

Interior Shelves



Teaching with National Park Service Museum Collections

Joan Bacharach, National Park Service, Museum Management Program

Abraham Lincoln's overcoat. Robert E. Lee's writing chair. Thousand year old pottery from the Southwest. Frederick Douglass' bill of sale. Civil War uniforms. USS Cairo 1862 Muster Roll. Pablita Velarde's Buffalo Dance painting.



Lithograph of Edward Savage's painting, *The Washington Family*, c. 1789-1796. Published by N. Currier.

These are a few of over 45 million natural and cultural objects and 64,000 linear feet of archives in the National Park Service (NPS) museum collections that are managed at 380 park units nationwide. The collections tell powerful stories of America, its diverse cultures, momentous events, varied habitats and places where American history happened. Many of these objects are featured in NPS *Teaching with Museum Collections* lesson plans and in virtual museum exhibits at www.nps.gov/museum. Many lesson plans are used together with the virtual exhibits.

NPS *Teaching with Museum Collections [TMC]* lesson plans bring NPS collections directly into the classroom to engage learners with innovative object-based educational activities. Online *TMC* plans use high quality images of NPS museum objects, historic documents and photographs, and other materials in creative and challenging sessions on a range of topics. Educational activities are designed to meet national educational goals in social studies, language and visual arts, math, and other areas for K - 12 grades. A special feature of the *TMC* lesson plan is the pairing of the virtual museum

object with similar real everyday objects in the classroom that stimulate hands-on experiential and enriching learning. Geared to busy teachers, the plans provide a 'one stop shopping' and include background information, a vocabulary, and evaluation and extension activities. Practical and easy-to-use materials are included, such as "*How to Read an Object*" and "*How to Read a Photo*" charts and "*How to Develop a Classroom Exhibit*" guidance. Newer lesson plans include ready-made PowerPoint presentations for classroom use.

TMC lesson plans are searchable online by theme, skills and park. Themes include U.S. Presidents, African American history, conflicts, and other topics. Searchable skills range from persuasive and creative writing to math and videography. Several new lesson plans from Ford's Theatre NHS, including *Mourning Lincoln's Death*, *Lincoln as Leader* and *John Wilkes Booth* will be launched to commemorate the 150th anniversary of President Lincoln's assassination. To date, there are over 60 *TMC* lesson plans online. They were developed by teachers at workshops, and by park educators and interpretive staff, and museum educators. New *TMC* lesson plans are under development with more being added each year. The lesson plans strengthen links between 'real and tangible things,' namely, the collections, and the people, places, events and ideas that the park commemorates. *Teaching with Museum Collections* lesson plans provide educators, students and a new generation of young Americans with opportunities for exploration and learning, and a deeper understanding of the park, its resources, and our nation's cultural and natural heritage.

Using the Past: Application of Archaeological Collections to Climate Change

By Eugene Marino, FWS

For decades archaeologists have captured information from animal remains recovered at archaeological sites. Since the presence of certain kinds of remains can provide information about a site's habitation and environment, the remains are often used to comment on the occupation and environmental conditions of the site at which they were found. For instance, female white tailed deer give birth in the spring; if a site contains only mature deer bones (those with fused ends) one can infer that the site supported a wholly adult population, probably in the fall or winter. However, the presence of both immature bones (those with un-fused ends) and mature bones suggests that the site supported a combination of young and adult deer, most likely in the spring or early summer. (continued p. 2)

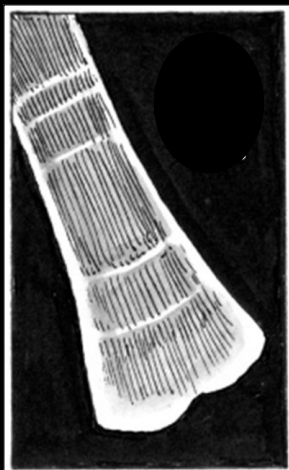


Archaeologists recover faunal remains from a site

Using the Past (continued from p. 1)

Likewise, the condition of the remains recovered from a site can reveal stressors in the environment: Harris lines along bones and linear enamel hypoplasias on teeth indicate an arrest in growth, often attributed to nutritional deficits. Such deficiencies, when cross-checked with other archaeological evidence, can indicate climate or other environmental changes at a site.

With their dedication to addressing climate change on National Wildlife Refuges, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently initiated a project to make recovered faunal remains, and the wealth of information they contain, available to researchers studying climate change. In August of 2014, the FWS Natural Resource Center conducted a review of all FWS collections to identify those that contain faunal material. The result was an annotated bibliography of all pertinent collections and the materials they contain. The next phase of the project is to assess the collections' conditions so that any necessary stabilization or conservation issues can be addressed before researchers access the collections. The project is part of an initiative to utilize non-traditional data, such as faunal remains, and make museum collections *work for* researchers, federal agencies, and members of the public.



Artists' rendition of an x-ray showing growth arrest lines on a bone



Sorting faunal remains recovered from an archaeological site

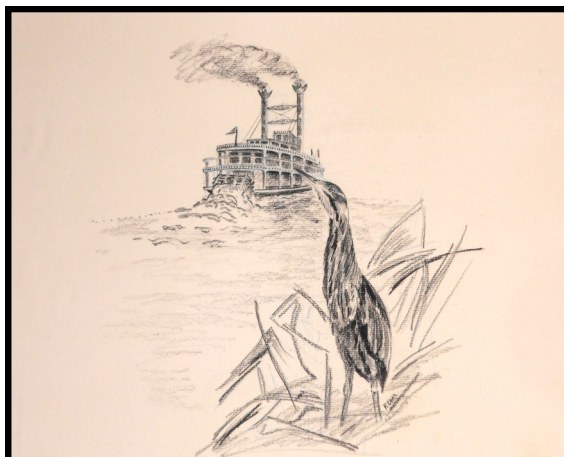
For more information about this project please contact Eugene Marino at eugene_marino@fws.gov

Remember the Bertrand

By Dean Knudsen, DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

The museum collection housed in the visitor center at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge was recovered from the wreck of the steamship *Bertrand*. The ship was bound for gold mining camps in Montana Territory fully laden with cargo and passengers when she struck a log and sank in the Missouri River on April 1, 1865. Fortunately, no lives were lost and after some initial salvage efforts the wreck was abandoned and eventually buried by 100 years of floods - and forgotten. In the late 1960s the wreck of the *Bertrand* was rediscovered within the boundaries of DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and an excavation resulted in the retrieval of thousands of artifacts, many in a remarkable state of preservation. Displayed in a modern visitor center since 1981, this diverse collection consisting of such things as hand tools, clothing, household goods and food items offers the general public a unique insight into the material culture of the mid-nineteenth-century American frontier.

DeSoto NWR plans to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the *Bertrand* in a number of ways, including off-site programs, a special postal cancellation station and oral histories - culminating in a series of events at the refuge on the weekend of March 27-29, 2015. At that time, two speakers will discuss the *Bertrand* collection, guided tours of the collection and an archeological dig site will be offered and children's activities will be made available.



Original artwork done for DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge depicting a nineteenth-century steamboat

For more information about events surrounding the 150th anniversary, please check the refuge website fws.gov/refuge/DeSoto/ or call us at 712-388-4800.

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