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Current Research at Arkansas Archeological Survey's Henderson State University Research Station

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Current Research: Current Research at Arkansas Archeological Survey's Henderson State University Research Station

Mary Beth Trubitt and Chelsea Cinotto
Arkansas Archeological Survey

During 2017, the Arkansas Archeological Survey celebrated its 50th anniversary with a series of website postings (<http://archeology.uark.edu/who-we-are/50moments/>), a forum at the annual meeting of the Arkansas Archeological Society, and a symposium at the annual Southeastern Archaeological Conference in Tulsa. In addition, the Survey made strides in documenting and archiving its history and collections. The Survey's Henderson State University (HSU) Research Station in Arkadelphia continued to inventory curated artifact collections and scan older paper records and color slides. Trubitt and Cinotto, assisted by volunteers during weekly Archeology Lab Days, are updating the station's curated collections database with artifact counts and weights, and using identified diagnostic artifacts to revise temporal information in the AMASDA state site files database. We are also adding new information on novaculite projectile point distributions to the "Arkansas Novaculite"

website (<http://archeology.uark.edu/novaculite/index.html>) database (Figure 1). Ultimately, the novaculite distribution map will be expanded to create maps for each time period.

This attention to the station's curated collections inventory has sparked several new projects. We inventoried over 10,000 artifacts from 1973 testing at the Spanish Diggings site (3GA48) in Garland County, the largest of the Ouachita Mountains novaculite quarries (Etchieson and Trubitt 2013; Trubitt 2017a). Novaculite debris from this quarry can now be compared with excavated samples of chipping debris and in-process pieces from other quarries and habitation sites. Diagnostic dart points (Marshall and Gary, *var. Gary*) indicate use of the quarry at least during the Middle and Late Archaic and Early Woodland periods (ca. 6000-200 B.C.).

Cinotto researched the 1973 salvage excavation at the Caddo Hills site (3MN22) in Montgomery County.



Figure 1. Novaculite projectile points and chipped lithics from 3HS35 inventoried and added to the "Arkansas Novaculite" website database (ARASHSUD_N18776, photo by Chelsea Cinotto).



Figure 2. Braden Incised jar rim reconstructed from sherds found in the pit at the Caddo Hills site (3MN22) (ARASHSUD_N20019, photo by Chelsea Cinotto).

Nineteenth-century artifacts from the site were featured in an exhibit on HSU's campus. A pit feature with minimal disturbance and intact stratification contained quantities of ceramic sherds, lithic debris, and animal bone from Caddo period use of the site. Cinotto's detailed analysis of the ceramic sherd assemblage revealed that 86 percent of the sherds had shell temper and 30 percent were decorated. Based on the typed sherds (Figure 2), the pit dates to the late A.D. 1400s to 1500s. Ceramic deposition indicates the pit was filled with midden material. The decorated sherds had similarities with those found at the nearby Standridge site (3MN53), as well as with the ceramics at Dragover (3MN298), Adair (3GA1), and Poole (3GA3).

Trubitt completed re-analysis of 1973-1974 test excavations at the Hedges site (3HS60) in Hot Spring

County, a Caddo mound center in the Ouachita River valley. Diagnostic arrow points (Figure 3) and pottery, as well as a new AMS date (Trubitt 2012), indicates construction, use, and burning of a series of buildings adjacent to the main mound during the Late Caddo period, Social Hill phase (ca. A.D. 1500-1650). Trubitt is currently writing a book manuscript comparing Hedges with Hughes (3SA11), a contemporary mound site in the Saline River valley about 30 km to the northeast. Past excavation at Hughes also uncovered residues of burned structures next to the main mound. At both sites, the buildings were burned at termination, unlike ordinary houses. In contrast to burned structures buried with "clean" earth that resulted in mounds, these structures were covered with midden containing quantities of ceramic sherds, chipped stone debris, and pieces of



Figure 3. Bassett and Maud arrow points from Hedges (3HS60) excavations (ARASHSUD_N16998, photo by Mary Beth Trubitt).

animal bone. The book incorporates interpretations about timing and activity patterning at these ancestral Caddo communities.

