

News from the



CONNECTICUT STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY & CONNECTICUT ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER



University of Connecticut • College of Liberal Arts & Sciences • Fall 2013

Photo by John Spaulding



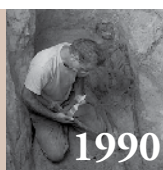
KEEPING AN EYE ON THE PAST

The Three-Decade Evolution of the Office of State Archaeology • By Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni



Office of State Archaeology is established by the CT General Assembly.

1987



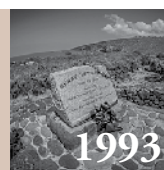
State legislature passes act to involve OSA in the recovery, identification and reburial of human skeletal remains.

1990



The Secor/Barnum Anthropological Collection of over 18,000 artifacts is transferred to the Museum.

1992



OSA exhumes and repatriates the remains of Henry Opukeāia back to the Big Island of Hawaii.

1993

After 26 years as the Connecticut State Archaeologist, I am considering retirement in 2014. As we begin to put the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) affairs in standing order, I have had the opportunity to look back at not only how our office and position have developed through almost three decades, but also time to consider all of the support services and constituencies we have interacted with over the years. For example, back in 1987 at the establishment of OSA by the Connecticut General Assembly, there was a single legislative citation for the State Archae-

ologist. Since then, we have been written into 12 sections of the state statutes with specific roles and responsibilities. In some ways we have remained small, but in others, we have grown considerably.

Although OSA roles and responsibilities are diverse, we can group them into two categories: Preservation and Service. Preservation of archaeological resources requires a multi-dimensional approach including the development of laws, coordination with municipal, federal, state and tribal governments, as well as creating public awareness. The latter is a charge we take very seriously, because if the public is not informed about the significance and existence of archaeological sites in their backyard, how can we expect them to support related legislation and the preservation work we do?

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News from the State Archaeologist

At the Municipal level, OSA has coordinated with every one of the 169 towns in the state over our tenure! We have assisted town planners, police departments, conservation, planning and zoning commissions, and first selectmen/mayors in reviewing thousands of economic development projects for potential impacts to archaeological and historical sites.

At the State level, we have worked closely with other sister agencies, especially the Department of Economic and Community Development's (DECD) State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Other state agencies that we have most commonly associated with include the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Department of Transportation (CTDOT), the Office of the Chief State's Medical Examiner, CT State Police, Attorney General's Office, and the General Assembly.

tions: the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation, Golden Hill Paugussett, and Eastern Pequot. In addition, five times a year, we meet with tribal representatives from all of these tribes that serve on the Native American Heritage Advisory Council (NAHAC) to discuss issues of burials and sacred sites.

While this alphabet soup of agency contacts represents a sampling of government and tribal constituents that have worked with OSA throughout the years, our most dominant inter-relationship is within the University of Connecticut. When our office was established and we were administratively placed within the State Museum of Natural History, a joint appointment was made with the Department of Anthropology. As a result, I have taught many classes on campus over the years, although Anthropology has long recognized our office's many obligations around the state and has kept teaching

projects, as well as independent studies for undergraduates. I am sure that if we stopped to count, we have interacted with over 10,000 UConn students in the last three decades.

The management and preservation of archaeological sites, conducting field research, and academic instruction represents an aspect of OSA responsibilities, but not the total perspective. Service (with a capital "S") is also at the heart of what our office and museum undertake. Every week we receive many emails and phone calls from the general public looking for assistance in archaeological and historical resources. Our office has served as a clearinghouse of information for teachers, amateur and professional archaeologists, Native Americans, historians, librarians, students from other colleges and universities, and many others. Property owners will call about objects they have found on their land, wondering if they



Friends of the Office of State Archaeology, Inc. is formed to support OSA.



Museum and OSA prepare long-term loan of Native American artifacts to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum.



OSA investigates the lost Gershom Bulkeley Tomb in Colchester, CT.



OSA conducts archaeological assessment survey of the 55-mile corridor of the Appalachian Trail in CT.



