

ASM Ink



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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

Next up: Looking for a 1662 chapel

By Jim Gibb

Father Brian Sanderfoot and St Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church will host ASM's second field school of the year on Newtowne Neck, near Leonardtown, St. Mary's County, June 14 through 24. Scott Lawrence and Valerie M. J. Hall (not the ASM board member) and I will serve as principal investigators. We have a mission: find the footprints of the 1662 Jesuit chapel and house while offering participants the opportunity to learn and develop excavation and analytical skills in a beautiful, pastoral setting.

The search began in December 2010 when Father Brian asked Scott to find the chapel as part of the parish's preparing for the commemoration of its 350th anniversary. Almost immediately we found tantalizing evidence. After several weekend expeditions over the next two years we came across clear indication of the chapel's location and the probable location of the dwelling occupied by the Jesuit fathers and lay brothers.

What we did not find are the postholes that would allow us to precisely locate the two buildings and determine their sizes and orientations.

St. Francis Xavier represents important aspects of Maryland history, particularly in terms of religious intolerance and freedom, and the power of a community to create and maintain identity and institutions despite pressures from outside sources.

In 1662 through a gift of land and other contributions from the Catholic families of the Newtowne Neck and throughout the rest of St. Mary's County, the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, built a chapel, and so St. Francis Xavier was born on Bretton Bay.

The chapel was closed by an act of the General Assembly during a period of intense anti-Catholic sentiments and dismantled in 1704. With the return of tolerance in the 1730s, the parish built the "new" St. Francis Xavier and that church remains in service to this day.

The old chapel site, not entirely abandoned, has served the parish as a cemetery since 1662. It is on the edge of the cemetery that the archeological team found the remains of the old chapel: numerous fragments of floor tiles, sherds of window glass, pieces of a ceramic candlestick holder and other bits of refuse suggestive of an adjacent house for the Jesuits, all dating to the late 1600s. The two loci are only 40 feet apart.

Our goal in June is to excavate 20 5-ft-by-5-ft units—adding to the 40 already excavated—to try to find the postholes of the two buildings and to sample the oyster shell midden associated with the putative dwelling.

We hope to better describe the place as it existed in the late 17th Century, reconstruct aspects of the lives of the Jesuits and their parishioners and learn something of the likely relationships the Jesuits and Native Americans developed during the life of the old chapel. Val Hall (M.A., Southern Illinois University) will oversee the dwelling site excavations; Scott and Jim will focus on the chapel.

The site, located near the end of the Newtowne Neck peninsula, is about 10 minutes from Leonardtown and about 30 minutes from Lexington Park. Lexington Park and nearby Solomon's Island offer many motel and

Upcoming events

May 24 – June 3: ASM field session, Biggs Ford, Woodland site in Frederick County.

June 1: ASM board meeting. Biggs Ford field school site. 10 a.m. All are welcome.

June 14 – 24: ASM field session, Leonardtown in St. Mary's County, 17th Century historic site.

June 29 – 30, July 6 – 7: Field work at Barton Site.

October 17–19: Three-day conference focused on the Ice Age colonization of the Americas. Santa Fe.
<http://www.paleoamericanodyssey.com>

October 31 – November 3: Eastern States Archeological Federation meeting. South Portland, Maine.

October 30 – November 2, 2014: ESAF meeting, Solomons Island, Maryland

Volunteer opportunities

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

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

Montgomery County is offering opportunities for lab and field work Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org. CAT opportunity.

ASM field session collection: Volunteers have turned their attention to material from Chapel Point and Heaters Island. The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. Contact Louise Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net or Charlie Hall chall@mdp.state.md.us.

The Lost Towns Project of Anne Arundel County welcomes volunteers for its prolific Pig Point prehistoric site. Fridays. Call Jessie Grow 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 echaney@mdp.state.md.us 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. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

CAT corner

For information on the CAT program, and updates, visit the ASM website.



Bones tell of Jamestown cannibalism

From news reports, May 2, 2013

Archeologists excavating a trash pit at the Jamestown colony site in Virginia have found the first physical evidence of cannibalism among the desperate population, corroborating written accounts left behind by witnesses. Cut marks on the skull and skeleton of a 14-year-old girl show that her flesh and brain were removed, presumably to be eaten by the starving colonists during the harsh winter of 1609.

The remains were excavated by archeologists led by William Kelso of Preservation Virginia and analyzed by Douglas Owsley, a Smithsonian physical anthropologist. The skull bears tentative cuts to the forehead, followed by four strikes to the back of the head, one of which split the skull open, according to an article in Smithsonian magazine, where the find was reported.

It is unclear how the girl died, but she was almost certainly dead and buried before her remains were butchered.

It's the only physical evidence of cannibalism of Europeans in any New World colony, although, as with Jamestown, there are written accounts of the practice in others.

"I tend to be sparing in the use of words like 'unique.' But I think this is one of those finds that literally is," said James Horn, a historian with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

That cannibalism occurred during the colony's "starving time" was never in much doubt. At least a half-dozen accounts, by people who lived through the period or spoke to colonists who did, describe occasional acts of cannibalism that winter. They include reports of corpses being exhumed and eaten, a husband killing his wife and salting her flesh (for which he was executed), and the mysterious disappearance of foraging colonists.

About 300 people inhabited the fort in November 1609. By the next spring, there were only 60.

According to a 1625 letter by George Percy, president of Jamestown during the starvation period, the famine was so intense "thatt notheinge was Spared to mainteyne Lyfe and to doe those things which seame incredible, as to digge upp deade corpes outt of graves and to eate them."

The girl's remains were discovered last summer in a refuse dump containing horse and dog bones. From the state of her molars, she is judged to have been 14 years old. Isotopes in her bones indicate that she had eaten a high-protein diet, so she was probably the daughter of a gentleman.

Owsley said in an interview that he could tell she was English because of his familiarity with English skeletal remains of the 17th Century and from scientific tests.

About 18 inches of fill remain in the cellar, so it's possible more of her skeleton will be found. Enough of her skull exists, however, to imagine what she might have looked like, using CT scanning, computer graphics, sculpture materials and demographic data.

Horn said that the young woman probably had arrived on one of the six surviving ships from a supply fleet that sailed from Plymouth, England, in early June of 1609. A week short of its destination, the fleet was scattered by a hurricane. The flagship, the *Sea Venture*, was driven onto reefs at Bermuda, an event that became the inspiration for Shakespeare's play "The Tempest," Horn said.

In mid-August, six of the ships eventually reached Jamestown. But their arrival, with little food and many extra mouths, did not bring relief or comfort. The settlers' insistent demands for food antagonized the Indians, who at first had welcomed and provisioned them. In October or November, the Powhatans launched a full-scale attack and siege, cutting off any hope of outside relief.

The colony was saved in May 1610 by the arrival of the settlers who had been marooned in Bermuda. They found the 60 survivors as thin as skeletons. In June 1610, another relief fleet arrived, commanded by Lord De La Warr, who would later lend his name to the state of Delaware.

Learning who she was will be difficult. Complete passenger lists for the voyages don't exist. Research into the sponsors in Plymouth might reveal a family with a girl born in 1595 or 1596 who went to America. There may be extractable DNA in the bone fragments, but at this point, there are no descendants to compare it with.

The remains will be [displayed at the Archaearium](#), the museum at the Jamestown fort archeological site. There are no depictions of bodies being butchered, cooked or consumed. An exhibit also has been incorporated into the Smithsonian's "Written in Bone" exhibit in the Natural History Museum.

Woman fights for two DC cemeteries

By Michael Price

Condensed from the Washington Post, May 17, 2013

Beneath Walter Pierce Park in Washington's Adams Morgan neighborhood are two adjacent historic cemeteries: a quarter-acre Burying Ground for the Society of Friends or Quakers, dating to 1809, and a 6 3/4-acre African-American cemetery, which operated between 1870 and 1890. At the peak of its use, Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery was the largest African American burial ground in the District.

On Saturday, the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Team will release a report asserting that thousands of bodies still lie beneath the dog run, soccer field, basketball court and playgrounds of the heavily used park. It will ask the city to protect the park from further development.

"The math shows there are probably still thousands of graves here, but who knows what shape they're in?" says Mary Belcher, an Adams Morgan resident who, along with the late Howard University anthropologist Mark Mack, spearheaded the project.

Until recently, the city's official position was that few if any graves remained, or that if they did, the grounds were so muddled by a century of development that it hardly mattered. In a city noted for its towering granite memorials, the only markers indicating the cemeteries' existence are a few small metal signs that say: "Gardening is not permitted — This Is A Historic Cemetery."

In 2005, the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation began a terracing project to manage soil erosion and improving the ground for community gardening. To see if any graves remained in that spot, the city sponsored an archeological project and brought in a backhoe to dig an exploratory trench.

