

# ASM Ink

March 2015, Vol. 42, No. 3

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



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

## Archeology Workshop coming up March 28

The annual Workshop in Archeology will take place Saturday, March 28. Sponsored by the Maryland Historical Trust, the meeting location has moved to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Anne Arundel County.

ASM is losing its longtime use of the Trust's Crownsville facility as the state moves its operations from there to other locations. But the Workshop format remains the same. Doors open at 9, welcoming speeches start at 9:30 and the talks begin at 9:45. As usual, the program is divided into four segments, with three of them offering a choice of presentations.

The exception, as usual, is the first segment when only one talk is offered. This year it will be Rod Cofield talking on early Chesapeake taverns. The executive director of Historic London Town, his talk with focus on detailing how the taverns were an important part of Colonial life.

The second morning segment offers the traditional choices. One is Greg Katz of the Louis Berger Group talking about last year's dig in Baltimore's Patterson Park searching for traces of a War of 1812 site that figured prominently in saving the city from a British attack.

The 11:15 other program has Austin Burkhard, a student at the University of West Florida, describing an underwater wreck-tagging program the Fish and Wildlife Service has undertaken at Chincoteague, Virginia, looking at its two-year history and some of the data collected.

After lunch, Sara Rivers-Cofield of the MAC Lab will explore how signs of faith and the supernatural fit into the historical picture. In the second talk in this period Jim Gibb will talk about SERC's multi-year, multi-disciplinary look into how the peoples in the Rhode River area have changed their ecosystem.

In the final segment of the day, Bill Utley of the Institute of Maritime History will discuss what to do when ordnance enters into the archeological picture either on land or under water. There is a lot of misinformation about it and he will talk about safety and when to call for assistance.

Also, a preview of this year's ASM field school will be offered. For the third straight year, we will be going back to the interesting and productive Biggs Ford Site in Frederick County. A summary of what was learned in the last two years will segue into what is hoped for in 2015.

A third afternoon program is a two-session CAT historic overview presentation, given by Silas Hurry and Kate Dinnel. Intended for CAT candidates, others will be admitted if there is room.

### Important notes:

- Lunch offerings onsite are limited. There are options a few miles away on MD Route 2, but the scheduled lunch break is only 75 minutes. Participants are encouraged to bring their lunch.
- SERC is a wildlife area, the speed limit is 15 m.p.h. and they are serious about that.
- Directions to get to the meeting sites are in the attached flier. Once on Contees Wharf Road, follow the signs to the Schmidt Center and nearby Mathias Laboratory.
- Book sales and exhibits will be available all day at the Mathias Laboratory.
- Admission is \$5 for ASM members and students, \$7 for the general public.

## Upcoming events

**March 7:** ASM board meeting, 10 a.m., Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

**March 28:** Annual Archeology Workshop. Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

**April 18:** Discovering Archaeology Day. Jefferson Patterson Park. 10-5.

**April 25:** Spring Symposium, Howard Community College.

**May 22 – June 1:** Field session at Biggs Ford Site in Frederick County.

**October 9 – 19:** Fall field school. Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

**October 24:** Annual meeting, Oregon Ridge Nature Center.

## Volunteer opportunities

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

**ASM Tuesday Volunteer Lab:** The lab in Crownsville will be open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 3. Contact Louise Akerson at [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall at [charles.hall@maryland.gov](mailto:charles.hall@maryland.gov)

A volunteer opportunity is available at a **17<sup>th</sup> Century site in Edgewater** in Anne Arundel County, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, with Jim Gibb [jamesggibb@verizon.net](mailto:jamesggibb@verizon.net) and Laura Cripps [lcripps@howardcc.edu](mailto: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](mailto:jamesggibb@verizon.net)

**Montgomery County** offers opportunities for lab and field work. Lab is at Needwood Mansion in Derwood on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and the first Tuesday evening of each month (except July and August). 301-563-7531 or contact [heather.bouslog@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@montgomeryparks.org). CAT opportunity.

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County welcomes volunteers for its prolific Pig Point prehistoric site. Fridays. Call Jasmine Gollup 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 historic overview presentation will be offered as part of the Workshop in Archeology March 28 (See flier.) For information on the CAT program, visit the ASM website.

**Final warning: Have you renewed yet?**

# Skull ID off by 500 years, 2,000 miles

By Michael E. Ruane

*Condensed from the Washington Post, February 6, 2015*

The skull of the suspected Civil War soldier arrived at the Smithsonian in a square box. The lower jaw was missing, as were four front teeth and some nasal bones, but otherwise it was in remarkable condition, considering that it was thought to have been in the ground at Gettysburg since 1863.

The skull made headlines last year when it was saved from the auction block by public outrage. It was due for a soldier's burial once it had been checked by the Smithsonian's experts.

But the moment veteran anthropologist Douglas Owsley set eyes on it, he knew it wasn't as advertised. It wasn't from Gettysburg. And it didn't date from 1863. It was far older than that. The "Gettysburg skull" was that of a young Native American man who lived about 700 years ago, 2,000 miles away in Arizona or New Mexico.

How could the skull of a man who had lived in the Southwest around the year 1300 be pegged as that of a Civil War veteran and almost get offered at an auction in Hagerstown, Md., last spring?

Officials at the Smithsonian, the National Park Service and the Gettysburg Foundation, which now owns the skull, have been trying to sort it all out. But for the moment, they have reached a dead end.

"The case is suspended, pending further information," but it's not closed, said Ed Clark, superintendent at Gettysburg National Military Park. "There's a lot of questions unanswered."

The story began last year when a Pennsylvania auctioneer named Tom Taylor placed the skull, along with several other supposed Civil War artifacts, in an auction that was to take place in June in Hagerstown. A handwritten label with the items stated: "Found at the Benner Farm Gettysburg 1949."

The skull came with a document stating that it had been found near a barn on the farm about two miles north of Gettysburg. The barn had served as a field hospital, according to the document.

But when word got out about the auction, negative public reaction was so fierce that Taylor pulled the skull from the sale. "I'm not going to sell something if there are too many people upset about it," he said. "It's kind of a morbid thing to begin with."

Clark, the Gettysburg park superintendent, said, "The prospect of selling and buying American soldiers' remains is just crazy."

After the outcry, the skull was donated to the Gettysburg Foundation, the national battlefield's private partner, he said. The plan was that once the skull was authenticated, it would be buried with full military honors in the cemetery where Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address.

Then science intervened. The skull was delivered by the Park Service to a lab at the Smithsonian last June 26. Owsley and colleague Kari Bruwelheide knew right away it didn't fit the story.

"First reaction is: It's not what they think it is," said Owsley. It had a "relatively flat face, [which] gets into Indian characteristics," and a wide, robust structure that wouldn't be that of a white or black person in Pennsylvania, he said. Plus, its condition was too good, Owsley said.

In the 1990s, he examined 15 sets of remains in a 19th Century cemetery in Gettysburg during a building project. So he has a good idea of how buried remains from that time and place should look. Because of the moist soil in southern Pennsylvania, this skull should have been far more deteriorated. It would have been in "multiple pieces," Owsley said.

A piece of tooth was sent to the University of Georgia where radiocarbon dating reported that the skull was about seven centuries old. Other tests suggested that the individual's diet was mainly corn and that he probably originated in southwestern New Mexico or southeastern Arizona, Owsley said.

He said the person was in his early 20s and could have been a member of a tribe such as the Zuni.

Neither Owsley nor Bruwelheide was surprised by the test results, which confirmed their hunches. "This is not the only example of this sort of thing that we've dealt with," Bruwelheide said. "In these types of cases, it's more unusual that [the story is] real than that it's not real."

"Now that it's taken this . . . pretty unexpected and spectacular turn . . . we still stand where we respect [that] this is a human individual," Clark, the battlefield superintendent, said. "We're still trying to figure out what's the best course of action."

# Archeology's most exciting time? Now

By Sarah Parcak

*Condensed from Slate, October 3, 2013*

Many of my fellow archeologists lament being alive today. They say, "If only we had lived in the great age of archeological discovery—we could have seen Egypt in her glory days, witnessed Tut's tomb being found or adventured with Hiram Bingham to find Machu Picchu."

I like a good archeological adventure (I've had many) and it would have been amazing to be part of the expedition that discovered Machu Picchu in 1911. But what if Hiram Bingham had the technology to find hundreds of other archeological sites at the same time and create entire 3-D maps of the ancient landscape accurate to within a few inches?

This is called space archeology. And it is happening right now. That's why I believe today is the most exciting time in history to be an archeologist.

