

Abstract

Beaver Island, Michigan was a unique settlement location in the late nineteenth century as families predominately from Árann Mhór, an island off the coast of Co. Donegal, immigrated to northern Lake Michigan. These Irish immigrants were able to reproduce many aspects of their rural, fishing, and farming lifeways from Ireland and establish a thriving ethnic enclave. A Mormon sect that had previously occupied the island, however, played a significant role in shaping the cultural landscapes and material conditions into which the Irish arrived. We use niche construction as a model of analysis to understand how the Mormons shaped space into place and what this meant for the socio-ecological legacy that Irish immigrants inherited. Utilizing archaeological and historical data, we investigate the non-linear and interactive influences of cultural groups upon one another and the mutual mutability of the social and physical worlds that individual agents inhabited, experienced, and transformed (Rotman and Fuentes n.d.).

This technical report documents the research activity from the 2012 field season. It includes a summary of the archaeological excavations at the Dan and Catherine Boyle Farm Site (20CX204) on Beaver Island along with attendant documentary research and oral history collection. We present our preliminary research results. Historical and archaeological investigations of Irish immigrant experiences on the island are on-going. As new data is collected, the preliminary interpretations presented here will undoubtedly be revised. Interested parties may follow the team's work by visit our blog at <http://blogs.nd.edu/irishstories>.

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Chapter 1: Project Introduction

As Irish immigrants from Árainn Mhór off the coast of County Donegal (Figure 1.1, left) began new lives on Beaver Island in northern Michigan (Figure 1.1, right), their identities and social worlds were significantly shaped by their interactions with a variety of cultural groups, including Mormons, Native Americans, and others with whom they had contact. This interdisciplinary project began in 2010 to undertake archaeological and historical investigations of a series of 19th-century homesteads associated with Irish immigrants on Beaver Island, Michigan. We have thus far spent three field seasons on the island, excavating two years at the Gallagher Homestead (20CX201) near Little Sand Bay and one year at the Boyle Farm Site (20CX204). Funding permitted, this research will continue for the next several years.

Transnational research, including the use of archival resources and collection of oral histories in both the United States and Ireland, have been central to the project as has the incorporation of undergraduate students as active collaborators on all phases of this research endeavor. By examining changes in material culture, dietary preferences, and uses of the built environment, the team has been investigating the ways in which Irish families continued traditions from their homeland, incorporated new cultural norms and practices, and otherwise negotiated their ever-changing social worlds. The results of this work will contribute significantly to the scholarly discourse on diaspora, ethnogenesis, and identity.

The research consists of intensive field excavation on Beaver Island; laboratory processing and preliminary analyses of artifacts recovered during the excavation; archival research; oral history collection; continued specialty and other analyses as warranted by the research questions (specifically botanical, faunal, ceramic, glass, other artifacts, and uses of domestic space); and public outreach; report writing; and dissemination of research results through web sites, public lectures, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

This document records our research activities from the 2012 field season at the Dan and Catherine Boyle Farm Site (20CX204). It includes a brief historical background, a review of the relevant literature, and a summary of the oral history, archival, and archaeological data collected. Preliminary interpretations of the data are also presented and compared to the research results from the 2010-2011 field seasons at the Peter Doney Gallagher Homesite (20CX201).

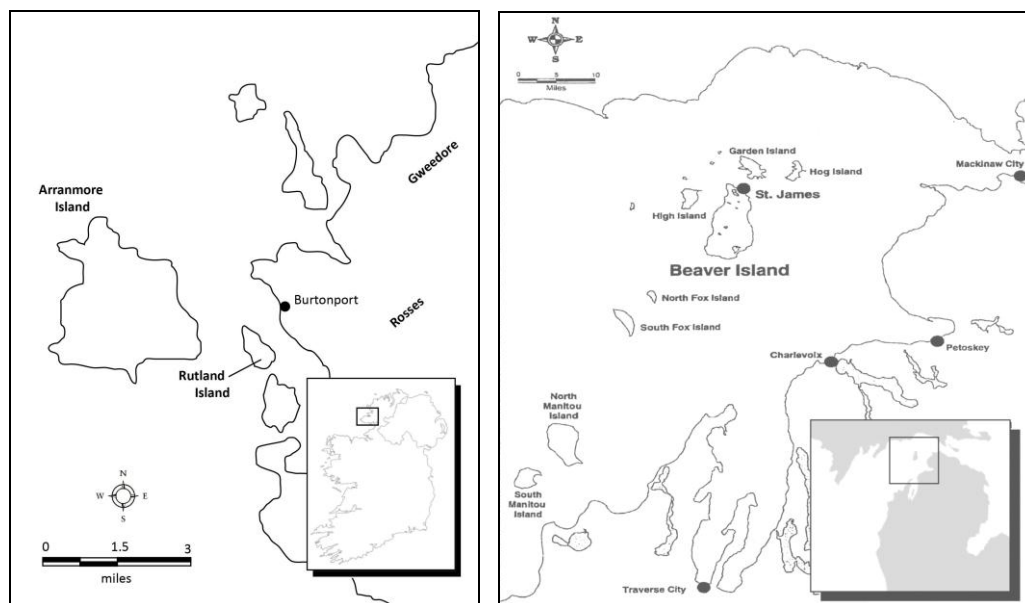


Figure 1.1. (left) Locator map showing Árainn Mhór, Co. Donegal. Inspired by Connors (1999:56). (right) Location of Beaver Island off the mainland of Michigan. Image inspired by Connors (1999:57). Drawn by Elizabeth Maurath.

Chapter 2: Brief History of the Project Area and Theoretical Framing of this Research Endeavor¹

As Irish immigrants from Árainn Mhór, off the coast of County Donegal, established themselves on Beaver Island in northern Lake Michigan, their social worlds were shaped by the cultural landscapes that were extant on their arrival. A Mormon sect who had previously occupied the island established the material conditions that allowed Irish immigrants and their descendants to form a thriving ethnic enclave during the late nineteenth century.

Niche construction as a model of analysis provides a framework for examining the continuities, discontinuities, and modifications to the cultural world on Beaver Island as different ethnic groups transformed its physical spaces into social places. In this context, domestic residences are especially informative lenses for understanding how Irish immigrants navigated the cultural landscape, ecologies, and other components of the social and structural ecosystems they inherited.

Utilizing archaeological and historical data, we investigate the non-linear and interactive influences of cultural groups upon one another and the mutual mutability of the social and physical worlds that individual agents inhabited, experienced, and transformed. [This research project and report of investigations is closely connected with previous field excavations on the island. Interested parties are encouraged to read Rotman et al. (2011, 2013) as well for additional historical background and theoretical framing.]

Historical accounts of immigration tend to homogenize individual experiences of Irish immigrants and frequently emphasize life in densely-occupied tenements in large urban centers on the East Coast (Doyle 2006:219). Smaller communities in the Midwest, however, had economic, social, and political structures that were more fluid than those of long-established urban enclaves (Esslinger 1975). As such, immigrants who settled in less urban and less industrial places – such as Beaver Island, Michigan – were afforded, for better or worse, different opportunities than their counterparts in large cities (Rotman 2010, 2012a).

