Episode 5 Title: A Way to Collaborate: the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation, Stephen Silliman and the Eastern Pequot Archaeological Field School.

Abstract: In this episode hosts Justin Schell and Laura Wilson discuss a successful collaboration built between the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation in Connecticut and a UMass Boston archaeologist, Professor Stephen Silliman. The episode focuses on the fraught colonial history of the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation and how a relationship was formed between an archaeologist and the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation. In the episode, Silliman gives tangible examples of doing restorative archaeology and collaborative scholarly work by empowering the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation and by involving them in the research process. Over time their collaboration ends up altering the nature of the research itself. The episode offers many tangible examples about how professional scholars and scientists could engage with Indigenous communities, and in doing so, help preserve a more complete history.

Guest: Stephen Silliman
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Narration (LW): Hello and welcome to the FLAME podcast, where we explore the Future Libraries, Archives, and Museums in Excavation. I'm Laura Wilson, CLIR Postdoctoral Fellow at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. In this podcast series we analyze the interviews we conducted with those who work in the cultural heritage world of museums, libraries, galleries and archives, as well as scholars, who are also a part of that world.

Joining me for this episode is a voice new to FLAME, Justin Schell.

Narration (JS): Thanks, Laura. I'm Justin Schell, a former CLIR Postdoctoral Fellow and currently the Director of Scholarly Technology and Creative Spaces at the University of Michigan Library. Excited to be here!

Narration (LW): In addition to this new voice, I'll also note a stylistic difference in this episode: In our previous four episodes we analyzed two different interviews. In the upcoming episodes however, we are going to try something different: we will be focusing on single interviews…we are still highlighting prominent topics about BIPOC representation in academia, BIPOC representation in archives, museum, gallery and library spaces. We will continue to look into the issue of sparse representation and mis-representation. And we will continue to talk about examples of representation and collaboration with Indigenous nations, which is the subject of today's episode.

Narration (JS): In this episode we'll focus on archeological collaboration with Indigenous tribes and what that looks like from the perspective of one particular archaeologist, Professor Stephen Silliman and his work with the Eastern Pequod Nation. Silliman is Professor of Anthropology at UMass Boston. His interests include theories of identity, labor, material culture, and post-colonial collaborative Indigenous

archeology, and the impact of post-Colombian colonialism on Indigenous nations. He works regularly with the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation [http://easternpequottribalnation.org/about-us.html] in North Stonington Connecticut, on issues relating to historic preservation and archeological research. He's published many articles and books, including one entitled *Engaging Archeology: 25 Case Studies in Research Practice [http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1039143052].* In 2019, he co-authored an article with members of the Eastern Pequot Nation entitled "Authoring and Authority in Eastern Pequot Community Heritage and Archaeology" [https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11759-019-09377-4]. The collaborations between Prof. Silliman and the Eastern Pequot Nation offer an example of collaborative scholarly work that centers an Indigenous community at its core.

FLAME co-host Ece Turnator conducted the interview with Prof. Silliman and you might hear her voice pop in occasionally.

THE THREE WORDS SECTION:

Narration (LW): So in every interview we conduct for this podcast, we ask our participants to choose three words or phrases that best describe the work they do. This question often takes interviewees a while to mull over, and is sometimes expressed through multiple clips. But Prof. Stephen Silliman's answers were straightforward and so we wanted to give them to you directly from him:

Stephen Silliman: I'd have to say those would be community, collaboration. And then as a longer phrase, Indigenous archeology and heritage.

Narration (JS): All three phrases are important and we will touch upon them throughout the interview. Silliman began working with the Eastern Pequot Nation to essentially understand and preserve their heritage. The Pequots are an Indigenous people currently in the state of Connecticut where they live alongside Mohicans, the Schaghticoke**,** Narragansett and other neighboring nations. The Pequot War and the Mystic Massacre of 1637 at Mystic Connecticut, resulted from rising tensions about the fur trade, and governance disputes between the English colonists and local tribes. The Pequot War of 1637 was a turning point in the Nation's history. The division between the Eastern and Western Pequots dates back to that important war when hundreds of Pequot children, elders, and adults were killed. About a year or so after the war, the Eastern Pequot started to live on the reservation where they still are today. This reservation is one of the earliest tribal reservations in the country and has been continuously occupied by the Eastern Pequot tribe. You will hear Stephen refer to the reservation period, that's when the Pequot tribe was divided and the Eastern Pequots moved to a reservation in North Stonington and separated from their **Mashantucket** brethren to the West. [https://www.easternpequottribalnation.org/history] The Eastern Pequot, I should add, are a state-recognized tribe. They

started petitioning for federal recognition in the late 1970s. After about 30 years of struggle their petition was first approved and then denied in 2005. Professor Silliman's relationship with the tribe dates back to the early 2000s and is connected to the tribe's federal recognition process, which you'll hear referenced throughout the interview. The Eastern Pequots' application was accepted by the Department of the Interior in 2002 but it was challenged and eventually denied in 2005. By contrast, the Western Pequot have been a federally registered tribe since 1983.