The Connecticut Archaeology Center is formed within the Museum of Natural History.

At the Federal level, OSA has assisted the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USF&W), Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on various projects across Connecticut. NRCS has been an extraordinary partner in providing ground-penetrating radar and other geo-physical techniques to assist our office.

At the Tribal level, OSA continues to work with all five extant Native American tribes in the state, which include the federally-recognized Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribal Nations, and three additional tribes having a legislative history with the State of Connecticut that goes back to the 1600s and state Indian Reserva-

to a minimum. We also serve on graduate committees and as readers for thesis and dissertation development. Also at UConn, we have interacted with many academic departments and research facilities including Dr. Linda Strausbaugh's Applied Genetics Laboratory, the Physics Department through Dr. Cynthia Peterson, Natural Resources with Dr. Jack Barkley, and Dr. Stuart Miller and the Judaic Studies Program just to name a few.

OSA and the State Museum of Natural History have a long record of support for undergraduate and graduate training here at UConn. We provide resources for advanced research through our extension Anthropological and Natural History Collections, hands-on field opportunities, support endowments, and our comprehensive archaeological site files and maps. These resources have provided the basis of many Masters and Doctoral level

are fossil or archaeological specimens. In addition, we have conducted field review when invited by private property owners to provide technical assistance in evaluating archaeological resources. In this regard, we have often developed working partnerships with landowners to preserve and protect significant archaeological resources, which they may have on their properties.

Service also includes giving public presentations to historical and archaeological societies, grade and high schools, civic groups, university classes, and nature centers. OSA has averaged 60 – 80 speaking engagements annually over our tenure. In addition, we work closely with the various Land Trusts around the state to preserve open space in municipalities concerned about dwindling natural and cultural resources in their communities.

Service also includes assisting the State's Chief Medical Examiner's Office

FROM THE DIRECTOR

and state and municipal police departments in modern criminal investigation. When the general public thinks of “archaeology,” they correctly think of our work as a way to understand the human past. Though our research interest is in the cultural past, the same techniques and methods of excavation and identification of human skeletal remains we are trained to uncover and examine are applicable to law enforcement cases. Over the years, we have been pleased to provide our assistance in the recovery of buried victims, the identification of human skeletal remains that have been affected by construction and other earth-moving activities, and from the result of criminal behavior. We are not trained in law enforcement and we rely on the professional police investigators to control the scene and gather the evidence they need to prosecute their cases. We can, however, provide the technical archaeological and anthropological expertise to assist their important and difficult work.

While OSA staff has not grown with all these initiatives, we have received great support from the staff and resources at our State Museum

Dear Friends,

In 2004, assisted by the UConn Geography Department and an Anthropology graduate student, the Museum and Archaeology Center began a new project to better organize and preserve the Office of State Archaeology site files using GIS. At that time, the site files documented over 5,000 known archaeological sites in Connecticut.

A responsibility of the State Archaeologist is to work with municipalities and developers across the state to help ensure that new construction and development occur without destroying archaeological sites—but he often has only 30 days to assess construction projects and conduct related field reviews. We knew that the use of GIS would help the State Archaeologist add, access, and sort site data quickly, streamlining OSA's work to complete hundreds of technical assessments in Connecticut towns and cities each year.

Jaime Grant, a graduate research assistant in Anthropology, helped us set up the new system in 2004 with training and support from Geography Department staff. Scanning and software



At the Hillside location, students and museum staff can also provide initial assistance and access to users during the week, helping to increase availability and convenience when the State Archaeologist is in the field.

Throughout the process, Bob Cless, a career archaeologist in the CT Department of Transportation, provided fundamental oversight and assistance, working with students, volunteers and staff, as well as the State Archaeologist. From the very first planning meetings, Bob was instrumental in development and design—getting things underway and keeping the effort going for 10 years.

