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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PLASTIC AGE AMERICA  
A GOVERNMENT REPORT SUBMITTED NOVEMBER 28, 2006

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## ABSTRACT

My thesis is a mixture of anthropology and creative writing, an anthropological account of what people five hundred years in the future would find if they had nothing but the archaeological record of the current United States from which to learn. In the following thesis, my future archaeologist attempts to reconstruct American life, exploring everything from military activity, to political organization, to social institutions – sometimes accurately and sometimes not. The introductory chapter is a very basic description of what life is like in this future society, when all the living signs of the America we know today have ceased to exist, along with almost all written documents. The persona of the future archaeologist begins in Chapter 1 and continues throughout the rest of the text. The text which the future archaeologist is writing is a report for her government. A subcommittee therein commissions this work in order to create a centralized body of knowledge about the “Amerhican Empire.” The texts itself represents the culmination of about twenty years of archaeology. While the author is the head of the project, other experts in archaeology and other relevant fields make contributions to the report as well. Some of their analyses yield remarkably accurate results, and others are intentionally very wrong. My initial goal for the thesis was to create a creative, original and entertaining product. As my research progressed, however, it became more of a commentary not only on how we construct theories about the future and but also how we interpret the people of the past.

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## PREFACE

My thesis is a mixture of anthropology and creative writing. When brainstorming different ideas for this project, I kept coming back to an idea I first had after taking my first introductory archaeology class here at Penn State: What would people hundreds of years in the future think about us? What would they find? And upon examining these finds, would their interpretations be anywhere near the mark? I continued to muse on this thought experiment in the back of my mind, until finally deciding to dig in and make it the focus of my thesis. I decided to write an anthropological account of what people five hundred years in the future would find if they had nothing but the archaeological record of the current United States from which to learn. In the following thesis, my future archaeologist attempts to reconstruct American life, exploring everything from military activity, to political organization, to social institutions – sometimes accurately and sometimes not.

In order to explore what would seem logical and what would seem strange to the future people, I had to decide what normal would be for their society. Their ideas of normalcy will shape the opinion and biases of the archaeologists working on this project in the future. It would be impossible to understand the interpretations which the future author of the work would be making about the past without knowing the postulates of the future society in which she lives and works. The introductory chapter is a very basic description of what life is like in this future society, when all the living signs of the America we know today have ceased to exist, along with almost all written documents. Some of the concepts are what I believe to be the natural evolution of present-day practices, while others might seem so unlikely as to be thought impossible. Luckily for me, it is thoroughly impossible to predict the path of the future. Many of the ideas are based on dystopias found in existing literature and cinema, and others are my own invention which these other fictions did not address for one reason or another. Still other ideas are based on research regarding current trends in science, technology and medicine. Combining creative license with logical progression, I created the material to follow. Regardless of how likely some things may seem, the postulates set forth in the introductory chapter must be accepted as perfectly true for this future world, and the reader must realize that they form the context from which the archaeologist is writing.

The persona of the future archaeologist begins in Chapter 1 and continues throughout the rest of the text. The author of the introductory material and that of the subsequent writing are clearly different, because the archaeologist writing in the future would have no need to write about the postulates of her own culture before beginning her analysis of another. The text which the future archaeologist is writing is a report for her government. A subcommittee therein commissions this work in order to create a centralized body of knowledge about the “American Empire.” The need for an authoritative report arises in response to many fantastical publications which have been written about that “mysterious” people thus far. The text itself represents the culmination of about twenty years of archaeology. While the author is the head of the project, other experts in archaeology and other relevant fields make contributions to the report as well.

I have outlined these practices and beliefs so that readers can appreciate the accurate and inaccurate interpretations which the future archaeologist and other contributing authors make in their discussion of the past. Some of their analyses yield remarkably accurate results, and others are intentionally very wrong. Hopefully the reader will be able to appreciate the inaccuracies as humorous but also as a critique of our own interpretations of the past. My initial goal for the thesis was to create a creative, original and entertaining product. As my research progressed, however, it became more of a commentary not only on how we construct theories about the future and but also how we interpret the people of the past.

## INTRODUCTION: POSTULATES OF THE FUTURE WORLD

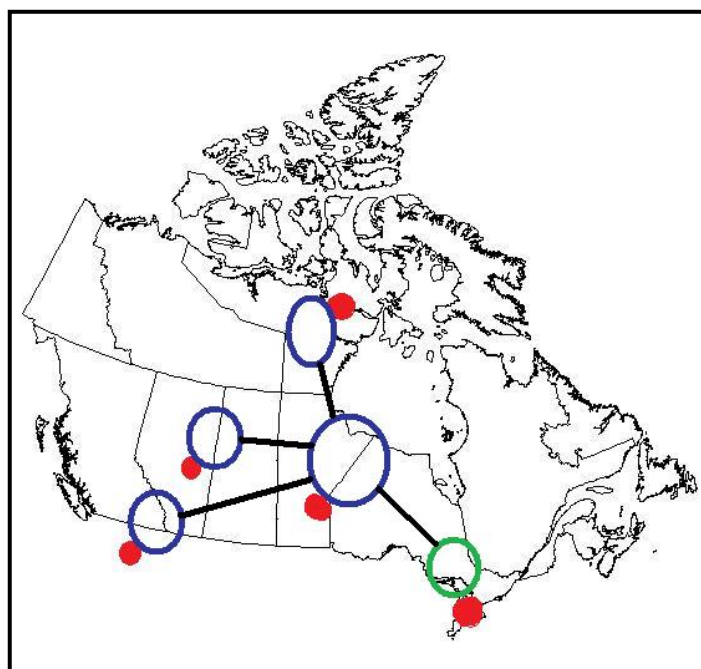
### Geography

**Canada:** The society to which my future archaeologist belongs will be located in modern-day Canada. The exact nature of what happened to America and how Canada (or Arcanada as it comes to be known in the future) came to rule is not the main focus of this section, but a brief summation is as follows. The world turns to nuclear power, and the United States soon outstrips its own resources. In the meantime, their facilities and practices create unprecedented environmental degradation. Unprepared facilities and waste disposal procedures coupled with increasing global warming lead to nuclear catastrophes across the country leaving most areas uninhabitable.

There are several large nuclear processing plants in the American Southwest with waste storage sites that are contained for now, but could cause devastating ecological effects sometime in the future. Some forms of used nuclear fuel are poured into metal-and-concrete-encased blocks and buried vertically. If the temperature in some of those areas in the Southwest – where it is already piping hot desert – climbs even higher due to global warming and the radioactive material gets too hot to contain itself, it could explode in a toxic ashy cloud. This could render a wide belt across the current Southwest and Southeast (assuming weather still travels in the same patterns in the future) uninhabitable for all but the most robust creatures. Perhaps future generations of cockroaches will enjoy a wide berth of human-free habitat.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Canadians develop a new means of harnessing and controlling nuclear power and do not face the same dire consequences. Because the U.S. shuts down its space exploration program, they leave that niche of exploration open to other countries, such as Canada, which soon develops the technology for harvesting and retrieving energy from other planets. This gives them the clear edge over the U.S. when energy begins to run out. In short, Canada rises to power because its energy resources are more abundant and better managed. New methods for processing energy will continue into the time of my future people and as a result they will be under the impression that energy is an almost limitless resource. This ideology will be fueled by the frequent discovery of new uranium deposits.

**Environment and Climate:** Societies all over the globe will be forced to move either very far north or very far south in my future world, because global warming will have increased

to such an extent to make living anywhere near the equator impossible. The heat, coupled with a lack of flora and fauna to live on would make mid- and tropical latitudes uninhabitable for humans and most other creatures. Though the numbers vary according to the study, the amount of carbon in the atmosphere has gone from a relatively stable level over the past few million years of 275 parts per million to approximately 380 parts per million as of 2010. The projected rise in temperature is approximately five degrees per century in the future, if one averages the various current projections.<sup>2</sup> Even if carbon emissions were to cease immediately all over the planet, some predictions say that it will take thousands, if not one hundred thousand years for the earth to go through the necessary cycles to return the atmospheric carbon levels to pre-human levels.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the now-frozen tundra of Canada could be much more hospitable for living, and much warmer. If the five degree estimate holds true, and assuming that the society in question exists around A.D. 2500-2600, that will mean an average temperature of 25-30 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than today.



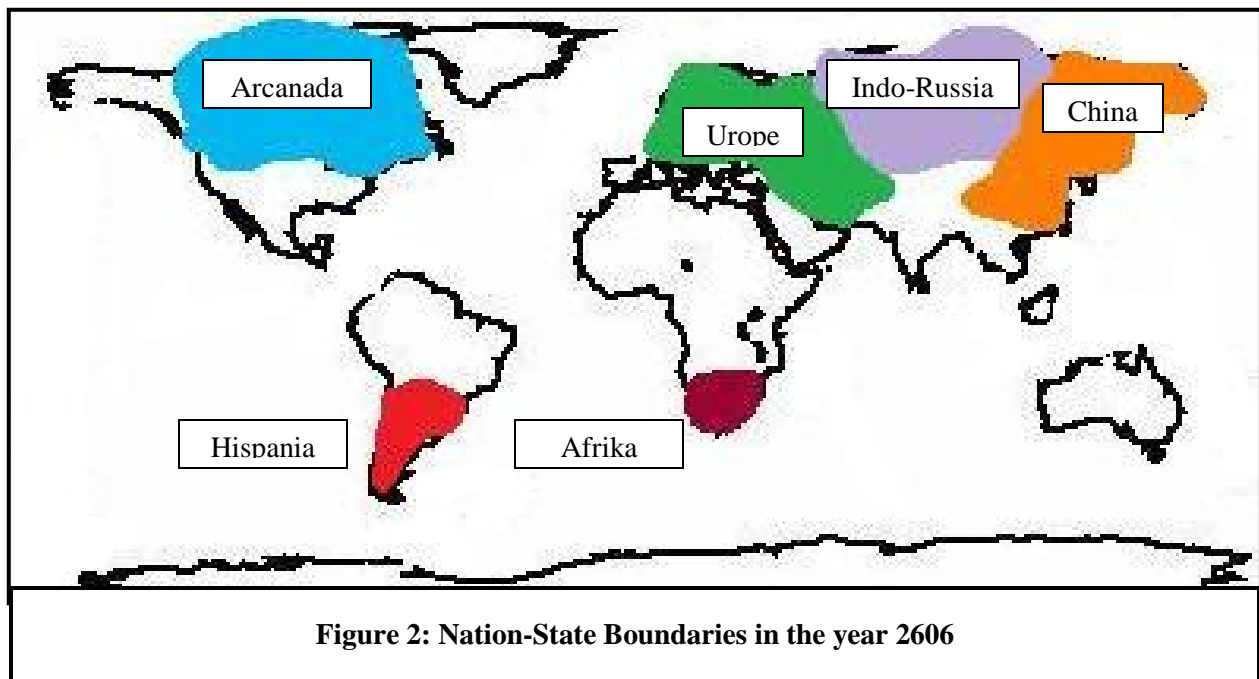
**Figure 1: Major Urban Settlements in Arcanada**

**Settlement Pattern:** Using the uranium deposits in Canada as a starting point, I created the figure on the right. I marked the locations of the largest and presumably earliest deposit discoveries, where the largest settlements will inevitably form. Existing urban centers in Canada will either be abandoned as people move where the better employment opportunities are, or they will be incorporated into the planning of new urban centers. The central area in Figure 1 is the largest area and thus the capital center. The other blue circles are the other largest centers, which are

highly urbanized cities with a surrounding area of less dense population. Assuming that the rural areas will not be easy places to inhabit, most people will cluster in these urban centers. The green circle represents the center which develops in response to the most recent large uranium deposit

discovery. This area is very near the northeastern U.S. which will be the subject of the future archaeologist's investigations (the deposit borders Lake Erie).

**Nation-State Territories:** Because people are going to be forced to inhabit colder climates, cultural consolidation will inevitably develop. The territories of each of these mega-countries shown in Figure 2 will cover the habitable areas where certain broad cultural traditions exist today. I have created the map here to distinguish where each mega-country will be located. As you can see, those on the Eurasian land mass will probably have a lot of contention and



conflict over their boundaries in relation to one another. Yet others, such as southern Africa and South America, are isolated enough that they will not be affected by border disputes. This in turn affects other areas of organization such as the degree to which a military is needed. The Canadian society on which I focus falls into the latter category. Its borders and people are secure. Agents of the government are free to explore areas to the south as much as they want or need. One exception to this general rule of peace occurs some years before the time during which the archaeologists is submitting her report. Arcanada has recently finished involvement in a conflict with several other nation states over energy harvesting on other planets, which will be discussed more in Chapter 1.

**Population Scale:** If all of the people in the world have to live in these areas, then the population overall has to be much lower than it is today. There will be just over 10 million



people in each of the two southernmost regions. The northern regions can support a much larger number. The Canadian region, which is the largest in area, will have a population of approximately 30 million people. This is approximately one-tenth of the current population of the United States.<sup>4</sup> This population will be confined to extremely dense urban populations. This is in line with population trends over the last few centuries, as increased urbanization has led to the first time in the history of humanity where more people currently live in cities than in rural areas.

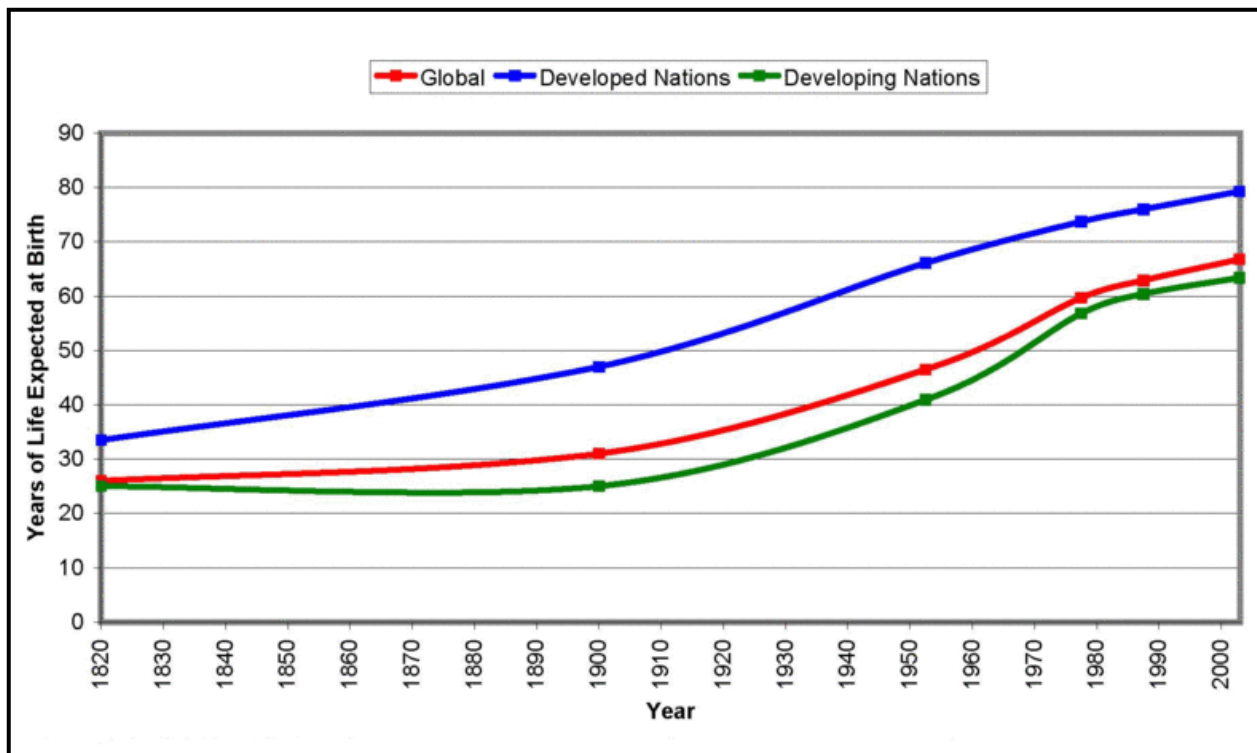
Fringe populations (Outlanders) will live in small farming, hunting and fishing communities outside the control and influence of the urban society. There will be no census figures on these individuals, because they live entirely off the grid of my society's government. They might be descendants of American refugees who refused to join the larger society, people of urban Arcanada who defected from the society, and/or the descendants of native peoples who precede the two other populations. If the world's population is almost universally confined to urban centers, then there will be very little interaction between the society members and the Outlanders, except for maybe the future archaeologist who camps out in areas not yet urbanized. With a nucleated population, flora and fauna will reclaim most of the land and nature will actually flourish again. It will be very much "wild" outside the areas of urban development and industrial processing. There will be extensive tracts of land on which the Outlanders can live without coming in contact with the urban people.

**Demographics:** Race will be an obsolete means of classification. There will be enough intermarrying and interbreeding over the next five hundred years so that variation in skin color is minimal. There will still be social classes because the economy is still based on capitalism. There will also be social classes as a consequence of differential reproductive methods. Some children being will be genetically designed to be successful and some will not. It will be all but impossible to distinguish among these individuals, but it will be something that tarnishes one's reputation if it is found out that one is not modified. Such a discovery implies that one's parents were not wealthy enough to do so. There will be a controversy raging in the society at the time as to whether work places are allowed to discriminate on this basis, and there will be legislation in progress which prevents workplaces or universities from performing genetic screening of their employees and potential applicants.

Different professions will earn different incomes. Different areas of the city will be regulated in such a way that there are rent locks in place so that even the lowest-paid people can afford to live there. New construction in the urban areas will occur on an as-needed basis depending on population projections made each year. Professional positions will pay different salaries depending on the skill and educational level required for the occupation. Within professions, superiority will be calculated by taking into account factors that make an employee productive. Computers with specially-designed software will evaluate relevant aspects of the individual's performance at the workplace and this information will then be used to compile objective calculations for who should be promoted, demoted or fired.

### **Biology and Life**

**Life Expectancy:** Life expectancy of this future society cannot be determined on any scientific basis. According to a literature review of projected life expectancy throughout the past, trying to predict the increase (or decrease) in life expectancy for a group more than a few years into the future is impossible.<sup>5</sup> Projections simply cannot take into account the type of medical and technological advances which contribute to the change, or the appearance of new threats and



**Figure 3: Life Expectancy, 1820 - 2003**

hazards. The life expectancy of this future society is my own estimation, though the choice is not entirely unsupported. People in the future will undoubtedly live longer than they do today; life expectancy has continued to increase throughout the course of history, and I see no reason to project that it would do otherwise in the future. To get some base for my ideas, I researched a particular project by a geneticist at Harvard Medical School named Ronald A. DePinho, whose work I first learned about on an episode of *The Colbert Report*. According to an article on his most recent findings, he was able to not only halt, but actually *reverse* the signs of aging in mice by controlling a gene which repairs telomeres.<sup>6</sup> Of course there are many steps and many years before such research becomes advanced enough for human trials. For the purpose of my fictional future, I will assume that this technology continues in its current vein and becomes applicable to humans. If so, the life expectancy of humans could theoretically be indefinite.

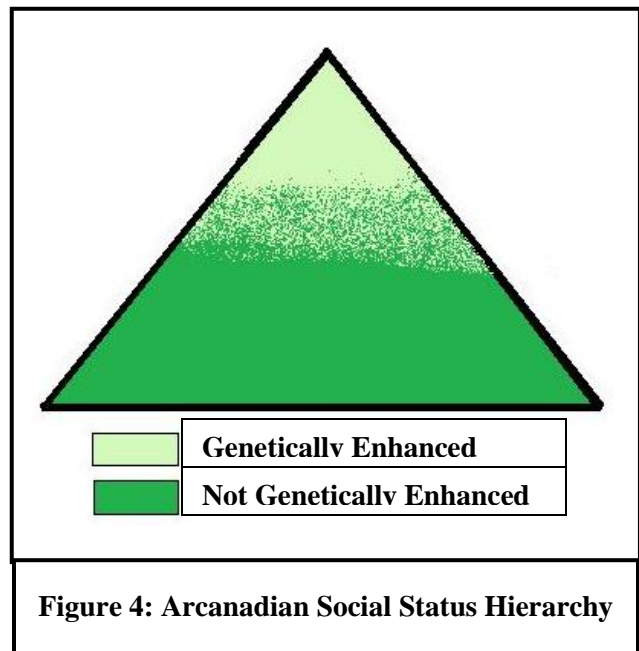
I do not want my future humans to live forever, because immortality poses logistical issues for a society which could be the subject of another thesis entirely. Part of the DePinho research cautioned that though it had not yet been observed in the mice, turning on the telomere repair gene could foster the development of cancer which was not genetically predetermined. My society will be able to genetically modify fetuses to prevent any genetic diseases; but they will not be able to foresee cancers that develop in response to turning on the telomere repair gene. Future humans will be genetically modified before birth to be receptive to turning on this gene. When the individual has reached the age of twenty-five years, medical professionals activate the telomere-repairing gene with an injection of estrogen.<sup>7</sup> The individual then fails to age for the next one hundred and fifty years. After this time, very aggressive forms of cancer begin to develop in almost all cases. In response to the cancer, individuals must have their telomere-repairing gene deactivated. The shock to the body of having the gene deactivated – which is something I have invented as a side effect – will cause that person to age rapidly and die within a very few years. Once an individual is deactivated, he or she will be removed to a Deactivation Home, which will be something like our modern nursing homes. There they will spend the few years before dying. How long an individual lives after the gene is turned off will vary greatly, but from our perspective, an age of two hundred years will be the equivalent of today's centenarian.

**Diseases:** As I mentioned briefly before, embryos will genetically screened and corrected for any predispositions to certain diseases. Other diseases that develop because of the

environment are treated with advanced medical procedures. The medical field will inevitably atrophy in many areas because of having so few diseases with which to contend. Research into the prevention of telomere-gene cancer will continue, as people strive to live even longer lives. There will be very little need of physicians or other medical professionals who are not researchers. Science of this day will have found a way to cure viral diseases, so that HIV/AIDS and even the common cold are foreign to them. Nonetheless the ever curious and ambitious nature of the human mind will lead to even more research into improving the quality and length of life. Research into fields which we have not even yet discovered will also continue, especially if it means lengthening the lifespan even more.

**Reproduction:** Eggs and sperm will be obtained from a database of genes known to create healthy offspring. The sex cells in the database will be grown using stem cells. Egg and sperm will be joined in the laboratory, and the resulting embryo will be corrected for genetic predispositions to diseases, both physical and mental. This process will also correct it for predispositions to certain behaviors, such as aggression etc. which have been found to be affected by genetic factors. This embryo will then be implanted in the woman’s uterus. Despite their medical advancements, the future people understand that trying to gestate a child in artificial settings usually leads to death or serious deformations in the embryo.

Such genetic screening as I have just described will be allotted to every citizen. Those capable of paying the extra price can have their child genetically engineered for appearance, capability, etc. This will be known as “genetic enhancement,” as opposed to the service offered everyone, which is “genetic correction.” This idea is stirring up controversy even today, and is in its infant stages (pun intended) of becoming a reality.<sup>8</sup> The debate going on at the time will be whether insurance companies should cover the cost of more advanced genetic engineering in embryos. The debate would be analogous to current arguments about whether insurance companies should cover voluntary procedures



that enhance appearance. Genetic engineering will create a social gap between those children that were designed for excellence and those who were not. This will be reflected in the social status hierarchy, which is illustrated in Figure 4. There is no absolute delineation between those who are genetically enhanced and those who are not. Rather, there is a stigma attached to not being enhanced which garners those individuals less prestige.

When faced with genetic tests of our remains, these humans will think it strange that we are so closely genetically related to our offspring. Though I want to steer clear of the stereotypical practices of most futuristic dystopias, I will have to borrow the practice of making individuals sterile. This will be accomplished during the process of correcting embryos for disease. The only way the women can carry their implanted children is through injections of the necessary hormones, and males will be sterile as well.

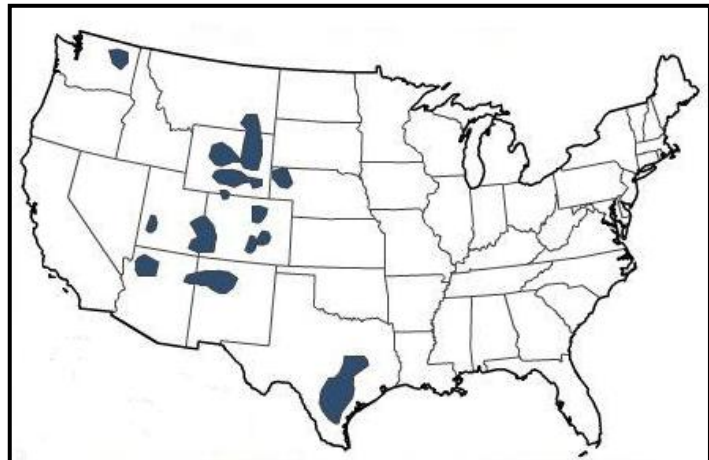
In order to maintain a constant population, each couple would hypothetically need to produce exactly two offspring. To account for early mortality and accidental deaths, etc., the true number is around 2.1 children to every couple. Even in my society, where diseases are prevented, accidental deaths can still occur. There will be some individuals who want no children or belong to a male homosexual relationship in which neither partner is able to carry an implanted embryo. To regulate this, my society will have a bureaucratic organization similar to the current Government and Public Affairs Committee (GPAC).<sup>9</sup> This organization will be responsible for integrating census information with death rates and resource availability in a particular year in order to calculate the number of children that can be born each year without risking a population explosion. Then people who desire to have children will enter themselves on a waiting list. People will be chosen from that list sequentially each year as the need to replenish the population arises. There will be a mandatory waiting period before a person can be reentered on the list for having another child. This policy would not blatantly restrict the number of children an individual can have, but it still maintains the population. Interestingly, even with such population limits put in place, most people will need to be regulated, as the rate of children per couple in western, industrialized countries has been decreasing in recent years. In the United States, for example, the rate is around 1.8 or 1.9 children per couple. This may seem insignificantly lower, but the slightest variation in either direction can cause big changes over many hundreds of years.<sup>10</sup> This is one of the contributing factors to the future's relatively low population.

The Outlanders will be genetically more “natural” and capable of reproducing normally – that is, without the intervention of hormones. The people of the urban centers would view this means of nature child conception as primitive, and this will be reflected in their interpretation of the Americans.

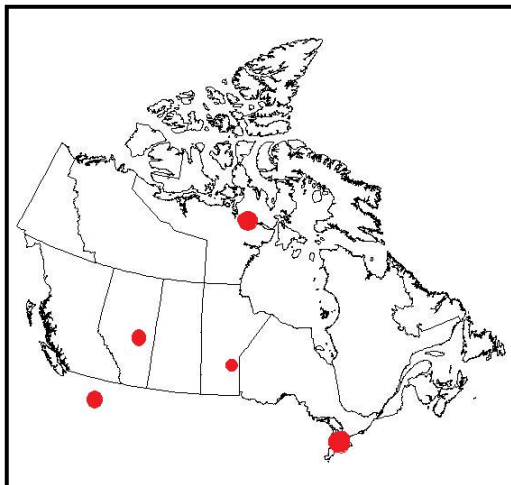
## Energy

**Solar Energy:** Resources such as natural gases, coal, petroleum, etc. will all be gone or nearly so by this time. Solar power is one of the two main energy sources. There will be small solar panels on the roofs of most residential buildings and all civic or industrial buildings. This society will be very dependent on technology (the equivalent of televisions, computers, digital books, recording devices, etc.), so I assume that the total demand will be extremely high. To supplement the solar energy, they will rely heavily on nuclear power.

**Nuclear Energy:** After most fossil fuel sources have gone, nuclear energy will remain. It is already growing, and the amount of uranium being discovered and mined today is



**Figure 5: Uranium Deposits in the United States**



**Figure 6: Uranium Deposits in Canada**

increasing. Current projections say that there is enough uranium to meet the growing demands of nuclear power well into the coming centuries.<sup>11</sup> There are several significant uranium deposits in the U.S. (Figure 5) and even larger ones in Canada.<sup>12</sup> Figure 6 depicts the location (but not magnitude) of Canada’s largest uranium deposits. I have also indicated the one in the state of Washington which will probably be within my future society’s boundaries. There is also a deposit located conveniently close to the northeastern United States, where the majority of the American

archaeology has taken place as of my archaeologist's report. My future archaeologist will be excavating and writing on places that have been discovered through construction. Digging will have to occur near the newly discovered deposit to the east so that settlements and processing plants can be erected. In the process, archaeological sites will be discovered which lead anthropologists to probe even further into modern United States Territory.

**Extraterrestrial Energy Harvesting:** Space travel has been a major area of science and technology in modern history, and I assume it will continue into the future with marvelous results. I have no doubt that the movie *Avatar* is prophetic – not in the sense that blue people live on foreign planets, but in the sense that the first to arrive on those planets and the first to claim them as their own will inevitably set to work immediately taking advantage of their natural resources. Canada, as mentioned before, develops a more efficient means of harvesting and using nuclear power. Canadians also continue to build a space program when the United States cuts back on their own. Multiply this trajectory by a few centuries, and Canada will have the capability to claim the energy resources of other planets as their own. They would most likely set to work mining Uranium from these planets – as well as plutonium and other elements which have energy capacity and which are currently the focus of energetic studies. The future people will be living in a time when energy is cheap and seemingly endless. They do not realize they might be causing irrevocable damage to those planets, which in turn could have devastating consequences for those planets and the entire solar system.

## **Technology**

**Universal Information Service:** Some improved and omnipresent form of what we know as the internet will exist in the future world. It will be a digital network that covers every inch of the society's domain and the world at large. It will be dubbed the Universal Information Service (UIS, or familiarly pronounced "yoose"). Attempts by modern governments to control the internet have usually met with little to no real success. During the protests in Iran a few years ago, no citizens were supposed to have internet access, yet videos of the protests and the violence still found their way to youtube.com and social networking sites within hours. Some countries consider the internet a breeder of dissent and the instigator of youth rebellions. Bill Clinton has said that "the effort of these regimes to control the internet is reminiscent of an attempt to nail Jell-o to a wall".<sup>13</sup> The future society would be equally unable to completely control access to

their information network, though there will be legislation that attempts to curb illegal activity. The future government has tried to control internet access in the past years of my society, but every time they do so hackers from a free information activist group reopen access. The government then passes an information tax and provides constant access – anywhere, anytime through wifi-like networks and public access points similar to those found in airports today.

The essence of this society's technology is constant connection. People will never *not* be on the internet. They will carry with them a small personal digital device that is completely unique to the holder. Such devices will need only to be waved in front of any screen, or internet access point, etc. to retrieve or send information. The device will be the inevitable result of current trends in electronics whereby individual devices are transforming into multitasking wonders. Phones, cameras, tvs, and computers are all becoming so multitask-capable that none really exists now without an element of the other. By the time of my future people, there will be a tiny, mono-device that functions as all of the above, as well as identification and health monitor, etc. To display things larger than is appropriate for its small screen, it will have the capability to immediately broadcast its content onto a nearby display screen, which occur everywhere in public and all throughout private dwellings as well. This device will also be a link to a person's banking information, and will allow people to purchase things with the wave of the device in front of the screen. This is all but possible today, so I have no doubt about its universal application in the future.

**Monitoring:** Many future dystopias involve the omnipresence of Big-Brother-esque surveillance whereby every move a person makes is watched by an ominous. This is how the government, in Orwell's *1984* for example, is able to wield control over a large population. It controls its population on a psychological level. My future society will practice this only to the extent of workplace and public area surveillance, since these can be legitimized with the excuse that they prevent crime and increase employee productivity. Again, this is just a continuation of what goes on in modern times. Private areas will not be monitored by governmental mandate. Considering the degree which current generations are obsessed with broadcasting their every move and thought to the outside world, it is possible that anything that the government will want to know will be there for the taking anyway.

As I mentioned previously, computers made sensitive to certain factors which indicate hard work or efficiency – synched with information transmitted from the individual



monotechnological device everyone possesses – will be able to calculate the proposed success of any given individual. This information will be used to make decisions in regard to finding a job out of college, promotions, elections, or anything of the like. Most people will be perfectly fine with this, but in answer to the small number of dissenters, allowing access for one's activities to be analyzed will be an optional practice. Those who do not want such calculations made about their work can decline monitoring, but in reality no one will want to hire them or accept them into a university if they make this decision.

### **Transportation**

The major centers on the map are connected by high-speed, above ground trains. President Obama is even now trying to implement such trains as an alternative to airlines for transcontinental travel in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Within the cities there are no subways, but instead above-ground public transportation in the form of vehicles that look like subway train cars. These vehicles will travel on tracks that course through the urban centers like our streets. There will be very few personal vehicles, and one will need a permit to justify one's need for such a vehicle. There will also be a type of all-terrain vehicle for the use of governmental authorities outside the urban zones. Private individuals will have to apply to use these vehicles, and will have to obtain permission from the government to leave the urban confines. This is not an unusual phenomenon in history. In seventeenth-century Edinburgh, many people who lived in the Old City were poor and never traveled beyond the city walls because there was a tax to leave and reenter.

There will also be fairly frequent space travel, considering these people are traveling to other planets to harvest and process uranium. The spacecrafts will be very different in design from our current vessels, since they will be nuclear powered and far more advanced than anything today. Space travel will not be limited to just the government and prospectors, but will include private citizens as well. Traveling to other planets will be something like taking a vacation to another country is today. There will be extraterrestrial recreational activities and the equivalent of national parks to visit.

Commercial air travel will greatly diminish thanks to the high speed trains which require less energy and are far less expensive. Air travel will mostly be used to travel among the large national entities. Immigration and international travel will be strictly controlled for security

reasons. Anyone wishing to travel abroad, whether for studying, government work, or recreation, will need permission to do so. This may sound restrictive, but it is no different than traveling internationally today, which requires a passport and usually a visa. Aerial travel over the American Southwest and Southeast will be highly regulated and limited. The area will still be plagued by decaying nuclear fallout, and flying over the area will be dangerous without planes designed specifically for the purpose. Any travel to the South American territory will involve a precautionary detour many hundreds of miles around the dangerous area.<sup>15</sup>

### **Agriculture**

**Food and Eating:** Instead of eating like we do today, people will consume a meal pill that provides all the essential nutrients required on a daily basis. These pills will be distributed to every person, and their cost will be covered by a tax. People will still wish to eat food sometimes. The ease of the pill will not have removed what thousands of years of evolution have programmed our brains and bodies to do. To satisfy this demand, traditional plants and animals will be grown to stock the future equivalent of restaurants. Most people will lack the knowledge and the equipment to cook for themselves, so a huge recreational activity will be going to restaurants and eating real food.

**Crops:** There will be only a narrow range of crops in the future. Some were lost because the areas where they were grown were abandoned rapidly. Others were so heavily genetically engineered that a single disease wiped out the entire crop. I once read an article in the *New York Times* that predicted bananas would be one of the first crops to go extinct. The world's bananas have so little genetic diversity that any disease which could kill one could kill them all. The same will happen to many crops over the next several hundred years of my future. Future humans (archaeo-botanists) try to find genetic materials of extinct plants so that they can recreate them. They have just successfully recreated one variety of maize, in addition to several others which they have either maintained in their natural form or recreated previously. Scientists will continue to genetically engineer existing crops, which will unknowingly replicate the same condition of genetic uniformity that made the plants extinct in the past. The agricultural scientists create the plant zygotes and bring them to maturation in an environmentally controlled facility. Vast greenhouse-like structures will be filled with growing plants attached to artificial "vines." These

lines give the plants all the nutrition and water they require. When the crops are fully ripe they are simply disconnected from their vines and sent either to markets or to restaurants.

**Animals:** The raising of animals to eat will be very different. It will be much like the plant crops described above, in that the creatures will be nourished entirely through intravenous fluids. This will require them to be largely immobile. Take cattle as an example. To breed cattle for food, adult cows will be housed in a breeding facility where they will be maintained in a kind of coma state. Breeding females will be given the telomere-repairing gene treatment so that they live extended lives. Cows will be inseminated, the calf will grow to full term inside the comatose cow, and the scientific farmers of the future will deliver it safely without needing any assistance on the mother's part. Animals which are used for food in this future society will be similar to ours in that they included cattle, pigs, and poultry, etc.

Animals which are not used for food, meaning pets, will still exist. Dogs and cats and whatever exotic pets one might obtain could be made to live very long lives thanks to the telomere technology applied to humans. Every once in a while one reads in the news about a ridiculously wealthy person wanting to clone his or her favorite pet.<sup>16</sup> These people usually have the financial means to make this happen, so if the technology is available, such cloning could very much become commonplace. Larger animals, mainly horses, will have to serve a purpose to be kept in large numbers, if they are not merely pets. Sports have always been a part of human society. Horses have often been used in sporting activities, and this might be a major reason for keeping them in the future society. With longer lives comes more time for recreation, and horses will be a part of that for the people of my future society.

### **Political System**

**Government:** Arcanada will have a government run by a Grand Council. There will be no political parties. Each spot in the council will be filled on a meritocracy basis by a member of a different field. Committees for each of the various important fields will be created – subsistence, transportation, population management, education, etc. Each urban center will have such a committee, the head of which will serve as a council member for that seat in the capital center. It is a relatively small government form, but this reduces the confusion of too many layers of government and all the bureaucracy of government such as the United States has today. One becomes a member of the committee by achieving notability in that field. Wealth or personal

affluence will not be a factor because elevation to such important positions will be calculated in part by the computer-software mentioned earlier. Computers will constantly calculate the performance and potential of various people, and when the time comes to replace someone in a certain position, the computer issues a report with its recommendations. People will then vote on their choice of candidate, but it will be extremely rare that the people choose someone other than the person whom the computer suggests. There will probably be cases in which a person is elected to a position to which he or she does not wish to have. Here I am borrowing from the ideas which the philosopher Plato writes in *The Republic*. In his perfect state, it is best to have leaders who rule are chosen without volunteering, as those who actively pursue an office are unsuitable to that office for the very reason that they pursue it. According to Plato, it is those who rule reluctantly who can be relied on to rule fairly.<sup>17</sup>

No figurehead such as a president or a prime minister will exist, because the position will not be worth the effort. The power of whoever held that office will have declined rapidly in relation to that wielded by the parliament or congressional body which worked “under” that office. Somewhere along the line, the position is eliminated. I recently watched a small segment of a television show on *Spike TV* about a certain criminal gang. From the time of its creation, the gang was run by one leader. His decisions were law and anyone in the gang who went against those orders was subject to a gruesome execution. After several instances where the leader was murdered and bloody battles were waged over which of his henchmen would take his place, the gang members realized that this was not the way to run things. Similar battles over accession have happened throughout history as multiple sons warred over their father’s throne or even different families claimed rightful inheritance to an important position. The gang’s efficacy suffered as certain members backed one candidate over another and their economic interests buckled under the disorganized management that resulted.

The gang then decided to adopt a new method of government. They adapted to the 21<sup>st</sup> century by changing from a CEO format to a grand council style rule. This allowed them to compartmentalize their economic activities; various representatives had equal sway in making decisions that affected the gang’s policy at large. This method was much more resistant to having power and organization dissolved if one important individual was assassinated. Enemies in rival gangs had a much harder time trying to take down all the members of the council rather than one central figure.

This is an important feature for my government to adopt, because new, stricter laws on population control and fertility and medical intervention will certainly cause strong resistance upon their introduction. I can certainly see several figureheads being assassinated over such issues. The council format will allow a more stable, safer form of maintaining order. There are of course protocols for when a president is assassinated; but it causes panic nonetheless. Until he (or she) is replaced, people lose faith in the government and perceive it as weak. The grand council system allows for a much calmer public in the event of a council member being killed or attacked in any way.

**Politics:** In a system where eligibility and suitability for every position are determined by computer calculations, the general public will be apathetic in regards to “politics” as we know them today. People will have faith that things are running as they should, or the computer system would alert them to some type of fault. The computer system will be able to determine the need to fire someone just as easily as hiring them, if someone’s behavior becomes unsuitable to a particular position.

For a semester during my junior year I had a study abroad student from Singapore as my roommate. Among the many comparisons we made about life in our respective countries, politics was one of the more interesting. She told me that people are for the most part unconcerned with who gets power and how they do it, as long as life continues to go on in much the same way. She said the system was elitist and very closed-door, but that this ultimately did not bother people. Americans might be under the impression that in order to minimize corruption, all aspects of politics and the people involved in them must be under constant surveillance by the media. Yet Singapore’s system has repeatedly ranked among the least corrupt political systems in the world by independent investigations, even though most matters are conducted behind the scenes.<sup>18</sup>

**Law Enforcement:** Every state needs some means of enforcing laws and regulations. There will be a police force, though such work will increasingly be done via technology. Run-of-the-mill beat cops as we know them will still exist for on-the-ground immediate response to small infractions. Their visible presence also reminds people to stay in line. Criminals often stare straight at security cameras while committing a robbery, so sometimes it takes enforcement officials wearing intimidating uniforms to actually deter crime. As far as investigating goes, technical analysts will sit in rooms, accessing and cross referencing virtual documents (everything would be digitized and placed on the UIS), video and surveillance footage until they

solve the crime. Punishment for small offenses will be fines. Meanwhile, serious offenses such as extremely violent crimes like murder, rape, etc. will be punishable by death or prison sentences. Prisons will be located on the periphery of the urban centers and the worst punishment one could receive will be manual labor at the prison. The idea of being forced to do manual labor outside the cities is especially degrading, since such work is associated with the primitive lifestyle of the Outlanders.

DNA evidence is already a major component of getting a conviction today. This coupled with the extent of monitoring in everyday life will make it extremely easy to determine guilt. Computer analysis of the evidence in question will also be taken into account, to supply an entirely objective perspective to the case. Any person convicted of a crime will be allowed one appeal which will be sent through computer analysis for a second time, incorporating any new evidence or testimony. Any third and final appeal will be examined by a law professional in conjuncture with the evidence analyzed by the computer. That judge can either concur with the computer's decision or overturn it. Either way, the third appeal's result is final. There is a small amount of room here for corruption on the part of the judge, but theoretically he or she has come to that position because of merit; computer analysis would have detected any corruption in the past prevented his or her ascension to such a position of authority.

### **Economy**

Arcanada's economy will be a capitalist system. This aspect of the modern American (and Canadian) culture will be one that carries through, simply because I do not see a vast overhaul being necessary or plausible. The system will be based on a fiat currency of points. Points from earnings will be directly deposited into individual's accounts (using UIS); those points will then be used to purchase goods and services. Points will be the same in all areas of the world, so that crossing international boundaries will not affect the currency used. This is almost the case today, not in regards to the value of the currency, but certainly in the way one does not need to physically carry different currencies. When I studied abroad in Ireland, I maintained an American bank account with dollars in it. When I made a purchase with my bank card, the value of the money was automatically converted (for free, thanks to my bank's policies), extracted from my bank account in the States and sent to where it needed to go in euros. When I withdrew money in any of the European Union countries, it automatically

converted the desired amount from dollars to euros, and when in the United Kingdom, the same occurred with British pounds. A student, a citizen of the United Kingdom, once remarked in one of my classes that he does not have to even think about currency or what country he is in if he has his credit or bank card with him.

Virtual currency will continue to be the norm. Even today we can purchase things with the swipe of a plastic card. Credit card companies are always coming up with faster and more effortless ways of market exchange. The most recent development is a card that only needs to be waved in front of a sensor (since we all know how much more effort it takes to swipe than wave a half-ounce plastic card). In the future, I see the exchange of money for goods and services becoming even more abstract and disconnected. The concept of money will have become abstract in the sense that people pay for things from online accounts filled with points that do not exist in any material form. They never hold a physical currency in their hands.

There will be governmental controls on the amount of points that can be charged for essential items such as clothing and housing. There will still be differential earning rates for different professions, and there is the possibility that some people might not work at all for one reason or another. Points will be allocated to those individuals' accounts and controlled so that those points can only be used on essential items, like virtual food stamps. Most items will continue to vary in value depending on supply and demand. People will still want to express themselves through fashion and art. Some people will still think nothing of paying the equivalent of a hundred dollars for sunglasses. Future archaeologists will be able to understand most parts of our economy, and might even recognize the function of civil services such as welfare. At the same time, they will be perplexed by carrying physical currency. They will regard this as a primitive practice, since such currency can be lost or damaged. They would not, however, be able to detect the extent of our own abstract, online purchases because there will be no record of it for them to uncover.

## **Education**

Education in general will be so valued and so indoctrinated into the fabric of this society, that it will be strange for people not to value learning and education above other pursuits. Americans today value education (though not always learning), but not universally.

Arcanadians will. The future archaeologists will not be able to understand why some people in the past did not go to college or why some people could not read (if they find evidence of this).

**Primary and Secondary Education:** It is during the early years of education that most young people learn socialization skills. Elementary schools today serve not only to educate but also to socialize young students. Future schools will continue to serve these dual purposes, but there will be some key differences. The students will gather in one building to learn together, but the method of learning will be different. Schools today are increasingly offering the option of virtual learning programs – essentially high tech versions of home schools where the computer programs become the teachers. I know that even my own high school has adopted such a program in recent years for students who are either unable to come to school for medical reasons or simply choose to stay at home for their elementary and high school years. Some schools are even implementing mandatory virtual classes in some cases. In Florida, for example, the state passed a law limiting the number of students who could be in each class, in hopes of improving the quality of the education by lowering the student to teacher ratio.<sup>19</sup> Instead that legislation has led to the virtual class system, wherein students work on their own computer, with a facilitator present to keep them on track and help with technical problems. Many parents and community members expressed opposition to this system because it lacks traditional student-teacher interaction. Improved technology (as a Penn State professor of Education commented in the article) might offer more personal interaction, and more diverse ways of learning. My future schools will have done just that. Students will virtually interact with the teacher, and the supercomputer technology in the future will allow the system to adapt to each student's preferences for learning.

**University:** Universities will be free apart from the necessary administrative fees, similar to what universities in Ireland and the United Kingdom charge. Canadian universities already function in this manner. One of my best friends studied abroad at the University of Leeds in England during the spring semester of her junior year. She found herself envious that most of the money British students pay is actually for room and board, and there are only about a thousand dollars in administrative fees. In my future society there will be one national university, with different campuses in each of the urban centers. There will be physical offices and various facilities required for running the university and conducting more hands-on courses, such as physical education classes. The universities also rely heavily on virtual instruction, so the



physical facilities will be much more limited than on modern college campuses. One of the reasons that tuition is so inexpensive is that the schools do not have to maintain huge classroom facilities. Classes will be held virtually via video lessons broadcast to the student's personal computer.

Universities around the country are adding online courses, which have been around for some years, but also virtual classes. Such classes are taught by streaming live lectures to the students' computers so that the school can cut the costs of maintaining classrooms and of hiring more teachers. In the future manifestation of virtual classes, students and teacher will still be able to interact, as the technology will allow for both parties to see and hear one another. They will also be able to hear any input or question from another student to the teacher, and for all intents and purposes the regular atmosphere of the classroom will be virtually recreated.

**Academic Professions:** The virtual system is a way to minimize the need to pay teachers, but there is still a demand for teachers and professors because of the high value placed on learning. Every campus will need to have a professor who is a specialist in each of the fields being taught. For every one or two professors in a given area of instruction, there will also be countless researchers in that field supported by the university. Their salaries and other expenses will be paid with taxpayer dollars. There would be academia jobs available at museums, science centers, etc. which are located throughout the urban centers. Since this culture values the pursuit of knowledge so much, museums, science centers and such will be a popular way to spend time and money. Such educational institutions will be located on or near college campuses and their proceeds will help to fund educational programs in their respective fields. Almost all information will be available online, but seeing actual objects as opposed to just pictures of those objects will be just as appealing as it is today. For example, people pay large admission fees to go see the King Tut museum exhibits even though they could just as easily (and more cheaply) purchase a catalogue with pictures of all of the items. Books will also be highly valued since creating printed material will be a very rare practice in the future. Libraries will all be the equivalent of rare book museums or libraries today.

**Other Professions:** Even professions that we think of as requiring no higher education, such as farming, are highly-skilled professionals in the future society. There will inevitably be professions that will not necessarily involve intellectual specialization. With inexpensive universities and life spans long enough that people do not have the excuse of not having time to

get a higher level degree, most people nonetheless get a higher degree related to their field. Construction workers, for example, will study civil engineering because it interests them and because they can. This will not be required, but it will just be an understood social ideology that people get higher education. It will be outside of the norm if people did not take advantage of this.

Here is an appropriate place to address individuals who deviate in some way from the norm. People who do not subscribe to the majority's perspective will not be prosecuted or persecuted in any way, but they will be social outsiders nonetheless. The civilization's population is small, so the number of dissenters will be small as well. Even if dissenters do organize, their existence will not threaten the authority of the established governmental and social order. Some people will decide not to get higher education. These people will be regarded as strange and will be considered lower in class. There will also be those who resent being monitored in any way, and they will decline to be tracked by the computer software. This will be perfectly legal, but in reality they will probably not receive employment, nor could they expect to be selected for public offices.

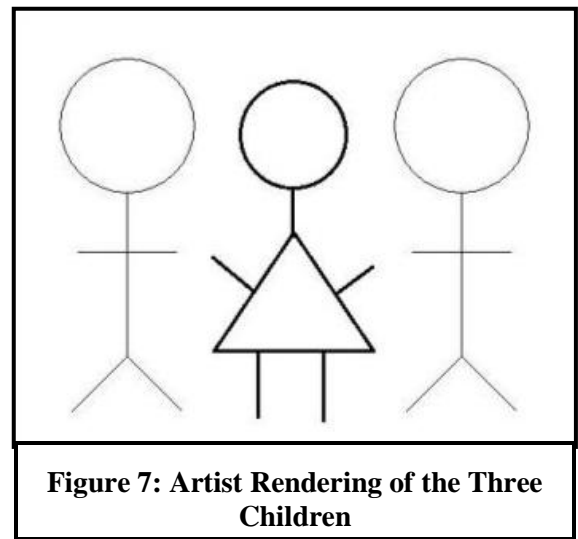
A few individuals will want to completely defect from this society. There are essentially two options for these people: they can move to another nation or live as an Outlander. The former simply requires a permit from the nation to which they planned to go, and it would be comparable to claiming political asylum in today's world. The latter is the more extreme choice. Even if all of the dissenters defected in this manner, it will pose no risk to the central society for two reasons. First, reentry will be prohibited. Secondly, individuals from this society are sterile. There is no risk of many citizens defecting and starting their own colony of rebels which then seeks to destroy the civilization, because they will soon die out. Even continual recruiting of newly defected individuals will mean a very small group at best. Life outside of the urban centers will be difficult, and intellectual knowledge will not help much in the wilderness. Without the unlikely help of the native Outlanders, any Arcanadian outcast would not last long.

## CHAPTER 1: DISCOVERING THE AMERHICANS

### A Story-Book Beginning

There are many accounts of civilizations that once thrived before the eruption of radiation that laid waste to the southern half of the continent. One in particular had been lingering in the shadows for centuries – that of a grand society that once lived in the large deserts to the south long before the lands were made desolate. In our grandparents' time, these stories were told with a tongue-in-cheek manner mostly to the amusement of restless children being tricked into sleep. The tales, the characters within them, and the fairy land in which they take place are all a myth, we said. But were they? For centuries there had been brewing rumors of a great, mysterious monument larger than any in our own civilization, carved into the side of a mountain in the outcast lands to the southeast – faces hundreds of years old emerging from the very rock itself. Then, one man's discovery eighty-five years ago dispelled a century's worth of rumors with a single photograph – they were true. No Arcanadian had made this monument, and yet there it stood for all the world to see. Suddenly, people began looking a bit harder at those fairy tales, this time trying to decipher what was lore alone and what indeed may have happened all those years ago. As it turned out, they contained much more fact than anyone had previously thought.

The foundation story we all heard as children goes something like the following, depending on the teller of the tale. Long ago, when harsh winter covered the land, our ancestors lived in small, unhappy groups. There were no cities, and people hunted the creatures of the earth for food and relied upon the fickle will of nature. One fateful day, two young boys and one young girl went off to search for food in the wilderness. But the death-like grasp of winter on the land was strong, and they could not find the smallest bit of food. As all three children began to weep in hunger, the clouds parted and a host of deities presented themselves to mortals. They instructed the three children to travel south to a great empire that stretched from sea to sea. The children were to learn all about the talents of the Amerhicans, who knew



great ways of producing food, clothing and tools of the most impressive caliber. But they also warned the children to be wary of learning from the Americans' follies, as the latter were very dangerous. The council of deities promised the three children prolonged youth for the duration of their journey, so that they might have the strength and time to visit every city and village in the empire. They instructed them to return to their humble village once they had completed their journey. There they would found the heart of a new great civilization. This new society would be built upon the good aspects of American culture, while guarding against their mistakes. While the American Empire would wither and die, the new society would grow and prosper for perpetuity. If the three children completed their task, the deities promised to make them immortal and to teach them the secrets of passing on the gift of everlasting life to all their people.

The three children accepted this task and soon prepared to take the long journey south. They traveled many months and eventually reached the land beyond the ice. As they passed through the countryside, they began writing down everything they witnessed in a book which became known as the Great Guide. They took note not only of the great accomplishments of the Americans but also of the follies that the deities warned them about. In the story of one village, the children attempt to warn the Americans about the consequences of a particular practice, but the deities intervene and forbid revealing the information. They explain that the Americans must make their own mistakes and ultimately destroy themselves. It is the children's task simply to learn from them in order to prepare for future generations. The trio has many adventures together, any number of which have been told and retold in varying detail in children's literature and scholarly publications alike.

The most critical adventure is told in the story of the Great Divide. The three children



**Figure 8: Artist Rendering of Atlantia**

visit the largest and most luxurious city in the empire, Atlantia, a city said to stand half on dry land and half on the tips of the waves. By this time, there have been some hints of dissention between the younger boy and the other two travelers. While the latter continue to see and learn from the mistakes of the Americans, the youngest becomes more

and more blinded by the luxuries of the great city. He questions the mission set forth by the deities. He then decides he does not wish to leave the American Empire to found the new society but would rather stay in Atlantia and enjoy its various entertainments. The elder boy and the girl try to persuade him otherwise, but when it comes time for them to return to their homeland, he refuses to accompany them. To make matters worse, before the two faithful children can leave the city, the youngest steals the Great Guide and replaces it with a book of empty pages to ensure that the others do not receive the reward of everlasting life which will not be granted to him. The remaining boy and girl travel from Atlantia back to the place where the deities first appeared to them, arriving there exactly 200 years after they began their journey. They find that the deities have since removed winter from the land and replaced it with a comfortable oasis for the founding of their new nation. When the council of deities appears again, its members are surprised to find the youngest child missing. The remaining two children explain how he stayed behind, and this saddens the deities. They then tell the pair that they must found the new civilization alone, relying on their memories of the Great Guide and relearning the parts which they have forgotten. The children of the boy and the girl must always be searching for the pieces of lost knowledge and attempting to complete the Great Guide.

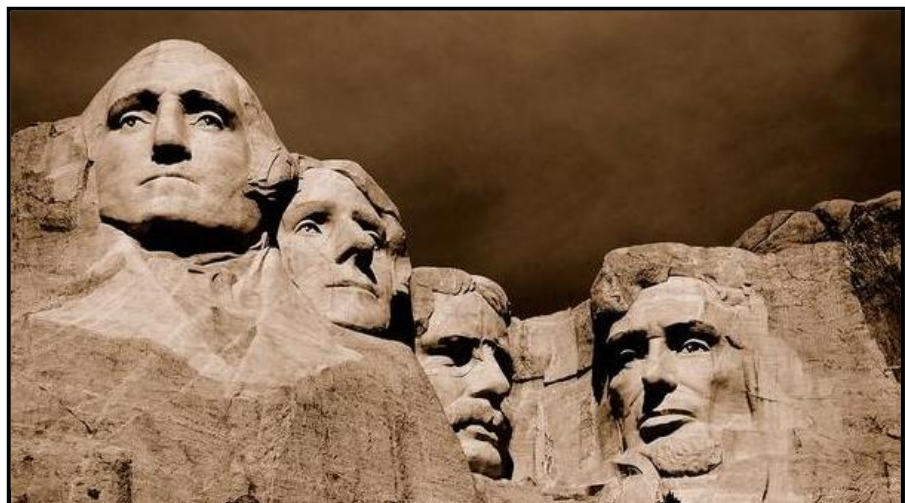
Then the council reveals to them the secrets of eradicating disease and ensuring long life to their posterity. But as punishment for the youngest child's betrayal, instead of granting them everlasting life, he promises them and all their children as many years as they spent journeying in America. The story goes on to tell of the founding of our first great city and of the development of tools and methods which were the building blocks of our own. The youngest child is said to have lived long enough to witness the collapse of the American empire, and with it the countless luxuries which he had so coveted. It is said he redeemed himself in his final act, which was to gather the few surviving Americans and lead them north to the lands of Arcanadia. He led them directly to the spot where he had met the deities, and there he died. Some versions of the legend also claim that the boy did not lead the remaining Americans to Arcanadia but rather shut himself and the Great Guide up in a cavernous underground vault in Atlantia and died there shortly after. The search for the Great Guide has been a quest taken up by adventurers and mythological studies students ever since.

### **Fact or Fiction? Maybe Both**

Outside of this tale, the Amerhicans make very few appearances in mythological history. There was no reason to give them any more thought or place upon them any more importance than the ancient Iskamos who supposedly taught the first northern people how to fish or any other group that makes an appearance in the stories of our forefathers. We knew the Amerhicans as the interesting, exciting, but ultimately doomed people who filled the adventures of the three children, but few thought that such an empire as described in the story had truly existed outside the world of imagination. Of course many recognize that most myths are based in some way on facts. We have all learned this from the examples of many a tale of Uropean lore. Scholars had long been theorizing about the condition of the climate in the south and whether or not it had once been able to sustain aggressive human cultivation. They came to the conclusion early on that yes, the land was once capable of supporting large populations, and that yes, it was most likely populated to a great degree, as all fertile landscapes have been throughout history. Still, no one truly imagined that the remains of an empire to the scale explored in the tale of the three children really existed just beyond our own borders.

That is, until the discovery of the Four Faces. In the year 2521, a former government surveyor took it upon himself to investigate the claims of a mysterious mountain to the southeast of the Center City Meridian. Rumors told of four giant faces emerging from the very rock itself, with features so clear, that there was no mistaking that they were carved by the hand of man. One sunny morning in September, Robert Valerie became the first man to provide official evidence that the Four Faces did exist. But more importantly, he became the first one to prove that we needed to take a much harder look at our own history and the role therein of the so-called Amerhicans.

Since Valerie's discovery just over 85



**Figure 9: Valerie's Original Photograph of the Four Faces (2521)**

years ago, countless theories have been proposed and even more publications have been circulated about the Americans and their role as historical rather than mythological figures. As is the case with every new discovery, the theories overran the facts from the very start, and now only the careful sifting through sometimes dubious artifacts and ruins can truly decipher the facts from the hype. Almost immediately, small cults formed based on the stories of the three children, and thousands upon thousands applied for permission to made pilgrimages to the Four Faces. It took several years for the government to verify that the path to and from the monument was safe for traveling, but eventually access to the site was opened to the public. To this day, Four Faces is still the most visited pilgrimage and tourist site of all those associated with the American Empire, and it holds equal interest for scholars and archaeologists. After all, a society with rulers powerful enough to commission the creation of a monument as awe-inspiring and as expensive as the Four Faces is certainly worthy of further investigation. Several amateur expeditions led by local historians and cult research foundations made valuable observations on several occasions. The most notable were the Mathews Survey (2522), which documented the scale and geological composition of the monument and the DiCosey Expedition (2524), which attempted to identify the methods used to create the monument using experimental archaeology.

Discovery of the Four Faces aroused much scholarly interest in the possibilities of other American sites, but such thoughts had to be put on hold from 2530-2547 during the Energy Wars. All efforts were redirected to war-related studies for the duration of the Wars. At the time, solutions for the future were more pressing than solving the mysterious of the past. Also, the threat of air strikes from hostile Chinese forces and border infiltration by enemy spies made traveling beyond the cities dangerous. In fact, the Mathews Survey and DiCosey Expedition, in addition to Robert Valerie's original drawings and photographs became even more valuable when an ill-aimed air strike damaged a section of the Four Faces during the Meridian Battle of 2533. Fortunately once the Pan-Global Treaty was signed at the end of 2547, people slowly began to remember the great discovery of Robert Valerie. Valerie himself was regrettably deactivated twenty years before deadline in June of 2544, probably due to his exploring American territories before the area could be thoroughly monitored for harmful radiation. He died eighteen months later, but his demise brought forth renewed interest in his discovery. With the war over, the prospect of returning to American archaeology once again became feasible.

## A Bird's Eye View of the American Empire

It was at this time, after the war recovery effort seemed to be going well, that the scientific community turned its eye back to the American Empire. In 2557, the Arcanadian Society for Investigating America (ASIA), a group loosely affiliated with the National University and consisting of mostly retired professors and young volunteers, conducted a series of extensive aerial scans using special planes on loan from the Radiation Monitoring and Regulation Administration. These scans proved to be

invaluable to directing future investigations, as they clearly showed areas of heavy settlement hundreds of miles to the south. These scans were first conducted eastward from the site of the



**Figure 10: Aerial Scan of Continental Coast from 100km. Pink Overlay indicates modern sea levels. White irregularities indicate man-made infrastructure.**



**Figure 11: Aerial Scan of Continental Coast from 115km. Pink overlay indicates modern sea levels. White irregularities indicate man-made infrastructure.**

Four Faces, and as the scanning planes approached the shoreline, members of the ASIA were shocked and elated to find heavy settlement patterns along the ancient coastline, with evidence of even more settlements extending west and south.

These scans provoked the first organized exploratory missions, and in the same year that ASIA officials stared at geological irregularities on a blurred aerial scan, archaeologists on the ground made the first documentation of a site which proved to be the largest of all known pre-modern sites, called New York City in this report. After being delayed by funding





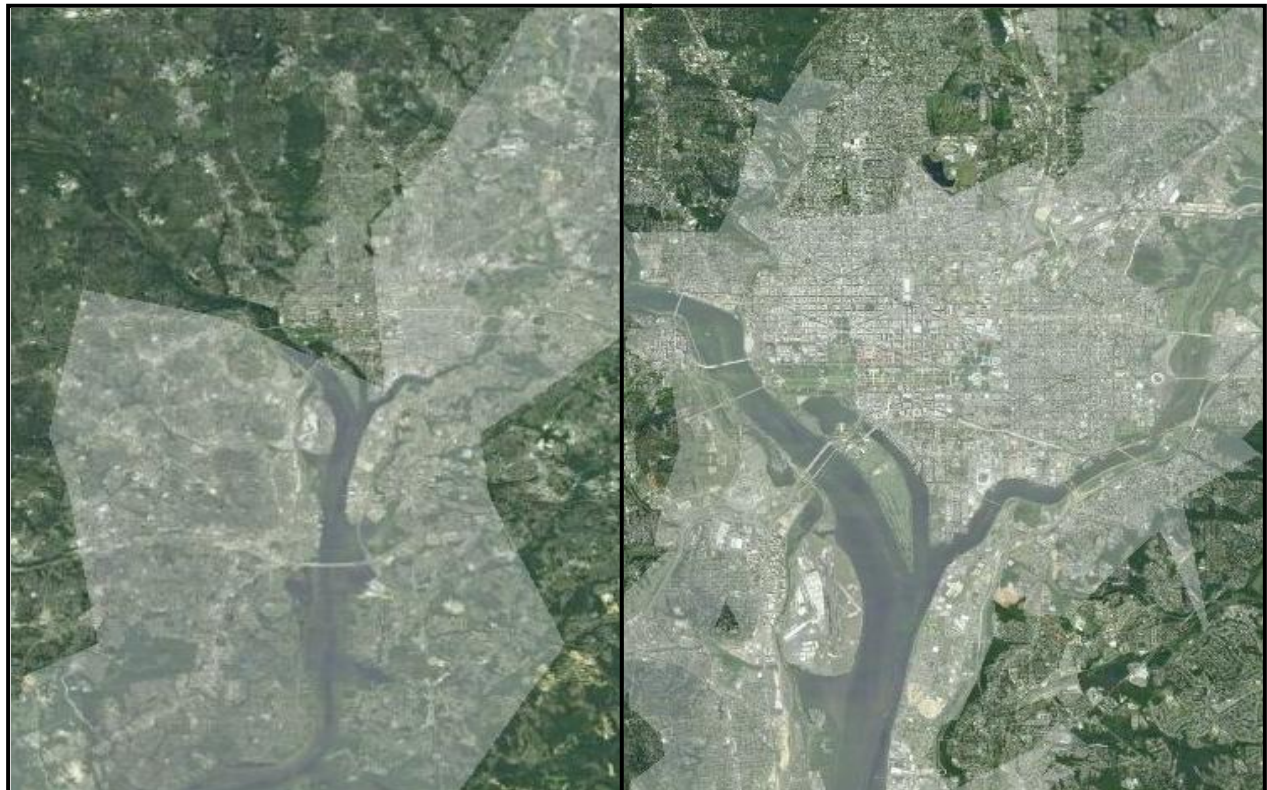
**Figure 12: Aerial Scan of New York City from 35km**

issues, underwater excavations began on that massive site six years later and have since yielded amazing finds. Arcanada had been an important ally to Urope during the Energy Wars, and upon the conflict's conclusion, the National Universities of our two countries established a greater cooperation. Arcanada benefited greatly from this in regards to Amerhican archaeology, because Urope's staff had developed far superior technologies for underwater archaeology. This was mostly due to two individuals. Kieran Conner

and Grainne Miller were Uropeans made world famous for their discovery and investigation of two large islands off the west coast of their continent. Many of the sites on these two islands far predate Amerhican settlements, but they interestingly seem to have been abandoned and submerged at approximately the same time. Conner and Miller spent a year helping the Arcanadian National University develop technologies and techniques similar to the ones they used in their famous excavations, and much of the material which has been successfully recovered from the submerged sections of New York City is due to their efforts.

The newfound cooperation of the two nation's universities also led to both giving access to the other of their respective Academic Archival Systems, which allowed Arcanadian scholars better access to the original documents of Uropean origin, some of which make reference to Amerhican culture. While most of the references are obscure and only mention that many of their own people left for a land across the sea, some documents name Amerhica specifically as having a strong relationship with the Uropean continent throughout the Plastic Age. While the study of foreign texts and artifacts with ties to the Amerhican Empire is still in its infancy, several scholars, including Arcanadian National University's Rachel Petrini and Anna Walsh have

published a joint paper with Uropean National University’s Bryce Johnson which is the most extensive work on the subject yet available to the public. Another major discovery occurred in 2582, when archaeologists identified another waterlogged but massive site several hundred kilometers south of New York City, and began excavations amid much fanfare. Discoveries from New York City aroused much public excitement over the Amerhican Project, and this new site – dubbed Potomac City by archaeologists – certainly did not disappoint.



**Figure 13: Aerial Scan of Potomac City from 50km (left) and 20km (right) after RMRA swept airspace for radiation interference**

Over the next few decades, new sites popped up in all shapes and sizes, from isolated ritual areas to urban centers connected by obvious lines of travel and communication. The northeast Amerhican territories have been the most investigated both because they were discovered first and because they were so densely populated during the time of the empire. But for many years the exact scale of the empire was not truly understood. Though the legend tells of a land that stretched from sea to sea, no one quite expected that to be true, simply because such a large territory controlled by one power is almost unheard of during the Plastic Age.

The last decade has witnessed the development of new technologies under the Radiation Monitoring and Regulation Administration, such as two models of impressive new surveying

planes that can withstand unprecedented levels of radiation. This has allowed the administration to conduct surveys not only from coast to coast, but also as far south as 33°N, 34°N and 35°N in some places. To the shock and delight of scholars and citizens alike, the most recent scan conducted by three StratoZ500© planes has mapped the largest area of outland territory ever recorded. It shows that the Americans may well have controlled a region larger than anyone had thought. There are signs of ruins stretching far down into the Radiation Desert. There are large areas in the central region that seemed to have been sparsely populated at best, and some have even argued that the eastern settlements could be American while the western settlements may have been built by an entirely undiscovered people. Such theories are unfounded, because all evidence points to an expansive, pan-continental empire controlled by the Americans alone. Unfortunately archaeologists will not get the opportunity to prove or disprove American control of the area for quite some time. While the RMRA is making strides in decontaminating the northernmost sites as well as those sites with lower ambient radiation, the southern border of safe atmospheric levels can only be extended at a very slow pace to ensure that no one investigating these areas is in danger. The lesson of Robert Valerie's untimely deactivation is still fresh in the minds of RMRA officials and scholars alike. For now those southwestern settlements will remain a mystery.

Despite the fruitful results of aerial scans, synthesis of information on a large scale was not entirely possible until the deciphering of American script in 2590. Before this time, some very short words and phrases which were nearly identical to the modern manifestation could be deciphered, but these limited translations were useless when applied to longer inscriptions and whole textual documents. Suzanne McKee, the nation's leading scholar of Lost Language and Communication Systems at the National University, launched a two year project with the goal of first identifying and separating names, titles and proper nouns. Once this was completed, McKee was able to reconstruct the complicated system of vowel placement which the Plastic Age Americans used. While the Americans' spoken language probably sounded very much like our own, the written form is different enough from modern text that it took several concentrated years of study to translate. Once inscriptions could be read, the longer written texts that somehow managed to survive in several different sites became some of the most valuable tools for interpreting American life. As the reader will see from the exploration of various sites in this chapter, written materials were probably widespread in the American Empire, the members

of which clearly valued literacy. While made of perishable material, some books and other collections of writing have miraculously managed to survive the ages, whether waterlogged in now-flooded areas and excavated by careful underwater archaeology or hoarded throughout history and traded from hand to hand as novelty items before people realized what they had. Since the publication of McKee's work, several private collectors have come forward claiming to have American texts or other artifacts in the collections which have been in their families for generations. While of course some of these claims are false, the vast majority are invaluable sources of information. The materials that have been verified as from the correct time period via carbon dating have also been tested for radiation levels, and sometimes to the discomfort of those who held them in their collections, have been found to register the appropriate level of residual radiation. Exactly how these texts came into the hands of Arcanadian collectors is still a mystery in need of sleuthing out. Most claim that distant relatives bought the articles for mere pennies from Outlanders at traditional markets which they visited as parts of vacations or scholarly trips outside the urban borders. How the Outlanders came into possession of the items is also a troubling question, as it means that they were almost certainly venturing into the Radiation Deserts without proper protection and proper equipment. But it is not the means by which the books and other texts have come into the hands of scholars that is of utmost importance but rather the fact that they exist at all. Written material has been by far the most informative means of learning about the pre-modern Americans, though various other methods, such as archaeoclimatology, archaeobotany, underwater archaeology, aerial scans depicting strata disturbances, carbon dating, archaeotechnology and many other techniques have all been employed in order to provide the most accurate interpretation as possible for the public.

### **A Meeting of Minds**

The discovery of the American Empire has caused a flood of evidence to be dumped in the laps of archaeologists and other scholars across the nation and around the world all in a relatively short amount of time. It was due to this bombardment of conflicting accounts by both professional and amateur archaeologists that the Grand Council Subcommittee on Archaeological and Historical Investigation in 2591 commissioned a report be created by the National University to dispel the inaccuracies which were abounding in the field and in the media. Said report would be the authoritative text on the subject of all things relating to

American archaeology and would aim to answer the three most burning questions about the American Empire:

- 1) Where did the Americans come from?
- 2) How did they live?
- 3) What happened to the empire and its people?

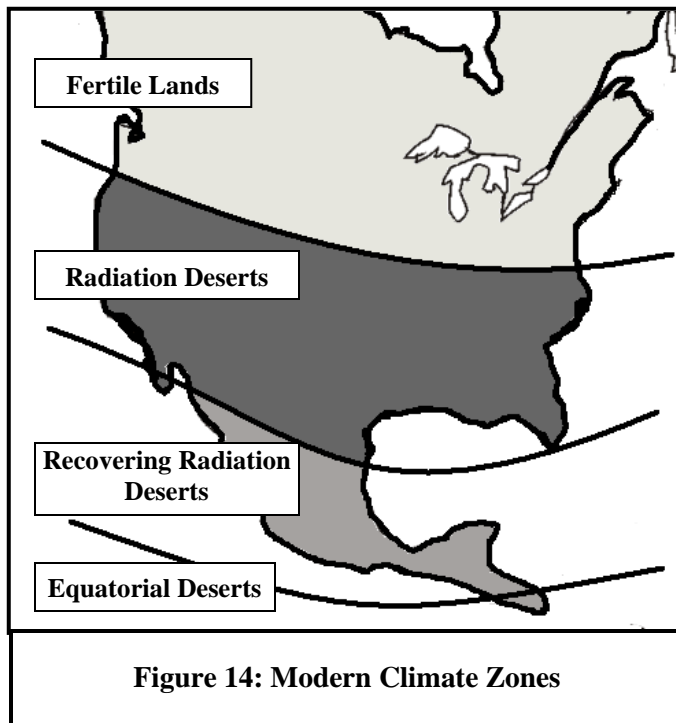
As the new head of the American Archaeology Department at the National University, the completion of this project soon became my life's work. It has taken nearly 15 years to come to fruition, but as it stands now the report presented here is the most comprehensive ethnological overview in the field. It is composed of my own research and studies, as well as those of experts in all subfields of American archaeology, archaeology at large, and other scientific fields. The members of the team which contributed to the publication of this project have spent countless hours searching through forgotten archival records, sleuthing through physical libraries, interpreting the minutest disturbances in aerial scans, trudging through radiation deserts in protective equipment, diving tens of meters below the ocean to investigate sites, and once even negotiating their own release from a band of hostile Outlanders. The years of work have yielded the report that follows, of which I and everyone else who contributed to its publication are extremely proud. It represents the greatest effort of interdisciplinary and international cooperation in the history of American studies, and the superior quality of the product is a perfect testimony of this milestone. We begin with discussions of the major urban centers about which we know the most. From there we analyze the infrastructural elements – the physical remains left behind after six centuries. The following chapters then move on to more abstract interpretations, about which we have more guesses than answers. There are still many things we do not know about the American people, but we have certainly come a long way by completing this report.

Where once there were rumors based on a tale and a whisper, now there are very real, very impressive signs that America was far more than a fairy land where three young children once explored – in fact, the Americans wrote more than one fairy tale of their own. It is meant as an overview of the current knowledge of settlements in the northeastern region of what was once the American Empire. General information will be provided where patterns of behavior or material culture have been identified, and particularly important or informative sites are used as necessary to illustrate as much as possible what we know about the American way of life.

## CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF AN EMPIRE

### A Land Since Forgotten

Today we look southward from our fertile landscape of Arcanada into the dust of a barren Radiation Desert. Climatologists estimate that the desertification occurred around 2050-2150. Nuclear eruptions in various parts of the empire were responsible for most of the irreversible damage. These eruptions were probably caused by existing climactic imbalances coupled with poor engineering of the Plastic-Age nuclear facilities. For example, our modern energy facilities are equipped to handle every possible natural disaster. Also, our techniques for harvesting energy from the nuclear reactions have advanced so far beyond the technology available to the Plastic Age Amerhicans that they leave less than one percent of the dangerous waste material that their primitive methods did. The Amerhicans' waste materials ultimately became uncontrollable or were abandoned, and a whirlwind cycle of environmental destruction ensued. Whether the result of a specific natural weather phenomenon or the inevitable result of rising global temperature, nuclear sites throughout the empire were ultimately either abandoned or were destroyed in catastrophic eruptions. In turn, the waste products from these sites contaminated the land surrounding the sites, poisoning water and land for hundreds of miles. Meanwhile, the dust clouds themselves, let alone the hundreds of harmful chemicals circulating freely in the



atmosphere, made living in any part of the remaining empire nearly impossible. The intense and sudden atmospheric contamination also spurred an accelerated spike in global temperatures, which only exasperated the desertification of the continent.

Now most of the land south of the 45° parallel, stretching well beyond the equator into the northern outlands of Hispania, is devoid of major flora and fauna. Meanwhile our region and zones northward enjoy fertile lands that escaped

the Radiation Eruptions. While there were some desert landscapes in the southwest region of the American lands long before the official formation of the empire, most other areas were filled with a diverse range of flora and fauna. The physical landscape is still much like it was 500-600 years ago. The western areas boast several extremely high mountain ranges, which are some of the major factors determining the pattern of water drainage across the entire continent. Rain falling to the west of those mountains eventually drains into the Pacific Ocean, while that on the east side follows various paths, ultimately leading to the Gulf of Mexico. These waters must pass through the central plain regions of the continent, which consists of thousands of kilometers of low-lying flat lands. In the eastern region, several smaller mountain ranges pass from north to south, again dividing the water flow between those waters that flow into the plains and those waters that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. With the exception of some rivers that changed course since the time of the Americans, the physical landscape has not changed.

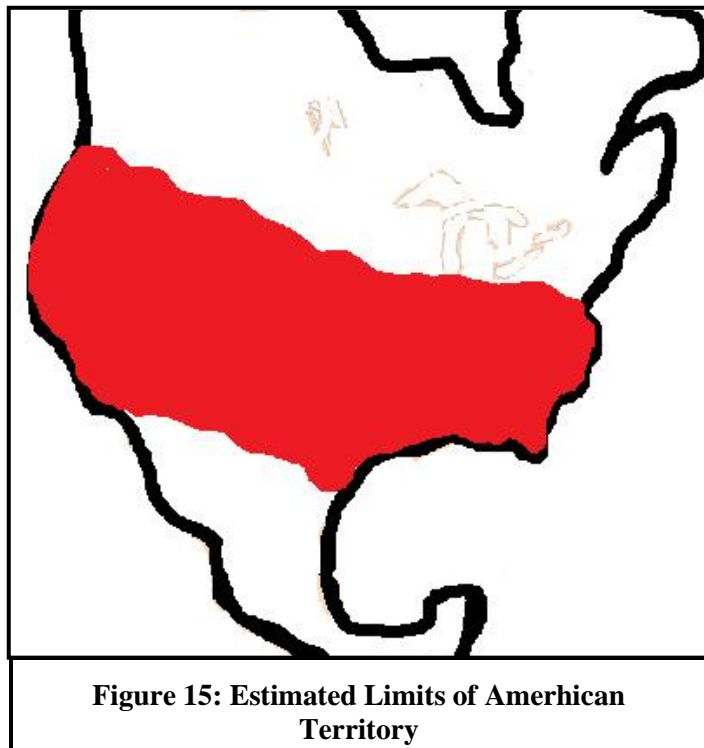
The climate was much different than the one we see today. It was 14-16°C colder on average. Most of our own nation was covered by ice, snow and even glaciers, which have since melted. The sea levels have since risen several meters as those glaciers released thousands of liters of water; also, water frozen in the vast expanse of Arcanadian soil slowly melted into the oceans, contributing to a dramatic overall rise over the past several centuries. Rising sea levels were a world-wide phenomenon, though they had differential effects on different areas of the globe. Some whole islands were consumed by the rising sea levels, and have since been lost entirely. The sea levels around the American Empire's borders probably increased about three to four meters. This might not sound like a significant increase; but for every inch of vertical measurement, the water creeps several meters inland horizontally. In some cases this encroachment has resulted in the remains of major American metropolitan areas being submerged, some for decades or even centuries. Many American cities were located very close to the shore line, or along the routes of major waterways, most of which have since dried up. Be it too dry or too wet, this changing climate has sometimes played havoc on the archaeological remains which are available for our interpretation. Underwater archaeology must be conducted for the excavation of sites which once stood on the shores of the American Empire and are now lying silently below several meter of ocean water.

