



THE DATUM POINT

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



Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org September 2014

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT – **JACK HRANICKY**

The month of August has been a busy one for the Chapter. And, the City of Alexandria held a commemorative event for the War of 1812. One of their speakers was our own Patrick O'Neill. He talked about numerous war events which he described in his book – *To Annoy or Destroy the Enemy, The Battle of the White House after the Burning of Washington*. This book is well written and involves his 12-year study on the war. I highly recommend that you get a copy.



Patrick O'Neill at Alexandria

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Supper Before the Meeting: Anthony's, 5:45pm Sept. 10 for supper before chapter meeting. All are welcome. If you're coming, email annpwood@verizon.net for a count. The **new** Anthony's is at 3000 Annandale Road, Falls Church VA, where Annandale Rd crosses Rte 50, on the southwest corner next to the new construction for Bill Page Honda.

SEPTEMBER 10TH, 7:30PM

RECENT RESEARCH FOR RURAL AND URBAN SLAVE HOUSING IN VIRGINIA

BY DR. DOUG SANFORD

A variety of scholars, including archaeologists, architectural historians, and historians, have studied the diverse living arrangements for enslaved African Americans in Virginia, the American South, and other regions of colonial and antebellum America. Somewhat surprisingly, much of this research has not occurred in cooperative fashion and only recently have larger, comparative databases for evidence of slave housing come into place. Such shared information is critical for understanding what we do and do not know about slave housing, about the domestic and social life of enslaved African Americans, and about where future research efforts should be focused.

Dr. Sanford's presentation will concentrate on such research in Virginia, and while some archaeological efforts will be discussed, more attention will be placed on the study of surviving examples of slave housing, along with relevant period documents. To date, most research on this topic has centered on rural slave quarters, and for understandable reasons. Conversely, urban slave housing has been relatively neglected, but holds great promise for future research.



British Actors on the Potomac River at Alexandria's War of 1812 Day

There are two archaeology conferences coming up. The chapter usually has a good turnout for both. The first one is the ASV's Annual Meeting in Richmond. It will be held October 10-12 in Richmond, Virginia at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel (804-379-3800), 1921 Koger Center Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23235. You need to go to the website to register: asv-archeology.org/News/NewsAM.html. No word yet on the ASV banquet speaker.

The other meeting is the Annual Meeting of the Eastern States Archeological Federation (ESAF). The ASV has been a member for over 40 years. It will be held October 30-November 2, 2014 at Holiday Inn at Solomons (410-326-6311), Maryland 20688. You need to go to the EASF site to register: esaf-archeology.org/meetings.htm. EASF's Speaker is Dr. Henry Miller, Director of Research, Historic St. Mary's City Commission. Exploring Maryland's Lost "Metropolis": Four Decades of Archaeology at St. Mary's City.

Both of these meetings are always informative, and you have a chance to meet archaeologists working in the Middle Atlantic.

On the 16th, we had our annual picnic at CD Cox's farm. Those who attended had a great time as well as some good food.





Your chapter officers are working on a Memorandum of Agreement with Fairfax Archaeology. When finished, we will have the procedures for volunteering and working in the lab and on site run by the county archaeologists.

UNEARTHING A LONGHOUSE IN
OLEAN, NEW YORK
by Leigh Watlington
photos by Becky Garber

A group of the northern Virginia band of itinerant volunteers travelled to the hills of Olean, New York July 29th through August 14th, 2014. Becky Garber, Jean Teasdale (all the way from North Carolina) and Leigh Watlington excavated at the Bockmier One Site of the Allegheny Valley Project. Dr. Steve Howard, formerly of Gault, was the Principle Investigator. Unearthing post molds which constituted a longhouse and large potsherds from a trash pit was the order of the day.

Other ASV members were Cynthia Hansen, Celia Isbrecht and Sonia Ostrander. "Gaultites" Jill Patton and Tom Sherman were also in attendance. Honorable mention goes to former Blueberry Hill excavator Nubia (canine), who enjoyed basking and grazing in the surrounding field.

An extracurricular activity for the crew included a trip to Letchworth State Park. The views of waterfalls on the Genesee River were amazing!

This is the second year at this area of the site. Considering the remarkable finds this year, the project will continue next year with plans for a Datum Point

possible field school. Please check the following websites for more information: www.alleghenyvalleyproject.blogspot.com and www.facebook.com/TheAlleghenyValleyProject All are invited and I hope to see more of you there next year!



Becky Garber, Leigh Watlington, Cynthia Hansen, Jean Teasdale, Dr. Steve Howard



OLD COLCHESTER

By CART

The cooler summer has been great for CART in the field at Old Colchester Park and Preserve. It was great weather for the youth camps from Huntley Meadows, and Riverbend Parks during their day visits at the Park and the teen archaeology experience at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. The Centerville Independent newspaper visited Ellanor C. Lawrence Park and interviewed the teens about the experience and history. The teens were excited to share their interests about history. The article can be found at <http://centervilleindependent.com/archaeological-dig-looks-for-elusive-post-civil-war-farm-house-at-park/>.

Currently CART field is excavating Mini-Test Units (MTUs) in an area, south of Hyde Street, within a convergence of several different sites and we need to fully understand the artifact distribution of the area. Within the MTUs we have already discovered ceramic, glass and a few lithic flakes. This area was heavily plowed, so many of the artifacts are broken and smaller in size.

The field crew has been collecting and processing soil samples by water screening in window mesh as well as by floatation. The material left behind is mainly very coarse sand, very small artifacts, and organic debris. Small important items that would be missed in a larger dry screen method are recovered this way.

There is a large amount of picking to do, as seen in the picture Sheila has a large pile to work through. The CART lab is currently picking out mostly debitage, bone, and seeds from these samples. So far in each provenience, approximately 200 micro-debitage pieces are recovered. Debitage are the flakes and shatter from making stone tools which could be quartz, quartzite or other stone material.

Data management is extremely important for the CART crew. Currently the GIS specialist and those that work on the Databases are further refining the system to increase quality as well as efficiency.



CROWD SOURCING

**Regarding LVA's request for transcription help
Submitted by Diane Schug-O'Neill**

Regarding the selection of documents, most of these were chosen because they were already part of an ongoing project at the LVA with a built-in demographic. Transcribing the CW150 documents can re-engage the communities where these documents were originally scanned. The Gabriel's Conspiracy items were part of a HistoryPin tour and panel discussion which was well-attended and generated a lot of interest. African American Narrative is a new project which we hope will make genealogical resources searchable and accessible in new ways. In the future, the content which is up for transcription will be driven by LVA programming, public interest, but also with a keen eye towards what has the most research value. Any suggestions for documents to be transcribed can be sent to makinghistory@virginiamemory.com or makinghistory@virginiamemory.com. Making History is a collaborative effort, so please send us your feedback!

On the review process:

*First, the document is transcribed and reviewed by the public on Making History: Transcribe. As noted by many previous crowdsourcing initiatives, the crowd tends to self-correct and yields surprisingly accurate information.

*Several of our staff members have also registered on the transcription site. They give the fully

transcribed pages another view, make corrections, and mark them as "Complete."

*From there, we export the transcription and all the metadata.

*Another staff member proofreads the transcription a final time at this stage, preferably one with subject area and/or handwriting expertise.

*It is then converted into a text searchable PDF and attached to the digital item in our repository (Digitool). Of course, since the site has only just launched, we will be making improvements and streamlining the process over the next few months. Once we have a more detailed view of the entire process, I will likely write a follow-up blog post on Out Of The Box (http://www.virginiamemory.com/blogs/out_of_the_box/2014/08/19/come-on-make-some-history/)

Sonya Coleman Digital Collections Specialist,
Library of Virginia

WAR OF 1812 200TH ANNIVERSARY

By Patrick O'Neill

What a few weeks I have had. I gave a talk to Fauquier County at the Old Jail in Warrenton on August 17th.



I was at Bladensburg on August 23rd for the unveiling of their new War of 1812 Monument showing Commodore Barney in "Undaunted

Courage". Had a book booth there, and it rained all day, but I did reach out to many people on the Battle of the White House! I was also on CSPAN3 at Bladensburg, asking a question from the audience!



On August 24th, a Flee The British 5K was held at the Congressional Cemetery. A woman dressed as Dolley Madison had pink sneakers on and carried a photo of George Washington that she supposedly saved from the President's House when the British burned it 20 years ago this day. She rode on the back of a golf cart and drove off at the beginning of the race and as the announcer counted 4, 3, 2, 1, the '1' was a volley shot by five British soldiers after Dolley driving off fleeing from them.

During the race, you ran around a corner and there was Dolley, screaming in southern drawl, “hep me, hep me, my house is on fire!”



Dolley’s pink sneakers!



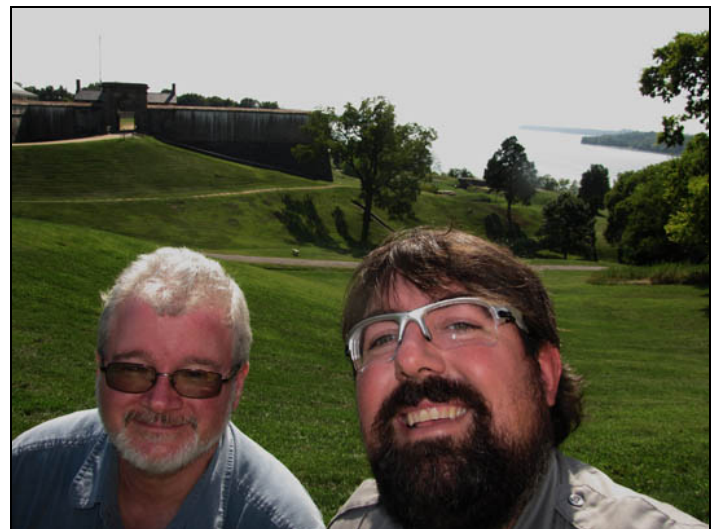
I look fresh in this photo, and, it was taken as I crossed the finish line (at the beginning of the race!)”.

