

# Allegheny Chapter #1

of the

## Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Inc.

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### Editor

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### Officers 2015 - 2017

President: Brian Fritz  
Vice President Bill Johnson  
Secretary/Treasurer: Amanda Valko

### Meeting Information

First Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.,  
February through June and September through  
November. Holiday Dinner is in December at  
an alternate location.

**September 2017** – Kathy J. Rygle,  
Westmoreland Archaeological Society, Chapter  
23 will present the program *Study of Terrestrial  
Gastropods, i.e. Shell-Bearing Land Snails  
Excavated from the Consol Site, 36WM100.*

**October 2017** – Christopher Espenshade,  
Archaeologist, Skelly and Loy, will be  
presenting the results of excavations at the  
Yuhus Site in Washington County.

*Meetings are held at Michael Baker International,  
100 Airside Drive, Moon Township, PA in the first  
floor presentation room. Parking is free. Building  
is locked so please buzz the security guard to get in  
and sign in at the reception desk.*

## President's Letter

George S. Fisher  
1875 - 1945

The first intensive archaeological investigations in western Pennsylvania began with Carnegie Museum's interest and excavation of the Oakmont and McKees Rocks mounds from 1895 through 1896. It was during these excavations that George S. Fisher of Finleyville began documenting prehistoric village sites within the Monongahela River basin of Westmoreland and Fayette Counties (Mayer-Oakes 1955:40). Fisher, working out of his own interest and pleasure, surface collected and excavated a growing list of sites. His surveys helped contradict the academic belief that Western Pennsylvania lacked any substantive prehistoric Native American presence (Means 2003:40). Fisher's field surveys eventually gained the interest of professional archaeologists, and in 1933, Fisher earned public praise for his work on the Pollock's Hill mound from state archaeologist Donald Cadzow (Cadzow 1933:3; Means 2003:40).

Fisher excavated well over 400 Native American graves (Fisher 1930:12). By today's standards, his excavations would be considered rampant looting with questionable methods and ethics. However, when compared to methods employed by many professional archaeologists of the same era, Fisher's work does not seem out of line. However, some of Fisher's ideas about Pennsylvania's prehistoric past did not hold up to scrutiny. Most notable was his insistence that Middle Woodland Period mounds were more than 10,000 years old and were the work of "white men who didn't have the coarse black hair of the Indians."

Cadzow, D. A.

1933 Mr. George Fisher's Discoveries in Western Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Archaeologist 3(3):3-5, 16-17.

Fisher, G. S.

1930 Indian Sites and Excavations in Western Pennsylvania. Bulletin of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology 1(2):12-13.

Mayer-Oakes, William J.

1955 Prehistory of the Upper Ohio Valley; An Introductory Archaeological Study (Anthropological Series, No. 2). Annals of Carnegie Museum 34. Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh.

Means, Bernard K.

2003 Deliver Me from Mononga-Hell: Thinking Beyond the Culture History Paradigm to Examine the Temporal and Spatial Parameters of Somerset Monongahela Village Settlements. Journal of Middle Atlantic Archaeology 19:37-58.



An expedition headed by State Archeologist George S. Fisher is making excavations of tremendous interest in the back yard of Pittsburgh. It is digging up in Washington County, near Canonsburg, bones of a pre-historic race which lived here centuries before Indians ruled the forests of Western Pennsylvania. In upper left, Fisher,

Pittsburgh Newspaper 1933

## 10,000 Years Ago Here

PITTSBURGH, May 20. (AP) — Archaeologist, George S. Fisher hopes to determine through a cup-shaped dish carved from a human skull what kind of men inhabited Western Pennsylvania 10,000 years ago.

He recovered the skull-dish from an ancient Indian mound several miles south of Uniontown where in 1929 he made a similar find.

The two pieces are the only ones of their kind found in this district.

"When I found the first worked skull," said Fisher, "that didn't mean much. It might have been brought into this district. But now that I've found another one, worked into a dish, these skulls are beginning to talk to us."

This 63-year-old Finleyville man who has dedicated his life to digging Indian relics from the earth declared the men who made the skull-dish lived at least 10,000 years ago.

"They were not Indians but white men who didn't have the coarse black hair of the Indians the white men found here," asserted Fisher. "These people were no more like Indians than a buggy is like an automobile."

The archaeologist is excavating the Uniontown mound under sponsorship of the Pennsylvania Indian Research Group.

Indiana Evening Gazette, May 20, 1939.

## Two More Bodies Taken From Mound

(International News Service)

CHARLEROI, Pa., June 23.—Two more bodies, pottery and other relics have been unearthed at an old Indian burial place three miles south of Vanderbilt, according to George S. Fisher, Finleyville archaeologist. The bodies were those of an adult male and a child about eight years of age.

