



ASM Ink

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www.marylandarcheology.org

City of Frederick passes archeology law

Frederick has become the second city in Maryland to enact legislation to protect archeological sites, following the lead of Annapolis.

The action came in a unanimous vote by the Board of Alderman July 23 and followed a three-year campaign spearheaded by local archeologists and assisted by archeologists from around the state.

"It's a historical moment for Frederick city," said Barbara Wyatt, the city's historic preservation planner.

"The [Maryland Historical] Trust supports the implementation of historic preservation programs on the local level and actively assists counties and cities in developing their programs," said Maureen Kavanagh, head of the Trust's Office of Archeology. "Hopefully this ordinance will serve as a model for other jurisdictions that have an interest in preserving and interpreting their history through archeology."

"The new Frederick City code ... is the result of a grass-roots effort of avocational archeologists in the Frederick area, and it is a notable success," said ASM President Carol Ebright.

The new requirements apply to subdivision plat approval, applications for grading or building permits that involve ground disturbance of 5,000 square feet or more and any building permits for ground disturbance in parcels containing inventoried archeological sites or within National Register or locally designated archeological or historic sites or districts.

If the preliminary study indicates a property doesn't contain artifacts, the restrictions end. If valuable artifacts appear likely to be found, the landowner can alter his development plans to show how building can take place without touching the artifacts or he can conduct a more detailed archeological study.

"One of the strengths of the new legislation is that it is modeled after the approach used by state and federal agencies for reviewing impacts to archeological resources," Ms. Kavanagh said.

"The city planning department will work with an archeologist whose professional qualifications meet those established by the Secretary of the Interior in the field of archeology."

"It's a well-honed document that may serve as a model for the state," said Ms. Wyatt, adding that the new law shows protections can be put in place without being overly restrictive.

Jack Lynch, a local amateur archeologist who led the drive for the new ordinance and eventually secured the support of Frederick city planners, said the new law doesn't stop development but gives the city time to find and study its history before development proceeds.

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An introduction to this month's field school. Page 3

The government's surprise stance on NAGPRA. Page 4

Upcoming events

September 9-11: Annual conference, Society for the Preservation of Old Mills, Westminster. Includes Mason-Dixon tour. For information, contact Bob or Jane Sewell at 410-833-2313 or see www.spoon.org

September 10: ASM board meeting, 10 a.m., Crownsville. All are welcome.

September 16-25: ASM field school. Swan Cove, Anne Arundel County.

September 17-18: 13th Annual Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians Native American Festival. Sailwinds Park, Cambridge, Maryland. Saturday 1-7 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call 410-376-3889.

September 24: "12,000 Years Before Columbus-American Indian Artifact Exhibit." Billed as Delmarva's largest artifact exhibit ever. Featuring projectile points, tools, pottery, flint knapping, rope and twine making, fire making, prehistoric life skills demonstration and artifact identification booth. North County Branch of the Caroline County Public Library, 101 Cedar Lane, Greensboro, Md., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information, contact Richard O. Smith at 410-482-2173 or rsmith@caro.lib.md.us

October 15: ASM Annual Meeting, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Cumberland. Theme: French and Indian War.

October 21 - 23: Developing International Geoarchaeology meeting, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. DIG 2005 is aimed at promoting and encouraging the application of the geological sciences to archeological problems. Information at www.dig2005.com

November 9-13: ESAF meeting, Williamsburg, Virginia. www.esaf-archeology.org

Volunteer opportunities

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

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

ASM field session collection: Volunteers are needed to work on up-grading collections associated with previous field sessions. Currently, the collection from the Rosenstock Site, a key Late Woodland Montgomery Complex area, is being upgraded. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. For additional information contact Louise Akerson rakerson@comcast.net or Charlie Hall hall@dhcd.state.md.us.

The Lost Towns Project of Anne Arundel County. 410-222-7441.

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its various activities, including archeology, historical research and artifact conservation. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 410-586-8501.

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 archaeology.

