

Exploring Our Buried Past

Archaeology in the Baltimore County Public High Schools 1983-2007

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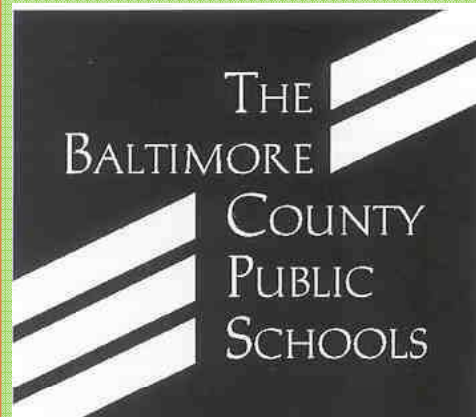
Patrice L. Jeppson

Cheyney University and West Chester University of Pennsylvania

“Archaeology is a great hook for engaging students in order to teach them social studies content and skills”

George Brauer, 2001
Baltimore County Public Schools

... in the case of BCPS, more than 90,000 students and 250 teachers over a 24 year period.



The Baltimore County public school district is the 22nd largest public school system in the country with 159 schools and a total enrollment of 106,000 students. There are twenty-seven high schools in the system.

Archaeology as a taught subject was first introduced more than three decades ago in the Baltimore County Public Schools in Maryland (BCPS) as part of one geography class in one high school. Over time, a district wide, sequential program of archaeologically-enriched instruction (which builds each year upon the previous year's knowledge) came to form part of the *essential* Social Studies curriculum taught in grades 2-12. Terminology and basic concepts were introduced in lower grades and were reinforced and expanded through substantive examples of archaeological research in middle school and high school social studies activities. BCPS also offered an archaeology (s)elective in as many as 18 high schools servicing approximately 800-900 students annually.

Between 1995 and 2007 a *Teacher Archaeologist* position was created in the district's Department of Curriculum and Instruction's Office of Social Studies (OSS) Educational Support Services division (ESS). The *Center for Archaeology/BCPS*, a facility providing educational support services for the archaeology instruction within the curriculum, was likewise established. Archaeology content was used to provide students learning experience with a variety of historical resources and to encourage practice with critical thinking skills in a manner that was challenging, exciting, and relevant to social studies instruction.

Social Studies Education, K-12th Grade and Archaeology

The Social Studies draw on:

anthropology, *archaeology*, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, and appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences.

(NCSS:

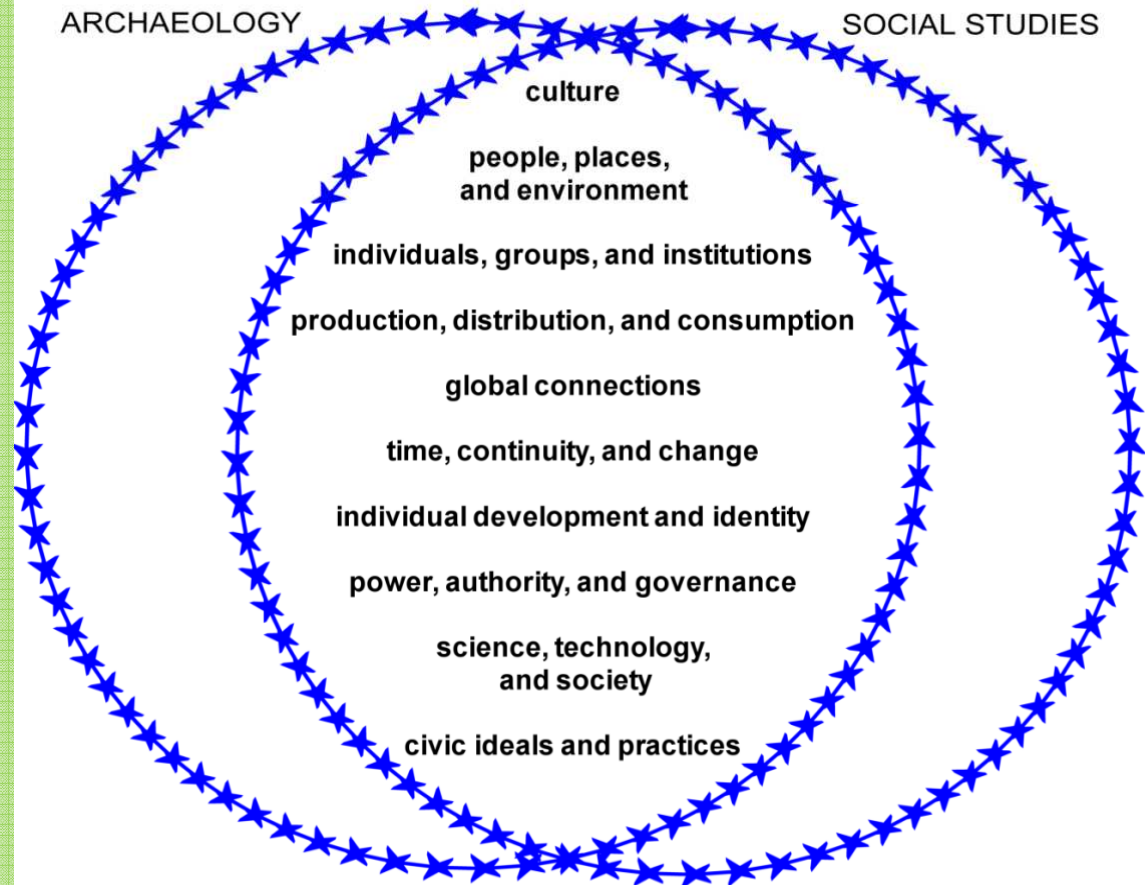
<http://www.ncss.org/about/background.htm>)