Bob Cless passed away at the end of this summer, but his contribution continues. In 2011, Bob helped train and support former UConn Anthropology student Mandy Ranslow, an archaeologist who was working with the site files as an assistant in the OSA. Mandy now works full time at the CT DOT, as Bob did. Mandy is completing a GIS certificate program here at UConn and providing training and assistance to others working in the site files office. The site



2004

OSA directs excavations at the Rogers Site, a late-archaic Native American encampment in Lisbon, CT.



2006

OSA conducts excavations at Venture Smith Family Plot in East Haddam.



2007

CT State Archaeologist voted President of the National Association of State Archaeologists.



2009

OSA investigates the assumed physical remains of Adolf Hitler in Russia.



2012

OSA exhumes and repatriates the remains of Albert Afraid of Hawk to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

of Natural History, the archaeological community, and the non-profit Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA), which has been an invaluable volunteer and financial support network for OSA. People have often referred to our office as a “one man band,” but this is far from the truth. Without FOSA, the State Museum of Natural History and Archaeology Center, and the people of the state of Connecticut, we could never have accomplished any of the initiatives we have. It is truly humbling to think about the dedication and support that has been given to our office. It is an important and significant gift.

technology was also provided by the Geography Department, and the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology donated funds to purchase a new computer for the project. Without this assistance, the project could not have been undertaken.

The site files project initially operated out of the Horsebarn Hill Office, before moving to the main Museum building on Hillside Road. With existing funds and assistance from the Academic Renovations team in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, we were able to create a small new room inside the building. These 52 square feet became the OSA's dedicated site files office. Qualified researchers, students, and archaeological consultants arrange appointments to use the site files hundreds of times each year.

files now number closer to 8,000, and the project continues. Bob's co-workers at the CT DOT and colleagues in the archaeological community are donating funds in his memory for the continuation of the site file work.

As Nick Bellantoni's words reflect, “The development of an electronic version of the state's archaeological site files and maps was one of Bob's inspirations. His dedication and hard work toward the project will always be remembered, and the continuation of what he started will be an ongoing part of his legacy.”

With thanks and remembrance,

Leanne Harty

Leanne Harty, Director

A PLACE FOR

EVERY B

Officially, the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) is designed to meet a variety of federal, state and local government mandates, but it is perhaps by meeting the people on the ground, who assist in the actual research and excavations, that you get the most vivid picture of the work of the OSA. In this article we will introduce you to just such a group brought together by one project—the Bulkeley Tomb. They included professional academics, avocational archaeologists, dedicated lay people, and curious students from every academic level. Through it, we hope you get a sense of just how many people the Office of State Archaeology touches and depends on in order to accomplish the work it does. You may even come to see yourself among the crowd.



Members of the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology digging out the entrance to the Bulkeley Tomb.



Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni and FOSA member Dave Cooke get their first look inside the tomb.



Colchester Town Historian, Stanley Moroch.



In the spring of 2002, while working on a restoration project in the Ancient Burial Grounds Cemetery in Colchester, CT, two town employees uncovered a broken marble slab engraved with the words “Tomb of Gershom Bulkeley and His Descendants.” It was located next to a forgotten mound of earth with a long overgrown entryway. While the Bulkeley name is well known in Connecticut—descendants include a Connecticut governor and a founder of the Aetna Life Insurance Company—knowledge of this family tomb had been lost to history. When the town historian, Stanley Moroch, got news of the find his first call was to Peter Bulkeley, one of Gershom Bulkeley’s living descendants. Having had no knowledge of the tomb, Peter wondered if there was any way to determine which of his family members might be interred there. Their next call was to State Archaeologist, Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni.

The prospect of opening the tomb and examining the remains raised two intriguing questions for Dr. Bellantoni. First, would a combination of forensic analysis and historic research be up to the task of giving names to these forgotten members of Peter’s family? Second, what might the forensics reveal about the historic treatment of disease and medical trauma in a

family from a higher socioeconomic class such as the Bulkeleys?

