



# Member Newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- *Turtle* Launched
- Annual Financial Report
- More on Venture Smith
- Write for the newsletter!



## President's Letter

On the day that I am writing this the ground is covered with a blanket of pure white snow, the sky is an incredible blue, and the sun is warm! The melting snow dripping from the eaves presages spring – and FOSA's digging season will soon begin.

The year has begun well with another successful Annual Meeting. Richard Lawrence, Director of Underwater Archaeology, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, presented a program entitled "In Search of Blackbeard: The *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project" to a crowd of about 200 people on January 26. Based on the questions that followed the presentation and the comments on the Evaluation Form, there's a lot of interest in maritime archaeology in Connecticut.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from

the Connecticut Humanities Council to cover the expenses associated with the speaker. The grant required that we conduct some form of evaluation and 36.5% of you completed the form and handed it in. Thank you for making the effort. Your comments gave us some great ideas for future meetings.

Prior to the speaker, Mae Johnson and Kris Keegan were each presented with a well-deserved Appreciation Award for their stellar work on the FOSA Newsletter. This is the kind of effort that often goes unnoticed, yet the newsletter is critical to keeping FOSA members up-to-date on what is happening within the organization.

The FOSA Board of Directors has met and together we set two goals for the Board to achieve this year. The first goal is to enlist

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## News from the Office of State Archaeology

Congratulations to the Annual Meeting Committee for another successful get-together! Richard Lawrence's presentation on the *Queen Anne's Revenge* and Blackbeard the pirate was most informative and entertaining. The committee and I are already working on next year's speaker and meeting.

OSA and the Board of Directors have set a series of priorities for the upcoming 2008-09 year. One of the many goals I will be working on is the establishment of funds for the next phase of development at the Museum of Natural History/Archaeology Center. This in-

cludes the construction of a new collections facility, archaeological laboratories, library space and offices. Of course, we need more than a new building, we need staff to occupy it. So, the two-fold strategy will be to work with donors and the university on the building development campaign and the state legislature for operating expenses to bring on staff.

The latest issue of *Connecticut History* (vol. 46, no. 2, Fall 2007) has just been published by The Association for the Study of Connecticut History. This is a special issue devoted to historical archaeology in the

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## President's Letter

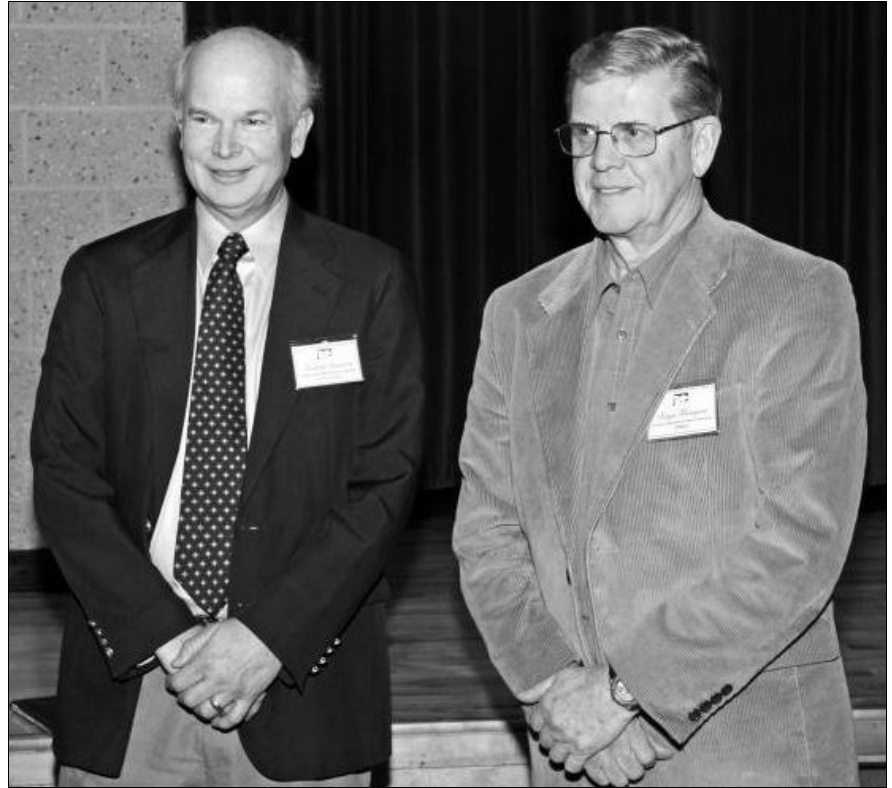
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FOSA members to volunteer those skills which they have indicated they are willing to share. The second goal is to raise an awareness of archaeology through such media as articles of local interest in local papers.