The Americans lived at much lower latitudes than our own civilization and yet they enjoyed a climate comparable to our own in regards to temperature, average rain fall and

seasonal variation. This means that many of the agricultural practices that Outlanders employ in the Arcanadian wilderness today were possible and in fact widely practiced across the American countryside. In the northern areas there were cold winters marked by significant snowfall and temperatures plummeting below freezing for several months out of the year. Summers were hot and dry, with temperatures that could climb above 38°C during the day. Some areas also dealt with very high humidity. The southern American regions, due to their closer proximity to the equator, experienced much hotter, dryer seasons. Winters were warm and wet, only rarely dropping to temperatures considered cold in the northern regions. Meanwhile the summers were much hotter, regularly reaching over 39°C, though – as many an archaeologist on our team can testify – those temperatures sound comfortable compared to those that currently characterize the region.

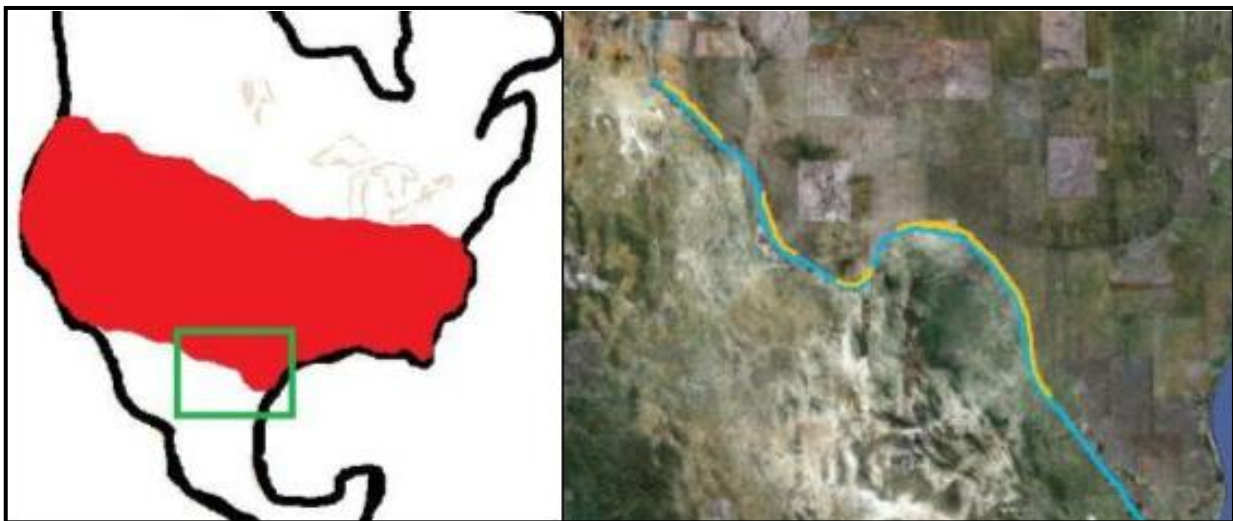
### **An Infant Empire Emerges**

During the apex of expansion the American Empire stretched across the Arcanadian Continent from shore to shore. Remains of settlements have been found several meters below the modern sea level, on what would have been the American coast 500 years ago. While there is no clear demarcation as to the northern boundary of this ancient nation, several small sites have been uncovered which might have served as border crossing stations and are currently under excavation. The extent to which the Empire extended southward is currently unknown. The arid conditions and remnant chemical wastelands to the extreme south of Arcanada have thus far discouraged long term excavations in those regions. Some scholars have already begun to advance various explanations for one particular structure which recent aerial scans have brought to their attention. Far south in the





Radiation Desert, running along a south-eastern trajectory from the 33° to the 27° parallel, there runs a dry riverbed and what could be the remains of an extensive wall structure. The river that once flowed in that bed has since shifted its course by several hundred meters. The size of the river, coupled with the presence of such a wall structure, indicates that this was an area in need of defense. While no physical excavations have been carried out on this structure, many researchers are of the opinion that it might mark the southern border of the expansive American Empire. The presence of such a fortification, coupled with the use of the existing barrier of a large river, suggests that the Americans had reason to create significant defenses against their southern neighbors.



**Figure 16: A Possible Clue to the Extent of America's Reign. The dry riverbed indicated in blue runs between N 33° and N 27°. Orange markings indicate signs of defense structures. Some archaeologists believe this could mark the southern boundary of the Empire. The Americans must have had some reason for building a line of defense along this river. Most likely, the barrier was meant to defend the Empire from its southern neighbors, a people that remain unknown to us.**

The northeast region was the most densely populated area of the nation. This means that it was most likely inhabited for the longest period of time. There are only scant records of how and when the area received its first inhabitants. Genetic analysis of human remains indicates that most inhabitants had a genetic makeup most strongly correlated with that of Europeans, though markers from all areas of the globe are represented in various burials. A diverse population most likely lived and interacted in this nation. Carbon dating indicates that serious settlement began in the early 1700s and continued until the late 2100s. As you can see, the American Empire did not thrive for very long compared with some other great empires of world history. The people

who first began the empire probably arrived in the northeast part of the continent just before the 1700s and slowly began to spread to the south and west. We know this because the northeast region not only has given us artifacts of the oldest dates but also because it seems to have been the most densely populated region. This is also the area where the largest sites have been discovered, the most important being New York City and Potomac City.

As settlements became more complex and more spread out, different territories began to emerge. These territories maintained economic relationships with one another, as trade routes indicate. Each had access to a variety of natural resources that others did not. Trading was an important part of every territory's survival as a result. There is little evidence of marked ideological differences among the members of these territories, and genetic markers indicate a widely-shared patrimony in Urope. As you would expect, there was equally little sign of warfare or other conflict among the territories during the years of their formation and for some time afterward. Gradually we begin to see signs that the territories were coming under the rule of one dominant power, specifically a power concentrated in one of the large urban centers of the northeast region. The first name which appears in textual accounts is a mysterious figure named Washington. This man began as a ruler of one of the larger eastern territories – probably one called Virginia, which encompassed Potomac City. From there Washington extended his influence to those territories that bordered his own, and continued the process of unification until nearly the entire continent answered to his rule. These territories, once integrated into the empire, were referred to as “states.”

### **A Nation Born of Conflict**

It was during the mid-1700s that the first real signs of significant conflict arise. Not all the territories became states under their own free will. Washington, as a military leader and political tycoon, was skilled in using both persuasion and martial force. We know that several decades of conflict and strife marked the rule of Washington. This is apparent for several reasons. Firstly, carbon dating from structural remains indicates that many buildings in the northeast were rebuilt during this time. Many structures show evidence of damage by fire. Several excavations of burial grounds indicate that there is a large spike in the number of dead males ages sixteen to thirty-five during the period c.a. 1770-1815. We know this information both from gravestone carvings where they are available and from carbon dating of human

remains. If the same trends held true for women of the same time period, we would attribute such clustering of deaths with a widespread disease of some sort, which the primitive medical technology of the Americans neither provided for preemptively nor treated effectively after infection. The fact that the widespread mortality affected men only indicates that warfare was indeed the cause. These initial instances of warfare were by no means the last. As the empire grew and became ever more complex and organized, the blight of war was an ever present check to its prosperity. While the early ascension wars were poorly documented, subsequent conflicts were often commemorated through monumental architecture. A complete analysis of American warfare can be found in Chapter 7.

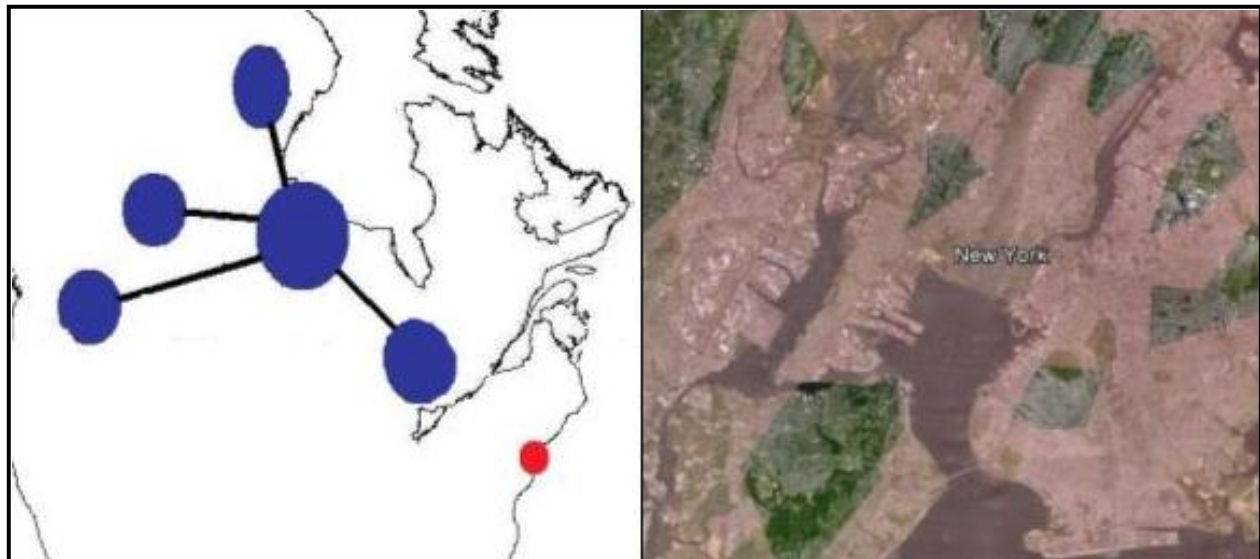
Finally, the American Empire moved beyond its years of most intense conflict, and fell upon a long period of relative peace and prosperity. Many new settlements throughout the western half of the continent thrived for the first time, and existing polities exploded in size and in population. Many of the most impressive architectural structures were built during this period, which lasted approximately one hundred and fifty years from 1850 to 2000. Trade routes and more advanced forms of transportation appeared, connecting the ever-growing urban centers with others in far flung corners of the empire beginning around 1940. All of the (very few) written records we have date to this era as well. When we think about the American Empire, it is primarily of the culture and activities which went on during this short but influential peak between 1950 and 2100. After this period, there are both signs of gradual societal decay and evidence of catastrophic events which dealt immediate and lasting blows to the once great civilization. The various theories regarding the American Empire's eventual collapse will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter. Despite the short reign of the American Empire and its ample and apparent flaws, its people did accomplish great feats of architecture, literature, and invention. They also continue to impress scholars to this day with the ingenuity they demonstrated when constrained by so primitive an array of technologies. There is ample reason why American Archaeology has become over the last few decades one of the fastest-growing fields of study both in Arcanada and the world at large.

## CHAPTER 3: THE ECONOMIC HEARTLAND AT NEW YORK CITY

### Land and Sea

Nearly all of what we know about American life is based on evidence found at two major sites. These urban centers were important not only in their own time because of their immense size and centralization of power, but also in our time because of the invaluable information they provide us. Both were found along the Plastic Age coast line, and both supported populations which staggered those archaeologists who were the first to interpret the amazing finds there. Both sites are impressive but for very different reasons. They undoubtedly served very different functions for the empire. While New York was a utilitarian urban space devoted to commercial endeavors, Potomac City was clearly more of a ritual center where rulers and other important figures coalesced.

Some years ago while RMRA pilots were conducting scans along the eastern seaboard, they were surprised to discover one of the largest American urban sites yet known – called New York City by its Plastic Age inhabitants. Since then, elaborate but difficult underwater archaeological projects have been conducted by National University professors David Lapp and Andrew DeLacy to salvage as many artifacts and as much information as possible from the site. Most of the area now lies beneath the modern sea level – with the exception of the larger stone structures – but 500 years ago New York City was a thriving coastal city where millions of



**Figure 17: New York City's location (red) in relation to Arcanadian urban centers (blue) (left) and the first RMRA scan taken of New York City (right).**

people lived and worked. The most intense excavations have been going on within the limits of the city proper, with a much smaller number exploring the immediate outskirts. According to ground-penetrating aerial scans, the entire city proper covered well over 500 square kilometers, though only a small fraction of that has been excavated to date.

The virtually complete submergence of the city poses many logistical and interpretive problems for archaeologists. Simply getting to and from the site requires significant amounts of expensive equipment, ranging from breathing apparatuses for the excavators to the extraction equipment necessary for retrieving waterlogged material. Miraculously, some items of paper or textile can be preserved underwater for hundreds of years if shielded from the damaging effects of oxygen and sunlight. However, the very process of collection can end up destroying the material in as many seconds as it has spent centuries below the waves. Underwater excavations also take exponentially more time than their dry land equivalents. A large number of untrained diggers cannot be employed to work simultaneously. The process of underwater extraction is extremely precise and requires the careful work of highly specialized individuals. The material must be brought to the surface and transported to a preservation facility with the utmost care and skill. Due to these constraints, a relatively small amount of this site has been excavated in detail.

### **Moving Mountains**

We know the general layout of what the city once looked like, thanks to the aerial and water surface scans. Thanks to ground-penetrating radar technology we are able to map not only the geological contours of the area, but also the patterns of settlement. We are even also able to distinguish between time intervals with some degree of accuracy. The land on which this massive city sits was once very marshy. Even when the sea levels were much lower than their current levels, the city was separated from the mainland by a wide river, and was situated across several islands. Evidence from radar penetration showing different soil levels and distribution of geological material indicates that there were areas of intense landscape manipulation in order to support extensive construction. Two prime examples of these efforts at the center of Manhattan Island and another island to the south called Staten. Archaeologists first discovered the central garden area when analyzing aerial scans. There appeared an anomalous rectangular area, measuring approximately 4.18 kilometers by 804 meters, positioned in the center of the most crowded island of New York City. This area shows no signs of ever having been built on in any



**Figure 18: Aerial scan of New York City pleasure garden. The large black mass in the center was once a reservoir.**

manner, which is quite strange for such a densely-populated area. Also, the garden lies in what economists say would have undoubtedly been some of the most prime real estate. Some suggest that the area was left bare because the bedrock would not support construction, but other areas of the island with similar geological structure were built up. The area could not have supported quite the extent of construction found on the lower half of the island, where bedrock comes very near the surface, but it is still strange that no construction at all was attempted. Despite its lack of significant construction of any kind, this plot of so-called virgin soil was not entirely pristine. Detailed soil delineation scans show that this area was painstakingly transformed from a marshy



**Figure 19: Two artist renderings of the New York City pleasure garden circa 2000**

wetland to an aesthetically pleasing snippet of nature among an otherwise concrete landscape. Only a few mere meters of physical excavations have been done on the garden, but certain basic characteristics of its construction are evident from scans. Most of the garden was made into flat stretches or slightly rolling hillocks, and engineered in such a way that drained most of its previous wetland waters into a deep reservoir near the center. Another formation on the scans shows a large complex of what appears to be containment cells and fenced paddocks. These could be signs of a zoo, which was a popular feature of pleasure gardens throughout history. As this work is being published, a colleague of mine, Dr. Margaret Miles, who specializes in the study of Plastic Age animal husbandry, has had a project proposal approved that will allow her to investigate these structures further.



**Figure 20: Staten Island (left) and inset showing site of large earthworks project (right)**

The second example of intense landscape manipulation is smaller, but more ambitious and mysterious in purpose. To the south of Manhattan Island lies a much smaller landmass called Staten. About midway along the southeast coast of this

island there is evidence of a massive land-moving project. This endeavor connected the main island to a small piece of isolated land approximately 480 meters from its coast. Interestingly, the land bridge did not span the shortest distance between the two points. A large amount of landfill taken from an unknown location was used to convert a marshy area to the north of the smaller island into stable land. Then more land and fill – brought from the large material waste deposits of the city – was brought to connect that area with the smaller island to the south via a narrow land bridge. Just as in the example of the Manhattan garden, there is no evidence that domestic or economic structures were ever constructed on this area. See page 47 for another perspective on the Staten Earthworks Project.

From the marshiest areas of Manhattan Island, we move now to the most stable. The heaviest concentration of building occurred at the southern tip of the island, where the bedrock is closest to the surface. This would have provided the best support for the several-hundred-meter-tall buildings which once towered over the streets of this island. Buildings of lesser magnitude were also constructed here, there and everywhere on this and the other islands of the New York metropolis. Some were so close to the Plastic Age shoreline that inhabitants very well might have been able to step outside and dip their toes in the water. While this is a romantic notion – and something some of our readers might envy considering the recent spike in the cost of beach holidays – this proximity to the ocean ultimately led to the city's abandonment.

New York City supported anywhere from 5-10 million people at its peak. It underwent a nearly continuous process of building and expanding for 250-300 years until it reached its apex around the year 2050. It was approximately this time when the last buildings were constructed on the other edges of the city. Not only were the waters rising, but the ground which the Americans had tried so hard to make stable was nonetheless sinking beneath their feet. The city required a huge amount of safe drinking water. Strangely enough, the island's groundwater was partially responsible for supporting the surface land. As the city's demand for water grew beyond the means of the island itself, elaborate systems were contrived for importing water from the mainland of the continent. But by the time these systems were implemented, the island's groundwater supply was gone – and with it went part of the island's very infrastructure. Sinking ground levels coupled with rising sea levels forced people to either move away from the island entirely or retreat to the interior of their shrinking landmasses. This took place gradually over nearly a century, and the final inhabitants were forced to abandon the city entirely around 2150.



### Taking a Closer Look at the Staten Earthworks Project

There have been several interpretations regarding the motivations for the Staten Island project. Some suggest it was originally intended to be an area for domestic construction, but that the stability of the fill was brought into question and no significant construction occurred. Others think the island to which the land bridge was built had ritual significance and the land bridge was merely a means of convenient land travel for pilgrims. The most recent evaluation of this phenomenon was published just last year by archaeologist Dr. Quinn Hoover who specializes in Plastic-Age nautical travel. She suggests that the land bridge and the island were not the focus of the construction project but rather the physical means by which a different purpose was achieved. Hoover points out that the land bridge creates a harbor between Staten and its smaller satellite. This project might have been an effort to create a safe haven where local fishermen could dock their boats. Here they would be protected from the effects of adverse weather and stormy waters. It does not seem to have been the receptacle of many large ships, as some of the ports along Manhattan Island were. There were no large storage facilities near the docks on Staten for this purpose, as we can see at the larger Manhattan ports. There was still some important smaller scale nautical traffic in this area, because evidence of small wooden docks still lie preserved beneath several meters of ocean silt. The orange overlay below shows the area where fill was added to create the land bridge, while the green represents the original shoreline. The pink boxes (far right) indicate where Hoover has found evidence of small docks. The blue arrows denote where Hoover believes small boats entered and exited the harbor. If Hoover's interpretation is correct – as many of her colleagues are inclined to believe – than this land fill project is a testament to the importance that the Americans placed on water travel and trade.



**Figure 21: Hoover's Analysis of the Staten Land-Moving Project.**

## **People, Places and Things**

New Yorkians lived in population densities ranging from 2,000-10,000 people per square kilometer. Sites for excavation are chosen based on the results of scan analysis, and this usually involves areas which show signs of large impressive structures or public monuments. As a result, few areas of purely residential nature have been explored in detail, since they are by nature less



**Figure 22: Manhattan Island - North of the pleasure garden was devoted to residences, while the central and southern parts of the island were the sites of most commercial activity.**

exciting for archaeologists and students alike.

Unfortunately, these sites are some of those which can tell us the most about the people who lived in this city. As of yet the expensive nature of excavating submerged and waterlogged sites has forced archaeologists to focus on more glamorous sections of the city, but eventually improvements in technology and increased funding will allow more flexibility in site choice. I know of at least two project proposals currently under deliberation by the National University which, if approved, will focus specifically on residential occupation of New York City.

The center of economic activity was central and southern Manhattan Island, and these are the sites where excavations have been focused. The concentration of commercial buildings is highest on this island, especially on the southern tip. There are several ways we can tell that these building were used for commercial purposes. The first is the sheer height of the structures. In comparison to the lower, more uniform structures used for domestic residence in other areas of the city, those meant for commercial purposes were extremely tall. Of course the buildings themselves are no longer standing as they would have been in 2050. It would not have

taken long after the abandonment for rising water levels to loosen the soil and rock base on which the foundations were anchored. Over the next centuries, water levels rose above the first floor levels and continued to weaken the structures of the buildings where they were most vulnerable – the floors directly above the foundation. The work of plant life did the rest. As the years passed and no one was left to stave off the gradual effects of nature’s reclamation process, roots dug deep into foundational stone and grasses sprang up through the concrete where the natural cycle of Mother Nature’s seasons had caused cracking and fissuring. Many of the mightiest buildings in New York City eventually succumbed to these seemingly minor forces of nature. Also, due to the close proximity at which the buildings were situated to one another, when one did finally fall, it was likely to take out two or three others on its way down.

The foundations that remain for the most part intact allow us to extrapolate as to the original scale of these large needle-style buildings. The amount of reinforcement in the foundation is proportional to the height of the building; and the buildings in the lower half of Manhattan were some of the tallest, reaching as high as 300-380 meters. These buildings surely had a type of lift system within them to accommodate the movement of people and goods among their many levels. This is comparable to our own methods of inner-building transportation, though their lifts seem to have been confined to vertical motion. Most buildings also retain the first few levels of construction, and we can tell by the allocation of space that these were not used for living but rather for working. Most American homes show clear lines of demarcation of internal space used for different purposes. The section for preparing food was separated from the place for consuming food, which was separated from the place for sleeping, etc. The commercial structures show no such delineations. They are much more open, and the space was probably divided up by perishable material, if at all. There are also no indications of non-commercial activity taking place in these structures. There is no evidence of true kitchens. We do find some cooking facilities, but these are very different than any found in residential areas. Their huge size suggests the capacity for preparing and serving food to hundreds of people. We have no evidence to suggest that New Yorkers traditionally dined in a communal setting, so it seems that these facilities were meant to cater commercially to a large group of individuals for a midday meal while at work. True domestic kitchens that have been excavated in New York City are some of the smallest found anywhere in the American Empire, so these expansive facilities are clearly something very different.

The outlying areas – meaning the fringes of Manhattan Island and inhabited areas to the west and south of the island – were used more for residential purposes. This is marked by the type of walled-dividers within the buildings themselves, in the cases when the first few levels of



**Figure 23: Buildings are organized into grid-like patterns (right) unless geography or some other impediment – in this case a large, curved road (left) – interrupts that design.**

the buildings are preserved. Also the context of these buildings is different. There are more small markets amongst these structures, suggesting that people here needed access to raw food resources, as opposed to the high frequency of restaurant-style structures in the commercial districts.

The buildings themselves were arranged in a highly-organized block fashion. Except for some areas where the topography of the land prevented it, clusters of buildings are grouped together in clear squares or rectangles. The clusters themselves are separated by pathways or roads. This pattern continued to the very edges of the island, where multiple docks and ports once welcomed goods and people every few hundred meters along the coast. Manhattan undoubtedly maintained a thriving sea trade both with the mainland and the other New Yorkian Islands.

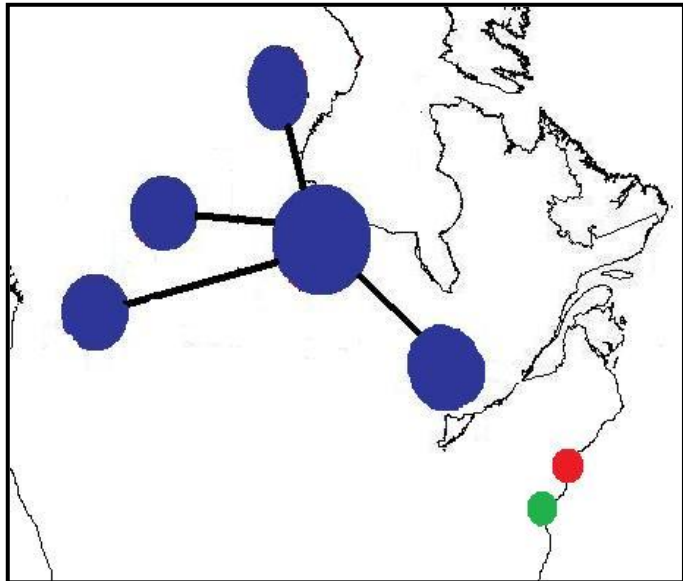
## CHAPTER 4: THE RITUAL HEARTLAND AT POTOMAC CITY

### An Anticipated Find

After the exhilarating discovery of New York City, archaeologists began to focus their search for more sites on the Plastic Age coastline. The logic was that if one great site was built on the water's edge, than there were probably more just like it waiting for archaeologists to uncover. At that time, the Radiation Monitoring and Regulation Administration had not cleared much of the area. It took several more years for the National University to convince the RMRA

that the Safe Zone boundaries needed to be extended southward. After multiple consultations, scholars were able to convey the importance of searching for more American sites southward along the coast; the RMRA set to work. Several more years were required to conduct the necessary cleansing processes and to build radiation neutralizing towers in the region. In the meantime, archaeologists anxiously poured over the scans from RMRA planes. Small distortions which might not have meant anything to the untrained eye were made the subject of heated debate as

the scans were passed around the university. Then one plane returned a scan that put all the previous findings to shame. The pilot of this plane was flying at rather high altitude, conducting routine scans, when a freak storm forced him to drop lower. Though the scanning device was not focused to take scans at this altitude, the pilot continued to snap shots as he went along. When he arrived back at the RMRA station, he and his colleagues were surprised to see what appeared to be a very large site of ruins. Just like New York City, this site was just off the modern coastline. It had escaped detection in previous scans due to a particularly dense concentration of radiation around it. RMRA immediately set to work to clear the area of harmful radiation. The process seemed to take much longer than usual both because it involved so much radiation and because



**Figure 24: Location of Potomac City (green) in relation to New York City (red) and Arcanadian Urban Centers (blue)**

archaeologists were counting the days until they could access the site. A whole six years after the discovery of New York City, the RMRA declared that the new site of Potomac City was safe to explore.



**Figure 25: Aerial scan of Potomac City from 200km (left) and 50km (right) before RMRA swept area for radiation interference**

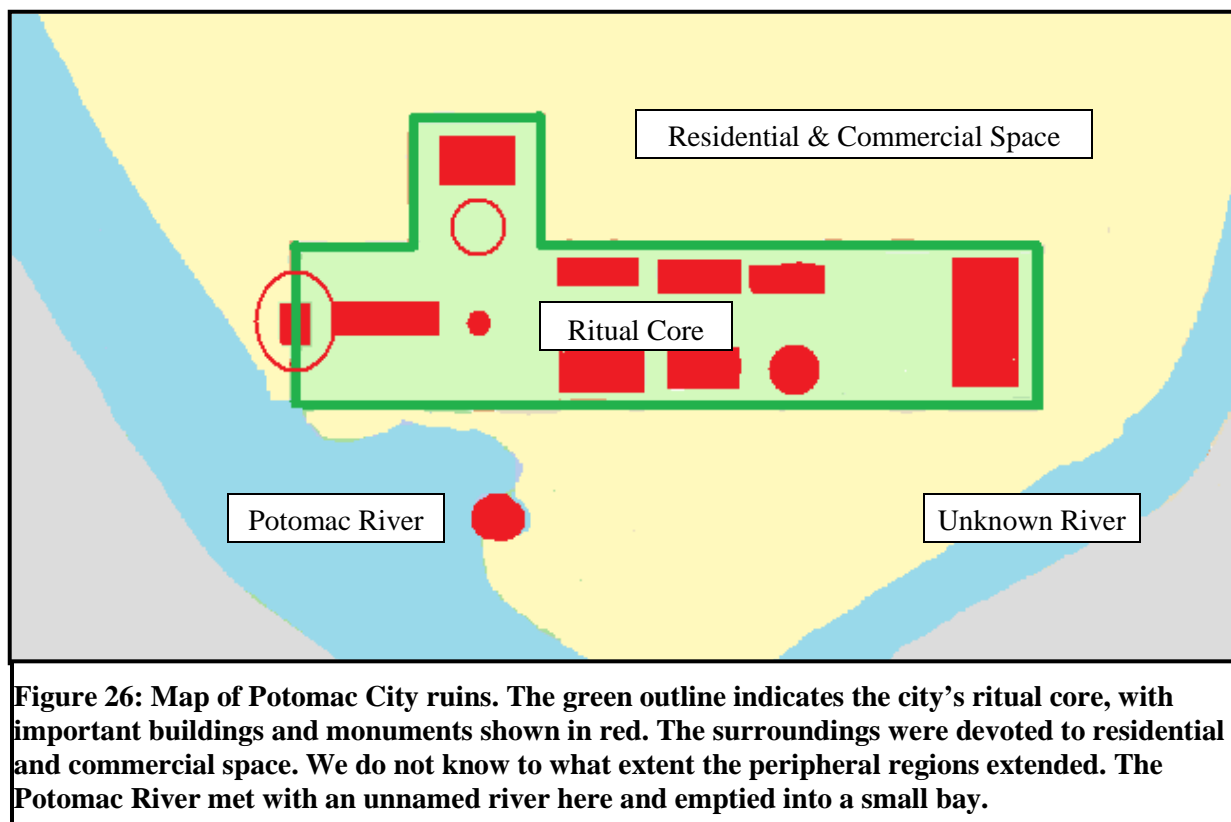
### **More Water, Water, Everywhere**

The site lies 390 kilometers to the southwest of New York City. We do not know what the Plastic Age Americans would have called this center, because we have not been fortunate enough to find written material that divulges such information. We *have* found reference to the major river which once skirted politely around the now submerged center; it emptied into a large bay at the exact location where the city's grandest ruins now lie. This river was called the Potomac River, and archaeologists have named the site Potomac City.

Just as the archeologists excavating New York faced obstacles in excavating the submerged sections of the city, workers at Potomac City faced similar problems at their site. While not built upon an island, it was stationed at the mouth of a large river. That river then opened up into a large bay a mere meters away from some buildings. Sea levels have risen three

to four meters in this area since Potomac City sat comfortably on the shoreline. This means that most of the city's structures were partially submerged under meters of ocean. Others were suffering from the damaging effects of soil and foundations long battered by the persistent forces of nature. Before the city was built, the area was very marshy and only a few feet above sea level. There are areas that reach higher altitudes as one travels inland, but many of the city's most interesting monumental structures are in the low-lying areas closest to the Plastic Age coastline. Though the process is tedious and the progress slow, excavations into the submerged areas began as soon as RMRA granted access to the site. Subsequent findings have been invaluable to the overall interpretation of the American Empire.

Divers began by charting the southern and western Plastic Age boundaries of Potomac City. They soon came to the conclusion that Potomac City once covered an area of a little over 100 square kilometers. This area includes the central ritual core and areas in the immediate surroundings which were most densely built up. We do not yet know quite to what extent the peripheral residential areas extended. The same archaeologists who have begun residential excavations in New York City are looking to begin similar studies at the newer site as soon as possible.



**Figure 26: Map of Potomac City ruins. The green outline indicates the city's ritual core, with important buildings and monuments shown in red. The surroundings were devoted to residential and commercial space. We do not know to what extent the peripheral regions extended. The Potomac River met with an unnamed river here and emptied into a small bay.**

Modern developers look at the sites of both New York City and Potomac City and scratch their heads. Both urban centers had large populations to support and both involved extensive construction of various buildings with various purposes. In the case of New York City, this involved massive landscape manipulation. We can see faint signs that similar projects had to be undertaken to make Potomac City inhabitable, though of course not as extensive as those in the former city. This begs the question of why these particular sites were chosen. Sites further inland could have provided the same easy nautical access if situated along a major river. Inland sites would not have been threatened by rising sea levels. This question has caused division among archaeologists as different professionals back different theories (see text box on page 58).

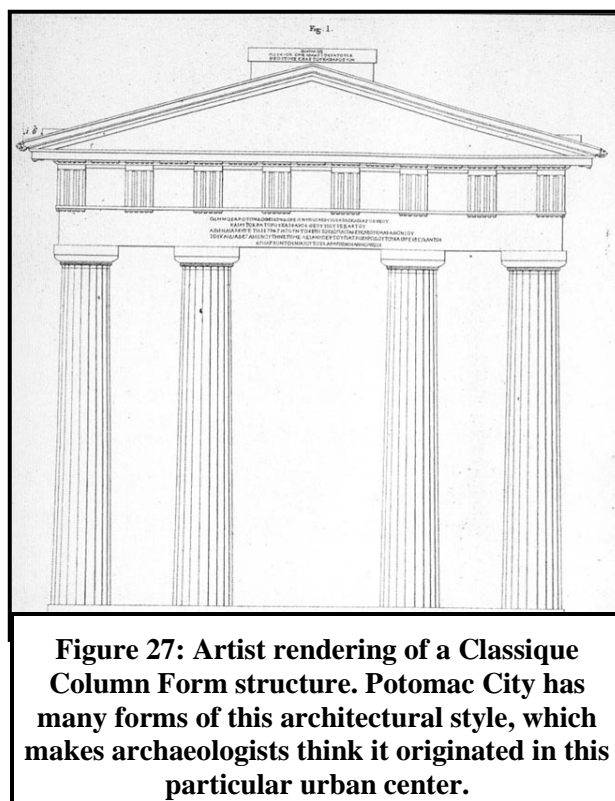
No matter why these sites are where they are, it is clear that Potomac City was a deliberate creation. Unlike New York City, which was built up over several centuries of occupation, Potomac City originated much later and more suddenly. Carbon dating from some well-preserved perishable materials in the waterlogged sections of the city indicate that nearly all of the foundations of the structures in the ritual core were built during the same few decades. These dates span 1790 to 1820. There is some evidence of rebuilding in later centuries, but the structures which were rebuilt on the surface maintained the same foundations. This tells us that some damage, either from fire or other natural disasters, was probably the cause. Once the foundations of the buildings were built, they stayed there. Instead, the ritual core was designed specifically to serve as a ritual core. The immediate residential areas were constructed about the same time. The residential structures closest to the ritual core consist of very small houses built extremely close to one another in long rows. These rows were accessible by streets which cut the residential areas into neat blocks of nearly-identical houses. Because the houses were so small, it is probably that they were occupied by members of the lower-classes that probably served in the ritual and civic buildings in the ritual core. There is no evidence that the priests who tended the ritual monuments lived anywhere within the ritual core. The only exception is a royal palace, located just off of the central ritual plaza. The area was probably considered too sacred for anyone but the most important priests and rulers to inhabit. Outside of these densely-packed row houses were less dense, less organized residential structures. The breakdown of an organized building pattern probably indicates that these houses were outside the rigid control of the ritual center, which clearly demanded aesthetically pleasing building construction. It is also only in the furthest outskirts of residential structures that we start to see signs of extensive rebuilding. This



indicates that many buildings on the outskirts were built, completely torn down and rebuilt in different locations. This is more like what happened in New York City over the centuries it took to become the huge metropolis it was at its peak. The only subsequent construction on the interior of the ritual core was very minor, and occurred only when an additional monument was to be built. The Americans were fond of dating their monuments, which is a great help when trying to determine the chronology of building projects and other special events in the empire's history. Also, the addition of several important burial grounds occurred several decades after the first ground was broken for the center's creation. Outside of the ritual core and immediate residential areas, structures were added in a more organic process. Probably, as the population of the empire at large grew, there arose a need for additional housing outside the ritual center. These structures were added to the outskirts of the existing residential areas and were not so tightly controlled as to pattern or layout.

### **A Horse of a Different Color**

Archaeologists immediately recognized that Potomac City had very little in common with New York, both physically and functionally. The first and most obvious differences regard the style of architecture, scale of buildings and allocation of space between civic and residential areas. New York's tall, slender buildings were meant for efficiently housing commercial activity. Potomac City's short, broad facilities make no attempt at maximizing their use of real estate. Most are characterized by simple block construction with entrances skirted by large cylindrical columns. This style – called *Classique Column Form*<sup>\*</sup> – is found in a few select New York structures. Potomac City, on the other hand, is simply filled with buildings of this style. This makes us think that



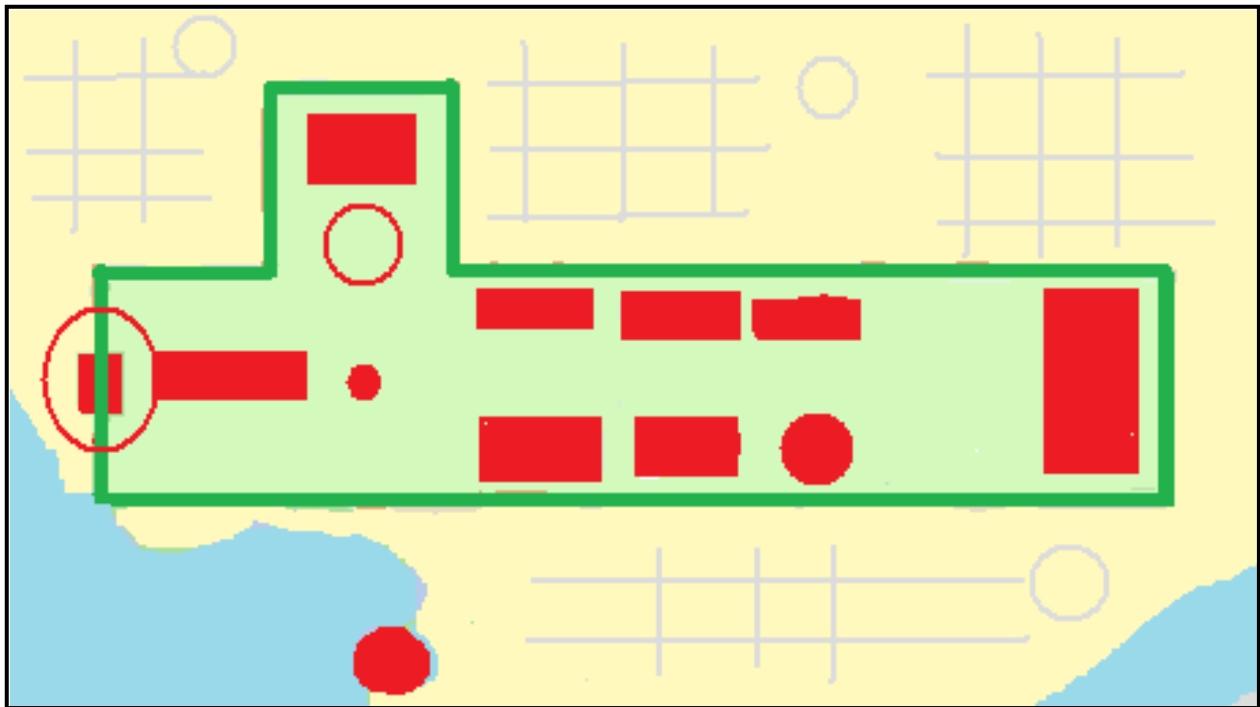
**Figure 27: Artist rendering of a Classique Column Form structure. Potomac City has many forms of this architectural style, which makes archaeologists think it originated in this particular urban center.**

<sup>\*</sup> More detailed analysis of architectural style and use can be found in Chapter 6.

the style originated in Potomac City, and was used only for buildings of very particular purpose in other urban centers. The prolific use of the Classique Column Form was the first of many clues that told archaeologists Potomac City was an extremely important ritual and civic center. Another very significant clue was the fact that the construction of buildings were not built to maximize the use of space. In fact, buildings rarely stood above 100 meters. This could not be more different than the construction pattern of New York City. The fact that the Americans were willing to sacrifice the use of so much space, suggests that efficiency and economic interests were made to take a back seat in the design of this urban center.

