



Historical Archaeology Field School Smith's Island, Bermuda May 27-June 22, 2012



This field school seeks to locate sites on Smith's Island, a sparsely inhabited island near St. George's, Bermuda's first capital, founded in 1612. Students will be involved in all aspects of investigation, including archaeological field methods, artifact identification and analysis, and documentary research. Through lectures, readings, and tours of local sites, students will also learn about Bermuda's four-hundred-year history and the early modern Atlantic world. Although we will catalog archaeological sites on the eastern third of Smith's Island broadly, our main focus is to locate two early seventeenth-century house sites, among the oldest in Bermuda's history. **Prior archaeological experience or knowledge of early American/Bermudian history is not required!**

History: Lying 600 miles east of North Carolina's Outer Banks, Bermuda is Great Britain's oldest remaining colony in the Americas. Settlement began with the wreck of the Virginia-bound *Sea Venture* in 1609. Bermuda's archaeological sites are among the oldest in English America, contemporaneous with Jamestown and predating Plymouth, Boston, and all Anglo-Caribbean islands. Tobacco and seafaring sustained Bermuda for 200 years, but after the American Revolution it became a British military stronghold and important Royal Navy base. Its central Atlantic location made it an important US base during World War II and the Cold War. More recently, tourism, commercial banking and global business became Bermuda's mainstay. As Bermuda celebrates its 400th anniversary in 2012, we will be excavating where the first settlers landed.

Smith's Island is a sparsely developed 60-acre island in St. George's Harbour. The Bermuda Government and Bermuda National Trust own most of the island, which has protected it from development. Smith's Island thus offers an unprecedented opportunity to locate and study some of the oldest undisturbed archaeological sites in Bermuda.

The first inhabitants were three castaway sailors who built a house, boat, and a one-acre farm there between 1610 and 1612. Two houses appear on a 1617 map. In the 1750s, a commercial whaling base mostly worked by African-Bermudian slaves was established on Smith's Island, as was a smallpox quarantine station for treating infectious inbound sailors and passengers. In all these eras, tenants farmed tobacco, cotton, arrowroot, and other crops and kept livestock. Archaeology will enable us to shed valuable light on poor white, Native American, African Bermudian islanders and other significantly under-documented members of Bermudian society, as well as on early modern whaling, smuggling, and other maritime activities.



Fieldwork: We will spend the four-week season surveying sites on the eastern third (20 acres) of Smith's Island and excavating a primitive early house foundation identified in 2010. **Work will be physically demanding. Because the island is heavily overgrown, this field school may not be suitable for students highly allergic to poison ivy.** We will work six days a week and will wash and process all the artifacts we recover each day. On rain days, we will conduct primary research in the Bermuda Archives in Hamilton (about 10 miles west of St. George's). If time permits, we will undertake a snorkel survey of Smallpox and Cotton Bight Bays to look for discarded refuse and shipwrecks. The work, in short, will be hard but intellectually rewarding.

Housing: You will be staying in waterfront accommodations at Convict Bay in St. George's and commuting to the dig daily by boat. Housing and food are included in the program cost, but we will be taking it in turns to cook dinners. Bermuda is a very expensive place to live: most food is imported and rents are very high. There will be a certain element of "roughing it" to keep the field school affordable. That said, you will be living in the oldest continuously inhabited town in English America, which boasts dozens of 17th- and 18th-century buildings and fortifications.

Program Costs are estimated at \$4,600, exclusive of airfare to/from Bermuda (about \$450). This includes housing, food, transportation, and field trip expenses within Bermuda. All students will enroll in Field and Research Methods in Archaeology and earn 4 University of Rochester credits. This coursework can be used toward satisfying requirements in the U. of R.'s Archaeology, Technology and Historic Structures major or toward history, classics, or anthropology major requirements. **PARTICIPATION IS LIMITED TO ONLY FOUR STUDENTS** due to housing and boat transportation limitations. For an application and additional information, please contact Michael Jarvis (Michael.Jarvis@rochester.edu).

Applications for the field school are due by March 1. For those accepted, a \$1,000 deposit is due by March 15, 2012. Please send your application to Michael Jarvis, Dept. of History, Rush Rhees 364, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627 or by email to Michael.Jarvis@rochester.edu.

APPLICATION

2012 Smith's Island, Bermuda, Historical Archaeology Field School

***** NB Preference will be given to UR ATHS majors who need field experience to complete their degrees*****

NAME:

Email address & phone #:

Address:

Year, Major, and any prior archaeology/early American history courses/experience:

Do you have any physical limitations and/or dietary restrictions? If so, please list:

Can you swim? If so, how strong a swimmer are you? Are you allergic to poison ivy?

Reality Check: Archaeology has little to do with Indiana Jones or Lara Croft and is hardly the romantic or action-packed enterprise that movies present. This field school will be both physically and mentally challenging and involve meticulous attention to detail in the archives, field, and lab. Please attach an academic resume and a statement detailing why you want to participate in this project, what you hope to learn, and why the experience will be worth the money and effort you invest.