



ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

So you are out walking and find...

By Gretchen Huggins

Condensed from the Columbia, S.C. Morning News, November 15, 2009

A couple of years ago, I was in the woods, searching for old family tombstones, and ended up pocketing several strange-looking rocks. Confident after Googling "rocks used by Native Americans," I was certain I had found an undiscovered stash of chert rocks, the type of material they used to make tools.

The only thing lacking was to get verification of my great find by a bona fide archeologist. A simple call and quick visit to the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology in Columbia not only led to a disappointing identification of the "cool creek rocks" I had brought in, but also sound advice that I promised to share.

State archeologist Jonathan Leader said, "Knowing what to do once an artifact is found can make the difference between a meaningful discovery and just another thing to stick in a shoebox."

He recommends:

- Knowing who owns the land/water where the artifact is located. This information can be obtained beforehand by visiting many county tax assessor Web sites. Landowners should be notified of any finds and have the right to decide whether to keep the artifact or allow the finder to.

- Carrying a local map and/or a Global Positioning Systems device. Free GPS software is available for download on many cell phones. Leader suggests, "If you find an artifact while having these tools with you, then you are much more likely to have an accurate record of the location. Memory can be very fickle. It's never a good idea to wait to mark something down."

- Being cautious with your find and about where you are.

After recording your location, place a dollar bill or ruler next to the object before taking a photograph of it in its original location. E-mailing a photo of a find to an archeologist is a great idea versus removing the artifact.

Leaving a possible treasure behind goes against the instincts of most folks. But here's why it makes sense:

"Let's say a strand of trade beads has gone undisturbed in the ground for over 200 years," Leader said. "As each bead becomes exposed by harsh weather, they are removed one by one by different people."

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TIME TO RENEW: MEMBERSHIP FORM INSIDE
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Upcoming events

December 19: ASM board meeting, West County Branch Library, Odenton. 9 a.m. All are welcome.

January 6 - 9, 2010: Society for Historical Archaeology annual meeting, Amelia Island Plantation, near Jacksonville, Florida.

April 14 - 18, 2010: Society for American Archeology annual meeting, St. Louis.

Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT program 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 will soon start work on the Rosenstock (Frederick County) plow zone 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. 410-222-7440.

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 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 updates and information on other CAT activities check the ASM website.

A website is available to candidates and graduates: <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MDcat/> . To join the group email MDcat-subscribe@yahooogroups.com

Big ESAF meeting draws Marylanders

Twelve Marylanders were among the 138 people registered for the 76th Eastern States Archaeological Federation annual meeting November 5 - 8 in Johnstown, Pa.

The meeting, hosted by the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, had six sessions, including, an overview of recent rockshelter archeological research and interpretations, the nature and change of the American Indian cultures during the Late Archaic, overview of the Monogahela Late Woodland prehistoric cultures in southwestern Pennsylvania and a symposium on the nature of soils, sediments and climatic change during the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene periods on the Maryland Eastern Shore.

Dennis Stanford, the banquet speaker, gave his latest theories on the earliest settlement of America and the Chesapeake region. Speakers from Maryland included Stephanie Sperling, who spoke on "A study of the Middle Woodland Period in Anne Arundel County, Maryland," Darrin Lowery, who spoke on the "Loess and Archaeological Record of the Late Pleistocene through Early Holocene on the northwestern section of the Delmarva Peninsula," and Daniel Wagner, who spoke on "Soil and Landscape Responses to the Younger Dryas" at the end of the Pleistocene and possibly contributing to the demise of Clovis.

Dick Brock and Steve Israel report that the 77th ESAF annual meeting will be next November in Williamsburg, Va. All ASM members are encouraged to attend.

Artifacts hint success may be near

By Nancy Bromley McConaty

Condensed from the Southern Maryland Newspapers, Oct. 23, 2009

Julia King is on a treasure hunt on land nestled deep in the Zekiah Swamp in Waldorf where she hopes to find definitive proof of a summer house built in 1673 by Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore and second proprietary governor of Maryland.