“The basic purpose of social studies programming in school education is to teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy”.

(NCSS:

<http://www.socialstudies.org/about/faq.shtml#definition>)

Effective social studies programs provide for the study of ten themes that are also central to archaeology:



Center for Archaeology in the Baltimore County Public Schools, 1995-2007 (CFA/BCPS)

Between 1995 and 2007, the school district's archaeologically-enriched educational offerings were supported by, and regularly drew for their content from, student learning experiences at *The Center for Archaeology (CFA/BCPS)* – an outdoor educational facility established on the site of an historic iron producing village.

The Center's work was geared towards meeting the identified needs of the school district which in turn coincide with State educational goals: The educational focus in the State of Maryland is on 'performance based learning' (learning by doing; learning using real-life, hands-on activities), interdisciplinary study, critical thinking, and multicultural equity.

The Center's mission was to provide instructional programming in archaeology and related historical studies for teachers and students. Specifically, the Center designed and distributed classroom instructional materials, provided on-site archaeology field activities, offered direct instructional support for teachers, trained teachers, provided outreach programming and operated a museum that provided direct instructional support for on-site activities.

The Center for Archaeology was financially and logistically supported by the Baltimore County Public Schools and the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks. In addition, the Center received grant support from the Maryland State Department of Education, the Baltimore County Historic Trust, the Maryland Historic Trust, the Maryland Historical Society, the Archaeology Society of Maryland, the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Materials and other forms of assistance were donated by a multitude of local corporations including 84 Lumber, as well as local agencies including the Baltimore County Motor Vehicle Shop, and the Recreation and Parks' Department of Public Works.

The underlying framework for the CFA rested upon the meaningful use of knowledge as reflected inquiry, investigation, decision-making and problem solving. Activities generated through the CFA required students to engage in productive habits of the mind including critical, creative, and self-regulated thinking. Instructional programming developed skills such as mapping, measuring, observing, and writing *through* an engaged, learning experience (proficiencies also needed for the Maryland State Performance Assessment Program).

The focus of the Center's student-directed archaeological and historical investigations were, broadly speaking, to learn more about the lives of those who lived and worked at Oregon Furnace and to understand the world of which they were a part. As the Center's research goals expanded, instructional activities promoted and directed explorations into other aspects of the past at Oregon town. The Center's overall goal was to promote within the student an appreciation for the value and complexity of historical and archaeological research.



Skill List				
Problem-solving				
Predicting				
Generalizing				
Explaining				
Assessing				
Analyzing				
Interpreting				
Estimating				
Comparing				
Contrasting				
Identifying				
Summarizing				
Graphing				
Measuring				
Surveying				
Illustrating				
Revising				
Describing				
Justifying				
Categorizing				
Organizing Information				
Recording Data				
Applying Knowledge				
Drawing Conclusions				
Formulating Hypotheses				
Others				

The Center for Archaeology/BCPS and the Historical Archaeology Site of Oregon Town

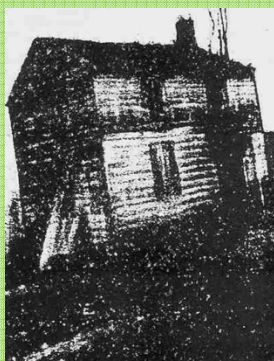


The Center for Archaeology/Baltimore County Public Schools was located at the site of the historic town of Oregon in Oregon Ridge Park, an 1100-acre, Recreation and Parks facility in Northern Baltimore County approximately 10 miles North of Baltimore City, Maryland. The Center was established in partnership with the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks.

