

FALL 2025

Millersville

UNIVERSITY REVIEW

Professor and students
uncover Lancaster history

PAGE 3

Inside the Eye of a Tornado | PAGE 7

A Decade of MU/Shippensburg's Joint Doctorate | PAGE 11

Unveiling the New Strategic Plan | PAGE 34

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DEAR MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY,

October is a magnificent season at Millersville University. The turning leaves, crisp mornings, and steady rhythm of campus life create the perfect backdrop for one of our most cherished traditions – Homecoming. On Oct. 4, we marked our 92nd celebration with a day of sunshine and spirited gatherings, including the parade, reunions, football game, Maker's Market, Skully Shoppes and the 'Ville Block Party. It was a joy to welcome so many alumni and friends back to campus for this special occasion.

This issue of the Review highlights the excellence and impact that defines Millersville. Our students continue to engage in groundbreaking research and discovery. Meteorology major Nelson Tucker leads the OTUS project, advancing tornado warning systems to save lives. On the cover, you will find our archaeology students working with Dr. Timothy Trussell to uncover what may be the first tavern in Lancaster County – an endeavor that connects past and present through hands-on learning.

Our faculty and programs also continue to expand Millersville's influence and educational reach. The joint doctoral program in Educational Leadership with Shippensburg University – unique within PASSHE – celebrates a decade of preparing outstanding leaders for schools and universities. Together, these stories exemplify Millersville University's unwavering commitment to its EPPIIC Values and to creating meaningful impact both locally and globally.

In my State of the 'Ville Address on Sept. 5, I introduced our new strategic plan, Beyond Boundaries, which charts an ambitious path for Millersville's next chapter. This issue revisits that vision, along with a reflection on the accomplishments of our previous plan, Tradition and Transformation.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Review and share in the pride I feel for all that Millersville University continues to achieve as we shape a brighter, more connected world together.

Daniel A. Wubah

Daniel A. Wubah, Ph.D.
President, Millersville University

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Professor and Students Uncover Lancaster History

Archaeology professor Dr. Timothy Trussell leads Millersville students on a dig to unearth what may be Lancaster's oldest tavern.

By Kelsey Madas

Tucked away in the farmland of Lancaster County, just north of Marietta, lies history that is just now being uncovered. Dr. Timothy Trussell, tenured assistant professor of archaeology at Millersville, and a team of 36 students – most are archaeology majors or minors – are hard at work to preserve the remains of the former Galbraith Ordinary, which may have been the very first tavern in Lancaster County.

In old English, “ordinary” referred to a simple house that served food and drink to visitors. According to Trussell, it’s “basically synonymous with ‘tavern’ in today’s lexicon.” Historic documents show the license for this tavern was obtained from the proprietorship of Pennsylvania by a man named John Galbraith in 1725.

LOCAL HISTORY, NEW HISTORIANS

Now 300 years later, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday since Aug. 27, Trussell and his team of student archaeologists have been excavating the site to uncover valuable information about the past. “One of the interesting things about people in a pioneer situation is that they had to work hard and be extremely practical, and they didn’t have time to write down lengthy descriptions of how they lived their lives or what they were doing,” explains Trussell. “So, although we know this tavern was here because of the historic documents, we have no idea what food they served, what drinks they served or what daily life was like at this early tavern.



Top left: The only known surviving photograph of the Galbraith Ordinary, taken sometime around 1880 - 1890.
Bottom right: The group of students researchers and Dr. Timothy Trussell (back row, middle) pose for a photo at the dig site.



That's where archaeology comes in – to fill in the gaps and let us research exactly what was going on here during those early days through analysis of the physical remains of the artifacts, the bones and more."

The students will remain on site for the foreseeable future, weather permitting, and will spend the last third of the semester in the lab working with the artifacts. Thus far, they've uncovered thousands and located the original foundation of the building that was buried under two feet of modern soil deposition. "Broken ceramics, which are excellent dating tools, are the most numerous artifact type, but we've also found smoking pipes, wine bottle glass, vessel glass, tools and many animal bones which are the remains of meals once served at the tavern," shares Trussell. He notes that the appearance of oyster shells among the artifacts indicates that the tavern owners were importing and serving oysters from the Chesapeake.