Zekiah Manor, also known as Zekiah House, was a simple wooden structure with a wood roof and brick chimney, King said. The home was considered elite for the late 1600s, particularly since it was built in a densely forested area that was often used as a hideout by the Piscataway tribe when their enemies from the north, the Seneca and Susquehannock tribes, conducted raids in the area.

In fact, King said she is also searching for artifacts from Zekiah Fort that was supposed to be built somewhere on the 8,800-acre Zekiah Manor tract.

King, a professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and a couple of students took a first look at the area where they believed Zekiah Manor once stood, known as His Lordship's Favor, last summer. They knew about where to begin their search for archaeological evidence of the summer house because of research Scott Strickland, a student at the college, conducted, King said.

"He came across this plat dated 1705 that indicated there was a house on the property with a brick chimney," she said, adding the house is gone but the group found a lot of bricks, window glass, ceramics and tobacco pipes that appear to be dated between 1699 and 1700.

The idea of Calvert deciding to build a summer house in Charles County is amazing, King said.

"Charles had been in Maryland since 1671 and he knew what Maryland was like," she said. "Charles County was pure frontier and a person had to do a lot of land clearing and settling to build a house. It was a lot of work to settle in Maryland. The idea of a summer house conjures up images of leisure and the elite but folks didn't have a lot of leisure time back then."

Calvert appeared to never actually live in the house because he was called back to England for several years and Indian raids conducted by tribes from the north made living in the area precarious, King said.

The archeological dig at Zekiah Manor will continue next summer, King said.

The Zekiah Manor dig will surely reveal another important chapter in Charles County's history, said James Gibb of Gibb Archaeological Consulting in Annapolis.

"It's certainly a neat project," he said. "There are several sites that are really important to Maryland's history that people have known about for centuries but we don't know exactly where they are and one of them is the summer house of Gov. Calvert. I would think that the summer house of a governor would be hard to lose but we lost it."

The archeological projects now under way in the county are great tourism draws, said Donna Dudley, the county's chief of tourism.

"It's wonderful that we're having such a buzz in the county about archeology," she said.

So you are out walking in a field and find ...

Continued from Page One

Separated and not recorded, the beads mean very little, but much can be learned if the beads are collected in a responsible way."

"It might turn out that the strand is part of a larger site, such as a trade post, Indian village or early farmstead," he said. "This is a much more exciting and better use of the find than a single bead stuck away in a sock drawer."

If you do choose to remove the artifact, it is best not to try and clean it before showing it to an archeologist. Scrubbing with brushes and household cleaners can often wear away details or cause pieces to break off an object. Keeping it "as is" gives you the best chance of getting an accurate identification.

Profiles in Maryland archeology

An interview with ... Robert Wall



Dr. Robert Wall teaches archeology at Towson University and has long directed research into the wide-ranging components of the Barton Site in Allegany County.

Q: How did you get started in archeology?

A: I took an anthropology course as an undergraduate, probably beginning sophomore year, and liked it. They had a summer field school that summer, so I took that, that just switched me over. I changed my major and just went on with it.

Q: Where was this?

A: University of Maryland, College Park.

Q: What had you been majoring in?

A: Engineering. My father was an electrical engineer. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but that seemed like the logical place to start, and I just didn't like it. Anthropology looked fascinating to me. So I thought, I may never get a job in it but I wanted to do something that I enjoy for the rest of my life.

Q: What did you like about it?

A: Looking at other cultures, analyzing other cultures, looking at the archeology and what you can learn from the past. This just seemed fascinating to me.

Q: What interesting projects have you been involved in?

A: There's such a constant stream of things. I've been at Barton since the early '90s. But when I was doing consulting work full-time I worked on a lot of different large-scale data recoveries where we looked at everything from Owasco houses to deeply stratified occupations, a lot of buried archaic sites. They all sort of run together, but each archeological site has its own quality, its use, you see things that you don't see anywhere else. So nothing really stands out, but when you look at early Paleo-Indian materials, like we think we have here [Barton], that does stand out. And I had the opportunity to work at the Thunderbird Site [in Virginia] in the '70s and worked there for several years. Actually my master's thesis project was on a site across from Thunderbird. I really got a good dose of Paleo-Indian archeology during those years. You never really lose the fascination for looking at the earliest cultures in North America.

