

THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

July 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

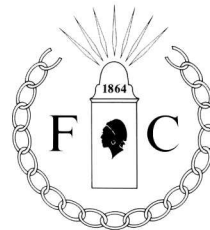
First, some old business. Several Chapter members participated in Patrick O'Neill's Archaeology Week at Kittiewan in late June. Despite the heat, it was a good time, and Patrick accomplished at least one of his goals by finding the foundation of a two story building adjacent to the main house, along with a number of artifacts. We'll wait for Patrick to tell us "the rest of the story." The heat was bad that week, but he did a good job of keeping us in cold water, fans (four each), and shade, so the work never had to stop for the weather. Thanks, Patrick.

A number of you have expressed interest in the October 9th guided tour of the Hunter Mill Road area – more than enough to plan on doing it. In early September, I'll be asking for actual commitments and about \$20 per person to make it happen.

At our July meeting, I intend to hold a vote on amending the by-laws of the Williams and Mullen Field School Scholarship Fund. As I've mentioned before, Ann Wood has suggested removing the April 1st deadline for field school scholarship applications from the by-laws of the Williams and Mullen Field School Scholarship fund, since this deadline has not proven to be meaningful or effective. I met with Ann, and we crafted a proposed amendment to the by-laws that reads as follows: *"The April 1st deadline for scholarship applications is removed from Section V (Eligibility); applications will be considered at any time during the year. The Section is further amended to note that, in the event that no awards are made during a calendar year, the Chapter may authorize an award in the subsequent year to an archaeology program at a local college or university or to one or more students in such a program. At the Chapter's discretion, the membership requirement can be modified or waived."* If you cannot attend the meeting, but would like to express an opinion on this, please contact me at jkelsey@cox.net.

July 14th Meeting

EXCAVATIONS AT THE CONTRABANDS AND FREEDMEN'S CEMETERY AND THE CONCEPT OF THE PROPER COFFIN IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY



**Dr. Steven J. Shephard,
Alexandria Archaeology**

Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery is located on S. Washington Street in Alexandria, the burial place from 1864 -1869 for at least 1800 slaves seeking their freedom behind Union lines. Four archaeological excavations were conducted in preparation for developing the property by the City into a Memorial Park. The results indicate an idea of what a "proper" coffin was like in mid-nineteenth century America. The history of the cemetery, some results of the excavations and the idea of a "proper" coffin will be presented by one of the project researchers, Dr. Steven J. Shephard.

Dr. Shephard has been Assistant City Archaeologist with the City of Alexandria since 1980. He received his undergraduate degree in History at the University of Florida, his M.A. degree in Anthropology/Archaeology at Florida State University, and his doctorate in Anthropology/Archaeology from Southern Illinois University. He has conducted archaeology in England, North Carolina, Tennessee, Illinois and Virginia. He has managed over 50 sites in the City of Alexandria and manages the Preservation Review section. He has published site reports, contributions to four books, articles on working with volunteers, urban development, the study of class differences through analysis of artifacts, interpretation of historic cemeteries, and the presentation of archaeological research results to the public. **Dr. Shephard will retire from the City at the end of this year having completed 31 years of service.**

FIELD OPPORTUNITIES

By President Kelsey

Let me take the opportunity to recap some field archaeology opportunities in the area:

- **Westbrook Drive.** This is a prehistoric site in a beautiful wooded area near I-66 and Stringfellow Road. Mike Johnson is leading the effort, which is just getting underway. If you haven't been getting Mike's emails on this site, contact him at michael.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- **Mount Vernon.** Mount Vernon has an active archaeology program, and much recent work has focused on the site for the new library, which has both historic and prehistoric components. Contact Curt Breckenridge at cbreckenridge@mountvernon.org.
- **Gunston Hall.** There is an active dig at the hall itself. Dave Shonyo, the resident archaeologist, would welcome volunteers. He usually is in the field on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Volunteers can park in the visitor lots. The current dig is just a short walk from there. Since it's on the main grounds, there are restroom facilities and no bothersome forest creatures to deal with. This would be a good opportunity for those needing historical archaeology hours for their certification and who have limited field experience. Contact Dave at archaeology@gunstonhall.org
- **McCue (Old Colchester).** I'm unfortunately not able at this time to provide more information on what should be an excellent site for both historic and prehistoric archaeology. Apparently, it has taken a while to get approval for the work at all the relevant levels of the County. Stay tuned for good news soon, I hope.

In addition to the field work around here, there are field schools elsewhere in Virginia. Contact me if you'd like more information. There is also on-going lab work at the Fairfax County lab in the James Lee Center as well as at Mount Vernon.

