By R. D. Flavin

Hubbard’s “Space Bee Goddess” BC engraved mudstone and the Atacama skeleton.

Well, time flies by when no one cares... And, leaving humor aside and returning to the sad silliness of the Burrows Cave hoax, as I remarked about in my “2012+1” column at the top of this year, a new journal article ostensibly about Burrows Cave has been published (Wilson 2012). Also, as mentioned in the column, a sizable collection of gold-painted lead Burrows Cave artifacts has surfaced. A review of the article, a full telling of the tale of the latest fake gold BC items, together with associated tidbits of pseudoscience flotsam and it's a 2013 Burrows Cave hoax update. Let's have at it, shall we?

That there's been a general dearth of professionally academic and skeptically critical articles about the Burrows Cave hoax is a given. With the exception of a few brief critical articles by Barry Fell in his amateur and non-peered reviewed journal, the Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications (Fell 1987, 1990a, 1990b), as well as some mentions in ESOP kindred publications (Occasional Newsletter of The Mid-Atlantic Epigraphic Society, Midwestern Epigraphic Journal, etc.), almost all publications discussing the Burrows Cave hoax were/are supportive of the lie. And, of course, money and the promise of money was/is involved. I remain disappointed that such popular science magazines such as Skeptic, Skeptical Inquirer, Discover, Archaeology Magazine, etc., never saw fit to address the BC hoax. Yeah, I got two or three rejection letters from the skeptic mags advising I pursue the story more (i.e, acquire quotes from professionals and provide data from scientific testing) from 1994-1998, and that failure prompted me to frame my online “Falling into Burrows Cave” article as a personal memoir. When asked for position statements, professional archaeologists invoked the lyrics to The Band's "The Weight," that is, "He just grinned and shook my hand, and 'No!', was all he said." Scientific testing is ridiculously expensive for (poor) private individuals, and my many attempts to interest universities and museums all ended with a variation o "our funding has been slashed." Now, from the void of critical oblivion there was one shining departure from the too-busy-for-refutation academic crowd, a wonderfully concise overview of the Burrows Cave hoax from Prof. Alice Kehoe (anthropology-emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). Near the end of an important work on the possibilities and probabilities of pre-Columbian contacts between the Old and New Worlds (Kehoe 2003; pp. 31, 33), Prof. Kehoe wrote:

"Rational discussion of evidence is impeded by the naiveté of many archaeologists who parrot the assertion that pre-Columbian contacts were either impossible or the sailors inevitably promptly murdered. Other archaeologists, canny rather than naive, fear jeopardizing their careers by engaging an out-of-favor topic. Some are simply uncomfortable talking with untrained enthusiasts eagerly embracing everything from dowsing and Goddess worship to the "golden" treasures and engraved tablets (engraved on commercial lithograph stone) allegedly found in Asian kings' tombs Burrows Cave in southern Illinois and sold at auction to the public. Worse, these treasures are endorsed by a neo-Nazi who served time in the federal penitentiary in the same area, the "cave" being announced about when he was released (Martin and Flavin, 1995)."

Kehoe's paper calmly challenged the Establishment's position of Sam Morison's "No Europeans [or anyone else RDF] in America before Columbus" by arguing for improved cross-disciplinary methodologies in anthropology and archaeology, and also invoking recent work which strongly suggests such ancient contacts not only did in fact happen, but ...that transoceanic and transcantinental contacts (sort of) regularly continued from ancient into historical times. Her suggestions for new and better methodologies were detailed in a later publication on the infamous Kensington Runestone (Kehoe 2005). While I disagree with dear Prof. Kehoe's final support for acceptance of KRS authenticity, I was duly impressed by her inclusive logic and non-exclusive reasoning concerning "fantastic claims. The late David H. Kelley (Department of Archaeology, University of Calgary) would also write about "hyper-diffusinism" in a near jesuitical fashion. It remains for an enterprising historian of science to one day chronicle the terminological differences between and the change from "hyperdiffusinism" to "transoceanic and transcantinental contacts." Hint – agenda-driven and often racist (i.e., twisted history or "twistory"), while the other is just...science and history.

