



ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

www.marylandarcheology.org

2011 Field Session was feature attraction

By Robert Wall

Towson University

We all but promised a rich site for this year year's ASM Field School and the 90-some people who showed up at the Barton Site probably will agree that we delivered. Features were found in all but one unit and some artifact bags threatened to burst.

The combined forces of ASM, the Western Maryland Chapter of ASM and the Towson University Archaeological Field School participated in the 40th annual ASM Field Session, in Allegany County June 10 - 20.

As in the past two years of work on the site, efforts were focused on ground truthing subsurface images revealed by a magnetometer survey of the entire site conducted by Tim Horsley of the University of Michigan, who stopped by to consult on the progress of the excavations and to assist with interpreting the site data.

This year we focused on three primary areas. The northern area was tested last year and at that time there was some indication of a palisade trench, the northernmost pattern of this type delineated by the magnetometer survey.

A small trench was placed north of last year's excavations to confirm the presence of this large arc-shaped feature. Excavations, supervised by Gary Grant of the Western Maryland Chapter, confirmed a linear feature about one-meter wide that cross-cut the trench at approximately the same location indicated by the magnetometer images. The affiliation of the palisade trench is Mason Island (Page) as evidenced by the ceramic recoveries from the feature.

A radiocarbon date derived from what is believed to be another section of this palisade trench, identified in 2003-2004, fits the Mason Island occupation of ca. A.D. 1050-1250, a date consistent with radiocarbon dates from other areas of the site where Mason Island features have been identified.

On the south end of the site we continued to look for evidence of additional palisades lines near the Keyser village. The boundaries of the Keyser village were positively identified by excavations and by magnetometer survey data and have been radiocarbon dated to the mid-1400s.

The southernmost palisade evidence shown in the magnetometer data was delineated using long, narrow trenches. The palisade was tentatively identified in the summer of 2010 as affiliated

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Upcoming events

July 23 - 24: Archeology Weekend at Historic St. Mary's City. For information, call 240-895-4990 or 800-762-1634 or visit www.stmaryscity.org.

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

October 27-30: ESAF annual meeting, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey.

November 12: CAT workshop day.

January 4 - 8, 2012: Society for Historical and Underwater Archaeology (SHA) meeting, Baltimore.

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

Coming up November 12, CAT Workshop Day. For details, updates and information on CAT activities check the ASM website.



ASM to hold silent auction during fall meeting

ASM has decided to add something different to its annual meeting, to be held this year October 8 at the new Robinson Nature Center in Columbia: a silent auction. Do you have something, or some service, you would like to contribute? A donation form can be found on the ASM website.

Bit by bit, black family's story emerges

By Patricia Sullivan

Condensed from the Washington Post, June 16

Squatting in a 4-by-5-foot dirt pit, the former site of a backyard privy, University of Maryland students Justin Uehlein and Sophia Chang carefully scrape deeper into the fine, brown soil of Annapolis.

They are looking for glass, pottery, discarded household goods — anything that will help their archeological team understand how a middle-class African American family fared here during the Civil War and beyond.

Bit by bit, the story of a family is excavated. A toothbrush missing its bristles, broken ceramic plates, tiny painted figurines, a carved pipe bowl, a domino: Those are among the 10,000 items painstakingly retrieved from the privy, a dirt kitchen floor and a trash pile.

"What we're trying to do is make an African-American history of Annapolis out of archeology," said Mark P. Leone, the U-Md. professor who directs the 30-year-old Archaeology in Annapolis program.

History books often overlook ordinary people. Maps go only so far and oral traditions sometimes skip uncomfortable episodes that families would rather forget.

But given a trowel and patience, anthropologists, archeologists and other historical scientists can find, identify and analyze artifacts that help build a more complete report. It's working science and history, filling in gaps and synthesizing the known and unknown.

The program has excavated Annapolis historic sites and conducted an extensive project at the Wye House, the plantation where Frederick Douglass lived as a slave.

