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Don Carlos Homestead Archaeological Excavation

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Don Carlos Homestead Archaeological Excavation

Presented by Dr. Christine E. Boston, Assistant Professor of Anthropology & Sociology at Lincoln University & Michelle Brooks, Lincoln University B.A. 2018

What Is Archaeology?

Archaeology is the systematic and scientific study of past cultures through excavation, which is controlled and planned digging. Archaeologists want to understand what life was like for people in the past, so archaeologists excavate and seek out artifacts (objects made, manipulated, or handled by humans) that they can use to interpret and understand what life was like in the past.

This method is particularly useful in understanding people of the past when the historical record is missing or incomplete. Archaeological investigations can provide information to fill in gaps or provide the only evidence for the historical record.



Dr. Christine E. Boston excavating at the Don Carlos site.

How Are Archaeological Sites Discovered?

Archaeological sites can be found through several means, including accidents, local stories, and purposeful discovery. Once a potential archaeological site is found archaeologists perform the first step of their investigation: surveying the site. Surveying is the process of examining a site for any potential archaeological value. Surveys can include walking and closely looking at the Earth's surface or aerial examinations of an area.

The Don Carlos Homestead Site

The Don Carlos Homestead site is located in the northern part of Moniteau County and was occupied from 1828 to the 1950s by the Don Carlos family, whose heritage traces back to Spanish royalty. All that currently exists of the site includes remnants of the original cellar, a wagon, water pump, and cistern. The land the site occupies has been owned by only two families in its nearly 200 years of occupation, providing ideal circumstances to learn more about the original settler family.

The site was brought to Dr. Christine E. Boston's attention by a family member of the current property owner in Fall 2016. On May 6, 2017, Boston and two Lincoln University students, Tori Spencer and Suzanne Hendrickson, conducted a site survey, mapping and locating evidence of a house and farm structure. Excavations of the site began in June 2017 and are ongoing. Through excavations at the site an additional structure, a stable/blacksmithing workshop, has been located, providing additional details about the family's life and contributions to the region.



(Left to Right) Dr. Christine E. Boston, Tori Spencer, and Suzanne Hendrickson display surface collections from the Don Carlos site survey conducted May 6, 2017. Artifacts included tools and animal remains.

From Teenager's Pioneer Dream to Three-Generation Homestead

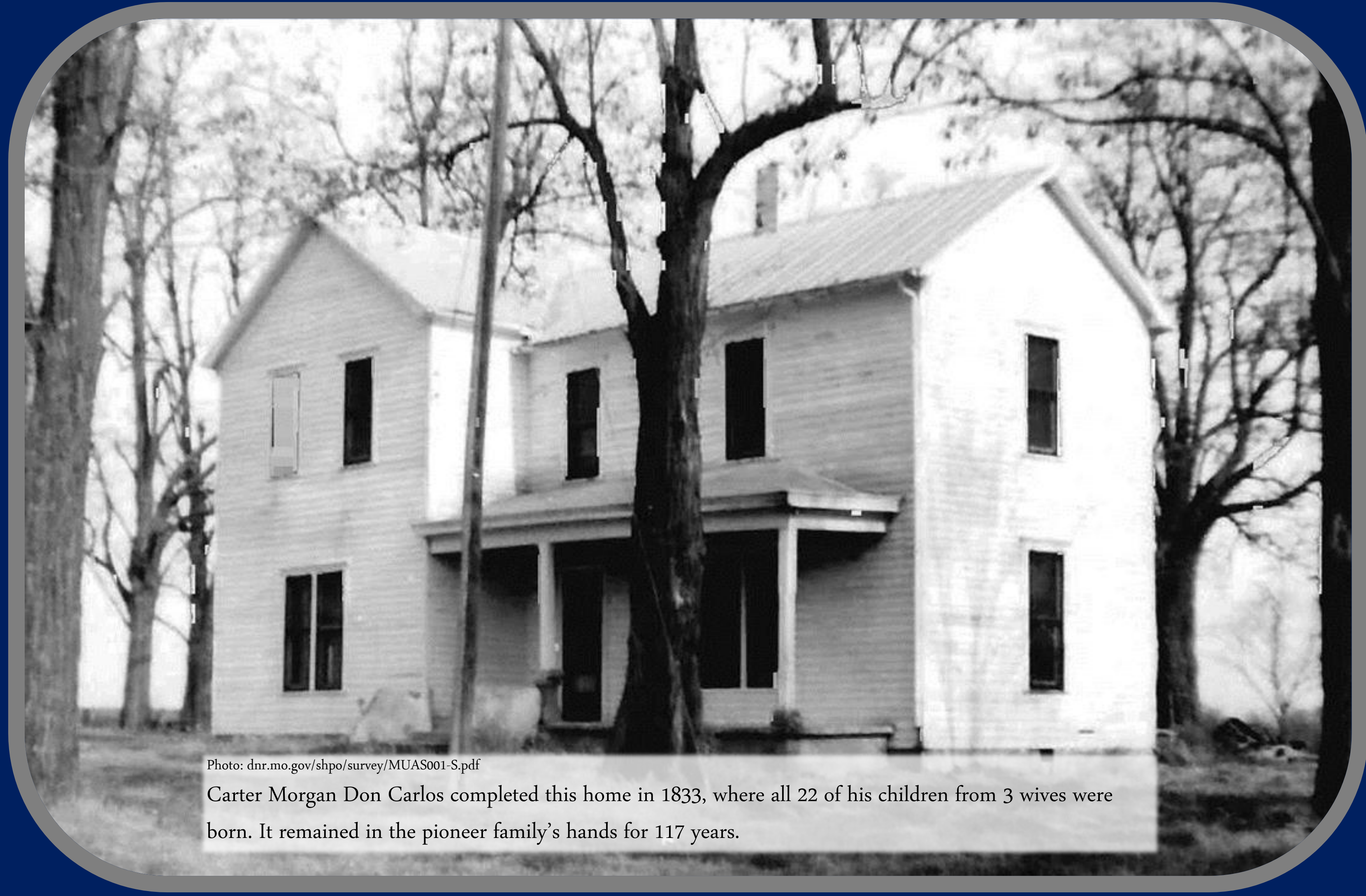


Photo: dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey/MUAS001-S.pdf
 Carter Morgan Don Carlos completed this home in 1833, where all 22 of his children from 3 wives were born. It remained in the pioneer family's hands for 117 years.

Timeline

- 1825** - Carter Morgan arrives in Rocheport
- 1828** - Carter Morgan establishes homestead in Moniteau County
- 1888** - Land passed to his wife Lavinia
- 1897** - Land passed to son William Don Carlos
- 1929** - Land passed to 3rd generation William Don Carlos
- 1942** - Sold to Ben and Lillian Meyer

Migration

Family lore says after losing his land and title at the conclusion of the War for Polish Succession (1739), the original Don Carlos immigrant, a **prince of Spain**, chose the New World over a family allowance.

The next few generations are unknown. The American Don Carlos story begins with horse dealer, **Robert Cole Don Carlos**, born 1770 in Patrick County, Virginia, who served in the War of 1812 as Andrew Jackson's private secretary.

Robert's eldest son **Carter Morgan** was born 1803 in Patrick County, Virginia, and reared in Tennessee. He brought his first wife, Talitha, from Kentucky to Missouri in 1825. They settled near what would be Prairie Home in 1828.

All of his 22 children were born on the Don Carlos homestead. Talitha bore him four children in their 11 years of marriage. He next married Boone County resident Fannie Hudson, who gave him 10 children before she died at age 34. Carter Morgan then married Fannie's sister Lavinia, who added eight more children to his legacy. At his death in 1888, 12 children, ages 42 to 14, were living. Carter Morgan is buried at Harris Cemetery, Pisgah.

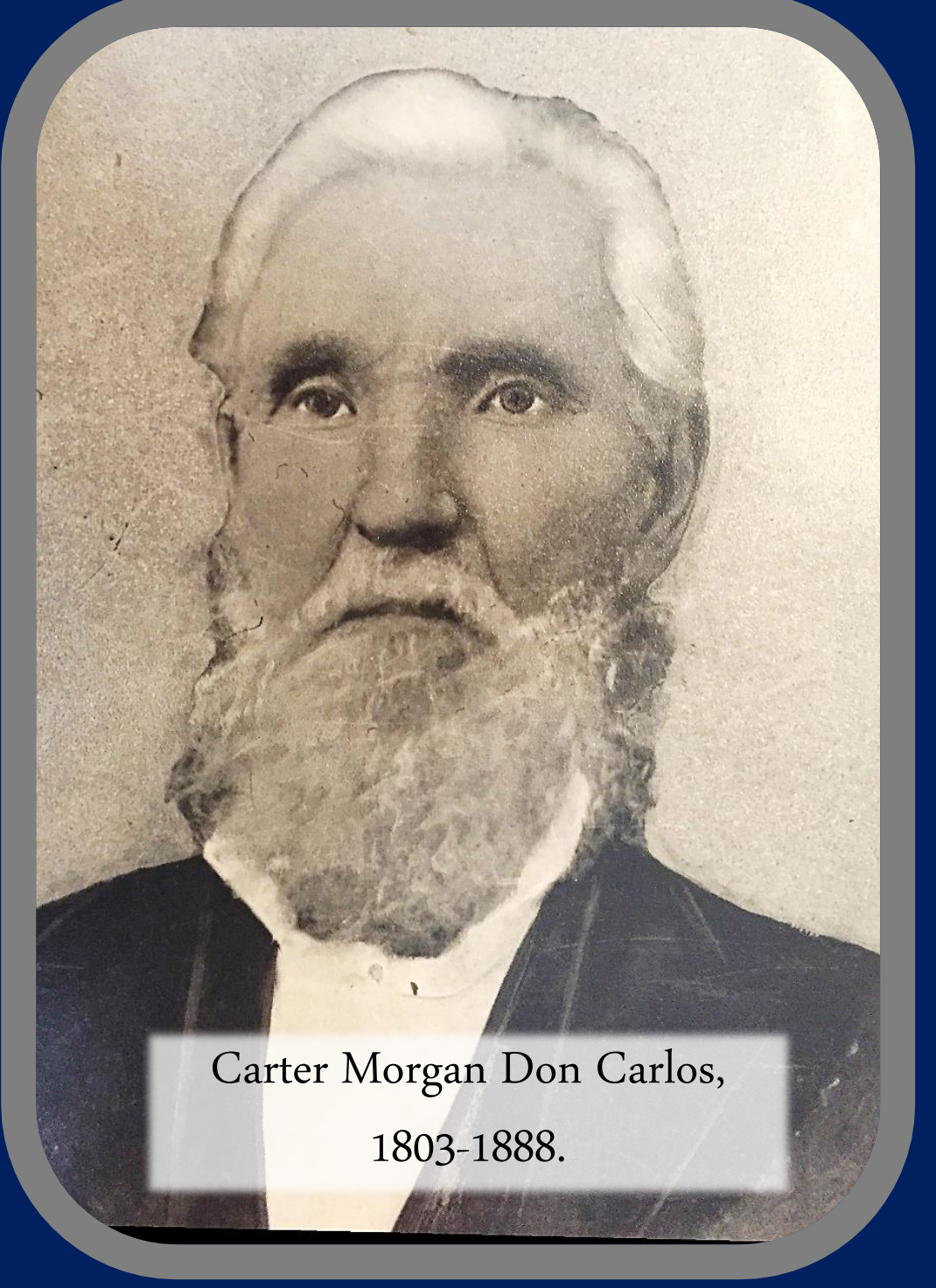
Robert, Carter Morgan's oldest son, mined for gold in Colorado and California, before returning as farmer and teacher in Moniteau County.

Hillard served as Cooper County assessor 1877-1882 and established the first drug store in Prairie Home.

Frank is credited with instigating the Prairie Home Fair. He also helped secure the first telephone line to the town.

Lum was the Moniteau County assessor in 1872 and sheriff/collector 1882-1886. He was president of the 22nd Moniteau County Fair.

William Carter, Carter Morgan's youngest son, was the first president of the Prairie Home Fair Board in 1915. He lived on the homestead until his death in 1929.



Carter Morgan Don Carlos,
1803-1888.

Influences

Carter Don Carlos was a founding member of the **California Lodge #183 AFAM** in 1859. He was part of a local group that spoke in Chicago to the **Chicago, Springfield and Hannibal Railroad** board of directors to ensure the rail line passed through Wolf's Point.

His progeny were mostly **Democrats, Baptists, Masons,** and **farmers.** There were some **teachers, politicians** and **explorers.**

What Archaeological Evidence Has Been Discovered & What Can It Tell Us About the Don Carlos Family?



Domestic Life

There are several artifacts that provide us insights into the domestic life of the Don Carlos family. Several pieces of ceramics, glass, cooking utensils, food storage, and clothing items have been recovered. Based on these items it appears that the Don Carlos family led a commonplace lifestyle. They ate off plainware dishes, used wax paper to store food items in their cellar, and enjoyed alcoholic beverages now and again based on the surface find of a wine bottle (provided by the property owner) and the presence of a pull-tab can and brown glass. They appear to have had a couple of potential conveniences, such as a stove, based on the discovery of a stove top and other related items.



Medicine

Quite a few medicine bottles were discovered at the site, demonstrating an importance on maintaining good health among the members of the Don Carlos family. While the contents of these bottles cannot be determined we can gain insights into the makers of the bottles and what may have been contained in them. For example, this bottle bears the Lyric bottle mark, which was manufactured in Alton, Illinois. These bottles were manufactured for the purpose of storing cough syrup and other generic medicines.



Stable, Blacksmith Workshop, or “Man Cave”?

One of the most surprising discoveries at the site was the unearthing of a potential stable or blacksmith workshop. While the property owner disclosed that the family did own an early model passenger motor vehicle they also had horses used for work and for travel. This conclusion is based on the discovery of three horseshoes, of varying sizes and types, and carriage bridle. These horses may have been used on the farm, as well as for the carriage service that ran in the area.

Also found in the same location were two bullet casings. These were manufactured between 1891-1911 by the Union Metallic Cartridge Company. These bullets were packed with paper, which surprisingly has survived in one casing!

A series of workshop tools were found, along with a plate and several fragments of glass. One of the more unique discoveries is a pipe stem fragment, meaning whomever occupied this space liked to smoke a pipe. Taken together this space seems to have been where men worked, hence the nickname the “Man Cave.” Additional excavations will assist with narrowing down the specific purpose of this space, which can provide insights into gendered labor roles that took place at the farm.

