THE DATUM POINT

September 2022

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

This month we are having a Zoom meeting only, which you can view from home. We will not meet in person.

Next month is the ASV Annual Meeting in Williamsburg! If you haven't already registered, please do so now!!!! Here is the link!

https://virginiaarcheology.org/2022-annual-meeting-registration/

On the same link you will find information about the hotel where the conference is being held. I look forward to seeing many of you there!!!!

I plan on going back to the Preserve on Bull Run Mountain to do some more pedestrian surveying to locate more sites and add information on the sites already identified. I plan to go out on October 1st. Let me know if you would like to come survey. This will require being able to hike a couple of miles on trails and in the woods. All are welcome.

This month's meeting is virtual!

Join This Month's Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88201815753

Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

History of Logboat Development in the Mid-Atlantic

By Robert Hayes, MS, from the Maritime Heritage Chapter of ASV.

The Mid-Atlantic has a rich maritime history dating long before European contact. Native Americans constructed dugout canoes and used them as the primary mode of waterway transportation, for trade, exploration, and defense. English settlers in the late 1500s provided detailed documentation of the construction and use of the dugout canoe by Native Americans. Over time, European settlers modified the Native American canoe design. Along the Mid-Atlantic, the canoe "evolved" from the traditional single-log canoe to split-log canoes, multi-log sailing canoes, bugeyes, and buyboats to support the growing maritime economy of the region.

The Maritime Heritage Chapter of ASV, in cooperation with the states of Maryland and North Carolina and the commonwealth of Virginia, has been cataloging and registering log-constructed boats for several years. The Mid-Atlantic Logboat Registry is

creating a database for those who want to know more about these uniquely constructed watercraft. To date, they have collected data for more than 200 vessels. Their work includes physical surveys and archival research of existing logboats, as well as assisting state agencies, historical societies, and private organizations with investigating suspected or confirmed finds discovered in local waterways.

Hayes is an active member of the Maritime Heritage and Nansemond chapters of ASV and serves as a member of the Maritime Heritage Chapter's executive board. He is the principal investigator for the Mid-Atlantic Logboat Registry, a project of the Maritime Heritage Chapter supported by the ASV, the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, the Maryland Historical Trust, and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. It is funded by a grant from the Institute of Nautical Archeology.

Hayes received a B.S. in biology (minor in history) from Bridgewater College in 1981, and an M.S. in biology from James Madison University in 1986. He served for five years of active duty with the U.S. Navy. He has more than 35 years of professional experience in the environmental science field, and is a certified industrial hygienist.

CART

COLLEEN BOYLE
Fairfax County Archaeological Research Team

This month the CART staff participated in the 2022 Day of Archaeology; an annual public outreach event sponsored by Archaeology in the Community that showcases organizations who do archaeological work in the D.C. area. The CART table featured a platter reconstruction activity, 3D printed artifacts, and stone tools available for the public to handle and engage with. Despite the rainy weather, the event was a success! The CART crew enjoyed chatting with community members and exploring the work of our friends and colleagues in the region. The most recent addition to the Fairfax County ArtiFACTS blog https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/artifacts

CART's newest addition, Tyler Ball, joined the team in June 2021. Tyler received his B.A. in Anthropology with a focus in archaeology from Marshall University in 2013 and his M.A. from East Carolina University in Maritime Studies in 2019. As demonstrated by the array of modified sharks' teeth above, Tyler is highly skilled at artifact illustration. His research interests and educational background focus on analyzing lithics and stone tools, underwater archaeology, artifact

illustrations, lab photography, photogrammetry, cemetery conservation, and public outreach.

Outside of archaeology, Tyler is a self-proclaimed shark nerd! Seriously, he knows his stuff when it comes to sharks! This summer, Tyler spent a week off the coast of Miami learning how to tag sharks and collect tissue samples for research. The Field School crew Tyler worked with was featured in a short documentary that made the lineup for National Geographic's SharkFest 2022!

Please note that we are not currently taking volunteers and our offices remain closed until further notice. We will post new opportunities on the Volunteer Management website when they become available. Until then, ACB volunteers are encouraged to share their talents with other branches and/or parks where opportunities are now available. For more information, please visit Fairfax County's Volunteer page for more information. If you would like to be notified when we can accept volunteer assistance again, please email cartarchlab@live.com To see more from CART, check out our latest artiFACTS blog post and a short clip of the National Geographic Documentary: Off the Hook featuring CART Archaeologist Tyler Ball.

82ND ANNUAL ASV MEETING

October 20-23, 2022

Dates: October 20-23, 2022
Location: Fort Magruder Lodge, Williamsburg, Virginia

Meeting and Banquet Registration Information Coming Soon

Special ASV Room rate: $109/night –
RESERVATION INSTRUCTIONS:
Call the hotel directly at 757-220-2250.
Ask for the room rate for the ASV Annual Meeting.

There is ***no on-line room registration*** for the ASV special rate.

CUTOFF DATE:
The cutoff date for the ASV rate is September 29, 2022.

By Yvonne French, Vice President

On May 11, 2022, the Northern Virginia Chapter hosted a Zoom presentation, "Towards an Understanding of a Native American Legacy: Pre-contact Origins and Development of Domesticated Crops in Virginia," by Archaeologist Thomas Klatka of the Western Preservation Office of the Department of Historic Resources.

However, the audio used by the chapter during the presentation caused much of the narrative to sound garbled. We are re-supplying the link to the original talk, which took place on July 21, 2021, before the Historical Society of Western Virginia. The society subsequently posted the lecture on YouTube at https://youtu.be/sNUC3AtvHfM. The audio in this presentation is understandable.

While many viewers of the May 11 rebroadcast chose to enable the closed captions for the fascinating talk and could follow along, the Chapter regrets that others may have been discouraged by the poor audio, something we are trying to rectify with the recent purchase of a multi-microphone sound system.

The Q&A that followed the Chapter's rebroadcast of Klatka's earlier presentation is transcribed below.

From chat box: What are domesticated seeds vs. non-domesticated seeds?

Klatka: A lot of it has to do with the size of the seeds themselves. The domesticated varieties are much larger statistically than the wild varieties. For the ethnobotanist that is the key element. From there, it is looking at both varieties through microscopes and finding differences there. The larger seeds were selected, and it led to genetic engineering, so the seeds became much larger than their natural counterparts. Interestingly, once experiments of engineering the seeds ceases, the seeds become smaller again. There are several universities that now are attempting to replicate the engineering of seeds, much like the Native Americans, to see how long it would take to detect observable changes in seed size and seed coat.

From chat box: You had a lot of names of plants that we don't recognize. Are they used in modern times?

Klatka: Some plants are available. Yaupon is a plant, like a shrub that is native from the southern Chesapeake Bay area down along the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. It is a wild-growing plant. You can take the leaves and roast and steep them and they are a source of something that is like caffeine. My sister sent me some and it is enjoyable. It takes a while to get used to it. There is a company in Florida named the Emerald Coast Tea Company and you can purchase yaupon from them. They will mix it with a little bit of mint, but it is a plant that we could be using as a substitute for teas or coffees, but we just don't use it. Prehistorically it was extremely well known and used. The Native Americans made a tea from the yaupon leaves that was extremely strong, and the Europeans who saw it referred to it as a black drink because it was very dark in color. In many of the native languages it had a different translation as a white drink. They would consume tremendous quantities of this strong drink and vomit because it causes a strong reaction in the body. They would use it during ritual times when it was important to arrive at a decision that was best for the

wellbeing of the community. It was also used in rituals for cleansing ceremonies. I never understood the difference between the native use of white drink versus the European's interpretation of calling it a black drink and then I was talking about it to a person who is trained in psychology and she said that if the human body receives a very high dosage of caffeine in a very quick period of time, it affects the optic nerve so the subject with their eyes open really sees white light, so it is kind of interesting.

There are several foods that we could be eating, they are growing in our backyards, but we don't accept them. It's a cultural practice.

From chat box: Do you think that a tribe's crop failure would cause them to lose everything and not even have seeds for the next year?

Klatka: Theoretically yes. In those cases, native societies had other mechanisms in place to guard against that. Alliance systems with other groups would be cemented through intermarriage and if my village was subject to an area with extreme drought and it threatened my seed resources, I could go to my allies and get crops and seed from them. We find, at least in Southwest Virginia, ceramics that are gourd effigies, and often those were used to trade or to move seeds from one group to another group. I met a native couple in Cumberland County along the James River. The wife's family was Cherokee and they met with her kin, who gave her a ceramic vessel that was an effigy of a squash, and inside it was filled with their corn, and they were planting it.

There is a tupelo red variety of corn which is a very old variety. A farm in Pennsylvania has been growing it and selling it. I have met three different farmers from down in this region who are growing it. It is very popular. It tastes a lot like the other heirloom corns that have a slightly different flavor. Tupelo Red is not a good corn when it is parched and boiled, but when it is dried and ground it is fantastic. It makes a great cornbread.

Patrick O'Neill (President): You commented that you see a lot of gourds growing in the wild. I grew up in Northwest Oklahoma and there was a lot of sand and there are gourds all over the place.

Klatka: I have never seen that. Do they have much flesh in them?

O'Neill: We took some home and tried to hollow them out like they used to do on *Gilligan's Island*. I don't remember if there was much inside. I do remember that they were large. Some of them were 8-10 inches from end to end and as big around as six inches at the bottom. They were very hard on the outside.

O'Neill: Tom Beacham writes: Did maize spread southward from Mexico while it spread northward?

Klatka: I can't address the question of whether the tempo was the same, but it did spread southward. It became a very popular crop for many native societies. The Mexico-to-South America trade routes were established early, they were perpetuated for a long time, and it was those same trade routes that brought beans upward from South America to Mesoamerica and even into North America.

O'Neill: Tom said he heard that plants spread east-west much faster than north-south due to similarity of climate in the east-west direction and the greater diversity of climate in the north-south direction. Is that true?

Klatka: Yes, I think it really is. Basically, in the east-west direction you are going to have more similarities of climate. As we go northward, the growing seasons are much shorter, so some crops just weren't very viable in the north. That's true even in what is now the United States. The maize crops did extend northward through the Great Lakes area but not much further than that. Native societies north of that did like corn and they traded for it, probably for more ritual purposes. The east-west pattern is probably true except for the Rockies, which caused a major problem for the spread of maize. The maize went to the east side of the Rockies, but instead of crossing over, it went to the north, so the maize never had much of an impact to the west of the Rocky Mountains.

Chat box: Did any or many of the South American plants get to North America long before contact with the European countries, or only predominantly after they arrived?

Klatka: Corn and beans got up here way before the Europeans arrived. Maize agriculture and beans and squash were part of the native diet when the first Europeans came to North America. Many of the other crops never really spread quickly. Maybe it was because of preservation. In my first talk, someone asked me when potatoes were first cultivated, and it really stumped me. So afterward I investigated it, and potatoes first came under cultivation in southeastern Bolivia and northern Peru, so they were actually a major food crop in the Andes. When the Spanish first came into South America and colonized it around 1630-1635, they were introduced to potatoes, and they loved them and shipped them back to Europe, where they spread very quickly. But potato tubers themselves only last so long before they need to be planted, so maybe that was one of the reasons why potatoes never really made it up this far. Other factors could be cultural in nature, I really don't know. There were crop plants like potatoes that would have done well in North America, and probably could have been a big part of the diet; they're certainly a major part of the global diet today.

Yvonne French: I missed what you said about why potatoes might not have spread so quickly. Could you please repeat that?

Klatka: When we plant potatoes today, we usually chit them, which means put them in a dark area so they start sprouting, then we cut them into pieces and plant them in the ground. I don't even go to that step, I just plant the whole potato in the ground. The potato itself stays viable even after it starts getting soft and it has sprouts coming out of it, but after a period, what's left of the potato does not provide enough energy to sustain the plant. Trading a plant like that may have taken too much time to travel to another place and be adopted. The plants that did spread northward into North America came in the form of dried corn, or dried kernels, or seeds, which could be saved for an extended period.

Yvonne: What was that black-tea / white-tea that you mentioned? I did not catch the name.

Klatka: It is called yaupon. If you look at the Emerald Coast Tea Company website, you can see it. It has the same chemical structure that caffeine does.

O'Neill: Getting back to the potato: the lack of seeds and the mushiness of the potato, such as with potato blight, I know that they just rotted quickly. I know they would not

survive long enough to replenish. They needed enough to plant. If they ate the decent ones than what were they going to plant again next year?

Klatka: Talking about fleshy fruits, I grew up in elementary school singing a song about going down to the paw-paw patch, you know you pick them up, put them in your basket, and for my whole life I never really knew what paw-paws were. Then I moved to Southwest Virginia and went to the farmer's market and usually every other year somebody brings in paw-paws, so I was finally introduced to them. These fleshy fruits are out there, we could be cultivating them by planting small groves of them and selling them in the grocery stores, but we just don't do it. It is interesting that so many of the foods we eat are all culturally inculcated. There's a lot of knowledge of plant foods out there that we could re-learn if we wanted to.

Yvonne: Ramps come to mind.

Klatka: I love ramps. I just finished my last batch of ramps last week. In my particular area when I go out and talk to farmers, I ask them if they have ramps, and if they have ramps on their land, they say, 'Do you mean those oniony-garlicy things? We've got them but we don't eat them.' But if you go out to West Virginia, everybody has them there and they're eating them and now they're becoming very popular in some of the metropolitan restaurants on the East Coast. They're a great plant. White Top Mountain has an annual ramp festival every year. They look similar to spring onions, but they have a very strong flavor. Some people refer to them as swaddled leeks. They do have a strong flavor that is like an onion or garlic. I think they're just wonderful.

Ann P. Wood: There was a farm market vendor selling those for several years here in Northern Virginia and I tried some. They were very tasty.

Klatka: It becomes a matter of personal choice. I've met some people who say that if you take a cast-iron skillet and cook ramps in it, they just ruin the skillet because you can't get rid of the flavor. I don't believe that's true. But, just like some people do not like garlic, some people do not like ramps. I'm a real fan of garlic. If a recipe calls for two cloves of garlic, I'll put a whole bulb in, so I don't mind them.

O'Neill: Are ramps something that you could find a seed for?

Klatka: There are seeds from the plant. Basically no one ever tends to them, they grow wild, and what is not harvested will flower and produce seeds, and then they self-sustain that way: The seeds sprout, and then drop and grow. There are several plants, ramps—and ginseng is another one—that are difficult to propagate from seeds. It is possible but it does take some work.

O'Neill: When we talk about domestic versus non-domestic, if I was a person who was eating ramps, or collecting them and trying to plant them again, would it be domesticated but you can't tell? I mean domesticated relating to, as you said earlier, genetic differences over time?

Klatka: Yes, definitely. We can take some plants and perhaps we could plant them over and over in our lifetime and not see any real change between the parent plant and the offspring. But over thousands of years, or even perhaps hundreds of years, that cultural selection of

certain types of plants could bring about a change so that you have a cultivar develop.

One of the really interesting things for me, maybe you did not pick it up because the audio is not coming in well, but we find some late woodland features that are filled with the seeds of domesticated plants, plants that were first domesticated back in the late archaic period, and they became really important parts of the diet, and they sustain all the way up to 1400-1500 A.D., even after maize is introduced and people have more game and fish resources than they really need, so a lot of these plants were perpetuated out of tradition as cultivated plants.

Mike Johnson: What about the groundnut with respect to the potato in the east? It's wild but I don't know if it was cultivated. I cultivated it once, but I got the beans, I never got the potatoes. I'm just wondering if maybe the groundnut had an impact on why the potatoes didn't get here.

Klatka: That's a good point. When you move through Mexico to the American Southwest and eastward, you're moving through a whole series of different types of soils and different moisture levels in those soils. That could have a big impact. I think that is probably why potatoes have never been a big crop in the Southwest or even Mexico. The climate seems right in terms of temperature, but certainly the amount of rainfall is much too low, and the soils are certainly sandy.

French: Do you have any recipes for anything like pemmican or any Native American foods?

Klatka: No, I don't. I never got into that. I am sure there must be some historic cookbooks. Look at the University of Nebraska Press. They tend to publish a lot of books on Native American cultures. That's a good one: Bison Books. That's where I would search.

O'Neill: I remember everybody always used to say, 'I'm going to cook with acorns' or 'I'm going to make a dish with acorns.' And I would say, 'That's great, you are going to make a dish with sawdust.'

Klatka: Yes, when I was younger, I had a friend who lived on a farm in central Pennsylvania (I grew up in Pennsylvania) and Carl and I used to hang out on the farm a lot, and his brother started collecting acorns and processing them. You have to boil them over and over and over to remove the tannins. And that's what he said: Once you get to the point where they are edible, it was just like eating sawdust or something like that.

It is now believed that maize came about by taking one native plant called teosinte and intermarrying it with a couple of wild grasses, and they started developing the early forms of corn. Carl had a farm and we got really fascinated with it so we found some teosinte through mail-order, and we grew it, and it was extremely lush, but the growing season up in Pennsylvania was not nearly long enough to sustain the plant itself, so we could never get it to produce any seed. Where I grew up, they said that if your corn is knee-high by the Fourth of July, you have a good crop. But here, by the Fourth of July, the corn is just towering, so we can get in two, almost three crops of corn in one growing season.

O'Neill: That's pretty good.

Klatka: One of the most interesting things we saw in Virginia was how prevalent corn was west of the Blue Ridge, where East of the Blue Ridge it was not. It probably was grown but certainly not to the levels it was

in other places. West of the Blue Ridge it was a major component of the diet. East of the Blue Ridge, it wasn't. On the other hand, crops like corn date back, not in Virginia, but in the Midwest, to the middle woodland period, where they were used for ritual purposes for a long time before they became important parts of the diet.

Sallie Lyons: I would guess that persimmons must have played a large part in the Indian diet in the fall based on the quantities that I get in my backyard growing wild.

Klatka: Yes, they are everywhere, and they are another good example of the plant food that we have all around us. You can find them in our local parks and forested areas, and we just don't eat them, but they can be delicious. You have to learn when to harvest them and when to eat them—there is a right period and a wrong period of time—and if you get the wrong period of time and you bite into one, your mouth puckers up so strongly that it takes a little bit of time just to get your mouth moving again. It is a delicious fruit. They are quite small, but they are tasty.

Sally: They can be baked, and they make a sugary jam that will last a long time, and they can also be fermented.

Klatka: That's a thing that is not really discussed much: that a lot of plants were fermented, especially the fleshy fruits, and the fermented drinks were quite prevalent in Native American societies, just as they are today. We're always amazed that the Egyptians had beer, but we shouldn't be too surprised about that.

O'Neill: I guess that's one of those things that crosses all lines, that the human wants to have something that has a little kick to it.

Klatka: For times of celebration.

French: Do you think that the corn didn't come so far east as prevalently because they had such nice things already?

Klatka: It was adopted very quickly and spread quickly because the native groups in the eastern United States had a long history of horticulture. They knew how to tend to crops, how to grow crops, and how to perpetuate them. That's the main reason. They basically had a strong diet in place with a diversity of plants that were easy to harvest. That goes into the discussion of tuckahoe and the tubers that grow in brackish waters. They can grow very densely, and you can pull them out, grind them up, dry them as a flour, and turn them into breads, or you can roast them. They are just so plentiful to obtain that not much work is required to get them. It's just a matter of harvesting them, not growing them. It depends on what's growing wild in the area as a very strong resource. That's a big factor.

Johnson: When I was in school in the 1980s, one of the reasons given for the corn not growing here earlier was the power and the resources of the Chesapeake Bay, and as you were saying, the brackish water and the tidal areas penetrated up many of the rivers to the fall line. In 1650 the crops of the local tribes, particularly the Dogue, or the Moyops, as they called themselves, were seen by someone from Bacon's Rebellion. He said that as he came up the river, he saw the old Dogue corn groves on a point of land separated from the largest neck in the freshets—Mason Neck—a swamp, but he was able to observe the cornfields in the brackish areas, so they of the survivability is due to there being so much limestone west of the Blue Ridge and it's so acid here east of the Blue Ridge.

Klatka: Absolutely. The Blue Ridge is known for its diversity. As the rocks break down, the soil becomes extremely rich in mineral nutrients, so when you look at a small region of the Blue Ridge, you have a greater diversity of plants than in other places. That's one of the reasons that, when people first started coming up with synthetic medicines in the late 1800s early 1900s, they came to the Blue Ridge to harvest plants that had medicinal qualities and started taking them into laboratories, analyzing them, and replicating the chemical structure by synthetic means in order to develop the first medicines. That was one of the initiatives of one of the Rockefellers. There is no question that the diversity of the minerals in the soils leads to a diversity in the plant life. It is lush. I don't doubt anything like what you said because with limestone underlying much of Southwest Virginia, it breaks down and turns into a very rich soil, along with other things. But I think you're right, Mike.

Johnson: You get a lot more bone preservation there.

Klatka: Excellent, yes, that's a biggie.

Johnson: We don't get much here at all unless we're dealing with a shell midden. That will change the pH of the soil, and there we do get bones.

Klatka: It is here but under the limestone are very alkaline soils, so bone preservation is really excellent. They are very nutrient-rich soils. That's a good point.

O'Neill: And also labor intensity. If you can go over to the creek and get something now, or get something three-quarters of the year as opposed to growing corn and it is going to be available only a certain time, you can't leave it, you've got to be there, so you have a village, you've got to have a permanent residence there for the most part. So there are lots of different factors and that's why we study all these things: it's not what answer is correct because there are lots of different factors and variables, and that's why we keep learning.

Klatka: That's how we acquire knowledge.

O'Neill: You look at why the Germans came over. If you look at where the Germans settled, they knew that where there was limestone, there was going to be better soil, and where there is better soil, there is going to be better crops, and that's where they wanted to go. So they would go places where they knew there was good soil, but the railroad companies trying to sell it to them would say, 'Oh, come on out here, we'll give it to you.' Western Kansas had good soil but that's because there was the grass mat on top, so once you got rid of that, then we had the dust storms and no water, which doesn't do any good, so there are lots of different variables.

Lyons: Another thing about corn is that you have to guard it because a deer or racoons can destroy a crop in one night.

O'Neill: It's labor intensive because you must watch it. It is not something that is going to take care of itself. Whether that means watering it, guarding it against fire, or whatever's going to happen . . . on the other hand once you get it going, it is great. You think about that: how does a group that has never seen this concept adapt it, because they had to have gone to somewhere else and seen where it was working and said, 'We want to try that here,' so lots of different things. Same as with the question of why certain people used a certain kind of chert, and someone else sees it and asks, 'Where did you get that? I'll give you anything you want for it.' Corn might be the same way:

‘Why would I want that stuff. Oh you can make taco shells out of it? Well OK then.’

Johnson: And Savannah River people probably wouldn’t touch chert with a ten-foot pole. Didn’t matter how pretty it was.

O’Neill: And they weren’t able to go to the Ace Hardware and get some good stuff.

Johnson: They had quartzite, what do they need chert for?

O’Neill: Coming from Kansas and Oklahoma, we know different out there. They would have looked at some guy from present-day Oregon who brought some obsidian and say, ‘Where did you get that?’ Good stuff, OK, any other questions? No, well Tom, thank you so very much, let’s give him a big hand.

Klatka: It was good talking with you. Take care.

2022 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Dues:

Individual ($15)_____
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Please make check payable to NVC/ASV.

Return to:
Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV
9518 Liberty Tree Lane
Vienna VA 22182

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month. *Due to COVID-19 concerns, meetings may take place in-person and/or on Zoom. Details with start time and on-line/in-person information will be provided in the Datum Point newsletter prior to each meeting.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!