

Whaley House Multimedia Story

SDSU Professor Seth Mallios: This is an archaeological excavation at the historic Whaley House. These are all San Diego State students, about half undergrad and half graduate students. What we're digging is a well and an old privy.

SDSU Professor Seth Mallios explaining the activity of the students: With the trowel, they'll put it into the dust pan then into the buckets. They send the buckets up, then they'll screen it through quarter inch mesh and they'll save the artifacts, put the dirt that fell through will be put into sand bags and the sand bags will be labeled and put onto the sandbag wall here. We take samples from those sandbags back to the lab both to save and to run. Then the rest of the sandbags ultimately at the end of the field season will be put back into this unit.

Ken Manchen, SDSU archaeology student: Let's see. Yesterday we found, not sure what it was, maybe some sort of locking mechanism that had like a carved bone handle on it. The Whaley's had kids a lot of the time when there were here so there are a lot of kids artifacts, kids toys down there.

Prof. Mallios: To tie it all together, one of the things that we like to do with archaeology is not only examine what we find in the ground but also the stories that are told about the place. So we get to examine the past and also how the present feels about the past and this place is perfect for it.

Prof. Mallios: Two great things about this, first is this is a real dig, this is research archaeology going on, there is nothing fake about this. We don't salt the dig at all so they can find stuff so they are engaging in a very meaningful activity. There aren't any empty assignments.

Prof. Mallios: The second thing is in doing this they get to assess whether they want to go into archaeology. The thing is archaeology has been romanticized so much I want people to know what they are getting into. A lot of the sites you're working on there is a lot of physical labor and out here they're filling sand bags, moving sand bags, chunking through dirt. For some people it's torture, for others it's the greatest thing they can do. The nice thing about this class is they get to know.