

Bony labyrinth segmented from the
cranium of a medical specimen
Photo credit: Devin Ward

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	2	Brief Communication: SFU	7
Call for Submissions: Nexus	3	Grad Student Profiles	10
Student Rep's Message	4	My Toronto Summer of 1961	14
UNB Field School	5	Medusa Colloquium	20
Department News	6		

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ian Colquhoun, Western University



Greetings, CAPA-ACAP members.

Well, for those of us who keep tabs on the worlds of music and politics, 2016 certainly left us either shaking, or scratching, our heads. Thankfully, that was not the case for CAPA-ACAP in 2016! If you were unable to make it to Peterborough for the Association's 44th Annual Meeting, you missed a very fine gathering, with great hospitality shown by Trent University (kudos to **Anne Keenleyside, Jocelyn Williams, and their local organizing team** on a job that was most well done)!

Though the student presentation awards were announced at the closing of the Annual Meeting, I would like to also recognize the recipients here. The **Oschinsky-McKern Award** (Best Student Podium Presentation) went to **Iulia Bădescu**, University of Toronto, for her paper, "Weaning and comfort nursing in wild chimpanzees shown using fecal stable isotopes and behavioural data". The **Davidson-Black Award** (Best Student Poster Presentation) went to **Devin Ward**, University of Toronto and University of Cambridge, for her poster, "Expression of developmental stress through regional fluctuating asymmetry in the cranium"; **Honorable Mention** went to **Joana Dowhos** with co-author Matt Tocheri, Lakehead U., for their poster, "Three-dimensional geometric

morphometric analysis of the trapezium in modern humans, African apes, orangutans, and fossil humans". Congrats to all on their fine work!

In the wake of the Annual Meeting in Peterborough, there has also been a new addition to the CAPA-ACAP Executive. On behalf of the Association, I extend congratulations to **Sarah Duignan** (PhD student, McMaster University) on her election as the new **Student Representative** to the Executive. Welcome aboard, Sarah – I look forward to working with you over the next couple of years! I must also acknowledge **Madeleine (Maddie) Mant** for her exemplary service as the CAPA-ACAP Student Representative (2014–2016) – you've left big shoes to fill!

With 2017 now upon us, it's time to turn our sights west and start thinking about the **45th CAPA-ACAP Annual Meeting**. It will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, from October 25th–28th, 2017, with the **University of Alberta** as local host. **Sandra Garvie-Lok** and **Lesley Harrington** are already well on top of arrangements. The venue for the 45th Annual Meeting will be the Matrix Hotel Edmonton – check it out at www.matrixedmonton.com/, and

watch for updates on the [CAPA-ACAP website](#) regarding abstract submission, registration, and hotel reservation info for the 2017 Annual Meeting.

I have already sent out a mass email to members about this, but I think this is worth repeating. If you are looking for a bit of a break after the Winter 2017 term, you might consider taking in the **50th annual meeting of the Canadian Archaeological Association** (they've got a few years on us!). The CAA Annual meeting will be held in Ottawa-Gatineau from May 10th–13th, with the Canadian Museum of History serving as host; the

conference hotel will be the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel and Conference Centre in Gatineau, directly across the road from the Museum (I have stayed there, and it is a very comfortable hotel); for details, go to the conference website, [here](#).

So, as 2016 winds down, I trust everyone had a successful and productive 2016 Fall term. All the best to all over the holidays, and here's to happy and healthy 2017! Hope to see everyone in Edmonton!



NEXUS

The Canadian Student Journal of Anthropology

CALL FOR PAPERS: NEXUS VOLUME 25
Deadline: 11:59 PM EST on February 28th, 2017

We would like to remind students of the call for papers for the next issue of the peer reviewed anthropological graduate student journal, Nexus. For more than thirty years, Nexus has served as Canada's premier graduate student journal of anthropology. The journal is freely available online.

The editorial staff is seeking submissions from all four subfields at any level of graduate or upper level undergraduate work to be considered for publication in the upcoming issue. The deadline is 11:59 PM EST on February 28th, 2017. Manuscripts can be submitted online at journals.mcmaster.ca/nexus. Submission guidelines and instructions are also available on the Nexus website. Please contact us with any questions at nexusjournal@gmail.com.

We are also looking for peer-reviewers at this time. If you are interested in being a reviewer for Nexus please contact us at the above address with 'reviewer' in the subject line of your email.

We look forward to continuing this long tradition of showcasing Canadian academic excellence.

Your editorial staff,
Laura Lockau, Kaitlin East, and Samantha Price

MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Sarah Duignan, McMaster University



Hello, CAPA/ACAP Student Members!

As your new student representative, I would first like to thank the wonderful outgoing student representative, **Madeline Mant**, on her fantastic work and dedication for the association. Her work with student luncheons and advocacy has been exemplary and I hope to continue fostering the growth and presence of CAPA/ACAP student members in years to come.

For those who do not know me, I am currently a second year PhD student at McMaster University. My research focuses on body image dissatisfaction as it relates to identity and belonging among adolescent girls in Canada, particularly among newcomer female youth. I am utilizing arts-based methodologies to explore new ways of understanding, communicating, and researching body image issues and the broader element of belonging within social groups that comes with these problems. I am very interested in how people negotiate illness and how they share their stories and experiences with others, advocating for self-expression as a way to resist mental health and body stigma.

