

# Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

**PANYC**

## **NEWSLETTER**

No. 150

September 2011

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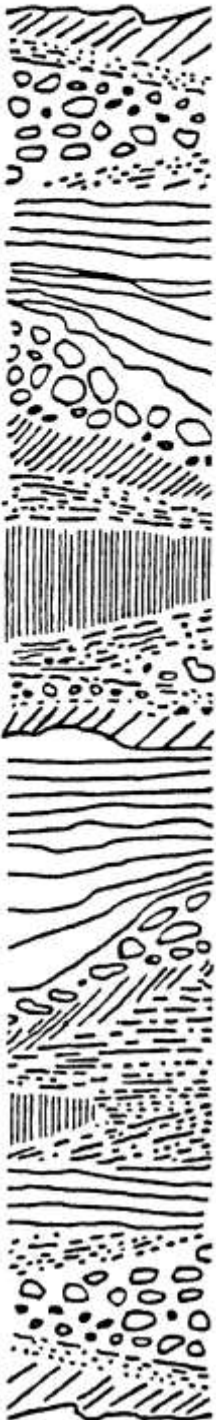
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### **Next Meeting:**

**September 21, 2011**  
**Neighborhood Preservation Center**  
**232 East 11th Street**  
**New York, NY**  
**6:30pm**

### **Newsletter Editor:**

**Christopher Ricciardi**  
**4110 Quentin Road**  
**Brooklyn, New York 11234-4322**  
**Phone/Fax: (718) 645-3962**  
**Email: [chrisricciardi@optimum.net](mailto:chrisricciardi@optimum.net)**



PANYC General Membership Meeting  
Wednesday, March 23, 2011

**In attendance:** Linn, Britt, Dallal, Freeman, Garland, Geismar, MacLean, Pickman, Rakos, Rothschild, Schuldenrein, Spritzer, Stone, Wall.

**Secretary's Report:** General meeting minutes from January approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** \$3,504.13 currently in the bank. Treasurers Report for Year Ending December 30, 2010 submitted to the board.

**President's Report:**

- 1) NYSAA has recently published Ralph Solecki and Stanley Wisniewski's new monograph: "The Archaeology of Maspeth (Queens), Long Island, New York, and Vicinity," in their Occasional Paper series. Linn was contacted by NYSAA to help market the publication. Linn proposed that we sell the monograph at the public meeting and her suggestion was unanimously approved. It was also suggested that Linn contact Queens based historical societies and historic houses as possible interested parties.

**Committee Reports** (only those making a report are mentioned)

**Awards:** Rothschild announced that a candidate for PANYC's non-professional award has been identified.

**Education:** Linn and MacLean are finalizing a list of educational resources in NYC. If anyone has any further suggestions, please send them on.

**Elections:** Overall elections: 19 out of a potential of 40 were received from our membership—almost 50% participation. Those elected were: President-Rakos, Vice-President-Dallal, Treasurer-Spritzer, Secretary-Britt.

There was a run off board election. Four-way tie between Pickman, MacLean, Stone, and Rothschild. Per by-laws, members took an in-house vote. Results—MacLean and Rothschild were elected board members for 2011-2012 along with Cantwell, Geismar, and Wall.

**Events:** Ashley Bettis will discuss her work at the end of the meeting with the Historic house Trust (HHT).

AIA-April 11<sup>th</sup> Schuldenrein will be presenting a paper at Columbia University.

Harvard Club-June 6<sup>th</sup> Dallal will be presenting on the ship found at the WTC site, invitation only. Contact Dallal if you wish to attend: 646-388-9768.

**MET Chapter:** Spring speaker will be Doug Mooney of URS discussing the Spring Street Burial Ground. Held at AKRF Wednesday April 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

Joel Klein will speak in May on his work with 9/11 families on Wednesday May 25<sup>th</sup> at Columbia University. Details to Follow.

Fall speaker will be Meta Janowitz.

Other upcoming events: a possible field trips to Seneca Village this summer, historic cemetery walking tour, among others.

Wall and Cantwell recommended Richard Schaffer who works with Cece Saunders at Historical Perspectives, Inc. HPI as a possible speaker for the fall discussing 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch medicine.

**Newsletter:** Thanks expressed to Ricciardi. It was determined that PANYC's archive of newsletters that Ricciardi has now made available on a CD will be posted on the PANYC website.

**NYAC:** April 15<sup>th</sup>-Annual meeting in Johnstown, NY. Theme: Education

**Public Program:** May 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 pm at Museum of the City of NY. Theme: History and Archaeology of City Hall Park. No break, 20 minutes for papers. Flyers will be mailed shortly.

**Website:** Announcement of the May 1 Public program will be posted on the PANYC website.

### **Old Business:**

#### **1) Navy Yard—Admirals Row:**

On March 8, 2011, Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) and New York Archaeological Council (NYAC) jointly submitted a letter commenting on the Draft MOA distributed by the Army National Guard Bureau (ARNG), the branch of the army responsible for transferring the Admirals Row property in the former Brooklyn Navy Yard from the federal government and disposing of the property as per Public Law 100-202. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently serving as the real estate agent assisting the ARNG in complying with federal regulations in this process. Our letter, which clarified and sometimes revised numerous archaeological issues presented in the draft MOA, was prepared by Geismar and Stone on behalf of both organizations (PANYC and NYAC), was a culmination of efforts spent representing the two organizations at numerous review meetings. The letter, signed by Linn and Pipes, presidents of the responding organizations, also requested that PANYC and NYAC continue to serve as concurring parties in the project's 106 review process. A discussion followed regarding PANYC's continuing role in the process which is to be determined.

**2)     **PANYC Archives:****

Status of the PANYC archives housed at the former South Street Seaport Museum Library was in question. Question as to whether it is at Seaport or not, Geismar stated she would contact Seaport to find out if the archives are still there and their status.

**New Business/Announcement:**

**1)     **Meeting re: The Transfer of DORIS (Department of Records and Information Services) to DCAS (Department of Citywide Administrative Services)****  
Public Meeting: March 15, 2011 @ The Banking Hall, 49-50 Chambers Street

As reported by Geismar, Deputy Commissioner, Eileen M. Flannelly conducted the meeting and expressed great excitement and enthusiasm over a proposed new visitor's center and the advantages of being part DCAS with access to its much larger budget. She also assured everyone there would be no change in the archive's personnel, and could only see it as a positive move with built in safety measures as the archives has its own legislative charter. To ensure a positive outcome, Flannelly indicated the archive's board, which has been inactive for 11 years, would be reinstated. All this was supported by Edna Wells Handy, the commissioner of DCAS, who indicated that DCAS itself was being, or has been, restructured and could provide improved services. Despite this, concerns were addressed about loss of autonomy and the inevitable degrading of the archives since the budget had yet to be determined. One interesting note was that the archives' material is to be digitized. Just how (monetarily) and when is yet to be determined.

