

BURKE ARCHAEOLOGY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2003

Kids Dig Courtland Place

Fifty-five fourth and fifth grade students from John Muir Elementary School had a blast discovering the history of their neighborhood in south Seattle this fall.



John Muir students measure artifact location with the help of UW Graduate Student Poorvee Vyas

Burke Archaeology Curator Peter Lape, Archaeology Outreach Coordinator Robin Goldberg, UW students and volunteers, the Rainier Valley Historical Society and artist and UW lecturer Don Fels conducted an archaeological dig at Courtland Place and S. Charlestown Street, in Seattle's Rainier Valley neighborhood. For four days, students from nearby Muir Elementary each took part in every aspect of the dig, from recovering artifacts to cataloging and analyzing them. Neigh-

borhood residents and the general public were invited to participate as well.

We discovered that the site was an informal dump from before the turn of the century through the

1930s. Students particularly enjoyed finding a porcelain doorknob, plates with decorated borders and medicine bottles. Artifacts from the excavation are included in an exhibit designed by the kids at the Rainier Valley Historical Society, and Don Fels will incorporate their stories into a landscaped stairway hillclimb leading from the dig site up to the Mount Baker neighborhood.

New Off-Site Facility Opens

In December, the Burke Museum opened a new curation space at a secure off-site location. Archaeology staff moved more than 1000 boxes and a canoe excavated from the banks of the Green River in the 1960s from our old warehouse and the on-campus building to the new space. With the relocation of this material, the Archaeology Department gained much needed office and research space at the museum, facilitating access to collections by researchers, and providing space to accept large new collections.

Vashon Shell Midden Book

During the summer of 1996, Curator Dr. Julie Stein (now Divisional Dean of Research in the College of Arts & Sciences) led a unique archaeological investigation of a shell midden on Vashon Island. Burton Acres appeared to be an advantageous spot for fishing and shellfishing, but little was known about the contents of the site or how much of the site actually remained.

After a winter storm in 1995 caused severe erosion of part of the site, King County's Historic Preservation Program contacted Stein to investigate. Through a collaborative effort with King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Vashon Park District, and McMurray Middle School, along with the help of many private individuals, Stein and the Burke's Archaeology Department staff developed a

two-week-long public project that would ultimately result in 375 volunteers experiencing archaeology. The public was invited to share in the discovery process by following archaeological protocol from excavation to artifact cataloging. This publication continues that discovery process, presenting and explaining the data gleaned from the site and offering interpretations about how people used the site.

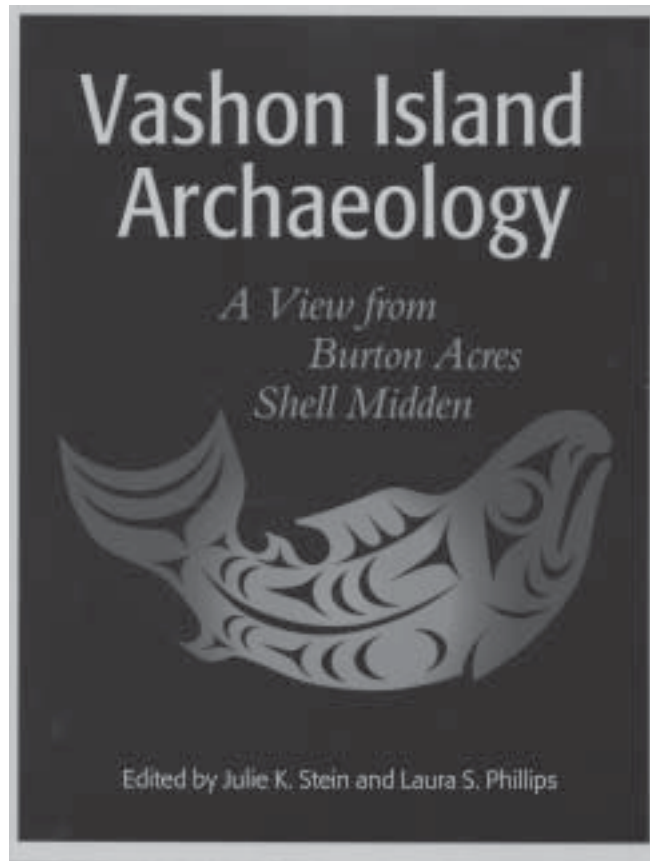
In keeping with the collaborative nature of the project, multiple perspectives on the history of Burton Acres Shell Midden are included. This publication includes a chapter written by Judy Wright, a Puyallup tribal member, and other authors include historian, Llyn De Danaan, several

