

Profiles of Archaeologists

David Moore

David Moore works in Asheville for the Office of State Archaeology, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. He identifies and preserves key archaeological sites and conducts excavations when significant sites are going to be destroyed. Dr. Moore also gives public programs on archaeology and prepares exhibits for local museums. Born in California, he grew up in Williamsville, New York. Dr. Moore attended the University of California at Berkeley and received his doctorate in Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



David Moore working in his lab.

How did you become interested in archaeology?

I read a book called *Aku-Aku*, by Thor Heyerdal, when I was in the sixth or seventh grade. It was about Easter Island and the people who erected the mysterious stone statues there. The story about how the huge statues were quarried, transported across the island, and erected was really exciting to me, and it taught me about how complex ancient cultures could be. From that point on, I had a fascination with archaeology.

When did you decide to be an archaeologist?

After I graduated from college, I got a summer job working at the Hardaway site in North Carolina. This was my first experience with real archaeology. We excavated a camp that was nearly 10,000 years old, and I learned how to identify stone tools. I loved the work, and I loved learning about the past, so I decided to apply to graduate school and become an archaeologist.

What kinds of archaeology jobs have you had?

I have worked for the Office of State Archaeology for nearly 14 years. During that time I have also taught archaeology field schools and classes at several local colleges and universities.

What do you enjoy about being an archaeologist?

I enjoy the actual process of uncovering evidence of the past through excavation. It is an exciting challenge to understand how people lived at a particular place at some time in the past and to try to understand all the forces that were a part of their environment. I also enjoy teaching about archaeology and helping others share my interest in learning about the past.

What do you dislike about being an archaeologist?

Often archaeological sites are destroyed by vandalism or construction. I try hard to help protect important sites, so it is extremely painful to see a site that has been destroyed, since we will never be able to learn about what was there.

Have you made any important discoveries?

None that would make the headlines, but I like to think that everything I do adds to what we

know about the past. I think it's an important discovery for everyone if I can help people learn about an Indian village located in their community 500 years ago.

What advice would you give a young person considering a career in archaeology?

Read about everything that interests you in history and try to meet professional archaeologists that work in your area. They often offer opportunities to volunteer in archaeology labs or on field projects. Explore these if you can to learn whether archaeology is something that you would enjoy.

What else would you like to tell people about archaeology?

Archaeology is a unique window on the past. If you want to learn about ancient peoples and cultures you can explore the past in books, at museums, on archaeological sites, and at historic sites. You may be surprised to know how much history is all around you if you begin to look for it.

Linda Carnes-McNaughton

Linda Carnes-McNaughton works in Raleigh as the archaeologist for the Historic Sites Section, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. In this capacity, she conducts excavations at historic sites across the state and helps to develop public programs there. Dr. Carnes-McNaughton grew up in Atlanta, Georgia where she graduated from Walker High School. She received her undergraduate degree in Anthropology from Georgia State University in downtown Atlanta. She received a doctorate in Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Linda Carnes-McNaughton excavating.

How did you become interested in archaeology?

I have always been interested in people—past, present, and future. Some of my fascination for old things and other cultures probably came from living in Japan for two years as a small child.

When did you decide to become an archaeologist?

In high school and early college, I took courses in sociology, biology, geology, and geography. I was a sophomore in college, majoring in Biology, when I was accepted to go on a dig. After that experience, I changed my major to anthropology and knew with certainty I would become an archaeologist.

What kind of archaeology jobs have you had?

Over the years I have worked as an archaeologist for university-sponsored projects, private-consulting excavations, and federal and state-government agencies. Mostly my work has taken places in the southeastern states, such as Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Once I did a small survey in Northern Ireland on historic pottery sites. I loved it and would like to return to do more work in the United Kingdom.

What do you enjoy about being an archaeologist?

As an anthropologist and archaeologist, I am able to blend many diverse kinds of research and skills to expand our knowledge of past human cultures. I embrace that diversity and the multi-dimensional aspect of exploration and discovery. And working outdoors, in many different settings, keeps me in touch with nature and the environment.

What do you dislike about being an archaeologist?

The only frustrating part of my job as an archaeologist is trying to preserve and protect our cultural resources—the sites, artifacts, buildings, etc. Many people take for granted that these ancient (and not-so-ancient) remains will be here forever. Educating people about preservation is very challenging, but very important.

Have you made any important discoveries?

I get asked this question a lot! Usually I respond by saying, “It’s not what you find (artifact or feature-wise), it’s what you find out (information-wise) that’s important.” But the most exciting sites I’ve worked on were a 4,000-year-old soapstone quarry near Atlanta and the earliest European-style pottery kiln in North America, dated to the AD 1570s and located near Beaufort, South Carolina.

What advice would you give a young person considering a career in archaeology?

Learn to think clearly, listen hard, and write well. Take courses in social sciences (such as sociology, geography, and folklore) and physical sciences (such as biology, geology, mathematics, and chemistry). Learn skills such as photography, map drafting, and even art work. But most importantly, polish communication skills, such as writing and public speaking. Begin by volunteering on archaeological projects sponsored by your state or regional archaeological societies or organizations. Proper training in field techniques is crucial to continuing your archaeological career. Finally, learn the preservation laws in your state or community. This will help you to educate others.

What else would you like to tell people about archaeology?

Being an archaeologist means looking at the world around us in a different perspective. We live in the present as we study the past in order to learn what to do in the future—on this planet and possibly others. We learn to be humanists while at the same time we practice as scientists.