



# ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

[www.marylandarcheology.org](http://www.marylandarcheology.org)

## Listening to, learning from the past

By **Stuart Struever**

*Condensed from The American Archaeologist, Winter-Spring 1978*

A few months ago at a luncheon given on behalf of the Koster Project, I was asked: "What are you looking for at Koster and what have you found of significance? Why are the Koster excavations important to the us today?"

*(Editor's Note: Between 1969 and 1978 Streuver led a Northwestern University project on a dig at the central Illinois site that uncovered 26 layers of occupation dating from 1200 AD to 6,700 BC.)*

It was a good question ... the essential question. In fact if we archeologists don't ask this question, then what we do may well be akin to flagpole-sitting and perhaps as useful. We are responsible to society no matter how intellectual or academic our goals. Our excavations must give us a clearer sense of the trajectory of human history of which we are a part. They must help us see ourselves better.

The analysis of Koster ruins has proceeded far enough for us to make some interesting observations. I think we can say that diet, even by the time of the first Horizon II village (now carbon-14 dated at 6,400 B.C.) approximated a diet that might be designed by a knowledge of the nutritional qualities of the various wild food species available to these Indians at the time.

How they learned this is anybody's guess. That they arrived at these understandings at such an early date should give us pause to reflect on our conception of the level of sophistication of these early human populations in the Midwest.

If we are to measure "cultural success" in part by the ability of a human population to establish an equilibrium with its environment that can be sustained over the long haul, then these Koster inhabitants were successful people, indeed. One may not envy their close-to-the-earth life, but it would be hard to improve on their formula for maximizing biological survival by sustaining the critical elements of the environment that insured that survival.

We today in the United States are the inheritors of a long tradition that says, first, man in a Special Creation, and therefore not part of the environment, and second, this separateness is expressed in the concept of "man against nature." The writings of pioneer Americans are laced with references to "conquering the environment," "bringing nature under control," etc.

We have been hard at it since we arrived on this continent a short time ago, shaping a culture that buffers us against the threats of human survival ... and in the process have almost unconsciously destroyed the environmental foundations of which that survival must ultimately be built.

What we're seeing in the archeological data at Koster, I think, are people with a qualitatively

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## Upcoming events

**November 30:** Forensics Friday with Jamestown archeologists. Smithsonian Natural History Museum. 1-4 p.m.

**December 1:** ASM board meeting. Miller Branch, Howard County Library, Ellicott City. 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend.

### 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 Julia Elkin at [ElkinJ@si.edu](mailto:ElkinJ@si.edu) or 443-482-3611.

**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](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org). CAT opportunity.

**ASM field session collection:** Volunteers have finished upgrading the ASM field school collection. They are working on the Rosenstock (Frederick County) material. The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. Contact Louise Akerson at [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall [chall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

### CAT corner

A workshop on Native American ceramics will be given by Bob Wall early next year.

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

## Equal time for dogs: canine finds artifacts too

By Danny Adeno Abebe

*Condensed from Ynetnews.com, November 14, 2012*

He never studied archeology and knows more about bones than about antiquities, but he is probably the first dog in history to uncover a major archeological site.

It all began five years ago when Zach, a mongrel, took a walk at Jerusalem's Ramot Forest with his owner, Shaul Yona. As he was joyfully running around the forest, Zach suddenly fell into a hole in the ground.

After Yona managed to get his dog out, safe and sounds, he peeked into the hole and realized that it was not just a random pit.

He alerted archeologists, who checked the hole and discovered that it had been used as a grape pressing area during the First Temple period.

The discovery led to an extensive excavation, which exposed additional pits, pottery pieces and bronze coins from the Second Temple period. The dig was orchestrated by Prof. Amihai Mazar, who was awarded the Israel Prize in archeology in 2009. The neighborhood residents and students helped out and Mayor Nir Barkat decided to build a biblical garden on the site.

*(Just as there is a CAT in Maryland archeology, there also is a DOG. It stands for Deed of Gift and is an anacronym use in collection curation at the MAC Lab at Jefferson-Patterson.)*

## It's membership renewal time

Did you remember to send in your membership renewal form last month? If not, don't delay any longer - you don't want Santa to put you on his naughty list and we don't want to hire a firm to make robo-calls to you. The form is available online at the ASM website. And while you are at it, consider upgrading your membership or making a donation to help with ASM projects. Grant money from the state has dried up because of budget cuts so your support will mean a lot to furthering our goal of finding, protecting and educating. We know you believe in this or you wouldn't be an ASM member in the first place.