Though generally following Kehoe's lede concerning narrow-minded institutionalized authority judgments, "The Cave Who Never Was: Outsider Archaeology and Failed Collaboration in the USA" also seeks to further distinguish between...
pseudoscience, "fringe" archaeology, and methodologically sound anthropological hypotheses. Prof. Joseph A. P. Wilson (Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of New Haven) introduced the term "outsider archaeology" to draw attention to the current disjointed expectations of responsibility and courtesy in anthropology and archaeology. An allusion to Colin Wilson's classic work on human societal alienation, The Outsider (Wilson 1956), is surmised and Prof. Wilson provides examples which illustrate the ethical quandary some professionals face when confronted with a "Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth" scenario. Sometimes "evidence" can't simply "speak for itself" and conclusions are required to advance and test certain models, as in the ongoing debate over the apparent connection between the Athapaskan languages of Western North America and the Ket language of South-west Siberia, the proposed Dené-Yeniseian language family. It makes sense, it's awesome in depth, yet doesn't inherently clash with existing migration and settlement models. Still, it's new, different, and ...another example of the Establishment dragging its heels when faced with change. However, as Wilson bemoans, "Few reputable journals devote attention to these questions." It would seem that anthropology is not above "eating its own," but its public responsibility and courtesy interfacing is also brought to task in Wilson's paper. And, here, the Burrows Cave hoax is used as a primary example of ...academic and professional laziness (var. the "No one wants to take out the trash" problem).

Prof. Joseph A. P. Wilson's "TABLE 1: TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS IN 1980s."

Joe Wilson's critique of the Burrows Cave hoax is roughly divided between flabbergast and outrage. Pushing past the preposterous claims of Russ Burrows and the crude forgeries of "ancient" inscribed stones, Wilson undergoes consternation by Burrows' open and ongoing relationship with the ex-neo-Nazi, Frank Collin. Inference remains unavoidable with respect to the circumstantial, as coincidence and a buck "might" get one a small Newman's iced-coffee at McDonald's. Wilson mentions my 2004 "assertion" that it's possible that Burrows and Collin shared the manufacturing and marketing of the BC artifacts and fictional "legend." A simple graphic speaks a thousand or more words. I'm reminded of yet another Wilson, the late and sublimely great Robert Anton Wilson, who offered his book, Coincidance: A Head Test (Wilson 1988), as a tribute against Establishment ontological obfuscation. My only complaint with Prof. Wilson's analysis of the Burrows and Collin connection is the persistent usage of the pseudonym "Frank Joseph" for the historically relevant sicko, Frank Collin. Collin is infamous for bullhorning neo-Nazi hate and revisionist history and it's germane to any discussion of Burrows Cave and revisionist American prehistory to cite 'Frank Collin' rather than the New Age con-man and uber-creepy fakir, "Frank Joseph." It's a keyword thing...

"The Cave Who Never Was: Outsider Archaeology and Failed Collaboration in the USA" reproduces a drawing made by the "Outsider" hyper-diffusionist archaeologist, George F. Carter (Geography, Texas A & M University), which depicts an "impossible" oar portrayed on one of the BC inscribed items. I've long coveted copies of various photographic collections of the BC material (i.e., the Bev Mosely and Virginia Hourigan collections) as I wish to eventually pursue a study of the iconography of the Burrows Cave inscribed artifacts so as to ascertain an educated ratio between copied-from-source-material to flagrant error to "show" authenticity (the "Hey, if it was fake there wouldn't be a mistake present" confidence game ploy). I now have copies of both collections (see below) and am dreading the long slog I'll one day have to take and make. BTW, though Carter's 100,000 BCE date for the initial colonization of the Americas and his work on the pre-Columbian diffusion of the New World chicken to the Old are still hotly contested, his theories on the early spread of sweet potatoes from South America into the Pacific and Asia have been vindicated. So, score one for the "Outsider" underdog (and "truth")!
Arguably, the best component of Wilson's contribution is his dignified outrage and genuine dissatisfaction with the archaeological community for not publicly addressing and refuting the Burrows Cave hoax and related unreasonable claims. It's about balance and enabling a more well-informed public. Scientific responsibility and courtesy should extend to fantastic claims on a regular basis and not just when it's convenient or popular. It's not just a debate between amateurs and professionals, or agenda-oriented modeling versus "fringe" science, as sometimes real hurt can rise from the armchair and negatively damage individuals and institutions. As in, for example, the latest cache of gold-painted lead Burrows Cave artifacts.

