



The Datum Point

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

Website – www.nvcasv.org

May 2006

May 10, 2006 Chapter Meeting

Speaker: Pamela J. Cressey
City Archaeologist for Alexandria

Topic - Alexandria's Preservation Code

Dr. Pamela Cressey will discuss the preservation code developed by the City of Alexandria, a model code for urban and city governed archaeological programs across the nation. Dr. Cressey has been the City Archaeologist in Alexandria for 28 years. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and both Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Iowa. Her tasks include planning and stewardship of community cultural resources, African American urban archaeology and historical research, and public interpretation through speaking and writing.

From the President – Patrick O’Neill

This month the Chapter will vote on an awards program recognizing chapter members that contribute to the success of the group. Please come and cast your vote for the program, or if you cannot make it, please contact an officer (see the back page for contact information) with your vote. The 2004 books have finally been audited and we have come out okay!!

Chapter News

Proposed Chapter Hall of Fame

The Chapter will vote on a proposed Chapter Award during the May meeting to have a Chapter Honor Award and Hall of Fame Award. The Award would recognize contributions to the Chapter. Nominations for the Award would be from Chapter members, accepted each year through the July meeting, at the end of which nominations would close. A selection committee would meet to go through the nominations, under the chair of the Chapter Vice-President. Sitting Chapter officers and members of the selection committee would not be eligible for the Award. The selection committee, in any given year would be able to select more than one awardee. Awardees could be individuals or groups, but a group could be nominated only if they shared one particular project. If the Chapter approves the establishment of the Award, the Vice President shall design a nomination form and a set of by-laws governing the Award.

Archaeological News

Emergency Data Recovery Dig Underway at Langert Site

Mike Johnson
Fairfax County Park Authority Senior Archeologist

In late March the Park Authority discovered that the western portion of the Langert site (44FX1788), which is a hornfels quarry workshop, was to be developed at any time. This part of the site was previously thought to have little of importance. However, artifacts discovered on the surface indicated that it may have been a base camp associated with the workshop.



**Cord marked Culpeper ware potsherd
(Middle Woodland ca AD 600)**

Park Authority staff and volunteers have been intensively excavating the site throughout the month of April. Each day we do not know if it will be the last. We initially laid out a 20-foot grid and excavated 1-foot square shovel test pits (STPs) at the grid intersections. We then overlaid a second 20-foot grid, off-set by 10 feet to increase our original sample, which located only two "hot spots." We excavated the STPs only to 6 inches deep, because we hit bedrock laden soil.

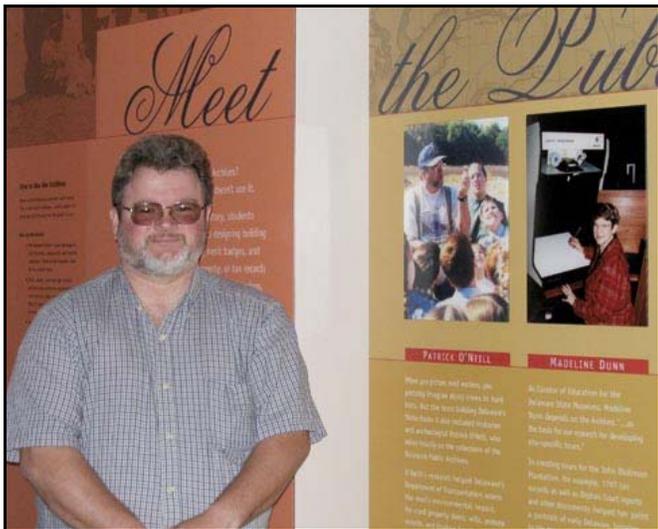
We have located five artifact concentrations so far. Each has been excavated, using a 100% STP sample that has traditionally been called "swizzle stick archeology," because rather than string out the 1-foot squares we uses swizzle sticks to mark the corners of the small STPS. We could then connect

the swizzle sticks with the shovel as we cut the STPs out like brownies or a layer cake. It is a very effective way to excavate a shallow site quickly.

