



# THE DATUM POINT

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

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

July 2012

## FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

With the onset of summer, the pace is picking up in the Archaeological Technician Certification Program. Dr. Esther White, Chief Archaeologist at Mount Vernon, recently taught well-attended courses on historic metals and glass analysis. (See photo) As always, the classes were both interesting and informative.



Future activities will include:

- A course on basic laboratory procedures on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, taught by Fairfax's own Dr. Liz Crowell.
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources will host a laboratory 'field school' at VDHR's archaeological collections room on August 6-10, 2012. For these five days, students will receive required core and area Certification lectures on a variety of topics and get hands-on experience with Native American prehistoric and historic artifacts, as well as and Euro-American historic artifacts. Actual lab work counts toward lab requirements for the Certification program (30 hours on prehistoric assemblages and 30 hours on historic assemblages). Course work counts toward course requirements but not lab time.

## July 11<sup>th</sup> presentation

## **A VALUABLE TRACT OF LAND & THE MERCHANT OF COLCHESTER**

By

**Maddy McCoy and Jon Mayes**

Maddy McCoy has conducted historic research in Fairfax County for many years prior to joining the CART team. Some of her special interest projects include development of a large slave data base for Fairfax County that has been used many times in historical research and archaeological projects. Jon Mayes has also been a member of the CART team for many years. His background is in historic archaeology. Together, they will present an interesting look into the history of Colchester!



Fairfax Arms, the only standing structure from the original Colchester community

## Cont'd from page 1

- A class on Archaeological Laws and Ethics, taught by John Sprinkle (to be scheduled).

In addition to these classes, Esther White is offering some really great opportunities to people available on midweek days and needing excavation experience and field courses, or historic lab hours. Esther will be accepting volunteers on (most) Tuesdays through Thursdays for excavation work at Mount Vernon. She is offering to work with candidates individually or in small groups to learn excavation techniques and complete the following excavation field courses:

- Introduction to Site Organization
- Excavation Techniques
- Stratigraphy and Soils
- Feature Recognition and Excavation
- Use of Grid and Transit during Site Excavation

The Northern Virginia Chapter has long been very active in the Certification Program. We have a number of candidates from our Chapter, and we are also assisting candidates from other chapters. A good part of the reason for our success is the support of people like Esther White, Liz Crowell, and Mike Johnson, as well as Ann Wood's work to provide training opportunities and prodding candidates to take advantage of them. (Not much prodding required.) For those of you who may be interested in more information on the program, you can read a description on the ASV website at <http://asv-archeology.org/Org/OrgCertification.htm>.

I regret to report that **Gail Wharton** passed away on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. She and her husband **Bob** contributed greatly to archaeology and historic preservation here in Fairfax County. Gail managed historic properties in the County, and Bob was the historic archaeologist in the County office for some ten years. Five years ago, Gail and Bob moved to the Richmond area, but they retained their membership in the Northern Virginia Chapter. If you would like to remember her with flowers, the family requests that you send a garden plant that can be incorporated into her garden. The address

will be 13390 Centerville Road, Disputanta, Va. 23842, at the home of her son, Jeff. Dedication service will be in August.

Mark your calendars for the annual Chapter picnic on August 25<sup>th</sup>. This year, we'll be back at Cox Farms, thanks to the kindness of **CD Cox** and his family. More information will follow later.

Finally, I'd like to welcome **Ed Kley** and **Ellen Knowles** as new Chapter members.

## HISTORIC HUNTLEY OPEN FOR TOURS

The early Nineteenth Century house that was built for Thomson Francis Mason, a grandson of George Mason IV, is now open to the public on Saturdays, March through November after a period of archaeological investigation and an extensive renovation. Tours are conducted at 10:15, 11:30, 12:40, and 1:45. There is a \$5 charge per person (\$3 for seniors and students.) The house is located outside the main entrance to Huntley Meadows Park at 6918 Harrison Lane in southern Fairfax County.



## FAIRFIELD FOUNDATION STATUS

In April, the lab operated by the Fairfield Foundation flooded, causing a good deal of damage and disruption to their good work going on in Gloucester County. Your Chapter and a number of you individually contributed to helping them get back on their feet. Thane Harpole and Dave Brown pass along their thanks for the help they've received. They report that "things are progressing slowly."

