



# The Datum Point

Newsletter of the  
**NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE  
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA**

Website – [www.nvcasv.org](http://www.nvcasv.org)

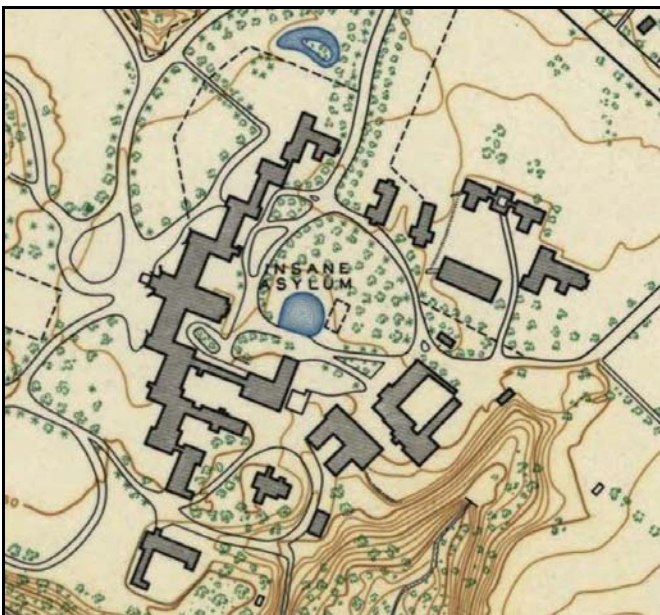
June 2006

## June 14, 2006 Chapter Meeting

### Speaker – Keith Young

Keith Young has traveled extensively to visit many Civil War sites. His early interest in the Civil War came from the fact he had great-grandfathers on both sides. Keith is a past President of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table. He has been the Unit Histories Section Advisor for the Compuserve Civil War Forum and is a contributor to the Library of Congress Civil War Desk Reference published in 2002. He has lectured on many Civil War topics at Civil War Round Tables and at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, a retired Navy Captain and a former nuclear submarine skipper.

### Topic - Civil War Soldier Burials at St. Elizabeth's Hospital.



The presentation includes history of the Government Hospital for the Insane of the Army and Navy and District of Columbia and how that hospital became St.

Elizabeth's Hospital. The hospital was founded by Act of Congress in 1852 and opened for business in 1855.

It was used in the Civil War, both as a mental facility and as a location for general hospitals of both the Army and Navy. Following the Civil War, St. Elizabeths cared for a large number of Union veterans who had mental conditions resulting from their service in the Civil War. The hospital also pioneered the building and fitting of prosthetic devices for disabled Union soldiers.

The hospital cemeteries contain a number of Civil War soldiers that died from battlefield wounds or disease in addition to the several hundreds of veterans of many American wars that died while under treatment for mental disorders. In recent years, these cemeteries have suffered from "benign neglect." Many grave stones are now missing or broken. The local camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Lincoln-Cushing Camp, recently undertook a project to examine existing records of the burials of Civil War soldiers and sailors in the hospital cemeteries to resolve conflicting records where possible and to verify the units to which these men belonged. The results of this project were published late last year as *Burials of Some Civil War Soldiers at St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C.* Copies of the book were distributed to over sixty historical and genealogical societies and libraries through out the country. The results of the project will be summarized.

### From the President – Patrick O'Neill

The chapter voted yes to have an awards program for people that have excelled during a calendar year within the group as well as recognizing those who have died or moved on. I believe this is a good way to show gratitude to people as well as stir some interest in new members to participate in archaeology in the area.

Come and let us know when and where you want to have the chapter picnic. I think August is looking better, but the chapter will decide. We'll vote at this meeting!

## Chapter News

Joyce Pearsall, a former volunteer in the FCPA Cultural Resources Office, sent the following letter to the *Datum Point* editor.

Dear Tom,

I had been a volunteer in Fairfax County archeology from 1976 until 2003 when my husband and I moved to Brevard, NC. Brevard is about 33 miles SW of Asheville. Our property has an open aspect, SE exposure, is well drained and close to an intermittent stream.

I'm writing to you to ask if you will include a newly discovered site in the DP: 31(NC) TV (Transylvania County) 861 (not a lot of recorded sites for Cherokee country...) Transylvania County is about 391 square miles and has a population of about 30,000.

