

The Datum Point



NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

September 2003

From the Veep – C.K. Gailey

First, the important news that the September meeting will be in the Clarke House, off Columbia Pike in the Lincolnia area, and not in Hunter House at Nottaway Park. This is a direct result of your increased attendance at our meetings: the 25 seats available in Hunter House just won't hold all of us.

A lot of fun was had by all at the Chapter picnic last month. As it turned out, we finished the major part of it just as the rain started, so we even stayed dry. Unfortunately, the lab lost one phase of its power that night, so by Tuesday all the perishable left-overs in the refrigerator were lost.

As announced in last month's DP, we voted on the application from Paul Inashima for a grant from the Dave Rubis Research Fund. We approved Paul's total request, \$595, to fund a radiocarbon date test from the David Site. The Chapter owes a debt of gratitude to Dave Rubis' parents, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Rubis, for establishing this wonderful and appropriate memorial to Dave's memory.

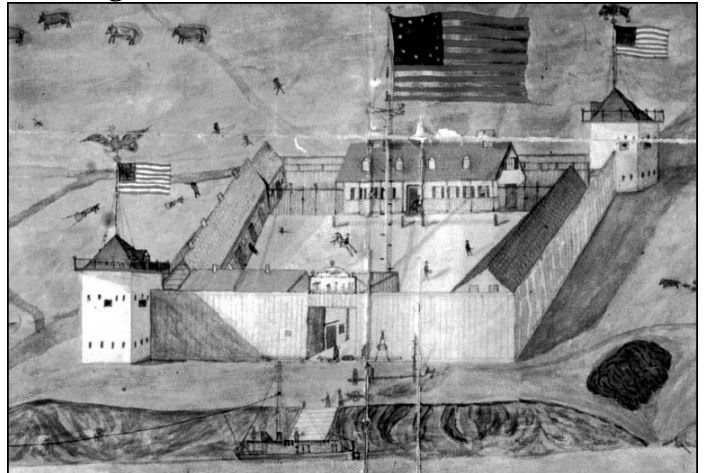
September 11th Meeting - 7:30 pm at the Clark House

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 town homes. **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).

September Talk FORT UNION FUR TRADING POST By Patrick O'Neill

Color image of Ft Union



This talk was scheduled for the June meeting, but was canceled because of an auto accident. **BUT, HE'S BACK!!!**

Patrick O'Neill has now entered his 20th year in archaeology. He has a BS in Anthropology from Kansas State University and an MA in History from West Texas A&M University. Patrick currently works for Parsons, Inc., and has worked on local projects in Washington DC, Grist Mill Park near Mount Vernon, Fort Belvoir, and is currently writing a book on the Mount Vernon neighborhood.

His talk will be on John Jacob Astor's famous Fort Union Fur Trading Post on the Montana/North Dakota Border at the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri Rivers. The National Park Service excavated the site and has now reconstructed the fort into its glorious splendor. Images of the excavations and a re-enactment of a fur trading rendezvous will also be presented.

August Update from George Washington's Whiskey Distillery

By Eleanor Breen

August has been a busy month at the 1797 whiskey distillery! This month, we focused our attention on excavating the robber's trench, the layers of destruction rubble located in the north partition of the building, and the millrace outflow feature to the south of the foundation. The layers of fill within the foundation trench are chock full of building material. We were excited to learn that the entire 30 x 75' building was built in one episode. It was hypothesized that the northern 15' was of different construction type or possibly erected at a different time period than the rest of the structure.

Removing the robber's trench fill exposed one continuous foundation trench, which discounted this hypothesis. We always wondered if the extant sandstone wall, that measures 60' from the south wall, was the exterior wall of the building, with then a 15' extension to the north. Once we removed the robber's trench from this interior wall, we came down on a foundation trench that was not as deep as the rest of the foundation, thus implying that this was in fact a partition on the interior of the building.

We would never have been able to finish the robber's trench without the help of our fantastic, fun Saturday volunteers! We are very excited about the layers of rubble within this 15 x 30' section of the building because these were not disturbed by the archaeology done in the 1930s. These layers of rubble, while not more than 1' deep, are primary deposits relating to the destruction of the distillery and overlay the actual 18th century living surface. We've been finding lots of painted pearlware, creamware, brown stoneware, buttons, melted glass, charcoal, and plaster, among other things.

