

# american archaeology

fall 2009

a quarterly publication of The Archaeological Conservancy

Vol. 13 No. 3



25

## COVER FEATURE THE MYSTERIOUS TOWERS OF THE MESA VERDE ANASAZI

BY TAMARA STEWART  
*What purposes did these remarkable structures serve?*



25  
NPS

## 12 ANCIENT CAVERS

BY MIKE TONER

*Prehistoric peoples used caves in the Southeastern United States for centuries.*

## 19 EMBRACING ARCHAEOLOGY

BY ANDREA COOPER

*Though they once had little use for archaeology, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee is now employing it to reveal their history.*

## 32 UNCOVERING EARLY COLONIAL LIFE

BY PAULA NEELY

*St. Mary's City, Maryland's first capital, is being revealed by decades of excavating.*

## 38 COLLABORATING WITH CUBA

BY WAYNE CURTIS

*An unusual Cuban-American project could change assumptions about the island's prehistoric cultures.*

## 44 new acquisition

### A GLIMPSE OF CALIFORNIA PREHISTORY

*The Lathrop Mound is one of the few intact Central Valley mounds.*

## 45 new acquisition

### PRESERVING NEW PHILADELPHIA

*The Conservancy obtains a portion of the first town founded by a freed slave.*

## 46 new acquisition

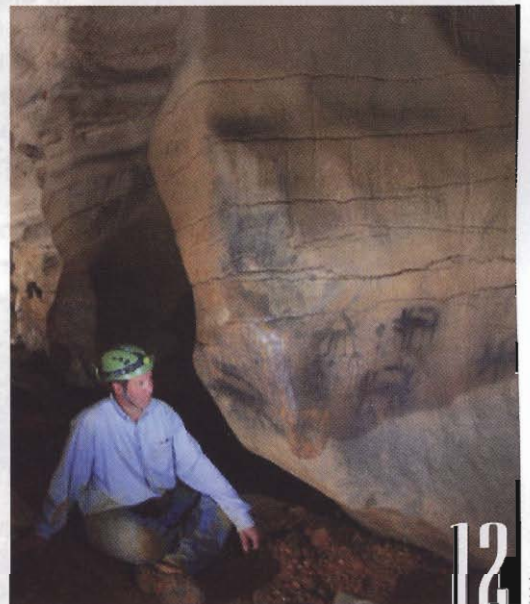
### LANDOWNER DONATES ANCIENT PALEO-INDIAN SITE

*The MacHaffie site is the Conservancy's first Montana preserve.*

## 48 new acquisition

### WORKING TOGETHER

*The acquisition of the Frazier site is another example of the Conservancy working with a developer.*



12  
ALLAN CRESSLER



2 Lay of the Land

3 Letters

5 Events

7 In the News

*Authorities Charge 25 with Looting · Ancient Carving Genuine · Ceremonial Femurs*

511 Field Notes

52 Reviews

54 Expeditions

**COVER:** This tower is one of a number of structures that form Hovenweep Castle in Hovenweep National Monument.

*Photograph by David Grant Noble*





# Preserving New Philadelphia

*The Conservancy obtains a portion of the first town founded by a freed slave.*

In 1836, New Philadelphia became the first town established by a free African American. It flourished until the new railroad bypassed it in 1869, at which point its population declined, and the town reverted to agricultural use over the following decades. (See "A New Life in New Philadelphia," *American Archaeology*, Fall 2008.)

The Conservancy is partnering with the New Philadelphia Association (NPA), a local non-profit organization formed to protect the historical site. The Conservancy is purchasing about nine of the 42 acres.

The founder of New Philadelphia, Frank McWhorter, was an enslaved laborer who worked for a Scots-Irish plantation operator, George McWhorter, and he also took on paying jobs at neighboring farms. Frank bought his wife's freedom in 1817, and his own two years later, for \$800 each. He subsequently purchased the freedom of 14 more family members. He acquired a piece of land in Pike County, in Western Illinois between the Mississippi



**Researchers record excavation measurements in 2008.**

and Illinois Rivers, next to a parcel where he lived. Frank divided the land, sold tracts, and registered the town as Philadelphia, later known as New Philadelphia.

New Philadelphia was strategically located to serve area farmers transporting agricultural products and other goods to the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. With the planned construction of the railroad, land sales increased and the town developed. By 1865, the community grew to about 160 people in 29 households. It was also thought to be a stop on the Underground Railroad, the network of people who helped fugitive slaves escape to the north.

The Conservancy is purchasing what's referred to as New Philadelphia's downtown. "Archaeological research to date has revealed extensive remains of households and businesses concentrated in that north-central portion of the town site," said Chris Fennell, an archaeologist from the University of Illinois who has investigated the site.

Archaeologists, historians, and descendants and local community members are especially interested in this town because of its multi-racial nature. "The town of New Philadelphia was an example of abolitionism at work, the sharing of a community by

whites and blacks, both as neighbors and as members of the same family," said Patricia McWorter, a fifth-generation descendant of Frank and a retired social worker, in a speech to the National Historic Landmarks committee. In 2009, the town was designated a National Historic Landmark, the highest recognition given to a cultural resource by the federal government.

New Philadelphia can help archaeologists explore the dietary contrasts between different households, understand the usage of space in town lots based on ethnicity, and reveal the lifestyles of groups who lived in bi-racial communities. The Conservancy's acquisition "will greatly assist in conserving this exceptional historical resource and further facilitating future development of New Philadelphia," Fennell said.

The NPA would like to see the town site developed as a public park that interprets the history and significance of the site, and the Conservancy is safeguarding the land until they have support and partners to make it happen. In the meantime, archaeological research that is being carried out with National Science Foundation funding will continue. —*Iris Picat*



## Conservancy Plan of Action

**SITE:** New Philadelphia

**TIME PERIOD:** 1800s

**ACQUISITION:** The Conservancy needs to raise \$50,000 to acquire nine acres of the site and maintain it.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Please send contributions to The Archaeological Conservancy, Attn: New Philadelphia Archaeological Site, 5301 Central Ave. NE, Suite 902, Albuquerque, NM 87108-1530

DOUG CARR, ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM