



# The Captain's Log

## Fall 2021

PRESERVING NORTHEAST OHIO'S PAST, WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN

## Message from the President

by Eric Olson

Star date 99305.95...at least, that's the Star Trek date on which I write this message. Welcome to the first issue of *The Captain's Log*. The name comes from a play on our abbreviated organization name, SHiP. Despite existing for five years, this is our first newsletter for the organization.

I am hopeful for the future of the organization, as we continue to change and develop. Recently, we got a new logo design and website, courtesy of Triad Advertising. Our new website is "www.neoship.org" which is short for "northeast Ohio stewards of historical preservation." In fact, that logo which you see at the top of this page won a Silver "ADDY" from the American Advertising Awards. You can read about the winners, including our logo, here: <https://akronamericanadvertisingawards.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AAFA-Winners-2021-Reduced.pdf>.

I think this website design and logo will help us with our messaging, promotion, and overall mission. However, it is undeniable that this picture is not a photo, so that you can move it easily as needed to accompany a photo.

COVID-19 halted a lot of momentum we had from 2019. During that year, we completed three separate archaeology projects with the Summit County Historical Society, Munson Township Engineers, and the Conservancy for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Since March of 2020, we here at SHiP, which mostly means our small group of board members and a handful of volunteers, have been developing our online presence. Now that our website is live, we are focusing on making some of the projects and content we have been working on more accessible. This includes starting a newsletter! The hope is that we will run this newsletter biannually, once in the fall around Ohio Archaeology month (October) and once in the spring during Preservation month (May).

There are exciting things going on at SHiP, and I am happy to see them come to light in this first issue of our newsletter. This past summer, I taught a small group of students archaeological field methods at a site in Middleburg Heights. Doug Hayes, one of my

students this past summer, is providing some insight into that experience. Meanwhile, Cait Conley has been working on a much larger project, the small cemeteries project. This project was started back in 2020 and continues to develop and morph as we learn more about the cemeteries and burials just in Summit County. The goal was originally to map all burials within the county, but it has evolved since that time.

Additionally, there will be committee reports, though they will be sparse since the committees are new! You should consider joining one and helping us in our mission to preserve northeast Ohio's history, both written and unwritten!



Eric Olson, president of SHiP, at Smoky Mountain National Park, May 2021.

# Committee Reports

## Membership

By Rob Trattner, chair

The membership committee oversees recruiting and welcoming new shipmates. The committee is also responsible for reminding shipmates of their annual dues, updating contact information, and reviewing and developing social media posts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram). Please contact Rob Trattner (rtrattner@ttmlaw.com) if interested in serving.

## Publications

By Eric Olson, chair

The publications committee's first task, the first issue of *The Captain's Log* has finished.

Publications is responsible for general editing of reports, press releases, and the biannual newsletter *The Captain's Log*. Please contact Eric Olson if you are interested in serving on the committee (eols.eric@gmail.com).

## Historic Preservation

By Jerrad Lancaster, chair

The Historic Preservation committee is responsible for submitting Ohio Archaeological and Ohio Historical Inventory forms

related to SHiP projects. Additionally, the committee oversees bringing forward archaeology, historical, and other historic preservation projects to the board. The committee fields questions from the public about preservation practices, standards, laws, and regulations. Lastly, the committee is the primary point of contact for SHiP led National Register nominations.

If interested in serving, please contact Jerrad Lancaster (jlancaster@uakron.edu)

## Book Club

By Tim Matney

The idea is simple. A group of professional and enthusiast archaeologists choose a book covering some aspect of archaeology and get together one afternoon or evening to discuss, critique, praise, condemn, or otherwise explore the book's new ideas about the ancient world over a cup of coffee. We will keep some notes during the meeting and then write up a summary of our discussion for publication in the next newsletter. If you miss a meeting, you'll still get to know what everyone in the club thought about the book when the next newsletter comes out.

Our first book for this series was recommended to one of us (TM) by a student who is enrolled in UA's Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology class. The book is *Kindred: Neanderthal Life, Love, Death and Art* by Rebecca Wragg Sykes (2020, published by Bloombury Sigma in London). Neanderthals are an endlessly interesting subject and frequently appear in the popular press and news. Most of us now know that some percentage of our DNA can be traced back to Neanderthal predecessors, so that connection appears more relevant than ever.