Material conditions on Beaver Island

The history of Beaver Island is not merely a sequence of events, rather its history – like all history – is a “process wherein both people and their environments are continually coming into being, each in relation to each other” (Ingold 2002:22). Furthermore, how and whether one cultural group creates, modifies, and abandons cultural landscapes sets the material conditions for those groups that come after them, in both linear and non-linear ways. That is, “through their environmentally-situated activities, [individuals and groups] condition the development of other organisms or persons to which they relate” (Ingold 2004:218). On Beaver Island, the Mormon occupation in the 1840s and 1850s significantly shaped the subsequent experiences of Irish immigrants during the second half of the nineteenth century.

At its widest point, Beaver Island is approximately 6 ½ miles wide (east/west) and 13 miles long (north/south). Prior to 1847, occupation on the island was a mix of Irish, Native American, German, and other families scattered on subsistence farms around the island’s periphery (Metress and Metress 2006). Encounters with French fur traders, commercial fisherman, and crews of cargo ships transporting goods between Buffalo, New York and Chicago were also not uncommon (Collar 1980). This “relatively peaceful multicultural society” was comprised of not more than a couple hundred residents (Connors 1999:60). Like Árainn Mhór, farming and fishing were the principal means by which families subsisted and earned their livings (Case 1938:2).

Mormon occupation. The social dynamics of the island were radically altered beginning in 1847. After a dispute with Brigham Young over the leadership of the Mormon Church, James Strang “began to look about for a place where he could establish a kingdom over which he could rule with undisputed sway” (Williams 1905:61). He learned of Beaver Island when the steamer on which he was traveling sought shelter in the harbor during a storm. Soon after, Strang established the Kingdom of St. James (Weeks 1976:10) and coronated himself king of a fledgling utopian community.

¹ Many of the ideas on niche construction and the evolution of cultural landscapes presented in this chapter have been developed in collaboration with Dr. Agustín Fuentes, University of Notre Dame.

The Mormon occupation was focused primarily (although not exclusively) on the northernmost quarter of the island, around the harbor and the farmland nearest to it, such as around Font Lake and along Barney's Lake and Sloptown roads (Case 1938:55) (Figure 2.1). A typical farmstead consisted of a small orchard and vegetable garden. Houses were "two stories high and built of squared logs" (Van Noord 1988:73). Mormon lifeways centered on "the importance of family, of industry and hard work ... a faith in technology and progress, idealism, and a firm belief in God" (Gladish 1998:18). The ways in which they shaped the material and ecological worlds on Beaver Island reflected these priorities.

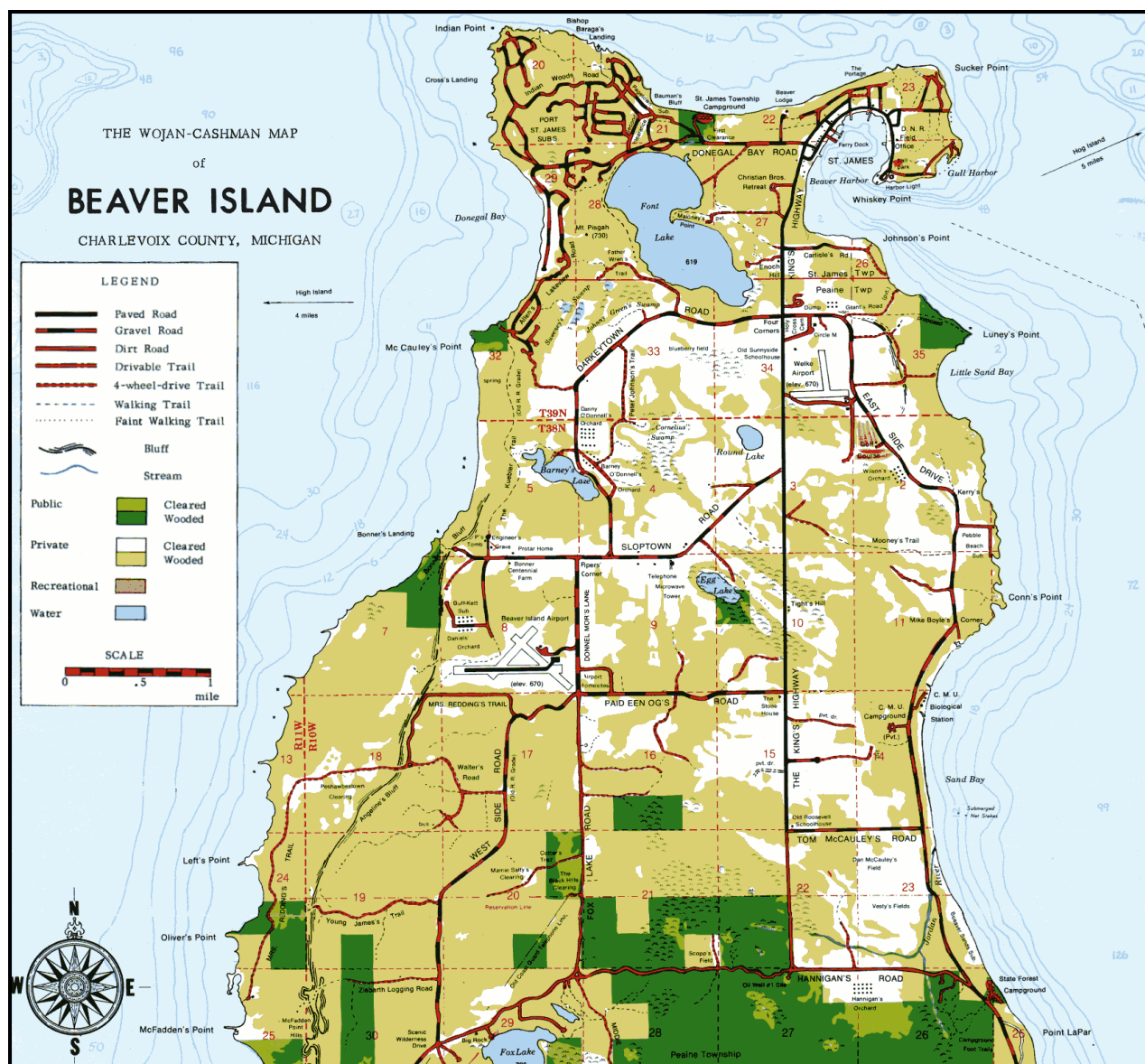


Figure 2.1. North end of Beaver Island where much of the historical development of the island has been focused, particularly the village of St. James (northeast corner around the harbor) and immediately south of the village (in the areas of clearance south and south of Font Lake). Image used courtesy of the *Beaver Beacon*.

Strang's autocratic rule created considerable tensions with non-Mormons on the island. Merchants, such as Alva Cable, "would sell no provisions to the Mormons," which forced Strang and his people to purchase goods from Chicago (Collar 2011:1). In response to increasing hostility, many Irish families migrated away from the harbor to the southernmost point at Cable's Bay (Connors 1999:98). Eventually, however, nearly all Irish and other non-Mormon families moved from the island altogether. Thus by the mid-1850s, the island was inhabited almost exclusively by Mormons.