Mary Belcher was alarmed: "You don't dig in a known cemetery with a backhoe." She and a friend sifted through heaps of soil unearthed by the backhoe and found oyster shells and decorative items indicative of grave markers. She complained to D.C. officials, and they agreed to a temporary stop.

The parks department held a meeting with community members to discuss the project. Officials told residents they believed the cemetery was empty, but neighbors responded that they had encountered several exposed human remains over the years. "Every time it rains, it's a natural archeological dig," says Steve Coleman of the nonprofit which leads cleanup efforts in the park.

The city eventually agreed to halt gardening and postpone the terracing until a more thorough investigation could be completed with the help of Howard University's anthropology department.

To lead the research, Belcher tapped Mack, who had previously worked with the New York African Burial Ground. The park project would consist of two concurrent investigations: compiling a list of the buried and conducting a noninvasive surface survey. Belcher and Mack raised \$12,000 from community organizations and preservation societies to pay Howard students for their participation.

In the end, the team tallied 8,428 burials, with fewer than 300 of them recorded as being dis-interred and reburied elsewhere. Hundreds — possibly as many as 1,900 — of the bodies actually came from an older African-American cemetery that had been at 12th and V streets NW.

In 2010, the National Park Service began a soil erosion mitigation project. Belcher and Mack objected, arguing that the exposed coffin and human remains they'd discovered could be damaged.

Simone Monteleone, a historian with the Park Service, says the work was as noninvasive as possible. Workers didn't terrace the land, they didn't dig and they respectfully covered any remains they found, she says. "We made every effort to protect the remains."

Belcher, however, says workers carelessly tossed boulders down the slope to fill gullies, rolling over exposed remains in the process. She convinced officials to temporarily halt the work. The project was finally completed after the Park Service agreed to let archeologists monitor the remaining labor.

On May 11, 2012, Mack was killed in a car accident. Mack's colleagues from the New York African Burial Ground helped finish his work.

Belcher's staunch efforts to preserve the cemetery are occasionally at odds with others who want to see park facilities improve, says Ruth Troccoli, an archeologist with the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. "Mary is a tireless advocate for the park, but her vision of the park. One of the aspects of the park is that it's both a cemetery and a park, and both deserve consideration."

Amateurs: much more than free labor

By Patrick H. Garrow

Condensed from The American Archaeologist, Winter 1975-1976

Professional archeology is an exacting, tedious and difficult field of endeavor. The field archeologist must have detailed knowledge in the broad field of anthropology, as well as a full list of vocational skills. In addition, he must be a public relations man. It is not surprising then that one colleague responds to anyone who introduces himself as an amateur archeologist by saying, "Ah, and I am an amateur brain surgeon. May I practice on your head?"

The comparison of an archeologist to a brain surgeon is valid in all but one area. Archeologists who achieve a Ph.D. in the field have often spent as much time and effort to master their skills as a brain surgeon. Also, both the archeologist and the brain surgeon have a single opportunity to do their job successfully. The archeologist operates on a site, the brain surgeon on a human patient. The main point of difference between the two fields is that the archeologist can be materially aided by enlightened amateurs and the brain surgeon cannot.

The key to establishing a meaningful relationship between amateur and professional archeologists is that each must operate within their areas of competence. Very few amateurs are competent to run field excavations and few professionals have the time or finances to locate and protect the sites in their areas of responsibility. Also, most excavation budgets do not provide enough money to hire all of the help needed on research projects. Amateur and professional archeology can - once they establish an atmosphere of mutual respect - combine their efforts and nicely compliment each other's skills and interests.

Professional archeologists invariably suffer from a chronic lack of time, staff and resources. Regrettably few archeologists can devote themselves full time to their field career. Many have teaching loads that preclude concentrated research in all but the summer months.

Location and description of archeological sites consume both time and resources and as a result few areas in the eastern United States have been adequately surveyed. Surveys have standardly been stimulated by specific problems - such as pending destruction of a particular area by construction activities.

This type of "react" situation seldom results in fully adequate data recovery. In fact, some areas are totally destroyed before any archeological data can be recovered. This unfortunate trend could perhaps be controlled if amateur archeologists would devote their time to locating the sites in their areas and reporting those sites to central collection points.

The protection of known sites is another area in which amateur and professional archeologists can interact advantageously. Archeological sites are extremely fragile research units. They can be quickly destroyed by unscrupulous artifact collectors or by a myriad of construction activities.

Amateurs (and for the most part, professionals) feel that site excavation is the most exciting phase of archeological research. No amateur should attempt to conduct an excavation without professional guidance, but professionals should be willing to accept the aid of amateurs on sites.

Amateurs can bring much more than free labor to a site. Skilled individuals in such areas as photography, land surveying fund raising, drafting and public relations can be found in most medium-sized towns. Those individuals can be most helpful in specific areas of site excavation and recordation and any volunteer can bring added enthusiasm and new perspectives to a site.

Amateur and professional archeologists can work together and have worked together in the past. The key to preserving and understanding the past lies in expanding this relationship

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restaurant options. Free camping is available one-half mile from the site next to the beautifully restored 1731 church and unrestored Jesuit manor house overlooking St. Clement's Bay.

The parish house offers modern conveniences including an ice maker and toilets, as well as a venue for workshops and a pizza-and-movie night. We will have a camp shower with hot water and steady pressure. Possible field visits include the State Highway Administration's excavations at Calvert Hall near Benedict and Historic St. Mary's City's excavations at the Calvert House.

Workshops and lectures will include a talk by Henry Miller, of Historic St. Mary's City, at an opening convocation on Saturday the 15th; Julie King, of St. Mary's College, at the nearby governmental center on Wednesday the 19th and Val Hall (TBA). We will have workshops on gravestone repair and proper use and maintenance of hand tools. Folks interested in laboratory work will find ample work on site.

The site is entirely in lawn (it is a cemetery) with on-site parking. Tents should shade most, if not all, work. Questions? Ask Jim Gibb at 443-482-9593 or JamesGGibb@verizon.net

Is archeology a useless pursuit?

By Bradley T. Lepper

Condensed from the Columbus Dispatch, May 29, 2012

The Daily Beast, the online home of *Newsweek* magazine, recently posted a list of "the 13 most useless" college majors. Archeology was listed along with anthropology at No. 9. The compilers of the list used employment opportunities and earnings potential as their criteria for usefulness.

I take issue with the notion that archeology is useless. In a timely paper, published online in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, archeologists Michael Smith, Gary Feinman, Robert Drennan, Timothy Earle and Ian Morris make the case that archeology is a vital social science that provides a uniquely valuable perspective on human history.

They write that archeology provides the only window to the human past before the invention of writing. It also provides a more comprehensive view of the early historic era, since archeology "can inform about all segments of society, including commoners, peasants, the underclass and slaves, groups often left out of early historical accounts."

Most important, "Archeological findings provide a long-term perspective on change." Arguably, without an understanding of how we got to where we are, we won't be able to find our way through the maze of problems that have accompanied these changes.

For example, a commitment to agriculture and living in cities has led to a deteriorating environment, declines in health and increased social inequality. These are among the factors often suggested to have been the causes of the collapse of civilizations. Similar problems afflict our contemporary society. Does this mean that we are headed for an inevitable collapse?

The archaeologist Karl Butzer, writing in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, suggested that such alarmist comparisons too often are "poorly focused, simplistic and unhelpful." But after reviewing five case studies of ancient societies that suffered a collapse, he has gleaned important lessons that might help us avoid the mistakes that led them to ruin.

He points out that modern nations have important advantages that make them less vulnerable to collapse

than earlier civilizations. For example, we have access to better information and we have "an increasingly educated and engaged citizenry."

Nevertheless, the social and economic effects of global climate change, for example, pose a threat to even the most technologically advanced civilizations. Butzer argues that there is an urgent need for our political leaders to accept the overwhelming scientific evidence for climate change so that we can begin to develop effective ways of dealing with its consequences. Otherwise, we, too, will fall victim to the "poor leadership, administrative dysfunction and ideological ambivalence" that have been hallmarks of the collapse of civilizations throughout history.

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

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

June 11: Mechelle Kerns on Fort Madison.

September 10: TBA

November 12: Julie Schablitsky will speak on the War of 1812 Caulk's Battlefield.

Central Maryland

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned, but it does engage in field work and related activities. Contact chapter President Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or ssisrael@verizon.net

Charles County

Meetings are held 7 on the second Thursday (September-May) in the community room of the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Carol Cowherd at cowherdcl@gmail.com or 301-375-9489. 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. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com Check our website for information concerning ordering the book, "Montgomery County Mills: A Field Guide," published by the chapter and reviewed in the January edition of the ASM newsletter.

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>

Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at Mt. Ida in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 5:45 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Diamondback in Ellicott City at 5:30 p.m. Contact Dave Cavey at 410 747-0093 or hoplite1@comcast.net The group now has a Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358> or try
UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.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. Chapter email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

Archeological Society of Maryland

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ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink; the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10% discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, 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 welcome. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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