



October 2022

RHODE ISLAND ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

www.preservation.ri.gov/archtober

Organized by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, this program promotes Rhode Island's rich archaeological heritage through a series of public events led by the professional community.

Events

in chronological order

Saturday, October 1 + Sunday, October 2 | 11am - 4pm

Artifact Recovery Days (hands-on archaeology, house tour, exhibits)

Little Compton Historical Society, 548 West Main Rd., Little Compton

Since June, [Little Compton Historical Society](#) has uncovered more than 1000 artifacts from a 180 square foot construction trench. Now it's your turn to help recover artifacts - like ceramic sherds and handmade nails - once used by the occupants of the ca. 1691 Wilbor House. Use archaeological tools to find, sort, and clean artifacts. Then compare the discoveries to previous finds to identify the artifacts and their role in the Wilbor household.

Visitors are welcome to take a guided tour of Wilbor House. A special exhibit, *Stories Houses Tell*, features archaeological findings from the Wilbor House and two other sites in Little Compton. The permanent exhibits are *Everyone Was a Farmer* and *Terra Nova, Vida Nova*. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to participate. Those under 13 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Thursday, October 6 | 6 - 7pm

NBG Presents: Annalisa Heppner (live virtual presentation on North Burial Ground)

North Burial Ground Director Annalisa Heppner will talk about the last year of work, programming, and archaeology. You'll hear about some lessons learned, successes and failures, favorite projects and more. She'll also reflect on what's to come for Providence's NBG and talk about how archaeology is a part of the big dreams for North Burial Ground.

Saturday, October 15 | 12 - 1pm

Cemetery Archaeology Walking Tour

North Burial Ground, 5 Branch Avenue, Providence

Join North Burial Ground Director—and archaeologist—Annalisa Heppner for a tour of North Burial Ground focused on cemetery archaeology and what we can learn from cemeteries as archaeologists (without digging) Then, stay for a workshop and data collection day (see next event).

Saturday, October 15 | 1 - 4pm

Data Workshop/Data Collection Project (document NBG's oldest headstones)

North Burial Ground, 5 Branch Avenue, Providence

Following the Cemetery Archaeology Tour, join North Burial Ground Director—and archaeologist—Annalisa Heppner for a workshop and data collection day documenting and assessing the condition of the oldest headstones in NBG. All you need is a cell phone or tablet with data and the ability to scan a QR code.

Saturday, October 15 | 1pm

Revisiting the Archaeology of the Kelly House and Blackstone Canal (walking tour)

Captain Wilbur Kelly House, 1075 Lower River Road, Lincoln

In 1992, archaeologists from Rhode Island College's Public Archaeology Program conducted investigations around the Captain Wilbur Kelly House (ca. 1820) and along the Blackstone Canal in Ashton in preparation for the soon to be constructed bike path. Revisit the location with one of the archaeologists that was involved in the original investigations, National Park Service Ranger John McNiff, and see how the results of those investigations are being interpreted today along that bike path. Wear comfortable shoes for walking on uneven or rough terrain.

Sunday, October 16 | 1 - 3 pm

I Dig Slater Mill (engage in public archaeology programs)

Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark, 67 Roosevelt Ave., Pawtucket

Experience Rhode Island Archaeology Month at Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Learn about the archaeological digs that have taken place at Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark and see a model of the Wilkinson water wheel. Watch footage of archaeologists working on the site and conduct a search for small treasures.

Wednesday, October 19 | 6 - 7pm

Project Highlights from Engaging the Americas at the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology

Live virtual program on Zoom (*registration required--use link below*)

In 2018, the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown University received the Engaging the Americas grant from the Mellon Foundation “to support improving physical and intellectual stewardship” of the Museum’s “Native American and Indigenous collections and further their integration in the Brown curriculum.” Much of this ongoing work has focused on re-inventorying, cataloging, photographing, and rehousing the extensive lithic assemblages in our archaeological collection. In this presentation, Dr. Jessica Nelson, Curatorial Assistant on the Engaging the Americas grant, will share highlights of the project with an emphasis on the New England assemblages in our collection.

