President’s Comments
Jack Gary

Greetings COVA members. This is a very optimistic time for the future of historic preservation in the Commonwealth. As a new Secretary of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) step into their offices and take the reins, COVA has the opportunity to forge new and productive relationships with the state agencies most responsible for protecting historic resources. The membership has already seized on this idea, as seen in our last meeting where we engaged in a productive discussion about the best way to ensure archaeology is well represented and supported in the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) under new leadership. The Executive Board of COVA has already reached out to both Molly Ward and Julie Langan to introduce our organization and simply congratulate them. Board members have also begun talking with current and former DHR staff who are best able to provide input on the appropriate level of staffing, funding, and basic organization of the department. Not surprisingly the response has been that we need more of the first two things in order to implement the third thing. The most encouraging development with regard to COVA providing recommendations for increased support for archaeology within the DHR has been an invitation by the SHPO to be a member of the steering committee for the 2016-2021 Comprehensive Preservation Plan. This process, which occurs every six years, will allow stakeholders such as COVA the opportunity to help “articulate the broad goals” of the DHR. This is a great opportunity and one that will provide a venue for our organization to express concerns and provide recommendations. Members of the Executive Board will serve as representatives for COVA and will report back to the membership after each meeting of the steering committee. Prepare for this to be a regular point of discussion at our membership meetings.

Another encouraging development has been the advocacy shown by concerned individuals and members of the public in reaction to the RevitalizeRVA Shockoe Bottom development in Richmond. Their primary focus has been the preservation and proper study of archaeological resources and has helped to galvanize public support for “doing the right thing” and making sure Section 106 is carried out. The reaction by Richmond’s City Council and Mayor’s Office indicates that they have heard these concerns with City Council removing immediate funding from the project and the Mayor proposing a plan for archaeological research regardless of Section 106. The final outcome of the development is to be determined of course, but it is a reminder that taking up the preservation banner can produce positive outcomes. Please keep an eye on these developments and add your voice to these preservation efforts.
Spring 2014: DHR Report

Threatened Sites – There are nine projects underway for 2013-2014 with four submitting partial invoices (Maize Study, Stubblefield Catalogue, South Jones Cove test excavations, and Accomack survey). Reported progress on the Nelson County Courthouse testing is excellent and the Indian Point emergency project is complete. The identification of a potential African-American cemetery associated with St Paul’s College in Lawrenceville has been put on hold due to permission issues. Nine proposals for 2014/2015 have been submitted with 3 more expected. The Threatened Sites Committee meeting was held on May 29, 2014.

Excavation – ASV/DHR/USFS/JMU field school has been completed. Several programs (ASV field school, JMU field school, USFS Passport in Time, Marine Archaeological Resource Initiative, Threatened Sites Program, Hurricane Sandy Archaeological grant) have coalesced into a spring field school strategy (as reported in an SAA paper in April). A Church Neck site (44NH0431), Northampton County, was tested. The site is a bayside prehistoric shell midden which is eroding into the Chesapeake Bay. The site occupation began during the Late Archaic and continued through the Late Woodland period. Current excavations indicated a period of heavy use during Middle Woodland times but extending into the Early Woodland at one end of the continuum and Late Woodland at the other. Another artifact concentration area flanking the site and at a higher elevation was also tested demonstrating ephemeral occupation. Attendance for the 10 day field school ranged between 22 and 42 volunteers per day with an average of 26 providing ca. 1800 hours of work. Using NPS figures, this equals ca. $34,000 in labor.

Werowocomoco – A multi-sponsored proposal has been submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the stabilization of the Werowocomoco shoreline. The proposal addresses the development of an engineering design and the construction of a section of the breakwater. In addition, Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Julie Langan and the Governor visited the site on Tuesday, May 20, with an emphasis on tourism and job building.

Preservation Initiatives - Recently, another initiative has emerged which purchases threatened historic properties for preservation. At this point, the non-profit is asking for sites which are in need of preservation which might be for sale or possibly available for purchase. These must be of high historic significance and can consist of standing structures and/or archaeological resources, the more known to the public, the better. Please send on any recommendations to me and I will pass them on.

DHR Civil War Symposium - I recently attended the DHR sponsored Civil War Battlefield Symposium with one highlight being a panel on easements, both open air and historic. The DHR was represented by Wendy Musimuci, Elizabeth Tune, Joanna Wilson, and Gilliam Bearns. Presentations focused on the 570 easements held by DHR, an amazing accomplishment. Much discussion related to archaeological resources within easements, both known and unknown, which required surveys prior to any subsurface impacts. Archaeology has come a long way within DHR leadership, easement staff, and input from Easement Archaeologist Joanne Wilson. Speakers addressing archaeology included Clarence Geier, Joe Balicki, Joanna Wilson, and myself. The final up note for DHR Easements’ staff is the recent hire of Mike Clem, a vastly experienced and knowledgeable Virginia archaeologist. If you or someone you know has an historic property and an interest in pursuing an easement, these are the people to offer advice and follow through.
Balance

David A. Brown, Ph.D.
The Fairfield Foundation

“Late again?” you ask? Well, it’s my first issue and a robust one at that, but its no excuse. I honestly intended this to go to press in June. We’ve all been in this spot. The weather warms up, the field calls out to us, and the hours in the day fly by. Distractions abound, from the need to finish that long overdue field project, article, or exhibit, to the everyday circumstances of family, friends, and free time (that exists—I swear). And here you have it—in your hands, so to speak—the written testimony of so many of your colleagues who are busily fitting 20 lbs. of work into a 10 lb. day.

While this newsletter is intended to help connect our community of archaeologists, it is also a reminder of the good work that we do and the difference that we make, inspiring us to continue these efforts despite the sacrifices. When I first picked up an issue of the COVA newsletter back in the mid-1990s, I immediately wondered how I could join this organization. As a sophomore undergraduate, I marveled at all the cool sites, interesting lectures, and public programs and dreamt about being a part of this group. Honestly...I had a dream about it. Not kidding. And yes, I’m a little passionate about this whole archaeology thing. But so are you. Especially if you’ve kept reading this far. And you, too, likely read one of those newsletters and thought “How can I be a part of that?” I was desperate to give a paper at a conference, to help salvage threatened sites by car headlights with the bulldozer idling in the background, and listen to stories of other archaeologists and their discoveries. I wanted to do it all—to be in the thick of it. Twenty years later, I’m happy to say I’ve had some of those experiences. It’s given me a very satisfying career so far, but its also taken its toll. Not just on my back and knees, either.

This world of archaeology can be all consuming. On the one hand, we often find ourselves choosing between time with family/friends and the extra work necessary to keep organizations like COVA and the ASV afloat. Many of us try to do it all, absorbing all the physical and mental stress that comes along with it. On the other hand, I can honestly say I haven’t been bored over these last two decades—not once. But I haven’t had many vacations either. I’ve found myself creating an impossible-to-summit mountain of projects that has me constantly engaged and excited, but thoroughly exhausted. And working with my best friend (Thane Harpole) for nearly that entire twenty years hasn’t helped/hurt either, as he’s added to that mountain in equal measure. And while I feel a strange sense of nostalgia looking back at it all, I wonder if I’ve struck the right balance between archaeology and the rest of my life.

