

John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology



Timothy E. Baumann 2006

At our 2006 Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, held at Sacramento, California, The Society for Historical Archaeology took great pleasure in presenting the John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology to Timothy E. Baumann. That coveted mark of distinction, named in honor of SHA's first president, is meant to recognize exceptional achievements by our colleagues at the outset of their professional lives. Tim Baumann is indeed a truly outstanding young scholar who has distinguished himself early in his promising career,

making him an especially deserving candidate for this extraordinary recognition.

Tim first took an interest in archaeology as a boy in St. Charles, Missouri, and later would begin pursuit of a career in the discipline as an undergraduate at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he earned a BA in anthropology in 1991. He then advanced to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he received both a Museum Studies Certificate (1994) and a Public History Certificate (1995) while working on his MS in

anthropology (1995). He moved south to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville for his doctorate, completing his PhD in 2001.

Tim's innovative doctoral study focused on the small town of Arrow Rock in his native Missouri and particularly on archaeological evidence related to the population of free blacks who settled there in the latter half of the 19th century. His dissertation, "'Because That's Where My Roots Are': Searching for Patterns of African-American Ethnicity in Arrow Rock, Missouri" (Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, 2001), greatly expanded upon the general theme of his earlier master's thesis, "Missouri's Neglected History: Establishing a Framework for African-American Archaeology" (Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, 1995). Moreover, this work stimulated an abiding interest in the history and archaeology of that rural community in Central Missouri, which in turn became the foundation for a long-term program of directed research that is now entering its second decade.

Joining the faculty at University of Missouri-St. Louis as a lecturer in 1998, he became an assistant professor of anthropology upon completion of his doctorate three years later. Throughout his years at UM-St. Louis, Tim has conducted an active program of archaeological field investigations in Arrow Rock, exploring its post-Civil War African American community through the material remains of former households, a Masonic lodge, an African Methodist Episcopal church, a school, a restaurant, and a tavern. Not only does this research hold great potential to contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the African American experience following Emancipation, it is perhaps equally important for the unique opportunities this research has provided for public outreach and community involvement. An impressive list of scholarly publications and conference presentations, as well as numerous invited lectures before various avocational groups, provides ample evidence that Tim excels at interpreting the importance of his research to his professional colleagues and to the public at large. Moreover, he has had great success in engaging the descendent population of African Americans from Arrow Rock who still maintain strong ties to the community, no matter where they might currently reside.

This is not to say that Tim has focused exclusively on Arrow Rock during his tenure at UM-St. Louis. To the contrary, he has conducted important comparative field research in recent years at the Oak Grove and Prairie Park plantations, two earlier sites within a few miles of Arrow Rock where the African American occupants were still held in slavery. Closer to home, Tim has also been involved with excavations in Old North St. Louis, a National Register Historic District, as part of a neighborhood revitalization project. Aside from rehabilitating the 19th-century built environment, a major goal of that collaborative project has been to integrate the neighborhood's recent history with its more remote past and involve the community in the process of interpreting that history.

Tim's efforts at public outreach are not limited to involving the Arrow Rock and Old North St. Louis communities in his field research and giving informative talks to interested laypersons. He hosts a website on archaeology and has garnered excellent coverage of his research and student training programs in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, the *Kansas City Star*, and other regional newspapers. Tim also has been the subject of numerous local television interviews and appears as an occasional guest on the UM-St. Louis National Public Radio station for live listener call-in programs that feature topical discussions of archaeology and historic preservation in the St. Louis area, including one that was broadcast in conjunction with the opening of the Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology held at St. Louis in 2004.

It is worth noting here that Tim Baumann served most capably as chair of the Terrestrial Program for the 2004 SHA Conference and volunteered to organize and chair the well-received Public Session at those meetings. Thanks to the breadth of his familiarity with historical archaeology in Missouri (he co-edited a volume devoted to that subject for the *Missouri Archaeologist* in 2005), Tim was able to gather a host of researchers working on a wide range of projects in the state, ensuring broad popular appeal. A highlight of the conference, the session was very well attended, despite a National Football League play-off game being held elsewhere in the city on that same afternoon.

As an influential participant in many state and regional organizations, Tim has proved to be a capable advocate for the interests of historical archaeology and has enthusiastically championed its accomplishments. He has been extremely active in the Missouri Archaeological Society and the Missouri Association of Professional Archaeologists, which has helped refocus statewide attention on historical archaeology among amateurs and professionals alike. He regularly lends his talents to organizing the Missouri Archaeology Month activities each year, playing a significant part in having historical archaeology become the focus of statewide observances in 1999. Tim also has given service to the Midwest Archaeological Conference, serving as an organizer of its joint meeting with the Southeast Archaeological Conference at St. Louis in the fall of 2004 and now as treasurer for MAC.

In spite of his relative youth, or perhaps because of the great energy it grants him, I believe it is no exaggeration to say that Tim Baumann is the leading practitioner of historical archaeology in Missouri today. The tremendous ability and remarkable dedication that he brings to his work has breathed new life into a long-dormant professional interest in historical archaeology throughout that state, earning him the respect of colleagues well beyond Missouri's borders. He has also proven himself an important figure in the vital effort to inform and connect with the public, raising the visibility of historical archaeology in the eyes of average citizens throughout his home state. For these reasons and more, Timothy E. Baumann is a worthy recipient of the prestigious John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology.

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