



THE DATUM POINT

April 2022

Newsletter of the
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER (NVC) OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org



FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

PATRICK O'NEILL

No monthly Zoom meeting this month because of our upcoming field trip to Germanna!!!! Come down in a couple of weeks and enjoy a rare insight to the Germanna Colony! Car pool if you can find some takers! The STPs at Ball-Sellers are on hold until after the Germanna trip, and I will let everyone know when they will start again. Mike Johnson is doing work at Jasper Ridge, too. Spring brings hope of getting out!!! See my article on some explorations at the Ball-Sellers House! We will be there mapping under the log house and 1880s house soon.



Remember to pay your 2022 Chapter Dues

Please see the last page of the DP for Chapter Dues! Mail a check to the name and address.

Field School Scholarship

The ASV NVC is soliciting applications for the Julian Williams and Eleanor Mullen Memorial Field Study Scholarship to provide limited financial support to individual members of the ASV seeking to enhance their archaeological field skills.

The deadline for application is May 1, 2022

The application form and additional information can be found the NVA Chapter website.

<http://nvcasv.org/about.html>

No Zoom meeting this month!

This Month's Field Trip

**Field Trip to the Germanna Foundation's
Archaeological Sites and Hitt Archaeological Center**

Saturday, April 23

Historic Germanna Site Summary By KELLY ARFORD-HORNE OF GERMANNA

Historic Germanna is located in central Virginia inside a horseshoe bend of the Rapidan River in what is now Orange County, Virginia. Archaeological excavations began at the site in 1969, when archaeologists with the Orange County Historical Society discovered the foundation of Lt. Gov. Alexander Spotswood's ca. 1720 Enchanted Castle house. In 1983 the site became threatened by development and prominent archaeologists from around the state attempted to recover as much information as possible before the site was destroyed. Within a year, a local historic group called Historic Gordonsville, Inc., raised enough money to purchase the 62 acres surrounding the Enchanted Castle foundation, rescuing it from destruction.

From 1984 to 1995 the University of Mary Washington held its archaeological field school at the site and uncovered most of the foundation of the house. Although no drawings or detailed descriptions of the

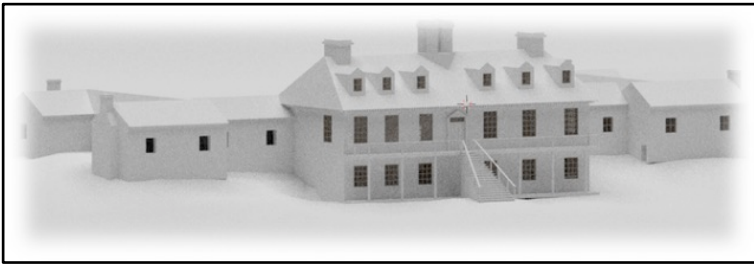


Figure 1

house survive, archaeology suggests the Enchanted Castle was an impressive Georgian-style structure with four symmetrically placed dependencies—two to the east and two to the west of the main house (Figure 1).

Excavations at the house uncovered many remarkable artifacts, including a beautifully decorated fireback likely created at Spotswood’s nearby Tubal ironworks. The fireback is currently on display in the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Fireback Recovered from Excavations at the Enchanted Castle. (Photo credit: University of Mary Washington, courtesy of VDHR)

During their excavations at the Enchanted Castle site, the University of Mary Washington also uncovered an unusual feature that predated the construction of the house. The feature consisted of a narrow trench containing ten post molds and was thought to be associated with Fort Germanna, constructed under the direction of Spotswood in 1714. The pentagonal palisaded fort was settled by 42 German immigrants who soon left the fort behind and moved west to build their own towns and farms.

The Germanna Foundation originated as a place where descendants of those German settlers could explore their common history and heritage. In 2013 the property containing the Enchanted Castle and possible fort feature was acquired by the Germanna Foundation. Shortly thereafter archaeology was renewed at the site and the search began to find more remains of Fort Germanna.

While recent excavations on the property have attempted to locate more of the fort, investigations have shown that Spotswood made significant changes to the landscape during the construction of his house, and much of the evidence for the fort appears to have been erased. As the search continues, new and fascinating elements of stories about the property have emerged. Excavations within the southwest dependency of the Enchanted Castle last season uncovered a portion of a large subfloor pit adjacent to a fireplace (Figure 3). So far, excavations within the pit have produced hundreds of pounds of architectural debris, along with early 18th-century food-related artifacts like corn cobs, peach pits, animal bones, redware milk pans, and bottle glass.