Analysis and interpretation of the 2013-2014 Society Training Program excavations at the Dragover site (3MN298) continues, as we are using architecture, foodways, and material culture to interpret social identity and community interconnections in the Ouachita Mountains. Trubitt is incorporating Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis results of ceramic sherds from Dragover and from WPA excavations at Adair (3GA1) to characterize the local pottery in the upper Ouachita River drainage. A brief report on results of a survey conducted at the Edwards 1 site (3MN2831) as part of the 2013 Society Training Program was completed (Trubitt 2017b). Incorporating results from recent major excavations at Dragover and at Jones Mill (3HS28) as presented in numerous public talks, Trubitt is drafting a short book on Ouachita Mountains archeology intended for the Survey's popular series. The *What's for Supper?* book for children, created by members of the Ouachita Chapter of the Arkansas Archeological Society



Figure 4. Engraved bottle (unprovenienced) from the JEC Hodges Collection documented in 2017 (ARASHSUD_N23824, photo by Chelsea Cinotto).

based on excavations at Dragover, can now be viewed as a pdf on the Survey's website (<http://archeology.uark.edu/learn-discover/classroom-materials/>).

Trubitt and Cinotto, assisted by volunteers, are nearing the end of a long-term project to document pottery vessels in the Joint Educational Consortium's Hodges Collection, curated at Henderson State University (Figure 4). Detailed descriptions of some artifacts in the collection, excavated in the 1930s-1940s by Thomas and Charlotte Hodges and by Vere Huddleston, have been published in the *Caddo Archeology Journal* (Trubitt 2017c; Trubitt and Evans 2015), and additional publications are planned. In September 2017, the Joint Educational Consortium transferred a set of human remains and associated artifacts to the Arkansas Archeological Survey, where they will undergo the NAGPRA inventory and notification process at the Survey's Coordinating Office in Fayetteville under the direction of Ann Early and Jerome C. Rose.

New fieldwork at the Survey's HSU Research Station was limited in 2017. Responding to inquiries

by landowners and local agencies, we recorded new archeological sites in Garland, Hot Spring, and Saline counties. Trubitt and Cinotto advised the City of Hot Springs on upkeep, access, and preservation of the Pest House or City Cemetery (3GA1061). The location of a “pest house” or city quarantine facility constructed in response to the 1895 smallpox epidemic, this site was used as a cemetery for victims of that epidemic as well as for poor residents and unidentified visitors who died in the city during the twentieth century. In the spring of 2017, Trubitt, Cinotto, and 11 local volunteers photographed and mapped depressions indicating numerous unmarked graves, the few gravestones and funeral home markers, and plantings and historic objects across the five acre cemetery (Figure 5). A final report (Trubitt and Cinotto 2017) included recommendations for cemetery preservation.

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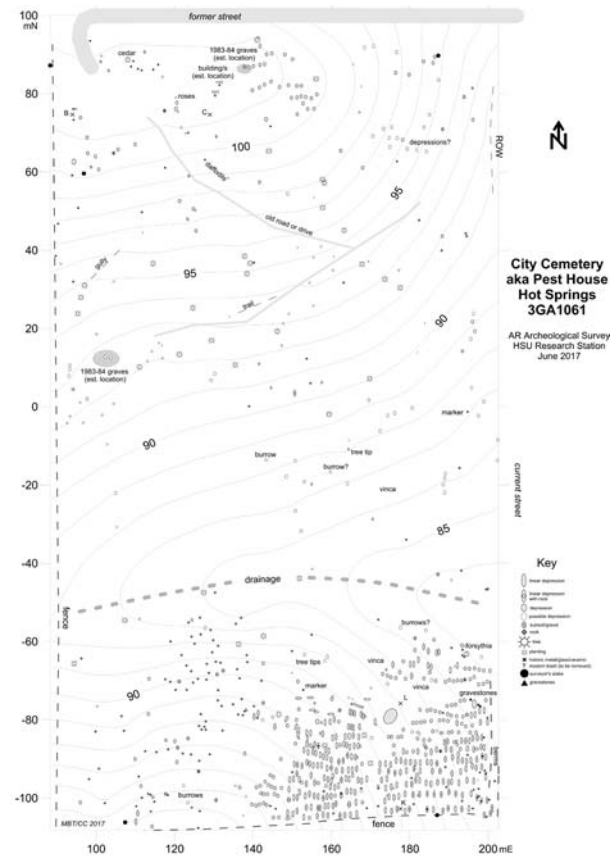


Figure 5. Topographic map of the Pest House Cemetery (3GA1061) showing grave depressions and other cultural features (map by Mary Beth Trubitt and Chelsea Cinotto).

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