When I was cleaning up leaves from under a rhododendron on our property, out came a little contracting stem quartz point. Then I found some quartz flakes, biface fragments and fire-cracked rock! Some of these were in the same location of the point, some scattered about the site. An STP in another location came up with two primary quartz flakes and two fire-cracked rocks. So I brought my artifacts with me on a trip to NV last year to have them blessed by the best (Paul, Mike, CK). I'll send you the photos taken by Mike Johnson in another e-mail. I then sent the artifacts off with the paper work to John Mintz, Assistant State Archaeologist (NC). The following are his remarks:

"There are four small quartz biface fragments are bases of what appear to be "Morrow Mountain" type points. These generally date to the Middle Archaic Period. The other two are just unidentified biface fragments. All were probably manufactured from local available raw material. The fifth biface fragment appears to be a fragment of a partially side-notched point. If I look real hard, maybe it's the beginnings of an Early Archaic, very crude Palmer point. The material from the STP consists of two quartz primary flakes [cortex] and 2 pieces of possible fire-cracked rocks."

Since I can't do Fairfax County archeology anymore (sadly), at least I have my own site that I can test at my leisure. I'm grateful for all the archeological education and experience I received from my teachers. See, it really paid off!

Sincerely,  
Joyce Pearsall



The Pearsall artifacts

## Archaeological News

### **Fairfax County Park Authority Board Approves Cultural Resource Management Plan**

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board adopted the Cultural Resource Management Plan on April 26, 2006. This plan, shaped over the past year in a collaborative effort with various stakeholders, was created to guide the agency in preserving and managing cultural resources on parkland and county-wide over the next five years.

The plan identifies 48 issues in 11 topic areas concerning management and protection of cultural resources. The areas include (1) planning, (2) archaeology, (3) Civil War sites, (4) artifacts and collections, (5) historic buildings, structures, objects and traditional cultural properties, (6) Fairfax County Historic Overlay Districts, (7) listings, (8) cemeteries, (9) cultural landscapes, (10) the human impact on cultural resources and (11) stewardship education. The Plan proposes strategies to address each of the issues.

Overall, the focus of the plan involves engaging partner organizations, volunteers and the community in developing methods to manage Fairfax County's cultural resources. The plan's adoption is a first step in protecting these important community resources and also brings to the forefront the need for additional financial resources necessary to fully achieve effective management of cultural resources.

For more information about this plan or to request a copy of the plan, please contact the Cultural Resource

Management and Protection Section at 703-534-3881. You can also access this document online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/GMP/crmp.htm>.

## THE WEST CAMPUS OF ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL TOPS NEW LIST OF MOST ENDANGERED PLACES IN WASHINGTON

By Rebecca Miller, 202-783-5144, [rebecca@dcpreservation.org](mailto:rebecca@dcpreservation.org)

May 26, 2005: The DC Preservation League, Washington's citywide organization promoting historic preservation of our built environment and landscape, announced its annual list of Most Endangered Places in Washington for 2006 at 12:30 PM today at the DC World War I Memorial on the National Mall. The list includes sites that span throughout the history of Washington's development from St. Elizabeth's Hospital in 1853 to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in 1971.

The sites on the Most Endangered Places list, issued annually since 1996 are chosen by the Board of Trustees of the DC Preservation League from nominations submitted by concerned individuals and organizations. These sites are chosen based on the severity of the threat of destruction to the buildings and landscapes in question, whether through demolition, neglect, or inappropriate alteration. The list can include buildings, parks or other landscaped areas, or even vistas and other aspects of the city's unique planned history. All Most Endangered Places listed are located in the District of Columbia.

The sites on the 2006 list of Most Endangered Places in Washington are the St. Elizabeth's Hospital – West Campus, Armed Forces Retirement Home (Soldiers' Home), McMillan Reservoir Sand Filtration Site, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, DC Public Schools as represented by Langston, Armstrong and Slater, the DC World War I Memorial and Walter Reed.



St. Elizabeth's in 1861 (Boschke map, Library of Congress)

A second list, the Watch List, includes sites not imminently threatened but which the League believes deserve attention because of their historical value and current or potential threats to their integrity. Properties are added and deleted from the Watch List throughout the year. The sites on the list for 2006 are the Anacostia Historic District, Anacostia River Yacht Clubs Battleground National Cemetery, Franklin School Interior, and Washington's Symbolic Core.

Detailed descriptions of each site and the threats motivating their inclusion on these lists are included in an illustrated brochure produced by the League. As an example of the types of threats posed, is the desire of the Federal Government to build 4.5 Million square feet of new construction on the west campus of St. Elizabeth's, an action that will virtually destroy the historic integrity of this National Historic Landmark.

The DC Preservation League invites volunteers, civic associations, District government, Federal government, and other groups to partner with the League in preserving and protecting these endangered places. For more information, contact the DC Preservation League at 202-783-5144 or [info@dcpreservation.org](mailto:info@dcpreservation.org). For more information on the League, visit [www.dcpreservation.org](http://www.dcpreservation.org).

