

Nomination of Christine D. Garst for the KAA Lifetime Service Award April 2025

Chris Garst grew up on a farm in Jewell County near Courtland, west of Belleville, Kansas. Chris has four children and did not pursue college until age 39. She attended Cloud County Community College, receiving an Associate of Science degree, before earning a Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State University and a Master of Arts degree in anthropology from the University of Kansas. While at Kansas State, she was honored to be the recipient of the first Patricia O'Brien Award, presented to the student who submits a superior undergraduate anthropology paper. During collegiate years, Chris worked part-time in the K-State archeological lab and experienced four field schools, two in Iowa and two in Kansas, one of which was a Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP). Chris became the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS) Archeology Lab director on January 9, 2001 and retired on April 1, 2024.

As director of the KSHS Archeology Lab, Chris had many responsibilities, and she was always on the lookout for how she could involve Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA) members in the Topeka lab, as well as promoting the annual KATP field school lab. A selected list of Chris' KSHS lab responsibilities is listed in Appendix 1.

Chris has been an active member of both the Professional Archaeologists of Kansas (PAK) and the KAA. She was the PAK Education Committee chair and served as a board member-at-large for several years. This is Chris' twenty-fifth year as a vital KAA supporter, most recently as KAA Certification Program chair.

Chris had been the KSHS Archeology Lab director for only five months at the beginning of the 2001 KATP field school. The Atchison cleaning and cataloging rooms not only were some distance from each other, but also overflowed on rain-days; on one day more than 60 volunteered. At the end of Chris' first KATP, one long-time participant said that Chris "handled the early rain days like a veteran, and now she is a veteran."

Chris helped compile a list of sites for which artifacts needed to be cleaned and/or cataloged. This listing included KATP field school sites from years past. Gradually, the backlog was reduced significantly during KATP labs and at the KSHS Archeology Lab.

During the beginning days of each KATP field school, when artifacts from the current work come in slowly, Chris brought supplemental artifacts to allow a variety of lab experiences. If the KATP was at a historic site, she selected pre-contact artifacts to clean, to catalog, and sometimes to reconstruct. Likewise, if the KATP was at a pre-contact site, she offered historic period artifacts.

At the beginning of KATP field schools, Chris occasionally sought to assist KAA members in processing collections for which the members themselves were responsible. Some of these included a large collection donated to K-State (for Dr. Brad Logan), Cuesta and Kansas City Hopewell artifacts from Meech Brothers site (for Jim Feagins), Great Bend aspect artifacts from a Little River Archaeological Project (for Dr. Donna Roper), Oxford one-room school artifacts (for Gail Lundeen), Lone Elm Park artifacts (for Mary Conrad), Minersville artifacts (for Deb

Aaron), and the private Pence Collection (documented by Aaron).

At the KATP lab, Chris matched experienced with non-experienced volunteers. She learned of individuals' particular talents and called on them when situations arose. For years whenever leather needed cleaning, experienced Sharon McKinney was paired with a beginner. Likewise, if paper was involved, professional archivist Marilyn Finke assisted, although one time Finke herself was assigned the slow process of separating layers of wallpaper. When Chris learned that first-timer Rhonda Barnett collected china dolls, Chris assigned Barnett to write a detailed description of the hand of a china doll found at the Last Chance Store site.

Chris knew lab volunteers might have knowledge unknown to others. Thus, when a cataloger could not identify an artifact, Chris encouraged that person to ask every cataloger and cleaner for suggestions, which sometimes produced answers.

Chris encouraged cleaners to experience cataloging as well, although on occasion some resisted. Chris allowed Mary Buster, an Adair descendant, to continue cleaning Adair Cabin artifacts for days. When a monogram on a silver spoon remained hard to read, Buster rubbed the etched letters for around eight hours before Chris was convinced the initials are FBA, standing for Florella Brown Adair.

Chris strove not only for consistent cleaning and cataloging at the KATP labs, but also wanted to provide enjoyable experiences. Many of the evaluations submitted at the end of field schools reflected Chris' successes. One quotation from an evaluation provides a good summary. "Chris Garst does a great job of providing everyone the opportunity to experience all lab opportunities, cleaning, sorting, identifying, and cataloging. She definitely keeps the training part of KATP in mind as she plans for field school."

On occasion KATP field workers participated in the lab. When the KATP lab became too stacked up with artifacts from a current site, Chris might call for a lab night on an evening without any scheduled activities.