Stephen Silliman: **Yeah, so the Eastern Pequot received their reservation in 1683 and the Mashantucket or the Western Pequot received theirs in 1666. These are a few decades of regrouping and outgrowth out of the Pequot War from 1636-37 and the Treaty of Hartford in 1638 [Transcription of the Hartford Treaty of 1638: http://pequotwar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Grade-8-Treaty-of-Hartford-Guiding-Questions-Avery.pdf], attempted to in an archival, legal sense, erase the Pequot because when the, after the close of the Pequot War, the Pequots who survived were either sold into slavery in the Caribbean, or they were executed, or they were put under the sort of overseership, or I don't know quite what to word that, but some were put under the Mohegan and someone to the Narragansett who were neighboring communities who had allied with the English before realizing quite what the English were up to.**

Stephen Silliman: **And then of course, as these colonial things go, the Mohegan and the Narragansett would then face their own problems with colonial presence. But that's how the Eastern and the Western Pequot were all just the Pequot prior to the Pequot War. And they were a large Indigenous nation that wielded quite a bit of power in Southern New England trade and diplomatic relationships, but with the sort of onslaught of epidemic diseases and, the English deciding they wanted more expansion, they wanted their perception of heathen, devil oriented Indigenous people. They wanted to sort of, move them out of the way to get land, to spread Christianity. Those kinds of politics and issues were in play. So that's what results in the creation of the Western and the Eastern Pequot. But if you back up before that, they're all Pequot and the Indigenous presence on the New England landscape, you know, is at least 10,000 years or more as you kind of get back into a glacier sitting on top of some of these areas before that time.**

Stephen Silliman: **So these are long-term Indigenous histories.**

Narration (LW): 10,000 years of history… That's a truly epic temporal scale. In a way then, Stephen prepared the 'evidence' for the tribe so that their existence on their ancestral lands could be proved, 'scientifically', to the federal authorities. Of course though, there was a big difference between the coastal lands the tribe originally occupied, versus the reservation land they were forced onto following the Pequot War of 1637. Stephen says that the Eastern Pequot were interested in all of that history.

In the next clip he refers to "points", and for our listeners, those would be sharp stone tools, like arrowheads.

Stephen Silliman: **The Eastern Pequot are very interested in what is the ancestral landscape? What can we find archaeologically? And so, you know, in our investigations we are sometimes finding points that would have been on spears or darts that go back anywhere from two to 8,000 years. So that's been really exciting for the Eastern Pequot to see things made by their ancestors that are sort of grounding the Indigenous presence on that landscape, but then looking at what happens in the reservation period, when, and this is important too. So that's a, it's a very rocky sort of upland area that they were given as a reservation when they used to have access to fertile soils along rivers, where they were growing corn, where they used to have access to coastal resources their negotiations to get land were fruitful in the sense that they were able to secure a reservation land, but it wasn't ideal land.**

Stephen Silliman: **So this land, they, their ancestors did use for thousands of years hunting and gathering different sorts of resources at different times of year. But it's clear that the upland rocky spot where the reservation is now was not a place where they had a large village, or they had multiple homes. At least we've not seen those archaeologically. We sort of see the archeological evidence of people using it by sort of coming through it and tying it into bigger landscapes were suddenly on that rocky piece of land is basically calling us, we're saying, you get, like, 200 and something acres, good luck growing crops on that. Good luck, getting to the coast, good luck finding animals to hunt because we're living all around you and good luck whenever we tear down your fences and let our livestock trample your gardens as part of further attempts that, you know, erasure and destruction of that. And these are the sorts of things that they were battling as they were persisting as a community. So that kind of sets that bigger framework and why they're really interested in both pre-reservation things and reservation things, because it's part of that long picture of Pequot history in Connecticut.**

Narration (JS): This highlights the very painful effects of colonization all the way to the present. Ece asked Stephen about how he built a relationship with the Eastern Pequot Nation over the course of the last two decades, about the articles he co-authored with tribal members and the Field School that is still going strong.