New Castle News, June 23, 1933.

## INDIAN MOUND TO BE OPENED BY MEN IN RESEARCH WORK

Chief George S. Fisher, Finleyville archaeologist and head of the Pennsylvania Indian Research, has called a special meeting of the members for Sunday afternoon, July 27 at 2 p. m. at the site of excavation near Courtney. Mr. Fisher has been located at this camp site for the past two months and is busily engaged in opening numerous mounds here. This site was partly opened in 1883. One of the outstanding finds so far have been natural terraces, beautiful in every respect. These were built by the ancient dwellers, Mr. Fisher believes, and that they remain now as they were originally constructed.

Chief Fisher is of the opinion that this site is too wonderful to permit destruction. Some weeks ago he met with the Boy Scout officials of the County and the Monongahela Valley with the proposition that they take over this location for the exclusive use of the Boy Scouts of the County in general and the valley scouts in particular.

The Charleroi Mail, July 21, 1941.

## No More Digging At South Park Commissioners Say

(International News Service)  
PITTSBURGH, Jan. 19.—If there are any relics buried beneath the soil of South Park here, Allegheny county is going to keep them, it appeared today.

George S. Fisher, former chief of the state historical survey and a well-known archaeologist, told the county commissioners that he had discovered traces of an ancient race lying just a few feet underground, but that certain individuals were digging out the relics and shipping them to collectors out of Pennsylvania.

**Ban Further Digging**  
The commissioners immediately

banned further digging in the area until an investigation can be made.

Fisher explained, in a letter to the authorities, that he and another archaeologist, Glenn Hoskins, had uncovered broken pottery, arrow and spear points in South Park. These, he said, apparently were relics of mound builders of the Hopwell culture who inhabited Western Pennsylvania between 10,000 and 15,000 years ago.

"These things are invaluable," he said. "They belong to the taxpayers—and yet I know that certain individuals have gone in there and begun digging where they saw us dig and have the relics they found and sent them to collectors outside this state. It's robbery—pure robbery."

"News stories," says a critic, "are not literature." For instance, they often tell of murder, incest and depravity without locating it in the deep South.

New Castle News, January 19, 1939.

Frank Morgan Farm  
Somersfield, Somerset Co. PA.  
June 16, 1936

South of Somersfield on the east shore of the Youghiogheny River lies a small site of about two acres where these ancient people lived for several generations, as has been proved by Mr. Montague by his excavations. The soil here is dark sandy loam on top of a very hard yellow clay. Mr. Montague has also found a great many artifacts that were used here. Post holes in rows inside another double row of post holes point to a large double stockade, or, more likely, an immense building having been here at one time. From the shapes of these post holes it seems probable that there were separate rooms for different families.

Articles uncovered below plough depth include arrow points, tomahawks, pipes, bone beads, shell beads and bangles, drilled animal teeth, and several clay pots and cups as well as other minor articles. Some of the clay material had to be partly restored while others were intact. These vessels seem to be of a different type than the ones found farther north along the same river. Some pots and sherds from a number of others fail to show any signs of shell tempering such as in usually found in the southwestern section of the state. One extremely large vessel made of a porous material and resembling a burial urn was found near the river bank. This might have contained the body of a very small child which has completely disintegrated, or again it may have been filled with food and placed here close to the river as an offering to the Water God.

Several fire places have been uncovered, and always in one of the enclosures where many people could gather around. These fire pits have been built with both broken stones and river pebbles, and in every case many different pot sherds were found.

More than twenty bodies have been found so far, some being in an excellent state of preservation and others being almost completely disintegrated. One body of an adult was found without any trace of a head, showing the same class of people lived here as lived farther north toward the junction of the rivers, as one of the same type burials was found on Site # 18 along the Monongahela and on Site # 76, which seemed to have been their home. Now we have the same people about 50 miles to the south near the Maryland state line. The finding of this headless body proves that these people were not warlike or savage, as we now have three places where we find burials both with and without heads.

I was not able to secure any measurements, but the pits seem to be from three to four feet across and about three feet deep. Some are bell shaped, being dug larger at the bottoms than they were at the top, and have probably been used for food storage pits. For such a good river site the absence of mussel shells is very hard to explain, as we would have had bushels of shell refuse on our sites farther to the north.

The unusual finds here include grit-tempered pottery, the use of sea shells for beads and pendants, and the number of undamaged pots.

Adult burials fail to produce much material, while as is true in our own district artifacts are usually found with child burials.