The Rosewell Visitor Center has been painted, and they're almost done getting the exhibit cases redone (water damage to the bases), but they haven't decided on a flooring yet, so we can't move anything back in until they get the flooring issue resolved. We have been improvising our lab, but are still managing to do a variety of small field projects and educational programs in the mean time. Right now we don't have additional special needs, since we're basically just waiting until we can start moving back in and reorganizing things."

## NEW MOUNT VERNON ARCHAEOLOGY WEBSITE

Mount Vernon's archaeologists are excited to announce the website for the Archaeological Collections Online Project – South Grove Midden, which is under construction at <http://mountvernonmidden.org>. The two year project to analyze and digitize more than 120,000 artifacts and the faunal and archeobotanical materials excavated from 1990 – 1994 at a large surface midden is directed by Eleanor Breen. The midden has phases which date from the mid-eighteenth century the twentieth centuries, with the bulk of the assemblage being deposited prior to the American Revolution.

The first component on the website is the Invoices and Orders database. Almost 4,000 objects are searchable and represent the objects and shipping materials George Washington received from England between 1754 and 1773. Each object is matched with Washington's corresponding order to compare what he desired with the actuality of what was received. These items arrived on 26 ships and Datum Point

document things clearly intended for use by George and Martha Washington and others, like the coarse linen fabric called *oznabrig*, which was destined for the growing community of enslaved individuals.

The Invoice and Order data can be searched on the Midden website or downloaded, and a manual and FAQs are available on the website to facilitate using the database. Over the next several months additional content will be added to the Midden site including the 400 Objects database, selected objects from the archaeological site.

Progress of the Midden site can be followed on the weekly blog, linked to the Midden web site and by "liking" *Mount Vernon's Mystery Midden* Facebook page.

## FT. WARD UPDATE FROM ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

We have finished the Stage 2 Archaeology in which we investigated by digging test holes across Fort Ward Park and identified structures. The artifacts are being washed, sorted, and catalogued in the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. We are now doing the final Stage 2 work: the identification of graves in several locations. We started investigations in the Jackson Cemetery on the west side of the historic fort. Fran Bromberg and Garrett Fesler are supervising the work with the archaeological crew, as well as a machine and operator provided by the Department of Recreation Parks and Cultural Activities.

We identified 19 additional graves in the Jackson Cemetery. Adding to the 4 identified in Stage 1 investigation, there are now 23 identified graves here. More work will continue at this location. We know from information provided by Elizabeth Douglas that the Jacksons made the cemetery available to other families and individuals, so there may be many more people buried here.

After the Jackson Cemetery, we will continue grave identification in these locations: 1) south of Oakland Baptist Cemetery in the area once called "The Old Graveyard;" 2) west of Oakland Cemetery



on land once included in the burial ground; and north of the Oakland Cemetery where many people remember seeing graves 50 plus years ago. If time permits, excavation will also occur on the Robert McKnight property near Braddock Road where graves are also possible.

You are welcome to visit the park and see the investigations. While heavy machinery is used to open trenches, great care is being taken to remove only the soil over the top of the grave shaft. No excavations will occur in the grave shaft, since the goal is to identify and mark graves that have been unidentified for so many years.

### **NEWS FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF MARYLAND**

*(President's note: One of the objectives your officers have discussed is to reach out to other archaeological organizations in the area and expand our members' knowledge of their activities. Belinda Urquiza, a Maryland-based Chapter member who has done archaeology there, was kind enough to provide this extensive summary of archaeological work and other activities being conducted next door. As we saw during our tour at Jefferson-Patterson Park and Preserve, there is great work going on, and I hope this information will help those of you who want to take advantage of it.)*

### **PROVIDENCE FARM DIG DAYS**

Anne Arundel County Archeological Society (AACAS) is conducting ongoing field work at Providence Farm in Centreville, MD. This is a wonderful opportunity to work on an 18th-century site, called Providence Farm Site, in Centreville, MD, just over the bridge in Queen Anne County, MD. The house was built in 1746, and the owner has taken down a 1910 addition. There are the remains of a brick building, likely an old kitchen, under the addition. The AA County Chapter has held several field sessions at the Providence Farm Site since 2010. AACAS' latest field sessions were held on June 3 and June 24, 2012.

