

FEATURES

Anthropology field program lets students dig into summer school

By **CHRISTINA NIFONG**
Staff Writer

When most people talk of digging up the past, they are referring to an argument they had with their significant other.

But for five weeks each summer, UNC students dig up the past for class credit. As part of a field school loosely connected with the anthropology department, students use mason trowels, dentist picks and sieves instead of old memories, and discover a lost American Indian culture instead of dragging up events best left forgotten.

The field school this past summer was held in Hillsborough at a bend in the Eno River and taught by Vin Steponaitis, director of the archaeological research lab and anthropology professor. This site has been known to hold secrets of various Indian tribes since the 1920s, but it wasn't until 1983 that UNC revived the search for Indian cultures, one of them 11,000 years old.

"We provide a rare opportunity," said Steve Davis, an investigator of a Siouan Indian project under which this program falls. Davis assists in the instruction of 15 students per year in the methods of excavating an archaeological site.

During the session, the students patiently and methodically labor in hopes of finding artifacts that will shed light on the lives of the Indians that resided there.

The work in the past has uncovered four villages in the area dated after 1000 A.D., Davis said. The work of this past summer involved only the village of the Shakori tribe, one of many small tribes living in the Piedmont during European contact. The goal of the researchers was to understand the effect that European contact had on the Indians in this area. For the students, that meant meeting

at 7:15 a.m. and driving to the site, expecting to return around 4 p.m., said Anna Shugart, a senior student of the field school.

Davis explained that the students didn't begin the archaeological process from the very beginning. They were not involved with discovering the site, usually done by simply looking on the ground for artifacts at a chosen field. The artifacts found must be analyzed to determine the site's age and if it was permanent or temporary.

As the first step of excavation, the students marked off 10-foot squares and copied a drawing of their square to grid paper so they could document everything as they went along.

Documentation is important, Davis said. "Archaeological excavation is by definition a destructive process. You can only excavate a sight once."

The next step was to take soil augers, which are instruments punched into the soil, and read the column of soil they extracted. They were looking for dark soil instead of the normal orange clay to show them where the organically rich areas were. Those dark spots in the soil show where posts had been or are evidence of pits where the Indians threw trash, made fires and were buried. They punch the auger into the soil every two-and-one-half feet, giving them a 95 percent chance of hitting a dark spot.

The student's job began, after marking the site, by digging off the first layer of soil. Shugart said they went down about a foot, sifting through all the dirt they removed and saved everything that didn't go through the sifter. The type of artifacts they found included pieces of pottery, stone artifacts, axes, and smoking pipes.

Lydia McCormick, a senior anthropology major, said that it was really hot

and dirty, but that she liked it anyway. "It's like playing outside when you're a kid."

After removing that soil, the dark spots on the subsoil became apparent. The post placements were mapped out, showing the existence of a palisade, or a defensive wall around the village. It was made of vertical posts 10 to 12 feet high, usually logs or saplings with woven sticks with mud packed in between, Davis said. The dark places also show where houses stood within the palisade. The grid, once the hundreds of small circles have been plotted, actually looks like the outline of a community.

"We kept thinking the professors were making it up (the dark spots in the soil) because we couldn't see them. But by the end of the class we could see them clearly, too," McCormick said.

The next step was to excavate the pits. They usually held a lot of organic material that had been well-preserved by close contact or carbonization, Davis said. Students spent one or two days excavating each of these pits with dental picks, and all the soil from the pits was washed through screens with tiny holes. The water screening allowed tiny seeds to be found. They are later analyzed and their species are identified.

Burton Davis, a junior anthropology major, emphasized the meticulousness of this process. "It's not just throwing a shovel into the ground," he said.

The pits often turn up animal bones, charred corn cobs and other types of trash. The non-perishable remains of day-to-day life were what they were looking for, Davis said. They found a



UNC Anthropology Research Lab

Archaeology students break up Hillsborough dig site into 10-foot squares to grid and document

wicker basket and a tin-plated spoon in addition to the more commonly found scissors, knives, hoes, bells and bracelets. They also found a small miniature clay dog's head. These all give hints to the type of world that has been left behind.