Stephen Silliman: **So yeah, this project with the Eastern Pequot tribal nation, it's been a collaborative one between the University of Massachusetts, Boston and Eastern Pequot community. This began in 2003 at their invitation. They were on the cusp of receiving federal acknowledgement and they wanted to do an archeological project or wanted to consider one that helped them with cultural, historical preservation as an initiative they wanted to emphasize going forward with this expected federal recognition. Now, the bigger problem with all of that is a couple of years later, they had their federal recognition taken away from them which is a much longer conversation.**

Narration (LW): That process of federal recognition, especially finding the evidence for it, really kickstarted the relationship between Stephen and the Eastern Pequot in the early 2000s. Stephen works hard to ensure that the tribal members' wishes are what give direction to his scholarship, especially given archaeology's painful history of stealing from Indigenous peoples, or misrepresenting them in other ways. How does working with a tribe change the way Stephen does archaeology then? Here he talks about positive benefits to the community:

Stephen Silliman: **And it was something that was having seemingly really positive benefits in the community. We were involving students in university training and engaging with their community. We were bringing university and grant resources to the Eastern Pequot community for training and locating and identifying cultural sites and mapping them and trying to understand different things about parts of their history they wanted archeology to help contribute to. So what the really nice thing about it was is because it was something they were seeking. And I was at a moment when I was looking for a project as a fairly new professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, we actually were able to start collaborating at the very beginning, rather than you hear a lot of collaborative projects that sort of talk about, well, we gave to the community, these things at the end of the project.**

Narration (JS): Stephen was basically incorporating the Eastern Pequot community members at every step of his work. This entailed not just co-authorship and co-approval but actually excavating differently. Excavations started to adjust to Eastern Pequot

traditions and beliefs …and they evolved into something quite unlike more conventional one-sided and extractive archeology.

Stephen Silliman: **It was collaborative from the very beginning; they were approving and guiding some parts of the project. They were making sure that any things that came out of the project such as a master's thesis or a publication, that those were approved by tribal council to be able to do those. We ensured that there were Eastern Pequot community members in the field during excavations. They were learning to do excavation alongside students, but then also contributing their perspectives and contexts to teaching the students themselves while they're there about their land and their heritage. So it was, it was an attempt to have all of this integrated from the beginning, you know, guiding questions and figuring out what sort of products do we want when this is over. And a lot of that's been, you know, a lot of building trust early on having people, community members, present for all of these things, following protocols for what do you do with artifacts and collections when you have them, how do you properly sort of purify, cleanse yourself according to their kind of ritual context before being on the reservation and finding materials and what do you do with the land when it has been disturbed and materials have come from that?**

Stephen Silliman: **So for instance, they do tobacco offerings to acknowledge the closing of excavations where cultural materials were found, or you have to be smudged the ritual sort of cleansing with a smoke from different important materials, like, you know, sage and other things before you come onto the reservation to do the work. So it was always an important way to kind of bring students into that cultural context and to show them that the act of archeology, that's not just a science-y thing or a research thing, it's a cultural thing. And it has a history that's very complicated. And here's a case where the Eastern Pequot are trying to find out how could archeology possibly be useful for them rather than it taking sort of discipline that it's been for quite some time, how do we make it sort of give as much as it takes and how do we find a balance with that?**

Narration (LW): So this is archaeology that is in direct touch–in a relationship–with the people and the culture that it investigates. That relationship is sadly missing in a lot of other archaeological work. But how has Stephen's methodology changed the Eastern Pequots' perception of archaeology? Here is what Stephen said. A quick note here, in the clip you are going to hear Stephen refer to *wigwam* or *wetu*. Both are terms used by the

Northeastern tribal nations to refer to a semi-permanent domed house:

Stephen Silliman: **So at the beginning of the project the Eastern Pequot were fundamentally first interested in where our cultural sites on the reservation that we don't otherwise know about. Where did ancestors live? What kind of houses did they live in? So what we did is we began with what you talked about as a survey. We took students and tribal members, and we walked systematically across the reservation looking for archeological evidence that might be visible on the surface. And there are some of those kinds of things in New England forest, if people were living in households that sort of move toward European style, framed houses with collapsed chimneys and cellars, you know, those things can be visible still, but a New England forest is a very difficult place to find sort of objects on the ground because every fall, all the leaves come down and they've done that for centuries.**

Stephen Silliman: **So there's not much just sitting around to be seen. So that moves us into things that we do that start to check underground. We archeologists call these particular things, shovel test pit survey. So you do very systematic, sort of small inspections in the ground to see are there artifacts here? Okay, they're not here, but there's some over here, right? They pick up if you go this direction and then you use that to start the home in on sort of sites of activity and houses. And that's how we've started to find more wigwam or *wetu* structures is they don't have a surface manifestation. You have to find postholes or hearths or trash accumulations, and other things that help you sort of center in**.

Narration (JS) Ece then asked Stephen if the collective memory about ancestral Eastern Pequot landscapes were still available to members of the tribe.

