

CHICORA

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MEDI-LEGAL TRAINING CLASS	1
BOSTON AREA CEMETERY VISITED	1
WORKSHOPS PROVIDED TO SCIAI	2
VIRGINIA SOUNDS ALARM ON LOOTING	2
WHAT MAKES CHICORA'S ARCHAEOLOGY PUBLIC?	2
MUSINGS OF THE DIRECTOR	3
CHICORA'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS	4

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- This is the second Boston area cemetery we have been retained to assess.
- Although most of our projects are in the Southeast, we have examined cemeteries as far west as Montana, New Mexico, and Arizona.
- Cemetery assessments are the best way to begin a preservation project.

CHICORA STAFF ATTENDS MEDICO-LEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION CLASS IN ST. LOUIS

There are only three death investigation training classes offered in the United States – and one of the most grueling is that offered by the St. Louis University School of Medicine. It is designed for investigators, law enforcement officers, forensic scientists and physicians that are involved in death investigations for medical examiners or coroners offices across the United States.

The week-long class was recently attended by Chicora staff Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker. Given the amount of forensic archaeology work conducted by Chicora, we wanted to have solid training in how other fields view death investigation. The week began with an

overview of the role of the death investigator, forensic odontology, forensic anthropology, toxicology, and varying identification techniques.

Over the next several days we received specialized training in gunshot wounds, explosion-related deaths, motor vehicle fatalities, suicide, head trauma, asphyxia deaths, cutting and stabbing deaths, fire and electrocution, and infant deaths. Also covered was detailed information on the process of death investigation from the perspec-



Group picture of the training class attendees. Mike and Debi are in the second row, far left.

tive of the medical examiner and homicide detective, forensic entomology, deaths in police custody, and appropriate notification of the next of kin. Also covered were issues relating to serial murders, mass

Continued, page 3

BOSTON AREA CEMETERY VISITED

Chicora's Director, Michael Trinkley, visited North Attleborough's small but interesting Mann Family Cemetery in September. Like family cemeteries here in the southeast, the graveyard consisted of only a small handful of graves. It also has been purely treated over the years. Unlike more local plots, however, the bulk of the

North Attleborough monuments are of slate.

We were retained by Barbara Donahue, a preservation consultant in West Newton, Massachusetts to assess the condition of the stones and provide long-term preservation recommendations. Our report will be part of her much more
Continued, page 3



WORKSHOPS PROVIDED TO SCIAI

Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker provided workshops to the August meeting of the South Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Identification (IAI). The IAI is the largest and oldest forensic organization in the United States, founded in 1915. Today there are over 6,800 members nationwide, with specialists in such areas as blood splatter, crime scene investigation, and Forensic Art.

The first workshop was Investigation of Cemetery Crimes. It provided an overview of the South Carolina laws relating to cemeteries, as well as how archaeologists and historians approach the investigation of a reputed cemetery. Topics included not only accidental discoveries and impact from development, but also crimes such as vandalism and desecration.

The second half-day workshop was an overview of techniques associated with determining the time since death, such as algor mortis, rigor mortis, and livor mortis, focusing on errors and problems inherent in these various techniques. Most of the workshop was devoted to decomposition – and determining the time since death on more difficult cases.



Example of burned human remains.

VIRGINIA SOUNDS ALARM ON LOOTING

With Confederate belt plates selling for \$12,000, looters have begun organizing “safaris.” In 2006, for example, “Diggin’ in Virginia” attracted more than 200 metal detector hauling relic collectors for a three-day hunt. The North-South Hunt has been held since at least 2002 and is already again scheduled for 2008. Each of the 200 participants are charged \$200 for the privilege of attending – resulting in the generation of \$40,000 a year!

For the past three years these looters of history have roamed Fort Powhatan on the James River during the Texas-based North-South Hunt, jockeying to see who could mine the most Revolutionary and Civil War relics. This is the same group that holds the Grand National Relic

Shootout and the Git R Dun Hunts.

“These digs are like reading a book, ripping the pages out as you read and setting them on fire,” said Kathleen Kilpatrick, director of Virginia’s Department of Historic Resources. “It’s an outrage.” Members of the Council of Virginia Archaeologists likewise protected the wanton destruction of history by writing state legislators and other Virginia officials.

The location of the hunt is particularly ironic since it was home to one of the few regiments of U.S. Colored Troops. On May 21, 1864, they, along with a Pennsylvania artillery regiment, repulsed a Confederate assault. Now, because of the widespread looting, much of their story has been destroyed. Unfortunately, the story can’t be

pieced together from purely historical sources and the artifacts that could have told the story have been dispersed far and wide, with many being sold and traded.

Other states have also been hard hit by thieves of time. For example the September 2007 Grand National Relic Shootout was held in a Louisiana cotton field.

Unfortunately neither the South Carolina Department of Archives and History or the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology have proposed legislation that would protect South Carolina’s fragile archaeological resources from this sort of wholesale slaughter.

“These digs are like reading a book, ripping the pages out as you read and setting them on fire.”



Artifacts like these are daily being sold on Ebay by relic collectors more interested in profiteering than preserving history.

MUSINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

There are a growing number of professionals beginning to realize that competitive bidding is not good for business. Besides the time spent doing an estimate for a job you may not get, there is an additional element that is equally important.

A competitive bid is all about cutting costs – shaving corners, material, labor – in order to get a project. The lower cost of the job typically involves lowering the quality

and workmanship. Is that a good way to do science? Can science even be done under such circumstances?

Competitive bidding rewards the lowest price and offers absolutely no advantage to good workmanship. Are archaeologists simply selling a commodity – like toilet paper – or are we selling a professional service?

There are a variety of attributes that are important and should be considered – qual-

ity research, clear specifications, good organization, the ability to provide price checks, responsiveness, and on-time performance. Cost is of course a consideration – it always has been and always will be. No one has unlimited funds to spend on archaeological or historical research. But there is much more – and it is increasingly important to understand these other dimensions to the science of compliance archaeology.



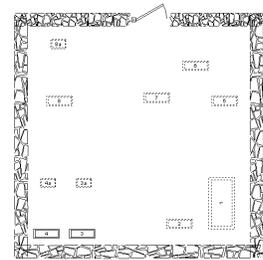
BOSTON CEMETERY . . . CONT. FROM PG. 1

comprehensive study of the cemetery, providing the Town of North Attleborough with the history of the property, as

well as techniques to make it more accessible to the general public.

Over the years the cemetery

was paved in concrete, resulting in many stones being broken. Its removal will be one of the first tasks.



Ⓐ Mann Family Cemetery

Scale: Not to scale

Sketch of the historic Mann Cemetery

MEDICO-LEGAL TRAINING . . . CONT. FROM PG. 1

casualties, and courtroom testimony.

The class is geared toward allowing death investigators to take the registry and board certification exams for The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI). In 2005, ABMDI became one of four professional boards in the nation to be accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board. Like other voluntary accreditation organizations, it is designed to recognize the highest level of skill and professionalism in death investi-

gation.

Among the 160 participants were several colleagues from South Carolina, including Charlie Boseman from the Anderson County Coroner's Office, Bucky Mock from the Clarendon County Coroner's Office, and Hayes Samuels, Jr. also from the Clarendon County Coroner's Office.

South Carolina is fortunate to have 24 Diplomats. In the Richland County Coroner's Office, for example, Christine Benson and Bill Stevens are both Registered Diplomats. There are also three ABMDI

Fellows in South Carolina: Bradd Bunce (Newberry), Bobbi Jo O'Neal (Charleston County Coroner's Office), and Rae H. Wooten (Charleston County Coroner's Office). You can find a list of these individuals at http://www.slu.edu/organizations/abmdi/index.phtml?page=registry_new.

Although we are not death investigators, the training provided by the class helps us more effectively interact with coroners and law enforcement across South Carolina.

If the law has made you a witness, remain a man of science. You have no victim to avenge, no guilty or innocent person to convict or save. You must bear testimony within the limits of science.
- P.C.H. Brouardel

We're on the web

www.chicora.org

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Chicora Foundation is public, non-profit research foundation with 25 years of experience. We operate under a broad heritage preservation umbrella, conducting archaeological and historical research, providing a broad range of public education programs, and offering technical preservation for museums, libraries, and archives.

Our web site, at www.chicora.org, provides a great deal of additional information about our work and includes lists of all available publications.

If you have additional questions, please contact us and we'll be happy to provide additional information.

P R E S E R V I N G T H E P A S T F O R T H E F U T U R E

CHICORA EDUCATION PROGRAMS

What do skeletons, Egyptians, prehistoric pottery, and okra all have in common?

They are all topics that Chicora's Education Coordinator, Debi Hacker, routinely covers in programs to South Carolina school kids.

At least twice a month — and often as much as once a week — Debi is on the road providing classes around South Carolina. Some of the favorites are "Prehistoric Pottery," where students learn how Indian pottery was made and decorated, and "The Mummy Returns," that describes life — and death —

among the Egyptian dynasties. Other classes explore the contributions that South Carolina's three cultures — Native Americans, African Americans, and Euro-Americans — have made to the foods we find on our tables.

The classes blend archaeology, history, and anthropology in a manner that is unique to Chicora. Our education programs are also unique in the materials that we bring to the class — skeletal remains, Egyptian oils and perfumes, exotic foods, and artifacts. All items that students get to touch and han-

dle. Many that they get to sample and take home.

If you haven't had a Chicora program in your school yet, call Debi at 803-787-6910 to learn about scheduling one soon.

Chicora believes that engaging kids in archaeology — making the history "come alive" — is the best way to stimulate minds and build a love for the past.

