



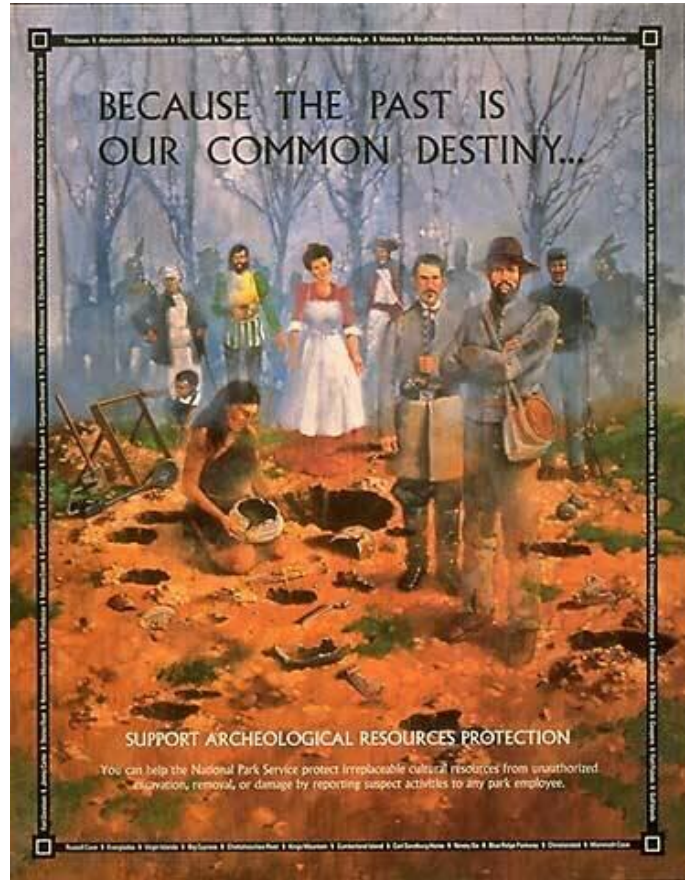
## The Past is Our Common Destiny

### Understanding the Past

Ninety Six National Historic Site is rich in archeological resources due to the park's long historical evolution—from Native American inhabitation, through the exploration and settlement and the American Revolution, to the demise of Cambridge in the 1850s.

Archeological resources are critical to the understanding of the past. Without them, the past fades away until nothing else remains. The image to the right illustrates the negative effects of digging in archeological sites. Past cultures and stories past fade away as a result of illegal activities such as metal detecting and looting.

Because the past is our common destiny, please support archeological resource protection. You can help the National Park Service protect irreplaceable cultural resources from unauthorized excavation, removal, or damage by reporting any suspect activities to any park official.



Courtesy of Southeast Archeological Center | Martin Pate

### Archeology & You

Archeology is the scientific study of past human culture, technology, and behavior. It is based upon the analysis of remains that people have left behind.

Archeologists use documents like maps, diaries, church records, letters, & business records to piece together untold stories. Many times no written record exists but all people leave behind ruins of buildings, a pile of trash, & graveyard burials.

Using careful methods to record and excavate sites, archeologists examine material remains left behind. These remains reflect individual cultures and by studying the remains we can learn about earlier people and places.

The study of the nonrenewable and fragile remains of past cultures instills awareness for the need to preserve and protect archeological sites. We need your help save these hidden treasures!

### Artifacts in Context

Artifacts are the tangible evidence of our past. Artifacts tell us who was here, how people lived, and what happened. In the hands of professionals, artifacts provide a window into history. However, understanding the past requires more than the object itself. It requires the surroundings and its relationship to other artifacts and to the landscape.

Taking artifacts removes them from the rest of the story. Not only does the removal destroy the historic landscape (which is also valuable), it also destroys other artifacts and clues which are regarded by the untrained as worthless.

Artifacts belong in their historic setting. They belong to all us. No one person has the moral right to take them.

### Protection and Preservation

There is a tremendous increase in the commercialization of the human prehistoric and historic record. Archeological sites are being looted to the extent that if something is not done soon to curb this destruction, there will be little of our collective past left for future Americans.

It is up to all of us to preserve and protect our past and our future by preventing illegal activities such as metal detecting, relic hunting, digging, vandalizing or looting objects from

historic sites. Enjoy but do not destroy our American heritage.

Because the past is our common destiny... support archeological resources protection.

Should you accidentally discover an artifact during your visit at Ninety Six National Historic Site, leave the object in its original setting and notify a park ranger immediately. You should never take an artifact with you. Report any suspicious activity. Call the visitor center at 864-543-4068.