



ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

Sighted ships, saved same

Work resumes on Barney Flotilla site

By Annys Shin

Condensed from the Washington Post, August 5, 2010

A neoprene-clad diver slipped into the murky water of the Patuxent River near Upper Marlboro Wednesday to examine the wreck of a 19th-Century ship that archeologists and state officials hope to make a star attraction in Maryland's commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

The sailing ship could be the USS Scorpion, part of a fleet known as the Chesapeake Flotilla that was designed to navigate the shallow waters of the Patuxent and harass the British, whose Royal Navy at the time was terrorizing towns from Havre de Grace to Norfolk.

The excavation is part of Maryland's effort to create a tourism cash cow from the bicentennial of a war whose biggest claim to fame is inspiring "The Star-Spangled Banner." Based in part on Virginia's experience with revenue generated by Civil War sites, bicentennial boosters estimate the 32 months of events planned to commemorate the War of 1812 could generate \$1 billion in tourism spending.

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MAC Lab gets World Trade Center ship

From various reports

The Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab) has been chosen to conserve and reassemble the remains of a late 18th or early 19th Century ship recently found at the construction site of the World Trade Center in New York City. A conservation team from the MAC Lab led by its head conservator, Nichole Doub, assisted in the extraction of the ship for transport to the lab.

The lab was built, in part, to conserve and store artifacts recovered from Maryland waters. Lab director Patricia Samford said this was the largest shipwreck project the lab has taken on.

The ship was extracted, wrapped and labeled piece-by-piece for transport to the MAC Lab where it will undergo conservation treatment and reassembly for study.

The process will entail up to a year of soaking in antifreeze, and then freeze-drying to drive out the remaining water and preserve the wood, she said.

"It has been a very unique and exciting experience, excavating an 18th-Century ship at the World Trade Center site," said Doub.

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Upcoming events

September 11: ASM board meeting. Howard County Central Library, Columbia. 10 a.m.

September 25: The Pre-Columbian Society of Washington's 17th annual symposium, at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center. The symposium title is "Under Cover of Darkness: The Meaning of Night in Ancient Mesoamerica." For information see <http://www.pcswdc.org>

October 16: Fall meeting. Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Cockeysville.

October 28 - 31: ESAF meeting, Williamsburg, Va.

Volunteer opportunities

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

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

ASM field session collection: Volunteers have 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 or Charlie Hall chall@mdp.state.md.us.

The Lost Towns Project of Anne Arundel County welcomes volunteers for its prolific Pig Point prehistoric site. Fridays. Call Jessie Grow at 410-222-1318.

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

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at echaney@mdp.state.md.us or 410-586-8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/ to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

CAT corner

A CAT Weekend on November 13 will feature two required workshops, archeological ethics and Native American ceramics. For details, updates and information on other CAT activities check the ASM website.



Audit said to find big NAGPRA flaws

By Rex Dalton

Condensed from Nature magazine, July 21, 2010

To scientists, ancient human bones and artifacts from Native American burial sites can offer a unique window onto history. But to some modern Native American tribes, allowing researchers to study these remains amounts to desecration. Long-standing tensions between the two groups were meant to be eased by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, which allows tribes to reclaim many remains held in museum collections.

But the first official audit of the government agency that administers NAGPRA portrays a troubled organization that has failed to serve tribes well and does not always give a fair hearing to scientists' claims. The final report, from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), is expected by autumn, but *Nature* has obtained a draft that is currently under review. Both the GAO and the NAGPRA office in Washington declined to comment on the draft.

The act created a system in which museums, universities or federal agencies that hold ancient skeletal remains and associated funerary objects had to file inventories of such items by 1995 with the NAGPRA office, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Any tribe could reclaim items that were shown to be culturally affiliated with it, while the remainder could be kept by institutions for further study.

The GAO report says that under the NAGPRA, 142,186 specimens have been repatriated from 209,626 publicly disclosed items. These constitute 55 percent of the human remains and 69 percent of the associated funerary objects that were inventoried.

But determinations of cultural affiliation often prove to be ambiguous and contentious, as in the Kennewick Man dispute, in which the courts ruled in 2004 that scientists could retain a 9,000-year-old skeleton from Washington state. In May this year, tensions ratcheted up when the Department of the Interior unveiled a federal rule that could allow tribes to claim thousands more artifacts — with no cultural connection — if they had been found near tribal lands. Some scientists are already considering legal challenges to prevent these repatriations.