Disaffection for Strang's ecclesiastical theocracy, however, also permeated his followers. At issue were disputes over the practice of polygamy and harsh punishment meted out for violating local laws (Quaife 1930). On June 16, 1856, two disgruntled Mormons attacked Strang (Collar 1972:118). Mortally wounded, he was transported back to Voree, Wisconsin where he died at the home of his parents on July 9 (Backus 1955:38).

Beaver Island Irish. Strang failed to name a successor and a power vacuum was created by his death. Former island residents, many of whom were Irish, returned to evict the Mormons and reclaim Beaver Island for themselves (Weeks 1976:9). Mormon "homesteads and improvements were seized and occupied" (Backus 1955:38). One oral history of the reoccupation asserts that "the Dan Boyles moved into a house where the hearth was still warm and the cow still in the barn" (Collar 1976:41).

With the Mormon eviction, the habitation of Beaver Island went from being almost exclusively Mormon to almost exclusively Irish in less than a generation. Árainn Mhór Irish who had initially settled elsewhere in North America migrated to the island in large numbers (Connors 1999:116). "Black John" Bonner facilitated the relocation of a group from New York City, while Charlie O'Donnell assisted another large group from Toronto, Canada at about the same time. Some Árainn Mhór Irish even came via the coalfields of Pennsylvania (Metress and Metress 2006:35).

The second half of the nineteenth century was the period during which chain migration direct from County Donegal was most active. Large groups of families came in 1866 and 1884, the latter of which received financial and logistical assistance from British and Irish Quakers (Tuke 1882-1885). At its peak, Beaver Island was a *Gaeltacht*, an Irish-speaking enclave (Sullivan 2010:65). Island colonization was predicated on the many interrelated families from Árainn Mhór, "who spoke the same dialect, lived the same lifestyle, and shared memories of the past" (Connors 1999:122).

During the post-Mormon occupation, the Irish consisted predominately of foreign-born immigrants who had transplanted religious, economic, and cultural practices from Árainn Mhór to Beaver Island. Traditional lifeways were further reinforced by the appointment of Fr. Peter Gallagher, C.S.C., who was born in Menabarigar, County Tyrone. He served on the island priest from 1866 until his death in 1898 (Pike and Vreeland 1988:173). As a native Irish speaker, Fr. Gallagher was a welcome addition to the Beaver Island community. Indeed at least one parishioner had prayed that she would not die until "an Irish priest would hear her confession in Irish" (Gallagher 1929-1930:201-202). Fr. Gallagher said Mass in Irish and conducted the religious business of the island in ways that helped to perpetuate old world social and cultural structures (Connors 1999:290). For example, when a fisherman or farmer was killed, Fr. Gallagher would gather all the bachelors to decide who would marry the widow (Connaghan 2012); thus assuring the preservation and continuity of the community.

The twentieth century. The Beaver Island Lumber Company altered the cultural and economic landscape of the island by bringing an influx of foreign laborers in 1903 (Gladish 1976). The logging camps were occupied by lumberjacks and millers from Germany, Denmark, Norway, France, Austria, England, and even India (Census 1910). Lumbering assumed prominence in the economy, accounting for more than one-quarter of all men's occupations on the island. The cultural influence of the Irish began to wane and the *Gaeltacht* faded into history as English became the language through which daily business was transacted.

Although the Beaver Island Lumber Company ceased operations ca. 1915, timber-related industries continued on the island into the 1970s (Gladish 1976:101). A multicultural society has persisted to the present day and only about a third of current island residents claim Irish ancestry.

Niche construction as a model of analysis

Niche construction, the creating and altering of niches, has emerged as powerful tool in evolutionary theory (Odling-Smee et al. 2003). Niche construction plays a central role in many emerging interdisciplinary scenarios of human evolution and examinations of human behavior (Fuentes et al. 2010; Kendall et al. 2011; Kendall 2012; O'Brien and Laland 2012). The concepts of ecological engineering and inheritance are central to the niche construction perspective. The active manipulation of ecologies by organisms and the inheritance of those structural and social ecologies by subsequent generations provide a robust context, in addition to standard evolutionary and historical approaches, for the analysis of change through time and across space. With humans, the niche construction approach offers a view of the linkage between the social and the structural ecosystems wherein material histories and the configuration of space and place are dynamic, evolutionarily-relevant factors in the shaping of human lives (Rotman and Fuentes n.d.).

The primary niche for humans is their socially-mediated relationship with one another and with their local environments; the human niche is culture. A niche construction perspective provides a framework to account for cultural-historical and ecological contingency affecting development and cultural histories on peoples across space and place (Kendall 2012). Relative to most other organisms, human ecological inheritance is exceptionally potent because it includes the complex social transmission via language and mores plus the inheritance of shared knowledge, material culture, and specific perspectives about the structure and use of the natural world (Kendall 2012; O'Brien and Laland 2012). A group's social ideologies, political institutions, economic practices, and religious beliefs create a suite of perceptions for the interpretation, modification, and use of space and environmental resources. The interactions between social and material landscapes create the structural and behavioral interfaces, setting up both selective pressures in the traditional ecological sense and social pressures and norms in the cultural sense. These are key forces shaping the lives of future generations inhabiting the landscapes of interest. For example, Balinese religious belief and its concomitant cultural practice of interconnecting temples, irrigation systems, and village community relationships provides the material and social environment which in turn influences cultural change in the very same villages, agricultural and belief systems across time, and shifting political and economic landscapes (Lansing and Fox 2011).

Melding archeological, cultural, and evolutionary perspectives, we generate a dynamic and integrative perspective on the human practices of placemaking, the occupying and inheriting of both social and physical spaces (Ingold 2004; O'Brien and Laland 2012). If humans actively interface with and shape their local ecological context through inheritance and reshaping of the built environment, then the conceptualization of landscapes via cultural perceptions, prescriptions, and behavior is a focal point for understanding causal processes and patterns in human history. Understanding the particulate detail of the landscape and the ways in which subsequent inhabitants view, utilize, and change it provides a robust template for modeling human behavior (Ingold 2002, 2004).

Niche construction on Beaver Island

New arrivals to Beaver Island encountered existing social and physical landscapes. While individuals and families were able to exercise some agency and autonomy, these socio-ecological inheritances profoundly shaped their range of choices by both facilitating and constraining engagement with the built environment and local ecology. Niche construction provides a model of analysis for understanding how the Irish navigated and negotiated the material conditions of their new social worlds (Rotman and Fuentes n.d.).

Native American occupation. Native Americans have long inhabited the islands in the archipelago in northern Lake Michigan of which Beaver Island is a part. Archaeological evidence and Odawa oral tradition indicate that there were several small fishing villages in the bays around the island as well as several mounds around the main harbor (which are no longer extant) (BIHS 2008). Settlements were seasonal with the Odawa moving among the local islands, such as Garden and High islands, and were active in regional trade that included copper from the Upper Peninsula (Bussey 1988:5). Native American groups utilized the landscape and its resources to meet their individual and community needs. Their modification of the built environment was concentrated primarily around the periphery and largely prior to European settlement.

Mormon niche construction. The Mormons were the first group to aggressively transform space into material place through the development of significant infrastructure on the island. They also renamed, inscribed, and recoded the existing landscape. For instance, James Strang's presence is embodied in the landscape in the naming of the village of St. James and the King's Highway. Similarly, Font Lake was the largest inland lake nearest the village and used by the Mormons for baptisms. Importantly, through these place names, the landscape was imbued with meaning in ways that were not simply functional (naming a road the King's Highway), but also deeply symbolic (calling the baptismal lake Font Lake).

The reshaping of the island under Strang's leadership was considerable. Roads were cleared to farm the interior and to connect agricultural activities to the village (Gladish 1998:25). Projects around the harbor included a steam sawmill, a tabernacle, and docks (Backus 1955:29-30).

Stores were set up and seemed to carry almost anything one might need – jewelry and watches, fine fabrics, work boots, cast iron stoves, farm implements, and building supplies. There were at least four general stores, and the docks and wharves which served them also held cordwood for sale to the passing steamships (Gladish 1998:20).

The Mormons created economic and social landscapes in which they codified and reproduced the ideologies that guided their daily lives (Word of Wisdom 2009:89).

About half of the men (49.7%) were engaged in farming and fishing as occupations, while the other half provided skilled trades and other services to their community (Census 1850). These occupations parallel that of urban places, recreating the life the Mormons led elsewhere in the Midwest before settling on Beaver Island. Furthermore, the range of occupations illustrates the economic and social interdependence of community members. The infrastructure on the island was again not just functional (the need for sawmills), but the cultural landscape codified and reproduced the social norms the group valued (such as interdependence). Upon their eviction, the Mormon's left this altered socio-ecological landscape behind to be inherited by subsequent inhabitants.

Irish inheritance of Mormon landscapes. The Irish also re-inscribed the landscape of Beaver Island through place names, such as Donegal Bay and Wicklow Beach, symbolically recreating the old world in the new. Yet island life for Irish immigrants had a very different focus than their Mormon counterparts. About 1/3 of men (35.7%) were engaged in farming and fishing occupations, but the overwhelming majority were listed as "laborers" (Census 1860). These laborers almost always appeared in families where the head of the household was a "farmer" or "fisherman." In all likelihood, these young men worked as farm laborers or on fishing boats, although some may have also performed odd jobs and other tasks. Interestingly, a reliance on lumber is completely absent as an economic focus during this time and doesn't appear as an occupation again until 1880 (Census 1860, 1870, 1880).

There were also relatively few full-time skilled tradesmen and service providers, which illustrates the degree of self-sufficiency of the Irish community. Significantly, the census data suggests that the Irish were recreating the fishing, farming, and rural lifeways of Ireland – which was very different from the Mormons who had recreated a more urban-like community on Beaver Island.

Extant farmsteads left behind by the Mormons helped structure the socio-ecological context of the Irish. Importantly, the land plots for each home left by the Mormons were much larger on Beaver Island than those in Árainn Mhór and Ireland in general (40-160 acres vs. 0.2 hectares). Mormon homesteads were positioned along roads with sometimes considerable distance between neighbors, a configuration that was very different from the more nucleated *clachan* settlements in Ireland (Thomas and Rotman 2011).

There is some evidence that the Irish recreated the *clachan* along Sloptown Road, one of the main arteries outside of the village of St. James. During the Mormon occupation in 1852, along a one-mile stretch, there were six property owners (Grieg 1852). Although homes were not explicitly marked, these parcels likely coincided with not more than six households. Following the Mormon occupation, the Irish constructed additional homes between extant residences, infilling between structures and reshaping place (JBIH 1976:193). By 1901, the number of parcels and households had doubled (N=12) (Myers 1901) and a school had been constructed. In this way, the Irish reduced the isolation of the original linear arrangement of Mormon homes by creating a more nucleated concentration of families along the road. This configuration

facilitated communal interaction similar to that of Árainn Mhór and was just one way in which Irish immigrants interacted with and altered the Mormon structural landscapes to fit their social ideals and desired lifeways (Thomas and Rotman 2011).

Similarly, the Greene Homestead was built in the 1870s by an Irish immigrant who came from Árainn Mhór in the 1860s (Mary Beth (Greene) Nelson, pers. comm., 2010). This home is a rectangular two-story log home with four rooms on the first floor with a central hallway (Figure 2.2). Although strikingly similar to Mormon log homes, it was very different from those in Ireland. On Árainn Mhór, houses were constructed using dry laid stone as that was the raw material most readily available (Figure 2.3). The structures typically had very open floor plans, usually consisting of only one or two rooms. On Beaver Island, however, there was a paucity of stone suitable for construction, but timber was abundant. Timber-frame house construction would have been unfamiliar technology for the Árainn Mhór immigrants. The Greene Homestead – and other log cabins built by the Irish on Beaver Island – likely resembled Mormon architecture so strongly because builders used extant Mormon homes as templates in new construction. Consequently, new houses were constructed as spatially-segregated Mormon residences, but utilized in distinctly Irish and communal ways (Thomas and Rotman 2011).



Figure 2.2. Irish-built Greene Homestead on Beaver Island. Photograph courtesy of Mary Beth (Greene) Nelson.



Figure 2.3. Greene Homestead on Árainn Mhór. Photograph courtesy of Mary Beth (Greene) Nelson.

The Irish also inherited the infrastructure developed around the harbor. Although it is easy to imagine the Irish taking over these buildings and businesses in much the same way as they occupied former Mormon homes, definitive evidence that they did so is elusive. For example, there were few service providers, such as merchants, listed in the 1860 census. Similarly, because logging was not a major part of the Beaver Irish economy, the sawmills and other lumbering infrastructure around the harbor would have been relatively quiet compared to the Mormon years when provisioning cord wood as fuel to steamers passing by on the Great Lakes was a major activity.

There were also features of the Mormon landscape that the Beaver Irish rejected outright. The most significant of these was the Tabernacle, which the returning Irish “mob” burned to ensure the end of Mormon worship on the island (Gladish 1998:22). That site was never redeveloped. The Irish were selective in their utilization of the inherited landscape, doing so only in ways that were consistent with their worldview and priorities.

Twentieth Century. The Beaver Island Lumber Company impacted both the social and cultural worlds through lumbering activities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Contributing to the most significant development of housing and businesses around the harbor since the Mormon occupation a half century earlier, the lumber company “installed a large mill, built offices, shops, lodging and docks, laid a railroad, and employed 125 men” (Gladish 1976:93). Some sawmills had been operated elsewhere on the island throughout the nineteenth century, but it was the Beaver Island Lumber Company that reestablished milling as a significant economic activity. There was also a shingle mill, a stave mill, and a lathe mill along with stables, a blacksmith shop, and the railroad roundhouse (Gladish 1976:94). Company residences and a boardinghouse on the north side of the harbor were rented out to lumbermen and their families.

The diverse workforce created a multicultural society that challenged Irish cultural hegemony. The economic and social worlds created and modified as a result of timbering returned the island to an urban-like interdependence that resembled that of the Mormon occupation. As such, the Lumber Company both shaped and was shaped by the socio-ecological landscapes they inherited; landscapes that had been created and modified by both Mormons and Irish during the previous half century.

Inheriting and constructing place

The worldviews and activities of the Mormons during the mid-nineteenth century resulted in material structures and patterns of land use that shaped the cultural and physical landscapes of the island. This process of *being* Mormon and its relationship to the local ecology contributed to the socio-ecological inheritance of subsequent occupations. However, the Beaver Irish did not simply adopt abandoned Mormon landscapes wholesale; rather, they selectively utilized and modified the built environment in ways that were socially relevant and meaningful to them.