The five blocks have produced sufficient evidence of various functional tools to support the base camp hypothesis. We have also recovered several chronologically diagnostic artifacts. They include an unidentified rhyolite stemmed point, a Calvert point (ca. 1100 BC), two soapstone bowl fragments (ca. 2,000-500 BC), several large cord marked potsherds (pictured), and what may be a Potomac Creek potsherd (ca. AD 1200-1620). The artifact's recent age does not mesh clearly with the dates from Archaic Palmer point (ca. 9500 BC) and a bifurcate point (ca. 7000 BC) along with other unidentified points were recovered from the workshop.

Patrick O'Neill Featured in Delaware State Public Archives public relations project.

From 1999 to 2003, our chapter president, Patrick O'Neill, was working quite a bit in Delaware, doing historical research as well as archaeology. As he would find historical documents at the Delaware Public Archives for the sites Pat was digging, he would also show the archives staff not only what he found, but why it was important and how other patrons could use the archives.



The staff was so impressed by his work there that they asked him to be the first person portrayed in their permanent exhibit in the new archives building in a "Meet the Public" display at the State Archives in Dover. Quite an honor, especially since he did not live in Delaware!

ASV Board of Directors Meeting Martha Williams

The highlight of the April 1, 2006 meeting in Roanoke was the formal introduction of Virginia's newly appointed State Archeologist, **Dr. Michael B. Barber**. Those who have been Society members for any length of time, and/or who have

participated in the last few ASV field schools, know that Mike's selection as state archeologist is not only great news for Virginia archeology, but even better news for the state's non-professional archeological community. Mike's first priority, according to him, will be to get going on a true Virginia state archeological resources plan—something that's been talked about for years but that never has materialized. Public education—including continuing and expanding the state's certification program—are also large parts of Mike's commitment to Virginia archeology.

Major concern:

The continued rape of Virginia's archeological resources through large-scale staged relic hunts, like those sponsored by DIG VA, is an increasing problem. Recent activity occurred at two Civil War sites: Fort Powhatan on the James River and Brandy Station battlefield near Culpeper.

In these events, which are advertised widely, relic hunters pay maybe \$250 for the right to blow through yet another Civil War encampment, set of features such as rifle pits, or even burials. The private property owner who hosts the event (think, 200 relic hunters at \$250 a pop!) gets the major cut of the entry money; the relic hunter adds to his collection, possible wins a prize; and/or gets to make a great profit selling Virginia's heritage. Need we say more?

ASV and COVA are trying to come up with a coordinated approach to eliminate or reduce this activity in our state—where, incidentally, private property rights groups are very strong. Strategies being discussed include educating property owners about the resources on their property; educating local government about the scope of the problem; pushing for state and local governments to give tax advantages to owners who grant archeological easements on their properties, etc. Got any ideas? Send them or express your opinion to our state president Faye Wade (diggerfaye@yahoo.com).

Circle the date on your calendars now: October 26-27, 2006. ASV's annual meeting in Richmond.

Your input is needed!!!!

Nominations currently are being solicited for new members of the ASV Board of Directors—three year terms—meets four times a year. If you can think of somebody who would be effective or perhaps would like to try this yourself, notify Bruce Baker (bakerbw@earthlink.net). Nominations for State Society awards: categories include professional and amateur of the year. See our President, Pat O'Neill, for particulars or to nominate somebody.

Other items of interest:

ASV's 2007 Committee is putting the finishing touches on its third commemorative volume of reprints from early QBs. The state's Threatened Sites committee (on which the ASV is represented) will meet in late April to decide where to allocate state \$ to fund emergency excavations on threatened sites. Got a site in need of exploration? Bulldozers ready to roll?

Tell Joey Moldenhauer about it (joey_moldenhauer@dss.va.gov).

A lithics workshop will be held on Tuesday evening, April 18, in Blacksburg, with a continuation the next day. Focus will be on identifying and sourcing lithics, particularly those with a southwestern Virginia focus. If interested, contact Joey Moldenhauer.

