

# THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – [www.nvcasv.org](http://www.nvcasv.org)

April 2014

Chapter meets at the James Lee Center, 2855 Annandale Rd, Falls Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Weds. of each month

## FROM THE PRESIDENT – JACK HRANICKY

It hardly seems like 50 years since I took this photograph, but shot in 1964. Fort Ward was groomed by the Corp of Engineers for the City in the middle 1960s. I remember a young Lt Tensley saying “Hranicky you are into history, what does a Civil War gate look like?” Well I researched it primarily through Mathew Brady’s photographs. The only thing that I could find was gate-like sign on the Potomac reading Alexandria. This was not adequate.



There were frontier forts, but the gate needed to be a little/more specular. I sketched ideas, but collectively, we came up with an idea. It was based on the Engineer Corp’s castle-logo design. It was accepted and we build it. I always through driving by the park that it was the one we put up. While I was chairman of the Archaeology Commission, we had numerous meeting at the fort. **Cont’d pg 2**

## April 9<sup>th</sup> presentation HISTORIC HUNTLEY by Geoffrey Cohrs



Geoffrey W. Cohrs is the historic interpreter and site coordinator for Historic Huntley at Huntley Meadows Park. He graduated from George Mason University in 2012 with an MA in Applied History and Digital Media concentrating in American history. Prior to returning to the DC area, he worked at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond as an outreach educator. He graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2003 and 2006 with degrees in English and History respectively.

People have been drawn to the site of Huntley for over two hundred years; there is something alluring about the place. While people may have come to Huntley for similar reasons they all used it in different ways and have all left their mark on the land. It has been used for leisure, for agriculture, and even for war. Join Geoffrey Cohrs as he traces the story of Huntley from the point of view of the land itself.

## Cont'd from page 1

At one, I commented on the gate, and then director Wanda Dowell said "Hate to tell you this, but the gate you guys put up rotted out after three years, and we had to rebuild it." Owell, they park kept our original design. The gate has been rebuilt 3 times.

On to other matters, we had a good attendance at the recent Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference in Pennsylvania. Several of us in local archaeology gave papers. It was an excellent meeting. The next big meeting coming up is in October, which is the ASV sate meeting in Richmond. More details coming.

Perhaps, winter is gone. We have a lot of good-weather archaeology to do. Don't forget calling in to the laboratory to volunteer at Colchester. I suspect much needed help would be appreciated; plus, the experience you can get in helping with the fabulous project. Years from now, we will have a new Colonial history based on our work now.

Coming up is the annual knap-in at Oregon Ridge park in (Baltimore County) Maryland. Chapter members usually do a little flintknapping at the meet; many of the them are quite good at it, namely Mike Johnson. The dates are May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

We still need a refreshment committee-individual for the chapter meeting. No expense to you, just need someone to bring in refreshments for the meeting break. Hope you will think about it. See you at the April meeting; afterwards, I am off the SAA meeting in Austin, Texas where I'm giving a paper in a paleo-session.

## OLD COLCHESTER

By CART

Although most think of archaeology as digging and processing artifacts, CART is more than field and lab. Since joining the team, Marion has taken our GIS from a tool used to record and analyze to a whole new level. We now have the ability to see the town of Colchester from a perspective that has not existed in for over 200 years.

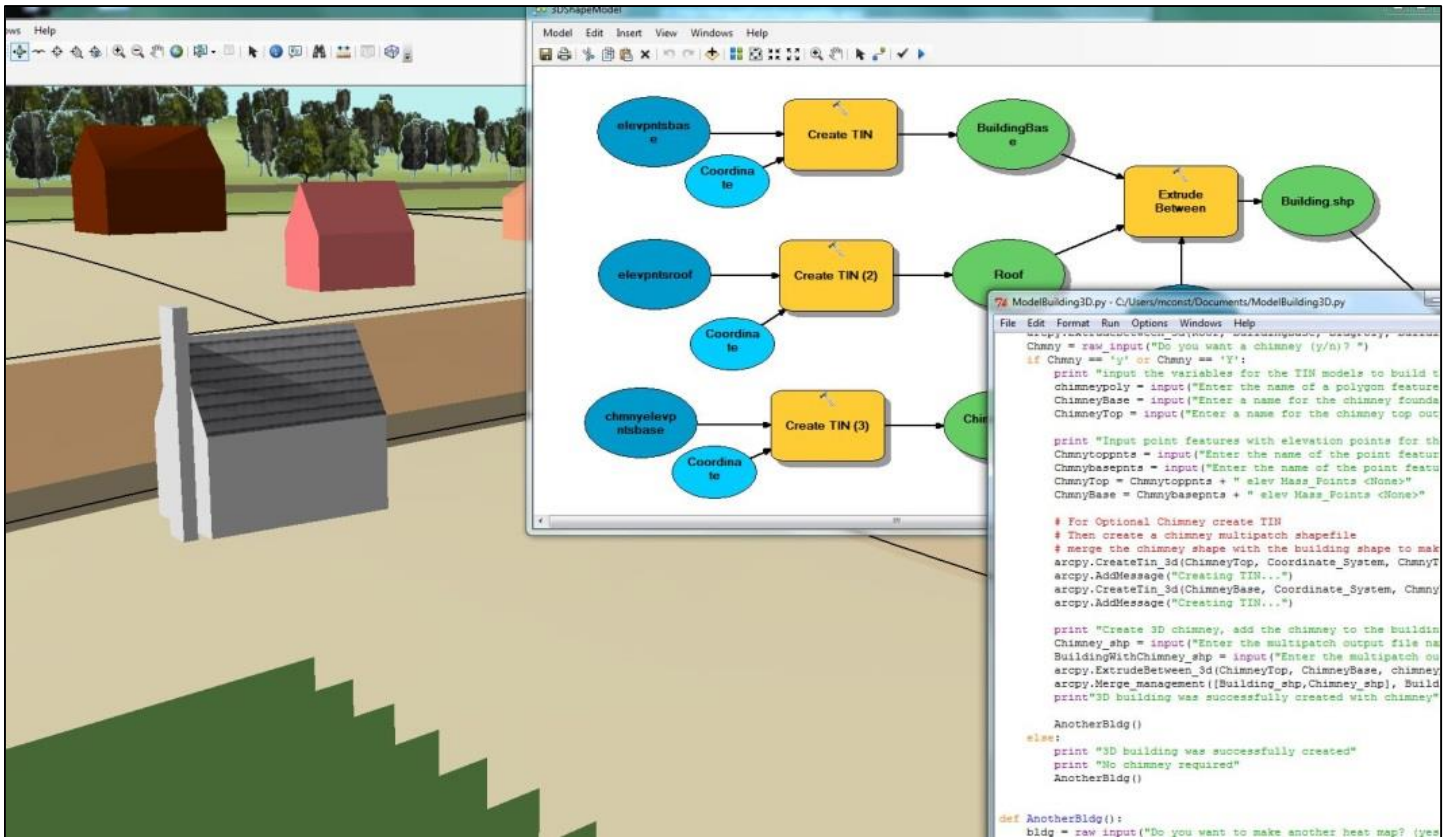
The project is entirely data-based and without conjecture. Marion integrated historic and archaeological data to create "Virtual Colchester." To accomplish this, she learned new skills, not the least of which was dealing with the "field types" and their phrases like, "oweðl make it fit" and "consistently inconsistent." However, of perhaps equal importance was a programming language to facilitate creating 3D projections.

The programming language, Python, was used to write a program that creates 3D buildings for Virtual Colchester. The python script was adapted from a model built in ArcGIS's ModelBuilder, which is used to create and manage tools that automate GIS processes by linking tools and data. Information about structure length, width, and any other architectural information is entered into the equation, and a 3D building is the final product.

Marion wrote this script to more efficiently create 3D structures on Colchester. This script could be used on other parks and can re-create the historic landscape of Fairfax County throughout time. The next step will be equally, if not more, challenging: to create environments for all periods of human occupation at the park back to the Early Archaic 10000 years ago.

Happy Spring from the Colchester crew! Here's to hoping a snowy March gives way to a warm and sunny April and time out in the field! The wet weather resulted in a number of lab days at JLC. The crew has finished cataloging almost all of the artifacts excavated to date.

During our time in lab, Kayla has worked on cataloging the artifacts recovered from the water screen fraction of feature fill from the 2013 Roysdon excavations, while Jean is cataloging artifacts from the George Mason University excavations done in the 1980s. Jonathan is busy working on converting previous archaeology information (done by Thunderbird/WSSI in 2006) into our Access database. Using this information and Marion's programs we can create "heat maps" of artifact concentrations across the OCPP. With all the time spent in lab, Megan has made excellent progress on writing the reports for the 2010-2012 field seasons.



Peter is leaving CART to begin a job with the Veteranø Curation Project in Alexandria. The VCP has toured our labs at JLC before and we look forward to working with the VCP in the future. CART wishes Peter the best of luck in his future adventures with VCP!

A few members of CART attended the MAACs in Pennsylvania. We would like to congratulate Sheila on the success of her paper presented at the conference. Sheila discussed and evaluated two prehistoric artifact concentrations within the park that showed evidence of the transport of raw materials into southern Fairfax County.

Recently we have returned to the larger area on the eastern side of OCPP, where CART excavated MTUs in 2011. This area has among the highest densities of prehistoric artifacts and may have intact soils capable of giving more insight on the landscape and lifeways of peoples at OCPP from years past. Excavating meter by meter test units, CART is beginning to understand the cultural sequence of this upland area. Please email [cart.volunteers@live.com](mailto:cart.volunteers@live.com) to schedule a time for field work.

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## PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE

At the January meeting of the Chapter officers, we agreed that the \$100.00 spending limit needed to be increased to \$200.00. We are not planning any expenditures, we just want to increase the amount to a realistic number.

### Current by-law:

All officers of the Chapter together shall constitute the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall meet annually at the call of the President. A majority of the officers may approve expenditures of **\$100.00** or less for the conduct of normal Chapter business.

### New by-law:

All officers of the Chapter together shall constitute the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall meet annually at the call of the President. A majority of the officers may approve expenditures of **\$200.00** or less for the conduct of normal Chapter business.



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