To address the first goal, Bob Martinchek has agreed to be the Volunteer Coordinator. He will be categorizing the skills that you members have indicated you are willing to provide and we intend to encourage your active involvement in the various committees and activities of FOSA. Perhaps some of you would like to help address the second goal of local archaeological interest articles to local media.

As you read the rest of the newsletter you will learn about the variety of activities that the members of FOSA are engaged in which support the OSA. FOSA is going to have a busy year and we hope that you'll join us!

*Cynthia Redman, President*



Richard Lawrence and Roger Thompson at the Annual Meeting. Photo by John Spaulding.

## New FOSA Officers and Board Members

Cynthia Redman – President  
 Jim Trocchi – Vice President  
 Dreda Hendsey – Treasurer  
 Paul Scannell – Secretary  
 Bonnie Beatrice – Board Member

Kenneth Beatrice – Board Member  
 Robert Martinchek – Board Member  
 Gary Nolf – Board Member  
 Frank Pearson – Board Member  
 Mike Raber – Board Member

## News from the Office of State Archaeology

*(Continued from page 1)*

state. The issue represents an important opportunity for archaeologists to present their work to the state's historians and develop the common ground between our two communities. FOSA members have contributed greatly to this issue. FOSA members including Roger Thompson, Dave Cooke, Cindy Trayling, Mike Raber, Kristina Lammi Thompson, and myself are among the authors of various articles. We are pleased with the publication and proud of FOSA participation.

Last year OSA reviewed over 250 development projects for local municipalities, conducted over 100 field reviews and gave over 65 public presentations around the state creat-

ing awareness of archaeology in Connecticut.

Finally, this year I was elected President of the National Association of State Archaeologists (NASA), which represents all 50 States and 5 United States Territories. I will be presiding over NASA's annual meeting this March in Vancouver, Canada. (I am told that I was the only elected official that demanded a re-count!!) Anyhow, I am proud to represent other state archaeologists around the country and assist them in national issues.

Thanks again for all your hard work and support.

*Nicholas Bellantoni, PhD  
 State Archaeologist*



## Below Ground

The beginning of the field projects this year will hinge entirely on the weather. Hopefully, we can get started in late March or early April. Jim Doolittle with his ground penetrating radar will arrive the week of April 21<sup>st</sup> and Nick has several projects lined up for his expertise. These are in the towns of Enfield, Redding, Norwalk, Newington, Lisbon and Ellington. We will also return to Shelton, Connecticut to aid in a police investigation where they are seeking a body that is believed to be buried in a barrel.

In Ellington we will be working at the historic Pinney House circa 1785. The house has no central kitchen fireplace and it is anticipated that there may be a "summer kitchen" behind the main dwelling. Hopefully, an archaeological investigation will provide some answers.

We will return to the prehistoric Rogers Site in Lisbon, Connecticut to finish up several features we were unable to complete last fall due to snow and cold weather. This past winter we received a radiocarbon date for Feature #5 at the Rogers Site. Feature #5 was a cremation burial and it produced a date of 3420 B.P. plus or minus 60 years or 1740 B.C. This date is "right in the ball park" with other dated cremation burial complexes in the Northeast.

The price of gasoline will be a large prohibitive factor in the amount of field work we attempt this year. We must car pool as much as possible and work longer hours at a site instead of more trips to a site to get the job done.

I hope to see a lot of happy faces in the Spring!

*Dave Cooke*

## Thank You for Your Donations (Since Oct. 1, 2007)

### FOSA General Fund

Richard Adamonis, Wethersfield  
Henry Coppes, Westbrook  
Faith Davison, Uncasville  
Helen Ewald, Cromwell  
Bruce Greene, Wethersfield  
Chris and Carole Noble, New Britain  
Cece Saunders, Westport  
Pat and Roger Thompson, South Windsor  
Lee West, Wethersfield

### Radiocarbon Dating Fund

Anne and Gabe Choquette, Middletown  
Dave Cooke, Rocky Hill  
John and Betsy Corrigan, Washington  
Henry Coppes, Westbrook  
George Kinsella, Old Saybrook  
Robert Martinchek, Newington  
Jeff Pudlinski, Litchfield  
Unitarian Universalist Society, New Britain

## Join Us in Welcoming New Board Member Robert Martinchek

Bob Martinchek, a resident of Newington, Connecticut for the past forty years, graduated from the University of Hartford with a degree in Business Administration followed by the Connecticut School of Banking and Finance.

His interest in archaeology became apparent during junior high school when his passion for the outdoors brought him into local woodlands and forests, following streams for endless miles in search of arrowheads and minerals for various science projects. During his explorations in the outdoors, he was always curious about the historical significance

of the area where something was found ... what story could be told here?

Active with FOSA for more than five years, Bob is also an active member of five gem and mineral clubs, three in Connecticut, one in New York and Massachusetts. Bob has had several articles published in *Minerals News*, a monthly newsletter for mineral collectors worldwide. He is a serious mineral and meteorite collector and has served on the staff of the East Coast Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show in Springfield, Massachusetts.

***Oops! Did you forget to renew your membership?*** Memberships are renewable annually in January. Single \$25.00, Family \$35.00. Make check payable to ***Friends of the Office of State Archaeology, Inc.***, P.O. Box 380845, East Hartford, CT 06138-0845.

**FOSA ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**Calendar Year 2007-2008**

<b>Beginning Balance 1/1/2007</b>		<b>\$7,634.45</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Memberships & 2007 Annual Meeting	\$6,108.75	
Donations	\$725.00	
<b>Total Income 1/22/2008</b>	<b>\$6,833.75</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		
Office Expense/Postage/Newsletter	\$953.55	
Annual Meeting Expense	\$1,251.68	
Insurance	\$500.00	
Dr. Bellantoni Cell Phone	\$961.47	
Ct. Archaeology Ctr. Split from Annual Meeting	\$415.00	
Donation to Connecticut Archaeology Center	\$5,000.00	
Special Supplies	\$534.12	
Miscellaneous	\$464.35	
<b>Total Expenses 1/22/2008</b>	<b>\$10,080.17</b>	
<b>Ending Balance 1/22/2008</b>		<b>\$4,388.03</b>

**DR. DOUGLAS JORDAN RADIOCARBON FUND**

<b>Beginning Balance 1/1/2007</b>		<b>\$2,355.75</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	\$1,760.00	
<b>Expenses</b>		
C-14 Tests & Bank Fee	\$1,452.95	
<b>Ending Balance 1/22/2008</b>		<b>\$2,662.80</b>

## Welcome New Members

Bryan Adams, Lisbon  
 Sara Adams, Lisbon  
 Peter Bartolan, South Windsor  
 Dawn Brown, Bridgeport  
 Tom Gruber and Elaine Widmer, West Hartford  
 James Hall, East Hartford  
 Gloria Krieger, Newington  
 John Oliver, Mansfield Center

William Peterson, North Stonington  
 Gail-Marie Rogers, Norwich  
 Robert Rydzziel, Hebron  
 Unitarian Universalist Society, New Britain  
 Kathy VanLeeuwen, Mystic  
 Kathy Walburn, New London  
 Philip and Marilyn Wilsey, Newington



## FOSA's Outreach Program

FOSA's *Outreach Program* strives to present the public with informative and creative "hands on" exhibits. In 2007, we were given the opportunity to participate in five events throughout Eastern Connecticut.

The first was the *Connecticut Gravestone Network's Symposium* where a photo display was put on view of projects the State Archaeologist and FOSA volunteers worked on. Among those depicted were the Venture Smith Project (see Fall 2006 newsletter) and the locating of unmarked burial sites through means of historic records, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and field work.

For the *CPTV Family Science Expo*, *BioBlitz* and *Hammonasset Festival*, FOSA presented a representation of the cross section of a Native American "Midden" along with a display illustrating Radiocarbon 14. Also during the *Hammonasset Festival* and *Atlatl & Knapp In Day*, the public was invited to try their hand at using an Atlatl, (an ancient spear throwing device), after a presentation was given by Gary Nolf of its history and function.

Participating in Outreach programs gives FOSA members the opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life, sharing stories, experiences and imparting our love of archaeology and the importance of preserving Connecticut's rich archaeological past for generations to come. *Sincere thanks* go out to all the folks who volunteered at these events.

For those of you who wish to participate in future programs and/or may have a collection to possibly display, please contact Exhibit Coordinator Bonnie Beatrice at [bkbeatrice@att.net](mailto:bkbeatrice@att.net) or 860-434-5114.

Watch your newsletters and emails for upcoming events. We hope to see you there!

Bonnie Beatrice



Nick Bellantoni and Paul Scannell at FOSA Midden and C-14 Display. Photo courtesy of Ken Beatrice.

## New Ancient Lineage Discovered

Ancient DNA extracted from the 5,000-year-old remains of two individuals has revealed a mitochondrial haplogroup previously unknown in the New World. The individuals, two young adult males discovered at the China Lake site in central British Columbia, Canada, were found to belong to haplogroup M. This discovery suggests that there was a greater genetic diversity among ancient Americans than researchers had assumed, said Ripan Malhi, a molecular anthropologist at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who conducted the DNA tests.

Researchers had identified five haplogroups—a term used to describe genetic lineages—in the mitochondrial DNA of living Native Americans. Those haplogroups are known as A, B, C, D, and X, and it was assumed that these remains would fall into one of these groups. Malhi said he was "very surprised" to find that wasn't the case, so surprised, in fact, that he at first assumed that the samples he tested were contaminated. But additional testing confirmed the results.