**3)     **Next meeting:****

The next PANYC event will be the Public Program held Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> and the next General meeting will be held Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Neighborhood Preservation Center, 232 East 11th Street, NY, NY (btwn 2nd and 3rd Ave). The new president will set the meeting dates for the rest of her term at the upcoming 5/18 meeting.

**4)     Ashley Bettis, as previously mentioned, was the guest speaker tonight discussing her work at the HHT. Tonight and she discussed her work at the HHT locating and creating a database of all of the documents related to archaeology performed at houses within the trust. Ashley has been carefully examining past reports and has made a master map for several houses showing the approximate location of all known archaeological units, trenches, shovel tests, etc. , which will no doubt be a terrific resource. She is also adding the present storage locations of excavated artifacts to the database, at the suggestion of PANYC. This database with links to scanned reports and maps will be available online in the future to interested qualified parties through the HHT website.**

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly M. Britt, PANYC Secretary.

**Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.**

May 10, 2011

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
The New York City Council  
250 Chambers St # 51  
New York, NY 10007-1209

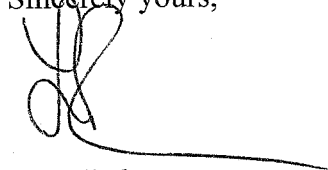
Dear Ms. Quinn:

This letter is to express the concern of Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) about the proposed merger of the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS), which includes the Municipal Archives and City Hall Library, with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). Needless to say, as archaeologists who study the City of New York, the archives are extremely important to us. Its records allow us to undertake the studies of the archaeological sensitivity of parcels of land that are slated for development and that are undergoing environmental review. But even more importantly, it performs the important public service of preserving the heritage of the City's government and providing access to its public records to all.

Our concern is that DORIS is a very small agency that will become lost within DCAS. DCAS's mission does not include the preservation of records, and naturally its priorities will reflect its mission, as they should. But in these days of limited funding, it would be particularly easy for DCAS to ignore the interests of a tiny new addition in allocating its limited resources within the agency. Moreover, the autonomous function of DORIS, a unique agency, would be lost.

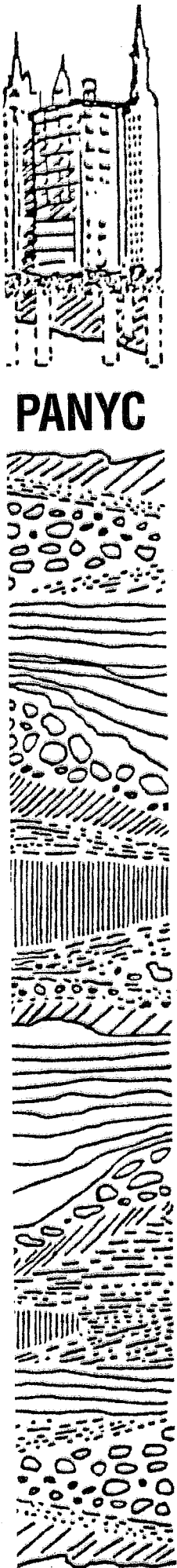
We strongly urge that DORIS continue as a separate agency so it can continue to carry out its invaluable mission of preserving the history of the municipality and making it available to the public.

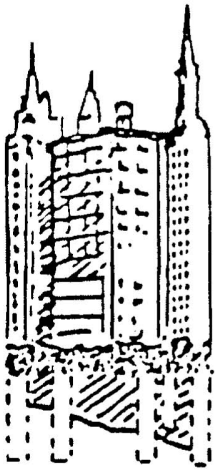
Sincerely yours,



Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215  
(917) 515-4154

CC Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
Council Member Gale Brewer, Chair,  
City Council's Committee on Governmental Operations,  
Eileen Flannelly, Deputy Commissioner of DORIS  
Michael Miscione, Manhattan Borough Historian





**Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) and  
New York Archaeological Council (NYAC)**



August 11, 2011

Major William Harper  
NEPA Program Manager  
Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau  
111 S. George Mason Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22204-1382  
bill.harper3@us.army.mil

*Re:* Admiral's Row, Brooklyn Navy Yard – Comments on Final EA and Draft FNSI

Dear Major Harper:

In response to your request for comments, Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) and the New York Archaeological Council (NYAC) have the following:

For the FNSI and in accord with Page 20 of the FEA and Page 9 of the FMOA ("the purchaser will submit a draft archaeological report to the NYSHPO for review and evaluation, detailing the additional Phase I and Phase II Investigations."), please edit Page 4, Line 16 to read, "...during the site redevelopment planning process; and performing additional Phase IB archaeological survey and Phase II archaeological evaluation on the site." Also, in the Final EA, could you please identify the preparer(s) within the document?

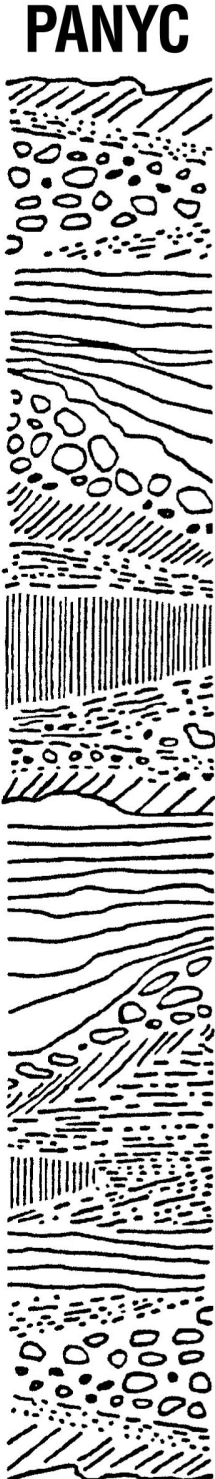
Once again, we thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Joan H. Geismar  
Representing PANYC/NYAC

Linda Stone  
Representing PANYC/NYAC

cc. R. Klein, ARNG  
D. Mackey, NYSHPO  
A. Sutphin, NYCLPC



**Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.**

July 6, 2011

Chancellor Meryl H. Tisch  
New York State Education Department  
Regents Office  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, N.Y. 12234

Dear Ms. Tisch:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC), a non-profit organization comprised of practitioners in academia, government and private industry, most of whom reside in New York State. This letter is to express our deep concern with the dismissal of several archaeologists from the staff of the New York State Museum (NYSM). These professionals provide a valuable service to New York State through their stewardship of our irreplaceable cultural heritage and by fostering in museum visitors an excitement and interest in our state's past. The NYSM is mandated to keep archaeological collections and it is this professional staff that ensures they are properly maintained and accessible to all. The experienced employees being laid off also support the business community by efficiently assessing the need for archaeological permits and expeditiously issuing them.