Q: What are you currently involved in?

A: Currently I'm working here at Barton. There's a lot of different components that were looking at - Susquehannock, Late Woodland and there's the early materials. It's sort of trying to balance which ones to write up first. I think this year I am going to try to get the Paleo-Indian archeology we've done here written up first and then it's going to be a whole sequence of reports, the Kaiser occupation to what we call the Village Site - the people have known about for years, but that will be the next publication that we'll work on, Susquehannocks and then the earlier Late Woodland cultures. There's so much here. It's fascinating to be on one site and see so many different things come out of these excavations.

Q: The Barton Site goes from Woodland all the way back to Paleo.

A: Yes.

Q: What is the Paleo component?

A: So far we don't have any Paleo-Indian points. We have radio-carbon dates that date even earlier than Paleo-Indian. We have examples of the technology, large scrappers, overshot flakes, specialized tools, the kinds of things you typically see in Paleo-Indian assemblages. Everything but the diagnostic artifacts, of course. But it's stratified below an Early Archaic occupation, about half a meter below, so we're pretty confident if it's not Paleo-Indians it's got to be extremely Early Archaic.

Q: How many deep units have you dug?

A: We started doing the deep testing in 2000. We actually had done one in 1993, about 200 meters away. In 2000 we found the same buried surface with early radio-carbon dates. We had dates that were on the order of about 19- to 20,000 years ago from the deeply buried horizon. Since 2000 we've put in I think six or seven two-meter adjacent blocks to kind of open up the area where this earliest occupation is.

Q: How deep is that that you're going?

A: Below the surface it's about two and a half meters. The main early occupation is about just under two meters to just over two meters below the surface.

Q: Your day job is teaching at Towson.

A: Right.

Q: What do you think of the students today compared with the students when you started out?

A: Every once in a while you get a student who is just fascinated with archeology and you sort of try to help them along as much as you can. It doesn't seem to me that the writing skills are as good as they have been in past decades. I'm not sure why. I don't know what they are teaching in high schools, but I've had a lot of students who just don't know the basics of writing - citations, bibliographies. A lot of it has to do with casual use of the Internet for research instead of looking at journals, books, even on-line journals. But there seems to have been a decline in writing ability.

Q: You have about 25-30 students in a class, let's say. How many will end up going into archeology?

A: Maybe one, maybe none. Students today seem to be very focused on: What can I get a job in? I mean I have had students who did go into archeology, but I think that if I looked at all the years I've had students, it was just a handful who have actually gone into professional archeology.

Q: Others have pursued it as a pastime?

A: Yeh

Q: What do you think is the future of Maryland archeology?

A: That's kind of a broad question. In terms of what aspect?

Q: In terms of how it's developing, what you think it's going to be doing or should be doing in the future.

A: I'd have to think about that one. (Pause) There's been a lot changes in the last few decades alone. Like in excavating, analyzing human remains, for one. We're not sure what direction that's going to go. In most excavations we pretty much leave human remains in place and try to do any kind of analysis in the field, if there's going to be any analysis at all. But it's hard to say how that's going to change. At Towson we're doing a little bit of expanding. We're getting a new liberal arts building and we're hoping the program will expand, at least there. I'm not sure whether we'll have more students in the future, or just better facilities for doing what we do. I don't really see a lot changes coming about, other than dealing with human remains.

Q: What changes there?

A: For the foreseeable future we may eventually develop some sort of a policy for how we treat human remains and it's going to be that way for a long time. Who knows in the next generations how that's going to be perceived, what we've done in this generation. Because in the past they were just excavated, analyzed and curated. But now we have a completely different way of treating human remains, hopefully a lot more in line with the wishes of native peoples. But there's still a lot to be done in that area. Because there is a lot you can learn in terms of forensic anthropology from remains, but I think it is kind of in a state of flux right now.

