



Collaborative digs conducted on Nevis

In July, archaeologists from the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, DePaul University in Chicago, and the University of Southampton in England conducted two weeks of shovel-test-pit surveys on Nevis, the smaller of the two Caribbean islands that make up the nation of St. Kitts and Nevis. The surveys focused on three 18th-century slave villages and were designed to assess the size and occupation span of each site.



Monticello's Fraser D. Neiman and Jillan Galle at the Jessups I site on Nevis.

Test pits at these villages – known as Upper Rawlins, Jessups I, and Jessups II – produced tobacco pipe fragments, 18th-century ceramic and wine bottle glass shards, a fragment of Chinese porcelain with Chinese characters painted on it, and many pieces of locally produced coarse earthenware ceramics known as Afro-Caribbean ware. Images of all the

artifacts and the field records from these excavations are to be posted on the DAACS website – www.daacs.org – in December.

This international, multi-institutional fieldwork collaboration – the first of its kind for Monticello archaeologists – complements DAACS' collections work in Jamaica.

For roughly 150 years spanning the 18th century, both Jamaica and Nevis were British-ruled “sugar islands” with slave-based economies. DAACS research is exploring how key differences in these islands – such as size, topography, proximity to other islands, and the niche their plantations occupied in the larger Atlantic economy – resulted in different social and

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economic strategies among both slaves and owners.

As DAACS' work is changing the understanding of the slave-based society that evolved in the Chesapeake region, it also promises to bring new insights to the West Indies through additional data collection and collaborative excavation and scholarship in Jamaica and Nevis.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org