

J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology
IVOR NOËL HUMME 1991



The Society for Historical Archaeology awarded the 1991 J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology to Ivor Noël Hume at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Richmond, Virginia.

“Noël” has had a long and distinguished career. He was born in London in 1927 and educated at Framlingham College, Suffolk, and St. Lawrence College, Kent. After serving in the Indian Army in 1944, from 1949–1957 he was the archaeologist responsible for the recovery of antiquities for the Guidhall Museum, as post-war London was rebuilt. At a time when salvage programs focused on Romano-British remains, Noël began to develop a keen interest and unique expertise in the artifacts from the “layers above,” that is, objects dating from the post-medieval years that most everyone else in

England ignored. It was that special curatorial knowledge combined with his years of experience with British stratigraphic field methods that led the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation at Williamsburg, Virginia, to consult with him and where he soon became Chief Archaeologist (1957–1964). Noël had also become known for a special ability to communicate the discoveries and value of archaeology to the public, having published *Archaeology in Britain* (1953) and *Great Moments in Archaeology* (1957).

His long-standing and outstanding career at Colonial Williamsburg almost spanned four decades during which time he was also named Director of Archaeology, 1964–1983; Resident archaeologist, 1973–1986; and Foundation archaeologist, 1986–1988 (retired). In fact, his retirement is in name only as he has been currently engaged as Winthrop Rockefeller Archaeological Museum curator, 1988–1992. Historical and intense field research of the Anthony Hay shop, Wetherburn's Tavern, and the Public Hospital in Williamsburg stand out as examples of how well the two disciplines of history and archaeology can guide restoration and reconstruction work in a museum setting. It was also under the direction of Noël Hume that field studies of rural life at Carter's Grove turned up 17th-century Martin's Hundred which—owing to Noël's writing, public speaking and media talents, and the National Geographic Society—practically became another American household word. His publication of *Martin's Hundred* (1982) was, in fact, only the latest of a series of significant publications in historical archaeology which included: *Here Lies Virginia* (1963), *Historical Archaeology* (1975), *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* (1970), and *Early English Delftware from London and Virginia* (1977). Indeed, the reference work *Guide to Artifacts* has become a bible for historical archaeologists working on British-American sites worldwide.

Noël Hume is also a Research Fellow for the Smithsonian Institution, and he received honorary degrees in Humane Letters from the University of Pennsylvania in 1976 and the College of William and Mary in 1983. He has always been active in the field of historic preservation, serving on Boards of Directors of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and the Institute of Early American History and Culture.

But even beyond his extraordinarily successful career and many accomplishments in the field, it is especially fitting that the Society for Historical Archaeology's 1991 J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology go to Noël; he was one of the leading forces in organizing the SHA in Dallas in 1967 and, in fact, first coined the term "Historical Archaeology," insisting on the "al" in "historical" and the "a" in "archaeology." If J. C. Harrington is the "father" of Historical Archaeology as Noël himself has often remarked, then Ivor Noël Hume surely must be its "godfather".

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