The remains were accidentally discovered in 1982 during a road construction project. "We think they were buried to-

gether or within a short period of time of one another," said Jerry Cybulski, the curator of physical anthropology at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. A bone sample from the remains was radiocarbon dated to roughly 5,000 years ago. Cybulski analyzed the skeletons in 2000. These individuals were shorter and their bones were thinner than the roughly 100 other ancient human skeletons that have been found in this region.

Cybulski met with the Canoe Creek Band of Salish Indians in 2002 to get permission for testing. There have been cases where Native Americans have opposed DNA testing of ancient remains that they believe to be their ancestors. The legal wrangling surrounding Kennewick Man is the best-known example of this. But this posed no problem for Cybulski, who wanted to test the remains to see if they were related. "We've had an ongoing relationship with the Canoe Creek Band," he said. Consequently, the Canoe Creek allowed Cybulski, Malhi, and their colleagues to conduct the DNA tests. Once these tests were concluded, the individuals were reburied.

(Continued on page 6)

## The *Turtle* Is Launched!

“Hear ye ... Hear ye ... Avast” ... to all HMS Ships in blockade of Connecticut Cities and Ports...the *Turtle* has been launched.

Under a heavy gray November sky with flag unfurled (declaring “Don’t Tread on Me”), the war machine made way for its maiden voyage commencing from the Connecticut River Museum dock in Essex. South, not far from this location, the original launching took place during the Revolutionary War in 1776. With a “Torpedo” cask holding 140 lbs. of black powder with timer and a flintlock mechanism for spark, the *Turtle* was now ready to do havoc against the English armada in control of New England shores.

Roy Manstan, at the helm during its maiden voyage, has been researching and designing the many components such as the hatch, the blades or “oars” that propelled the craft, and the screw that secured the torpedo to the target’s wooden hull. No sketches or drawings exist of the *Turtle*, only letters that were written by David Bushnell, the inventor, and a description by Ezra Lee, the first pilot, and these were used to build this latest *Turtle*. Bushnell, a mechanical engineer, was a Yale graduate. To aid him with his research, Roy obtained several textbooks that Bushnell would have read during his studies.



“Launched and Underway.” Photo by Bruce Greenhalgh.

A sea trial is now being prepared for this summer’s activities. Part of the test plan will call for a series of diving operations to simulate the “Screw” placement into a ship’s hull with deployment of the torpedo. Please note, all black powder will be removed prior to launch.

Fair Winds and Calm Seas!

*Ken Beatrice*

## Another Attempt to Amend NAGPRA

The Senate’s Committee on Indian Affairs has approved legislation to amend the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to allow Native American tribes to take custody of 9,400-year-old Kennewick Man as well as all other ancient remains. The legislation must be approved by a vote of the full Senate as well as the House of Representatives in order to become law.

The legislation makes two minor changes to NAGPRA’s wording that would have major consequences. The bill is sponsored by Senator Byron Dorgan, D-North Dakota. “The amendment seeks to “clarify Congress’ intent in the original statute of who should be consulted, and who may use the consultation provisions of NAGPRA,” according to Barry E. Platt, communications director for Sen. Dorgan.

## Ancient Lineage

*(Continued from page 5)*

Like the five known Native American haplogroups, M has been traced back to Asia, so it is consistent with the theory that the first Americans were Asian people who crossed Beringia en route to the Americas. “This type of lineage may have come in with the first Americans, or it may have come in later in time,” Malhi said. “I wouldn’t be surprised if we discover more haplogroups in the future.” He specu-

If Congress passes the legislation it would in effect overturn a 2004 decision by the 9<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in favor of a group of scientists who sued the federal government for the right to study Kennewick Man. The court ruled that Native Americans failed to prove cultural affiliation with Kennewick Man, as mandated by NAGPRA. This legislation “would automatically make NAGPRA cover any prehistoric remains found in this country,” said Alan Schneider, the lead attorney for the scientists. “It could radically affect the ability to learn about the peopling of the Americas.”

A similar bill was approved by the Indian Affairs Committee in 2005, but Congress didn’t pass it.

*Michael Bawaya, Editor, American Archaeology*

lated that the M haplogroup could have “died out” over time. “That could be the result of random extinction processes.”

The remains of a female of similar age were also found near China Lake, and DNA testing revealed she belonged to haplogroup A.

*Michael Bawaya, Editor, American Archaeology*

## Update on Kennewick Man

For many of us, our first extensive exposure to the story of Kennewick Man took place when Dr. James Chatters spoke on recovering and examining these remains at our 2006 FOSA Annual Meeting. First uncovered in July 1996 on the banks of the Columbia River, this discovery triggered a nine-year legal clash between scientists, the federal government and Native American tribes who claim Kennewick Man as their ancestor.

