TROWEL AND PEN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KENTUCKY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Volume 7 2002

KEEPING THE FAITH: EXCAVATIONS AT OLD ST. THOMAS

In 1808, Pope Pius VII appointed four new American bishops in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Bardstown, Kentucky! After three years of travel and preparation, Bardstown's new bishop, Bishop Flaget, and his assistant, Father David, arrived in Kentucky. They settled in 1811 on Howard's Plantation at Poplar Creek, not far outside of Bardstown. At this place, in 1816, they would build St. Thomas Church. It is now the oldest standing brick church in Kentucky.

St. Thomas holds an important place in Kentucky history. It was the site of the first seminary west of the Appalachians. It was here that the Society of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth was established in 1812. But the buildings aren't the only important features at St. Thomas. Archaeological deposits surround the structures. These deposits hold information about Kentucky's pioneers: how they immigrated to the state and how they built their homes and schools. From the artifacts they left behind, we can learn how these early Kentucky Catholics contributed to our way of life.

KAS archaeologists recovered profoundly personal items at St. Thomas, like these two brass crucifixes.

Sophomores from Bethlehem High School in Bardstown, Kentucky assisted KAS archaeologists in their research.

Renovations planned at St. Thomas presented Kentucky Archaeological Survey (KAS) archaeologists with a chance to learn more about the site and its inhabitants. In particular, we were interested in recovering artifacts and looking for the remains of historic structures. In 1825, 23 buildings stood at St. Thomas. Today, only the brick church remains.

Our research began in August 2001. We focused our excavations on the area around St. Thomas Church, Howard's c.1790 log house, and the Second Nazareth site where the sisters lived and taught school. We discovered the large seminary basement; a possible

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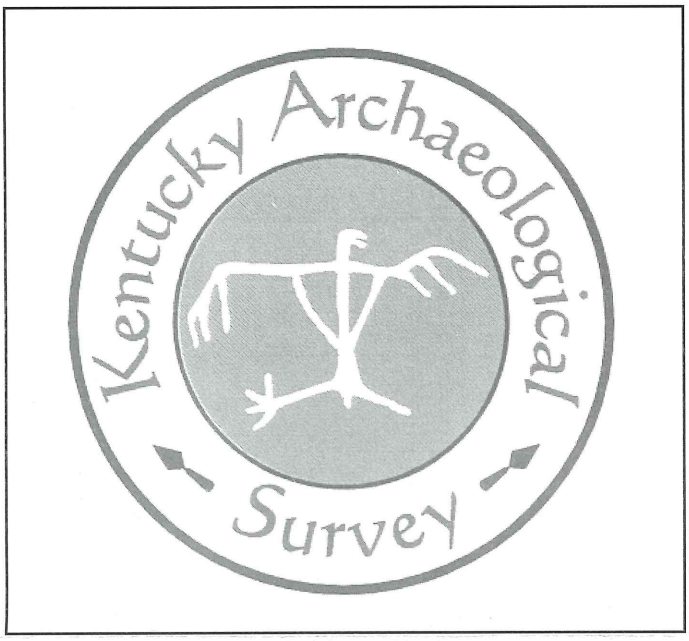
DID YOU KNOW...

that the Kentucky Archaeological Survey now has a logo? It features a white raptorial bird (like an eagle, falcon, or hawk) with widespread wings on a blue background. The encircling border contains the words *Kentucky Archaeological Survey* offset by two trowels.



Our new logo symbolizes the Survey's mission.

The colors, Wildcat blue, white, and black, were chosen with a nod to the institution that houses most of the Survey's offices and labs: the University of Kentucky.

The raptorial bird is a part of the Burnt Ridge Petroglyph. Archaeologists discovered this prehistoric Kentucky rock art site in a small sandstone rockshelter in 1987. Like many of Kentucky's other rock art sites, the Burnt Ridge Petroglyph was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1989.