Yet as NAGPRA administrators struggle to manage these disputes, the GAO report finds that the NAGPRA office — which has an annual budget of \$1 million — is beset by problems including inadequate resources and poor record-keeping. These can delay repatriations and make it harder to reach decisions on contentious cases. "We have heard for years the NAGPRA office statistics were often wrong, but it is like pulling teeth to get them corrected," says Vincas Steponaitis, an archeologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who in 2004-08 served on the NAGPRA review committee that oversees repatriations and adjudicates on ownership disputes.

The report also suggests that the NAGPRA office has manipulated the makeup of the seven-person committee, weakening scientists' voices in its decisions. The committee comprises three tribal members, three representatives of scientific organizations and an independent member agreed on by the others. Nominations for candidates are sent to the NAGPRA office, which makes a recommendation to the secretary of the Interior Department.

But the GAO audit says that the NAGPRA office inadequately screened these nominees and passed over nominations for scientific representatives in favor of its own candidates. It also says that the office used "questionable efforts to recruit members" of its own liking, including selecting a candidate six months after the nomination deadline and resurrecting a seven-year-old nomination to fill one of the science seats.

"It was clear NAGPRA staff wanted to prevent strong advocates for science as professional organization representatives," says archeologist Lynne Goldstein, of Michigan State University in East Lansing, who helped create the act.

The report notes that NAGPRA officials defended such practices, saying that one official "believed that the Review Committee had become too weighted toward the interests of the museum and scientific communities."

Continued on next page

The audit also assessed how well eight federal agencies complied with the act. It found that three — the Army Corps of Engineers, the Forest Service and the National Park Service — were highly compliant. But there was less confidence in the remaining agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Tennessee Valley Authority, which operates hydroelectric power plants built in the 1930s, when about 8,400 ancient remains were unearthed.

The report says that the authority failed to publish notices to alert tribes to 337 "culturally affiliated human remains" that could have been repatriated. But the authority denies the charge and has provided *Nature* with documents indicating that cultural affiliation was not confirmed and that notices were sent to five tribes, who did not respond.

"The GAO findings are examples of everything I've heard about for a decade," says Goldstein. She and others say that they hope the report will lead to a shake-up at the NAGPRA office to ensure that rules on Native American artifacts are followed properly.

Work resumes on Barney Flotilla site

Continued from Page 1

"It's very much about economic development and cultural heritage tourism," said Bill Pencek, executive director of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

The site of the wreck lies just past where Route 4 crosses the river.

For three weeks beginning in late July, underwater archeologists from the U.S. Navy, the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Maryland Historical Trust worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, from a cluster of barges crammed with an excavator, a Port-o-Potty, a shipping container-cum-office and two large bins that filter water and sediment.

Seven divers spend an hour or two at a time underwater with about a foot of visibility, carefully working through several yards of mud, silt and clay to what they believe is the hull of the vessel.

A couple of previously excavated artifacts indicate it might be the *Scorpion*: a grog cup with the initials C.W., that may have belonged to a cook who was transferred to the *Scorpion*, and a surgical kit.

Researchers hope to find more definitive proof when they map the ship's dimensions.

The *Scorpion* was part of the Chesapeake Flotilla, which, under the command of Commodore Joshua Barney, battled the British in St. Leonard's Creek before retreating up the Patuxent, where the flotilla became trapped. Barney then destroyed his fleet to prevent the boats from falling into British hands. The British ultimately advanced on Washington, where they set fire to the president's mansion and the Capitol.

The wreck was first discovered by Donald Shomette, who has written several books about underwater archeology in the Patuxent, and Ralph Eshelman in the late 1970s. It was excavated in 1980, but they reburied it because they lacked the funds to fully excavate and conserve the ship.

The current team, led by Julie Schablitsky, chief archeologist for the highway agency; Susan Langley, the state underwater archeologist, and Robert Neyland, head of the Navy's Underwater Archaeology Branch in the Naval History and Heritage Command, faces similar constraints.

Working with a budget of \$200,000 cobbled together from different sources, it only has money to do limited underwater excavation. More than a million more would be required to dam off the site and excavate the vessel under dry conditions.

