



THE DATUM POINT

September 2024

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

ZOOM Meeting starts at 7pm, not 7:30!!!!

A respite from the heat! Get out and dig or go on a field trip!!!! You are very welcome to come out to the Everhart Mill, where the NVC and Banshee Reeks Chapters are exposing the foundation of the 1760s Everhart Mill on Dutchman's Creek. This is in northwest Loudoun County. All are welcome, but please contact me to get dates and location information! patrickloneill@verizon.net



The ASV Annual Meeting is fast approaching. You can go to this link to see how to register online and get banquet tickets. It also has information for the Fort Magruder Hotel where we are staying. **(copy and paste in your browser).**

<https://virginiaarcheology.org/2024-annual-meeting-registration/>

**This month's meeting will be via Zoom.
To join the meeting follow this link.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87410075607>

Wednesday, Sept 11. 7 PM

44AU0719

**The Mt. Sidney Pottery and Potters,
c 1825-1884: An archival journey
documenting the Mt. Sidney Pottery
and looking at the lives of the men
who identified themselves as potters**

**By Massanutten Chapter President
Cynthia A. Schroer**

Cynthia Schroer is a retired public school science teacher with a B.S. in Biology and Anthropology and a M.S. in Biology from James Madison University. She is a Life member of the ASV and currently serves as the president of the Massanutten Chapter.

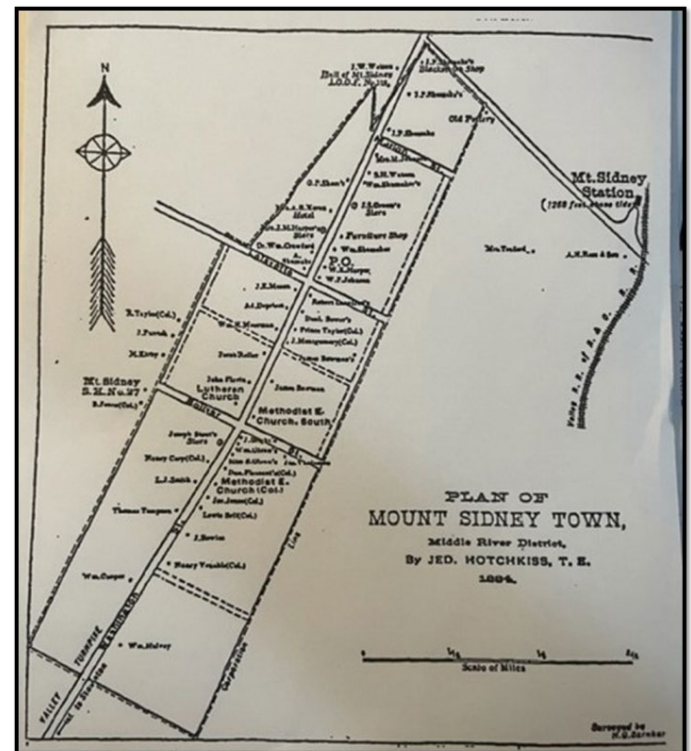
In March of 2024, research was conducted at the Staunton Library, the Augusta County Historical Society (online and in-person), and the Augusta County Court House. The Staunton Library provided a valuable resource in H. E. Comstock, The Pottery of the Shenandoah Valley Region (Frank L. Horton Series) which explains pottery traditions, manufacturing and lists the Valley potters. The

Augusta County Historical Society has extensive resources online available to the public in its Augusta Community Portal. The scanned copies of the ACHS Bulletins are available from 1965 to the present. Entries of particular importance were Pots, Potteries, and Potting in Augusta County, 1800-1870 (ACHS Bulletin, 1979) by Jim Hanger, a local modern stoneware potter. His explanation of local pottery traditions and timeline of local potters proved to be very helpful. Also Mount Sidney by Katherine Gentry Bushman (ACHS Bulletin, 1983); and “A Highly Prosperous village” A History of Mt. Sidney by Ann McCleary (ACHS Bulletin, 1998). The Augusta County Historical Society is also the depository of the working papers of Ann McCleary’s Historic District Nomination for Mt. Sidney in 1989. Jackpot! At the Augusta County Court house the Wills, Maps, and Indentures contributed to the unfolding of the potters’ story.

The Pottery of Mt. Sidney did exist but you would not know it from walking over the site – there are no remnants of this industry that existed from 1825/1835-1884: no artifacts, no pictures, no existing pots, no visible footprints of the kiln, potting/glazing shed, grinding mill, or clay pit. The site was leveled in the late 1980s to make way for the park – the BBQ pit, the playground and the picnic pavilion. But the “old pottery” does show up on maps, in newspaper advertisements of Mt. Sidney crocks for sale, and references related to the pottery written in the pages of Indentures.



