

# The Datum Point

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

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

September 2008

## FROM THE PRESIDENT – ANN WOOD

At our August meeting, chapter members expressed concerns over the potential loss of a county archaeology staff position that is important to volunteers.

Chapter members had been eagerly awaiting a replacement for Bob Wharton, who retired earlier in the year. The position includes supervising volunteers and interns in the field and in the lab, and recruiting and guiding new volunteers. In addition, the person filling this position manages collections and directs historical archaeological projects in the field. However, the chapter was advised that county budget reductions may lead the Park Authority to eliminate this position.

Volunteers contributed more than 4,000 hours to Fairfax County archaeology last year, identifying sites and collecting data on the county's rich historic and prehistoric past. Over the past two years, the program has attracted several high school and college interns who have assisted with reboxing collections, scanning archaeological photographs, fieldwork, exhibit preparation, and artifact analysis. Volunteers have been called the backbone of the program.

Meanwhile, the only field opportunities available in the county in late August were two small, short-term, one-day-a-week digs. Aimee Wells has been supervising a small project at Colvin Run Mill on Fridays. And, eight volunteers showed up on a recent Tuesday to help with a single 5x5 foot square being excavated in a small spin-off dig at Clark's Branch in Riverbend Park.

At last count, sixteen candidates for ASV certification have signed up for classes on Virginia Archaeology Overview and Glass Analysis, which are being offered by Mount Vernon Archaeologist Ether White on September 6 at Mount Vernon.

At our September meeting, we'll hope to hear more about our important county staff position, learn new details about the October 25 celebration of 30 years of

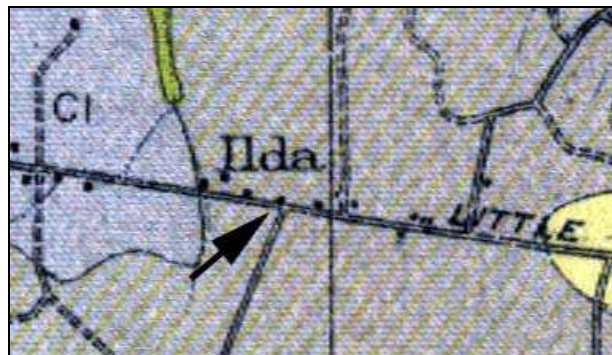
Fairfax County archaeology, and plan our picnic to close out this special event, and consider further amendments to our archaeology scholarship by-laws (see Pat Fuller's article).

September's Talk is

## **Fairfax County, Virginia Slavery Inventory Database By Maddy McCoy**



Maddy McCoy is compiling an invaluable Slavery Inventory Database for Fairfax County, based in the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Library. The data base got its humble beginning when she became involved with the infamous Guinea Road cemetery, which resulted in the finding of 30 burials on a VDOT project...



**Guinea Road Cemetery area in 1915**

## FAIRFAX COUNTY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The following dates are being provided so that members of the Fairfax County can know when they can go to meeting to speak on the behalf of county issues. This can be found at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/publicmeetings.htm>

### The Challenge

Fairfax County is projecting a budget deficit of more than \$400 million for FY 2010 (beginning July 1, 2009), which must be addressed through a combination of spending reductions and other strategies. Our challenge is to develop a budget with an appropriate level of services that are both sustainable and acceptable to the community.

### The Response

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will host 20 community dialogue sessions to gather comments from the public, and will use that input as a key factor to help guide the development of criteria for budget decisions.

### The Format

Each community dialogue will consist of presentations by county and school budget staff followed by facilitated small group discussions. The dates, times and locations are listed below.

### Register

Please [register to participate](#) in the Community Dialogue sessions for Fairfax County's FY 2010 Budget Process. Your input will be valuable in shaping the priorities of the FY 2010 Budget; we look forward to working with you.

Below is a complete list of the 20 community dialogue meetings are scheduled for the fall.

- For assistance with the registration process and for reasonable ADA accommodations, please call 703-324-2391, TTY 711 (Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.).