CAT corner

For updates and for information on CAT activities check the ASM website or contact your mentor or director Chris Davenport. He can be reached at 301-845-8092 or dig4funds@aol.com

Special fieldwork opportunity: Richard Ervin of SHA is working on the Broad Creek Cemetery, a 17th through 19th Century cemetery on Kent Island. On occasion and on very short notice, it is necessary for him to conduct emergency excavations in preparation for new interments. Contact him at 410-545-2878 (days), 410-643-7128 (evenings) or by email at rervin@sha.state.md.us

Lost Towns awaiting '05 field school

By Jane Cox

Lost Towns Project

As the summer heat begins to fade, our thoughts are turning to the September ASM field session, to be held at Swan Cove in Anne Arundel County for the second year. Last season, more than 70 five-by-five foot plowzone units were excavated, revealing more than 20 intact and stratified features.

A report on the exciting discoveries from the 2004 field session was produced over the winter. We encourage prospective field school participants to review the report prior to the field session. A digital copy can be found at www.losttowns.com

This season, the team will focus on excavating stratified features, while continuing to expose additional features through plowzone excavation. We will continue excavations in and around the complex of pipe-related features, in particular looking for additional evidence for the structure that once stood in the area.

We also plan to excavate plowzone units further "uphill" to see if Drue's industrial complex is even larger than currently thought. The ASM field school also will excavate in the adjacent later domestic dwelling (the "Merriday house") which will include excavations of a deep and well-stratified cellar hole dating to the early 18th Century.

The Lost Towns team will work on feature excavation with small teams of ASMers. This will be a little slower going than last year's pace, but it will offer participants an opportunity to excavate intact and complex stratigraphy. So sharpen your trowels and bring your spoons! Few field schools actually have the personnel, resources and time to do this!

Three features already have been tested, which will offer a guidebook for excavation and it promises to be an educational experience. Three large pit features will be completed in September, along with several smaller features, like the series of postholes and postmolds that appear to make up one edge of a Drue complex post in ground structure.

As we did last year, we look forward to sharing the historic background and context of this 17th Century site through lectures and workshops.

The Lost Towns team looks forward to seeing you soon!

A list of speakers for the session has been announced, three lunchtime lectures on site and at evening lecture. All are by members of the Lost Towns staff. Another lunchtime talk is a possibility.

On the first Saturday, lab director Cara Fama will give field school participants an overview of 17th Century artifacts, such as may be found on the site. Monday, Jane Cox will talk about the Providence settlement. On the second Saturday, Tony Lindauer plans to give participants a chance to try making clay pipes the 17th Century way.

The evening talk will be Tuesday at 7:30 at Londontown and will be given by Lost Towns director Al Luckenbach.

JefPat looking for a few good wigwam makers – right now

From September 1 through 4, Jefferson Patterson staff and volunteers will complete work on a replica Woodland Indian wigwam and work shelter. Jeff Gottlieb, a knowledgeable and experienced craftsman of replica indigenous tools and shelters, is leading the project and asking for volunteers who are handy with cutting tools, know how to tie square lashing with frapping, have a reasonably strong back and are comfortable on a ladder.

During the weekend, JPPM invites volunteers to camp overnight while they work. The park will also provide coolers of water and snacks during the day.

For more information contact Kelly Mackall at 410-586-8502 or mackall@dhcd.state.md.us

U.S. now supports Kennewick ruling

In a move that took the archeological community by total surprise, the U.S. Interior Department has come out against a pending congressional amendment that would broaden the scope of NAGPRA, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act.

Citing NAGPRA, the government had thwarted or attempted to thwart all efforts to examine the bones of the Kennewick Man discovered in 1996 in Washington state, and buried the site under tons of debris.

After a federal court found in *Bonnichsen v. United States* that NAGPRA did not apply to the Kennewick Man because there was no link established between the remains and any existing tribe, a move was initiated in Congress to expand NAGPRA to include no-longer existing peoples.

