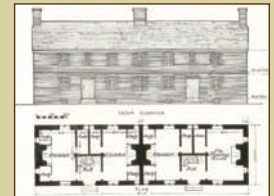
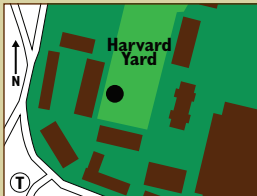


# DIGGING VERITAS

## *The Archaeology and History of the Indian College and Student Life at Colonial Harvard*

Just four years after Harvard initiated a new kind of archaeological collaboration in Harvard Yard to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Indian College, the project uncovered a 17th-century foundation trench on the Indian College lot in front of Matthews Hall. A diverse group of student excavators, Harvard faculty and staff, leaders of local Native American communities, and preservation professionals came together over thousands of artifact fragments, provoking exchanges and explorations about this long-buried past. Even a discarded brick or a small piece of pipe stem provided evidence for colonial Harvard as a landscape shaped by social and religious tensions that affected everything from Native American and English settler relationships to the routines of student life. As current students searched for meaning in the material remains of past Harvard students, three themes emerged: negotiations of social status, rules and religion, and the Indian College. Who knew small buried fragments could reveal so much?

In 2009, students from the Archaeology of Harvard Yard course located a foundation trench believed to be the Harvard Indian College! Excavations in summer and fall 2011 will further explore that site.



The Harvard Yard Archaeology Project is a collaboration of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University Native American Program, and Department of Anthropology.

PEABODY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

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*“With the discovery of these artifacts, I could imagine myself traveling back through the centuries—19th, 18th, and 17th—to when Harvard Yard was still a pasture and to when the Indian College stood tall.”*

—Lan Zhou, Harvard College 2008

## Social Status: Divided We Eat



Seventeenth-century wine bottle from colonial Harvard Yard.

The 17th-century College officially favored wealthy students, such as those who paid double tuition and presented a silver dish upon matriculation. These students, known as “Fellow-Commoners,” received the right to dine at the Fellows’ table on tablecloths covered with their silver items. They enjoyed hot mulled cider, fresh fruit, and other luxuries unknown to the less affluent students, who ate from shared wooden trenchers (platters).

## The Indian College



Pieces of print type from colonial Harvard Yard.

Few realize that Harvard’s charter created a multicultural educational institution that was dedicated to “the education of the English & Indian Youth of this Country in knowledge: and godlines.” The Harvard Indian College, however, was part of a network of grammar schools and praying towns created to Christianize Native Americans. It housed the first printing press in North America, which produced the first Bible on the continent—in the local Algonquian language.

## Rule (Breaking) and Religion



Late 17th–early 18th-century tobacco pipe from colonial Harvard Yard.

Like any school, Harvard has rules. Harvard’s 17th- and 18th-century rules were religious in nature, stemming from local Puritan beliefs. The College Laws forbade drinking and smoking; they even forbade certain types of adornment, such as gold buttons, which violated Puritan notions of modesty. Yet, looking at fragments found underground in Harvard Yard, student archaeologists discovered that breaking rules has a long history.

**Curated by the students of Anthropology 1130 and 1131 and Peabody Museum summer interns; advised by William L. Fash, William and Muriel Seabury Howells Director, Peabody Museum; Dr. Patricia Capone, Associate Curator; Dr. Diana Loren, Associate Curator; Dr. Christina J. Hodge, Senior Curatorial Assistant.**

*Front:* 2011 excavation site at the Indian College in front of Matthews Hall. Wine bottle from Colonial Harvard Yard, PM 992-9-10/100225. Students excavate Harvard Yard in 2009; photo by Michele Koons. Pieces of metal print type from colonial Harvard Yard. Left to right: PM 2007.20.385, PM 980-3-10/99588, PM 2007.20.705, PM 2007.20.385, PM 2007.20.705, PM 980-3-10/99586, PM980-3-10/99589, PM 980-3-10/99587. Conjectural sketch of the Indian College by H. R. Shurtleff in Samuel Eliot Morrison’s 1936 *Harvard College in the 17th Century*, Vol. 1, p. 344A. *Back:* Late 17th–early 18th-century tobacco pipe from colonial Harvard Yard, PM 992-9-10/100212. *All object photos by Mark Craig.*