

Designing the 2001 Poster

HOW WE DESIGNED IT

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month committee asked archaeologists from the Cultural Resource Department of Parsons Engineering Science to design the Delaware Archaeology Month poster. The committee recommended that the theme of the poster should center on the recent excavations conducted on Native American sites. A volunteer poster group was formed at Parsons to discuss this issue and to consider how best to portray this topic.

The past few years have witnessed an increased level of discussion between archaeologists and Native Americans on the national level and in the State of Delaware. Therefore, it was reasoned that a poster which combined Native American and archaeological symbols and perspectives would be appropriate. Our poster committee thought that this integrated approach would be especially fitting since both groups have a deep appreciation and respect for the past. Additionally, this combined theme would symbolically recognize the need to continue the push for increased interactions and partnerships.

The design of the 2001 poster has been stimulated by our interactions with Native Americans and a broader reading of the anthropological and historic literature. This poster takes certain elements from these sources, and recombines them in an overall design. This poster is meant to accentuate positive aspects of learning about the past, enriching our communities with greater historic knowledge, and gaining a better appreciation for America's and Delaware's indigenous cultures.

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month poster therefore is designed in the spirit of cooperation, harmony and mutual understanding. We hope that members of the general public will enjoy the design and find some inspiration in it!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Circle:

A number of elements in this poster—the artifacts, the quote, and the sun—are all purposefully chosen and deliberately set in a circular arrangement.

The circle is an ancient symbol that is frequently found in material culture and art work throughout the world. The circle motif often is used by Native American cultures and Eastern Algonquian tribes, appearing in sacred inscriptions, signs, and in ceremonial architecture. The concept of the circle often is used in oral teachings as a metaphor for explaining the universe, supernatural forces, life cycles, spiritual harmony, and community union.

A quote by Black Elk (1863-1950), holy man of the Oglala Sioux is particularly suitable in this context:

You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round.

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.

Quote from Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux. By Nicholas Black Elk, as told through John G. Neihardt, 2000, page 150. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

Color and Direction Symbolism:

The poster incorporates a number of colors—including white, yellow, black and red—which are commonly used by many Native American tribes today. The poster incorporates a direction to the colors, white to north, yellow to east, black to south, and red to the west, as well as a contrasting color format—yellow against black. The particular artifact colors and directions used in this poster were inspired and based on those used by the Nanticoke Indian tribe of Delaware.

Color is a powerful visual medium in past and present cultures. Color often is used by societies and individuals to convey both deliberate and hidden social and religious messages—whether in spiritual teachings, art, food, clothing, or bodily adornment. Color may have many meanings according to tribe and particular contexts, and it may be used to evoke emotional or physical meanings. For example, the color red may have meanings such as triumph, power, or life blood, whereas white may be taken as a sign for conveying serenity, light, winter, or snow.

Directionality and color are often intertwined and associated with one another, and can be symbolic of different deities, powers, and sacred locations. Across Native American societies of the eastern seaboard, the eastward direction and counter-clockwise right-side

rotations are associated with life and light. Conversely the westward direction, clockwise and left rotations are sometimes associated with death. Hence major deities are thought to dwell in the west and souls of the deceased travel in that direction.

An underlying message of color as used in this poster is to recognize the diversity of human races, while promoting harmony, unity, and communication among all peoples.

Cosmology, Cycle of Death and Rebirth:

Humans have always been fascinated with cosmos, or the order and harmony of the universe, to understand the complex interdependence of man and the natural world. Observation of the sky and the movement of the planets and stars is a common denominator in many Native American cultures, and it is often used to understand human experience.

The poster illustrates the duality of night and day through use of its black background and its sunburst patterns. The black is meant to convey darkness, symbolic of human ignorance, misunderstandings, and the need to find light. The sunburst is symbolic of rebirth, regeneration, and the dawn of a new day. The white in the center of the sun may be taken as the center of all things, and the place where all natural and human realms can be taken as one. In this sense, the sunburst and its central core represents the need for both Native Americans and archaeologists to come together, find their paths, and work together to build common ground, as has been nicely described in these new books:

Swidler, N., K. Dongoske, R. Anyon, and A.S. Downer (editors)

1997 *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground*. Altamira Press, Walnut Creek.

Dongoske, K.E., M. Aldenderfer, and K. Doehner (editors)

2000 *Working Together: Native Americans and Archaeologists*. Society for American Archaeology, Washington D.C.

Quote Attribution:

The quote used on the poster is attributed to Big Thunder, a Penobscot tribal Chief in the state of Maine. Chief Big Thunder is said to have remarked:

The Great Spirit is in all things, he is in the air we breathe.
The Great Spirit is our Father, but the Earth is our Mother.
She nourishes us, that which we put into the ground, she returns to us.