When all archaeologists had to work with was one blurry aerial scan, some interesting theories surfaced about the site and its purpose. Some speculated that this was an empty ritual center where pilgrims might have visited but where few people lived year round. Many disagreed with this interpretation, but had to wait for physical excavations to prove their argument. This was easily accomplished once archaeologists visited the site. Strategic excavations of the areas surrounding the central ritual plazas indicate that this was a heavily populated area and had been for as long as two centuries before its collapse. It seems that the outer residential areas were abandoned long before the central ritual area, but even this was only after several centuries of continual occupation. Some estimate that at its peak the center probably supported a population of approximately 500,000 people. While this is paltry in comparison to New York City's population, it is still large for a Plastic Age American site.<sup>20</sup>

There is a clear distinction between areas that were used for ritual purposes and those areas used for residences (Figure 28). The two regions directly border one another, but can clearly be identified as different. The central ritual core is dominated by a long rectangular area 500 meters wide, stretching approximately 3 kilometers east and west. Another sector stretches northward from this area approximately 800 meters. Nearly all of the buildings in this area exhibit Classique Column Form of architectural styling. Also, just like the garden in New York City, the large rectangular area is devoid of any building construction. It is skirted by very dense building, but the central area was always open space. The pristine area is interrupted only by one large, needle-like obelisk, which was clearly of ritual significance because it occupies such a central location in the urban center. More detailed analyses of religious rituals carried out in this area will follow in Chapter 12.



**Figure 28: Ritual Core of Potomac City.** The areas outside the ritual core (green) are built very close to one another in the same grid pattern we see in New York City commercial and residential districts. Classique Column Form structures are the only kind built inside the core.

### **Further Insight**

New York City had little in the vein of religious ruins or artifacts, and archaeologists such as Dr. Devon Brumbaugh – an expert on extinct religious practices – publicly announced his frustration on this front after various excavations found only a few structures of interest to him and his team. He went so far as to claim the Amerhicans were “a nation of heathens with little to offer the academic community of Arcanada and the world at large.” Brumbaugh was forced to eat his words when the first physical excavations of Potomac City revealed temples and ritual facilities unprecedented in Plastic Age archaeology. Like most civilizations throughout history and pre-history, the Amerhicans incorporated their religion closely with that of their political and civic traditions. We now see that the Amerhicans were far from heathens, but in fact incorporated their worship of a pantheon of supernatural deities into the ritual and civic functions which were also carried out within the ritual core of Potomac City.

It is from this site that we have the first evidence of where and how the rulers of the Plastic Age Amerhican Empire lived and what their duties involved. While we initially thought that the city of Potomac City was a religious center, we know realize that it served several

functions. The presence of the Royal Palace was our first clue that the city was also the site of most of the empire's political and civic activity. Further investigation into the Palace and its adjacent buildings led archaeologists such as the National University's Dr. Orlando Jackson and doctoral student Deidre Mullen to focus several excavations on the political functions carried out in the ritual core. Their reports have contributed greatly to our understanding of Amerhican rulers, methods of governing and distribution of political power. Both Jackson and Mullen, as well as subsequent reports based on their findings, are included in later chapters of this report that deal specifically with government functions.

In Potomac City we also find the first and only evidence yet discovered about Amerhican military forces. A large part of this knowledge is thanks to the Amerhicans fondness for commemorating military conflict with public monuments. These monuments often make reference to specific battles, their location in and outside of the Amerhican Empire, and even the names of some important individual figures who participated in the various conflicts. Without context we are able to interpret little else beyond that their certainly were times of conflict within and outside of the empire, but even this little information can be used to guide future excavations that can help to fill in the many blanks we now have.

Though the marshy urban center supported a fraction of the residents of New York, Potomac City has provided much more valuable insights into the functioning of Amerhican government and even religion than the former site. Excavations have been going on for half the amount of time of those in New York City, but despite the slow start, the findings from Potomac City are daily helping us to build a better understanding of the Amerhican Empire. Now that we have discussed the basics of both major centers, the following chapters will move on to the more general Amerhican practices that we have learned about thanks to the information obtained from these impressive urban centers.

### **Why Build Urban Centers on Dangerous Coastlines?**

The Americans' had an affinity for building large urban sites in locations that eventually stood devastated in the wake of rising sea levels. One camp of archaeologists claims that Americans were not aware of rising sea levels, and therefore had no way of knowing that their urban cities would soon be in danger of severe flooding or complete destruction. On this side of the issue is world-renowned American archaeologist Dr. Jonathon Haynes. Haynes argues that the Americans began building their urban centers in the early 1700s, before they had technology advanced enough to track long-term climate change. They chose sites close to the coast or major waterways because they relied heavily on those waterways for travel and trade. Haynes relies on sheer logic for his argument. "If they knew sea levels were rising, they would have planned accordingly," he argues. "Nothing could have caused them to risk their cities being overtaken by the water. They simply did not realize rising sea levels posed a significant threat until it was too late"

Archaeologists opposed to this theory are led by National University professor Dr. Chad Warwick. Warwick rebukes Haynes' claims that the Americans were ignorant of global climate patterns. "The Americans were an advanced people," Warwick retorts. "They had to have known the dangers of building cities so close to the coast. To say they weren't aware of what was going on around them is to do them an injustice. These people risked centuries of hard work and their very lives for good reason, and what calls for self-sacrifice more often than religion?" Warwick argues that the Americans knew of the impending dangers of rising sea levels, but that religion dictated they build anyway and entrust their fates to the gods. Warwick points to one particular find from Potomac City to support his theories. A temple with an anthropomorphic statue once stood outside the ritual core, at the very tip of the Plastic Age coast. Warwick believes this temple to be in honor of the American god of water. Worshipping the water god probably required building important temples at the water's edge, or the Americans prayers would go unanswered. While Warwick admits he has no proof of the details, he believes there is evidence enough that religious worship required the Americans to build their cities near the sea. "They certainly knew that building their cities right up against the tide was dangerous, but they put a priority on their religious practices," Warwick states. "They probably expected their god to protect them from the inevitable. More enlightened people have believed as much with just as little justification."

## CHAPTER 5: ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

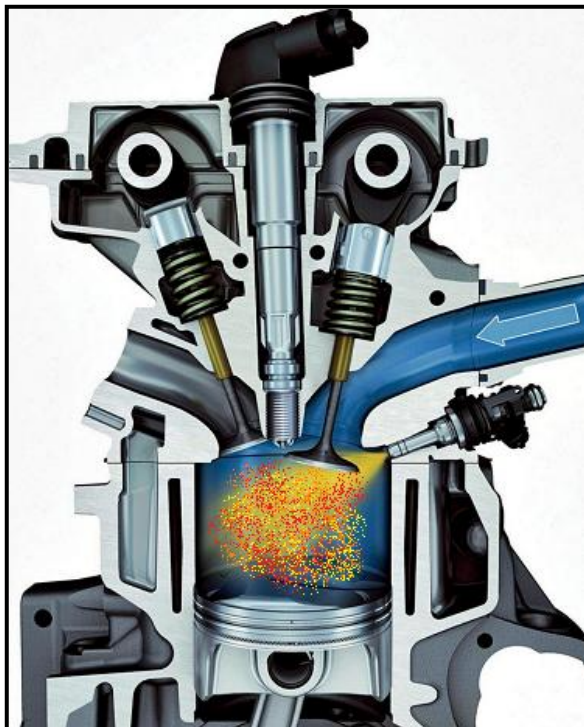
### Archaic Fuels from Archaic Sources

The American Empire lived and died with the era of fossil fuels. The Americans' vital tools and technological trinkets alike were designed to be directly or indirectly powered via these primitive sources. It is hard for a modern audience to imagine such a world. There are only three known deposits of matter which fall under the classification of fossil fuel known today. Two are in Hispania and one lies just in the Western Outlands of Arcanada. We have no use for these deposits, so their existence is rarely acknowledged or discussed. Hispania deposits are rather extensive, and would be some use to the struggling economy of that nation if there was any value in drilling for and extracting the fuel. The most rural of Hispania inhabitants occasionally troll specific areas and collect pools of tarry oil as it bubbles to the surface. They use it in a variety of traditional practices, sometimes burning it for the little heat or light it can provide, and sometimes processing it into other useful forms. Hispania Outlanders – which that nation calls the *Sucios* – are much more documented than our own. Several of that nation's University professors have conducted ethnographies about them, and their curious traditional practices are much better understood. Those same professors have shown interest in conducting similar studies of our own Outlanders, though their several attempts to contact Outlander leaders to discuss the possibilities have been less than fruitful. Representatives from Hispania National University broadcasted an international symposium two years ago on the traditional practices of Outlander People. This was in an effort to arouse more public interest in the study of these populations. Among other things, their research detailed some ways in which the Outlanders use unprocessed and processed fossil fuels. No such research has yet been discussed at the Arcanadian National University, but Hispania National University reports allow us to hazard guesses as to what our own Outlanders might be doing in the wilderness. Their practices might be similar to those first practiced by Americans when they began using fossil fuels as a significant energy source.

Deposits of fossil fuels, or what we more commonly call earth energies, take many millions of years to form. Our own University's resident expert on archaic energy sources, Dr. David Galbraith, has published extensively on these deposits and the ways in which Plastic Age people used them. We will only go into a cursory explanation of the natural processes that result

in fossil fuels, but anyone wishing a more technical explanation should see Galbraith's paper directly. The Americans primarily used oil, natural gas and coal. Oil and natural gas are both formed from the remains of floral and faunal species which lived hundreds of millions of years ago. When these organisms died, their remains were buried underneath river or ocean sediments. These primordial bodies of water dried up or shifted course, but the heat, pressure and bacteria combined to compress and cook the organic remains meters below the surface. Oil is the first to form, but hotter and deeper conditions cause some oil to become natural gas. Oil deposits and natural gases rise through the earth's crust and can escape to the surface unless they become lodged beneath an impenetrable layer known as a capstone.<sup>21</sup>

The Americans probably began by gathering the raw material as it came to the surface and using it in primitive ways just as Hispania Outlanders do. However, as their technology improved, they took to digging hundreds of meters into the ground to access the vast stores of oil and natural gas trapped below. Once they managed to release this resource, they developed a means of processing it. Though we do not know much about how they did this or where this



**Figure 29: American combustion engine found in transportation vehicles. Processed oil (blue) entered the engine from a holding tank, where it ignited to create a small, controlled explosion.**

occurred, we do know how they used the finished products. We have found the most evidence of processed oil use in transportation vehicles. Some of these vehicles, which have been buried for several centuries, have as much as a liter of processed oil still in holding tanks within their engines when archaeologists excavate them. Smaller personal transportation vehicles and larger forms which will be discussed more in depth later in this report were fitted with combustion engines.

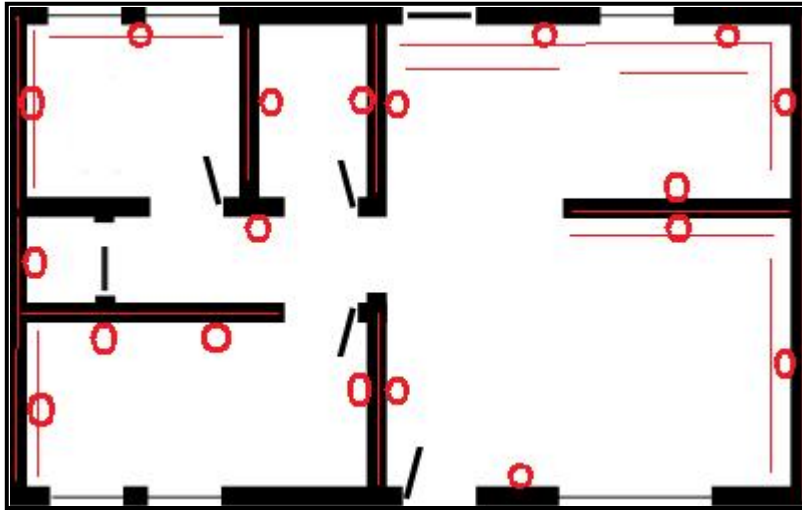
Processed oil was held in a tank, with a valve that allowed the oil to drain into the engine. Complex mechanical devices in the engine would take in the oil and create a controlled explosion, the energy from which was then used to drive other parts of the machine into action. Continued

sparks and explosions would keep the engine running and propel the machine forward. This whole process is very inefficient, though it is impressive as far as American inventions are concerned. The American engines were approximately one third as efficient as our own models. Many other engines apart from those found in transportation vehicles were designed around the same principles. All of the samples we have yet found ran on processed oil. Some forms of processed oil and natural gases were also used for heating. Nearly all the building structures in New York City, and most in Potomac City have what were once large duct systems built into the walls and beneath the floors. Chemical analysis of residues in these ducts has been tricky, because water has washed away almost all trace evidence. Swabs of more protected duct works have returned results that indicate oil and natural gas derivatives once passed through the systems. Most American technological devices were only equipped to use electrical energy, so it is probable that these ducts were used to disperse heat throughout the structure. All those years ago, when the seasons were more variable and the winters much colder in the American Empire, temperature control was very important.

Coal forms through similar processes as oil and natural gas, but the deposits are composed entirely of floral species such as trees, and ferns and other plants. Pressure and heat over those millions of years turn the floral remains to coal. Harvesting the coal was a complicated endeavor for the Americans. Aerial scans have found, in the rural areas, several large sites which archaeologists believe to be coal harvesting facilities. Harvesting involved digging hundreds of meters into the ground in some places. The Americans dug complicated systems of underground tunnels to transport coal and other minerals from these deposits. The tunnels might have resembled the underground networks we have built to extract energy resources from Uranus, and more recently Pluto. Galbriath himself has visited two American sites believed to be coal harvesting facilities. Both have been obliterated by nature, but he has expressed interest in trying to reconstruct exactly how Americans went about procuring their energy source. Once coal was extracted, it had to be processed. Again, we do not know much about how this was done. Probably the raw material was transported to a large factory-like facility and treated in some way to make it easier and safer to use. We have found some very large facilities on the outskirts of New York City and Potomac City that seemed to have involved coal, but archaeologists are more convinced that they were the sites where coal was burned to create electric energy, not where the coal itself was first processed. For now, that middle step



remains a mystery. We do, though, have the coal-to-electricity facilities to study. The Americans had many mechanical devices that were not designed to receive energy directly from the burning of coal, so it had to be converted to a type of energy that could be more easily used and manipulated. Vast networks of electrical lines were strung on poles above-ground throughout the American territories. Lines were also buried beneath the ground and embedded in the floors, walls and ceilings of all structures from large commercial facilities to tiny



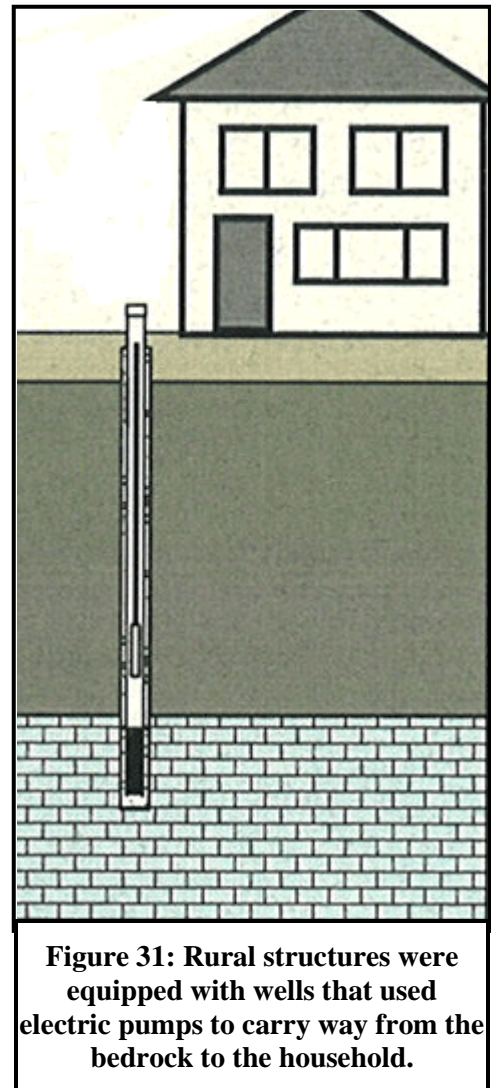
**Figure 30: Sample floor plan of an American household showing major electrical lines and access ports.**

residences. These electrical lines ran in tandem with the channeling oil and natural gas for heat. Small ports inside the buildings allowed access to the electrical power. When energy was needed to power a particular device inside a commercial facility or home, that device would have to be physically connected to the port.

This notion seems almost laughable to the modern reader. Our own technology is much more integrated into the structure of the house. Every surface is equipped to convey energy into another. While we can simply set a communication device down on the counter and pick it up a few moments later fully charged, the American system was very different. It is comparable to a circulation system in which the blood is carried to the various parts via a network of blood vessels. This was much like the energy network in the average American building. The American power systems were very inefficient. Careful analysis of the wiring and conversion systems we have found indicates that they were only able to utilize about 40% of the available energy. While the Americans were very advanced in some areas of innovation, they certainly had not progressed much in energetic technologies.

## Using Earth Energies

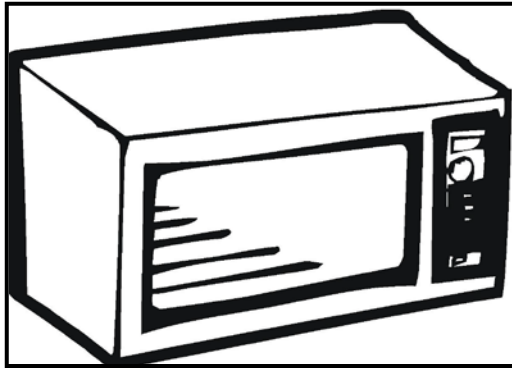
Once the Americans harvested the energy, processed it, converted it, and transmitted it to its destination, how was that energy used? In residences electrical energy was used to power a wide array of tools and gadgets. The most basic needs of the American household were heat, light and water. Some heat, as mentioned above, was created through natural gases and processed oil. Meanwhile other structures were heated entirely through electrical machines. Residences side by side sometimes utilize different systems, and it appears that both forms prevailed across more or less the same time span. Light was the next most widespread use of electricity. The electric wire networks were usually attached to a dock in the center of the ceiling in any given space. In turn, a light source was attached to this dock and pulled its power from the electric network. Plastic Age houses commonly utilized incandescent light bulbs, a popular but ultimately inefficient means of lighting. Because Americans clearly lacked any technology relating to our own SmartHouses, switches positioned at a reachable height were then used to turn the lights on and off. It might be a stretch to imagine having to physically flip a switch to turn on the light when one enters a room, but this was everyday life for the Plastic Age Americans. Each structure also had a system of pipes that conducted water to various parts of the building. In the urban centers like New York City and Potomac City, this water was drawn from the source into the structure via a system of pumps powered by electricity. The demand for water in some urban areas was difficult to meet. For example, the urban water supply in New York City was provided via hundreds of kilometers of elaborate piping that brought millions of liters of water to the city from more than one hundred kilometers away on the mainland. In rural areas, individual structures had wells dug into the ground until they reached the water table. A system of tanks and



**Figure 31: Rural structures were equipped with wells that used electric pumps to carry way from the bedrock to the household.**

pumps, usually powered by electricity as well, would carry the water from the wells into dispensing areas in the residence.

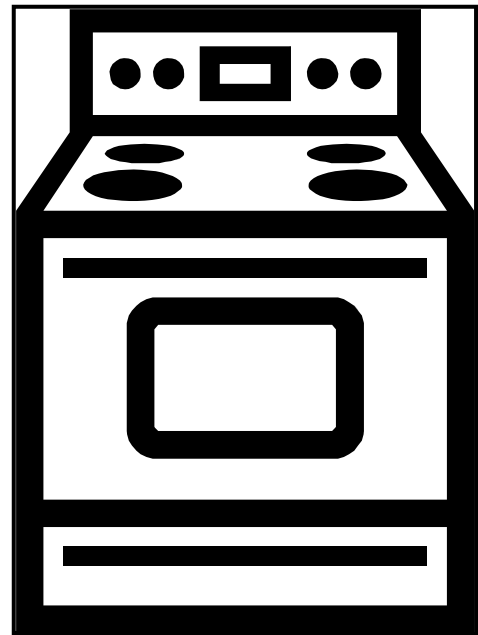
Once supplied with the necessary heat, light and water, the Americans could complete the vital task of cooking. They required many different tools and facilities for preparing raw food stuffs. This is yet another very difficult concept for modern readers to grasp, because we no longer rely upon raw foods for survival. We all enjoy a traditional meal on a special occasion,



**Figure 33: Metal microwave cooking box. Powered by electricity, this box blasted raw food items with microwaves to cook them quickly.**

but the Americans dined in this way for all of their meals. The raw foods system is flawed for several reasons. As anyone who has taken a field school in primitive agriculture can testify, the amount of labor necessary to produce a crop of traditional foods is extensive. The success of a crop depends on any number of fickle factors, such as weather, presence of some insects, lack of others, precipitation, temperature and genetic variation among plants. It is no wonder that many Plastic Age

crops went extinct. Only through careful recovery of extinct plant matter from archaeological sites have archaeo-botanists been able to recreate some species of traditional crops. We are not about to make the same mistakes as the Americans, though. We have carefully engineered the genome of each of these crops to ensure the best, most efficient product. Scientists have been endlessly entertained by recreating various crops, most recently a yellow grain known as corn. We grow floral and faunal crops alike in environmentally-controlled facilities, where the forces of nature are not a consideration. The demand is not great for these traditional foods, so primitive agriculture has remained a small, though interesting division of University studies.



**Figure 32: This larger metal kiln was capable of heating pots of food on its surface via metal burners or by baking food inside its body. The internal area was heated via electric coils or natural gas.**



**Figure 35: Computer reconstruction of a Plastic Age cold storage container common in American households.**

American existence, on the other hand, relied heavily on the preparation of traditional foods. In every residential structure, and even in some commercial facilities, there is a specific area devoted entirely to the storage and preparation of food. This is called the kitchen. Compiling data from the excavations of many different residential structures, we have been able to identify some of the main devices which the average American kitchen contained. There were one or two devices for the purpose of cooking the food. These sometimes include small metal boxes in which food would be blasted with microwaves (Figure 32). We do not know what these devices were called, or why they appear in addition to other cooking devices, but

research into this question is in the works. Larger metal cooking kilns (Figure 33) were one of the main elements in American kitchens. Their internal spaces were heated with electric coils or through the use of natural gas. Food was placed in racks inside the kilns. Kitchens also included food storage facilities. Some foods that required no temperature control were kept in cupboards and drawers throughout. Remarkably, residences throughout New York City and Potomac City have given us perfectly-preserved pieces of some Plastic Age food stuffs. One particular product very well represented in the archaeological record is a small, packaged grainy noodle called *ramen*. This particular product seems to have been a staple of the American diet, especially in the ultra-urbanized areas because we find so many of them so well preserved. For the



**Figure 34: Ramen, a starchy noodle product, is remarkably abundant in the American archaeological record. It is found in large quantities in the kitchen areas of residences, especially those in the urban centers.**

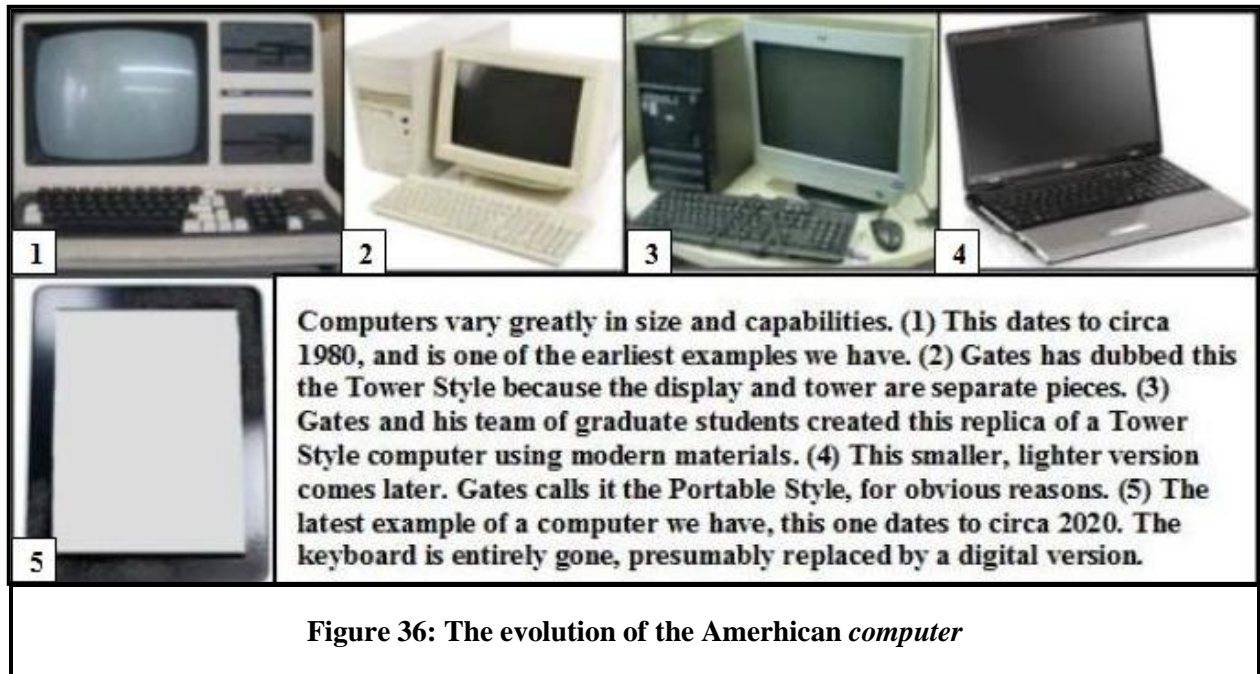
foods that required preservation at colder temperatures, the Americans had large cold-storage chests. Our recovery of food material from these boxes has been less successful, since they do nothing to preserve food without electrical power. Still, small samples of decomposed plant materials sometimes remain. It is from some of these miniscule samples that archaeo-botanists were able to reconstruct the genome of some of the crops we grow for restaurant dining today.

Electricity access points in residences were numerous, suggesting there were many other things which Americans required electricity to power and use. These items were probably much smaller and more portable than the facilities in the kitchen, because we rarely find any other electronic devices in situ.

**Americans Step out of the Dark Ages**

From a few chance finds, we have learned that Americans were busy developing some of the first proto-computer devices known in the Plastic Age. We only know that these machines were computers because of expert analysis of their circuitry. The National University’s resident expert on the study of Plastic Age telecommunication technology, Dr. William Gates, has spent the last fifteen years researching the structure and use of two distinct devices related to American technology.

The first class of device resembles a primitive version of our own UIS access stations. One American text makes an offhand reference to these devices, calling them *computers*. These



*computers* range from large block-like structures with extensive internal circuitry to thin, portable artifacts. The outer casing which gives the *computer* its structure is composed of plastic, while the internal circuitry is composed of plastic, and a combination of metals for conducting electronic power. *Computers* vary greatly in size (see figure). The earliest models were bulky machines inside and out, but later models became smaller and more sophisticated.

Certain models also differ from one another based on one major capability. After careful study of all three types of communication devices, Gates and his team have discovered a specific pattern of circuitry indicative of connections to a remote network. Prior to Gates' discovery, no one would have believed the Americans were so far advanced in their use of abstract communication. Gates has devised a system of classification for *computers* whereby they are first divided into one of three categories by size, then further divided by networking capabilities. Gates has not yet been able to reverse engineer a *computer* to connect to modern wireless networks. Three years ago the National University created a fellowship specifically for research into American abstract technology. Stephanie Jobs, one of the fellows working on the project, recently published her newest theories regarding the extent of American wireless capabilities. She proposed that the hardware evident in *computers* suggests a level of advancement heretofore unheard of; she even suggested the Americans were capable of supporting an abstract information network comparable to our own. Furthermore, she proposes we might be able to discover traces of this forgotten network through experiments with *computer* hardware. Where this rather extreme notion might lead has yet to be seen, but her theories have certainly earned Jobs a significant following.

The second kind of artifact Gates researches is a small, portable communication device. Though the technology is archaic, the concept of these devices should be a familiar one to the reader, because they were created in the same vein as our own personal communication devices. It took careful analysis of circuitry patterns to determine what the capabilities of these devices once included. They were used for audio communication, though some show signs of further capabilities which might have included visual communication as well. Gates refers to these devices as *paggers* after having discovered that term in an American text about technology. *Paggers* are more than abundant in the archaeological record, and we are able to track a change in typology over time. The *paggers* are made mostly of plastic, while the circuitry is a combination of plastic, copper and other metals. We often find the plastic exoskeleton to be very well



**Figure 37: The evolution of American pagers. Typologies are easy to create with these devices, as there was a clear progression towards smaller, lighter models. The earliest model we have found dates to circa 1990 (far left). Its inner mechanisms are just as clunky as its external frame. The technology within the pagers became smaller and smaller, until the latest model we have found (far right) emerged in the late 2020s.**

preserved, but the circuitry degrades quickly. It takes just the right conditions for the internal mechanisms to be preserved well enough for scholars such as Gates to extract technical information about how these devices worked.

### **Beyond Earth Energies?**

The Americans did not make much use of energy resources apart from earth energies. They did not take full advantage of the solar and nuclear resources at their disposal. Finding artifacts related to solar energy in the American archaeological record is difficult. To date only three panels have been discovered. Two of these were in the immediate outskirts of New York City and one was found just outside a very small rural site several hundred kilometers from the nearest urban center. All three are similar in shape and size, being large rectangular panels of



**Figure 38: Basic design of American solar panels**

polysilicon supported by a metal frame. They measure approximately four meters by eight meters. When archaeologists first discovered these panels, they were so badly damaged that they were originally labeled as remnants of structural support. It was not until smaller pieces were brought back to the National University for further analysis that scientists recognized the presence of the polysilicon. Polysilicon was used in the very first models of our own commercial and residential roofing panels. We have since developed more efficient technologies, but the scientists working on the project quickly made the connection that the primitive American artifact before them was probably a solar energy conduit. After summoning the remaining pieces of the panels from the archaeological sites, scientists reassembled as much as they could. The polysilicon sheeting captured the solar energy and converted it to electrical energy, which was then transmitted through electrical network cables to facilities where the energy was needed. There is no evidence that Americans routinely mounted solar panels on rooftops or vacant lots. We would recognize the signs of this practice because it was one of the first steps our own government took in utilizing solar panels. Obviously, our technology has advanced by leaps and bounds since then. Our specially designed solar strips are incorporated into the coating of all buildings, making our every structure its own self-supporting solar conduit. The Americans, on the other hand were far too focused on the energies beneath their feet than that right above their heads.

American nuclear facilities are evident in the archaeological record, but equally



**Figure 39: American Nuclear Facilities. Each grey square represents a possible nuclear facility based on aerial scans. The site represented by the black square is the largest we have found. See figure 40 for site scan.**

unrealized as far as their potential. Two such sites have been uncovered by physical excavations, and several more are anticipated based on aerial scans of remote areas of the southwest American Empire. Nuclear facilities are easily discoverable on the American landscape by utilizing a simple aerial radiation scan. The levels of radiation around these sites are extremely high. They can



take more than a year of concentrated work by the RMRA to declare safe to visit. Visiting and working at these sites is very dangerous. Most analyses of these sites are carried out via low-flying scans and photographs, which are able to give us the structural layout. The practices that went on in these structures are hard to infer just from the physical remains, but the quality of the waste disposal facilities speaks volumes about the overall endeavor. It appears that the Americans encased their nuclear waste products in cement and buried them just outside the confines of their processing facilities. While this may have seemed a logical solution at the time, this method was ultimately damaging to the entire surrounding ecosystem. Natural geological processes inevitably caused the cement casings to rupture, allowing nuclear waste to drain into the water table and permeate every part of the environment. Continuing to bury nuclear waste was unsustainable. There was simply too much waste. The Americans' nuclear processing produced nearly sixteen times as much waste as our own methods, and our scientists are making maximization progress every day. Archaeologists can tell from scans alone that these facilities were abandoned quickly. Some trenches for disposing waste were dug, but the concrete cases still lie on the surface, where they have been awaiting burial for nearly five hundred years. Luckily, most are intact, but even the minutest occasional cracked casing requires careful and skillful handling by RMRA professionals.

Nuclear facilities were certainly a reality for Americans, but there is no evidence that they ever took advantage of harnessing nuclear power on a broad scale. As discussed above, commercial and residential structures are wired for electricity converted from coal or for natural gas and processed oil. If we extrapolate the few finds of solar panels, we might be able to say some facilities were powered via the sun, but those were certainly few and far between. No homes ran on nuclear power, and only the nuclear facilities themselves seem to have the technology to convert the nuclear energy into a more stable, usable form. Every one of our own citizens has toured a nuclear facility several times by the time he or she transitions to university, so the reader can immediately see the contrasts to our own technology. Our nuclear plants, in addition to creating absolutely and relatively much less waste than their American counterparts, have clean and environmentally friendly ways of disposing of the little waste they do produce.



**Figure 40: Aerial scan of a large nuclear facility in the southwest American territory (left). Nuclear facilities are apparent because of their tell-tale circular smoke stakes (red) and large cooling ponds (blue), which are highlighted here (right).**

Nuclear instability was probably one of the main reasons for the American collapse, which will be discussed at length in the final chapters. The American nuclear facilities were abandoned and soon collapsed after there were no longer personnel on the grounds to manage them. Our own facilities are equipped to regulate themselves and automatically initiated appropriate responses to natural disasters and other threats for seventy-five years. This is the default activity for the facilities after receiving no human input for more than four days. Even if the Americans did have such a safeguard system, their facility could not dispose of its own waste. It did not have the automation necessary to do that, and there would be too much waste buildup over a short amount of time. Nuclear power in the American Empire is still something of a mystery to modern archaeologists. A considerable amount of time, money, effort, management and personnel went into the creation and running of these facilities, with seemingly little to no energetic benefits. Perhaps more research into these specific questions will be answered in the coming years, but for now the conflicting evidence and the danger of the sites themselves means few scholars are chomping at the bit to conduct the necessary research.

Overall, the reader will get the impression that American energy and technology is nothing to marvel at. This is mostly true, though we must try to remain objective. The Plastic Age Americans were extremely advanced for their time period when compared with some other areas of the world. While scholars from Hispania National University are studying stone housing structures and rock formations, Arcanadian scholars have been mapping electrical and water

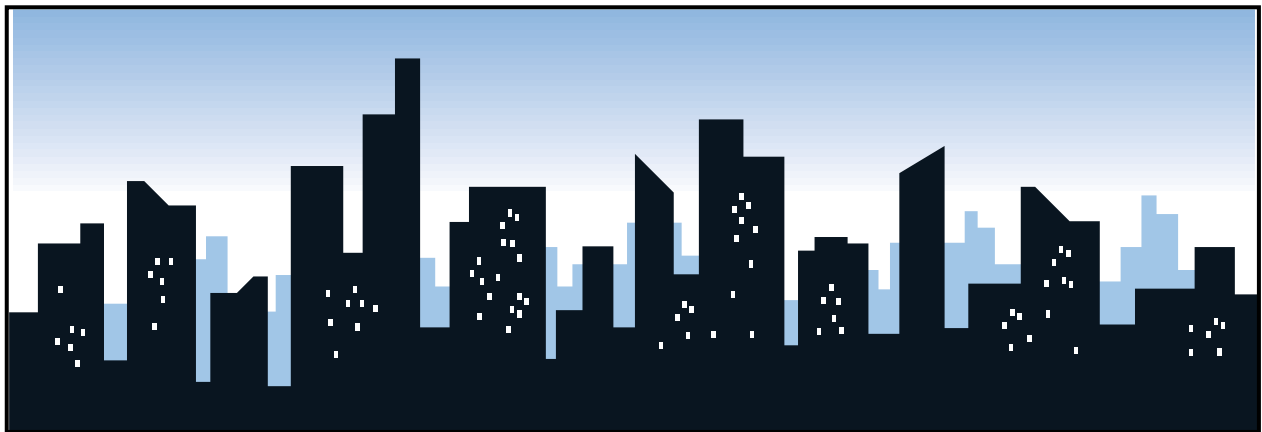
lines that thread for hundreds of kilometers through and beneath city streets. There is still much we have to learn about Americans' ability to harvest and use the energy they had available to them, and only with future research can we come to a better understanding of what went on half a millennium ago across the American Empire.

## CHAPTER 6: BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

### **Building Up, Up, Up**

One of the great things about having two urban centers widely excavated is that we have the ability to compare infrastructural variation. Urban planning and architecture in New York City and Potomac City, while they overlap somewhat, represent a wide array of different examples. This diversity allows us to investigate the functions of many different types of structures. As far as we can tell, most New York City structures were built with a very uniform aesthetic in mind. Functionality over appearance was the rule. The sheer height to which some of them stood required that the builders focused more on the stability and safety of the design rather than picturesque quality. They were not always successful in making the buildings properly protected against threats. Archaeologists can find no evidence of any means by which the buildings were meant to withstand major disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis. This suggests that either the Americans were ignorant of how to create such safeguards or that this particular area was miraculously void of natural disasters during the Plastic Age. The latter is very unlikely. The only related evidence we can find is an elaborate earthworks project probably meant to combat rising sea levels. This was a huge undertaking, but sediment analysis indicates it came very late in the history of the city. It was constructed only a few years before most of the population abandoned the city entirely.

The New Yorkians preferred a tall, utilitarian building style, known as Needle-Point. One such structure, labeled NYC-14-18 in archaeological maps, was discovered on the lower half of



**Figure 41: Artist rendering of what the New York City skyline looked like circa 2000. The New Yorkians favored a tall, Needle-Point style of architecture.**

Manhattan Island and is one of the tallest buildings in the entire city. We can determine the height with great certainty. The building itself toppled long ago, but we can measure the distance on the ground to which its debris spread. We then use computer software to calculate the vertical height indicated by the range of the debris. NYC-14-18 once stood at 381 meters. It was constructed mainly of steel and concrete, with a thin, sleek vertical design.

Buildings in the area show no signs of paint or other forms of coloration, so the external surface was gray in color. The top of the building came to a point and most likely sported an antenna for the audio communication network, which the New Yorkians used extensively. An antenna of proper magnitude was discovered not far from

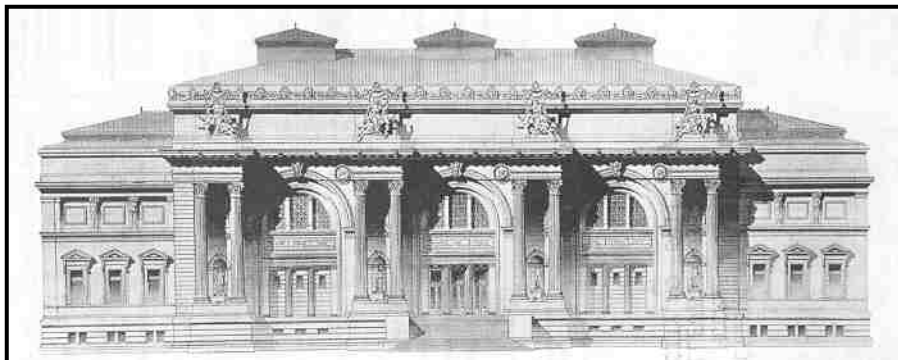


**Figure 42: Computer reconstruction of building heights in New York City. This model takes a photograph of the island in modern times and superimposes the estimated heights and appearance of some of New York City's largest structures. NY-14-18 is framed in red.**

the toppled building's rubble, and we assume it belongs to this building. Building this structure was no mean feat for the New Yorkians. The amount of building material alone is impressive. The project involved almost 60,000 tons of steel alone. According to older calculations, it might have taken as many as 5 million man hours to complete the building. Recent estimates based on a greater understanding of the technology available to the New Yorkians at the time when this building was constructed push that number to upwards of 8 million man hours.

## State-Sponsored Aesthetics

One very interesting building extends partially into the boundaries of the New York City pleasure garden. NYC-83-62 is an architectural anomaly when contextualized with the surrounding needle-style structures. It exhibits a style known as *Classique Column Form*. This style refers quite literally to a structure built with large columns. These columns are sometimes present for structural support, and in other cases they are merely aesthetic. Several nuances in the construction have been documented. In some, the columns are fully functional in supporting a frontal overhang. In others, the columns are merely part of the building's façade and are sometimes even carved into the face of the building to create the illusion of true *Classique Column Form*. In the case of NYC-83-62, the main entrance is marked by four pairs of columns which were entirely three dimensional, with a small space between the building body and the columns themselves. Each pair supported an elaborately-carved stone outcropping which projected several meters. This is an example of columns which are midway along the continuum of functional to superficial. They are there to support the carved stone pieces, but since the outcroppings serve no function in themselves – such as providing an area of shelter in front of the entrance – they are moderately superficial. There are other elements



**Figure 43: Artist rendering of NY-83-62. The main entrance is marked by four pairs of columns which were entirely three dimensional.**



**Figure 44: NYC-83-62 (yellow) sits inside the boundaries of the pleasure garden (green).**

of the *Classique Column Form* evident in most examples of the style in New York City. NYC-83-62 has a large open entrance area designed to inspired awe in its visitors. The grandiose sense of importance

which the entranceway inspired was a way of demonstrating the power of the state. This style of architecture is most popular in civic buildings. NYC-83-62 was under the patronage of the state, a fact to which the architectural style attests.

Classique Column Form is the most widespread style of architecture used in Potomac City, where we believe the style originated. Identifying the different architectural style makes it easy to tell the difference between residential and ritual areas at this site. Classique Column Form is found on the frontal facades of 70% of buildings larger than 24,000 square meters at the base. Few buildings smaller than such a measurement have columns. We presume this is because buildings so small were not of adequate importance to require special attention in design. The empirical powers were more likely to invest in larger buildings for their inherent impressiveness, statement of superiority and usefulness.

In Potomac City architects created a way to accentuate the traditional open entranceway of Classique Column Form even further. This was done by the addition of a large domed ceiling, usually elaborately decorated. Not only did such domes create a visual impression, but they welcomed visitors or pilgrims with an auditory message as well. Any noise was amplified and



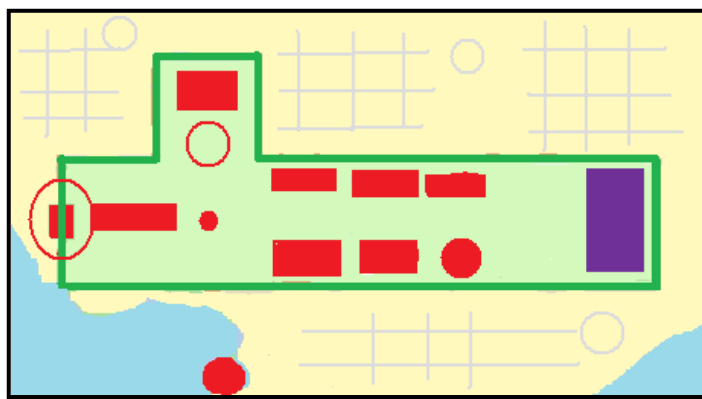
echoed throughout the entrance area, which archaeologists believe served two main purposes. First, it encouraged silence. While this might seem contradictory, archeoauditors have seen similar patterns in religious centers both in the American Empire and in older centers found in other nations. We even use somewhat similar methods in the construction of study facilities today. Our modern techniques are more advanced, of course, in that we can direct the volume of an individual's speaking voice directly back into the sphere in which he or she is located. Making loud noises in these Plastic Age dome entryways overwhelmed visitors and soon caused them to adjust their volume accordingly. This instilled in them a feeling of reverence for the place in which they stood.

The other major purpose of the amplification of sound under these domes might be to alert anyone inside the structure to the presence of an individual or a group in the entranceway. This was a means of summoning a religious or civic figure to address the needs of the visitor(s) or of preventing people from entering into the inner regions without attracting attention. This

prevented crime such as theft or vandalism, since many of the structures did not have other ways of securing the entrances from infiltration. We use more advanced security systems today. Not only do we monitor with cameras, but areas under surveillance are also monitored by sensitive noise receptors. In the event that cameras fail or lights are disabled in any way, the noise receptors can pinpoint the exact location of any movement within a confined area and can signal for assistance from the proper authorities. Some of our own such technologies are sensitive enough to register and locate the beating of an intruder's heart in a room completely devoid of light.

There are more variations on the Classique Column Form here than in any other site yet discovered, which makes archaeologists think that this was the birthplace of the style. This is a similar concept to charting the spread of languages; the area where a language group is most complex and varied is most likely where that language originated, because it has the longest amount of time to change, adapt and diverge. The same applies to architectural styles. The inhabitants of Potomac City probably developed this style first, and thus had more time to manipulate and experiment with different styles and create new variations on the original design. Certain styles then many have spread to other areas, such as New York, where the diversity in the style is much lower, due to the lack of time for experimentation and manipulation. A common such variation found in Potomac City is the placement of columns around a circular edge rather than the traditionally straight, even façade.

One particular structure from Potomac City exhibits the most elaborate Classique Column Form we have found to date. The scale of this building alone is impressive; building such a structure was certainly a statement of power and prestige. The building is referred to in

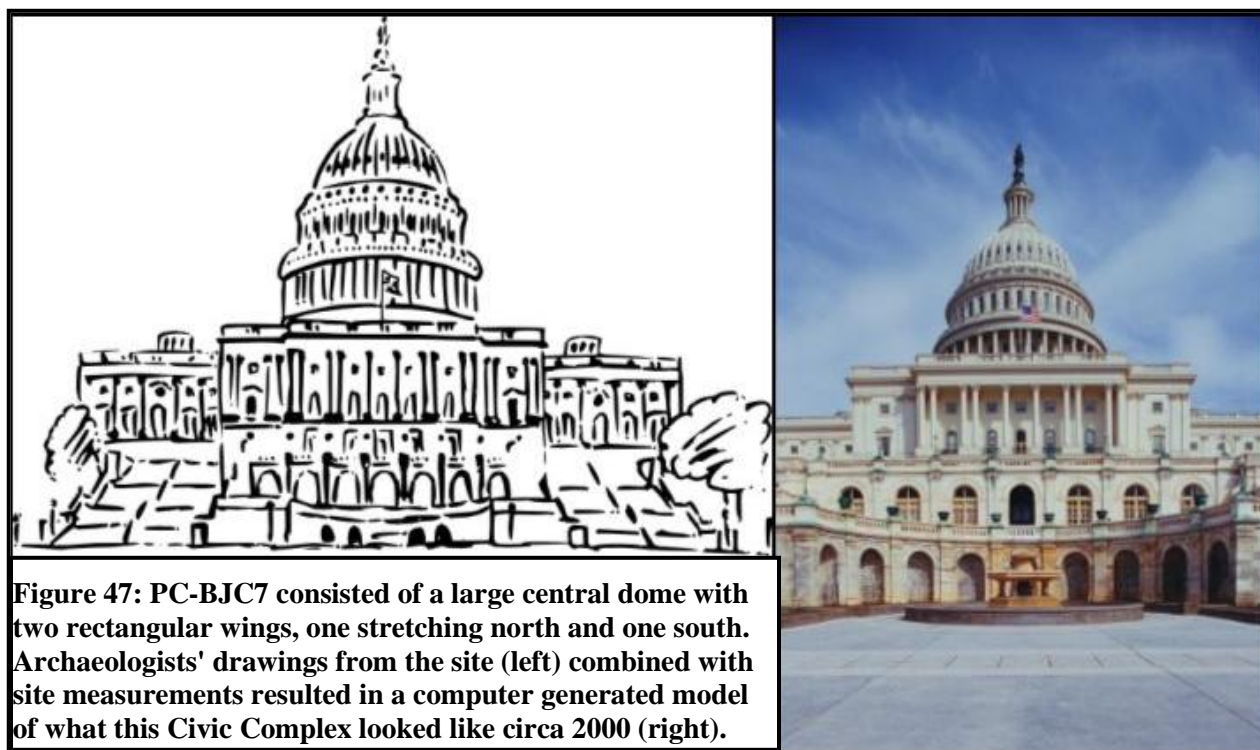


**Figure 46: PC-BJC7 (purple) lies at the far eastern end of the ritual core.**

archaeological reports as PC-BJC7, is located at the far eastern boundary of the rectangular lawn of undeveloped land. We can immediately tell that all the buildings located within or on the boundaries of this lawn were extremely important. Tracts of undeveloped land in otherwise densely built urban areas were a common American means of



delineating ritual spaces. The development of land was vital to support their vast and growing population, so land was only spared for the most precious of purposes. We first discovered this practice in New York City upon excavating the large pleasure garden. A similar rectangular tract of undeveloped soil in Potomac City allows us to infer that this area was sacred ground. Archaeologists have estimated its original dimensions and design from the foundations, which are mostly intact. Luckily, the central, circular part of the building still exhibits a great amount of its original design. The way Americans adhered to symmetrical design allows us to extrapolate when whole sections of a structure have succumbed to the elements of time and nature.



PC-BJC7 was comprised by a central, dome-covered structure flanked by two rectangular wings to the north and south. The combination of circular and rectangular was a common design in Potomac City. PC-CCF2 and several other ritually significant sites were designed along the same pattern. From north to south, the structure measured over 225 meters long and reached approximately 105 meters at its widest points. Height is more difficult to estimate. We know this structure had one of the most impressive domes in the entire urban center. The large, open internal space evident on the ground bespeaks a dome of massive proportions. Some estimates

suggest that when it stood intact, the top of the dome could have reached as high as 65 meters, while other estimates push that number all the way to 85 meters.



**Figure 49: One of the first recorded images of the Celebrity Stairs of PC-BJC7.**

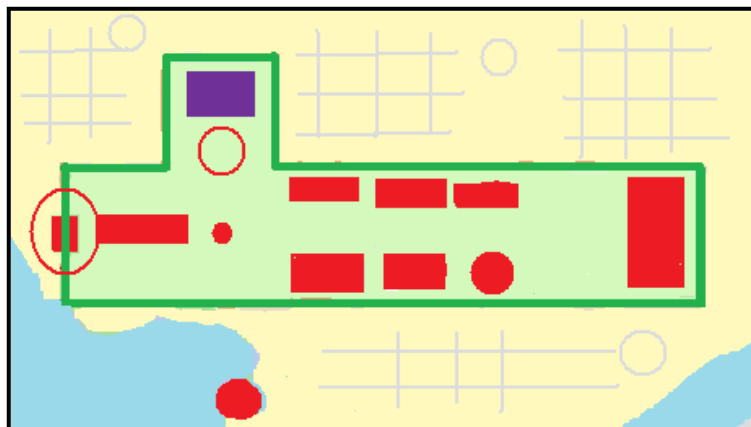
The mystery of the dome allows for romantic interpretations galore, but PC-BJC7 was made most famous by the large stair cases that mark its western face. They are remarkably well persevered and have been by far the most photographed part of any Potomac City site. The two grand staircases lead upwards

to what was once the third or fourth floor of the impressive structure. We do not know exactly how many steps there were originally in each of the cases, because the uppermost platform has been destroyed, but what remains is impressive nonetheless. No council member, public figure or celebrity who visits Potomac City can leave without a picture on the staircases, which have since become known as the

Celebrity Stairs. One iconic shot shows the entire Grand Council posing for a portrait upon the stairs during their 2592 visit to Potomac City in celebration of the tenth anniversary of its discovery.



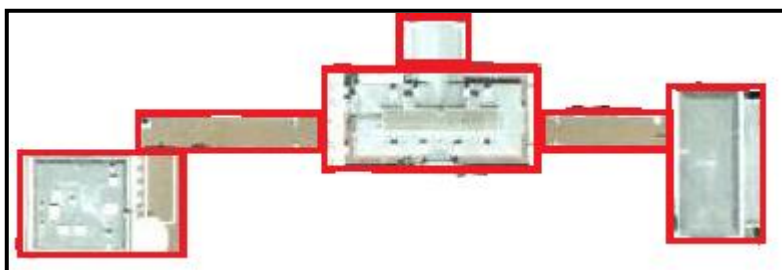
**Figure 48: The most famous photograph from the Celebrity Stairs is from November 19, 2592 when the members of the Grand Council visited the site to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its discovery.**



**Figure 50: PC-CCF2 (purple) lies in the northern offshoot of the ritual core. It is another brilliant example of the Classique Column Form.**

PC-BJC7 may be one of the largest Classique Column Form structures in Potomac City, but many others exhibit equally impressive variations of the column theme and pattern. The Americans often combined different Column styles in the construction of one building. Examples of this can be seen in several structures, the most notable of is a large one situated in

the northern offshoot of the ritual core. This building, catalogued as PC-CCF2 was clearly ritually significant, which we can tell from several features of its placement and design. First, it is in close proximity to the other obvious ritual and civic structures. It is also linked with the importance of those structures by design and surrounding lawns. The north side of PC-CCF2 was constructed in a rather odd way. There were three major areas, eastern, central and western parts with many interior divisions of space, all of which were connected by narrower corridors. This design results in a long,



**Figure 51: PC-CCF2 consisted of a central residential area connected to east and west wings via narrow hallways.**

narrow structure approximately 150 meters from east to west and no more than 50 meters from north to south at any one point. It was certainly not built symmetry in mind. Most American buildings utilize symmetrical designs heavily, so it is strange that this building breaks with the established pattern. The northern face of PC-CCF2 looks out onto an area of undeveloped land measuring approximately 200 meters by 200 meters which ultimately ends when crossed by a major transportation lane. On this face of the building, the Americans used the traditional straight Column Form, with four large columns supporting an overhang of stone, carved into a triangular pattern and extending from the upper edge of the structure. The column complex is entirely three dimensional and creates a covered area in front of the structure some five to ten

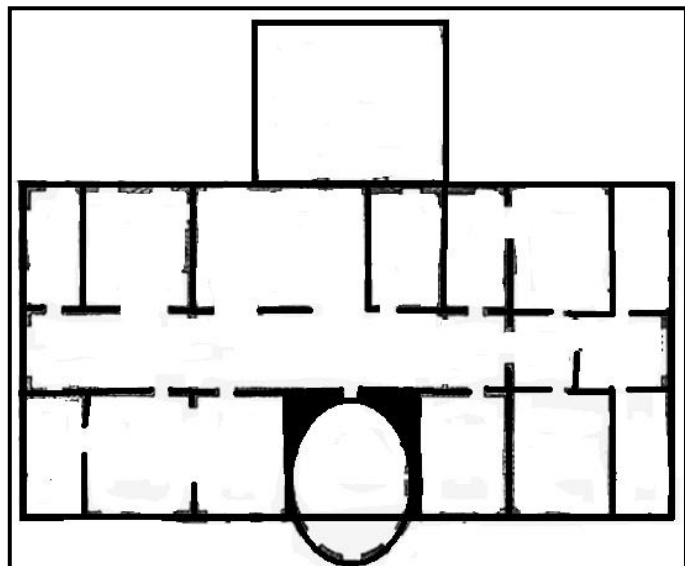


**Figure 52: The southern face of PC-CCF2 exhibits a curved variation of Classique Column Form.**

meters deep. Meanwhile the south façade of the building looks out on a similarly undeveloped area of land that intersects with the east-to-west stretch of core ritual space. On this side of the building, the Americans used the circular variation of the Column Form. PC-CCF2 lacks an impressive dome structure like the one discussed earlier, but it still exhibits a circular interior entranceway on this side, with columns skirting the outer limits of its external façade. Six large columns equidistant from one another once stood. Only two complete ones have

survived the centuries. Unlike their counterparts on the northern face, these columns are not entirely three dimensional and detached from the body of the building itself. They do not support an overhang, but rather function as decoration. Doorways opened out onto a small landing which the columns supported. The columns here also do not reach the ground, but end on tall platforms, which probably prevented any unwanted visitors from reaching the windows above.

This structure is remarkably well preserved, mostly because it lies the farthest away from the original coastline and has managed to avoid the brunt of the erosion. We can see clearly the partition of space on the first level and even some on the second level. Anyone who observes the patterns in this structure can easily see that it differs markedly from that of any other large civic structure found in Potomac City. PC-CCF2 is much smaller than PC-BJC7 described above, but this is not the main reason why archaeologists are so interested in this structure. It exhibits the same allocation of space and facilities one would expect to find in residential structures. As a result of these findings, some archaeologists have begun referring to PC-CCF2 as the Royal



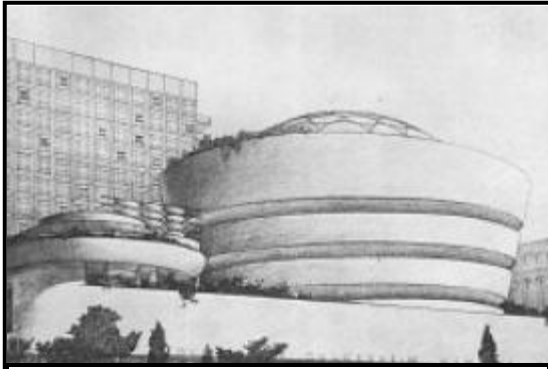
**Figure 53: Floor plan of PC-CCF2 first level. Archaeologists believe this was a large domestic structure, and have come to refer to it as the Royal Palace.**

Palace. While some still balk at the idea that this could be a grand household of some important person rather than yet another civic facility, there is a growing consensus that PC-CCF2 was indeed a grand residential palace. If the latter and increasingly popular interpretation is correct, then it is safe to assume that the person who inhabited this palace was most likely the ruler of the time. It would be important for such a figure to be close to the ritual heart of the empire. PC-CCF2 shows a unique combination of features which we usually associate with state architecture and features we usually associate with residential architecture.

For example, the north entrance, with its impressive columns lining the external façade, opens up into a large entranceway similar to that of any Classique Column Form structure. Yet the interior of the first floor immediately outside of that open entrance hall is quintessentially domestic in appearance. Not a single room in this central conglomeration is large enough for significant gatherings of any kind. A relatively small kitchen area has been found, and thanks to the limited effect of water in this structure, extra-sensitive chemical sensors were able to detect the presence of extinct food stuffs both in that area and in the larger, more open room directly to the south. The latter was probably a dining room. Its small scale indicates that a small group of people regularly ate and handled food in this vicinity. About three quarters of the second level has been preserved. From what we can tell of these remains, there were at least eight rooms which could have served as sleeping chambers. All signs point to a domestic area made elaborate and impressive for the ruler, and designed with elements of civic architecture to accentuate the connection between the ruler's roles as political figure, even in his private life. The role of the leader and his involvement with the ritual undertakings of the state will be discussed in the next chapter. For now, we continue with the discussion of the infrastructural remains.

### **Several Mysterious Discoveries**

Not all American buildings fall into a specific stylistic pattern. Some other less common architectural elements so appear. We will discuss just two of them here. One lies on the border of the New York City pleasure garden. Most buildings in the American Empire are based on a conventional square or rectangular foundation. The few exceptions are those with combined civic and ritual purposes that combine circular and rectangular designs. This building, NYC-99-99, is entirely different. NYC-99-99 stands on higher ground than some other less fortunate areas of the island, so most of its structure still stands. Some parts of the upper levels collapsed due to

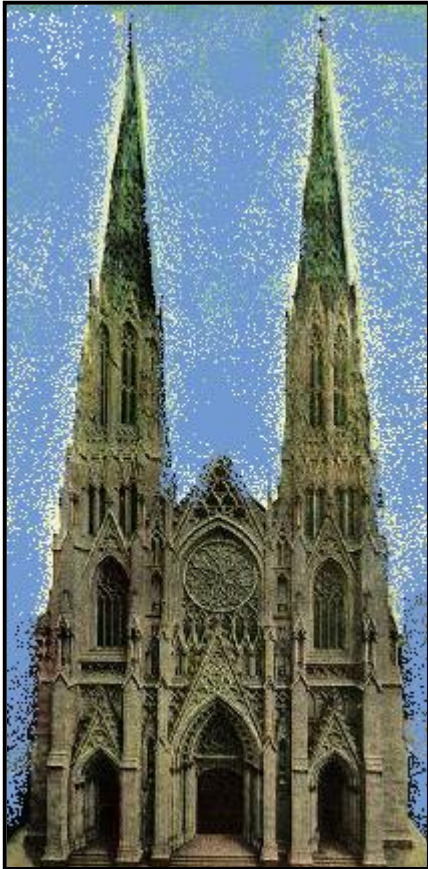


**Figure 54: Artist rendering of NYV-99-99 circa 2000. The anomalous circular design has sparked debate among archaeologists as to its purpose.**

rain damage over the centuries, but we can clearly see that this was a building unlike any other. Three levels remain in great condition, and they show a circular design. The different “levels” are almost difficult to define, because the delineation of space is much more fluid in this building than any other we have examined. In the center, there was a floor-to-ceiling column of open space. This is a manipulated form of the traditional open space characteristic of the *Classique Column Form*. We do

not have an answer for why this particular building was created in a way so divergent from the existing style. Some have suggested that it might reflect the most recent change in fashionable aesthetic, because NYC-99-99 does date as one of the latest features built in the city proper. Others suggest that it might be linked in some way to the circular design of certain Potomac City structures and could therefore be some kind of religious center. If this is true, we would expect to find religious sculptures or materials inside, which we have not yet found. All of these theories are equally plausible until we find evidence to the contrary, if such evidence even exists. While we may not know exactly why NYC-99-99 was designed the way it was, we do know something about what it was used for. It actually shares a function with the previously described structure NYC-83-62. Though the buildings are extremely different in morphology, they both seem to have served similar functions as storage and exhibit facilities for pieces of art and other antiquities. These include various sculptures, small figures, and even some paper and canvas materials that have persevered through the centuries. The extent of these finds and an overview of American art can be found in Chapter 12.

The other example of strange architecture is found further south on Manhattan Island (NYC-76-56). In contrast to the later trend of sleek gray structures built tall and slim to minimize ground coverage, the builders of this structure had no inclination for such practicality. It was constructed before the population of the city reached its highest levels, when space for building was less constricted. The design of NYC-76-56 could not be more different than its surroundings. As opposed to the *Needle Point* structures detailed above, this center collapsed in on itself almost vertically, making its interpretation more difficult. We cannot determine its



**Figure 55: NYC-76-56 is unlike the later Needle-Point structures that fill the city. It was probably a special ritual center for practicing primitive American religion.**

height to any accurate degree as of yet, but some elements of its design survived the collapse in large pieces. The first things that caught archaeologists' eyes were the building's curving doorways and windows. Several large slabs that were once window panes have been examined, and artist's renderings show an impressive result. There are not many indications of different levels inside the structure, indicating it had a large open internal space. This type of structure in a city so strained for real estate indicates that this site had very important ritual meaning to the people who built it and who lived in the city. The large open space would have inspired awe in a people accustomed to compartmentalization and efficient use of space. We do not know the details of American religion, but it is clear from the scale, ornamentation and apparent importance of this ritual building that NYC-76-56 was related to its practice in some way. It may even represent an older form of religious practice. It dates to circa 1780, while the Potomac City structures associated with ritual purposes came later.

## CHAPTER 7: GOVERNMENT & WARFARE

### Seat of Power

Nearly all the information we have about the way the Amerhican Empire was governed comes from excavations at Potomac City. As we discussed in the last chapter, the Royal Palace was the home of the Amerhican Emperor. The Palace was very large, with many separate rooms. This brings archaeologists to the conclusion that the Emperor lived there with a large court. We have very little evidence to go on about who exactly would have made up the Emperor's court, so we rely upon some conventions of court life in various cultures throughout history. The Emperor himself was the most important member of the court. Strangely, it does not appear that Amerhican Emperors were polygynous. Certain texts that will be discussed further in Chapter 11 suggest that Amerhicans were bound by monogamous marriages. Monogamy, especially in the most elite classes, is a relatively rare phenomenon in human history, and many scholars are skeptical that this was indeed the case in the Amerhican Empire. Further studies are currently underway in hopes of shedding more light on the subject. Even if the Amerhican Emperor was monogamous, his household probably supported a large extended family. This family might include his parents, wife, children, cousins, aunts, uncles or even grandparents. The Emperor might also have been responsible for housing his in-laws, or he might choose to do this to earn favor with his wife's family. The Palace could support many tens of people of varying closeness to the Emperor.

Apart from relatives, the Emperor probably employed many advisors. Most archaeologists believe that these advisors lived outside of the Royal Palace in PC-BJC7, which has since become popularly known as the Civic Complex. This is very likely, but the Emperor's advisors still probably spent a considerable amount of time in the Royal Palace. The Emperor and his court also required means of entertainment when not consulting advisers on political and religious issues. Musicians, bards, dancers and other types of performers are among all the notable courts of history. Finally, the Emperor required many servants, who lived and worked in the Palace preparing meals, cleaning and waiting upon members of the Emperor's family.

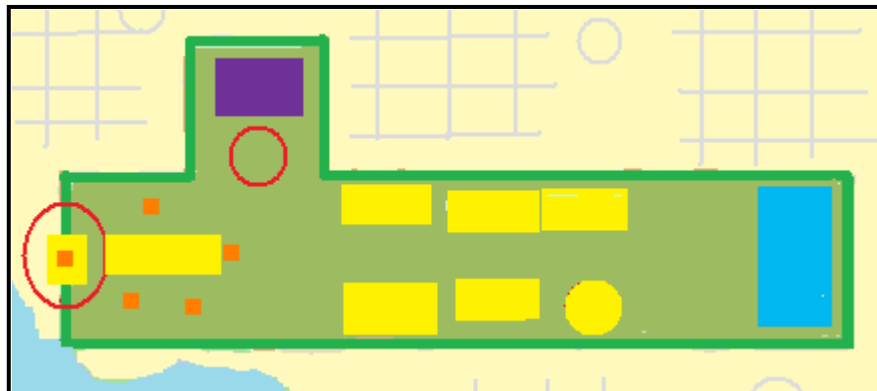
The location of the Royal Palace carries significant meaning with it. It allows archaeologists to infer the three main roles of the Plastic Age Amerhican Emperor:

- 1) Liaison with Divine Deities



- 2) Political Decision Maker
- 3) Military Commander

The lawns of the Royal Palace are attached to the ritual plaza. This represents his association with and responsibilities to the divine. The Palace is also the only part of the ritual core that



**Figure 56: The structures of the ritual core were for various purposes. The Royal Palace (purple) and Civic Complex (blue) were the site of political activity. Religious temples are shown in yellow, and the small orange squares show military monuments and altars.**

extends into the outlying residential areas. The northern, eastern and western windows of the Palace once provided a view of the residential Amerhican houses, while the southern windows looked out upon the ritual core. We can tell a great deal from this positioning

alone. The Amerhican Emperor was a liaison between the people and the divine deities honored by the ritual activities that took place in and around the plaza. While he probably did not preside over every ritual activity in the center, he was by far the best emissary to the gods. There is no indication that the Amerhicans actually thought their leader was divine himself. Instead, his position of leadership made him the best person to intercede on the people's behalf with the deities the Amerhicans worshipped. This included meeting with the priests of the various temples and performing rituals himself only on the most important of occasions.

The Royal Palace is just a few hundred meters from PC-BJC7, where the political decisions that created and maintained the Empire were made. This Civic Complex is the largest facility in all of Potomac City. It probably housed thousands of political advisers with expertise on various subjects. The modern reader should be able to recognize something of our own political organization in this model. Think of the Amerhican Emperor's political advisers as an amplified version of our own Grand Council system; one expert from each field serves as the representative for that field and speaks on issues pertaining to his or her expertise. The Emperor's advisers had to be much more numerous than our own representatives. Presumably there were ambassadors from all the various territories and states under Amerhican control.

Foreign ambassadors and advisers might have been among the crowd as well. The Civic Complex, with its many gathering facilities and several large auditoriums, was the place where the Emperor, advisers and ambassadors alike met to hash out procedures for running the Empire. The Emperor of course had the final say in whatever political decisions were to be made, but if he were a good leader he took into account the counsel provided by his many advisers.

The laws of the land were probably recorded on paper, though we have very little trace of paper products in the archaeological record. New laws and decrees were sent to all corners of the Empire from Potomac City via audio and video communication devices. The ambassadors from territories and states also returned to their respective constituencies to carry out the Emperor's bidding.

Once back in their own minor capitals, these ambassadors lived and worked in scaled-down structures that mimicked the design of the Imperial Capitol. We can easily recognize these structures because only a small number of buildings in each city or town exhibit Classique Column Form. This style of architecture demarks those buildings with civic functions. It is to these buildings that the ambassadors returned and carried out their duties. The Emperor only visited these outposts on very rare occasions. His many responsibilities in the capital city prevented many such excursions into the farthest flung regions of his empire.

The American Emperor's final duty was to lead his empire's military forces. Military memorials and temples to the war gods are glaringly present in the ritual core. They are concentrated on the western edge of the plaza. These are even closer to the Royal Palace than the Civic Complex which demonstrates again the connection between the Emperor and his military obligations. The Emperor clearly made the political decisions that sometimes called for military action. He might have decided one day to take over an additional territory that refused to join the empire willingly. This required military force being dispatched to the area in question. What we do not know is if the Emperor also rode out with his own military forces and led the charge. Most archaeologists think he certainly did not. If a conflict was close to the Imperial capital, he might have done so, but traveling to faraway places to conduct military campaigns first hand would have obliged the Emperor to neglect his vital duties at home. It is unlikely the Americans would want their strongest advocate with the gods to be missing during a time of war when appeasing the gods was more important than ever. The Emperor instead probably

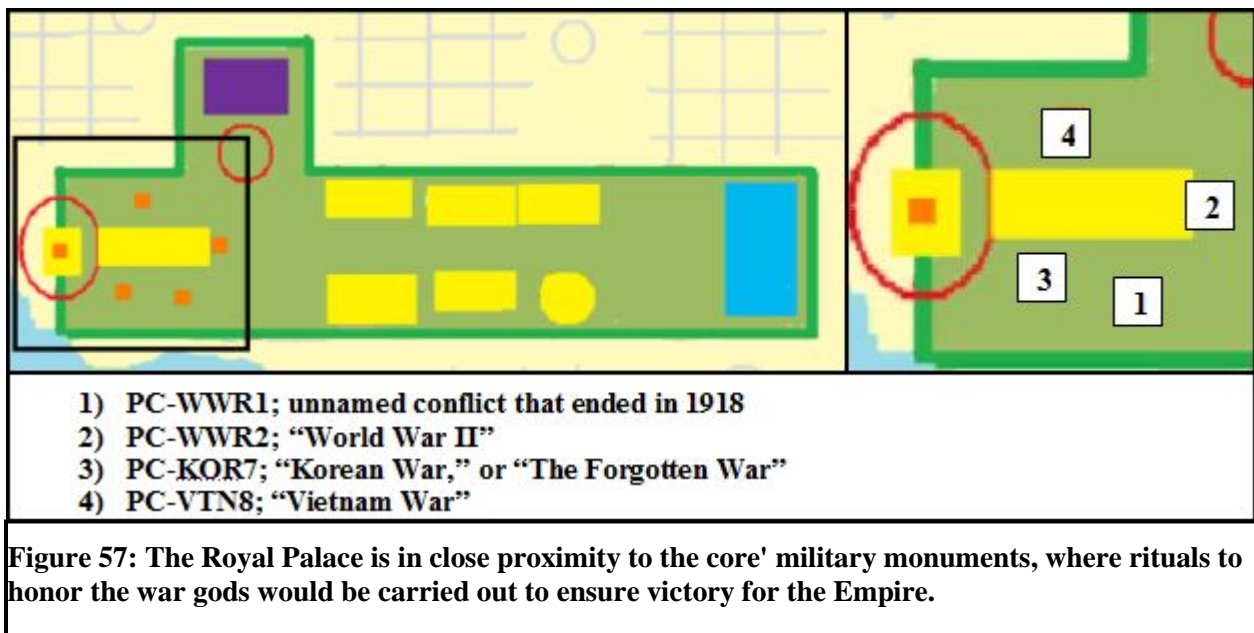
chose talented generals in whom he trusted the actual commanding of the military forces on the ground.

From the information provided thus far, the reader might surmise that the American Empire was a monarchy. Most archaeologists believe agree with that thought, but many are troubled by our inability to determine how the position was passed on from one Emperor to the next. If we base our understanding of the American Empire on similar models throughout human history, familial ascension is the most logical answer. In historical monarchies, the male offspring of the king or emperor takes over when his father dies or is no longer able to rule. It is easy to test this hypothesis in other areas of the world where they have found royal tombs. Genetic testing allows archaeologists understand how the various rulers were related. This would never work in modern times, because we no longer blindly pass on our genes to our offspring without modification. During the Plastic Age, Americans reproduced naturally as well, but genetic testing has still not provided us with any clues to succession for one very big reason – we cannot find the royal burials. Strangely, nowhere in the ritual core is there anything resembling a burial ground, let alone a royal tomb. Archaeologists have been perplexed by this mystery since the site's discovery. There are numerous burial sites outside the city boundaries, one of which has lent us most of what we know about American warriors, but none suggesting a royal occupant have yet been discovered. One popular theory as to why this might be is proposed by National University archaeologist Dr. Kathleen Sheppard. Sheppard proposes that the mortuary practices for a deceased royal might have been different than any other citizen of the empire. It is quite possible that the Emperor's body was partially or completely cremated after his death and the remains somehow incorporated into an important ritual. Without physical evidence we have no way of learning how the American Imperial power was transferred. The few surviving American texts make no mention of the process. We are left to assume that Emperors passed their title through their family line, though we have no hard evidence either way.

### **Commemorating Conflict**

War memorials are particularly useful to archaeologists because they are often inscribed with dates, and there is nothing more useful for establishing chronology than a concrete date carved into a concrete monument. Four such monuments have been excavated thoroughly over the past fifteen years, and each represents a separate war in which the American Empire fought.

Two will be discussed here and the remaining two will come up when we discuss the American warrior in a few pages. Without the dates on the monuments, it would be almost impossible to discern in what order the conflicts occurred. The styles vary greatly, and we do not have a large enough sample to be able to determine any trends in design. The monuments are built out of large blocks of granite with some marble touches or out of reflective steel. The materials were clearly obtained at some distant source and transported through much effort to the place where they still lie today. These monuments were very close to the Plastic Age coastline, and as a result they have suffered extensive damage. The stone inscriptions are very hard to read thanks to centuries of wind and water battering the rocky surfaces. Archaeologists have to take scans with field recording devices that look for anomalies in the microscopic wear pattern. A few dates and passages were miraculously preserved much better when one part of a monument fell against another, protecting the inscription between the two pieces for hundreds of years.



The earliest monument is catalogued as PC-WWR1 (#1 on map) in honor of a war that ended in 1918. This is one of the more damaged structures, and we were unable to get much more information from the inscriptions. It is a modest monument, a simple Rotunda Form structure with supporting columns and a hefty dome that once covered an altar area. It probably served also as a small temple, where offerings were made to the gods or to the ancestors who died in that war. Today only a few columns remain standing and the dome itself lies shattered next to the ruins of the base. It was only by accident that archaeologists even discovered the temple. The small size of the monument fits with what we know about the American Empire at

that time. The Empire was still growing, times were turbulent, and infrastructural developments



**Figure 59: Artist rendering of PC-WWR1**

would not take off for another thirty or forty years. Money and labor were directed to more pressing matters and only a small monument could be constructed to commemorate American warriors in this conflict.

The next monument is much larger and more centrally located than PC-WWR1. It sits at the western edge of the artificial pool (#2 on map) and the foundation that remains measures approximately 103 meters across at its longest point and 74 meters at its widest point. The monument has suffered extensive damage over the centuries, but its symmetry has allowed us to reconstruct what it looked like circa the year 2000. Its foundation, an oval shape, was covered in granite. This foundation was then edged with over fifty large, rectangular columns, each approximately 5 meters tall. These rectangular slabs were also made of granite, which had to be harvested at some distant location and transported to Potomac City. Each of the slabs was engraved with words, most of which have been worn away by the elements. Several inscriptions can still be read thanks to a stroke of luck. Some of the slabs fell directly forward against the granite foundation, protecting their inscriptions from Mother Nature over the past six centuries. Some of the quotes seem to be attributes to certain speakers, probably Emperors or religious leaders. Others have no accreditation. Archaeologists believe these to be excerpts from a religious text of some kind. We have no way of proving or disproving that theory as of yet, because written American documents are few and far between. The few we

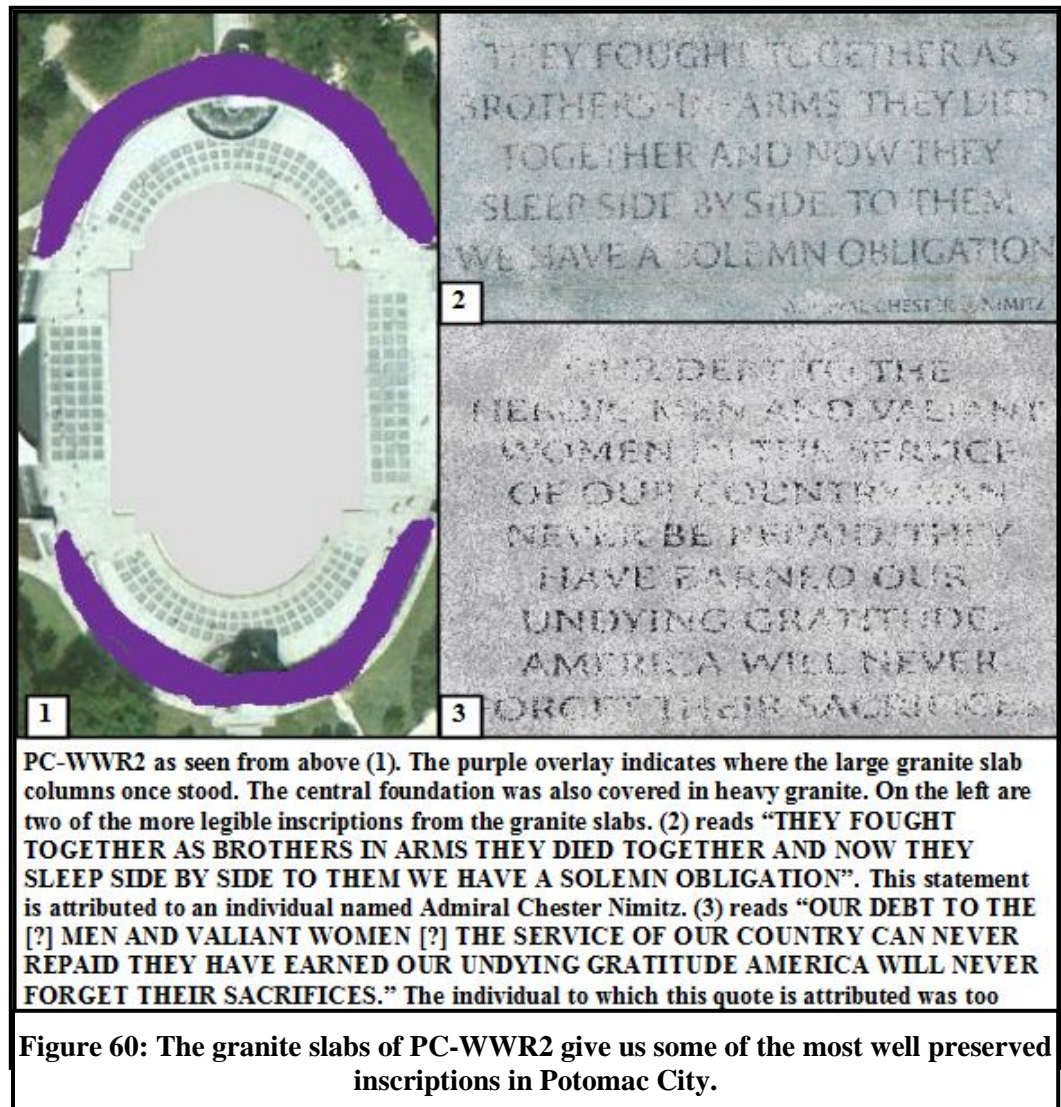


**Figure 58: Goddess seal found in the foundation of PC-WWR2. The goddess is holding a broken sword and standing on a helmet.**

have do not address religious matters, and none of the quotes engraved on the slabs of PC-WWR2 appear in any extant texts.