"What makes this site unusual is that we have a single surviving picture from around 1890 showing this old stone building when it was still standing," says Trussell. "Though the building was destroyed around 1905, I

was able to use this and modern-day maps to calculate the location of the site, and that is where we have been doing our excavations."

After the tavern ceased operation, a German family purchased the property and built a stone mill and house for the millwright in 1804. Those buildings still stand today and helped Trussell to test the site for the foundation of the former ordinary. A stylized drawing from sometime during that period shows all three buildings, which lie along present-day PA 772. The last time the building shows up on a map is in the 1899 atlas, indicating that the ordinary was either torn down or possibly burned in a fire. Hopefully, Trussell and his team will be able to unearth what happened through their research.

LEARNING IN THE FIELD

Students participating in the dig as part of the archaeology program's field school are also completing a nine-credit course. The unique program has undergraduate students conducting every part of the

archaeological project. "They do it all, from the survey and testing phases through full block excavation," states Trussell. After the fieldwork wraps up later this fall, those same students will clean, identify and catalog, and enter all of the artifacts that they excavated from the different soil layers into a database.

This setup is not the norm in the state, nor in higher education. "At many universities, graduate students will do all of the artifact analysis and will even take over in the field when something interesting is found," Trussell explains. "Millersville is quite unique in that every position, even our field supervisors, are all Millersville undergraduates trained in our program. In this way, they receive an extremely comprehensive training that is unique at the undergraduate level in the entire state of Pennsylvania."

Trussell says that the field excavations have two complementary goals: giving students hands-on training in their field and "researching unknown or little-understood aspects of early colonial history. In this sense, our students are all doing primary research in the field, trying to discover those aspects of history that are not in the history books."

On a warm day in October during a site visit, archaeology and anthropology major Jillian Baumberger '26, a self-described bone enthusiast, talks about how these types of remains offer clues about the past. She points to a portion of a jawbone she found in the pit. "It's really cool to see what kind of animals were there at the tavern, and it's interesting to see what was popular to eat at that time."

"I knew this course would be physically demanding, but I was surprised just how demanding it actually is," shares Veronica Fox '26, a dual major in history and anthropology with a minor in archaeology. "I get a true workout every day we're in the field and have been left quite sore after all of our field days." This is the first dig she's ever been on. "Dr. Trussell tells us that archaeology is an inherently destructive field; by digging up a site and its artifacts, we are removing all the contexts of that site, and thus the story of the people who were there. Therefore, it is our job to dig the site well, learn all we can and preserve that story."

Julia Swan '26, who is also majoring in archaeology and anthropology, says the sheer number of artifacts surprised her. "I've always been a bit shocked at how much we can learn about a group of people from what they leave behind. Being able to look at a piece



of ceramic and know that it means someone of Dutch ancestry was here, or seeing the color of the soil change can tell us that there was a fire, it's just such an interesting thing to me!"

All of this experience in field archaeology, artifact analysis and historical research results in graduates who are well-prepared to enter a competitive job market and qualify for top graduate schools. Trussell says he has a long list of alumni who've gone on to work at archaeology firms, enrolled in graduate school, pursued related careers in museum studies or historic preservation, or landed paid contract work.

TURNING THE TROWEL ON TRUSSELL

Trussell's love of archaeology started when he was an undergraduate student and a history major at Oregon State University. While studying Civil War history there, he signed up for a dig the archaeology program was doing over the summer to excavate a U.S. Army Civil War artillery fort at the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon. "I went on the dig and fell in love with archaeology," he says. "It gave me the chance to research and study history from an entirely different perspective than documents alone offer." When asked about the most unexpected thing he ever found on an archaeological dig, Trussell says, "In more than three decades of field archaeology, by far the best thing I've ever found was my wife! We met on an archaeological dig in 1994, and she's been stuck with me ever since!"

Throughout his many years of research, Trussell remains deeply entrenched in his field of study and the answers to questions about history he can find there. "I love archaeology because it gives me an entirely different, and richer, perspective on history and historical research," he says. "It is intellectually satisfying and is great fun when we find something!"

What will Trussell and his team find at the site of the Galbraith Ordinary? Hopefully, something extraordinary.

Do you dig history? Learn more about Millersville's unique archaeology program here:

millersville.edu/archaeology ♦