The skeleton, one of the oldest and most complete ever found in North America, has been under close analysis since courts sided with researchers in a legal battle with local Indian tribes who wanted the remains reburied without study. While initial attempts were made by the local tribes to preclude study of the remains, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ultimately ruled in favor of the scientists, allowing the bones to be studied.

Beginning in the Spring and Summer of 2006, a team of 20 forensic scientists, led by Dr. Doug Owsley, forensic anthropologist for the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., have been studying the remains. Their findings have concluded that the skull does not match those of Indian tribes living in the general area.

In addition to Dr. Owsley, other members of the team and their area of expertise include:

C. Loring Brace, professor of anthropology at the University of Michigan, has put some of the skeleton measurements into a computer database, which allows him to study and track incremental changes in human populations over time. Professor Brace believes Kennewick Man may have been a descendant of the ancient Jomon people of Asia.

Hugh Berryman, research professor at Middle Tennessee State University, is an anthropologist who is an expert in interpreting skeletal injuries and figuring out how and why bones break. Professor Berryman studied how the bones broke over time and determined, with other scientists, that Kennewick Man was deliberately buried by other people.

George Gill, professor of anthropology at the University of Wyoming specializes in determining the race of skeletons through complex measurements of skulls.

Thomas Stafford Jr., geochemist from Lafayette, Colorado is using tiny bone fragments and powders from Kennewick Man to determine what part of the bone might

yield the most accurate age of the skeleton. In the past 10 years, Stafford has developed a more precise radiocarbon dating test that is accurate within 20 years. Previously, the best dating technology had a 500-year margin of error. He hopes to use his improved test on Kennewick Man's bones.

The scientists want to also try extracting DNA from Kennewick Man's bones or teeth, although Professor Stafford isn't sure the technology is yet advanced enough. If successful, DNA testing could allow scientists to compare Kennewick Man's genes with other populations around the world or tell scientists something about his physical traits.

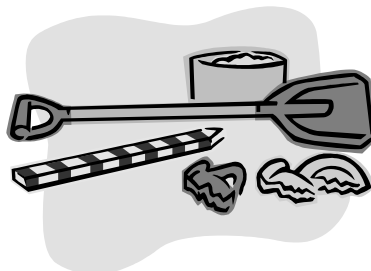
Using an industrial CT scanner, Dr. Owsley has been able to study the skeleton in fine sections and also obtain a better look at the spear point imbedded in Kennewick Man's hip. The point had previously been described as a Cascade point, typical of the region, but Dr. Owsley indicated that is not the case. Cascade points tend to have two pointed ends and are sometimes serrated while the point in Kennewick Man has a pointed end and a stem.

The discovery of Kennewick Man is dramatically reshaping beliefs about how humans populated the Americas. The research concerning the skeletal remains continues, and the team of scientists will be finishing their reports and will write a book or journal together. They anticipate that their team effort will serve as an example of how to study future discoveries.

Much of the story of Kennewick Man remains unwritten. At the same time, his skeleton may continue to raise more questions about the past than it answers.

**“Their findings have concluded that the skull does not match those of Indian tribes living in the region ...”**

*Roger Thompson*



## The First English Settlement in Connecticut

The first English colonists settled on Connecticut soil on September 26, 1633. They came from Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts and established a trading house at the original confluence of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers (map item B). This place was known thereafter as Plymouth Meadows. It is located in the town of Windsor and is the basis of its claim to be Connecticut's first town.

These rivers were originally named the Rivulet and the Great River, respectively, and the original confluence was about a quarter of a mile south of where it is today (map item A). This change is because in 1735 it appears: "Tradition says that Gov. Wolcott dug a channel through the neck of land (the present mouth of the Rivulet) to enable him to land his passengers on Plymouth Meadows, or Great Meadows, as preferred." Thus, Wolcott enhanced his river ferry that went from the east side of the Connecticut River to the west side; by cutting through the former peninsula of land that is now an island (see map). Hence, the confluence is now a quarter of a mile upstream.

Previous to the Plymouth arrival, the Dutch explored this area in 1614 but never colonized until June 1633, when they built a trading post where today's Park River meets the Connecticut River in Hartford. Their trading house was known as the "House of Good Hope." As early as 1627 the Dutch from New Amsterdam met with the Plymouth Colony, inviting them to the fertile lands on the Connecticut. Though this meeting was civil, the English contested the Dutch's right to colonize what they thought was theirs. It wasn't until the Indians of this immediate area traveled to both Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies, inviting them to settle in this rich fertile valley, that the English finally colonize here. These Indians wanted the English here as a deterrent to the oppressing Pequot. The Indians knew the power of the white man's guns could keep this oppression at bay.

