

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 26, 1999

SCSU archaeological dig unearths new findings

ST. CLOUD, Minn - St. Cloud State University's new library isn't set to open until fall of the year 2000, but already SCSU students are digging into exciting research at the site of the 235,000-square-foot facility, where skeletal remains of what may be some of Minnesota's earliest settlers have been unearthed this past week.

In addition to the remains of a white woman in her early 20s and those of a white man of unknown age, both discovered last Wednesday, university archaeologists have found two coffins, one that appears to be that of a child. Today workers were attempting to free the coffins from the earth that had surrounded them for approximately 150 years.

The bones of the man and woman, found in the southeast corner of the site of the new library, are likely to date back to the 1830s or 1840s, said Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of archaeology at SCSU.

"That could make this the site of one of Minnesota's first cemeteries, dating back to before Minnesota was a territory," said Jon Drews, an archaeology graduate student who has been researching the site. He said the cemetery in which the bones were found most likely predates any organized church in the region.

Rothaus, who is proceeding with the dig as an official agent of the Office of State Archaeologist, said he and his students are following state requirements and guidelines for such finds. One is to prohibit photographs and other unauthorized contact with human skeletal remains. Unauthorized disturbance of a burial site is a felony, he said. The university archaeology team also has not allowed the magnitude of their finding to cloud their respect for the skeletal remains. "These are the bones of human beings who once were someone's daughter or son, and perhaps someone's husband or wife," Rothaus said.

The dig is hampered by four feet of frozen ground topped by several inches of asphalt. Rothaus and his graduate student archaeologists will be supervising the drilling of core samples Wednesday and Thursday to determine the best way to recover any additional artifacts within the boundaries of the new library.

University officials say construction on the new library is not being hampered by the archaeological dig. "The project continues to proceed on schedule as workers concentrate on other parts of the site," said Steve Ludwig, assistant vice president for facilities management at SCSU.

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Note to editors: St. Cloud State University will hold a press conference at

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ST. CLOUD Times

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

TUESDAY

Jan. 26, 1999

A Gannett Newspaper
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NEWSPAPERS INC.

2 coffins found at St. Cloud State library site

Location may have
been early cemetery

By John Molene

TIMES STAFF WRITER

St. Cloud State University archaeologists found two coffins Monday — one that appears to be child-sized — at the same site where remains of two people were discovered last week.

Monday's find signals the bodies may be more than a family burial plot.

"That could make this the site of one of Minnesota's first cemeteries, dating back to before Minnesota

was a territory," said Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of archaeology at the university.

Workers today were attempting to free the coffins from the earth that has surrounded them for about 150 years. The bones and coffins were found in the southeast corner of the site of the new St. Cloud State library, along Fifth Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets South.

The bones found Wednesday were those of a Caucasian man of unknown age and a woman in her early 20s. They were uncovered during excavation for the new library.

Rothaus said the bones of the man and woman are likely to date back to the 1830s or 1840s.

The possible cemetery in which the bones were found likely predates any organized church in the region, Rothaus said.

Tests could not determine how long the bones had been at the site.

Rothaus, who is proceeding with the dig as an official agent of the Office of State Archaeology, said he and his students are following state requirements and guidelines for such finds. One is to prohibit photographs and other unauthorized contact with human skeletal remains. Unau-

thorized disturbance of a burial site is a felony, Rothaus said.

The dig is being slowed by 4 feet of frozen ground topped by several inches of asphalt. Rothaus and his students will supervise the drilling of core samples Wednesday and Thursday to determine the best way to recover any additional artifacts.

University officials said construction is not being hampered by the archaeological dig.

"The project continues to proceed on schedule as workers concentrate on other parts of the site," said Steve Ludwig, assistant vice president for facilities management.

Star Tribune

NEWSPAPER OF THE TWIN CITIES

www.startribune.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27 • 1999

Briefs

Two coffins found in St. Cloud State dig

ST. CLOUD, MINN. — Two coffins were found on the construction site of the new St. Cloud State University library, where century-old human bones were found last week.

Workers tried Tuesday to free the coffins from earth that has surrounded them for an estimated 150 years, university marketing director Barry Wegener said. One disintegrated as dirt around it was warmed, he said. "It's slow going because the dirt is so frozen."

One of the coffins appears to be that of a child, he said.

Last Wednesday, workers digging up a parking lot found the remains of a woman in her 20s and a man of unknown age. They likely date back to the 1830s or 1840s, said Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of archaeology at the university. "That could make this the site of one of Minnesota's first cemeteries, dating back to before Minnesota was a territory," he said.