Perhaps this is a false dichotomy? Perhaps archaeology is “life”? For many of us, its our hobby and our job, these people are our co-workers and our family and friends, and these sites are our homes. And so the added work doesn’t feel as much like a sacrifice as it is an opportunity to do more of what we love. But for many of us, this was never the case, or our lives changed—we married, had children, changed jobs, etc. Our passion for archaeology didn’t change; we just couldn’t fit everything we wanted into the time available. And so we search for balance.

We each hope our efforts make a difference. As I read over the research updates, committee reports, and upcoming events, I’m reminded of the immense effort that we put into making our world around us a better place. Note the role of public archaeology in our present (threatened sites), our near future (calls for papers) and our perpetual future (collections management). There are so many opportunities to get involved and inspired. And our efforts, as an organization, whether as advocates for preservation or simply a support group for maintaining our collective sanity, demonstrate the value of COVA. And yet we see only a fraction of our members’ efforts. We each do so much more. We try to strike a balance between doing good for others, and doing good for ourselves. We may never know if we’ve succeeded on all fronts. Life seldom grants us that satisfaction. But we know that we love what we do, like the people we share this passion with, and feel like we benefit our community. When we find a way to “do good,” we often look to do more, feel the energy of inspiration, and the drive to make a difference. And while we may not be perfect, often failing to volunteer to help on a committee, speak up at a meeting, or make an important deadline (again—mea culpa), we are all trying our best to find that balance.
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<th>COMMITTEE LIST</th>
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### EXECUTIVE BOARD

- **President**: Jack Gary  
  [Jack@poplarforest.org](mailto:Jack@poplarforest.org)
- **Vice-President**: Eleanor Breen  
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- **Past President**: Elizabeth Crowell  
  [larchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:larchaeology@gmail.com)
- **Secretary**: Jolene Smith  
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- **Treasurer**: Carole Nash  
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- **Newsletter Editor**: David Brown  
  [dave@fairfieldfoundation.org](mailto:dave@fairfieldfoundation.org)

### MEMBERSHIP

- Garrett Fesler, Chair,  
  [Garrett.Fesler@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Garrett.Fesler@alexandriava.gov)
- Cliff Boyd, Justin Patton, Jamie May

### CERTIFICATION

- Carol Nash, Chair,  
  [nashcl@jmu.edu](mailto:nashcl@jmu.edu)
- Dave Brown, Thane Harpole, Esther White, Kay McCarron

### ETHICS

- Randy Lichtenberger, Chair,  
  [nosquantz@hotmail.com](mailto:nosquantz@hotmail.com)
- Clarence Geier, Randy Turner

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Carol Nash, Chair,  
  [nashcl@jmu.edu](mailto:nashcl@jmu.edu)
- Mike Barber, Mark Wiffkofski

### COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

- Esther White & Eleanor Breen, co-Chairs,  
  [ewhite@mountvernon.org](mailto:ewhite@mountvernon.org)
- Kerry Gonzalez, Kimberly Trickett, Elizabeth Moore, Bernard, Means, Lori Lee, Dee DeRoche.

### THREATENED SITES

- David Brown, Chair,  
  [dave@fairfieldfoundation.org](mailto:dave@fairfieldfoundation.org)
- Clarence Geier, Mike Madden, Randy Turner

### AWARDS

- Mike Carmody & Kerri Berille, co-Chairs,  
  [kbarile@dovetailcrg.com](mailto:kbarile@dovetailcrg.com)

### STATE PLAN

- Cliff Boyd, Chair,  
  [clboyd@radford.edu](mailto:clboyd@radford.edu)
- Keith Egloff, Laura Galke, Clarence Geier, Tom Klatka, Mike Madden, Bernard Means, Carole Nash, Chris Stevenson, Randy Turner, Mike Barber

### LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

- VACANT, Chair
- Randy Lichtenberger, Steve Thompson, Carole Nash

### BUDGET

- Derek Wheeler, Chair,  
  [dwheeler@monticello.org](mailto:dwheeler@monticello.org)
- Mike Barber, Keith Egloff, Laura Galke

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Eric Proebsting, Chair,  
  [eric@poplarforest.org](mailto:eric@poplarforest.org)
- David Brown, Lauren McMillan, Bernard Means, Matt Reeves, Jolene Smith, Esther White
COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Committee
Garrett Fesler, Chair

The Membership Committee has added a new member, Jamie May, to help us review potential applicants. If you are looking to get involved in a COVA committee, but worried about a time commitment, you can’t beat Membership. We review potential applicants for full-time membership in our organization. As Chair, I receive an applicant’s request which is accompanied by a CV or resume summarizing qualifications. I then distribute the applicant’s information to the Membership Committee at large. Each committee member reviews the applicant and lets me know if they feel the applicant is qualified. On occasion we may discuss the pros/cons of a particular applicant internally via email until we have a consensus. Most applicants are found to be qualified and I then put that person to vote to COVA’s full-time members by way of an internet voting service. The current Membership Committee consists of Garrett Fesler (Chair), Cliff Boyd, Justin Patton, and Jamie May. More is always merrier. Please contact me if you would like to serve on our committee.

Certification Committee
Carole Nash, Co-Chair

As of May 1, 2014, the Certification Program has 107 students enrolled. The program is gearing up for an active summer season, with two field schools announced thus far and two lab schools in their planning stages:

May 14-20: Nassawadox Creek #1 shell midden, Northampton County (with Passport in Time program)
June 9-14: White House Farm, Page County
July 21-25: Zooarchaeology Course, Virginia Museum of Natural History (in planning stages)
August 4-8: VDHR Lab School, Richmond (in planning stages)

This schedule represents a nice geographic range of activities, in addition to the on-going work with the Fairfield Foundation on the Middle Peninsula and studies in the planning stages at Mount Vernon and (potentially) Leesville Lake, Pittsylvania County. The Cabellsville Archaeology Project in Nelson County continues to include Certification students, too.

Michael Barber, Carole Nash, and Michael Madden co-authored a paper on the Certification-Passport in Time (PIT)-DHR initiatives on the Eastern Shore, given at the Society for American Archaeology meeting in Austin, Texas on April 25: “The ‘Public’ in Public Archaeology: Down from the Ivory Tower and into the Real Trenches.”

COVA members who would like to be involved in the Certification Program are invited to join us at these activities or contact Thane Harpole, Dave Brown, Esther White, or Kay McCarron, our COVA representatives.

