



THE DATUM POINT

March 2025

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 is a Zoom meeting!!!

It is warming up! Lets get out there and do some historic preservation. I am trying to get some dates for excavating to define an 1880s church foundation in Fauquier County. Soon.... I am also in negotiations to brush clear and map an early 1800s mansion, ice well, and other foundation, also in Fauquier County.

Mike Johnson is still doing Jasper Ridge labwork. Still finding lots of cool things in the recovered artifacts!

I would like to schedule a chapter field trip for May. Any suggestions of where to go?



This month's meeting will be via Zoom at 7:30 PM, Wednesday, March 12. To join follow this [Zoom Link](#).

Speaker: Brad Hatch

**Topic: Eel Pots and Carp Pens:
Patawomeck Indian Fishing Traditions**

Terminated NPS Archeologist: Historic Sites in NPS In Peril After DOGE Cuts



Photo: Erin Cagney, dcreport.org

On Valentine's Day 2025, 1,000 United States Park Rangers were fired, along with 3,400 United States Forestry Service civil servants, with another 2,700 Department of the Interior members resigning. These actions taken by the president may leave archaeological sites under threat as critically needed

and well-trained staff are removed in a supposed effort to reduce government waste.

Featured in DC Report, terminated NPS archaeologist Erin Cagney shares her story as her career and dream of being an NPS archaeologist was cut short for supposed savings, yet the price we will pay for the loss of important archaeological sites that can never be undone has yet to be determined (McConville & Zeno, 2025).

“In the span of only a few months, their actions may destroy our nation’s history that has been protected for over 15,000 years, and we will never get it back,” ~Erin Cagney, (Cagney, 2025)

On the day Cagney was fired, she had been inspecting a site where a new waterline was being installed in Piscataway Park, in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. In fact, Cagney’s park was quite extensive:

My park, National Capital Parks-East (NACE), contains over 170 archeological sites in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. These sites include 10,000 year old Indigenous camps; the 500 year old capital of the Piscataway people, Moyaone; early colonial manor houses and sites of enslavement; Frederick Douglass’s home; Civil War forts; Civilian Conservation Corps camps, and everything in between. These sites encapsulate the history of our nation and the people who have called our nation’s capital home over thousands of years. My job as the sole Archeologist for NACE was to protect and

preserve these sites for present and future generations of Americans. (Cagney, 2025)

Unfortunately, Cagney’s story is far from singular, as reckless austerity measures are implemented at an alarming rate. “Archeological sites are a fragile and non-renewable cultural resource. Once they’re gone, they’re gone forever. I fear for what this administration has planned for the future of all publicly managed land in the country. In the span of only a few months, their actions may destroy our nation’s history that has been protected for over 15,000 years, and we will never get it back,” (Cagney, 2025)

For more information, please visit [DCReport.org](https://www.dcreport.org) to [read the full story](#)

Cagney, E. (2025, March 7). Terminated NPS archeologist: Historic Sites in NPS in peril after Doge Cuts. DCReport.org.

<https://www.dcreport.org/2025/03/05/terminated-nps-archeologist-historic-sites-in-nps-in-peril-after-doge-cuts/>

McConville, D., & Zeno, S. (2025, February 28). America’s park and Forest Rangers are being fired, and oil and gas bosses are now in charge. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/americas-park-and-forest-rangers-are-being-fired-and-oil-and-gas-bosses-are-now-in-charge/#:~:text=An%20estimated%202%2C300%20employees%20of,as%20more%20firings%20are%20expected.>

Women’s History Month

March 2025 is Women’s History Month, during which we examine and highlight the contributions of women to our shared history. With far too many important and impactful women in archaeology and

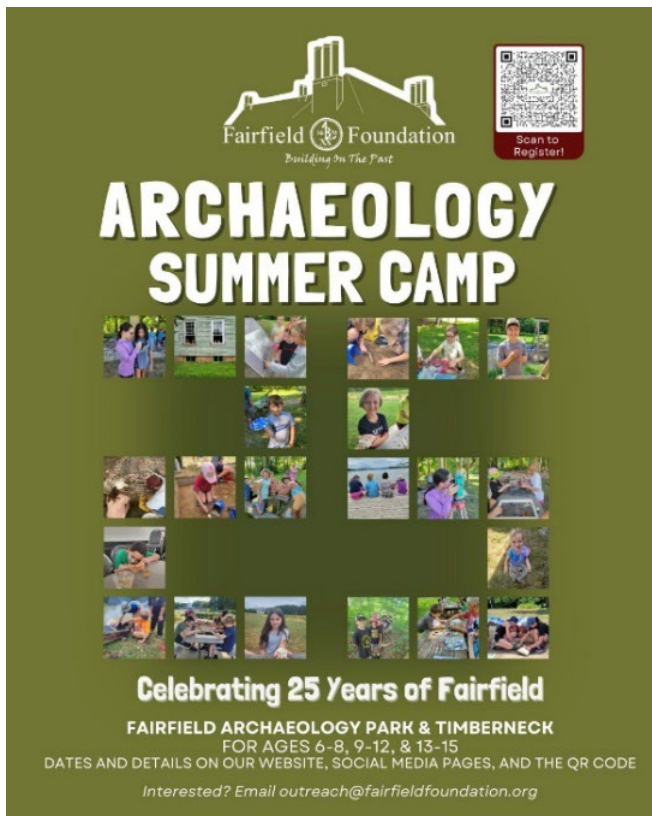
anthropology, here are two well-written and informative articles discussing women's contributions to our understanding of the past.

