

# Northwest and North Central Region Quarterly Report

October/November/December 2024

Barbara Clark, RPA, Director  
Bria Brooks, Public Archaeologist  
Tristan Harrenstein, RPA, Public Archaeologist  
Ellie Minette, Public Archaeology Assistant  
Kate Schreiber, Public Archaeology Assistant  
Elizabeth White, Public Archaeology Assistant

As we wrapped up 2024, staff in both the North Central and Northwest Regions kept busy. We hosted the “Celebrating our Ancestors” event in Pensacola in October. It was all hands on deck as staff and interns from both regions, along with the Coordinating Center worked to provide and assist with programming and workshops throughout the two day event. Celebrating Our Ancestors was a multi-day public event designed to share the history of enslaved people in Pensacola and celebrate the many important contributions they made to create this city and its unique culture. The multi-day event hosted mini-workshops on subjects such as cemetery preservation and genealogy; performances and artisans; a cooking demonstration; a fireside chat, and a book talk with authors Joseph McGill and Herb Fraizer.

“Celebrating our Ancestors” culminated with the fireside chat and sleepover, which are signature programs of the [Slave Dwelling Project](#). Participants were invited to join Joseph McGill, Jr and other members of the Slave Dwelling Project, along with historians, archaeologists, and heritage professionals from across Northwest Florida in a fireside conversation about the history of slavery. This was an opportunity to build on the conversation begun during the Sleeping with the Ancestors book talk, by discussing the history of slavery in Northwest Florida, particularly Pensacola, and the impacts of the institution locally. Members of the public participated in the program, not only by asking questions, but sharing their own ideas and experiences. Following the fireside conversation, participants were invited to stay the night in the Historic Pensacola Village.

In 2026, the North Central Region will be hosting the CRPT Conference. Barbara started the initial planning for this by meeting with the Cemetery Program staff at the Florida Division of Historical Resources. One of the goals of the 2026 conference will be to highlight the Cemetery Program, focusing on the assistance they can provide, including grants. Monticello will be the likely host, in an effort to stimulate the local economy of this small, rural panhandle community. Barbara is working to locate a venue and coordinate with the Jefferson County Tourism Development Council to make plans for promotion, lodging, and meals. She has also discussed the plan with State Representative Allison Tant, who expressed support for the conference and interest in attending.

Both regions have been continuing their work to reach out to new potential partners, as well as rekindle partnerships that may have dwindled during the pandemic. Bria in the Northwest Region has been working with various partners to create a robust lineup of Black History Month programs in the Northwest Region. As a result of her hard work, she has planned numerous lectures for

February, Black History Month Bingo with local senior citizens, media interviews, and the Northwest Region will be participating in the local Martin Luther King, Jr Day Parade! Tristan, likewise, has been hard at work reaching out to numerous partners in an effort to schedule meetings with them. His plan is to meet face-to-face to discuss what their needs are and how we can work to establish more concrete and beneficial partnerships. This also provides us with a reason to visit their location, some of which we have not visited for several years.

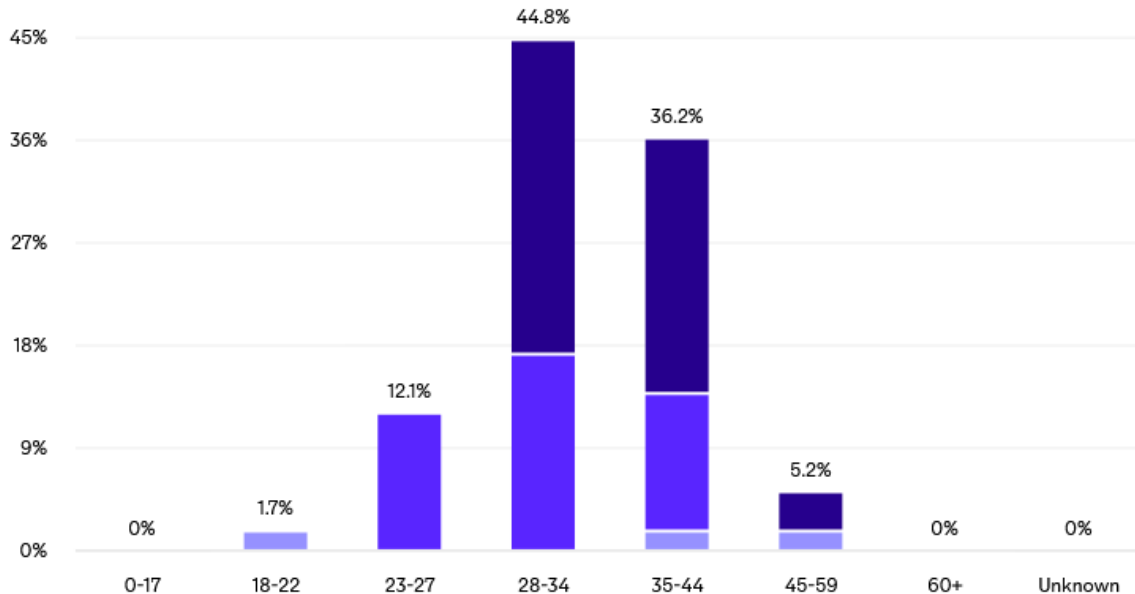
In the Northwest Region the Archaeology Untapped series continues to be popular, based on the science cafe concept, this program is designed to meet people where they are at, literally! In this case, at local breweries. In November Barbara was invited to speak at one in Santa Rosa County. Other ones have featured topics like, “Tales of Tails: Analyzing the Critters of Luna’s Shipwrecks” with UWF Anthropology Professor, Dr. John Bratten. Bria is also planning a Black History Month themed Archaeology Untapped as well. Both regions have continued to provide other partners, organizations, schools, and various other venues with programming and lectures as well. This includes lectures and programs at various community centers, libraries, homeschool groups, state parks, senior centers, Rotary Clubs, and other civic organizations.

