The Course

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of field techniques in historical archaeology, their methodological motivation, and the substantive issues in early Chesapeake social history that can be addressed by archaeological evidence. You will learn basic archaeological excavation, sampling, and recording techniques required to execute successfully multi-disciplinary field research. We will explore the relationships among field techniques, the data they produce, analytical methods, and the archaeologist's ability to make and evaluate inferences about history.

Analytical approaches covered include the use of ceramics in chronological inference, the analysis of faunal remains for dietary reconstruction, the utility of geoarchaeological and dendrochronological methods in the reconstruction of land-use history, and the use of architecture and artifact spatial patterns to make inferences about the social use of space. The social, economic, and ecological dynamics of early Chesapeake society provide our historical focus. On-site instruction, lectures, and discussion sessions at Monticello will be complemented by field trips to related sites.

Historical Background

Two broad historical trends, one economic, the other demographic, set the stage for our research at Monticello and the Field School. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, slave-based plantations growing tobacco for export had begun to spread rapidly into the Piedmont Region, where Monticello is located, from the Coastal Plain to the east. For the remainder of the century, the Piedmont was the most economically dynamic region of Virginia.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, plantation owners responded to shifting local and trans-Atlantic markets by diversifying their sources of income to include new agricultural crops, more complex and intensive methods of cultivation, and even forays into manufacturing. Hoe-based tobacco monoculture was supplemented with, or in some cases replaced by, a more diversified agricultural regime based around the plow cultivation of wheat.

Fundamental demographic shifts paralleled these economic developments. Slave immigration from older plantations in the Coastal Plain, importation of enslaved people directly from Africa, and natural increase all contributed to rapid growth in the region's slave population. By the end of the 18th century the slave population was comprised almost entirely of native-born people.

Our research at Monticello aims to trace the conflicting strategies pursued by

plantation owners like Thomas Jefferson and enslaved people as they attempted to cope with these shifting historical circumstances and to better their own and their families' life chances in Colonial and Antebellum Chesapeake.

How did the co-evolving economic and social strategies employed by slave-owning elites and enslaved laborers shift with the movement of settlement into the Piedmont? How were these strategies in turn affected by economic diversification at Monticello and on other plantations near the end of the eighteenth century? What were the ecological and social consequences? How did enslaved people resist them or turn them to their own advantage? What opportunities and constraints did economic diversification and the growth of kinship networks offer enslaved people in their attempts to better their lives?

These are some of the questions that we hope to be able to answer over the next few years, drawing on results from our current archaeological research at Monticello as well as comparative analysis of data from other plantations in the Chesapeake and other early-modern slave societies of the Atlantic World. This course offers you the opportunity to be a part of the research process – both in the field and in the lab.

The Site

This summer we will be working at an archaeological site that we call "Site 30". It is Located about a half mile east on Monticello mansion. Based on our fieldwork last year, we think the site was occupied by enslaved agricultural laborers during the last few decades of the eighteenth century, when tobacco was still the sole cash crop at Monticello. Last year we excavated 52 five-foot quadrats in a stratified random sample designed to yield data on spatial patterns in artifact density across the site and to detect subsurface features. We were successful on both counts.

First, we discovered a very important subsurface feature, a subfloor pit. Subfloor pits are small storage cellars that people enslaved in the Chesapeake typically dug under the floors of their houses. Houses with multiple pits are common for in the Chesapeake for much of the eighteenth century. They probably represent barracks-style housing for multiple families or individuals. A key question you will help us answer this summer is: are there additional pits associated with the one we found? Or did the house have only one pit, which would suggest the sort of single-family housing that was becoming more common at the end of the century?

Figure 1. The subfloor pit at Site 30, discovered during last year's fieldwork. Research Manager Crystal O'Connor takes sediment samples from a section cut though the pit fill.

Second, using data from our 52 quads, we were able to make artifact density maps. The map for all ceramic sherds shows an oval shape zone of higher density that is roughly 150 feet long. The zone is too big to have been produced by trash generated in the house associated with the subfloor pit. There are other houses on the site! A second goal this summer is to find them.