During a hearing on the proposal before a Senate committee July 28, Interior Department representative Paul Hoffman said that the department "does not support the amendment." He said: "In *Bonnichsen* the 9th Circuit concluded that congressional intent was 'to give American Indians control over the remains of their genetic and cultural forbearers, not over the remains of people bearing no special and significant genetic or cultural relationship to some presently existing indigenous tribe, people or culture.'

"We believe that NAGPRA should protect the sensibilities of currently existing tribes, cultures and people while balancing the need to learn about past cultures and customs. In the situation where remains are not significantly related to any existing tribe, people or culture they should be available for appropriate scientific analysis. The proposed legislation would shift away from this balance."

Judith Bense, president of the Society of Historical Archeologists, called the stance "a complete surprise."

"I hear that the reversal of opinion came from Department of Interior Secretary Norton who studied the ruling of the 9th Circuit Court on the Kennewick case and felt that it set precedent," she wrote in an email.

Summarizing NAGPRA's effect to date, Hoffman said that "in the last 15 years, museums and federal agencies have announced their willingness to repatriate the remains of 31,093 individuals. Another 110,000 human remains were listed as 'culturally unidentifiable.' "

Indian holy ground: A church vs. state issue?

By Brad Knickerbocker

Condensed from the Christian Science Monitor, August 4, 2005

ASHLAND, ORE. -- The relationship between government and religion has been a complicated issue ever since the architects of the new American republic made it the lead item in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Thomas Jefferson argued for "a wall of separation between church and state."

It remains a difficult legal and political issue, as witness the U.S. Supreme Court's recent split decisions on public displays of the Ten Commandments. It may be even more complex involving claims by native Americans, whose spiritual and religious practices are so connected to what they see as holy ground.

A series of court cases and federal agency policy decisions have attempted to thread subtle differences between the constitutional protection of the "free exercise" of religion and the equally important prohibition against the "establishment" of religion.

Critics say that declarations of hallowed ground by the federal government -- just as in cases involving Christmas creches and other religious displays -- go against the First Amendment.

Ruling in an Arizona case, brought by gravel pit owner Dale McKinnon, three 9th Circuit judges saw things differently. "Because of the unique status of Native American societies in North American history, protecting Native American shrines and other culturally important sites has historical value for the nation as a whole, much like Greece's preservation of the Parthenon," wrote Judge Betty Fletcher.

Among the more well-known sites at least partially protected because of their religious and cultural importance to Native Americans are Medicine Wheel and Devil's Tower in Wyoming, Rainbow Bridge in Utah, and Cave Rock on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe.

Related to such cases is the history of "Kennewick Man," the 9,300-year-old skeleton found on federal land in central Washington State in 1996.

9 years later, Indians are still waiting

By Evelyn Nieves

Condensed from the Washington Post, August 5, 2005

BROWNING, Mont. -- Nine years have ticked away since Elouise Cobell sued the government on behalf of as many as 500,000 Native Americans whose land the United States was supposed to manage. But the end of what has become the longest, largest class action lawsuit against the federal government remains nowhere in sight.

Sometimes, when Cobell returns home here to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in northwest Montana from Washington, where the case is being heard in U.S. District Court, she feels buoyed by a development she thinks might help settle the case once and for all. But the feeling is fleeting.

Last week, a major victory was still fresh; Judge Royce C. Lamberth had issued his most scathing critique of the Interior Department's handling of the Indians and the case. Lamberth cited Interior's "mismanagement, falsification, spite and obstinate litigiousness," among other failings, and his disgust was palpable.

"Perhaps Interior's past and present leaders have been evil people, deriving their pleasure from inflicting harm on society's most vulnerable," he wrote in the extraordinary, 34-page July 12 ruling, which agreed with the plaintiffs' claim that the department's information was unreliable.

But Cobell was preoccupied by a bill to settle the case that was introduced July 20 by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Byron L. Dorgan (N.D.), chairman and ranking Democrat of the Indian Affairs Committee. The bill, which the senators called "a starting point," was far from the remedy Indian leaders had hoped for, Cobell said.

"This bill proposes a formula for accounting that looks at the trust records from 1980 to 2005," Cobell said when she returned here from testifying. "The judge has already ruled that Interior has to make an accounting going back to the beginning."

