

#### FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT PATRICK O'NEILL

The chapter had a great picnic, and we were very happy we did not get rained out!!!!!!!! Thanks for all that came!

We are still having a meeting this month, even with the picnic! Please come before the hurricane hits Thursday!!!!!!!

The Chapter is having a table at Gunston Hall Archaeology Days on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, a Saturday. Please contact me if you can come and staff the table or participate!

Salubria Field Trip still on for Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>!!! I think most people are bringing a lunch to eat on site! Please contact me if you intend to go, so we can let them know how many are participating!

This meeting, we will vote on Mike Johnsonøs proposal for monies at Chapmanøs Mill, so come to lend your support!

If you have not registered for the ASV Annual Meeting, please follow this link and do so!!!! Hotel rooms will run out!!! https://www.virginiaarcheology.org/2018-asv-annual-meeting/

Join Chapter members at Anthony's Restaurant at <u>6 pm</u> before the meeting! Located at 3000 Annandale Rd, Falls Church, VA 22042 - (703) 532-0100

## Chapter Talk 7:30pm Weds Sept 12, 2018

# SEEKING THE LOST TOWN OF PORT TOBACCO

### By Dr. James G. Gibb



Port Tobacco developed on the village site of the Potobac Indians in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Maryland General Assembly designating it the Charles County seat in 1727. It remained the countyøs political, economic, and social center until the courthouse and most of the businesses moved to La Plata, a new town on the railroad about two miles west of Port Tobacco, in the mid-1890s.

Since 2007, a team of professional and avocational archaeologists have scoured dirt and documents to reveal the layout of the town and to better understand the virtual abandonment of one of Marylandøs premier Colonial era ports.



More than ten years of archaeological excavations have revealed how Port Tobacco changed from a number of buildings dispersed along a mile of Port Tobacco Creek to a well-ordered settlement organized around a central town green. The research team has explored the site of one of the townøs three surviving 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings, the Charles County jail, an 1840s through 1860s restaurant owned by African Americans, Indian sites 3,000 years and older as well as those from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century print shop that previously may have served as a brewery.



This illustrated presentation summarizes the work to date of the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, an undertaking supported by the Charles County Commissioners and the Charles County Archaeological Society of Maryland.



Jim Gibb (Binghamton University, PhD 1994) directs the Smithsonian Environmental Research Centerøs Environmental Archaeology Laboratory (SEAL), housed in the historic Sellman House at the main entrance to the campus. He has researched and published on numerous topics in archaeology, from a Paleoindian site in Southern Maryland, to patterns of wealth among 17<sup>th</sup>-century planters, to production strategies among late 19<sup>th</sup>-century cheese manufacturers.



Jim served from 2007 through 2010 as principal investigator for the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, and he continues to partner on the project with Charles Countyøs archaeologist, Esther Doyle Read. The team has explored the development of the town, reconstructing its Colonial-era layout and documenting the environmental degradation that led to its demise.





#### **CART**

#### Fairfax County Archaeological Research Team

The summer weather brings more excavation along the site in the western side of the county. Near the cellar, is an area of burnt soil which could indicated a raised hearth on the eastern side of the structure. The artifacts recovered have been minimal, but do include window glass, highly corroded nails, animal bones, and a few buttons (see photo below).

Many of the units have more recent rodent disturbances throughout them, which contain Doritos chip bags and other plastic materials. A few units were opened to explore the bulkhead entrance to the siteøs large cellar feature. These units did not reveal stone steps or other architectural characteristics, but did show evidence which suggests that the entrance could have been filled as recently as the 1940s.



*IMAGE*—recently excavated copper alloy button (impressions on the face suggest the button may have originally been fabric-covered)

In the lab, processing continues. Volunteers are busy picking water-screened material from Old Colchester Park and Preserve and are almost caught up on washing from recent excavations as well as the labeling of artifacts with very small printed labels. The lab staff has been cataloging a variety of interesting artifacts that predominately range from eighteenth to twentieth century.

CART would like to welcome Brittany B. to the field team, Daphne A. to the lab team, and Justin U. to the collections team. They all have many years of experience excavating sites across the eastern United States, and we welcome their helping hands and knowledge to the Archaeology and Collections Branch.

As Fairfax County is celebrating 40 years of archaeology, many members of the Archaeology and Collections Branch are preparing presentations for the Annual ASV conference in October. Hope to see you there!!

We would like to congratulate Frank L. on recognition as an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year and Stephen B. for receiving the Elly Doyle Special Recognition Award for his outstanding service to the Park Authority. Both Frank and Steve are dedicated volunteers who have spent countless hours helping to preserve our history. For questions about volunteering in the field, email CART staff the field in at cart.volunteers@live.com. Volunteer days in the field are Thursdays through Saturdays, weather Volunteer days in the lab are permitting. Wednesdays through Fridays. Keep an eye on our cartarchaeology.wordpress.com blog: for information on local events and recent finds by CART.

#### CHAPMAN'S MILL DEED RESEARCH By Patrick OøNeill

My patent and deed research has proved very fruitful for Chapmanøs Mill as well as the nature Bull Run Nature Conservancy property. The base of research was to trace the land George Chapman Sr. acquired or inherited that reached the largest size of 1334 acres before the Civil War, encompassing two mills and straddling Broad Run.

Five tracts of land were patented to become the 1334 acres, including a 1742 patent to Jonathan Chapman (containing some of his father Nathaniel Chapmanøs 1737 grant), a 1744 patent to George Neville (aka Neavil), one to John Grant in 1744, a smaller one to Lowry Jones in 1800, and a missing patent that probably transferred to Francis Feagan between the 1750s and 1800 (Figure 1).

Between 1805 and 1829, first his twin brother John, then later George Chapman Sr. acquired several hundred acres north and some to the west of the original Chapman tract (Figure 2). The tracts were purchased from George Jones and his brother Lowry Jones (two tracts), several adult children of Francis Feagan, but tracking these transactions required very detailed and tedious research, but in the end it paid off, as you will see.

Then, George Chapman Sr. died in 1829, and the Mill Tract, as it was referred to, was 1334 acres and given to both of his sons, named George and John Chapman (Figure 3 next page). The land was to be divided into half with each getting a mill. This was never done on paper, only between these brothers in good faith. George Chapman Jr. died in the 1850s, and brother John oversaw the mills and land for his





nieces and nephews, but never gave them dividends, rent monies, or any profits from the mill and land.

John Chapman died just after the Civil War, in debt and in an asylum. His nieces and nephews from his brother George had to sue Johnøs estate to get the land that was theirs. John Chapmanøs estate received basically everything south of the railroad tracks and the lower mill (main mill), which all was sold to Mr. Beverly (Figure 4). George Chapman Jrøs children received basically everything north of the tracks and the upper mill.

Since I completed my research, something wonderful has happened. Staff at the RELIC Room connected me with Janis Stone, who has been involved with the Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve for years and wanted some help with some cemeteries at the tract. Janis took me on a tour with Preserve Manager Joe Villari last week and she showed me four historic cemeteries, two stone foundations, an 18<sup>th</sup> century log cabin, and a huge stone quarry, all of which now **our chapter is going to try and help them clear, map, and investigate** (Figure 5)!!!! <u>How cool is that?!!!!!</u>



## **2018 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS**

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Name:
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Individual (\$15) Student (\$5) Family (\$17)
Return to: Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV 9518 Liberty Tree Lane Vienna VA 22182
Chapter members must join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia at www.virginiaarcheology.org/
The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA.
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!