



PEABODY MUSEUM  
of ARCHAEOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY

## PRESS RELEASE

# Digging Veritas: The Archaeology and History of the Indian College and Student Life at Colonial Harvard

**Exhibit Dates:** November 10, 2008 to January 2010

**Opening Reception:** Monday, November 10, 2008

5 – 7 PM Exhibition Opening and Reception

Free and Open to the Public

**Where:** Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard

University, 11 Divinity Ave. Cambridge. Harvard Square T stop, #1

Bus, handicapped accessible. Information: 617-496-1027



Rules against student smoking and drinking at Colonial Harvard were apparently stretched. Late 17<sup>th</sup>–early 18<sup>th</sup> century tobacco pipe from Colonial Harvard Yard. Photo by Mark Craig. PM 992-9-10/100212.

**(Cambridge, 8 October 2008)** The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presents a new exhibition on the archaeology of Harvard Yard entitled *Digging Veritas: The Archaeology and History of the Indian College and Student Life at Colonial Harvard*. Through archaeological finds from Harvard Yard, historical documents, and more, the exhibition shows how today's Harvard students make sense of student life at colonial Harvard and the role of the Indian College in Harvard's early years. Student archaeologists unearthed evidence of colonial Harvard as a landscape shaped by social and religious tensions that affected everything from Native American and English settler relationships to the everyday

routines of student life. As the students searched for meaning in the material remains of Harvard students of the past, three themes emerged: literacy and the Indian College; rule (breaking) and religion; and negotiations of social status. Who knew small buried fragments could reveal so much?



Seventeenth- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century drinking and dining utensils from Colonial Harvard Yard. Photo by Mark Craig. Stoneware tankard body sherds, PM 992-9-10/100224. Wine bottle, PM 992-9-10/100225.

### **How Students Lived at Colonial Harvard**

Rule-breaking got an early start at Harvard. Despite Puritan-based college rules in the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries forbidding student smoking and drinking, the archaeological team discovered large quantities of ceramic tobacco pipes and fragments of glass wine bottles. “The site began to resemble a tavern...our view of early Puritan Harvard changed to match the artifacts,” said student and co-curator Danielle Charlap.

The exhibition compares remains of meals, serving dishes, and dining utensils with historical records to piece together a more complete

picture of how students ate, including the privileges reserved for older and wealthier students in Harvard’s dining system. In addition, the exhibition shows how recovered personal effects such as buttons, earrings and part of a wig curler indicate that Harvard’s strict colonial rules on dress were stretched.

### **Literacy and the Indian College at Harvard**

The exhibition includes the tiniest and most exciting find from the recent Harvard Yard excavation: pieces of metal print type used in America’s first printing press that was once located in Harvard’s Indian College. This press produced the first Bible printed in North America, also known as the Indian Bible or the Eliot Bible, which was written in the Algonquian language. Harvard’s 1650 charter declared the

college's commitment to "the education of the English & Indian Youth of this Country in knowledge: and godlines" which resulted in the establishment of the Indian College. The Indian College's founders hoped graduates would proselytize their home communities with the Gospel. After ten years, the Indian College no longer had Native American students, and the building was consigned to other uses until it was dismantled in 1695. Prompted by this history, student curators reflect on the ideals of a multicultural educational setting and the place of Native education within history.



Pieces of print type from Colonial Harvard Yard.  
Photo by Mark Craig. Left to right: PM 2007.20.385, PM 980-3-10/99588, PM 2007.20.708, PM 2007.20.385, PM 2007.20.708,

### **Over 65 Curators**

As part of the commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the Indian College, the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP), and Department of Anthropology began a collaboration to study colonial Harvard in 2005. Eventually over 60 students, most of whom participated in the course *Archaeology of Harvard Yard* (Anthropology 1130 and 1131), contributed to curating this exhibit. The year-long course was a hands-on field archaeology class, including laboratory work and culminating in the new exhibit at the Peabody. "The whole class curated the exhibit," said Dr. Patricia Capone, a Peabody Museum Associate Curator and one of the course instructors. The class, which was taught during fall 2007 and spring 2008, was open to all Harvard students; as a result, the student curators represented many different departments including Anthropology, History, History of Art and Architecture, Computer Science, and Government.

"Everyone had a voice in putting together the exhibit," said Dr. Diana Loren, also a Peabody Museum Associate Curator and a course co-instructor. Students were encouraged to explore their own identities

as Harvard students in relationship to the past and to contemporary stakeholders. Students engaged with representatives of HUNAP as well as speakers from neighboring groups including the Wampanoag Tribe of Aquinnah, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation, Nipmuc Nation, Massachuseuk, Cambridge Historical Commission and Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Also curating the exhibit were *Archaeology of Harvard Yard* instructors Dr. William L. Fash, Jr., William and Muriel Seabury Howells Director of the Peabody Museum, and Dr. Christina Hodge, Peabody Museum Senior Curatorial Assistant.

### **About the Peabody Museum**

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

**Location:** *The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.*

**Hours:** 9 AM to 5 PM, 7 days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is \$9.00 for adults, \$7.00 for students and seniors, \$6.00 for children, 3-18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 AM to noon, year round, and Wednesdays from 3 PM to 5 PM (September to May). Admission includes admission to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call (617)496-1027 or go online to: [www.peabody.harvard.edu](http://www.peabody.harvard.edu).

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