In 1994, six years after Congress began oversight hearings into the mismanagement of Indian trusts going back for decades, it passed a law ordering a special trustee to monitor the accounting of the trusts and creating a plan for reforming the system. The 1996 lawsuit followed after the first special trustee resigned in protest of what he said were attempts to obstruct his efforts to reconcile accounts.

Current Interior Secretary Gale Norton and her predecessor, Bruce Babbitt, have said it is impossible to provide a full historical accounting of the trusts -- there are said to be about 300,000 accounts, incorporating perhaps 500,000 individual beneficiaries, with combined balances in the trust of \$500 million to \$800 million.

But Interior officials say that as they perform a historical accounting of the trusts ordered by Lamberth -- an effort costing \$100 million so far -- their research, performed by using statistical sampling, has shown that the trust holders are owed little for their land.

James E. Cason, the associate deputy secretary for the Interior, told the Indian Affairs Committee last month, "In Congress, they argue against providing funding for that accounting; in court, they argue that the accounting is impossible. . . . Instead of an accounting, they want lots of money."

This stance infuriates the plaintiffs. What they object to, they say, is the Interior Department's taking money from already underfunded Indian health and education programs to fund its defense against the lawsuit. And they say Interior is basing its accounting on records that date only since 1985.

From the start of the Indian trusts, accounting has been a problem. Allotment holders would receive Treasury checks with no additional paperwork. They were not told who leased their land, what it was used for, how much was used or the price the company paid for obtaining the land's oil, timber or other resource.

Recent history has also revealed problems.

In 1999, Treasury's financial management office destroyed 162 boxes of trust documents as Interior officials were telling the court they were searching for the records. A court-appointed master assigned to oversee the preservation production of documents found that Treasury violated ethical rules for not reporting the documents' destruction for 16 months. He called the trust system "clearly out of control."

Interior has appealed every major ruling in the case. Last week, it appealed Lamberth's July 12 order, in which he ordered Interior to include notices in its correspondence with Indians whose land the government holds in trust, warning them that the government's information may not be credible. Interior was issued a stay pending a ruling next month.

Baltimore kids try their hand at digging

By Justin Fenton

Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, July 30, 2005

Sifting through buckets of dirt in a Hampden backyard, 15-year-old Anthony Williams believes he has found something to add to the plastic bag of pottery and glass bottle fragments at his feet. He bounds over to David Gadsby, one of two graduate students leading the dig, and shows him the potential artifact.

"That," Gadsby says, "is a rock."

It doesn't matter. Since the beginning of the month, Williams and other city students have been digging through people's backyards in and around Hampden, searching for anything that might help paint a better picture of working-class Baltimore during the 1800s.

With the help of four teens -- three of them funded through the city's YouthWorks program -- Gadsby and Bob Chidester are hoping to discover more about the neighborhood's mill workers. Sometimes, they come across items that could be useful. Other times, it's just another hole in Paula Carder's lawn.

"Anything we find helps us learn about the daily lives of Baltimore's working class," Gadsby said. "Generally, people not represented in the historical record are the poor. This, hopefully, is a way to address that."

They just started working in Carder's sloping lawn and had dug four holes as of Thursday. The University of Maryland, College Park's Center for Heritage Resource Studies is sponsoring the six-week project as part of an effort to see whether a longer dig in the area is worth pursuing.

The findings in urban digs usually aren't awe-inspiring at first -- or even appear to rate a second glance -- but can help provide a better description of how people lived during the time period, said Charles Hall, the state's land archeologist.

"It's not glamorous stuff, but you're not looking for anything of intrinsic value like gold or diamonds," Hall said. "It's more about what these objects can tell us about these people's lives. History records the stories of folks who write it. And there's an awful lot who don't write, who work and struggle and don't ever have the opportunity to write history."

Mundane items such as the bottles and pottery can be dated, either through the level of strata from which they are recovered or the type of material they are made of. Combined with known historical facts from the area, these items can be used to fill in the blanks of how mill workers lived.

