



ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

Symposium to focus of forensics

April in Maryland brings two things: spring showers and the Spring Symposium. We can't control the showers, but we try to offer an enticing selection of speakers for the symposium so you can learn a lot, chat with old friends coming out of hibernation, meet new ones and generally get geared up for the 2011 digging season.

This year's symposium takes place Saturday, April 9, at the MHT headquarters in Crownsville - this is a change from the earlier listing. The theme will be "The Uses of Forensic Sciences, the Natural Sciences and New Technologies in Support of Archeological Research." The all-day program starts at 9, with the first speech at 9:30.

Leading off will be forensic scientist and Towson University anthropology professor Dana Kollman talking about an attempt to solve the mystery of a missing Marylander. Four years after he disappeared a skull was found in Vermont. Was it the missing man's? A Towson team went after the answer last year and the Smithsonian got involved. You'll have to attend the symposium to find out if it was a match and how the answer was arrived at.

The Zekiah Swamp in Southern Maryland is a repository of secrets. Steven C. Gladu, a student at St. Mary's College of Maryland, tells about an X-ray fluorescence study of what appeared to be European flint found at an Indian settlement in an effort to pinpoint the flint's place of origin and if it was indeed a contact period artifact.

Analyzing pewter is Nichole Doub's focus. The head conservator at the MAC Lab will talk about the importance of lead and its alloys in interpreting historic battlefields. The objects at hand are battlefield buttons.

Not all remote-sensing tools are mechanical. Heather Roche will describe her use of cadaver dogs to speed up site surveys and the finding of likely locations for the diggers to take over. Dogs are highly mobile, can work over most ground conditions, cover a lot of land quickly, work in most types of weather and are non-invasive.

Professor Theodore Schurr of the University of Pennsylvania will explain how genetic studies have altered our knowledge of the early peopling of the Americas. Old theories have been replaced by a belief in a complex migration pattern beginning with a coastal route through Berengia some 15,000 to 20,000 years ago.

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Upcoming events

April 9: ASM Spring Symposium, Crownsville.

April 16: Discovering Archeology Day, Jefferson Patterson Park, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 10-20: Annual ASM Field Session, Barton Site, Allegany County.

October 8: ASM Annual Meeting, Robinson Nature Center, Columbia.

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, 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

For details, updates and information on CAT activities check the ASM website.

George Evans now lives his boyhood dream

Condensed from the Frederick News-Post, March 17, 2011

When George Evans was a boy, he would sometimes ride his bicycle to the Best Farm and ask the property owner if he could look around for artifacts.

A Walkersville resident, Evans, 70, is once again helping to unearth history at the site, now owned by the National Park Service as part of Monocacy National Battlefield. Evans is one of several volunteers assisting with archeological digs on the land. The most recent uncovered one of the largest known slave villages in Frederick County, part of what was the L'Hermitage plantation.

Evans was also involved in the discovery of the Middle Ford Tavern on the Monocacy Battlefield property. "It wasn't a real big place, but they must have had some high-end clients, because the glassware we found had these nice narrow stems like wineglasses," Evans said. "It wasn't just a place where the locals went to get drunk."

Evans has worked on a number of other digs throughout the area, many of which were related to Archaic sites, dating back more than 10,000 years. He was also one of the first volunteers allowed to assist at Jamestown, Va. In April, he plans to spend a week volunteering at Jamestown.

Evans said he's glad to be able to finally live out his boyhood dream, even if he isn't getting paid. "I like the idea of holding something that no one has touched in some cases in more than a thousand years," he said. "I have a passion for it and I really enjoy it."

We covered the waterfront, and more

Possibly a record crowd of about 150 people gathered in Crownsville on Saturday, March 12, for the annual Workshop in Archeology. Leading off the 10 sessions was James Delgado of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who took the assembled multitude of a tour of 3,000 years of shipwrecks in the great museum of the sea, ranging from Phoenician finds off the Turkish coast to A-bomb testing sites in the Pacific.

Bob Wall filled his audience in on the history of the Barton Site in Allegany County and told what to look forward to this summer as ASM's field school returns there in June. Two National Park Service archeologists shared their experiences. Joy Beasley recounted the recent finds at the slave-holding L'Hermitage plantation in Frederick County and Robert Sonderman discussed 18th and 19th Century glass artifacts.