Ethics Committee
Randy Lichtenberger, Chairman

The COVA Ethics Committee serves the organization in the critical role of promoting and enforcing the “Statement of Ethics” and “Standards of Performance” found in our bylaws. We urge all members, new and old, to read these sections from time to time. They are not only a membership requirement but also a great reminder of what we should
all be aspiring to as professionals. Several years ago, COVA adopted an enforcement mechanism for our code of ethics. Known simply as the “Grievance Procedure,” the process allows for filing a formal complaint alleging a breach of ethics by a COVA member. The Ethics Committee is charged with hearing all valid complaints and presenting recommendations to the Executive Board for punitive action, if any. We are privileged to have members who are dedicated to the ideals of our profession and to simultaneously serving the interests of the public at large. The Ethics Committee has received no valid complaint in the history of the grievance procedure and we hope this streak will continue indefinitely. That said, the process is available and will be strictly enforced should the need arise. I believe this era will be seen one day as a golden age of Virginia archaeology and we owe it as much to maintaining our high ethical standards as we do to the quality of our sites and advances in theory and method. The committee is comprised of only three individuals at the moment and seeks additional members who would be willing to act as examiners of grievances if called upon. Please consider serving in this important role for our organization.

Note: The Bylaws and Grievance Procedures are conveniently located on the COVA website at http://cova-inc.org/about/bylaws.html.

Public Education Committee
Carole Nash, Chair

The Public Education Committee is joining forces with the Public Outreach Committee to organize and publicize the Friday Night COVA Education Session on Friday, October 10 at the ASV Annual Meeting in Richmond. Given the emphasis COVA has placed on the proposed development in Shockoe Bottom and potential impacts on archaeological resources there, the session will be focused on urban archaeology and planning. Suggestions of good examples of recent urban archaeology projects in Virginia are welcomed.

The Public Education Committee has loosely discussed reinvigorating themed sessions, analogous to the sessions that gave rise to the COVA Symposium volumes in the 1990s. Again, suggestions for topics are welcomed.

Collections Management Committee
Esther White & Eleanor Breen, co-Chairs

COVA’s Collections Management Committee continued to publicize their Survey of Archaeological Repositories in Virginia http://cova-inc.org/resources/COVAcollectionsSurvey.pdf which documents more than 100 places where archaeological collections are housed in the Commonwealth. The Society for Historical Archaeology’s newsletter (Volume 46 Number 3, Fall 2013) included an article about the Survey (http://www.sha.org/documents/Autumn2013.pdf) and a presentation was delivered at the Society’s annual meeting in January in a session on collections management and collections research.

We concluded the report with a section on success stories to end on a positive note. One of the committee’s favorite success stories from the survey process was the development of a course in Archaeological Collections Management at the University of Mary Washington by Professor (and COVA member) Douglas Sanford. Doug’s class provides hands-on and group research experience in archaeological collections management within the Department of Historic Preservation’s laboratory and storage facility. We have put the syllabus for the class online and we hope it will be an inspiration for others http://cova-inc.org/resources/Collections_Management%20(Sanford_UMW_2012).pdf.
COMMITTEE REPORTS

The committee has also begun work on Phase II of the survey focusing on outreach, accessibility, and promoting Virginia’s significant collections. We are working closely with COVA Associate Member Mark Freeman to make the repository inventories accessible and searchable online as well as offer some sample documents that repositories can use to assemble inventories and create collections policies. We are also continuing to gather additional repositories, so the response section of the project is a living document, rather than a static point in time. If you have not submitted a survey for your repository (and we know who you are) – it is not too late to be included in this important and public dataset!

The second aspect of Repository Survey Phase II is to better address the final question in our survey, question 6: “Which collections do you believe contribute to important research about Virginian history? Which collections do you highlight to donors, legislators, researchers, or the public? Please explain.” You can look forward to surveys from us in all sorts of fun formats to delve into answers to this question. We want to know what Virginia archaeology research themes you find most compelling and what collections you are currently utilizing to answer them. Please email Esther White ewhite@mountvernon.org answers to these questions if you just can’t wait for that survey to hit your mailbox!

In non-Survey news, in conjunction with Mount Vernon’s archaeologists, the committee launched the Culture Embossed website http://cova-inc.org/wineseals/index.html. This site is an attempt to crowd-source details about wine bottle seals by making it easy to upload both information and images. Please take a moment to visit and help us populate the site. We hope to launch additional artifact types into this format in the future – so please let us know your thoughts and suggestions.

Please contact Eleanor Breen or Esther White to learn more or join the Collections Management Committee – we’re always looking for additional members!

Threatened Sites Committee

David Brown, Chair

Development, erosion, relic hunting, and other threats destroy hundreds of significant archaeological sites each year. The Threatened Sites Committee is an ad hoc committee that works alongside representatives of the ASV and DHR staff to help review proposals submitted for work on threatened archaeological sites and collections. Funds are frequently appropriated by the General Assembly each year and administered by the DHR. While most proposals are evaluated during the spring, they are accepted year-round. The funds are typically used to leverage other contributions towards a project, or in cases when no other funding is available and the threat to the site is significant. Funds are also allocated for analysis of collections, from recent threatened sites projects as well as older site excavations, including human remains. Applications for Threatened Sites grants and guidelines for their review are available from the DHR website: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/arch_DHR/threatened.htm.

Awards Committee

Mike Carmody & Kerri Berille, co-Chairs

- See Page 10 -
COMMITTEE REPORTS

State Plan Committee
Cliff Boyd, Chair
No report at this time.

Legislative Affairs Committee
VACANT, Chair
No report at this time.

Budget Committee
Derek Wheeler, Chair
No report at this time.

Public Outreach Committee
Eric Proebsting, Chair
The Public Outreach Committee was formed at the Winter 2012 meeting by the executive board to encourage new initiatives and partnerships designed to help CoVA reach a broader public audience. One of the first projects accomplished by the committee was to establish a social media presence for the organization. Launching the new CoVA Facebook page in February 2012 has been a great success and allowed our organization to begin connecting with a much broader online audience on various topics related to the archaeology of Virginia. Members of the committee have also been instrumental in creating a list of “popular publications” for the general public to access on the CoVA website, and have partnered with the Collections Committee and Mount Vernon’s Archaeology Department to launch the new crowdsourced database Culture Embossed (http://cova-inc.org/wineseals/index.html). As we welcome several new members to the committee, this year’s goals include assessing the public outreach opportunities we already have as an organization. This could include partnering with other CoVA members and committees to assist in ongoing public outreach initiatives as needed. Another task is to begin the process of defining some of the key audiences we hope to connect with as an organization, and start discussing ways we can better connect with these members of the public.
Lysbeth B. Acuff (Beth) died in Richmond, VA from complications of pneumonia. She had been suffering from dementia and had been in a nursing home since July 2013. Beth was born August 31, 1937 in Springfield, Missouri. Her father was in the Navy so they lived in a number of communities. While in college at Southwest Missouri State, she met her husband and moved with him to New York City for his job. Beth began work at Academic Press. In 1968 she became a stay-at-home mom. The family moved to Philadelphia and then to Chevy Chase, Maryland in 1972. Beth returned to college at American University studying under Drs. Charles McNett and June Evans graduating with a B.A. in Anthropology in 1977. Beth enjoyed all aspects of archaeology: prehistoric and historical. She worked at the Cahokia mound site in Illinois and the Shawnee Minisink Paleo-Indian site in eastern Pennsylvania. After receiving her Master’s degree in Applied Anthropology from the University of Maryland she worked with the National Park Service on sites at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia as well as assisting Dr. Anne Yentsch with the excavation and artifact analysis of the Calvert House in Annapolis, Maryland.

