

# ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



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

## '19 field school: Search for last Patuxent site

By **Matt McKnight**

*Chief - MHT Office of Archeology*

The site of the 2019 Tyler Bastian Field Session in Maryland Archeology will be the Billingsley Plantation (18PR9) near Upper Marlboro in Prince George's County. 18PR9 is the core of a 700-acre tract that was patented to Major John Billingsley in 1662 "for transportation of 14 servants in the year 1650 under ... conditions of plantation."

Though it's pretty clear from the archival record that Major Billingsley never lived on the property, a European-built structure is depicted on the parcel on a map of the Chesapeake published by Augustine Herrman in 1673 (and drafted much earlier). Whether this structure depicts an actual dwelling is still an open question. What is not in question, is that the tract was inhabited.

The Herrman map marks the presence of not one, but two 17<sup>th</sup> Century Indian villages on the Billingsley parcel: one named "Wighkawameck" and the other, "Coppahan". In addition, the *Proceedings of the Maryland Assembly* on May 23, 1674 make it clear that Billingsley purchased his 700 acres from the "Mattapany and Patuxon Indians," at least some of whom "...doe Continue upon the Land."

In the days that followed, the upper and lower houses of the Maryland Assembly were debating first purchasing the land from Billingsley's heirs for the use of the Patuxent Indians and later leasing the land on the Patuxent's behalf. Ultimately, the two houses agreed on Wednesday, May 27 that they would lease the land for 2,000 pounds of tobacco per year for the use of the Patuxent and Mattapany Indians and then re-assess the situation in five-years' time.

Whether this plan was ever carried out is uncertain. It is the last time the Patuxent Indians are mentioned in the *Archives of Maryland*. But the statement made on the 23, as well as Herrman's map, make it clear that two indigenous groups were indeed living on this land in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

In the fall of 2018, Charlie Hall, Troy Nowak and I walked onto the Billingsley site (now owned by the State of Maryland) to test our recently acquired magnetic susceptibility meter in the fields surrounding a standing 18<sup>th</sup> Century dwelling at the site (operated under a 99-year lease by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as a historic house museum and wedding venue).

We knew a little about the history of the tract and were aware that prehistoric artifact collecting had occurred in these fields during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. An inventory of some of those collections is included in the MHT site file for 18PR9 and included numerous Archaic and Woodland diagnostics, but no Contact period finds. But, such was the state of our site files for Biggs Ford prior to our return in 2013, and at that site we definitely identified a Contact-era component.

Magnetic susceptibility can be influenced by several factors, such as burning, digging, the introduction of organic matter and the introduction of foreign stone or other raw materials. MHT and ASM successfully used the technique at both Biggs Ford and Calverton, but at Billingsley it was evident within the first couple of

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## Upcoming events

**April 27:** ASM Spring Symposium. Crownsville. All day.

**April 30:** The Crownsville lab Open House. 10 a.m. and noon. See the recently renovated and reorganized lab space.

**May 4 – 5:** Primitive Technology Workshop, Willow Grove Nature Center, Baltimore County. Contact F. Kirk Dreier at 410 887 2503 or [kdreier@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:kdreier@baltimorecountymd.gov)

**May 23 – June 5:** Annual ASM field school. Billingsley Site, 18PR9.

**October 5:** ASM Annual Meeting, Veterans Park, Charles County. All day.

## Volunteer opportunities

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

**ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays:** The lab in Crownsville. Contact Charlie Hall at [charles.hall@maryland.gov](mailto:charles.hall@maryland.gov) or Louise Akerson at [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) It is currently working on cataloging artifacts from the Levering Coffee House Site, Baltimore (a mostly late 18th/early 19th Century site).

**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](mailto:jamesggibb@verizon.net)

**Montgomery County** for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslag at 301 563 7530 or [Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org](mailto: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. Weekdays only. Email [volunteers@losttownsproject.org](mailto:volunteers@losttownsproject.org) or call 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](mailto: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](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork) to get started.

UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at [Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov) or 410-313-0423.

**CAT corner:** For information on the CAT program, contact Sarah Grady at [sarahgrady11@gmail.com](mailto:sarahgrady11@gmail.com)



## MHT funding remains stable for next fiscal year

Funding for the Maryland Historical Trust noncapital grants program remained virtually unchanged in this year's General Assembly session. The historic preservation grant program, the one that affects archeology the most, is slated for \$300,000 of the \$7.9 million aimed at the Trust.