Wednesday, October 19 | 5:30 – 7:30pm

Naval Activities in Rhode Island during the Revolutionary War

in-person at Rogers Free Library, 525 Hope St

live virtual presentation

More than 200 vessels are known to have been lost in Rhode Island waters during the Revolutionary War. These include Royal Navy ships run ashore around Aquidneck Island and burned to avoid capture, British-owned transports, and victualers scuttled in Newport harbor to prevent the threatening French fleet from entering the harbor, and colonial craft destroyed by British and German auxiliaries during raids in Warren. In this talk, Dr. Kathy Abbass of the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project (RIMAP) will discuss the ships involved in the naval events of the Battle of Rhode Island in 1778 and give an update on RIMAP’s search for the *HMS Gaspee*.

RIMAP was created in 1992 to include members of the diving and non-diving public in a professionally organized and directed effort to study Rhode Island’s maritime history and marine archaeology. RIMAP is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with an interest in the maritime history and marine archaeology of Narragansett Bay, the Sounds, the state’s rivers and other inland waters, and how all of these connect Rhode Island to the wider world.

The event is sponsored by the Battle of Rhode Island Association and the Bristol Historical and Preservation Society.

Saturday, October 22 | 11am - 3pm

Archaeology of College Hill Community Archaeology Day (hands-on archaeology)

Corner of Hope Street and Lloyd Avenue, Moses Brown School, Providence

Take part in an active archaeological excavation! Brown University students will be digging on the grounds of Moses Brown School, uncovering the foundations of a 19th-century home and processing artifacts from that household. Stop by this family-friendly event to see the artifacts students are discovering. You may even try your hand at digging. This event is sponsored by [Moses Brown School](#) and Brown University’s [Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World](#).

Saturday, October 22 | 11am - 3pm

Uncover Archaeology: Community Archaeology Day

(exhibits, drawing workshop, meet archaeologists)

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology, R.I. Hall, Brown University, Providence (60 George St)

Visit the [Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World](#) on Brown University's Main Green, see ancient coins from Greece and Rome up close. Examine Persian and Roman ceramics, animal bones, Nabatean sculptures carved in rose-red sandstone, prehistoric tools, precious metals, and other artifacts from thousands of years ago – and learn to draw them, coached by experts. And talk with Brown's archaeologists about their fieldwork all over the world.

Monday, October 24 | 6 - 7pm

**The Search for HMS Gaspee: History, Technology, Citizen Science, and Results
(panel presentation and discussion)**

Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick

In July the [Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project \(RIMAP\)](#) conducted a 15-day expedition to Gaspee Point in Warwick to determine the presence or absence of HMS *Gaspee*, burned there by Patriots in 1772 as a reprisal against British interference in local trade. For the 250th anniversary of that event, it was hoped to find the remains of a vessel sometimes called the "harbinger of the American Revolution." Speakers will discuss the historical materials that informed archaeological research, the remote sensing surveys to determine what cultural materials might be embedded in the spit, the findings of the dive team, how the shore-side research station shared the progress of the study with visitors, and finally, the planned land-side investigation that will continue after the first frost. Of special note will be the public involvement in this study.

Throughout October

Archaeology of the Pierce Rum Distillery in Bristol (video recording)

In 2007, an archaeological dig at the corner of State and Thames Streets uncovered wooden vats that were part of "The Distillery," in operation ca. 1820-1825. These round and rectangular vats held a mixture of molasses and water that was fermented, pumped into large copper pots, heated, and distilled into finished rum. While some of the rum was transferred into casks or "hogsheads" for local consumption, most was shipped to Africa where it was traded for enslaved people. A rare find, the Pierce Distillery archaeological site reveals how rum was produced in massive quantities in order to feed the cycle of African enslavement.

In 2020, [Bristol Historical & Preservation Society](#) (BHPS) hosted a series of online conversations to explore local history. This presentation features Suzanne Cherau, Senior Archaeologist at The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. ([PAL](#)), in conversation with BHPS Executive Director Catherine Zipf. They discuss the excavation of the Pierce Distillery archaeology site and the history of rum distilling in Bristol and in New England.