Before the tomb was opened, Stanley Moroch and his team of researchers from the Colchester Historical Society combed the historic record to see if they could narrow down the list of possible Bulkeley descendants who might be interred there. Peter Bulkeley provided a comprehensive family genealogy, listing over 150 family members, dating back to the first descendants to arrive in Connecticut in the mid-1600s. This list was cross-referenced with cemetery records from across the state to eliminate those family members known to be buried elsewhere. Moroch’s team also researched local deeds, church and tax records, etc. to determine which family members might have lived locally. The final list was narrowed to approximately fifty descendants who could potentially be located in Bulkeley family tomb.

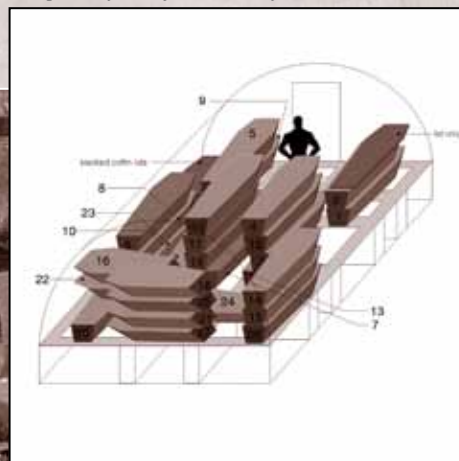
In the meantime Dr. Bellantoni was assembling the team who would be responsible for entering and

excavating the contents of the tomb. He drew largely from a talented and dedicated group of volunteers who call themselves the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA). Members include professional, retired and avocational archaeologists, students, teachers, and lay people with curiosity about the past. For reasons that quickly became apparent, the excavation of the Bulkeley tomb would have been impossible without their help.

When the first brick was pulled from the entrance and Dr. Bellantoni peered inside, he understood he had a lot more work ahead of him than he had anticipated. It was obvious there were many more bodies in the tomb than ever imagined. Coffins had been stacked several high, one on top of the other. Over time, as the wood rotted, they had collapsed on themselves, spilling their contents into a large, chaotic pile of wood shards, coffin hardware, human remains, and personal artifacts. This was not going to be a classic shovel-and-trowel excavation, but a slow, methodical process

BODY

By the end of the project the original order of the tomb was completely reconstructed, and of the 31 bodies removed, 29 were positively identified as Bulkeley ancestors.



Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni excavating the remains inside the tomb.



Dr. Albert Harper and students working on the forensic analysis of the remains on site.



Peter Bulkeley inside the tomb after it had been restored and his ancestors' remains returned.



Bulkeley descendants and friends at the re-interment ceremony.

of working down from the top of the debris pile in an effort to reconstruct the original order of the tomb.

Several factors helped the team to distinguish distinct burials. While the sides of the coffins had collapsed the tops and bottoms were still roughly intact, creating a kind of stratification that separated the remains. All of the coffin lids had nameplates or were decorated with tacks spelling out the occupant's initials, which proved vital as a cross-reference to the list of potential occupants that the historical research had generated. Forensic observation on site helped further distinguish remains by age, sex, and physical size. The archaeologists also knew to anticipate a rough chronological order to the debris pile, as the earliest coffins would have been placed in the tomb first, while the latest family members to be interred would be located on the top.

As the remains were brought out of the tomb, forensic anthropologist Dr. Albert Harper led a group of undergraduates from UConn and

several other New England universities to try to further match the unas-sociated remains with their owners. It took twelve days to excavate all the burials from the tomb. In total, 31 distinct sets of remains were removed, but only six could be positively identified and named on site. The rest would go on to the forensics lab for further analysis.

For each hour spent in the field many more were spent in the forensics lab the following winter examining the morphology of the Bulkeley tomb occupants. The shape, color, and structure of the bones allowed Dr. Bellantoni, working with several UConn graduate students, to distinguish the sex, age, and health of their owner. Working painstakingly over weeks, they were able to piece together, as well as possible, complete sets of skeletal remains out of the chaotic collection originally found in the tomb.

Forensic analysis of the Bulkeley family remains also gave researchers unique insight into the medical status of a group of people from a higher

socioeconomic class. They observed evidence of arthritis, tuberculosis, and severe bone fractures. And, although as a general pattern, the Bulkeley family did not live statistically longer lives than the average member of the population at the time, there was clear evidence that they had received significantly more medical services than lay people.

In the end, the combination of modern archaeological techniques, forensic analysis, and historical research allowed Dr. Bellantoni's team to positively identify 29 Bulkeley ancestors for Peter and the rest of the living descendants. Throughout the following year the dilapidated tomb was restored, and the remains of the family members were re-interred at a rededication ceremony in the fall of 2003. Placed inside the tomb was the broken marble slab that first hinted at this greater story.

Beyond the direct lessons learned from the Bulkeley Tomb, the people involved in the project offer a unique snapshot of the nature and practice of archaeology today. It is one of the rare disciplines where students, dedicated amateurs, and lay people work in partnership with professional scientists and historians in an effort to identify, preserve, and share history's stories. As Peter's family would attest, it is the people that come together around the OSA that help make archaeology feel like such a personal science.

JOHN SPAULDING

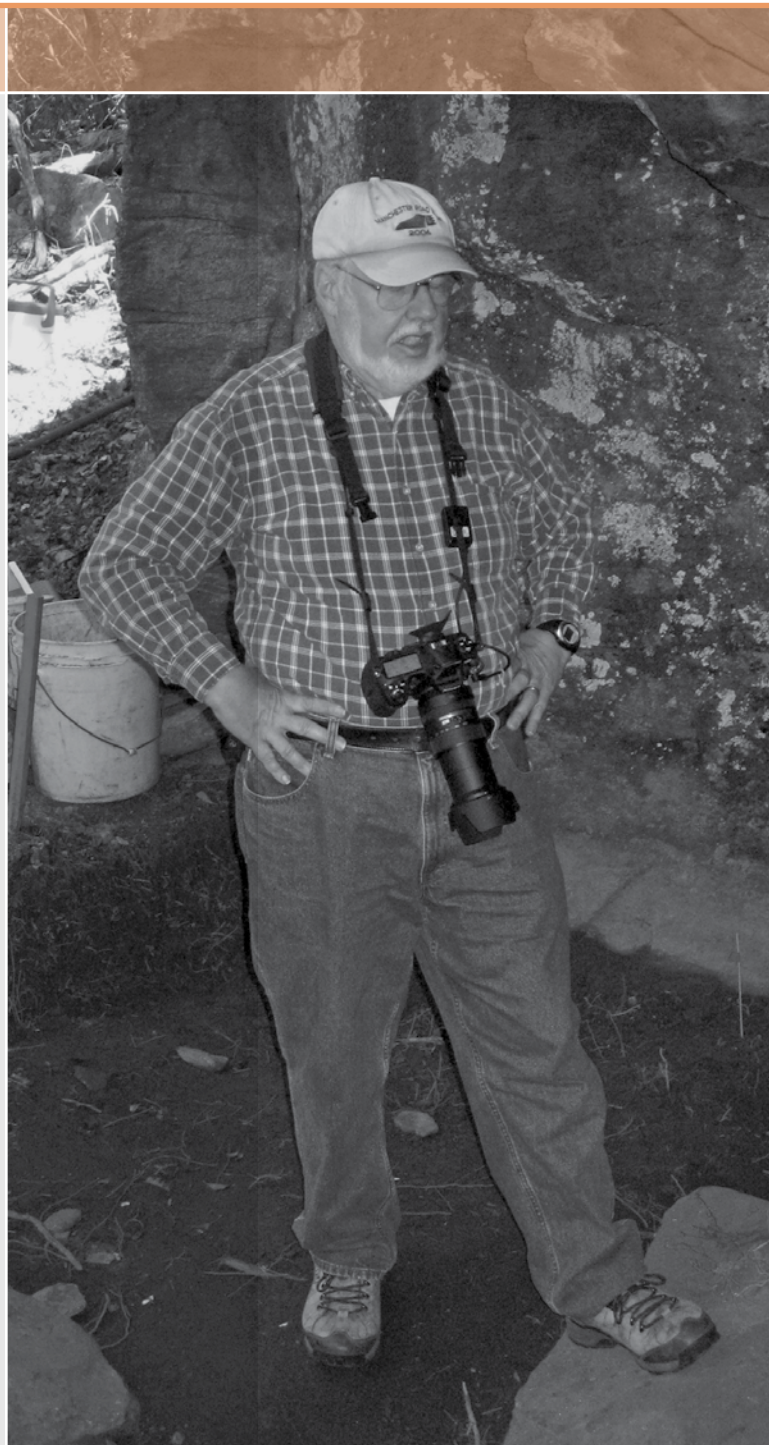
During the summer of 2000, the bricks of what was thought to be an empty burial vault in East Hartford's historic Center Cemetery collapsed. A town crew came to assess the damage and was surprised to find skeletal remains of 16 individuals. The Office of State Archaeology (OSA) was called in to investigate and worked closely with John Spaulding, the archivist of Center Cemetery. John had done extensive research on the families buried at the cemetery, with some burials dating back to the early 1700s. Cemetery records were compared with the analysis of skeletal remains to conclude the vault belonged to the Pitkin Family, a prominent East Hartford family that produced a colonial governor and other influential community leaders.

During the investigation, John photographed the daily activities. Each day he brought an updated album of the images that also included newspaper articles, historical research, genealogical information, and other related details of interest. At the conclusion of the Pitkin Family Tomb project, the album became a comprehensive document of the work that took place and was the first of many fieldwork albums to come.

John joined the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA) and was often referred to as FOSA's "official photographer." He participated in almost every field project between 2000 and 2010, creating binders full of photographs, newspaper articles, and related research for each endeavor. Today the albums are valued resources in the OSA archives that not only record the technical aspects of the excavations, but also include images of the many experts and volunteers who contributed. As a professional engineer, serving as Chief of Public Transportation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation until his retirement, John offered many helpful suggestions on field techniques. John also played an important role in the FOSA Annual Meeting, setting up the technical media for the speakers, as well as recording the presentations for FOSA's archives.

Beyond his work with FOSA, John served as an officer in several organizations including the Manchester Historical Society, Pitkin Glass Works, Connecticut Gravestone Network, and Association for Gravestone Studies. His love of photography led him to photograph many bird banding projects for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

John passed away in 2010, survived by his wife Elizabeth, six children, eight grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. He is deeply missed by his archaeology colleagues, and for many it still feels strange not to have him out in the field. Yet his contributions to the OSA and FOSA have established a timeless legacy through his thousands of images and over 40 site albums documenting not only Connecticut's historic past, but those who work to protect it and bring it to life.



New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery A small group of Eastern Orthodox Jews left New York in 1890 and settled in Chesterfield, where they established a synagogue and creamery. The one-room synagogue was dedicated in 1892 and a mikvah, or ritual bath, was added later. Economic factors forced the closing of the creamery, which became a residence and then an inn that operated throughout the 1940s. It burned down in 1950. The synagogue officially closed in 1953 and was torched by an arsonist in the 1970s. While none of the former structures are still standing today, excavation of the site has uncovered significant archaeological features, including the location of the mikvah.

CONNECTICUT'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVES

NEWS FROM THE

STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Archaeological Preserves are specially designated sites designed to protect some of our most precious archaeological resources. Through a cooperative effort between the State Historic Preservation Office, the Historic Preservation Council, the Office of the State Archaeologist, CT's archaeological community, concerned citizens and property owners, 31 locations have currently been set aside as preserves in the State. Below is just a sample.



Aunt Polly was the cherished houseboat of actor William Gillette, who was best known for his stage portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. Aunt Polly served as Gillette's primary residence from 1901-1919. She burned on December 20, 1932 by the riverbank below Gillette's estate in East Haddam, where she had been permanently moored in a cement cradle and roofed over for 10-12 years prior. The site, which contains what remained of the boat below the waterline after years of ice and water damage, is now part of Gillette Castle State Park. At low tide 106 feet of the wreck are visible at her Connecticut River location, while at high tide the wreck is completely covered.



One year ago this autumn, Superstorm Sandy blasted its way through the eastern seaboard. Amid much damage, Sandy's high winds toppled the 103-year old Lincoln Oak on the New Haven Green. To everyone's surprise, the pulled-up root mat exposed human skeletal remains. The New Haven Police Department, Office of the State's Chief Medical Examiner, our colleagues at Yale University, and the OSA were called in to handle the situation. For three days, we carefully removed the fragile bones from within the extensive root system of the tree. Remains were transferred to Yale University's Bio-anthropological Laboratories in the Anthropology Department, where on-going forensic analyses have determined that the partial skeletons of six individuals were uprooted in the storm event.

Historians have long noted that the New Haven Green was the site of the earliest burying ground for the city beginning in the mid-1600s. The Green was used as a cemetery into the early 1800s. In 1791 Grove Street Cemetery was founded, and by 1810, the tombstones occupying the Green had been transferred to the new cemetery. However, while tombstones were moved, there appears to have been no attempt to move the bodies!

The Lincoln Oak was planted in April 1909, in celebration of the 100th



anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. (As you know, Lincoln's birthday is in February, however, the ground was much too frozen to plant a commemorative tree in winter!) At the base of the tree there was a small monument with a three-foot cement base. What we were not aware of at the time was that two time capsules had been imbedded within

the cement base! While conducting research, a local historian found a newspaper article of the day referring to the time capsules. So, with assistance from the New Haven Parks and Recreation Department, our colleagues at Quinnipiac University, and a cement contractor, we chiseled away at the cement base. And sure enough, we found two copper cylinder canisters about 10 inches in length and 4 inches in diameter.

Of course, everyone wanted us to open the canisters immediately, but first, we wanted to know what was in them prior to opening! So, we brought the two canisters to Quinnipiac University's Paleo-Imaging Laboratories and zapped them with high-powered x-rays. In the x-ray images, we could "see" round objects, a metal star, coins, newspapers, and ribbons among other things. Only then did we open the time capsules!

Inside were a musket ball and grape shot recovered from the Gettysburg Battlefield, a star from the Grand Army of the Republic, commemorative Lincoln coins, and newspapers from six New Haven dailies in 1909! This project will teach us something about the Colonial inhabitants of New Haven, their health and life stresses, as well as the city's history in the early 20th century. You never know where each project will lead!

Nick Bellantoni, State Archaeologist

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a vital part of the Museum's effort to provide innovative programming and enrich the museum experience. We wish to thank the following individuals for their service: Rebecca Brown, Meghan Connolly, and Kathleen Lynch.

CONNECTICUT ARCHAEOLOGY FAIR

Saturday, October 19, from 10 am to 4 pm,
at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center,
200 Main Street in Wethersfield, CT.

Local archaeological societies, historical societies, and universities will have displays highlighting past and current excavations and research. View and learn more about real artifacts! Talk to archaeologists who can answer your questions. Whether you have a passing interest in archaeology or you want to find out how to become more involved, there will be something for everyone. The Fair is free with a suggested \$5 donation for 18 and over. All proceeds will be used to support ongoing archaeological work in the Office of State Archaeology.

MEMBERSHIP

Standard membership benefits:

- Free admission to special events
- Reduced rates for workshops
- 15% discount at the UConn Co-op
- Early notification of programs
- Museum Newsletter

Regular Memberships	1 Year	2 Year
___ Family.....	\$45	\$80
___ Couple.....	\$40	\$70
___ Senior Couple.....	\$35	\$60
___ Individual	\$35	\$60
___ Student Individual	\$25	\$45
___ Senior Individual	\$25	\$45

Consider upgrading to an Owl Membership. These memberships provide special support for Museum programs. In addition to standard membership benefits, Owl Members receive guest passes, gifts, and more.

Owl Memberships	
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