The [“Archaeology Books for Fun” podcast](#) continues. Tristan and Barbara, the podcast hosts, have seen steady growth and interest. The latest book, “The Lost City of the Monkey God”, written by Douglas Preston, has provided them with lots of opportunities to discuss concepts relating to archaeological ethics, colonialism, and indigenous erasure. The next book they will be discussing is “The Nine Lives of Florida’s Famous Key Marco Cat”, by Austin J. Bell. This book was chosen because of its Florida focus, which will tie in nicely with March’s Florida Archaeology Month. This quarter the podcast has had 182 plays, and 292 views on YouTube. Furthermore, data suggests that the podcast is hitting our target demographic, working individuals in their late 20s to 40s, who may not be able to attend our physical programs due to their busy schedules (see graphic below).

Oct 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024



## Age



*“Archaeology Books for Fun” podcast listeners age demographics data suggest that the podcast is successful in reaching our desired audience.*

In November, the majority of FPAN staff, including all staff from North Central and Northwest, traveled to Virginia to meet with staff at Montpelier and then attend the Southeastern Archaeological Conference in Williamsburg. This provided a unique opportunity to network and share ideas with Public Archaeologists working at various archaeological and historical sites in Virginia. FPAN also hosted a session at SEAC to celebrate our 20th anniversary. Staff co-authored papers with various partners throughout the state to highlight our various programs and partnerships. The session was very well attended and received.

Our Graduate Assistants have been hard at work this quarter as well. They assist in running the DARC museum and the volunteer lab, providing them with valuable experience going into their professional careers. The Milton High School project also continues to be a solid premier FPAN program for students. GAs have also been assisting us with some website updates, such as checking links to ensure they are still active. Additionally, they have been doing social media posts, assisting staff at events, and providing much needed support for programs and administrative tasks.

### **In Progress/Ongoing:**

- Barbara Clark continues to serve as Chair of the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as Chair of the Rural Acquisition Committee of the National Forests in Florida.
- Tristan continues to serve as a board member of the Florida Trail of Indian Heritage and chairs their marketing committee, he was also recently elected to be the upcoming organization president.
- Barbara continues to serve as a member of the Tallahassee/Leon County joint government Advisory Committee for Quality Growth.
- Barbara continues to serve as the Secretary for the Maritime Landscape Alliance for Preservation and work towards the goal of establishing the Florida Panhandle as a National Heritage Area.
- Bria traveled to Africatown, in Mobile, Alabama to assist with cemetery documentation and cleanup of the historic cemetery, which includes graves of those formerly enslaved, including Cudjoe Lewis, the subject of one of Zora Neale Hurston's ethnographic works.
- Barbara and Tristan are currently working remotely as their office, a historic 1920s tenant farm house, at Maclay Gardens State Park is being restored and renovated.
- Bria is developing programs, workshops, and events for Black History Month 2025.



*Bria and Jennifer Melcher, fellow UWF Archaeologist, pose in front of the Africatown Cemetery during a cemetery cleanup.*





*Bria hosted an "Archaeology Bingo" night at a local community center in the Northwest Region.*





*After scheduling numerous times due to weather, Barbara led a Coastal Hike in partnership with St. George Island State Park and the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, in which we highlighted the relationship between climate and cultural resources.*



*North Central was invited to the Eastpoint Public Library in Franklin County to provide programming for a local homeschool group. Here Tristan discusses foundation archaeological concepts with the students prior to the hands-on activity, "Build a Boat", sourced from our curriculum guide, ["Beyond Artifacts"](#).*