Oregon site may be 14,000 years old

Condensed from ChattahBox.com

A series of caves and rock shelters in the Summer Lake Basin north of Paisley in south-central Oregon, may hold evidence of the earliest Native Americans living in North America that has ever been discovered.

A scraper-like tool fashioned from bone, found in one of the Paisley Caves, has been carbon-dated as 14,230 years old, which is the oldest and only pre-Clovis artifact ever found in the Americas.

Scientists believe that pre-Clovis peoples migrated here south along the North American coastlines. The Paisley Caves are located upriver from the Pacific Ocean, placing them along the possible migration route of pre-Clovis Native Americans.

The excavation was conducted by the Northern Great Basin Field School, with the University of Oregon, lead by archeologist Dennis L. Jenkins, who presented his finding last month in a lecture at the University of Oregon. He explained that the simple bone tool was subjected to studies of sediment and radiocarbon dating, which suggested it belonged to a pre Clovis culture.

Jon Erlandson, an archeologist at the University of Oregon said, "They can't yet rule out the Paisley Cave people weren't Clovis." But none of the Clovis people's distinct fluted spear and arrow points were found in the cave.

The only other American archeological site older than Clovis is at Monte Verde in Chile, which is about 13,900 years old.

Last year at Paisley Caves, Jenkins' team found coprolites, which are fossilized human excrement, that were dated to 14,000 to 14,270 years old. A DNA analysis showed that the coprolites were human.

But experts questioned the age of the coprolites, suggesting that they were younger than the sediments they were found in. Other archeologists questioned the pre-Clovis age of the coprolites, because no artifacts were found to corroborate their age.

Now, with the find of a bone artifact, dating to 14,230 years old, archeologists are starting to take notice of the importance of the Paisley Caves, as holding the key to the earliest human inhabitants of North America.

"The dating of the bone tool, and the finding that the sediments encasing it range from 11,930 to 14,480 years old might put these questions to rest. You couldn't ask for better dated stratigraphy," said Jenkins.

Chapter notes

Anne Arundel

Meeting five times a year in February, April, June, September and November, the chapter has a new meeting location: Severna Park Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library, 45 McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at AACHapASM@hotmail.com or visit the chapter website www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php

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 7:30 on the second Tuesday (September-May) at the Port Tobacco Court House. Contact President Paula Martino at paulamartino@hotmail.com or 301-752-2852.

Dec. 8: Jim Gibb will look at "Port Tobacco 2009: Four New Questions for Each New Answer."

Jan. 12: Peter Quantock will speak on "Clunia: Unearthing a Roman Theater in Spain."

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Agricultural History Farm Park Activity Center in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Contact heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org, or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com

Dec. 15: Holiday party

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.

Jan. 13: TBA

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>

Dec. 7: Bob Wheelersburg on "Washington Boro, Pennsylvania" at Harford Glen.

Jan. 13: Richard Hughes on heritage areas, at the Historical Society of Harford County.

Feb. 10: Speaker TBA, subject biblical archeology, at the Jewish Center in Havre de Grace.

March 10: John Seidel with an Eastern Shore prehistoric survey, at the Perryville Library.

April 16: Tim Riordan will deliver the Paul Cresthull Memorial Lecture on the St. Mary's City chapel and cemetery, at Harford Community College.

Upper Patuxent

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

Dec. 14: Lab night. Contact Lee Preston for details.

Jan. 11: Steve Israel, "Report on the Rockdale Road Rockshelter: A Late Woodland Campsite."

March 8: Laura Cripps, "Report on Bibracte, a Romano-Celtic Temple Site in France " (excavated in 2009).

May 17: "The Brown's of Mt. Pleasant : 307 Years of Ownership in Howard County " or the 3rd Annual J. Alfred Prufrock History/Archaeology Team Competition Game."

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: www.geocities.com/wmdasm

December: No meeting scheduled due to the holidays.

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@verizon.net

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