CAPA/ACAP was first introduced to me as a friendly meeting, a place where you could share your ideas and research without fear or (too much) sweat. The association provides a very

nurturing environment for young researchers, and takes pride in the accomplishments of its members, particularly students. The newsletter remains a wonderful place to communicate throughout the year while we are stretched apart from each other. I encourage student members to consider sharing information and news through this medium, particularly your abstracts and any websites or tools for our “Physical Anthropology on the Web” feature. Public outreach is an important element in working as a physical anthropologist today, so this is a great opportunity for our social media-savvy student members to let their voices be heard! The annual meetings are also a wonderful place for first-time presenters, and I loved seeing the wide array of new research coming forth from our student members at the 44th meeting in Peterborough this October.

This time of year many of us will be returning to be with family or friends, some of us travelling great distances to do so. Since starting grad school, I find these moments to be a bit strange: you’ve burrowed into the end-of semester wave of assignments, applications, marking, and other odd jobs, only to have to quickly catch the plane or train or taxi cab to your holiday gatherings and have to return to the world beyond your desk. It’s a great time for reflection and for re-energizing. I’ve long been a supporter of

graduate students discussing and pursuing activities and passions outside of curricular needs for the very same reason. I think we become better writers, researchers, and analyzers when we are able to find joy in activities that make us stop thinking about that thesis, even if only for a moment. These sorts of moments let us gather our energy and turn it into something beautiful, and I would argue that this, in turn, creates stronger versions of our academic selves as well. I think the holidays provide a tabula rasa, and it is a good

opportunity for all of us to recharge and reconnect with the people and activities we love.

Thank you all again for this opportunity, I look forward to getting to know you both formally and informally over the next two years. Please feel free to contact me at duignase@mcmaster.ca with opinions, research, stories, bad anthropology puns, and everything in between.

Best,
Sarah Duignan



In July 2017, the Department of Anthropology, **University of New Brunswick**, in partnership with Parks Canada, are offering a **bioarchaeology field school** at the **Fortress of Louisbourg** National Historic Site of Canada. Established in 1713, Louisbourg was an important French fishing port, evolving into a military stronghold, transshipment centre, and the capital of Ile Royale in the 1720s. By the mid-18th century, Louisbourg comprised a 60-acre fortress, coastal defences and a harbour. Louisbourg was successfully besieged twice, first in 1745 and then by the British in 1758. The second siege marked the end for Louisbourg, as the British destroyed the fortifications in 1760. Rochefort Point was the primary burial ground for the inhabitants of Louisbourg after c.1739; however, sea level rise and coastal erosion have put the burial ground at risk. Efforts to manage coastal erosion impacts at Louisbourg has prompted this long-term rescue excavation and analysis of the burials.

This bioarchaeological field program offers students experience in excavation, field data recording, and analysis of human skeletal remains, including ethical handling practices, curation and storage. The field program will run from **July 23 to August 20**. For more information about the program and to apply check out our [website](#), find us on Facebook [@UNB Bioarchaeology Field School](#), or see page 22 of this newsletter.



DEPARTMENT NEWS

McMaster University

Our graduate students have been busy in 2016! We are pleased to announce the following successful graduates from the Biological Anthropology and Anthropology of Health graduate program at McMaster:

Alyson E. J. Holland, PhD: *Thwarting The Silent Thief: Informing Nutrition-Based Osteoporosis Prevention Education for Canadian Young Adults*

Madeleine L. Mant, PhD: *Slips, Trips, Falls, and Brawls: Fractures of the Working Poor in London during the Long Eighteenth-Century*

Stephanie Marciniak, PhD: *Scourge of the Empire? Ancient Pathogen Genomics and the Biosocial Context of Malaria in Imperial-Era Southern Italy (1st-4th c. A.D.)*

Creighton Avery, MA: *An Analysis of Dental Health in Relation to Sex and Social Status at Roman Winchester*

Lindsay Grenier, MA: *An Investigation of the Impact of Knowledge Translation of Dietary Health Information During Pregnancy: A Case Study from the Mothers2Babies Project in Hamilton, Ontario* (major research paper)

Dana Hart, MA: *Gender and Veganism: A Qualitative Analysis of Three Vegan Blogs* (major research paper)

Lisa Semchuk, MA: *A Stable Isotope Investigation of Diet in the Vagnari Cemetery* (thesis)

Sarah Timmins, MA: *Subadult Growth And Rickets From A Late Roman And Merovingian Period Context In Lisieux, France* (thesis)

Xuan Wei, MA: *An Evaluation of "Old Age" Traits in Transition Analysis and Mandibular Ridge Resorption in Age Estimation of Older Individuals* (thesis)

BRIEF COMMUNICATION

Hugo Cardoso, Simon Fraser University

Development of a new skeletal reference collection in Canada and science outreach projects in Portugal

I would like to make the physical anthropology community aware of the project I am undertaking through a partnership between Simon Fraser University and the Municipality of Lisbon, Portugal, to 1) develop a new skeletal reference collection in Canada, for research and teaching purposes, and 2) promote science education and public outreach in Portugal. The terms of the project stem from my belief that a strong and productive partnership between scientific institutions and the local and international communities they serve is crucial for the sustainable and long-lasting development of science, and for improving scientific and civic public education that serves individuals and peoples.