If the state and federal researchers can scare up funds to turn the site into a dry dig, the excavation could become an attraction itself. Viewing platforms could be installed for tourists to see the ship as it emerges from the bottom of the Patuxent -- and for taxpayers to see their tax dollars at work.

The current team might also benefit from advances in conservation technology. The discovery of the wreck in 1980 contributed to the creation of the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory.

Slave site excavated at Monocacy

By Ike Wilson

Condensed from the Frederick News-Post, August 12, 2010

It is one thing to learn archeological theories in the classroom. It is quite another to not only practice those theories but also employ them on a discovery of historic proportions.

Six students from four universities count themselves fortunate to be working on the largest known slave habitation site in the mid-Atlantic region at Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick.

National Park Service archeologists recently uncovered the remains of several dwellings as well as artifacts associated with enslaved occupations of the site from 1794 to 1827.

The team plans to use surface-penetrating radar, a remote-sensing technique that uses electromagnetic waves to detect buried features such as foundations. Information from the radar survey will help focus the excavations, which are expected to continue until October.

"We are very excited about these discoveries and what they can tell us about the people who lived and labored at L'Hermitage," Park Service archeologist and project director Joy Beasley said.

The site is associated with L'Hermitage, a plantation established in 1794 by the Vincendières, a family of French planters who came to Maryland from Saint-Domingue, known today as Haiti. By 1800, L'Hermitage was home to 90 enslaved laborers, about 10 times the number of slaves that would be expected for the size of the plantation, according to a National Park Service news release.

This was the second-largest slave population in Frederick County at the time and among the largest in Maryland, Beasley said.

Located on the Best Farm property on the battlefield, the site was initially discovered in 2003. But with limited historic information, archeologists needed to do more work to ensure they were on the right track.

The student archeologists are excited to be part of the project.

"This is a real momentous kind of project, and I'm really honored to be a part of it," Howard University senior and anthropology major Alex Brueggeman said. "I think I can say for everyone working on the project that it has taken over our lives, in a good way, and it has given us greater interest in archeology, in the site and in history."

The project is also meaningful to Howard senior Shayla Monroe. "We get to do something we feel connected to," Monroe said. "Even though we study these techniques in the classroom, a lot of students don't get to do the kind of hands-on (exploration) we are doing with this project."

Discovery of the slave habitat was fascinating to the students when they heard about it, Monroe said. "And as each day unfolded our excitement has not waned. Each phase of the project has brought new things to be excited about," Monroe said.

Beasley said a new funding source -- Youth Intake Program -- initiated by the secretary of the Interior allowed the National Park Service to hire the students from Hood College, American University, University of Maryland College Park and Howard.

"We're real excited and real fortunate to have a good group of undergraduate and graduate students," Beasley said.

Beasley, who is also the park service's cultural resource program manager, said she hopes the discovery will broaden the battlefield's and Frederick County's appeal to Civil War buffs.

"We would like to use the information from the excavation to develop some new exhibits and interpretive programs about slavery and African-American experiences at Monocacy National Battlefield," Beasley said.

Whether the project gets more funding is a decision that is "not necessarily in our hands," Beasley said.

"We have some funding for next year but it will be used to complete the analysis of the data and produce a final report," Beasley said. "We would certainly be happy to have more funding, but as right now, I'm not aware of any available funding. We will do the best we can with what we have."

The site is relatively intact and there is a lot of information to be gotten out of it, Beasley said.

Home found of traitor-governor

By Meredith Somers

Condensed from Southern Maryland Newspapers, July 30, 2010

It all started with the turn of a page.

Scott Strickland, a 2008 graduate of St. Mary's College of Maryland, was leafing through local land records earlier this year when he came across a deed transfer that referred to "the plantation which I lately dwell."

While that phrase might not have a place in modern lingo, when Strickland read those words and accompanying description of an area that's currently between Hatton Creek and Charleston Creek, just north of Cobb Island, the anthropology major knew he was onto something big.

What Strickland had found were clues to an elusive target: the home of former Maryland Gov. Josias Fendall, a turncoat governor in the mid-17th Century and founder of Charles County.

"Fendall is a really interesting character," said Julia King, a professor of anthropology at St. Mary's College. "There's not a lot written about him because he was a traitor."

That lack of available information was the reason behind the summer archeological project.

For the past few years, a joint effort between St. Mary's College and the College of Southern Maryland has taken students from both schools out of the classroom and into the areas they have only read about in their history books.

Charles County developer Mike Sullivan and his wife financially back the program via the Smallwood Foundation. Each year the students stay with the couple at their home in Mount Victoria throughout the six- to eight-week program.

"The process started by [choosing] a number of things we were going to look for. Josias Fendall was one of them," Sullivan said of this year's project. Sullivan said the first question to ask was where the former governor lived.

"Sometime in July, we nailed it, we nailed the site," King said. "We are pretty convinced it's Fendall's site. There are very high-status artifacts, we know that the site was occupied before 1683. ... It's all pointing to Fendall."

As King explained it, around 1660 there was a move to oust the upper house of the general assembly, which consisted of Lord Baltimore and his counselors.

"I don't think Fendall started it, but he went along with it. That greatly upsets Lord Baltimore and while it doesn't happen ... he basically banishes Fendall from the colony," King said.

The former governor returned to the county a few years later and led a relatively quiet life, King said.

"[Fendall] appears in records, we know he's around. As long as he keeps his nose clean ... but in the late 1670s he starts running his mouth again," King said. "He must have had deep animosity toward county government. It's not extreme language, but it's language that gets Baltimore upset."

Once again Fendall is hauled into court, found guilty and banished from the area. In 1683 he sells his plantation, and that deed transfer is what Strickland found this year.

Thousands of fragmented artifacts were littered around the spot. Located partly in a cornfield, years of plowing had turned up everything from clay smoking pipe shards to nails, window glass, brick and other historical building materials.

"I was really in awe of all the artifacts we did find. Just in this one site there were these amazing things all broken up but still intact [enough] so that we were able to tell what they were," said Maggie Lucio, a College of Southern Maryland student.

"We've collected brick and shell; one unit had over 8,000 pieces of shell," King said. "We count and weigh them. The shells give us great information because we see what the Chesapeake Bay was like in the 1680s. It's forensics but it's a clue, not to a crime, but to an event that's taken place."

Group wants to highlight endangered sites

Preservation Maryland, in conjunction with Maryland Life magazine, is looking for nominations for its 2011 Endangered Maryland list. The goal is to come up with a list that reflects both the diversity of the state and the variety of threats facing Maryland's heritage.

"The goal of Endangered Maryland is to raise awareness of some of the state's most threatened historic and cultural sites," the group says. "Treasured sites are lost each year due to demolition vandalism, neglect, lack of funds and inappropriate development. Once they are gone, they can never be replaced."

The requirements for nomination and a list of past designated sites is available at <http://www.preservationmaryland.org> Deadline for nominations is Sept. 17, 2010.

Barton Site's Deep Unit at Level 19 and counting

The excavation of the Deep Unit at the Barton Site during July went very well. With a good number of volunteers the unit was taken down to Level 19. Bob Wall scheduled the weekend of August 21 and 22 to finish the excavation.

The plan is to investigate Levels 19 and 20 and then remove the 20-cm-thick bulk. The bulk represents the vertical time period from the present at the top down to the Pleistocene river cobbles of the Potomac at the bottom. Perhaps therein lies the elusive diagnostic point.

MAC Lab gets World Trade Center ship

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"Maryland's foresight in creating the MAC Lab demonstrates our dedication to the role of preserving our nation's past," said Gov. Martin O'Malley. "I have visited the lab and met the conservators. I am elated that Maryland's nationally recognized conservation laboratory was chosen for the exciting project of recovering and reassembling this important find."

The ship was discovered in New York on July 12 when its ribs were spotted poking out of the muck as workers were excavating the World Trade Center site.

It's not clear how the ship got buried beneath the twin towers. It could have been used as fill when the Manhattan shoreline was expanded into the Hudson River about 1800, curators say. Sections of San Francisco are built on fill partly made of old ships, said Betty Seifert, a curator at the laboratory. Or the vessel might have sunk at its wharf and been forgotten. Ships "get old, they get tired, they get tied in and left and abandoned," Seifert said.

And it's not clear what kind of ship it is. "Never seen anything exactly like this," said Warren Riess, professor of maritime history and archeology at the University of Maine and lead investigator on the discovery.

He said it's not known where the ship was built, although tree scientists are being called in to see whether they can figure out where its wood came from and how old it is.