We have almost completed excavation of the millrace outflow feature, which appears to have artifact rich secondary deposits overlying silty layers of primary deposits that filled in the outflow during its use. Also in this area of the excavation, we have begun excavation of a thin, sandstone-filled linear feature running parallel and 10' south of the distillery's foundation. Our architectural historian consultants hypothesize that this trench may be related to one of the numerous sheds that we know from the primary documents existed around, and possibly attached to, the distillery. We also have linear trench features on the east side of the building that are perpendicular to the corners of the building. While these features could possibly be drains, they could also relate to sheds on this side of the building. To test this hypothesis, our crew and our volunteers opened up 1 and ½ units to follow this trench and see what it is.

Datum Point

We have many activities planned in October for Virginia Archaeology Month. Please come visit us!

Activities at Mount Vernon

- **Ongoing excavations of George Washington's Whiskey Distillery site.** September: Tuesdays through Fridays 8am to 4pm; October: Tuesdays through Fridays 8am to 4pm and Saturdays 9am to 4pm. Weather permitting. See the ongoing excavations of a 1797 Distillery and speak with Mount Vernon archaeologists. Located at Washington's Gristmill Complex on South Rte. 235, three miles from the Mount Vernon Estate. Distillery excavation is free; admission required to tour the adjacent working Gristmill (\$4 adults; \$2 children ages 6-11).
- **Lecture and site tour: *George Washington's Whiskey Distillery: Current excavations and plans for reconstruction.*** Saturday, October 11th, 2003. Free. Please call the Archaeology Lab at (703) 799-8626 by October 1st for more details and to reserve a space.
- **Lecture and archaeology walking tour of the Mount Vernon property: *Archaeology at George Washington's Mount Vernon.*** Saturday, October 18th, 2003. Free. Please call the Archaeology Lab at (703) 799-8626 by October 1st for more details and to reserve a space.
- **George Washington's Distillery Site Open House.** Saturday, October 25th, 2003. 9am to 5pm. Come see the ongoing excavations of Washington's Distillery building. Open house includes site tours, hands-on activities, and exhibits. The Distillery site is located three miles from the Mount Vernon Estate at Washington's Gristmill Complex on South Rte. 235. Free admission to the Gristmill Complex this weekend for Mount Vernon's Harvest Days.

And also, don't forget, that if you can't make it out to the site, you can follow our progress online at www.archaeology.org.

ONGOING Old Town

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

“A Community Digs Its Past: The Lee Street Site” - An exhibit featuring the archaeology and history unearthed during the excavation of the city block bounded by Lee, Union and Queen streets. Free and open to the public. Alexandria Archaeology Museum.

“Discovery Kits” - Hands-on activities designed for younger audiences and their families. Free.

“Archaeology Adventure Lessons” - 45- minute hands-on lessons conducted in the Museum, designed for K-12 grade. \$2/child, with a \$20 minimum. 20 children maximum. Reservations required.

OCTOBER -

VIRGINIA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

Sat., Oct. 4 - Art Safari:

- a.) 1:30 p.m. site tour of the Shuter's Hill excavation.
- b.) Museum Open House from 1 to 4 p.m. with family-oriented hands-on activities. Free and open to the public.

Sat., Oct. 11 - Alexandria Heritage Trail Bike Ride. 15-mile guided tour. Followed by tour of the Shuter's Hill excavation. Free, but reservations and helmets required.

Sat., Oct. 18 - “What Lies Beneath Our Feet.” 10 a.m. to noon. Guided walking tour of Old Town with City Archaeologist. Meet at the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. Free, but reservations required.

Sat., Oct. 23 - “Stone Ground: A History of Union Mills.” 10 a.m. Java Jolt illustrated lecture with Ms. Paula Elsey. Free, but reservations required.

Fri., Oct. 31 - Historic Alexandria Hauntings 2003. Admission. Market Square in Old Town Alexandria.

DECEMBER

Sat., Dec. 6 - Ornament Decorating Workshop. Drop by the Museum from 1 to 4 p.m. Families are invited to decorate take-home dough ornaments using shapes, colors and patterns based on the Museum's collection of excavated artifacts. Free and open to the public.