The money is to provide support for research, survey, planning and educational activities involving architectural, archeological or cultural resources.

But some of the \$1 million allocated for the African-American heritage preservation program, the \$600,000 for the capital historic preservation program and the \$6 million for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority program could end up being used for archeology-related purposes.

For instance, said Elizabeth Hughes, head of the MHT, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program recently awarded funds to support a geophysical archeological survey of the three-acre site at the 1740s Rackliffe House in Worcester County.

## What's at stake with Mallows Bay plan

By Scott Dance

*Condensed from The Baltimore Sun, April 4, 2019*

NANJEMOY, MD. - The congregation of scuttled ships in and around Mallows Bay is often called a ghost fleet, but it looks more like a mass grave of skeletons.

Though they lie in ruins, the century-old wrecks are the remnants of a turning point in American history, the leftovers of a World War I shipbuilding boom that helped create a world power. Some of the vessels resting at the bottom of this bend in the Potomac River are believed to be even older than the Civil War.

A long-pending proposal would place the forgotten maritime graveyard inside a new national marine sanctuary, aiming to preserve them as long as nature will allow. The effort already is drawing more history buffs, school groups and kayak tours to this remote peninsula of Charles County, some 30 miles south of Washington, D.C.

But five years after the site was nominated and four years after then President Barack Obama formally advanced the designation, supporters of the Mallows Bay sanctuary are worried it isn't getting any closer to reality.

They fear that opposition from watermen — who see all the attention for the shipwrecks as a bad omen for their livelihoods — is delaying the sanctuary. Watermen from both sides of the Potomac worry it's just another step toward tighter limits on fishing and crabbing.

Final approval of the sanctuary proposal has been stuck for more than a year in a review by Gov. Larry Hogan's office. Officials with Hogan's office and NOAA won't explain the delay, other than to say it's not being caused by the watermen's concerns. They say they are negotiating "final details" that could be resolved by the fall.

"We strongly support the final designation, and it's just a matter of getting the final details right," said Michael Ricci, a spokesman for the Republican governor.

But both sides find the delay and lack of communication about the status of the proposal troubling.

Proponents say labeling the site a sanctuary means another layer of protection — adding sanctions against vandalism, charging the federal government with monitoring the area, and making federal funds available if needed. They say they don't plan to impose new restrictions on commercial fishing.

But watermen like Pete Springer say they have no reason to trust officials' assurances the sanctuary won't eventually add yet another layer of regulation or restrictions onto their businesses.

He passes through the ghost fleet at the beginning and end of every day on the river and understands the desire to preserve it. But he doesn't understand why the sanctuary's boundaries, proposed to extend 18 square miles across Mallows Bay and the Potomac, need to extend so far into his fishing grounds.

Others say the sanctuary is needed because the fleet isn't some static record of history. Storms have

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tossed and rearranged the ships and they've occasionally caught fire, presumably at the hands of vandals. A group of Charles County elementary school students recently completed a project that concluded the Potomac's steady flow is gradually dragging them downriver.

Historian Donald Shomette, who detailed the ships' history in a 2009 book, is among those concerned that without investment and recognition, Mallows Bay will fade from memory once again.

"This would be the most unique national marine sanctuary in America," Shomette said. "It would be one of the most unique in the world."

Most of the ships in Mallows Bay date to a massive shipbuilding effort that began with President Woodrow Wilson's national call to arms against Germany in April 1917. The wooden steamships were hastily constructed at more than 40 shipyards in 17 states. As quickly as that effort began, the ships became obsolete when World War I ended in 1918.

Though some found use ferrying food to war-torn Europe or rescuing people from the Russian Revolution, many ships that had launched to great fanfare months earlier suddenly became surplus. They were brought to a Virginia salvage yard, stripped of valuable metals and other parts, and eventually tied together at anchorage in Mallows Bay.

While the vessels rotted away in the cove, their rapid construction marked the foundation of what became a booming maritime and shipbuilding industry in the United States. They also marked the nation's shift from focusing on inward expansion to more global involvement. Shomette said the ghost ships are remarkable not for any war heroics, but as proof of the nation's resolve and ingenuity.