The Plymouth group came by sea and up the Connecticut River, past the already established Dutch Trading Post, settling in Plymouth Meadows, on the south side of the Farmington River's terminus. They bought this land known as Matianuck from the local Indians. The Dorchester group from Massachusetts Bay came by way of land a short time later and settled just north of the Farmington River in what was called the Great Meadows (see map).

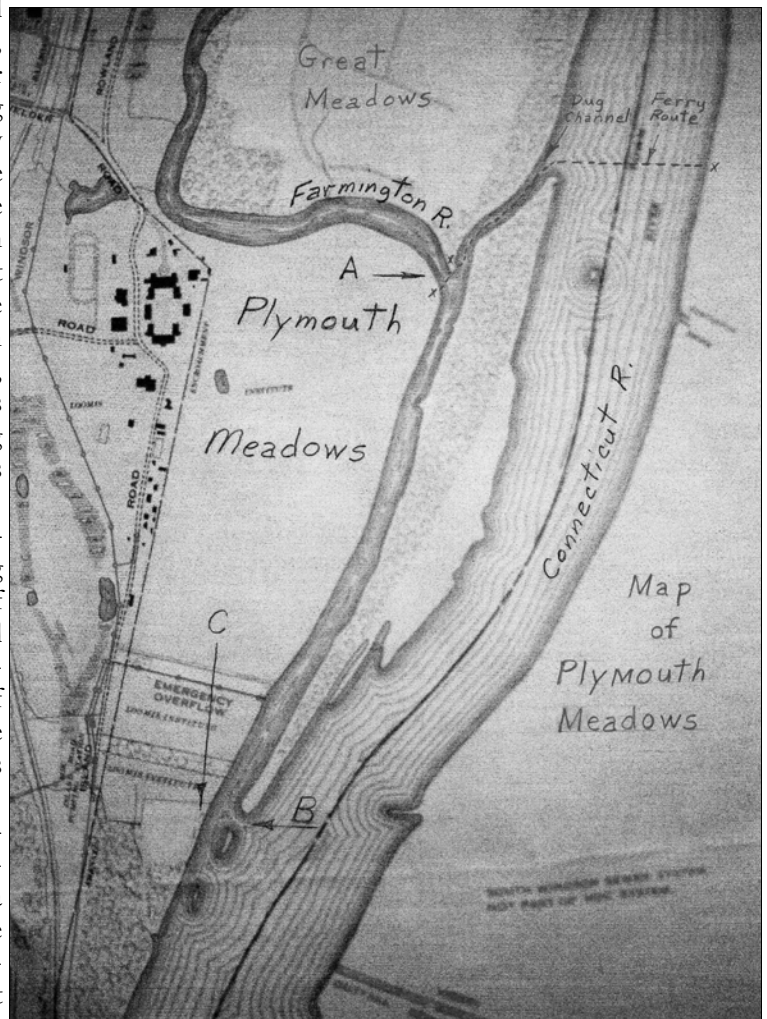
The written record tells us that the Plymouth Plantation group, under the charge of Lt. William Holmes, arrived by ship in 1633, bringing with them the frame of a house for immediate erection. These materials may have come from England, because there were no sawmills during this time in the colonies. Also, a palisade was built around this trading house. This complex was surrounded

by 43 acres of meadow. Incidentally, do not confuse this palisade with another built on the north side of the Farmington River by the previously mentioned Massachusetts Bay's Dorchester group in 1637 for protection during the Pequot War. The trading house was continuously occupied and its surroundings farmed until this plot was sold to Matthew Allen of the Dorchester group in 1637. After he bought the land, materials to build Allen's new house were from the old Trading House.

There is little doubt the Plymouth Meadows was inhabited before the English came. Both the written and archaeological record indicate this. Centuries of spring freshets have continually left fertile alluvium. It is also documented that the meadow was already cleared for agriculture and fit for cultivation when the first English arrived.

Some noteworthy events took place at the Plymouth Trading House shortly after its establishment. One was an

*(Continued on page 9)*



Plymouth Meadows. Photograph and notations by Jim Trocchi.



## Spotlight on Volunteers

Mae Johnson has been a member since the conception of FOSA in January 1997. She was among the first Board Members and held the position of Secretary. Of her present activities, she maintains the FOSA mail list and most important, is a member of the Newsletter Committee, for which she was presented a "Certificate of Appreciation" for her outstanding contribution at our 2008 Annual Meeting.

Mae received her interest in archaeology and then FOSA in a very unique way. She wanted to develop property she owned that is adjacent to the Menunketesuck River where a known prehistoric Indian burial had been found in the 1940s. Mae knew Dave and June Cooke and they helped her make contact with Dr. Nick's office. Within a very short period of time, a dig at the site was organized, and before she knew it she caught the "archaeology bug," assisting with trowel and screen in hand. A site file located at the Office of State Archaeology is known as the "Johnson Site."

