

ASSESSMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE JOHANNES KOLB ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

by

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As long-time Scoutmaster of local Boy Scout Troop 655, I was lucky enough to know Chris Judge and be close enough to the Kolb Site in Darlington County to participate for eight years in the activities there. Every March from 2000 through 2007, I took a large group of Boy Scouts to spend the weekend on the site and participate in the dig. The Department Of Natural Resources was kind enough to allow us to camp on the site, and it was always one of our troop's favorite activities.

The weather varied greatly from year to year. In 2001 the temperature fell to 25 degrees and in 2003 the river flooded the site so that we had to be ferried in by boat. None of this dampened the enthusiasm of the boys for this event. We used this annual event to introduce our new recruits from Cub Scouts to the troop on their first Boy Scout campout, so we usually had a group of 20 or more Scouts and as many adults.

As the years went on, Chris Judge was able to assign a crew member to instruct the boys in Archaeology Merit Badge, and all of the boys were able to earn this badge during the weekend. Our troop probably had the highest percentage of boys with this badge in the nation. Also, over the years, Chris found ways to incorporate the boys into the actual work of the dig, sifting, washing and "incavating," which was their important-sounding title for filling in holes.

In addition to the actual dig, the boys really benefited from the other exhibitions and activities which were drawn to the site, such as pottery-makers, flint-knappers, and historical re-enactors. All-in-all, this probably was the most intense educational experience that my boys received on any weekend trip. Of course, the site itself is unique for the historical range of information available to teach there. Some years there would be a fine barbecue lunch provided and Native American dancing for entertainment. One year our boys even got tee-shirts printed with the site logos.

Also unique about the site is its flora and fauna available to teach our boys about nature when we were away from the actual dig. The view of the Pee Dee River from our favorite campsite was beautiful. Red maples were budding and Redbud trees always blooming during that particular weekend, which gave some nice color to the landscape. The absolute silence and isolation of the site provided the perfect backdrop to the Cherokee ghost tales we liked to read around the campfire at night.

We found the literature about the site very helpful and interesting, and we have preserved it in our troop scrapbooks along with the numerous pictures of the boys working on the site. More than 100 boys from our troop will have benefited from this project and carry fond memories of their weekends there into adulthood. Even if none of them pursue archaeology or anthropology as a career, they will certainly be interested supporters of the fields, and much more knowledgeable adults as a result of the project.