The Chapter will have access to the site for several months. Future field sessions will be announced on AACAS' Calendar at <http://www.aachapasm.org/calendar.html>. AA County Chapter in the News: Providence Farm Site in Centreville, MD. [Click here for the article](#). Contact: Mechelle Kerns Galway at 410-409-5187 or [AACHapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) to register to participate and for directions.

### **BRYANS ROAD SITE FIELD DAYS**

Charles County Archaeological Society of Maryland (CCASM) is working with Dr. James Gibb ([Gibb Archaeological Consulting](#)) to investigate a Native American site near Bryans Road in Charles County, MD. CCASM is working on private property (approximately 10 acres). The project will continue for several months. There is a research design for the project and will have a final report. Also, there will be plenty of opportunity to dig, screen, wash artifacts, identify artifacts, and perhaps do some surveying. Visit the CCASM blog for more information on the [Native American Site Investigation](#). Future field and lab sessions will be announced on:

- CCASM's Calendar at <http://www.charlescoasm.org/calendar.html>;
- CCASM's Blog at <http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com/>

Contact: Carol Cowherd (CCASM President) at [cowherdcl@gmail.com](mailto:cowherdcl@gmail.com) to register to participate and receive directions.

### **MONOCACY ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Ongoing - Excavation at an Archaic Camp site in Pine Valley Park, Manchester, MD. Under the direction of Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514

### **BARTON FIELD SESSION 2012**

This year's investigation will search for a better understanding of the Paleo occupation of the site through core sampling, expand the area where Middle Woodland ceramics were discovered last

year and continue the Deep Unit exploration in the Susquehannock area of the site.

*Two Consecutive 3-day Weekends were held on: June 15, 16,17 & June 22,23,24. Future work dates will be announced on the Western Maryland Archeological Society's web site at <https://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm/> Field Sessions 2012 are conducted by Dr. Robert D.Wall (Towson State University)*

Future work dates to be announced. Volunteers are welcome. For more information, contact [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com); Roy Brown 301-724-7769; or <https://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm/>

### **LOST TOWNS PROJECT AT LONDON TOWN IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MD**

Their last public Dig Day at London Town will be Saturday August 4th at London Town from 9am until 2pm. Field Hours are still 8am until 3pm.

### **PIG POINT (18AN50)**

Pig Point is a highly significant multi-component site on the Patuxent River in southwestern Anne Arundel County, at the juncture of the Patuxent River and its Western Branch. The *Lost Towns Project* conducted excavations in 2009 and 2010 and have proven nearly continuous occupation of the site for about 8,500 years, beginning in the Early/Middle Archaic time period. Artifacts have even suggested the site may have been utilized during the Paleoindian period, although no intact soil strata or features have been found that date to that very early time (around 10,000 years ago).

For an overview of Pig Point Site, see <http://losttowns.com/projects/Pig%20Point/overview.html>

For more information, contact Jessie L. Grow, The Lost Towns Project, Education and Volunteer Coordinator, Lab Director, (office) 410 222 7440; (lab) 410 222 1318; (cell) 410 507 2674; (email) [volunteers@losttownsproject.org](mailto:volunteers@losttownsproject.org)

### **CIVIL WAR EVENTS**

July 7 & 8, 2012 - 148th Battle Anniversary - Highlights the 14th New Jersey Regiment's experience at Monocacy National Battlefield in 1862 and 1864.

### **COLCHESTER UPDATE**

Through the cool spring days, progress has been made at 44FX3197, the Town Site. Feature 87, the linear red trench near Old Colchester Road, is over a meter in depth, and still continues. There are pockets of black grit and red sand throughout the feature, and most of the artifacts are less than ¼" in size. The trench contains artifacts ranging from lead shot to porcelain, many small pieces that are recovered in the water-screen process.

These artifacts date the feature to the town occupation time period, but the function of the trench is still unknown. The few rainy days earlier this month flooded the units, but with the hot and dry weather excavation can continue when the water table is low. The north and south edges have been exposed, as the red rocky/gritty soil is removed down to tan subsoil (seen in the picture). The feature is a little over a meter in width, with sloping sides.



Test Unit 151, has yielded many artifacts and exposes more of the southern wall of Feature 25 (the large stone foundation). Bone, earthenware, porcelain, nail and glass fragments have been recovered from the test unit. Most layers of the unit

contained over twenty five pounds of architectural rock and few bricks. Could this be evidence of a large stone chimney that has fallen into the structure? Little charred wood was observed during excavation, suggesting that the structure had not burned. Test Unit 151 hopefully will show more of Feature 85 (the cut slate trench) and its association with Feature 25. The warm summer days will be welcomed to be outside and processing the feature fill since all the soil is saved for water-screening.



Testing the areas noted by Thunderbird/WSSI in 2006, boundary MTUs excavated by CART at 44FX0704 are similar to the findings in 2006. A few MTUs contained domestic artifacts like nails and ceramic, but no large features were discovered on the south or east of the cemetery area.

Similar to the historic side of things, the prehistoric fieldwork on Colchester is winding down. Since the return of the total station last month, the crew has been continuing the task of delineating the Finger Ridges. The cultural deposits on the Ridges known as 1, 1a, and 2 have combined into one site that connects to 44FX0704, the cemetery site. That area

also encompasses a prehistoric site that was identified during the Phase I survey in 2006, all of which conglomerates to make one very large, multi-component, upland site. Ridge 3 has well-defined topographic boundaries, and so it is likely to remain a single entity. It has already been determined that the sites on Ridges 4 through 8, connect. The final task, then, is to continue to excavate MTUs along the boundaries of that landform until culturally sterile MTUs are found.

As mentioned in previous updates, the MTUs on all the Finger Ridge sites generally yield low densities of artifacts. While such a state of affairs is not necessarily exciting while excavation is underway, this series of upland sites aligns well with the settlement patterns of the Archaic and Early Woodland Periods. The temporally diagnostic artifacts discovered on these landforms give weight to that hypothesis, as well. Therefore, as report writing moves forward, it will be important to consider these upland sites on a landscape level. One task of the CART's research design is to compare the various sites across the Park, with the goal of reaching a better understanding about land-use across time and space. The work on the Finger Ridges has become an integral piece of solving that puzzle, especially since their stratigraphy appears intact.

In need of catching up to the field work, interns and volunteers have made a considerable effort to sort the feature fill in the lab. Seeds, straight pins, small shell, bones and other artifacts continue to be picked out of the window mesh rubble. There is a lot more to do in the lab before everything is ready for the report, but Lily has joined our staff to help move toward that goal. Boxes of artifacts are given archival tags, weighed, and being cataloged on paper forms in preparation for the digital catalog. The lab work will move more quickly as things wind down in the field.

Robin left us to go to grad school in the fall. She will be missed and we wish her luck in the coming school year.



On the occasion of the

**150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE CIVIL WAR**

# THE 97<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENTAL STRING BAND

performs at the  
**Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center**  
2739 West Ox Road • Herndon, Virginia 20171

## SUNDAY, JULY 22, 2012

STARTING AT 7:30PM

Sponsored by the Sully Foundation, Ltd. and the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park.

Co-hosted by Sully Historic Site and Frying Pan Farm Park.

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### Fairfax County Archaeology (FCPA)

Dr. Elizabeth Crowell     [elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov)  
703-534-3881

### Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	<a href="mailto:ewhite@mountvernon.org">ewhite@mountvernon.org</a>
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	<a href="mailto:archaeology@gunstonhall.org">archaeology@gunstonhall.org</a> 703-550-0441
Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	<a href="mailto:pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov">pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov</a> 703-838-4399 (information)

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Return to:

Isabella Pease, Treasurer, NVC/ASV  
8304 Graceway Drive  
Lorton, VA 22079

**Chapter members should join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia at [asv-archeology.org](http://asv-archeology.org)**

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!**

### *THE DATUM POINT*

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