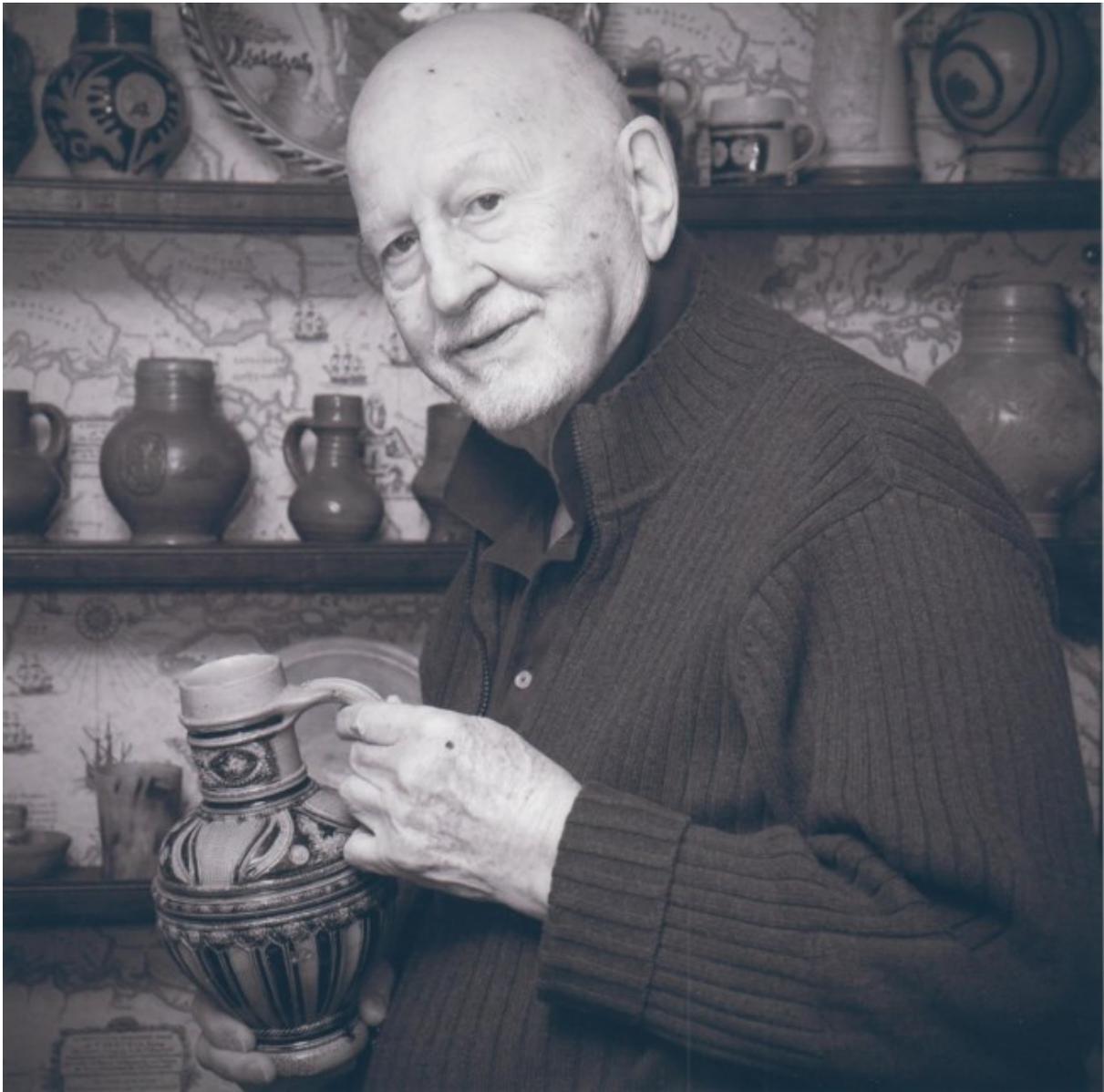


OBITUARY

Ivor Noel Hume

SEPTEMBER 30, 1927 – FEBRUARY 4, 2017



Ivor Noël Hume, internationally known archaeologist, author, beloved husband, and father died February 4 at his home in Williamsburg, Virginia, after a short illness. He was 89.

Son of the late Cecil Noël Hume and Gladys Mary Bagshaw Mann, he was born in the Chelsea borough of London in 1927 and received his schooling

and early archaeological experience in Great Britain. His first professional job began in the summer of 1949 with London's Guildhall Museum. He undertook archaeological excavations working in advance of the reconstructions in the blitzed ruins of the City of London after World War Two. Noël Hume developed expertise in the Roman-period artifacts found in these excavations, along with the cosmopolitan remnants of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London.

Mostly self-taught in these early endeavors as there were no "experts," Noël Hume became an international authority in many categories of material culture, particularly the history of English pottery and glass wine bottles.

In 1950 J. C. Harrington, the National Park Service's distinguished archaeologist, went to London seeking an expert in seventeenth-century glass. Noël Hume's name was mentioned and contact was made. Subsequently, he was asked to consult on artifacts found in Colonial Williamsburg's eighteenth-century sites.

In 1957 the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's president, Carlisle H. Humelsine, asked Noël Hume to head their expanding archaeological program. He remained as director of archaeology for thirty-one years, until his retirement in 1988.

