

ASM Ink

July 2016, Vol. 43, No. 7

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

Success all around at River Farm session

By Stephanie Sperling
Co-Principal Investigator

The ASM Field Session at River Farm was a resounding success! Over the course of 11 days, over 100 people excavated 20 units and found at least 13 features and thousands of artifacts that span at least 10,000 years of human history on the shores of the Patuxent River.

Participants excavated in four areas across the 27-acre site and each was highly productive.

Units in Area 1 were excavated in order to understand more about a Late Woodland period midden found during previous investigations in the southern end of the floodplain. The four units dug in this area revealed that the midden is at least 50 feet in diameter and has exquisite preservation, despite the relatively shallow water table in this part of the site.

Excavators also found the riverside edge of the midden located very close to the activity areas, further suggesting that the residents of the site were burning huge bonfires on the beach for several hundred years during the Late Woodland period. An Early Woodland living surface was encountered underneath the dark Late Woodland layers, but a coastal flood sent the groundwater rising through the soil column and destroyed this horizon during excavation. The unit was recorded and backfilled the next day.

The eight units dug in Area 2 revealed the most unusual find of the field session. The team



The mysterious oval outline found in Area 2

Continued on Page 5

Upcoming events

August 15 – 20: Further excavation at River Farm field session site. 410-222-1318.

September 10: ASM board meeting. Heritage House, Ellicott City. 10 a.m. All members welcome.

October 22: ASM Annual Meeting. Catoctin Furnace Historic District, Frederick County.

Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

ASM Tuesday Volunteer Lab: The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 3 and is now cataloging Mason Island II (18MO13) material. Anyone interested (especially CAT candidates) is welcome. Contact Louis Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall at charles.hall@maryland.gov

A volunteer opportunity is available at a 17 Century site in Edgewater in Anne Arundel County, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, with Jim Gibb jamesggibb@verizon.net and Laura Cripps lcripps@howardcc.edu under the auspices of the Smithsonian. Contact either one to participate. There will be magnetometer training.

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at jamesggibb@verizon.net

Montgomery County is accepting applications from for lab and field work volunteers for work beginning in September. Contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program and the Lost Towns Project welcome volunteers in both field and lab at numerous sites throughout Anne Arundel County. Weekdays only. Email Jasmine Gollup at volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call the lab at 410 222 1318.

Mount Calvert. Lab work and field work. 301 627 1286.

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at ed.chaney@maryland.gov or 410 586 8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork to get started.

CAT corner:

Jim Gibb will offer two workshops on August 20, with a repeat on September 17. The morning sessions, 10 a.m. to noon, will be on ethics, the afternoon, 1:30 to 3:30, on preservation law. Bring your own lunch. The workshops will be at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater. A tour of SERC is available during the lunch break. RSVP required by August 13 at: burquiza@comcast.net or 410-535-2586.

For other information and the latest news on the CAT program, visit the ASM website.

Who should get the 2016 Marye Award?

Each year ASM presents its highest honor, the William B. Marye Award, to someone for outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology. All nominations originate from members. Candidates need not be ASM members, Marylanders or even archeologists. What they must be is someone who has had a substantial impact on archeology in our state.

Do you know someone who should be honored? A nomination form is with this newsletter, which also contains a list of past winners. Nominations are due by September 18.

It's election time: A ballot is with this newsletter.

Spaces are provided for write-in candidates. Completed ballots should be mailed, marked "ASM ballot", to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782 or brought to the annual meeting Oct. 22.

An earlier Henson site believed found

By Joe Heim

Condensed from the Washington Post, June 16, 2016

The archeological finds seem ordinary at first. A rusted belt buckle, shards of broken pottery and glass, remnants of an old clay pipe. But in this detritus of lives lived more than 200 years ago on a southern Maryland farm known as La Grange, researchers in Charles County believe they have uncovered the birthplace of a key figure in African-American history.

Josiah Henson is not a household name, but the autobiography the former slave published in 1849 provided integral source material — and some say inspired the title character — for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," published three years later. Stowe's book, the most popular novel of the 19th Century and one that has been translated into more languages than any other book besides the Bible, is credited with helping anti-slavery forces gain support for their cause in the years leading to the Civil War.

In his telling, Henson describes being born on a farm belonging to "Francis N" near Port Tobacco, Md., and he later relates the story of his mother being brutally attacked by an overseer.

Julia King, a professor of anthropology at nearby St. Mary's College of Maryland, said it took months of scrutinizing old documents and several weeks of digs at the seven-acre property to determine that this was indeed where Henson was born and lived for the first eight or nine years of his life.

She admits that the evidence is not definitive.

"We're not going to find a piece of ceramic that says 'Josiah Henson was born here,'" King said Wednesday as she led a tour of the excavation site. But she and others have discovered plenty of convincing clues, more than enough, she says, to make the case that this is Henson's birthplace.

Located on the winding road between Port Tobacco and La Plata, the grand house built in the late 18th Century by Francis Newman still stands on the property. The slave quarters are long gone, but after mapping out the land and taking shovel samples every 25 feet or so, King and her team believe they have located the site of the former structures. It is there, with just a few sample digs, that they have uncovered a trove of items dating to the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They expect to find many more in the weeks ahead as the project continues.

King has spent her career as an anthropologist and says she doesn't often get emotional about artifacts that she and her team unearth. This time, however, was different. She had just watched the remake of "Roots" when the digging portion of the project began. The realization that the miniseries was set at about the same time that Henson would have been enslaved hit her hard.

"I was really just overwhelmed with emotion," King said. "And I was really just grateful that I had the opportunity to get this bigger story out."

In his book, Henson tells of how his family was separated and he and his mother were then sold to an owner in Montgomery County, where a park now bears his name (*Editor's note: And where ASM's Mid-Potomac*

Chapter has done extensive work). He later tried to buy his way out of slavery but was cheated out of money by his former owner. Finally, in 1830, he escaped from a slave owner in Kentucky and made his way to freedom in Canada, where he founded a settlement for former slaves.

What happens next to this site is unclear. The area believed to be the location of the former slave quarters is in a rolling hayfield lined by giant pine trees. King says that a great first step would be a historical marker to alert passersby to its importance.

"I just want to make sure everyone knows who he is and where he lived," King says.

History St. Mary's City names new chief archeologist

Travis Parno has joined the Historic St. Mary's City museum staff as chief archeologist directing excavations within the National Historic Landmark. He also will be leading the annual field school in historical archeology cosponsored by St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Parno received his PhD from Boston University, where his doctoral research focused on the Fairbanks House (c.1641) in Dedham, considered the oldest timber-framed house in North America. He received his BA from the College of William and Mary and his masters from Bristol College. He has field experience in New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Bermuda.

He replaces Tim Riordan, who retired.

St. Mary's City to open doors for Archeology Days

Historic St. Mary's City will celebrate the 29th annual Tidewater Archaeology Days July 30 and 31. Visitors can tour excavations at the home of Maryland's first governor, Leonard Calvert, and discover what the soil reveals about Maryland's beginnings, then help screen excavated material. The new chief archeologist, Travis Parno, and archeology students will be on hand to help interpret the stories that each piece tells. An exhibit of artifacts recovered from the site will be on display.

There will be special tours throughout the day. At 11, 1, 2:30 and 4, a once-a-year opportunity to tour the archeology laboratory with the curator of collections and Archaeological Laboratory director, Silas Hurry, will be offered. For the first time, the tours will feature the new archeological laboratories and curation space located on the campus of St. Mary's College, adjacent to the parking lot for Farthings and the State House.

At 11, research director Henry Miller will direct a special tour of the Brick Chapel, including the opportunity to see the famous lead coffins in their permanent home beneath the floor of the chapel. At 3, Miller will guide a tour of St. John's Site Museum.

Space is limited for all of these tours, so sign up at the Visitor Center (18751 Hogaboom Lane, St. Mary's City) upon arrival. Also, throughout the day,

special activities for children are planned.



The excavations will be open from 10 - 4 both days. Admission (\$10 adult, \$9 seniors, \$6 youth 6-18 and free for those under 5 years and Friends members) includes access to special activities, living history sites and the St. John's Site Museum.

Harford County honors Jack Davis of ASNC

Jack Davis of the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake has received the Preservationist Honor Award by the Harford County Administration and the Historic Preservation Commission. This recognition is given for "advancing the cause of historic preservation in Harford County over a significant period of time".

Two other chapter members, Bill McIntyre and Dan Coates, have been recognized by the commission in previous years for restoration at Concord Point and Liriodendron, but this marks the first award for a chapter member's long-term involvement in many preservation and public education projects.

Also, the chapter honored member Sharon Stowers with the Paul Cresthull Memorial Golden Trowel Award. Sharon is the 22^d recipient of this recognition for "achieving the standards of dedication to the study and promotion of our archeological heritage established by Paul Cresthull." Cresthull was an early and longtime member of ASM.

Success all around at River Farm session

Continued from Page 1

discovered a portion of a large oval-shaped structure, at least 25-30 feet and surrounded by ritualistic artifacts including a marked slate pendant and decorated tobacco pipes along with ornately decorated pottery. Several dozen driven post holes were found on the interior of this structure, and a deep hearth and more posts found nearby to the north and south suggest this was an area of intense activity between A.D. 900 and A.D. 1400.

A small portion of the wall feature was excavated on the last day of the field session and several large burned sherds of shell-tempered pottery were found, along with a sherd of grit tempered, smoothed pottery and a tiny stemmed quartz point. A few, small driven post holes found at the bottom of the feature suggest this wall was somewhat slight and may have been comprised of saplings.

Area 3, situated at the north end of the River Farm floodplain, was apparently a hotbed of Early Woodland activity. Participants found a large hearth full of big charcoal chunks next to an Accokeek pot break and hundreds of jasper flakes. A deep, circular, mostly sterile pit was found next to the hearth. Could this have been a pot seat or perhaps a storage pit?

The final area, Area 4, was in the uplands out of the floodplain. A magnetometer survey was conducted at the beginning of the field session and three units were placed in areas that had possible anomalies. The team found one small hearth surrounded by a few post holes in this field, along with traces of Woodland and Archaic period activity.

Participants were invited to daily lunchtime lectures with topics as wide-ranging as "The Pig Point Ceremonial Complex" to "Modern Climate Change in Jug Bay" to "The Historic Period at River Farm." Several people were treated to an afternoon canoe tour of Jug Bay led by the other principal investigator, Jane Cox. Thanks to the staff of Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary for allowing free access to their park and facilities throughout the field session.

More work is necessary at River Farm to more fully understand the complexities of this rich and exciting site. We are tentatively planning a week of excavation August 15-20 to explore the structure in Area 2, the areas of the floodplain behind the midden in Area 1 and the wooded areas in the nearby Two Run Branch Site, located just uphill from River Farm. Call 410-222-1318 or pzsper64@aacounty.org for more information or to sign up.

Please come and join us!

Is this a meteorite dagger I see before me?

By Declan Walsh

Condensed from the New York Times, June 2, 2016

CAIRO — The iron blade of an ornate dagger buried in Egypt with King Tutankhamen probably came from a fallen meteorite, researchers have determined.

The dagger, which was discovered in the folds of the wrapping around the mummified boy king, has long intrigued historians and archeologists for its great beauty — it has a gold and crystal handle, and an ornate sheath — and because ironwork was rare in ancient Egypt.

Using X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, Italian and Egyptian experts found that the blade's composition of iron, nickel and cobalt was an approximate match for a meteorite that landed in northern Egypt. The result "strongly suggests an extraterrestrial origin" for the blade, according to their results published this week in the journal *Meteoritics and Planetary Science*.

The finding could add to secrets from an ancient tomb that is still a source of fascination almost a century after its discovery by the English archeologist Howard Carter in 1922. The dagger was found in 1925.

Earlier studies, in the 1970s and 1990s, were inconclusive or disputed. Newer technology allowed experts from Polytechnic University of Milan, the University of Pisa in Italy and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo to perform new tests.

Comparing the composition of the dagger with meteorites that landed within 1,250 miles, they found a close similarity with one that hit the seaport city of Marsa Matruh, 140 miles west of Alexandria, on the Mediterranean coast. That finding may help explain why, from the 13th Century B.C., Egyptians started using a hieroglyph that translates as "iron from the sky," the paper said.

More findings are discovered in the Pompeii area

Condensed from the New Haven Register, June 24 2016

ROME (AP) -- Italian and French archeologists have discovered four skeletons and gold coins in the ruins of an ancient shop on the outskirts of Pompeii, officials said Friday.

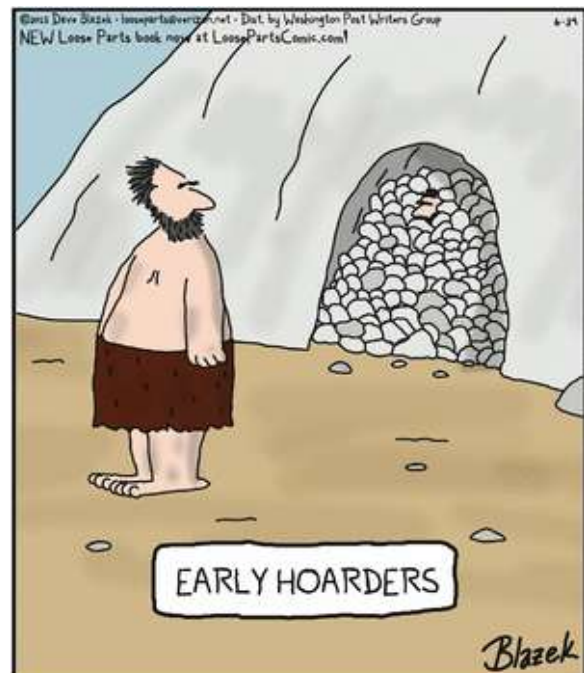
The skeletons are those of young people, including an adolescent girl, who perished in the back of the shop near the ancient Roman town when Mount Vesuvius erupted and covered it in ash in 79, said a statement from the area office of the famous archeological site near Naples.

The excavation of that and a second ancient shop started in May near a necropolis in the Herculaneum port area. Archeologists are puzzling over what kind of business the second shop did. It features a circular well accessible by a spiral staircase and dug out of the terrain.

Officials said there was evidence the shop had been ransacked by clandestine diggers after the eruption, presumably "on the hunt for treasures buried under the ashes."

Pompeii and nearby Herculaneum were ancient Roman towns. Much of the area is still to be

excavated, including Herculaneum, which was buried deeper, beneath as much as 80 feet of ash.



Chapter notes

In addition to the listed chapters, ASM has a chapter at the Community College of Baltimore County, led by Nina Brown, and a club at Huntingtown High School in Calvert County, run by Jeff Cunningham.

Anne Arundel

Meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Severna Park Branch Library, 45 West McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact AACHapASM@hotmail.com or the chapter website <http://www.aachapasm.org/calendar.html>

Central Maryland

For information contact centralchaptersm@yahoo.com or stephenisrael2701@comcast.net 410-945-5514. Or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/asmcentralchapter or <http://asmcentralchapter.weebly.com/>

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May) in the community room of the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Sarah Grady at sarahgrady11@gmail.com or 410-533-1390. Chapter website is charlescoasm.org and its blog is ccarchsoc.blogspot.com

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or 301-563-7530 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768>

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick the second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. For more information, visit the chapter's web page at digfrederick.com or call 301-378-0212.

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at St. Francis Xavier Church in Newtown or at St. Mary's College. For information contact Chris Coogan at Ccoogan@smcm.edu

Upper Patuxent

Meets the second Monday at 7 p.m. at 9944 Route 108 in Ellicott City. Labs are the second and fourth Saturdays. On Facebook, www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or try UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com or <http://uparchaeologygroup.weebly.com/>

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink; the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10 percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Jo Boodon, PO Box 1584, Ellicott City, MD 21043 for membership rates. For publication sales, not including newsletter or Journal, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd.,

Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net

Submissions. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

President

Claude Bowen
301-953-1947
clauder.bowen@comcast.net

Vice President

Valerie Hall
301-814-8028
valeriehall@gmail.com

Secretary

Barbara Israel
410-945-5514
barbaraisrael@comcast.net

Treasurer

Jim Gibb
410-263-1102
JamesGGibb@verizon.net

Membership Secretary

Jo Boodon
410-750-7318
PO Box 1584 Ellicott
City, MD 21043
asm.membership.secretary@gmail.com

At-Large Trustees

Lynne Bulhack
301-460-5356
lbulhack@aol.com

Tom Forhan

Elaine Hall
240-426-1298
Elaine.frances.hall@gmail.com

Annetta Schott
443-949-4122
annettaschott@gmail.com

Belinda Urquiza
410-535-2586
burquiza@comcast.net

Jaimie Wilder
301-741-2869
jaimiewilder1634@gmail.com