



THE DATUM POINT

July 2023

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

Please come to the TOUR this next Sunday in Alexandria!!!! My cell is 703-244-6275 if you can't find us!!!!

Tour This Month: **Chapter Tour in Old Town,** **Alexandria, Sunday, July 9th**

We will visit the renovated Alexandria Archaeology Museum, take a short waterfront walking tour, and enjoy a late lunch at Virtue Feed and Grain.

Meet at **12 noon** at:

Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union St, Alexandria, VA., third floor, Suite 327.

Signs will help guide you to the suite.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP by July 7 at <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/ep2Zr1Qb> so we can get a headcount for the restaurant. Click the link, check the box under the date, and add your email address. Or if you prefer, RSVP by July 7 to Diane Schug-O'Neill at schugoneill@gmail.com.

Parking can be difficult in Old Town. Most street parking is metered near the Torpedo Factory, but **street parking along Founders Park** is free all day on Sundays. The City's parking map is very useful when you are looking for unrestricted parking areas:

<https://geo.alexandriava.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISParkingViewer>. There are several parking garages within a short walk of the building. The **parking garage at 220 N Union** is \$5/day on the weekend, and other nearby garages average \$10/day.

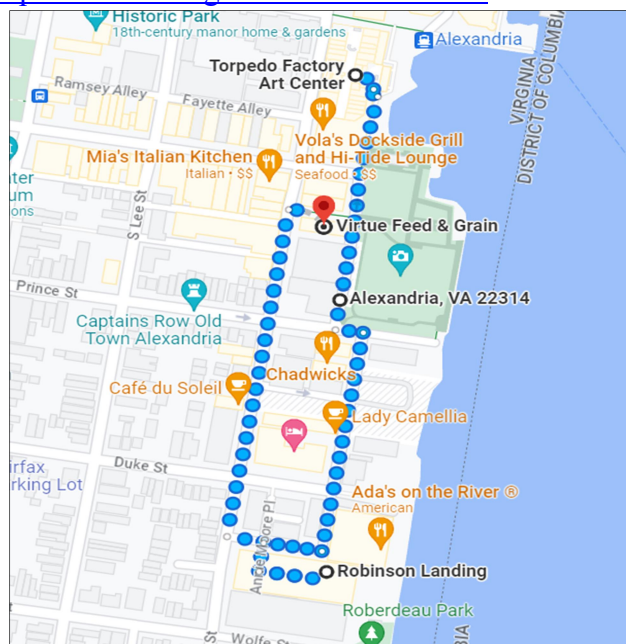
Our host – **Dr. Garrett Fessler**, Archaeologist with Alexandria Archaeology, will be our guide and join us at the restaurant. His specialties and interest areas include the African diaspora, historical archaeology, Chesapeake

Tour This Month **(no meeting!)**

Sunday, July 9 at 12 noon
Alexandria Archaeology Museum
Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N
Union St, Alexandria, VA, 3rd floor

plantations, landscape archaeology, household archaeology, and cultural resource management.

Tour Itinerary – We will have the Archaeology Museum to ourselves for the first hour (it is open to the public from 1-4 p.m. on Sundays). At 1:00 p.m. we will take a ½-mile, flat, mostly shaded walking tour from the Torpedo Factory to Robinson Landing, and then back. We will pass right by our lunch spot, Virtue Feed and Grain, for those who want to skip the walking and/or get started early. Everyone should be there by 2 p.m., when our table reservation will start. Menu can be found at <https://virtuefeedgrain.com/our-menus/>. **MAP BELOW**



On June 9th, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum opened a new permanent archaeology exhibit called A Community Digs its Past: The Lee Street Site. Cases and panels display artifacts and reveal the archaeological process and the history of Alexandria as seen through the lens of the Lee Street Site (archaeological site number 44AX180) and several other waterfront sites. The exhibit answers questions like: what is urban archaeology; what did Alexandria look like in the past; and what do archaeologists do? The exhibition was made possible by a grant from Historic Alexandria Foundation and is the cornerstone of the museum.

