

THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

October 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

Thanks to Diane Schug-O'Neill for putting together last month's field trip to Werowocomoco and Fairfield, and thanks to Randy Turner and Thane Harpool for leading the tour at those sites respectively. We had over twenty members take part, and comments were very complimentary. To quote one member, "It is so evident that Randy and Thane are both very passionate and dedicated archaeologists. This kind of enthusiasm is contagious in that it makes me want to learn more and more about the incredible history Virginia and Maryland have to offer." (contd pg 2)



Above- Randy Turner addressing the crowd
Below- Thane Harpole describing Fairfield



OCTOBER 10TH TALK

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT FORT WARD HISTORICAL PARK IN ALEXANDRIA

By Garrett Fesler



Alexandria Archaeology recently completed an STP survey of the entire park and an intensive survey to identify the locations of graves. The centerpiece of the park is the Civil War fortification. The park also contains evidence of a thriving African-American community started after the end of the war. By the early twentieth century as many as a dozen families lived at "The Fort". A school for African-American children was later converted to an Episcopal church. Several cemeteries are present mainly containing unmarked graves.

Mr. Fesler received his MA in history at the College of William and Mary, and Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Virginia. He has focused on the archaeology of the African Diaspora, primarily at slave quarter sites in the Chesapeake region. He has worked at the James River Institute for Archaeology, Inc. in Williamsburg, and since July 2011 he has worked as a city archaeologist with Alexandria Archaeology.

Cont'd from pg 1

Gay and I weren't able to go on the field trip because we were taking a French and Indian War tour with the Archaeological Conservancy. The tour was led by Conservancy archaeologists Andy Stout and Will Shepherd, who did a wonderful job. At last count, we hit at least ten forts from the period, not to mention museums, Iroquois villages, etc. Several years ago, we took our first Conservancy tour – the “Best of the Southwest.” The beauty of these tours is that, not only are they led by archaeologists, but the individual archaeologists who worked the sites you visit are frequently there to talk about their work.

This discussion gives me an opportunity to put in a general plug for the Conservancy, which has the important mission of conserving archaeological sites that might otherwise be destroyed. For those of you who have been to Gault, that site is now owned by the Conservancy, thanks in large part to Dr. Mike Collins. The Conservancy publishes an excellent magazine – *American Archaeology* – which comes with membership.



Crown Point on Lake Champlain

In our own area, field work continues two or three days a week at Chapman's Mill, not to mention historic and prehistoric lab work at the James Lee Center for Westbrook and Colchester. If you'd like to get on the email list for the Mill, get in touch with Mike Johnson (mj44fx1@verizon.net). Down at Kittiewan Plantation, the home of the ASV west of Williamsburg, digs are planned on October 6, 20, and 27 to investigate the possibility of a structure in the vicinity of the herb garden. If you're interested, contact Martha Williams (mwilliams1onono@aol.com) or Bruce Baker (bakerbw@tds.net). As many of us will attest, Kittiewan is a great place to dig.

WSSI ARCHEOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

The WSSI archeology symposium is less than one month away. Unfortunately, responses to the initial announcement of the symposium were minimal. We considered cancelling the event but as we are very excited to present the results of our research at this important colonial slavery site in Fairfax County, Virginia; the event will go on as planned but will be somewhat more informal and will likely end by early afternoon rather than 6 PM as originally announced.

Artifacts from the site, including the colonoware assemblage will be on display. Presentations will be fewer but more diverse than originally expected and will include details of the history and archeology at the Accotink Quarter site, information



Inside an Iroquois longhouse

about analysis of the site's colonoware, results of other research that we have recently conducted, archeology in Ecuador, a discussion and film on Akan pottery from Ghana (hopefully) and more.

If you are planning to attend the symposium at our Gainesville, Virginia office on Thursday, November 1, 2012, and have not already contacted us, please RSVP to Boyd Sipe (contact info below) as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary accommodations.

If you would like to present at the symposium, the deadline for abstracts is flexible so it's not too late. Please send a brief abstract or contact me as soon as possible and we can discuss the details. Also feel free to contact me with any other questions about the event.

Thanks and we look forward to seeing you,

Boyd Sipe, M.A., RPA
Thunderbird Archeology
a Division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.
5300 Wellington Branch Drive
Suite 100
Gainesville, Virginia 20155
(703) 679-5623
(703) 307-6951 (Mobile)
bsipe@wetlandstudies.com

ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY – VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED

Recent archaeological investigations at Alexandria's Fort Ward Park yielded a diverse assemblage of over 10,000 artifacts, dating primarily to the late 19th and 20th centuries. Alexandria Archaeology is seeking one or two highly motivated volunteers to assist in the cataloging of these archaeological finds. Prior database and/or cataloging experience and a keen attention to detail are desirable qualifications for this position. This position offers the opportunity to work closely with Alexandria Archaeology's professional staff in a friendly and fast-paced museum environment.

Interested applicants should contact Alexandria archaeologist Paul Nasca at paul.nasca@alexandriava.gov.

UP-COMING EVENTS

- “*First Lady Dolly Madison and the War of 1812*,” local historian and author Carole Herrick will recount Dolly Madison's flight through Northern Virginia following the British burning of the White House. Sunday, October 14th at 2 PM at the Fairfax Museum and Visitors Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax.
- “*Life on the Eurasian Steppe: The Ancient Art and Culture of Kazakhstan*,” scholars **Alexander Nagel** and **Anatoli Nagler** reveal how excavations have provided great insight into the nomadic Eurasian steppe cultures of the 8th to the 1st centuries B.C. At the S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington DC, October 24th at 6:45 PM.
- “*Civil War Medicine*,” Learn about Civil War medicine from living history presenters and guest speakers. October 27th, 12 – 4 PM, at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax.
- “*Ancient Synagogues in Israel*,” a lecture by Dr. Jodi Magness of the University of North Carolina, at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, 6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD on October 28th at 2 PM. For more information, see www.jccgw.org/baf.
- “*Who Owns the Past: Competing Claims for Antiquities from the Holy Land*,” AIA Circuit Lecture on Thursday, November 8th

at 7 PM at the Elliott School, 1957 E. St., NW, Room 113, the George Washington University.

- Fairfax County's 8th Annual History Conference will be held on Saturday, November 10th at the Stacy Sherwood Conference Center in Fairfax, VA.
- The 2012 Jamestown Conference will be held on Thursday, November 15th in the Lane Auditorium at the Bruton Hills complex in Williamsburg from 9AM to 4:30 PM. For more information, see <http://www.apva.org/jr.html>.
- "The Nature of Philistine Settlement in Early Iron Age Israel," a lecture by Dr. Linda Meiberg of the University of Pennsylvania, at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, 6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD on November 29th at 8 PM. For more information, see www.jccgw.org/baf.
- "*Secrets of Orkney's Stone-Age Temple: Ritual and Religion Before Stonehenge*," an evening seminar at the S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington DC, December 5th at 7 PM.

DNA CONFIRMS NEW HUMAN ANCESTOR

By Hristio Boytchev

Condensed from the *Washington Post*, 8/31/12

Scientists have produced a digital image of a genome tens of thousands of years old with the resolution of a typical living person's, enabling them to describe the life and history of the ancient humans in great detail, they reported in Thursday's issue of Science magazine.

Led by Svante Paabo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, the scientists have created the highest quality genome sequence of ancient humans yet. Therefore, the Denisovans — as the group has been called, after the Siberian cave harboring its fossils: a finger bone and two teeth — are much better known genetically than Neanderthals, although there are hundreds of specimens from them.

"There is no difference in what we can learn genetically about a person that lived 50,000 years ago and from a person today," Paabo said Wednesday in a conference call with reporters.

The international team of researchers used only genetic material from a tiny finger bone from a girl that lived in Siberia tens of thousands of years ago. The specimen was found in a cave in 2008 and, based on preliminary genetic analyses by the team in 2010, was attributed to a novel group of humans closely related to Neanderthals.

"The Denisovan genome is particularly close to my heart, because it was the first time that a new group of humans were discovered and defined just from DNA," Paabo said.

The scientists owe their insights mainly to new technological advances in sequencing of prehistoric DNA. "All forensics on ancient DNA were originally developed for modern DNA," said Matthias Meyer of the Max Planck Institute, lead author of the article.

The breakthrough came partly through starting the sequencing with single strands of DNA, as opposed to the usual approach of using double strands. Earlier this year, the researchers made the raw genome sequence available to the public by publishing it online.

Using the DNA alone, the scientists reconstructed the appearance of the Siberian girl: She had brown eyes and dark hair and skin. Also from genetic information, the scientists pieced together the girl's pedigree and compared it with modern humans' and Neanderthals'. The Denisovans contributed genetic material only to present Australian Aborigines and some people in Melanesia, whereas Neanderthals

left their mark on everyone outside Africa, Paabo said.

Based on the mutation rate in modern humans, the team approximated the age of the Siberian girl at about 80,000 years. That conflicts with archeological data that assign the geological layer of the fossil to an age of 30,000 to 50,000 years. Carbon dating, a standard procedure to determine the age of fossils, would provide a more definitive answer, but the specimen is too small for that.

“It is amazing that we can sequence the whole genome, but there is too little carbon to date it,” Paabo said.

The scientists estimated that the Denisovans split from modern humans between 700,000 and 200,000 years ago, a broad range attributed to uncertainties about the underlying mutation rates. The researchers also inferred the population sizes of the ancient Denisovans based on the differences between genes from the father and the mother in the Siberian girl’s DNA. Because the genes are very similar to each other, the scientists estimated the genetic diversity and therefore the population size to have been low, although the Denisovans have occupied large parts of Asia.

Paabo shied away from calling the Denisovans a separate species, because they interbred with the ancestors of modern humans. “I wouldn’t call Neanderthals a different species from humans, either. I stay away from that debate,” he added.

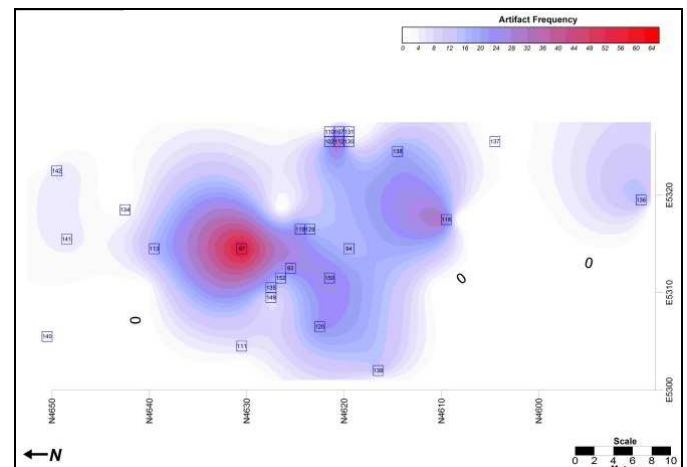
The scientists speculated that a single population moving out of Africa gave rise to the Denisovans and Neanderthals. The new findings support the notion that the ancestors of modern humans mixed with groups of ancient humans, instead of quickly replacing them.

As a next step, the scientists plan to re-sequence the Neanderthal using the new methods and get it on par with the genome of the Siberian girl.

CART UPDATE

Megan Veness and Chris Sperling have been busy working with lab staff and volunteers on the final push of artifact and feature analysis for 44FX0704 and 44FX3197. The Surfer map shown is a distribution of total artifacts across 44FX0704. The dark red areas have the most concentration, and are located north of the brick foundation (Feature 86).

With this distribution and others, CART will be able to plan efficient excavation next field season to understand more of the “Cemetery Site”. Most features at 44FX3197 are simple stratigraphy of post holes or rodent runs, but a few are more complex stratigraphy. Megan continues working on understanding the deposition and significance of the larger features on the site, which is necessary to fully grasp the townscape design and social divisions of historic Colchester. The report is due in just a few weeks.



One of our volunteers, Steve Kimbel, was recognized by Fairfax County Park Authority by receiving the Resource Management Division’s 2012 Volunteer Excellence Award. This award is “to recognize significant contributions to the interpretation and stewardship of Fairfax County natural and cultural heritage”. Steve has been volunteering with the county for over 20 years, pictured here with Mike Johnson in the 1980’s.



Steve Kimbel and Mike Johnson in the Neolithic era
(note black hair!, and/or actual presence of hair)

The lab is finishing the processing and data entry of high priority artifacts necessary for analysis. Staff and volunteers have been busy pushing feature material and artifacts through the lab in order to enter them into the artifact catalog. Lily finished the floatation thanks once again to Mt. Vernon for allowing us to use their floatation machine. The light fraction has just been sent for archeobotanical analysis. It may be a while before we get our results due to the volume of material that the historic features produced, but we are interested in what they may yield.

As the report begins to unfold, the crew will slowly begin to dwindle in size. As this happens, the lab team is thinking about the fall activity for both volunteers and the smaller staff. We will be transitioning from producing information for the report to focus more on activities that are not as time-sensitive. Activities on the list include picking the small artifacts from the window mesh material, weighing artifacts, preparing the artifacts to be properly stored. If for some reason, we finish those tasks, there are plenty of other things to do that would either further refine our work or help increase our knowledge of Colchester. The investment of time now will be worth it later.

To date there are over 70 volunteers from across the country working on the Glassford and Henderson Transcription Project. The first reel of microfilm associated with the ledgers from Alexander Henderson's store in Colchester is 60 percent transcribed (5+ reels of microfilm in total). The

Alexandria store (contained on 1 reel of microfilm) is nearly 75 percent complete with the initial transcriptions. If you are interested in becoming a transcriber for this invaluable project please contact Molly Kerr MKerr@mountvernon.org.

In non-Colchester news, Chris Sperling is nearly finished with field work at Eleanor C. Lawrence Park in Chantilly. However, he will not be out of the field long as a new project has high priority. The new project will be a shovel test survey in Burke ahead of a proposed trail. If anyone is interested in being contacted about the Burke job, send Chris an email, Christopher.Sperling@fairfaxcounty.gov.

There are two new faces at JLC. Elizabeth Peebles has been hired as a limited term architectural historian. She will be evaluating two properties in the park. She had previously been an interned with the FCPA then earned an MA from the University of Delaware. The other recent hire, Megan Leining started as the new collections specialist.

POHICK CHURCH EVENT

Good Day to you fellow historians,

I write to let you know about a very special celebration and hope that you can join us: "The Church of George Washington Celebrates the 250th Anniversary of the Election of George Washington to the Vestry of Pohick Church." This program will be held on October 20, 2012.

There will be two events at this celebration, plus a reception. First, Greg Fisher, who is known for his portrayal of George Washington, will be the primary presenter. On the spiritual side, he will reflect on his service to Pohick Church as a vestryman (governing board) and his involvement in building the church and his responsibilities as a

church warden. On the political side, he will share his hopes for the future, as he will soon be leaving for the first Continental Congress to be held in Philadelphia. The year is 1774.

Second: Book Signing by Mary Thompson, the historian at Mount Vernon. Her new book is titled: *In the Hands of Providence: Religion in the Life of George Washington*.

You won't want to miss this very diverse program, so please sign up soon. Please pass on this information to others those who may have interest in attending.

Sincerely,
Carole Thomas
Docent/Member, The Historic Pohick Church

Program

- 4:30 Invocation
The Rev'd Donald
D.Binder, Ph.D, Rector,
Pohick Church
- Welcome:
- Welcome: Michael J.
Elston, Senior Warden
- Introduction of George
Washington: Tom Costa as
The Rev'd Lee Massey
- 4:50 Greg Fisher as George
Washington
- Question-and-answer
session to follow.
- 6:00 Parish Hall Reception
(hors d'oeuvres, desserts,
hot spiced cider, iced tea,
and punch)
- Book Signing by Special
Guest and Author:
Mary V. Thompson
- Author of *In The Hands of
a Good Providence:
Religion in the Life of
George Washington*

Books available for purchase.

*Depending on space availability,
tickets may be purchased at the door.*

*Pohick Church
The Church of George Washington*

Celebrates the
250th
Anniversary
of the Election of
George Washington
to the Vestry of
Pohick Church
Saturday, October 20
4:30 to 7:00 P.M.



Registration Form

*George Washington
250th Anniversary Celebration
Registration Fee:*

\$10.00 per person or
\$25.00 per family

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip Code _____

Day Phone _____

Email _____

Please RSVP by October 14, 2012.

Payment Method: Checks only.
Make your check payable to: **Pohick
Church** and write in the memo section:
GW Anniversary Celebration.

Mail this form and your check to:
Pohick Church
Attention: Pohick Docent Guild
9301 Richmond Highway
Lorton, Virginia 22079

**For more information,
call (703) 339-6572.**

NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	John Kelsey	jkelsey@cox.net 703-922-8107
Vice-President	Chris Havlicek	christo829@juno.com
Treasurer	Isabella Pease	ipease@cox.net
Corresponding Sec.	Maggie Johnson	stillmaggie@cox.net 703-455-6902
Recording Sec.	Felicia Glapion	glapfk11@yahoo.com
Editor	Patrick O'Neill	patrickloneill@verizon.net 703-249-9593
Webmaster	Diane Schug-O'Neill	schugoneill@gmail.com
Certification Liaison	Ann Wood	annpwood@verizon.net

Fairfax County Archaeology (FCPA)

Dr. Elizabeth Crowell elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-534-3881

Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	ewhite@mountvernon.org
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-550-0441
Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399 (information)

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

[] Please send *Datum Point* via e-mail

Individual (\$15) _____

Student (\$5) _____

Family (\$17) _____

New _____

Renewal _____

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

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

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

THE DATUM POINT

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**Help NVC-ASV Save Postage and be GREEN!
Have the Datum Point emailed to you!**