

Neal H. Lopinot, Ph.D.
Biography

Neal was born in the American Bottom of southwestern Illinois. At the age of 10, he began collecting Native American artifacts on the bluffs and in the valley of the Mississippi River, mainly between the towns of Columbia and Dupou, Illinois, where he spent most of his youth. After graduating from Lindbergh High School in south St. Louis County, he received a BA in Anthropology from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (1974) and his MA in Conservation Archaeology and a PhD in Anthropology specializing in Archaeology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (1977 and 1984, respectively). His MA thesis entailed a study of Archaic plant-food subsistence in the valley of upper Chaco Wash in northwest New Mexico, whereas his PhD dissertation also focused on Archaic phenomena along the Saline River in extreme southeastern Illinois.

Dr. Lopinot specializes in archaeobotany or the study of plant remains from archaeological sites. This specialty was first cultivated (no pun intended) while working as a volunteer two afternoons a week from 1972 to 1975 at the Missouri Botanical Garden under the tutelage of Drs. Hugh C. Cutler and Leonard W. Blake. He has analyzed plant remains from hundreds of archaeological sites throughout the eastern and southwestern United States. Some of his best-known contributions have entailed studies of food production by the Mississippian occupants of Cahokia Mounds, although he has studied plant materials from many states throughout the Mississippi drainage system.

After receiving his PhD, he obtained an adjunct position at the University of Missouri at St. Louis (1984-1987), teaching half time and serving as the Assistant Director of the former Archaeological Survey. He was next employed as Associate Coordinator of the Contract Program at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (1987-1991), and thereafter he was received an appointment through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. In this position, he was a consultant with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District (1991-1993). In 1993, he was hired as the Director of the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at Missouri State University, where has been ever since.

Since his first publication in an edited book in 1976, Dr. Lopinot has continued to be actively involved in research and writing. He has authored or co-authored eight monographs or major research papers, 13 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 10 articles in other journals and magazines, 11 chapters in edited books, 61 technical reports (many containing 200-300 pages or more of text), and 57 contributions to other monographs and technical reports. He is currently working on a book pertaining to the history and archaeology of a slave plantation on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Dr. Lopinot also has delivered 48 papers at regional, national, and international conferences. In his only effort presenting a poster paper, Dr. Lopinot won first place in the Professional Division at the 1999 annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology.

Dr. Lopinot has also guided more than 10 years of research at the Big Eddy site near Stockton, Missouri. In 2005, he was featured in an issue of *The National Geographic Magazine* for his work there. While being an active researcher, Dr. Lopinot also invests a great amount of his energy on public relations, and he also advises and mentors MSU students that work at CAR as interns and volunteers. More recently, Neal assumed the position of Secretary of the Missouri Archaeological Society (MAS). The MAS, a not-for-profit organization of avocational and professional archaeologists, was formally

organized in 1935. As Secretary, he oversees the direction and operation of the MAS and assists with the organization of the annual statewide conference in the spring. Neal is also managing editor of the *Missouri Archaeological Society Quarterly* and the state's professional journal, *The Missouri Archaeologist*.