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## Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

# Conference Review: Reconstructive & Experimental Archaeology Conference REARC 2013

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The 4th Annual Reconstructive and Experimental Archaeology Conference was recently held in Gastonia, NC at the Schiele Museum of Natural History. The conference theme was Education and Reconstructive and Experimental Archaeology.

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REARC's friendly atmosphere and accessibility make a perfect place to get started or polish your presentation skills.


This great little conference has become a terrific venue for both students and professionals to rub elbows and present the results of their research. Topics range from pure lab experimentation and replication to hands-on field experience. Living history and primitive technology are also welcome subjects, while demonstrations and practical experiential workshops are held as part of this annual conference. This year the preconference workshop covered the basics of flintknapping and was led by 4 skilled instructors –

professional archaeologists, college professors and experimental practitioners.

Friday night's Meet and Greet gave everyone a chance to get acquainted. Large conferences can almost always wind up with everyone getting lost in the crowd, and only the old-time insiders knowing what's going on. REARC's friendly atmosphere and accessibility make a perfect place to get started or polish your presentation skills. It's also the open cross-section of presenters and subject matter available at any conference.

The 2013 conference hosted noted author, teacher and practitioner, John Whittaker of Grinnell College. John is noted for his two books, *Flintknapping: Making and Understanding Stone Tools* and *American Flintknappers: Stone Age Art In The Age of Computers*. He is not only a trained field archaeologist, but has included experiential and experimental projects as part of his classroom pedagogy for many years. He is also an experienced flintknapper. His keynote address, *Teaching Science Through Experimental Archaeology* followed the development of early ethnographer Franklin Hamilton Cushing. Cushing unorthodox methods provide an interesting model for how experiential and experimental undertakings inform a professional's thinking. He also unveiled recent experimental research that refutes the theory that the atlatl works as part of a spring system in favor of the idea that it works on a linear path more like a lever. We're on a quest to make sure he publishes his findings in the *Bulletin*.

Post conference demonstrations and hands-on classes included opportunities to try metal working on a Viking-style forge, flake tool technology, or visiting the Schiele's Backcountry Farm and engaging with experienced interpreters of the day. There was also a poster session featuring the work of students from participating universities. The findings of one project are included in the *Bulletin of Primitive Technology* #46. Back issues are still available at <http://www.primitive.org>.

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## | Gallery Image





FIG 1. PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGIST JACK CRESSON DEMONSTRATING THE FINER POINTS OF BASIC FLINTKNAPPING TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. PHOTO BY DAVID WESCOTT





FIG 2. AT THE RECONSTRUCTIVE & EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE. PHOTO BY DAVID WESCOTT



FIG 3. KEYNOTER JOHN WHITTAKER. PHOTO BY DAVID WESCOTT



FIG 4. STUDENTS FROM WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS ON THE POTTERY EXPERIMENTS LEAD BY THEIR PROFESSOR, JANE M. EASTMAN. PHOTO BY DAVID WESCOTT





FIG 5. GROUP PHOTO. PHOTO BY DAVID WESCOTT