### Saturday, Sept. 20

9:30 a.m. to Noon

- [Chantilly Regional Library](#)
- [Reston Regional Library](#)

- [Sherwood Regional Library](#) (Alexandria)
- [George Mason Regional Library](#)

### Tuesday, Oct. 14

7 to 9:30 p.m.

- [Government Center](#) (Fairfax)

### Thursday, Oct. 16

7 to 9:30 p.m.

- [South County Government Center](#)

### Tuesday, Oct. 21

7 to 9:30 p.m.

- [Oakton High School](#)
- [South County Secondary School](#) (Lorton)
- [Marshall High School](#) (Falls Church)
- [Herndon High School](#)

### Saturday, Oct. 25

9:30 a.m. to Noon

- [Centreville Regional Library](#)
- [Fairfax Regional Library](#)
- [Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library](#) (Falls Church)
- [Pohick Regional Library](#) (Burke)

### Wednesday, Oct. 29

7 to 9:30 p.m.

- [McLean Community Center](#)

### Thursday, Nov. 13

9:30 a.m. to Noon

- [Oakton Library](#)
- [Woodrow Wilson Library](#) (Falls Church)
- [John Marshall Library](#) (Alexandria)
- [Burke Centre Library](#)

7 to 9:30 p.m.

- [Mason Governmental Center](#) (Annandale)

**JULIAN WILLIAMS AND ELEANOR MULLEN  
MEMORIAL FIELD STUDY SCHOLARSHIP  
FUND**

Subject: Discussion at the last chapter meeting of modifications to The Julian Williams and Eleanor Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship Fund.

It has been suggested by Liz Crowell that funds be made available to help finance archaeology interns when they attend archaeology meetings. Martha Williams has enthusiastically endorsed these ideas and added one of her own. See below. Priority would go of course go to the original intent of the fund if there is multiple requests for funds.

Suggestion #1 - Help for Interns Discussion centered on the following topics. Definition of the word intern. An archaeology intern is usually a college student pursuing a degree in Anthropology or Archaeology who is working in our archaeology program in a paid or unpaid capacity. We all agreed that the recipient should report back to the chapter on the experience (a short summary would be sufficient). The recipient should provide the treasurer with a financial accounting of expenditures. The recipient should be a member of the chapter as stated in the fund requirements i.e. four months.

Suggestion #2 - Help for chapter members. Martha Williams suggested the fund could also be used to help finance chapter members who give presentations involving personal expense. This could be done simply by the chapter discussing the request, posting it in the newsletter, and then taking a vote on the request. The recipient might consider doing a presentation to the chapter or submitting it to the ASV Quarterly Bulletin.

The fund has a ceiling of \$750 or 25% of the corpus fund. We currently have between \$14,000 and \$15,000 in the fund. We may want to discuss a different ceiling for these two suggestions.

Pat Fuller V.P.

**UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST**

September 6 - Indian Festival @ Riverbend - Mike Johnson is flint knapping @ 1:00.

September 13 - Centreville Days, including ribbon cutting @ the Sears House; exhibit @ Mount Gilead; exhibit @ tanyard; possibly archaeology @ Whaley House site.

September 14 - Liz Crowell presentation at Fairfax Museum in Fairfax City on 30 Years of Archaeology.

September 20 - Volunteer symposium

October 4 - Open House @ Oak Hill; presentations by Liz Crowell and CK Gailey.

October 25 - 30 Years

November 15 Fairfax County History Conference @ NOVA

**CHIPPOKES PLANTATION STATE PARK  
SURRY COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH FIELD SCHOOL**

**Monday Oct. 27 – Saturday Nov. 1, 2008  
8:30 am – 4:30 pm**

**Background**

Chippokes Plantation State Park is located on the bank of the James River in Surry County, Virginia. Background: Chippokes Plantation is among the oldest working farms in the nation. Captain William Powell received a land grant for 550 acres along Chippokes Creek in 1619. In 1646, the plantation was expanded to 1403 acres. The center piece for the state park is the brick Italianate plantation house built in 1854 and open to the public. The plantation was placed on the National Register in 1969 and the park was created in 1977 when the General Assembly voted to create a foundation to establish, administer, and maintain the model farm.