As we understand the situation, the NYSM was not aware of the imminent firings. While layoffs may be needed, given the state's budget problems, the specific decisions as to who should be dismissed should be made by the NYSM Director. He and his staff best understand the museum's needs and how they can meet its mandated responsibilities.

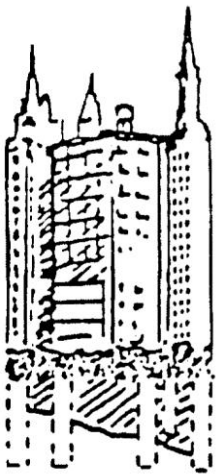
We urge you to reconsider the immediate dismissal of NYSM staff. If these layoffs are allowed to occur, it will have a devastating effect on the NYSM's ability to provide researchers, scientists, educators, students and the general public access to archaeological collections. It will also have a deleterious effect on the museum's valuable educational programs the professional staff now expertly handles. The loss of these highly trained and well-respected archaeologists from the staff of NYSM will be a severe blow to the heritage that so many in our state hold dear.

Sincerely,

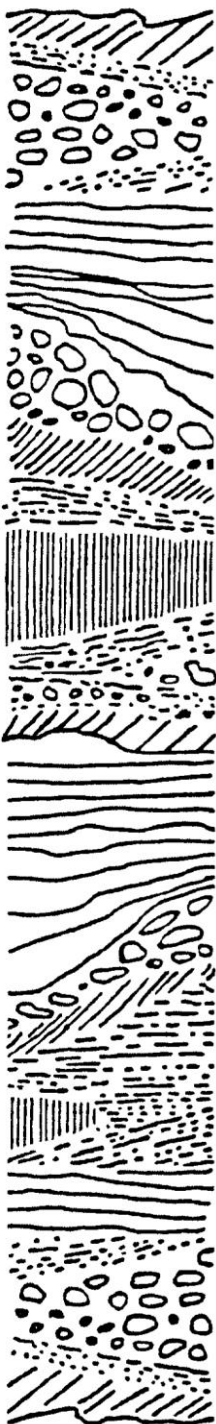
Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
230 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Apt 4  
Brooklyn, NY 11215  
(917) 515-4154

CC:

Dr. John B. King, Jr., New York State Education Department  
Dr. Clifford A. Siegfried, Director, New York State Museum



**PANYC**



# BUSINESS LIVES

## 52%

of Northeast CFOs say the economy will improve in the next six months

Source: Grant Thornton

### HOT JOBS

#### PROJECT MGMT. OFFICE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**ORGANIZATION** Teachers' Retirement System

**JOB DESCRIPTION** Manage strategic aspects of IT and operational projects

**MOST IMPORTANT TASK** Mitigate risks and monitor cost/benefit comparisons

**CREDENTIALS NEEDED** Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 10 years' project-management experience; PMP/PgMP certification preferred

**SALARY** \$135,000-\$150,000

**RECRUITER** Internal

**DOWNSIDE** Coping with ramifications from the city's budget crisis and changing pension legislation

**UPSIDE** Implementing new and innovative project-management tools

Teachers' Retirement System provides eligible city educators with retirement, disability and death benefits and is one of the largest pension systems in the nation.

—SUZANNE PANARA

### EXECUTIVE MOVES



**Chadbourne & Parke:** Abbe D. Lowell, 59, rejoined the corporate law firm as partner and head of the firm's white-collar defense and special litigation and investigations

group, a position he held from 2003 to 2007. He will be splitting his time between Washington, D.C., and New York City. He returned to the firm from McDermott Will & Emery, where he had been a partner. Mr. Lowell's experience includes complex investigations, criminal and civil trials, appeals, and congressional and agency investigations. In addition to his private practice, Mr. Lowell has held counsel positions on congressional committees and with the United Nations high commissioner for human rights.

**WFUV 90.7 FM:** Chuck Singleton, 55, has been promoted to interim general manager of the radio station licensed to Fordham University. He was previously a program director.



**Oxford Properties Group:** Dean Shapiro, 48, joined as senior vice president and will be focused on the Hudson Yards joint venture project with The Related Companies. Mr.

Shapiro will lead the in-house commercial leasing and marketing

See EXECUTIVE MOVES on Page 28



**OLD NEW DIGS:** Scott Jordan's apartment contains 50,000 artifacts from the city's past.

ROGER HAGEDONE

### GOTHAM GIGS

## Urban Archaeologist

**He unearths treasures from the past in yards and 19th-century landfills**

Scott Jordan is always searching for new digs. Construction sites. Backyards. Nineteenth-century landfills. Any place where the 54-year-old urban archaeologist might unearth bits and pieces of New York's past. ¶ "History can come alive when you touch it," said Mr. Jordan. ¶ What began as a hobby on Governors Island, where Mr. Jordan grew up as the son of a military man, has evolved into an obsession. Look no further than his two-bedroom in Astoria, Queens. It holds some 50,000 artifacts—from multicolored bottles to buttons fashioned out of bone. He even has a pistol from the Revolutionary War. ¶ To support himself, Mr. Jordan makes mosaics and earrings out of pottery shards, coins, pieces of porcelain dolls. He sells his work at the GreenFlea Market on West 77th Street and Columbus Avenue most Sundays. This spring and summer, he will be at St. Anthony's church on Sullivan and West Houston streets on Fridays and Saturdays. ¶ When he's not donning a top hat and selling his artifacts, Mr. Jordan can often be found at the bottom of an old cistern or privy. "It keeps that little kid in you alive," he said.

—SHANE DIXON KAVANAUGH

### EXECUTIVE INBOX

Anne Fisher

#### A case for avoiding venture capital

**VENTURE CAPITALISTS** aren't exactly beating a path to your door? Look on the bright side: Financing your growth mainly through cash flow (and a few strategic bank loans, if you can get them) lets you limit the equity that anyone else holds in your company—which means that you get to keep calling the shots.