But this summer, the most exciting developments have been at the James Holliday House, in the shadow of the Capitol dome on a gentrified street that was home to blacks in the 19th Century.

The house was built between 1784 and 1819 and was bought in 1850 by one of the first African Americans to work at the U.S. Naval Academy. Holliday, born a slave in 1809 and freed 10 years later, was hired as a messenger for the superintendent when the Naval Academy moved to Annapolis. Five years later, he bought the middle-class brick home and the house, with only a small addition in the back, has been occupied by the same family ever since.

"We're hoping to better understand how this family fits into Annapolis," said Kathryn Deeley, a Maryland doctoral student who co-directs the site work and lab analysis. "James Holliday worked at the Naval Academy for about 40 years and his position was one of relative importance, especially in the African-American community."

That task has been helped by Holliday's great-great-granddaughter, who invited the team to do the excavation and who periodically conveys family stories that help students understand what they see.

"I think this is the first time in Annapolis where we could follow a site from when it was built, to who lived here, to the current homeowner," said Amanda Tang, a doctoral student and an associate director of U-Md.'s Field School in Urban Archaeology.

A related nearby site, the Pinkney House, which was owned by a wealthy black landlord and rented out for many years, turns up similar artifacts. Jocelyn Knauf, a doctoral student and an associate director of the field school, said that the site offers insight into urban life.

"We're really interested in how the use of space might have changed," she said, "how the material culture has changed and how small artifacts reflected identity."

Dogged determination

"Once archeologists start to dig they go on digging like mad and don't stop."

"Like terriers!"

-- Agatha Christie (who was married to an archeologist) in "They Came to Baghdad"

Workshop mysteries revealed

Remember the mystery artifacts at the annual Workshop in Archeology? In the back of the conference room was a display case containing 11 artifacts for identification. Eight objects were "stumpers" selected by the artifact curators at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab at Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum. Three additional objects were included that have stumped the archeologists as well, in the hope that someone could help identify them.

Here are the objects and their "official" descriptions:



Copper alloy saddle pommel



Shank cowrie shell button with metal shank attached using lead



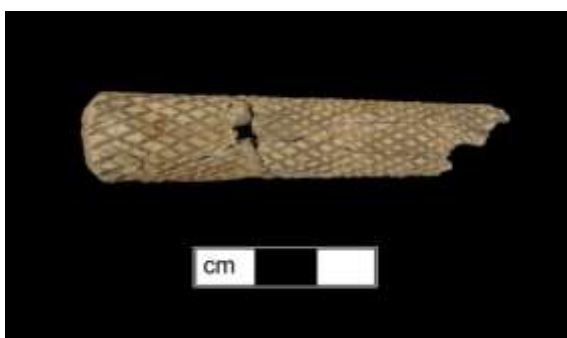
Iron oarlock or rein holder:



Blue glass stamp (for a wax seal):



Small traveling ink well:



Bone needle case (etui) with hatch-marked decoration



Steatite fishing sinker:



Antler projectile points

The Unidentified



Guesses: jaw harp or princers/
tweezers



Guesses: rope winch or
compass face



Guesses: none, except material,
deer cannon bone

Congratulations to Henry Ward (ringer!), Barbara Israel and an anonymous participant for their sharp ID skills.

13,000-year-old carving found in south

Condensed from the Washington Post, June 22, 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some of the earliest Americans turn out to have been artists.

A bone fragment at least 13,000 years old, with the carved image of a mammoth or mastodon, has been discovered in Florida, a new study reports.

While prehistoric art depicting animals with trunks has been found in Europe, this may be the first in the Western Hemisphere, researchers report Wednesday in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.

"It's pretty exciting, we haven't found anything like this in North America," said Dennis J. Stanford, of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, who was a co-author of the report.

They hunted these animals, Stanford explained, and "you see people drawing all kinds of pictures that are of relevance and importance to them."

"Much of the real significance of such finds is in the tangible, emotional connection they allow us to feel with people in the deep past," said Dietrich Stout, an anthropologist at Emory University in Atlanta, who was not part of the research team.

Cave paintings showing animals have been found in Texas, but those were dated to about 4,000 years ago, much more recent than the newly found carved bone.

The bone fragment, discovered in Vero Beach, Fla., contains an incised image about 3 inches long from head to tail and about 1 3/4 inches from head to foot.

"There was considerable skepticism expressed about the authenticity of the incising on the bone until it was examined exhaustively by archeologists, paleontologists, forensic anthropologists, materials science engineers and artists," said lead author Barbara Purdy of the University of Florida.

The bone was found by a fossil hunter near the Old Vero Site, where human bones were found side-by-side with the bones of extinct Ice Age animals in an excavation from 1913 to 1916.

It was heavily mineralized, which prevented standard dating, Stanford explained. But mammoths and mastodons had died out in the Americas by 13,000 years ago, so it has to be older than that. "It could be quite early," he added.

But the researchers wanted to be sure it was not a modern effort to mimic prehistoric art. They compared it with other materials found at the site and studied it with microscopes, which showed no differences in coloration between the carved grooves and the surrounding material. That, they said, indicated that both surfaces aged together.

In addition, the researchers said, there were no signs of the material being carved recently or that the grooves were made with metal tools.

"It either had to be carved from direct observation when the animals existed or has to be a modern fake" and "all indications are that the carving is the same age as the bone," said anthropologist Christopher J. Ellis of the University of Western Ontario, who was not part of the research team.

The only other report of an ancient bone in North America carved with the image of a mastodon came from Mexico in 1959, but questions were raised about that object and it disappeared.

The new discovery was made by James Kennedy, a fossil hunter, in 2006 or 2007. Kennedy noticed the image in 2009 when he was cleaning the bone and he then contacted researchers who began their study of the artifact.

The newly found North American image is similar to some found in Europe, raising the question of whether this is merely coincidence or evidence of some connection between the two, the paper noted.

Stout said the suggestion that the similarities between this and ancient European art might imply some cultural contact or movement of people across the Atlantic very early is controversial. That idea has previously been proposed by Stanford and others, but has attracted a lot of criticism and skepticism from other archeologists, he said.

David J. Meltzer of Southern Methodist University said he doesn't "for a moment, think the specimen begs any questions about the larger issue of the peopling of the Americas. It's just one specimen — albeit an interesting one — of uncertain age and provenance, so one should not get too carried away."

Barton site was a feature attraction

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with the Mason Island (Page) culture so additional trenches were excavated this year to more positively identify the feature, to follow out associated post alignments and to discern related patterns such as structures.

The palisade trench was again confirmed with contiguous excavations but no house patterns were identified. Only isolated post molds were found. These excavations were conducted under the supervision of Dave Frederick of the Western Maryland Chapter.

Another two-meter unit was placed in an area between the Keyser village and a Mason Island palisade but no features or post molds were identified.

One of the more interesting finds came from the T-0 terrace, the low-lying terrace that borders the southeastern corner of the site. These soils are believed to be much younger than soils on the T-1 terrace where most of the site's occupations are located. Auger borings had confirmed this in past years.

This year, a two-meter unit, supplemented by additional auger borings, was taken down to a depth of approximately 1.5 meters. The unit was positioned over a large, dark area that showed clearly on the magnetometer images.

At a depth of approximately 50 cm below surface, some Late Woodland pottery was recovered. At 75 cm, a large, thick body sherd of possible Middle Woodland age was recovered. The sherd was derived from a poorly constructed vessel and contained a high percentage of crushed rock temper. No stable occupation surfaces were found in this unit.

The last two two-meter excavation units were placed in the deep test block and within an area about 10 meters to the north of the deep test and close to the Susquehannock unit block excavated a few years ago. The purpose of the latter two-meter test was to follow a palisade trench identified several years ago. In areas such as this, close to the tree line on the river's edge of the site, the magnetometer data is far less clear.

This unit was found to be quite complicated and it was almost completely covered in features. Features recorded and excavated included a deep Mason Island silo-shaped pit reaching a depth greater than one meter below surface. Nearby was a shallow basin, also containing Page ceramics. An extension of the palisade trench was found along the east wall of the unit and in the center of the unit, a deep, circular pit feature was recorded.

The only Susquehannock feature in the unit was a shallow, bell-shaped pit along the west wall. Schultz incised ceramics were found in the pit along with animal bones and mussel shell.

Finally, the deep test unit excavations, supervised by Roy Brown of the Western Maryland Chapter, were initiated. The deep unit also contained several large features that covered much of the two-meter unit's surface. A large Susquehannock pit feature was revealed in the northwest quarter of the unit with the remainder of the unit covered by an extensive Mason Island midden and a large hearth in the south wall.

The Susquehannock feature will be excavated as part of the deep test excavations because it extends about a meter below the base of the plow zone. The Mason Island features were completely excavated.

At the close of the field session on Monday, June 20, Level 2 of the deep unit had been started with only 18 10-cm levels left to reach the Potomac River bed. Excavations will continue periodically during the summer and may extend into the fall, depending on the progress we can make this summer. All are welcome to participate.

Wanted: Nominees for William Marye Award

The highest honor ASM bestows is the William B. Marye Award. Each year candidates are nominated for having made an outstanding contribution to Maryland archeology. An ASM committee then selects the winner.

The candidate need not be a member of ASM or even a Marylander. Or even an archeologist. Last year's winner, John W. McGrain wasn't, but through his role in Baltimore County government his contributions were so helpful that he received the honor.

Other recent winners include Bill McIntyre, Bob Wall, Bob Bantz, Jim Gibb, Carol Ebright and Dan Coates.

Do you know of someone you think should join this group? A nomination form is on the ASM website, along with a complete list of previous winners.

Nominations do not roll over so people nominated in previous years should be nominated again.

To be considered, the nominations have to be received by September 8.

Archeology professor sentenced for looting

By Tamara Stewart

Condensed from American Archaeology, Summer 2011

Daniel Amick, an archeology professor at Loyola University in Chicago, pleaded guilty to taking 17 ancient artifacts from New Mexico federal lands in June 2007 without an archeological permit. The artifacts included Paleo-Indian projectile points and represent some of the earliest evidence of human occupation in the New World. Amick is chairman of the university's archeology department.

According to the U.S. Attorney's office in Albuquerque, this past February Amick pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of violating the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and was sentenced to one year of conditional, unsupervised probation.

In another looting case, Durango, Colorado, couple Carl "Vern" Crites and Marie Virginia Crites entered guilty pleas this past March to theft of artifacts from federal lands, trafficking in stolen artifacts and depredation of government property.

The Crites were charged in the massive Four Corners looting sting of 2009. Authorities seized five truckloads of artifacts from the Crites' home, a collection they described as "astonishing." Vern faces up to 10 years in federal prison for theft of government property, up to 10 years for depredation of government property and up to two years for trafficking in stolen artifacts.

So far five federal convictions in the Four Corners looting case have resulted in probation and restrictions on use of public lands for the accused.

In Nevada, Michael Cook, a volunteer archeological site monitor for the U.S. Forest Service, was charged with taking a 300-pound rock with petroglyphs from the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area in 2008 and moving it to his front yard in Pahrump. Cook pleaded guilty and was sentenced to six months in federal prison following by one year of supervised release.

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 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.

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

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/nSorthernchesapeake>

September 14: Bill McIntyre talks about "40 Years Working in the HCAS/ASNC." At Harford Glen.

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 in Ellicott City at 6 p.m. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or leeprestonjr@comcast.net

September 12: Roy Brown on "Prehistory: Animal, Vegetable, Mineral."

October 10: Lab session.

November 14: Dana Kollman on Page and Keyser interment regimes from the middle and upper Potomac River valley.

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>

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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

Submissions welcome. Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD. 20782, 301-864-5289 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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