Spoken by an eastern seaboard Algonquin Chief, this particular quote struck poster committee members as particularly relevant to those of us who excavate sites, recover artifacts and material remains, and try to learn as much as possible about past cultures. Big Thunder's quote is also an excellent example of the continuous cycle that we have described in the circle.

Big Thunder's quote frequently appears in books devoted to Native American spirituality or quotes. It may be found on numerous Internet sites, for example Ani Wa Ya, Earth Healing Prayers. For a photograph of Big Thunder, see the University of Maine Hudson Museum. An excellent historical article on Big Thunder is "Chief Big Thunder (1827-1906): The Life History of a Penobscot Trickster", by Harald E.L. Prins, *Maine History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1998, pp. 140-158.

State Route 1 Artifacts:

Five projectile points, or as they are commonly called, "arrowheads" and "spear points", are depicted in the poster. To Native Americans, rocks are symbols of Mother Earth, and signs of everlasting and indestructible forces. Stone artifacts, in fact, are the most frequently recovered objects from archaeological sites.

The projectile points displayed on the poster were recovered during recent excavations in advance of construction of the State Route 1 road corridor. The points were from the Smyrna to Pine Tree Corners road segment in New Castle County, and the Puncheon Run Connector road corridor in Dover, Kent County.

The points generally fall into common styles which range from time periods referred to as Early and Middle Woodland, or from 3,000 to 1,000 years ago (1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.). The points were fashioned from chert and quartz materials, which naturally occur as cobbles and pebbles in streams. Native Americans procured these natural gravels and skillfully chipped them into a variety of stone tools.

* The black and white points are from the Frederick Lodge site, in New Castle County. The Frederick Lodge site was a vast 30-acre site, and among its hallmarks was the excavation of an occupation dating to about 8,000 B.C., a period that is not well-known in Delaware history.

* The tan point, which is repeated several times, is from the Sandom Branch site, in New Castle County. The Sandom Branch site was a well-preserved site which contained a number of hearths, stone tools, and pottery dating to the Late Woodland, or from about 1,000 to 500 years ago.

* The red and yellow points are from the Hickory Bluff site, in Kent County, on the south edge of Dover. Large-scale excavations were conducted at the Hickory Bluff site. The site is considered one of the most impressive site excavations in Delaware. The site contained numerous pit and hearth features and over 85,000 stone tools and pottery.

These artifacts, and the results of the State Route 1 site excavations, will be published in the Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series. The series is found in many community libraries throughout the state.

For further information on the different periods of Native American archaeology and on the projectile point types that may be found in Delaware, see "A Guide to Prehistoric Arrowheads and Spear Points of Delaware", by Jay Custer, 1996.

POSTER SPONSORS

A number of organizations—a professional and amateur society, two state agencies, and six Cultural Resource Management firms--contributed to the financial support of this poster. Archaeological fieldwork, laboratory work, and research are on-going in the state of Delaware. Many archaeological projects are conducted under the umbrella of "Cultural Resource Management", which has a goal to identify, evaluate, and excavate sites prior to construction activities.

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month Committee thanks all of these organizations for their generous support.

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POSTER DESIGN CREDITS

The poster design was created by members of the Cultural Resource Management Department at Parsons Engineering Science, Inc. . Volunteers included Elizabeth

Crowell, Phenix Hall, Susan Hathaway, Dennis Knepper, Randall Patrick, Michael Petraglia, and Carter Shields. For further information on the poster design or its contents, contact Michael Petraglia, 703-218-1084.

The 2001 Delaware Archaeology Month Committee thanks Parsons Engineering Science, Inc., and all its hardworking volunteers for this creative, thoughtful design.

Delaware Archaeology Month is sponsored by a committee of the Archaeological Society of Delaware, partnered with professional and avocational archaeologists living and/ or working in Delaware, and concerned about preserving Delaware's rich heritage of archaeological sites. Contact Craig Lukezic or Alice Guerrant at 302-736-7400, for further information.

The committee includes members from the Archaeological Society of Delaware, City of Wilmington Department of Planning, Delaware Department of Transportation, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Delaware State Parks, Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Delaware State Museums, GAI Consultants, Inc., Gannett Fleming, Inc., Greenbank Mill Associates, Inc., Hunter Research, Inc., Iron Hill Museum of the Delaware Academy of Science, John Milner Associates, Inc., MAAR Associates, Inc., McCormick, Taylor and Associates, Inc., Preservation Delaware, Inc., The Louis Berger Group, Inc., Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc., University of Delaware Department of Anthropology, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. This celebration of the past would not be possible without the generous participation of the speakers, festival volunteers, and sponsors.