

OAC Spring Meeting, Friday, May 8, 2026 – Ohio History Connection, Columbus

Symposium on Historical Archaeology in Ohio

Titles and abstracts in order of presentation:

1. “Storytelling with Old Stuff – Highlights from *Heartland: The Stories of Ohio through 250 Objects*.” Andrew Richmond, ISA, AAA, Wipiak Consulting & Appraisals.
Abstract: As material culture historians, our job is to use objects to tell the stories of our past. Through 250 objects made or used in Ohio, *Heartland* tells 250 stories, some well-known, some practically unknown. For this presentation, we will focus on the stories told by archaeological objects, and by those that are archaeology adjacent.
45 minute time slot – 30-35 minute presentation + 5-10 minutes for questions/comments.
2. “Out from Under the Floorboards: A Summary of Excavations at the Overfield Tavern.” Jessica C. Royster, MA, RPA, and Brenda L. Detty, MS, RPA, Ohio Valley Archaeology, Inc.
Abstract: Located in the heart of Troy, Ohio, the Overfield Tavern is the state’s oldest surviving tavern, c.1808. For more than two centuries, it has served as a focal point of community life, first as a tavern and local hub, later as a daycare, and most recently as a vibrant local history museum. In December 2024, a fire severely damaged portions of the building and destroyed many of the museum’s archaeological collections. Since then, museum staff have begun planning for significant conservation and restoration work. In fall 2025, OVAI joined these efforts through a multi-component archaeological project that included geophysical survey, targeted unit excavations in the tavern yard, and subfloor excavations within the building itself. The team has also incorporated public archaeology and community outreach throughout this project. This collaboration demonstrates how integrated archaeological approaches can support cultural resources, inform restoration, and strengthen community engagement. The work at Overfield Tavern will continue to shape both the museum’s future and its relationship with the Troy community.
30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation + 5-10 minutes for questions.
3. “Immigrant Life in a Marginal Urban Environment: Recent Excavations at Cleveland’s Irishtown Bend.” Robert C. Chidester and Meagan N. Bell, The Mannik & Smith Group.
Abstract: In 2023, The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc. (MSG) was retained to conduct data recovery excavations of three historic parcels on Cleveland’s Irishtown Bend, a National Register of Historic Places-listed archaeological district. Located on the steeply sloped valley wall of the Cuyahoga River directly across from the Flats, Irishtown Bend was home to one of Cleveland’s largest Irish immigrant communities from the mid-19th century into the early 20th century. Several other sites within this archaeological district were originally excavated by David Brose and Alfred Lee of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in the late 1980s. While local historical understanding has long held that the inhospitable valley wall was abandoned and all housing removed by around 1910, MSG’s excavations and archival research demonstrated that a later generation of Eastern European (particularly Hungarian) immigrants continued to occupy the hillside until the early 1930s.
30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation + 5-10 minutes for questions.

4. "Four Decades of Archaeological Investigations at the Shaker Community of Union Village." Andy Sewell, Lawhon & Associates, Inc.

Abstract: Union Village was the hub of the Shaker Movement in the Old Northwest of the United States in the nineteenth century, which at its peak encompassed 4,500 acres and a population of 600 believers spread among nine communal family lots. Since the early 1980s, portions of this community have been revealed by archaeological investigations connected to a series of transportation and commercial developments in Turtle Creek Township, Warren County. This paper will review archaeological excavations at several locations within the former Shaker community, discuss potential for future investigations, and outline the threats posed by development to what remains of this once vibrant communal society.

30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation + 5-10 minutes for questions.

5. "Archaeology at the Wilson Bruce Evans House, Oberlin, Ohio." David F. Klinge, MA, and Dr. Brant Venables, ASC Group, Inc.

Abstract: The Wilson Bruce Evans House is a National Historic Landmark in Oberlin, Ohio. The home was built between 1854 and the early 1870s by Wilson Bruce Evans and his brother, who emigrated to Oberlin from North Carolina. A free black tradesman, Wilson relocated his family to escape rapidly escalating racial persecution in the years immediately preceding the Civil War. Wilson was a prominent local tradesman and active abolitionist. He was an indicted participant in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue of 1858, and lived and worked in the house until his death in 1898. The house, a two-story brick building with a hipped roof, remained in possession of the Evans family into the 2010s and it was occupied, at least seasonally, by members of the family into the late 1990s.

The Wilson Bruce Evans Home Historical Society recently purchased the home and the surrounding properties with the express goal of preserving, restoring, and interpreting the site for the public. Archaeological investigations in advance of that work have documented a complex of former buildings on the property related to the last decades of Wilson's life and the expanded use of the property by his family. These features provide valuable insight regarding the sequence of construction on site, the trans-ference and conflation of construction techniques from the mid-Atlantic, and the expanded use of the property during the last decades of Wilson Bruce Evans life and after his passing.

30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation and 5-10 minutes for questions.

6. "Notes on the Efficacy of UAS-Based Photogrammetry Survey Paired with Traditional Geophysical Survey at Historical Archaeological and Cemetery Sites." Joseph E. B. Snider and Alexander C. Corkum, Terracon Consultants, Inc.

Abstract: Increasing demand for high-quality geophysical surveys at archaeological and historical cemetery sites, along with the proliferation of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), and continued advances in data processing software, the integration of airborne survey methods has never been more timely or more effective. The benefits of UAS-based photogrammetry survey include high-resolution, time-of-survey, orthorectified imagery as well as Digital Elevation Models (DEMs). While imagery provides an efficient means of mapping above ground structures, DEMs offer the ability to recorded subtle microtopographic features. This paper presents example datasets from a wide range of archaeological contexts, including residential, religious, and commercial site types, as well as several historical Euro-American and African American cemetery sites across Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia. Together, these case studies illustrate the growing importance of integrating aerial photogrammetry with geophysical survey methods and underscore the transformative potential of UAS technologies in the documentation, interpretation, and preservation of archaeological and historic cemetery landscapes.

30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation and 5-10 minutes for questions.

7. "Fourteen Years of Public Archaeology Exploring One of Ohio's Earliest Potteries." Wesley Clarke, MA, RPA, The Castle Museum.

Abstract: The Nathaniel Clark Pottery site (33WN490), in operation at Marietta, Washington County, Ohio, from 1808 to approximately 1849, produced both lead-glazed earthenware and salt-glazed stoneware. Field and archival research on the Clark manufactory since 2013 has encountered substantial archaeological and documentary information, providing a window for study of the local and regional socio-economic and technological contexts within which the Clark family operated. Work at the site has been accomplished largely with two annual field camps for middle school aged students and high school-adult ages, where inexperienced participants require close supervision. A coterie of skilled volunteers has also been developed that help supervise the field camps and continue the field work throughout the year. The material and documentary information for the Clark site is providing insights into the commercial development of early southeastern Ohio and its significant pottery craft industry.

30 minute time slot – 20-25 minute presentation and 5-10 minutes for questions.