Noël Hume worked along with his first wife of forty years, Audrey, also an archaeologist, to establish the preeminent historical archaeological research program in America. Audrey passed away in 1993.

In 1994 he married his second wife, Carol Grazier, whose love and support helped him continue a prolific career of researching, writing, and consulting. Known to his friends and colleagues as "Noël," he mentored a legion of young archaeologists who went on to become leading practitioners in the field. Noël's writings are characterized by his sharp wit, unrelenting curiosity, and rigorous scholarship, as well as being concise and remarkably accessible to both public and professional readers. His mesmerizing public lectures reflected his early training and interest in the dramatic arts. Through his writings and his development of both field and laboratory techniques geared specifically for the archaeological remains of the historic period, Noël Hume is often considered the "father of historical archaeology." He was a founding director of both the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology (1966) in Britain and the Society for Historical Archaeology (1967) in America. In 1993 Queen Elizabeth II recognized his accomplishments by making him an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for service to British cultural interests in Virginia.

During his Colonial Williamsburg career Noël Hume directed and excavated ten major field projects within the eighteenth-century town, including the Anthony Hay Cabinet Shop (1960–61), the Public Hospital site (1972–73 and 1980–81), and the James Anderson House (1984–85). In 1969 he published *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*, an encyclopedic review of artifacts encountered in North American archaeological sites that cuts across many disciplines. It is still referenced by enthusiasts, collectors, curators, and social historians, and remains the “bible” for working archaeologists. While the public and professionals both embraced his work with the eighteenth-century remains of Williamsburg, it was his work at Carter’s Grove Plantation, owned by Colonial Williamsburg in nearby James City County, that drew for Noël Hume national and international attention. In 1970–71 and 1976–78 he uncovered the archaeological remains of Wolstenholme Towne, a lost Virginia settlement founded 1618, eleven years after the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown. Noël Hume and his crews found the remains of the settlement’s fort, church, homes, and outbuildings. Most important was the discovery of the massacre victims of a 1622 Native American uprising which quickly made the world news. The project has been described as an “archaeological achievement of the highest order.” *National Geographic* brought Wolstenholme Towne to its readers’ attention with two articles, published in its June 1979 and January 1982 issues. While many important early seventeenth-century artifacts were recovered, it was Noel Hume’s innovative analytic techniques and storytelling approach that gave life to the human remains found at the site. His popular book *Martin’s Hundred* (1982) became a best seller. The *Martin’s Hundred* settlement was partially reconstructed on site and the artifacts were displayed and interpreted in The Winthrop Rockefeller Archaeology Museum. Immediately after his retirement from Colonial Williamsburg, Noël Hume embarked on a major excavation on Roanoke Island, N.C., the location of America’s first attempted English settlement. In 1992, supported by the newly established First Colony Foundation, he directed the excavations that resulted in the discovery of Thomas Harriot’s 1585–86 scientific center. Harriott, an English mathematician and astronomer, made an expedition to the New World as a scientific adviser on one of the voyages sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh. The metallurgical and distilling area of Harriott found by Noël Hume has led to a number of later archaeological endeavors on Roanoke by others in the field. His Roanoke effort led to another *National Geographic* article in 1994 and another Noël Hume book, *The Virginia Adventure: Roanoke Island to James Towne, An Archaeological and Historical Odyssey*, also published in 1994. From 1953 until his death, Noël Hume wrote more than twenty-five books on archaeology and contributed dozens of significant articles to professional journals and other publications. His first publication, *Archaeology in England* (1953), was followed in 1958 by another important work, *Great Moments in Archaeology*. After moving to America, his list of major early works included, *Here Lies Virginia* (1963), “1775: Another Part of the Field” (1968), and *Historical Archaeology* (1969). Noël Hume was a regular contributor to the

Colonial Williamsburg Journal. Two volumes of his published articles were reprinted “In Search of This and That,” in 1992 and “Something from the Cellar,” in 2005. In 2000 he began a relationship with the Chipstone Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which published his *If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery*, (2001), a tome summarizing his lifelong interest in collecting and studying pottery. Noël Hume also contributed regularly to the annual journal *Ceramics in America*, published by Chipstone from 2001 through 2017. His autobiography, *A Passion for the Past*, was published in 2010, and *Belzoni, the Giant Archaeologists Love to Hate*, a biography of the Italian-English archaeologist of the early nineteenth century was released in 2011. In its book review of *Belzoni*, the *New York Times* stated that Noël Hume’s writing made it “nearly impossible to resist the story of [Belzoni’s] life.”

Beyond Noël Hume’s illustrious public career in archaeology and the pursuit of the past, he was first and foremost a friend and confidant to his closest colleagues. Noel Hume is survived by his constant helpmate and wife, Carol; his brother, David, in Great Britain; and his children and grandchildren, who affectionately called him “Papa.” A master of historical storytelling, Papa presided over many memorable family gatherings, regaling his most important audience with tales of curiosities, mirth, and intrigue.

A special Celebration of Noël Hume’s Life will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2017, at the Center Street Grill in New Town, 5101 Center St., from 4 to 6 p.m. The family invites those who wish to stop in and pay their respects.

Donations in memory of Noël Hume’s life can be made to Service Dogs of Virginia, 218 Albemarle Square, PO Box 408, Charlottesville, VA 22902 (434) 295-9503 or Sentara Hospice, 200 Enterprise Dr., Newport News, VA 23603. Online condolences may be offered at www.nelsencares.com.