Two distinct trails were in this territory, one along the Monongahela and Cheat rivers and then south toward the Gulf of Mexico; the other by the way of the Youghiogheny over the mountains to the Potomac river and the east.

Shell beads and pendants on this site came from the east, as no cowry shells were found with the burials such as are found here.

This has been a very interesting site and many thanks are due Mr. Montague and his assistants for their courtesy and willingness to give all possible information.

G. S. Fisher.

## **Study of Terrestrial Gastropods, i.e. Shell-Bearing Land Snails Excavated from the Consol Site, 36WM100.**

Kathy J. Rygle

Westmoreland Archaeological Society, Chapter 23

Land snails have been underexploited as diagnostic artifacts at archaeological sites, many times because they were not saved during excavation. We are fortunate, thanks to the effort of all who worked on the Consol site, 36WM100, that a large number of snail shells, one of the more common subsets in the faunal assemblage, were preserved, and the context in which they were found documented. The shells from the larger species of snails were recovered either by hand or by use of a ¼ inch (6.35 mm) steel hardware cloth during feature excavation. These

amounted to over 10,000 specimens recovered from 272 of the 1300 features excavated. Likewise, many smaller species and juveniles are to be found preserved in flotation samples. Flotation samples are available from 338 features, 225 of those samples contain at least one snail shell, many contain hundreds. Micro snails down to 0.2 mm have been recorded.

Initial attempt is in progress to break down masses of raw information on snails and associated documentation and related artifacts, into smaller units for interpretation. Working along with Bob Oshnock, who has extensively documented and mapped site statistics, this combined information will be used to interpret various aspects of the site, be it climate and environmental reconstruction, prehistoric occupations, dating, aboriginal subsistence patterns, or ritual and healing practices. With the assistance of Steve Pedersen, snail shells are being inventoried by feature. Initial work has begun by Dick George in 2002 to identify species present at the site. Dr. Timothy Pearce, of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH) at that time identified 24 distinct species. These have been archived into the collection of the Department of Mollusks at CMNH, and will be used along with standard references to identify snail taxa from the site.

Kathy has over 30 years of experience in Analytical and Manufacturing Chemistry, and an interest in the historical use of natural compounds derived from the snail. She feels that since techniques of archaeological chemistry have greatly advanced in recent years, through a systematic and scientific approach to this study, a wealth of information can be “uncovered” from the land snails of the Consol site.

## **Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology 2018 Annual Meeting**

### **Call for Papers**

Hosted by The North Fork Chapter 29 at the Comfort Suites, 10 Lakeside Avenue, Dubois, PA, 15801, APRIL 6-8, 2018.

The theme of the 89th annual meeting will be “Of the Past, For the Future: Current Contributions to Pennsylvania Archaeology”. There will be three open sessions, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Students are encouraged and welcome to present. Papers are accepted on a first come first served basis. We will also be sponsoring a Student Poster Session this year.

Anyone wishing to participate should send abstracts of 150 words or less for papers and posters to the Program Chair by March 17, 2018. Students please send a copy of your student identification when you submit your abstracts. All presenters must be current members of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology.

Program Chair: Kenneth Burkett 2717 Brookville Street, Fairmount City, PA 16224, Phone: (818) 849-0077; kburkett-jchc@windstream.net.

## North Fork Chapter Picnic

North Fork Chapter 29 invites all SPA Members to enjoy a fall day in western PA at our annual picnic.

**Sunday, October 15th**  
**1:00 pm - 5:00 pm**  
**Scripture Rocks Heritage Park**

The park is located on Route 28, 1/8 mile south of 1-80 exit 81 at 560, PA Route 28, Brookville, PA.

- ❖ Guided Walking Tour of this State & National Award winning Park
- ❖ Free Picnic 4:00 pm (Everything provided)
- ❖ Atlatl Competition

Please RSVP by Oct. 7th to:  
[kenburkett@comcast.net](mailto:kenburkett@comcast.net) or (814) 365-5563.

