

THE DATUM POINT

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

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

March 2015

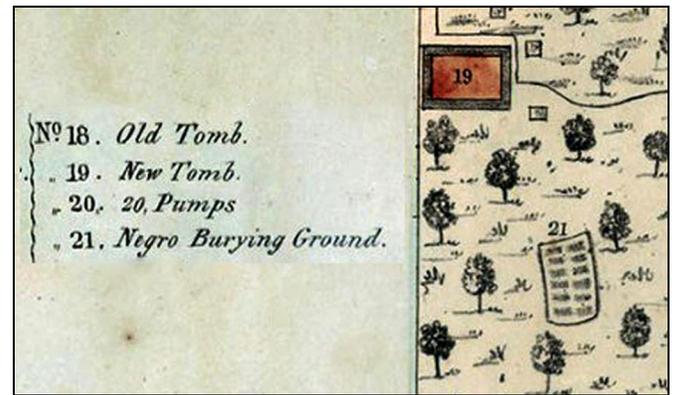
Chapter meets at the James Lee Center, 2855 Annandale Rd, Falls Church, 2nd Weds. of each month

March 11th Meeting

FROM PRESIDENT DIANE SCHUG-O'NEILL

44FX116 - ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SLAVE CEMETERY AT GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON

I know everyone is more than ready for Spring time, but first, there is still lab work to be done; both C.A.R.T. and The Mill have active labs. If you are a student in the Certification Program, I recommend you connect Ann Wood about these two ongoing opportunities. If you're not a student of the Certification Program, I recommend you contact them personally. Starting out in a Lab situation is an excellent introduction to archeology. ([C.A.R.T.](#) is in Fairfax County; [The Mill](#) is in Prince William County).



I would also like to *Welcome Aboard* these new Chapter members: Zoe Chomko, Ed Eaves, and Evelyn Gibson. Evelyn comes to the D.C. area from Texas, where she worked at the Gault Site. I expect to hear quite a few members relate their Gault experiences with her at subsequent meetings.

Joe Downer holds a BA in American History from George Mason University and an MA in anthropology from George Washington University. Prior to work at the Mount Vernon Slave Cemetery, Joe interned with the National Park Service where he researched the history of race and Civil Rights in the National Parks. Joe is also an accomplished musician and vocalist. He lives in Woodbridge, VA with his wife, Lauren.

Last month's meeting not only brought us new members, but also included *three* members of the *Massanutten Chapter!!!* We were very pleased to see that these three ladies got our information and joined us for the very interesting presentation from the Policastro's. That's why we're so pleased to be able to use modern technology to spread old information. ☺ Let's all remember to extend that warm NoVa smile and a hearty "Hello," when we see new faces at our meetings. You just never know what you have in common with that person sitting across from you.

Joe's research focuses on the Slave Cemetery at Mount Vernon. Through the use of this space, it is hypothesized that Mount Vernon's enslaved community practiced distinct traditions, instilling in that spot a sense of place, and reinforcing those individuals' human identities. This work investigates the cemetery within broader regional and cultural contexts to attain a better understanding of the death rituals and culturally resistant activities that slaves at Mount Vernon used in their day-to-day ideological battle against the system that held them in bondage.

A very special *Thank You* to the anonymous donor to the Rubis-Fuller Fund honoring Dave Rubis. The [Rubis-Fuller Fund](#) provides (cont'd on page 2)

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financial support to scientific research efforts. Dave Rubis, a Chapter member and volunteer, was committed to the use of scientific methods in archaeology and developed new techniques that greatly enhanced the Chapter's archaeological efforts, particularly at Cactus Hill. One year, Dave was featured on the Virginia Archeology poster! He was using his unique Rubis Water Level device. If you have more than a few minutes, please ask Dr. Mike Johnson for a concise description.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming meeting about the slave cemetery at Mount Vernon.

VCU LIBRARIES' DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

For researchers and others interested in the history and architecture of late 19th century Richmond can now explore the city through a new resources that was recently added to VCU Libraries' Digital Collections <<http://dig.library.vcu.edu/>>

A fully digital and interactive version of the Baist *Atlas of the City of Richmond* <<http://labs.library.vcu.edu/baist-atlas/>>, published in 1889, is available online. The atlas consists of an index map and twenty large linen plates (18 ½ inches tall by 28 inches wide) mapping all areas of the city including parts of Henrico and Chesterfield counties and part of the City of Manchester, now Richmond's South Side, which was then an independent city.

- Examine the atlas map plates within the context and street views of a modern day Google map
- Explore points of interest and historic images of Richmond
- Use a street index to research and discover 1889 Richmond at the street level

Visit the site HERE <http://labs.library.vcu.edu/baist-atlas/>.

An article about the Baist map digital collection is available HERE <http://bit.ly/newsatlas>.

Bells Across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox

As you know, on April 9th, the nation will observe the 150th anniversary of the surrender at Appomattox Court House, which effectively marked the end of the Civil War. As part of this observance, the National Park Service is spearheading a national initiative, "[Bells across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox](#)," details of which are in the attached press release.



The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission is encouraging all localities and sesquicentennial partners across the Commonwealth to participate in this initiative.

"Bells across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox" begins with bells ringing at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park at 3:00 p.m. on April 9, coinciding with the end of the historic meeting between Grant and Lee in the McLean House. After the ringing at Appomattox, bells will reverberate at churches, historic sites, and public buildings across the nation, beginning at 3:15 p.m. and lasting four minutes (each minute symbolizing a year of war).

Sites that have agreed to participate include the Virginia State Capitol, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, and communities from Texas through Connecticut. It is a profound way to join with the nation in marking the end of the Civil War and the beginning of freedom and reconciliation.