Chippokes Plantation retains an extensive array of original plantation outbuildings, slave quarters, and farm buildings. The 28 recorded archaeological resources include a Native American Late Archaic camp,

Woodland Period encampments, early 17<sup>th</sup> century dwelling sites, second half 17<sup>th</sup> century colonial farmsteads, second quarter 18<sup>th</sup> century domestic structures, and 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century farm related sites. This extensive array of archaeological resources provides both opportunities and challenges for management.

Extensive interpretation is a component of park management including house tours, a Farm and Forestry Museum, and a visitor center as well as offering research opportunities of diachronic change through time. Management also retains a strong preservation element with sites avoided in impacting projects, protected from natural erosion, and policed for illegal metal detecting and/or artifact collection.

### **Field School**

The archaeological field school at Chippokes Plantation State Park is sponsored by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Historic Resources, Archeological Society of Virginia, and USDA-Forest Service Passport in Time. Recent work at Chippokes began in 2007 with the examination and testing of 44SY162, a primarily Middle Woodland site on an eroding bluff overlooking the James River.

The boundaries of the site were determined with a regime of shovel test pits (STPs) with three 5.0' units dug to establish stratigraphy. Although 2 projectile points were recovered which dated to the Late Archaic Period (ca. 2500 -1000 BC), the majority of points were Middle Woodland triangles and ceramics were primarily pebble-tempered Prince George Ware and early shell-tempered Mockley Ware placing the date of occupation at ca. 500 BC to Ad 500.

The 2008 excavations will continue to test 44SY162 to determine if earlier occupations are present. In addition, 2 other sites will be tested. The first is 44SY253, a recently recorded colonial site which seems to date to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and may represent the remnants of College Plantation. Discovered during a STP regime associated with river bank stabilization, testing was limited to the impact area. The Field School work will extend the STP testing away from the bank until a previously disturbed area is encountered. Dependent on outcome, several test units may be excavated.

The third area to be tested will be the Walnut Valley Plantation Slaves' Quarters. The plantation was built in the 1780s and the quarters are assumed to be contemporaneous. Testing will focus on the entranceways and recovered artifacts will likely chronicle the dates of occupation.

Datum Point

Taken together, the 3 sites at Chippokes will present a picture of the cultural creolization which became Chesopean and Virginian society. It was this blending of the English, Native American, and African cultures which gave Virginia its unique cultural flavor, ideation, and social nuances. Bits and pieces of the 3 cultures were borrowed, blended, and adopted by the new cultural phenomenon which became Virginia.

## **ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM**

Alexandria Archaeology Museum's Open House Saturday, September 13 from 1 to 4 p.m. part of the Torpedo Factory Art Center's "Art Activated". Drop by the Archaeology Museum and take part in the Potter's Art Adventure -- a fun family-oriented hands-on activity. Be inspired, by 19th century salt-glaze stoneware patterns, to draw or paint your own take-home drawing. It's free and everyone's invited!

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) unanimously adopted a policy statement encouraging greater public understanding of and appropriate involvement with the nation's archaeological heritage resources at its August 15, 2008, business meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

The policy statement "Archaeology, Heritage Tourism, and Education" calls for the ACHP to "foster public understanding and appreciation of archaeological resources through heritage education programs and, where appropriate, heritage tourism initiatives while encouraging their conservation for future generations in a spirit of stewardship."

The policy statement and accompanying guidance were developed by the ACHP's Archaeology Task Force, chaired by expert member Julia A. King of St. Mary's College of Maryland, the first archaeologist appointed to membership on the ACHP since its creation. The policy is attached and is also available at [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov).