A very famous image from PC-WWR2 is that of the copper seal situated in the center of the monument’s foundation. This seal is remarkably well preserved, thanks to its being protected by several of the granite slabs all these years. The seal depicts the figure of a goddess, holding a broke sword in her hands and standing upon a helmet. The phrase “World War II” is emblazoned on the seal, which archaeologists believe is the name Amerhicans gave the conflict being commemorated with this monument. The goddess could represent several things. Some suggest she is a patron goddess of Amerhica, shown in a victorious stance. Some suggest she is a war or victory goddess, which the Amerhicans are honoring with an image at the monument in thanks for their triumph. Without any other context, is difficult to say for sure. Either way the

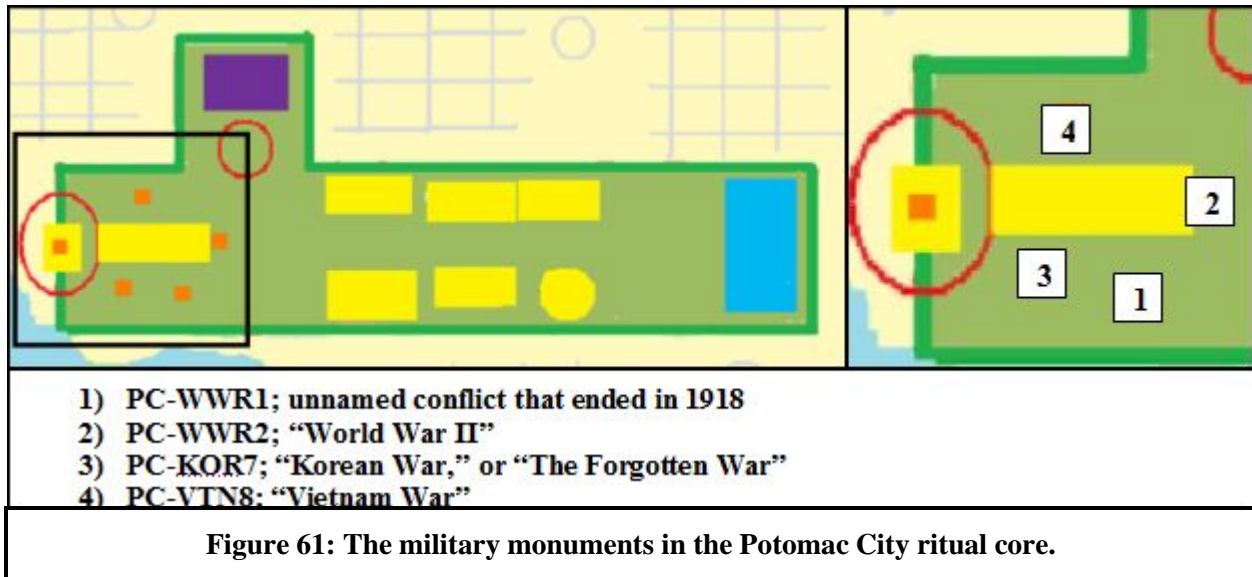
monument is yet another example of Amerhicans’ honoring state and divine purposes with one structure.



**Figure 60: The granite slabs of PC-WWR2 give us some of the most well preserved inscriptions in Potomac City.**

## The American Warrior

The remaining two monuments allow archaeologists a rare glimpse at the warriors who fought in the American Empire's armies. We are able to document not only the exact dates of major military conflicts but also the number and names of casualties. This is a rare occurrence in any archaeological record. Seldom do we ever learn the names of common persons; but two monuments in Potomac City give us just that.



These two monuments are similar in design and commemorate wars waged only a decade apart. The earlier of the two, is called PC-KOR7 (#3 on map) and commemorates a conflict that lasted from 1950 to 1953. One inscription calls this the "Korean War," while another labels it the "Forgotten War."

Archaeologists cannot account for the discrepancy in nomenclature, but they are certain that only one military undertaking is depicted at this site. There are two parts to this monument. The first is a circular wall made of black polished granite and inscribed on every inch with names. Again, the circle here is ritually significant.



**Figure 62: This artist rendering uses computer generation to recreate what the PC-KOR7 soldier statues once stood as though walking through the field.**

Archaeologists are certain these names belong to those American warriors that died in the Forgotten War. The wall has suffered damage over the years, but since the entire surface was covered with names, there is no elaborate message to piece back together. We can make sense of the just the pieces. The second part of the monument is a series of larger-than-life statues of American warriors that once stood as though walking towards the monument. Ten sculptures have been excavated, and scans indicate several more at still waiting to be uncovered. Both the names carved into the wall and the depiction of individual warriors speak to the importance American military forces places on each and every person.

The other similar monument is just across the artificial pool from PC-KOR7. It is known as PC-VTN8, and it commemorates a war that took place between 1965 and 1975. A simple inscription lists the dates and labels the monument in honors of the “Vietnam War.” It was a lucky thing archaeologists even found the monument. It was originally constructed partially below ground. A walkway was cut into the earth and the granite was mounted on one side of the trench. Over the centuries, water and earth filled that trench, wearing many of the names away. By the time archaeologists were conducting scans in the area, the site was completely buried. Luckily a team of geologists was surveying that field to supplement an archaeological report with soil layer analysis. They noticed the irregularities on the scan and immediately notified

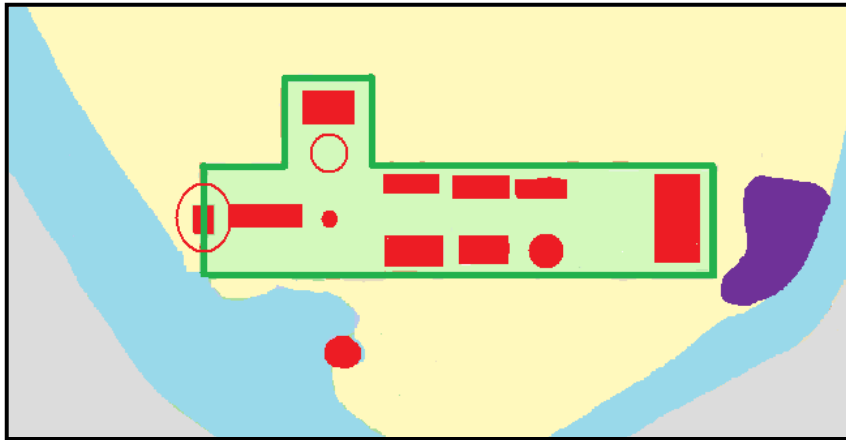


**Figure 63: Many names of individual warriors are still legible on PC-VTN8**

archaeologists that something very interesting was buried in that nondescript section of the ritual plaza. This monument is just like PC-KOR7 in that it is black polished granite covered in names. Approximately seventy percent of the inscriptions have been worn completely away, but enough remain to tell archaeologists that many individual warriors were honored with this monument.

Interestingly, as time progressed in the lifetime of the empire, the demographics of those listed among the casualties of war begin to change. Even between the





**Figure 64: Archaeologists discovered and partially excavated a submerged cemetery on the western edge of Potomac City (purple)**

Forgotten and Vietnam Wars, there is a noticeable increase in female names included in the monuments. This is corroborated by the few skeletal samples we have. On the far western limits of Potomac City, far away from the ritual core, once stood a special burial

ground. Unfortunately this cemetery was a mere stone's throw from the Plastic Age coastline, and the rising sea levels soon made it an underwater site. The flat, low-lying field was one of the first features to be swallowed up by the sea. At first archaeologists were wary of attempting to bring mortuary remains from this cemetery to the surface. It is hard enough to excavate human remains on dry land, but graves covered by over a meter of water are another story entirely. Then a scouting expedition was conducted by National University archaeologists. During a series of dives, they recorded the name and date on all tombstones which they could easily uncover by hand. They recorded this information and also brought back several artifacts they found on the surface. The tombstone dates indicated the cemetery contained remains spanning over one hundred years. The artifacts told archaeologists that this was probably a cemetery for the interment of warriors. With so much potential information to gain, archaeologists quickly got over their tentative approach. They began by conducting scans to location the densest concentration of burials. They specifically looked for areas where later burials were deposited on previous graves, because they could gather the most information about trends across time from such

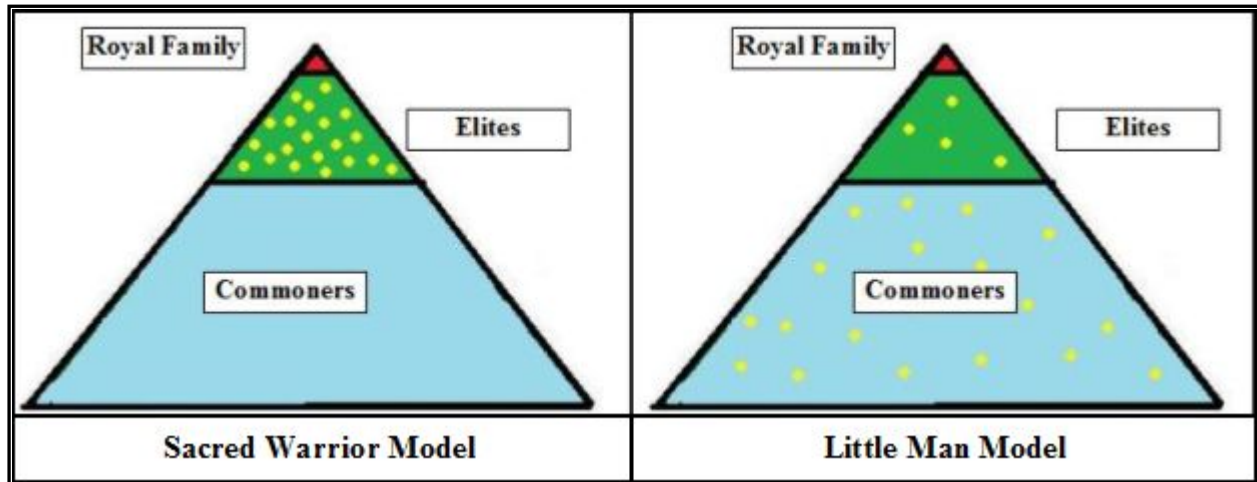


**Figure 65: This skull, pulled from one of the lowest layers of the Potomac City cemetery shows signs of a violent death. Archaeologists believe this to be an American warrior who died in battle.**

vertical excavations. Seventeen such columns have been dug to date, and they reveal interesting information about the demographics of American warriors.

The skeletal evidence from the earliest conflicts indicates that nearly all remains showing violent injuries were men. Some injuries were very obvious traumas, like the crude amputation of a limb or a cranium shattered perimortem. In other cases it takes careful examinations to discover the faint scar where the bullet grazed the bone. Still others show no damage at all, which probably indicates their injuries were to a part of the body that has long since decayed. Towards the second half of the American Empire's reign, there appeared to be many more female remains which exhibited the same type of injuries. Some archaeologists initially thought this was just the result of it becoming more acceptable to bury spouses and other female family members in the same sacred ground as the male warriors. Then archaeologists began taking a closer look at the wound patterns on the female remains. These studies came to the conclusion that the women had not just been buried there as female companions but had died fighting just as their male counterparts had. This realization was a groundbreaking one for American archaeologists, who have had little opportunity to explore the exact nature of social and political interactions between the sexes. One thing we have come to learn for certain is that the American Empire was one of the few Plastic Age societies that not only allowed female military service, but actually celebrated it alongside that of their male warriors.

There are two major schools of thought regarding how we interpret American concepts of the individual – male or female – in military service. Some archaeologists have suggested that only those that belonged to an elevated social status could become warriors. This has come to be known as the Sacred Warrior Model. They cite in the defense of this theory that the special attention paid to the warriors in special burial ground probably indicates similarly special treatment in life. Archaeologists of this opinion look at the inclusion of the images of warriors in PC-KOR7 and deduce that military service was an honor too sacred for the commoner to bear. They also point to the personal names on PC-KOR7 and PC-VTN8 and argue that these are not commoners, but rather those elite who became warriors. There are absolutely no commoners' names known from nearly all other prehistoric and historic sites and civilizations. This is striking evidence in support of the Sacred Warrior Model. Those who subscribe to this theory identify warriors as members of a class which ranked above commoners. The other widely held belief has been termed the Little Man Model. Archaeologists on this side of the argument claim that the



**Figure 66: The Sacred Warrior Model proposes that warriors belonged to the elite class of society, while the Little Man Model suggests that warriors came from all classes. The latter assumes the Americans had an appreciation for the individual commoner unprecedented in history.**

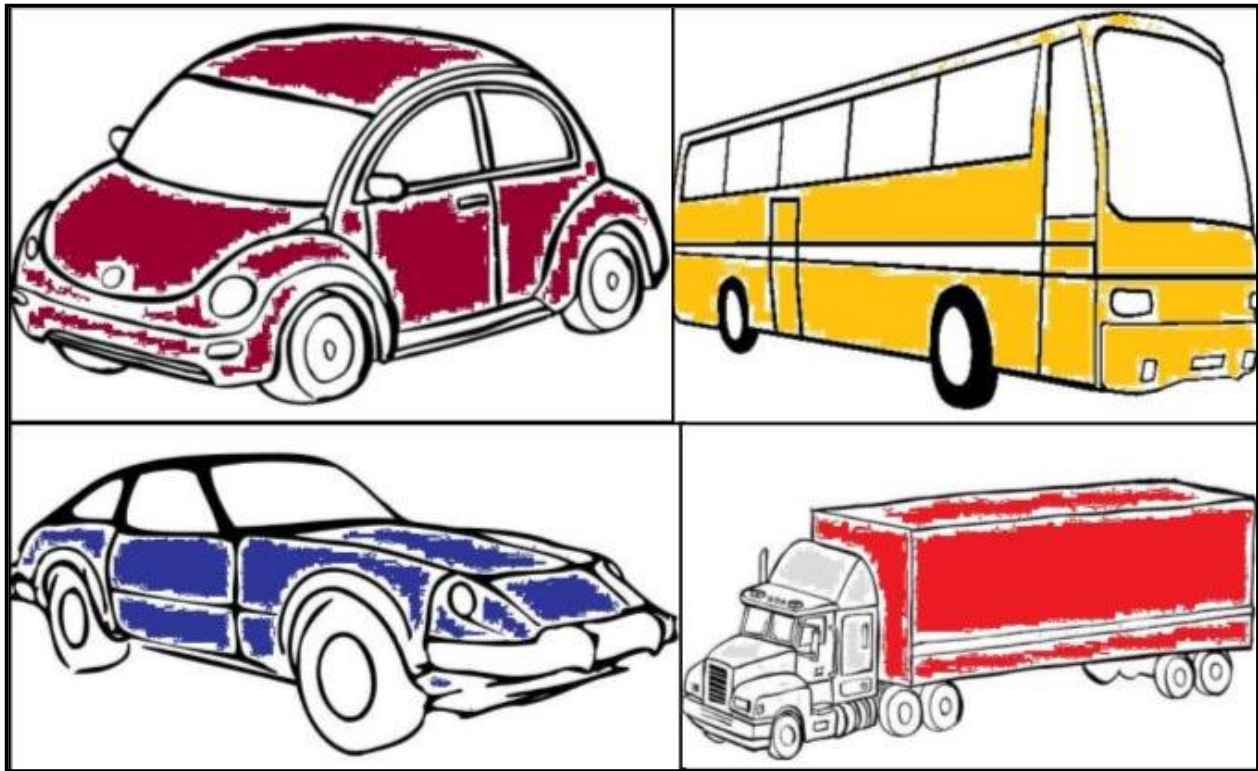
names were those of common people who were injured or killed during the course of conflict. They do not see this as strong evidence that warriors belonged to a separate social class, let alone an exalted one. Instead they view the commemoration of such names as the result of an American ideology that greatly valued the commoner and the individual. Archaeologists sharing this opinion believe the names carved into military monuments indicate citizens who elevated their social status somewhat through military service because they were valued as individuals who sacrificed for the good of the state.

The empire continued to grow and thrive, and as more and more territories came under the American Emperor's rule, his political, religious and military powers only became more important. The growing empire also required infrastructural improvements to make the movement of goods, people – and more often, troops – easier and more expedient. It was during the 1950s that Americans began to focus on more and better forms of transportation, and this only helped them spread their political and military influence to all corners of the continent.

## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

### Getting from A to B

The Americans had several ways of navigating their expansive cities. Their transportation technology was certainly primitive and inefficient in comparison to our own, but for the Plastic Age, the Americans were on the cutting edge. The most common means of transportation was personal manual vehicles. The carcasses of thousands of these vehicles still sit in the city streets where archaeologists can easily observe their design. Smaller versions are more common in the urban centers, but some studies in rural areas have turned up larger, more powerful models. These vehicles were designed to travel on concrete and macadam streets. The



**Figure 67: Personal manual vehicles varied from small, several passenger cars (left) to larger vehicles for transporting people (top right) and goods (bottom right).**

streets crisscrossed every bit of the city, creating a very organized grid pattern. Many of the streets are only wide enough for one personal vehicle to pass through at one time. The single lane streets eventually intersect with double, triple and even quadruple lane throughways. The most complicated grid system can be found in New York City. Potomac City has a less organized grid system. Its streets are designed in various circular patterns, and there is little to no personal

manual vehicle traffic within the ritual plaza area. Because New York City was such an economic hub, it makes sense that it required more elaborate ways of moving people and goods



**Figure 68: New York City streets, highlighted here in yellow, ran in a grid pattern throughout the city.**

in, out and through the center.

The many remains of personal manual vehicles that still line the city streets have all decayed too much to give us much information. We can look at their general shape and even make something of the motor configuration but not

much else. Luckily we have been able to find several examples that are able to tell us much more; we found one miraculous collection of vehicles that escaped the damaging effects of nature's elements. Between ten and fifteen vehicles were left in the ground-floor parking level of a large commercial facility in New York City. Parts of the building collapsed not long after the city was abandoned. The collapse could have destroyed all evidence of the vehicles, but instead it created a small pocket of space that was completely sealed off from the outside world. The vehicles sat protected in this convenient time capsule until archaeologists began conducting scans in the area. The archaeologists were actually collecting data on foundation dimensions, but they ended up finding one of the only intact caches of American transportation technology in the city.

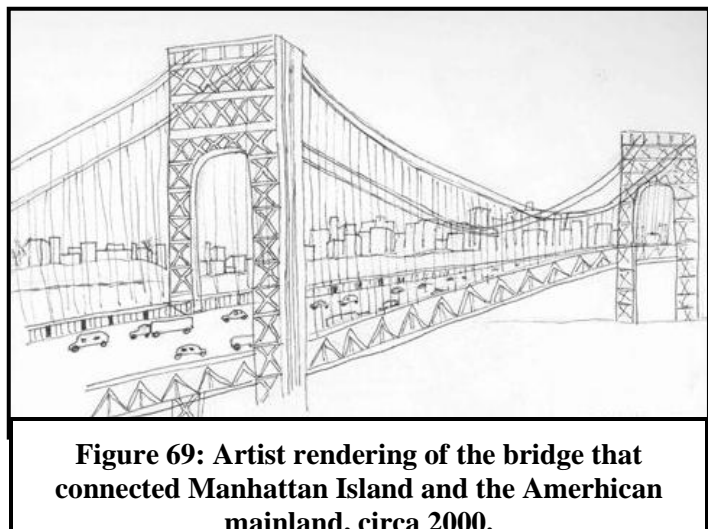
As you will recall from Chapter 5, these personal manual vehicles were powered using fossil fuels. Each vehicle was fitted with a combustion engine in its front quadrant. Processed oil was held in a tank, with a valve that allowed the oil to drain into the engine. Complex mechanical devices in the engine took in the oil and created a controlled explosion, the energy from which was then used to drive other parts of the machine into action. Continued sparks and explosions kept the engine running and propelled the machine forward. This whole process is

very inefficient by modern standards; American engines were approximately one third as efficient as our own models.

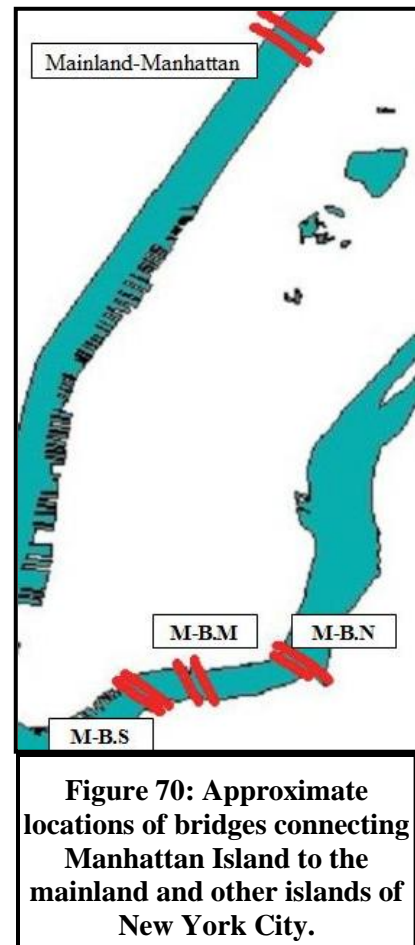
The American personal manual vehicles were not like the Independent Compartment Cars we have in our own cities. Our ICCs are controlled and operated by a computer system that automatically directs the course of travel based on the address typed into the program when you enter the car. We do not actually steer the vehicle, control its speed, or meddle with the course it chooses. The American system was quite the opposite. There was no automated track along which their vehicles traveled. An actual American person controlled the course of their vehicle and was responsible for guiding it safely through the complicated urban grid system. You can immediately see the drawbacks of such a system. Every time an American got behind the wheel of their personal manual vehicle, they had to know exactly where they were going, the most efficient way to get to their destination based on traffic patterns at that exact moment in time, and they had to navigate amidst a sea of other personal manual vehicles all being controlled by different individuals. Can you imagine what would happen if we suddenly adopted such a chaotic system? The idea is laughable. Still, this was the daily reality for the millions of Americans that operated personal manual vehicles.

### **Over and Under**

Seeing as how New York City was built across several islands and personal manual vehicles could neither swim nor fly, bridges were a must for the Americans. Bridges allowed traffic to come and go from the mainland and to the other sections western and southernmost sections of the city. The large foundations of many bridges still survive today, a testament to the tenacity of their Plastic Age design. Aerial scans have detected the remains of an impressive eight major bridges, one of which connects Manhattan with the mainland and the rest of which lead to other islands to the west and south. The Mainland-Manhattan bridge was quite



massive in its day, measuring 1,015-1,215 meters across a large river. Two large towers still stand where they did 500 years ago, several hundred meters from each shoreline. Civil engineers estimate that those supports could have held aloft a roadway large enough for two or three lanes of traffic traveling in both directions. The main support of the bridge came from an extremely complex network of steel cordage – engineers’ estimates put it at over 15,000 kilometer’s worth if stretched end to end. Over the years, with no bodies left to perform maintenance, the extreme temperature shifts between summer and winter each year caused the metal in the bridge to condense and expand. Eventually, weak points in the steel cordage gave way and snapped like shoelaces. Over the next century or two, all but the concrete foundations followed suit and fell into the water. Despite its impressive magnitude, the bridge lasted only about 200 years after New York City was abandoned.



All three of the Manhattan-Brookland bridges are also two-tower bridges like the Mainland-Manhattan example shown above. The northernmost such bridge, labeled M-B.N by archaeologists, was constructed using the oldest building materials of all the large bridges in the city. It was built sometime between the year 1880 and 1910, and was probably the first of its style.

In addition to bridges, the Americans dug underground tunnels that allowed personal manual vehicles to dive beneath the major waterways. All of these tunnels are now completely submerged, and all save one have completely collapsed. Two tunnels connected the mainland and Manhattan (the one to the north dubbed T:M-M.N and the one to the south T:M-M.S). Archaeologists do not exactly know why the

Americans chose to build tunnels in addition to bridges. The issue has elicited theories of varying plausibility from professionals throughout the field. The tunnels required many more man-hours to complete. Their construction was far more dangerous considering the risk of cave-ins and ventilation problems for the thousands of workers needed to complete the project. The tunnels all date to the same twenty year period from 1940-1960. They were functional for less than one hundred years before rising sea levels shut them down. Building such costly and yet ultimately useless structures is an unexplainable decision on the part of the Americans.

### **Beneath the Ground Beneath Our Feet**

An intricate network of tunnels also traversed New York City's underbelly. Excavations of a similar system in Potomac City have been undertaken in the past five years as well. These were not tunnels like those described above. Instead of personal manual vehicles, another transportation form entirely utilized this network of underground passageways. It was yet another fortunate accident that resulted in archaeologists discovering the subterranean tunnels. Around the year 2592, the first major looting of American sites began to occur. The Grand Council had commissioned this report the year before, an act that brought American antiquities to the forefront on the black market. Artifacts from newly-discovered sites were appearing in shady Arcanadian shops and there were no procedures for seizing the objects or prosecuting the guilty parties. Eventually, the Grand Council passed a series of laws which became known as the American Antiquity Protection Codes. In addition to setting our procedure and punishments for those who traded in illicit American artifacts, the codes also established an American Antiquities Enforcement Squad. The AAES became responsible for protecting sites known to be easy prey for looters. It was during an AAES boat patrol off New York City's coast in March of 2597 that officers noticed something suspicious. An unauthorized boat was anchored just outside the city, with no one on board. After radioing the National University outpost to make sure no archaeological excavations were going on in the area, the AAES officers staked out the boat and waited.

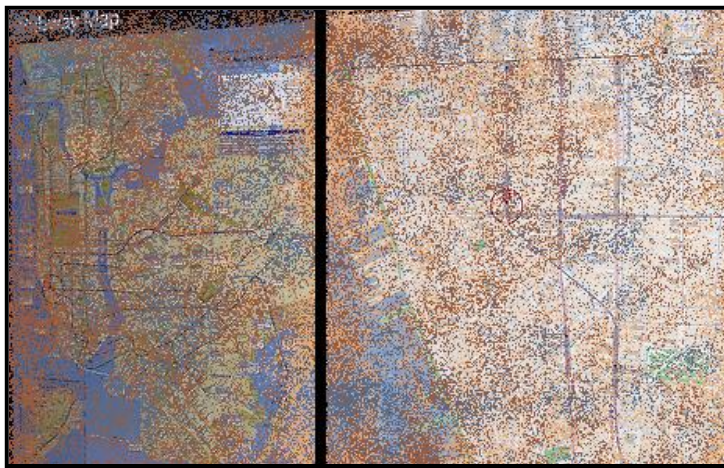
After nearly an hour, two men in complete diving equipment surfaced with a bulging sack of stolen American artifacts. The men were taken into AAES custody and soon traded their information for a lesser sentence. The men told of a vast network of tunnels that they had discovered beneath New York City. They found the tunnels when diving for American artifacts



to sell on the black market. Their illegal undertakings forced them to work under cover of night, but they soon found they could use the tunnels to travel from one part of the city to another completely unseen. This allowed them to expand their business, and they confessed to stealing hundreds of artifacts over the course of three years. While investigations revealed that most of the stolen artifacts were long gone in international markets, archaeologists were at least able to benefit from the discovery of the subterranean tunnels.

Since the AAES bust, several teams of experienced divers have conducted missions with the purpose of charting the tunnel network. Many of the tunnels are partially caved-in, but divers can still traverse through kilometers upon kilometers of tunnel space. This tunnel system was used for transporting significant numbers of people via large compartment vehicles. These vehicles were more like our own ICC's than were the personal manual vehicles, but there are some key differences. These vehicles were composed of many compartments attached to one another and powered by one engine at each end. They ran along an electric track, much like our ICC's. At certain points along the track, there were platforms where the trains stopped. People entered and exited the platforms via a staircase that connected it with the surface.

We do not yet know if these tunnels extend beyond the city limits, but one exciting discovery does tell us much about the tunnels within New York City. It was on the wall at one of the platforms that divers found a remarkably preserved paper document – a map of the tunnels



**Figure 72: Divers surveying the tunnels discovered this map encased in plastic on the wall.**

that also showed the locations of more boarding platforms. It is very rare that documents survive so long in the archaeological record, especially when water is involved. Sometimes being completely submerged actually helps preservation; the absence of light and oxygen halts decay. This particular map was in a plastic frame mounted on the wall, with a thin plastic covering. The covering was not water-

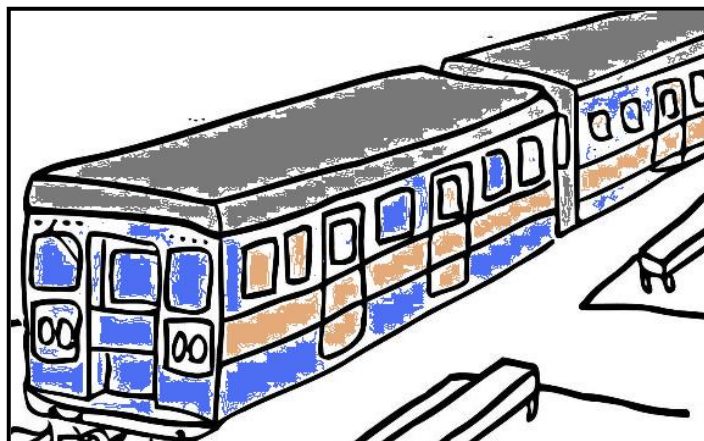
tight, so the document did become completely saturated, but the plastic covering protected the paper from being torn and destroyed by the motion of the water. The document is still not

pristine. Some small pieces are missing and some of the text is blurred beyond recognition. Nonetheless this discovery has provided us valuable information. First of all, it displays the extensive network of tunnels as they were 500 years ago. We could get a pretty accurate picture of where the tunnels went by scans and diving expeditions, but we much prefer being handed the information in one nice, neat document. This map is also the only reason we know names of the different districts of the city (e.g. Manhattan, Bronks, Kweens, and Brookland). These terms appear in the names of platform stops in those areas. The document has been photographed and scanned in great detail, but experts disagree about the best way to extract it. The risk of damaging it while en route to a research facility is extremely high. At the moment, it remains exactly where it has been for the past 500 years, where the same conditions which have protected it thus far are allowed to continue their work.

The tunnels are cut into deep levels of otherwise undisturbed soil and rock strata. They were dug long before rising seal levels became a threat to the city's infrastructure. As the water did encroach, the Americans were forced to take action to preserve the tunnels. Divers have photographed large networks of pumping systems, supposedly designed to battle the thousands of liters of water which would have deluged the subterranean regions of the island. Kilometers and kilometers of open tunnel space required pumping. At some point the water table would have risen to such a degree that the work became constant and desperate. Eventually the Americans' battle with the rising water failed. The pump systems show violent damage where the pressure became too much for their strong steel reinforcements; they burst into pieces. Some exploded with such velocity that pieces drove themselves a meter deep into the concrete of the tunnel's

opposing wall.

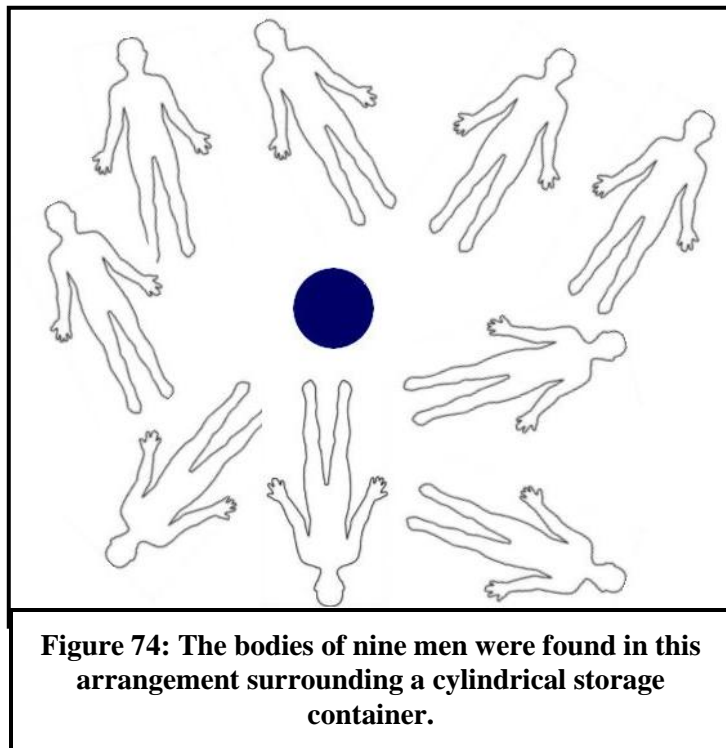
While many of the tunnels have since caved under the pressure of the city above – erosion and other effects of water damage only exasperating the situation – our divers have managed to explore, map, photograph and make visual recordings of those areas which are safe for human exploration. Plans to send underwater robotic rovers are



**Figure 73: This depiction of a tunnel car was taken from an American text known as the Children's Codex (see Chapter 11).**

currently awaiting approval from the National University. The large compartment trains are still waiting silently where they were presumably abandoned. Archaeologists believe that the abandonment of this transportation system was gradual and planned. We know this because most of the compartment trains are all sitting in the tunnels in or near one central terminal. It is likely that when Americans stopped using the subterranean tunnels, all vehicles were left at that central platform. The vehicles were thus not in route when the water filled the tunnels. If this did happen, we would expect to find the cars at various platforms. We would also expect to find a significant amount of human remains within the cars themselves, as those unfortunate travelers inside were quickly drowned.

The tunnels are not without evidence of human remains. The remains of nine different bodies have been discovered by divers. They were discovered in a tight grouping near a dead end in the tunnel, which was created when a large section of the roof collapsed. Skeletal analysis of their cranial injuries suggests that all the individuals were victims of the cave in. Luckily they were not buried by the collapse, or we might not have found them. Instead they were probably struck down by smaller chunks of debris. Divers excavated these bodies and they have since been transported to the National University research facility. Researches at the center have concluded that the diver's original theory was correct – the collapse was cause of death for all



twelve individuals. Eight of the nine show severe head wounds, while the remaining one exhibits major limb and spine fractures which incapacitated him instantly. All were males over the age of fifty. We currently have no explanation for why these nine men were hanging around in the underground tunnels. All evidence suggests the tunnels were exclusively for train traffic, not foot travel. Divers have not yet uncovered any contextual evidence which can help us answer these questions. The bodies

themselves were only preserved thanks to their being covered by a thick layer of concrete dust and muddy silt. The former mixed with the water to form a kind of natural cast, which protected the bodies as they were buried by subsequent layers of silt. Any material that may have been around these individuals when they died has since rotted away, save one item. Near the center of the area in which the bodies were found divers found what was once a cylindrical metal storage container of some kind. Some small pieces of miscellaneous and unidentifiable debris have been pulled from the interior surface of the container. Chemical analysis reveals trace elements of carbon, which suggest to us that something was burned inside the metal cylinder. As to the purpose or content of what was burned, it is still too early to determine. Fortunately the carbon does allow us date the material in the container to the year 2040-2050. This is the only site inside the tunnels where human remains have been discovered, but robotic rover excavations could turn up more interesting finds.

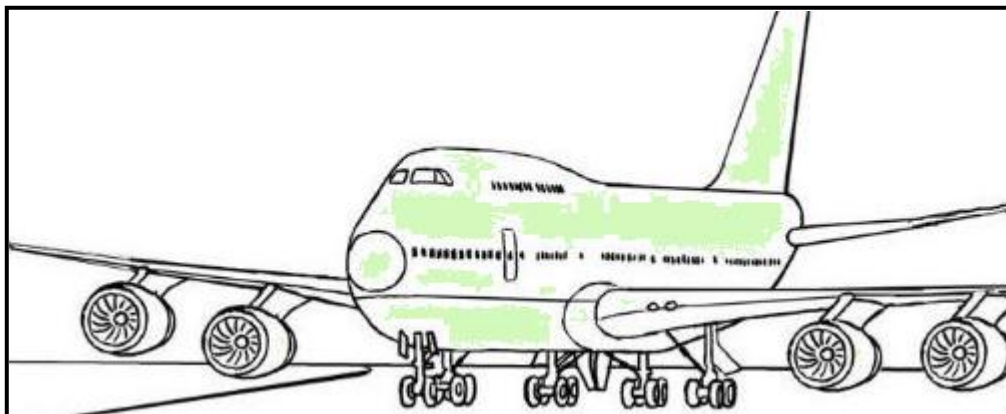
### **Other Urban Centers and Beyond**

Other large passenger vehicles were also common in the American Empire. Travel to and from the major urban centers was important to commerce and recreation. Elaborate track networks extend from New York City and Potomac City and stretch out into all corners of the empire. We have not found the actual vehicles that followed these tracks, we assume they are much like the trains that traversed the subterranean tunnels. The tracks in the tunnels are nearly identical to the ones that run on the surface. We can conclude from this evidence that the above-ground passenger cars closely resembled their subterranean counterparts. We have yet to find any areas used to store or maintain these trains, though such facilities must have existed somewhere close to the city. There is one logical explanation for why we have not found any of the above-ground passenger trains, and it has to do with the nature of the city's abandonment. If a sudden traumatic catastrophe hit the city, inhabitants would not have time to. We would expect to find objects where they were at the moment of the catastrophe. If the abandonment gradually occurred over several years, what we find makes more sense. The train cars were used to transport people out of the city. After a certain point in time the last passengers were taken out of the city, and routes back were discontinued. The train cars were expensive to build anew. The ones that had been used in New York City were probably transferred to other areas or dismantled

for parts to build new models. We cannot know until we excavate other urban centers and find evidence that can direct our future theories.

### **Taking to the Skies**

Evidence of extensive air travel has been discovered outside of New York City and Potomac City, to the surprise of most American archaeologists. Though still primitive and undoubtedly inefficient in machination, air travel was certainly among the American transportation repertoire. The remains of various flying vessels have been discovered just off the modern coastline of New York City. Suspicions of something important were first aroused by the presence of a vast, flat area covered with a thick layer of concrete. This created an artificial plain covering approximately eighteen square kilometers. Archaeologists' interest was piqued, and teams soon dispensed to investigate the mysterious artificial plain. Several experts in varying fields tagged along, such as architects, urban planners, underwater archaeologists, even a scholar in prehistoric sports and recreation. Dives immediately started bringing back small pieces of metal which were unfamiliar to the experienced excavators on the site. After several days of confusing finds, divers finally came across a nearly intact flight vehicle. The primitive airplane was discovered less than a hundred meters from the artificial plain, which archaeologists realized was an airport tarmac. The vehicle measures 33.5 meters from nose to tail and registers an impressive wingspan of 35.6 meters.<sup>22</sup> This airplane was meant for the transportation of both people and cargo items. The lower levels of the aircraft's body were devoted to storage space, while the upper levels were for passenger travel. The plane is heavily damaged on its front end.



**Figure 75: This depiction of an American airplane was taken from the Children's Codex (see Chapter 11).**

Some archaeologists have come to the conclusion that it probably crashed in an attempt to leave the city. The problem with this theory is

that there are no human remains in the plane and no sign that it was carrying any cargo either. We would expect to find some evidence that the plane was full of people and goods if it was leaving the city. The more likely explanation is that the plane sustained damage during a previous mishap and was being stored on the tarmac for repair. It was then abandoned, and the rising sea levels swept it out to the place where archaeologists discovered it. There has not been a lot of research done on Plastic Age aerial travel. This is the only American site of its kind that has been excavated, and there are still many more questions than answers. To what extent did Americans use air travel? Was commercial flight a new concept, or was it a routine means of getting from A to B? Does the example we found represent one of the first or one of the last in the line of American flying machines? More investigations are needed before archaeologists can even come close to answering these questions.

## CHAPTER 9: TRADE NETWORKS & ECONOMY

### A City of Consumers

With all of forms of transportation at their disposal, it comes as no surprise that the Americans maintained a large network of trading routes. New York City served as the heart of this network, acting as a hub of both travel and trade. New York City was certainly the place where items and people came and went each and every day, but it was not the place where any significant goods were produced or manufactured. Surveys have not found any evidence to indicate any agricultural land or large manufacturing plants were located within the city. The surrounding areas might prove more fruitful when excavations have a chance to explore them to a greater extent. The economy and trading scene of New York City must have been based on more abstract exchanges. A service industry, for example, leaves no evidence in the archaeological record. New York City certainly did not export as many material goods as other major urban centers of the American Empire. The extremely large population of the city still required that goods, both raw and assembled, find their way to the city.

