

**Get out and ride.** **ATV LOAN RATES AS LOW AS 2.74% APR** \*Learn more. **SERVICE CREDIT UNION** ★★★★★ FEDERALLY INSURED BY NCUA

# Digging into Stratham's past



Recommend 0



Zoom Emily Reily

Project archaeologist Neil DePaoli of Lee, Left, and archaeologist Tany Kress of Manchester and Sharon Dadalt of Auburn, dig out soil from a section of stone footing to analyze it for artifacts during a dig Wednesday at the Thomas Wiggin Homestead in Stratham.

By Liz Parmelee

Posted Aug. 20, 2002 at 2:00 AM Updated Jan 31, 2011 at 10:22 PM

STRATHAM — Thomas Wiggin, English pioneer settler in New Hampshire in 1631 who died in 1667, was in the upper echelon of the colony's society.

Archaeologists from Manchester's Sargent Museum are now striving to uncover details of the life of Wiggin's son, Thomas Wiggin Jr., on his farmstead on site of the Sandy Point Discovery Center.

For the past several days, Tanya Kress and other archaeologists have been digging in a "primary deposit," an area containing artifacts that were thrown out and not disturbed since.

"It's the idea of coming across something that no one has seen for hundreds of years," Kress said about why she became an archaeologist.

The idea of the project is to get an overall footprint of what once was Thomas Wiggin Jr.'s house, and gain a view into the history of the homestead.

"You never know what you are going to find," said Neill DePaoli, the project archaeologist.

The Wiggin archaeological dig site is one of five current projects in the Seacoast. The archaeological project follows three steps: background research, preliminary excavation and intensive excavation.

The archaeologists at the Wiggin site are in the final stage of the project, having been digging for more than four weeks.

Archaeologists also spent time working near the current site in 1992, 1994 and 2000.

During the interval between 2000 and the current work, Wesley Stinson, director of the Sargent Museum, successfully applied for a grant of nearly \$49,000 from the N.H. Office of State Planning to continue the work.

"We've found much of the building but we haven't closed the door yet," said DePaoli, who has a doctorate in history from UNH.

DePaoli is working, among others, with professional archaeologists Kress and Sharon Dadalt. Kress has been a professional archaeologist for three years and Dadalt for 14 years.

In the past month the archaeologists have defined the boundaries of the cellar walls, and established that the building went far beyond the cellar.

**Get out and ride.** **ATV LOAN RATES AS LOW AS 2.74% APR** \*Learn more. **SERVICE CREDIT UNION** ★★★★★ FEDERALLY INSURED BY NCUA

COUPON OF THE WEEK

**15% OFF Laser Spider Vein Treatment**  
Flawless Face: 15% OFF Single Sessions of - Laser Spider Vein...  
**Pinewood Laser & Spa**

SEE ALL ONLINE TODAY MORE >>

- \$65 - Partial Foil, Cut & Blow Dry! Hair by Liz
- \$65 Color, Cut & Blow Wave! Hair by Liz
- \$25 - Wash, Blow & Go! Hair by Liz
- Super Savings on Manicures & Pedicures Exotic Nails
- \$25- \$100 OFF Landscape Labor Marshall Bros Landscaping

## TOP JOBS

- Year Round Cook**  
Ogunquit, Maine The Beachmere Inn
- Vice President of Lending**  
Rochester, New Hampshire Holy Rosary Credit Union
- Store Associates**  
Dover, New Hampshire Cleary Cleaners
- Tractor Trailer Driver**  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire Irving Oil

More Top Jobs

### TOP HOMES



Wells, ME - \$354,900 - Welcome to Brackett Estates. The "Hopscotch" is a modern cape...  
**The Gove Group Real Estate, LLC**



York, ME - \$489,000 - Custom built three bedroom Cape with \$80,000 in updates and renovations!...  
**Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage**

[More Top Homes](#)

### » STAY INFORMED

[Email Newsletter](#)

[Sign Up Today](#)

Sign up for our newsletter and have the top headlines from your community delivered right to your inbox.