The town of Oregon was established in a region with abundant mineral resources. A high grade marble seam runs through the area and the vicinity is rich in iron ore deposits. Between 1840 and 1870, the resident workers of the company town of Oregon were involved in mining these "ores" for the production of pig iron. This product was ultimately used in the manufacturing of railroad rails, barrel hoops, and wagon wheel rims, and items such as cast iron stoves, frying pans, and trivets. By the mid-19th Century, there were approximately 50 such pig iron furnaces operating on the Eastern seaboard between New York and Washington. Their hey-day marks an important point in the "American Century" when the country was developing its industrial prowess. This stage of the iron industry's development ended with the growth of monopolistic companies such as Bethlehem steel.

Peter Goff Tenant House Museum CFA/BCPS

After completing excavation of the tenant house, high school industrial art students drew up blue-prints for a reconstruction of the structure using excavation information and historical photographs recovered by summer program students researching at the archives. High school woodshop and masonry class students then reconstructed the house and re-appointed the house foundation stones. This reconstruction process took four years and involved several shop classes.



Media communications students videotaped the process for a student documentary that aired on the school district's educational cable TV channel. The reconstructed tenant house serves as a Baltimore County Public Schools museum. Named after a resident of Oregon, the Peter Goff Tenant House Museum displays artifacts excavated and restored by students alongside period antiques and replicas typically found at Oregon Town. All students and teachers visiting the CFA for on-site programming toured the Peter Goff Tenant House Museum in order to help understand the context of the material culture they were recovering. The museum also served as the CFA office program.

Bibliography of Educational Materials Produced by The Center for Archaeology

Educational Support Services, Office of Social Studies, Baltimore County Public Schools, Towson, Maryland

2002 [1998] A Study of Cultural 'World View' Using Primary Documentary Evidence.

2002 [2001, 1999, 1984] *History of Oregon Ridge: Where the Past Is Always Present*. Archaeology Course Reader/Museum Pamphlet. *Student Questions/Teacher Response*. This student reading summarizes the history of the Oregon Ridge town site from the earliest land grants, through the period of iron production, including its present operation as an outdoor education facility. Written in both personal narrative and 3rd person format, this selection provides social history information about the 19th century town and the town's people. The high school archaeology course students read this history prior to visiting the archaeology site for their field/lab practicum. Student questions and a teacher response sheet accompany this course resource

2002 [2000] *Hacienda Plain Activity: Teacher Directions, Student Resource Packet, Student Activity, Teacher Response, Assessment*. *Eighth-grade World Culture Course, South America Unit*.

2001 *Food for Thought: 19th-Century Food Preparation, Presentation and Consumption*. *Student Questions/Teacher Response*.

1999 [1990] Oregon Ridge Pipe Stem Study. In *Content Outline for High School Archaeology Course, Teacher Instructional Guide*.

2000 *Ceramic Study Kit and Ceramic Study Assessment Kit: Archaeology Course. Traveling Study Kits*.

2000 *Using an Archaeological Site Map to Learn About A Culture: Kalahari Site Activity: Teacher Directions, Student Resource Packet, Student Activity, Teacher Response, Assessment*. *Seventh-grade World Culture Course, Africa Unit*.

2000 Torralba Activity: Teacher Directions, Student Resource Packet, Student Activity. Teacher Response, Assessment. *Seventh-grade World Culture Course, Europe Unit*.

1999 *Economic Life at Oregon Ridge, 1848-1854*. This weeklong set of exercise activities for the high school archaeology course draws on primary documentary evidence related to the Oregon Ridge site. Students transcribe original documents from the Oregon Ridge General Store and draw inferences from the collected data about the economic history of the Oregon Ridge towns' people. The exercise is completed prior to visiting the site for the field/lab experience.

1999 Using an Archaeological Site Map to Learn About A Culture. In *Seventh Grade World Culture Course Teacher Instructional Guide*.

1998 Site Formation In archaeology. In *Content Outline For High School Archaeology Course Teacher Instructional Guide*.

1998 [1992] The Cemetery as A Source of Information: Investigating the Cultural and Physical Characteristics of a Cemetery. Archaeology Course Supplementary Resource.

1998 Using Probate Inventories To Study the Past. In *Content Outline For High School Archaeology Course Teacher Instructional Guide*. This is a high school archaeology course exercise that draws on primary data related to the Oregon Ridge site. While learning to critically examine primary documents, the students gain insight into early 19th century social and economic history.

