

## *UTK 2017 Archaeological Field School at Coan Hall, June 1-June 30, 2017*

The 2017 summer field school in historical archaeology will be held at 44NB11 (known as Mottrom's or Coan Hall) near Heathsville in Northumberland County, Virginia. The site is located on a tributary to the Potomac River on Virginia's Northern Neck. The project explores the landscape of an early British colonial plantation through documenting and interpreting cultural and environmental changes, and studying them in the context of broader changes in the region and the wider Atlantic world. Recent scholarship has advocated using a fine-grained approach to questions of economic, demographic, and socio-political colonial development in the Chesapeake focusing on river valleys as analytical units. The Northern Neck is underrepresented archaeologically, with most work relating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century focusing on the James and York River drainages.



Exposed cellar and associated features, 2016

### *Site and Project History*

John Mottrom, one of the earliest English settlers of the Potomac's south bank, established a household there sometime before 1644. The property quickly became the center of the Chicacoan community who took their name from the principal village of an important Indian chiefdom. Some of the English



Features north of the dwelling

Chicacoans participated in the uprising known as Ingle's Rebellion, which resulted in the overthrow of Cecil Calvert's Maryland government in the mid-1640s. Mottrom helped arm the rebel faction. He was elected to the House of Burgesses, and his property became the legislative seat for Northumberland County, the first English county on the Northern Neck.

Mottrom was among the earliest planters in the Potomac Valley to use enslaved African labor. Elizabeth Key, a woman whom he attempted to enslave, contested her status in court and won her freedom following his death in 1655. Subsequently his son and grandson developed the property, expanded the labor force, and navigated the troubled political, racial, and economic currents of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Excavations from 2011 to 2016 exposed portions of the 20 ft. x 54 ft. manor house. It is likely the original circa 1640 dwelling, but this cannot be confirmed without excavating associated features. The house consists of two equal-sized rooms on either side of an H-shaped chimney. The house was originally earthfast (built with posts set directly into the ground), repaired with new posts, and later underpinned with brick. West of the hearth, GPR results revealed a large, deep cellar. In 2015, field school participants began to remove its fill. The cellar cuts through an earlier historic feature at the site whose purpose is as yet unknown.



Ground penetrating radar survey, 2015

The archaeological and geophysical results hint at a complex landscape that developed across the six acres that surround the house. Features north and east of the dwelling have been discovered archaeologically that are likely associated with a service buildings, including a possible kitchen. Evidence of fence lines or palisades were also found during the geophysical survey of the site.

In 2017, excavations will be carried out to better understand the evolution of the structures and associated landscapes. Questions that the project will explicitly address in 2017 are anthropological, geographical and historical, and include:

- How did early colonial settlement impact the environment?
- How did colonial people, both free and unfree, form communities in this new place? What are the spatial dimensions of community, and how do they change over time?
- How did people living along the Potomac design spaces in response to threats of violence, real or perceived?
- How did colonists organize domestic spaces to structure or resist unequal social relationships? How were landscapes modified in response to changes in social relations over time?



Waterscreening to collect environmental samples

To answer these questions, more site-specific questions also need to be addressed.

- When was the manor house at 44NB11 constructed, modified, and abandoned?
- How was the landscape structured immediately around the manor house? What is the evidence of landscape change over time?
- What do the house, the landscape, and the associated artifacts tell us about conflict and community in early Northumberland County?



Excavating a structural post hole and mold, 2015



Excavating cellar fill, 2016

#### **Goals for summer 2017**

Manor house:

- Uncover, map and excavate a sample of post holes/post molds to establish the construction sequence.
- Sample the western cellar to its base to understand its relationship to the sequence of construction and to collect artifacts and environmental samples pertinent to the use of space and community formation.

Landscape (time permitting):

- Excavate a pit northwest of the manor house and locate associated features.
- Test areas where remote sensing data indicate the presence of additional outbuildings or significant features.

**Dates, Credits, Costs and Logistics**

Dates: June 1-June 30, 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> summer session)

**Credits:**

Six hours of undergraduate or graduate credit are offered. Depending on the number of students, participants will either enroll in Anth 430 or Anth 530 (Archaeological field school) or Anth 492/592 (off-campus study).

You must be enrolled as a UT student to take this course. People who are not currently enrolled at UT can participate by following the instructions under "Visiting Students" at <http://admissions.utk.edu/undergraduate/applications/AdmApp10.pdf> (undergraduate) or following the instructions for "transient admission" at <http://admissions.utk.edu/graduate/req.shtml#Trans> (graduate).



Excavations at 44NB11, 2016

**Estimated costs:**

	<b><i>In-State</i></b>	<b><i>Out of State</i></b>
Undergraduate*	\$2706.00	\$7338.00
Graduate*	\$4212.00	\$10356.00

\*based on current posted fees for 6 credit hours. Consult onestop.utk.edu for 2017 summer fees.



Lodgings at Coan Wharf

**Additional costs include:**

Housing costs are covered by grant funding. Students should budget for travel to and from Heathsville, food and incidental expenses during the summer session.



### ***To Apply***

Please contact Dr. Barbara Heath (974-1098; [bheath2@utk.edu](mailto:bheath2@utk.edu)) and provide the following information.

- Personal information: full name, home address, phone number and email address.
- One page letter stating your reasons for participating in this class and reviewing any prior archaeological experience (although prior experience is not necessary to participate).

*Application deadline is March 20, 2017.*



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