I believe Mae expresses all of our feelings in this following quote from her, "I understand the importance of preserving and documenting our archaeological history. The FOSA membership and volunteers continue to make a significant contribution to assisting the OSA to accomplish its



Mae Johnson receiving Certificate of Appreciation from Cynthia Redman. Photo by John Spaulding.

mandates and goals. I'm happy to be a small part of it."

A special Thank you from all of your friends in FOSA for your contributions in making our organization so successful.

*Kenneth Beatrice*

## First English Settlement

*(Continued from page 8)*

encounter with 70 Dutch soldiers in battle array who came up to dislodge them for settling here and cutting into the fur trading business with the Indians. There are no details of this event, other than that the Plymouth people had enough of a force to call their bluff and withstand them without a shot being fired. Also, in the winter of 1633-34 the Indians living near the Trading House came down with smallpox and sought refuge there. The English tried to help them but the Indians having no resistance to this disease died in large numbers.

The main reason for writing this article is that we may have a wonderful opportunity this year for an archaeological study in a portion of the Plymouth Meadows. While I was on docent duty at the Windsor Historical Society, a visitor stopped to tell me he was the owner of this very historic property (map item C). His property borders the southern line of the Loomis Institute. He expressed his desire for an archaeological study here. We exchanged contacts and agreed to meet in the spring.

What can we possibly learn from an archaeological study here? First and foremost would be evidence of the remains of the Plymouth Trading House. But from an archaeological perspective, if the materials for the Trading House were reused and relocated as previously mentioned above, it de-

creases the chances of finding the Trading House site. In this situation we will have to depend on finding its palisade or any residual foundations, footings or soil stains.

We will probably find some degree of prehistoric artifacts and hopefully features in what was no doubt a very desirable place to settle and live for the Native Americans in prehistoric times because of its fertile soil for agriculture and its rivers for fishing.

A view of Plymouth Meadows today from the adjacent Loomis Institute road is spectacular and captures your imagination. It is a picturesque sight, bordered by two tree-lined rivers. One can only wish they were in a time machine to see all the prehistoric and historic events that took place here. Archaeology is the closest thing we have to this science fiction technology. Perhaps if this summer's research comes to fruition we will be placed in our own time machine.

*Jim Trocchi*

### References:

Stiles, Henry. *The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor*. Picton Press, PO Box 250, Rockport, Maine 04856-0250: 1891.

Howard, Daniel. *A New History of Old Windsor, Connecticut*. The Journal Press of Windsor Locks, Ct.: 1935.

## More Exciting Discoveries at the Venture Smith Archaeology Site

On a gently sloping hillside above the Salmon River at Haddam Neck lie the unassuming stone ruins of the Venture Smith archaeology site. The average hiker might dismiss the stonework and depressions as talus deposits and tree throws. Nothing could be more mundane and uninspiring. Or could it? Things are not always what they seem, for in this case those cultural features helped uncover a very inspiring story of one man's endurance, resolve, and courage in the painfully restrictive and racist world of 18<sup>th</sup> century New England.

It is the story of Broteer Furro/Venture Smith (ca. 1729-1805), the eldest son of a West African prince who was kidnapped and sold into slavery when he was about 6 or 9 years old. In 1738 he was bought by Robertson Mumford, the steward on a slave ship out of Rhode Island, for four gallons of rum and a piece of calico. Mumford changed Broteer's name to Venture and brought him to toil at his family estate on Fishers Island. Venture was sold or pawned several times. After many hardships and much hard labor, he eventually saved enough money to buy his freedom in 1765. Venture the free man was 36 years old; he had been a slave for about 30 years.

For the next ten years Venture toiled to buy the freedom of his wife Meg and their three children; he then moved to the Connecticut Valley and in 1775 bought ten acres of land on Haddam Neck. By 1798, Venture's homestead had grown to over 100 acres with three houses. We know this because Venture dictated his autobiography to a local white schoolteacher, who published it in that year as *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But resident above sixty years in the United States of America. Related by Himself*. In the book, Venture credits his success to frugality and a strong work ethic.

The *Narrative* touches lightly on Venture's economic endeavors to win his family's freedom and provide for them in Haddam Neck. One sentence mentions a "farm,"



Clinch nails (clinker and carvel types), used in small boats, identified by William Peterson, senior curator, and Quentin Snediker, director of the shipyard, at Mystic Seaport. Both were pleased to confirm that site structures and artifacts demonstrated Venture Smith's mariner activities, since the Seaport is presently researching the role of black mariners in Connecticut's maritime history. Photo courtesy of Lucianne Lavin, PhD.

and two sentences report his involvement in "fishing and trafficking business" and possession "of boats, canoes, and sail vessels, not less than twenty."