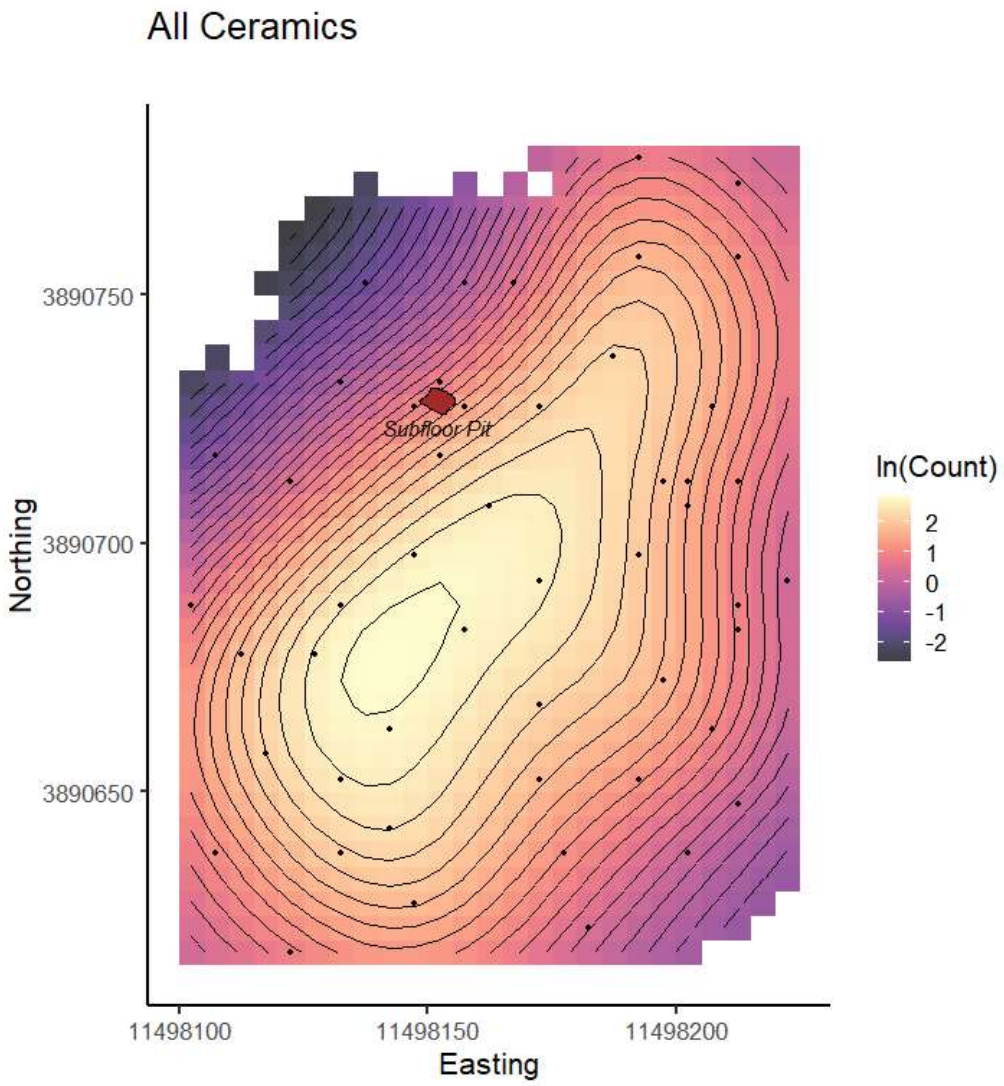

Figure 2. Density map for all ceramic sherds at Site 30. Density is measured on a natural log scale to better reveal patterns in low-density areas. Black dots are excavation quadrat centers. Note the location of the subfloor pit.

Achieving both these goals will require digging more five-foot quads. Those additional quads will allow us to meet a third goal: to increase the size of our spatial sample, so that we can see meaning patterns in the distribution of different artifact types. These are currently obscured by the statistical noise from our small sample.