As these things go, those were just the second and third legs of the 2012 Burrows Cave stool, as the first arrived a couple of weeks earlier. One day in mid-December I got a text message which asked: "Are you Richard Flavin?" I texted back, "Yes. Who wants to know?" After a couple of uncomfortable phone-calls and a few e-mails later, yet another unfortunate chapter in the Burrows Cave Hoax revealed itself. Old guy had died, his family found a considerable amount of what appeared to be golden treasure among his possessions, and contacted a charity to arrange for an auction. One of the golden treasures was broken and after examination the item was revealed to be gold-painted lead, as were all the "treasures." Upon consulting the Illinois Attorney General's office, the charity received a recommendation not to auction the items...even as cheap reproductions or folk art. These items appear to be another batch of gold-painted lead "treasure" chum manufactured to get the collector sharks to circle sometime in the mid-to-late 1980s. I'm proud of the old guy's family for choosing a charity, I feel bad for the charity (especially since there are still a lot of BC idiots out there who would buy the items even with the surety that it's all painted lead), and I've a deep sad that this won't be the last time a charity is disappointed by alleged Burrows Cave "artifacts." From Flavin's Corner: "2012+1." #299; 1-4-2013.

After being questioned by Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana (actually, their online-auction division), I telephoned Russ Burrows to inform him of the charity fiasco, asked him if he had any information as to how such a "valuable" assemblage could have made its way to the local thrift-store, and...suggested he advise his supporters to move quickly if they wanted to acquire the gold-painted lead "treasure." He told me that he was recovering from a stroke...and repeated his claim from the last few years that he's "not into that stuff anymore." Well, I hadn't spoken with Burrows for (I believe) a couple of years at that time and he did sound a tad slower than I remembered. However, IMO, just a trifling less than his usual aggressively arrogant and pompous self. Russ deadpanned denial of any specific knowledge and floated an indirect allegation (as usual) that Jack Ward had something to do with it." I couldn't speak any further without rehashing all of the known (and published) myths, rumors, lies, slanders, and impossible scenarios already in play, so, I ended the conversation. I hoped maybe Russ could con someone into giving Goodwill some serious legal tender and something good might materialize in this detestable chapter in criminal pseudoscience.
And, because some scabs cry out for picking more than others, I contacted Brian “Harry” Hubbard with the same developments and suggestions. Hubbard had been telephoning me every few months with BC-related information and news of his latest interviews, public speaking engagements, and upcoming publications. Much of the conversations with Harry were, of course, decidedly one-sided as I’d ask a question and his blathering obfuscations would run on-and-on until I reached that “I’ve got to go check on my laundry” stage. Well, honestly, it was the combination of too much of the long-con and the extremely poor and annoying audio quality of the telephone calls. I’d heard excuses about Skype, a slow computer connection, and then there was something about being in the sticks with poor television reception. I tossed some alms his way in the form of a couple of small care-packages containing DVDs (action-adventure flicks as per request). Unlike ol’ fogey Russ, Harry was excited by Goodwill’s predicament and took down the contact info for their online-auction division. Other than John White who bought many goddess-themed BC items, I’m not currently in touch with any BC collectors (or at least those that I’d be able to stomach a conversation with). I was contacted by a charity who does exceptional work, answered some questions, and made a couple of calls to get the word out about the gold-painted lead BC items. It was the least I could do. Literally, and I’m kinda’ ashamed about it.

A few weeks went by and Harry rang back with news that he’d just acquired the Goodwill BC Collection. He was still on the road, giddy with delight, and promised to call me back as soon as he’d returned home and unpacked. Harry callled a couple of days later and told a tale that somehow seemed appropriate given the general apathy and bad luck surrounding the Burrows Cave hoax. The Goodwill online-auction division had referred Harry to the Illinois Attorney General’s office who acted as a final arbiter in the matter for some odd and unknown reason. Why was the Illinois AG’s office involved with a charity in Indiana? They proceeded to task Harry with proving he had a connection to the collection and added something about Thelma McClain. Irony can be wicked leaden at times. The Goodwill BC collection photograph (see above) contains a 1997 newspaper article from the Vincennes Sun-Commercial which features Harry and Paul surrounded by stacks of gold-painted lead BC items. I believe, but could be mistaken, that the fake gold in the 1997 picture was from the release of some of Mildred Ward’s estate to her son-in-law, Tom Elkin. Previously, Harry had paid for his own BC-themed issue of The Ancient American (3, 16; January/February 1997) that published pictures of the fake gold photographed by Burrows in the 1980s, stored among Jack Ward’s papers, and given to Harry by Mildred’s daughter, June Ward Elkin. Anywho, Harry claims that he was able to show a couple of letters (?) from Thelma McClain which satisfied the Illinois AG’s office. All well and weird, but apparently the Illinois AG’s office couldn’t condone the BC items being sold as collectables and insisted on allowing the sale based upon some current scale price of scrap lead at around 22¢ per pound (versus the price of 99.9%+ new clean lead at around $2.40 per pound). Harry said it cost him two hundred and seventy-something dollars for the 606 lb haul. Score one for Harry, …and it’s a damned sad loss for Goodwill Industries and the fine work they do.