Consider **Magnolia Bakery**. Begun in 1996 as one little shop on Bleecker Street, it sells cupcakes that have become pop-culture icons, featured in sitcoms including *Sex and the City* and movies such as *The Devil Wears Prada*.

When Steve and Tyra Abrams bought the business in early 2007, *Magnolia still had just one location*, with 35 employees. The mostly **self-financed company thrived during the economic downturn** and now has four stores in Manhattan, one in L.A. and one at Bloomingdale's in Dubai.

This summer, Magnolia will open a shop at Bloomingdale's in New York and one in Chicago. Meanwhile, the company will start selling its wares online, a venture fueled by a dedicated bakery set to open in Harlem on July 1.

This summer's burst of activity notwithstanding, Mr. Abrams is determined not to get carried away. He says he is bombarded with proposals from would-be investors, Wall Streeters and others "who tell us we could be in airports, we could sell frozen baked goods and refrigerated batter in supermarkets, we could franchise, we could go public."

So what's stopping him?

"We bought a small neighborhood bakery," he said. "That's what resonated with us." And he'd rather **stick with what feels right**.

Of course, that's tough if equity investors are urging you toward faster, bigger, more, more, more. That's why Mr. Abrams has maintained a simple financing formula: "One [angel] investor, cash flow and a good bank."

**HAVE YOU RESISTED** the temptation to sell equity in your firm? Tell us at [www.craigslist.com/execinbox](http://www.craigslist.com/execinbox).



From: Professional Archaeologists of New York City Professional Archaeologists of New York City [mailto:panyc2006@yahoo.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:17 AM  
To: Shane Kavanaugh  
Cc: Xana Antunes; panyc2006@yahoo.com  
Subject: "Urban Archaeologist" May 16, 2011

Dear Mr. Kavanaugh,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC) regarding your recent piece in Crain's New York Business "Business Lives" section (May 16, 2011) entitled "Urban Archaeologist."

At PANYC we are always pleased when archaeology receives attention from the press and we applaud you for your interest. We are dismayed though that you presented Mr. Jordan as an urban archaeologist. Digging historic features such as privies and wells in urban backyards for artifacts, or the "goodies," contained therein is not archaeology. This activity is often called pot hunting or looting. Archaeology involves methodical excavation and documentation of that field work. The artifacts yielded are then thoroughly studied. When combined, the field work and artifact analysis provide us all with a glimpse into New York City's past that we cannot get elsewhere. The artifacts are often sent to museums where they provide the framework for research projects and exhibits. Our profession has ethical standards that practicing archaeologists uphold. Digging historic features and selling artifacts are not acceptable practices.

It would be wonderful if your next "Gotham Gigs" features a real professional urban archaeologist! There are many of us in the area and I would be more than happy to put you in touch with a few.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Rakos  
PANYC President  
(917) 515-4154

From: Shane Kavanaugh <skavanaugh@crainsnewyork.com>  
Subject: RE: "Urban Archaeologist" May 16, 2011  
To: "Professional Archaeologists of New York City Professional Archaeologists of New York City" <panyc2006@yahoo.com>  
Cc: "Xana Antunes" <xantunes@crainsnewyork.com>, "panyc2006@yahoo.com" <panyc2006@yahoo.com>  
Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 5:42 PM

Dear M. Rakos,

I'll grant that looting the pyramids may have removed important archeological artifacts and limited our knowledge about ancient Egypt. But has Mr. Jordan done the same by picking pottery shards, colorful bottles and other objects from landfills and backyards? Have his efforts hindered the efforts of New York's "Professional Archeologists"? If not, what harm have they done?

Archeology may benefit from professionalism, but it is hardly harmed by the amateur efforts of those such as Mr. Jordan. In addition, methodical excavation and documentation may thrill you and your colleagues, but I'm afraid my readers might find it dull. Thanks for the feedback, though.

Sincerely Yours,  
Shane Dixon Kavanaugh

August 5, 2011, 3:28 pm

# The World Trade Center Ship, From Stern to Stem

By [DAVID W. DUNLAP](#)



A. Michael Pappalardo/AKRF Warren Riess of the Darling Marine Center of the University of Maine and his wife, Kathleen, inspecting the bow of the 18th-century sailing vessel found at the World Trade Center site.

After finding the stern of an 18th-century sailing vessel in landfill where the new World Trade Center is being constructed, what could be better? Finding the bow — or at least enough to gain a clearer picture of the length of the vessel and how it was constructed; all of which might help solve the mystery of what it was doing anchored off Lower Manhattan in the first place.

The most intriguing theory now in circulation is that the vessel may have been used around the time of the Revolutionary War as a troop carrier of some sort. “That ties in really neatly with the British military button found between the frames,” said Warren Riess of the [Darling Marine Center](#) at the University of Maine.

Archaeologists [unearthed the boat](#) in July 2010, west of and perpendicular to Washington Street, between Liberty and Cedar Streets, where the waters of the Hudson once reached. It was immediately evident that the sunken hull had long ago been sundered by underground excavation. The remaining wood was so deteriorated that archaeologists couldn’t even tell at first whether they were looking at the [fore portion or the aft](#).

[Fred R. Conrad of The Times created a [panoramic view](#) of the vessel in place.]

Once that was settled, they hoped to find what they surmised must exist under the *east* side of Washington Street: the bow. That had to wait a year, until the [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#) began excavating that area for the subterranean [vehicle security center](#).

That brings us to July 27, when archaeologists from the firm [AKRF](#), working for the [Lower Manhattan Development Corporation](#) and the Port Authority, left the scene of the excavation — just where they thought the bow ought to be — utterly dejected. They'd found nothing but a few slivers.

“We walked to O’Hara’s, ordered a pint and said, ‘Well, we gave it our best shot,’ ” said A. Michael Pappalardo, one of the archaeologists.