Finally, I'd like to highlight a few other archaeology-related opportunities:

- **Catherine's Ring - A Historic Link to Our First President.** This presentation is being given in Old Town Alexandria on Tuesday July 6, 6 – 8 PM at the Morrison House Hotel, 116 South Alfred Street. Richard Klingenmaier will discuss the recent discovery of a gold memorial ring given to the young wife of an Alexandria Sea Captain in early 1800, and how its return to Alexandria after 210 years has served to focus a new, personal light on the momentous events surrounding the death of George Washington in 1799. He will also discuss his research approach and how that has opened up yet other avenues of research that will add to our knowledge of the local Alexandria landscape at the turn of the 19th century.
- **Protecting our Past: National Park Service Museum Emergency Response Team.** Hurricanes Katrina, Isabel, and Ivan left unimaginable devastation in their wake, impacting archeological resources and museum collections from Louisiana to Virginia. National Park Service Senior Staff Archaeologist Bob Sonderman will discuss the impact that these and other events have had on historic properties, archeological sites, and museum collections and how the National Park Service Museum Emergency Response Team (MERT) has responded. The presentation will be on Wednesday, July 7, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the Sidney Yates Auditorium, Main Interior Building, 1849 C St, NW. This lecture is open to the public. **CONTACT:** Diana Ziegler, (202) 208-1169.
- **Pre-Columbian Society of DC Symposium, 25 September.** The Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, DC will hold its 17th annual symposium on Saturday, September 25, 2010, at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center, Washington, DC. The symposium title is "Under Cover of Darkness: The Meaning of Night in Ancient Mesoamerica." Speakers will include Linda Brown, Ceclia Klein, John Pohl, Keith Prufer, Kent Reailly, and Marz Zender. For program details and registration information, please visit www.pcswdc.org.
- **ASV Annual Meeting.** This is being held October 28 – 31 in Williamsburg at the Clarion Hotel Historic District. The hotel is offering a group rate of \$69 plus tax and a \$2 per room per night occupancy tax. The hotel is conveniently

located near the Historic District, and the rate is very good for Williamsburg. If you're thinking of going, I suggest you look into reservations soon, especially since the meeting is being held jointly with COVA and the Eastern States Archaeological Federation. The hotel phone number is 757-229-4100.

FAIRFAX LIBRARY HOURS ARE CHANGING!

The Fairfax County Public Library will change its hours as a result of countywide budget reductions. The new hours will take effect at branches July 1, 2010.

The Access Services branch, which is located at the Fairfax County Government Center, will maintain its current hours. Here are the new hours:

Regional Branches: (Centreville, Chantilly, **City of Fairfax (including Virginia Room)**, George Mason, Pohick, Reston, Sherwood and Tysons-Pimmit)

Monday 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Tuesday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Wednesday 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Thursday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday hours remain 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday hours remain 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Community Branches: (Burke Centre, Dolley Madison*, Great Falls, Herndon Fortnightly, John Marshall, Kings Park, Kingstowne, Lorton, Martha Washington*, Oakton, Patrick Henry, Richard Byrd*, Thomas Jefferson* and Woodrow Wilson)

Monday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tuesday 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Wednesday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Thursday 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday hours remain 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
No Sunday hours

* The renovated Thomas Jefferson Library will reopen at 10 a.m., June 26 with the new hours.

* The temporary Dolley Madison Library will reopen at 10 a.m., June 28 with the new hours.

* The renovated Martha Washington Library will reopen at 2 p.m., July 10.

* The renovated Richard Byrd Library will reopen at 6 p.m., July 22.

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ARCHAEOLOGY SCHEDULE

By Mike Johnson

Westbrook Drive (44FX2660) - We have completed almost 90 STPs and are beginning to focus in on the main part of the site. However that may be deceptive. We are finding that STPs in the upper elevations, which appears to be the main part of the site, have been producing significant quantities of gravel. Since almost all of the non-artifact rocks have been water rolled it is likely they are residual gravels from Rocky Run many tens of thousands of years ago. The lower elevations have produced very low amounts of gravel. This indicates that the site has been subjected to sheet-wash erosion deflating the higher elevations of the site, depositing the eroded soils down slope. The down-slope areas could have buried archeological horizons. Time permitting we will have to deep test the lower parts of the site.

Tammy Bryant sent the attached photo of the three points Thunderbird Archeology recovered from their preliminary site testing. Thanks, Tammy. The points include an unidentified side notched point on the left; a Rossville-Piscataway point (ca. 2,000 BP) in the center, and either a point midsection or Rossville-Piscataway point on the right. On Tuesday we recovered the basal portion of a fluted quartz preform, fluted on both faces. It is tantalizing but by itself not diagnostic of a Paleoamerican occupation.