Beth was hired to be the Chief Curator at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 1986. There she established new protocols for the vast archaeological collections. She helped to preserve significant artifacts from tiny potsherds to a massive tub mill. She was responsible for moving the 1000s of boxes of artifacts from an off-site storage warehouse into an on-site state-of-the-art climate-controlled storage facility at the Department’s new headquarters (2801 Kensington, Avenue, Richmond). She also designed the conservation laboratory. Beth played an active role in public education including managing Virginia Archaeology Month, assisting with the 1991 Society for Historical Archaeology & Conference on Underwater Archaeology joint meetings that were held in Richmond, and designing numerous public exhibits, tours, and publications. She helped draft the State Collections Management Standards. She served on the Collections Management Committee for the Council of Virginia Archaeologists (COVA) and helped determine the requirements for new collections to be deposited at the Department’s storage facility. She served on the Executive Board of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology and had been president of the Church Hill Association, the City’s oldest neighborhood. She was called upon for her expertise by other archaeologists, historians, and museums throughout the U.S. A memorial service was held for Beth near her home at the historic St. John’s Church in the Church Hill neighborhood of the City of Richmond on January 26, 2014. The family has suggested memorials in her name, be sent to the Virginia Historical Society, 428 N. Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23220. (Mark Wittkofski, Jan. 30, 2014)

Rex L. Wilson passed away on April 7, 2014, at the nursing center at Westminster at Lakeridge in Woodbridge, Virginia; he was 87. Born on June 29, 1926 in Perry, Oklahoma, he was adopted at the age of four by Frank and Erma Wilson, who owned a farm outside Aline, Oklahoma. He was an only child. In 1944, Rex L. Wilson enlisted in the U.S. Navy to serve his country in World War II. He served in the Pacific theater, including the battle for Okinawa. He married Olivia Susan Ikenberry in 1947, and completed his undergraduate studies at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. He was recalled by the Navy to serve stateside in the Korean War and was honorably discharged in 1954. Rex L. Wilson attended graduate school in anthropology at the University of Oklahoma and graduated in 1957. He joined the National Park Service as an archaeologist which took him to positions in Georgia, New Mexico, Wyoming, Virginia, and Arizona before moving to Washington, D.C., where he served as Departmental Consulting Archaeologist. In 1973 to 1974, he completed Ph.D course work in archeology at the University of Oklahoma and returned to Washington, D.C. to serve as Chief of the Interagency Archaeological Services Division of the National Park Service. He later went on to serve as Senior Archaeologist for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Chief Archaeologist for the Office of Surface Mining. Rex L. Wilson retired in 1987 and moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he and Susan lived for 18 years before moving to Westminster at Lakeridge. He was active in the Presbyterian Church USA, most notably at Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va., and held numerous leadership positions. During his career, Rex produced numerous professional publications, the most notable being "Bottles of the Western Frontier" (University of Arizona Press, 1981) which is considered the definitive resource in this subject. He also authored the book "Out East of Aline: An Adoption Memoir" (Uncommon Buffalo Press, 2000). This book depicted Rex's life as an adopted child in Depression era rural Oklahoma and has been critically acclaimed by the School Library Journal and the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Rex L. Wilson is survived by his three sons, five grandsons, two granddaughters, and three great-grandsons. Memorial services will be held on Saturday, May 24, at 1 p.m. at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria, Va. At the request of the family, in lieu of flowers or other gifts, donations may be made to the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute online at:https://uafoundation.org/netcommunity/sslpage.aspx?pid=334&tab=23. Under "Designation" select "Other" then type in "McKnight Brain Institute in memory of Rex and Susan Wilson". (Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 18th, 2014)
NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2014 COVA AWARDS SOUGHT

Each year, the Council of Virginia Archaeologists (COVA) presents awards to persons and organizations outside of the professional archaeological community for significant contributions to archaeological site preservation or historic preservation within the Commonwealth. The Michael A. Hoffman Award, named in memory of a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia, is presented to organizations; the Virginia Sherman Award, named in memory of Westmoreland County’s Historic Preservation Officer, is presented to individuals. These awards are presented at the Archeological Society of Virginia’s annual meeting in October.

The contributions made by the nominee could include, but are not limited to: advocacy and/or enactment of pro-preservation laws and proffers; research funding; site preservation; easement donations; or support of public education programs. Nominations will exclude professional archaeologists, and the contribution must have had a direct and significant impact on an archaeological site or historic preservation in Virginia. The criteria for nominees are intentionally flexible in order to encourage creativity in recognizing those who actively seek to save our cultural heritage. Some examples of possible recipients include local municipalities, corporations, politicians and developers.

Examples of previous recipients of the Hoffman Award include Busch Properties, for stewardship of the Kingsmill property; International Paper Company, for stewardship of the Cactus Hill site; and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for commitment to including archaeological investigations in the development process. Last year’s recipient, the City of Fredericksburg, was honored for their continued efforts to identify and evaluate archaeological resources in the city and promote archaeological education.

Previous recipients of the Sherman Award include Charles Hill Carter III, for stewardship of Shirley Plantation; William Cropper, for the donation of Kittewan to the Archeological Society of Virginia; and Alan Crockett, for his commitment to the preservation and understanding of Lee County archaeological resources. Last year’s recipients, Bill Olson and Joyce Stevens, were nominated for their continued work on Northern Virginia sites and cemeteries.

Nominations for both awards need to be received by Friday, August 1, 2014. Please include the name and contact information for the nominee (including address, phone number and email) and provide a brief summary of the nominee’s contributions to archaeology and historic preservation in Virginia. Nominations should be submitted to:

COVA Awards Committee
Dovetail Cultural Resource Group
300 Central Road, Suite 200
Fredericksburg, Virginia
kbarile@dovetailcrg.com
fax: 540-899-9137