The policy statement and its accompanying guidance set out the benefits of using archaeological sites for educational purposes while considering their management and sustainability needs, including resource protection considerations, public access, current and long-term threats, and maintenance requirements. The policy encourages balancing educational and tourism goals and objectives with privacy and preservation concerns through consultation among all involved and

concerned parties. The policy urges that decisions about appropriate use of archaeological resources be made in consultation with persons, organizations, and entities that ascribe values and significance to them.

The policy and guidance are designed to assist ACHP staff, federal agency decision-makers, and other interested parties when, in the effort to foster a greater appreciation and understanding of the American past, they make decisions about incorporating archaeology and archaeological resources into heritage tourism projects and programs, as well as broader educational initiatives.

The principles and guidance should also be useful to others involved in heritage development, including State Historic Preservation Officers, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, state, tribal, and local governments, tourism interests, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and private individuals dealing with archaeological resources.

For further information contact: Dr. Tom McCulloch, (202) 606-8554, archaeology@achp.gov.

## **CENTREVILLE CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS**

Nadine Mironchuk of the Chelsea Historical Society in Massachusetts gave a fascinating presentation on Chelsea's participation in the saga of the Six Civil War soldiers recovered from the Centreville MacDonald's property in 1997. What follows is the story of the nine years leading to the reburial of the Centreville Civil War Soldiers in the Bourne National Cemetery on Cape Cod.

For those who are new, in 1997, Dr. Doug Owsley of the Smithsonian led a team of trained crew chiefs and volunteers in an emergency recovery of six Civil War soldiers' graves that had been lost to history for more than 130 years. The graves were located on a hillside, a short distance south of the intersection of Routes 29 and 28 in Centreville.

Besides Owsley's interns, the Chapter's own Rich Richardson, Jackie Cuyler, John Inlay and Dale Brown served as crew chiefs. The recovery, which was overseen and coordinated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, was driven by the planned development of a new MacDonald's Restaurant. The County had agreed to do the excavation several years before.

Five of the graves were tentatively located using tile probes. Tile probes are excellent devices used in trying to find grave shafts. Although they are not always totally reliable they provide a good start that involve minimum

damage to the graves. Normally, when a tile probe is pushed into undisturbed ground it goes in a little way, meets increased resistance and then stops, because the natural soil is often compacted with clay particles.

However, if the ground has been disturbed recently enough, as with many grave shafts, the tile probe penetrates easily to the full depth of the grave. That is because grave soil is disturbed, containing air. However, as with Centreville Civil War grave #6, where the grave had been dug 6 inches into the sandstone bedrock, the grave fill contained broken up sandstone. That grave was a big question mark before the surface soil was stripped.

The grave shafts were then verified with the help of a bobcat and operator donated by MacDonald's and the used of garden hoes by Owsley's assistant, Rich Richardson and other trained staff. The top edges of the shafts were evident when cleaned off. That is due to the distinctive mixed soil inside the grave as opposed to the undisturbed soil outside the grave. More than thirty people helped in the excavation.

In addition to Owsley's crew members these included NVC/ASV volunteers, who made up the majority of Owsley's crew chiefs and the field crews, and members of the Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association (NVRHA). It was a NVRHA member, Kevin Ambrose, who discovered the first grave while relic hunting the property. Fortunately, he reported his discovery, which led to MacDonald's seeking help from the County in removing what was first thought to be only one grave.

Sully District Supervisor, Michael Frey's office was in an adjacent office building and he ended up joining in the recovery as a crew member. The Relic hunters worked on grave #6, which was the best mapped grave of them all. They used their metal detectors as they were excavating, which meant that they were able to find the metal artifacts virtually in situ. That resulted in the excellent artifact associations mapped in grave #6. After the remains were recovered and brought back to the James Lee Center lab, they were cleaned and the artifacts carefully inventoried. The tough part began at that time.