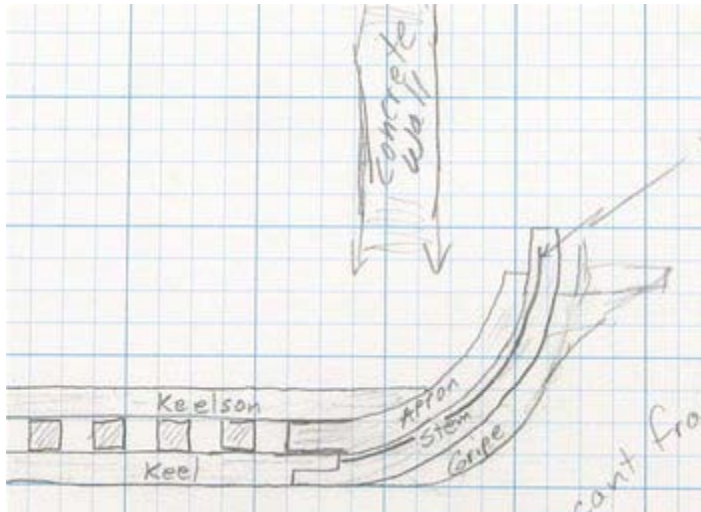
His colleague Elizabeth Meade said, “We called ourselves ‘The Boy Who Cried Ship.’ ”



Ángel Franco/The New York Times At the office of AKRF, archaeologists wrestle with the largest single piece of the bow of the 18th-century sailing vessel from the World Trade Center. From left: A. Michael Pappalardo, Carrie Atkins Fulton, Elizabeth Meade and Emma Marconi.

Argh, but maritime stories always have a twist. Two days later, as an excavator bucket pulled away at a small shelf of soil, the archaeologists were thrilled to see whole pieces of wood falling out. They asked that workers slow the excavation. Under the mud and muck was a small but cohesive bit of the lower bow. Its discovery was [reported Thursday](#) by the Manhattan news site DNAInfo.

There was no bowsprit to be found, or figure head, or quarterboard to give the vessel’s name. This was the submerged portion of the bow, where structural timbers known as the apron, the stem post and the gripe are found. Still, it was an exciting discovery.



Warren Riess A cross-section shows the profile of the bow and its relation to the concrete wall along Washington Street that split it from the rest of the vessel. Only the lower part of the bow, to the right of where Dr. Riess wrote the words “apron,” “stem” and “gripe,” was found.

It can now be said that the vessel was about 50 feet long. Thirty-two feet of the stern were exposed last year, 10 to 15 feet amidships were lost long ago and three to six feet of the stem were exposed on July 29. The remnants were left in place last weekend so that Dr. Riess could inspect them. They were then taken to the AKRF office at 440 Park Avenue South to be readied for shipment to the [Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation](#) at Texas A&M University.

A dendrochronological examination of wood samples by Columbia University has already disclosed that the trees almost certainly grew in the Philadelphia area and were cut down no later than the 1770s.



Ángel Franco/The New York Times A button found aboard the ship, from the coat of a private in the British Army 52nd Regiment of Foot, which battled the American rebels.

The button to which Dr. Riess referred is a pewter disc with an ornamental border and the number “52” in the center. Diane Dallal of AKRF said it corresponded with the 52nd Regiment of Foot, a light infantry regiment of the British Army that tried to suppress the colonial uprising in these parts. The fact that it is pewter — not silver — means that it adorned a private’s uniform, she said.

Archaeologists are careful not to associate many of the interesting things found around the boat with the boat itself. But this button was discovered last summer between two wooden frames of the ship. So though they do not yet know the boat’s name or its mission, they may have their first inkling of who the passengers were. And they know they have found the whole thing.

## *Seneca Village Site Visit*

PANYC and NYSAA Met Chapter members toured the long anticipated excavations at Seneca Village in Central Park on July 13th. Many years of research and non-invasive investigations have gone into studying this now vanished 19th century village. The work is being conducted under the direction of PANYC members Nan Rothschild and Diana Wall along with historian Cynthia Copeland.

PANYC members Meredith Linn and Jenna Coplin are assisting with the field work which is also providing students from several colleges and universities the opportunity for a hands-on archaeological experience. Thanks to Diana Dallal for the photographs.







DNAinfo.COM – Manhattan Local News  
African-American Community Thrived Where Central Park Stands  
July 29, 2011 10:09am | By Leslie Albrecht, DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

Read more: <http://www.dnainfo.com/20110728/upper-west-side/africanamerican-community-thrived-where-central-park-stands#ixzz1U50SY3F7>

UPPER WEST SIDE — On Thursday afternoon, picnickers and sunbathers basked in Central Park's greenery near West 85th Street, but 160 years ago, the spot was home to a thriving, predominantly African-American village that was torn down to make way for the park. An eight-week archaeological dig this summer has shed new light on the community, **Seneca Village**, which existed from the 1820s to the 1850s and was home to close to 300 people at its height.

The village, thought to be the first community of African-American property owners in New York, spanned from West 81st to 89th street, between Seventh and Eighth avenues (now Central Park West).

Also home to Irish and German immigrant families, Seneca Village had three churches and a school, all of which were demolished in 1857 so the city could build Central Park. Professors from Barnard College, City College of New York, Columbia University and NYU teamed up to lead a group of student archaeologists, who burrowed into the soil to recover artifacts from the village.

Researchers already had **some information about Seneca Village**, because surveyors mapped the area before the city razed it. A census and other records of the time showed the names and occupations of families who lived in the village.

The excavation unearthed more clues about their daily lives. Among the finds were a roasting pan that looked like something out of a modern-day kitchen, a beer bottle, a shoe that probably belonged to a small woman or child, and pieces of tobacco pipes.

Researchers also uncovered the stone foundation of a three-story house where William G. Wilson, the sexton from **All Angels Church**, lived with his wife Charlotte and eight children. All Angels was the missionary parish of **St. Michael's Church**, which still stands on West 99th Street and Columbus Avenue.

Some discoveries were intriguing, said Cynthia Copeland, an education professor at NYU and public historian who co-directed the dig. Archaeologists found large amounts of animal bones underneath households headed by women, which suggests that women were butchering their own meat, Copeland said.

The excavation officially ends Friday. On Thursday, intern Victor Luna scooped soil samples out of a pit in the hopes of finding seeds that would reveal what vegetables the villagers grew. Luna, a 22-year-old anthropology major at City College who grew up in The Bronx, said the dig was an eye-opening experience.