"It's amazing to attempt to recreate subsistence and what life was like," Burton Davis said.

Steve Davis explained how archae-

ologists discover the habits of a society by the material goods that are found. Pottery interprets much to researchers, he said. Just on the Eno River they have found pottery with four or five different variations of design.

The particular way a tribe makes their pottery can identify the tribe and it can also explain if the society was matriarchal or patriarchal. A matriarchal society would have strong traditions

and pottery skills, and the pottery would have the same designs for many generations. In a patriarchal society, this tradition would be lost.

According to Burton Davis, the two-fold ability of learning the skills of excavation and the ways to relate what is found to history are the merits of the field study. "Once you've finished, you begin to kind of see history unfold in front of you."

Coaches

from page 1

think everyone else was, but I don't know."

Porter had little to do with the committee's deliberations and deferred the duties of leading the meetings to Samuel Neill, the other committee co-chairman, Garwood said.

Porter and Neill supported Garwood's statement, saying Neill filled the duties of chairman because it would be difficult to have two chairmen run a meeting.

Neill said he did not remember whether Porter announced his involve-

ment with Smith to the committee.

Samuel Poole, BOG chairman, said he saw no problem with Porter's involvement with Smith because Porter had made it clear from the outset that he represented coaches.

"As long as there is complete disclosure and there is no adversarial position, there is no problem with it," he said.

The committee was looking at policy, not at any particular coach's contract, which negates the possibility of conflict, he said.

MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Distinctive Master of Science program available for high-potential students with degrees in business, computer science, psychology, or related fields. Earn MS in one year, depending on background. Program emphasizes knowledge of system design tools, database design, networking, expert systems, and management of information resources.

Professor Elias Awad, Coordinator of the Master's MIS program, will be at Career Planning & Placement, Hanes Hall, Room 211 on October 18th from 8:30 - 12:00 noon to discuss the MIS program.

University of Virginia
McIntire School of Commerce



Daytona Rays



We've brought
Daytona to you.

1 visit \$5⁰⁰
5 visits \$22⁰⁰
10 visits \$32⁰⁰
1 month of \$40⁰⁰
unlimited visits with coupon
M-F 10 am-9 pm
Sat. 10 am-6 pm



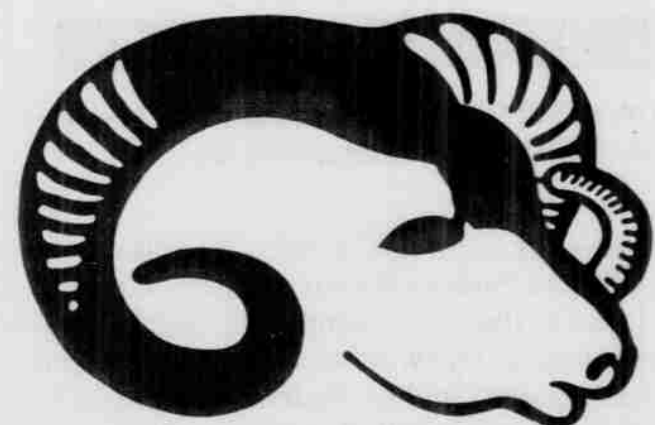
TANNING SALON

Willow Creek Shopping Center • 967-7071
At the intersection of Jones Ferry Road & Hwy. 54

Hey Tar Heels!
Beat Feet
into CAROLINA PRIDE

And Register to WIN A
SPECIALIZED® Mountain Bike . . .

FREE



CAROLINA PRIDE
sportswear
151 EAST FRANKLIN STREET
919-942-0127

- Drawing at noon October 31st
- Winner need not be present
- *HardRock*™ model

Hours
M & T — 9:30-6
W, Th, F & Sat — 9:30-8
Sun — 10-3

