



**CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OCTOBER NEWSLETTER**

**October Meeting, Sat. Oct. 28, 2017, Zion Lutheran Church, 41 Whitmarsh Avenue, Worcester MA
Remember to enter the Whitmarsh Street side of the church and to pay your yearly dues**

AGENDA

7:30 PM Business Meeting

7:45 Refreshments: Thirza Joost

**8:00 Applying Zooarchaeology: Freshwater Mussel Remains
and Their Value to Conservation Biology
By Dr. Joseph A. Mitchell**

Archaeological faunal assemblages can provide valuable data to modern conservation biology. For example, while freshwater mussels (*Bivalvia*: Unionidae, Margaritiferidae) are common constituents in the archaeological record of North America, today they are one of the world's most imperiled faunal groups. Efforts to aid habitat restoration, population growth, and species reintroduction can be informed by studies of prehistoric mussel assemblages. These data can provide a historical perspective, cataloging communities as they existed prior to extensive modern impacts, thus representing an ecological baseline to be compared with modern populations.

Analysis of archaeological shell has resulted in new river records for many mussel species, and, in some cases, led to major extensions in known biogeographical ranges of now endangered and/or extinct faunas. When compared with modern data, archaeological shell assemblages often demonstrate a much higher diversity of species, populations that are more evenly distributed, and more varied in shell size, indicative of good juvenile recruitment. As modern data are extremely limited for many locales, studies of archaeological shell can provide the historical perspective necessary to fill in the remaining picture, and provide information that would otherwise never be known.

Dr. Joseph Mitchell is a North American archaeologist, specializing in archaeomalacology and geochemistry. Joseph's interest in archaeology began as a child, which he credits to growing up living at Winterville Mounds State Park, one of the largest Native American mound complexes (Mississippian Period) in the country, and a backyard any outdoorsy kid would envy. With his passion for history and archaeology, Joseph pursued a master's degree in archaeology from Mississippi State University, studying under Professor Evan Peacock. During this time, Joseph developed his research interests in freshwater mussel remains and shell midden sites, and spent time working as a CRM field archaeologist for the US Forest Service. Joseph then pursued a doctoral degree in the Department of Geoscience at Mississippi State University, where he investigated geochemical and isotopic signatures within freshwater shell middens to understand human population mobility and prehistoric environmental conditions. Joseph is currently an adjunct faculty member with Worcester State University and Fitchburg State University.



Dr. Joseph A. Mitchell in London

THE MASSACHUSETTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Inc

ROBBINS MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY – P.O. BOX 700
Middleborough, MA 02346-0700
508-947-9005

Web site address: www.massarchaeology.org; email address: info@massarchaeology.org

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING (at Zion Lutheran Church, 41 Whitmarsh Ave.

Worcester) From I-290, merge onto I-190 North via exit #19 towards Rt.12/Holden/Fitchburg. Take Rt.12/Gold Star Blvd. Exit #1 towards W. Boylston St. and bear right onto Gold Star Blvd. (Rt. 12) Follow Route 12 and travel 0.7 miles up a hill, over a bridge. Follow Route 12 which curves to the left and continue through two stoplights. Take the right onto Whitmarsh Ave., right after Greendale Pizza and go up the hill for 1 block. The Zion Lutheran Church will be on your left at the end of the block. The parking lot is on the right.

Archaeology Exhibits

LOCATION: Robbins Museum, 17 Jackson St. Middleboro, MA 02346

DATE & TIME: Every Wednesday, 9:00am-4:00pm; Saturday, 10:00am-2:00pm; and by contacting, education@massarchaeology.org; our Education Department Staff offers a flexible schedule for tours that meet your organizational and classroom needs!

INFORMATION: Curt Hoffman, 508-947-9005, info@massarchaeology.org

SPONSOR: Massachusetts Archaeological Society

ADMISSION: \$2.00 per child and \$5.00 per adult

The Robbins Museum is handicapped accessible. Come visit one the oldest archaeological societies in the country. Enjoy our exhibits on the Massachusetts past. Learn about archaeology from our dedicated staff, volunteers, and archaeologists. Fun for the whole family. The Robbins Museum and the Massachusetts Archaeological Society offer education programs for all ages. Lectures for adults and hands-on programs for schools, scouts, and libraries. Have a real archaeologist visit your group and teach you about the fascinating history of New England as discovered through the science of archaeology.

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER MASSACHUSETTS ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY Officers for 2017-2018

Janet Bessette, 508-752-1453, Chapter Chairperson
Curtiss Hoffman, 508-881-1124, Program Committee
Mary Aronson, 978-534-0032, Recording Secretary
Alan Smith, 508-853-5245, Corresponding Secretary
Thirza Joost, 508-757-7960, Treasurer