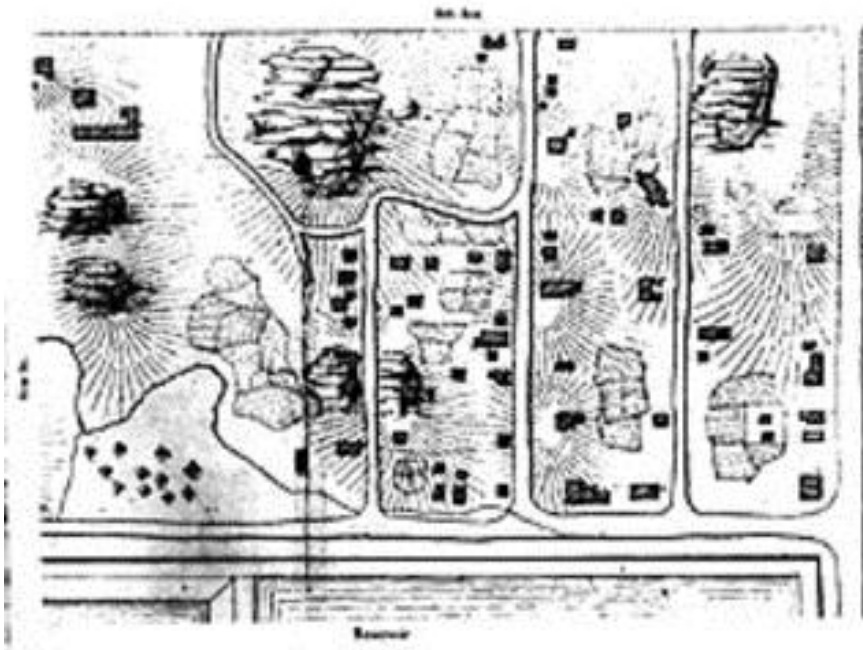
"I'm from the city and I never imagined that people actually lived here," Luna said. "To me, it's always been a park. To find out that this was a successful, mostly African-American community was amazing. It's a part of history that's not really taught."

Some of the finds, such as candlesticks and delicate porcelain, suggest that the families of Seneca Village were solidly middle class, not working class, as many assumed, Copeland said. "It all suggests that these were very resourceful people," Copeland said. "We've got proof now that this was a hearty group."

As the archaeological team dug into Central Park's soil this summer, curious joggers and bikers would sometimes stop to ask questions. Some were dimly aware of Seneca Village, but mistakenly assumed it was a slave village, shantytown or Native American settlement, Copeland said.

"They expected to hear about Irish or Germans," Copeland said. "But they were shocked to hear about African-Americans living here, let alone property owners who were free."

Read more: <http://www.dnainfo.com/20110728/upper-west-side/africanamerican-community-thrived-where-central-park-stands#ixzz1U50NdoHX>



A historical map of Seneca Village. (Landmark West)

The New York Times

## N.Y. / Region

### Unearthing Traces of African-American Village Displaced by Central Park

By **LISA W. FODERARO**

Published: July 27, 2011

For more than a decade, anthropologists and historians pieced together the history of a short-lived African-American community that was snuffed out in the 1850s by the creation of Central Park. They combed vital records and tax documents, scanned parkland using radar and studied soil borings.

But because the vestiges of the community were buried beneath the park, the leaders of the [Institute for the Exploration of Seneca Village History](#) — a consortium of three professors from City College, Columbia University and New York University — were kept from doing the one thing that would open a window onto the daily existence of the some 260 residents: digging. That all changed eight weeks ago, after they won permission from the city to excavate in an area of the park near 85th Street and Central Park West.

While the borings of the past produced just a few artifacts, the dig, which will end on Friday, generated 250 bags of material that should keep the scholars busy for months, if not years. The work on Wednesday alone yielded a toothbrush handle fashioned of bone and the lid of a stoneware jar.

About two-thirds of the residents of Seneca Village were African-American, while the rest were of European descent, mostly Irish. The community was settled in the 1820s, a few years before slavery was abolished in New York. Despite old news reports that the village was a squatter camp, it was, in fact, made up of working- and middle-class property owners.

Detailed historical maps indicate that the village stretched from 82nd to 89th Streets, between what were then Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Nan A. Rothschild, an anthropologist who is a professor at Columbia University and Barnard College, said that there were other settlements in the area, but that “this is the most formal, coherent community that we know of, because it was laid out in a grid pattern and had three churches and a school.”

With the help of 10 college interns, the institute focused on two primary sites: the yard of a resident named Nancy Moore, and the home of William G. Wilson, a sexton at All Angels’ Episcopal Church, both of whom were black. Records show that Mr. Wilson and his wife, Charlotte, had eight children and lived in a three-story wood-frame house.

The holes, which were up to six feet deep, revealed stone foundation walls and myriad artifacts, including what appeared to be an iron tea kettle and a roasting pan (now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for conservation), a stoneware beer bottle and fragments of Chinese export porcelain.

But perhaps the most powerful find, at least for the archaeology interns, was a small shoe with a leather sole and fabric upper. Possibly belonging to a child, the shoe was a reminder that the work uncovered real lives.

“It’s just such an intimate thing,” said Madeline Landry, a junior anthropology major at Barnard College, who found herself choked up by the discovery. “That shoe fit someone who walked around here.”

The former yard of Nancy Moore contained the original soil of Seneca Village, in contrast to Mr. Wilson’s property, which appeared to have been dug up and filled during the park’s construction. Thus, in Ms. Moore’s yard, the interns found a number of items that might have been discarded, including fragments of two clay pipes, as well as bones from animals that had been butchered. The institute also plans to put the dirt under a microscope; such scrutiny could show seeds, pollen and other organic matter. Diana diZerega Wall, a professor of anthropology at City College, said, “You can tell what they were growing in their gardens and what the environment was like in general.”

For Cynthia R. Copeland, an adjunct professor at New York University’s school of education, the artifacts promise to shed new light on Seneca Village. In 1997, she helped curate an exhibition on the community at the [New-York Historical Society](#).

“The vast array of materials that we uncovered really gives us a true sense of a strong, stable community,” she said. Digging in a park with 38 million visitors a year had its special challenges, however. The institute hired round-the-clock guards to ensure that the sites were not disturbed. The [Central Park Conservancy](#), the nonprofit group that manages the park, asked the archaeologists to fill the holes and haul away their equipment each day.

Douglas Blonsky, the conservancy’s president, does not seem too worried that the project will lead to more requests for exploration. He gave his blessing to the dig after being worn down by the group’s professionalism and patience. “The project team put in a decade of research and preparation before putting a shovel to soil,” he said.

The institute would like to eventually mount an exhibition based on the dig, but plans to hold an open house at the site on Aug. 24. For its part, the conservancy plans to work with the institute to create some kind of educational display there. As for an encore excavation, Dr. Wall said one was possible. “This site isn’t going anywhere,” she said. “It’s in the bank.”