UW graduate students and Burke Archaeology Collections Manager Laura Phillips. The multiple viewpoints of the authors were integral to the success of the project and resulted in a multifaceted history of the site.

This book describes step-by-step guidelines used to develop the public investigation and can be used

by other archaeologists who wish to undertake similar projects. It also gives insight about the careful and extensive planning required for such an endeavor. By participating in the discovery of their local history, the community gained a better understanding of the importance of stewardship, preservation and interpretation of the cultural resources of Puget Sound.

This anxiously-awaited book is now available at the Burke Museum Store, the University Bookstore, as well as other local bookstores.



New Work on Government Collections

Washington State Parks and Recreation recently joined forces with the Archaeology Department to rehouse several state park collections currently held at the Burke Museum. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Army Corps of Engineers—Portland District, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage, Alaska, are also entrusting the Archaeology Department with curation of important regional collections. We are excited by the continued development of the Archaeology Department as a leader in research and curation services.

New Mummy Exhibit

Work is nearly completed on the revival of the Burke's Egyptian mummy and coffin. Snow and Company has completed the construction of a new storage and exhibition case system. This case includes cutting-edge technology in microclimate control and monitoring, and a fiber-optic lighting system. It will help preserve these objects of great antiquity from deterioration in Seattle's climate.



3,000 year old Egyptian coffin in new state-of-the-art case

Conservator Linda Roundhill has completed work on the mummy coffin, and is now finishing cleaning and stabilizing of the cartonnage and the mummy herself. We have learned a lot about the mummy and coffin in the three years since this conservation project began, and plan to show it all off in a new exhibit, scheduled to open in October 2003. The exhibit, ***Reverent Remembrance: Honoring the Dead***, will show how the dead are remembered in four cultures, from present day American Halloween (and its ancient Roman and Celtic roots) to Mexico's Day of the Dead, Indonesian traditions and ancient Egypt.

For a sneak preview of the new mummy case, don't miss the Burke's Behind-the-Scenes Night, coming up on April 9.

Archaeology Department gets IESUS Grant for Diabetes Project

The Institute for Ethnic Studies in the US (IESUS), based at the University of Washington, has awarded a planning grant to curator Peter Lape to begin work on our Puget Sound Traditional Diet and Diabetes project in May 2003. The grant will

allow Lape and Assistant Collections Manager Megan Noble to bring together an interdisciplinary team, including Puget Sound Native Americans, archaeologists, and health professionals, to investigate the links between diet and type II ("adult onset") diabetes in Puget Sound Native American Communities. Currently, these communities have nearly twice the rate of type II diabetes than other groups, and higher rates of childhood diagnosis. We plan to use archaeological data to investigate long term changes in diet, and also use archaeology as an educational

tool to teach kids about healthy eating.

Cedar River Watershed Teams Up with the Burke

Starting next fall, middle school students will be working at actual archaeological sites with staff from the Burke, the Cedar River Watershed Education Center and other collaborators to learn about the rich cultural heritage of the Cedar River Watershed. The protected watershed, which provides over 70% of the drinking water to the Seattle area and spans over 90,000 acres, is home to prehistoric and historic archaeological sites with evidence of 9,400 years of human use. We hope the project will generate information relating to the archaeological sites never before available to the general public and citizens of King County.

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Grants:

Institute of Ethnic Studies in the US (Puget Sound Traditional Diet and Diabetes Planning Project)

King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission (Courtland Place Archaeology Dig, with Rainier Valley Historical Society, which was also supported by the Ferguson Foundation; Vashon Island Archaeological Project report publication)



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