Is the Past in Your Future?
Careers in Archaeology

ON THE COVER:
Kirsten Garwood working at Casa Real near the wildlife refuge center in Guam. She and her partner were digging a test pit at the Old Spanish Mission site, searching for an abandoned military pipe.

Still have questions?
Go to: http://www.saa.org/Careers/tabid/131/Default.aspx

You can also call or email the Society for American Archaeology, Manager, Education and Outreach public_edu@saa.org, 202/559-5709

Society for American Archaeology
1111 14th St NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-5622
www.saa.org

“Being an archaeologist has given me a lifetime of fulfilling work and interesting challenges. I found out that it was possible to fuse my diverse interests in people, science, and the outdoors into a single profession.”

—Jeanne Moe

“… love of history prompted me to consider archaeology as a career. The job may not pay a lot but it is truly personally gratifying. As a Cherokee I feel that almost every aspect of my job allows me to preserve some vital piece of our unique Cherokee identity.”

—Russ Townsend

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2011 University of Kentucky Summer Field School students Caitlin Rogers (left) and Emily Clark (right) preparing the initial plan map of Unit 82 at Block 1 at a prehistoric village site in central Kentucky.

ON THE COVER:
Colin Wagner of Drexel University’s Student Tracking Applied Research Fellowship Program, a program of a partnership between Drexel University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Colin is using software to record the virtual reconstruction of both artifacts and landscapes.

2011 University of Kentucky Summer Field School students Caitlin Rogers (left) and Emily Clark (right) preparing the initial plan map of Unit 82 at Block 1 at a prehistoric village site in central Kentucky.

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Livingston Central High School students Michael Montgomery, Cody Doom, Brandi Holland, and Timmy Bryan, with assistance from the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, excavate a Civil War hut used by Union troops at Fort Smith located on school property in Smithland, Kentucky.

Where can I work?

• Business or government: Most U.S. archaeologists work in cultural resource management—called CRM for short. CRM archaeologists do research required by law. Government archaeologists take care of archaeological sites for research and public enjoyment.

• Colleges and universities: In an academic career, archaeologists teach and do research.

• Museums: Curators do research and work on exhibits. Conservators and collections managers analyze, preserve, and protect artifacts. Educators offer public programs. Archaeologists also work as webmasters, park interpreters, consultants, elementary and high school teachers, CEOs, and directors of non-profit organizations. And all archaeologists give talks to the public!

What kind of education do I need?

Archaeologists in the U.S. usually get their degrees in anthropology—the study of humans, past and present.

• Many combine archaeology with other interests, like history, classics, biology, environmental science, or education.

• Entry-level jobs in archaeology require only a bachelor’s degree. A professional archaeologist needs a master’s degree that includes specialized training in archaeology. This generally takes two years. Some jobs require a Ph.D., which takes several more years.

Archaeologists don’t spend all of their time working outside in exotic and remote places, unearthig priceless objects.

Archaeologists …

• Study the lives of past people.

• Examine places and things people left behind.

• Share what they have learned, and

• Work to protect the places past people lived.

Don’t let the movies fool you.

Is archaeology right for me?

Experience archaeology firsthand to find out!

• Take an archaeology field school. These college- or university-sponsored excavations, usually held in the summer, are organized to train students. You’ll hear lectures, learn how to dig, and earn college credits.

• Join an archaeological society. Many have local chapters that offer student memberships. You can find one here http://archaeology.about.com/od/associations/a/smoke1.htm

• Volunteer to work on an archaeological site. You can find a project that’s right for you here www.archaeological.org/fieldwork

• Volunteer in a museum, lab, or historical site with artifact collections or exhibits.

“Truth be told, I can’t imagine any other career …”

—Melody Pope

Tell me more!

• Personal career stories highlight a day-in-the-life of real archaeologists: http://goo.gl/B0a2rI

• Archaeologists reflect on their careers: http://www.saa.org/Careers/CareerAutobiographies/tabid/1442/Default.aspx

• Listen to archaeologists discuss their career paths, jobs, and research: http://anthropology.si.edu/video_interviews.html

• Explore how to become an archaeologist at About.com: http://archaeology.About.com/od/careersarchaeology/tpt/Archaeologist101.htm

• Learn more about careers and the SAA: Archaeology for the Public: www.saa.org/public

University of Memphis Anthropology majors August Marshall and Justin Shavers processing artifacts on the monthly Volunteer Day at the C.H. Nash Museum.

Jennifer Graham, University of Memphis Graduate Student, installs a temporary exhibit on the Poverty Point culture at the C.H. Nash Museum.

Livingston Central High School students Michael Montgomery, Cody Doom, Brandi Holland, and Timmy Bryan, with assistance from the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, excavate a Civil War hut used by Union troops at Fort Smith located on school property in Smithland, Kentucky.

Vanessa Cabrera working a 3D scanner at the Latte Site, Ritidian, Guam. Jennifer Graham, University of Memphis Graduate Student, installs a temporary exhibit on the Poverty Point culture at the C.H. Nash Museum. University of Memphis Anthropology majors August Marshall and Justin Shavers processing artifacts on the monthly Volunteer Day at the C.H. Nash Museum. Archaeologists don’t spend all of their time working outside in exotic and remote places, unearthig priceless objects.

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