A High Paled Yard - Archaeology Commentary

Dave Shonyo

Gunston Hall Archaeologist

Reprinted by permission from the March issue of *Gunston Grapevine*, the Gunston Hall newsletter

Part Two

In 1960, a rather curious document came to light which had a significant impact on the eventual representation of the dependencies at Gunston Hall. It is a pencil drawing that was reputed to have been made by John Mason to accompany his *Recollections*. It shows quite a good likeness of the land front of the mansion. To the right (west), about at the location of the present school house, there is a small, simple building. On the other side of the mansion there stands a building approximately at the location of the current kitchen. Somewhat further to the left is another small structure, which could be where the smoke house now stands.

The drawing was generally taken to have been made by John Mason to show Gunston Hall and some of its dependencies as they appeared during his Father's occupancy. There are some serious problems with this interpretation. Most obvious is the lack of any indication of a paled fence surrounding the kitchen yard. Then there are the stovepipe chimneys projecting through the roofs of both the assumed schoolhouse and kitchen buildings. There are no signs of the exterior brick chimneys suggested by the archaeological investigations. Relatively minor points include the fact that one of the gable ends of the kitchen faces into the kitchen yard. That means that the sole entrance to the kitchen would be on a gable end, which would be quite unusual. Also the smokehouse – if that is what it was supposed to be – had a gable roof. Eighteenth-century smokehouses in Virginia almost always had pyramidal roofs.

In spite of these problems with the drawing, the architects responsible for the design and construction of the representations of the dependencies apparently considered it an accurate depiction of the 18th -century buildings. At the time the drawing surfaced, Everett Fauber had prepared architectural drawings and had obtained materials preparatory to starting construction on the schoolhouse. However, he scrapped his plans and built the simpler building shown in the drawing (but added an exterior brick chimney). Likewise, architect Milton Grigg built the kitchen as shown in the drawing, with the addition of an exterior brick chimney. He also followed the drawing in putting a gabled roof on the

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smokehouse. Neither the age nor the ultimate source of this influential drawing has ever been determined. An analysis done at the Smithsonian showed that the paper is of a type not manufactured before 1840.

(John Mason wrote his *Recollections* in that year.) The drawing seems to be a depiction of the outbuildings as they existed sometime in the 19th Century. The stovepipe chimneys certainly suggest this. Edward Daniels wrote that he pulled down the chimney of the "old Mason schoolhouse" in 1869. Mason biographer Kate Mason Rowland said that the schoolhouse was still there when she visited Gunston Hall in 1892. Joseph Specht, sometime between that date and 1907, built a cottage for his mother-in-law on the site of the schoolhouse. All of this indicates that the drawing might depict the mansion and dependencies as they existed after 1869 and before the schoolhouse was replaced by a cottage.

Both Kelso and Outlaw objected to the construction of a representation of a kitchen yard. Outlaw expressed his view in an April 1974 letter: As the archaeologist on the Gunston Hall project I have had the closest contact with the direct physical evidence for the kitchen. ...It is my opinion that we have found the kitchen. The evidence, however, was very meager and would not warrant a reconstruction since a great number of renditions are possible. It would be unfitting for the original Hall to be surrounded by reconstructions. ...I would urge restraint on the idea of reconstruction and would recommend a consideration of other ways in which to interpret Gunston Hall to the public." The response of architect Milton Grigg was, essentially, that it is important to impress on visitors that there was more to the plantation than just the mansion. A kitchen yard, although not necessarily completely authentic, would give at least some idea of the activities necessary to directly support the household. He dismissed the archaeological results as being "...at times contradictory..." and "...characterized by scholarly ambiguities...."

The configuration of the kitchen yard reconstruction went through many iterations during the planning stages, as well during and after its initial construction. In addition to the structures now present in the yard, plans drawn up in March 1976 called for the inclusion of a weaving house, privy, dovecote and poultry house and yard. The weaving house and dovecote were never built. The poultry facilities were built, but removed a few years ago. A privy was constructed near the smokehouse. This was relocated in 1980 to a place near the schoolhouse, and eventually removed altogether after having too often been mistaken for the real thing by visitors.