The mission of the DC Preservation League is to preserve, protect and enhance the historic and built environment of Washington, DC, through advocacy and education. Also see: [www.examiner.com/a118511~District\\_memorials\\_and\\_campuses\\_threatened.html](http://www.examiner.com/a118511~District_memorials_and_campuses_threatened.html)

Regional Archives Conference in Baltimore that same day. The staff is most appreciative of this recognition.

### **Prince William Reliquary's Latest Edition Posted**

The latest issue of RELIC's free online magazine, Prince William Reliquary, was posted in April. It contains a variety of articles about Prince William individuals, families, places and historical events.

To see it go to [www.pwcgov.org/library/relic](http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic) and click on Prince William Reliquary. The page also contains volume indexes for all issues 2002-2005.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

#### **NPI Section 106 Intro-May 20 in Great Falls-5/12 registration deadline**

The National Preservation Institute, a nonprofit organization founded in 1980, educates those involved in the management, preservation, and stewardship of our cultural heritage. The 2006 National Preservation Institute seminar schedule is now available online at [www.npi.org](http://www.npi.org).

#### **Section 106: An Introduction Great Falls, VA - Saturday, May 20, 2006**

Learn the basics of project review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This seminar emphasizes practicalities-how to avoid pitfalls and victimization by myths. Discuss recent changes in regulations and procedures, with an emphasis on coordination with the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws. An agenda is available online at [www.npi.org](http://www.npi.org).

Instructor: Ethel R. Eaton, Ph.D., manager, Office of Review and Compliance, Virginia Department of Historic Resources; previously with the Maryland Historical Trust, with past excavation, teaching, and research positions at universities and museums. A registration form is attached in PDF format. The registration fee is \$100. The deadline to register is May 12, 2006.

The general NPI News Release "Professional Seminars in Historic Preservation & Cultural Resource



**John Smith's *Godspeed*, one of his 1607 ships under sail by Fort Washington on March 26<sup>th</sup>**

### **Archeological Lectures & Events**

#### **WHAT'S NEW IN RELIC**

May 2006

The Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center for Genealogy and Local History, Prince William Public Library System, Bull Run Regional Library, 8051 Ashton Avenue, Manassas, VA 20109. 703-792-4540

[www.pwcgov.org/library/relic](http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic)

<http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic>

Email: [relic2@pwcgov.org](mailto:relic2@pwcgov.org)

To read the latest lists of new materials in RELIC (through the end of April) go to [www.pwcgov.org/library/relic](http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic) or <http://www.pwcgov.org/library/relic> and click on New Acquisitions.

#### **Prince William County's RELIC receives Commonwealth award.**

On April 22, the Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center received the Commonwealth Award for 2006, presented by the Virginia Genealogical Society "for outstanding service in the promotion of genealogical study." RELIC staffs Beverly Veness and Darlene Hunter, C.G., were present at the VGS Conference to accept the honor. Don Wilson, head of RELIC, was unable to attending, having committed to presenting a paper at the Mid Atlantic

Management" includes the seminar calendar from March through December 2006 plus descriptions of NPI seminars. It can be viewed and down loaded by visiting [www.npi.org/NewsRelease2006.pdf](http://www.npi.org/NewsRelease2006.pdf).

Questions? Please contact

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## **Alexandria Archaeology Seeks Field Excavation Volunteers**

ALEXANDRIA, VA –Alexandria Archaeology is holding field orientation for volunteers to help with field excavation at Shuter's Hill this summer. The 2006 field orientation will be held Saturday, June 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. All new field volunteers are required to attend this orientation.

This year, volunteers will assist in excavating the work area outside the late 18th through early 19th-century laundry (associated with the mansion of John Mills, Ludwell Lee, and Robert Dulaney) and in the later 19th-century estate house.

The orientation will cover the history of the site and will include an introduction to basic excavation techniques. Excavation with volunteers will take place primarily on Saturdays and occasionally on Fridays throughout the summer and fall. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age. The orientation is free. Reservations are required. Please contact Alexandria Archaeology for additional information, 703.838.4399 or [francine.bromberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:francine.bromberg@alexandriava.gov).

## **Mount Air Historic Site Opens: The County's First Cultural Resource Park Provide Details of Past**

By Elizabeth Crowell

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Park Authority opened the county's first interpreted cultural resource park at ceremonies Friday, Datum Point

April 28, 2006. Chairman Connolly, members of the Park Authority Board, History Commission and Park Authority staff all participated in the Opening. Mount Air Historic Site is located at 8600 Accotink Road.