Electronic submissions are encouraged. Please contact Mike Carmody or Kerri Barile at 540-899-9170 or at the email address above with questions.
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<td>Long-term commitment to preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Edith Sprouse</td>
<td>Contributions to historical research in Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>International Paper Company</td>
<td>Stewardship of the Cactus Hill Site, Sussex Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Stockner Excavation Co.</td>
<td>Assisting with Carroll Co. Courthouse archaeology investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Charles Hill Carter, III</td>
<td>Site stewardship of Shirley Plantation, Charles City Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Loudon County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Commitment to archaeology in the development process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>No Award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Mount Vernon Ladies' Association</td>
<td>Ongoing preservation leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>William Cropper</td>
<td>Donation of Kittewan to the ASV, Charles City Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Brentsville Historic Centre Trust</td>
<td>Preservation of the Brentsville Courthouse complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>William Glahn</td>
<td>Site stewardship of New London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Hopewell City Council</td>
<td>Long-term commitment to preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Troy &amp; Theresa Stavens</td>
<td>Site stewardship of Warner Hall, Gloucester Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 &amp; 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There were no Hoffman and Sherman Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Alan Crockett</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Ziai Family Limited Partnership</td>
<td>Donating 20 acres in Loudoun Co. to Archaeological Conservancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Dot O'Connor</td>
<td>Long-term commitment to the Poplar Forest archaeology program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Wintergreen Nature Foundation</td>
<td>Founding the Wintergreen Archaeological Survey (WAS)</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Becky Garber</td>
<td>Commitment to Virginia archaeology</td>
</tr>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Mount Vernon Neighborhood Friends</td>
<td>Commitment to Mount Vernon area archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Anita Dodd</td>
<td>Long-term commitment to Stafford Co. archaeology</td>
</tr>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>Menokin Foundation</td>
<td>Preservation and study of Menokin Plantation, Richmond Co.</td>
</tr>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Robert Steig</td>
<td>Support of archaeology/long-term planning in the Berryville area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
<td>City of Fredericksburg</td>
<td>Sponsorship of archaeological projects as a planning tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Bill Olson</td>
<td>Support cemetery research/maintenance in Prince William Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Joyce Stevens</td>
<td>Support of archaeological studies on her property in Alexandria</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The Hoffman Award was created in 1990. The Sherman Award was created in 1996.
POPLAR FOREST

Jack Gary

Recent Excavations and Research

Despite the brutal winter weather Poplar Forest’s Department of Archaeology and Landscapes managed to wrap up the fieldwork on our third landscape restoration project. We are studying the circular carriage turnaround in front of Jefferson’s retreat house in order to determine what it was paved with and what types of plantings were placed around and within the circle. As reported in the Fall 2012 edition of Virginia Archaeologist, we discovered a paving of a single layer of quartz cobbles underneath deposits of 20th and mid-19th-century gravel. This paving creates a 12.5 foot wide lane in an 80 foot diameter circle. The straight approach that intersects this circle is similarly paved but is of a width of 15 feet. Excavating portions of the circular paving revealed that the cobbles were pressed directly into the clay subsoil on the east side, suggesting that the area in front of the house was graded to level it, removing the original topsoil and 18th-century plowzone. Directly in front of the steps leading to the portico of the house a three-foot-wide paving of flat stones was discovered. These flat stones create a “crosswalk” that may have been a flat place to dismount from a horse or carriage.

As reported in the Fall 2013 edition of Virginia Archaeologist our excavations also discovered that the boxwood hedges lining, and in the center of the turnaround were not part of Jefferson’s landscape plan. Archaeological evidence definitively proved that the shrubs had been planted after Jefferson’s death in 1826 and after the house burned in 1845. A burned portion of a terra cotta ornament of the sun god Apollo that had been part of the original dining room entablature was found in the fill in which the boxwoods were planted. In September the boxwoods were removed and excavations in the center of the turnaround were expanded in order to locate the remains of an oval bed of flowers Jefferson noted planting in 1816. We discovered that the boxwoods weren’t the only post-Jefferson landscape feature
and in fact there may have been two or three different landscape designs in the center of the turnaround between 1826 and 1855. The most intriguing are five 2.5 to 3 foot wide beds running through the south half of the turnaround. These beds were placed here sometime after 1833, based on the TPQ of artifacts found within the fill of the beds. What type of plants they contained is unclear, but the linear beds were covered by fill and replaced with a circular planting plan of what appear to be shrubs. This plan in-turn was replaced by the boxwoods shrubs. While we are able to get good resolution on the post-Jefferson landscape designs, the intensive gardening that took place in this space appears to have obliterated any visible remains of Jefferson’s oval bed of flowers.

DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

Kerri Barile

Riverfront Park, Fredericksburg

In August 2013, Dovetail Cultural Resource Group conducted an archaeological investigation of the proposed Riverfront Park area in the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The project was undertaken at the request of the City of Fredericksburg prior to the design and associated construction of park elements within the city-owned property located along Sophia Street in downtown Fredericksburg.

The Phase I survey comprised the excavation of 12 backhoe trenches and four test units placed in areas with the potential to contain intact remains associated with the mid-18th through early-20th century occupation of the parcel. Georeferenced historic tax parcel maps guided the team to potential building locations, and the results proved that the project area contained numerous locations that were highly archaeologically sensitive.

Spanning from the mid-18th through the mid-20th century, the area housed over a dozen dwellings and outbuildings, an ice house, privies, fences, and gardens. Dovetail’s work uncovered and examined many of these features including Ferneyhough’s 1832 community ice house, a late-18th century brick duplex once located along Sophia Street, a sandstone foundation associated with a tenant building constructed in 1859, and the rear yard of the Rowe-Goolrick House which highlighted the home’s inhabitants as well as those who were employed at the dwelling (Photo 1). Artifacts from the excavation represented the diverse domestic occupation of the parcel: white clay pipe fragments, ceramics from the 18th through 20th centuries, architectural debris, and personal items (Photo 2). Since the dig, Dovetail has been working closely with the City, the Riverfront Task Force, and the park planners to assure that archaeological deposits are considered during park design and that the parcel’s vast history is highlighted in the final product. It is anticipated that a final design will be selected by the end of the year.
Excavations at Mount Vernon

Luke J. Pecoraro, Asst. Director for Archaeological Research

Serpentine Area Survey (44FX762/26)

In the frigid months of March and April, Mount Vernon’s archaeologists initiated a survey of the Serpentine Area (44FX762/26), which composes the gravel lanes and central bowling green on the west side of the mansion. This large area contains two “wilderness” sections on the north and south sides of the bowling green gate; these two landscape features were planted in dense evergreen trees, with mounds and gravel paths (John Milner Associates 2004:3-25). A collaborative effort with Mount Vernon’s Horticulture division and the Garden Club of Virginia was initiated to test the archaeological integrity of the north wilderness, and determine if any of Washington’s landscape elements survived. The small-scale testing in the wilderness is part of a larger, on-going research project to gain insight into how Washington redesigned the immediate western vista from the Mansion as a single system in the 1780s, simultaneously reshaping the upper and lower gardens, laying out the bowling green, planting the shrubberies and wildernesses, and planning walks around and through these elements.

Pre-excavation research on the north wilderness revealed that in January of 1785 George Washington sent slaves from his near-by Dogue Run farm to search for trees to be planted along the walks, in the groves and wildernesses (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:75). On March 15, 1785, he recorded in his diary, “Laid out a walk for the wilderness, intended on the No. of the Serpentine road on the right” (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:103). This is his first specific mention of activity in the wildernesses. He laid out the walk for the south wilderness two days later (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:103). Later on in the month, Washington wrote that he finished planting and staking the pine trees in the wildernesses “on the left” (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:107).

By May, the trees planted earlier in the spring around the bowling green were in poor shape; “Most of my transplanted trees have a sickly look. The small Pines in the Wildernesses are entirely dead... In short half the Trees in the Shrubberies, & many in the Walks, are dead & declin[ing]” (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:135).

Not to be deterred, replanting of the trees began in November of 1785 (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:232) and continued through February of 1786 when George Washington recorded, “Finished planting all the young pine trees in the Wildernesses on the left” (Jackson and Twohig 1978[4]:272). This is the final specific reference made by Washington about his wildernesses.