## Cecil County historians honor George Reynolds

The Historical Society of Cecil County has presented George Reynolds with its Ernest A. Howard Award honoring those who have made a significant contribution to the preservation of historic resources while facing huge challenges protecting the built environment, saving scarce relics or recording folkways.

Reynolds, a founding member of ASM, set out to document the rich and unstudied archeological resources in Cecil in the 1950s, the Cecil historians said. His interest in archaeology and local history never diminished. Over the decades he's been involved in all of the major digs in the county, they said.

Reynolds is only the fourth recipient, and first archeologist, to receive the honor, which is only given to someone who has overcome significant obstacles to preserve Cecil's past.

## 25 sites found in Alexandria's Fort Ward park

*Condensed from The Zebra, September 2012*

The City of Alexandria has recently completed three stages of an archeological investigation at Fort Ward Park.

The goal of the city's work was to identify unmarked graves and cultural resources associated with the Native American habitation of the area, an American Civil War fortification and a post-Civil War African-American community known as "The Fort" that was present until the 1960s. During the more than two-year investigation, 43 graves were identified within the park, only three of which were marked by headstones.

Fencing will be installed to protect the burial areas from adjacent park activities and all graves will be marked by blank signposts until each identity can be confirmed. In addition to graves, archeologists discovered several concentrations of Civil War artifacts, including Minie balls (a muzzle loading, spin-stabilizing rifle bullet, developed by French army officer Claude-Etienne Minie, used during the Crimean and American Civil Wars), lead shot, clothing buttons, personal items and military hardware, mostly in the northern portions of the park.

Archeologists identified 25 discrete archeological sites within the park boundaries, not including Fort Ward itself. All of these sites are relevant to the community of African-Americans that began residing around the abandoned Fort Ward following the Civil War.

## Setting up a Facebook page for ASM

Conrad Bladey is setting up a Facebook page for ASM. Anyone interested in helping please contact him at [cbladey@verizon.net](mailto:cbladey@verizon.net)

# More Viking traces found in Canada

By Randy Boswell

*Condensed from the Calgary Herald, October 24, 2012*

An archeologist searching for traces of Viking encampments in the Canadian Arctic has found tantalizing new evidence to bolster the case that Norse seafarers from Greenland — hundreds of years after their ancestors abandoned the famous L'Anse aux Meadows settlement in Newfoundland around 1,000 A.D. — were trading goods and even inhabiting sites on Baffin Island.

The Viking sailors are believed to have been frequenting areas once occupied by the Dorset people, an artistically advanced culture that would mysteriously vanish by 1,400 A.D.

Using a high-resolution, chemical-detection technique called spectroscopy on tool-sharpening stones unearthed at several 700-year-old Arctic sites, researchers led by Memorial University of Newfoundland's Patricia Sutherland have found microscopic bits of brass, bronze and smelted iron — metals known only from European sources during the medieval era.

The findings, profiled this week in a National Geographic feature, add to a host of previous discoveries by Sutherland on Baffin Island and in northern Labrador — including carved objects as well as European-style wool and architectural ruins — that one of Newfoundland's leading archeologists says amounts to a "pretty convincing" case for a sustained Norse presence in ancient Canada.

About 20 whetstones have been recovered from four Arctic sites known to have been occupied in ancient times: Avayalik Island in northernmost Labrador and three sites on Baffin Island — Tanfield Valley and Willows Island in the southeast near Iqaluit, and one on the island's northwest tip.

"We were particularly interested in metals that the Norse would have been using. And we do have that evidence now," she said, adding that the discovery means Norse travellers were either present at the sites or that aboriginal peoples traded with the Norse to acquire the sharpening stones.

"Neither the Dorset nor ancient Inuit smelted iron," she noted.

Sutherland said the latest find is just one part of a "whole package" of evidence that she and her colleagues have gathered over many years of research in the northeast corner of Canada as they try to rewrite the first chapter of European history in North America.

Apart from the well-documented and widely accepted Norse occupation at L'Anse aux Meadows there are currently no confirmed Viking sites west of Greenland.

"Science is cumulative and sometimes it's a long, arduous process," said Sutherland, noting how controversy swirled around the Newfoundland site for a long time. At the short-lived L'Anse aux Meadows settlement, the Norse built several sod-and-wood dwellings before promptly abandoning their colonization attempt under threat from hostile natives they called "Skraelings."

