

UTK Archaeological Field School at Coan Hall, May 30-June 30, 2019

The 2019 summer field school in historical archaeology will be held at 44NB11 (known as Coan Hall) near Heathsville in Northumberland County, Virginia. The site is located on a tributary to the Potomac River on Virginia's Northern Neck. The project explores the landscape of colonial encounters by documenting and interpreting cultural and environmental changes, and studying them in the context of broader regional changes and the wider Atlantic world.



Drone photo of mansion house at end of 2017 field school.



Excavating 17th- and 18th-century features, 2018.

Site and Project History

Algonquian-speaking Indians occupied the area in the 16th and 17th centuries. John Mottrom, an early English settler on the Potomac's south bank, acquired the property from their leader and established a household at Coan Hall sometime before 1644. The property quickly became the center of the Chicacoan community who took their name from the principal Indian village. Mottrom was elected to the House of Burgesses, and his property became the governmental and religious seat for the first English county on the Northern Neck.

Mottrom was one of the earliest planters in the Potomac Valley to use enslaved African labor. Elizabeth Key, who he attempted to enslave, contested her status in court and won her freedom following his death in 1655. Other Africans also lived in Mottrom's household.

Subsequent to his death, his son and grandson developed the property, expanded the labor force, and became prosperous planters and local leaders.

Excavations from 2011 to 2018 exposed portions of the 21.5 ft. x 54 ft. manor house, which was among the largest houses in Virginia at the time it was built and occupied. The house consists of a minimum of two rooms on either side of a masonry H-shaped chimney. The house was earthfast (built with posts set directly into the ground), repaired with new posts, and underpinned with brick. A large brick-and-stone-lined basement extends beneath the western room, and was accessed via a bulkhead entrance on the building's west gable end.



Basement floor, looking west, 2017.

Archaeological and geophysical results from previous field seasons hint at a complex landscape that developed across the six acres that surround the house. Features associated with probable outbuildings have been located north of the house. Evidence of fence lines, a palisade, and the foundations of the 18th-century mansion that replaced Mottrom's house were found during excavations and via the 2015-2018 geophysical survey of the site.



Ground penetrating radar survey, 2018.



Excavating mid-17th-century pits, 2018.

2019 Goals

In 2019, excavations will continue to explore the 17th-century landscape and investigate a deposit that contains numerous white ball clay tobacco pipes, animal bones, and other domestic artifacts located some distance from the manor house. It may be associated with a plantation store run by Mr. Hawkins in the mid-17th century.

Course Objectives

Students will gain hands-on experience in archaeological field methods, including identifying and mapping cultural and natural features, classifying and describing sediments, identifying and recording changes in stratigraphy, total station and hand mapping, geophysical survey, and site photography. Students will also learn about 17th - and 18th-century New and Old World artifacts, and sampling and processing protocols for the recovery of plant and animal remains.



17th-century belly bowl pipe.

Class will meet Mondays-Fridays from 8am to 4:30 pm with some evening discussions or lectures. One field trip to an archaeological site in the region is also planned. Weekends are free to explore the Northern Neck region, visit Washington, DC or Richmond, VA, or just relax at the house.



Butchered pig in the fill of a pit, 2018.

Dates, Credits, Costs and Logistics

Dates: May 30-June 30, 2019
(1st summer session)

Credits:

Students can elect to earn 3 to 6 credits. Participants should register for Anth 430 (CRN 301) or receive research-intensive credit by enrolling in 430R. Graduate students should register for Anth 530 (CRN 301).

Participants must be enrolled as UT students to take this course. Prospective students who are not currently enrolled at UT can participate by following the instructions under "Visiting Students" at the UTK "Transient admission" (graduate students).



Excavations at 44NB11, 2018.

Estimated cost **per credit hour** (tuition and fees):

	<i>In-State</i>	<i>Out of State</i>
Undergraduate*	\$463.00	\$1235.00
Graduate*	\$718.00	\$1742.00

*based on current posted fees by admission year. Consult onestop.utk.edu for 2019 summer fees.

To estimate total costs, multiply cost per credit hours by number of credits desired.



Lodgings at Coan Wharf.

Housing is provided for participants at Coan Wharf, a few miles from the archaeological site. Students and staff share a renovated farmhouse with modern facilities and access to the Coan River for swimming and boating.

For summer 2019, students will pay \$500 for housing. Students should also budget for travel to and from Heathsville, food, and incidental expenses during the summer session.



Field school participants, 2018.

To Apply

Please contact Dr. Barbara Heath (974-1098; bheath2@utk.edu) and provide the following information.

- Personal information: full name, home address, phone number and email address.
- One page letter stating your reasons for participating in this class and reviewing any prior archaeological experience (although prior experience is not necessary to participate).

Application deadline is April 12, 2019.



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