Larger samples will allow us to reliably measure spatial patterns in artifact size ("size sorting"), which can tell us about the length and intensity of household occupations. Larger samples will also enable us to define assemblages associated with different households and assess the extent to which they were able to maintain domestic economies independent of the plantation's basic food provisioning system. Another topic for investigation is variation in the means, motive, and opportunity that households may have had to participate in the local consumer economy.

A major aim of the course is to teach you how to collect and analyze archaeological data to make testable inferences about these and other topics. Our goal is to dig from 15 to 20 quadrats during field school… and learn more both about archaeological methods and the lives of Site 30's enslaved residents.

Reading

Reading, updated copies of the Syllabus, and Course Description can be found on UVA's Canvas website: https://canvas.virginia.edu/

In addition, you will receive copies of the Monticello Department of Archaeology's *Lab Procedures Manual* and *Field Procedures Manual*. ***We expect you to come to class having done the reading assigned for that day. You can expect a pop-quiz on the reading assignment at least once a week.***

Daily Schedule

Our class day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. We'll assemble at 8:30 at the Monticello Visitor's Center and walk to the site. Most lectures will take place first thing in the morning at the VC. There is a thirty-minute break at noon for lunch at the site. You are responsible for packing your own lunch.

Once we begin to recover artifacts from our excavations, we will rotate excavation teams through the lab, where you will learn the basics of artifact processing -- washing, labeling, curation, and keeping track of critical archaeological context information for each object. You'll learn about the classification and measurement protocols and software we use to catalog artifacts and field records into our database (see www.daacs.org). You'll have a chance to hone your artifact identification skills with the artifacts you are processing, as well as examples from our extensive study collection.

Field School Staff

Fraser D. Neiman	Director	fneiman@monticello.org
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DAACS Lab

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Iris Puryear	Archaeological Analyst	ipuryear@monticello.org

Guest Lecturers

Andrew Davenport	Public Historian and Director, *Getting Word* Oral History Project, Monticello (slavery, oral history, descendant engagement).
Brandon Dillard	Manager of Historic Interpretation, Monticello (slavery at Monticello)
Dan Druckenbrod	Professor, Geography and Environmental Science, Rider University (dendrochronology and dendroecology).
Dan Hayes	Geoarchaeologist (geoarchaeology).
Kandace Hollenbach	Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee (paleoethnobotany).
Gayle Jessup-White	Community Engagement Officer, Monticello (family history, descendant engagement).
Barnet Pavao-Zuckerman	Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland (zooarchaeology)

Requirements and Evaluation

Class Participation. We expect you to attend all field sessions, lectures, and discussions. Readings are to be completed before coming to the session at which they are scheduled to be discussed. You should try to digest and evaluate what you have read and be prepared to share your understanding of the reading and any questions you have about it in class. Contributions to class discussion will determine 10% of your grade.

Quality Field and Lab Work. Your performance will also be evaluated based on the quality of your field and lab work. This includes quality of the field records you generate, including map and section drawings. You are responsible for learning completely and executing accurately our recording protocols, as described in the *Field Procedures Manual* and *Laboratory Procedures Manual.* You will be creating archival field and lab records. ***Given the destructive character of archaeological excavation, the observations you make can never be repeated and the records you create are the only records there will ever be. We therefore take our obligations for completeness, accuracy, and standardization in excavation and recording very seriously. We expect you to do the same. Study the field and lab manuals carefully.***

You will meet regularly with our teaching staff to review objectives for field, lab, and analytical skills, your progress toward meeting them, as well as your understanding of material covered in the readings and lectures. These aspects of your performance will

determine 40% of your grade.

Quizzes. Two quizzes, one at the end of the second week and one at the end of the fourth week will give you some intermediate feedback on your progress and determine 20% of your grade.

Final Exam. The results of a 2-hour written examination, covering lectures, readings, and both field and lab skills will determine 30% of your grade.