We selected the Burnt Ridge Petroglyph's raptoria bird as the central figure in our logo for three reasons. First, it is the only known Native American example of a raptorial bird figure in Kentucky rock art. Second, raptorial birds are both prehistoric and historic Kentucky symbols. They are engraved on prehistoric sandstone tablets and marine shell ornaments and are molded into historic metal buttons and glass liquor flasks. And finally, petroglyph sites are fragile and threatened, like so many of Kentucky's archaeological sites.

Our logo reminds us that the archaeological record contains much of the unique story of the prehistoric and historic peoples who once called Kentucky home. We believe that pursuing our mission to educate people about Kentucky's rich archaeological heritage is one way to ensure the preservation and protection of that heritage.

We hope that, in time, everyone will think of archaeological site preservation and education when they see our logo. We also hope that our logo will challenge people to explore how they can play a role in preserving and protecting Kentucky's unique prehistoric and historic archaeological heritage.

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cabin located in the southern end of the site; a building located in front of the church; and an orphanage on the Second Nazareth site.

KAS archaeologists and our student assistants recovered over 9,000 artifacts. Near the church, we found fragments of red glass identified as prayer candleholders, reflecting the site's religious function. Many young students attended the St. Thomas school, and their activities are reflected in the recovery of glass, clay, and stone marbles. Music also was important at St. Thomas, as reflected by a mouth harp and a harmonica strip. These artifacts give us a direct personal connection to the people who lived at St. Thomas. We hope that St. Thomas Parish will put many of the items on display at the restored Howard's log house.

The Shaker Life Exhibit at Pleasant Hill Shaker Village, located 6 miles east of Harrodsburg on US 68, showcases results from ten years of archaeological research there, directed by KAS archaeologist Kim McBride. The exhibit is part of the general admission tour ticket, and is open from 10 am to 5 pm every day. Contact Pleasant Hill at 859/734-5411 or email **info@shakervillageky.org** or see their web site **www.shakervillageky.org**. Teachers interested in school tours should ask for the education department: **education@shakervillageky.org**

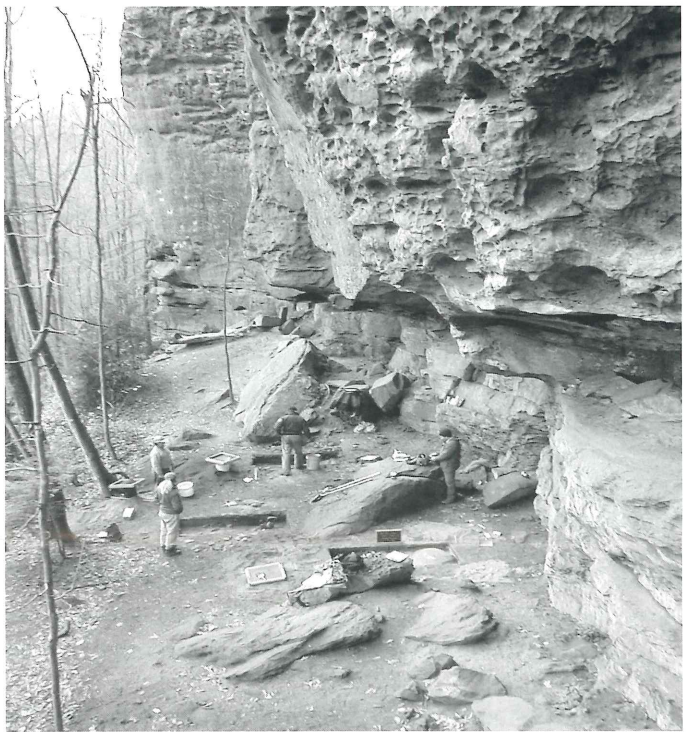
POWELL COUNTY ROCKCLIMBING WALL HOLDS INFORMATION ABOUT THE PAST

In November 2000, KAS archaeologists teamed up with Daniel Boone National Forest archaeologists and the Red River Gorge Climber's Coalition to excavate at the base of a Powell County cliff known as Military Wall. Throughout time, people found this overhang an attractive place, although for different reasons. Thousands of years ago, it provided shelter for prehistoric Native Americans. Today, Military Wall attracts climbers from around the world.