One of the highlights was the recognition of Mrs. Catherine Thorsen, a champion for the preservation and protection of this site. Through her efforts citizens can now enjoy the site's historic, natural and cultural resources. The 15-acre site consists of preserved and stabilized ruins of the house, walkways, gardens and interpretive signage.

Dennis McCarty was issued a patent for the 522-acre tract known as Mount Air, north of Accotink Creek in 1727. The McCartys were a prominent family in Virginia who were active in public life. Dennis served as Sheriff, Justice of the Peace, vestryman from Truro Parish, and was a member of the House of Burgesses representing Prince William County. He married George Washington's cousin, Sarah Ball in 1724. A house was built on the McCarty property by at least 1732, as is evidenced in a bill of lading requesting lilacs and other plantings for his garden. Also in 1732, an Act of Assembly authorized construction of a public warehouse on Dennis McCarty's land. In 1742, Dennis McCarty died. Mount Air remained in the hands of McCarty descendants until 1860.

In 1860, Aristides Landstreet, his wife Mary, and his family moved into Mount Air. When the Civil War started, Aristides enlisted with the Confederate army and was posted in Richmond. For a time his family remained at Mount Air, near the shifting lines of Confederate and Union troops. Finally, the estate was occupied by Union troops, and the family relocated for the duration of the war. Both the house and the lands had suffered greatly as a result of the war. The value of the property declined over the years and after Aristides died in 1910, his daughters were forced first to mortgage the property and subsequently to sell it in 1914.

In 1914, George (sic) Shirley Kernan returned to Virginia and purchased the Mount Air property. For several months in 1918, Mrs. Kernan made the grounds available as quarters for the Army Engineers, who were constructing a railroad link to Camp Humphreys (now Fort Belvoir). Abandoned lumber from this encampment were used to panel one of the rooms in the main house and to construct a garage that was later converted into a tenant house. Mrs. Kernan also constructed a brick terrace overlooking the rolling meadows and woods west of the house. She decorated this terrace with Corinthian capitals that she rescued from the old Botanical Gardens in Washington as it was

being dismantled. Mrs. Kernan died in 1962, leaving the estate to her daughter, Elisabeth Enochs.

Although Elisabeth traveled extensively in her work for the Children's Bureau and journalist, her home remained at Mount Air. In the late 1960s, Elisabeth began exploring means of preserving Mount Air. In 1969 the main house was registered with the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites. Elisabeth resided at Mount Air until 1992. In May 1992, several weeks after Elisabeth's death, the main house was completely consumed by fire. Fifteen acres, containing the house site, were acquired by the Park Authority in 1997.

The property has had several archaeological investigations. The American University conducted a field school in the summer of 2000 to explore the main structure. Several 5 x 5 foot units were excavated recovering mostly white wares and late 19<sup>th</sup> century nails, stoneware, ironstone and an assortment of burned materials. A 5 x 5 foot unit placed against the foundation produced a late 18<sup>th</sup> century component of pearlware and cream ware. These artifacts, at the bottom of the builders' trench, imply a later date for construction of the brick dwelling house than proposed.

Park Authority archaeologists and volunteers excavated at the site from 2000 through 2002. A series of 5 x 5 foot units were placed 60 feet east of the house and produced a large quantity of pearlware, cream ware and bone. Other artifacts included pins, metal fragments and wrought nails. The level indicated a trash midden quickly filled and closed about 1820. Beneath this level were several levels containing mid-18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts consisting of white salt glazed stoneware, pipe stems and Staffordshire slipped plates and bowl. While archaeological evidence found in the builders' trench of the brick house indicate a late 18<sup>th</sup> century construction date, evidence from this trash midden indicates that the site was occupied at least as early as the 1750s.

An open house followed brief ceremonies. Volunteers and staff participated in the excavation of a test unit so visitors to the open house would have the opportunity to see archaeologists at work. In addition, staff set up an exhibit that previously had been on display at the case in the government center.

**For more information about the site, please call Rich Sacchi at (703) 534-3881.**

**Mount Air** in southeast Fairfax County has now been designated the first permanent “archaeology” site for the County and is open for display. County Archaeologist Bob Wharton will have excavations open to the public of Fridays, and signage gives a walking tour during daylight hours. Come and see!!!



Top: Iron fencing around the foundation of Mount Air.

Bottom left: Cobbles and bracing in basement. Bottom right: Fireplace protected by cobbles and bracing.



## **NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS**

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Return to:  
NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia  
2855 Annandale Rd.  
Falls Church, VA 22042

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

**The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!**

## **The Datum Point**

Northern Virginia Chapter  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED