

# Excavation Uncovers Laurinburg History

Deborah Kelly

A turn of the century downtown Laurinburg building provided historical information for a St. Andrews professor and a student intern. Margaret Houston, director of the Indian Museum of the Carolinas and professor of archeology at St. Andrews assisted by student Christina Marley, worked on artifacts discovered at the McDougald Building at Railroad and Main. Dr. Houston took care of the archeological aspect of the excavation and Marley's involvement included a four-week historical research of these artifacts.

The three-story brick Old Market Furniture building, site of the excavation, was built by Malcom Alexander McDougald around 1900 and later condemned in the the 1930s. Don McPherson, Laurinburg businessman, recently purchased the building and decided to restore it to its former condition. During the reconstruction, workers discovered in the foundation trench old revolvers, gun parts and pottery fragments. Mr. McPherson asked Dr. Houston to dig the test pit where she discovered old handmade bricks, fused glass and a medicine bottle. Charred timbers indicated that another building had burnt down and had been covered over by a layer of sand.

Dr. Houston and volunteers from the Indian Museum began the test pit on May 26, 1987 and finished four days later.

Houston described the excavation as a very dirty process due to the charred charcoal that was present in the test pit. "Amongst the layers of rubble that had fallen in we also found lots of upholsterers tacks, staples, coil springs from furniture, old bricks and square and round nails."

The archeologist said that the most enjoyable part for her during the dig was showing volunteers how to "find out history from dirt." A gun lock that they discovered had tied in with the construction

workers' findings.

Marley's research during winter term '88 indicated that the first building was in existence in 1898 and the McDougald building in 1904. This information left a gap of six years between the time the original building had burnt down and the new one built to replace it.

According to Dr. Houston, the original building's existence can be traced to an 1898 insurance map. "We tried putting together the pieces by taking facts from different sources. The sources, archeology and history, came together to show what happened on that particular site as far back as 1885. We wanted to complete the general idea of what was going on," said Marley.

Christina Marley also interviewed Dan Odom, local historian. Odom described a big fire in July 1902. He said the fire had started in a wooden building, present-day site of Jones Department store. The wind blew northeast and crossed the street burning its way down to the railroad tracks. The poorly organized Laurinburg fire department was powerless to stop it, he said.

Marley has so far found no written record of the fire. Dr. Houston says that suggested evidence indicates that the McDougald building probably burned down in a different blaze than the one described by Odom.

Marley is working on a chronology of the building for the display that will be shown at the grand opening of the newly restored building that includes a clothes store, sports shop and the new location of Mr. Jerry's hair salon. At this time a date has not been set for the grand opening.

"I never dealt with archeology before, but with the artifacts you can tell so much from them to get a better picture of what was going on at the time," Marley said.



The Old Market Furniture Building yielded a great many artifacts from Scotland County at the turn of the century. St. Andrews Professor Margaret Houston supervised the four-week excavation.

## Students to Live, Study in China

Nine St. Andrews students and two alumni departed for Beijing, China on Jan. 25 as the first participants in the college's China program.

Philip Leist-White, '85, and his wife Ann Leist-White, '87, are traveling with the nine students. "We will be on the campus of Beijing Foreign Language College," said Philip Leist-White.

The students will spend afternoons studying Chinese language from 8:30 to 11:30 every morning and will spend afternoons studying Chinese culture. Each student will also do a project related to their major.

Philip and Ann will supervise the culture classes and projects. "Just the cultural exchange is going to be important for these students," Leist-White said. "it's important for Americans to understand China."

Leist-White has done extensive overseas traveling during his student years at St. Andrews. He has spent time at Brunenburg, Italy; Greece and France.

"One of the best thing about St. Andrews students going overseas is that it ties in with the SAGE program so well," he

said. "Sometimes all the things you study about foreign cultures in the classroom don't come together until you're placed in those cultures."

"In a way it's a capstone to SAGE."

The St. Andrews students will live in a separate building from the rest of the campus. Leist-White said that it is not really feasible to room American students with Chinese students this early in the program.

"Conversation partners will be set up, so that each students will have at least some exposure to a Chinese student on a personal day-to-day basis," Leist-White said.

The students will also make a five-day trip to Xian. And every Tuesday afternoon there will be visits with Chinese people in factories and neighborhoods. On Saturdays the group will visit sites within a one-day drive. Those sites include the Great Wall of China and the Ming Tombs.

"This is really going to be a great experience for everyone involved," Leist-White said.

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