Stephen Silliman: **It depends. I mean, there was lots of sort of collective memory about, you know, ancestors on that landscape, but the specific locations except for fairly recent homes people didn't seem to be able to point to where those were. And the other thing that didn't seem to be clear either from oral histories or from the documents themselves, is who lived in any one of these given houses that we found is it the ancestor of this family line or this family line, or was this a small house with a large family, or was this more of a community sort of place? We didn't have either documents or history that helped pinpoint that. So a lot of the archeological work has been trying to find out, even if we can't pinpoint who it was, what were lives like in different**

parts of the reservation and different kinds of houses at different time periods that became sort of the core focus and to do that, that required us moving into bigger excavations, where we could open up lots of what we call 'excavation units' to expose parts of house walls or cellars, or trash pits and those kinds of things.

Stephen Silliman: **And it was a really interesting process too, as we got started with Eastern Pequot, because most of them had no actual personal exposure to archeology and how it happened. There was some concern about what archeologists are going to do because of reputations of archeologists historically with Indigenous communities. So it was interesting to kind of have them with us as we move through that, to sort of build the trust and to start with these little sort of small checks of different areas. But then to end up with some of the Eastern Pequots saying, wow, we really like when you dig larger holes, not the small ones. We'd like to actually see more, you know, some communities, some Indigenous communities are a little resistant to having cultural sites opened up. But the Eastern Pequot, I think because of their sort of engagement with this bringing archeology into their fold, the issues with federal acknowledgement, that meant that the more evidence that they had of "look, we've been on this reservation for hundreds of years, we have this continuity", I think the opening and the bringing those histories and that kind of material for them, bringing those to light was important and very positive for them.**

Narration (JS): What we are seeing here is that this particular type of archaeology gave greater agency to the Eastern Pequot community, with needs and traditions taking primary importance to the archaeologist on site. Over the decades a relationship, an understanding, and trust was built.

Stephen Silliman: **And then, the sort of destruction aspect with archeology is, I mean, you've taken it, you've moved the dirt. You can't put it back. That then is ameliorated by the tobacco offerings and the presence of Eastern Pequot sort of being part of that process itself. So that's kind of how we would go from, how do we understand the landscape, find some sites, and start to excavate those. And then of course the next step is those materials go back and went back to UMass Boston archeology laboratory that I oversee that had to be washed, processed, identified cataloged, photographed, archived, so that ultimately all that information was available to them, but also to students and researchers associated with my lab, because**

then ultimately, as you know, we wanted to return those materials to them when they were ready to receive them.

Narration (LW): "Return those materials to them when they were ready to receive them" is a really evocative statement and something that is central to the issue of repatriating Indigenous artifacts. Even though the university had temporary custodianship of the content for a while and were conducting research upon it, the Eastern Pequot had more agency over the process and ownership of the content than is typical when institutions "own" their materials. That's all really important and unusual. In addition, this whole process changed the focus of Stephen's work. He became interested in life at the reservation within a given period, rather than track change over longer periods of time. And so he began researching the relationships among sites from approximately the same time period more carefully, asking questions about what life was like on the reservation around, say, the 1780s. Let's hear Stephen explain this concept:

Stephen Silliman: **What we were trying to do was, yeah, like most archeologists, we do want to know, like what happened over several centuries, of a particular cultural context in this case, what happened over several centuries of the Eastern Pequot living on the reservation? And that was important to track that over time. But what became very clear was: there's a certain narrative that comes out of archeological thinking when that's the only way that you focus on it. And so we also wanted a simultaneous interest in, rather than trying to find what is a "representative site" that says, okay, this is what Eastern Pequot life was like in 1780, because here's this one site. It's like, well, let's try to see if we can find two or three sites from those same periods and see, are they the same?**

Stephen Silliman: **Did they live in the same kind of house? Do they eat the same kinds of foods? Do they use the same sort of pottery that's becoming widely available in markets? And if they don't, what is this sort of show about just the kind of internal dynamics of communities, if one household shifts more towards something and someone else doesn't that these are all really interesting parts of the sort of human experience and also these particular cultural lives that we don't want to tell these monolithic sort of single history of something. And instead we want to look at these intersecting histories that are going this time and how people are negotiating their own times. You know, when we sort of do the diachronic thing where it's like this site leads to this site leads to this and there's that trajectory, it sort of leaves out how did people at those particular moments, how did they engage their own histories?**