The wildernesses were extant as a separate feature through at least 1858 when the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association (MVLA) acquired the property, according to a plan drawn by Benson J. Lossing (John Milner Associates 2004:4-63). In the late 19th century under the direction of MVLA Superintendent H.H. Dodge, the wildernesses were restored by planting evergreens (John Milner Associates 2004:4-63). Attempts to understand the wildernesses archaeologically were overseen by Morley J. Williams, Mount Vernon’s Director of Restoration and Research from 1934–37, who dug trenches and photographed archaeological evidence of a gravel walk in the north wilderness just below grade in September of 1931; neither the precise location nor the temporal designation is known of the path Williams found can be discerned (Figure 1).

Restoration plans to rehab the wildernesses were implemented through the planting of pine trees in the south wilderness in 1952 (John Milner Associates 2004:2-238), and the addition of shrubbereies in the 1999/2000 (John Milner Associates 2004:3-25).
A systematic random sampling strategy was implemented to excavate a 5 × 5 foot test unit within 20 × 20 foot quadrants in the north wilderness area. This excavation model was formulated during the 2008-2010 investigations of the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, 44FX2460 (White 2012). Though 44FX2460 was a plowzone site, this testing strategy can be employed for stratified areas of the estate including 44FX762/26. The excavation methodology provided a sampling of the stratigraphy to arrive at site formation processes and of potential features.

Our six week project in March/April opened 14 5’ × 5’ test units, seven of which located path deposits interpreted as comprising two different paths. The sections of path were relatively shallow, and in some cases overlie prehistoric horizons. Though it cannot be discerned what time period the paths may date to, a topographic plan of the estate drawn in 1931 by Williams illustrates an S-shaped path in the location where one of the two paths was discovered (Figure 2).

An additional result of the excavation was the discovery of six planting features. Systematic data collection on trees in Mount Vernon’s historic core began in 1917, with subsequent surveys completed in 1926, 1931, 1934, and 1951. Trees standing in the north wilderness at present were surveyed with a total station, and it may be possible to correlate the archaeologically-discovered tree holes with past surveys, and determine which trees may relate to the original wilderness layout and design.

References

Jackson, Donald and Dorothy Twohig (editors)  

John Milner Associates, Inc.  

Pogue, Dennis J., Judith D. Jobrack  

White, Esther  

Figure 2: Documentation associated with Morley J. Williams’ 1931 work in the north wilderness.
African American Cemetery Survey (44FX0116)

One of our upcoming projects which will begin in June and run through early fall is a systematic survey of Mount Vernon’s African American Cemetery. Located on a ridge approximately 50 feet southwest of George Washington’s New Tomb, the cemetery is thought to have been in use from c. 1760 – 1860, with upwards of 150 individuals interred (Figure 1). Our goal is to thoroughly compile documentary evidence for the cemetery, which to date is very sparse, and archaeologically test the area using a random sampling strategy excavating 5’ × 5’ test units. Only the tops of the grave shafts will be uncovered and fully documented, with the goal to delineate boundaries and internal spatial organization of the cemetery.

Limited archaeology has taken place in the African-American cemetery, despite a geophysical survey of the southwest corner which produced 50 anomalies thought to be potential graves. These anomalies were never ground-truthed, and subsequent work to mitigate effects of activities done between 1994 and 2014 such as erecting a new fence, planting trees, fixing the memorial archway, and attending to drainage issues has indicated an additional 8 possible grave shafts not found in the 1985 survey.

Excavation in the African American Cemetery will take place on Fridays and Saturdays from June 6 through October 25. Volunteers are welcome, and if interested should contact Dr. Eleanor Breen: ebreen@mountvernon.org.


Patricia Sullivan/The Washington Post, Published: May 15, 2014

The minister’s voice reverberated through the oaks and hollies just southwest of George Washington’s tomb, calling on visitors to remember those “unnumbered trail blazers who rest beneath this hallowed space.” He was referring to scores, and perhaps hundreds, of slaves and their families whose remains lie somewhere beneath the butterscotch-colored soil on a ridge above the Potomac River.

William “Billy” Lee, Washington’s manservant throughout the Revolutionary War, was buried here about 1828, researchers say. West Ford, a longtime servant of the Washington family, is thought to be the last person buried here, in 1863. The rest of the names are unknown. But the details of their final resting places may soon be identified through a multi-year archaeological survey to be launched May 30. Before beginning the project, the plantation organized Thursday’s blessing ceremony. The survey at Mount Vernon is one of several local efforts to learn more about the burial sites of African Americans, both enslaved and freed, during the early years of the United States.

Ten miles north, at the border of Alexandria, the long-neglected Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery has been restored, and workers are preparing for a September dedication. And at Fort Ward, on Alexandria’s west side, residents and city employees are working to identify and commemorate the graves of African American residents buried there.

The primary goal of the Mount Vernon project, said Curtis G. Viebranz, president of the historic site, “is to create a map to show exactly where the interred are” and how many were buried there. No graves will be excavated, he told the few dozen people who came Thursday to pray, sing, place flowers and sprinkle soil on a commemorative wreath.
Eleanor Breen, Mount Vernon’s deputy director for archaeology, said that about 316 slaves lived on the plantation at the time of Washington’s death in 1799. A visitor’s account from 1833 described 150 slaves buried there in unmarked graves, and researchers said Thursday that the number of graves may be significantly higher.

In 1928, the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association placed a simple marker on the cemetery site to bring attention to the unmarked burial places. It was replaced decades later with a brick archway and a path that leads to a sunken area of three concentric circles with a partially constructed column at the center.

Investigators using ground-penetrating radar have identified nearly 60 possible grave sites in limited explorations of the area over the decades, Breen said. The archaeological team involved in the new effort will dig by hand to identify likely graves, she said, being careful not to disturb the ones they find. The search will cover 3,500 square feet and could involve the use of radar in later stages.

Alexandria’s Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery is believed to hold many more remains. Archaeologists think at least 1,700 people of African descent are buried there, many of them children. The cemetery was created from a pasture that belonged to a Confederate sympathizer. It was seized by the federal government to create a burial place for the remains of escaped and newly freed slaves who had moved to Alexandria during and after the Civil War.

A newspaper article in the late 19th century described neighbors digging clay from the land, and bones visible in the soil after it rained. In the mid-20th century, an expanded Washington Street and its sidewalks ate into the cemetery land. An office building went up on the site, then a gas station, and a segment of Interstate 95 was constructed nearby. The cemetery was all but forgotten until city historian T. Michael Miller discovered a 19th-century newspaper reference to it in the 1980s. In 1995, research historian Wesley E. Pippenger found something called “the Gladwin records” in the Virginia Library in Richmond. It listed every single burial — including name, age, residence and date of death — at the Alexandria site.