As I’d recently sent Russ an e-mail with an attached PDF of Wilson’s “The Cave Who Never Was: Outsider Archaeology and Failed Collaboration in the USA,” I telephoned him to get his opinion of the paper and tell him about Harry’s score. And, as usual, I got po’ diddy. Concerning the Public Archaeology article, Burrows said something to the effect that “He’s an idiot… Mumble… More mumble…” Regarding Hubbard’s acquisition, he commented, “Good for him…” Yeah, that conversation had to have taken a not-so-grand total of three or maybe four minutes… In a forthcoming article (Thomas 2015, p. 11), Dr. Suzie Thomas (University Lecturer in Museology, University of Helsinki) quotes Wilson and supports professionals informing the public of frauds, hoaxes, looting, and such. And, yes, Burrows Cave is mentioned...

The next four months turned into a Burrows Cave hoax psychodrama as Hubbard began to telephone several times a week to discuss how Russ could have made the fake gold items in his kitchen, garage, or backyard. First off, Harry “rewarded” me for introducing him to the Goodwill BC gold-painted lead “replicas” by sending me a couple of USB flashdrives with copies of his personally photographed BC material, which also included the Bev Mosely, Virginia Hourigan, and other BC photograph collections. I appreciated the gesture, though …the task of going through all the material is being put on the rainy day way-back burner for now. And, secondly, Harry said that his People* were impressed with my writing (cough, right, sure), how the Goodwill acquisition worked out, and so “authorized” Harry to give me five or six of the gold-painted lead pieces (“bars, medallions [sic], coins, slugs, figures, pictures, things I have plenty of…” People? Really? Yeah, it was another Burrows-esque ”I’m not in charge” diversion with Harry claiming he didn’t have the cost of the bulk lead …or gas money for the road-trip. Such cash-ledger Three-card Monte goes back to the mid-to-late 1980s and the Burrows/Ward/Cullen triumvirate. And, through extension, that would make Thelma McClain’s antique and curio store a complicit Senate.

Now, the background BC mythos has remained that all of the Burrows Cave “gold” items sold to private collectors and photographed at various times in the ‘80s and ‘90s were “replicas” made in St. Louis and paid for by the mysterious

Previously published photograph of Burrows with fake gold “medallions” ca. mid-to-late 1980s, the Goodwill BC Collection in boxes, and a sampling of the BC gold-plated lead coin “replicas.”
"landowner," that is, (as alleged by Burrows) the notorious Chicago gangster, Antonino Joseph "Tony" Accardo (aka "Joe Batters" or "Big Tuna"), who passed away in 1992. Burrows' oft repeated allegation that Jack Ward stole a large amount of the real "gold" and secret it away in Swiss bank accounts (Buergin 1998; Hubbard 2013) continues to be predicated on the fantastic claim that "real" BC gold ever existed. That not a single genuine gold Burrows Cave item has ever been identified and tested doesn't deter or dissuade the BC Believers. Hubbard maintains the conviction that somewhere among the many hundreds of items of the Goodwill BC Collection there could exist a "real" gold piece or three. As far as Harry's current belief in Swiss bank accounts or deposit boxes containing BC "gold," I haven't a clue and can't bring myself to soberly inquire.