Elizabeth Malloy, Director of the Haddam Historical Society, introduced the Connecticut Trust's readers to Venture Smith in her article, "Archaeology and Preservation at Haddam Neck" (see *Connecticut Preservation News*, May/June 2006). In it she discussed some of the initial findings of excavations directed by Dr. Marc Banks and me. That archaeological project was completed in 2007. This article summarizes some of our findings. They show how archaeology can support and add to what we learn from written records.

The archaeological finds confirm the vague references to farming and boats in Venture's *Narrative* and provide previously unknown information on his daily life, economic status, and moral standards. More than 49,000 artifacts and at least eight or nine structures including three houses, a blacksmith shop, a wharf, and a "pull in" for boats were discovered. Some artifacts represent architectural remnants and everyday domestic activities such as window glass, nails, hardware and padlock, broken dish and cup fragments, vessel glass, a bone knife handle, metal cutlery, and food remains. Interestingly, no liquor bottles or smoking pipes were found that date to Venture's time, suggesting the he neither drank nor smoked.

Other artifacts represent clothing, weaponry, and recreational activities, such as metal and bone buttons, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century pistol, and mouth harps. Some indicate farming: ox and horse shoes and the remains of a barn complex with agricultural tool fragments.

Several hand-made nails were identified by the staff of the Mystic Seaport Museum as a special type used for building small boats. A boat caulking iron, boat-related hardware, and lead baling seals for shipping goods were also recovered. These artifacts and the "pull in" support Venture's statement that he was a mariner, and they show that he repaired and possibly built his own vessels. Some of the metalwork was probably accomplished in the adjacent blacksmith shop.

In effect, these archaeological remains symbolize maritime activities that provided the cash income to free and sustain Venture's family in a race- and class-conscious world and help win the respect of his white neighbors, many of whom



18<sup>th</sup> Century padlock found in one of Venture's warehouses, one of Venture's strategies to prevent his being robbed, as he was on a number of occasions during his earlier years according to his *Narrative*. Photo courtesy of Lucianne Lavin, PhD.

(Continued on page 11)

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## Venture Smith

*(Continued from page 10)*

eulogized the man in a later edition of his *Narrative* published in 1896.

Venture died on September 19, 1805, at 77 years of age and was buried in the First Church cemetery in East Haddam, even though he was not a church member. His tombstone was made by a professional stone cutter; it is unique in that the "cherub" at its top displays Negroid features. This and other artistic attributes symbolize his high standing in local white society. Every year on September 19<sup>th</sup>, the East Haddam Historical Society and The First Church Society commemorate Venture with a eulogy, presentations by historians and archaeologists, and the placing of a wreath on the grave.

Venture Smith's story has been told in books, several international conferences, poems by the State Poet Laureate

Marilyn Nelson, a school curriculum, and, most recently, the BBC's 2007 film "A Slave's Story." Venture Smith has become an international hero and role model for everyone.

*Lucianne Lavin, PhD*



Another Smith strategy to protect the family goods & prevent being robbed. Ketland percussion cap pistol made in London c. 1820s, excavated from just outside the Smith main house. Photo courtesy of Lucianne Lavin, PhD.

A temporary exhibit of some of the archaeological finds from the Venture Smith Homestead excavations can be viewed at the Institute for American Indian Studies, 38 Curtis Road, Washington, CT (website for directions, hours, etc. is [www.birdstone.org](http://www.birdstone.org)).

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Newsletter Committee: June Cooke,  
Mae Johnson, Kristen Keegan, and  
Jim Trocchi.

## Meetings and Announcements

**Saturday, April 5, 2008** – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Connecticut Gravestone Network Symposium 2008. *Hosted by Friends of Center Cemetery, East Hartford, CT.* South Senior Center, 70 Canterbury St., East Hartford, CT. Lecture Topics: Welcome for First Time visitors – “Assessing an Old Burying Ground” 9:30 am. “Stone Conservation Talk” 10:45 am. “The Beauty of White Bronze” 1:15 pm. “Introduction to some Connecticut Carvers” 2:30 pm. Lunch-snacks & beverages will be available. Admission: Pay at the door - \$10 to

public, \$5 for CGN members. For details contact Ruth Brown at 860-643-5652 or [shapbrown@cox.net](mailto:shapbrown@cox.net).

**Saturday, May 3, 2008** – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Massachusetts Archaeological Society & Archaeological Society of Connecticut Spring Meeting. Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, Storrs, Connecticut. Theme: Amateur Collectors and Current Research.

**We would like to hear from YOU!** Please send your comments and ideas related to FOSA or the FOSA Newsletter to June Cooke at [junebug632@webtv.net](mailto:junebug632@webtv.net) and/or Mae Johnson at [mpjohnson@snet.net](mailto:mpjohnson@snet.net).