Location of the Mt. Sidney Pottery Kiln (44AU0719), Ruritan Park



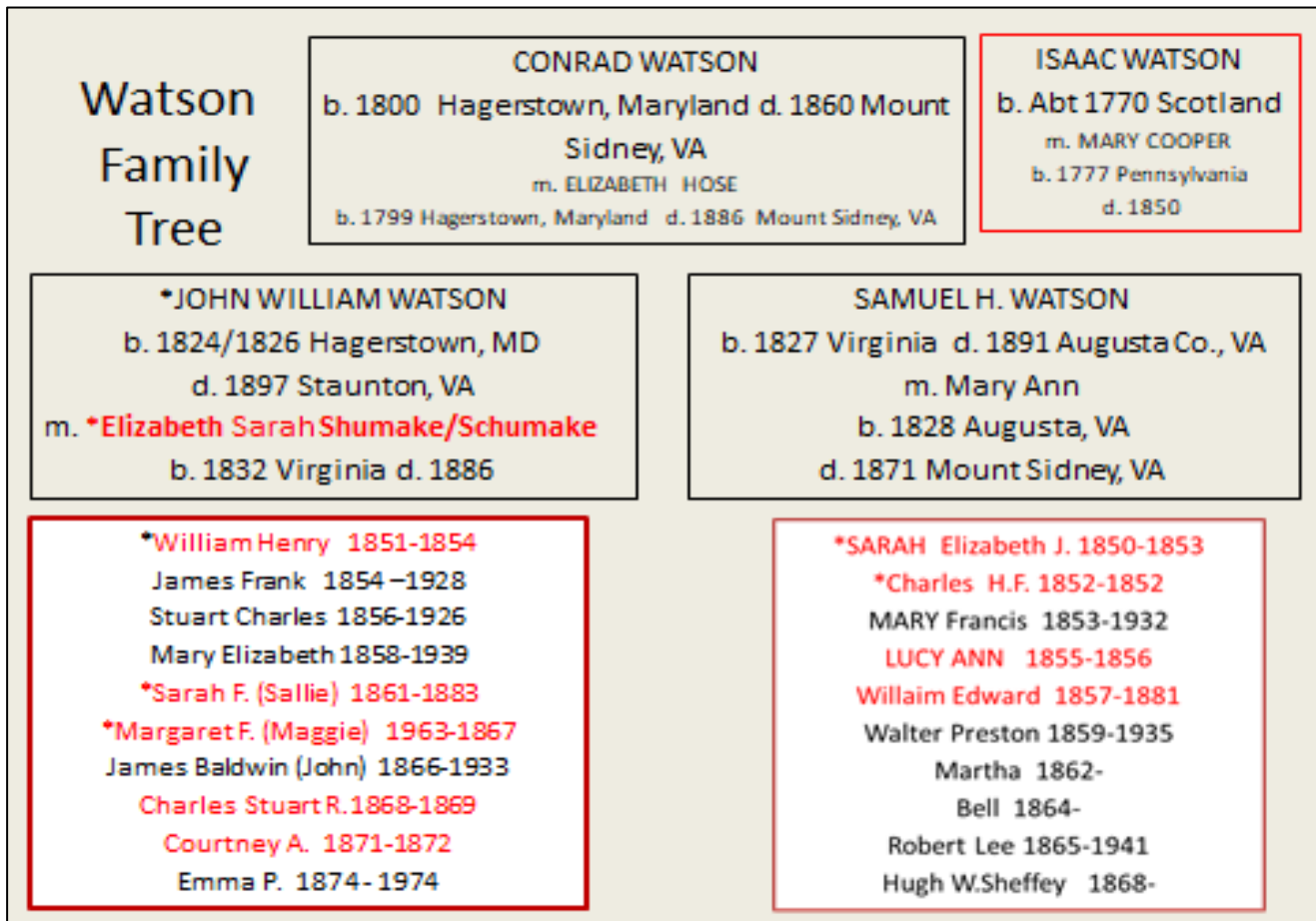
Location of “old pottery” Plan of Mt. Sidney Town, Middle River by Jed. Hotchkiss, T.E. 1884

The Potters of Mt. Sidney, Conrad Watson and his two sons John William and Samuel, were found in Comstock, the timeline of Hanger, and the

census records. By creating an Ancestry.com genealogy, the two generations of potters and their families in Mt. Sidney were identified and later some were found resting in the local cemetery. These men survived the Civil War, were members of the Sons of Temperance, and struggled with debts as indicated by multiple periods of borrowing money and putting up collateral (Indentures). They also lasted in the potting industry from c. 1825 (1835) to 1884. In the latter part of the 19th century, Valley potters had to face new problems – increased competition, the rise of industrial pottery production, the expansion of railroads, increased costs, and the introduction of glass containers. By 1908 most had closed.



Elizabeth S. Watson
wife of J. W. Watson



The Mt. Sidney Potters: Conrad, John William, and Samuel Watson Names in red represent those with markers in the Bell Cemetery

2024 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Dues:

Individual (\$15) _____

Family (\$17) _____

Student (\$5) _____

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!!!!