Sometimes, the simple findings yield extraordinary results. While working on the Lost Towns Project in Anne Arundel County four years ago, Gadsby was able to fit together four different pieces of a pipe from the 1600s. It was one of a number of discoveries from Providence, Anne Arundel's oldest European settlement, that turned out to be the earliest examples of manufacturing in the New World.

Hampden grew out of a cluster of houses built for workers in 1802 by the owners of flour and cotton mills along the Jones Falls Valley.

The square holes are carefully measured, then dug no deeper than 20 centimeters until hitting the subsoil, an orange clay surface. Gadsby and Chidester, a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, do most of the technical work to ensure proper scientific methods are followed. The students help with that technical work and then dive into the dirt to search for historical items.

So far, Gadsby says, they've found pottery, marbles, glass bottles, a tiny porcelain doll, and a piece of a chandelier.

"We didn't think we [were] going to find nothing," said Williams, who after weeks of digging still gets a kick out of every fragment he discovers.

Not only do they get to dig all day and participate in a doctoral thesis project, but the teens are getting paid. Through the city's YouthWorks program, which last year placed 5,000 students in jobs, three local students were directed to the project and receive minimum wage. The Hampden Community Council provided funds for the fourth student.

Williams, a 10th-grader at W.E.B. DuBois High School, thinks he's found a future career -- or at least a future hobby.

"I'm gonna do this next summer. And in the winter," he said.

ASM license plates are available

Have you seen the special ASM license plates and wished you too could have a set? Wish no more, they are still being offered to ASM members. Here's how to get yours:

--- Write to Tyler Bastian, 13047 Penn Shop Road, Mt. Airy, MD, 21771-4565, asking for MVA form VR-124, or get one from your MVA office.

--- Send the completed form to Tyler, enclosing two checks. One should be made out to the MVA for \$25 (its fee for the organizational plate) and one to ASM for \$10. Tyler then will sign the form on behalf of ASM and send it to the MVA. Your plates will be ready in a few weeks.

When you pick up your new plates, you must turn in your current plates, if you have any. The ASM plates will arrive with a new registration form and new stickers (with the old expiration date). Renewals are handed by MVA in the same way and at the same cost as standard plates.

The \$25 MVA cost is a one-time charge and the check to ASM is tax-deductible.

If you have any questions, contact Tyler at 301-829-1172 or contact Mary Beard, MVA Title Correspondence Unit, 410-787-2968.

D.C. iron casket offers peak at 1850s

By Michael E. Ruane

Condensed from the Washington Post, August 14, 2005

The mysterious boy on the Smithsonian laboratory table had probably died of pneumonia about 1850 -- too sick to eat and delirious from fever.

His body had been dressed in a pleated shirt, finely tailored waistcoat and white sateen trousers and buried in an elegant iron coffin along Columbia Road NW in the District.

His remains were amazingly well preserved: He was five feet tall, dark haired and looked about 13. Beyond that, almost nothing was known. Who was he? Where had he lived? Why was he buried near a college in what was then the farm country well outside town?

This month, a team of experts at the National Museum of Natural History peered into his coffin to try to unravel his story, perhaps learn more about his death and maybe something of his life.

The mystery began April 1 when his coffin was discovered by construction workers digging beneath a gas line in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. The workers, unsure what to do, locked the coffin in an empty building where, on April 4, vandals broke in and smashed the coffin's glass faceplate and metal cover.

It was subsequently turned over to the Museum of Natural History, where a team of forensic anthropologists, pathologists, historical archeologists, clothing experts and researchers began its work.

The coffin, which had been stored in a cooler, was opened Aug. 3. The boy's clothes were removed. An autopsy was performed and samples from his organs and strands of his hair were taken for further analysis.

Experts marveled at the preservation. The body's darkened flesh was still supple, they said, and the facial features were mostly intact. The coffin appears to have been sealed until the vandalism, but it's not entirely clear how that might have protected the body.

"We're still working on the exact reason these remains are so well preserved," said Larry W. Cartmell, an Oklahoma pathologist and expert on ancient diseases who helped perform the autopsy.

Arthur C. Aufderheide, a clinical pathologist and mummy expert at the University of Minnesota, said the boy's right lung tissue bore a peculiar redness and firmness often seen in cases of lobar pneumonia.

With modern antibiotics, such pneumonia now is unusual, Aufderheide said Tuesday. But it was common in the 1800s and was lethal among the very young and very old. He said the illness usually kills in about a week, before the immune system can counterattack.

He said the boy's empty stomach indicated he probably had not eaten for 24 to 36 hours.

Continued on next page

"He may have been simply too sick," Aufderheide said. "These people become profoundly ill with lobar pneumonia. The temperature rises progressively, frequently up to 105. . . . If you're that sick, you're not interested in eating; in fact, you're probably delirious part of the time."

Cartmell said that the boy also had a cyst and other damage on the lung. Such damage suggested the pneumonia might have stemmed from a chronic respiratory ailment, such as tuberculosis. "He's had more or less chronic lung problems," Cartmell said.

Museum curators studied the coffin, whose lid was shaped like that of an Egyptian mummy, molded in the shape of a flowing gown and marked on a raised area at the feet with the imprint of a mysterious flower.

"Isn't it nice?" lead anthropologist Douglas Owsley said in showing it.

This brand of coffin, which was expensive and advanced for its time, was first manufactured in 1849, historical archeologist Deb Hull-Walski said.

"Typical coffin around this time period, wooden coffin, might cost a dollar and a half," Owsley said. This one probably cost \$45 to \$55. "A lot of money in that time period," he said.

It was originally polished and sealed with lead, Owsley said. The viewing glass allowed loved ones to see the deceased without being exposed to contagion, he said. There was most likely a name plate, now gone, fastened on the lid between two decorative motifs that survive.

Experts said the boy might have been associated with nearby Columbian College, the precursor to George Washington University. A school history says the college had a small cemetery near Columbia Road.

Researchers last week were poring through archives and planned to scan old newspapers in search of death notices. "We're getting there," Hull-Walski said Monday.

Owsley said the boy might have been buried in the cemetery and been left behind when the cemetery was relocated. "They were very good at moving headstones," he said of such relocations. "They weren't necessarily so good at moving the people underneath the headstones."

The boy's clothing also was well preserved. The clothes - all of cotton -- were almost certainly his, and probably his Sunday best, Owsley said. Knowledge of teenage boys' clothing from that era is limited.

"These are the kinds of garments that any young man of his age and, probably, status would have worn," Foote said.

She said the narrow cut of the clothes suggested the early 1850s and guessed that the wearer was of the middle class, or higher, because of the well-tailored vest and the finer-quality cloth on the shirt collar and cuffs.

"It's so rare to see burial clothing intact," said Beth Eubanks, a textile expert working on the case.

"Especially if it's a young boy, because there's not a whole lot of research that's been done on boys' clothing.

"It's a window," she said, through which "you don't normally get to see."

For members only

Help wanted: Would you like to do more to help ASM function but have never been asked? Or do you now have more opportunity or desire than you did before? We hope so. [There are many ways to help and with current technology this often can be done at a distance. Here are some options:](#)

1. [Serve on a committee.](#)
2. [Assist with activities such as setting up for meetings, helping with field school, contacting schools, selling publications.](#)
3. [Share skills in organizing events, photography, database management, internet, word processing, desktop publishing.](#)
4. [Mentoring new members, general volunteer labor.](#)

[If you want to assist, send your name, phone number and/or email address to President Carol Ebright at \[cebright@sha.state.md.us\]\(mailto:cebright@sha.state.md.us\)](#)

Keeping track: ASM Secretary Belinda Urquiza requests that you notify her of changes in address, telephone or email. An up-to-date list is our best way of getting in touch with you and keeping your publications flowing.