The 1976 plans called for a rail fence, rather than a paled fence, along the east margin of the yard. It is not clear whether this was actually installed. These plans also called for the boards of the paled fence to be pointed on top, and one early description indicates that this was actually done. As originally constructed, the fence did not join the corners of the mansion. Rather, the yard was enclosed on its west margin with palings which left an open space about 25 feet wide between the east side of the mansion and the kitchen yard fence. Grigg defended this decision against objections that John Mason wrote that the fence *adjoined* the mansion. He referred to an

early 19th-century dictionary definition of "adjoin" as meaning, "...to be next to; to be close to; be contiguous to; to lie close together; be in contact or proximity."

Correct or not, Grigg's interpretation makes a certain amount of sense. The main floor door on the west side of the house seems to have been used by family members. A fence in Grigg's location would have allowed access to this door without having to pass through the busy kitchen yard. Also, as David Reese has pointed out, it would be unusual for Mason to have partially obscured so attractive an architectural detail as the mansion's sandstone quoins by abutting a fence to the two corners. In the event, the "adjoiners" eventually had their way, and the paled fence was extended to the corners of the mansion in 1980. This created the current configuration, with a fence section running obliquely from a corner of the kitchen to the northeast corner of the mansion. David Reese has indicated that placing the fence section on an oblique angle to the other structural elements would be very uncharacteristic of Georgian architectural practice.

The kitchen itself was extensively renovated in 1990. The roof was rotated so that a gable end no longer faces the kitchen yard. A porch, which was included in the 1976 construction, was removed, and some or all of the window positions were changed. Incremental changes continue to be made to the kitchen yard structures in order to make them appear more characteristic of the 18th century. The formerly white building and fence surfaces were repainted several years ago with iron oxide pigmented paint, similar to that thought to cover the original dependencies. Soon, some or all of the kitchen yard buildings may have the roofing materials replaced to give a more authentic appearance.

Recent archaeological evidence has some important implications for how we view certain aspects of the 18th century kitchen yard. During excavations in the yard undertaken in 2002, two post holes and associated post molds were found. These were exactly in line with, and had the same characteristics as, a series post holes and molds from the fence that formed the east boundary of Mason's garden. Due to the fact that the archaeology program was de-funded that year, it was not possible to complete the investigation of these post features or search for additional holes in line with them.

Near the end of the 2005 field season, an additional post hole and mold were found along the same line. This feature, which actually appears to be a gate post, is located in the space between the garden and the kitchen yard. It thus appears that, in the 18th century, a single fence line extended along the east margin of the garden and continued into the kitchen yard, forming the east side of that yard. That fence was 76 feet from the side of the mansion, whereas the present fence is somewhat more than 90 feet east the mansion. Thus, the present laundry and smokehouse are located in areas that apparently would have been outside George Mason's kitchen yard. This is consistent with the finding that an 18th century road ran under these structures.

We often think in terms of what *the* 18th Century kitchen yard may have looked like. The fact is that it probably changed in

appearance during George Mason's lifetime. The buildings would have been rather flimsily built and relatively unprotected from the forces of nature. Fire was an ever present hazard, as was damage from rot and insects. (Rot forced Gunston Hall in the early 1980's to begin replacing parts of the 1976 structures.) Mason may have also changed the size, number and functions of buildings over the years. All of this complicates our efforts to understand this important activity area.

It has not been my purpose to make the public interpretation of the kitchen yard more complex, or even suggest that its presentation to visitors be changed in any way. The present conjectural representation serves Milton Grigg's stated purpose of giving visitors a feeling for some of the activities that went into supporting an 18th - century plantation household. It also gives a good idea of what an 18th -century kitchen yard may have looked like. We hope, as our understanding of this area grows, that we can provide an increasingly accurate picture of a long-lost, but important, part of George Mason's home.

(The manuscript *Fifty Years of Gunston Hall Archaeology* (2001), a labor of love by former archaeology volunteer Lois Lembo, provided invaluable guideposts for the preparation of this article. David Reese, Susan Borchardt, Kevin Shupe and Susan Hardenburgh also generously shared information and other assistance for which I am most grateful.)

Archeological Lectures & Events

An Invitation to NVAH Annual Meeting

Time: Sunday, May 7, 2006, 2-4 p.m.
Fort C. F. Smith, Arlington, VA

Speaker: Scott Deibler, Park Manager, on "Fort C. F. Smith: From Farm to Fort to Park".