The Untold Stories of Archaeology's Women - Sapiens Anthropology Magazine discusses marginalized archaeologists.

<https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/first-female-archaeologists/>

Archeology This Month: Women's History – National Park Services discusses several influential women of archaeology.

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/archeology-this-month-women-s-history.htm>



FairfieldFoundation.org

Call for Content

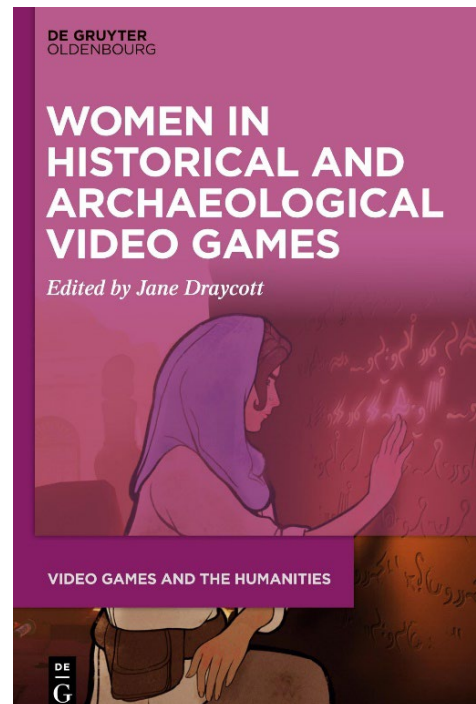
- ❖ Working on a project?
- ❖ Found a fascinating article?
- ❖ Visited someplace interesting?
- ❖ Reviewed a book you have read?
- ❖ Have an artifact you want to discuss?

The Datum Point newsletter could use your content. Please contact Ishtar Watson with your ideas and content suggestions and submission. The deadline is the first of each month. Each submission will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



Monthly Book Review

By Ishtar Watson



Women in Historical and Archaeological Video Games

2023, Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin

Edited By: Jane Draycott

Women in Historical and Archaeological Video Games offers the reader a fascinating look into the portrayal of women in video games, either set in the past or related to archaeology. Discussing aspects from the larger topic of archaeogaming, an emerging area of archaeological significance, Draycott combines fourteen papers discussing aspects of said topic, providing the reader with a rich yet approachable primer to the topic. Once I started reading the book I found that I could not put it down, each paper being quite interesting and containing a wealth of bibliographical information for those interested in pursuing the topic at greater depth.

Of the fourteen papers, I found Expectations vs. reality: Perceived accuracy when women are in historical video games, by Claire Manning, to be the most compelling. In her paper, Manning lays out several examples of video games featuring historical settings where women are depicted beyond domestic activities, such as leadership or warfare, and the overall reaction of the public. In

each example, women depicted in such settings received negative feedback from the public, largely based upon skepticism of the accuracy of women occupying such roles.

Manning provides many examples of real women who occupied such positions of power or martial activities, contrasting these examples with the incredulity of the contemporary public. Using this contrast, Manning concludes that women in historical video games are often portrayed more accurately than the public would expect. She goes on to speculate that several factors play into this misunderstanding, such as sexism, misunderstandings, and unfounded assumptions of 19th—and 20th-century archaeology.

Draycott, J. (Ed.). (2023). Women in historical and archaeological video games (Vol. 9, Ser. Video Games and the Humanities). Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

If you enjoyed this section, please feel free to ask the Datum Point editor about including your own book review of archaeological and associated books.

2025 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Patrick O'Neill	PATRICKLONEILL@VERIZON.NET 703-244-6275
Vice-President	Darius Roby	Darius.Roby@live.com
Treasurer	Barbara Leven	levenbarbara2@gmail.com
Recording Sec	Diane Schug-O'Neill	schugoneill@gmail.com
Datum Point Editor	Ishtar Watson	Ishtar@anti-proton.com
Webmaster	Chris Havlicek	christo829@juno.com

Other Public Archaeological Programs in Northern Virginia/DC

Fairfax Co. Archaeology (FCPA)	Dr. Elizabeth Crowell	elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-534-3881
Mount Vernon	Joe Downer	JDowner@mountvernon.org 703.799.6831
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-638-9724
Alexandria Museum	Dr. Eleanor Breen	Eleanor.Breen@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399
DC City Archaeologist	Dr. Ruth Trocolli	Ruth.Trocolli@dc.gov 202-442-8836
Germanna Foundation	Kelly Arford-Horne, MA, RPA	kelly.arford-horne@germanna.org 540-423-1700

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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!!!!