Stephen Silliman: **And how were they thinking about their futures at that time, rather than thinking, well, as archeologists, we're looking at, how did we get to this point, but they're also asking questions of themselves. Like how are they drawing on their own histories as they kind of move forward and do things. So that was an interesting thing that we wanted to look at because I think what it also gets to is this dynamic of change and continuity, and a lot of archeological questions are often about sort of one or the other like, well, how did these folks change? Or how did they stay the same while I was trying to look at a question of if that community persists, if it survives, then it, it has aspects of change and continuity all the time. That's all communities have those things. So I wanted to shift the question to how do we look at stories of persistence or survivance, which is particularly, sort of, Indigenous take on communities and cultural persistences. If we look at that first, how do we, then I ask other interesting questions because for us and for the Eastern Pequot community, they're sitting there right now.**

Stephen Silliman: **In the 21st century, these are their cultural materials. So they got from there to where they are now. So in a sense, they have persisted, they have these sort of survivance stories, but then what are the material and historical dimensions of those? And another way I've thought about it is sort of changing continuity or like two sides of this proverbial coin. But I wanted to, what if we focused on the coin first that has the two sides rather than get caught up and was it been all continuity or all change because that has led archeologists and other people down some problematic paths when people think, well, Indigenous people have changed this much in two centuries, but they don't apply the same lens to the English at, you know, at Plymouth or whatever. And then 200 years later, it's like these different, sort of, standards are applied. So I was trying to help shift that narrative and try to make this [about] Eastern Pequot, past and present. And what does that connection actually look like…**

Narrative (JS): Instead of the monolithic, unchanging representations so often ascribed to Indigenous groups, what this type of archaeological narrative connected to the people and culture of the Eastern Pequots does is that it foregrounds their history as a continuous group of people that changed over time and adapted to their circumstances. This becomes possible especially when the focus is on the material history, the artifacts excavated from the reservation that tells a very close up account of day to day Eastern Pequot lives.

Stephen Silliman: **We would find, for instance, some houses in the late 18th century on the Eastern Pequot reservation, we would find what we call sort of shell middens, large accumulations of shellfish that had been harvested from the coastline and the estuaries. So their reservation is about seven miles inland. So it's clear that they're accessing and using these coastal resources, bringing them to their inland reservation.**

Stephen Silliman: **People are eating oysters and soft shell clams, which we call steamers in new England or hard shell clams or quahog. Um, so they're using all these, but the interesting thing was we found a couple of sites houses that were occupied around the same period that would have different profiles of shellfish. Whereas like it's clear that this household might've been preferring oysters or have better access to oyster as well as this one had all these hard shell plans or quahog. So it kind of gave a sense of yes, at the bigger scale, there's an interest in shellfish.**

Stephen Silliman: **It may be a renewed interest. It may be an interesting manifestation of women's labor in the late 18th century. As a lot of men were on whaling ships serving in militias, working on local farms. So there may be some really interesting gender dynamics at the same time. Yes, there's some use of these coastal resources, but houses are doing it slightly differently. So we got some interesting sense of that. We get the same sort of thing with how are they using in a sort of pottery that's coming from English, American, and Chinese sources that are coming in through the market and found some interesting things there that all houses are getting access to those, but we don't know how they're getting access to those. We have copies of store ledgers [https://www.nativenortheastportal.com/collection/eastern-pequot-community-records-1820-1850] that talk about lots of things that Eastern Pequot and other native folks were buying or getting with credit from stores.**

Stephen Silliman: **But ceramic vessels are hardly ever mentioned. We have overseer's records of transactions that happen on the reservation, and it might be about food products or clothing or, or the more tragic things like coffin hardware and those kind of [materials] or building material. But those don't mention these pottery vessels either yet. Those are the most ubiquitous things found on Eastern Pequot sites and actually on most sites in the 17th and 18th, 19th centuries, in New England anyway. But so we don't really know where they're getting them, but when we look at the kinds that they have, they don't necessarily have full matched sets. They might have some, pottery that could have been hand me downs or they're buying**

individual pieces as opposed to walking in the store. Like I'd like the newest set of pottery that you got from London last week or something. That's not what they're doing because of probably economic and cultural preferences.

Stephen Silliman: **So we're actually able to see those, but this stuff is in no document, almost not covered in the documents whatsoever. Just like the sort of shell fishing that's not covered in any documents about the Eastern Pequot in the 18th and 19th century. So it's giving us some interesting insights and I'll mention one other thing that's really quite been sort of fascinating to me in the Eastern Pequot have enjoyed this too. It's by the late eighteen hundreds and early ninteenhundreds Eastern Pequot folks are not really making stone tools of any sort.[1] Like they been doing a century or two before. They are using gunflints that are, you know, in firearms and they may be sort of modifying. And re-sharpening those, I mean, occasionally we find a flake or two that suggests someone may have been making something. We do have a couple of pieces of a window glass that have been flaked and formed into a cutting implement.**