Various institutions in Portugal have a very old tradition of amassing modern human skeletons from local cemeteries to develop skeletal reference collections. Currently, various collections hold cemetery remains amassed from the cities of Lisbon, Coimbra, Santarém, Porto and Évora. Skeletal reference collections have had a major role in the birth and development of physical anthropology as a discipline and its importance relies on the fact that the individuals in these collections are personally identified through antemortem records. Although in North America skeletons in similar collections have originated from cadavers used in anatomy and dissection classes, in

Portugal (as well as southern Europe and South America) these collections are only possible thanks to the involvement of the municipalities, which are legally responsible for cemetery management. For more than a century, municipalities in Portugal have facilitated and provided academic institutions with access to abandoned remains at these cemeteries, which are otherwise meant for incineration. The secularization of cemeteries and the Catholic mortuary practice of temporary burial and exhumation of bones for secondary internments in ossuaries partly explains this long relationship



Hugo working at the Natural History Museum in Portugal.

between the scientific community and the municipalities, which encourages the use of abandoned remains for research and teaching.

This project was initiated in 2014, when I submitted a formal request to the Lisbon Municipality to obtain abandoned remains from the local cemeteries, ship them to Simon Fraser University and curate them in Canada on a long-term but temporary basis, for research and teaching purposes. Between 2014 and 2016, my request was reviewed and approved by the Portuguese National Ethics Commission for the Life Sciences, the National Institute of Legal Medicine, and the Lisbon City Hall Legal Services. In 2016, the City Council voted unanimously in favour of sending the remains to Canada. The number of remains that will be sent to Canada will depend on sources of funding. Shipping costs are expected to be very high, since the project will respect the international legislation regarding the transportation of the deceased and of human remains.

Currently, I am finalizing with the Municipality of Lisbon the conditions under which the remains will be collected, shipped and curated at Simon Fraser University, and eventually returned to Portugal. This also includes detailing a variety of activities developed in partnership with the Lisbon Municipality aimed at promoting public awareness and understanding of science, as well as making formal and informal contributions to science education in general and specific issues related to this project. These activities include, for example, an exhibition, public talks and workshops about the scientific and societal importance of studying human bones, as well as interchange incentives aimed at university students.



Alto de Sao cemetery, the largest cemetery in Lisbon.

Photo credit: Hugo Cardoso

The project is also based on and justified by a set of benefits that include:

- 1) The establishment of the ethical and legal framework for these collections in Portugal. Traditionally, the amassing of the collections has not been subjected to the scrutiny of ethics commissions, and have occurred in a legal void. The letters provided in support of this project by the National Ethics Commission for the Life Sciences and the National Institute of Legal Medicine, have provided such a framework based on general principles, provisions and practice of the law by analogy, thus deeming unnecessary any formal changes in legislation.
- 2) The transportation and curation of the remains in Canada and their return to Portugal will be supported by Canadian and other funding agencies, thus unburdening the Lisbon Municipality of any costs associated with the use of the remains by a Canadian university.
- 3) The predictable incineration and consequent destruction and de-individualization of the remains is prevented. These remains will instead become a fundamental source of information about the biology of humans in the past, and for the study of the interplay between the evolutionary and sociocultural processes that shape human biological diversity. They will also

serve as a unique source of teaching materials, for the basic and advanced training of students in human osteology.

4) The promotion of science education and culture in Portugal, under a number of activities that will be developed in partnership with the Lisbon Municipality. This type of community outreach will demonstrate to the general public the value and potential of the ethical study of human remains.

Consequently, the successful development of this partnership is dependent on:

1) respect for the current legislation and ethical standards in Portugal and Canada regarding the use of human remains for research and teaching purposes, and
2) application of the principle of reciprocity between the Lisbon Municipality and Simon Fraser University. In

particular, it has been based on a good understanding of the parties' unique contribution to a strong public and civic education grounded on the development of science and the promotion of public understanding and of the social returns of its products.

The project is supported by my many decades of experience developing, expanding, curating and managing these collections in Portugal, specifically at the National Museum of Natural History in Lisbon, and the Northern Delegation of

the National Institute of Legal Medicine in Porto. It is also supported by the Department of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University, which has long had a reputation for high quality research and training in human osteology, and also for meeting high technical standards in the curation and management of human skeletal collections.

If you have questions or suggestions about this project please email me at hcardoso@sfu.ca. I welcome any ideas for science outreach activities and any feedback about ethical issues

or any other legal, scientific, pedagogical or curational concerns with the project. To my understanding, very few other projects like this have been undertaken anywhere in the world. However, if you are or have been involved in similar projects, I would really like to hear from you about your

experience. Funds are currently being sought to cover the very substantial shipping costs associated with the project. Although it is expected that SFU will cover some of the costs, other sources of funding will be required. If you have any suggestions about funding sources or are interested in donating to the endowment fund that is being created for the collection, please let me know. It is anticipated that the shipment of the first set of remains to Canada will happen in the second half of 2017.



A skeleton from the BoneMedLeg collection in Porto, Portugal.

Photo credit: Hugo Cardoso

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Devin Ward, PhD student, University of Toronto

Devin is a PhD student at the University of Toronto, studying causes and types of variation in the modern human inner ear. She has a B.S. (Hons.) in Evolutionary Anthropology from Rutgers University and a M.Phil. in Biological Anthropological Science from the University of Cambridge (Darwin College). Her affinity for biology and history stems from a childhood in the northern woods of Maine, where ecology is an important part of cultural heritage.

During her M.Phil., Devin examined indicators of nonspecific stress with two populations of ancient Egyptians and Nubians. Although she used several approaches to do so, including body size, fluctuating asymmetry, and linear enamel hypoplasia, she also included analysis of the inner ear, or bony labyrinth. As the bony labyrinth completes growth before birth, it provides a unique perspective on cranial development. To access the labyrinthine structure nondestructively, Devin microCT-scanned each cranium in the Cambridge Biotomography Centre. The bony labyrinth has been found to scale positively with body size throughout primates, but her M.Phil. research did not identify the same trend within *Homo sapiens* samples she studied. This suggests that further exploration of factors controlling labyrinthine size is needed.

For her poster at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology, she presented additional findings from her M.Phil. Devin evaluated levels of fluctuating



Devin Ward at Cambridge University, UK.

asymmetry in the bony labyrinth, cranial base, vault, and face in the same samples of Egyptians and Nubians. Her findings confirm previous ideas about developmental stability in the bony labyrinth, identifying low levels of fluctuating asymmetry, but may question theories supporting stability in the cranial base, where the highest levels of fluctuating asymmetry were identified.

In her PhD research, Devin intends to expand her work on the bony labyrinth. She plans on addressing inheritance of bony labyrinth morphology, as well as the effects of external stressors, such as malnutrition, on morphology. To do so, she will combine both archaeological samples of human skeletal remains as well as model organisms, including mice.

Devin is also associated with two archaeological projects, one in Italy and one in Gibraltar. As the Osteological Supervisor at the Rutgers University Archaeological Field School in Italy, she conducts bioarchaeological and zooarchaeological analysis on all skeletal remains recovered on site. This project excavates a Roman villa in the Sabina Tiberina. Through study of the burials identified to date

(600-700 CE), Devin's research contributes towards a better understanding of the life of the villa after its ruin by assessing health, age, sex, and body size in its possible inhabitants. As a research assistant with the "Death on the Rock" project, Devin performs standard osteological analysis of human remains excavated from the old St. Bernard's Hospital. Funded by the University of Cambridge, the HM Government of Gibraltar, and the University of Gibraltar, this project seeks to evaluate the origin and nature of the 200 previously-unknown burials.

Vacone, Italy, location of the Rutgers University Archaeological Field School in Italy.

Photo credit: Devin Ward



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Medusa 2017: University of Toronto Anthropology Graduate Students' Union Colloquium, at the University of Toronto, **March 16–17, 2017**. Deadline for abstracts **Jan. 10, 2017**. See www.utorontoagsu.com/academic-event/ and page X of this newsletter for more details.

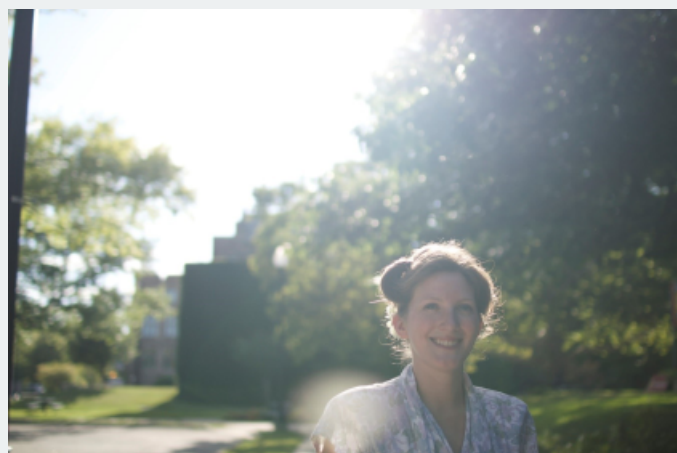
American Society of Primatologists: Washington, D.C., August 25–28, 2017. Go to: <https://www.asp.org/meetings/>

Canadian Archaeological Association: Ottawa/Gatineau, May 10–13, 2017. Go to: <http://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/annual-meeting>

Watch for more details soon on **CAPA-ACAP's 45th Annual Meeting**, in Edmonton, Alberta, hosted by the **University of Alberta**. Mark the dates on your calendar now: **Oct. 25–28, 2017**.

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Lisa Semchuk, MA, McMaster University



Lisa Semchuk photographed at McMaster University.

Photo Credit: Huy Thach

When it came time for me to start post secondary studies, one of my biggest challenges was deciding on a field. There were so many disciplines that I found engaging or intellectually stimulating, and when I learned about anthropology, I learned that I could synthesize my interests under one field of study.

My undergraduate studies began in anthropology at the University of Manitoba with a focus in biological anthropology, but also heavily incorporating courses in archaeology and cultural anthropology. I developed research interests in human skeletal biology, growth and development, and social determinants of health. These interests led me to opportunities such as the Drawsko Field School in Mortuary Archaeology, designing my own independent research project with Dr. Rob Hoppa, and working as a research

assistant for Dr. Tracey Galloway on projects involving food insecurity and health care in Northern Canada.

Outside of my studies, I honed my skills in anthropology through different volunteer and work experiences at the Manitoba Museum and the Province of Manitoba's Historic Resources Branch.



Lisa Semchuk after a day of digging at the Drawsko Field School in Mortuary Archaeology in Drawsko, Poland.

After completing my Bachelor of Arts at the University of Manitoba, I pursued graduate studies at McMaster University under the supervision of Dr. Tracy Prowse. My thesis, 'A Stable Isotope Investigation of Diet at Vagnari,' examined the foods eaten by people buried in the cemetery of a Roman industrial estate (1st – 4th centuries AD). The people buried at Vagnari were presumably the

workforce of the estate, and would have been responsible for the many agricultural and manufacturing activities that took place at the site. Roman diet in historical research is often biased towards the foods eaten by the urban elite, so my focus on a sample of rural estate workers helps to illustrate in further detail what ordinary Romans ate. Studies of Roman diet can help us understand not only what foods were eaten, but perceptions about the foods individuals should be eating according to factors such as age, gender, or status.

For my thesis, I combined stable isotope data with age estimations, sex

assessments, and analyses of grave good assemblages from individuals buried in the Vagnari cemetery to understand dietary variation at the site. I also incorporated historical research, such as information on Roman social ages and perceptions of food and health from dietetics, to understand dietary variation at Vagnari within a Roman cultural context. Lastly, I compared the stable isotope data from Vagnari with published isotope data from contemporary sites in Italy to situate the Vagnari diet within a broader Roman context. This analysis explored some of the dietary variation within and between locales of Roman Italy, and discussed how additional factors, such as the location, situation, and function of a site, can influence the food choices

available to the individuals who inhabit it. Aside from my thesis project at McMaster University, I was involved as a research assistant in Dr. Megan Brickley's SSHRC funded project, 'Social-Cultural Determinants of Community Wellbeing in the Western Roman Empire: Analysis and Interpretation of Vitamin D Status.' I was also a teaching assistant for courses in bioarchaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology, which allowed me to share my passion and knowledge of the field with students at McMaster University.

Beyond the realm of academia, I am an avid swing dancer, and travel frequently to participate in swing dance workshops or competitions. My recent feats in swing dancing include taking home the gold medal in the Newcomer Lindy Hop division at the 2016 Canadian Swing Dance Championships, as well as attending the international Herräng Dance Camp in Sweden.

At present, my studies are on hiatus while I engage with anthropology for the public, which has most recently led me to work in consulting archaeology. In the meantime, I am working on disseminating my thesis results, and exploring different possibilities for where my research interests in anthropology can lead me next.



Lisa Semchuk celebrating a successful Master's defense at McMaster University.

MY TORONTO SUMMER OF 1961

Professor Emeritus Charles F. Merbs, Arizona State University

'My Toronto Summer of 1961' is one in a series of essays by Charles Merbs; 'Dressing for Dinner' appeared in CAPA-ACAP's Fall 2015 newsletter. In this essay, Prof. Merbs describes meeting his mentor, Dr. J.E. Anderson, and their work together on the Fairty ossuary.

This story actually begins during the summer of 1959 on Southampton Island, north of Hudson Bay. I was there to study the burials of the native Inuit group on the island, the Sadlermiut, who became extinct from an epidemic during the winter of 1902–03. When we arrived at Coral Harbour and packed our equipment for the trip to the sites we were to excavate, I discovered that the person responsible for bringing our archaeological supplies had forgotten to bring trowels. The Hudson Bay Company factory had nothing trowel-like to offer, so something to serve the purpose would have to be found at the first site we visited, which happened to be at Prairie Point. Several possibilities were considered and I finally settled on seal scapulae. They were readily available and needed a minimum of alteration to serve our purpose. It was important not to leave them behind, however, so they would not be mistaken for Inuit manufacture. So that is how I became a seal scapula tool expert.

The first two burials at Prairie Point had been badly disturbed, but the second, PP-2, yielded a wealth of artifacts. One of these was an unusual bone scraper. The following year, I received a reprint from William E. Taylor, Jr., an archaeologist at the National Museum of

Canada (now the Canadian Museum of History), titled *A Description of Sadlermiut Houses Excavated at Native Point, Southampton Island, N.W.T.* (now Nunavut). Plate VIII (p. 91) included photos of two bone scrapers. The first (E) was a very common Inuit scraper made from the scapula of a caribou. When I showed one of these artifacts to an Inuit woman, she identified it as an all-purpose scraper, “especially good for baby’s diapers,” she added with a smile. The second (F) was a bit beat up, but I immediately identified it as similar to the one I had found at Prairie Point three years earlier. Taylor’s identification read “scraper of seal scapula.” No way. My 1959 trowel experience had made me an expert on seal scapulae and this was not one. The scraper, I concluded, had been fashioned out of the mandible of a polar bear and was an implement unique to the Sadlermiut. I was a young graduate student who probably didn’t know his place, but I felt compelled to point this out to Dr. Taylor. The response I got was delightful, and forged an immediate friendship. “When I got your letter,” it read, “I knew you were wrong. We had more of this kind of scraper in our collections so I immediately brought them out for a quick identification. Damn. You are right. They are polar bear.”

Dr. Anderson now enters the picture. Sometime during the Spring of 1961, I received a call from him out of the blue asking if I had any plans for the summer. I didn't. I was getting ready to leave Wisconsin at the end of the summer to begin work toward my Ph.D. at the University of Arizona in Tucson. I was born in Wisconsin and my education was purely Wisconsin, from kindergarten through my M.A., and I felt it advisable to add a bit of diversity to the mix, to spend some time in the desert. All my thoughts were on the following school year, not the summer. (As it turned out, the diversity experiment lasted only a year. I returned to Wisconsin for my Ph.D.)

Dr. Anderson said he had received a grant from the National Museum of Canada to study an Ontario Iroquois ossuary collection from a site called Fairty. He needed two graduate assistants and would I be interested in being one of them. I had been recommended by Bill Taylor. I had heard of Dr. Anderson and knew something of his reputation as the premier human osteologist in Canada. The thought of spending a summer with him working on a large collection of bones in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Toronto was very appealing indeed. The other assistant was to be someone named Nancy, one of his own

students. Her specialty, I was told, was as much anatomy as it was anthropology. We would be working on the Fairty collection, but also recording variation (discrete traits) in what was referred to at the time as the Normal Collection. It consisted of 202 adult human skeletons collected between 1928 and the 1950s, each was documented with name, sex, age at death, and cause of death. Today it is

known as the JCB Grant Collection.

My Canadian summer did not get off to a good start. I drove from Madison to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and crossed over to the Canadian side. Officials at customs and immigration asked me why I was visiting Canada and my response was "I have a job waiting for me in Toronto." Big mistake! The correct answer would have been "just for pleasure." I

heard one official mumble to another "half of Canada is out of work and the other half is on strike, and this fellow says he has a job waiting for him." I was asked to produce proof of this job and I had none. Everything had been arranged by phone. I was politely told to return to the United States and come back to Canada when I had written proof of this job. So I returned to the Michigan side and immediately tried to put in a collect call (I was a poor graduate student) to the University of Toronto. However, there was a problem. The U.S.



The polar bear mandible scraper that started Prof. Merbs' Toronto adventure.

Photo credit: Charles Merbs

telephone workers were on strike. After some time, I was finally able to get a man's voice, which said he would try to put me through. A Department of Anatomy secretary came on the line and was very suspicious of the male voice in a time when all phone operators were female. "Where is the regular operator?" she asked. His response was a very firm "Ma'am, I am your good-looking operator today. Please put me through to Dr. Anderson." She gave in and Jim came on the line accepting the call. I told him my predicament and he laughed. "You call this a job," he said. "You are not being paid enough to eat. Have a good sleep and go back tomorrow morning." I did as he instructed. When I crossed over in the morning I was confronted by one of the same officials from the day before. This time he just asked for my passport, stamped it, and with big smile said, "Welcome to Canada."

My home for the summer was the apartment of James Van Stone, arctic archaeologist turned ethnographer and professor at the University of Toronto. Jim, as usual, was spending his summer with the Inuit. He had been a member of our 1959 team on Southampton Island and we were good friends. The apartment was located at 710 Spadina Avenue, just south of Bloor, a walkable distance to the university, and it had a balcony and an underground garage. I don't recall what floor it was on, but I took great pleasure sitting on my balcony, looking down on Toronto. I brought only one book along, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and figured that was enough to fill in any spare reading time I would have.

When I met Dr. Anderson, he told me immediately to call him Jim, never James. In publications he was J. E. Anderson. My fellow student researcher introduced herself as Nancy Cameron. I also quickly discovered that being Jim's assistant meant that I had become part of his family. I met his wife, Helen, and after work each Friday, Jim and I drove to his home in a suburb west of Toronto, where I spent the weekend. One weekly ritual I recall was the

three of us watching "Danger Man" on TV. Jim loved that show.

The Fairty ossuary represented a secondary burial practice of the Ontario Iroquois known as the Feast of the Dead (Kidd 1953). After a period of time during which the dead were buried individually, all of the bodies in their various stages of decomposition were collected and placed with great ceremony in a large pit surrounded by scaffolding. What had been individuals now became a large undifferentiated collection of parts and, ultimately, bones. Excavated by J. Norman Emerson and the Ontario Archaeological Society, the Fairty ossuary appears to have been associated with the adjacent Robb site, which had been occupied around AD 1400.

Analyzing the bones from Fairty was a challenging undertaking. We were confronted with approximately 36,000 bones and bone fragments but not a single individual. The project took over a large anatomy classroom equipped with long tables, which were divided into sections. There was the radius section, for example, subadults separated from adults, and further divided into complete and fragmentary, the latter into midshafts, proximal ends and distal ends. The bones and parts were also separated by side. Parts were glued together whenever a match was found. The first task was to get a minimum individual count. We had a kind of lottery going to guess which part of which bone would give us the highest minimum count. Factors to be considered were probability of recovery (which could rule out very small bones), preservation (bone density being a factor here), bilateral occurrence, identifying features (infants could be a problem), etc. The part producing the highest count turned out to be the distal humerus, 512, a part I don't think any of us picked. Adults made up 58% of the total, adolescents 14%, and prepubertal individuals 28% (Anderson 1963, p. 33).

We found the language of paleopathology a bit weak in those days, so Jim suggested we create our own language and worry about proper terminology later. I still remember some of the words we coined, such as adjectives “frimly” and “gormly,” and the noun “gloid.” A frimly, gormly gloid would be a truly impressive pathology.

