

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



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### **Issues of excavating another people's culture topic of public lecture**

*Waterloo, Ont. (Nov. 9)* — The sensitive issues surrounding the excavation of another people's culture will be highlighted during a discussion of New York City's African Burial Ground at Wilfrid Laurier University on Saturday, Nov. 19.

Michael Parrington, principal archeologist at the African Burial Ground in 1991 and 1992, will speak at 8 p.m. in the Theatre Auditorium. The lecture is open to the public.

In 1991, the skeletal remains of 390 individuals, most of African ancestry, were unearthed as a federal agency prepared to erect a \$276-million skyscraper in Lower Manhattan. Since then, a steering committee has been created to represent the interests of the African community and to make recommendations regarding the memorialization of what has now been designated a national historic landmark. The scientific study of the remains is being directed by a physical anthropologist at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Parrington, who has excavated sites ranging from circa 2000 BC to AD 1900, was also principal archeologist at the site of the First African Baptist Church cemetery in Philadelphia in 1983-84 and was consulting archeologist to the Trinity Church Cemetery in Newark, N. J., in 1993.

He is the author or co-author of more than 70 cultural resource reports and more than 30 published papers and reports, many dealing with historic cemetery studies. He is also co-author of *The Buried Past*, a 500-page book on the archeology of Philadelphia.

Laurier researchers have been involved in the excavation of an Algonkian habitation site — part of a proposed cottage development — north of the Cape Croker Reserve on the Bruce Peninsula. Through co-operation, the scientific research is being complemented with native insight to improve knowledge of that area's culture.

Parrington will talk to archeology students on Friday. His public lecture on Saturday will conclude the annual meeting of the Association of Professional Archeologists, held at Laurier on Saturday.

Unique in Canada, Laurier's archeology program allows students to specialize in one of four streams: historical industrial, classical, Near Eastern, or Canadian prehistoric. There are about 70 majors in the general and honors archeology programs.