The City's archaeology museum has been in the Torpedo Factory Art Center for nearly 40 years. The museum studies and interprets archaeological sites from across the city, holding the past in trust for residents and visitors. The new Lee Street Site permanent exhibit is a milestone for the award-winning program and marks one of the most impactful changes to the space in the last two decades. "We're looking forward to welcoming residents and visitors to our museum and public laboratory, where there's always something new to learn about Alexandria's buried past," said Dr. Eleanor Breen, City Archaeologist.

Museum staff redeveloped the content of the exhibit to be more accessible to visitors and to tell a more inclusive history of the port city, while effectively explaining the archaeological process to the public. The newly designed exhibit centers the experiences of free and enslaved African Americans in Alexandria. One exhibit case explores the remains of a bakery at the site operated by Robert Jamieson, an enslaver who began to free some of his enslaved people as baking became industrialized in the 19th century. A document highlighted in the exhibit from 1828 records the manumission of Jane Turley and her four children, Maria Ann, Thomas, John, and George. Documents like this provide a glimpse into Alexandria's complex and sometimes difficult history.

New findings from the Robinson Landing (44AX235) and Hotel Indigo (44AX229) sites help contextualize what is known from the Lee Street site. The redeveloped exhibit uses these more recent archaeological discoveries along the waterfront, including four historic ships and numerous remnants of businesses and homes and

associated artifacts, to interpret the port city's diverse past.

Alexandria Archaeology partnered with local graphic design firm StudioA to create a more modern, visually pleasing exhibit. StudioA has previously worked with The Jewish Museum of Maryland and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The Alexandria Archaeological Commission and Friends of Alexandria Archaeology provided much-needed volunteer support by reviewing drafts.

Visit the Archaeology Museum's new A Community Digs its Past: The Lee Street Site and for more information on this exhibit and archaeology in Alexandria, visit

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/Archaeology>.

For reasonable disability accommodation to the museum, contact [email \[archaeology@alexandriava.gov\]\(mailto:archaeology@alexandriava.gov\)](mailto:archaeology@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.4399, Virginia Relay 711.

NVC Staffs Booth At Day of Archaeology

Certification students and chapter members Cynthia Donahe and Taylor Reynolds staffed a booth funded for \$40 by the Chapter on Saturday, June 10, at Dumbarton House in Washington, DC, as part of Day of Archaeology. The event was arranged by Archaeology in the Community (AITC).





Top: Cynthia Donahe with new tri-fold. Bottom: Taylor Reynolds and Ms. Donahe. Photos: Nancy Rubin

Ms. Donahe updated the chapter's tri-fold display, donating all costs to the chapter. Yvonne French and husband Paul Hogroian created a dig box for children that uses rubber mulch to hide examples of artifacts. Anyone who wants to display the tri-fold and dig box should be in touch with Ms. Donahe at cynthia.donahe@gmail.com.



Nancy Rubin Photo: Cynthia Donahe

ASV also was represented at the event by ASV Board Member Nancy Rubin of the Col. Howard MacCord Chapter.

AITC was founded by Dr. Alexandra Jones in 2006 when she noticed that many of the young students in her Washington, D.C., neighborhood had never heard of

archaeology, let alone met an archaeologist. As a trained archaeologist and educator, Dr. Jones was inspired to engage young people within her community and teach them the importance of archaeology. Students had the opportunity to learn about their families' histories and their community's past from an archaeologist who lived around the block and who served as an active member of their community.

In tandem with writing her PhD thesis at UC Berkeley, Dr. Jones created and implemented several customizable programs to teach archaeology in alignment with school curricula. Upon graduation, Dr. Jones continued to develop programs and partnerships, bringing them back to her hometown of Washington, D.C. The program gained momentum across DC, Maryland, and Virginia and in 2009, it became a chartered 501(c)3 nonprofit. Since its founding, AITC has served thousands of students of all ages, customizing curricula to best suit the needs of the group and expanding into new media to ensure the public can engage with archaeology. AITC also gives meaningful work to archaeology graduates.

Archaeology Resumes At George Mason's Gunston Hall

Archaeology resumed at George Mason's Gunston Hall recently after a hiatus that spanned most of the pandemic.