Jim also introduced us to a game he liked to play. You would make a circle with your thumb and index finger and try to get another person to look at it. If you succeeded you got to draw an X on his or her upper arm and hit it firmly, but not painfully, with your fist. Jim was a master at this game. I remember one occasion when he brought over an open paper bag and said look at what he had found. I looked into the bag and there was the dreaded circle. He had torn a hole in the bottom of the bag and put his fingers through it. Being able to catch him was a rarity. It was silly but it worked to break up the monotony and keep us alert.

Once or twice a week we had a very distinguished visitor, the famous anatomist and Jim’s mentor, Dr. J. C. Boileau Grant. We were all familiar with *Grant’s Atlas of Anatomy* and his *Method of Anatomy*, as well as his anthropometry studies among various First Nations groups. Having access to his vast knowledge of the human skeleton was a real treat and I was always ready for his visits with something to show him or questions to ask. He never disappointed me. When I showed him something that I thought was new and exciting he would say, “Yes, I remember something like that.” Then, on his next visit he would lend me articles written on that subject, some of them dating to the 1800s, and some in languages other than English, plus personal letters in which he discussed the feature with other anatomists around the world. We do truly stand on the shoulders of giants.

Dr. Grant always had a black umbrella with him, even on sunny days, an umbrella of the sort that opens automatically when you press a button. Jim said that Dr. Grant was the first to find and purchase such an umbrella, and his graduate students, Jim included, quickly followed suit, such was their admiration for the man.

Sometimes Jim and I would have a disagreement about some feature. One had to do with spondylolysis, a subject I was very familiar with from my work with the Sadlermiut. “How many cases have you found in Fairty?” I asked. “Five,” was his answer. That seemed like an exceptionally low frequency for any population, so I gathered up all the lumbar vertebrae and did my own study. I think I came up with something like 17 cases. When I confronted him with my results, he said that many of the cases I was calling spondylolysis looked to him like simple postmortem fractures. So we got out a microscope and I was able to demonstrate that in each case some degree of resorption had taken place on the separated edges, that the phenomenon was definitely premortem. I won that battle, and Jim was a gracious loser, saying that was what science was all about, but in truth I lost more battles with him than I won.

Weekends sometimes involved “field trips.” On one occasion, Jim received a call from someone in Southampton, Ontario, who said a buried skeleton had been found and would he come and remove it. A local doctor assured everyone that it was human. So we drove to Southampton, Jim and Helen, Nancy and her husband Duncan, and me. The “human” skeleton turned out to be a pig, and the doctor was nowhere to be found.

On another weekend trip, Jim, Nancy and I followed up on a tip we received about a site that supposedly had been abandoned before a feast of the dead could be performed, so it still

contained individual burials. We visited the site and checked it out and it did indeed appear to be as described. It would be interesting to study individual skeletons instead of a collection of bones for a change. We saw a man on a tractor plowing a field adjacent to the site, and Jim went over to talk to him and came back with the happy news that we were indeed free to investigate the site. Nancy and I set to work doing some preliminary excavation while Jim went over to the farm house to make it all more official. When he came back he had a strange expression on his face. "Stop digging and pack the equipment," he said. It turned out that the man on the tractor did not own the site property, nor did he like the man who did. Jim said that the real owner looked him straight in the eye and said, "Have you been reborn?" Jim hesitated, so it was clear he had not, so that was the end of that.

Jim took advantage of my knowledge of Inuit osteology to study some skeletal material from the Canadian Arctic curated by the Royal Ontario Museum. We would publish the results and I would have a publication for my vitae (Anderson and Merbs, 1962). One area of disagreement in the study involved the interpretation of missing incisors. Jim followed Aleš Hrdlička's interpretation, that they resulted from ritual ablation. I saw them as accidental loss from tooth use. His interpretation won out as evidenced by the content of our publication, but I wasn't going to let it rest. I went on to refute Hrdlička's interpretation using his own data plus a bit of mine (Merbs 1968). One weekend, Jim, Helen and I traveled to Queens University in Kingston to a friend of Jim's from his school days in Toronto, Dr. John V. Basmajian. Jim asked Dr. Basmajian to review our Inuit manuscript before we sent it in for publication and he agreed. He also mentioned that he intended to hire a physical anthropologist for the Queens' faculty as soon as he could. My ears perked.

Another weekend, we visited a field school actually excavating an Iroquois site, so I got to see how these people, like those represented by the Fairty Collection, actually dealt with the world.

It was an incredible summer. My knowledge of human osteology took a quantum leap and I made some wonderful new friends. Under "Acknowledgments" in the Fairty report, Jim wrote "Many students participated in the programme. In particular, Mr. Charles Merbs, Mrs. Nancy Cameron, and Mr. Richard Austin contributed greatly to the preparation of data for analysis. Their interest and great care suggest a productive future for them in physical anthropology" (Anderson 1963:30). I treasure that comment. Nancy you know today as Nancy Ossenberg.

I was married the following summer in New York City and my wife, Barbara, and I headed north through Vermont into Canada, then westward toward Wisconsin to get ready for the next school year. We spent time in Quebec City, passed through Montreal, and made a stop in Kingston to see if Dr. Basmajian had been able to get the physical anthropology position at Queens, and, if so, could I apply? He said he was still trying and found it rather humorous that I included job hunting as part of my honeymoon. We continued on to Toronto and went to visit Jim and Helen. One of Jim's first comments was "How did you like Niagara Falls?" When we said that the Falls were not on our itinerary, he decided otherwise. We spent the night with the Andersons. The next morning, Helen packed a lunch and we all, including a new member of the family, adopted son Ronnie, headed for the Falls.

Among the many things I learned from Jim Anderson during my Toronto summer of 1961 was that a person's activity patterns can, under ideal circumstances, become imprinted on his

or her skeleton. I also realized that the skeletons I was working on for my dissertation, a group of Inuit, were ideal for this kind of analysis. All men did essentially the same thing and the same was true of the women, but the patterns of behaviour for the two sexes were very different. They dealt with their extremely harsh environment as highly skilled hunters, resulting in behavioural patterns that could be easily identified and correlated with skeletal changes. I very badly wanted Jim to be on my doctoral committee and he wanted that as well. However, the policy of the University of Wisconsin was that all members of one's doctoral committee had to be faculty members at

the University of Wisconsin. That was a great disappointment for both of us. Nevertheless, I still feel that I was lucky enough to have not one but two primary mentors, my advisor and dissertation committee chair of record, William Laughlin, and my osteology mentor extraordinaire, J. E. Anderson. It is interesting that Bill Laughlin always said he felt the same way. He also had two primary mentors, his advisor and dissertation chair, Albert Hooten, and his bioarchaeology field mentor, Aleš Hrdlička.

References Cited

- Anderson J. E. (1963) The People of Fairty. An osteological analysis of an Iroquois ossuary. National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 193. Contributions to Anthropology, 1961-62, Pt. 1, pp. 28-129. Ottawa.
- Anderson J. E. And C. F. Merbs (1962) A contribution to the human ontology of the Canadian Arctic. Royal Ontario Museum Art and Archaeology Division, Occasional Paper 4, pp. 65 94. Toronto.
- Kidd, K. E. (1953) The excavation and historical identification of a Huron ossuary. American Antiquity 18, pp. 359-379.
- Merbs C. F. (1968) Anterior tooth loss in Arctic populations. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 20 32.
- Taylor, W. E., Jr. (1960) A description of Sadlermiut houses excavated at Native Point, Southampton Island, N.W.T. National Museum of Canada Bulletin 162, Contributions to Anthropology, 1957, pp. 53-100. Ottawa.
-

CALL FOR PAPERS: MEDUSA 2017

MEDUSA: University of Toronto Anthropology Graduate Students' Union Colloquium

Deadline: Tuesday January 10th, 2017

Contact: agsusymposium@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.utorontoagsu.com/academic-event/>

The Anthropology Graduate Students' Union (AGSU) at the University of Toronto invites proposals for the 4th annual MEDUSA colloquium. The colloquium will take place on Thursday, March 16th and Friday, March 17th, 2017 in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, St. George campus.

The theme of the 2017 colloquium is "Translation". Translation is a word that itself can be defined in different ways. From protein synthesis within living organisms, to interpretations of ancient and modern languages; translation is a concept that is used in a variety of ways within anthropological inquiry. However, anthropological knowledge production often leaves behind many who could benefit from our unique perspectives. With the theme of Medusa 2017 we challenge anthropologists to disseminate their most thought provoking and interesting work that showcases the new generation of collaborative anthropology. We encourage the submission of high-quality student research on any topic, but most especially those which creatively interpret themes of accessibility, connection, and understanding.

The colloquium is open to students (both graduate and undergraduate) across disciplines and institutions. In addition to submissions from all sub-disciplines of anthropology offered at the University of Toronto, we strongly encourage submissions from other disciplines working on relevant topics related to human, non-human, and post-human evolution, culture, history, health, and society.

Conference Format:

We are accepting panel presentation submissions, individual paper presentations, and poster presentations. Individual papers will be grouped together into a relevant panel. Presentations will be 15 minutes in length, followed by discussion. Posters are to be no larger than 3'10" or 116 cm (horizontal dimension) and 4' or 120 cm (vertical dimension). Prizes will be awarded for the best student paper and poster. Pending funding, we will offer modest compensation for travel expenses. Such funds will be disbursed on a case-by-case basis, and are not guaranteed.

In addition to presentation and poster submissions, we encourage the submission of media works related to your research and fieldwork. This includes photos, auditory media, or other creative compositions, please contact us should you require any further clarification.

Submission Instructions:

For individual paper and poster submissions, please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words to agsusymposium@gmail.com by January 10th, 2017. For panel submissions, please submit a proposal as well as the abstracts for each paper on the panel (maximum 4 papers). Submissions should also include the following information in the body of the email: presenters name, program (Undergrad, MA, MSc, PhD, faculty), year of study, research focus, university/department, complete address, telephone number, email address, title of paper, and audio-visual requirements.



A unique
hands-on
bioarchaeological
experience.

UNB BIOARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG, CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA

July 23-August 20, 2017

Gain bioarchaeological field experience and earn 6 credit hours.

- Excavate the 18th-century burial ground at the Fortress of Louisbourg, National Historic Site of Canada
- Learn bioarchaeological field techniques involving human remains and mortuary artifacts
- Gain hands-on lab skills for processing and analyzing human remains

Courses are taken concurrently:

ANTH 3552 (Bioarchaeology Field School I)

ANTH 3553 (Bioarchaeology Field School II)

For additional details, visit go.unb.ca/cel-bioarch

Phone: 506 458-7994 Email: bioarchfieldschool@unb.ca



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