## ***Shade Furnace: Raising an Iron Furnace in the Frontier Forest of Somerset County Wins 2017 AASLH Award of Merit***

NASHVILLE, TN—July 2017—The American Association for State and Local History

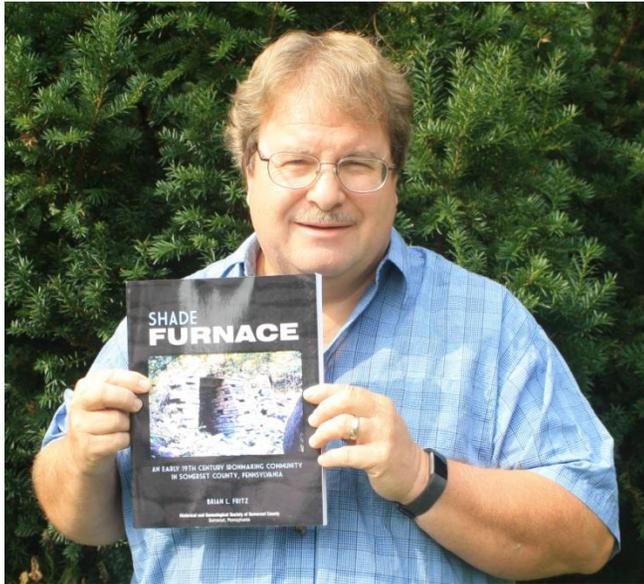
(AASLH) proudly announces that the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County, Inc. is the recipient of an Award of Merit for the publication *Shade Furnace: An Early 19th Century Ironmaking Community in Somerset County, Pennsylvania*. Brian L. Fritz, author of the *Shade Furnace* book, will receive the award at a special banquet during the 2017 AASLH Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, on Friday, September 8. The banquet is supported by a generous contribution from the History Channel. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 72nd year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

*Shade Furnace: Raising an Iron Furnace in the Frontier Forest of Somerset County*, by Brian L. Fritz

In the year 1808, Somerset County, Pennsylvania was little more than a mountain forest with patches of fledgling farmsteads connected by rutted bridle paths. From this frontier forest, a partnership of industrious men launched a plan to raise an iron furnace along the banks of Shade Creek. Thomas Vickroy provided the land and startup capital. Peter Gearhart and George Reynolds supplied the knowledge and managerial skills needed to construct and operate the ironworks. Their daring plan brought to life a charcoal blast furnace, a forge for refining pig iron, and an iron plantation of more than 5,000 acres. Shade Furnace resulted in both success and failure to its many owners over an operational life of fifty years. Today, the ruins of Shade Furnace remain relatively undisturbed along the rugged valley slopes of Shade Creek. Its stone walls and foundations are a time capsule to a nearly forgotten era when the engines of industry lay in the rural forests and not in the sprawling cities. The legacy of Shade Furnace continues to inspire our imagination and that particular entrepreneurial drive so deeply rooted in the pioneering spirit of the American Frontier.

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant

achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203, or go to [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org).



Brian L. Fritz is a 2011 graduate of the University of Akron earning a Master's of science degree in geology. Mr. Fritz is a native of Somerset County, Pennsylvania with roots on a farm near Stoystown. He is the owner and Principal Archaeological Investigator of Quemahoning LLC, a cultural resources consulting firm based in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Mr. Fritz earned bachelor's degrees in geology and anthropology from Clarion University of Pennsylvania in 2007. He is a registered professional archaeologist (RPA) and geographic information system professional (GISP). Mr. Fritz and his archaeologist wife, Amanda Valko, have organized and hosted public archaeology and educational programs for more than a decade.

“Archaeology and geology fulfill a vital role in understanding humanity and our relationship to the environment. Most people would agree that we live in a complex world and that social complexity is likely to increase in the foreseeable future. How can we forge humanity's future if we do not have a firm understanding of our present condition? How do we evaluate our present condition without a scientifically enlightened perspective of our past?

Archaeology and geology are tools that provide us with a window into our past and a frame of reference to gauge the evolution of the human condition.” -- Brian L. Fritz

## Second Annual Workshop in Archaeology

“Experimental Archaeology: how we know what we know” on Saturday, October 7, 2017 at the Meadowcroft Museum, Avella, PA from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Sponsored by the Meadowcroft Museum, the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology and the Heinz Regional History Center.

Understanding past Native American behavior regarding technology is a perplexing task. To help understand change, archaeologists must have some knowledge to the purpose or function of prehistoric technology. This includes knowing how tools were made as well as used. Experimental archaeology has played an important role in providing archaeologists with examples conducted through controlled experiments which are then studied and compared to archaeological examples. Presentations in this workshop cover both the production and use of tools.

Registration at the Door 10:30 AM to 11:00 AM

1100 AM – 11:15 Opening Remarks: Dr. John P. Nass, Jr., California University of Pennsylvania

SESSION ONE: Presentations include making a dugout canoe, steatite experiments and pottery making/firing. Presentations 11:00 AM – 12:45 PM

Lunch: 12:45-1:30 PM

SESSION TWO: Presentations include experiments and tool function relating to chipped stone projectile points, bone and antler points, and microwear. Presentations: 1:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Additional programs:

11:00 AM– 4:30 p.m. Flintknapping Demonstration

This presentation will feature an expert flintknapper who will demonstrate how stone tools were made during the Prehistoric and Contact periods in Pennsylvania.