Stephen Silliman: **So that's been kind of an interesting way of looking at sort of the repurposing of materials, but what's really interesting is in a couple of sites, right about the beginning of the 1800s, one inside of a house and one inside of a trash pit outside of a house, we have found one or two older pieces of stone technology that very likely were made several thousand years ago. One is a stone pendant, a piece of a pendant. One is a projectile point that is quite old. There are a couple of pieces of a soapstone bowl. These are things that tend to be associated with several thousand years ago in New England. Yet they're showing up inside of early 19th century, Eastern Pequot houses. And there it's clear that they're not there by accident and they're not there because an Eastern Pequot family dug a cellar and hit an older site.**

Stephen Silliman: **And now there's old site materials sort of spread out through it's like just one or two objects. And one is in the foundation area of one of the houses and that's suggested to us and to them that these are Eastern Pequot families that are, I talked earlier about how people sort of reached back to their own histories as they think about their own futures. This looks to me like Eastern Pequot are reaching back and sort of summoning older materials up into the 19th century in ways**

[1] The more accurate dating here is the late 1700 and early 1800s. Email correspondence with Prof. Silliman (7/18/2022).

that we don't fully understand, like, was that someone in the house that brought that in and other people in the house for, like, why are you bringing that here? Or is it like an interesting conversation about older Pequot, material on that landscape being summoned again..

Narration (JS): The story of this several thousand year old pendant and the projectile point makes me think of the Eastern Pequot of the 1800s interacting with a much older part of their Pequot ancestry through objects…just like the Eastern Pequot of the 21st century are doing…through archaeology.

Stephen Silliman: **If I had to guess, I would think that instead of being passed down for how many generations that would have taken, I suspect that this was found locally, maybe on the reservation maybe in a local… maybe that they were laboring or farming next door on some settler, colonial farmstead. And it comes up as part of the work that they're doing. So, I mean, in my mind, that's probably how it, in a sense, resurfaces and then kind of becomes new. An old part that [becomes] a new part of Eastern Pequot households at the time and Eastern Pequot today, or they've been really excited finding these materials that they know were made by their ancestors well, before the reservation was ever established.**

Stephen Silliman: **It has given them things that they can show to politicians and people who question them like, well, how do we know that you really been on this reservation for this long? It's like, well, here, look, there's this. "I can take you to a house where one of my ancestors lived."**

Narration (LW): Working with the Eastern Pequot gave Stephen an opportunity to engage with Eastern Pequot youth. It has given the Eastern Pequot of all ages an opportunity to get in physical contact with their own history:

Stephen Silliman: **They've also wanted to use it for internal community kinds of initiatives for teaching youth about things or engaging with the materials on the landscape. So when we've had Eastern Pequot community members with us in the field, they've ranged from like seven or eight year olds to 80 to 90 year olds who have different ways that they want to engage. But I think as the sort of embodiment of doing archeology, it sort of brings people together and puts them in physical contact with the objects of their history and with the land. So I think that's provided them with an internal way to sort of connect generations and ask**

different questions and foreground different things in the community.

Narration (JS): So the project shifted to focus on things that the community was asking for and this expanded to other community events, and events that involved academics, some of them Indigenous.

Stephen Silliman: **So the last eight to ten years has been really about how we do products that meet the community's needs a bit more, and I can give you some examples of those, please do. Okay. So one of the first ones we did was back in 2013, we did a panel and an exhibit at UMass Boston that featured Eastern Pequot and Nipmuc community members [https://caps.umb.edu/news/detail/new_exhibit_celebrates_collaboration_between_archaeologists_and_tribal_nati] , because there are two of us at UMass Boston who have archeology projects with local native communities. Steve Mrozowski [https://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/faculty/stephen_mrozowski] has worked with the Nipmuc for many years, including Rae Gould [https://www.brown.edu/academics/native-american-and-Indigenous-studies/d-rae-gould-executive-director] who is Nipmuc and is, has, is an archeology anthropology PhD from the University of Connecticut. And then the work that I've been doing with the Eastern Pequot.**

Stephen Silliman: **So Dr. Cedric Woods, who runs the Institute for New England Native American Studies at UMass Boston, sort of brought all this together as two UMass Boston projects, serving Indigenous communities. And then we had everyone come to campus to have a panel where they talked about what archeology meant to them? Where's it come from? We had artifacts from both projects in exhibit cases and the library photos of different things, so that this was kind of a temporary exhibit there in the library. So that was one of the ways that we tried to kind of move into different areas. Around the same time, this was about 10 years into the project, I wanted to come up with something that was more of a giving back. We developed a privately printed commemorative book that had pictures of every Eastern Pequot community member who'd ever been associated with the project; they were all featured in there at least once.**

Stephen Silliman: **It included particularly interesting artifacts that had been recovered. Those were throughout the book. It had lists up here of the things that have been written about this, here are the funding sources, so that we kind of had this all in one**

place. And it was something that an eight year old or an elder could look through that find something of interest. And then I had Eastern Pequot folks caption every photo, rather than having us do it on the institutional side. It's like, could you say something about this photo or about your experience? And so we let Eastern Pequot voices do the captioning work there, which I felt like was a pretty major move toward, again, moving more stuff into their hands.

Stephen Silliman: **The interesting thing is it's not particularly publicly accessible, but you have to have the book and this book was not distributed widely. It's not for sale. So all, so they're probably like 40 to 50 people in the Eastern Pequot community who have it. We have some in my labs, a couple of administrators, the state archeologists in Connecticut, you know, they have copies, but we really were trying to design this to be about them.**

Stephen Silliman: **And for them; if they want to make it more accessible, they can. So then as we did that, that then led me to think more about, well, this is more engaging than, you know, like another academic piece. So then we made a, and that just was released in February of this year, about an 18 minute long documentary called "Listen to Their Voices" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsJ2znR-Wq8] that features almost exclusively, just Eastern Pequot, talking about archeology objects, land, history, identity. And then we stitch that together into sort of a documentary type thing. You know, there's some context at the beginning that's set up, but then otherwise they are talking about what this meant. So it was an attempt, again, to move their voices to the foreground and the video/audio version of those voices so that they could use that, so that it became much more public.**

Narration (JS): The documentary came out in February 2021. The link to it is available on our website and we highly encourage you to watch it to hear members of the Eastern Pequot Nation discussing the importance of this work in their own words. They even had it translated into Portuguese so it could be used in an online discussion about Indigenous persistence for a Brazilian audience.

And … there are many other important acts of reciprocity, centering on the Eastern Pequot in Stephen's way of doing archaeology. One of the articles he co-authored, "Authoring and Authority" has four Eastern Pequot authors, including the lead author, Kathy Sebastian Dring, the former Chairperson of the tribe.

[http://easternpequottribalnation.org/government/katherine-sebastian-dring-chairman.html]

Narration (LW): Centering the needs of the community has led to other types of local connections, too. For example, because the Eastern Pequot do not have a place to store and preserve the excavated materials, the Western Pequot Tribe accepted the materials into their own museum for safekeeping.

Stephen Silliman: **The Eastern Pequot said that they wanted those materials to come back to their actual well back to Pequot homeland. Now they don't have a facility to take those in. They don't have a way to, sort of, because of the financial constraints, by not having federal acknowledgement there are a lot of struggles that they face in that sense. So they don't have a building. They don't have a facility to put that back into and they want them cared for properly. So they worked out a nation-to-nation agreement with their neighbors, the Mashantucket Pequot, who for listeners, they don't know, they're the ones who have Foxwoods Casino and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, which means they're very well-funded to take care of their communities and the objects and the histories of those communities at the Eastern Pequot, unfortunately do not have.**

Stephen Silliman: **So they worked out a nation-to-nation agreement where the Eastern Pequot materials would go to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and be put into storage there with Eastern Pequot being able to access those as needed or researchers to be able to get to those. So in a sense, they're under Eastern Pequot control in a Mashantucket Pequot facility, but back on Pequot land and you know, in a grand sense, which has been an important sort of move for that. And what's been interesting about that is we have not ever, we don't call that a repatriation. They don't want to call it that, and we don't call it that because repatriation has a lot of language of you're giving back something that you took, that someone is sort of making demands as part of cultural property ownership. And contestations over that. To us, it was simply you've asked for them back, we'll figure out the last few things we need to do to make sure these are accessible and we're going to give them back to you. So they didn't want to talk about that as a repatriation because it was never taken.**

Narration (LW): Stephen gave many other examples of scholars and institutions that do Indigenous-centered work created in collaboration with the Indigenous nations:

Stephen Silliman: **Yeah, there are several of these projects that have been going for a few years. Sara Gonzalez at the University of Washington [https://chid.washington.edu/people/sara-gonzalez] has a really great project in Oregon with an Indigenous community. That's very structured that way. Kent Lightfoot at UC Berkeley, [https://arf.berkeley.edu/who-we-are/affiliated-faculty/kent-g-lightfoot] who was my dissertation advisor back in the nineties, he has done a lot of that kind of work with the Kashaya Pomo on the coast of California. So there's some really interesting projects I've been going for a while. Some are much newer. There are a couple in Connecticut, the Mohegan Tribe, they have their own archeology program. And what they do is they've partnered with an academic Dr. Craig Cipolla, who's at The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto [https://www.rom.on.ca/en/collections-research/rom-staff/craig-n-cipolla]. He has been sort of like the archeological director, but it's always with Mohegan presence and they've done really interesting collaborative publications. And as a federally recognized tribe with the casino and the Mohegan also have lots of funds to have a big archeology building and permanent staff and equipment. Again, the things that these shouldn't be quite don't have, like at the Eastern Pequot, won't need an archeology project on, we need to bring university equipment and university personnel to do it because they never have access to funds that would permit that on their own. But that's another really interesting case of a collaborative tribally controlled archeology project.**

Narration (LW) **Stephen went on to say how important it was for universities and academic institutions more generally to collaborate in this way with Indigenous communities, beyond just these specific examples.**

Stephen Silliman: **That's a way for those institutional resources to do some social and historical good and some restorative justice work, because we know a lot of these institutions have been ones that have taken and been part of settler colonial projects. And a lot of museums are all wrapped up in issues of colonialism, imperialism, elite-collecting, especially longstanding big historical museums. But I do want to clarify one thing, the Eastern Pequot do have state recognition. So there are some tribes that have neither state nor federal and some that have only state, but not federal. And that's some of the irony of why of them losing their federal acknowledgement is they've had state recognition since Connecticut was a state yet the state did lots of things to undermine their bid for federal standing. But yeah, instead this is where you, and this is why, you know, I've really tried to sort of bring UMass Boston resources to that**

community to get some things that they otherwise can't manage on their own financially, which there's also a problem in that is then that's so much of an institution bringing things to them where they don't have as much sort of self-sufficiency and control over that as they, whereas the Mohegan have full control over their archeology.

Narration (JS): Toward the end of the interview Ece asked Stephen about his future plans.

Stephen Silliman: **I mean, definitely we'd like to continue this. I mean, it's been a little more challenging with the last COVID context, but also the availability of grant funds to cover things at the level that we need to, you know, we've been supported at different times by the National Science Foundation and Wenner-Gran Foundation and also UMass Boston specific granting opportunities. But because this project is so long-term now, it can be difficult sometimes to go back to the same funding agencies and say, we're still doing that thing. And it really is taking this long to do it at this level. So you need new angles. And I've thought about Digital Humanities, NEH kinds of directions. For some, as we develop more of these sort of digital resources and heritage resources that are about sort of community and capacity building for the Eastern Pequot.**

Stephen Silliman: **So I see some combination of more field work because they requested they would like us to come back and continue doing that more sort of educational resources. We've about talked things like, can we tie augmented reality to a heritage trail on the reservation that someone with an Eastern Pequot guide, for instance, to take this trail with a smartphone, you activate some code on a post, and then you can see someone else standing at that old house site telling you something about its history or its meanings. So we've thought about, can we keep sort of integrating and building all of this in different sorts of ways. So that's, those are some of the things that we've been thinking about.**

Stephen Silliman: **Another really interesting project that does some of this kind of work on the archival side is the Native Northeast Research Collaborative [https://www.thenativenortheast.org/] that some know about as it used to be called the Yale Indian Papers. So what Paul Grant-Costa [https://ygsna.sites.yale.edu/people/paul-grant-costa] and Tobias Glaza [https://ygsna.sites.yale.edu/people/tobias-glaza] have done, they've tried to get all these transcriptions of lots of documents pertaining to Indigenous life and history in New**

England, especially in New England, but also New York and a few other places, how to make those more accessible and legible and digitally available. And what they're now doing is they're having members of Indigenous communities provide sort of annotated commentary on some of those documents. So some of the ones they have about the Eastern Pequot they had Eastern Pequot interns who helped kind of work on those documents and provide their thoughts on those documents. So it's an interesting way to have a collaborative Indigenous space in the archives that's available now.

Stephen Silliman: **Yeah. So now when you go to look at that, you're not just, oh, I'm reading a transcription of an 18th century petition. I'm also right there next to it is an Eastern Pequot person from 2000, from 2020, telling you something about that or how they engage with that or what some of those mean and what what's, what's the implication of people sort of filing a petition in the 18th century about what are those implications still today of that petition either being granted or being denied. So I just find it a really interesting way to bring that Indigenous collaborative context, again, into an institutional Digital Humanities place. And it's also a project that sometimes I've had Paul and Toby come to one of my field schools and sort of talk about how the archival and the documentary side of this works. And then I sometimes have students in the field school, they have to choose a document about the Eastern Pequot, summarize it, and then say, what are the implications of this for what we're doing here right now.**

Narration (LW): That was our guest Stephen Silliman professor of Anthropology at UMass Boston. You can access the transcript of this episode and learn more about Stephen's collaborative work with the Eastern Pequot on our website. Thank you for joining myself and Justin on our podcast today!