Archaeologist Dave Shonyo shows visitors a unit recently opened in the Logtown area, which is believed to be where enslaved people who were married lived.

Gunston Hall is in the midst of a long term-project to make the area around the mansion look as much as possible as it did in George Mason's day. Gunston Hall's archaeology staff and volunteers explore, excavate, conduct on-site lab work, prepare reports analyzing their finds, and of course, educate visitors. During the dig season, visitors can find them on most Tuesdays-Saturdays, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at one of the dig sites. For information, contact Dave Shonyo, whose information is listed on page 8 of this publication.

At Gunston Hall, archaeology lends an understanding of how the property was arranged and what activities took place there. By investigating this "landscape archaeology," they can find clues about how the landscape was laid out. Sometimes they discover old traces of roads, buildings, fences, and plantings. Often, they find artifacts from the time that the Masons and their enslaved workforce lived here. Archaeology volunteers have found nails, slate pencils and fragments of broken slates, cooking utensils, animal bones, various buttons, jewelry, glass bottles both complete and incomplete, and more.



Chapter member Philip B. Mulford and Corresponding Secretary John Kelsey measure using a Total Station

CART OUTREACH EVENT



CART Crew Chief Colleen Boyle and Field Technician Amanda Bengé inspired future archaeologists at Archaeology in the Community's annual Day of Archaeology festival in Washington, DC. At the event, staff demonstrated modified excavation and ceramic repair techniques. Kid-friendly activities included an excavation sandbox with smoothed edged plate shards and puzzle plates featuring historic patterns.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



CART Assistant Archaeological Collections Manager Heather Hembrey examines an artifact in collections storage. From the smallest bead to the largest architectural feature, Heather accessions, tracks, exhibits, and cares for the approximately 5,000 artifacts housed in the Fairfax County Park Authority archaeological repository. Beyond physical objects, Heather cares for digital and paper records, researches artifacts and archaeological collections, contributes to Archaeology and Collections Branch (ACB) public outreach programs (artiFACTS posts; hands-on activities), and assists professional colleagues and citizens who have questions about Fairfax County's archaeological collections.

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

A POLLINATOR FROM THE PAST

BY HEATHER HEMBREY, M.A., M.A.A.

June was National Pollinators Month. As gardens and wildflowers flourished, we watched and admire moths, bees, birds, butterflies, and other small creatures as they move pollen from one flower to another to fertilize plants. This month's artiFACT is a rim sherd that archaeologists excavated in central Fairfax County. Sometime between ca. 1740 and 1770, a potter in Staffordshire, England, chose to decorate this ceramic with pollinators.



This rim sherd was once part of a shallow vessel such as a plate or platter. It is made of white salt-glazed stoneware. During manufacture, white clay was pressed into a mold that featured the “Moth and Vine” pattern – an intricate arrangement of moths fluttering around flowers growing on vines. The potter threw common salt into the kiln when the temperature was at its highest. The salt’s sodium reacted with the silica in the clay, producing a hard, pitted glaze that resembles orange peel, as seen on the image to the right. English ceramic manufacturers produced molded salt-glaze ceramics between ca. 1740-1770. Rim sherds decorated with patterns such as the “Dot, Diaper and Basket” or “Barley” are found more frequently at archaeological sites than are sherds featuring moths, vines, and flowers. The Archaeology and Collections Branch is fortunate to preserve this little salt-glazed stoneware pollinator that was created in England and brought to Fairfax County more than 250 years ago.

To see more from CART, check out the latest artiFACTS blog posts by visiting

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/artifacts>

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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
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Germanna Foundation	Kelly Arford-Horne, MA, RPA	kelly.arford-horne@germanna.org 540-423-1700

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Dues:

Individual (\$15) _____

Family (\$17) _____

Student (\$5) _____

Please make check payable to NVC/ASV.

Return to:

Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV

9518 Liberty Tree Lane

Vienna VA 22182

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month. *Due to COVID-19 concerns, meetings may take place in-person and/or on Zoom. Details with start time and on-line/in-person information will be provided in the *Datum Point* newsletter prior to each meeting.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!