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: August 1, 2011

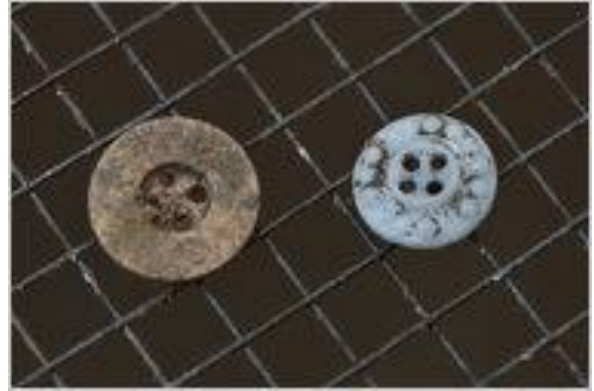
An article on Thursday about the excavation of artifacts from Seneca Village, which was destroyed in the 1850s, misstated the date that an open house at the site will take place. It will be on Aug. 24, not on Oct. 25.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times  
Student interns in Central Park at the site of Seneca Village, which was settled in the 1820s.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times  
A shard of pottery found at the site.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times  
Buttons were among the settlement artifacts.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times  
The bowl of a clay pipe from the village, which was demolished in the 1850s.

## Ghosts of the Gowanus

The EPA is working to trace the history of the toxic waterway before it's too late

By [Miriam Coleman](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 30, 2011

In Jonathan Lethem's novel *Motherless Brooklyn*, one character describes the Gowanus Canal as "the only body of water in the world that is 90 percent guns."

The lore of the Gowanus and whatever lies buried beneath its murky waters has long entranced New Yorkers. And though the canal might not be truly filled with guns, suitcases filled with drugs and cash, or Jimmy Hoffa, it does hold secrets to the history of settlement along this critical industrial corridor.

As part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund cleanup, the federal agency has a mandate to identify the archaeologically significant features of the Gowanus Canal and preserve them wherever possible.

The EPA began this work during the initial Remedial Investigation phase of the cleanup, drawing heavily on a 2004 study created by the Army Corps of Engineers that recommended the canal for the National Register of Historic Places. It also commissioned a sonar scan to evaluate the debris lying at the bottom of the canal.

John Vetter, the national EPA expert on archeology and historic preservation, said that the sonar scan turned up a couple of intact barges, as well as a World War II air sea rescue vessel that Vetter describes as having a "checkered history." (It was heavily modified and used as a houseboat before sinking into the Gowanus a few years ago.)

"Much of the debris, the bulk of it, is probably the remnants of barges that had been long-forgotten," Vetter explained one recent evening as the archeology committee of the superfund's Community Advisory Group was setting up for a meeting just a few blocks from the contaminated waterway.

Lynn Rakos, an archaeologist with the Army Corps of Engineers, said that the usual process for this work starts with remote sensing and documentary research to identify the types of vessels among the debris. When a structure appears to have some historic significance, maritime archeologists may dive into the water to have a closer look, photographing and recording what they find. They take extensive measurements and create drawings to document the findings, and in some cases end up salvaging the structures and donating them to museums.

But Rakos notes that not all of the vessels found in the canal will merit in-depth study.

“Some of these vessels are very common—or if it’s an army vessel or navy vessel, they might have documentation that’s down to the bolt. So is looking at it something like that what we should be doing with federal dollars if we already know what this vessel is and how it functioned and how it was made?”

Another troubling point in the archeological operations is the fact that the findings will likely be contaminated. Vetter recently faced a similar challenge in the Hudson River cleanup, when his team uncovered timber from the site of a colonial-era British fort in Upstate New York.

The timbers were heavily contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and the EPA initially determined that they should be buried in a landfill. Vetter and his team decided instead to preserve them, but the decontamination and preservation processes have been arduous.

The toxicity of the Gowanus waters also makes diving expeditions rather unpalatable and possibly even dangerous.

“Since we’re EPA, we’re not anxious to jump into the rivers to get first-hand looks unless we have a real call to do that,” Vetter said.

While the canal’s history as an industrialized waterway stretches back all the way to the 1840s, the EPA team is unlikely to find anything that disappeared into the canal before the 1960s. That’s because during its time as an active navigational channel, the canal bottom was regularly dredged.

And although the sunken vessels may easily capture the public imagination, as far as EPA archeological work goes, it’s really the canal itself and its infrastructure that give evidence of the history that Vetter and his team are trying to preserve—or at least document.

“We’re not looking at this particular object that might have fallen into the canal, but we’re more looking at the process that produced the canal of this configuration, of this design. What service did it provide to the larger city? Because if you alter it and change it, it’s hard to reconstruct that story.”

One major focus of the EPA group's study has been bulkheads, the retaining walls built to prevent surrounding land from collapsing into the canal water. The bulkheads built along the Gowanus range from timber to steel to concrete and represent well over a century of industrial engineering.

"That kind of historic feature sort of defines the character of an area, if you have steel sheeting, or if you have a poured cement concrete wall versus the wooden constructions that you'll see as you look around the parts of the canal here," Vetter said. "But what's interesting on the Gowanus is you see the full range of designs and technologies. And there's actually accessible an evolution of the technology of bulkhead design, which is a worthy study in itself because it's something that goes on all over the world."

Vetter expects that the Gowanus's historic bulkheads will be affected by the cleanup. The Superfund process has now reached the Feasibility Study phase, during which the EPA will decide exactly how to remove the contaminated sediment from the canal. The job of the archaeologists now is to offer advice on how best to protect these historic features during the remediation, and to document the pieces if they must be destroyed in the cleanup process.

"If we lose a piece of bulkhead—well, let's describe that as we take it apart to replace it with something stronger," Vetter said. "Let's document it thoroughly. Let's photograph it, let's get the information about it. Or find out the history of construction. What sort of people were involved when they worked on it?"

The EPA has enlisted the members of the CAG archaeology committee to help assemble this history, and Vetter said that its members have provided invaluable resources in compiling old photographs, documents, and maps.

Linda Mariano, a CAG member and artist who has lived in Gowanus for more than twenty years, has been thrilled by the opportunity to delve into the history of her surroundings and search for the remnants of old Dutch mills, revolutionary war burial grounds, and sunken ships.

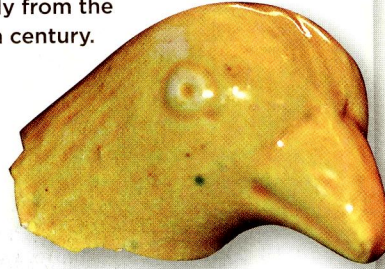
"Something in my gut is interested in our past and the mysteriousness, the undiscovered," said Mariano. "It's like taking off a layer of your own skin and investigating what's in there."





