

The Datum Point



NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

October 2003

From the Veep – C.K. Gailey

All of us who were there had a very interesting presentation from Patrick O'Neill last month on a 4-year archeology project at a fur-trading fort built in North Dakota by John Jacob Astor (not the U.S. government!) Pat kept us informed and entertained, in his usual excellent manner, with a combination of technical discoveries and nuts & bolts of crew life on the great northern plain, including prairie fires. Thanks, Pat.

It's getting to be election time again. Anyone out there interested in any of the Chapter jobs? In particular, does anyone want to try being President? Let me know.

It was gratifying for our whole program to see that someone from archeology received the FCPA Resource Management Division Volunteer Excellence award. It matters a lot more that one of us got it, than who the individual was, since we all work together so much.

I hope to see everyone on Thursday the 11th, at Clark House.

October 9th Meeting - 7:30 pm at the Clark House

Located at **6332 Barcroft Mews Drive** in Falls Church, take the Beltway Exit east on Little River Turnpike 2 miles to a left on John Marr Drive. Make a right onto Columbia Pike, go 1.8 miles and turn right onto the service road at Barcroft Plaza (by a Harris Teeters). Turn left on the service road and proceed to the Barcroft Mews Townhomes adjacent to the plaza. Clark House is a three story yellow house on the left as you enter the townhomes. **Turn at the bus stop enclosure.** Overflow parking will be in the Plaza.

Coming from Bailey's Crossroads: West on Columbia Pike. Go through light at Braddock Road. Take the FIRST left (protected turn lane) and make an immediate left to townhouses. (If you pass the traffic lights at Lincolnia and Columbia Pike, you've gone too far).

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October Talk

War and Peace in the American Southwest during the Pre-Columbian Era By Dr. James Snead



Bear Claw Petroglyph from Galisteo Basin, NM

Dr. James Snead will talk on the Pre-Columbian American Southwest and the struggle with war and peace among the Native Americans living in the area. The presentation will center on his fieldwork in the Galisteo Basin of New Mexico.

Since 1999, Dr. Snead has been an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at George Mason University, and taught previously at the University of Arizona. His book *Ruins and Rivals - The Making of Southwest Archaeology* was published in 2001 by the University of Arizona Press.

JAMESTOWN DISASTER

Melba J. Myers, Conservator VDHR

CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION GROUP

As you probably know, the basement of the Visitor's Center at Jamestown Island was flooded by the surge from Hurricane Isabel. The artifacts have now been moved to a warehouse at Fort Lee where they are being repackaged. I have been contacted by Sara Wolf, a conservator from the NPS Northeast Museum Services Center, who is coordinating the work at Fort Lee. For the next two weeks, including the weekends, they need as many volunteers as possible -- people with experience handling archaeological collections. The ASV members who have been participating in the Certification Program would be an excellent source. I am also contacting COVA.

The main gate to Fort Lee is on Route 36 east of Petersburg. As a starter perhaps you could give me contact information for the current President of the Richmond ASV Chapter and I could get in touch, OR you might want to ask them yourself to start some calls to round up appropriate volunteers. People from any chapters are of course welcome. They don't yet have email at the warehouse so BY THE END OF TODAY I would like to go down there and bring the first list of volunteers. The Base requires a list of names before anyone shows up.

Here are some guidelines:

We need the name and contact info for each person. They need to specify dates and rough time (for example from 10:00 am to 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 6) People will be there between 7am-7 pm. **NO ONE WITH MOLD SENSITIVITY** Wear clothes that can be washed with hot water (grubbies) --- Sara says they do provide masks and gloves. No climate control - whatever the weather is outside, that is what will be the temp inside. If it is nice they work outside. Bring your own lunch or other food. Bring drinks in your own cooler, as there are not enough coolers for a large group.

Many thanks for any help. I suspect that other names can be added later, but I would sure appreciate as many today as we can round up.

Melba J. Myers, Conservator
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221
(804) 367-2323 Ext: 130
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Turtle Hill - Work on the site is winding down. Most of the objectives were completed as of October 1. We have a good handle on the main factors needed to determine the significance of a site: chronology, function, size and integrity.

Chronologically, the site's age was significantly pushed back during October. Berno recovered a classic rhyolite Palmer corner-notched point (ca. 11,500 BP) in the southwestern part of the site. This makes it more likely that the Lobate based point recovered from near the southeastern edge of the site is Middle Archaic in age. As has been reported earlier, the site's age has been firmly established to include Savannah River (ca. 4,000 BP), soapstone bowl period (ca. 3,200 BP), Marcey Creek (ca. 3,000 BP), Selden Island (ca. 2,900 BP), Popes Creek (ca. 2,300 BP), Mockley/Selby Bay (ca. 1,700 BP/AD 300), Shepard (ca. 900 BP/AD 1,000), and Potomac Creek (ca. 600 BP/AD 1400). The dates are approximate center dates in the ranges.

Functionally, the site seems to have been a seasonally recurring winter habitation site. That assumption is based on the site aspect, i.e., the site's surface slopes down toward the south and southeast and it is protected on the north and west by hills. These factors would lead to maximum winter sun on the site and protection from colder north and northwestern winds. The site also has produced postmolds, stone tools, and pottery, which are signs of sedentism. By contrast, the site has produced little evidence for quarry activity and very few bifaces and obvious butchering tools.