You are cordially invited to the Northern Virginia Association for History (NVAH) annual meeting to be held on Sunday, May 7, 2006 from 2-4 p.m. at Fort C. F. Smith (the Hendry House) in Arlington, Virginia. The address is 2411 24th St. North, Arlington, VA. There will be a short business meeting, followed by a speaker, a tour of the site and light refreshments. The event is free and open to the public, but please RSVP by April 30, during reasonable hours, to either Amy Breedlove (703) 370-8136 or to Sara Collins (703) 521-0522 or by e-mail to NVAH1366@hotmail.com. Please include the number in your party. **WEB SITE:** For further information about the park and directions: www.fortcsmith.com.

PARKING: Parking is in the lot at the eastern end of the park or along the North side of 24th St. next to the park. (The parking lot entrance is on your left about 0.5 miles from Fillmore Street and past the "Service Entrance" to the Park).



Fort CF Smith from an 1865 map

FT. SMITH: The fort, built in 1863 to protect the Aqueduct Bridge (now Key Bridge location), was part of the outer perimeter of forts for the Defense of Washington. It was situated on land once owned by George Mason III. The Jewell family farmed the tract before and after the Civil War. The 19 acre park offers a lush tree canopy, open meadow, the Hendry House and the preserved earth works of the fort. The park is open before and after the meeting and would be an ideal spot for a family picnic or stroll (there are no picnic tables). The Speaker, Scott Deibler, will be available after his presentation to lead a walking tour of the Fort C.F. Smith area.

Volunteer Opportunities

Gunston Hall to Undertake Additional Investigations in Cemetery Area.

Later this spring, Gunston Hall archeologists will undertake a follow-up to a 2005 geophysical survey of the burying ground at Gunston Hall Plantation. The purpose will be to determine the parameters of the Mason family burying ground and search for a possible slave burial area nearby.

The present burying ground is delineated by a brick wall, which was erected in the 1920's. Within are monuments to George and Ann Mason, plus six other grave markers. The work in 2005 employed ground penetrating radar, electromagnetic induction and magnetic gradiometry to investigate the area within the walls, plus a sample area outside the walls. The work was done by Dr. Bill Hanna, Pete Petrone and John Imlay with the assistance of the Gunston Hall archaeology department.

What appears to be a brick burial vault was found under the George and Ann Mason monuments? More surprisingly was the detection of 22 burial sites within the walled area. Only one of these was directly associated with a grave marker. Perhaps the most interesting of the burials is a relatively rare mid-19th Century cast iron coffin of the Fisk type. Preliminary testing of a small area outside of the walled area suggests that

there may be additional burials beyond the enclosed burying ground. The wall, which was built by the last private owner of Gunston Hall, was undoubtedly placed around only the part of the cemetery that was visible to him.

The 2006 work will involve the same team that accomplished the 2005 survey. It will seek to determine whether there are, in fact, additional burials outside the walled area and the extent of any such burials. Also, no slave burials have ever been found at Gunston Hall. It is not uncommon for slave burials on plantations of the period to be located near the family burials. An effort will be made to determine whether this is the case at Gunston.

The survey work will be accomplished over a three or four day period in late May or early June. NVC/ASV members are welcome to participate. Volunteers will help "ground truth" the instrumented survey results by soil probing and shallow excavations. (No exhumations will be attempted.)

Contact Dave Shonyo

www.gunstonhall.org/archaeology/

Gunston Hall Certification Program

Gunston Hall has supported an ongoing archaeology program since 1998. The program depends heavily on the involvement of volunteers. The program also welcomes the opportunity to work with ASV/DHR/COVA certification candidates. Several successful candidates have met their historical archaeology certification requirements through work at Gunston.

Note: Individuals interested in the above programs should contact Dave Shonyo at his email address archaeology@gunstonhall.org or by phone at 703-550-0441.

NVC Chapter Scholarship Opportunity

Since no chapter members applied for the Williams-Mullen Memorial Field Scholarship, the scholarship is now open to anyone with one or more years as an ASV member. There is a May 15 application deadline. Contact chapter Vice President C.K. Gailey for details and applications.

NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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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
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
Archeological Society of Virginia
2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED