



THE DATUM POINT

April 2019

Newsletter of the
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER (NVC) OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org



FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

PATRICK O'NEILL

Spring is here!!!!!!!

Dr. Carole Nash is directing another archaeology excavation opportunity at Kittiewan from Tues. May 28 through Sunday, June 2, 2019. I will let you know more when I get the particulars. The excavations will continue on the lower terrace on Kittiewan Creek in what has become known as Wayne's World. The site is very rich in Native American cultural material.

Which leads me to this. The Northern Virginia Chapter has the Williams-Mullen Field School Scholarship in which ASV members can apply for limited monies to go towards a field school or field opportunity. Go to this link <http://nvcasv.org/about.html> and apply. Deadline is May 1.

I am gearing up to clean and map four historic cemeteries, two stone foundations, and a log cabin on the Bull Run Mountains Natural Preserve Area. Anyone wanting to participate, email me at patrickloneill@verizon.net.

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

**Chapter Talk 7:30pm
Weds April 10, 2019**

**TIME AT THE HATCH SITE
BY MIKE MAKIN**



Gorgets from Hatch Site

Mike Makin, William and Mary College, will give a presentation on the archaeology of the Hatch Site. Lefty Gregory excavated on the site from 1975 to 1989.

Set in a marshy area on the western boundary of the James River National Wildlife Refuge in Prince George County, Virginia, the Hatch site provides an unprecedented opportunity to study precolonial Algonquian ceremonial practices in the Chesapeake region. This archaeology site is arguably among the most significant in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Extensive excavations led by Lefty Gregory from 1975 to 1989 produced a wealth of data regarding the Late Precolonial and Early Colonial periods.

Massive pit features containing an abundance of butchered animal bones and numerous ritualized artifacts suggest large gatherings involving feasting. Further evidencing the ceremonial nature of this place are 34 human burials and 111 dog burials. A few of the dog remains exhibit signs of sacrifice. Following the excavations, the artifacts and records sat in storage for decades. Their recent donation to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has opened up this invaluable data for study.



Profile of dog burial

Using the newly accessible collection, anthropology students at the College of William & Mary produced a digital map of the site and created a detailed artifact inventory of all feature contexts. The student efforts combined with the studious excavation allow a thorough understanding of the contents of each feature and their placement within the excavated area. The site is composed almost entirely of large pit features, many over five feet in diameter. Roughly 1,000 of these are tightly packed together, suggesting intensive visitation. Radiocarbon dates collected for my master's thesis and two previous studies indicate most activity at this site occurred between 900 and 1400 CE.

Most pits contained the butchered remains of deer, turtles, turkeys, and fish as well as an abundance of roasted mussel shells. The features contained lithic debitage and projectile points, along with charcoal and fire cracked rocks. Features also contained hundreds of pottery sherds, many of which were Rappahannock Incised.



Abbott Zone-Decorated Vessel

Additional, though much less common, items recovered that might be considered ritualized include ornate clowdflower and platform tobacco pipes, gorgets, finely-crafted projectile points, and elaborate Abbott Zone-Decorated pots. These materials all suggest large gatherings where food was cooked and shared in special containers. Previous studies have linked such items to ceremonial gatherings where self-adornment and display of status through presentation of rare or unusual items were commonplace.

A striking aspect of the ritual pits is their stratigraphic composition. Most pits on the site contained a foot or two of sterile soil capped by a distinctive burned layer, occasionally a foot or two thick. This is true of burial contexts as well pits with no burial. This upper layer is where archaeologists retrieved most of the cultural material associated with features. It appears that when Native people dug these pits, they were backfilled and food was then roasted on top. Wash layers visible in some profile drawings suggest some pits were left open for a time before the roasting occurred. After the ritual concluded any materials used in the ceremony, such as decorated

pottery, pipes, or gorgets, were left in place on top of the pit along with any food remains.

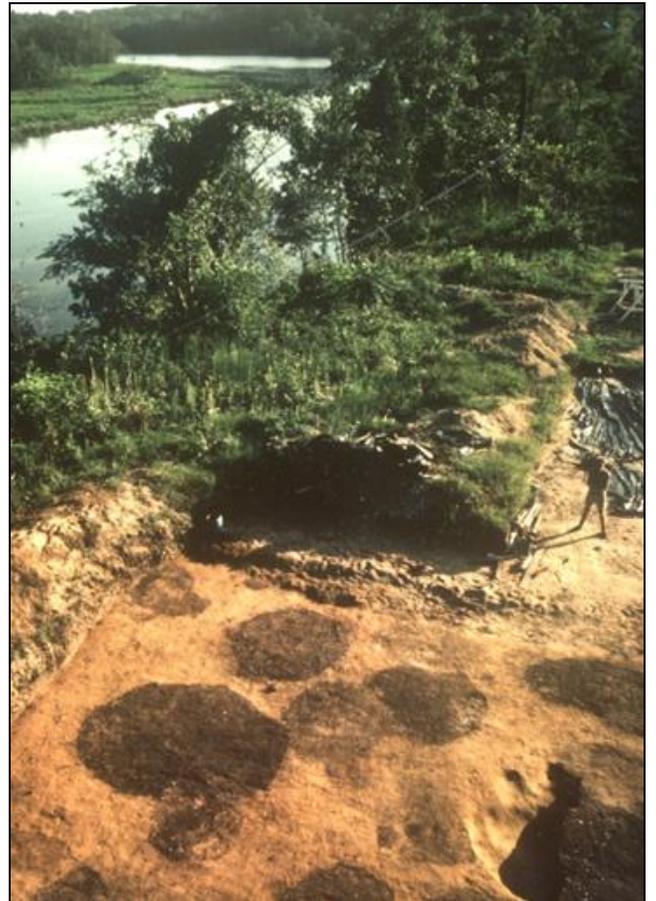


Tobacco pipes

Ritual items left in place may be what some cultural anthropologists refer to as ephemeral monuments. A common feature of non-Western cultures, ephemeral monuments have special, commemorative purposes but once used, people abandon them to decay and be forgotten. Items such as these are temporary vehicles of social transmission. They serve a commemorative purpose in the moment but have no use once that moment has passed. Ritual items at Hatch, including food remains, were ephemeral monuments specially made or procured for these ceremonies and were only needed as the ritual took place. This practice is often difficult to understand in the Western memorial framework.

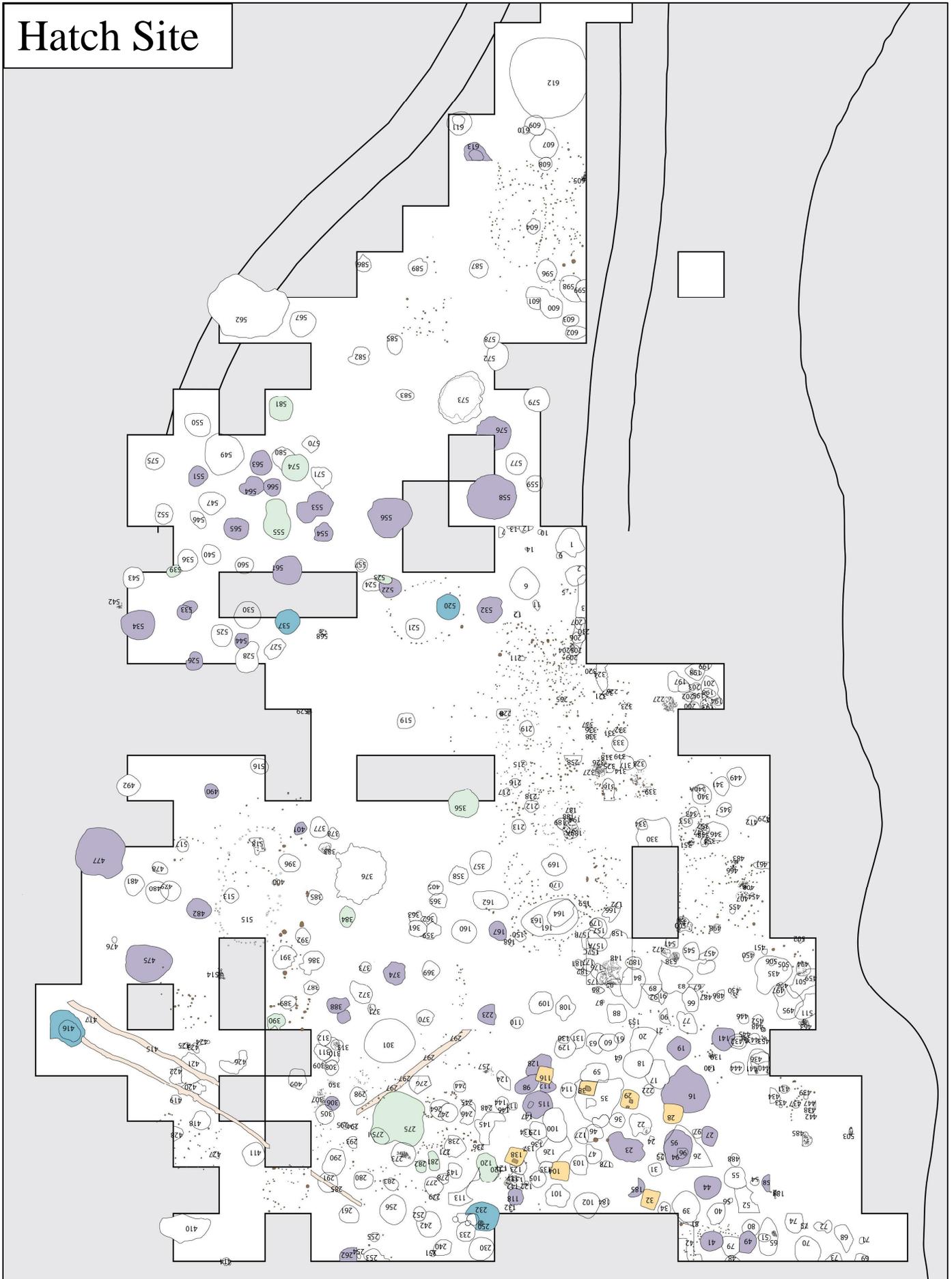
Stepping away from the presupposition that time is moving in a forward trajectory, allows the archaeologist a glimpse into the cultural framework of precolonial people who may have perceived time in a cyclical fashion, as many non-Western cultures do. Arguably, the belief that time is moving forward is based on European ideals of progress and the need for physical reminders of the people and moments that contributed to it, a concept rooted in colonialism and its need to assert that Europe is the pinnacle of civilization. Linear time justified conquest in the minds of Europeans. It allowed them to view colonized people as backward or somehow living in a primitive past Europe had long abandoned. Time's passage may be more cultural

construct that rooted in immutable physics. The remarkable continuity of the practices exhibited on the site suggests a regular return to a ritualized moment, one that was revisited with some regularity.



Hatch Site with Leverette "Lefty" Gregory on the right for scale

Hatch Site





You are Cordially Invited
Mystery of the Centreville Six
Historical Marker Unveiling
Saturday, May 18, 10:00 AM
(Armed Forces Day)
McDonald's Restaurant
5931 Fort Dr., Centreville, Va. 20120

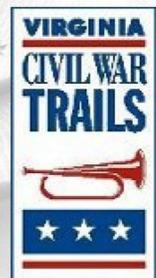
Welcome & Opening Remarks

James Lewis
(Moderator & Author of the marker)

Speakers

The Honorable Michael Frey
(Sully District Supervisor
at the time of discovery and excavation)

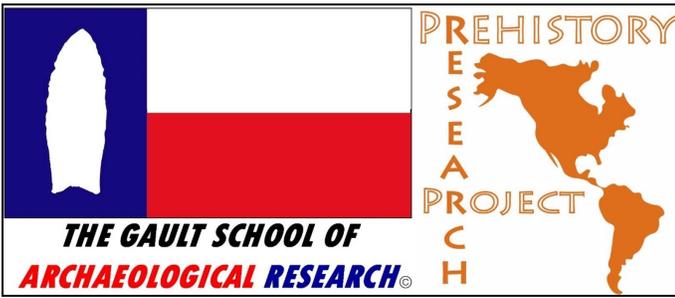
Kevin Ambrose, Keynote Address
(Individual who discovered the first soldier)



Accompanied By



Live Period Music by Jon Vrana
Presentation of the Colors – South Lakes JROTC
Sponsors: Jim Van Valkenburg (Franchise Operator / Owner)
Bull Run Civil War Round Table & Civil War Trails



**MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT
ABOUT THE GAULT SITE**

The Prehistory Research Project is moving back to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin.

As many of you are aware, the Prehistory Research Project (PRP) conducts archaeological investigations into the earliest human occupants of the Americas including the Gault Archaeological Site. The PRP is funded by the Gault School of Archaeological Research (GSAR) through the generosity of our members, directors, private donors, and volunteers who all contribute to our mission.

While a formal statement will be made soon, our 10-year official agreement with Texas State University will come to an end as of August 31, 2019. Some of our biggest accomplishments over the past decade have occurred under the auspices of Texas State University, resulting in the dissemination of high-profile scientific research and major discoveries from the Gault Archaeological Site, which holds global appeal on a professional and public level. The PRP staff are honored to have had the opportunity to contribute and support Texas State University's designation as an Emerging Research University.

As this chapter with Texas State University draws to a close, we are excitedly preparing for the next phase of the PRP as we become part of the University of Texas at Austin family by joining forces with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory located on the UT Austin J. J. Pickle Research Campus.

Our move to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) is very much a homecoming for the Gault Archaeological Site and in many ways for Datum Point

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the PRP, and we are thrilled to re-join our colleagues and begin a new collaborative partnership with TARL and the University of Texas at Austin that will create exciting new opportunities.

In the meantime, look for additional details as we get closer to making this endeavor happen, and we would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to Texas State University and the Anthropology department for hosting the project over the past decade. Thank you to all of our friends, colleagues, volunteers, and students who have supported us throughout our time there!

CART

Fairfax County Archaeological Research Team

Last month staff from CART kept busy attending conferences and symposia to present our findings to the professional and local communities and connect with our archaeological colleagues in the region. FCPA Archaeology was represented at the annual meeting of the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference (MAAC), The Friends of Fairfax Archaeology (FOFA) Slavery Symposium held at Gunston Hall, The Mount Vernon Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Symposium, and the Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) annual conference. Additionally, CART members presented findings to the Pohick Church Docents and the Historic Centerville Society.



Lab Director, Elizabeth Paynter, presenting at the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference

At MAAC, the staff organized an entire session on archaeology in Fairfax County! Presentation topics included discussions of ongoing and previous field projects, reevaluations of legacy collections, and even an experimental study of expedient glass tools.

Between all of these events, staff also completed the field work for two projects in March. A systematic shovel test pit survey of the Green Springs Garden Park was conducted in order to locate and account for subsurface cultural resources within the park. A small survey was also conducted at the Old Colchester Park and Preserve in advance of a wetlands improvement project.

The lab has been busy cataloging the various projects on which the field crew has been working. At the same time, our current volunteers have been helping with washing, labeling, re-bagging of the new artifacts, as well as picking and data entry.

Please join us in the field or lab, for questions about volunteering in the field, email CART staff in the field at cart.volunteers@live.com. Volunteer days in the field are Thursdays through Saturdays, weather permitting. Volunteer days in the lab are Wednesdays through Fridays. Keep an eye on our blog: cartarchaeology.wordpress.com for information on local events and recent finds by CART.

2019 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Other Public Archaeological Programs in Northern Virginia/DC

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

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 2nd Wed. of each month at the James Lee Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!