On August 27th, I was at Fort Washington Maryland for the Bicentennial of the fort falling to the British as the Potomac Squadron advanced on Washington and Alexandria. I gave small talks to over 30 people that day!



Display at Fort Washington

Ranger Adam Geseck came and he had been tweeting and posting on Facebook real time information about the advance of the British. When we got together at the end of the day, yes, we took a selfie of us in front of the river at almost the exact moment the British started firing 200 years ago! How awesome is that?!



One of the more moving War of 1812 Bicentennial events was the wreath laying at the Old Presbyterian Cemetery in Alexandria for Robert Allison on August 30th. Allison is the only known grave

marker for a militia that died at the Battle of the White House.



Robert Allison marker

As Jack has said in the President's Column, I was at Old Town Alexandria on August 31st as they celebrated the War of 1812. Alexandria surrendered to the British 200 years ago because the Datum Point

militia and army had fled after the fall of Bladensburg. I had an information book next to the author's table, which was very successful in telling people about the war. I also gave a talk on the water front, shown in Jack's President Column.

September 1st, 200 years to the hour, Diane, Bridget and I were clearing out the gun pits at the Battle of the White House in preparation for a special bicentennial tour on September 5th.



Diane, Bridget and I in one of the gun pits

On September 2nd, I gave one of my very special War of 1812 tours to Lorna Hainsworth and her friend Sid Stoffels. I showed them Shutters Hill, Gadsby's Tavern, Alexandria Waterfront, Robert Allison's grave, Mount Vernon, the White House Battlefield, and Fort Washington (in one day!).



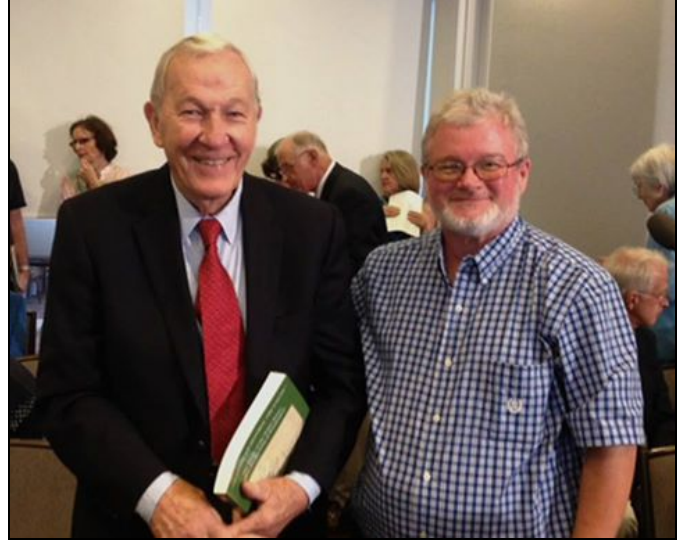
Sid and Lorna at the Boundary Stone at Jones Point



Showing Lorna where the British ships were located

I attended the Burning of Washington Conference sponsored by the White House Historical Association on September 2nd and 3rd. CSPAN3 again was filming the conference, and I asked several questions to the speakers, so you can see me on National TV!

I met many dignitaries, including Roger Mudd! Here he is shown holding my autographed book I gave him and he was very impressed with the book!



But, the proudest moment for all these observances, was on September 5, 2014. standing in one of the gun pits on the White House battlefield, with my wife, some NVC members, and the public, holding a replica of Captain David Porter's battle flag from the old *Essex*, after 200 years almost to the minute when the Potomac Squadron lined up and shot their way past the 2,500 Virginia militia and Porter's seamen. This was the culmination of 12 years of research, to be there at that time, and that place, and with that flag. We now know that 200 years ago, these efforts at the Battle of the White House in part caused the attack on Baltimore that led to the penning of Francis Scott Keys poem, our national anthem.



This Old Villa



Enjoy an afternoon exploring **Historic Huntley**
A Local Architectural Gem

Saturday, September 27
6918 Harrison Lane • Alexandria

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Tour the 1825 house and grounds
Participate in kids' architecture activities including LEGO
Light refreshments

2:00-3:30 p.m.

Lecture and panel discussion

C. Richard Bierce, AIA
on Huntley's Federal period architecture
and findings from the historic structures report

Stephen Ortado, Historic Preservationist
on the restoration process and interesting discoveries

Suggested Donation \$5
Historic Huntley is a Fairfax County Park Authority Facility
For information: 703-768-2525, www.historichuntley.org
Co-sponsored by Friends of Historic Huntley and FCPA
Parking at Faith United Methodist Church

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THE DATUM POINT

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