While Hubbard readily acknowledges the gold-painted lead BC items are fake, he nonetheless argues they are reproductions or "replicas" of legitimate antiquities based upon his and Paul "Schaffranke" Kelley's assertion that "readable" Etruscan is used in the casting molds and the finished products (and, it follows, many of the Burrows Cave engraved stone items). So, establishing baseline whack-itude, Harry proceeded to question, debate, and argue with me as to how Russ could have 1) made so many and 2) cast the larger lead items. Burrows had joked with me more than a decade ago about melting lead on his kitchen stove and it took a couple of weeks for Hubbard to consult with his "People" and experts to verify that a home stove can generate a flame of approximately 3000°F and the melting point of lead is 621.43°F. Me thinks The Google is not strong with Hubbard. I tried to remind Harry of the scene in Mel Gibson's The Patriot where he melts his dead son's toy soldiers and casts them as musket balls. Burrows was a member of the Illinois State Militia (Reactivated), an American Civil War reenactment group for many years. Dedicated antique firearm enthusiasts and hobbyists regularly fashion their own rifle musket balls and Minie ball bullets. It would not be stretch to conclude that Burrows and his fellow reenactors had knowledge of campfire lead bullet/ball casting (an average wood campfire flame reaches approx. 1600°F). Hubbard, with continued whack-itude, ignored the Civil War reenactment group experience and persisted with questions as to how Burrows could have 1) made so many and 2) cast the larger lead items.

As far as sheer numbers, comparisons between the 1890-1920 Michigan Relics/Artifacts (aka the Scotford-Soper-Savage Frauds) and the Burrows Cave Hoax items were made as early as the 1988 ISAC Conference (Flavin 1995). Weird scripts, religious imagery, and ...lots and lots and lots of "artifacts." Based on production-hours, discovery locations, the use of pseudo-Egyptian hieroglyphs and pseudo-cuneiform, I've previously proposed an initial manufacturing by devotees of James J. Strang (1813-1856) who led thousands of estranged Mormons to Michigan after the 1844 murder of Joe Smith, Jr. in Carthage, IL. Strang and his "Strangites" were numerous, industrious, and ...whacks. Pseudo-Egyptian hieroglyphology was all the rage in early-to-mid 19th century whackery (Fabre d'Olivet 1815-1816, Smith 1842), cuneiform writing with "nail-headed" characters were discussed in popular newspapers after ca. 1845 (Unknown 1845), and Strang's thematic sequels to Smith's fantastic "Golden Plates," the Voree Plates, and the Plates of Laban, show affinities to the Hebrew script and also to Byrom and Taylor shorthand writing systems. That the Michigan Strangite cult could have produced a core assemblage of engraved and carved items before the Scotford-Soper-Savage manufacturing and salting period is not beyond conjecture. But, I could be wrong. The Michigan Historical Society now houses over 800 Michigan Artifacts (given by the LDS, who recognized their modern origin), with other collections at the University of Notre Dame, IN and in Louisiana. The total number of Michigan Artifacts was once thought to be between 20,000 and 30,000, though a more recent estimate guesses of 3000. Comparisons between the Michigan Artifacts and the Burrows Cave Hoax items are valid as far as concocted religious imagery and invented pseudo-ancient scripts, yet as demonstrated by Hubbard's continued focus (obsfuscation?) on 'number' as somehow evidence of authenticity I would argue 'amount' was a central component of the BC scam from its inception.

Answering Hubbard's question about the casting of large lead pieces proved difficult, as Harry refused The Google or a trip to a craft/hobby store or even a bait-shop that sells supplies to make one's own lead sinker weights. Hint: iron skillet, common clay, cheap lead, and some heat.

I selected a few small fake gold items from assorted photographs Hubbard had sent to me, but he never responded to my e-mail. For a few weeks we'd discussed getting the gold-painted lead BC items looked at. The gold paint had already been tested and demonstrated to contain copper and zinc (Chandler, Hanson, & Totten 2001) and I proposed analyzing the lead to see if any identified impurities could narrow a search between "clean" lead and processed scrap. Yeah, too anal-academic, a waste of time and money. I kept reminding Harry about the "Flavin green light" to toss me a couple fake coins, but my requests went unheeded or acknowledged. After a couple of weeks of silence, there was an e-mail and a few voice-mails instructing me to download his new book (Hubbard 2013) and comment on it. As I'd paid $17 and change a year or two previously for his last effort, I assumed this was an amateur hyper-diffusionist sop or some sort. The PDF e-book downloaded okay, I guess I saved some goof-off cash, and I was already familiar with just about all the material and info, so had little to say about it. However, who published the e-book proved quite ...fascinating.

