



# ASM Ink

September 2008, Vol. 34, No. 9

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

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

## Woodland pottery-making site discovered

**By Stephanie T. Sperling**

*From Letters from Lost Towns, Summer 2008*

Lost Towns Project archeologists spent a few weeks last fall excavating on a small peninsula on the Rhode River at YMCA Camp Letts in Edgewater. This prehistoric camp site, which dates to the Middle and Late Woodland periods (about A.D. 200 through A.D. 1600), was originally discovered in 2005. We were finally able to return in 2007 and learn more about the Native Americans who lived in Anne Arundel County in the centuries before contact with Europeans.

In the field we concentrated part of our excavation on a large oyster shell midden -- essentially a prehistoric trash heap -- and came up with a very curious collection of ceramic sherds. After a consultation with prehistoric ceramic experts at Temple University, it appears that we have uncovered evidence that the native peoples were making pottery here perhaps thousands of years ago.

This is very exciting for us and for the archeological community at large, because it is rare to find a site that has evidence of pottery manufacture.

These crumbly, brittle pebble-sized sherds were tempered with oyster shell and looked like someone had tried and failed to make a vessel. It appears that at least one pot had not been successfully fired, and was tossed out with the trash into the shell midden.

One of the sherds shows that they had tried to construct a vessel by stacking rolled clay coils on top of one another, a typical method used by the Native Americans in this region. Three of these coils are still plainly visible adhered to an oyster shell from the midden.

### IMPORTANT NEWS

**\*\* Annetta Schott** has informed ASM that she will not be able to continue as a candidate for re-election as an at-large trustee in this year's election. It is too late to change the ballots for the election, which were distributed in the July ASM newsletter. To replace Annetta, members are urged to write in the name of Gary Hall, of Rockville, before they mail in their ballots or bring them to the Annual Meeting in Frederick October 18.

**\*\* The theme of the annual meeting in Frederick** will be "Potomac River Valley Native Americans: Just Who Were These Peoples Anyway?" The all-day affair will feature a variety of talks covering 1,000 years of history, both in general and in relation to specific tribes. Participants will also get a chance to see the Swomley collection of artifacts from the Claggett Retreat site, which will be on display nearby. The complete program will appear in next month's newsletter.

# Upcoming events

**September 6:** ASM board meeting. Central Library, Columbia. 9 a.m. All ASM members are welcome to attend.

**September 6:** Point Farm benefit and auction, Jefferson Patterson Park, 5:30 - 8:30. Tickets \$60 before September 1, \$70 after. Proceeds to benefit JefPat. To donate items or purchase tickets, call 410-586-8515.

**September 26 - 28:** A conference in honor of the work of Bill Gardner. Shepherdstown, West Virginia. For information, see <http://www.thunderbirdresearch.org>.

**October 18:** ASM Annual Meeting. Trunk Memorial Hall of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 35 East Church Street, Frederick.

**October 24 - 26:** Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology meeting, St. Mary's City.

## 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 [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 Locust Neck Late Woodland site, to be followed by the Late Archaic Baldwin site collection. 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. 410-222-7440.

**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](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

Alex McPhail is taking over as director of the CAT program. He will meet with program leaders in early September to go over plans.

A 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)



*Dan Coates displays the two styles of screens built for ASM activities.*

## Northern Chesapeake builds new screens

**By Dan Coates**

*President, ASNC*

The Northern Chesapeake chapter recently constructed new field equipment for ASM to support the annual field sessions and chapter field investigations. This was done to augment and replace the very field-wear, heavy and cumbersome tripod screens, a wide variety of which ASM has used for many years.

Three "H" or "rocker" screens are a modified version of those used by professional archeological crews throughout the state. They are a light-weight but more durable version of those available from equipment vendors such as Stoney Knoll. Field-tested by Jim Gibb's rough and ready crews, these 18"x26" pressure treated sifters weigh in at only 12 pounds with carrying handle and shoulder strap and are adjustable to nine different height/center of gravity combinations. The screen is easy to change and fully covered at the edges by aluminum angle. The screens are provided with a durable felt cloth to sift onto, and 1/8" screen inserts for fine sifting. These are especially well-suited for shovel testing over a large area and rough terrain conditions.

We also built one crew-size shaker screen on rollers over a 41" high frame. The 24"x33" screen will hold 2.5 cubic feet of soil. Sifted soil can be directed into a wheel barrow for easy disposition away from the unit. The all-weather frame is 7-ply painted plywood, with aluminum channel covering the exposed edges. It is fastened together with special composite deck screws for durability and ease of repair. Designed for static excavations, the frame can be carried on the shoulders of one person for short distances. This type has survived many years of hard labor by Jim and his crew and is well suited for shoveling directly into the screen.

Initially this equipment will be stored and maintained by the Northern Chesapeake chapter and used at the fall field excavations on the Susquehanna Canal. The screens are available for other chapters and ASM field sessions.

The Northern Chesapeake chapter and Gibb Archaeological Consulting have several more screens of both types for use at ASM field sessions. As members gain hands-on experience with the equipment, ideas for

further modification should be forwarded to Dan Coates at [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net). Several suggestions from the Port Tobacco field session already have been incorporated.

## Judge says US owes Indians in trust case

*From news reports, August 8, 2008*

WASHINGTON — A federal judge ruled Thursday that American Indian plaintiffs are entitled to \$455 million in a long-running trust case, a fraction of the \$47 billion they wanted.

U.S. District Judge James Robertson's final number is close to government estimates in the 12-year trial. The lawsuit — filed on behalf of a half-million American Indians and their heirs — claims they were swindled out of billions of dollars in oil, gas, grazing, timber and other royalties overseen by the Interior Department since 1887.

"He basically accepted the government's argument that not that much money is missing," said Bill McAllister, a spokesman for the plaintiffs, who are led by a member of the Blackfoot tribe in Montana, Elouise Pepion Cobell.

The judge said he will have to hold another proceeding to decide how the money will be awarded, hinting that he hopes for a settlement between the two parties before then.

At issue was how much of the royalty money was withheld from the Indian plaintiffs over the years and whether it was held in the U.S. treasury at a benefit to the government.

Judge Robertson did not actually order the government to pay; hearings on that question are scheduled for later this month. And he was scathing at times in describing how the case had illuminated government mismanagement, including a long trail of lost or destroyed records about money owed to Indians for timber leases, oil leases and other activities.

Robertson said in the opinion that plaintiffs did not successfully argue that the money was of benefit to the government over the years, significantly reducing his final estimate of what the American Indians were owed.

"Plaintiffs' demonstrated willingness to accept data they liked and reject data they disliked did not enhance the credibility of their model," he added.

In a statement Cobell said she is "disappointed, to say the least." She later said an appeal is planned.

The Interior Department broke its customary silence on the case to praise the ruling.

"The department is gratified that the court recognized the complexities and uncertainties involved in this case," said James E. Cason, associate deputy Secretary of the Interior.

The government proposed paying \$7 billion partly to settle the Cobell lawsuit in March 2007, but that was rejected by the plaintiffs.

In a January decision, Robertson said the Interior Department had "unreasonably delayed" its accounting of the money owed to landholders and that the task was ultimately impossible.

The case has dragged on for several years, with occasional fireworks. U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth ordered the department to disconnect its computers from the Internet for failing to provide adequate security for the Indians' trust records. He also held President Bush's interior secretary, Gale Norton, and her Clinton-era predecessor, Bruce Babbitt, in contempt for their handling of the trust fund.

Lamberth later was removed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, which said he had lost his objectivity. The government had asked that Lamberth be replaced after the judge lambasted the department, writing in a decision that it "is a dinosaur — the morally and culturally oblivious hand-me-down of a disgracefully racist and imperialist government that should have been buried a century ago."

## Lost Towns budget slashed, new members sought

The Lost Towns Project is feeling squeezed by Anne Arundel County budget cutbacks. Assistant Director John Kille reports that the popular archeology and historic preservation program suffered a budget cut of \$130,000.

This led to a 60 percent reduction in operating expenses and threatens several longstanding ongoing programs. "Many of our 'regulars' have had their hours cut to one or two days a week," he said.

As a result, Lost Towns is seeking more contributions to make up for the loss. People wishing to help out are



asked to take out tax-deductible memberships. Individual memberships are \$20, family \$30. Special contributor status is available for \$50 or more. Contact John Kille or Lost Towns at 410-222-7440.

## Artifact trove going to DC-area display

By Ovetta Wiggins

*Condensed from the Washington Post, July 30, 2008*

They are the everyday items of daily life, tossed off or abandoned by people long gone to their graves, that 300 years later have become the stuff of history. A button, a bottle, a toothbrush and 300,000 other ordinary relics from colonial-era plantation life on the banks of the Potomac are now historical artifacts, to be examined, admired and cataloged by those who take stock of bygone days.

The items are coming home to the place where they were discovered more than two decades ago, the spot beside the river once known as Oxon Hill Manor or the Addison plantation. Now it is the site of the National Harbor mega-development in Prince George's County and some the best of the artifacts will be displayed there.

They reflect the wealth of that era's elite, the bottles emblazoned with the family name, Addison, and the fancy buttons, ornate furniture knobs and even the toothbrush.

"This is pretty high class," Patricia Samford, director of the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory, said as she surveyed some of the pieces wrapped in sealed plastic bags. "A lot of people didn't have the money to adorn their clothing with these types of buttons or furniture with these kinds of knobs."

The Addisons, apparently wealthy English merchants, used slave labor to grow tobacco, oats and corn on property beside the Potomac that John Addison bought and began expanding in 1687. His descendants sold the land to Zahariah Berry in 1810. It passed through various hands before the manor house burned down in 1895.

Archeologists recovered more than 5,000 tobacco pipe fragments, pieces of 56 wine bottles bearing the letter "A" and fragments of more than 2,000 bowls, pitchers, water glasses and pieces of stemware.

Jennifer Stabler, an archeologist and planner coordinator with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, said that in the next few years, some objects will probably be on display at the visitors center, and photographs of some artifacts might be displayed on panels throughout the development.

"It's an amazing collection to have something like this survive," said Rebecca J. Morehouse, the collections manager at the state laboratory.

Morehouse said the artifacts include a brick with three indented paw prints, a mug probably used for coffee and two domino pieces made from bone, as well as the bone handle of a toothbrush.

"It's pretty obvious that they were one of the state's wealthiest families," Morehouse said.

It has taken almost 20 years for the artifacts to make their way back to National Harbor because they were part of a custody battle between National Harbor developer Milton Peterson and John Milner Associates, a preservation firm hired by the property's former owner, John T. Lewis.

Before Peterson took possession of the land, Lewis began excavation on the site. After Peterson bought the property, he was unable to proceed until he resolved a dispute with Milner, who wanted Peterson to pay \$1 million for work his company was supposed to do under an agreement with Lewis.

The state trust intervened, reaching an agreement in 2000 that allowed Peterson to pay \$300,000 over three years to the Maryland Historical Trust.

## Civil War claims another casualty

*From news reports, August 12, 2008*

A Civil War relic hunter who was killed in an explosion in February had been cleaning a cannonball when a spark ignited black powder, a federal investigation concluded yesterday.

Sam White, 53, was working on the nine-inch naval cannonball in the driveway of his Chesterfield County, Virginia, home, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said.

No other injuries were reported but the blast sent pieces of shrapnel through the side and roof of his detached, two-car garage. One 5- to 7-pound fragment traveled 1,200 feet before crashing through the front-porch roof of a house in a neighboring subdivision.

Explosives experts said White's death was an extraordinary event and one rarely recorded since the end of the Civil War. But a U.S. Army explosives expert strongly disagreed that munitions from that period do not pose a modern threat.

## Busy fall planned by Northern Chesapeake

The Northern Chesapeake Chapter will be busy the next few months off the field as well as on.

It plans to participate in the following annual events in Maryland and Pennsylvania:

September 13 and 14: Pennsylvania Indian Cultural Society's Festival to benefit the Hershey Medical Center's Children's Cancer and Kidney Research, at Paradise Township Park in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

October 11: Welsh Heritage Festival to benefit the Old Line Museum and restoration of the historic Welsh slateworkers' cottages at Coulsontown, Pennsylvania.

October 12: Swan Festival in support of Harford County Parks and Recreation, at the historic Swan Harbor Farm near Havre de Grace.

October 18 and 19: Trolley Festival in Frederick.

November 2: Native American Month displays at the 1788 Hays House in Bel Air.

In addition, the chapter will conduct field investigations at:

October 10 and 11: Phase 2 at the Old Line Museum's restoration of the historic Welsh slateworkers' cottages at Coulsontown.

November (date TBA): Phase 2 at the Octoraro Locks along the 1800 Susquehanna Canal near Port Deposit.

## 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)

**September 16:** Jim Gibb will talk about recent discoveries at Port Tobacco in Charles County.

**November 18:** Rebecca J. Morehouse, curator of state collections at the Jefferson Patterson MAC Lab, will give a lecture "Life Beyond the Field: Curation at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory." She will focus on materials from Anne Arundel County.

### 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)

### 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](mailto:paulamartino@hotmail.com) or 301-752-2852.

**September 9:** Report from the field on the Port Tobacco Project, James Gibb

**October 6:** "From Eden to Exile: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Bible," by author Eric Cline. NOTE: This meeting is being held at a different time and place. Besides the date change, it will begin at 7 p.m. and be at the College of Southern Maryland in LaPlata.

**November 11:** Update on Moore's Lodge, site of first Charles County Court House, Julia King.

**December 9:** Registering archeological sites for the amateur, Carol Cowherd.

## 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, except for July and August, at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com) or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

**September 10:** Dixie Henry of the Maryland Historical Trust talks on "From Salt Pork to Compliance: An Archeologist's Journey from the Oneida Territory of Central NY to the MD SHPO."

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A short business meeting at 7 is followed by the featured presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net) or 410-273-9619(h) and 410-808-2398(c)

**September 11:** Jack Davis and Dan Coates present "Osteotechnology -- Prehistoric Bone Toolmaking" at the outdoor Harford Glen pavilion near Bel Air.

**October 9:** Bill McIntyre presents "Garrett Island -- Revisited" at the Perryville Town Hall.

**November 13:** Gary Wasielewski on "Cedar Hill - Preservation of an Early Municipal Cemetery" at the Havre de Grace Town Hall.

**December 8:** Annual business and dinner meeting. Jim Gibb and Ann Persson present "Investigation of the 1800 Susquehanna Canal" at the Harford Glen cafeteria.

## 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)

**September 8:** Carol Ebright will deliver the Vaughan Brown Memorial Native American Study Center Lecture. Her title will be, "Maryland Indians: An Overview."

**November 10:** Lee Preston on the history of Simpsonville Mill.

**January 12:** To be arranged.

**March 9:** The second annual, Alfred J. Prufrock: Oh, Do Ask What Is It? game.

**May 11:** To be arranged.

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

**September 26:** Artists Bryant and Pamela Patrick White, whose work depicts 18th Century subjects, discuss the era while appearing in 18th Century garb.

**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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TIME SENSITIVE: DELIVER BY AUGUST 30