Fact, faith collide after Carroll dig

By Stephanie Desmon

Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, August 3, 2005

In a Carroll County cornfield stands a shrine to one of the pioneers of Methodism in America. A larger-than-life granite statue of the preacher Robert Strawbridge was erected last year -- 8 feet tall atop an 8-foot pedestal -- not far from the true centerpiece of this hallowed ground: the house Strawbridge was thought to have lived in through the 1760s and part of the 1770s.

Convinced by a snippet of oral history that this was the place, Methodist patrons for decades tried to secure it as a memorial to the early circuit rider. It wasn't until the turn of this century that the house became theirs when its elderly occupant died.

Hoping to learn more about this historic home, members of the Strawbridge Shrine Association asked an archeologist to do some digging. What she has learned isn't exactly making members happy.

"I can't argue it that Robert Strawbridge lived there in the 1760s, not responsibly. I haven't seen that evidence," said Kirsti Uunila, a historical preservation specialist with Calvert County who did the work in Carroll County on her summer vacations and who submitted a report last fall.

Even if the house never belonged to Strawbridge, it is certainly old -- a scientific team experienced in using tree rings to date pieces of timber determined the logs were felled in 1757. And at the very least, Strawbridge lived somewhere in the vicinity soon after arriving in the Colonies around 1760.

But there is a quiet debate brewing over whether the home was actually inhabited by the Irish-born preacher who changed the religious landscape here -- and whether it is being wrongly promoted to the 1,000 or so who make the pilgrimage each year.

These things aren't easy to prove. Oral histories can be based on fuzzy recollections that, once set to paper, take on lives of their own. Land records can be muddled, lost or even wrong. Journals are a great resource, but not many survive after 250 years. Even a bronze plaque on a building declaring its age isn't surefire affirmation.

"I've done a tremendous amount of research over the last 60 years," said the Rev. Edwin Schell, historian of the United Methodist Church's Baltimore-Washington Conference. "Instead of finding answers, you find new questions."

The shrine association has received Uunila's report -- and members have heard the conjectures of others -- but they are not budging on the story. They continue to say the house belonged to Strawbridge. They're waiting for undeniable proof -- and the archeologist's report is not that, several said.

Strawbridge is believed to have rented the land where the shrine sits today -- Schell says he later owned the property. George Horvath, who studied land and tax records, said Strawbridge owned adjacent land and nothing was built on it.

Strawbridge's original house might have been destroyed, according to several sources. Tax records from 1798 include a notation that a log house burned. A sentence in a book co-written by Maryland's state archivist, Edward C. Papenfuss, says the home was razed in the 1760s. References to the home having been "wet" -- likely meaning near a spring -- have been found and the house currently sits on a rock.

Uunila, the archeologist, said another dig could reveal remnants of an earlier Strawbridge house. She hopes to return within a year to do more work.

The oldest item she found was a single fragment of borderware, a 17th-Century ceramic manufactured in England, which she assumes was once a family heirloom or antique kept in the house. Notably absent, Uunila wrote, were artifacts known to date from Strawbridge's residence in Carroll County in the 1760s and 1770s.

The house standing today could have been constructed using the logs from the original house (materials were rarely discarded in those days), she and Horvath agreed.

"I thought it was old enough," said James Thomas Wollon, a Havre de Grace architect who specializes in historical preservation and studied the house for the shrine in 1999. Still, he noted, "we didn't find his sermons stuffed in the rafters or anything like that."

Shrine association members are reluctant to talk about the possibility that what they have believed in for so long might not be the whole story.

"At this point, we hardly discuss it because it's a matter of upsetting something before it needs to be upset," said association treasurer Dorothy Shindle, who remains convinced the house is Strawbridge's.

"To me, we have a way to honor him. Whether it's the precise house is irrelevant because we're honoring the memory of him. You want to be accurate, too. You don't want to be misleading," said Reuben Morningstar, a shrine board member and former schoolteacher. So if it turns out the house wasn't his, "then we need to tell" people, he said.

Edward Cook, one of the scientists affiliated with Columbia University who did the tree-ring work, said that in the majority of work he does, buildings turn out to be a lot younger than people believe they are. Tree-ring dating was done in Boston on several houses believed to be pre-1660. "Only one is that old anymore," he said. "It was a major disappointment."

Unila said there is no reason for the shrine to lose its sense of being sacred, despite her confidence that Strawbridge never lived in the house that bears his name. "It probably seems like heresy to them, what I've said," she said. "I'm sad if it shakes their convictions and their use of the place, because it shouldn't."

"You can talk about Strawbridge all you want, because he was in the neighborhood, so to speak," she said. "But there's no reason to continue a fiction that that was his house. But it's not my call."

City of Frederick passes archeology law

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Lynch estimates that 90 percent of the time only an initial study will be needed. For the few sites where significant artifacts might be found, building could still take place after the artifacts are removed, or developers may want to alter their building plans to highlight or avoid the archeological sites, he said.

For example, if a half-acre needs to be preserved in a 20- to 30-acre subdivision, designers can work around that, he said.

He hopes Frederick County will follow the city's lead in establishing protections.

"Frederick County, which has lost many, many archeological resources to development over the past few decades, has no similar protection and desperately needs it," said Ms. Ebright.

She praised "the determination and activism of Jack Lynch, Nancy and Spencer Geasey, Joy Hurst, and others of the Monocacy Chapter of ASM made this new regulation a reality."

"They were aided in their efforts by professional archeologists as well, notably Andy Stout who spent considerable time and effort crafting the code, and Jim Gibb, who lent support based on his experiences with the City of Annapolis."

"It wasn't an easy road. The proposed regulation faced frustrating bureaucratic tangles and opposition from developers. The final product, which underwent considerable changes over the last month, is a strong, broad-based plan that is generally follows the compliance process used elsewhere in the state and nation."

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

The chapter meets on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:30-9 p.m. in the Chesapeake Room, Heritage Center, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis. Contact Jim Gibb at 410-263-1102 or jamesggibb@comcast.net

Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned. But if someone has a site they want investigated, contact the Maryland Historical Trust or Central Chapter President Stephen Israel at 410-945-5514 or ssisrael@abs.net

Mid-Potomac

Contact james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org or heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org, or call 301-840-5848. Chapter website: www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org

Mid Shore

The Mid Shore Group meets at 7:30 on the fourth Friday of the month at the SunTrust Bank on Goldsboro Street in Easton, from January through September. However, the April meeting is held at the Talbot County Historical Society Auditorium. Contact Bill Cep at 410-822-5027 or email ccep@crosslink.net

Monocacy

The chapter meets the Wednesday closest to the 15th of each month at the Walkersville Middle School. Contact Joy Hurst at 301-663-6706 or hurst_joy@hotmail.com. Chapter website: www.digfrederick.bravehost.com

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Contact Dan Coates at dancoates@comcast.net

Southern

Contact Kate Dinnel for information at katesilas@chesapeake.net or 410-586-8538.

Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida, near the court house in Ellicott City. Most are preceded by dinner at 6 at the Tiber River Café in Ellicott City; November, February and May will have a potluck dinner at Mt. Ida instead. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or roseannlee@earthlink.com

September 12: Lee Preston on "Searching for the First Americans: How Far Have We Come in 35 Years?"

October 10: Lee Preston on "A History of Longwood: From the 18th into the 21st Century."

November 14: Wayne Clark and Paul Inashima on "New Perspectives, Excavations and Analysis of an Archaic Period Soapstone Quarry in Maryland."

December: No meeting.

January 9: To be announced.

February 13: Robert Wall on "The Barton Site."

March 13: Cherry Koontz on "Two Weeks Around the Horn."

April 10: Charlie and Helen Koontz on "Egypt: Pyramids, Temples and Sculptures."

May 8: Jim Gibb on "Stalking Early Colonial Tidewater Sites."

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Ed Hanna, 301-777-1380. Chapter email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: www.geocities.com/wmdasm

September 23: Results of the 2005 Barton excavations.

October 15: ASM Annual Meeting, in lieu of regular program.

November: Field Trip - TBA

December: Holiday Break

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

ASM, Inc 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@aol.com

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