Schedule - Tuesday (7/6) normal lab at the James Lee Center. Wednesday (7/7) Westbrook Drive at 9 am. Saturday (7/10) Westbrook Drive at 9 am.



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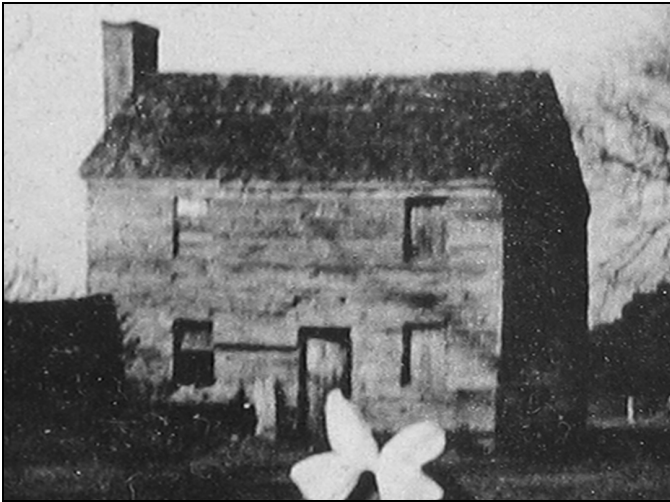
Here is a great site for printing your own graph paper!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

<http://www.printfreegraphpaper.com/>

KITTIWAN ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

By Patrick O'Neill

I want to thank the Northern Virginia Chapter, as well as the COL Howard MacCord Chapter, for their contribution to the Kittiewan Archaeology Week! It was a great success, again!



We were looking for archaeological evidence



We found the chimney, two corner piers and two central piers for the external kitchen!



The chimney was intact, with evidence of a rebuilding stage at some point in time.



The reddish zone is the heat signature under the hearth area inside the chimney.



I had asked John and Paul simply to find the edge of the ice house. John had dug a couple of STPs in this area in 2007 and went down 4 ft. However, they didn't listen to me and find the ice house. Instead, they found a modern cistern, which had probably been placed inside the old ice house. Maybe next time, guys!



Probably the most interesting artifact this time was this bone needle or awl. It may actually be the remnant of a tooth root, we'll see. It was found just "outside" the northwest chimney area where there would have been morning shade. The tip was very sharp, and the sides were worn smooth! Definitely a slave related tool!



This red clay pipe was also pretty cool! We left the dirt inside in case we can get some assistance from DHR if there is any tobacco residue inside.

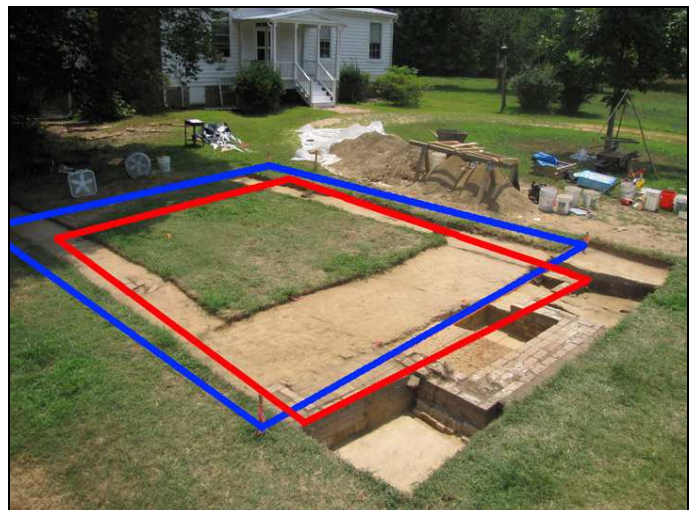
Generally speaking, we found very few historic ceramics, many machine cut nails, a few hand wrought nails, some window pane glass, and some animal bone fragments. Hard to say if the building was an external kitchen with so few recovered artifacts. However, the chimney is 1 ½ ft wide than the chimneys in the wings of Kittiewan, so, for now, it will be the external kitchen.



It was hot, but a lot of good mapping went on, as Bruce Baker said! The team was great!



I don't think John and Paul thought I was going to work them so hard! It was deadly hot down there!!!



But, to tout my own horn for a moment, I laid out the grid with the blue line representing where I thought the building was and the red line where it actually was. Please forgive me as I was off 1 ½ feet!!!!!!!

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Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	ewhite@mountvernon.org
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Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399 (information)

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 should join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.

asv-archeology.org

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!!!!

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Northern Virginia Chapter
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2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

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