

THE DATUM POINT

Newsletter of the
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

June 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

With a break of two months between normal meetings, more than the usual amount of business has piled up. The first order of business is to thank those who helped with the tour and picnic at Brentsville -- Diane Schug-O'Neill for setting it up and coordinating with the people there; Patrick O'Neill, David Welch, and CK Gailey for help with the logistics of the picnic, including cooking. The people onsite went out of their way to make it an informative and enjoyable tour. The weather cooperated magnificently. I think I can safely say that a good time was had by all.

Looking to the future, we have tentatively scheduled our next field trip for October 9th -- a four hour guided tour of the Hunter Mill Road area, focusing on Civil War sites with some 18th Century sites as well. Because the tour moves from site to site, we will need to rent a bus through our guides. The bus that they normally use is able to accommodate twenty people at a cost of around \$30 per person. I'm concerned about the impact of this projected cost, since our activities are usually cost-free, and I want to get a sense at our June meeting for whether we have enough people interested in doing this. If you don't plan to attend the meeting but would like to participate in the field trip, please let me know at jkelsey@cox.net or 703-922-8107. This isn't asking for a commitment this far in advance.

While a few members have spent a lot of time with Mike Johnson at Blueberry Hill along the Nottoway River, this has been a rather slack season so far for most of us. Hopefully, this is about to change in a pretty dramatic way, if Liz Crowell or Mike will be able to give us a "thumbs up" on McCue at our next meeting. Also, don't forget Patrick O'Neill's

Archaeology Week at Kittiewan from the 19th to the 27th of June.

If you can't attend the June meeting but would like to express an opinion on any of these matters, please send me an email, and I'll present your views at the meeting.

June 9th Meeting

THE SANDY HILL ADENA CACHE OF MARYLAND - A NATIONAL TREASURE –

BY JACK HRANICKY



This illustrated paper is a report of the author's work to move the Sandy Hill Cache from a private collector to the Maryland Historic Trust. The cache was found in 1927 in Dorchester County, Maryland. It has 178 artifacts, many of which are outstanding examples of the Adena culture which include tube pipes, gorgets, copper, large bifaces, and a variety of miscellaneous items. Numerous artifacts have engraving. It is called by Dennis Stanford (Smithsonian) and the author – a "U.S. National Treasure."

CHAPTER BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED AT MEETING – John Kelsey

1. Scholarship Fund By-Laws Amendment.

At our April chapter meeting, Ann Wood suggested removing the April 1st deadline for field school scholarship applications from the by-laws of the Williams and Mullen Field School Scholarship fund, since this deadline has not proven to be meaningful or effective. I met with Ann recently, and we crafted a proposed amendment to the by-laws that I would like to offer for a vote at the June meeting. The amendment reads as follows: *“The April 1st deadline for scholarship applications is removed from Section V (Eligibility); applications will be considered at any time during the year. The Section is further amended to note that, in the event that no awards are made during a calendar year, the Chapter may authorize an award in the subsequent year to an archaeology program at a local college or university or to one or more students in such a program. At the Chapter’s discretion, the membership requirement can be modified or waived.”*

2. Section 106 for Historic Huntley.

After a vote of the officers of the Chapter, we agreed to participate in a Section 106 process for the rehabilitation and restoration of Historic Huntley in southern Fairfax County. This essentially means that the Chapter, along with other organizations, will have a chance to offer opinions and advice regarding work to be performed at Huntley, which includes restoration and rehabilitation of the interior and exterior of the main house and outbuildings and other work at the site. If you are interested in this project and would like to review the materials we have received so far, please let me know. Also, please let me know if you would like to be the Chapter’s “point person” for the project.

3. Letter to County Executive.

In December, the chapter voted to send a letter to County Authorities urging them to retain the Senior Archaeologist position now occupied by

Mike Johnson. As you know by now, the position has been retained, at least through 2011. I have drafted a letter to Mr. Griffin, the County Executive, expressing the appreciation of our membership for the continued support for this position. Because I’m writing on behalf of the members of the Chapter, I will ask for agreement to send this letter at our June meeting.

4. Archaeology Scouting Merit Badge.

The Chapter has been asked to provide one or more Archaeology Merit Badge counselors to participate in a festival on September 11th near Fredericksburg. The counselors would discuss archaeology with interested Scouts, and, to the extent practicable, help them meet requirements for the merit badge. The Chapter has participated in this activity in some previous years, but did not do so last year. If you think you may be interested in taking part, please let me know and I will share the information that I have on the event.

5. Other Upcoming Activities.

Several Chapter members have volunteered to staff an archaeology table at the Outdoorfest at South Run Park on June 5th. If you’re in the area and would like to help out, please stop by. The event runs from 2 - 8 PM and includes a number of other family activities. It also appears that there will be an archaeology exhibit at the Fairfax County Fair, June 11th - 13th at the Fairfax County Government Center. When I get a bit more information, I’ll ask if any of you are able to help out. Don’t forget the annual ASV meeting in Williamsburg on October 28th to the 31st.

CONFEDERACY MUSEUM COULD BE REALITY IN APPOMATTOX SOON - By Nolan Connelly, Lynchburg News-Advance May 20, 2010

The Museum of the Confederacy has raised \$6 million of a needed \$7.5 million in funding for a satellite location in Appomattox. We’re getting really close, said Sam Craghead, a public relations

specialist for the museum. The groundbreaking is in the foreseeable future.

Most of the funding has come from private individuals and grants. Craghead said that after a public fundraising effort begins soon, construction could start this year. The museum's expected completion date is early 2012 after a projected 18 months of construction.

The museum initially planned an opening in late 2011, but was delayed by fundraising issues and an expansion of the original museum plans. The new design is 11,000 square feet and located on eight acres of land near the intersection of U.S. 460 and Virginia 24. The proposed site is a mile away from the Appomattox Court House National Park.

The satellite location in Appomattox is part of an effort to expand the number of Confederate artifacts on display. Craghead estimated that visitors to the Richmond museum see less than 10 percent of the entire collection.

The Appomattox site, Craghead said, will have artifacts and exhibits related to Appomattox, including General Robert E. Lee's uniform and sword and the pen he used to sign surrender documents at the McLean house in Appomattox Court House.

Other satellite sites will include locations in Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania and Fort Monroe near Hampton Roads. The museum is a perfect fit for the location, Craghead said, because the site is close to the courthouse, (has) easy access to the roads and could help to keep visitors in the area.

Craghead said the museum is looking forward to participating in the ongoing sesquicentennial observations of the Civil War, which will end on April 9, 2015, 150 years after Lee surrendered at the Appomattox Court House.

ROSS NETHERTON

Ross Netherton, who alone and with his late wife Nan, authored many books on Northern Virginia and Virginia subjects passed away peacefully on April 30. James Munson, Alexandria historian, died

on April 14. - Washington Post Thursday, May 6, 2010 Ross D. Netherton Federal Highway Official

Ross D. Netherton, 91, who retired in the 1980s from the Federal Highway Administration's office of research, died April 30 at his home in Arlington County. He had cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Netherton's main fields of expertise had been in transportation and land-use planning law, environmental law and historic preservation. He spent the 1950s as legislative counsel for AAA and the 1960s as counsel for legal research with the highway research board, an affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences.

He then worked for the Interior Department and the federal Highway Beautification Commission before joining the FHA in 1974. In retirement, he focused on a second career as a Northern Virginia historian and preservationist. In these efforts, he often worked with his wife, a longtime staff member in the Fairfax County office of comprehensive planning.

Ross DeWitt Netherton Jr. was a Chicago native and a 1939 graduate of the University of Chicago, where he also received a master's degree in social science in 1940. He was a 1943 graduate of the University of Chicago law school. In addition, he earned a master's degree in law from the University of Michigan in 1950 and a doctorate in law from the University of Wisconsin in 1962.

He served in the Army in China, Burma and India during World War II and retired from the Army Reserve in 1973 at the rank of colonel. He was a member of the Burma Star Association, a group of veterans who had served in the Far East, and helped start one of the first American branches. His other memberships included the Cosmos Club.

His wife, Ann Rohrke "Nan" Netherton, whom he married in 1947, died in 2003. Survivors include three children, David Netherton of Concord, Mass., Richard Netherton of Falls Church and Nancy Netherton Stelling of Richmond; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Alexandria Times

MAY 27, 2010

Slavery and freedom, embodied



PHOTO/AUSTIN DANFORTH

Sculptor Erik Blome applies polish to the statue of the Edmonson sisters that he created for the site at 1701 Duke St. The Edmonson sisters were former slaves held there in 1848 before their father, a free black man, was able to purchase their freedom.

New public art piece on Duke Street depicts the story of two slave sisters

BY AUSTIN DANFORTH

In a sense, the Edmonson sisters have come full circle for their return to Alexandria.

Admittedly, the terms are far better in 2010 than when they arrived here more than 150 years ago. The slave pens that once dotted Duke Street are long gone. The gripping, first-hand accounts of life behind those fences have been confined to books and museums for decades. The idea of buying and selling humans for a lifetime of servitude is now a valuable lesson, not a valuable capital venture.

