



Aaron Deter-Wolf

Prehistoric Archaeologist

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

MA (2000) Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
Latin American Studies; Anthropology, Art
History, History. Thesis: Whistle Figurines
from Motúl de San José, Guatemala.

BA (1998) Bachelor of Arts cum laude, Duke
University, Durham NC. Art History and
Classical Archaeology

WORK HISTORY

Tennessee Division of Archaeology, Nashville, TN.
Prehistoric Archaeologist (2007–Present)

Middle Tennessee State University, Dept. of
Sociology and Anthropology, Murfreesboro,
TN. **Adjunct Professor** (2009–2022)

TRC, Inc., Nashville, TN. **Staff Archaeologist**
(2001–2007)

Earth Search, Inc., New Orleans, LA,
Archaeological Project Manager (2000–
2001)

Proyecto Motul de San José, Nuevo San José,
Petén, Guatemala, **Field Supervisor** (1998
and 1999 field seasons)

Proyecto La Amelia, San Francisco El Tumbo,
Petén, Guatemala, **Field Archaeologist** (1997
field season)

REFERENCES

Phil Hodge
State Archaeologist and Director
Tennessee Division of Archaeology
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Florida State University
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As the Prehistoric Archaeologist for the Tennessee Division of Archaeology in Nashville, Tennessee, I am responsible for managing archaeological sites on State-owned lands, investigating disturbances to ancient Native American graves, conducting archaeological excavations and research, and informing the public about archaeology. From 2009–2022 I also served as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Middle Tennessee State University.

My recent research in Tennessee and the American Southeast has included studies of [site destruction caused by extreme weather events and looting](#), examinations of [ancient freshwater shellfishing](#) in the Middle Cumberland River Valley of Tennessee, and explorations of [foodways archaeology in the American Southeast](#). My research has been funded in part by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Over the past decade I have been one of the leading researchers developing the archaeological study of ancient tattooing. In 2009 I organized the first American academic symposium to examine Native American tattooing, which culminated in the volume [Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America](#). I have authored multiple book chapters and journal articles on the archaeology of tattooing, and am co-editor of the 2018 volume [Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing](#). My research includes studies identifying a 2,000 year old [Ancestral Pueblo cactus spine](#) tattooing tool from southern Utah, and [Archaic period turkey bone tattooing tools](#) from Tennessee, as well as an experimental study documenting physical differences in tattoos created using different [pre-electric tools and techniques](#). Most recently I am engaged in efforts using non-destructive digital imaging technologies to record tattoos preserved on pre-Columbian Andean mummies in museum collections.

Prior to employment with the State of Tennessee, I worked in the Cultural Resource Management industry as Project Manager and Principal Investigator for companies in Nashville and New Orleans. In those capacities I designed and supervised projects throughout the Southeastern United States on behalf of federal agencies, commercial development interests, and private clients. That work included historic and prehistoric cemetery delineations and mitigations, data recovery excavations, evaluations of site integrity and eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and archaeological surveys of planned development corridors.

Please see the following pages for additional information on my professional experience and representative citations.



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

- 2022 [Examining the Physical Signatures of Pre-Electric Tattooing Tools and Techniques](https://exarc.net/ark:/88735/10654). EXARC Journal 2022/3. <https://exarc.net/ark:/88735/10654>
- 2022 Tattooed Human Mummies Database, Version 5.0. Data file, DOI [10.6084/m9.figshare.5738439](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5738439).
2021. [Ancient Native American Bone Tattooing Tools and Pigments: Evidence from Central Tennessee](#). *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 37:103002.
2021. [Ancient Tattooing: Interview with Aaron Deter-Wolf](#) (2021) Tides of History podcast.
2019. [Redefining the Age of Tattooing in Western North America: A 2000-year-old Artifact from Utah](#). *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports* 24:1064-1075. (Media Coverage: [1](#); [2](#))
2019. [Tattoo Bundles as Archaeological Correlates for Ancient Body Ritual in Eastern North America](#). In *Shaman, Priest, Practice, Belief: Materials of Ritual and Religion in Eastern North America*, ed. S.B. Carmody and C.R. Barrier, pp. 37-62. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
2018. [Egyptian Mummies, Hidden Tattoos and the Archaeologist who Experiments on Himself](#). Science Friction, ABC News (Australia).
2017. [Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing](#). University of Washington Press, Seattle.
2017. After You Die: Preserving Tattooed Skin. In [Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing](#), pp. 130-134. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
2017. Further Evaluation of Tattooing Use-Wear on Bone Tools. In [Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing](#), pp. 231-240. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
2017. Scratching the Surface: Mistaken Identifications of Tattoo Tools from Eastern North America. In [Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing](#), pp. 193-209. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
2016. On-screen appearance, "[Iceman Reborn](#)." NOVA (PBS). Premiered February 17.
2013. Deter-Wolf, A. and C. Diaz-Granados (editors) (2013) [Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions in Eastern North America](#). University of Texas Press, Austin.
2013. Needle in a Haystack: Examining the Archaeological Evidence for Prehistoric Tattooing. In [Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattooing in Eastern North America](#), pp. 43-72. University of Texas Press, Austin.
2013. The Material Culture and Middle Stone Age Origins of Ancient Tattooing. In [Tattoos and Body Modifications in Antiquity: Proceedings of the Sessions at the Annual Meetings of the European Association of Archaeologist in The Hague and Oslo, 2010/11](#), pp. 15-26. Zurich Studies in Archaeology 9. Chronos-Verlag, Zurich.
2013. Flint, Bone, and Thorns: Using Ethnohistorical Data, Experimental Archaeology, and Microscopy to Examine Ancient Tattooing in Eastern North America. In [Tattoos and Body Modifications in Antiquity: Proceedings of the Sessions at the Annual Meetings of the European Association of Archaeologist in The Hague and Oslo, 2010/11](#), pp. 35-48. Zurich Studies in Archaeology 9. Chronos-Verlag, Zurich.

FULL PUBLICATIONS LIST AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AND ONLINE:

<http://tdoa.academia.edu/AaronDeterWolf>