What attracted me to the book was that the review I read noted that Sykes has attempted to weave scholarly content together with a humanist interest in understanding what individual Neanderthal lives and their societies were like. Many of us have read the dry bones technical reports and detailed scientific assessments of Neanderthal remains across Europe and Asia, so I'm looking forward to loosening up a bit and reading how Skyes can put a human face on the archaeological remains. If you wish to join the book club, please email Dr. Evi Gorogianni, chair (egorogianni@uakron.edu)

# Ohio Archaeology Month

October is Ohio Archaeology month, and as such we here at SHiP want to promote the various activities and events happening around the state.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out the Ohio History Connection's webpage for a complete list of Ohio Archaeology Events: <https://www.ohiohistory.org/participate/event-calendar/ohio-history-center/archaeology-month>

Go to the Akron-Kent AIA chapter's home page to register for their October virtual presentation:

<https://www.archaeological.org/event/hopewellians-in-a-non-hopewellian-world-the-rise-of-elaborate-ceremonialism-and-long-range-interaction-in-precontact-northern-ohio-2/>

## October 14

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

*Hopewellians in a Non-Hopewellian World: The Rise of Elaborate Ceremonialism and Long Range Interaction in Precontact Northern Ohio*

Presentation by Brian Redmond of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The presentation will be streamed on Teams, with a "watch-party" at Leigh Hall 208, Akron. For a Teams invitation or questions please email Dr. Evi Gorogianni (eg20@uakron.edu).

## October 15

9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

The Ohio Archaeological Council is hosting their fall

members meeting. The event is virtual and free. The conference will be live streamed on their YouTube channel

([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCihQNObsGAzCtTT\\_euQ1kA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCihQNObsGAzCtTT_euQ1kA)). There will be presentations on current archaeological research around Ohio. For a full list of the presenters and abstracts, visit their webpage: <https://www.ohioarchaeology.org/>.

## October 20

7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

*Tracking Down Ancient Earthworks with High-Tech Device*

Sure, you've likely heard of Serpent Mound and perhaps the Newark Earthworks, but what of the other 600+ ancient earthwork sites in Ohio...not to mention neighboring states? Join us as we use high-tech instruments like magnetometers, LiDAR, and drones to reveal the hidden foundations of earthen enclosures built by American Indians nearly 2000 years ago.

This event requires registration and is \$5 or free to Ohio History Connection Members. Register using the link under "more information."



# Student Spotlight: Lessons from the Field

by Doug Hayes

I consumed my first Archaeology lessons with a racing heart and unblinking eyes during childhood summer sleepovers at grandma's house. Although our stomachs were filled from a banquet of chocolate chip cookies and lemonade, my brother and I still had an appetite for adventure. It was on these evenings that we would retreat to the coolness of the back room and seek the excitement we yearned for in the deepest recesses of its VHS collection. And Grandma, knowing full well what we desired, would reach for the well-worn case that contained the lectures and exploits of our most esteemed mentor: Dr. Henry Walton Jones Jr., though we preferred to call him "Indiana".

As entertaining as Dr. Jones was, and regardless of how often I revisited his "lectures", I was always left with many questions about archaeological logistics. Try as I might to explore these questions, the pairing of my grandfather's metal detector and my hunger for adventure was insufficient

to reveal the knowledge I sought. As I grew, my questions lingered, but my maturing practicality placed them in the same category as the Indiana Jones films: entertaining, but merely fantasies from my childhood. It wasn't until my early thirties that I stumbled upon the Archaeology course offerings at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) and realized that perhaps this world was closer to me than I previously thought.

Thus, in the summer of 2021, through the Archaeological Field Methods at Tri-C led by Professor Eric Olson, I finally had the chance to resolve the question that had been simmering within me for over two decades:

***"Just where the heck do you dig anyway?"***

In other words, absent the ancient texts and convenient clues commonly made available to fictional

archaeologists by Hollywood scripts, how does one make an informed decision of where to dig? I am happy to report that, compared to Dr. Jones, Professor Olson proved to be much more informative (and far less ethically problematic) as a guide. While Indiana Jones dug and conducted what I will loosely call pedestrian surveys, I will describe three methods that may never find their way onto the silver screen: the Soil Probe, Electrical Resistivity, and Metal Detection. Professor Olson instructed my fellow students and me on each of these methods, which we then implemented at site 33 CU 536 to assist in deciding where to place our test units.

The first method I was trained to use was the soil probe. To execute this test, in each of the three 10x10 meter survey areas, one student operated the soil probe by plunging it into the ground at regular intervals until resistance from the soil was met. The intervals for measurement were set 50 cm apart on North-South lines. Each line was spaced one meter apart (East-West) from the next line. Upon its removal from the soil, the second student (the recorder) assisted the operator in measuring the depth to which the probe penetrated the soil. After finding this measurement, the



recorder entered the data in the space reserved for the measured coordinate in a Google Sheet which contained the master list for all coordinates to be measured. Three 10 meter x 10-meter grids were measured using this method. For each of the three areas probed, the operator remained constant within the area to control for potential differences in the force applied to the probe that would arise with using different operators within the same 10 x 10-meter grid. This method was used to identify differences in soil compaction that would provide hints for the location of subsurface features. During my rotation as a member of the soil probe team, I served as the recorder. While the more physically demanding role of the operator appealed to me, I enjoyed the sense of focus I experienced from ensuring accurate measurements and accurate recordings. To my delight, I had the opportunity to take on a more physically active role in the next technique I was trained on: electrical resistivity.

After completing the soil probe, I joined a fellow student to conduct the electrical resistivity survey of one of the 10 x 10-meter grids. Much like the soil probe, this approach had an



***Doug excavating a test unit at 33 CU 536***

operator and recorder working in tandem to take

measurements at regular intervals through the grid. The measurements for this exercise were taken at the same intervals as the soil probe (every 50 cm North-South, every one meter East-West). To take these measurements, the operator would plunge the two electrodes of the multimeter into the ground one meter apart from each other. Five seconds after the electrodes were inserted into the ground (as counted by the operator), the figure displayed by the multimeter was announced and recorded in the Google Sheet by the recorder. This data was intended to provide a picture of the

discrepancies of soil resistivity through the survey area. The

general principle behind this technique is that the resistivity

data would allow us to peek below the soil to see where anomalies exist and, by extension, where potential features could be.

At one point during the field experience, I was charged with completing the resistivity survey without a partner. While moving on all fours 50 centimeters at a time for approximately two hundred measurements may sound like an arduous task, it is one I enjoyed thoroughly. There was immense satisfaction in refining my technique after each





***Doug and fellow student Josh conducting the soil probe survey.***

measurement to pursue the most efficient method of moving, measuring, and recording. Measuring resistivity with a multimeter by oneself may not make the final cut of Indiana Jones's next archaeological escapade, but the combination of mental focus, physical movement, and the chase of maximum efficiency brought about a sense of excitement and flow beyond the possibility of what cinema can offer me.

The last method I learned to inform the placement of test units was the use of a metal detector. (It turns out, I may have been on to something with grandpa's metal detector after all!) To operate the metal detector, the operator would

raise and lower the metal detector coil three times while pressing its balance key. The resulting ground balance figure was then recorded in the Google Sheet by the recorder. This method was the least labor-intensive of the three and the area was surveyed quickly. This technique was used to infer differences in depth of the B horizon.

After the measurements in each of the three 10 by 10-meter grids were completed and the data recorded, Professor Olson performed data analysis. Using the data from each separate method, he found common points of interest, where each approach seemed to reflect an anomaly. Much like the healing power of

the Holy Grail in *The Last Crusade*, Professor Olson's data analysis is highly effective and yields great wonders, though the intricacies of its workings remain mysterious to me. From this analysis, the locations of five test units were selected for excavation.

Though our excavations this summer may not have revealed a legendary supernatural artifact, the Archaeological Field Methods course unearthed knowledge that I had sought for over twenty years. Furthermore, it provided me with the skills to continue this archaeological adventure that once seemed destined to remain a fantasy. So while I eagerly await the next Indiana Jones movie slated for release in 2022, I feel a surge of even greater anticipation for the next time I will be in the field, perhaps conducting an electrical resistivity survey.

## In the next issue...

May is historic preservation month, and that is when we hope to have the second issue of *The Captain's Log* completed. Our focus will be on student research, so if you or someone you know has been working on a project in class, tell them to send it to the editor!

We also hope to finalize the dates for the *Time Traveler Trivia Tour*, a bike tour of the towpath. We already made t-shirts, now we just need to hit the trails!

As always, for more information about becoming a Shipmate, the latest news, project summaries/reports, check out our fancy new webpage: [www.neoship.org](http://www.neoship.org).



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