Mike Lucas' talk about historical research was designed as a CAT workshop, but an overflow crowd turned up at the MHT library to learn the techniques. The experimental archeology trio of Roy Brown, Jack Davis and Dan Coates had an overflowing table of homemade artifacts to illustrate their discussion of prehistoric cordage and containers.

Two other sessions were devoted to maritime archeology. Nautical archeologist J.B. Pelletier detailed the hunt for the War of 1812 privateer The Lion in Bodkin's Creek and John Dowdle of the Institute of Maritime History talked about the recent search in the Mount Vernon area for a miniature gunboat that sank soon after being presented to George Washington in 1788.



(Left) James Delgado talks about centuries of shipwrecks that have offered clues to the way things were. (Right) Roy Brown helps arrange a display of Native American cordage and containers.

First Americans: Two approaches?

By Thomas H. Maugh II

Condensed from the Los Angeles, March 5, 2011

Delicate stone arrowheads and tools and a wide variety of marine and bird skeletons unearthed on the Channel Islands off the coast of California provide strong evidence that North America was settled by two separate groups of immigrants some 13,000 years ago, one that came overland from Asia and a second group of maritime explorers who sailed along the coast.

Archeologists generally agree that one group of hunters migrated from northern Asia across the land bridge that connected Asia and North America through the region known as Beringia, slaughtering large mammals with spears and arrows fitted with characteristic stone tips known as Clovis points.

But a slowly growing body of evidence hints that a separate group of people, who originated perhaps in Japan, sailed along the coasts of both continents, traveling as far south as Tierra del Fuego and migrating as far inland as the glacial lakes of the Pacific Northwest.

The problem with proving it is that the ocean level was about 200 feet lower then. As sea levels have risen, they have inundated most of the coastal sites where the ancient seafarers may have lived.

To get around the problem, archeologist Jon M. Erlandson of the University of Oregon and his colleagues studied caves on the Channel Islands that remained above the rising waters. They reported this week in the journal *Science* that they had discovered middens containing many bones and tools.

The arrowheads, made of a locally obtained rock called chert, were of two main types: barbed arrowheads with a stem to which a shaft could be attached, and broad crescents. The barbed arrowheads are so delicate, Erlandson said, that they could only have been used for killing fish and similar prey. The broader crescents would have minimized the accuracy required for shooting at birds; in that way, they were like the arrow equivalent of a shotgun, he said.

Similar points dating from 16,000 years ago have been found in Japan. Points contemporaneous with those found on the Channel Islands have also been found in the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau areas in the Pacific Northwest and in the Paisley Caves in eastern Oregon.

In contrast, the Clovis points used by the people who lived further inland are much heavier and cruder, and have a flute or indentation to hold the shaft. No fluted points have been found on the islands, Erlandson said.

The team also found the remains of shellfish, seals, geese, cormorants and a variety of fish. Archeologists who favor the theory of a single migration to the New World over a land bridge have argued that the people who made the Clovis points — so named because they were first found at a site near Clovis, N.M. — eventually migrated to the shore, where they changed their technology to make arrowheads and spears more suitable for fishing.

Erlandson, however, argues that the maritime culture migrated inland up rivers in some areas, leaving evidence of their presence near the glacial lakes and at other sites.

FRANK AND ERNEST

BOB THAVES



Alaskan tot's cremated remains found

By Brian Vastag

Condensed from the Washington Post, February 24, 2011

Some 11,500 years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age, a child died near a river in what is now central Alaska. The people living with the child in a tent-pole house - presumably the parents - placed the 3-year-old's body in their home's cooking pit and lit a fire. After two to three hours of burning, the family covered the remains with dirt and left.

That's the dramatic story emerging from the study of the oldest human remains ever found in Alaska - and some of the oldest in all of North America.

"The cremation was the last event to take place in the hearth," said Ben Potter of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, who led the team of archeologists investigating the site.

Their study appears in this week's issue of *Science*.

The cremation left about 20 percent of the bones, enough for a detailed analysis. The child was placed on his or her back, with knees drawn toward the chest and arms placed to the side. Charcoal indicates that a fire was built on top of the body.

Because no other evidence of use of the cooking pit was found above the body, Potter and Joel Irish, also of the university, concluded that the family left soon after the cremation.

"This is a child people loved, took care of," Potter said. "The fact the house was abandoned speaks to that."