Space archeology refers to the use of space- and air-based sensor systems to discover ancient settlements, cultural remains and natural features (like relic river courses) otherwise invisible to the naked eye or hidden due to vegetation and water.

Archeologists use datasets from NASA and commercial satellites, processing the information using various off-the-shelf computer programs. These datasets allow us to see beyond the visible part of the light spectrum into the near, middle and far infrared. These spectral differences can show subtle differences in vegetation, soil and geology which then can reveal hidden ancient features. Satellite datasets like WorldView can see objects as small as 1.5 feet in diameter. In 2014, WorldView-3 will be able to see objects as small as a foot.

Another important sensor system is LIDAR (which stands for Light Detection and Ranging). LIDAR uses lasers to scan terrain in fine detail and even penetrate dense rainforest canopy, allowing archeologists to see beneath the trees to reveal features of interest, from large monuments to small, subtle remnants of ancient homes and road systems.

Then the real fun begins. Once archeologists have shown possible "new" ancient features, they can import the data into their iPads and take it to the field to do survey or excavation work. Technology doesn't mean we aren't digging in the dirt anymore—it's just that we know better *where* to dig.

Using this technology, archeologists have found many thousands of unknown sites. I've used satellite datasets in Egypt—I believe we have still found less than 1 percent of its sites—to show ancient settlements, tombs and even some potential pyramids. We collaborated with a French team at the site of Tanis to test high-resolution imagery that showed nearly the entire layout of the ancient city.

Across the globe, archeologists are making amazing discoveries from satellite and aerial imagery (including Google Earth). A team working at the famous Mayan site of Caracol have shown hundreds of new structures using LIDAR data. In Syria, archeologists have revealed thousands of previously unknown settlements. In Cambodia, LIDAR data recently revealed an entirely new ancient settlement deep in the rainforest.

We are also now able to map patterns of archeological site looting from space. The high-resolution imagery shows looting pits, which have a distinct shape compared to excavation units. In Egypt alone, we've seen looting increase more than 500 percent since the start of the Arab Spring at some well-known sites.

So, is the fun of archeology now gone? I say that things have only gotten more exciting. What "fun" is there in randomly searching for features or sites, hoping that, perhaps, you might locate something? It is far more beneficial (and much better science) to archeology to know exactly where to go and look. Also, with funding and time restrictions, we need to be much more efficient.

As it turns out, the great age of archeological discovery has only just begun.

## Silent Auction to be held during April Symposium

ASM will be holding its Silent Auction at the April 25 Spring Symposium again and it looking for items. The auction's success depends on you. What can you contribute? What can you get a local business to offer? Time is short so act now. Submission and donation forms are with this newsletter.

## Book review: *Lives in Ruins* – get it?

*Lives in Ruins*, by Marilyn Johnson, Harper Collins, 275 pages, \$26

Marilyn Johnson is a professional writer who chose archeology as the subject of her latest book, archeology and the people who inhabit that world. Her chatty account follows her travels as she seeks knowledge and runs into various interesting people and situations (including Maryland's Douglas Comer, briefly).

She looks for sites and people to illustrate a wide slice of archeology's scope. "We think we know what archeologists do, but, like librarians, they toil behind an obscuring stereotype," she writes. The stereotype is the obvious one. Still, she notes, "every archeologist I interviewed worked Indiana Jones into the conversation."

Though she is a tourist in the field, she is an engaged one. She takes courses and goes to out-of-the-way sites and field schools. "I really wanted to see the earth through archeologists' eyes. What do they observe in a pile of ruins? How does a shard of pottery or an ancient tooth help them piece together the past? How can they help us recapture and preserve our history?"

Her travels take her to places widely known or little known, each picked to show another aspect of or problem of archeology. She goes from high in the mountains of Peru (no, not Machu Pichu) to an underwater site off Cyprus to the New York state military post of Fort Drum. There is a forgotten Revolutionary War burial ground and the problem of saving war-zone treasures from friendly fire.

"The tension between keeping a site secret so it won't get looted and publicizing it so it can be preserved and appreciated is a constant," she writes.

The title has the obvious humorous meaning, but the words beyond the humor intrude too. She meets people whose devotion to archeology has left them job-hungry if not totally hungry. One PhD with years of field experience went through 300 job applications after his post dried up. With an archeologist wife and some children to support, he worked for a while in a bike shop. Another worked as a maid so she could keep digging. Another sold postcards.