1997 *Content Outline for High School Archaeology Course: Teacher Course Guide* for the BCPS' semester-long, high school archaeology elective course. Includes course goals, course indicators (objectives), and an outline of instructional activities.

1996 To Dig or Not To Dig. In *Content Outline for High School. Archaeology Course Teacher Instructional Guide*. By participating in the simulated role-play activity, the high school archaeology course students come to understand the role they have as citizen in preserving the past. This group exercise deals with archaeological morals and ethics and with the conflicting interests of preservation, heritage, tourism, archaeology, and economic development.

1995 *Blast From The Past/Oregon Ridge Furnace: Its Construction and Operation* This student reading is used in the high school archaeology course and as a museum pamphlet. It provides students with a brief history of the iron smelting industry and explains the operation of the Oregon Ridge iron smelting furnace. Students read and discuss this selection prior to visiting the archaeology site for a field/lab practicum.

Pipe Stem Dating Activity – A Dating Study of 3,729 Clay Pipe Fragments Using archaeological data from secondary sources, the high school archaeology students learn techniques for absolute dating of historical archaeology sites through pipe stem analysis. This exercise activity is cross-disciplinary, drawing on math skills as well as social studies skills.

Decoding Archaeological Evidence: “What’s All This Stuff Mean?” This exercise gives the high school archaeology course students experience with making inferences and drawing conclusions based on archaeological data.

1990a *Archaeology: A Field Manual and Resource Guide*. Archaeology Course Supplemental Resource. This field manual is provided to all students in the high school archaeology course. The information included in this resource prepares students for their excavation experience (practicum) by addressing field methods and techniques (grid layout, excavation procedures), reviewing the concept of stratigraphy, and explaining recording and reporting practices (daily field records, site survey forms, site report formats).

1991 Fauna Comparative Analysis: Sites E and B. In *Content Outline For High School Archaeology Course Teacher Instructional Guide*. This exercise draws on data recovered during student research at Oregon Ridge. Students in the high school archaeology course compare and contrast the site data to gain information about the dietary habits and social status of two different socio-economic groups at Oregon Ridge. The students complete this exercise prior to visiting the site for the field/lab practicum.

Historic House Survey

In order to gain a better understanding of the importance of historic preservation, the Historic House Survey Activity involves high school students in completing a study of an existing architectural feature at the Oregon town site. Working in a cooperative format to complete measurements, line drawings, and a questionnaire form, teams of students record a structure’s dimensions, create a floor-plan drawing, and sketch profile drawings for each side of the structure.

Artifact Study Kit Activity – “Take the Artifact Challenge: Introduction to Debris”

This activity booklet accompanies an artifact study kit. It is part of a high school archaeology course supplemental offering where students undertake a hands-on analysis using artifacts recovered from the sites at Oregon Ridge. Five artifact study kits, designed for group use, are made available to local high schools on a scheduled basis. The kits are used as initiatory or summarizing activities.

Teacher In-Service Training

Starting in 1993, the Center began offering a 5-day long, summer program for BCPS staff development. This program is for interdisciplinary teams of middle school educators and was designed to develop both model performance-based identification tools for gifted and talented students and interdisciplinary instructional activities. Between 8 and 12 teachers at a time received an intensive introduction to archaeology, gained personal experience in both field and laboratory methods, and incorporated this knowledge into goals-based, core curricular instruction.

Selected Recognition

Archaeology:

Society for American Archaeology

2001

Award For Excellence in Public Education

'Recognizes institutions or individuals who bring about an improved public understanding and appreciation of anthropology and archaeology'.

Archaeological Society of Maryland

1999

Patricia Seitz Memorial - Teacher of the Year Certificate of Excellence

For 'Outstanding Role In Fostering An Understanding Of The Discipline Of Archaeology Among Students'.

Education:

National Association of Gifted Children

2001

Curriculum Study Award

For the BCPS' Third-Grade Archaeology GT Curriculum.

National Council For The Social Studies

1995

Program of Excellence Curriculum Award

For 'Outstanding Social Studies

Programming in the Nation'. For the

CFA/BCPS program, 'Archaeology and Critical Thinking'.

Maryland Council For The Social Studies

1994

Outstanding Programming Award

For Outstanding Social Studies

Programming in Maryland

Other:

Better Homes and Gardens

1999

Honorary Mention

'National Reconstruction/Restoration Competition'. For the Peter Goff Tenant House Museum project.