Rothaus is proceeding with a dig at the site as an official agent of the state archaeologist's office. The dig is being slowed by 4 feet of frozen ground topped by several inches of asphalt. Rothaus and his graduate students will supervise the drilling of core samples Thursday to determine the best way to recover any additional artifacts.

University officials said library construction is not being hampered by the archaeological dig.

— *Associated Press*

Media Release

CONTACT: Barry Wegener
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 27, 1999

Bones of early settlers unearthed at university's new library site

ST. CLOUD, Minn - St. Cloud State University's new library isn't set to open until fall of the year 2000, but already students are digging into exciting research at the construction site of the new building, where they have unearthed remains of some of Minnesota's earliest pioneers.

The unusual research opportunity for archaeology students and faculty began Jan. 20, when construction workers digging the basement for the southeast section of St. Cloud State's new \$32.5 million library turned up several human bones, including a skull, femur, ribs and a shoulder bone. Within three days the partial remains were determined to be that of a white woman and man, and a corner of the library construction site had been turned into a mini archaeological dig.

As they continued to comb through the site -- just across campus from the Mississippi River -- university archaeologists soon realized their adventure was only beginning. Less than a week after their first discovery, they found two coffins, one belonging to a small child. Digging is expected to continue at least a few more days, and research is ongoing as to the identity of these early settlers. The bones are believed to date back to the 1830s or 1840s, said Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of archaeology at SCSU who is supervising the research.

"That could make this the site of one of Minnesota's first cemeteries, dating back to before Minnesota was a territory," said Jon Drews, an archaeology graduate student who researched the history of the library site, which until last summer was a 25-year-old parking lot. He said the cemetery in which the bones were found most likely predates any organized church in the region.

Rothaus, who is acting as an official agent of the State Archaeologist Office in the research, said despite their excitement over this rare opportunity, the university archaeology team has not forgotten they are working with human remains. "These are the bones of people who once were someone's daughter or son, and perhaps someone's husband or wife," Rothaus said.

The dig has been hampered by typical Minnesota winter weather and four feet of frozen ground topped by several inches of asphalt. Construction on the new library has not been slowed by the archaeological dig. "The project has continued to proceed on schedule as workers concentrate on other parts of the site," said Steve Ludwig, assistant vice president for facilities management at SCSU.

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VOLUME 150, NUMBER 275

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ST. CLOUD, MINN.

Bones found buried on campus from 1840s: Part of the mystery is solved.

Bones unearthed last week on the campus of St. Cloud State University belong to a white woman who died in her early 20s, and a white man who died at an unknown age. The bones date back to the 1830s or 1840s, according to Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of archaeology at the university. Workers also attempted to unearth two coffins on Tuesday, including one that appears to belong to a child.

The bones were excavated when workers began to dig the foundation for a new library, scheduled to open in fall 2000.

Rothaus, acting as an agent of the state archaeologist, will supervise students who will study the area. Rothaus believes the area, which had been covered with asphalt and used as a parking lot since the mid-1970s, could be the site of one of Minnesota's first cemeteries.

University officials said construction on the library continues on schedule as workers concentrate on other parts of the site.

— STAFF WRITER JUDITH YATES BORGER

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 29, 1999

SCSU archaeologists discover new skeleton, continue research

ST. CLOUD, Minn - St. Cloud State University archaeologists are painstakingly removing dirt that encases what may be a fifth human skeleton found at the site of SCSU's new library. Meanwhile, soil boring was conducted Thursday and Friday morning around the site to determine the scope of the 150-year-old cemetery.

"We have skeletal remains of four people for sure, possibly five," said Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of history at SCSU and overseer of the archaeological dig that sprang up nine days ago in the southeast corner of the library construction site. Rothaus and several students of archaeology have been working daily at the site since construction workers unearthed a skull, femur, ribs and shoulder bone that later research determined belonged to a woman who died in her early 20s and a man of unknown age -- both white.

Earlier this week university archaeologists discovered two small wooden coffins, which held the skeletal remains of what Rothaus believes were children under the age of 5. They were disappointed but not surprised when the coffins crumbled as they chipped away the dirt around the wood. Students gingerly removed chunks of the coffin, put them in a box and sifted out the tiny bones one by one. All the skeletal remains are being driven to Hamline University in St. Paul for further research. The State Archaeologist Office in St. Paul contracts with Hamline osteologists to do advanced research on projects such as this.