Alexandria Archaeology Museum

Third Floor of the Torpedo Factory Art Center

105 North Union Street, #327

Alexandria, VA 22314

703/838-4399

<http://www.alexandriarchaeology.org/>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!! ASV's Annual Meeting will take place in Williamsburg on the weekend of October 24-26. Host facility is the Patrick Henry Inn. Arrangements chair Royce McNeal is asking for volunteers; Program Chair Randy Turner notes that there will be Friday night sessions. Chapter presentations are needed, including one from our chapter, of course. Highlights: a certification lab workshop at Flowerdew Hundred and a field trip to Flowerdew as well.

NATUREFEST 2003

Runnymede Park, Herndon

Susan Lily has asked the NVC-ASV to again participate in Runnymede Park's NatureFest 2003 on Sunday, September 21st from 12 noon to 5pm. Diane and Patrick O'Neill (with you know who), CK Gailey, possible the Monkens, and hopefully some of you other volunteers will make this year better than the last. Plus, the Park gave us a check for \$75 for our own kitty! So, please contact Patrick O'Neill at 703-249-9593 for details and help out the chapter on an easy fundraiser!!!!!!!!!!!!

Prince William County Project

By Patrick O'Neill

Centex Homes, Inc. has given the Civil War Preservation Trust 127 acres of the Bristoe Station Battlefield and possible cemetery areas west of Manassas. Centex has granted a 120-day window, over on November 11th, for an independent study to be conducted to locate burials within the remaining 220+ acres of land being retained by Centex. The Sons of the Confederacy, under the direction of Red Barbour, have asked me to locate burials or areas of potential burials on the tract within the 120-day window using volunteers. Anyone wishing to learn more of the project and possibly volunteer, please contact me at 703-249-9593. A waiver has to be signed and presented through me for access to the site.

Cultural Resource Protection Group

By Michael Johnson and Rich Sacchi

Turtle Hill (44FX2636) - Laura James has completed here internship and returned to Mercyhurst College. She will be doing her senior thesis on the site.

Two other assessment phase projects are pending. Both are on hold right now. As a result, time is available to test other parts of Turtle Hill. Test excavation squares have been laid out on one of the fire cracked rock concentrations, the potential post mold and the heavy pottery and stone artifact concentration in the western part of the site. The last shovel test transect has been laid out along the west 180 transect.

The 5x10-foot block excavation over the potential pit feature discovered in STP S10W20 was excavated down four levels to 12 inches deep. The potential feature turned out to be a stain from a rodent disturbance. The block though did produce additional possible Shepard pottery and two large cross-mended rim and lug handle sherds from a Marcy Creek pot (ca. 1,000 B.C.). One large lobate based point of undetermined age, one Savannah (Holmes var.) River point and one Selby Bay point (Middle Woodland) were recovered.

The shovel testing continues to produce very small sherds of pottery, including what looks like Selden Island (ca. 900 B.C.). All of the sherds are so small that they would not be noted in a screen under field conditions. One small sherd, less than 1/4-inch square, which was noted in the lab is, if the only sherd of that type, of equal importance to understanding a site to any degree.

Resource Stewardship (Elmore Farm) Lab - Every Tues., 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Cactus Hill (44SX202) - Artifact cataloging is every Tuesday evening, 6-9 p.m.

As the summer has flown by, the long days and short nights have provided for ample work at the Park Authority. We are in the process of finalizing the archaeological report on the current excavations and Huntley Historic Site (44FX1740). Our consultant, Louis Berger and Associates are finishing the next draft of the report. Rich Sacchi, Liz Crowell and John Rutherford are in the process of chasing out some of the architectural features.

Backhoe trenches excavated by Louis Berger have provided excellent data on the formation of the

terraces at Huntley. Additional feature excavation by the CRP has located some important structural features (possibly the oldest subsurface structural features yet found at Huntley).

The following photo shows newly found brickwork likely associated with the original bulkhead entrance to the basement. Although truncated by later repairs to the house, these newly found features are important to the interpretation and restoration of the original structures. Work outside the house has found additional brickwork associated with early additions to the house.



Brickwork was found in test units to the east of the house. Remnants of this brick work were found by Berger in earlier excavations.

Other projects ongoing for the last several months include: Union Mills (excavations by consultants to begin in the fall); Ox Hill Battlefield Masterplan; Excavations at the undeveloped portions of Spring Hill RECenter; amongst other project teams.