In archaeological circles, the records were a treasure, allowing the newly formed Friends of Freedmen’s Cemetery to identify people who too often existed in census or other records only by first name and the word “slave.” When the Virginia Department of Transportation found graves in its right of way during the reconstruction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, it began marking and commemorating the sites. Today, bronze panels list the name of every person believed buried at the cemetery, with bas-relief etchings that show slaves escaping the South, and, after Emancipation, studying. Wooden grave markers that had deteriorated have been replaced. Plans are afoot to indicate that some graves probably lie beneath nearby sidewalks or roads as well. A sculpture by Mario Chiodo, “The Path of Thorn and Roses,” sits squarely on the old gas station’s concrete pad. The memorial will be dedicated in September. “African Americans are so used to their story not being told, they’re excited when it is,” said Audrey Davis, acting director of the Alexandria Black History Museum. Fran Bromberg, Alexandria’s assistant city archaeologist, called the cemetery “an incredible project. I’m pleased that archaeology was used for justice.”

Colonial Williamsburg Archaeology

Andy Edwards, Staff Archaeologist, Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research

Archaeology at the Capitol Ravine

This spring, Colonial Williamsburg (CWF) archaeologists have been examining the east, or Capitol, side of one of the major ravines that crosses Williamsburg. The ravines are natural geological structures common to upper Tidewater and remained virtually untouched for hundreds of thousands of years – until the decision was made to build a new capital city at Middle Plantation. Governor Francis Nicholson’s Baroque plan called for a long, straight avenue from the William & Mary College Building, situated in Middle Plantation in 1695, and the new capitol to be built nearly a mile to the east. The several ravines that crossed that avenue were to be bridged or filled, a task accomplished in the first quarter of the 18th century. As Williamsburg grew, the ravines got smaller, becoming convenient receptacles for trash and even receiving fill on which to construct buildings.

Between 2008 and 2011, as part of the Coffeehouse reconstruction project, we explored the western side of the Capitol ravine, recovering topographical, environmental and artifactual information. Archaeology showed that the Coffeehouse itself was constructed in 1750 on fill brought into the ravine and that it was used for dumping material generated by use of the building as a coffeehouse, tavern and store in the third quarter of the 18th century. We recorded one episode of very heavy rain (a hurricane?) dating to 1760s that was suggested by erosional gullies and sand alluvium found during the excavations. In the spring of 2014, through the largess of donors, we got the opportunity to explore the eastern side of our ravine. Using the same north grid-line, we would be able to create a cross-section of the whole ravine by cutting a 25-meter swath from the creek to the Secretary’s Office yard. This side of the ravine was less steep, owing, we thought, to the dumping of material from the 1747 and 1832 capitol fires. We did not expect many artifacts as this area was a public space throughout the 18th century, but we did want to understand the filling sequence and recover environmental material in datable strata.

After six weeks of excavation, we have been able to determine several filling episodes, beginning with the spreading of burned brick rubble (probably from the 1747 capitol fire), sand and clay on the very eastern extremity of the ravine in order to create a flat area for the construction of the 1748 Secretary’s Office. The steepest slope of the ravine appears to have been actually cut away some time in the 18th century as debris from the 1832 capitol fire was found lying on a sandy wash, not a buried “A” horizon as expected. Also unexpected was the deposition of a very dense clay about 20 feet wide and 6-7 feet deep along the bottom of the ravine adjacent to where the creek runs now. The six-inch layer of sandy wash found under the 1832 brick lay over the eastern edge of the clay. That stratum contained only 18th-century material, including a French uniform button from an artillery regiment that was only in the Yorktown/Williamsburg area between 1780 and 1783. This find suggests that the deposition of the clay occurred between after the Revolution and before the 1832 deposition of burned brick.

Environmental (pollen and phytolith) and flotation samples were recovered from relevant strata and will be analyzed prior to writing the final report. This brief excavation will tie into our long-term study of how the ravines in and around Williamsburg were changed over time and how the environment responded and corresponded to those changes.
Ferry Farm
Laura Galke, Site Director/Small Finds Analyst, George Washington Foundation

George Washington Foundation staff is joined this season by students from the University of South Florida and Virginia Commonwealth University for another season of excavation at George Washington’s boyhood home, Ferry Farm, in Stafford County. Excavation in the Washington family’s yard has revealed utilitarian earthenwares, colonial-era bottle glass, and earthenware wig hair curlers. About twenty percent of the artifacts recovered reflect American Indian use of this culturally dynamic landscape, which is adjacent to the fall line of the Rappahannock River and boasts a fresh water spring. Public archaeology is practiced daily, as visitors and school children can tour the site, help archaeologists screen excavated soil, and interact with excavators and students directly.

Artifacts have revealed new information about the Washington family during their 1738-1772 occupation in the Fredericksburg area, including mid-18th-century strategies that they used to express their pride in the British empire and to compensate for their financial stress following the untimely death of George’s father, Augustine, in 1743. This season’s excavations will continue through July.

Fairfield Foundation
Anna Hayden, Staff Archaeologist

For the past six months, the Fairfield Foundation has been hard to work all across the Middle Peninsula (and beyond!), growing our public archaeology programs by introducing exciting new opportunities as well as continuing a number of existing programs. Here is a glance at some of our favorite recent projects!

Middle Peninsula State Park Survey, Gloucester County

This March, despite the abnormal and distinctly un-spring-like plunging temperatures, Fairfield staff and volunteers persevered to squeeze in one day of shovel test survey on the future Middle Peninsula State Park property. With the help of volunteers who trekked up in the cold from VA Beach, we made some excellent progress with the STP survey, completing shovel test pits over a large portion of an agricultural field and filling in some gaps in the testing grid. In one area of the field in particular, excavations revealed an array of artifacts including wine bottle glass, tobacco pipe stems, tin-glazed earthenware, and colonoware. All of the park land was associated with Rosewell plantation from the 17th century to the late 19th century, and this work will help us better understand the evolution of the broader agricultural landscape as the Page family, African slaves, and English indentured servants worked to clear forests, plant tobacco, and build the houses, fences, roads and other infrastructure that defined this area for centuries. These continued archaeological efforts will help guide the planning process on the state park, as we identify areas that deserve preservation or more research prior to any park infrastructure projects.

