



# ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

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

## From the Trust: What's ahead for '08

By Maureen Kavanagh

*Chief Maryland Archeologist*

While we're busy writing our New Year's resolutions, we await the release of the governor's budget for FY09, expected just before the legislative session begins later in January.

We had a preview of potentially tight budget times when the special session convened in Annapolis this fall to address new sources of revenue.

Two budget items to watch which have a big impact on state support for archeology include the IMPART program, which provides funding for internships at many Maryland universities, and the Maryland Historical Trust's non-capital grant program, which supports the ASM field session, Archeology Month and the new survey and testing program.

One of the best sources for up-to-date information on historic preservation funding in the state budget is the Preservation Maryland website (<http://www.preservationmaryland.org/>). Preservation Maryland tracks the budget as it moves from the governor's office through the legislature during the spring. You can view their Advocacy Alerts on-line or sign up to receive e-mails.

Every year approximately 100 new archeological reports are added to the Trust library. They describe work conducted under federal, state and county regulations, grants and other miscellaneous projects. Like many states, Maryland has struggled with the issue of how to make the important information in this "gray literature" more accessible.

This past year the Maryland Historical Trust Board of Trustees approved a project to synthesize the archeological data from the thousands of projects that have been conducted in Maryland over the past few decades. Matt McKnight, who received his PhD from Penn State, recently joined the archeology staff to begin collating and organizing the report information.

While the multi-year project is still "under construction," some of the anticipated products will be volumes aimed toward the general public on *Prehistory of Maryland*, *Colonial Archeology of Maryland*, and *Archeology of the Early Industrial Age*. Web-based information in a variety of formats will certainly be part of the products coming out of this exciting project.

The Board of Trustees also has lent its financial support to two other archeological projects: the construction of a traveling exhibit on underwater archeology and the expansion of the very popular diagnostics web site at Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum ([www.jefpat.org](http://www.jefpat.org)) to include 19<sup>th</sup> Century ceramics.

All three of the projects will be instrumental in generating lasting products and promoting greater interest in Maryland archeology.

## Upcoming events

**January 9-12:** SHA conference, Albuquerque.

**January 26:** Montgomery County history conference. 8:30 to 3:30, Germantown Campus, Montgomery College.

**February 23:** ASM quarterly board meeting, Urbana Library. 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend.

**February 28 – March 2:** MAAC conference, Ocean City.

**March 8:** Archeology workshop. Crownsville.

## 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](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto: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 being curated is the collection from the Conawingo Dam field school site. This site was a Montgomery County 19th Century mill complex tested by ASM in 1971. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. For additional information contact Louise Akerson [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall [hall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:hall@mdp.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 Ed Chaney at [echaney@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:echaney@mdp.state.md.us) or 410-586-8554.

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

## CAT corner

Two CAT workshops will be part of the annual Workshop in Archeology at Crownsville March 8.

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

A website has been set up for CAT candidates and graduates:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MDcat/> . To join the group email [MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Members can choose to get emails or just use the website to send messages. Courtesy of CAT candidate Tom Forhan.

**Special fieldwork opportunity:** Richard Ervin of SHA is working on the Broad Creek Cemetery, a 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Work is expected in October. Contact him at 410-545-2878 (days), 410-643-7128 (evenings) or by email at [rervin@sha.state.md.us](mailto:rervin@sha.state.md.us)

## Volunteer wanted – in the financial area (no money needed)

Now's a good chance to combine an interest in archeology with an interest in bookkeeping. ASM is looking for someone to help treasurer Sean Sweeney handle ASM's financial records. Millions of dollars are not at stake, but it is important to keeping ASM up and running. If you have knowledge of the basic skills needed and would like to lend a hand, contact Sean at 410-569-8715 or [seansweeney1224@comcast.net](mailto:seansweeney1224@comcast.net)

## Off to a fast start at Port Tobacco

**By Jim G. Gibb**

*Port Tobacco Archaeological Project*

ASM members participated this fall in what is easily the most exciting archeological project to come along in years. Dozens donated their time and strong backs to the survey of Port Tobacco, a town site founded as early as the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, established as the Charles County seat in 1727/8, and comprised of scores of houses and businesses until removal of the county seat to La Plata in 1895.

The Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, founded only this past summer, has surveyed most of the southern half of town. Shovel testing (about 400 shovel tests at 25-foot intervals) recovered over 25,000 objects and identified Late Woodland sites, a possible 18<sup>th</sup>-Century earthfast dwelling, 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century brick foundations, a blacksmith shop, a newspaper office and print shop, and the carriage shop of Lincoln assassination conspirator George Atzerodt.

Team members have found well-preserved 18<sup>th</sup>-Century deposits beneath a layer of gravelly sediment that blanketed the town during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Co-directed by Dr. April Beisaw (Binghamton University) and myself, the project is a multi-year exploration of this town site, from its Native American antecedents until its partial acquisition by noted prehistorian Alice L.L. Ferguson in the 1930s. Initial work has been funded by a non-capital survey grant to ASM and grants from Preservation Maryland and the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium. We are currently pursuing a number of other grants to fund additional survey, limited testing of identified sites and research into the environmental disaster that befell this now land-locked port town.

The Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco and the Incorporated Town of Port Tobacco (15 households) have supported our work. They are providing the newly restored 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Burch House to serve as field headquarters and collections facility, and the reconstructed (1970) courthouse will continue to provide modern sanitary facilities and a meeting place (the courtroom).

We are currently preparing a report on our survey effort to date and we maintain an active blog), reporting each day on our progress, findings, and insights: <http://porttobacco.blogspot.com/>. You can find an introduction to the project on our main website, [www.gibbarchaeology.org](http://www.gibbarchaeology.org) (Discoveries page). Feel free to comment.

## History uncovered in southern Md.

**By Nancy Bromley McConaty**

*Condensed from Southern Maryland Newspapers, December 7, 2008*

Archeologists in Southern Maryland are digging up history one shovelful at a time.

They are revealing the area's significance in history, including Historic St. Mary's City — the original capital of Maryland — where the foundations of buildings from the 1600s were unearthed from fertile farmland.

In Calvert County, a 17th-Century plantation reconstructed on the campus of Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum in St. Leonard, reveals how early settlers dealt with the harsh realities of farming and how black slaves had a significant role in Southern Maryland's past.

A project in its infancy is struggling to gain ground in Port Tobacco in Charles County, where archeologists are just beginning to unearth the remains of a colonial village.

Archeologists are struggling to recover, conserve, record and preserve these relics so that future generations will be able to learn how Southern Maryland evolved from prehistory to the present.

Millions of pieces of the area's history have been recovered, but an unknown number of artifacts still lie beneath the ground and river beds to excavate, clean up, catalog and preserve, according to local archeologists.

Much of the area's history has been gleaned from these artifacts because many cultures that populated the region did not record histories of their stay in the area, said James Gibb, of Archeological Consulting in Annapolis. Gibb's firm is leading the Port Tobacco project.

"We don't find anything written down about the people who were enslaved on plantations, but when we think about it everything on a plantation was handled by slaves," he said. "If we try to look for that in written records, good luck. There's not much there."

"Part of the value of archeology, why we pay tax dollars for this, is to make history more tangible," added Edward Chaney, deputy director of the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory at Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum. "We're able to see history with our own eyes. People are intrigued by that."

Often, settlers in the region were not able to read or write, so the recording of Southern Maryland's history suffered as a consequence, said Henry Miller, director of research at Historic St. Mary's City. Almost 40 years of excavation has taken place at the restored colonial capital of Maryland.

"Events were minimally documented," he said. "Archeology provides us with a crucial historical perspective on everyone, not just the wealthy and powerful. It's impossible to learn how we became a people without that information."

It is crucial that the work at Port Tobacco continues so that a large portion of Southern Maryland's history is recorded for future generations, Gibb said. The silting over of the Port Tobacco River in the mid-1800s is perhaps the best thing that happened to the town in terms of preservation of artifacts, he said.

"Port Tobacco is probably the best-preserved historical town site in the entire state of Maryland," he said. "It's a very interesting story. Its demise because of the silting in of the river is evident.... There's a pretty exceptional preservation of artifacts because of the sedimentation of the site. It's a little bit like the Pompeii effect, but instead of a volcanic site, it's sediment," Gibb said, referring to the ancient Roman city that was preserved in volcanic ash after a catastrophic eruption of Mount Etna buried the city.