The Virginia State Capitol will participate by in this initiative by ringing bells at the historic Bell Tower for four minutes at 3:15 p.m. on April 9. We hope that you will join in this initiative as we come together to commemorate this historic moment across the nation.

Please share this information within your community and let me know of organizations, churches, and historic sites that are planning to participate.

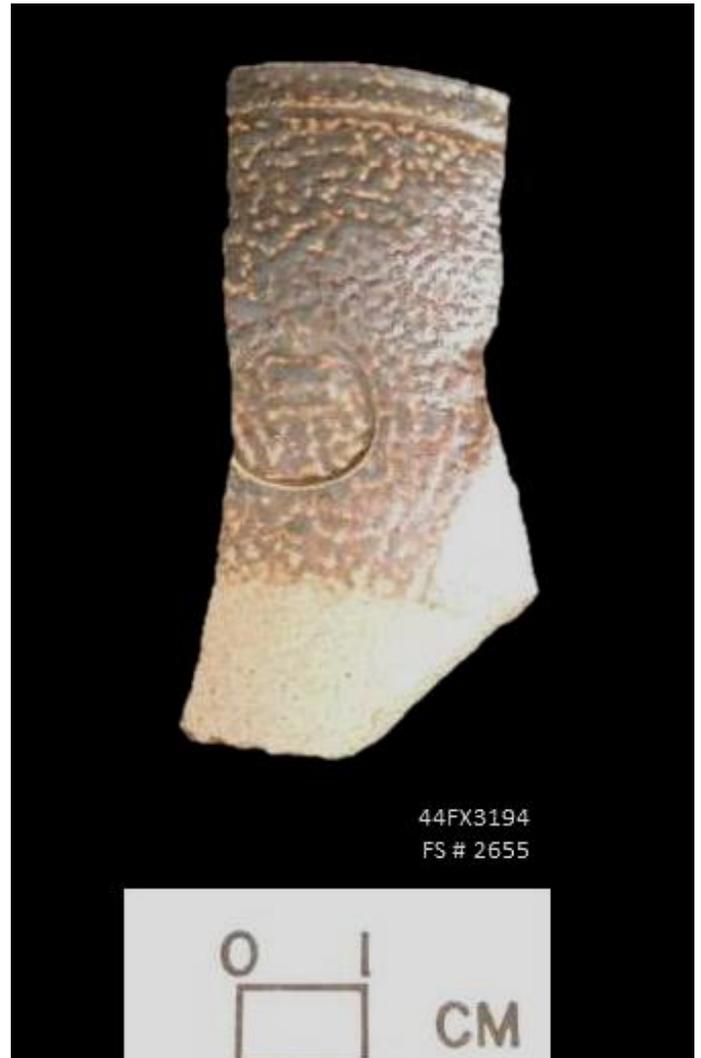
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OLD COLCHESTER

By CART

The recent wintery weather has temporarily grounded CART from continuing excavations at the cemetery site on Old Colchester Park and Preserve. It is giving us some time to catch up in the lab because it may just be slightly too cold to waterscreen out in the field, or is it? The snow days have allowed us to complete cataloging Feature 123 and Ash Grove ¼ö just in time for those to analyze the data for their Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference (MAAC) papers.

A beautiful English Brown stoneware rim sherd was found near Feature 123 stamped with an image of a crown with the letters öWRö. After some research, we were able to discover this to be a tribute to King William III (1689-1702), though the same style stamp was used into the 1790s.



Despite the recent bitter cold weather, CART got some field days to continue our investigation just outside of the cemetery on Old Colchester Park and Preserve. In an attempt to expose the brick foundation in its entirety, we have located the edge of the feature but no post holes for the structure. There is, however, evidence of oyster shell in a line, which could be a drip line around the structure.

Volunteers continue to work hard on assisting us with artifact processing within the lab. Emiko T. and Chris H. have done an excellent job picking through the water screen samples taken from the prehistoric sites on Old Colchester Park and Preserve, while Jim C. has done a superb job picking the water screen samples from the Ash Grove Meat House.

Erica DöElia was recently hired as the Assistant Lab Director for the Colchester Archaeological

Research Team. She has a B.A. in History from Ramapo College of New Jersey. She completed her M.A. in Anthropology at Western Michigan University with a focus in archaeology public outreach and education. Her research interests include colonial America, mid-Atlantic plantations, and public archaeology particularly with children. Erica spent several seasons working with the Fort St. Joseph Project, a French colonial fort in southwest Michigan. She has additional field experience at other places in Michigan, Poplar Forest, and the Finger Lakes National Forest. Prior to coming to Fairfax County, Erica worked as the Archaeology Lab Manager at James Madison's Montpelier in Orange, VA.

CART is once again headed to the annual Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference in Ocean City, Maryland in March! Chris Sperling, Megan Veness, and Julie Powers will all be presenting papers on historical archaeology done within the region. Chris will be discussing CART's recent excavations at Ash Grove, a plantation that originally belonged to the Fairfax family.

CART's excavations were focused on surveying the area surrounding and within the meat house on the property. Megan will be presenting one of the stone foundations, Feature 123, discovered at Old Colchester Park & Preserve. It is possible this foundation is one of the few drawn on the Rochambeau Map while he was traveling through Colchester Town in 1781 and 1782. Most of the artifacts found in the feature date to the last quarter of the 18th century which was the busiest period of Colchester Town.

Julie Powers will be presenting a paper on previous work she in which she was involved. Her work, at Avery's Rest in Lewis, Delaware focuses on the late sixteenth century colonial site with various dwellings. Both Megan and Julie have entered their papers into the student competition. Join us in wishing them the best of luck and congratulations on their hard work!

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