



# NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Fall 2024 Vol. 52, No. 3

## LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH OCTOBER 2024

The Louisiana Archaeological Society celebrates more than 50 years of bringing together individuals interested in investigating and preserving the cultural heritage and history of our state. Volunteers work side-by-side with archaeologists in research and excavations. Have you ever wanted to participate in archaeological research? Discover what archaeology can reveal about the history of your community during one of the many events offered during Louisiana Archaeology Month.



Volunteers look for artifacts by sifting through excavated soil at the Lac St Agnes mound site in Avoyelles Parish.



Volunteers sort and catalog artifacts from the Lac St. Agnes Mound site.



Local enthusiasts conduct field investigations with archaeologists at the Tom Field's site in Union parish.



Students work alongside archaeologists to learn field techniques.



Volunteers attend workshops to learn how to interpret artifacts.



School children discover how archaeologists learn about the past.



Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired students explore archaeology during summer camp.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Mark A. Rees, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Every October the State of Louisiana, along with other states, celebrates Archaeology Month. As shown on the cover of this *Newsletter*, the Louisiana Archaeology Month poster for 2024 commemorates the Louisiana Archaeological Society's fiftieth anniversary (see page 21 of this *Newsletter* for the full poster). As mentioned in the Summer 2024 *LAS Newsletter* (Vol. 52, No. 2), on May 25, 1974, a group of avocational and professional archaeologists met in Jonesville, Louisiana to establish a state-wide society for the advancement and support of archaeology. Sherwood Gagliano chaired the meeting and Clarence H. Webb was elected as the first President of the LAS (see *LAS Special Publication No. 2*).

The LAS and Louisiana Archaeology Month have shared goals of public education, interpretation, and conserving the archaeological record of the state. Louisiana Archaeology Month is organized and promoted each year by the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Archaeology. Presentations, exhibits, and events are scheduled throughout the state. Among the many upcoming events are: a Ranger-guided hike and earth oven cooking demonstration at Poverty Point World Heritage Site, presentations on "The First Settlers of Livingston Parish: 15,000 years ago to 1500 AD" and Ashland Belle Helene Plantation, and an exhibit on *El Nuevo Constante* shipwreck. For dates, locations, and more information, check out the [Calendar](#) and [Map](#) on the [Louisiana Archaeology Month](#) page of the Division of Archaeology's [website](#). The Acadiana Chapter of the LAS and Anthropology Society at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are co-hosting a series of public presentations and events (see page 22 of this *Newsletter*). Plan to attend, host, or participate in an event near you and [Discover Louisiana Archaeology!](#)

In addition to Louisiana Archaeology Month, other important news in this *Newsletter* includes the annual LAS meeting (see page 18). The LAS executive committee is pleased to announce a joint conference will be held with the Mississippi Archaeological Association (MAA) on February 21-23, 2025 in Natchez, Mississippi. The meeting venue, lodging, and additional conference information will be announced soon on the [LAS](#) and [MAA](#) websites.

Articles of interest in this *Newsletter* share a common theme of public archaeology that intersects plantation, urban, and rural contexts. The Evergreen Plantation Archaeological Survey (EPAS), led by Dr. Jayur Mehta out

of Florida State University, is one of the most important collaborative, community archaeology projects in the state. Louisiana has hundreds of Antebellum and post-bellum plantations, notably along the Mississippi and Red rivers. Evergreen Plantation (16SJB63) is a National Historic Landmark listed on the National Register. It is also among the plantations on the West Bank of the Mississippi River that are endangered by encroaching industrialization (see Summer 2023 *LAS Newsletter*, Vol. 51, No. 2). The EPAS is uncovering the hidden history of enslaved people through community collaboration and public outreach.

Recent archaeological investigations at St. Louis Cathedral by Ryan Gray with the University of New Orleans highlight the critical importance of urban archaeology, especially in a city that so stridently touts its history, culture, and heritage. Public interest in archaeology becomes readily apparent in such well-known and heavily trafficked spaces. New Orleans should have a full-time City Archaeologist, as it once had, for the edification of Louisiana residents and visitors, as well as the investigation and conservation of its endangered and subsiding archaeological record.

In the piney hills near the Arkansas border 240 miles to the northwest, the Archeology Research Center at the Union Museum of History and Art in Farmerville has begun fieldwork with the goals of public education and community participation. Archaeology has an uncanny way of getting people interested in its subject matter, materiality, and what it can tell us about ourselves and the past, whether in the middle of a city, beside a Great River, or in a forest. Fortunately, it is Louisiana Archaeology Month. Spread the word and read on.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Field Notes and Recent Research

Evergreen Plantation Archaeological Survey 2024 .....	3
Recent Archaeology at St. Louis Cathedral ....	7
UNO Excavates in St. Louis Cathedral .....	9
Union Museum Archeology Research Center and Site 16UR153 .....	12
UL Lafayette—KNF Fieldwork at Lake Iatt ....	16
<b>News and Announcements .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Louisiana Archaeology Month .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Meetings .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>LAS Chapters .....</b>	<b>25</b>



## FIELD NOTES AND RECENT RESEARCH

### Evergreen Plantation Archaeological Survey 2024

Tara Skipton

University of Texas at Austin

The Evergreen Plantation Archaeological Survey (EPAS) returned to St. John the Baptist Parish this summer for its third field season. This season's crew had two goals this time around: 1) to fully expose and define the bewildering brick feature from previous seasons, and 2) to explore GPR anomalies behind extant nineteenth century cabins of the enslaved closer to the sugar mill. By the end of the field season, we left with more thoughts than answers, but we learned a lot from each other and from the local communities of Wallace and Edgard.

Feature 3 at Evergreen Plantation (16SJB63) was born on backfill day in 2021, during EPAS's first field season (Figure 1). After spending the first half of the day excavating what we could and piece-plotting each brick we saw in the onset of a downpour, we filled in the unit, with a potential walkway as our best guess. The main focus of that season was recovering the location of an unmapped structure, lost on paper but not in memory. Earlier, we found a double-sided brick beneath the surface 15-m north of Feature 3. Although the brick in Feature 3 appeared a lot more orange and felt a lot softer than the fireplace, we thought that maybe some reuse of materials was afoot.



Figure 1. Aerial view of Feature 3 at the end of the season.

When we exposed more of Feature 3 in our 2023 field school and this season in 2024, however, its full shape was entirely unexpected (Figure 2). While excavations in 2023 focused on exposing as much of the brick as possible, the goal for 2024 was to assess what lay around its perimeter. Excavations just east of the pentagonal, multi-tiered Feature 3 revealed a noticeable charcoal deposit. It was amidst relatively limited amounts of

material other than metal, and we found lots of metal. Some was identifiable but most was not. Among the identified metal artifacts were a bastard file and a chain with a numbered brass tag. What we thought was some sort of ammunition (clearly, no firearm experts were on the crew), turned out to be the heads of lead roofing nails, likely indicating the presence of a tin roof over whatever structure Feature 3 represents.