11:00 AM – 4:30 p.m. Site Recording in Cultural Resources Geographic Information System - Susquehanna Room. State Historic Preservation Office Recording of archaeological sites is an essential task in protecting and preserving our archaeological resources. Assistance in recording your archaeological sites will be provided by these qualified individuals.

11:00 AM – 4:30 p.m. Artifact Identification – SPA chapter members. These individuals have over 50 years of combined experience with archaeological artifacts. Bring in your historic or prehistoric artifacts for identification and analysis by the experts.

Registration is \$15.00. Registration can be prepaid or paid at the registration desk at Meadowcroft. Lunch is \$12.00 and must be pre-paid in advance. Discounts are available for students, seniors, and Heinz History Center Members. For more information contact Dr. John Nass at [nass@calu.edu](mailto:nass@calu.edu).

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Antique Firearms & Indian Artifact Show**

Saturday, September 2, 2017

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Jefferson County Fairgrounds

Rt. 28 ¼ mile north of PA Interstate 80, Exit 81

Adults - \$7.00 Children under 16 – Free

Antique firearms through 1898 and Prehistoric and Historic Artifacts will be on exhibit. There will be artifact identification, flint knapping, and primitive games. There will also be a raffle for a 50 cal. Muzzleloader in the style of Jefferson Co. gunsmith Solomon Harriger by Ron Luckenbill. For table reservations or information: Email: [kburkett-jchonline.org](mailto:kburkett-jchonline.org), Phone: (814) 849-0077, or visit: [www.jchonline.org](http://www.jchonline.org). Benefits the Jefferson County Historical Society and Northfork Chapter 29, Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology.

## **In Memorium**

Anna L. Warren, 90, formerly of Southwest Greensburg, born Sept. 28, 1926, died Thursday, June 1, 2017. She was a resident of O'Fallon, Ill. Mrs. Warren was a retired reading specialist, working with many children over the years at Queen of Angels Catholic School, North

Huntingdon. Anna also had a long and dedicated career with Westmoreland Historical Society, devoting thousands of hours to the development of Hanna's Town historical site. Mrs. Warren held numerous key positions with the WCHS during her 30 year tenure. Anna was a charter member of the Westmoreland Archeology Society, a founding member of the Elizabeth Hanna Guild and chairperson of Westmoreland Historical Society Research Committee. Mrs. Warren was named field archeology supervisor in 1978 for the Hanna's Town site. She lead numerous archeological digs at Hanna's Town, supervising visitor digs, student digs and also teaching summer college interns in archeological methodology and research as they pertained to Hanna's Town. Mrs. Warren resigned from this position in 2006 after many decades of devoted work. Further, Mrs. Warren conducted extensive research on the development and subsequent burning of Hanna's Town and also on the Pennsylvania 8th, who was mustered in Westmoreland County. Anna Warren published several historical research articles in related publications over the years. She participated in archeology and research panel presentation/discussion at various colleges and universities in western Pennsylvania. Mrs. Warren received the prestigious "Archy Award" from the Society for Pennsylvania Archeology in 2004 in honor of her decades of work and extensive historical and archeological contributions to Western Pennsylvania, Westmoreland County and Hanna's Town. Mrs. Warren also participated in archeological digs at prehistoric sites including the Consul site in Sewickley Township. In addition, Mrs. Warren was an avid field hockey fan. Anna played on her college team, later volunteering as an assistant coach with the YWCA girl's field hockey team for several years. Mrs. Warren was a lifelong member of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, formerly in Southwest Greensburg. In addition to her parents, Andrew and Josephine Johnson, she was preceded in death by her husband of 53 years, Arthur M. Warren, along with a brother and two sisters. She is survived by a brother and sister, two daughters, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Esther the Comfort Dog Ministry, (checks should be written to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 304 South St., Collinsville, IL 62234).

Published in Greensburg Tribune Review on Aug. 9, 2017

## 2017 MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of Allegheny Chapter #1, SPA, complete this form and send it to Amanda Valko, Secretary, Allegheny Chapter #1. Thank you!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT CHAPTER AFFILIATION (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_ STATE MEMBER? \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (CHECK ONE):

<input type="checkbox"/> LIFE	\$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE HUSBAND/WIFE	\$16.00
<input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING	\$ 20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT	\$ 8.00
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE INDIVIDUAL	\$ 10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTITUTIONAL	\$16.00

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: ALLEGHENY CHAPTER NO. 1, SPA

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