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Then later this week the group came across a frozen mass of dirt with a skull and leg, shoulder and arm bones protruding. Student archaeologists, with the help of alumnus Randy Peterson, Ph.D., an archaeologist with Braun Intertec in the Twin Cities, are chipping away at the oval of earth that probably encased the bones for 150 years. It could be a complete skeleton, but "we won't know for at least another week."

The unusual research opportunity began when construction workers digging the basement for the last section of St. Cloud State's new \$32.5 million library made their unusual discovery. Construction on the building has continued throughout the dig, which is likely to close down within a week. This morning the construction took a new turn, "swinging steel" with a crane. Seven semi-loads of steel have been delivered for the building, which is expected to be ready for use in fall of 2000.

There is much left to find out about the human remains. Public History graduate student Jon Drews immediately began studying archives at the Stearns County Historical Society and on campus to find out more about early settlements on that spot. But his work on the dig has interrupted his research. "We haven't been able to get back to the library," he said. This is the most complex archaeological project Drews has worked on. "The only thing I've done before is surface surveys -- finding pottery and stuff," he said. Rothaus takes his students on periodic digs in Mille Lacs Kathio State Park.

After state archaeologists have finished their study of the skeletal remains, they will likely be reinterred at a St. Cloud cemetery. Rothaus estimates the research process will take about a month.

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Fri Jan 29, 1999
St. Cloud Times

Fifth set of bones found at SCSU

By Dave Aeikens
TIMES STAFF WRITER

St. Cloud State University researchers are examining a fifth set of bones as they continue to study a site where a new library is being built.

Workers excavating for the library discovered two sets of bones Jan. 20. Then archaeologists found small wooden coffins Jan. 25 at the same site.

Researchers believe all the bones could be about 150 years old. A press conference was scheduled for late this morning to announce the latest discovery.

The group examining the site discovered a frozen mass of dirt with what may be a skull, leg bones and arms bones protruding. The possible fifth set of bones was discovered last week. Researchers had left it in the ground to protect it until they could get at it.

Student archaeologists are chipping away at the oval-shaped piece of earth, university officials said. It could take a week to know exactly what was found. The St. Cloud State group is working under the direction of the state archaeologist's office. All bones are cleaned and sent to the state archaeologist in St. Paul.

The bones are believed to be from an old cemetery in the area. It could take another week to complete the work.

The first bones discovered were identified as belonging to a woman in her early 20s and a man of unknown age. Both were Caucasian.

The archaeological discovery is not expected to slow the construction of the \$32.5 million library. The bones were found in the southeast corner of the library construction site, facing Fifth Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets South.

Media Release

CONTACT: Marsha Shoemaker
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 3, 1999

5 new graves uncovered at SCSU library site

ST. CLOUD, Minn - Excavation has turned up five new burials this week around the site where graves of at least four other early pioneers were unearthed in late January.

St. Cloud State University archaeologists working at the site, discovered during construction of SCSU's new \$32.5 million library, this week uncovered one intact coffin and skeleton of a 6-foot human male, plus portions of four other coffins. All five graves are believed to be related to the earlier findings of two child-size coffins and skeletal remains of at least two adults unearthed at the site last week and the previous week. The newest findings resulted from soil borings and extensive excavation of the site of what is believed to be a 150-year-old cemetery.

Richard Rothaus, an assistant professor of history at SCSU is overseer of the archaeological dig initiated Jan. 20 when the first human skeletal remains were uncovered in the southeast corner of the library construction site. Rothaus and several students of archaeology have been working daily at the site and will continue to work at least until the end of the week. Construction on the new 235,000-square-foot library has continued around the archaeological research and has not been slowed by the findings.

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(Editor's note: An assistant to the state archaeologist, Bruce Coenen, will be on site through today. Interviews with both Rothaus and Coenen may be arranged today by contacting Marsha Shoemaker, 320-255-4029. A further update about findings at the site is planned for Friday.

A QUESTION OF ETHICS

DNA Analysis in the

BY JULIANNE BASINGER

ANN ARBOR, MICH.

DNA ANALYSIS that used to take a few hundred square feet of laboratory space and several trained technicians has now been condensed onto a palm-size piece of silicon. But some scientists fear that the new invention, which could give almost anyone the ability to analyze DNA, may also multiply the ways in which modern genetics could be abused.

Mark A. Burns, an associate professor of chemical engineering at the University of Michigan, who helped to create such a device, finds the possibilities of its use both exhilarating and a little frightening. He and a multidisciplinary group of other researchers on the main campus here have developed what they call a "laboratory on a microchip" that contains all of the required components for processing and analyzing DNA samples.