CK Gailey, Pat Gallagher and Ed Hon began the labor intensive task in trying to find out who these soldiers were. Many hundreds of hours were spent combing through the Civil War archives in pursuit, first, of what units were located near there. Historic mapping from the Confederate occupation of Centreville after First Bull Run showed the west side of Old Centreville Road, then called "Manassas Road" by the Confederates, being

occupied by the 4<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, the "Tiger Battalion" (Louisiana), the 6th through the 9th Louisiana and the "General Wagon Yard."



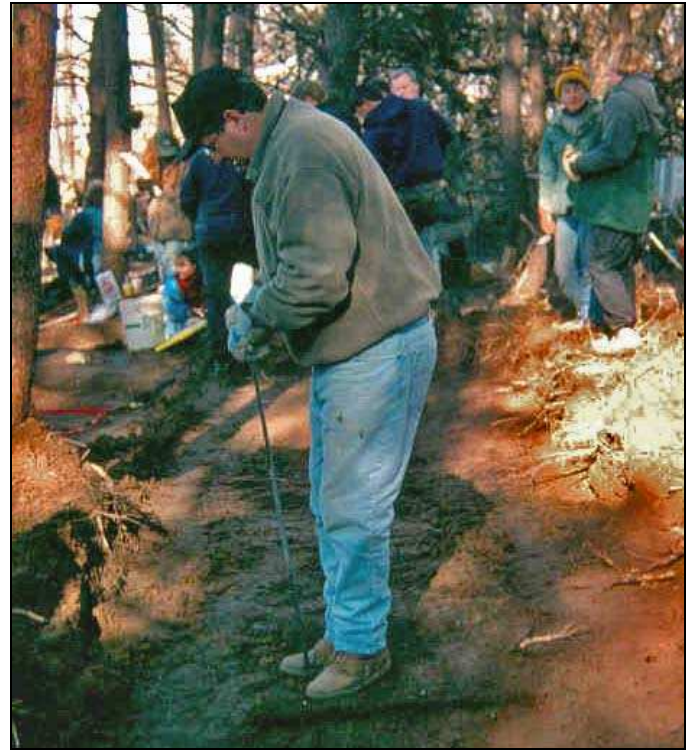
**Chapter member, Joyce Pearsall is a lone figure starting work on grave #6 the top of which was exposed in February of 1997**

Information from relic hunters indicated that Louisiana buttons had been found on the site. However, the buttons found with the soldiers were 1850s vintage "eagle I" and "eagle shield," which suggested that they were militia. Although in the 1850's both southern and Northern militias might have had those buttons, the reported presence of Louisiana buttons on the site led the researchers to conclude that the soldiers were Union militia casualties or camp deaths. Since coffin nails and wood were present, the graves were relatively deeply dug, and the sixth grave was dug six inches into the bedrock, the staff concluded that they were not hastily buried.

That left two options if they were Union: battlefield deaths from the preliminary skirmish at Blackburn's Ford two days before First Bull Run or camp deaths from the Union occupation that occurred after the Confederates left in early 1862. However, the Park Authority's search was directed toward the latter by a note in the official records by a Union Chaplain. It stated that they buried the dead after Blackburn's Ford wrapped in their blankets, because no wood was available for coffins.

That whole effort was tossed on its ear when one of the relic hunters who had worked on grave #6 produced evidence that Union Chaplain was not present at Blackburn's Ford. Dalton Rector also had been researching the possibility that the soldiers were from Companies G and H of the 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry that fought at Blackburn's Ford. This new evidence focused all research there. The Park Authority

provided Rector with the forensic analysis, which Dr. Owsley and his staff had been working on in parallel to the documentary research. Rector produced a report that provided compelling evidence that hypothesized the identities of several of the soldiers and several alternatives for the others.



**Doug Owsley testing with tile probe for grave shafts.**

After reviewing his research our research team concurred that his was the best current hypothesis. The Park Authority also authorized Dr. Owsley to perform stable isotope testing to help determine the diets the six soldiers were raised on. Although he initially thought the results could indicate that they were Confederates, that conclusion did not fit with any of the rest of the data.