But the most trowel-dropping find in this area was a flattened 1802 Spanish coin (Figure 3). Even though the bricks appear to be older than the artifacts we found, all other materials in this assemblage still dated to the early twentieth century, just like we found in other contexts around the quarters. Perhaps someone held onto this coin as an heirloom or keepsake before unfortunately dropping it, and never seeing it again.

After discussing our perplexing array of clues with Evergreen's historian, Michael Dardar, his best guess was that Feature 3 is the remains of a sawmill that was in operation sometime between 1894 and 1930 when the Songy family owned the property. The missing bricks in the center may have been dislodged and relocated elsewhere during the removal of the heavy equipment in the 1940s. The Spanish coin might not only have been lost, but accidentally dropped into the machinery and flattened. The old bricks could represent a reuse of materials. The bastard file seems on par with the toolkit accompanying a sawmill, and perhaps that chain and tag marked lumber lots or was simply a makeshift way to keep the door closed. Overall, Feature 3 has taken us on a whirlwind of imaginative interpretations (Figure 4), and we hope the dots are finally connecting.

For the second half of the season, the EPAS crew explored what lay behind the quarters closer to the sugar mill. An old 1851 map of Evergreen Plantation depicts only 14 cabins out of the 22 that stand today, so it was thought that some of the cabins might have been built earlier than others. In the 2023 field school, cabin excavations closer to the big house yielded early-twentieth century materials with only a few materials that could date back to the mid-nineteenth century. So we opened units on the other side of the quarters complex to test whether there was a disparity in dates of construction.





Figure 2. Oblique view of Feature 3 at the end of the season.



Figure 3. Spanish coin dating to 1802 (Front above; back below).



Figure 4. Jayur Mehta and Tara Skipton discussing how confusing Feature 3 is.



Most GPR anomalies in this area were nothing more than an intense amount of tree roots. At the front of Cabin 22, we uncovered a loose pebble-and-mortar feature that surrounded a piece of rebar. This could be the foundation of some steps leading up to the front of the cabin. However, we spent most of our efforts behind Cabin 21 after it produced distinct changes in soil color that we did not see in other units (Figure 5). This area had a relatively large amount of faunal remains. Here, we found a few complete glass bottles, more ceramic sherds, and another trowel-dropping discovery.



Figure 5. Operations behind Cabin 21.

I started about half of our mornings this season with a mini lecture over breakfast on various topics in archaeology, like sampling strategies, the scientific method, and flotation samples. I always dedicate one of these mornings to discussing what we would do if we find human remains, since it is one of the most common questions from friends, family, and acquaintances. I note that we are excavating in areas very unlikely to contain human remains, but this information is useful for future archaeologists.

After that morning, every now and then, students would gasp as they found yet another tooth behind Cabin 21. They took their best guesses at what animal it came from, but there was always a little doubt: "...but I don't know, it could look a little human-ish?" Most of the time, it's a pig tooth. Most of the time. But this time, the student insisted that everyone look closer. This tooth had three robust roots, still-glistening and intact enamel, and a relatively flat crown. I'm no expert in faunal identification nor in human osteology, but it was no pig's tooth. Pictures were sent to Florida State University's bioarchaeologist, Dr. Geoffrey Thomas, who confirmed it was human.

We stopped excavating in that area while we emailed state archaeologist Chip McGimsey to discuss what we

should do. Given the context, it was most likely not associated with a tribe, and he recommended that we rebury it in the unit if the landowner agreed. So, we kept it in a safe place until the end of the season.

In the meantime, we hosted an array of visitors as we finished up the field season. We wanted to open the project to those interested and to also get practice talking with a variety of people. First, we had an Archaeology Community Day for our archaeology friends and colleagues. Many stopped by to see what we've been doing (be on the lookout for next summer's invitation!). Then, we had two groups of descendants stop by: Jo and Joy Banner from the Descendants Project accompanied a family from Baton Rouge on Juneteenth, and the family of Joe, the toughest guy my husband and I befriended at the local gym.

Especially for descendants, I find it important to give the same insight on protocols for discovering human remains as I give to students just in case anyone believes that we bulldoze right through burials, or bag everything up to be stored in a box back home, never to be seen again. This time, I also disclosed the discovery of the tooth and our plans to rebury it. But Joe's preteen grand-niece immediately gave me the sassiest and most shocked "why?" That made me stop in my tracks. I told her this was typically what we do out of respect for the person and their descendants. She asked about the possibility of DNA testing since there are so few resources for recounting Black ancestry. We both knew about the shortcomings of the archive, and she saw reburying the tooth as another way of shrouding that history. Of course, DNA analysis won't give us a full biography, but it can at least tell us something about a person for whom we know almost nothing about.

There is no singular descendant community for those who once lived at Evergreen Plantation, but many individuals and families are today affected by the work we choose to do and not do. We continue to hold onto the tooth as we continue to ask more descendants and community members for their input. So far, these discussions have produced more clarity and reassurance for future steps. We will be returning to Evergreen Plantation for another season of excavation next summer, and we hope you stop by as we learn more.

For more information, email me at:

[taraskipton@utexas.edu](mailto:taraskipton@utexas.edu).







Figure 6. EPAS students showing finds to archaeologists from TRC and Goodwin & Associates on Archaeology Community Day.



Figure 7. EPAS 2024 field crew in really cool shirts designed by Isaac Jordan.



## Recent Archaeology at St. Louis Cathedral

D. Ryan Gray, University of New Orleans

It certainly wasn't a call we were expecting. Around Thanksgiving of last year, we learned that in advance of a planned restoration project at St. Louis Cathedral, contractors had excavated two pits in the nave and narthex of the church, and that they would need to open at least two more. These were intended to help architects and engineers evaluate the foundations and make sure that they were in good condition. The ca. 1849 Cathedral is perhaps one of the most iconic features of the New Orleans cityscape, and this was an unmatched opportunity to get a view of the development of the site.

Archaeologists from UNO initially visited to document the pits that were already open. The profiles of these excavations revealed a complex construction sequence spanning some 2 meters in depth. There were distinct layers associated with an early church (completed in 1727), a series of renovations to it throughout the mid-eighteenth century, its destruction in the Good Friday fire of 1788, and the construction of the replacement Cathedral that opened in 1794. This served the City's Catholic population until it was replaced by the building that is still on the site now. Given the sensitivity of the deposits, UNO was eventually allowed to excavate the next two pits, on either side of a doorway at the front of the Cathedral.

It was a rewarding experience in public archaeology, to be sure. Hundreds of people passed by every day, taking photographs and asking questions. Local news crews

visited, along with preservation professionals, historians, and other archaeologists. Of course, there were also challenges in excavating in such a restricted and high traffic area. Archaeology usually is messy, and where to screen soils was an issue, especially when we reached inundated, mucky soils that required water screening. For these lower soils, which contained the earliest deposits, we ultimately decided to bag the soils and bring them back to UNO for fine screening. As a result, we're still processing those samples, and pulling tiny bits of fish bone, beads, and straight pins out of the construction debris. Some photos of the excavations in progress are included here

While the final plans for the Cathedral restoration will ultimately determine the scope of the analyses done now, you can read more about the project in articles published in *Preservation in Print* at:

<https://prcno.org/st-louis-cathedral-uno-archaeology-project-documents-three-centuries-of-history/>

An article that appeared in UNO's *Silver and Blue* alumnae magazine is reproduced on the following pages and can be found online here:

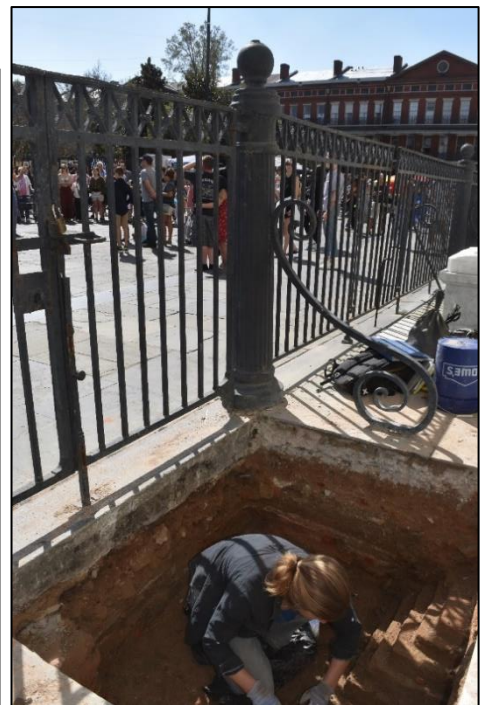
<https://www.uno.edu/media/37226>

You can also look for new online exhibits to be launched on New Orleans Historical:

<https://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/1727>) and

on UNO's *CatalogIt* page:

<https://hub.catalogit.app/9619>

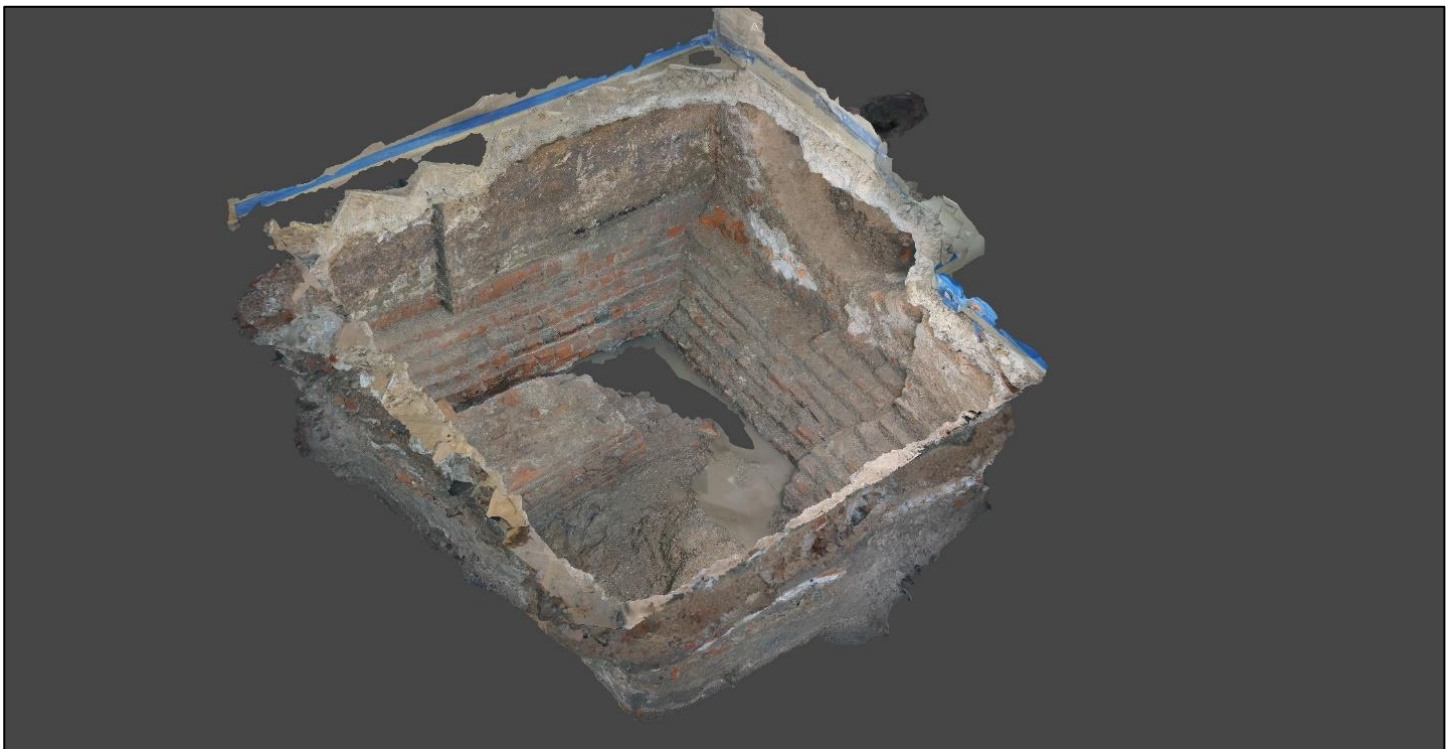


Left: UNO archaeologists screen soil while crowds watch street performers in Jackson Square. Right: Excavation in front of St. Louis Cathedral.





Above: Screening directly into trailer provided by Abry Brothers in Jackson Square.  
Below: Screenshot from 3D rendering of interior excavation by Noah Fulmer.







Left: UNO student Madison Mollere holds bead and straight pins from fine screened samples recovered during Cathedral excavation.

### UNO Professor Ryan Gray Excavates In St. Louis Cathedral: “It really is a one-of-a-kind project”

Littice Bacon-Blood, with photographs by Esther Clowney

[Reprinted with permission from *Silver & Blue*, Spring 2024, Vol. 48, Issue 1, pp. 34-37]



WHILE A BRASS BAND PLAYED TO THE DELIGHT of tourists who clapped and swayed to the spirited beats that filled the air in Jackson Square one breezy January afternoon, a short distance away, University of New Orleans students stood sifting—literally—through the soils of time at St. Louis Cathedral.

The famed cathedral, located in the French Quarter, sits on one of the oldest church sites in North America. The first church constructed on the site dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. University of New Orleans anthropology professor Ryan Gray, who specializes in urban historical archaeology in the city of New Orleans, and his team were examining a portion of the 300-year-old foundation.





According to a welcome plaque placed in the vestibule of the main sanctuary, the current cathedral was completed in 1851 and is built over the foundations of a colonial 1727 church. It is the oldest active cathedral in the United States, according to church officials.

"We have other projects always happening, but it's not often that you get projects where you're digging underneath St. Louis Cathedral," says Gray, who is also associate director of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies. "It really is a one-of-a-kind project! I may spend the rest of my career doing archaeology in the city and this may be the only time we get to do something like this."

"It's rare to have well-preserved French colonial era sites, even in the French Quarter because there's been so much building that has happened on top of them," Gray says.

As part of a planned restoration project, contractors excavated two pits to examine the condition of the cathedral's foundation, which was laid in 1849. The Archdiocese of New Orleans requested UNO's archaeological team after contractors came across evidence of much older foundations, Gray says.

"We were able to determine that these earlier foundations were almost definitely those of the St. Louis Church constructed in 1724-1727, the first permanent structure built on the site," Gray says. "We found artifacts in the layers consistent with this period, including both French and Native American pottery, glass, clay smoking pipe fragments, fish bone, a part of a religious medallion, a bead, and nails."



UNO professor Ryan Gray examines the excavation site inside St. Louis Cathedral.

The excavated site measures about six feet deep and is located in an interior side foyer.

An unusual amount of tiny straight pins was found among the layers, Gray says. He believes these brass straight pins were used to fashion curtains in the earliest church.



UNO researcher Elizabeth Williams excavates a site inside St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, the oldest active cathedral in the U.S.



Artifacts found from colonial era layers.



"When the church was first finished in 1727, there were no window panes available," Gray says. "They stretched fabric across the windows, and we think that the reason we have so many straight pins is that what was being used to hold the fabric; to pin it in place and hold it tight."

In addition, when the team cleaned up the excavations and examined the stratigraphy, they found that the various layers contained a record of the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century history of the site, Gray says.

"Including renovations to that first church, evidence of the 1788 fire, the reconstruction of the cathedral in 1794, and its expansion into the present version in 1849," Gray says. "We hope that, by working closely with the contractors on the next excavation, planned to span the front right doorway of the cathedral, we can help refine the chronology of the site in the 18th century and use the layers to think about the social history of this area at the center of the city."

Gray's historical expertise is frequently called upon by public and private entities when something of

archaeological significance is unearthed. He most recently oversaw a team excavating another of the city's landmark, Madame John's Legacy, the second-oldest building in the French Quarter, built in 1789.

As the cathedral's bell toned the noon hour to signal the start of mass, Gray and his crew cleared out of the foyer. There is no excavating during the service, he says.

Gray headed to a screen station that was set up outside to examine some of the finds that have been bagged and labeled. He's pleased that UNO is able to prevent the potential loss of archaeological artifacts through site documentation and preservation.

"UNO is the only institution in the city that has archeologists and can put together a project like this on short notice for anyone," says Gray. "There's really no one else doing this type of work in the entire city. For a project like this, that's not getting any federal money, there's no requirement for them to do the archaeology. It's something that's really a central part of our mission to be able to help and do these sorts of things."



Pictured left to right: Dr. Ryan Gray, Austin Roebuck (master's student, urban studies), Traci Cunningham (volunteer), Elizabeth Williams (research associate), Lori Sawyer (volunteer), Renee Erickson (Ph.D. student, urban studies).



## Union Museum Archeology Research Center and Site 16UR153

Tom Fields

Farmerville is a small town in Union Parish of north-central Louisiana. Had the town not had a successful athletic program, many in the state would have no idea where Farmerville is located. Lake DarBonne, where Farmerville sits on the banks, is the major draw for the area but even the lake is not the diamond that makes Farmerville special. The people of the community are what make the parish so special. This is why there is a museum in small town America.

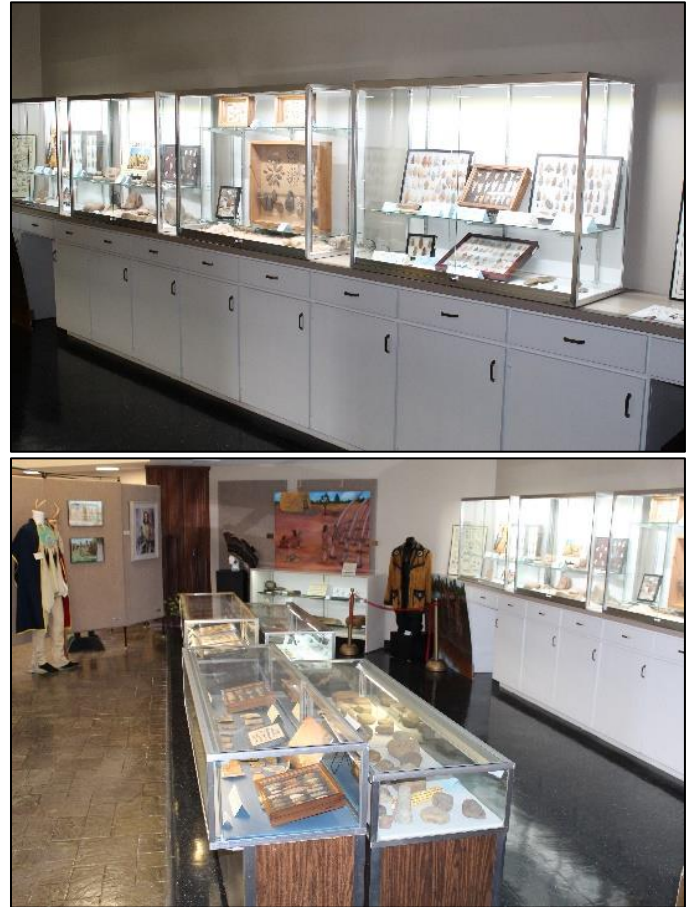
Several years ago the Union Museum of History and Art was formed as a location where history could come to life through events that told the story of Louisiana. Everything from Hispanic dresses to honoring World War II veterans, to showcasing the waters of Union Parish that brought the community together. A generous businessman provided an old Main Street bank building at a very attractive price and later donated an adjoining building. The new museum is open and growing.

Events would continue to bring visitors from north Louisiana to Farmerville to enjoy the Folk Festival, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Jerry Lee Lewis Day, and many other special events. But there was a desire to also have a permanent exhibit. A decision was made to exhibit a collection of artifacts from our indigenous past. It was named the First People of Union Parish. The archaeology of north-central Louisiana was underway in the Union Museum of History and Art.

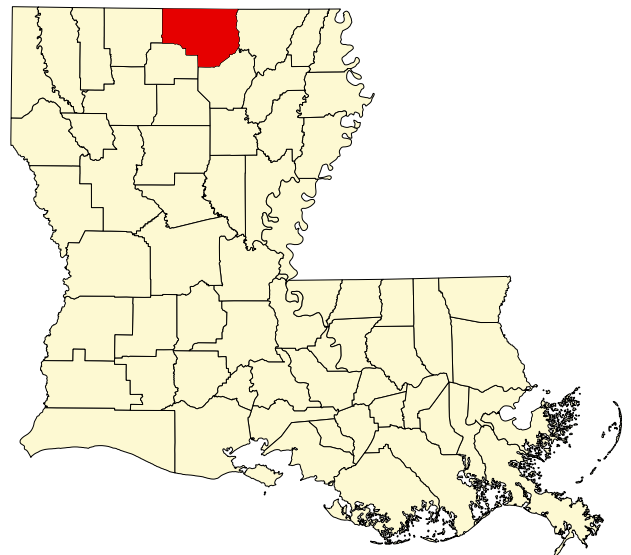
Floor display cases were donated and others were purchased. Supporters from around north Louisiana brought them to their new home. Claiborne Electric has a special grant program and the museum applied for funds to purchase large table-mounted display cases, a computer system, and office furniture for what would become the James Hardy Archeology Research Center. Additional grant money was obtained and Jeff Girard developed a video to be shown in the museum's archaeology section. The museum had space to exhibit artifacts, a video that addressed the first people of Union Parish, beautiful display cases, and a burning desire by local citizens to learn about the archaeology of the area. What was missing was something to display.

Several individual collectors donated small collections that could be displayed but a much larger quantity of material was needed. The museum also needed a scientific approach to what was being displayed and some way to share this information with the world. The

desire was for the Union Museum's archaeology collection and exhibit to be inclusive and to promote the science of archaeology.



Above: Archaeological exhibits at the Union Museum of History and Art in Farmerville. Below: Location of Union Parish in Louisiana.





The museum developed a database based on the National Park Service's model for curating archaeological exhibits. The database formed the basis for reports and for information displayed on a website established by the museum. The [website](#) is a work in progress as it expands to include additional information that tells the story of pre-historic north Louisiana. The website can be accessed [here](#) or by Googling "Farmerville Archeology".

The dilemma of needing exhibit materials was solved. James Hardy, for whom the Archeology Research Center was named, had been a longtime high school coach and advocational archaeologist before he died. James loved archaeology. He was a companion of Joe Saunders on many digs and explorations. Coach Hardy had published several articles in the *LAS Newsletter*. He was going to help with the museum. When he unexpectedly died, his wife approached the museum with an offer. She offered the James Hardy collection to the museum on a long-term loan. The Hardy collection is very well organized and includes documentation on the proveniences of the materials. This made it easy to incorporate the Hardy collection into the museum's database and organize it for display in the newly acquired exhibit cases. All of the display cases are now full and attract people of all ages from around the region. The website is operational and has received hits from as far away as Europe.

The Archeology Research Center of the Union Museum of History and Art now offers educational opportunities for the local citizens of north Louisiana. A speaker series was introduced. For eight months of each year a different speaker comes to the museum to provide information on archaeology. The guest speakers have included Diana Greenlee from Poverty Point, State Archaeologist Chip McGimsey, Jeff Girard from Northwestern State University, Dr. Gary Stringer from the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM), and others. In support of the speaker series the research center publishes a newsletter every six to eight weeks. This newsletter is available to anyone. To be added to the distribution list, email Tom Fields at [nlaarcheology@yahoo.com](mailto:nlaarcheology@yahoo.com).

The center also has an outreach program. It has partnered with the Union Parish Library and offers presentations to children during the Library's Summer Program. Local schools have been contacted and Tom Fields has been offered the opportunity to speak to classes. The research center also has a recurring column, *The Archeologist Corner*, that is published in three local newspapers. The purpose of the column is to educate the local public and instill an interest in archaeology.

The museum display is growing. Local contract archaeologist Wayne Abercrombie had spoken to the museum staff on several occasions. Wayne was born and raised in Bernice, Louisiana before joining the Marines, serving in Vietnam, and later living in North Carolina. Wayne was going to help the museum with field research but unfortunately also passed away. Coach Hardy had coached Wayne at Bernice High School in the 1960s. Wayne Abercrombie's Louisiana collection was donated to the museum, increasing the the museum's collections by 50 percent. A nice problem to have, but the museum plans to do more to be a true research center.

For three years the goal of the James Hardy Archeology Research Center has been to become a fully-functional research center. The plans were to go beyond looking at projectile points and pottery that had been donated to the museum. There was little more to the displays of artifacts without details of where the artifacts had been located, how deep they were found, what was found with them, and information on the local terrain. The research center planned to do more. With the support of Chip Mcimsey, the center took a new step in becoming a fully-functional research center.

The center plans to locate and document sites in and around Union Parish in an effort to see which cultures were present in the area, when indigenous people arrived, and how they lived. Union Parish is bordered on the east by the floodplains of the Ouachita and Mississippi Rivers. When crossing the Ouachita River into Union Parish, the land becomes wooded and hilly. Numerous bayous and streams cross the area. It has been noted in several publications that there has been little scientific investigation of the indigenous people who lived in Union Parish. Research is needed to answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how.

### Site 16UN153

The Fields site (16UN153) in west-central Union Parish has been known about for many years. Surface finds of pottery and projectile points had been collected as early as 80 years ago. This ended 60 years ago when the land was purchased for a camp on Lake DarBonne. The owner approached several archaeologists but there was little interest in the site. Glenn Green at NLU (now ULM) was told about a Caddo Mound in 1975. Even Clarence Webb was told of this but there was little interest. Thirty-five years later Recca Jones, discoverer of Watson Brake, was informed and was interested but unfortunately passed away before she could visit the site. The landowner remained patient. Then in May of 2024, Chip McGimsey





Excavations in progress at Site 16UN153.

visited the site with several members of the loosely formed archaeology club, the DarBonne Diggers. Earlier in the day the group was disappointed to find that what was thought to be a nearby mound was in fact a pimple mound. The group motored to site 16UN153 and found it very interesting.

Site 16UN153 is on the edge of a bayou with large trees and little underbrush. One of the DarBonne Diggers found a sherd and flake in an armadillo backdirt pile. The site has been in a pine plantation for the last 30 years and may have had minimal prior disturbance. The site thus seemed to potentially contain significant undisturbed deposits. The DarBonne Diggers decided to undertake investigations at the site to try and determine its age and degree of preservation.

Before beginning any fieldwork, many steps needed to be taken. Necessary equipment and supplies first had to be obtained. A list was prepared and the board of directors of the museum approved the purchase. The second step was to recruit volunteers to participate. Twelve people volunteered to go to the site. Only one

person had ever been on a dig and that was 40 years earlier. The third step was to provide basic training in how the fieldwork would be done. Volunteers were introduced to the collection strategy and forms to be used. A training program was developed and the team came together to watch videos that ranged from shovel testing to record taking. Chip McGimsey went the extra mile and came to the museum to assist with the training. He offered helpful hints based on practical experience.

While the training took place, Tom Fields and his wife went to the site, laid out grid lines, and marked over 35 locations for shovel testing. The shovel tests were placed at 10-m intervals along several transects across the site. The goals were to define the site boundaries and identify areas for possible test excavations. A tent was erected and supplies were brought to the site. On August 12<sup>th</sup> the team met at the museum and convoyed 12 miles to the site. To everyone's surprise, Chip showed up to help for the first two days. Three teams were formed and one person on each team dug, while two screened and one documented what was found.





Freshly washed artifacts at the Union Museum.

I remember saying a little prayer that the site was not sterile. I knew if it was there would be no further interest in doing future fieldwork. Steve Barmore, an extremely skillful digger, is learning Cherokee. He said a blessing in Cherokee to quiet the spirits and offered a sacrifice of tobacco. We didn't have to wait long. Pottery and flakes appeared from the first shovel tests. Chip stated that we could expect one to three artifacts from a shovel test pit. We were getting 5, 10, 15, and even 20 artifacts from some of the pits. Of course some were sterile and this would help to define the boundaries of the site. All of the artifacts were bagged and transported to the museum for washing.

The second of the two weeks of fieldwork was dedicated to 1-by-1-meter excavations. We would excavate for four days and on the evening of the fourth day we were to host the Archaeological Conservancy at the museum. On Friday we would be breaking camp. On the second day of week two, Steve Barmore was working on the floor of an excavation unit and said he thought he found a feature that might be a fire pit. Chip examined the

feature and said it was possibly three post holes. This was the first feature we had ever found so excitement was high. We covered the excavation unit and Chip returned nine days later. He excavated the feature and confirmed it consisted of post holes.

The preliminary results of our investigation have disclosed that 16UN153 is a Coles Creek site. This is in line with other sites in the area. Three other Coles Creek sites have been identified, with one site containing four mounds. This means the site is about a thousand years old, give or take a few hundred years. Within the last two hours of the last day of fieldwork a new discovery was made at the site. One half of a Dalton projectile point was found. The Dalton point is now in the museum and drastically expands the potential age of the site.

All of the artifacts have been cleaned. Overall, we brought about 55 pounds of material back to the museum. This winter we will be classifying artifacts in the collection. Maps have been prepared and will show the areas that were excavated. A second dig is scheduled for next March and will possibly last for three or four weeks.

### Future Plans

The Archeology Research Center at the Union Museum of History and Art has taken steps to have the DarBonne Diggers professionally recognized. What was a loosely cohesive group of individuals interested in the science of archaeology has petitioned the Louisiana Archaeological Society to form a new chapter. The petition for the DarBonne Diggers Chapter includes applications for 15 members to join the LAS. The LAS will vote on this petition at the upcoming annual meeting. We expect to have more join before the vote in February.

We have one more survey planned for this year. As Lake DarBonne is being drained, we are planning to survey as much as possible. Large numbers of artifacts have been found on the exposed lake bottom in the past. The next lake drawdown will be in six years.

The year 2025 is expected to be even busier. We will return to site 16UN153 and plan to excavate at two more documented sites. We will shovel test at least one more site and investigate one historic site. We will document these findings in a report. For a small town museum, a lot of good people are having a lot of fun.





## UL Lafayette–KNF Fieldwork at Lake Iatt

Mark A. Rees

Louisiana Public Archaeology and Osteology Lab, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in collaboration with the Kisatchie National Forest (KNF) Heritage Program, is conducting fieldwork at the Iatt Bluff Lake site (16GR591) in the KNF Catahoula Ranger District. Iatt

Bluff Lake is a multicomponent site with a major Coles Creek component. The following photographs are from the ongoing data recovery excavations.









## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Annual Joint Meeting of the LAS and the MAA

February 21-23, 2025



The Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS) and the Mississippi Archaeological Association (MAA) are pleased to announce an annual joint meeting will be held in 2025.

The joint LAS–MAA conference is scheduled for February 21-23, 2025 in Natchez, Mississippi. The meeting venue, lodging, and additional conference information will be made available soon on the [LAS](#) and [MAA](#) websites.

The joint conference Program Chairs will be Samuel Huey (LAS) and Adam Fuselier (MAA).

To submit a presentation or poster, email a title and abstract to Samuel Huey (for LAS members) or Adam Fuselier (for MAA members).

Sam can be emailed at [shuey@chronicleheritage.com](mailto:shuey@chronicleheritage.com) and Adam's email is [adam.fuselier@usda.gov](mailto:adam.fuselier@usda.gov).

Those who attended the last LAS – MAA joint conference in Natchez will no doubt remember it fondly. There are plenty of interesting sights (and sites) to see and places to eat in historic Natchez. Make plans now to attend!



### LSU Campus Mounds in the News

Louisiana State University recently [announced](#) it will receive a \$220,871 grant from the National Park Service (NPS), to be matched by LSU, for a project to preserve the LSU Campus Mounds. This grant is part of the NPS [Save America's Treasures](#) program, which recently [awarded](#) funding for 59 projects in the U.S.

According to the [Reveille](#), the mounds at LSU are between 6,000 and 11,000 years old. Project partners include the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, the

Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, and the Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana.

As suggested by the [Reveille](#), there is currently some uncertainty over the age of the two earthworks at LSU (see "On the Excessive Antiquity of the LSU Campus Mounds" by Fogleman, in the Winter 2023 issue of the [LAS Newsletter](#), Vol. 51, No. 1). A separate project is being planned by archaeologists with the NPS, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, and Louisiana Division of Archaeology to conduct coring and OSL dating of the LSU Campus Mounds.





## Josetta Leboeuf has Joined the Louisiana Division of Archaeology

The Division of Archaeology is pleased to announce that Josetta Leboeuf is the new Outreach and Education Coordinator. Josetta replaces Maegan Smith who left for greener pastures in Washington State where her husband has taken a job.

Josetta received a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and a M.A. from Louisiana State University. Her thesis examined the lithic artifacts from the Hoover site (16TA5). Before and after graduate school, she worked for Coastal Environments, Inc. on a variety of projects around Louisiana and other states.



Josetta joined the Division in 2003 as a Staff Archaeologist working primarily with Nancy Hawkins on various outreach activities. Josetta's focus was on the development and publication of the *Ancient Mounds Driving Trail*.

## BOEM Releases Series of Videos Exploring Shipwrecks in the Gulf of Mexico

*Release Date:* April 18, 2024 on the [BOEM website](https://www.boem.gov).

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is pleased to announce a series of short videos showcasing 19<sup>th</sup> century underwater shipwreck sites in the Gulf of Mexico that have been nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

These videos are the culmination of a comprehensive study to identify and protect a vast array of 19<sup>th</sup> century underwater shipwrecks. Protection of significant historical and cultural sites from authorized activities is not only a key responsibility of the BOEM mission but

In 2006 Josetta decided to become a teacher and began an 18-year long career with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. Josetta taught science to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Capitol Middle School and Glasgow Middle School, then transferred to Baton Rouge Magnet High School, where she taught biology and advanced placement environmental science. Josetta was recognized as teacher of the year twice at the school where she taught. She was later a semi-finalist for teacher of the year in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Josetta joined the Division of Archaeology at the beginning of August, just in time to develop this year's Archaeology Month poster and schedule of events. See this newsletter for more details and check out the [Archaeology Month webpage](#) on the [Division of Archaeology website](#).

Josetta will be working to develop new resources for schools and adapt the Division's existing educational products to the new curriculum standards. Please reach out to Josetta by email at [jleboeuf@crt.la.gov](mailto:jleboeuf@crt.la.gov) if you have any questions or ideas for outreach activities, events, or programs.



also an opportunity to celebrate and learn from the rich maritime history of the Gulf of Mexico.

The videos explore the captivating realm of shipwrecks and archaeology. They also give a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural significance of these sites, as well as the importance of protecting them for future generations.

For more information and to view the videos, visit the BOEM website at:

<https://www.boem.gov/environment/maritime-heritage-collection>



## LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

Josetta Leboeuf

Louisiana Division of Archaeology

Each October, the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Archaeology (DOA) coordinates educational events across the state for Louisiana Archaeology Month. Throughout the month archaeologists will share their knowledge with local communities to promote interest and good stewardship of our archaeological resources. The event schedule includes scholarly presentations and poster displays, special exhibits, children's activities, artifact identification fairs, ancient technology demonstrations, and opportunities to visit archaeologists at work both in the field and lab. This year, we celebrate and recognize the public's role in archaeology with the release of the 2024 Archaeology Month poster which features some of the many ways the public has engaged in archaeological research.

Upon returning to the DOA in August, I was immediately impressed by the momentum gained in archaeological outreach during my less than brief (18 year) hiatus. The focus on public engagement through the UL Lafayette Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab and The Greater New Orleans Archaeology Program, the work of my predecessors in local schools and museums, and more than 50 years of collaboration through LAS is certainly commendable! Public education is vital for inspiring active community participation in preserving cultural heritage and archaeological sites for future generations. Furthermore, since cultural resources belong to everyone, and the research is almost always funded by public dollars, it is our responsibility as archaeologists to share our work with the public.

Exemplary public programs invite residents to explore the history of their own community and heritage and engage volunteers in the investigative process. LAS has been a consistent partner in these efforts over the years. For example, a long-time aspiration to revive field school opportunities for LAS members initiated the return to the Lake St. Agnes Mound site (16AV35) in Avoyelles Parish in 2017. With guidance from Kisatchie National Forest and DOA staff, LAS members conducted field investigations, artifact washing parties, and public workshops on artifact curation and identification. Often projects are twofold, providing volunteers when time or labor is limited. Volunteer contributions were monumental during excavations led by former SE

Regional Archaeologist Rob Mann at the Royal Hotel (16WF175) in St. Francisville, screening material from the root balls of fallen trees at the Poverty Point World Heritage Site, and recent processing of materials from the Conly Site (16BI19) by members of the Northwest Chapter.

The partnership between archaeologists and the public is the very foundation for which the LAS was created. It is difficult to imagine Louisiana archaeology without the contributions from avocational archaeologists Dr. Clarence Webb, Bill Baker, Recca Jones, and so many others who have been fundamental in documenting sites, building relationships with local communities, and fostering stewardship of archaeological sites. So this year during Louisiana Archaeology Month, we recognize everyone who has contributed to the preservation and better understanding of our rich and diverse cultural history and encourage present and future generations to go forth and discover great things!

For a full list of events or to add one of your own, visit the Louisiana Archaeology Month [webpage](#). In addition to Archaeology Month, the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development invites you to enjoy local programming in October to celebrate Atchafalaya Month, Louisiana Folklife Month, and National Arts and Humanities Month.

You can also follow the Louisiana Division of Archaeology on:

Facebook @LouisianaOfficeofCulturalDevelopment

Instagram @LouisianaArchaeology

#LouisianaArchaeology and #Louisiana for Archaeology Month information.



LOUISIANA DIVISION of ARCHAEOLOGY



# LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

## OCTOBER 2024

The Louisiana Archaeological Society celebrates more than 50 years of bringing together individuals interested in investigating and preserving the cultural heritage and history of our state. Volunteers work side-by-side with archaeologists in research and excavations. Have you ever wanted to participate in archaeological research? Discover what archaeology can reveal about the history of your community during one of the many events offered during Louisiana Archaeology Month.



Volunteers look for artifacts by sifting through excavated soil at the Lac St Agnes mound site in Avoyelles Parish.



Volunteers sort and catalog artifacts from the Lac St. Agnes Mound site.



Local enthusiasts conduct field investigations with archaeologists at the Tom Field's site in Union parish.



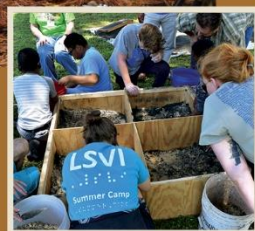
Students work alongside archaeologists to learn field techniques.



Volunteers attend workshops to learn how to interpret artifacts.



School children discover how archaeologists learn about the past.



Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired students explore archaeology during summer camp.



Decorated pottery sherds



Stone tools



Mid-19th century French ointment jar



German stoneware mineral water bottle



Champagne bottles

Artifacts from the Lac St. Agnes Mound site in Avoyelles, Parish

Artifacts from the 19th century Royal Hotel site in St. Francisville Historic District

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# LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH 2024

Public Presentations and Events Hosted by the  
Anthropology Society, University of Louisiana at Lafayette and  
Acadiana Chapter, Louisiana Archaeological Society

## **October 8 – “Investigating Poverty Point's Mound F”**

*Diana Greenlee, Station Archaeologist, Poverty Point World Heritage Site, at 5:30 pm in the Student Union Magnolia Room AB at UL Lafayette.*

## **October 10 – “Shipwrecks of Louisiana”**

*Chip McGimsey, State Archaeologist, Louisiana Division of Archaeology, at 5:30 pm in the Student Union Magnolia Room AB at UL Lafayette.*

## **October 11 – Avery Island Tabasco Factory Site Excavation Tour & History**

*Shane Bernard, Historian and Archivist, meet at 10:30 am, Jungle Gardens Lot (Highway 329, Avery Island, Louisiana 70513).*

## **October 12 – Archaeology Day Exhibit**

Lafayette Farmer's Market, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm, Moncus Park, 2913 Johnston Street, Lafayette.

## **October 15 – “An Archaeological History of Bayou Vermilion and Lafayette, Louisiana”**

*Mark A. Rees, Professor of Anthropology, UL Lafayette, at 5:30 pm in the Student Union Pelican Room AB at UL Lafayette.*

## **October 24 – “Sticks and Stones: Language Choice in Reporting on the Precolonial Past”**

*Lynn Funkhouser, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, UL Lafayette, at 5:30 pm in the Student Union Pelican Room AB at UL Lafayette.*

## **October 29 – “Problems When the Dead Rise”**

*Ryan Seidemann, General Counsel, The Water Institute, at 5:30 pm in the Student Union Pelican Room AB at UL Lafayette.*

The UL Lafayette Student Union is located at 620 McKinley Street in Lafayette.

Questions? Email: [acadianalas@gmail.com](mailto:acadianalas@gmail.com)

See the [Louisiana Archaeology Month](#) online [calendar](#) for additional events scheduled near you!



## MEETINGS



*Landscapes in Transition:  
Looking to the Past to Adapt to the Future*  
**2025 Conference on Historical and  
Underwater Archaeology**

January 8-11, 2025

New Orleans Marriott, Louisiana

For more information, go online to:

<https://sha.org/conferences/> or email the Program

Chairs at: [SHANOLA2025@gmail.com](mailto:SHANOLA2025@gmail.com).



The 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the  
**Society for American Archaeology** will be held on  
April 23–27, 2025, in Denver, Colorado.

For more information, go online to:

<https://www.saa.org/annual-meeting>



**Southeastern Archaeological Conference**

The 80<sup>th</sup> annual SEAC meeting will be held  
November 13-16, 2024 in Williamsburg, VA.

See the [SEAC website](https://www.southeasternarchaeology.org/annual-meeting/details/) for more information:

<https://www.southeasternarchaeology.org/annual-meeting/details/>



The 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the  
**Texas Archeological Society**

Will be held on October 25-27, 2024 in  
Victoria, Texas.

See the [TAS website](https://www.txarch.org/Annual-Meeting) for more information:

<https://www.txarch.org/Annual-Meeting>



**LAS Meeting, February 21-23, 2025**

See the announcement on page 17 of this LAS

*Newsletter* or go to the [LAS website](https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/) at:

<https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/>



PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGY PRESENTS  
**THE**  
**NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY**  
**EDUCATORS CONFERENCE**  
**AND**  
**THE 16TH BIENNIAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE**

**October 24-27, 2024**

Southern Utah University  
Cedar City, Utah



Project Archaeology will host the [4th Biennial National Archaeology Educators Conference](#) at Southern Utah University (SUU) in Cedar City, Utah on October 24-27, 2024. The conference will be held at the SUU Hunter Alumni Center in Cedar City. All archaeology educators are invited to participate in this professional development opportunity. Archaeologists, K-12 and university educators, descendant community members, informal educators, librarians, and other interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Attendees will be immersed in experiential learning, including sessions, workshops, and field trips to multiple rock art sites. Darren Parry, acclaimed educator, activist, speaker, and author of "The Bear River Massacre: A Shoshone History," will be the keynote speaker.

Visit [the conference webpage](#) for conference registration and additional information. For more information on Project Archaeology, email Sarah Bennett at: [sarah.bennett@projectarchaeology.org](mailto:sarah.bennett@projectarchaeology.org)

To learn more about Project Archaeology, visit the website at: [projectarchaeology.org](http://projectarchaeology.org)



## LAS CHAPTERS

### Acadiana Chapter

The Acadiana Chapter of the LAS meets regularly and hosts a speaker series in partnership with the Anthropology Society at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Check our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AcadianaLAS/) page at <https://www.facebook.com/AcadianaLAS/> or email [acadianalas@gmail.com](mailto:acadianalas@gmail.com) for future dates and locations.

Acadiana Chapter Officers are:

Ian Robicheaux, President

Parker Chouest, Vice President

Sarah St. Germain, Secretary

Sam Huey, Treasurer

Gloria Church, Social Media/UL Lafayette Liaison

### Baton Rouge Chapter

Contact: Brandy Kerr or Margeaux Murray, Co-Presidents

Email: [batonrougelas1975@gmail.com](mailto:batonrougelas1975@gmail.com)

To receive information about our meetings, please email [batonrougelas1975@gmail.com](mailto:batonrougelas1975@gmail.com).

### Delta Chapter

The Delta Chapter hosts a monthly speaker series from August through April. The Delta Chapter meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at Tulane University, Department of Anthropology, Dinwiddie Hall, at 7 pm in Room 201. For more information, email Brian Ostahowski at [brian.ostahowski@gmail.com](mailto:brian.ostahowski@gmail.com).

The Delta Chapter has a Facebook page at:

[www.facebook.com/DeltaChapterLAS](https://www.facebook.com/DeltaChapterLAS)

### Northwest Chapter

Primary Contact: Tad Britt

Email: [tad.britt@gmail.com](mailto:tad.britt@gmail.com)

Secondary Contact: Jeffrey Girard

Email: [jeffreygirard@att.net](mailto:jeffreygirard@att.net)

### West Louisiana Archaeology Club

Contact: John Guy, President

Email: [johnnyhguy53@gmail.com](mailto:johnnyhguy53@gmail.com)

Rocky Rockhold, Vice President

Email: [richardrockhold@yahoo.com](mailto:richardrockhold@yahoo.com)





## LAS Newsletter Information

The *Newsletter of the Louisiana Archaeological Society* is published digitally three times a year for the society. Louisiana Archaeological Society (LAS) members receive email invitations for *Newsletter* content and regular notifications with links to the online *Newsletter*. Past issues of the *Newsletter* are available on the [LAS website](https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/) at <https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/>

## Information for Contributors

Email all news, notes, announcements, reports, and *Newsletter* correspondence to the editor at: [laarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:laarchaeology@gmail.com). Submissions should be in MS Word.

Mark A. Rees, LAS Editor  
Louisiana Public Archaeology and Osteology Lab  
P.O. Box 43543, Anthropology Program  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Lafayette, LA 70504

## Membership Information

LAS members receive the digital *Newsletter*, one print copy of the annual LAS Bulletin, *Louisiana Archaeology*, and are invited to attend the annual LAS meetings. Annual membership dues are: \$30 for individuals; \$5 for associated family members; \$15 for students (with a valid student ID); \$45 for institutions such as libraries and universities. Life memberships for individuals or institutions are \$300. Members can also choose among the following chapter affiliations: Acadiana; Baton Rouge; Delta; Northwest; West Louisiana.

Visit the [LAS website](https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/) at <https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/> to join or renew. Membership requests, dues, and changes of address can also be directed to the LAS Treasurer:

Rachel Watson, LAS Treasurer  
Louisiana Division of Archaeology  
P.O. Box 44247 Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Make checks payable to the *Louisiana Archaeological Society*.

LAS publications, including issues of *Louisiana Archaeology*, as well as shirts, hats, and other gear can be ordered from the [LAS website](https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/) at: <https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org/>



## LAS Officers

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Vice President: Samuel Huey, Lafayette

Secretary: Jennifer Lynn Funkhouser, Lafayette

Treasurer: Rachel Watson, Baton Rouge

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Visit the LAS website: [www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org](https://www.laarchaeologicalsociety.org) for additional information or to join the LAS.

*Opinions stated in the Newsletter are those of individual authors or the editor and do not necessarily represent the viewpoints or policies of LAS members or the LAS.*