Figure 3: Portion of Pit Feature Identified within the Southwest Dependency of the Enchanted Castle.
(Photo credit: Germanna Foundation)

Last season, excavations were also renewed at a foundation within the historic town of Germanna, which was located just a few hundred feet from the Enchanted Castle (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Bottle Neck Recovered from the Possible Site of the First Spotsylvania County Courthouse.
(Photo credit: Germanna Foundation)

The town of Germanna included a courthouse, church, and jail, all constructed under the direction of Spotswood. Other buildings, including an ordinary, were also known to be present within the town. Archaeologists excavating at this foundation in the 1980s theorized it could be related to the first Spotsylvania County courthouse. Although renewed excavations at the foundation are just beginning, Germanna archaeologists are enthusiastic about the possibility of identifying the courthouse and other buildings within the town of Germanna. Excavations around the possible courthouse foundation, the southwest dependency, and more are restarting this spring. It promises to be an exciting dig season for Germanna Archaeology!

Tour schedule

12:00 – 12:30pm—Arrive and eat lunch at the site (restaurant suggestion and details follow).
 12:30 – 1:30pm—Head to Hitt Archaeological Center for a tour of the lab and to use bathrooms. (Option to walk to 18th century mill race associated with Spotswood/Germanna/Urquhart Mill complex.)
 1:30 – 2:30pm—Tour of Fort Germanna/Enchanted Castle site and historic town of Germanna site.

Bios of Tour Guides

Eric Larsen, PhD, is Director of Archaeology for the Germanna Foundation. Larsen graduated with a BA from the American University with a concentration in History and Anthropology. He received an MA and PhD in Anthropology from the University at Buffalo.

Larsen has worked 30+ years primarily in the mid-Atlantic, working on numerous sites including African American neighborhoods and several 19th and 20th century urban sites. He spoke to the chapter about Germanna five years ago. To review Dr. Larsen's 2017 talk, visit <http://nvcasv.org/datum/2017/2017apr.pdf>.

Kelly Arford-Horne, MA, has been working with the Germanna Foundation for almost two years. Her responsibilities there include directing excavations at historic sites located on the foundation's properties along the Rapidan River. She has almost 25 years of experience in the field of archaeology and has worked as an archaeologist for multiple CRM companies, local government organizations, and non-profits.

Sandwich shop

Sam's Pizza and Subs [36080 Goodwin Drive, Locust Grove, VA 22508](http://www.sampizza.com/location-9.html). It is about 10 minutes or five miles from Sam's to Germanna. For a menu and to order ahead, visit <https://sampsizza.com/location-9.html>.

Directions

Germanna is about 70 miles or 1 hour and 20 minutes from the James Lee Center. Depending on the app you're using for directions, the roads leading to the site may or

may not show up. The site is located on [Gordon Farm Road, Locust Grove, VA](#). If that doesn't show up for you, the closest house address is [1304 Spotswood Drive, Locust Grove, VA](#).

Final Approach

- Turn off Route 3 onto Spotswood Drive (this is directly across from the entrance to Germanna Community College, Locust Grove Campus)
- Drive about 0.7 miles then turn left onto Gordon Farm Road (this is a gravel road)
- Follow the gravel road and turn left immediately after passing the chain link fence, which surrounds an old garage
- Follow the road through the gate, turn right at the blue shipping container, and park in the flat area next to the terrace
- Picnic tables are on the terrace next to the parking area

Waiver / Volunteer form

Germanna requires the signature of a waiver / volunteer form. If you do not have a form on file at Germanna already, paper forms will be available before the tour. Save time by printing and filling it out in advance at <http://www.nvcasv.org/Waiver.pdf>.



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

PATRICK O'NEILL

Spelunking at the Ball Sellers House

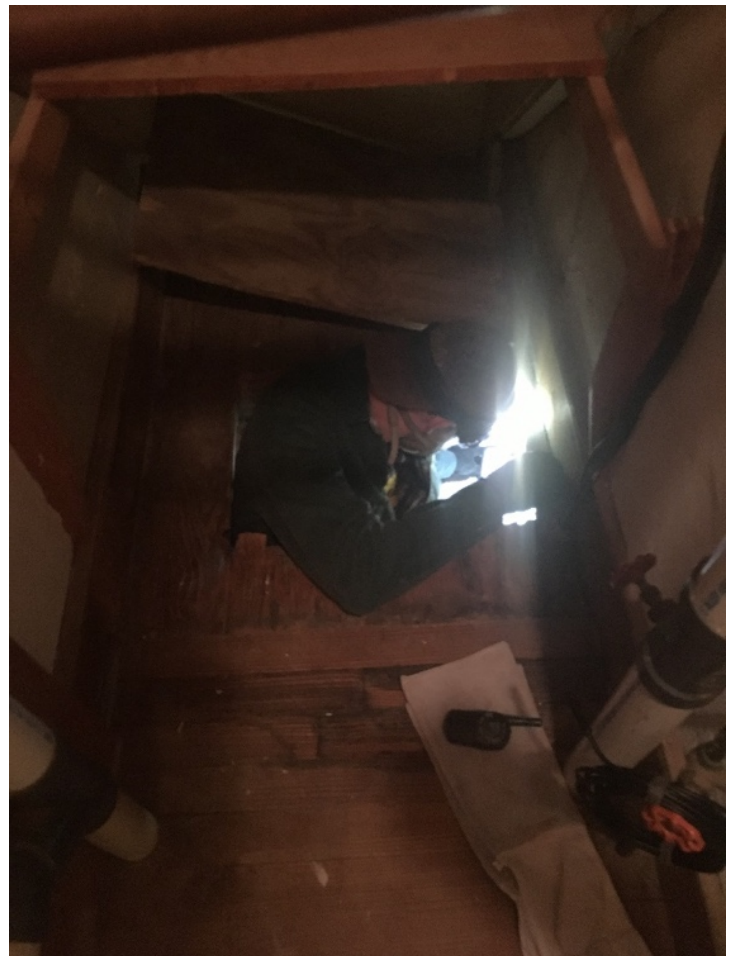


Original 1740s log house on the right, 1880s addition on the left

This past weekend, NVC Chapter member Kurt Fredrickson spelunked under the 1880s addition of the Ball-Sellers House in Arlington. The effort was to determine if portions of the original exterior west wall sheathing of the 1740s log house still exist. An 1880s addition was built about 1 to 1.5 feet from the original log house. In short, Kurt found evidence that suggests the base framework of the 1880s addition was built with used hewn and notched wood beams as well as peeled logs. Other evidence suggests the dismantled building may have been on the same side (west side) of the log house prior to the 1880s addition and was disassembled to use in the construction of the new addition. We will be going back to map the hewn beams and other items that Kurt was able to view. Meanwhile, here are some photos documenting his adventure.



Second story gap between the original log house on the right and the 1880s addition on the left



Small opening under the stairs.



Kurt took some video and lots of upclose photos.
Someone had placed a clean layer of plastic across the
entire sublevel area.



Hewn and notched beams under the 1880s house.
Shaft revealing structural details on 1740s log house.



CART
COLLEEN BOYLE

Fairfax County Archaeological Research Team



This month the CART field crew began work on a clean-up and restoration plan for the Summers Family Cemetery. We have been working with our partners \divisions at FCPA, and the Sons of the American Revolution, who provided grant funding to the Daughters of the American Revolution. The DAR in turn, used grant funds and contracted a stone conservator to replace the headstone of Francis Summers which was damaged by vandals over 15 years ago and have adopted the cemetery for clean-ups a few times a year. We have also worked with the Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association to document and clean up the cemetery. The clean-up and restoration work on the historic iron fences as well as several markers will be complete before the 30 April re-dedication ceremony.

The work at Summers represents the beginning of an initiative to re-survey and document all non-commercial cemeteries in Fairfax County that began this year and builds upon the work done by earlier historians. The Archaeology and Collections Branch is working with their partners at the Virginia Department of Historic

Resources as well as other public agencies on this survey work, which will take a few years to complete but will be made public when it is finished.

The field crew will be returning to Riverbend Park to continue our survey in the Northern and Southern Ridges! The team has been working on updating our digital field maps these past few weeks, this will be our



first opportunity to test them in the field. The ridges make up a huge region of the park so the team will be working out there over the next few months.

Please note that we are not currently taking volunteers and our offices remain closed until further notice. We will post new opportunities on the Volunteer Management website when they become available. Until then, ACB volunteers are encouraged to share their talents with other branches and/or parks where opportunities are now available. For more information, please visit Fairfax County's Volunteer page for more information. If you would like to be notified when we can accept volunteer assistance again, please email cartarchlab@live.com.



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Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-638-9724
Alexandria Museum	Dr. Eleanor Breen	Eleanor.Breen@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399
DC City Archaeologist	Dr. Ruth Trocolli	Ruth.Trocolli@dc.gov 202-442-8836

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

Individual (\$15) _____

Student (\$5) _____

Family (\$17) _____

Return to:

Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV
9518 Liberty Tree Lane
Vienna VA 22182

Chapter members can join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia at www.virginiaarcheology.org/

The Chapter meets at 7:00p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month either in person or on Zoom.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!