DIAGNOSES AND DETECTIVES

The researchers, reporting on their work in the journal *Science* last fall, noted that their microchip and similar DNA-testing devices could be made widely available at a low cost. That means parents might eventually use one at home to diagnose their children for strep infections and other common ailments, getting results in minutes rather than days. Homicide detectives at a crime scene could test blood on a car's upholstery. Biologists working in an Amazonian rain forest could categorize endangered species on the spot.

The article by the Michigan researchers is the first published report on integrating the components necessary for processing and analyzing DNA on a small chip, according to Paul Matsudaira, who is also working on such devices as a biology professor and researcher at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Other labs have integrated other components for different types of chemical analysis, but not for DNA analysis, as this one does," he says. "It represents an important



Mark A. Burns analyzing

St. Cloud Students
Excavate Campus Site

ST. CLOUD, MINN.—Workers building a library at St. Cloud State University have dug up more than dirt. They uncovered a gravesite that students and professors are now excavating.

Twenty-four graves have been found at the southeast corner of the site of the university's \$32.5-million library. Students, including Amber Demorett (right), also found coffins and personal items.

Richard M. Rothaus, a history professor who is overseeing the dig, said that the site, dating to the early 1840s, is one of the state's oldest cemeteries. Preliminary testing, he said, has indicated that the remains are those of early Protestant settlers, some of the first to venture west of the Mississippi River.

The remains will be re-buried at



ST. CLOUD STATE U.

a local cemetery, and the new library will display artifacts as a memorial to the gravesite. Campus officials said the construction was not delayed by the excavation, and that the library would be completed by the fall of 2000.

Miami University Sued
for Banning Thongs

OXFORD, OHIO—A music professor sued Miami University here last week, claiming that his civil rights were violated when he was barred from the campus aquatic center for wearing a thong bathing suit.

G. Roger Davis filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court, claiming that the university had violated his First and 14th Amendment rights when it revoked his paid membership to the center. Joining him in the suit was the Naturist Action Committee, of which Mr. Davis is a member. The group, based in Oshkosh, Wis., fights regulations restricting nudist or clothing-optional life styles.

The professor's membership was terminated in December after he ignored warnings by staff members that his bathing suit violated the center's dress code. That code bars "street clothes, thong, and see-through swimwear."

Scott T. Greenwood, a lawyer who is representing Mr. Davis, said the center had singled out his client when it changed its swimwear policy to bar thongs.

Holly J. Wissing, a university spokeswoman, said the policy was reworked in November 1997 to include the list of unacceptable swimwear after Mr. Davis—who had been warned that his bathing suit was inappropriate—had complained that the policy was vague. But she denied that the policy was specifically meant to restrict the professor.

North Carolina Student Paints Astronaut's Story

North | him as a child. It shows him play-
home dressed in a ka-

Chronicle of Higher Education
March 12, 1999

IN THE

News

Star Tribune

NEWSPAPER OF THE TWIN CITIES

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Saturday

Front page

FEBRUARY 6, 1999

Dig unearths 'real' lessons

*St. Cloud gravesite offering
students intriguing education*

By Robert Franklin
Star Tribune Staff Writer

ST. CLOUD, MINN. — Instead of books and computers, students studying at St. Cloud State University's new library site Friday were using a whisk broom, paintbrush and 5-inch trowels.

Construction is well underway on the \$32.5 million library, but this week's most urgent task was for student and professional archaeologists on the site to recover human remains from what is believed to be a 150-year-old cemetery, one of the oldest in Minnesota.

The discovery of five to seven more possible graves this week — bringing the total to as many as 16 — has been an educational bonanza. "It's phenomenal. It's on-the-job training the likes of which most students never get," said Richard Rothaus, assistant professor of archaeology at the university.

ST. CLOUD continues on A14:

— A dozen or more students have shown up daily to work at the site. There is no class credit, but they get unique job experience.



Star Tribune photo by Duane Braley

Professional archaeologist Tom Peterson sifted dirt Friday that surrounded one of the coffins discovered at St. Cloud State University's library site. Bones, nails, coffin handles and bits of clothing have been found.

ST. CLOUD STATE
UNIVERSITY

A tradition of excellence and opportunity

ST. CLOUD from A1*Campus gravesite find gives students hands-on opportunity*

"It's unfortunate that a cemetery had to be disturbed," Rothaus said, "but if you have to disturb one, the middle of the university campus is a really good place to do it."