The book suffers from a paucity of illustrations - there is not one picture or map - but has an extensive bibliography. One quibble: The little gizmos that indicate a footnote are so small that they are easily overlooked and one then has to figure out what the footnote amplifies.

-- Myron Beckenstein

## Productive 132-year-old sight wasn't loaded

By Henry Brean Condensed from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, January 25, 2015

Eva Jensen spotted the Winchester Model 1873 rifle leaning against a juniper tree on a remote outcrop in early November, during a federally mandated archeological survey of an area where in the Great Basin National Park plans to trim trees and remove brush to reduce the impact of wildfires.

The butt of the old Winchester was buried in four or five inches of dirt and debris from the tree. The metal was rusted. The stock looked like just another scrap of old, weathered wood.

Once their excitement died down, she said, "we documented it the way we do any artifact." They returned a week later, after seeking out some advice on how best to remove it.

They plan to return to the area in the spring for a more thorough search using metal detectors. They will also explore the possibility, however remote, that the owner of the rifle is still up there.

The gun was uncocked, its chamber and magazine empty when Jensen found it.

## 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](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) or the chapter website <http://www.aachapasm.org/calendar.html>

### Central Maryland

For information contact on Central Chapter, contact [centralchapterasm@yahoo.com](mailto:centralchapterasm@yahoo.com) or Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@verizon.net](mailto:ssisrael@verizon.net)

### 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](mailto:sarahgrady11@gmail.com) or 410-533-1390. Chapter website is [charlescoasm.org](http://charlescoasm.org) and its blog is [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com)

**March 12:** Don Shomette on "The Ghost Fleet of Mallows Bay."

**April 9:** Rebecca Morehouse will highlight several Charles County collections stored at the MAC Lab.

**May 14:** Doug Zabel on "The Basics of Rocks."

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion, 6700 Needwood Road, Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org) or 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) Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768>

**March 19:** Vivian Eicke, the chapter's immediate past president, will speak on archeological sites and places in Ireland.

**April 16:** Geologist Don Mullis on "The Importance of Developing a Geomorphological Site Conceptual Model for Archeological Sites- It Can Really Add a Lot to the Story."

**May 21:** Elizabeth Bollwerk, archeological analyst at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in Charlottesville, Va. will speak on a topic still to be determined.

**June 11:** (note this is the *second* Thursday) Annual Picnic at Needwood Mansion from 6 to 9:30 p.m.

### 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.

**March 11:** "The Making of a Trail of Indian History on the C & O Canal" by Margaret Coleman, president of the Sugarloaf Regional Trails organization, and Virginia Busby, of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs.

**April 8:** "Bison in the East: A Story of Pigs, People, and Pigeons" by Stephen R. Potter, regional archeologist, National Capital Region, National Park Service.



## 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>

**March 11:** "The Levant Comes of Age: The 9th Century B.C.E. Through Script Traditions". Dr. Heather Parker, Harford Jewish Center.

**April 24:** Friday. Doug Owsley of the Smithsonian will deliver the Cresthull Memorial Lecture, on Written in Bone. Harford Community College, Edgewood Hall, Room E132.

**June 6:** Annual ASNC picnic meeting, Rock Church and "Beehive" Historic Site, MD 273 at Little Elk Creek, in Cecil County.

## St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at St. Francis Xavier Church in Newtown. For information contact Scott Lawrence at [graveconcerns@md.metrocast.net](mailto:graveconcerns@md.metrocast.net)

**March 16:** Julie King, subject TBD.

**April 20:** Scott Lawrence will talk on recovery and restoration at St. Nicholas Church cemetery.

**May 18:** Patricia Samford offers a presentation on King's Reach.

## Upper Patuxent

Meets the second Monday at 7 p.m. at 9944 Route 108 in Ellicott City. Labs are the second and fourth Saturdays. For information contact Dave Cavey at 410-747-0093 or [hoplite1@comcast.net](mailto:hoplite1@comcast.net) On Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358> or try [UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com](mailto:UPArchaeologygroup@yahoo.com) or <http://uparchaeologygroup.weebly.com/>

**March 9:** Dave Peters will talk on "Pipe Stem Dating of Six Historic Sites in Harford County."

## 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>

**March 27:** Survey of Choptico Indian Town at St. Mary's, by Susanne Trussell.

**April 24:** Overwhelmed by the Sea: A report on sites at Point Lookout State Park by Lynne Bulhack.



**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 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](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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