The increasing popularity of climbing has meant that many more feet trample the area where the prehistoric people once lived. The project goal was to find out whether today's climbers were disturbing the prehistoric site. Investigations at Military Wall discovered 8,000 year old atlatl (spearthrower) dart points and a large earth-oven in which prehistoric people would have prepared their food several thousand years ago.

Of even greater interest, however, was the information researchers recovered from soil samples taken from the excavation pits. This soil contained a cornucopia of prehistoric plant remains, some of which were used as food. Here are the names of some of the plants represented: black walnut, hazelnut, pecan, grape, blackberry, squash, gourd, sunflower, acorn, maygrass, sumac, and amaranth.

According to Forest Service archaeologist Cecil Ison, Native Americans began to grow crops near the rockshelters in the Red River Gorge area about 5,000 years ago. Some of the earliest known domesticated plants in the eastern United States have been recovered from these important Kentucky sites.



Archaeologists and climbers conduct excavations at the Military Wall Rockshelter.

Attention all you educators who have searched in vain for a professional archaeologist: *Search No More*! Go to **FIND-AN-ARCHY** on **www.kyopa.org**, the website of the Kentucky Organization of Professional Archaeologists, and click on your region of Kentucky. There you will find the names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of archaeologists willing to talk to your pupils.

WPA Archaeology: Legacy of Era (24:00 min); the fourth episode in the **Kentucky Archaeology Video Series** is now available. It can be purchased from the Kentucky Heritage Council, 300 Washington Street, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. The cost is $10.00 (+ $4.00 S&H). Make checks payable to the Kentucky Heritage Council and be sure to provide a shipping address. The first three episodes are also available for purchase on a single tape. The cost for this video also is $10.00 (+ $4.00 S&H).

The first three episodes in the **Kentucky Archaeology Video Series** are now on *The Archaeology Channel*, the Archaeology Legacy Institute's public-education streaming-media website: **www.archaeologychannel.org**, The **Series** was developed by the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, and was produced by Voyageur Media Group, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio. Check them out!

A SITE OF THEIR OWN: ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE FARNSLEY-KAUFMAN HOUSE

In 1997, the Farnsley-Kaufman House had run out of time. The Jefferson County Board of Education planned to tear down this circa 1810 house and its outbuildings to make way for a new middle school. Public outcry saved the house just in time. Now, a non-profit group, Friends of the Farnsley-Kaufman House, leases the property and plans to renovate the house. Since 1998, KAS archaeologists, working with teachers and students from the new Farnsley Middle School have used the site as a historic preservation laboratory and outdoor classroom.

Each school year, a team of four teachers and 120 sixth graders carry out archaeological research targeting house preservation needs. To date, students have surveyed the property and have excavated the front porch, which was removed nearly 50 years ago. Their hard work has generated a wealth of information that will help guide the renovation of the Farnsley-Kaufman House.

But perhaps the most significant outcomes of this project are the students' own personal experiences. Through excavating; cataloging and analyzing artifacts; creating an exhibit; and designing their own web page (**http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Schools/Middle/farnsley/project/farnsley/farnsley.htm**), these Farnsley Middle School students have learned how to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real-life situation. More importantly, they have developed a new respect for the past at a site they can call their own.

Farnsley Middle School students, led by KAS archaeologists, research "their" historic home site.

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It is the mission of the Kentucky Archaeological Survey to provide technical assistance to state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations and to work with educators to develop public education programs by establishing good working relationships with other agencies and organizations, conducting archaeological surveys and other research, and providing educators with information on Kentucky archaeology.

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