Now, on their return to 1701 Duke St., Emily and Mary Edmonson, two former slaves, stand guard in bronze as a re-

minder of what came before.

Bracketed by the former Bruin "Negro Jail" that held them for sale, a famous breakfast spot and one of the city's most modern-looking new office buildings, the roughly 10-foot tall bronze sculpture of the two sisters gazes down Holland Avenue toward the African American Heritage Park.

Holding hands on the site where they were once looked upon as chattel, Mary and Emily are emerging — escaping — from the shadow of a rock that sculptor Erik Blome said represents the darkness of slavery.

"The way it turned out, I think it's beautiful," said Audrey Davis, assistant director of the city's Black History Museum. "What happened to Em-

ily and Mary sort of sums up what happened to a lot of people during slavery. The experience — not having control, being sold away from your family — it's kind of all embodied in their story."

Daughters of a free black man and an enslaved woman, the two teenage girls were among the nearly 80 slaves that attempted to escape to freedom aboard the *Pearl* in April 1848.

Their flight, however, lasted only a few days as the ship was captured in the Chesapeake Bay before reaching safe harbor in the north. The Edmonson sisters, then ages 13 and 15, were sold to prominent Alexandria slave trader Joseph

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Bruin.

At one point, the girls were nearly sold into what could have been a life of prostitution in New Orleans. But that November, the girls' father, Paul, with the fund-raising help of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and other northern abolitionists, managed to purchase and free Mary and Emily.

Blome, an instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, was commissioned to create the piece in 2008. The artist said he "obsessed over" the statue of the Edmonson sisters, his 48th monument, for the duration of the project.

"I think the faces came out superb ... I worked really, really hard on the faces for more than a week," said Blome, 43, Saturday after the sculpture had been set in place. "The size of it I think helps people notice it from the street and gives it the level of importance that it should have."

descendents to complete the sisters' likeness.

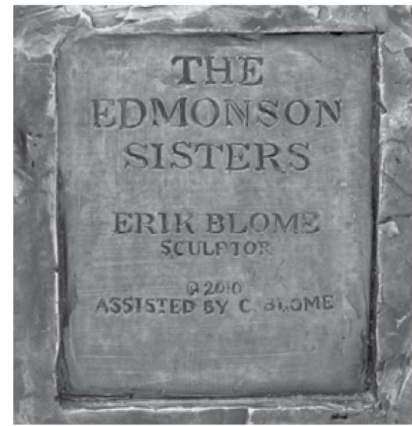
"This, over time, might just be one little brick" in the broader history of slavery in America, Blome said. "Buildings go up and come down, and eventually the story is gone. It's easy to forget things."

In bronze, the story of the Edmonson sisters is sure to last. For Blome, it's the staying power of the medium — not the physical weight — that gives his work gravity.

"It's forever. This piece, even if you neglect it, it's going to be here longer than that building and that building," Blome said, pointing to large, contemporary structures across the street. "You can throw it in the Aegean Sea and 10,000 years later they're going to pull it out and put it in a museum."

The making of the sculpture itself was not without some serendipity.

By chance, Blome met two 30-something Eritrean men at an art show who were looking



The Edmonson sisters statue will be dedicated late next month.

nal stages of the public art project, Blome hired them on the spot.

"I could tell they really needed work," Blome said. "As I'm working on the piece, they're recounting their journey to me and it's just an amazing story."

"It was so parallel to the Edmonsons. They escaped at night, they hid — it was the same thing ... these two could relate to the story I depicted."

The fruit of their labor is a decidedly more positive historical marker than many of the slavery-era sites that line upper Duke Street in Old Town.

"It kind of embodies the possibility of being enslaved and reaching and achieving freedom," Davis said. "In that whole block you have Freedom House, the Franklin & Armfield slave pen, you have Bruin's [slave pen], you have this corridor with all of this sadness and their story is one of hope."

The bronze landmark, a joint enterprise between city planners and Carr Properties, which redeveloped the property behind the statue into a glass-and-steel commercial building, will likely be dedicated toward the end of June.

"It kind of embodies the possibility of being enslaved and reaching and achieving freedom ... you have this corridor with all of this sadness and their story is one of hope."

— Audrey Davis
Alexandria Black History Museum

The sculptor had just four photos to work with, so beyond absorbing what literature was available on his subjects — including Harriet Beecher Stowe's "The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," a non-fiction reader that touched on the girls' story — he turned to

for work. Like the Edmonson sisters, the two African men had themselves escaped political persecution and spent five months traveling through 14 countries — sometimes on foot — from their native land to the U.S.

Light on assistants for the fi-

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NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia
2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

Chapter members should join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.
asv-archeology.org

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

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