As a result, the preponderance of the data still supported Union and 1st Massachusetts. More recent discussions with Dr. Owsley of the stable isotope results have started to line up better with Rector's findings. It is not a perfect match but a much better one. A young soldier named Albert Francis Wentworth was identified by Rector as the likely candidate for grave #2 and therefore DNA testing. Wentworth was the best candidate for grave #2 because he was the only person who fit the age profile as determined by Dr. Owsley of 16-18 years old. All of the other graves were occupied by people of age groups that could fit several of the casualties.

This exhaustive preliminary research took about three years. Once the Park Authority staff felt confident that

Rector's was the best explanation, at his request, reburial was deferred to provide Rector the time to locate a modern relative for DNA testing. His efforts centered on Wentworth and one other grave but Wentworth was the key. This is where Mironchuk and Chelsea come in. Although Wentworth was born and raised in New Hampshire, his Mother brought the family to Chelsea, where her son Albert enlisted in the 1st Massachusetts.

Today, a cemetery in Chelsea has a monument to him and Mironchuk has taken great pride in leading the preservation and interpretation of the sacrifices soldiers from Chelsea made to the Union cause. She came in contact with the Park Authority only several weeks before the scheduled reburial in the Bourne National Cemetery. Rector's efforts to find an appropriate source for DNA testing had come to naught, and the Park Authority staff, in good conscience, had determined that the six soldiers should no longer be stored on a shelf in the Smithsonian.

The Bourne Cemetery was determined to be a more appropriate temporary or final resting place. This was done with the firm conviction that if an appropriate DNA donor could be found then the appropriate soldier's remains could be re-exhumed for the testing. Although there has been some honest disagreement over the last two years about proceeding with the re-burial at Bourne, the presentation by Mironchuk in Centerville on the Chelsea interest enabled all sides to finally meet and discover common ground.

The result is that the effort to obtain DNA testing on at least the hypothesized Wentworth grave has been rejuvenated. Members of the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable, led by Bill Etue, were instrumental in arranging for Mironchuk to give her presentation at the Centerville Library. For those interested in the DNA testing process, it involves first identifying a known living or deceased (buried) relative in the female line, who would possess Wentworth's mother's mitochondrial DNA. For example, a descendent from an Albert Wentworth child would not work, because she would contain the mitochondrial DNA of his wife, not him.

As a result the genealogical work has to focus on a trail leading back to either one of Wentworth's sisters or a sister of his Mother or Grandmother on his Mother's side, etc. I have offered some of my genealogical hours owed by our Editor Patrick O'Neill that I bought at a silent auction. Patrick has started on the case. To put the pressure on him, I should report that he took only two hours and 45 minutes to trace my Father's Johnson ancestry back to the American Revolution. He even

found a picture of that early Johnson's tombstone in Clay County, West Virginia.

All can agree that this is an exciting example of a multi-disciplinary approach to a worthy and fascinating "Cold Case File." We will keep you posted.

**HERNDON'S NATURE FEST**  
**SUNDAY, SEPT. 21<sup>ST</sup>**  
**1:00 – 5:00PM**  
**RUNNYMEDE PARK**

The Chapter will participate in Herndon's Nature Fest once again! The goal of the fest is to celebrate nature. Our Chapter has been participating for quite a few years. We're always in the back, by the historic house and the Raptor Tent (always a good show, by the way). The nature stations throughout the park and earn a treat, including Archaeology, Sugarland Run Watershed, Native Plants, Macro Invertebrates, Rain Garden Education, Electra- Fishing, pollination and bees, bats, Farm Life, insects, raptors, & much more. Satellite parking is available at the Herndon Police Station at 397 Herndon Parkway with passenger van shuttle to the Park.

Runnymede is Herndon's 58-acre community nature park is located at 195 Herndon Parkway between Elden Street and Dranesville Road.



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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

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