raising
- Grant Writing
- Newsletter
- Office / Field Work
- Photography
- Typing/Word Processing
- Writing

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**MEETINGS**

**Archaeological Society of Connecticut** Meeting, Yale Peabody Museum, Saturday, October 16, 9 am to 4 pm. (Please note there is a $5.00 admission fee for the ASC meeting). [Http://www.sittings.com/asc.html](http://www.sittings.com/asc.html)


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