Projected projects for the fall include more work at **Mount Air** and other sites! We need volunteers, so if you are interested please call **Rich Sacchi** or **John Rutherford** at (703) 827-8672 or **Bob Wharton** and **Mike Johnson** at 703-787-3778.

Notes from the ASV Board

By Martha Williams

The Executive Board of the state ASV held its quarterly business meeting in Richmond on August 9. George Moncken, Diane Schug-O'Neill, and Martha Williams amply represented the Northern Virginia Chapter. Several items of interest were discussed at this meeting, including:

- The resignation of Ed Bottoms (Nansemond Chapter) as incoming President-Elect, due to health reasons. A replacement nominee has yet to be named.
- The reinstatement and resumption of the ASV website under its new address: www.Archeologyvirginia.org. Diane Schug-O'Neill, Chandra McPherson, and Lyle Browning will maintain the website for the coming year, then reassess its effectiveness and determine whether an outside webmaster would be more efficient.
- The Board voted to reissue Doug Owsley's publication "A Soldier's Report," with updates. Several Northern Virginia chapter members were closely involved with the excavations with which this report deals.
- Jack Hranicky announced that the data from the Ben McCary Fluted Point Survey, of which he is in charge, will reside in the Wolf Hills Museum in southwestern Virginia. Much discussion on this point, primarily about the accessibility of the database for researchers who wish to use it.
- A Phase I survey class for certification purposes will be held at Kittiewan, the ASV's nominal headquarters, in late September. Graduates of the certification program will host/supervise this workshop.

Affiliated organization reports:

- VDHR (Randy Turner) noted that the threatened sites program has received more \$-minor miracle, given the state budget crunch. Although the Petersburg regional office has been closed and its functions have been transferred into Richmond, all other regional offices are still up and running (although

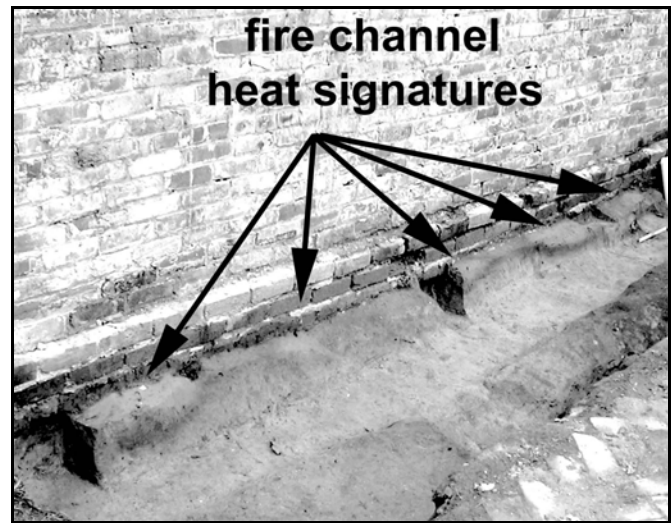
lacking secretarial help). They consistently work with the local ASV chapters, and have dealt this year with five major sites around the state: Werowocomico (Powhatan's village), Fort Christiana, the Kentlands Historic District, the Saltville Woodland Village, and Fort Loudoun (in Winchester).

- COVA (Carole Nash—JMU) reports working on two initiatives: a series on the archeology of the 20th century, and a curriculum program being readied for release in 2007. Kay McCarron (GMU) is working with grad students on the latter project.

Princess Anne, Maryland

Brick Clamp

By Patrick O'Neill



FYI A couple of months ago, I visited the early 19th-century Teackle Mansion in Princess Anne, Maryland as a professional courtesy to monitor efforts to find a possible brick clamp. Five u-shaped heat signatures evenly spaced were found protruding under the front porch of the large brick mansion. These heat signatures were the remains of the fire channels or archways used to fire a clamp (if you remember my talk on clamp construction!). A large pit, going 6.5 feet down below ground surface, had truncated almost 98 % of the clamp and only 20 cm of the heat signatures remained! But, that was enough to classify it as that feature type!!!!

The brick GURU lives on!!!!

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Alexandria Museum Pam Cressey 703-838-4399 (info)

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

Northern Virginia Chapter
Archeological Society of Virginia
2739 West Ox Road
Herndon, VA 20171-3807

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED