

June 5, 2001

Dr. Jeffrey T. Clark Professor of Sociology and Anthropology North Dakota State University P.O. Box 5075, SU Station Fargo, ND 58105

Dear Dr. Clark and Dr. Slator:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for your "Teaching with Immersive Virtual Archaeology" project at North Dakota State University. We have an active and popular program in history, including regional history, at Jamestown College, but we have not been able to offer any courses in anthropology or archaeology in recent years. Given the proximity of Fort Seward to the college, which has spurred a local interest in archaeology, and the desire of our Education Department to add introductory anthropology classes to the curriculum to serve the needs of future teachers, I agreed to take my sabbatical at N.D.S.U. to add a second master's in these areas. However, after my return to Jamestown College, I shall face the daunting prospect of trying to design such classes with virtually no artifact collections and a limited budget; save for the summer excavations at the fort, my students would have little prospects for laboratory experience. The "Virtual Archaeology" program, which Dr. Clark has demonstrated to me, has the exciting potential to give my students "hands-on" experience in viewing artifacts and reconstructions closely, and accordingly I would be delighted to use this software in my courses.

Jamestown College has added light boxes to many of its classrooms, and its instructors have laptop computers and Internet connections that would enable this program to be used in a classroom or laboratory setting. As somebody who enjoys using computers, searching for visual aids that will augment the readings of texts, and seeking to incorporate the very latest in pedagogical research in my courses to prepare my students for both advanced study and employment in the 21st century, I offer my services as a "guinea pig" to try out this most promising software. I am particularly hopeful that technology applications such as yours will be valuable in providing both content in archaeology and history, as well as critical thinking skills important in so many avenues of life.