A dozen or more undergraduate and graduate students have shown up daily to work on their hands and knees, carefully scraping and sifting through the dirt for archaeological finds. Cold weather and other classes haven't seemed to slow them much.

"When it's the real thing like this, there's no better way of training," said Dana O'Brien, a fourth-year anthropology student from Mound.

The cemetery may have been established in the 1830s or 1840s, before comprehensive records were kept in the area, Rothaus said. An Episcopal church owned the property in the 1850s but moved within a few years.

According to an old newspaper report, bodies had been moved to North Star Cemetery in St. Cloud by the turn of the century, but Rothaus said that cemetery has no records going back that far.

"If they exhumed [the remains] and buried them someplace, they missed a lot of them," said Randy Peterson, a professional archaeologist with Braun Interiors of Minneapolis. Peterson, the first graduate of St. Cloud's archaeology program in 1972, was hired to supervise the dig.

Under a parking lot

The first bones, thought to be from a man and a woman, were found Jan. 20 by a backhoe operator digging about 4 feet below what had been the surface of a 25-year-old parking lot. A few days later, archaeologists found more bones and two wooden coffins containing the remains of small children.

Then they found soil patterns indicating more grave shafts and this week approximately doubled the total number. "This is too many for a family grave plot," Rothaus said.

The graves were laid out east-and-west, in Christian burial fashion, in about a 50 by 50-foot corner of the block, which already is dominated by rising concrete and steelwork for the library.

As construction machines roared nearby, students worked Friday on a gravesite that a tiny flag labeled as No. 11. They scraped sandy soil from the top of a decaying wooden coffin, a small amount at a time, put it

into a plastic tray and then shook it through a sifter.

They found square nails and fancy decorative nail heads that they said could have been used as fasteners inside or outside a coffin. They've also found coffin handles, buttons and bits of clothing.

"The more money they spent on burial ceremonies, the more likely that it was a person of importance," said Mike Coenen, of Little Falls, who returned to graduate school at St. Cloud after leaving his job as a DFL aide in the state Legislature last month.

Nearby, other gravesites were warmed by portable heaters under plastic sheeting suspended from beams and sawhorses.

Rothaus said the archaeologists must act first to handle the human remains with respect and then to maximize historical information.

Difficult situation

He called it "one of the most difficult archaeological situations," because of the time pressure of construction and the ethics of disintering remains, something students usually don't do. "We can't make mistakes here," he said, and unlike some digs, "we can't take two years."

Finding the remains has not appreciably slowed construction, although part of the 235,000-square-foot library will be built over the old cemetery, said Marsha Shoemaker, the university's communications director.

St. Cloud State has about 14,000 students. The library, which is scheduled to open in fall 2000, will replace a 1971 facility built for an enrollment of 8,000, she said. Rothaus said the contractor, Doulan Corp., has been accommodating, even lending equipment to help with the dig.

Some of the remains apparently were disturbed when sewer lines were installed about 1910 and 1910, when the area was residential. One pipe was visible Friday beside gravesite No. 11, and students said they found one coffin that had been damaged.

Remains are being sent to Hamline University in St. Paul for study. Rothaus said that, after the dig, students will try to find more records about the area. It is unlikely that the remains will be identified. DNA testing would be prohibitively expensive, Rothaus said.

Meanwhile, he said, "the students are having a great time. . . . They're not getting [class] credit, but they'll get jobs."

Media Update

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 5, 1999

More coffins unearthed at SCSU library site

ST. CLOUD, Minn - Archaeologists at the early cemetery discovered during construction of St. Cloud State University's new library have uncovered seven more coffins, bringing the count to 16.

"What we thought at first was a small project has turned into a major one," said Richard Rothaus, the archaeologist and assistant history professor who has been leading a dedicated group of students daily at the site. The SCSU researchers have been working steadily at the campus archaeological dig since construction workers unearthed the partial skeletal remains of a man and woman Jan. 20.

The student volunteers are getting invaluable experience in many aspects of archaeology, Rothaus said. "It's been an unparalleled opportunity for them to learn how adaptable and patient an archaeologist must be. You just can't simulate that in a classroom."

Rothaus said the condition of the coffins' wood and hardware and the fragments of buttons and cloth that have been found in some of the coffins indicate they all are from the same era. He believes this could be one of Minnesota's earliest Caucasian burial sites.

Construction on St. Cloud State's new 235,000-square-foot library has continued around the archaeological research and has not been slowed by the findings. The \$32.5 million high tech facility will open in fall of 2000.

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