Life is Short; Break the Rules

TAKEAWAYS FROM WORKING WITH JOE VERBKA AT THE CHURCHILL CEMETERY IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Angela Jaillet-Wentling, M.A., RPA
GAI Consultants, Inc.
## Introduction

### Takeaways from Working with Joe

- There’s no shame in being so excited over history that you drag others into it with you.
- If you have enough energy and drive, you can make things happen – even if you’re not entirely sure what you just made happen.
- Hard work and hand tools build character.
- What’s better than a good story, a good laugh, or a good wine?

### Ground-Penetrating Radar Survey at Churchill Cemetery

(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
Proposed Investigation/Remediation of the Landslide Impact on SR 2110 William Penn Highway, MPMS #88514

(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)

Phase Ia Geophysical Investigation of the Churchill Cemetery in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania for PennDOT District 11-0
Takeaway #1

There’s no shame in being so excited over history that you drag others into it with you.

Site Overview of the Beulah Chapel and Associated Cemetery Grounds.
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010).
North of the William Penn Highway/I-376 Parkway Interchange at Churchill east of Pittsburgh

Earliest documented history of the project location is dated to the 1758 encampment of General John Forbes’s British forces following their expulsion from Fort Pitt.

Situating the Site: Location and Time
The earliest known grave dating to 1792 is that of James Bonner, a ten year old boy.

The Beulah Cemetery contains more Revolutionary War Soldiers’ graves than any other in Allegheny County.

Headstone of James Bonner, 1792.

Situating the Site: Location and Time
Beulah Chapel (a National Historic Landmark) was erected in 1837 with bricks made on-site and was preceded by two earlier log structures.

National Historic Landmark (NHL), Beulah Chapel (Top)

Beulah Chapel NHL Plaque (Right)

(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)

Situating the Site: Location and Time
Takeaway #2

If you have enough energy and drive, you can make things happen – even if you’re not entirely sure what you just made happen.

Sean Martorelli (PHAST) explaining GPR data collection to Joe Verbka and Nick Krobot (PennDOT District 11-0 Environmental).
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
Ground-Penetrating Radar: GPR

Transmittal of radar pulses through the various subsurface materials producing a reading of the amplitude of reflected waves.


The Stonehenge Hidden Landscape Project
http://lbi-archpro.org/cs/stonehenge/results.html


GPR Survey: Michael Sprowles and Sean Martorelli.
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
Takeaway #3

Hard work and hand tools build character.

(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010; Shaffer 2015)

Michael Sprowles, Sean Martorelli, and Angie Jaillet: Hand Tools
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)

Portion of Site: Hand Tools
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
The Area of Potential Effect (APE) included a total of 0.34 acres (0.14 hectares).
Project Study Area and Considerations

Known Anomalies/Controls

Tree and Plot Marker.
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)

George and Mary Krapf Headstones.
View West.
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
Project Results

Nine known anomalies and 25 previously unknown anomalies were identified.

Of the 25 previously unknown anomalies, 17 anomalies were considered likely to be unmarked grave shafts.

GPR Survey (SE Quad TA #2)
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010)
Project Results

Given the high potential for impacting unmarked graves, we recommended avoidance and an archaeological monitor during construction in the vicinity of the Project.

Joe Verbka and Nick Krobot: Archaeological Monitors?
(Courtesy of Verbka and Jaillet 2010; Shaffer 2015)
Takeaway #4

What’s better than a good story, a good laugh, or a good wine?

A good friend that can provide all of those things!
Thank You!

References

Conyers, Lawrence B.  

Cridlebaugh, Bruce  

Hargrave, Michael L.  

Kvamme, Kenneth L.  

Pennsylvania USGENWEB Archives  

Society for American Archaeology  

Verbka, Joseph and Angela Jaillet  