The city's most obvious need was food. Americans required raw food products to supply both homes and restaurants. There is no agricultural land or pasture available in the densely-built islands that constitute New York City. All raw food stuffs had to be imported from areas of the empire where agriculture could be practiced. Many of the crops Americans relied upon for survival required timely harvesting and careful storage to prevent them from going bad before they arrived on the dinner plate. Food had to be gathered from other parts of the empire and shipped expediently into the city, put into the market place, distributed to homes and restaurants, prepared and served all within a relatively short amount of time.

There are areas outside of New York City which were capable of producing agricultural products to the city, but the immediate area certainly could not have produced enough to satisfy the demands of hundreds of millions of people. More raw foods stuffs had to come from more distant locations. Food had to be transported into the city via the fastest means possible. Much was probably transported in large personal manual vehicles. These vehicles could enter the city and take food directly to marketplaces, homes or restaurants. Above-ground trains could travel at faster speeds and on more direct routes, but we do not have any examples of these to test for traces of food stuffs. If food needed to be transported to the city quickly from far away, the trains

were a smarter choice. One drawback to transporting via trains is that upon arriving in the city, the shipments needed to be unloaded into personal manual vehicles anyway to be ferried to their final destination. Once the vital need of food was met, the hundreds of millions of Americans living in New York City needed other kinds of goods; and hundreds of millions of people need a continuous supply of just about everything. The city lacked any major facilities for producing manufactured items; everything had to be imported. The sheer volume of goods that New York City imported each day would astound the modern reader. This scale of trade required a great amount of capital investment and a great deal of influence in the region. The fact that New York City could afford to engage in such trade means that this city was extremely wealthy.

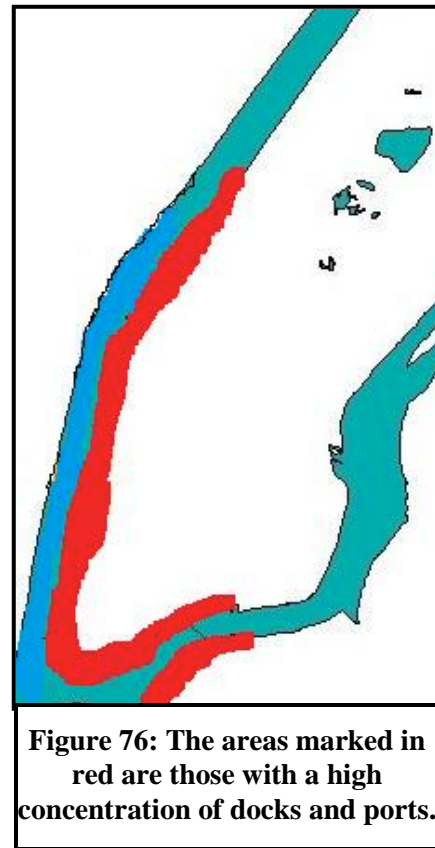
### **Beyond the Domestic Market**

The islands of New York City were accessible from the mainland via multiple bridges and underground tunnels. These routes are a clear sign that New York received goods and people from other American territories; domestic trade was a vital aspect of the healthy Empire. Even more interesting are the extensive nautical facilities found along the Plastic Age coastline of Manhattan Island. That New York City had an active sea trade is impossible to ignore. The Americans' ocean trading might have even extended to other empires and continents. Based on certain art artifacts discussed in Chapter 12, we know the Americans had access to foreign markets. International trade networks were established for some time before the collapse. The Americans were separated from the major Plastic Age powers of Urope and China by vast oceans. Trade with these powerful entities was only possibly via air or sea travel. We still know very little about the Americans' flight technology, as mentioned briefly in Chapter 8. For now, we will focus our attention on the extent of sea trade.

There was barely a meter of Manhattan Island's coast that was not perforated with docks and ports. The evidence of these facilities can be seen by aerial scans even today. They range in size from small docks equipped to handle small personal watercraft to huge ports ready to receive vessels twenty stories tall. The larger piers are surrounded by massive storage warehouses where tons of goods were unloaded from the watercraft and stored to await the next league of their journey. The industries of importing and exporting employed hundreds of thousands of Americans. Individuals were needed to man the ships, unload and store the material, reload outgoing vehicles, and load the land vehicles that took the imports to their



ultimate destinations. These are only the manual labor positions required to make the import/export operation run smoothly. The personnel also had to include professional merchants who traded in international markets and any numerous intermediary merchants employed by corporations and companies. It was a complicated network to oversee, made all the more so by the Americans general lack of digital management. Robotic technology was only in its infant stages when the American Empire collapsed. As a result, they never got to take full advantage of digital management systems which could have streamlined their import/export processes. A limited amount of the machinery was run by preliminary robotic technology. Records of incoming and outgoing shipments were probably maintained on computer databases, though we cannot recover any evidence to say for certain. Still, the majority of work fell to human overseers, and this left the trade open to human error.



### **New York City as an Economic Engine**

Raw materials are lacking the archaeological record in this city, but finished products certainly are not. We find finished products of every conceivable kind, from clothing to personal manual vehicles, and personal communication devices to recreational equipment. All arrived within the bounds of New York City as completed products. This not only testifies to an extremely powerful trading network but also to the importance of New York as another type of entity in the economic market. The American Emperors did not exact tribute from the states they conquered, apart from customary taxes. New Yorkers were not sucking resources from other areas by force. Rather, they had the capital to extent to ensure they got what they needed. Most archaeologists agree that New York City was not the American capital; that title falls to Potomac City. Even if tribute were demanded, it would be diverted to the latter. Americans were among the first avid capitalists, so we know the goods that came to New York City were bought and paid for in one way or another. It is clear that retail facilities dominated Manhattan

Island. Large Needle-Point buildings houses commercial offices and huge shopping facilities. Spread throughout every nook and cranny of the city were countless small shops. The retail facilities on any given New York City block ranged in size from small, single-floor shops, to multi-story complexes comparable to the megashops of modern times.

Small shops number in the hundreds; we find them on the largest streets to the smallest allies. Though rare today, private, single-family ownership was very common in the Plastic Age. Many of the smallest shops are on ground level, with domestic facilities in the back rooms or on the second floor. The close juxtaposition of quant residential areas and small shops tell us that the shop owners lived and worked in the same small facility.

Meanwhile, there are large, complex commercial facilities with thousands of square meters of storage and display space. There are fewer of these megastores, but they certainly make up for it in size and quantity of merchandise. Their storage facilities alone could fit several of the smaller shops inside of them. The larger facilities also lack a residential affiliation. No individuals lived in the facility or in the immediate vicinity of the facility. There were areas in the upper floors for office space and administrative usage, but not residential living. The megastores were much too large to be handled by the small family staff of the smaller shops. The task would be too overwhelming. Hundreds of employees were needed to run a store like some we find on the largest New York City streets. These large commercial facilities were probably the sites of incorporated, publicly-traded companies, similar to our own megastores.

Another important and yet elusive aspect of the American economy is the service industry. New York City's economy was based predominantly on the service sector, which by definition leaves behind little in the archaeological record. The services provided probably resembled what we are used to seeing in our own society. The entertainment industry consistently reports the largest profit margins each year in Arcanada. The entertainment industry carries out all its trading in the digital realm. If someone were to excavate Arcanadian media offices sometime in the distant future, they would be hard-pressed to find evidence of this vast and powerful market. The American system was likely similar to ours in that it was becoming more and more digital. The only way for us to point to specific cases of this digital exchange is to find some type of record of it. By definition, there is no physical evidence; no record exists outside of the digital world unless the records were recorded on paper. Even then, the number of paper records we can recover from sites this old is paltry at best. If we cannot observe the

practice itself, we are forced to interpret what we can from the indirect evidence of its existence. Unfortunately that evidence usually comes in the form of noticing what *isn't* there as much as noticing what *is* there. We usually have to assume that American society functioned in a more primitive form of our own when it comes to economic exchange. That is the extent to which we can extrapolate in most cases. The parts of New York City which have been excavated so far date to a time when the Americans were entering the digital age. Luckily for us, they did cling to a very small amount of physical currencies.

### **Money in the American Pocket**

The physical currency found so far is minimal. The traditional American currency system consisted of metallic coins of varying sizes. Eight such coins have been pulled from one of the platform stations of the subterranean transportation tunnels – the same one where the preserved map still hangs on the wall. Countless others have been found scattered in the streets, inside personal manual vehicles, and hidden within furniture. The eight pieces found on the tunnel platform were strewn about on the platform surface, and some had fallen into the track. These coins easily assist in their own interpretation. They have very useful self-identifying markings and inscriptions; many of which are remarkably well preserved. The coins are all designed around the same pattern. One side depicts the profile of a male figure, probably the emperor who reigned at the time the coin was minted. The opposite side shows a civic building of some importance. The buildings depicted on the coins all belong to the Classique Columnal Form of architecture discussed in Chapter 6. We have not yet been able to determine with absolute certainty if the various coins depict specific buildings or where those buildings might be located. The coins also share some common inscriptions; these include dates, the terms “The United States of America,” “Liberty,” and an incoherent phrase “E Pluribus Unum.” The actual metallic composition of the coins varied greatly, even between two samples of the coins with the same monetary value. Such amalgamation can indicate two things. Either the process of producing the coin was terribly flawed, or that the physical appearance of the coin was more important than the value of the metal it contained. The former is unlikely, because the Americans were certainly capable of something as easy as casting metal coins. The latter choice seems more likely. It was probably the case that the appearance of the coin alone was most important.



Archaeologists interpret the varying values of the coins based on their respective sizes and labels. The largest coins are labeled with the inscription delineating each as a “Quarter Dollar.” We have not yet found any “Dollar” coins, but we assume that these would have been even larger to represent their higher value. The next lowest denomination of currency was the “cent.” The next smallest coin, also silver like the “Quarter Dollar,” was worth five cents, as its inscription indicates. It too displays a profile portrait, and facial recognition software has determined conclusively that it is a different individual from the portrait on our sample of the “Quarter Dollar.” This particular five-cent coin was minted during the reign of a different leader.

The next smallest coin represents the value of one cent. This coin is different in that it is a copper color. We have found four of these one cent samples. Two of these are so corroded we cannot even read the dates or inscriptions. The final two samples display yet another emperor. This emperor’s profile is facing a different direction than the others, though we cannot tell if this was significant. The dates on the one-cent coins span 1984 to 2000, indicating that this emperor reigned for at least sixteen years. The final coin we have discovered represents the lowest monetary value. The coin is labeled as a “Dime.” It is silver like the coins of higher value, but it

is the smallest of all the coins we have found. Obviously it was considered less valuable because of its smaller size. This “Dime” also differs from the other coins in that the depiction of the civic building is replaced by the image of a flaming torch flanked by two branches. We do not know the significance of these images, but this coin dates the latest time period of the coins we have found – the year 2010 – and depicts yet another emperor. It is possible the changing imagery on the coin could be the result of a different monetary tradition brought about by this new ruler.

## CHAPTER 10: RESTAURANTS & RECREATION

### Dining in the Urban Centers

Finding physical currency and inferring a certain amount of digital exchange is not the most difficult task in American archaeology. Determining exactly what the Americans spent that money on is a more daunting question. The Americans in New York City had many ways of disposing their income; evidence of recreational and entertainment facilities are clear and numerous. Restaurants were probably the most popular, based on their frequency in the archaeological record. Americans had facilities for preparing their own food at home, as described in Chapter 5, but they clearly enjoyed a restaurant experience from time to time. Our own restaurants are modeled on a similar design. The typical floor plan involves an entranceway accessible easily from the street, which opened up into one large open space or several rooms partially separated by perishable dividers. The kitchen area was located in the back of the structure. The cooking facilities often opened up into small corridors, or ally ways behind the building whereby waste products would be disposed away from the notice of patrons. Some of these restaurants are very small, while others cover a large amount of ground space and even span multiple levels. Most were on ground level to provide easy access for pedestrians on the street.

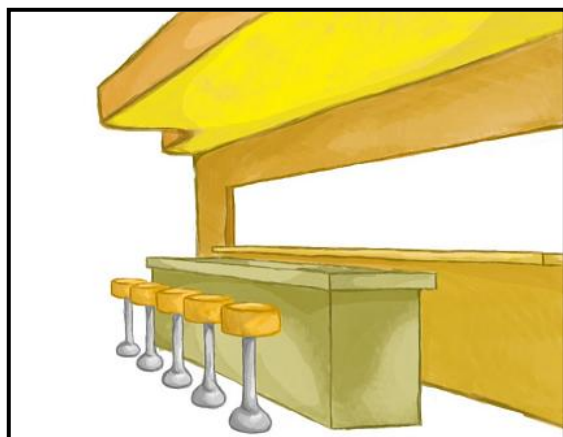
In modern times, eating in a restaurant is something which we indulge in only on the most special occasions. It is a several-hour-long affair because we want the experience to be worth our valuable time and expense. The Americans

understood this sentiment in some ways. About half of the restaurants archaeologists have found as of yet have extensive seating areas, which probably indicate that many people ate there. It also indicates that these people also spent a considerable amount of time eating and loitering in the



**Figure 78: This computer generation shows a sample floor plan of an American restaurant. The entrance area is shown in pink, while the dining area is shown in green.**

facility, because this would also require the restaurant to have many tables available. If the process of being served were quicker and more utilitarian, we would not expect the need for so many tables. A smaller number of tables and a smaller area for seating would be sufficient with a fast turnover rate. It is generally agreed that Americans certainly appreciated their restaurant industry, and gave the activity of dining comparable time as we modern people do. The main distinction to be made between those past people and ourselves is that they would have spent considerably more time dining in their lifetime than we ever will. New Yorkers in particular enjoyed dining in restaurants very much. This is evident by the fact that restaurants number in the hundreds, even according to our preliminary explorations – they most likely dined in restaurants more often than they prepared their own food. Economists who have studied the distribution of New Yorkian restaurants surmise that either a huge percentage of the population regularly patronized these establishments on a somewhat frequent basis, or that a smaller percentage of the population patronizes these establishments on a constant basis. We know that there was significant economic stratification in the city of New York, which probably means that eighty or ninety percent of the population would be unlikely to afford eating in restaurants constantly. It is therefore more likely that those with the economic resources to do so ate in these restaurants almost exclusively instead of preparing food in their own domestic structures.



**Figure 79: Some eating facilities in New York City might have looked much this artist rendering, with a single line of seats facing the counter.**

New York also has many smaller restaurants with very different function and morphology. Because Plastic Age Americans required food for all of their meals, they could not possibly devote hours to eating three times every day. This created a need for some quicker meals. Small eateries, with little to no seating areas, are evidence of a hurried and deritualized form of the eating experience. There are at least as many small eateries as large restaurants, if not more. There are several general characteristics of the small eatery.

In some there is an extremely limited seating area, probably capable of serving no more than twenty or so people. In the few cases where the seating furniture still remains in the facilities, we have seen that the tables are very small. The design of

the seats themselves differs greatly from the furniture used in the more leisurely eateries. The examples we have found are rigid seats. If we did not know any better, archaeologists would think these seats were designed to be uncomfortable to the human figure. We know that Americans were able to construct chairs more pleasing for resting areas, because the chairs in the larger restaurants exhibit the qualities of very comfortable structures. In some cases, this type of organization includes a counter-like table apparatus attached to the wall or to the area of food preparation. The single seats lined the counter and faced a wall, a mirror, or the food preparation area. Such an establishment would have discouraged long occupancy of the seating area. The counter seating prevented large social groups from interacting while they ate, because individuals could not face one another to interact. Our modern restaurants always seat groups of diners at round tables where face-to-face interaction can be most facilitated; single diners are a rare occurrence. The activity of dining is a special, social occasion in modern times, but these discoveries show that this was not always the case in Plastic Age America.

Determining what kinds of food the Americans ate is tricky. Areas used for preparing food have either been subject to periodic flooding or permanent submersion. There are no sites of agricultural activity discernible anywhere within the cities or in the immediately vicinity. The only surmises we can make in regard to the makeup and variety of the American diet is based on information from climatologists and archaeobiologists. The current climate of New York City



**Figure 80: Corn (left), beans (center), wheat (right) and barley were staples of the American diet.**

is much warmer and wetter than it was 500 years ago. Though the site is located much further south than our own urban centers, the climate resembled that of our middle and modern northern territories. There were hot, dry summers and

very cold winters, separated by more temperate transitional seasons. Agriculture was widespread in areas distant from the urban centers. It is for this reason that we cannot determine for sure

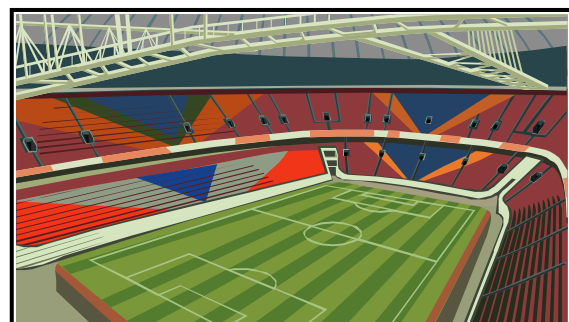


what type of raw food products made their way into the city. The surrounding agricultural lands were either converted to other use once the consumers in the city moved away or they were abandoned and left for nature to reclaim the fields. We do know that corn, beans, wheat and barley were prominent crops in the American Empire, and that these crops were suited to the environment in the southern regions. The expansive transport systems indicate that products from anywhere in the empire were brought to New York City and Potomac City, though we have no way of telling how much came or what it was. We can only base our interpretation on patterns we know from other Plastic-Age civilizations around the world.

The most popular animal meats were probably beef, pork products and various domesticated poultry. Other animal products included butter, milk, and eggs. The few sympatric sources for natural food in New York were those species which could be harvested from the waters surrounding the city. The ocean and rivers supported a large fish population. Many species that once lived near New York City still exist and have shifted their territories northward with the warmer temperatures. These include Striped Bass, Bluefish, Blackfish, Black Sea Bass, several species of Flounder, Sea Robins, Dogfish and Northern Eels. Further off the coast there was ample shark hunting.<sup>23</sup> Other products from the sea included crustaceans – lobsters being the most likely widespread product in those waters – and several kinds of bivalves. We know that New Yorkers were very nautical people. The coast of the Manhattan Island was completely rimmed with ports and docks of varying sizes. Some of these were used for large trading vessels coming from other American territories or even nations across the ocean; many of the smaller ones were probably used by local fishermen, bringing in their daily catch for the demanding needs of the city dwellers.

### **The American Playground**

For those Americans who had the money to spare, the urban centers had a plethora of other recreational activities to entertain and amuse them besides restaurants. There are several large sports facilities. These are huge coliseums, some capable of seating well over one hundred thousand people. Whatever sports were played in



**Figure 81: Artist rendering of an American coliseum for sporting events.**

these facilities must have been popular among the tens of millions of people living in the urban centers. We do not know the details of the games played out in these coliseums, but most involved a rectangular grass or dirt field. Athletes competed below as the audience seating rose hundreds of meters above their heads on all sides.

Forms of theatrical entertainment abounded in the cities. New York City in particular has a huge area where many theatres are concentrated. These facilities are located along several large streets in the lower center of Manhattan Island. Judging from the sheer size and number of theatres, they were a popular recreational activity for the people of New York City. Economists predict that each of the many facilities had to generate an extremely large profit for so many of them to exist in such close proximity to one another. They are not spread out in order to take advantage of different communities or traveling routes, which is a common strategy for modern franchises. Clearly the New Yorkians were not practicing this strategy; this is evident in the geographical distribution of other recreational facilities throughout the city. The theatres are clumped into a very small geographical area, creating a theatre district.

The practice of live entertainment survived a long while in the theater district of New York City. Live performances fell out of fashion around three hundred years ago. It is now only practiced by small revival groups who specialize in recreating this Plastic Age tradition. Today



**Figure 82: Computer generated artist rendering of an American theatre for live entertainment, circa 2000.**

we have our Digital Three Dimensional, or DTD, complexes where performances are always prerecorded. They are played on three dimensional screens with carefully-designed sound systems to create the most realistic experience. Live performance was alive and well in the time of Plastic Age Americans, and a city as large and wealthy as New York

demanded a wide array of live entertainment. The theatres vary in size. The remains of the larger facilities still show some evidence that the interior was elaborately decorated and sculpted. Often there was a lower level seating area, with higher levels supported by great columns. The ceilings

have long ago collapsed, but we can use architectural reconstruction software to recreate what they might have looked like. While not nearly as advanced as our own DTD complexes, the Americans did have some concept of controlling acoustics. This was reflected in the way that they designed the theatres. The angles of the ceiling and walls were meant to direct all sound from the stage area out into the audience, which was the most efficient way they had of ensuring the performance was audible to everyone.

For those preferring a more rural experience while remaining in the center of New York City, the pleasure garden was an enjoyable retreat. Most pleasure gardens written about from ancient times were solely for the use of the emperor or other important civic figure. We do not believe this was the case with the New York City pleasure garden. There are no barriers to suggest the commoners were not meant to enter the garden. Also, it was probably rare the Emperor could escape his duties in Potomac City long enough to use the pleasure garden very often. All signs point to a resource of which that all inhabitants of the city could make use. The New Yorkers could stroll along the many trails of the garden and take in the greenery. The large, man-made lake in the center also provided an opportunity for quaint boat rides. The people of American urban centers certainly had no lack of recreation. Whether they preferred a taste of nature's blessings or a night out in the concrete jungle, the urban center provided it all.

## CHAPTER 11: AMERHICAN SOCIETY

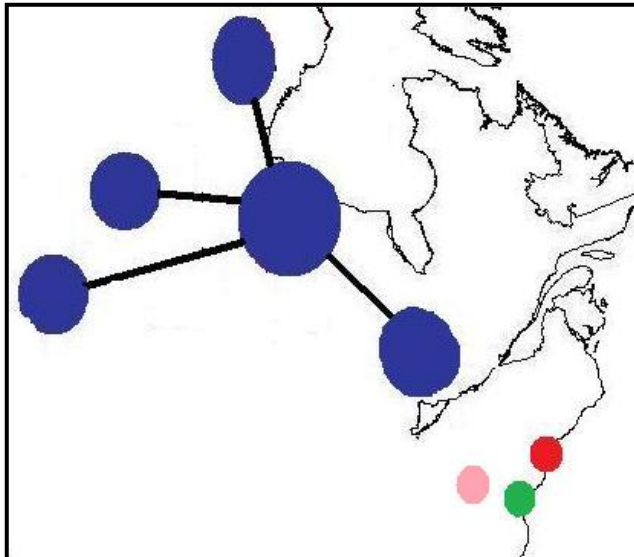
### A Family Beneath the Surface

Amerhicans social institutions and traditions are some of the hardest things to infer from the archaeological record. We have very few written texts, and none of these help us much on these subjects. We do know some basic things based on artistic representations. Like many other peoples before them, the Amerhicans' most basic unit of social organization was the nuclear family. If the modern reader were to talk into an Amerhican household circa the year 1950, he or she would recognize a familiar scene. Couples lived in a house with their children. Sometimes even the children's grandparents lived in the same home as well. Something which a modern observer could not detect in these families is genetic relatedness. Modern reproduction is closely monitored to prevent genetic disease or defect in our offspring. This inevitably means that parents are rarely related to their offspring in the purely genetic sense. The Amerhicans lacked technology like ours. Children of a man and women were a genetic combination of both parents, and genetic testing could clearly distinguish filial relationships.

It might seem strange to a modern reader that this was a concern for the Amerhican people, but wanting to be genetically related to one's offspring is a natural response to evolution was extremely important. The concern over true parentage was a big obstacle to overcome when genetic monitoring first became the norm over three hundred years ago. Even today there are small movements of people who prefer natural reproduction. Most members of society now realize that this is irresponsible. We have the technology to create genetically ideal offspring, and choosing to forego genetic correction is unfair to them and to society as a whole. We know now that genetic correctness is more important than genetic relatedness in a family, but the Amerhicans had neither the technology nor the interest to carry out genetic modification. The drawbacks are obvious. The Amerhicans produced children without any ability to stop genetic diseases, defects or predispositions to certain behaviors and conditions. Producing a healthy child was dependent upon a lucky combination of parents. While this did not always turn out for the best for the Amerhicans, it does help archaeologists today.

If the Amerhicans reproduced as we do today, we would not be able to determine familial relationships from the archaeological record. Lacking much written material, we rely upon genetic testing of human remains to establish who was related to whom. In many cases, the

Americans were not buried with their families, but we have come across some instances where several generations were laid to rest in the same burial grounds. This is especially common in more rural burial sites.



**Figure 83: The site of Dr. Bloom's rural cemetery excavation (pink) in relation to Potomac City (green) and New York City (red).**

National University professor Dr. Jackson Bloom has conducted a small scale excavation of a rural cemetery. This cemetery once belonged to the inhabitants of a small farming village. Because the community was small and isolated, many of the remains we find are genetically related to others in the same area. At least four direct generations of Americans were buried here and many were more distantly related. Degrees of genetic relationship are easy to determine. For example, a child shares approximately half its genes with each of its parents. A grandchild

shares one quarter of each grandparent and half of each parent. Cousins share approximately one twelfth of genetic material and so on.

The lack of genetic modification was one of the reasons the American life span was so short in comparison to our own. From what we can tell from the limited amount of human remains we have examined over the past two decades, the Americans who lived to adulthood had an average life span of sixty years. It is hard to know if this is accurate. Most of the human remains we have date to before the 2000s. Technological advancements after 2000 probably increased the life span significantly. So far we have found little evidence of infant mortality. It is possible children who died were treated in a different way than the traditional American custom of burial. It is possible they were cremated, and some ritual was performed using the cremated remains to ensure an afterlife for the child. This is all conjecture, of course. We know there must have been many infant and childhood deaths. We suffer these tragedies even today because we cannot prevent any accidents from befalling our loved ones. The Americans had to contend with a host of genetic threats to their newborn children, in addition to other diseases, infections

and nutrition. Either we have not found the buried remains because the smaller bones decayed long ago, or because children were cremated and never buried.

Another reason our results about the American life span might be biased is because we have a large number of human remains from military cemeteries. The cemetery excavated in the southeast corner of Potomac City was the final resting place of many a fallen American warrior. These individuals are not the best for collecting such data, because many of them died from wartime injuries while still very young men and women. Other individuals in these cemeteries reached ages well into the 80s and 90s. We assume these were veterans of military conflicts that survived the conflict and later died of old age. Results from the rural cemetery above are helpful because they are not from a warrior burial ground. Some of those individuals lived to be in the 80s and 90s as well, but accidental death was evident in still other remains. Farming accidents claimed the lives of at least two of the individuals in the rural cemetery. They might have lived into their 90s if not for the accident, or the 90-year-old remains might be anomalous individuals. It is difficult to know for sure without more finds on which to base further statistics.

Based on the filial relationships we can glean from the human remains, we can not only see that nuclear families probably lived together but that extended families in rural areas continued to live close to one another. We do not see this in the cemeteries of urban centers, but we only have special warrior burial grounds to go on so far from those sites. Extended families provided support systems for one another. These family groups were probably a major way the Americans organized and identified themselves and their relationships with other social groups.

### **American Clans**

The Americans maintained a system of social organization based on extended family support. We class this type of organization as clan-based. At first the concept of American clans was a hard sell for archaeologists. There was little evidence to support its existence. Then several finds over the course of six years changed archaeologists' minds. Dr. Laura Erickson, a National University researcher, was busy surveying some of the residential areas in New York City and Potomac City in order to submit an excavation proposal to the American Archaeology department. As part of her research, she conducted preliminary surface digs. Finding interesting artifacts on the surface is a sure-fire way of convincing the committee that excavating a particular location is worth the time and expense. During her three years of conducting such

surveys, she found four different examples of what appeared to be clan identification emblems. In New York City, she found several thin rubber artifacts with a magnetic coating on one side. On the other was a well preserved emblem of some kind. She did not know what to make of these at first, but catalogued and collected them nonetheless. In Potomac City she continued to find similar emblems, on rubber cutouts and other materials alike. She found two new designs, but more interesting to her at the time was the fact that she found some of the same emblems she had found in New York City. Erickson returned to the National University and began sorting through the material she had found in the urban sites. It just so happened that a colleague of hers, National University researcher Dr. Ken Highfield was returning from a similar survey in a rural farming region. Erickson and Highfield began discussing their respective discoveries, when the subject of the emblems came up in conversation. The two researchers compared notes and finds, and were shock to discover some overlap in their artifacts. Several of the emblems Erickson found in the major urban centers were also turning up in rural sites, and vice versa.

After Erickson and Highfield's initial publications on this phenomenon, archaeologists became more interested in studying these emblems. The idea that they represented clan relationships was first proposed by National University professor Dr. Jenna Briggs. Her 2597 publication on American familial organization described a system where extended families were organized into clans, each represented by an emblem. After hundreds of years, the clans became large, and members migrated all over the expanding American Empire. Many ended up in urban centers, while the original roots of the clans might have still resided in remote rural areas. Some migrations even occurred in the opposite direction. We know one particular clan to be based in the urban center of New York City (see figure on previous page), but we find some of its emblems in faraway rural sites. No matter how far some Americans traveled from their original territories, they clung to their clan identity. Probably the clan emblem was worn on clothing as well. Textiles rarely last more than a century in the archaeological record without some stroke of luck working in archaeologists' favor. The emblems we have found are printed on plastics, rubber cutouts, and other resilient materials. The rubber cutouts with magnetic coating could easily be displayed on metal surfaces, a convenient way of marking territory or property as belonging to a particular clan.

Clan membership preceded any political unification that occurred as the Empire grew. American loyalties were first and foremost to members of their clans. When the territories were



**Figure 84: Three of the most powerful clans in the American Empire. The Eagle Clan (1) emblem is found in Potomac City, as well as many rural sites near the coast between Potomac City and New York City. The Lion Clan (2) emblem is found in equal proportions in both major urban centers and many rural sites as well. There seems to be no central location in which this clan is based. Finally, the NY Clan (3) is found in high concentration in New York City. Is by far the most popular in that urban center, making archaeologists think this is where the NY Clan is originally based.**

still independent entities, having members in the same clans probably was a means of facilitating good trading relationships. When the Empire began uniting various territories, those in territories that shared clans probably showed the least resistance. They already had an existing familial and political relationship with one another. Territories that resisted the Empirical takeover were probably those with rival clans, who did not want to be in the same political system with enemies of their families. Even several centuries after the various territories were unified under one American Emperor, belonging to a clan was an important way for American inhabitants to identify themselves in relation to one another. Belonging to a certain clan probably also affected important life decisions, such as marriage.

While we know little about social institutions in daily American life, we know even less about marriage in particular. We know that the Americans practiced a form of marriage that mandated monogamy. We infer this from the findings at the Royal Palace. Despite some



archaeologists' opinions to the contrary, the consensus in the scholarly community is that Americans were monogamous. We have not found evidence to suggest the Emperor himself has more than one wife at any given time. If anyone could garner enough prestige and wealth to support a polygynous family, the Emperor certainly could. This was a huge break from the conventions of other historical societies. Monogamy is relatively rare. Still, evidence suggests the Americans practiced monogamy as the norm. If there were polygynous (or even polyandrous) family groupings, they were the exception rather than the rule.

### **A Women's World**

Women enjoyed much better treatment under American rule than most women in other historical societies of the world. We talked briefly in Chapter 7 about the remains of female warriors that have been found in Potomac City. No matter which warrior model one chooses to believe, serving as a warrior for the American Empire was certainly an honor. The fact that women were among those permitted to train, fight and die alongside male warriors is a testament to women's high status in the empire. The remains from Dr. Jackson Bloom's rural cemetery tell us that women had equal access to medical treatment and nutrition as their male counterparts. In fact, the female skeletons have a slightly higher average age at death. This was probably because they did not participate in the more dangerous farming activities that sometimes killed males. There are remains of younger women in this cemetery as well. When trying to determine the cause of death in a young female, childbirth is the first suspect. Barring any obvious injuries or genetic conditions, we are left to assume this was the case for more than one American woman.

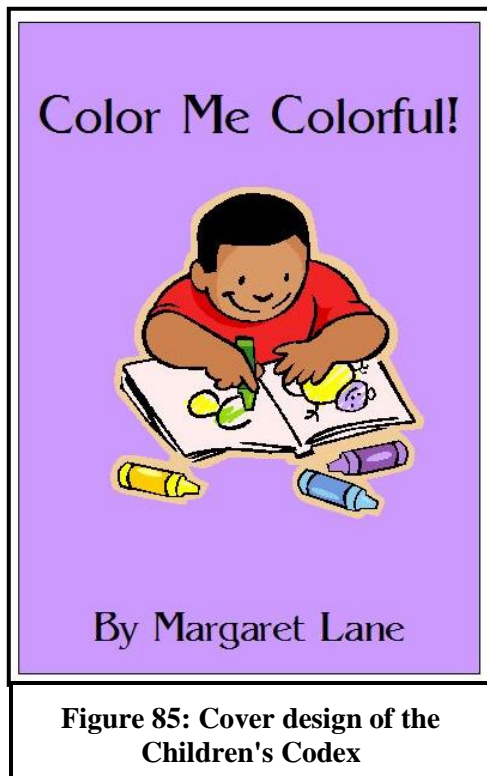
In urban areas, we have fewer human remains to depend on for interpretation. There is more room for drafting theories because there is little evidence to prove anything. Most archaeologists believe American women in urban centers were equal to men. They had access to the same occupations and performed the same civic duties as their male counterparts. There are no inscriptions in Potomac City or elsewhere to suggest that a woman ever served as the American emperor. We would expect to find some monument among the many that was engraved with a woman ruler's name. There might be evidence that women served as lesser rulers, perhaps as territory regents. Archaeologist Dr. Brendan Applegate believes he has found an engraving which indicates that a woman named Christine Whitman ruled a territory known as New Jersey between 1994 and 2001. Applegate's work is still in progress, and he has not

published on this find yet. If his theory about Christine Whitman is correct, she will be the first confirmed woman ruler of an American territory. In the light of such evidence, most archaeologists are willing to accept the idea that women were important political figures in the Plastic Age American Empire. There were probably many women among the Emperor's political advisers, though we do not have any way of knowing for sure as of yet.

The only point on which archaeologists have differing opinions is on women's role in religious practices. Some believe women were barred from performing religious rituals. There might be some exceptions, because most societies do reserve certain rituals for women to perform. According to this camp of archaeologists, women were only permitted to attend, not perform, most important rituals, especially those that took place in the ritual plaza of Potomac City. On the other hand, skeptics of this idea point to such evidence as the possible woman ruler of New Jersey and argue otherwise. They cite as evidence the fact that political figures in the American territories had to perform religious rituals as part of their job description. The Emperor performed religious rituals on the imperial scale. Still, local gods and goddesses in the various territories probably differed slightly from the imperial pantheon. Each lesser ruler was responsible for the political and spiritual wellbeing of his (or her!) respective territory. Women had to have been allowed to carry out those rituals if they were to serve as the territorial ruler. Publications in support of both theories have come and gone, but we are still years away from a definitive answer.

### **From Childhood's Hour**

Civilizations throughout world history have viewed childhood in many different ways. Some saw children as tiny adults and treated them accordingly. Others recognized childhood as a distinct state of being and paid a lot of attention to a child's perspective of the world. The Americans leaned towards the latter approach. Children were allowed to experience their youth without adult responsibilities and expectations. Children were prevented from entering the work force until well into their teenage years. The Americans took care to educate and entertain their children while still young. We know this because one of the few American texts we have is a book specifically designed for children. We call this a "text" only in the loosest sense – it is a picture book. This book has become known as the Children's Codex, and it only survived the centuries through the convergence of perfect conditions. The book was stored in a residential

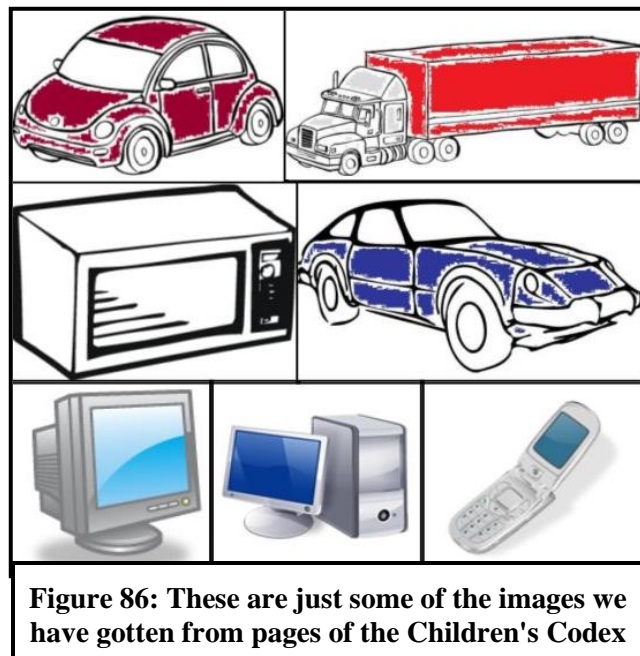


**Figure 85: Cover design of the Children's Codex**

area in the rural farmlands northwest of Potomac City. This area was several hundred meters above sea level, so rising sea levels were not a threat to the site's artifacts. Rain, wind and Mother Nature's host of flora and fauna still destroyed most paper material in the American archaeological record. Fortunately the Children's Codex was stored in a metal fire-proof box in a rural residence. The box itself was not necessarily airtight, but there was a fire in the residence sometime around 2200. The house was never rebuilt, so archaeologists believe it had already been abandoned by the time of the fire. The charred remains of the house collapsed and buried the metal box below a few meters of rubble. This protected the box so well, that the Children's Codex inside was almost

perfectly preserved when discovered in 2598.

Though the Codex was originally meant to entertain a young child, it has provided modern archaeologists with some valuable information about Plastic Age technology, invention, transportation and more. The book is comprised of paper pages printed with cartoon pictures of items from everyday American life. Some of the pictures are labeled with the American term for the item being depicted. This has been very helpful in allowing us to identify the terms Americans themselves used to describe the artifacts we find. This book is the reason we know the American term *computer*, and it has given us valuable insight into the design of American airplanes and personal manual vehicles.



**Figure 86: These are just some of the images we have gotten from pages of the Children's Codex**

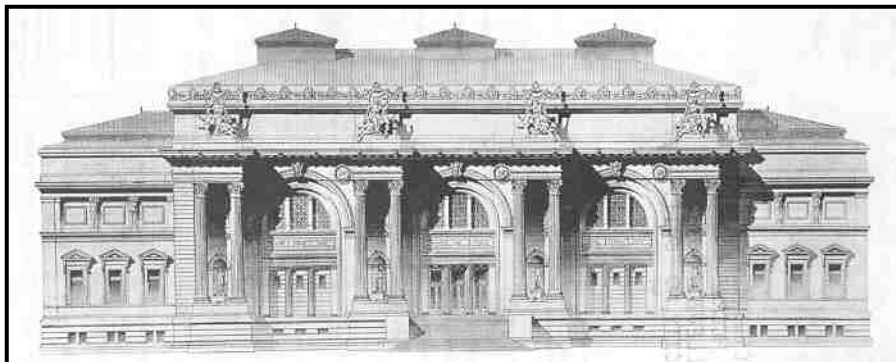
Because the book was specifically designed for children, we know the Americans viewed childhood as a distinct part of an individual's life. They designed a book specifically for a child's education and entertainment, so it follows that many other things were designed especially for the smallest citizens of the empire.

## CHAPTER 12: AMERHICAN ART

### Worth A Thousand Words

Just like in many other civilizations around the world, most Amerhican art is linked to religion in some way. The breathtaking sculptures and monumental architecture that cover Potomac City in honor of the gods are the most well-known examples of this. We will deal with the religious art in the next chapter, but we will begin with a few examples of art from other sites that have no obvious religious connection. One site in New York City has given us several rare glimpses into the Amerhicans' artistic taste. The first is the large Classique Column form structure within the boundaries of the pleasure garden. We have discussed this building for its architectural significance in Chapter 6, but what we found inside is just as important to archaeologists.

The most popular theory about the purpose of this building is that it was a pleasure palace for the Emperor when he visited New York City. Its stately architecture, immense size, and location inside the pleasure garden grounds all support that interpretation. But archaeologists who believe this to be an imperial vacation home believe it also served other functions while the Emperor was away carrying out his duties in Potomac City. The Emperor had the authority and the disposable wealth to collect art objects that were completely unobtainable by the commoners of his Empire. These items were housed in his various dwellings, and that included the Pleasure



**Figure 87: NY-83-62, also known as the Pleasure Palace, housed Imperial treasures from throughout the Amerhican territories and even other continents.**

Palace. This building was once filled with collectables taken from every area of the growing Amerhican Empire and even from around the world. Just as visitors were allowed to use the pleasure garden

for recreational purposes, we believe the Pleasure Palace was open to commoners as well. There are several reasons this was a good idea for the Emperor to allow. First, it prevents his people from thinking he is hoarding important items away from them. If they are able to visit them and

see them for themselves, they feel much more like these precious items belong to the entire imperial body rather than just the Emperor himself. Also, seeing items from faraway areas of the American Empire would create a sense of unity. The collection could become a museum of the American Empire. The item's availability and visibility sent the message, "look at the many impressive things that come from this Empire your ruler has created for you!" rather than "I'm the Emperor and I get pretty things that you don't get to look at." Public access to the Emperor's collection was a clever political move.

Though the halls of this giant facility were once brimming with artistic collections, ninety-nine percent of those objects are nowhere to be found. New York City's abandonment, which we will discuss in depth in Chapter 13, was gradual. There was plenty of time for the curators of the Emperor's collection to pack things up and send them to a safer location. Where that safer location was, we have yet to discover. Fortunately the absence of many items in this building tells us something valuable in itself. The items kept here were important enough to spend considerable time and money to transport to a safe location. Some archaeologists have argued that there is yet another possible explanation for the empty structure. They believe the items might not have been that valuable at all, or that the items needed to be abandoned because there was not time or resources enough to remove them. Then, these archaeologists believe looters took care of the rest. Looters have historically gone through unfathomable peril to cash in on a good find. If something as visible as the Emperor's Pleasure Palace was left unprotected, it is very possible that looters returned to the site once everyone else left and helped themselves to the contents.

There is a reason that only a small subset of the archaeological community subscribes to this theory. One of its major premises is also one of its biggest flaws. They claim that the items might not have been valuable enough to transport to safety. If that was the case, would those same items somehow be more valuable to looters, who would have to expend the same time and resources (maybe more) to steal the items? The items had to be valuable enough to go through the considerable trouble of stealing, relocating and then reselling the items. If they were not valuable enough to the state to transport in the first place, was there really a market for them just a short time later? There is also the possibility that the items were indeed valuable but that some kind of catastrophe caused them to be abandoned because there was not time to remove them. Again, there is the question of how the looters then got them. Presumably if the items were

valuable, the Emperor's forces would return to salvage as much as they could after any catastrophe. A major piece of evidence against the idea of looters taking all the Pleasure Palace items is the lack of any human-induced damage. It is actually very easy for an archaeologist with a trained eye to tell the difference between wear caused by centuries of exposure and damage caused by a Plastic Age human hand. If the facility was heavily looted, we would expect to find items broken in the heat of the moment and left behind, broken doorways that blocked storage areas, and other signs of violence. We know that some of the art displayed was very large and would have required very organized labor and sophisticated equipment to remove and transport. Looting tends to be a chaotic and unorganized process. If groups of looters did band together to steal the largest of items on display, we would expect to see at least one example where their work went wrong and the item fell, breaking and becoming useless. None of this is present. There is absolutely no indication that items were removed by force or in a hurry, leaving us to see this as additional evidence that the items within these buildings were removed to safety over an extended period of time. There are simply too many "what ifs" in the looting theory for it to hold much weight with the greater archaeological community. For now, the consensus stands that the items that once adorned the large Pleasure Palace facility were removed long before the city itself was abandoned and we simply have yet to find the content's subsequent home.

The Pleasure Palace is one of the few New York City structures that escaped major flooding damage. Its first and second stories remain mostly intact, and this has allowed archaeologists to explore the internal areas more widely than they have done in some other buildings in the city. We have said that nearly all of the items were removed from the facility long ago, but thanks to human oversight we have found several items which were left behind. We assume these items were left by accident, because they are quite small. They were also found in tucked away places that could be easily overlooked during a move. Continuing to go through every inch of debris in the Pleasure Palace in search of valuable items will take many years of future excavations. So far there have been three notable finds in this facility.

### **A Window to the Past**

The items we find in the Pleasure Palace are not only significant for their inherent artistic value, but for what they tell us about the American Empire and its relationship with foreign nations. The first two items we found were both wrapped in several layers of cloth and paper

products. The artifacts were found shoved into a small drawer in one of the smallest storage spaces in the whole facility. The drawer was so badly damaged that it would not open when archaeologists tried to access its contents. They ultimately had to cut the rest of the cabinet away from the drawer in order to make sure they did not damage the contents. Presumably, the



**Figure 88: Small sculpture of an extinct ape called a Baboon. Research indicates this item originated in the ancient civilization of Egypt.**

damaged drawer was the reason these items had been left behind.

The first item we found – a mere 8.8cm-tall figurine – tells us some important things about American foreign relations. The figurine is a simple carving of an extinct primate called a *Baboon*. These animals were native to the African continent until they died out around 2350. The fact that the animal was native to Africa is not enough to assume that the figure itself came from that distant location. For some time archaeologists were hesitant to claim a trading relationship between Africa and the American Empire based solely on this tiny figurine. Further research on these *Baboons* and this particular style of sculpture was necessary before we made any concrete assumptions.

Eventually archaeologists were able to coordinate their search for answers with professors from the European National University. Their department on the study of Abandoned Regions of the World has an impressive database of art from extinct civilizations from all over the globe. Arcanadian

archaeologists were able to compare the *Baboon* sculpture with their database and soon found that it resembled the style of sculpture from the prehistoric civilization of Egypt circa 660-380 B.C.<sup>24</sup> This was quite a shock for archaeologists, but it soon gave us a better understanding of



how this ancient item ended up in the vaults of the Pleasure Palace. Obviously, the Egyptians were an ancient people that died out well before the American Empire was even thought of. Still, the *Baboon* figurine tells us that the Americans had a desire for collecting and curating very old items and that they had the trade networks to get such items from faraway parts of the world. Through the ages, the figurine was passed from hand to hand, before it finally made it into the Pleasure Palace vault. We do not know if it came directly from Egyptian descendants in the Afrikan continent as part of a peaceful exchange or whether it was an item taken by force from an enemy. Either way, this tiny artifact tells us far more about the presence of the American Empire in the world-wide trading network than we have learned from any other single item.

The second item found shoved in the same tiny drawer as the *Baboon* figurine was a single metal key. This item was a domestic product of the American Empire. At first archaeologists thought the key was not an artifact but rather a key for some storage facility in the Pleasure Palace. They quickly dismissed this idea after examining the key and its context further. The key was wrapped just as diligently in cloth and paper as the *Baboon* figurine was. This suggests that they were both artifacts and were both meant to be equally protected. They must have been equally valuable to merit equal preservation treatment. Upon examining the key, archaeologists realized it was not meant for practical purposes. There is absolutely no wearing on the tooth of the key (bottom of the



photo), indicating it was created as merely an aesthetic piece. Before digital entrance and before fingerprint and DNA identification software became widespread, physical keys such as this one were used to open locks. The lock involved a complicated system of internal mechanics. A key specifically designed for that lock consisted of just the right shape of tooth to fit into the lock's hole and turn the mechanisms within. This released the lock and opened the door, box, or safe. A key as beautifully carved as this one was not meant to be used. If it had been, there would be scratches on the tooth, which you can see there are none. Its carvings and decorations are extremely detailed. Someone spent a considerable amount of time carefully crafting this piece from steel. The entire key only measures 12cm from tip to tip, so this creation took patience as well as precision.<sup>25</sup> Without other keys with which to compare this one, we do not know much about the artistic context of what we have discovered here. We also do not know when this key was created. We are unable to carbon date it, and without a previous understanding of typologies, we cannot even get a relative chronology on it. Even without giving us much information, this key is a precious example of American artwork.



**Figure 90: This abstract horse and rider represent a later trend in American art that moved away from traditional line and form.**

The final notable item we have from the New York City Pleasure Palace is another sculpture, this one depicting a horse and rider. This item was discovered in a completely different room, and it was not packed away like the key and figurine. It was actually standing out in plain sight for archaeologists to find. It appears that the item was set on the floor near the entrance to a small storage room, but was somehow overlooked. The item became lodged between the door to the entrance and the wall, which

protected it from any further damage. When archaeologists pried back the door to get a better look at the room, they looked down to discover the 28.6 x 36.8 x 13.2 cm bronze statue pictured

here. At first archaeologists thought the bronze had been badly damaged.<sup>26</sup> Its flaky appearance did not seem like something an artist would do on purpose. After the horse and rider were carefully removed to the National University for further analysis, researchers realized that the mangled appearance was indeed part of the original design. This gives us a very different look into American aesthetics than does the fine-tuned design of the key described above. This is a far more abstract vision of artistic representation. The key is all about clarity of form and the interaction of positive and negative space. Meanwhile, the horse and rider we have here represents a movement away from the polished appearance of examples like the key. Again, we have neither absolute nor relative chronology on this item, so we cannot tell if it came before or after the key. Modern art theorists have come to a consensus that the horse and rider were a later creation. They cite trends in modern art in support of their conclusion. Usually the more traditional, concrete aesthetic forms are replaced by more experimental creations. Assuming this held true during the Plastic Age, we are at least able to infer some small things about the American art world from the very few finds we have to date.

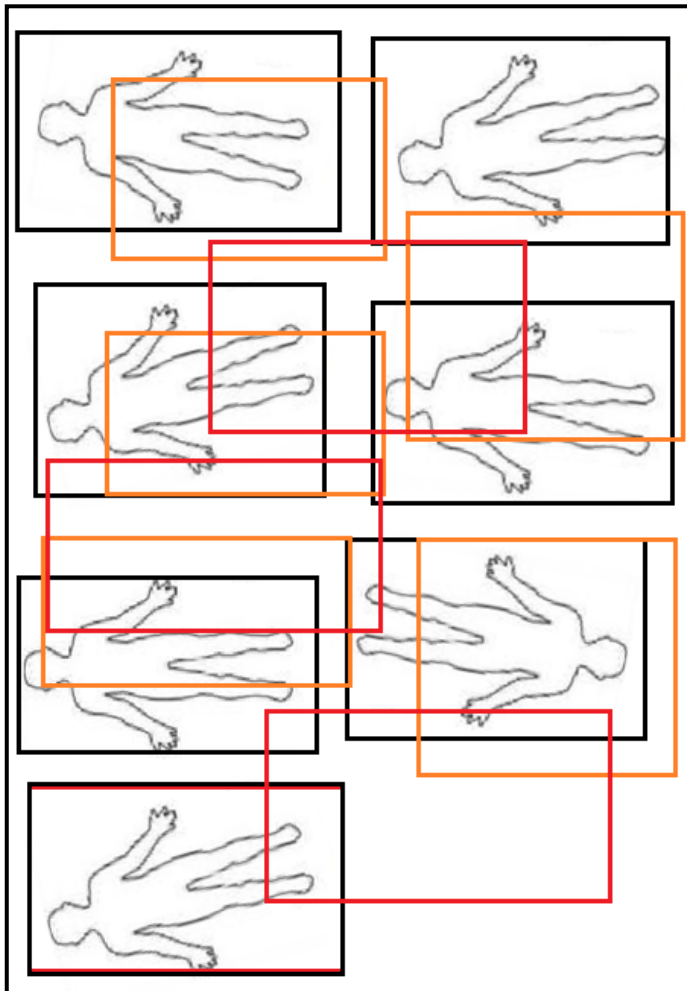
## CHAPTER 13: AMERHICAN RELIGION

### Belief in the Beyond

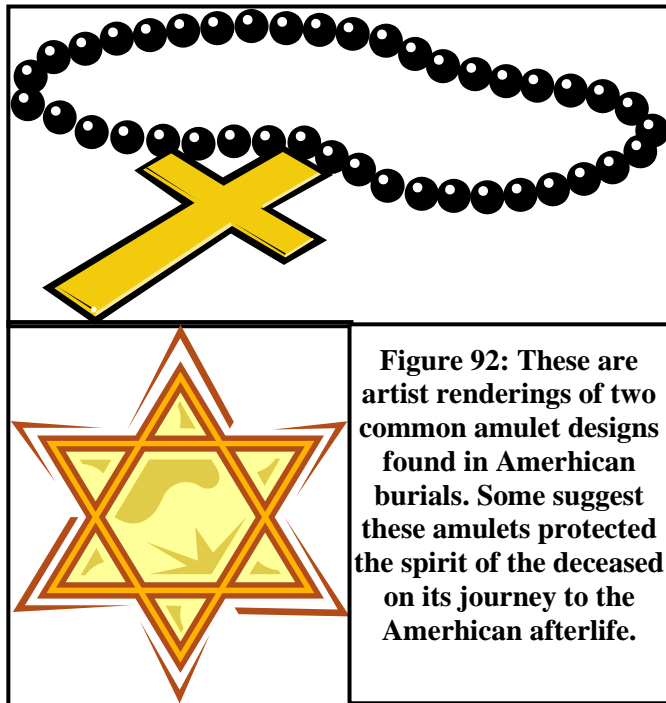
We find most evidence about Amerhican religious practice in Potomac City. There are a few exceptions, such as the temple-like NYC-76-56 in New York City (see Chapter 6), but the ritual capital provides us with the most obvious temples and religious sculpture. The warrior cemetery just outside the ritual core also gives us some insight into the Amerhican afterlife. We couple evidence taken from these graves with those found in the rural areas. It was customary for the Amerhicans to bury their dead in wooden or metal coffins. These coffins range from simple

wooden boxes to elaborate metal sarcophagi. Bodies inside the boxes were laid on their backs, facing upward. Because burial ground was sometimes scarce in the urban centers, it is common for archaeologists to find later remains buried directly above previous generations.

We know from the burials that the Amerhicans believed in some kind of afterlife. The bodies are usually buried with small grave goods. These include amulets of precious metals, such as silver and gold, and sometimes very elaborate clothing ensembles that would be very expensive. The only possible explanation is that the Amerhicans believed their departed loved ones needed items of economic value for some kind of afterlife. This is a pattern seen throughout history. Amerhican burials were nowhere near as elaborate as those belonging to



**Figure 91: Amerhicans were buried in rectangular coffins, facing upward. Land for burials was sometimes tight, and surface burials (human forms in black boxes) often cover up multiple levels of earlier burials (red, orange)**



**Figure 92: These are artist renderings of two common amulet designs found in American burials. Some suggest these amulets protected the spirit of the deceased on its journey to the American afterlife.**

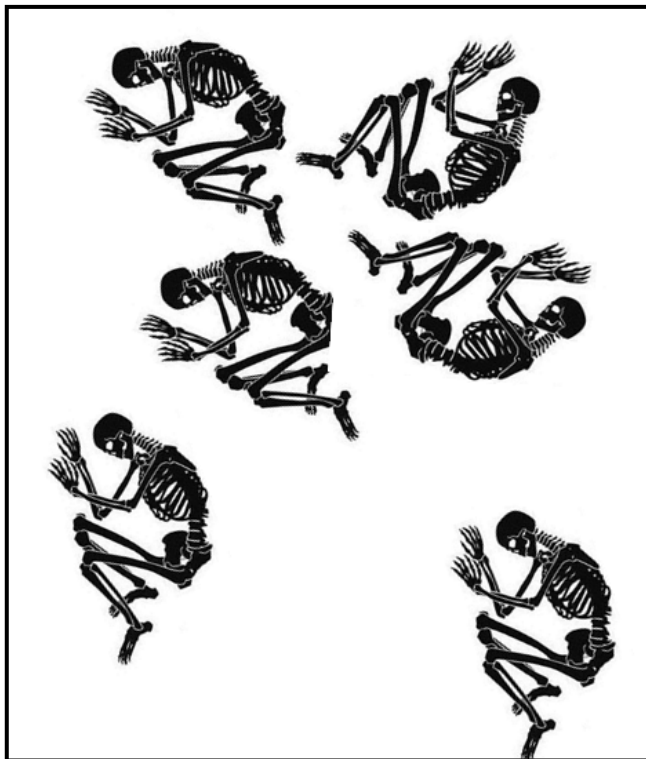
some societies described in the European Database on Ancient Civilizations of the Abandoned Regions of the World. Americans were not buried with everyday items, such as furniture and food stuffs, so wherever they believed they were going did not require the same material possessions as this world. They only needed the small pieces of gold and silver. This could mean the spirits of the deceased needed to purchase their way into the afterlife or that the amulets simply protected them on their journey there. We

can make general assumptions about the presence of the amulets, but ultimately we have insufficient evidence to make a concrete conclusion either way.

It is possible the Americans also believed they would need their bodies in the next life. Beginning around the year 1860, remains show evidence of extensive chemical treatment before burial. The list of chemicals that physical anthropologists have documented in these remains is a long one. The major component is formaldehyde and other phenol-based elements. These chemicals helped to preserve the bodies, which is something archaeologists can appreciate. Remains after 1860 are not in pristine condition by any standards, but they are slightly better preserved than their earlier counterparts. Archaeologists are divided over the exact reason for wanting to preserve the bodies in the burials. Most agree that the Americans were clearly attempting chemical mummification to preserve the bodies, but there is no telling what the motivation behind this practice was. The chemicals only preserved the body nominally. It was still not long after burial that the remains decayed to little more than bone fragments. Presumably, the Americans were trying any way they could to preserve the deceased's bodies. This was undoubtedly linked to religious beliefs, but we have no way of discerning the details.

We have only found one site where the burial practices differ completely. National University archaeologist Dr. Landon Tate was exploring an isolated rural settlement approximately three hundred kilometers to the west of Potomac City. He found a small,

unmarked burial site on the property of a large Plastic Age farm. The burial is anomalous in many ways. Tate's ground-penetrating radar surveys indicated there were at least six burials on the property, four of which have been fully excavated as of today. The bodies date to the same ten year span between 1970 and 1980, but none are chemically mummified. More interestingly, none were buried in coffins of any kind. We can usually see evidence of even the simplest wooden box long after it has decayed in the ground. The wood's decomposition leaves a visible and chemical signature in the soil. We do not find such evidence at this site. All the remains belonged to young females between seventeen and twenty-five years of age. This is strange



**Figure 93: The bodies of at least six women have been found in an anomalous burial ground outside a rural American settlement. The women were buried without clothing or grave goods of any kind, and were placed in the ground in the fetal position.**

because we usually find a much more diverse demographic in burials. The women were buried without grave goods of any kind. In fact, there were buried without anything – including clothing. Clothing deteriorates quickly in the ground, but we are able to see soil irregularities where it decomposed and even find small pieces that fuse with the bones. We cannot find any trace of textile remains in these graves. We do not know if the naked burial was significant in any way. It could have ritual significance in that it might prevent the spirit of the deceased from reaching the afterlife.

We do not know why someone would want this for the deceased women, but that is certainly one possibility for the irregularities in this burial. We also have no physical evidence that tells us how and why these

women died. Fortunately Tate has just had his grant renewed to continue analyzing these remains, and he should be publishing in the next two years.

Now that we have some concept of the American afterlife, we turn to their religious practices in life. We know that they worshipped a pantheon of gods. This is not so different than

our own mythological collection. The major difference is that we recognize our own folklore as a collection of allegorized fables, and the Americans actually believed the characters in their pantheon were real gods. They created temples in which to worship them and altars at which they carried out rituals in honor of various deities.

Before the territories of the American Empire became united under one ruler, each polity probably worshipped its own localized version of the pantheon. When Potomac City became the Emperor's seat, the local gods of that polity were upgrade to an even more exalted level. We can identify the two main gods the Americans worshipped. The first was the patron god of water and agriculture; the Americans called him Jefferson. Rainfall was the most important natural element to the Americans because they relied so heavily on raw foods that came from agriculture. If the rains did not come, the Americans did not eat. It was therefore very important to appease the water god.

Two sites in Potomac City are obviously devoted to the worship of Jefferson. The first is the artificial pool that extends between PC-WWR2 and PC-LIN9. This is not a natural body of water – its rectangular shape immediately told archaeologists it had been crafted by American hands. We believe this artificial pool was created as a means of bringing the water god into the heart of the ritual core. There is another temple, located on the coast, which we will discuss in a

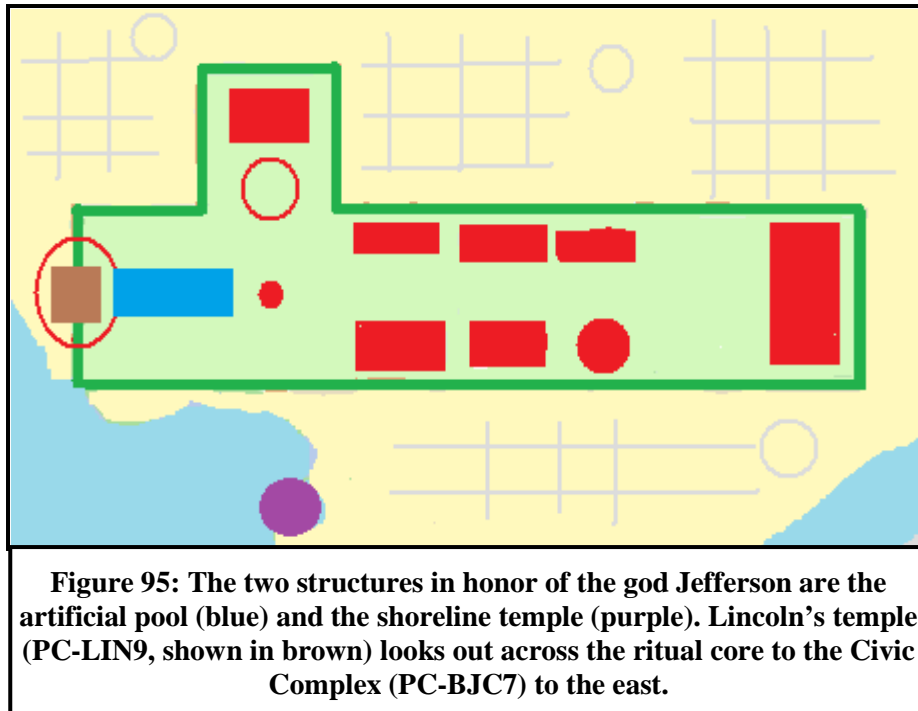
moment, but no other way of honoring the water god in the central location. It was important that the Americans demonstrate to the water god that he was a vital deity. Creating a ritual pool in the center of the core was the best way to do this.



**Figure 94: Computer generated recreation of the shoreline Jefferson Temple.**

The shore temple to Jefferson was located on the very edge of the Plastic Age coastline. This was our first clue that it was the image of the water god that we found inside it. Divers have taken three-dimensional scans of the ruins, and used these to recreate what the monument originally looked like.

Inside a Rotunda Form temple once stood a large sculpture of the water god. The body of the sculpture is actually very well preserved, because it was cut from solid granite. It's large size and weight makes it impossible to remove for the time



**Figure 95: The two structures in honor of the god Jefferson are the artificial pool (blue) and the shoreline temple (purple). Lincoln's temple (PC-LIN9, shown in brown) looks out across the ritual core to the Civic Complex (PC-BJC7) to the east.**

being. Very expensive equipment is necessary for extracting an item of that scale from its underwater resting place. We hope to eventually develop a cheaper, easier method of extracting the sculpture and transporting it to a National University facility where it can be studied and curated.

The second major god worshipped by the Americans in Potomac City was called Lincoln. Lincoln was probably the local patron deity of Potomac City and was promoted to one of the national figures when this urban center became the Empire's capital. Lincoln was also the god of war. His temple looks out upon the four military monuments described in Chapter 7. Further in the distance, Lincoln looks out at the Civic Complex (PC-BJC7). The location of his temple is no accident. Lincoln was meant to oversee the political and military activities of the Empire. His worship was equally important to the Americans as Jefferson. The statue of Lincoln that still sits in his temple is far more accessible than that of Jefferson in the shoreline temple. Lincoln's temple was built upon a step-pyramid, which kept most of his temple from sinking under rising sea levels. The structure has certainly suffered much damage from the water over the centuries, but the temple itself is far easier for archaeologists to excavate and document than some others along the Plastic Age coastline.

Lincoln's temple is a paradigmatic example of Classique Column Form architecture, with a step-pyramid staircase design. Pilgrims to the site were meant to be awed by the scale of the building as they ascended the stairs to bring offerings to the statue of Lincoln.



**Figure 96: Artist rendering of Lincoln's Temple (PC-LIN9)**





**Figure 97: The statue of the god Lincoln in his temple stands 5.8 meters tall from the bottom of his throne to the top of his head.**

The sculpture depicts Lincoln seated upon a throne. It stands 5.8 meters tall from the base of the throne to the top of Lincoln's head and weighs an estimated 160 metric tons. Again, we do not know exactly what kind of offerings or rituals were carried out inside the temple, or on the steps outside. Some archaeologists have been excited by the prospect of finding evidence of human sacrifice being carried out in the Lincoln Temple. No such evidence has been found, but there is no telling what will turn up in the near future.

The Americans also worshipped several other deities in temples that lined the ritual core. We do not know what the Americans called these other

deities, and we have not found any sculpted images. The temples are all Classique Column Form structures. They are small in comparison to the grandiose Lincoln Temple, but are impressive structures in their own right. Archaeologists suspect that the expansive floor plans are a sign that each temple housed a host of priests. These priests lived and worked in the temples, carrying out necessary rituals and marshalling festivals. The deities worshipped in these temples might have taken a back seat to Lincoln and Jefferson, but the Americans still needed to worship the others in turn to ensure the universe remains balanced. With environmental degradation looming in the future and rising sea levels encroaching on their ritual and economic hubs, the last thing the Americans needed was to incur the wrath of the gods.

## A Stellar Stele

A mysterious structure in the center of the ritual plaza in Potomac City has caught archaeologists' attention over the past few years. Ground-penetrating scans first turned up evidence of this find in 2598, but excavations did not begin until 2603. It was originally thought to be a paved walkway of some kind, but upon excavating archaeologists realized what they had found was a downed obelisk. Computer reconstructions indicate that this obelisk once stood almost 170 meters tall. This makes it by far the tallest structure we have found in Potomac City, though most New York City Needle-Point structures still dwarf it. Archaeologists are torn as to the purpose of this obelisk. It was composed of granite, and coated with marble. The marble is not nearly as resilient as the granite, and much of that surface layer is shattered into small chunks. If there was an inscription on the obelisk, we have not found it yet. Examining the many pieces under microscans will take University researchers years of careful analysis. There are two major theories that have come about regarding this obelisk. Dr. Gerard Geslak, a National University professor, believes the obelisk is a utilitarian rather than ritual structure. "It looks just like every other example of prehistoric time keeping devices," Geslak states. "The shadow the obelisk casts was used to track the passing of seasons. Think of it like a giant sundial, except it tracks the calendar year as opposed to the time of day." Geslak points out that a society so dependent on agriculture would have a very visible way of tracking the progression of the seasons. Another theory is championed by National University researcher Dr. Kristina Wright. Wright proposes that the obelisk is yet another structure used in the religious worship. This is certainly an unorthodox design in the context of other ritual structures in Potomac City. All the other temples have some interior area where rituals could be sheltered from the elements. Also, interior spaces were probably off limits to the commoners, allowing the priests to carry out any number of activities without being scrutinized by the public.

The outdoor design is something Wright feels she can explain. "Geslak could be right in that the obelisk was connected to the passing of seasons. The four faces of the obelisk could represent the patron deities of each of the four Plastic Age seasons," she argues. "It makes perfect sense for a temple devoted to worshipping nature deities would be outside." Wright does not believe it was used to track seasons. "The Amerhicans were far too advanced to have to depend on a giant obelisk to tell them the time of season."

Until the research on the marble surface can turn up evidence one way or the other, we must assume there is equal merit in both theories.



**Figure 98: Artist rendering of the Potomac City obelisk**

## CHAPTER 14: WHAT HAPPENED THEN & WHAT HAPPENS NOW

### An Empire Crumbles

The Americans were a successful and advanced people. Their inventions and technology were groundbreaking for the Plastic Age, and their ingenuity spread to the worldwide market. Despite their steady growth over more than three hundred years, the American Empire eventually followed the path of every other great civilization of the world.

The collapse was a gradual one. We cannot point to one single factor that caused the American collapse. Some of the clues – such as environmental degradation, rising sea levels and nuclear devastation – are obvious contributing factors. In addition to these clues, we look for more indirect results of collapse to create a timeline. We mostly do this by tracking the decline of new building construction and the disappearance of the American literary tradition.

Environmental degradation and the desertification of most of the continent led to widespread drought and, subsequently, famine throughout the country.

When famine spread across the country, the urban centers in the interior that relied upon faraway farms for their crops and animal products were hardest hit. Whereas our modern farming is conducted in the heart of the urban centers where the demand is, the primitive methods Americans used required open land. Farms were located thousands of miles away from their markets in some cases. While this may not have been a real issue for our own people, who can easily do without the frivolity of food, the Americans relied solely upon agriculture for sustenance. Unfortunately for them, their agriculture required climactic stability which simply ceased to exist after some years of environmental degradation. When the cities in the interior of the continent stopped receiving enough food, people began dying or defecting. They either had to move closer to food-producing areas, start producing their own food, or remain in the city to eek out a survival on whatever food stuffs came along. It is no surprise that political organization begins to disintegrate quickly in the face of such destruction. The power of the local authorities was first to go, and without that foundation, the Imperial authority soon followed.

The various facets of environmental damage are intimately linked with one another, and converged to destroy the American political system. Americans' use of earth energies was not a problem for most of its history. When the population was still small and the technologies fewer, the amount of environmental pollution was almost negligible. Unfortunately this changed

as the population of the American Empire grew exponentially at the end of the twentieth century. The rest of the world was growing as well, and suddenly Mother Nature could not counteract the carbon footprint caused by a mechanical world powered by earth energies. Climactic patterns shift, and the most widely-felt of these changes was global warming. Temperatures began increasing by an average of 2.5°C each year. For some parts of the world, this meant improved agricultural seasons and prosperous crops. For most of it, though, this shift was devastating. The Equatorial Deserts expanded like never before, and populations were forced to higher latitudes to survive. The American territory was far enough north that only its southernmost territories felt truly devastating effects. Their southern neighbors probably pushed more and more into American territory as the temperature climbed. This was probably why the Americans constructed the elaborate defense structure we discussed briefly in Chapter 2 (Figure 16).

With warming global temperatures came rising sea levels. As polar icecaps and glaciers melted, the oceans swelled to unprecedented sizes. Whole islands were swallowed over the course of less than a century. The rising sea levels had no effect on the vast majority of America's empire, but unfortunately their major urban sites were not so lucky. Potomac City and New York City sat nearly on the waves of the Plastic Age shoreline. It was only a matter of decades before rising sea levels filled the underground tunnels that connected Manhattan Island to the mainland. Next the subterranean transport network filled with water, and the American's pumping stations became too overwhelmed to stem the flooding. By the year 2050, we begin to see evidence of major earthworks projects begun in a last-ditch effort to save New York City. These projects went on for some time, but were ultimately abandoned along with the floundering city. Its inhabitants began moving to other urban centers or rural territories inland. By 2150, the only ones who remained in the coastal urban centers were the last hangers-on that refused to submit to the inevitable. All major habitation had ceased and the city streets were continuing to sink under several meters of ocean water.

We use several methods to establish this timeline of collapse. We can date the construction of new residential and commercial facilities as well as the small artifacts we find within these structures. There is an extreme decrease in the number of residential structures in New York City and the outskirts of Potomac City beginning in the year 2050. By the year 2200, we can find no evidence of new construction in these urban centers. After c.a. 2000, it is almost

impossible to detect signs of written material. This is one of the most telling signs of the American impending collapse, which would follow within one hundred years or so.

Eventually even Potomac City, the heart of Imperial rule, had to be abandoned. Rising sea levels forced the inhabitants of the city to seek dryer homes inland, and the ritual plaza was eventually swallowed up by the sea. This was a gradual process for several reasons. We discussed in Chapter 12 the lack of major artistic finds in the Pleasure Palace of New York City. This is true of most major state-owned complexes in Potomac City and New York City. There was clearly time to remove items of value from the museums and storehouses owned by the Emperor. If some dramatic event had caused the whole empire to dissolve around the same time, we would expect to find many more in situ artifacts. Precious items and items used in everyday life alike were picked up and taken elsewhere for the most part. What we do find in the residential and commercial districts of the coastal urban centers are items left behind by accident or discarded because of damage. Nature took over after human occupants left and destroyed any perishable material left behind after the evacuation.

Rising sea levels forced populations to push inland, and environmental degradation destroyed the American agricultural economy. These two factors alone are not enough to explain why the American people essentially disappeared, never to reorganize into another large society. Some isolated populations probably enjoyed good crops despite the overall product, and could easily have continued to live on the rural American landscape. Unfortunately, the Americans' long tradition of poor energy efficiency came back to haunt them one final time. In the wake of environmental degradation, nuclear waste was either completely abandoned or carried out with insufficient laborers. Without the Imperial and local government to enforce a standard in the process, nuclear facilities became ticking time bombs. Radiation Monitoring and Regulation Administration estimates that major eruptions began in the American southwest. Sites here went unmanned; soon the reactors reached unsafe temperatures and nuclear explosions destroyed flora and fauna for hundreds of miles in every direction. This set off a chain reaction of similar explosions across the country. The resulting radiation poisoned the environment even further, making life impossible in the former American territories.

### **Where Did the Amerhicans Go?**

Even all these catastrophes could not have eliminated every last Amerhican individual. The critical reader will then ask, where did the last Amerhicans go? The short answer is that we do not know for sure. They probably traveled north in small bands to escape the heat of the Equatorial Deserts and the Pollution of the Nuclear Deserts. Many probably met with the ancestors of our Outlands and joined their ranks. If we were to ever negotiate an agreement with the Outlands to get them involved in academic projects, we could research this possibility. It would only involve a simple comparison between the genetic material we pull from Amerhican cemeteries and that of modern Outlanders. This does not look like a realistic possibility within the near future, but we can always hope that attempts to create a working relationship will eventually succeed.

There is also the possibility that the Amerhicans traveled north, and instead of joining Outlander bands, joined up with our own ancestors that founded Arcanada. We have no way of proving this theory. The only way we could test that theory would be through comparing genetic information from our pre-genetic modification forefathers with that of Amerhican remains. Cremation has been a mandatory practice in Arcanada since the drafting of our first constitution in the year 2303. Those remains are long gone. Our modern populations would have little genetic connection with any possible Amerhican ancestors because modification and enhancement has edited out many of the markers we might use to establish relatedness. There is a slim chance that some markers have survived modification and enhancement, and genetic research should be considered a viable subfield of study until ruled out by concrete conclusions to the contrary.

### **The Future of Amerhican Archaeology**

One of the purposes in creating this report was to help the Grand Council Subcommittee make decisions regarding funding and permits for further Amerhican Archaeology projects. After determining what we already know, they will be better prepared to allocate funds to the most promising or underrepresented topics. Amerhican Archaeology will certainly be a blooming field for some time. The Amerhican Archaeology department of the Arcanadian National University is the fastest growing department by far, and it continues to attract new graduates and seasoned scholars from all walks of life and academic backgrounds. Amerhican Archaeology departments have also formed at the Uropean National University and Hispania National

University. Our own professors and researchers are often given travel permits to those nations to consult with projects, assist in designing courses, and speak to Uropean and Hispanian students on pursuing a career in Amerhican Archaeology.

Many project proposals are approved at each month's meeting of the Grand Council Subcommittee, and hopefully this report will be helpful in making sure all aspects of the Amerhican Empire receive their just attention. The Amerhican Empire was absolutely huge at its peak. The possibilities are truly endless as to what we might discover in the near future. We have excavated such a small percentage of the sites we have discovered and we have discovered only a small percentage of the sites that undoubtedly exist throughout the continent. It is an exciting time to be an archaeologist. I am truly lucky to have been offered the position of Amerhican Archaeology Department Head when I came to the National University in 2590. The researchers and professors that work in this department are some of the best in the University, and there are many exciting opportunities to be had by young people looking for a career in academia after graduating university.

There are so many things we still do not know about the Amerhican Empire and the people that once made it great. With each new discovery, we often emerge from the site with more questions than answers; for now, those questions are just as important as the answers.

Our goal over the next few hundred years is to begin finding more answers than questions when we delve into a new excavation. If our successes thus far are any indication of what we are going to discover in the future, I speak for my entire department in saying that we could be on the brink of some of the most ground-breaking archaeological discoveries in the last millennium. Only time will tell.

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## ENDNOTES

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  - <sup>2</sup> McKibben 2007
  - <sup>3</sup> Weisman 2007
  - <sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2010(b)
  - <sup>5</sup> Waldron 2005
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  - <sup>26</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art 2011(c)

## **KELLY LANE MARTIN**

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**EDUCATION:**      **B. A. in Anthropology with Honors, B. A. in English**  
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA  
Schreyer Honors College, College of Liberal Arts  
December 2011

### **SELECT ACADEMIC PROJECTS:**

#### **Weekly Analysis of Native American Issues;** Archaeological Ethics & Law

- Conducted weekly legal research on contemporary issues in American Indian law
- Presented critical analysis of current events and legal scenarios to the class

#### **Rhetorical Analysis of Native American Civil Rights;** Effective Public Speaking

- Designed and delivered three speeches on the legal mandates of repatriating human remains
- Chosen to represent my section in a university-wide speech competition; results pending

### **LEADERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT:**

#### **Golden Key International Honour Society; President: Fall 2011, Vice President: Spring 2010**

- Composed activity reports for headquarters, organized & conducted weekly meetings and events such as our new member recognition ceremonies and mentor dinners with honorary members
- Updated websites including Penn State clubs page, national webpage & Facebook page

#### **Penn State Debate Society: 2010-2011**

- Speaker for Public Debate on Penn State Policy: Fall 2010
- Addressed a crowd of 150-200 students regarding Penn State's undergraduate opportunities

#### **Undergraduate Law Society: 2008-2011**

- IFC/Panhellenic Dance MarATHON Committee Chair: Fall 2008 - Spring 2009
- Organized canning trips and other fundraisers; raised over \$1,400 for pediatric cancer research

### **HONORS:**

- Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society for the Liberal Arts
- Dean's List for all semesters enrolled
- Honors Thesis in Anthropology: *The Archaeology of Plastic Age America*

### **WORK EXPERIENCE:**

#### **Scaringi for Senate 2012 Campaign;** Harrisburg, PA

##### **Assistant Campaign Coordinator;** May – June 2011

- Compiled contact information for grassroots organizations across the state
- Coordinated appearances by my candidate in conjuncture with leaders of civic organizations

#### **Morgan Academic Support Center for Student Athletes (MASCOSA);** University Park, PA

##### **Tutor;** January 2011 – Present

- Instructed an average of four students in one-on-one tutoring sessions each week
- Tutored subjects such as Spanish, Statistics and Biology

#### **The Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire;** Manheim, PA

##### **Bartender;** May 2008 – Present

- Complied with PLCB serving laws at an outdoor amusement facility
- Routinely conducted product inventories and balanced cash accounts each shift