Sutherland said she has been "trying to bring together different lines of evidence" gathered from the four Arctic sites to build the case for a continuous Norse presence in northern Canada for several generations after Newfoundland was abandoned and before the failure of the Greenland colony itself around 1,400 A.D. ended further westward exploration by the Norse and their apparent trading networks with aboriginal groups in Canada.

"While her evidence was compelling before, I find it convincing now," James Tuck, professor emeritus of archeology at Memorial University, tells National Geographic.

On Baffin Island, which the Norse called "Helluland" or "land of stone slabs," the researchers have documented dozens of suspected Norse artifacts such as Scandinavian-style spun yarn, distinctively notched and decorated wood objects, as well as the whetstones.

A single human tooth from one of the sites was tested a few years ago for possible European DNA, but the results were inconclusive.

In 2009, fragments of a what appeared to be a sod-and-stone building, a drainage ditch and a whalebone spade — similar to remnants found at Norse sites in Greenland — were reported by Sutherland and her research team at one of the Baffin Island sites.

# Unknown Va. Civil War site discovered

By Theo Emery

*Condensed from the New York Times, November 11, 2012*

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. — The first bullet surfaced just after lunch. As Jon Tucker sifted soil through a screen in September, a corroded lead slug jiggled into view amid the sand and ash excavated from a pit just a few feet from a fenced-off sidewalk and rushing traffic.

Tucker waved to his supervisor, Taft Kiser, the lead archeologist on the site, and held up the bullet for him to see. It would not be the last time. Hundreds of artifacts followed, along with the contours of a buried cellar holding a rich trove of Civil War history sealed since a ferocious 1862 battle in this Virginia city, which today lies just beyond the suburbs of Washington.

The discovery amid construction of a courthouse was unexpected. But the site has astonished historians and archeologists for another reason: It represents a "time capsule," in the words of Kiser, a rare snapshot in time, undisturbed through more than a century of urban construction around it.

Since then, the crew's shovels and trowels have scraped away cinders and sand to reveal the basement's contents: Dozens of bullets. Buttons from Union jackets. Shards from whiskey bottles. A metal plate from a cartridge box. Chinstrap buckles. Tobacco pipes. A brick fireplace and charred floorboards.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," said Kiser, 53.

With the construction paused, the team raced to document what they concluded was the basement of a building set afire shortly after the Battle of Fredericksburg. The timing was opportune because the battle's 150-year anniversary is in December, and Fredericksburg has been preparing to mark the sesquicentennial.

Such sites are a kind of archeological Brigadoon, the fictional Scottish village that appeared once a century. They come unexpectedly amid construction, scientists and historians have only a brief period to document them, and then construction resumes, destroying the site.

Most archeological artifacts today are unearthed because of development, said Joe B. Jones, the director of the Center for Archaeological Research at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg.

"Until people start breaking ground, only then do people realize what they've got there, and everybody's got to scramble to find a way to deal with it in a responsible way," he said.

In Fredericksburg's case, city planners hired Kiser's firm to investigate the historical significance of the property chosen for the \$35 million courthouse complex. There was no expectation that the investigators would find anything. When the archeologists initially checked city records, they were unable to find any indication that a building had been on the property before 1886.

"We're ecstatic about what we found," said Robert K. Antozzi, the city's coordinator for the courthouse project. "Now we have a major expansion of the story of Fredericksburg, and that's really exciting."

Shortly into the dig, the crew discovered a sandstone cellar wall — a clue that something was preserved below. When they dug at another location, they found a brick wall flush against the sidewalk on Princess Anne Street, which runs through downtown. The crew also discovered an 18th century well and latrines across the site, where livery stables once stood.

The near-perfect preservation of the site has helped to paint a vivid portrait of the aftermath of the battle, when Ambrose Burnside, the general of the Union forces, tried unsuccessfully to take the city from Robert E. Lee as Union forces forged toward Richmond.

Almost 150 years later, Kiser, a burly man with a salt-and-pepper beard and a ponytail, bounded around the site, suggesting last-minute spots for the crew to investigate. As a reminder of the urgency, a backhoe hulked nearby, ready for the project to restart.

Over the weeks, the crew had worked at a breakneck pace to find everything that it could before time ran out. "Thirty-minute lunches," Kiser joked. "You don't want to lose something because you decided to have a second cup of coffee."

## Spear technology pushed back 200,000 more years

By Sindya N. Bhanoo

*Condensed from the New York Times, November 20, 2012*

Human ancestors were using stone-tipped spears to hunt 500,000 years ago, 200,000 years earlier than previously thought. A new study reports that the stone tips, found in South Africa, were probably once attached to wooden spears and then hurled at animals by hominins of the species *Homo heidelbergensis*.

*Homo heidelbergensis* was the last common ancestor of modern humans and Neanderthals, said [Jayne Wilkins](#), an anthropologist at the University of Toronto and the study's first author. The spears "suggest that the behavioral complexity of these early humans was greater than expected," she said. Creating a stone-tipped spear would have required attaching stone to wood, handling multiple types of material at once, planning and goal-oriented behavior.

Wilkins and colleagues from Arizona State University and the University of Cape Town in South Africa [report their findings](#) in the current issue of the journal *Science*.

The stone tips were found at an archeological site called Kathu Pan 1 in the 1980s. In 2010, the tips were dated. But it was unclear whether the tips were actually used in hunting. "They could have been used for cutting or butchery,"

Wilkins said. "We wanted to make sure."

She and her colleagues compared the wear and breakage in the stone tips to modern spear points fired into the carcass of an African gazelle called a springbok. The ancient stone points had breakage patterns consistent with those of the modern tips, Wilkins said.

The idea of attaching a stone tip to a spear, known as hafting, was a critical advance in hunting. By using a spear with a piercing stone tip, early humans could cause their prey to bleed and die faster. It is a technique that was later used by both Neanderthals and early modern humans. "But we didn't really know the antiquity of that practice until now," Wilkins said.

## Listening to and learning from the past

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different view of their place in the order of things. They clearly did not have the technology or the organizational complexity to persuade themselves that they could actually control most of their physical world. There was simply too much contrary evidence around them. Rather they developed a sense of relationship with their environment which was good enough to enable them to maintain a series of progressively complex cultural systems that spanned 300 or more generations in the Illinois Valley without cataclysmic starvation, population explosion or warfare. If I'm reading the archeological record correctly, that's a pretty good success records for people whose energy control was miniscule compared to ours.

We today are not prepared to mimic their lifestyle, but it might not hurt if we got inside their heads and absorbed some of the basic assumptions of their world view. These early people have a lot to tell us ... if we can but learn to listen.

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

Meets five times a year in February, April, June, September and November at the home of Pat and Stephen Hittle, 102 Evon Court, Severna Park. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns at [AACHapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) or the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php)

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:cowherdcl@gmail.com) or 301-375-9489. Chapter website is [charlescoasm.org](http://charlescoasm.org) and its blog is [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com)

**December 13:** Michael Lucas will talk about the War of 1812 at Nottingham.

## 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](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org) or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: [asmmidpotomac@gmail.com](mailto:asmmidpotomac@gmail.com)

**December 19 Wednesday:** Chapter Holiday Party at the Agricultural Farm Park Activities Center in Derwood,. from 6 to 10 p.m. Dinner at 7. The chapter will provide the main course. Please bring a side dish or dessert and a gift (around \$15) for exchange. PowerPoint of "Archaeologists Gone Wild, Part IV" and Archaeology Jeopardy are the featured entertainments.

## 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](http://digfrederick.com) or call 301-378-0212.

**December 12:** Lisa Macurak and her students from the New Windsor Middle School in Carroll County will present their work at the springhouse on the property of the town founder, Isaac Richardson Atlee.

## 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](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

**December 13:** University of Maryland professor Lindley Van of early Christian sites in Turkey. Annual Appreciation and Awards Dinner. I.O.O.F. Hall, Aberdeen.

**January 9:** Amanda Koss, "A Birdwatcher's Experience at Machu Picchu, Peru." Havre de Grace City Hall.

**February 13:** Jim Gibb on the results of the May 2012 field session. Historical Society of Harford County, Bel Air.

**March 13:** - TBA (biblical archeology site). Harford Jewish Center, Havre de Grace.

**April:** Friday date TBA. Annual Maryland Archeology Month Presentation. Edgewood Hall, Harford Community College, Bel Air.

## 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](mailto:hoplite1@comcast.net) NOTE EARLIER STARTING TIMES

## 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](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>



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**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% 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](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

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