Each cultural group modified their island “world” but at the same time was constrained or enabled by previous structures, landscapes, and economic infrastructure. Within, and often in spite of, these constraints, groups selected some aspects of the existing world, eschewed others, and created still others. Each group participated in niche construction on the island by responding to extant (inherited) landscapes and the local ecology by using both material and social reactions to reshape material conditions and thus influence particular historical trajectories. The perspective we employ here offers a different view than notions of replacement or cultural transition. We see socio-ecological niches as dynamic entities that mutually shape and are shaped by the peoples coexisting with them: malleable, yet structured entities that are passed across generations, influencing relationships with and between their inhabitants at any given time. The ecological inheritance that is the cornerstone of this process creates the template that produces the material and, subsequently socio-ecological contexts in which humans negotiate their environments. Rather than model the habitation of Beaver Island as a series of replacements or as sequential occupations, this perspective allows for the hybridity and mutuality inherent in human creation, manipulation, and engagement with space and place (Rotman and Fuentes n.d.).

The island could well have had a very different history. If the Mormons had not come to Beaver Island, the multicultural society of the 1830s may well have persisted, radically altering the initial social and material interface for the Irish of Árainn Mhór. If Strang has not been so autocratic and alienating in his

leadership, the homogenous Mormon culture – as well as the subsequent homogenous Irish culture– would not have had the particular domestic and commercial landscapes that developed as they did. If Strang had named a successor, the Mormon occupation of the island might have continued and, if the power vacuum that resulted from his death had not been filled by the Irish, the thriving *Gaeltacht* would likely not have been possible, altering the linguistically-mediated perception of social and structural realities for that generation – and so on.

Engaging with social and material histories through the lens of niche construction is a model for an engaged analysis of Beaver Island and the understanding of its physical, social, and material worlds. Each group encountered a living socio-ecology, inherited from the actions and ecological entanglements of the peoples before them, and (re)constructed their worlds to meet their cultural and material needs. Their environmentally-situated actions and reactions to the existing ecologies and structures reflected both their worldviews and priorities. On Beaver Island, the cultural landscapes of its inhabitants created a socio-ecological legacy, which facilitated and constrained the social and economic choices of those who followed.

Research Questions of Interest

The purpose of this project is to investigate the landscapes of Irish immigrants to the Midwest. This research program investigates the dynamic social relations of class, gender, and ethnicity by analyzing the structure of landscape features, the spatial relationships of associated artifacts, and types of material culture used by Irish immigrants in the Midwest. The ethnogenesis of Irish identity is of particular interest. This project investigates the uses of nineteenth- and twentieth-century landscapes in northern Michigan through historical and archaeological investigations, with an emphasis on how these uses were constructed through the negotiation of social relations, how they changed, and why. These changes are examined in the context of the economic, political, and social development of Charlevoix County as well as the region under industrial capitalism.

As Irish identities and lived experiences on Beaver Island were transformed through cultural interaction with non-Irish groups so too were their material and social worlds. Through these varied cultural contacts, such as with the Mormons in the mid-nineteenth century and the multiethnic workforce of the Beaver Island Lumber Company in the early twentieth century, Irish families continued traditions from their homeland, incorporated new cultural norms and practices, and otherwise navigated the multifaceted and ever-changing social landscapes in which they lived.

Assimilation of cultural groups into new surroundings is a process; one that means both “to make like” as well as “to take up and incorporate” (Kivisto 2004:155). Rather than simply representing demographic shifts in the island’s population, the cultural exchanges that accompanied each of these transitions profoundly shaped Irish identity and *ethnogenesis* (the process of forming new cultural identities). Ethnic identities were defined and solidified through contact with other peoples. Instead of a straight line of one group becoming like another, however, interactions between these entities represented a series of negotiations in which some ethnic traditions continued, individual choices and adaptations made (Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77), and cultural norms rejected or subverted (Joseph 2004:19). Murray (2006:6) describes this process as that of *becoming* or *devenir*; “Becoming never stops yet occasionally changes its direction, or ripples in turbulent flows, forever following its course towards a new identity.”

It is the varied cultural contacts between circa 1840 and circa 1920 that are the foci of this multiyear project. Identity is contrastive by nature: ‘we’ exist by reference to a distinguishing ‘them’ (Newton 2010:96). How was Irish identity and ethnogenesis shaped by interaction with peoples of varied ethnicities? How was “Irishness” performed when the island was occupied by disparate cultural groups, such as Native Americans and Mormons? How was identity mediated in the second half of the 19th century when the island was so homogeneously Irish? How were consumer choices, food ways, and uses of space shaped and transformed as Irish immigrants on Beaver Island navigated the multifaceted social worlds in which they lived?

Issues of identity and culture contact are of key importance to other scholars interested in ethnogenesis and the experiences of other diasporic peoples. This project investigating Irish-America on Beaver Island, therefore, both draws from and contributes to these interdisciplinary discourses. Research at

Fort Michilimackinac, for example, has focused on interactions between the areas indigenous people and the French and British soldiers and fur traders at the Fort. Scott's (2001) investigation of the site, however, revealed that Fort Michilimackinac was a multicultural place occupied by German Jews, French Canadians, Native Americans, African Americans, and Métis. Each of these groups "used religion, language, dress, food, and house style to emphasize their cultural traditions" (Scott 2001:32). In this context of colonialism, uses of the material world were both symbols of ethnic identity and overt displays intended to reinforce superior-inferior statuses among the colonizers and the colonized. Consequently, the process of ethnogenesis at the fort was not about acculturation, but rather the reassertion of traditional cultural norms in response to conflict among highly varied ethnic groups.

Franklin (2001) observed a similar phenomenon in colonial Virginia. Foodways were used as a vehicle for racial and cultural identity, to construct and maintain group boundaries. Although the Afro-Virginians in her study were enslaved on Tidewater plantations, they were able to use their resources and knowledge to produce foodways that both demonstrated some measure of autonomous cultural production within the context of slavery as well as their own within-group construct of identity.

An isolated marine community of Overseas Chinese along the central California coast was studied by Greenwood and Slawson (2008). Their analyses revealed both continuity and change in this immigrant enclave. Foodways and traditional dishes persisted in their use, while architectural changes to houses and associated furnishing were somewhat more malleable through time. Rather than simply "measuring assimilation according to percentages of imported vs. domestic manufactured items, [critical analyses of the material world of this village] illuminated broader issues such as evidence of continued ethnic traditions, resistance to American cultural norms, individual adaptations, and the persistence of a small but distinctive culture with its own values and behaviors" (Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77; see also Joseph 2004:19). Importantly, their study highlights the complex negotiations that constitute the process of *becoming* and the ways in which identity is selectively mediated through material culture, often with reference to both the world people currently inhabit and the worlds they left behind upon emigrating.

A transnational perspective is imperative for understanding continuity and change in Irish immigrant and Irish-American experiences. Significantly, "processes of dispersion were historically and socially distinctive for captive Africans, Irish migrants, and the Overseas Chinese, but scholarship on all these diasporas centers around the articulated, constructed, and unrecognized connections displaced peoples have with their origins" (Mullins 2008:155). In addition, "social networks consist of the local and Ireland" and that "it is important to understand that their *Ireland* (not the geographical but the one in their minds) has been relocated" to their new communities (Murray 2006:16, emphasis in the original). Much of this constructed identity on Beaver Island continues to be reified by local historians, oral traditions, and popular institutions, but has not yet been informed by the archaeological record. This interdisciplinary and collaborative project investigates 19th-century homesteads associated with Irish immigrants on Beaver Island and explore the process of *becoming* Irish-Americans.

One of the most salient aspects of the literature on ethnogenesis has been its emphasis on delineating particular historical and social contexts in order to describe the ways in which New World identities have emerged through global interaction (i.e., Voss 2008). In understanding the materialization of the Irish immigrant community on Beaver Island, lessons from the archaeology of the African and Chinese diasporas and creolization have been useful in elucidating the social relations within and between these diasporic communities as well as references to homelands of the imagination (e.g., Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2004; Bograd and Singleton 1997; Singleton 1999).

Cross-cultural encounter is primary in the historical experience of colonialism; ethnogenesis exists at the intersection of negotiated identities and colonial forces and is defined by its social relations (Rotman and Hauser 2006). Implicit is the simultaneity of sameness and otherness. While different historical contingencies were at work for the displacement of Irish laborers and the enslavement of Africans, the histories of these peoples are two threads of the same colonial narrative. Central to the colonial condition of Ireland was the displacement of Catholics over a successive number of generations. This displacement did not strip individuals of culture, rather it acted as a crucible in which peoples with varied heritage – including belief systems, class backgrounds, and ways of doing things – became aggregated and placed in new social landscapes. Within these contexts, social relations and identities were repositioned. In the migration from

Ireland to America, unique regional and cultural variations in the homeland were homogenized in the perceptions of these immigrants by the dominant communities into which they were absorbed. Ethnogenesis elucidates the ways in which New World identities from displaced populations are created, transformed, and maintained. This research on Irish-America contribute to the interdisciplinary study of these important questions on ethnogenesis, diasporic peoples, and the materiality of identity and culture contact.

This project includes a micro-historical approach to successive generations of the Irish Diaspora with particular focus on the documentary record, material culture, and social landscapes (Mullins and Paynter 2000). Domestic households are key loci of social reproduction and, consequently, significant locations for archaeological research (Ludlow Collective 2001:95). Notably, “the home was an important locale where institutional policies and practices interfaced with small-scale interpersonal relationships” (Voss 2008:209). For Irish immigrant families on Beaver Island, their home was the place wherein the larger social and cultural worlds were negotiated, strategically accepted or rejected (either in whole or in part), and a meaningful family life created.

At present, relatively little is known about the ethnogenesis of Irish-American identity away from large urban centers, such as Boston and New York. In addition, no disseminated archaeological research has been conducted on the historic period occupation of Beaver Island (with the notable exception of this 2010-2011 excavations; see Rotman et al. 2011, 2013; Rotman 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b). As such, this study makes a significant contribution to the comparative literature on Irish-America and ethnogenesis as well as the regional literature in historical archaeology. In addition, the results of the archaeological excavations will undoubtedly shape the ways in which contemporary populations perceive their own “Irishness” by providing additional sources of historical knowledge.

Brief History of the Dan and Catherine Boyle Site (20CX204)

The Dan and Catherine Boyle Site is located along Barney's Lake Road (formerly Darkey Town Road) south of Font Lake in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 33 Township 39N Range 10W (Figure 2.4). The site was chosen for investigation because of its association with first generation Irish immigrants and its contemporaneity with the Gallagher Site (20CX201) excavated in previous field seasons. As such, the data from the Boyle Site provides excellent comparative data for addressing our research questions on Beaver Irish immigrant experiences during the second half of the nineteenth century.

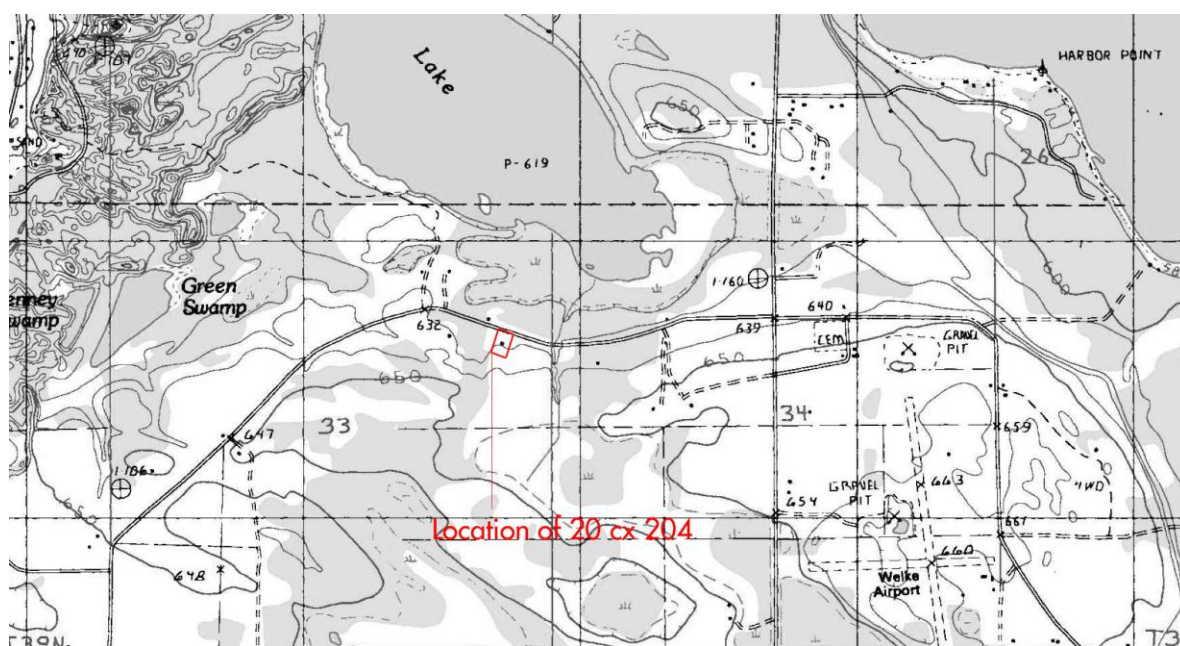


Figure 2.4. Location of the Dan and Catherine Boyle Site (20CX204). Beaver Island North Topographic Map. Drawn by Elizabeth Maurath.

Dan and Catherine Boyle originally settled near French Bay ca. 1857-1858 (Connaghan 2012). Both Dan and Catherine were born in Ireland - Dan on Árainn Mhór and Catherine in nearby Killybegs, southwest of Donegal (US Bureau of the Census 1860; Connaghan 2012). Dan had emigrated to the United States in 1855 and became a naturalized citizen, while Catherine emigrated in 1851 and, according to the 1900 Census, could not read, write, or speak English (US Bureau of the Census 1900).

Also in the household in 1860 was their daughter Mary (age 1) and Philip Galiger, a 25 year-old Irish day laborer. No occupation is listed for Dan. By 1870, Dan is enumerated as a fisherman and their family has grown to six children (US Bureau of the Census 1870). Philip Galiger was no longer living with the family, but another Irish day laborer was, 25-year-old Neil Boran.

After 25 years on French Bay, the family moved closer to the village of St. James by purchasing the farm on Barney's Lake Road. Helen Collar's research on the parcel (available in the Beaver Island Historical Society archives) indicated that Catherine Boyle received the parcel from the State Auditor on a tax deed for 10 cents in 1883. The 1880 Census shows that the household consisted of Dan, Catherine, and nine children between the ages of 4 and 20 years old (US Bureau of the Census 1880). Dan was listed now as a farmer, rather than fisherman. There were no day laborers or other boarders shown in the household.

The house that was constructed was the first known historic period structure to be extant on the parcel/area of focus for this archaeological investigation. Fr. Dan Connaghan, great-great grandson of Dan and Catherine, recounted that the log cabin was built in 1884 and occupied until another larger house was built across the street in 1895. It consisted of one storey with a garret/loft (Connaghan 2012). A photograph from ca. 1948 shows the structure as a ruin (Figure 2.5). The door is clearly visible on the southern elevation with the root cellar to the north (left) of the house.

The archaeological excavation focused on the deposits/midden in and around the previous location of the structure. Only the cellar hole remained visible at the time field investigation commenced.



Figure 2.5. The log cabin at the Boyle Site as a ruin ca. 1948, including a close-up (right). Photograph courtesy of Fr. Dan Connaghan.

Chapter 3: Methods and Data

Source materials for this research project include a broad spectrum of evidentiary classes. The 2010-2011 pilot project utilized a cultural study in Ireland, artifacts and architecture, oral history, and archival resources; most of which will also be used for the proposed project during subsequent years of investigation. (The cultural study in Ireland is dependent upon annual funding for that activity.)

Previous excavations. To date, 204 archaeological sites have been identified in Charlevoix County, Michigan, including 44 sites on Beaver Island. Most of these were documented during surveys of the island by James Fitting (1973) and Joseph Chartkoff (1989, 1993). Our investigation of the Gallagher homestead (20CX201) was the first controlled excavation of an Irish-American site on the island. Excavation revealed stratified middens, discrete features such as building foundations and trash pits, and extant architecture, including a mid-19th century log cabin, sheds, and other outbuildings (Rotman et al. 2011, 2013).

There has been very little development on the island, particularly outside of the village of St. James, and so preservation of archaeological deposits is excellent. The homesteads that will serve as the focus of this project are: (1) The Peter Doney Gallagher homestead (20CX201), the site of the 2010-2011 pilot project, had a diverse occupation representing many cultural groups on the island. Built by Mormons in the 1840s, the cabin was occupied by a German family immediately following the Mormon eviction. Beginning in the 1880s, it was then occupied by multiple generations of two Irish families (the Earlys and the Gallaghers) up through the early 21st century. The occupational history of this homelot provides a wonderful cross-section of lived cultural experiences on the island.

Future years of excavation might include the following additional sites: (2) The Bonner Centennial Farm (20CX70) was occupied by multiple generations of the same Irish immigrant family from the 1850s through the early 20th century; whereas (3) the Gillespie Homestead (20CX116) was built by an Irish immigrant family at about the same time as the Bonner Farm, but was continuously occupied by *different* Irish families up through the early 21st century. As such, the occupational histories of these households provide data for Irish identity and ethnogenesis that spans the Mormon period, through the peak Irish occupation during the second half of the 19th century, and then through the transitional history of the island as it became increasingly culturally diverse. Finally, (4) the Protar Homestead (20CX69) was built and occupied by an Irish immigrant family in 1857 during the immediate post-Mormon period. From 1892-1925, the house was home to Feodor Protar, a German gentleman who emigrated from Russia and served as an island physician. Following his death, the house was occupied by a series of families from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The specific history of this house provides data for both Irish and non-Irish occupation of the island during the late 19th century as well as the transitional period on the island of increasing cultural diversity in the early decades of the 20th century.

Oral histories. In conjunction with the field excavation, we have been collecting oral histories both on Beaver Island and in Ireland. Oral history is also one important dimension of collaboration with descent communities. It is an important means of enhancing our understanding of immigrant experiences as well as providing opportunities for Irish Americans to contribute to the telling of their own histories.

Through oral histories, both in Ireland and on Beaver Island, we have connected to the very personal and intimate narratives of national and global phenomena. Individualized accounts have added detail and texture to history that is often understood in anonymous terms. Through local media outlets (the *Beaver Beacon* and the *Northern Islander*), postings in prominent public places on the island, and word of mouth, we have successfully identified many informants who have shared their family histories with us and still others will be able to contribute their stories via the project web site (<http://irishstories.crc.nd.edu>, which is still under construction).

Archival resources. An abundance of archival resources are available for understanding Irish-American experiences and identity. Helen Collar conducted research on Beaver Island for many years and all of her research notes are housed at Central Michigan University (some of which are available online). The Beaver Island Historical Society and the Beaver Island Community Library also have a spectrum of historical records related to human occupation on the island, including Native American, Irish, German, and other cultural groups. In addition, there are a variety of documents pertaining to the Mormon history of the island that are curated by the Church of Latter Day Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois as well as in Racine, Burlington, and

Voree, Wisconsin. Land deeds and other public records are on file with Charlevoix County Municipal offices. Archival resources relevant to the project are similarly available in Ireland, including but not limited to the University College Dublin Folklore Collection, the National Archives, the National Library, and the Quaker/Friends Library and Archives, with additional local resources at the Árann Mhór Community Center. Research in these various archives both in Ireland and the US has already begun, the results of which has explicated land ownership, illuminated the socio-economic and cultural history of the islands, elucidated changes to the landscape through cartographic data, and otherwise revealed aspects of daily life for Irish and other island residents. Continued archival research will expand this knowledge base. Follow-up historical research also occurs in response to questions generated by the archaeological field work.

Each of these data classes and what we learned from them will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters. The data presented here represents only preliminary research results. Additional years of field work, archival research, and oral history collection for other homesites on the island are expected to continue through at least 2017 (pending funding).

Ethical considerations for this project

The Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) clearly outlines the standards for ethical research involving cultural resources. RPA-certified archaeologists, such as the Principal Investigator for this project, agree to abide by a Code of Conduct that states:

“Archaeology is a profession. The privilege of professional practice requires professional morality and professional responsibility as well as professional competence on the part of each practitioner.

I. The Archaeologist's Responsibility to the Public

1.1 An archaeologist shall:

- a. Recognize a commitment to represent Archaeology and its research results to the public in a responsible manner;
- b. Actively support conservation of the archaeological resource base;
- c. Be sensitive to and respect the legitimate concerns of groups whose culture histories are the subjects of archaeological investigations;
- d. Avoid and discourage exaggerated, misleading or unwarranted statements about archaeological matters that might induce others to engage in unethical or illegal activity;
- e. Support and comply with the terms of the UNESCO Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership of cultural property (as adopted by the General Conference, 14 November 1970, Paris).

1.2 An archaeologist shall not:

- f. Engage in any illegal or unethical conduct involving archaeological matters or knowingly permit the use of his/her name in support of any illegal or unethical activity involving archaeological matters;
- g. Give a professional opinion, make a public report or give legal testimony involving archaeological matters without being as thoroughly informed as might reasonably be expected;
- h. Engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation about archaeological matters;
- i. Undertake any research that affects the archaeological resource base for which s/he is not qualified.

- j. Knowingly be involved in the recovery or excavation of artifacts for commercial exploitation or knowingly be employed by or knowingly contract with an individual or entity who recovers or excavates archaeological artifacts for commercial exploitation.

II. The Archaeologist's Responsibility to Colleagues, Employees, and Students

2.1 An archaeologist shall:

- a. Give appropriate credit for work done by others;
- b. Stay informed and knowledgeable about developments in her/his field or fields of specialization;
- c. Accurately and without undue delay prepare and properly disseminate a description of research done and its results;
- d. Communicate and cooperate with colleagues having common professional interests;
- e. Give due respect to colleagues' interests in and rights to information about sites, areas, collections or data where there is a mutual active or potentially active research concern;
- f. Know and comply with all federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations applicable to her/his archaeological research and activities;
- g. Report knowledge of violations of this Code to proper authorities.
- h. Honor and comply with the spirit and letter of the Register of Professional Archaeologists' Disciplinary Procedures.

2.2 An archaeologist shall not:

- i. Falsely or maliciously attempt to injure the reputation of another archaeologist;
- j. Commit plagiarism in oral or written communication;
- k. Undertake research that affects the archaeological resource base unless reasonably prompt, appropriate analysis and reporting can be expected;
- l. Refuse a reasonable request from a qualified colleague for research data;
- m. Submit a false or misleading application for registration by the Register of Professional Archaeologists.

III. The Archaeologist's Responsibility to Employers and Clients

3.1 An archaeologist shall:

- a. Respect the interests of her/his employer or client, so far as is consistent with the public welfare and this Code and Standards;
- b. Refuse to comply with any request or demand of an employer or client which conflicts with the Code and Standards;
- c. Recommend to employers or clients the employment of other archaeologists or other expert consultants upon encountering archaeological problems beyond her/his own competence;
- d. Exercise reasonable care to prevent her/his employees, colleagues, associates and others whose services are utilized by her/him from revealing or using confidential information. Confidential information means information of a non-archaeological nature gained in the course of employment which the employer or client has requested be held inviolate or the disclosure of which would be embarrassing or would be likely to be detrimental to the employer or client. Information ceases to be confidential when the employer or client so indicates or when such information becomes publicly known.

3.2 An archaeologist shall not:

- e. Reveal confidential information, unless required by law;
- f. Use confidential information to the disadvantage of the client or employer;
- g. Use confidential information for the advantage of herself/himself or a third person, unless the client consents after full disclosure;
- h. Accept compensation or anything of value for recommending the employment of another archaeologist or other person, unless such compensation or thing of value is fully disclosed to the potential employer or client;
- i. Recommend or participate in any research which does not comply with the requirements of the Standards of Research Performance.

(Cited from <http://www.rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=3>.)

In addition to this professional Code of Conduct, RPA-certified archaeologists agree to adhere to the following Standards of Research Performance:

“The research archaeologist has a responsibility to attempt to design and conduct projects that will add to our understanding of past cultures and/or that will develop better theories, methods or techniques for interpreting the archaeological record, while causing minimal attrition of the archaeological resource base. In the conduct of a research project, the following minimum standards should be followed:

- I. The archaeologist has a responsibility to prepare adequately for any research project, whether or not in the field. The archaeologist must:
 - 1.1 Assess the adequacy of her/his qualifications for the demands of the project and minimize inadequacies by acquiring additional expertise, by bringing in associates with the needed qualifications or by modifying the scope of the project;
 - 1.2 Inform herself/himself of relevant previous research;
 - 1.3 Develop a scientific plan of research which specifies the objectives of the project, takes into account previous relevant research, employs a suitable methodology, and provides for economical use of the resource base (whether such base consists of an excavation site or of specimens) consistent with the objectives of the project;
 - 1.4 Ensure the availability of adequate and competent staff and support facilities to carry the project to completion and of adequate curatorial facilities for specimens and records;
 - 1.5 Comply with all legal requirements, including without limitation obtaining all necessary governmental permits and necessary permission from landowners or other persons;
 - 1.6 Determine whether the project is likely to interfere with the program or projects of other scholars and, if there is such a likelihood, initiate negotiations to minimize such interference.
- II. In conducting research, the archaeologist must follow her/his scientific plan of research, except to the extent that unforeseen circumstances warrant its modification.
- III. Procedures for field survey or excavation must meet the following minimal standards:
 - 3.1 If specimens are collected, a system for identifying and recording their proveniences must be maintained.

- 3.2 Uncollected entities such as environmental or cultural features, depositional strata, and the like, must be fully and accurately recorded by appropriate means, and their location recorded.
- 3.3 The methods employed in data collection must be fully and accurately described. Significant stratigraphic and/or associational relationships among artifacts, other specimens, and cultural and environmental features must also be fully and accurately recorded.
- 3.4 All records should be intelligible to other archaeologists. If terms lacking commonly held referents are used, they should be clearly defined.
- 3.5 Insofar as possible, the interests of other researchers should be considered. For example, upper levels of a site should be scientifically excavated and recorded whenever feasible, even if the focus of the project is on underlying levels.
- IV. During accessioning, analysis, and storage of specimens and records in the laboratory, the archaeologist must take precautions to ensure that correlations between the specimens and the field records are maintained, so that provenience contextual relationships and the like are not confused or obscured.
- V. Specimens and research records resulting from a project must be deposited at an institution with permanent curatorial facilities, unless otherwise required by law.
- VI. The archaeologist has responsibility for appropriate dissemination of the results of her/his research to the appropriate constituencies with reasonable dispatch.
 - 6.1 Results reviewed as significant contributions to substantive knowledge of the past or to advancements in theory, method or technique should be disseminated to colleagues and other interested persons by appropriate means such as publications, reports at professional meetings or letters to colleagues.
 - 6.2 Requests from qualified colleagues for information on research results directly should be honored, if consistent with the researcher's prior rights to publication and with her/his other professional responsibilities.
 - 6.3 Failure to complete a full scholarly report within 10 years after completion of a field project shall be construed as a waiver of an archaeologist's right of primacy with respect to analysis and publication of the data. Upon expiration of such 10-year period or at such earlier time as the archaeologist shall determine not to publish the results, such data should be made fully accessible to other archaeologists for analysis and publication.
 - 6.4 While contractual obligations in reporting must be respected, archaeologists should not enter into a contract which prohibits the archaeologist from including her or his own interpretations or conclusions in the contractual reports or from a continuing right to use the data after completion of the project.
 - 6.5 Archaeologists have an obligation to accede to reasonable requests for information from the news media.

(Cited from <http://www.rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=4>.)

The archaeological and historical investigations undertaken within the scope of this multi-year multi-institutional research program have been and will continue to be conducted in full compliance with this Code and Standards. The work has been and will be completed in consultation with the State Archaeologist, the local historical society, tribal authorities, and all other stakeholders in this endeavor as appropriate.

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