Chris was quite aware of the requirements in the various certification categories and regularly made suggestions to certification enrollees—when in the lab, around the lunch table, and at certification meetings. For those perplexed about finding sites to record, Chris sometimes related that she herself had recorded the farm of her childhood from her memories. In the lab Chris was proactive toward certification requirements. At KATP field schools and at Topeka lab events, she regularly asked attendees what their requirements were. Chris also would announce that she had opportunities available and would give first preference to those needing those experiences for certification. For example, Chris might assign preparation of the KATP display case to someone who needed such for certification.

Chris always had suggestions for those who needed to write articles for certification. Those who wrote following Chris' suggestions included Rose Marie Wallen on the Nutter site, Deb Aaron on reconstructing a possible Keith phase ceramic pot, and Pauline Hintz on children and toys from Fort Hays; all three articles appeared in issues of *The Kansas Anthropologist*.

At the end of each KATP, Chris determined if the volume of unprocessed artifacts warranted further KAA events. If the KATP backlog was manageable, no additional KAA event was required. Over the years, Chris called 22 Topeka KAA lab events for the summer, fall, and/or winter.

For the management of artifacts housed at KSHS, Chris recruited volunteers from the KAA ranks and elsewhere. Some volunteered regularly, some occasionally, and some for specific projects. KAA members Chris recruited to work as frequent Topeka lab volunteers over two-plus decades include: Marilyn Finke, Jerry Finke, Steve Hamilton, Jim Huss, Jim Mayhew, Sharon McKinney, Marion Poe, Jim Roberts, Jann Rudkin, Sharon Sage, Sue Smith, John Vincent, Rose Marie Wallen, and Virginia Wulfkuhle, who worked with slides after KSHS retirement.

Chris was aware of the need for the required and elective classes. Chris has taught or co-taught 11 classes. These include Basic Laboratory Techniques (2004, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2018), Artifact Restoration and Conservation (2006), Ceramic Studies (2008, co-taught with Donna Roper, Caroline Kahler, Robert Hoard, and Tod Bevitt), Artifact Description and Analysis (2009, co-taught with Virginia Wulfkuhle), and Cultural Reconstruction (2013, 2017, and 2024).

During these classes, Chris liked to give assignments so attendees could research, organize information, and give oral presentations. For the 2006 class of Artifact Restoration and Conservation, class members not only organized what they had learned, but also collaborated in the writing of an article for *Kansas Preservation*.

As time passed, Chris not only encouraged oral reports during certification classes, but also during KATP labs, when she called mini-seminar breaks. One such break-in-the-action was Steve Finch's PowerPoint on English ceramics.

Chris modeled what she encouraged. She gave three public presentations on the Baker site: to the Council Grove Chamber of Commerce, to another Council Grove group in 2024, and for a 2023 KATP rain-day. Further, Chris authored many articles for KAA publications, both for the journal (*The Kansas Anthropologist*) and for the *KAA Newsletter*. Two of the nine articles in *The Kansas Anthropologist* through 2024, both about KATP field schools, were co-authored. Another article will be in the upcoming volume of *The Kansas Anthropologist*. For the *KAA Newsletter*, Chris authored or co-authored at least 17 articles. One co-authored report of a farmstead near Nicodemus appeared in the KSHS *Kansas History, A Journal of the Central Plains*.

The nomination of Chris Garst for the KAA Lifetime Service Award was submitted for consideration by the KAA Executive Committee in spring 2025 by Mary Conrad, Jim Roberts, and Rose Marie Wallen, long-time KATP lab volunteers.

Selected Bibliography

Journals

Garst, Christine D.

2002 *Silver Horn: Master Illustrator of the Kiowas* by Candace S. Greene; forward by Donald

Tofpi. Reviewed by Christine D. Garst. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 23:139.

2021 Keep the Whiskey in the Cellar and the Ammunition on the Windowsills: Archeology of the Baker Store (14MO701). *The Kansas Anthropologist* 42:115-138.

2021 It Was Doubtless an Act of Rashness ... A Commemorative Artifact from Fort Hays. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 42:139-141.

2022 The Wullschleger Site (14MH301): More Than Half a Century of Searching. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 43:11-23.

2022 Gunflints in the Kansas Historical Society's Archeological Collections. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 43:63-74.

2022 From Gripper Snappers to Isinglass: A Summary of the 1988 and 1990 Kansas Historical Society's Archeological Investigations at Constitution Hall (14DO321). *The Kansas Anthropologist* 43:75-107.

2023 One Person's Trash Is Another's Treasure: A Flake Cache from 14BT436. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 44:54-56.

2024 Archeology of the Baker House (14MO301): They Could Smell the Pies Baking as the House Burned. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 45:83-111.

2025 Life at the Crossroads: A Summary of the 1991 Artifact Collection at the Hollenberg Pony Express Station (14WH316). *The Kansas Anthropologist* 46:in preparation.