Because of rapid population growth, forested land and open fields in Southern Maryland that still hide historical artifacts are disappearing.

"Once they bulldoze a site it's gone," Gibb said. "There's no replacing it. Development, particularly in Southern Maryland, isn't going to stop. What we hope to do is achieve some sort of balance. We want to preserve some areas and develop around them."

"A lot of resources are being destroyed," said John Fiveash, president of the Archeological Society of Maryland. "As bulldozers go through to put in housing developments, the historical information goes away and there's no way to recover it. If we don't want to forget where we came from, excavation of these sites has got to be done before they are destroyed."

Archeologists have to tread lightly when excavating a site, as well, because doing it too hastily can also destroy precious artifacts, Miller said.

"We understand that by digging a site we're destroying it," he said. "We've got to be very careful when we dig artifacts up so we can record them."

"There's definitely a sense of urgency," he added. "We want people to be aware that there is a rich heritage here and it's threatened."

Amateur archeologists contribute to the preservation of Southern Maryland's history. More than two dozen volunteers joined archeologists to help do the initial survey at Port Tobacco. The volunteers helped archeologists clean, analyze and record information for a report intended to convince the state, Charles County government and local residents to pitch in financially and physically to keep the project in motion.

So far, the excavation has uncovered 15 boxes filled with a variety of artifacts, Gibb said.

"Given the fact that we're just doing a shovel test, it's extraordinary," he said. "There wasn't a single test unit that didn't produce at least one artifact. Some units produced a couple of gallon-sized bags full."

"You never know what you're going to find," said Patricia Samford, an archeologist at the lab at Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum. "You never know what great discovery you'll make in the next shovelful of dirt. For most volunteers, at first it's just a really neat thing to do. But they find that if they stick with it for a while it goes beyond the actual physical objects. They begin to learn what the soil tells us about the past."

"Our history is what makes us who we are," Fiveash said.

"If we don't know our history, we really don't know who we are as a people. It's that simple."

## Virginia tribes don't get their '07 wish

**By Brigid Schulte**

*Condensed from the Washington Post, Nov. 23*

They have donned their fringed buckskin, bone breastplates and finest headdresses made of turkey feather or porcupine hair. They have danced for the Queen of England. They have smiled for President George W. Bush.

At every turn during this Jamestown 400 Commemoration, Virginia's remaining Indian tribes have done everything asked of them.

As the anniversary year draws to a close, however, they do not have the one thing they wanted most: federal recognition as sovereign Indian nations, equal to the Navajo, Arapaho and the Sioux. "First to greet. Last to be recognized," had been their rallying cry. Now, many Virginia Indians find themselves in a familiar, hollow place.

"You're left feeling that this is all kind of superficial, from the Indian point of view. Like we were used one more time," said Rappahannock Chief Ann Richardson. "You feel like in 2008, they might just forget about us again."

"Broken promises to Indians," added Chief Ken Adams of the Upper Mattaponi. "The cycle does repeat itself, doesn't it?"

Leaders from some of the eight state-recognized tribes again donned their regalia to offer their annual Thanksgiving tribute of fish and game to the governor, honoring the 1646 treaty with the British Crown that gave them the reservation land that over the centuries only two tribes, the Pamunkey and Mattaponi, have been able to hold on to.

The road to federal recognition for any tribe is steep and uncertain. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has a Federal Office of Acknowledgement that requires tribes to prove, with reams of exacting documents and genealogies, that they have been in continuous existence from the time of first contact with European settlers. That's 400 years for Virginia Indians.

"The procedures put in place were so stringent, they were designed to limit the groups that could come in," said Mark E. Miller, a historian who has written books about forgotten eastern tribes.

So a process that was designed to take two years for the 300-some tribes that have applied instead generally takes 20, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Some tribes have instead appealed to Congress. But some powerful figures, such as Sen. John

McCain (R-Ariz.), argue that lawmakers do not have the expertise to make the call. And in the days since the Indian gaming/Jack Abramoff scandal that sent lobbyists to jail for defrauding Indian tribes, the route through Congress has become close to impossible.

Reginald Tupponce, an Upper Mattaponi leader, remembers sitting in the gallery high above the House of Representatives in spring, holding his breath as lawmakers debated whether to pass the legislation that would give sovereign status to six Virginia tribes: the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock and Monacan.

The bill would enable their children to apply for scholarships and would open up federal funds for housing, health care and economic development. It would mean that they could finally petition the federal government to return the bones of their ancestors from the drawers and boxes of Smithsonian warehouses to be buried with respect, something that only tribes with federal status are allowed to do.

But that day, all lawmakers argued about was gambling.

Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), a fierce opponent of gambling, had nearly single-handedly held up their bill for eight years. Now, he was finally giving his grudging support.

Other lawmakers called the tribes "arrogant" for trying to bypass the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tupponce shook his head. They had tried to apply at the bureau. But when the chiefs met with bureau officials in the late 1990s, they were emphatically told that their petitions would probably not be looked at in their lifetimes.

And if they were, the actions of Walter A. Plekker, who served as head of the state's Bureau of Vital Statistics for much of the 20th Century and changed the race on all their birth, death and marriage records from "Indian" to "colored," would make their case almost impossible to prove.

So it was such a sweet moment, Tupponce said, when the bill passed that May day. After eight years of lobbying, it was the farthest they had gotten. Three days later, the Queen of England, the president and television crews from around the world would arrive in Jamestown for the vaunted Anniversary Weekend.

Then everything stopped. Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.), who had in previous years given his support



to the recognition bill, was silent. And newly elected Sen. James Webb (D-Va.) said he needed time to study their history and claims. After months, sending staffers to dig in historical records and scrutinize genealogies, Webb was satisfied. On Nov. 8, flanked by tribal leaders, he held a news conference announcing his support.

He knows he moved too late in the political game for the tribes to get their recognition this year, as they had so wanted.

Many Virginia Indians now say that what they feel most strongly is conflicted. They are still without federal recognition. But Steven Adkins, chief of the Chickahominy tribe, ticked off his legacies of the Jamestown 400 year. The Department of Historic Resources began putting up highway markers recognizing native history, including the settlers' massacre of an entire Paspahegh village. The state's Standards of Learning materials, which once mentioned only Pocahontas and taught erroneously that the Virginia Indians were nomadic, have been corrected. Indians organized teacher training seminars and Web sites.



*Don't lose out. Renew ASM today.*

## Workshop in Archeology set for March 8

The 17th Annual Workshop in Archeology will be held in Crownsville March 8. The keynote speaker will be Bly Straube, lead curator at Jamestown, who will speak on The Jamestown Rediscovery Archaeological Project. Two CAT workshops will be offered, and Dan Coates and Jack Davis from the Northern Chesapeake Chapter will do a presentation on prehistoric bone technology. The complete program will be in the February newsletter.

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

The Chapter meets five times a year in February, April, June, September, and November at the All Hallows Parish Brick Church at the Parish Hall near London Town, at 7 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at [AAChapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AAChapASM@hotmail.com) or visit the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php)

### Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned. But if someone has a site he wants investigated, contact the Maryland Historical Trust or Central Chapter President Stephen Israel at 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@abs.net](mailto:ssisrael@abs.net)

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Monthly lab nights are the first Thursday of the month, from 7 to 9 at Needwood Mansion. Contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org), or call 301-840-5848. Chapter website: [www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org](http://www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org)

## Monocacy

The chapter meets in the Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com) or Nancy Geasey at 301-293-2708.

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Contact Dan Coates at [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net) or 410-273-9619(h) and 410-808-2398(c)

**Jan. 10:** Monthly chapter meeting at the Harford Historical Society, Bel Air. Speaker: Richard Sherrill, "Accessing the Harford County Archives."

## Southern

Contact Kate Dinnel for information at [katesilas@chesapeake.net](mailto: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. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at an Ellicott City restaurant. For information, contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [leeprestonjr@comcast.net](mailto:leeprestonjr@comcast.net)

**Jan. 14:** Dr. L.J. Cripps, University of Durhamp, "Cornish Iron Age (800 BC-43 AD): A Cultural Backwater?"

**March 10:** Rebecca Morehouse, collections manager, MAC Lab, "Life Beyond the Field: Artifact Curation at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab."

**May 12:** Howard Wellman, MAC Lab, "Archeological Conservation and Artifact Handling in the Field."

## 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](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: [www.geocities.com/wmdasm](http://www.geocities.com/wmdasm)

**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](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net).

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

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