Harry's "new" book, Tomb Chronicles Part II is published electronically (i.e, available for digital download) from ZTT Consulting, a design, marketing, and web-site hosting company whose motto/slogan is "Open Your Your Mind." Under "e-books," ZTT is proud to offer two authors – Steven M. Greer, M.D. of The Disclosure Project and Harry Hubbard of Past Preservers. Greer has two e-books for sale, Disclosure: Top-Secret Military and Government Witnesses Reveal the Greatest Secrets in Modern History and Contact: Countdown to Transformation – The CSETI Experience from 1992-2009. Oh, great! More government and military conspiracy lunacy combined with UFOs. That's so Burrows late-'80s and early-90s! They say "birds of a feather flock together," but the military tall-tales and alien whack à la Russ seems creepy coincidence. Sure, Harry had his "Lizard Flick" video and lectures about lizard aliens on BC engraved mudstones years ago, but Greer has a body! An "alien" body! Well, sort of...

Earlier this year, a "documentary" premiered in Hollywood entitled, Sirius, about the work of Greer and aliens. Press
releases heralded new scientific proof of the existence of aliens and the film features Greer referring to "Ata," the so-called Atacama skeleton (see above) as an "extraterrestrial being." As the tale goes, the skeleton was picked up by a souvenir hunter in a small Chilean town in 2006, sold to a Chilean tavern and publicly displayed for a few years, before being bought by a Spanish collector and catching Greer's attention. Further press releases promised "paradigm shifting physical evidence of a medically and scientifically analyzed DNA sequenced humanoid creature of unknown classification" which teased non-human. Extraterrestrials! Aliens! However, the film contains Dr. Gary Nolan of the Stanford School of Medicine declaring that it's human, though there seems to be considerable debate about ...what, why, and how. All non-ufologists with a pup-in-the-affray agree that something mysterious and sad, wrong, and wicked sad occurred. Oxycephaly and Hutchinson Gilford Progeria Syndrome are suggested. The debate between premature fetus and died a few days after birth is ...uncomfortable. Genetic disease with a toxic feticide solution? This is all wicked sad and far, far afield from Little Egypt, Illinois and the Burrows Cave Hoax. Alien abortions? Damn, I picked the wrong time to stop drinking...

On the ZTT Consulting web-site, Hubbard is listed as associated with Past Preservers, a "boutquetalent management agency" which matches opinionated "experts" with media production companies. Working with the History, Discovery, and National Geographic Channels, Past Preservers is basically a headhunter firm that connects amateurs, whacks, and crackpots with whatever production company has an open budget at the time. Though the agency asks for a curriculum vitae and offers some folks with Ph.Ds, the self-published author crowd (à la Harry Hubbard) is also represented. Their stated mission of "producing quality history-based non-fiction programming" seems disingenuous, as the web-site brags about its relationship to The History 2 television network program, America Unearthed, a series which grew out of the "success" of 2009's "Holy Grail in America," a 2-hour program which postulates the Burrows Cave Hoax items are somehow connected to the fabled Second Temple treasure which disappeared (read: were melted down) when Titus ransacked Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Harry claims to have Scott Wolter, the Minnesota geologist of Kensington Runestone infamy, on "speed-dial." Over our many weeks of hectic telephone calls, Hubbard often mentioned Wolter as being interested in his "Alexander the Great is buried in Southern Illinois" theory. At one point, Harry alleged that Wolter inquired about me and "my" ability to be considered as an on-air "expert" in things fantastical, and I ...politely informed Hubbard I wasn't interested. Okay, it wasn't like that... Actually, I declined by swearing like a drunken sailor. Wolter, in his role as a leading hyper-diffusionist asshat, never acknowledges the previous hard work of dedicated amateurs and professionals and presents himself as the first serious investigator looking into controversial and unexplained North American archaeological enigmas. His ongoing "war" with Wikipedia is transparent publicity propaganda, as it's all about ratings. With Scott Wolter the line between showmanship and media-whoring is broken ( . . . . . . . ) and I suppose I should wish them both "Good luck!" with a possible second-season America Unearthed episode on Alexander the Great and the Burrows Cave Hoax (after The Hack, I write this at the end of January 2015 and no such proram has aired). Such programming could be termed medicinal, as there have been credible reports of people having movement of feces through their colon while watching America Unearthed.

In closing this 2013 Burrows Cave Hoax update, it's sad to report the demise of the print edition of This Week From Indian Country Today, as the Oneida Nation-owned publication is going online-only. Apparently after hiring professionals from Martha Stewart's Living Magazine and Playboy, the Oneida have determined there's more cash in digital than pulp. A press release stated that the new online-only "newsletter" would also cover global indigenous issues. Because, of course, American Native peoples need to know why the Maori of New Zealand are upset with Peter Jackson and his J. R. R. Tolkien cinematic adaptations.

Fortunately, News from Indian Country remains an excellent print publication for the Native American community and...
continues to receive awards and recognition for its courageous journalism. From my personal experience, it's not uncommon to see passed-around issues of News from Indian Country in restaurants and on public transportation in Chicago and Milwaukee. Computers aren't in every home and many prefer to handle a physical copy of a publication. And, besides, it makes sharing a lot easier... Now, my personal bias proudly revealed, I respect News from Indian Country for publishing my first Burrows Cave/The Ancient American article (Martin & Flavin 1995) and also for featuring me on a radio broadcast about the Burrows Cave Hoax (Flavin 1996). I've telephoned the editor (and founding publisher), Paul DeMain, a few times over the years and for informational purposes I'll send him a link to this update and include news of Wilson's article in Public Archaeology.

We acknowledge alternative belief systems such as cult-religions and pseudoscience, yet we must also continue to champion the rights of some to lie, hate, and promote impossible conclusions. However, we have to do better to merit the bountiful benefits of modern science and reason. By way of an easy analogy, Fox News has been around since 1985 and has become an obscure sociopolitical joke widely regarded as an ongoing public embarrassment, though their audience ratings are higher today than ever. Is it schadenfreude? Another example of "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer"?

The Burrows Cave Hoax began in 1984 and will mark its thirty-year anniversary in 2014. I don't believe a Kickstarter campaign is necessary to get schools to teach more courses in fantastic archaeology or to get scientifically critical media to publish or broadcast more. A recent study suggests that selfish behavior won't survive into the future as mankind was formed through compassion and cooperation. Perhaps when enough professionals get tired of casting pearls, North American archaeology and all science will be properly extended to those confused folks who need it most.

Addendum (Based on the 12-28-2013 broadcast of America Unearthed S02E05):

Well, I knew it was going to happen, and even got a couple of telephone calls from Wolter's media-folk asking if I'd be interested in making any public [recorded] comments for the episode mentioning the BC Hoax and laughed long and said "No thanks!" many times. And, indeed, this past Saturday, the fifth episode of the second season of America Unearthed was broadcast, entitled "Grand Canyon Treasure." Where to begin? Half of the episode concerned claims from a "tribal elder" that somewhere in the Grand Canyon exists a series of "Egyptian" caves with gold, mummies, and even a tale of a cave large enough to house a great many people. Oh, and to further silliness, there was even a mention of a "Pyramid" in one of the caves. The rest of the episode concerned the BC Hoax... So, let's analyze a few of the many ridiculous claims of America Unearthed.

Besides the scientific method, there are lies, damned lies, and the "I'll be damned if I know" quandary. Fantastic tales of Egyptian gold and mummies from the pre-Columbian period have been dismissed for centuries by professionals, though recently some explanations have been offered through 19th century Masonic-esque rituals and re-enactments (including "quasi-religious" staged performances and other fraternal "customs"). Easy examples are the so-called "Tucson Artifacts," the cowboy and Odd Fellows' graffiti from Oklahoma, the 19th century Masonic illustration which inspired the 1872 Bat Creek Stone hoax, and perhaps to some degree the 1869-1877/1880 Davenport hoax materials, the 1874 Paraiba inscription, and the 1924-1930 thirty-one or thirty-two lead objects from Silverbell Road, AZ which were claimed to be from the ancient Roman-founded New World land of "Calalus, the Unknown Land." Other examples such as the Soper-Savage frauds from Michigan and various Mormon revisionist history claims are too complicated to adequately discuss here. I'm not the least surprised Wolter and America Unearthed didn't mention any 19th century fraternal and religious alternatives to the really tall-tales of Egyptians in the Grand Canyon AND Southern Illinois, as the goal of America Unearthed to entertain and make money. Education and history has not and will likely never be included in America Unearthed.