"This is a representation of American can-do," Shomette said. "They are symbolic of what we did."

After enduring decades of decay, tides and storms, the ships now testify to the dominion of nature. Some are half buried, or tangled in driftwood and the roots of trees that grow out of them. They've created homes for crabs and rockfish and osprey.

And as Mallows Bay has grown in popularity among kayakers, scuba divers and birdwatchers, the desire to preserve the area has grown, too. A group that included Chesapeake Bay advocates, Charles County businesses, historians and state officials petitioned NOAA to establish the country's 14th national marine sanctuary in 2014.

The designation applies to some 600,000 square miles of waters as far away as American Samoa. One that spans 842 square miles at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay marks both a historic trade route full of shipwrecks and a famously abundant fishing ground. But others, spread across the Pacific, focus on protecting wildlife, including whales, coral reefs and seabird colonies.

Robert T. Brown, president of the Maryland Watermen's Association, said he has had conversations with state officials about the concerns as recently as the past couple months.

"We want to make sure our industry and our heritage are protected in the main stem of the river," Brown said. "Let the people enjoy it, but leave our heritage alone. Let us fish."

Sammy Orlando, NOAA liaison for the Mallows Bay proposal, said the majority of marine sanctuaries are open to fishing, and that officials have no plans to take over any management of natural resources around the shipwrecks.

"For our organizations to continue to invest in this site and bring in new partners who will want to invest ... we need a long-term commitment from the state and NOAA," wrote Kristen Sarri, CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

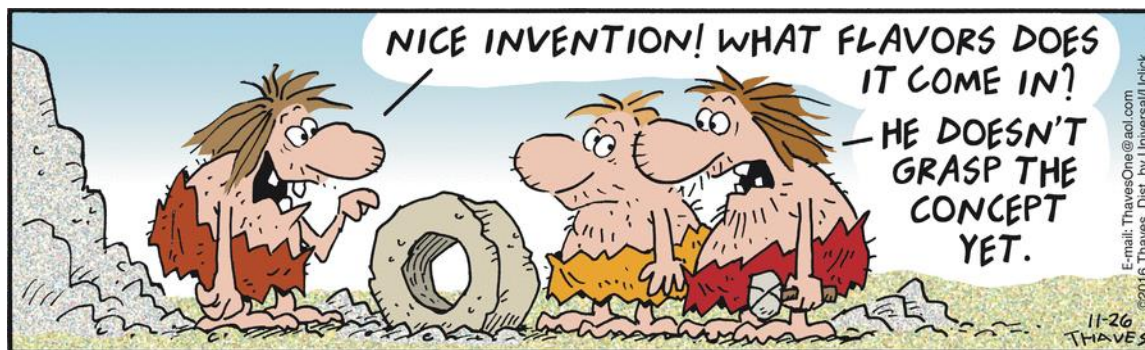
The groups hope that a designation will lead eventually to construction of a visitors center, interpretive signage or other resources that draw attention to the ships' history. While state law already protects the artifacts from vandals and thieves, placing them inside a NOAA sanctuary could add new layers of protection — both through federal laws and enforcement activity by federal police.

Supporters had hoped to celebrate the new sanctuary in time for the centennial of the end of World War I, on Nov. 11, 1918, which also marked four years since the Mallows Bay sanctuary's nomination. But that anniversary has long come and gone.

In the meantime, growing numbers of tourists are expected to return soon to Mallows Bay as the weather warms. Weekly kayak tours of the ghost fleet are set to resume in May.



Frank and Ernest bonus By Thaves



## '19 field school: Search for last Patuxent site

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hours that soils in one of the surveyed fields were significantly altered (by several orders of magnitude) beyond normal background magnetic susceptibility levels.

Ultimately, after three days in the field, we had identified a roughly 1.3-acre anomaly of culturally modified soils. Furthermore, the location of this anomaly matches almost perfectly the location of the "W" in "Wighkawameck" on the Herrman map.

Well, needless to say, we entered into immediate negotiations with M-NCPPC about that possibility of holding the 2019 Field Session at Billingsley. And by immediate, I mean...that day...in the field! M-NCPPC agreed, and this year I will be serving as co-principal investigator, alongside Stephanie Sperling of M-NCPPC.

Be sure to keep an eye on the ASM and MHT webpages over the next few weeks for detailed information about volunteering and how to access the site. We hope to see you at Billingsley, May 24 to June 3, as we search for evidence of the last documented village of the Patuxent Indians in Maryland.

The Spencer O. Geasey Memorial Lecture will be held Thursday, May 30 from 6 to 8 p.m. Stephanie Sperling will provide an archeological overview of the Patuxent River's Jug Bay area from the comfort of a pontoon boat. The boat will launch from Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park and since the capacity of the boat is limited, go to the ASM website and sign up quickly, Kristin Montaperto will be on land to provide for the others a behind-the-scenes tour of the Mount Calvert grounds and museum exhibits.

No other evening or lunch-time lectures are planned, as of this time.

Camping is available on the Mount Calvert grounds. Some of the nearby hotels are:

-- Comfort Inn Conference Center Bowie, 4500 Crain Hwy., Bowie, 20716. 301-464-0089

-- Hampton Inn Bowie, 15202 Major Lansdale Blvd, Bowie, 20716. 301-809-1800

-- Sleep Inn & Suites Near Joint Base Andrews, 9310 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro. 20772 301-599-9400

**For updated information on field session activities, check the ASM website.**

## Chapter News

In addition to the listed chapters, ASM has chapters at Hood College and the Community College of Baltimore County and a club at Huntingtown High School in Calvert County, run by Jeff Cunningham; visit its website, <http://hhsarchaeology.weebly.com/>

### Anne Arundel

Anne Arundel Chapter will be meeting at the Schmidt Center at SERC, the second Tuesday of each month, 7 to 9 p.m. Parking in front of the venue. For information, contact Jim Gibb at [JamesGGibb@verizon.net](mailto:JamesGGibb@verizon.net)

### Central Chapter

Meets the third Friday every other month at the Natural History Society of Maryland at 6908 Belair Road in Baltimore. Business meeting begins at 7, talk at 7:30. For information contact [centralchapterasm@yahoo.com](mailto:centralchapterasm@yahoo.com) or [stephenisrael2701@comcast.net](mailto:stephenisrael2701@comcast.net) or 410-945-5514. Or [www.facebook.com/asmcentralchapter](http://www.facebook.com/asmcentralchapter) or <http://asmcentralchapter.weebly.com> or Twitter [@asmcentral](https://twitter.com/asmcentral)

**May 17:** Armand Lione will talk on "The Anacostan Natives of Washington, DC - A Rich History That's Been Left Untold."

## Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May) at the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Carol Cowherd at [ccasm2010@gmail.com](mailto:ccasm2010@gmail.com). Website [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com) and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

## 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 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) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768)

**May 16:** Montgomery County Parks archeologist Cassandra Michaud will give an update on the archeology and progress of the museum construction at the Josiah Henson Park.

## Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. For more information, visit the chapter's web page at [digfrederick.com](http://digfrederick.com) or call 301-378-0212. The chapter does not meet in July or August.

**May 8:** Joe Adkins, deputy director for planning for the City of Frederick, will present information about the city's archeological processes. Recently the city hired the firm, Johnson, Miriram and Thompson of Hunt Valley to serve on an "as needed" basis for archeology in the city. It is not clear what this means.

## Northern Chesapeake

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>

**Sunday, May 19:** Annual Picnic Meeting. Eden Mill Nature Center, Pylesville.

## St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph D. Carter State Office Building in the Russell Conference Room, Leonardtown. For information contact Chris Coogan at [Cicoogan@smcm.edu](mailto:Cicoogan@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](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358) or [www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com](http://www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com) or try [uparchaeologygroup@gmail.com](mailto:uparchaeologygroup@gmail.com)

**May 13:** Photogrammetry to document archeological sites, Brian Crane.

**June 10:** The Search for Camp Johnson Civil War Encampment. B&O Ellicott City Station Museum.

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

**May 11:** Re-scheduled field trip to the French & Indian War era Ashby's Fort in West Virginia.

**June 28:** Artifact Analysis Workshop conducted by Suzanne Trussell.

**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 Ethan Bean, 609 N. Paca Street, Apt. 3, Baltimore, MD 21201 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](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

**Submissions.** 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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