The child's teeth show that he or she was 2 to 4 years old, while stone knives at the site - and a peculiar scalloped feature of the child's teeth - connect the child to the wide-ranging band of early North American immigrants, who researchers say migrated from Siberia during the last Ice Age, when the Bering Strait was exposed, to colonize a wide swath of northern North America.

Until now, no one had found a permanent or semi-permanent house associated with the hardy people who survived in a subarctic region even colder than it is today. Other sites in Alaska and Siberia from around the same period look like temporary hunting camps.

But at this location - called Upper Sun River in a translation of the Native American word for the locale - Potter and company were astonished to find a six-foot-wide circular pit, dug about a foot into the ground. Four post-holes surrounding the hearth and two other holes outside the circle indicate a tent-pole structure, perhaps covered with sod or animal skins, Potter said.

Archeologists discovered the site in 2006 but did not find the child's remains until the summer of 2010.

The cooking pit also held bones of rabbits, squirrels, grouse and salmon, the last indicating that the family lived there during the summer.

Leaders of two Alaskan tribal groups embraced the find, saying that they are working closely with the archeologists.

"Words truly fail me in describing how excited we are and how almost reverent this find is for us," said Joann Polston, first chief of Healy Lake Traditional Council.

"Priority one is to preserve the finding. That drives our decisions," said Jerry Isaac, president of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Ancient DNA experts at the University of Utah are now trying to extract DNA from a sample of the child's bones, although it is unclear if they will succeed. In recent years, researchers have extracted DNA from 40,000-year-old Neanderthal remains. Burning the flesh off the bones may have helped preserve the DNA, Potter said, as it left no food for bacteria that could have decomposed the bone.

Isaac plans to compare his DNA to any recovered from the child.

Symposium to focus of forensics

Continued from Page One

Another means of site interpretation is provided by April Bieslaw, of Heidelberg University in Ohio. Known to ASM members through her work at the recent Port Tobacco field schools, she will explain how a more thorough look at animal bones can provide clues to much more than just what people ate.

The final speaker, Martin D. Gallivan of the College of William & Mary in Virginia, will use Tsenacomaco, an Algonquin site, to illustrate how a broader range of interpretive frames, including those that emphasize historical contingency and social interaction rather than cultural ecology, can offer insights into a vanished culture. Today's Indians also are getting involved in the discussion.

The cafeteria will be open for lunch. Admission for ASM members and students is \$5, for others \$7.

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

April 19: Mechelle Kerns on the sheet midden discovered beneath the Legg's Dependence kitchen with artifacts covering 250 years.

June 21: TBA

September 20: TBA

November 15: TBA

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.

April 6: Anne Hayward looks at the massive sedimentation changes at Port Tobacco.

April 15: Nichole Doub of JPPM will speak about the 16th-Century ship discovered buried in New York last year. 7 p.m. at the College of Southern Maryland's La Plata Campus, Center for Business and Industry, Room BI-113, 8730 Mitchell Road. For information call 301-934-7703.

May 4: Annual business meeting and a workshop of bottle identification with Alyssa Marizan.

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: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768>
Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com

April 21: Meeting at Needwood. Chapter members Mike Robinson and Bob Hines will debate Maryland's secession from the Union--a Civil War Sesquicentennial program.

May 14: The chapter will co-host with the Montgomery County Parks Department, a Public Dig Day at Needwood Mansion from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Activities include supervised excavation of a slave building site, tours of the mansion, crafts and games, and more. A small fee is charged.

May 19: Meeting at Needwood. Tom Forhan on "Cultural Landscapes and Wilderness: Historic Archaeology of the Riley Tract Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC."

June 16: Chapter meeting and picnic at Needwood from 6-9 p.m.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or jlazelle@msn.com or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

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 Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

April 8: Julia King: "You Are What You Eat... and Drink and Smoke: 17th-Century Burials and the English Way of Life," Harford Community College.

May 15: Member and guest picnic, and tour of the exhibit: "Prehistoric Culture of the Northern Chesapeake," Liriodendron Mansion.

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

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>

April 22: Steve Israel, US Army Corps of Engineers archeologist, retired, on Rockdale Road Rockshelter.

June 3: Bob Wall, Towson University, "The Barton Site 2010-2011," a report on the findings of last year's field session and a discussion of what he plans to investigate this year.

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

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter ASM Ink, the biannual journal MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10% discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net.

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