

# A 250% Increase in Jack-o-Canterns: Historical Archaeology at a 20th-Century Northern Arizona Logging Camp

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**ABSTRACT:** Northern Arizona University's Apex, Arizona Archaeology Project continued its commitment to collaboration, student training, public engagement, and historical archaeology during Summer 2024. In this poster, we discuss our ongoing research into the Saginaw and Manistee's Depression-Era logging camp along the Grand Canyon Railway and our investigations into the daily lives of the men, women, and children who lived and worked at the site between 1928 and 1936. We provide a general overview of our archaeological findings, lessons from public site tours, and future directions for upcoming seasons.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Apex, Arizona Archaeology Project conducted its third field season from May to June 2024. This year's surveys, mapping, and excavations (Figure 1) at the 1928 to 1936 temporary logging headquarters of the Saginaw and Manistee Lumber company revealed new insights into the daily lives of the men, women, and children living just a few miles south of the Grand Canyon. The artifacts and features recorded this summer focused on management housing and helped us explore the impacts of the Great Depression and Prohibition on residents, the roles of women and children, and the central position of labor at the site.

The 2024 Field School centered primarily on the various Loci, or activity areas, associated with management. Eight students, two staff, and four Passport in Time volunteers investigated Loci KLM (the likely location of the home of Arvid Anderson, the superintendent), Locus J, and Locus V (both possible housing for the teacher or the Erickson or Matson families). This provided comparative data for the 2022 and 2023 field seasons which focused on the schoolhouse, kitchen, and laborer housing. This research was accomplished alongside tours for the general public, which inform and expand public knowledge about historical archaeology in the Southwest.

## CHILDREN

The 2024 field season revealed numerous artifacts, such as small shoe soles, related to children at the site, more so than in any other year. Based on interviews conducted by Al Richmond, most of the housing on the west side of the tracks was occupied by Scandinavian, management families. Per the 1930 census, Arvid Anderson (superintendent), Gus Erickson (fireman), Eric Matson (loader man), and Oscar Ryberg (cook) all had wives and young children (3, 2, 3, and 8 children, respectively). Toys at all the Loci suggest the presence of both young boys and girls, in line with census records (Figure 6). "Boy's" toys tended to revolve around themes of transportation, including cars, planes, trains, and tractors, but also a toy gun. "Girl's" toys included porcelain dolls and tea sets. A piece of slate at Locus V, below the schoolhouse, perhaps indicates that schoolwork continued at home. The cast iron and porcelain toys at management housing are seemingly more expensive than those found elsewhere at the site. Coupled with their higher numbers, this might indicate more disposable income to purchase and not be concerned with the breaking or loss of toys not seen elsewhere at the site.

We also suggest that the 7 total "Jack-o-Canterns" (Figure 5) scattered across the site at Loci C (1), G (4), KLM (1), and S (1), may have been a school Halloween art project, as they are largely found in areas connected with the presence of children. They possibly indicate an assimilation to American holidays.

**Figure 1: 2024 field school students at work. Left: Makenzie and Ricky work on the Tape-and-Compass Map; Right: Sarah and Marc excavate the possible privy.**



**Figure 2: 2024 Field School students, Passport in Time Volunteers, and staff. Kneeling: Rachael O'Hara, Emily Dale, Adrienne Dale, and Matt Harwood. Standing: Charlie Webber, Lorna Baker, Sarah O'Donnell, Bailey Stalford, Fran Maiuri, Devony Martell, Ricky Raffaele, Shannon Stoller, Makenzie Long, and Carl Evertsbusch. Not Pictured: Marc Hillis**

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

A large part of the Apex, Arizona Archaeology Project is public engagement and community outreach, which we could not do without the funding and support of our partners. All eight students, who each received a full \$1800 tuition stipend from the Kaibab National Forest, gained training in archaeological methods, history, and public education. We continued our participation in the Passport in Time program and became the first project run through the new Volunteer.gov system. Four volunteers worked with us for a week, assisting in excavation, mapping, and artifact recordation (Figure 2). Thanks to funding from the Passport in Time Clearinghouse, all volunteers received a \$500 stipend. Finally, thanks to a grant from the Arizona Humanities, we again hosted a series of public tours of our archaeological fieldwork. In 2024, 90 people visited the site from a variety of organizations. Our final tour of the season is scheduled for Saturday, September 21 through the Flagstaff Festival of Science.

**Figure 3 (Left): Anheuser-Busch cup**



**Figure 4 (Right): One of the many Coca-Cola bottles from Flagstaff, Arizona**



## MANAGEMENT VERSUS LABORER

Archaeological investigations across the site reveal alcohol consumption was rampant, even among management. Whiskey, including Hiram Walker, Old Quaker, and Seagram's, was by far the most popular spirit, though two Vai Brothers wine bottles arrived from Los Angeles. Beer was also commonly consumed, with beer bottles, beer cans, a Pabst bottle opener, and a small Anheuser-Busch glass cup (Figure 3) found across the residential area. Even Prohibition did not put an end to drinking. Budweiser and Puritan Malt Syrup Extract cans suggest on-site beer production, and an American Medicinal Spirits bottle suggests someone may have been willing to procure a doctor's prescription to obtain liquor.

While the 2024 season continued to uncover food brands found elsewhere at the site, such as Calumet Baking Powder, Ovaltine and Hershey's Cocoa, and Orange Crush soda, food consumption patterns at the management housing differ slightly. Coca-Cola bottles were more common than in laborer contexts, many originating in Flagstaff (Figure 4). Canning jars were also far more numerous, suggesting women and families were more likely to preserve foods at home, and Wessen Oil cans suggest home-cooked meals. The presence of Scandinavian immigrants on the west side of the tracks may also account for the higher number of sardine cans originating in Norway.

Finally, a discrepancy in cleaning products between management and laborer housing contexts suggests different approaches to hygiene. Laborer contexts are much more likely to contain canned, powdered cleansers, like Old Dutch and Lighthouse, while management housing displayed a preference for bottled, liquid Clorox.

**Figure 9: Model T ignition switch plate. Note the "Ford" logo at the bottom of the dial. Possibly dates to between 1919 and 1925.**



**Figure 7: Souvenir-style projectile point.**

**Figure 8: Armand Rouge compact case**



## OTHER COOL THINGS

- A uniface chert projectile point (Figure 7) might reveal connections between Apex's workers and the growing Native American souvenir market of the early 20th-century.
- Make-up compacts, including Princess Pat and Armand brands (Figure 8), may have held rouge, foundation, or other beauty products used by Apex's women.
- Several car parts, such as a "Crysta Lites" window frame, two oval gas tank, and a rectangular "Ford" ignition switch plate (Figure 9), indicates the Model T may have been a common car at the site.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Apex, Arizona Archaeology Project has two more years of permitted field work. Future years' priorities include recording non-residential and industrial structures, and surveying the railroad grade beyond the camp headquarters. Other projects will be undertaken with graduate student interest.

The continued success and support for the Apex, Arizona project demonstrates the ability of Southwest archaeology to shed a light on the region's more recent history, connect communities to their past, and provide new opportunities for public engagement and collaborative projects.



**Figure 5 (Above): Apex Jack-o-Canterns at their 100th class reunion**

**Figure 6 (Right): Doll arm, ceramic horse from "Germany", an Avery Company toy tractor, and an Air-Top Toy Express plane**



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