Garst, Christine D., and Robert J. Hoard

2017 Archeological Investigations of the Adair Cabin (14MM327): Results of the 2014 Kansas Archeology Training Program Field School. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 38:114-156.

Garst, Christine D., Robert J. Hoard, Daniel Hougland, Dan Morrow, Margaret C. Wood, and Virginia A. Wulfkuhle

2016 The Thomas Johnson/Henry Williams Homestead: A Rural Component of the Nineteenth-Century Settlement of Nicodemus, Kansas. *The Kansas Anthropologist* 37:53-115.

Wood, Margaret C., Christine D. Garst, Robert J. Hoard, and Virginia A. Wulfkuhle

2018/2019 African American Farmers of Nicodemus, Kansas: An Archaeological Examination of the Thomas Johnson and Henry Williams Farmstead. *Kansas History* 41(4):228-243.

Newsletters

Garst, Chris

2005 KSHS Lab Opportunity – Volunteers Needed [need photographer to photo ethnographic collections—would fulfill requirement for Advanced Archeological Lab Technician]. *KAA Newsletter* 17(2):6.

- 2007 Summer Spree Set for August 11 & 12. *KAA Newsletter* 19(2):1.
- 2007 2007 KATP Laboratory. *KAA Newsletter* 19(3):20.
- 2011 2011 Summer Spree. *KAA Newsletter* 23(3):21.
- 2015 Summer Spree. *KAA Newsletter* 27(4):7.
- 2019 Certification Opportunity [restoration opportunity to reconstruct goblet fragments from Fort Hays]. *KAA Newsletter* 31(2):9.
- 2019 Fall Lab Events. *KAA Newsletter* 31(4):5-6.
- 2020 14RC8 Lab Event: A Numbers Game! *KAA Newsletter* 32(1): 3.
- 2020 14RC8: Put to Bed? *KAA Newsletter* 32(2):7.
- 2022 Many Thanks! *KAA Newsletter* 34(2):11.
- 2023 “Touching Artifacts Always Gets My Imagination Going”: Fort Hays Fix-It Event a Success. *KAA Newsletter* 35(4):2-3.
- Garst, Chris, and Gina Powell
2018 Winter Wing Ding a Huge Success. *KAA Newsletter* 30(1):10-11.
- Garst, Chris, Nancy Arendt, Nancy Calhoun, Jerry Finke, Marilyn Finke, Anita Frank, Marion Poe, James Roberts, and Jimmette Rowlinson
2006 Camaraderie Along with Education: A Report on the Artifact Restoration and Conservation Class. *Kansas Preservation* 28(4):17-18.
- Garst, Chris, and Nikki Klarmann
2022 KATP Summer Lab Event: Cleaning, Cataloging, and Fun! *KAA Newsletter* 34(2):1.
- Garst, Chris, and Virginia Wulfkuhle
2007 2007 Summer Spree. *KAA Newsletter* 19(3):24-26.
- Wulfkuhle, Virginia, and Chris Garst
2006 KAA Members Work on Certification at the KSHS Archeology Lab. *KAA Newsletter* 18(3):5.
- 2007 A Call for Volunteer Trainees. *KAA Newsletter* 19(4):12-14.
- 2009 Another Call for Volunteer Staff Trainees. *KAA Newsletter* 21(4):10-12.

Appendix 1. Selected List of Chris Garst' KSHS Lab Responsibilities.

- maintained organization of archeological collections and records
- maintained listing of collections requiring further cleaning, cataloging, etc.
- determined tasks requiring lab volunteers, such as cleaning, sorting, cataloging, data entry, photography, assessing curation standards in individual boxes
- encouraged individuals, including KAA members, to volunteer
- supervised archeological lab interns
- changed KSHS archeological catalogs from paper only to online inventories
- managed donations and loans
- planned and led KATP labs
- determined whether KATP recoveries warranted further lab events
- wrote reports
- gave public presentations
- attended KSHS artifact ID days, such as at Pawnee Indian Village Historic Site, High Plains Museum, KSHS public events, and KATP collectors' nights
- held open house of working lab during KSHS public awareness days
- answered archeological questions, possibly involving curated artifacts, from both professionals and the public
- added to catalogers' resources for use in identification of artifacts in KSHS lab and in KATP field lab
- decided to bring to light obscure artifacts and collections
- coordinated the digitization of archeological images and documents for the KSHS online database *Kansas Memory*
- began on-going project with volunteers looking inside each curated archeological box to ascertain whether the contents meet curation standards; and if not, to upgrade the curation
- participated on many KSHS committees and work groups, including discussions for the major exhibit renovation of the Kansas Museum of History