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ARCHAEOLOGY, PRESERVATION, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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WCU Anthropology student, Deryn Fink, excavates a unit along the exterior of the mill structure to look for early features associated with the mill operation.

The Anthropology program at West Chester University (WCU) boasts a vigorous course of study in archaeology that actively engages undergraduate students in scientific research and community outreach projects. For example, WCU students have recently partnered with the Boy Scouts of America in Chester County on archaeological site survey for their headquarters relocation, offered public talks for community groups on a variety of archaeological topics, and have for the past several years been involved in research and preservation activities at the Newlin Grist Mill Park in Concordville, PA. The 160-acre Newlin Grist Mill Park is a place for the exploration and enjoyment of history, archaeology, and the environment. The grist mill was constructed in 1704 by Nathaniel Newlin and served its community until 1941 as a source for grinding grains.

Each generation of owners updated machinery and modified the building and grounds to meet the needs of the time. These changes can be seen in the construction and landscape of the Newlin Grist Mill. Today, the Newlin Grist Mill Park operates as a non-profit organization, providing access to outdoor recreation and pursuing a research and educational mission. WCU anthropology students engage with this mission through their annual participation in the Delaware County Archaeological Festival, held on the grounds of the Newlin Grist Mill. Students can hone their skills in archaeological field excavation, apply their classroom learning, and engage with community members interested in knowing more about archeology. Those excavations have focused on the area between the mill building and a

building known as the archives, with the objective of better understanding how that part of the site has been modified over the past two centuries.

WCU anthropology students have also been involved in experiment-based learning at the Newlin Grist Mill. For example, in 2012 students were involved in the trial-and-error phase of the Brickmaking Project, which entailed the manufacturing of reproduction bricks that were used in the restoration of a chimney at the Historic Amstel House in New Castle, Delaware. Built in the 1730s, the Amstel House is one of New Castle's few surviving early colonial buildings, and housed many of the town's prominent colonial families, including the Governor. The students participated in treading the clay and molding bricks in pre-made forms, using clay that had been dug from the backyard of the house and supplemented with other local clays.

The partnership between WCU and the Newlin Grist Mill has supported student internships, as well. Recent alumni Robert Heintz, a U.S. Marine Corps military veteran, spent the summer of 2018 conducting a GPS survey to complete a comprehensive base map of the park grounds. He mapped archaeological excavations, standing historic structures, important plant communities, and specialized teaching areas used by the Newlin Grist Mill staff for their educational programs. The Newlin Grist Mill may now use the map for a variety of management and planning purposes in their long-term mission to provide access to recreation, education, and research.



WCU student Elizabeth Hiser learns to mold bricks in a form. The new bricks are all stamped with the year 2012, so as not to confuse the replicas with earlier bricks



WCU students and their professor's daughter tread the clay for brickmaking



WCU Anthropology students excavate a trench between the Newlin Grist Mill Archives and water mill to look for evidence related to the earliest historical occupation