He said that in the bowels of the vessel workers found, among other things, the well-used bowl of a clay smoking pipe that was probably lost by one of the ship builders. Also found was some buckshot, musket balls and a small cannonball, perhaps from a swivel gun, indicating that the ship was most likely armed against pirates, some of whom lurked in the New Jersey marshlands, he said.

Many of the surviving pieces of the ship were "futtocks" -- curved parts of the frame that were cut from specially selected curved tree limbs, Riess said. Almost all the wood was oak. Also recovered was inner and outer planking, part of the keel and a single, 530-pound piece that was part of either the ship's bow or stern. That had to be lifted from a truck bed with a power hoist.

"This is very exciting for us," Doub said. "It's always interesting to be working on a ship of this level of preservation."

From an archeologist's point of view, "it is incredibly robust," she said, even after 200 years.

Kenneth Weaver dies at 83; aided archeology

Kenneth N. Weaver, who for nearly 30 years headed the Maryland Geological Survey, died July 7 in Timonium of complications from Alzheimer's disease. He was 83.

When he became state geologist and director of the Survey, there were two employees. By his retirement in 1992, the survey included 23 geologists, hydrogeologists, sedimentologists and geomorphologists. At one time it also included a Division of Archeology, headed by Tyler Bastian. Weaver supported the birth and growth of the division, the initiation of state site files, publication program and artifact curation.

"If Tyler was the father of state archeology, Ken was the grandfather," said Carol Ebright, who worked with them at the Survey before the division's archeologists were combined with those at the Maryland Historical Trust. "He didn't do archeology directly, but he made what Tyler did possible.... He was a very courtly, gentlemanly type of person."

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

Meets five times a year in February, April, June, September and November at the Severna Park Branch of the County Public Library, 45 McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns at AAChapASM@hotmail.com or the chapter website www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php

September 10: London Town's Rod Cofield will talk on ways by which women, as patrons and laborers, participated in Colonial-era public houses.

November 6: Conrad Bladely on "30 years of Archeology: London, England to Laurel to Linthicum and Celebrations in the Archeological Record - Wassail Bowls and Bonfires."

Central

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

Charles County

Meetings are held 7 on the first Wednesday (September-May) at Historic LaPlata Train Station. Contact President Carol Cowherd at cowherdcl@gmail.com or 301-375-9489.

September 1: Sara Rivers-Cofield, curator of federal collections at the MAC Lab, will discuss the Posey site, a late 17th Century Charles County site, whose artifacts show how interaction with European colonists changed the material culture of Maryland's Indians.

October 6: Michael Lucas, Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, will discuss ongoing archeological and historical research At Mount Calvert.

November 3: Julie King, of St. Mary's College, will speak about her continuing work in Charles County.

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:45 p.m. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org or call 301-8405848 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768 Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com

September 16: Meeting at Needwood Mansion, Derwood. Chris Dudar, Smithsonian forensic anthropologist will be speak.

October 21: Meeting at Needwood Mansion, Derwood. Alexandra Jones will talk on the "Gibson Grove African-American Burial Ground Project."

November 18: Meeting at the Agricultural History Farm Park Activity Center in Derwood from 6 to 10 p.m. Jeff Geyer will present a workshop on Lithics Identification. Bring your own dinner or \$5 for pizza and salad.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or jlazelle@msn.com or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

September 8: Jean French, a local archeologist and paleoethnobotanical researcher, will present "Local Native Plant Foods." NOTE: Meeting starts at 6 p.m.

Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Ann Persson at 410-272-3425 or aspst20@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of every other month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Diamondback restaurant in Ellicott City at 6 p.m. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or leeprestonjr@comcast.net

September 13: Jake Feirson and Lee Preston, The Vaughan Brown Memorial Lecture "The Iglehart Collection: 10,000 Years of Native American History in Howard County."

November 8: Jaimie Wilder, "Before Howard Community College : The History and Research of the Bassler Farmhouse."

January 10: (Snow Date Jan. 17) Jim Gibb, "Two African American Households in Port Tobacco, 1846-1900."

March 14: Anne Hayward, "Textiles in the Tidewater: How Textiles of the Colonial Chesapeake Are Represented in the Archival Record Versus the Archaeological Record."

May 9: Lee Preston, "Made in China : Silk, Porcelain and Terra Cotta Soldiers."

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Chapter email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

September 24: Phil Allen, professor of geography at Frostburg State, will talk on a site in Ireland.

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