Here's a few obvious complaints:
1) It's not a government conspiracy to forbid helicopters from flying too close to the bottom of parts of the Grand Canyon as it's too dangerous and a shining example of the Federal Aviation Administration's use of common sense. The blurry image of an alleged 2002 government plane is standard paranoid conspiracy zaniness. Wicked way cute helicopter pilot, though!

2) Coming within inches of the edge of the Grand Canyon (despite the casual cool apparel) without so much as a set gloves or a rope or anything functional which could assist a rescue should there be an accident occurrence ...is simply poorly staged television.

3) The introduction of Clifford Mahooty as a "tribal elder" and his insistence that various tribes share in the legends of hidden caves in the Grand Canyon which could hold over a 1000 people and the claim of a "cave" with a full-sized pyramid inside, together with all the usual pseudo-Egyptian malarkey of gold, mummies, and unspecified "artifacts" couldn't have been a surprise, yet it was broadcast as such. Fortunately (as I have only so many goof-off hours per week), there's an excellent blog devoted to America Unearthed by Jason Colavito at http://jasoncolavito/americainearthed.html (I've recently Googled many more). Colavito refers to Mahooty as a "Zuni Elder" (Zuni official) who is currently an "ancient astronaut theorist" and has appeared on the thematically related television series, Ancient Aliens. However, what I find oddest of all, is the recent
article, "Archaeological Scandals" by Frank Joseph (née Frank Collin, the ex-Neo-Nazi and convicted pedophile), as published in *Lost Cities and Forgotten Civilizations* (Edited by Michael Pye and Kirsten Dalley, by the New York-based Rosen Publishing, Inc, which advertises itself as "an independent educational publishing house, established in 1950 to serve the needs of students in grades Pre-K -12 with high interest, curriculum-correlated materials.") Rosen publishes more than seven hundred new books each year and has a backlist of more than seven thousand. Specializing in circulating reference material aimed at school and public libraries, Rosen titles are the gold standard in guidance, social studies, history, science, and mathematics, as well as general high interest topics for children and young adults. The book is marketed as "Interest Level : Grades 7 - 12." Joseph/Collin's piece runs on pp. 7-30, with mention of the 1909 Kincaid/Smithsonian disagreement on page 22. This is in a textbook for junior and high school students?  Nope, I can't see a positive thing about any of this...

[Note: Another online review of *America Unearthed* S02E05 by Andrew Zarowny has come to my attention. It's recommended reading at: [http://www.rightpundits.com/?p=11739](http://www.rightpundits.com/?p=11739)]

Now, the rest of *America Unearthed* S02E05 concerning the Burrows Cave Hoax in southern Illinois. Let's be brief...

![English cursive inscribed on a 1850-1950 tombstone as shown by Wolter (the front is a crude drawing of Isis) and two BC maps - a "genuine property map" and a sketch by Burrows of the "location" of the alleged caves. Used without permission.](image)

Wolter met with the official landowner (Harry wasn't allowed on the property for some unspecified reason), a nice enough fellow who doesn't believe any of the BC hoax claims and cited the coincidence of the "Little Egypt" nickname of that section of Illinois and the naming of the nearby town of Cairo, IL. The landowner was cordial enough to take Wolters to a ravine and rock shelter too many believe is the "location" of the fictitious cave, and Wolters began to ...entertain us. The "maybe" they could have...and the "possible" comments ended with a phoney "We just need to find more proof..." As always, any proof of these fantastic claims would do...

Related (and sad) hyperlinks to this addendum:


Bibliography:


Flavin, Richard. 1995. Personal communication with Gloria Farley upon her loan of Ward's *Ancient Archives Among The Cornstalks*.

Flavin, Richard. 1996. *WOJB's Morning Fire*, hosted by Paul DeMain; interview with Richard Flavin concerning Burrows...
What archaeological hoaxes have there been over the years? Here is an American hoax. The Cardiff Giant, found in 1869 on a farm in Cardiff, New York...Â Inside the cave he claimed to have found hundreds, perhaps thousands of carved stones bearing figures or letters in some unknown language. Others were said to contain depictions of deities, humans, ships, and so forth. Burrows is said to have taken some of these items away for analysis and later examination by a number of archaeologists and epigraphers.Â 2009 Burrows Cave Hoax Update. Falling Into Burrows' Cave. Star. Ad Honorem.