Although we have not completed the assessment of site size, we know the site's boundaries are at least 200x180 feet on a side. Therefore, it is at least 4/5ths of an acre. The west 180-foot shovel test transect has been laid out but not completed and artifacts were recovered from the last shovel test transect along the northern edge. Additional, shovel tests may be warranted in both directions.

The site's horizontal integrity has been established by the excavation and mapping of two fire cracked rock clusters. Stone raw material distribution maps from the 10-foot interval shovel test pattern (1% sample) have revealed distinct patterns across the site's surface. Vertical integrity has been confirmed by the discovery of post molds. Although the site's potential for deep stratigraphy was reduced by the discovery of an 11,500 year old Palmer point in an upper

excavation level, Soil Scientist, Dan Hayes has been contracted to review the sites geology. He was scheduled to visit the site on October 1.

Lab Work - Bob Wharton has been conducting a review of the artifact collections. He began with the earliest accessions, which date to 1980. As a result, we have begun the major lab task of cataloging the county's backlog. This involves re-cataloging old site collections that were done in old catalog systems (Fairfax County Court House), collections that were not cataloged because of our primitive and slow lab methods back then (Dranesville site and Langley Oaks Quarry), or ones that were donated or cataloged by outside organizations (Lowes Island being worked on by Marion Dana) and need to be inventoried in our system.

Including the Fanny Wilson, the David site, and Turtle Hill the lab effort over the last two years has added more than 290,000 items of data that Vicki Monken has been diligently entering into our Access database. As many of the lab crew knew the recent site data include discarded items like fire-cracked rocks, bricks, and geo-facts like pebbles. They represent items processed in the lab and are a direct measure of the fantastic level of work done by the Lab volunteers.

Alabama Archeological Society Paleoindian Conference - On September 27-28, C.D. Cox and I attended the conference in Huntsville, Alabama. It included speakers on Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina and North American Paleoindian work.

More than 180 people attended and included professional and amateur archeologists and artifact collectors. These groups had a display that included approximately 900 fluted points. The McCary Fluted Point Survey of Virginia fluted points only has 999 entries. In 1982 Alabama reported to the eastern States Archeological Federation more than 1,700 fluted points, including more than 800 from two adjoining counties.

On the second day of the conference involved an all-day tour of selected Clovis sites in Northern Alabama for the presenters and selected experts (they thought C.D. and I qualified as experts so we went along). It involved a dangerous joint boat ride for 1.5 miles (one way) on the Tennessee River in a 25 mile an hour wind with 2-3-foot waves. We also visited several cotton fields surrounding a large sinkhole where hundreds of fluted points had been reportedly discovered.

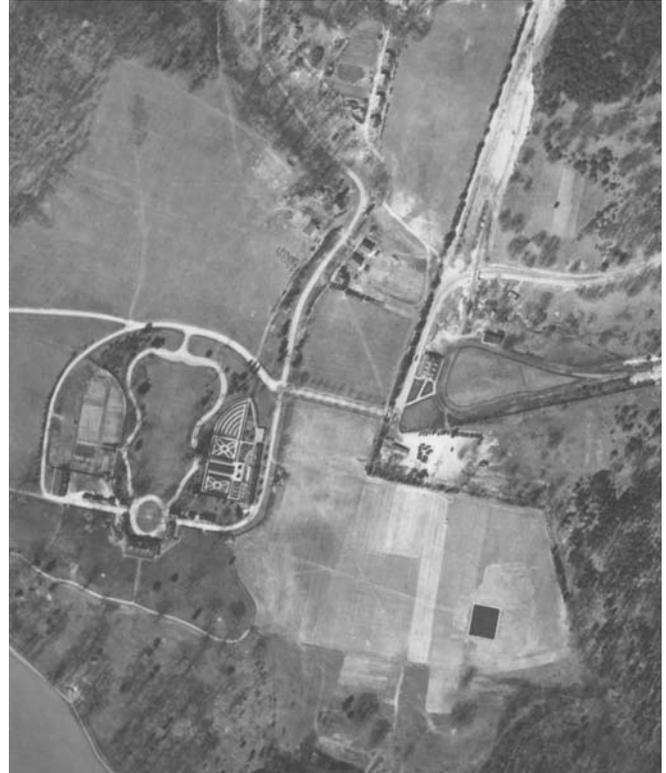
On the way back we visited our own Joyce Pearsall in Brevard, North Carolina. We got a wonderful tour of her house and yard (Heaven is in North Carolina), the local Pisgah National Forest where we had lunch at 5,000 feet above sea level, a trout hatchery, and the Brevard downtown. Thanks Joyce.

Bristoe Station Battlefield

By Patrick O'Neill

I need volunteers for probing and monitoring out on this project on weekends, maybe even Sundays, between now and November 11th. Please give me a call at 703-249-9593 or email me at patrickoneill@erols.com for more information.

MOUNT VERNON BOOK



I sent off my manuscript to the publisher this week for my Mount Vernon book. This photograph is an excerpt showing Mount Vernon straight down in 1926! The electric trolley loop from Alexandria enters from the right and the Potomac River is in the very bottom left.

Patrick O'Neill

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____
Phone (H): _____
(W): _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

Individual (\$15) _____
Student (\$5) _____
Family (\$17) _____

New _____
Renewal _____

Return to:
NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia
2739 West Ox Road
Herndon, VA 20171-3807

Chapter members are encouraged to join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

The Datum Point

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED