

# ASM Ink

September 2022, Vol. 49, No. 9

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



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

## ASM's annual meeting coming up Oct. 1

October isn't far away any more. Summer is dwindling down as August fades into memory, September is going to whiz past and October is arriving with a bang and with ASM's fall gathering coming on its very first day, Saturday October 1.

The meeting, hosted by the Central Chapter, will take place at the Marshy Point Nature Center in southeastern Baltimore County, starting at 9 with the annual business meeting. The results of this year's ASM election will be announced and the newly elected officers will take over. The talks portion of the meeting will focus on cemetery preservation, including a keynote address by Howard Wellman. A tour of a Colonial burying ground is planned. The complete program will appear in next month's newsletter.

NOTE: If you have not returned your election ballot, remember to bring it to the meeting so it can be counted.

## European drought exposes Nazi fleet, and ruins

By Marina Lopes

*Condensed from the Washington Post, August 21, 2022*

One of the worst droughts on record in Europe has parched the continent's major waterways, revealing relics such as a long-submerged village and World War II-era battleships.

This week, low water levels on the Serbian section of the Danube River exposed a graveyard of sunken German warships filled with explosives and ammunition. The vessels, which emerged near the port town of Prahovo, were part of a Nazi Black Sea fleet that sank in 1944 while fleeing Soviet forces. More ships are expected to be found lodged in the river's sandbanks, loaded with unexploded ordnance.

A junior Serbian transport minister told local media there were about 10,000 explosive devices in the water.

Other ruins have also emerged around Europe as waters recede in the drought. In July, a Roman bridge built during the first century B.C. was uncovered in the Tiber River, and in August, a village that had been deliberately flooded in 1963 to build a dam appeared from the Belesar reservoir in Spain.

The village is one of several sites submerged under reservoirs in Spain. A ghost town that had been flooded to build a dam on Spain's border with Portugal emerged in February, revealing houses with windows and walls still intact.

Officials estimate it will cost \$30 million to remove more than 20 ships, ammunition and explosives, Reuters reported. But the dry conditions have also given archeologists and researchers a rare glimpse into the past and contact with ruins that are normally difficult to access.

Earlier this week, the unrelenting heat wave that left the Iberian Peninsula drier than any time in the last 1,200 years also exposed dozens of prehistoric stones in a reservoir in central Spain. The drought drained the reservoir to a fraction of its capacity, the Spanish government said, granting archeologists access to the Dolmen of Guadalperal, believed to be from 5000 B.C.

# Upcoming events

**September 10:** Board meeting. Zoom.

**October 1:** ASM annual meeting. Marshy Point nature center, Baltimore County

**Nov. 4-6:** ESAF annual meeting, Shippensburg, Pa.

## Volunteer opportunities (non-covid)

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

**Not Maiden's Choice:** MHT and the Western Maryland Chapter are going to be returning to a historic site in Washington County discovered in November while looking for something else. April 7-10. If interested contact [mathew.mcknight@maryland.gov](mailto:mathew.mcknight@maryland.gov)

**ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays:** The lab in Crownsville. Contact Zachary Singer at [Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov) It is currently working on the Maiden's Choice collection, which is a late 18th to early 19th Century dwelling in Washington County

**The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at [jamesggibb@verizon.net](mailto:jamesggibb@verizon.net)

**Charles County for lab and field work** volunteers, contact Esther Read at [ReadE@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:ReadE@charlescountymd.gov)  
For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at [ccasm2010@gmail.com](mailto:ccasm2010@gmail.com).

The **Anne Arundel County Archeology Lab** in Edgewater, in conjunction with The Lost Towns Project, accepts volunteers and interns to help process artifacts, including washing, labeling, sorting and cataloging. No experience needed. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The lab is generally open 2-3 weekdays each week from 9:00-3:00. Volunteers must sign up in advance. There are occasional opportunities for fieldwork as well. For more information, the current lab or field schedule, or to sign up, email Drew Webster at [volunteers@losttownsproject.org](mailto:volunteers@losttownsproject.org).

**UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks** invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at [Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov) or 410-313-0423.

**Montgomery County** for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or [Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org)

**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 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.

## CAT corner:

If your email address changes please remember to let Tom know. It's the only contact we have for many of you. For more information on the CAT program contact Tom McLaughlin at [mclaugh01@verizon.net](mailto:mclaugh01@verizon.net)

"[Archeology is] very systematic and controlled. You never know what you're going to find, which is what makes it interesting. You may spend a lot of time finding nothing. Then, you do find that one cool thing, and that makes it worth it."  
-- Kwajalein senior archeologist Caitlin Gilbertson

## Eastern Shore chapter is about to start up

Though rich in archeological history, research and public engagement, Maryland's Eastern Shore has long been without an active ASM presence. Hopefully, that's about to change, as a local group is proposing a relaunch of the Eastern Shore Chapter of ASM.

The group includes Julie Markin of Washington College and CAT program participants Julia Berg, Sarah Mason and Wendy Hubbert, with additional regional support from Bill Wilson, Ed Otter, Elizabeth Ragan of Salisbury University and John Seidel and Elizabeth Seidel of Washington College.

Because the chapter will initially cover the entire region from Cecil County to Somerset County, the Wharves of Choptank Visitor & Heritage Center in Denton has been chosen as a central location for regular monthly meetings. An option to meet by Zoom will be provided as well.

The chapter plans to offer a variety of activities, including field study, monthly lab days and lectures by speakers including Caroline County Historical Society President Jok Walsh.

The plan will be presented to the ASM board at its September 10 meeting.

To express interest or get additional information, please email [esarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:esarchaeology@gmail.com).

## On the last day of dig, a human bone is found

By Zach Zorich

*Condensed from the New York Times, August 9, 2022*

This spring, a team of archeologists and volunteers began painstakingly digging into the history of Fort Mercer, a Revolutionary War fortification on the Delaware River that is now the centerpiece of Red Bank Battlefield Park in National Park, N.J.

During the war, Continental Army soldiers were stationed at the fort to keep the British and their Hessian mercenary allies from resupplying troops in nearby Philadelphia. On Oct. 22, 1777, the army repelled a major assault by Hessian forces. Little-known today, the Battle of Red Bank was brief and ferocious, marking one of the worst defeats the Hessians suffered in the war.

The archeologists were focused on excavating a trench that had been used to defend the fort during the battle. "My sense was we were going to be looking at the kind of trash that a garrison might throw away," said Wade Catts, principal archeologist with South River Heritage Consulting in Newark, Del. Catts led the dig with Jennifer Janofsky, the director of the park and a historian at Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J.

Instead, at about 2 p.m. on June 26, the last day of field work, the team found a leg bone; they quickly determined that it had belonged to one of the attacking Hessians. It was the first human bone to be found at the site since 1904, when a new fence was built at the battlefield. Over the next few weeks, the group recovered the remains of 14 individuals. "I didn't really think we were going to get a mass burial," Catts said.

On the day of the attack in 1777, the Hessians surely thought the same. The force of 2,300 mercenaries was led by Col. Carl Emil Ulrich von Donop, a courageous leader with a fiery temper, according to letters written by his officers.

The fort was defended by only 534 soldiers, including members of the Sixth Virginia Regiment and the New Jersey militia, as well as members of the First and Second Rhode Island Regiments, two of the nation's first integrated military units. Forty-eight of the American soldiers were Black; the regiments also included Native Americans of the Narragansett people.

Colonel von Donop was confident of victory. Fort Mercer "will be Fort Donop or I shall be dead," he wrote to Gen. William Howe, commander of the British military forces. When the Hessians arrived at the fort, von Donop sent an officer to call for the Americans to surrender. "The King of England orders his rebellious subjects to lay down their arms," the demand stated. "If they stand battle, no quarter whatever will be given."

The American commander, Col. Christopher Greene, soon replied: The Americans accepted the challenge, and no quarter should be taken on either side. Fighting commenced at 4 p.m. From the river, 13 galleys of the Pennsylvania Navy immediately bombarded the Hessians with cannon fire and the soldiers inside Fort Mercer opened up with muskets and 14 cannons of their own.

**Continued on next page**

Two battalions and one regiment of Hessian soldiers advanced through the barrage. Their assault was slowed by trees that had been cut down; branches had been sharpened and stacked in a line around the fort. The battle lasted just 75 minutes; when it was over, 377 Hessian soldiers — and just 14 Americans — were dead.

The horror of that afternoon was soon apparent to the archeologists. From an excavation pit 10 feet wide, 30 feet long and four-and-a-half feet deep, they recovered 14 skulls and numerous other human bones. Catts believes that the soldiers belonged to the Regiment von Mirbach and that they were at the center of the Hessian formations during the assault.

The injuries to one soldier, Catts said, included "a musket ball in the lower part of his back above where his pelvis should be; a lead canister shot in the middle of his back, where he had no more thoracic vertebra; and then a one-and-a-half-inch iron grapeshot that seems to have taken off his left arm."

Janofsky noted that the ships on the river were firing chain shot and bar shot at the Hessians, ammunition that is designed to destroy a ship's rigging. "These guys were being hit by all kinds of things," Catts said. "What a horrible place this would have been."

According to accounts written by surviving Hessian officers, most of the wounded were left on the battlefield: The Hessians had not brought wagons to carry them and the American soldiers, fearing another attack, remained inside the fort.

"It is painful for me to lose so many good people, I can't describe it and I have not recovered from it," Lt. Col. Ludwig Johann Adolph von Wurmb wrote a few days later. "The tragedy of our poor wounded here in America is not describable without shedding tears, and those left behind with the enemy have no aid."

That night, a group of American soldiers ventured out to repair some of the defenses. A voice called out from the battlefield: "Whoever you are, take me out of here." It was von Donop, who had been shot in the hip.

According to Capt. Thomas Antoine Mauduit du Plessis, the French engineer leading the group, an American soldier shouted out, "Well now, is it agreed that no quarter will be given?" The colonel replied, "I am in your hands. You may take your revenge." The Americans brought him into the fort and cared for him until he died a week later.

The rest of the Hessian wounded were left where they lay until the next day, when American soldiers were tasked with burying the dead. The ditch in front of the fort may have been an easy place to dispose of the bodies, Janofsky said. "Are we looking at somebody who was shot, died and is buried?" she said. "Or are we looking at what the burial party did on Oct. 23, 1777, which was essentially pitching bodies into a convenient hole?"

The first human bone recovered, a femur, was found in the excavation pit by volunteers Joe Reilly and Wayne Wilson. As soon as it emerged, all digging stopped — the standard procedure when human bones are found. Anna Delaney, the forensic anthropologist for the New Jersey State Police, was called in.

In the next weeks, Ms. Delaney helped remove all the human remains from the site and preserved them in her lab, where they will be analyzed. She and Thomas Crist, a forensic anthropologist at Utica University who has worked on Revolutionary War remains, plan to study the chemical composition of the bones. Certain stable isotopes, and the presence of trace elements, can help determine where a person grew up and what that person's diet and health were like later in life.

Delaney and Crist also hope to recover DNA from the bones and from traces of blood on some of the artifacts. Delaney said: "To be able to give one of these soldiers their name back, to give their family back something, I think that is actually the most exciting part of the whole process." Once the analyses are complete, the bones will be reburied.

For Janofsky, the human remains add poignancy to the story of the battle. Among the dead was a man between 17 and 19 years old, the same age as many of her history students. "Very few of us have seen the violence of the battlefield, and it's what we've been looking at for the past months," she said. "I feel like we are charged with helping our visitors understand that moment."

# Ancient footprints on the sands of time

By Jeanne Timmons

*Condensed from the New York Times, August 3, 2022*

Scientists have discovered ancient human footprints in Utah, traces, they say, of adults and children who walked barefoot along a shallow riverbed more than 12,000 years ago.

It took "pure chance" to make this discovery at the Utah Test and Training Range, a 1 million-acre site where the U.S. Armed Forces test experimental aircraft and other military hardware, said Tommy Urban, a research scientist at Cornell University.

Following on Urban and his colleagues' recent studies of ancient human and other mammal tracks at White Sands National Park in New Mexico, the Utah tracks extend scientific understanding of ancient North America by revealing not just where humans lived, but also evidence of their behaviors.

Daron Duke, a Nevada-based archeologist for the Far Western Anthropological Research Group, invited Urban to assist with a search for ancient campfires at the Utah test range. Duke and his team published a paper on the contents of one campsite last year.

While driving to a dig site, the two were having an animated conversation about trackways. When Duke asked what a fossil footprint looked like, Urban pointed out the window and said, "Well, kind of like THAT!" They stopped the truck, having located the first of what would turn out to be 88 footprints.

"When I spotted them from the moving vehicle, I didn't know they were human," Urban said. "I did know they were footprints, however, because they were in an evenly spaced, alternating sequence — a track pattern."

The 88 footprints are in several short trackways, some of which indicate that people may have simply been congregating in one area. "It doesn't look like we just happened to find someone walking from point A to point B," Duke said. They believe these footprints are of people who lived nearby. "Maybe collecting things. Maybe just enjoying themselves" in the shallow water, he added.

Duke said they had also found a type of stone spear tip in a nearby site that might have been used to hunt large animals, but no evidence of the animals yet.

Urban compared the Utah footprints to the "ghost tracks" in White Sands, a term used for tracks that appear only under certain conditions, then disappear just as quickly.

The fossil tracks in New Mexico, as much as 23,000 years old, were uncovered using ground-penetrating radar technology and contained a treasure trove of revelations: tracks of ancient humans and megafauna intersecting and interacting with each other.

They showed proof that ancient humans walked in the footprints of enormous proboscideans and vice versa; that one human raced across the mud holding a child, put that child down at one point, picked that child back up and then rushed off to an unknown destination; that at least one giant ground sloth was followed by ancient humans, rose up on its hind legs and twirled as the humans surrounded it; that children played in puddles.

"The western U.S. has many similar settings that could have early footprint sites," Urban said of the salt flats. He added, "Now we have a second location, there are probably more out there."

Still, finding human footprints was surprising. Humans haven't inhabited the area for thousands of years. It's a desert, it's remote and it's now a military installation.

"When we thought through these options, concluding that the most logical explanation is that the footprints were made during the late Pleistocene, then we were excited," Urban said.

The Utah footprints are more than what appears on the surface.

"They are subtle, because they are flush with the ground surface and generally covered in a veneer of the same sediment," Urban said. "You wouldn't necessarily notice them if you didn't already know what to look for."

When footprints are made, the pressure of the tracks impacts the subsurface, offering information about the weight and size of the people or animals making those tracks, as well as the speed at which they are moving. By studying them with ground-penetrating radar, the team was able to find additional footprints and understand more about the tracks without destroying them.

It was Duke's first time working with footprints and he admitted to feeling trepidation about excavating them. But, he said, "when you see the children's toes forming in what you're digging, that's just amazing."

## Chapter news

### Central Chapter

All Meetings will be held on Zoom the third Tuesday of every second month. For more information and to be added to the Zoom list contact: Katharine Fernstrom at [kwfappraising@gmail.com](mailto:kwfappraising@gmail.com)

### Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May). The next few will be virtual. Contact President Carol Cowherd at [ccasm2010@gmail.com](mailto:ccasm2010@gmail.com) for Zoom access information. Website [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com) and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month. In-person meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Virtual meetings, if necessary, will be via Zoom with the business part starting at 7 p.m. and the presentation at 7:30 p.m. For up-to-date meeting information contact Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526 or check our chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org>, or send an Email to: [asmmidpotomac@gmail.com](mailto:asmmidpotomac@gmail.com) or view our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768)

**September 15:** Miguel Vilar, anthropology post-doctorate associate, University of Maryland will speak on ancient/modern DNA analysis:

**October 20:** Heather Bouslog, Montgomery County Parks senior archeologist, will discuss deaccessioning and disposition of collection objects.

**November 17:** Chapter president Don Housley will speak on ASM's 2022 Field Session at Barwick's Ordinary.

### Monocacy

Meetings are at 7 p.m. Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick. For more information, visit the chapter's web page [masarcheology.org](http://masarcheology.org) or call 301-378-0212.

**September 14:** Todd Mackley of Emmitsburg will present a program on a neolithic Native American site in the Catoctin Mountains near Mt. St. Mary's University.

### Northern Chesapeake

A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410- 273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

### St. Mary's County

Meetings are at the Leonardtown Library in Leonard every second Tuesday night of the month at 6:30. For information contact Craig Lukezic at [crlukezic@gmail.com](mailto:crlukezic@gmail.com)

**September 6:** Silas Hurry reflects on the many artifacts that have led to a range of studies into the past over the preceding 50 years.



**October 11:** Craig Lukezic will present the basic concepts and methods of archeology to the public. Such as why do they dig square holes? and Why do they ignore dinosaurs?

**November 8:** The 75-plus sites identified near Jug Bay, from ancient camps and Indigenous villages, along with Colonial towns, antebellum plantations and underwater shipwrecks help paint a vibrant picture of life along the Patuxent river. By Stephanie Sperling.

## Upper Patuxent

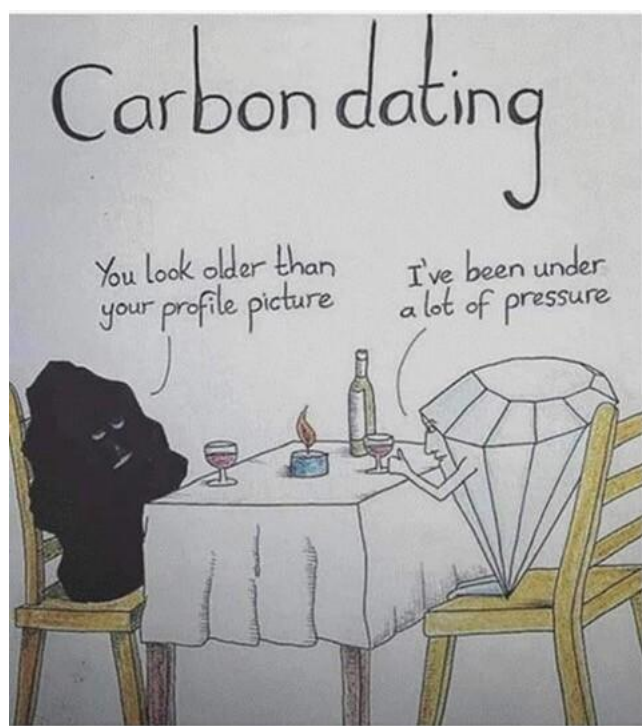
Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, virtual or at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. [www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358) or [www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com](http://www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com) or call Kelly Palich, 410 313 0423.

## Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 211 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://tinyurl.com/wmdasm>

**September 23:** State terrestrial archeologist Zachary Singer will speak on the Paleoindian Period in the Maryland region.

**October 28:** Roy Brown will report on the excavations at Maiden's Choice in Washington County in search of Evan Shelby's French & Indian War era fort in which a number of chapter members participated.



**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-percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Ethan Bean, 765-716-5282 or [beans32@comcast.net](mailto:beans32@comcast.net) for membership rates. For publication sales, not including newsletter or journal, contact Dan Coates at ASM publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace MD 20178-2104 or 410-273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

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