### NEWSmax

- [Sanders Surges, Hillary Drops in New Gallup Poll](#)
- [New Probiotic Fat Burner Takes GNC by Storm](#)
- [The One Crazy Reason Trump Is Running for President](#)
- [Americans Urged to Search Their Names Before Site Gets Taken Down](#)
- [Americans to Be Hit Hard by New Currency Law Now in Effect](#)
- [This Type of Sugar Is a Healing Superfood](#)
- [Avoid These Two Veggies and Detox Your Fat-Burning System](#)
- [Easy Way to Fix Eye Bags - Do This Daily](#)

[What's This?](#)

### TOP CLICKS

POPULAR EMAILED

[Teens seriously injured in Epping crash](#)  
Jul. 20, 2015

[Hampton pedestrian 'critical' after struck by Dover teen](#)  
Jul. 21, 2015

[Tall ships arrive for Sail Portsmouth 2015 festival](#)  
Jul. 22, 2015

[Police investigate letter to Seacoast](#)

The actual occupation dates were also confirmed. The home may date back to as early as the mid-1600s, raising the possibility that the senior Wiggin may have built the homestead prior to his son living in it.

"This is the earliest excavated English homestead in New Hampshire," Dr. DePaoli said.

While the dig ended late last week, the archaeologists agreed there is still more to do.

DePaoli said he hopes to conduct more work at the Wiggin site, but that depends on funding.

"The site itself is definitely significant enough to warrant funding to be looked at again," DePaoli said.

He said if he comes back to the site in the near future, the archaeologists would like to decipher the overall makeup and layout of the farmstead.

The research on the site stems from interest Peter Wiggin, a current resident of Stratham, has in his family's genealogy. He is a direct descendant of Thomas Wiggin Sr. Peter Wiggin contacted the state in 1989 to research the possibility of Wiggin Sr. residing in the area in the late 1600s.

A prominent figure in early New Hampshire history, Wiggin first ventured to New England in 1630 when he sailed with the John Winthrop fleet to Boston. In the years that followed, Wiggin served as the governor of the Upper Plantation, comprising modern-day Dover, Durham and Stratham. He was also the holder of the massive Squamscott patent, land east of the mouth of the Squamscott River. He was also a close ally of Gov. John Winthrop of Massachusetts.

In 1992, archaeologists spent three weekends on the site, putting in test pits south, east and west of the current site. Colonial-era artifacts recovered included brick fragments, nails and ceramics. At this point, the actual site had not been pinned down.

In 1994, archaeologists revisited the site for a week and laid out a 1-by-10 meter trench with several test sites within it.

While they found stone rubble from what they believed to be the chimney base, their work was not completed.

DePaoli said the archaeologists began to realize there was something significant on the site but were reluctant to keep digging because there was no history specialist on site.

The time period was pinpointed to the late 1600s and early 1700s but the cellar walls were then still undefined.

Six years later, money was needed to conduct more research at the site. The archaeologists secured a \$9,000 grant through the Sargent Museum from the state planning office.

In 2000, archaeologists revisited the site intending to do a follow-up from work done in '92 and '94.

They homed in on the cellar and got a better idea of the actual size of the building. Artifacts they found confirmed the time frame, including redware, tableware and German stoneware.

Peter Wiggin found a button with the letter "W" on it, officially linking the site to his family name.

Artifacts were also found with origins in Spain, England and the Netherlands.

0 of 3 Premium Clicks used this month

[PRINT + ONLINE SUBSCRIBER ACTIVATION](#) | [REGISTER](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

.5

### Top Video Headlines

of 3



### TV GUIDE



**A Former Deadliest Catch Producer Was Shot Dead in Pasadena**



**Fan Fiction Comes to Life: Loki and Scarlet Witch Are Dating IRL**

### EVENTS CALENDAR

SAT SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI

Saturday, July 25, 2015



**Getting to the Source: From Farm to Fork, A local food-coaching program includes tours with farmers, fishermen and local brewers.**

Blue Moon Evolution

**Tour of the historic North Cemetery** *All Day*

North Cemetery



**Summer Reading Sale at the Pound School Used Book Shop** *All Day*

More Events »

Add Events »

EVENTS VENUES DINING

Events by eviesays.com

Connect with seacoastonline.com

Facebook

Twitter

RSS

Back to top

#### Reader Services

- Reader Service Home
- New Subscriptions
- Subscriber Controls
- Contact Us

#### Submissions

- Events
- Photos
- Letters to the Editor
- Corrections
- Announcements & Obits
- Story Ideas

#### Alerts

- Email Alerts
- Text Alerts

#### Advertise

- Media Kit Home
- Products and Services
- Ad Rates
- Advertising Contacts

### Stay Informed

[Email newsletter](#) Sign Up Today

Sign up for our newsletter and have the top headlines from your community delivered right to your inbox.

Your privacy is important, read our [privacy policy](#).

© Copyright 2015 Local Media Group, Inc. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Local Media Group Publications](#)  
Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted,  
seacoastonline.com | 111 New Hampshire Ave., Portsmouth, NH 03801

---