**ARIZONA:** Geocaching is a hobby in which hikers leave small items or bundles in out-of-the-way places and then challenge others to find them using only GPS coordinates. A geocacher in Prescott National Forest found a much older cache, a thin-walled pot used by the Yavapai between 600 and 100 years ago. Knowing the importance of archaeological context, he did what came naturally—he marked the location with his GPS and notified authorities of the rare, fragile find.

**NEW YORK:** Despite its modern lack of either greenery or open space, downtown Manhattan was, as recently as the 19th century, part farmland. Construction workers stumbled across a site from that time—a wall and well that were once part of the farm of Stephanus van Cortlandt, the city's first native-born mayor, and his descendants. Among other artifacts, archaeologists found a pipestem, pottery and stoneware, and a yellow ceramic bird's head, all likely from the 18th century.

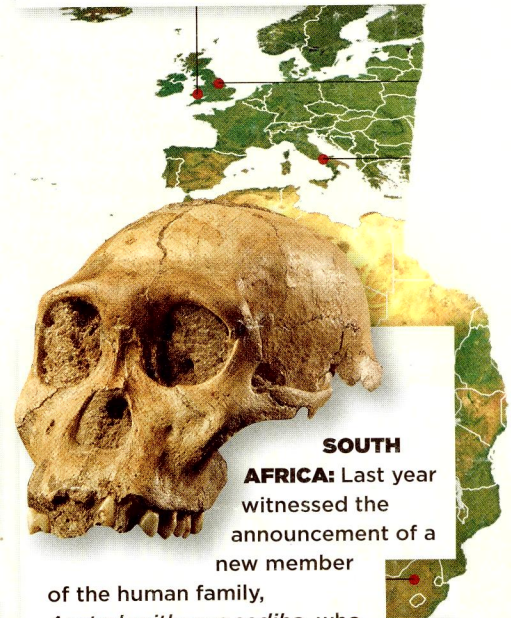


**WALES:** In *The Lord of the Rings*, flaming hilltop beacons are used to communicate between distant kingdoms. But they might not just be fantasy. Iron Age hillforts could have had a similar purpose 2,500 years ago. To test it, a heritage group organized the "Hillfort Glow Experiment," getting 350 volunteers to communicate between 10 hillforts with flares and flashlights (no Middle Earth pyres, though—it is fragile habitat). In some cases, the glow connected the hills 25 miles apart.



**PANAMA:** From a reef at the mouth of the Chagres River, underwater archaeologists have raised what they believe are cannons from the fleet of privateer and rum pitchman Captain Henry Morgan. Morgan's ship, *Satisfaction*, ran aground in 1671 on the way to raid Panama City in response to a Spanish attack on Jamaica. The cannons are the first known artifacts of his Panamanian excursion.

**BRAZIL:** Digs being conducted on Rio de Janeiro's waterfront in advance of the 2016 Olympics have revealed the remains of Valongo Wharf, where as many as a million African slaves were unloaded and traded in the early 19th century. Once considered a shameful blot on the city's history, the site will now be preserved. It has produced artifacts of both Rio's ruling classes and slaves, including cowrie shells and amulets representative of African spiritual practices.



**SOUTH AFRICA:** Last year witnessed the announcement of a new member of the human family, *Australopithecus sediba*, who lived in South Africa nearly two million years ago. Paleoanthropologists have now found two more *A. sediba* individuals—an adult and infant—who fell in a cave "death trap." Combined with the older female and youth found previously, scientists are now able to study the development of these early hominins, who show a combination of primitive and modern skeletal traits, from cradle to grave.

# New York 1 News:

<http://www.ny1.com/content/145201/brooklyn-students-conduct-dig-near-historic-battle-site>

Thursday, August 18, 2011

## Brooklyn Students Conduct Dig Near Historic Battle Site

Nearly a dozen students could be seen digging and sifting Wednesday on a triangular plot of land located on Columbia Street in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn.

"It is just intriguing because of the shape of it, it is intriguing because of the stories connected with it," said Brooklyn College Anthropology Department Chair Dr. H. Arthur Bankoff.

Bankoff is leading a group of college and high school students from Brooklyn College's Summer Archaeological Field School. Long time residents believe the land is a burial site for soldiers killed in the Battle of Brooklyn during the Revolutionary War.

"It was a neighborhood rumor more or less that this was a burial site and for many, many years it was considered a burial site," said Red Hook historian John Burkard.

One of the reasons for the rumor: The people who built an adjacent industrial building in 1932 veered clear of the site, leading folks in the neighborhood to believe that something lay beneath. "I would like to see them find a connection to the Battle of Brooklyn 1776," Burkard said.

The students participating in the project say it's hard work, but that it will all be worth it if they make a big discovery.

"A lot of people don't realize how much stuff you can do in your own backyard, so they always think if you want to do archaeological digs lets go away to a different country but it's right here so it's pretty cool," said student Tunisia Mitchell.

"Nobody really knows the historical significance of Red Hook so it's kind of interesting to inform people about it," said student Jason Padilla.

As they dig, the students are looking for the outlines of graves. If they do find them, Bankoff says they will simply stop digging at that point.

"We'll leave them there. We're not into really disturbing people who were buried but it would be good to have some confirmation that they actually were here," Bankoff said.

PANyc Events Calendar

| <u>Event</u>   | <u>Topic</u>                                   | <u>Speaker</u> | <u>Time</u>            | <u>Date</u>                      | <u>Location</u>   | <u>Contact</u>  |
|--|--|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b><u>MET Chapter talk</u></b><br><b><u>Council for Northeast</u></b><br><b><u>Historical Archaeology</u></b><br><b><u>(CNEHA)</u></b>   | XRF analysis of stoneware from Lower Manhattan | Meta Janowitz  | 6:00 PM                | Thursday<br>October 6,<br>2011   | AKRF Offices, 440 Park Avenue South, between 29th and 30th Street. 7th Floor, Big Apple Conference Room | Meredith Linn at<br>mbl2002@columbia.edu  |
| <b><u>Society for Industrial</u></b><br><b><u>Archeology Roebing</u></b><br><b><u>Chapter GREAT FALLS</u></b><br><b><u>SYMPOSIUM</u></b> | Various  | Various        | Various                | October 20-23, 2011              | Utica, NY   | <a href="http://www.cneha.org/conference.html">http://www.cneha.org/conference.html</a>   |
|  | Various  | Multiple       | 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. | Saturday,<br>November 5,<br>2011 | International High School, 200 Grand Street, Paterson, NJ   | <a href="http://roebblingsia.org/symposia.html">http://roebblingsia.org/symposia.html</a> |

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