New Quarter Park, York County

Recently we returned to New Quarter Park in York County to conduct another two-day public archaeology project on a significant 18th-century site. There are direct connections between this site, a Burwell family property for much of the 18th century, and the family’s ancestral home at Fairfield, where we’ve been digging for the last 14 years. Researching this site is giving us a chance to look at the wider influence of the Burwell family, which controlled thousands of acres across Virginia, as well as the daily lives of African slaves or indentured servants who may have occupied this property.
This project is a collaborative effort between the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society (TVHS), the Fairfield Foundation, the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) (and its Middle Peninsula Chapter), and New Quarter Park. York County acquired the park in 1976 and opened it to the public soon thereafter. The two-day excavation brought dozens of volunteers to the site to learn about archaeology through hands-on participation. The volunteer crew was instructed in the field by Fairfield Foundation staff and our trained volunteers, many of whom completed the ASV’s Archeological Technician Certification Program. The ability to provide personal archaeological instruction to small groups has been a mainstay of our foundation’s educational mission for more than a dozen years. Building upon our initial work last November, we continued expanding an intensive shovel test survey, excavating small holes every 25 feet on a grid, to better establish site boundaries, the general site chronology and begin to identify distinct concentrations of artifacts. So far we have completed about 63 of these tests, covering roughly a 175 by 225 foot area, and are starting to get a sense for size and complexity of the site. In addition to this work, we excavated several 2.5' square test units, which open larger windows into the history of this site, by yielding larger artifact samples and identifying cultural features that embellish our understanding of the built landscape. Volunteers helped us uncover possible 18th-century postholes, which may relate to a building or fence line at the site, and also helped identify intact layers that escaped the plow blade, an unusual phenomenon in Tidewater, Virginia. Artifacts in the undisturbed layer, such as a decorated locally-made tobacco pipe bowl, as well as the neck of a square case bottle, hint at a late 17th-century component to a site we initially surmised was occupied solely within the 18th century. The identity of the site’s occupants is still unclear, but it is always exciting to share both the thrill of discovery, as well as the challenge of answering a plethora of research questions, with archaeological newcomers. After all, the point of archaeology is to answer questions about the past- and we think this is an exciting process that should be shared with the public. We are already making plans to return to New Quarter Park again in the fall, as the public response to this project has been exceptional. Much of the recent work was filmed and will contribute towards a documentary about the project and the Fairfield Foundation’s public archaeology mission.

Daffodil Festival, Gloucester Colonial Courthouse Green

Springtime in Gloucester means daffodils! Though they have taken a little longer to appear this year than normal, those bright yellow harbingers of sunnier days perked up all over the county, just in time for the annual Daffodil Festival - a celebration of spring and the first big public event of the year on Gloucester’s Main Street. Public archaeology excavations occurred within the historic courthouse circle, exploring this rich ground for more traces of Gloucester’s past. The excavation during last year’s festival was a resounding success, with thousands of visitors wandering past, stopping to ask questions, and viewing some of the objects that we uncovered. It was also popular with the kids, a number of whom came over and helped screen for artifacts. The excavations that we have done so far have helped uncover numerous unidentified buildings from the 18th century, some pre-dating the standing 1766 courthouse. The goal of this work, which has been supported by both the state of Virginia (through the Department of Historic Resources) and Gloucester County (through the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department), is to learn more about the complex evolution of the courthouse village through time, which unfortunately is not very well documented in the surviving documents. What we reveal will help interpret the story of Gloucester County to the public, and can also help planners and public works officials sensitively plan for utility upgrades, buildings repairs, and other projects within the historic courthouse green that minimize disturbances to intact archaeological resources.

Building on the success of last year's public excavation, this year's dig focused on searching for the foundation to a building that predates and is partially covered by the standing 1766 colonial courthouse. Young and old visitors alike joined in our search for this early building’s foundation, tracing it beneath a flower bed full of daffodils (although we were careful not to dig any of those up!). At the very end of the second day we found what we were looking for - almost. The foundation was gone, but what remained was a trench where the bricks once sat, now filled with brick rubble and 18th-century artifacts. We will analyze the artifacts, comparing them with those we found previously.
during construction monitoring, to learn more about what life was like in the courthouse before the Revolutionary War, and hopefully what type of building this was. With luck, it will match one of the buildings found on the 1754 plat of the courthouse area!

**Fairfield Plantation, Gloucester County**

Archaeology at Fairfield plantation has been spurred this spring by visits from a number of local groups – including a Boy Scout troop from Yorktown, a middle school group from New Kent, and a high school group from Gloucester. We also held a very successful public dig day in conjunction with Garden Week. All of these visitors got the chance to help us excavate, as we continue with our sampling strategy, consisting of 5’x5’ test units excavated every 20 feet across the site. This spring we are excavating test units to the north of the manor house, in an area that likely would have been part of the front yard. This area continues to the north of the house, right up to the edge of a ravine. Excavation of these units is providing us with information about how frequently and when agricultural plowing might have occurred in the front yard, and might also shed light on possibly intentional episodes of filling in sections of the ravine in order to extend the yard and eliminate dangerous low spots. We were also lucky enough to excavate a handful of test units in the midden area to the west of the manor house. These units produce large quantities of artifacts that require extensive processing time, so excavation in the midden is infrequent, but is always exciting when it happens. This excavation occurred in conjunction with the final stages of Colleen Betti’s senior honor’s thesis project at the College of William and Mary. Colleen’s analysis of artifact patterning in different areas of the midden has produced intriguing results, hinting at differential spatial use of the midden and associated work yards correlating with changing occupation of the manor house.

**Data Investigations**

**Dr. David Brown, Co-Owner**

**Wilton Plantation, Middlesex County**

Recent work at this remarkably intact 18th-century plantation came alongside its purchase and conversion into a bed and breakfast. Preservation Virginia, the property’s prior owner, placed a preservation easement on the property that required archaeological survey, testing, and, if necessary, mitigation prior to ground disturbance. The current owner, Stephen Foster, invested heavily in the archaeological research, incorporating findings into the restoration of the state and federally registered property, both at the mid-18th-century manor house and the mid-19th-century slave quarters. Shovel testing, test unit excavations, and monitoring preceded the installation of all utilities, driveway grading, drainage improvements and architectural restoration (including the return of both end chimneys to the slave quarter). Mr. Foster’s strict adherence to the easement, and his support of archaeological research exceeded expectations and his willingness to bring the public and scholars into this previously untouched historic gem set great precedent for those restoring and putting into active use historic houses and their surrounding landscapes.
Fort Nonsense Historical Park, Mathews County

The Mathews Historical Society and Mathews County opened their premier historic park at the primary landward entrance to the county along Route 14 earlier this year. The park includes interpretive signs that highlight the role Fort Nonsense played in the Civil War, including its construction by enslaved Africans and its placement in defense against a never-to-be-realized assault by Union forces from the east (they eventually approached from the west). The information for these signs was compiled largely by consultants and local scholars, including Becky Barnhardt of the Mathews Memorial Library, while also incorporating archaeological research derived from excavations associated with the construction of a boardwalk and other visitor improvements to the park. While these excavations revealed important information about the use of the property during the Civil War, it also revealed a very significant earlier component dating to the early 18th century. A multitude of artifacts and some intact stratified deposits confirm this component of the site retains significant integrity and has the potential to reveal information about an understudied period of Mathews County’s history (at that time part of Gloucester County’s Kingston Parish). In particular, the site either immediately pre-dates or is contemporary with North End Plantation, one of the many Page family estates in Virginia. The likely middling planter/tenant farmer site is entirely encompassed within the park’s boundaries and marks another important historic landmark preserved for future study.

Mitchell’s Neck, Lancaster County

Beginning in 2013 and continuing in 2014 DATA Investigations conducted a shovel test survey surrounding a collapsed house situated on Mitchell’s Neck in Lancaster County. A tall, two-and-a-half-story, 18th-century brick chimney survived above remnants of a two-room raised basement (a 19th-century improvement) and the property owners, who were also descendants of the property’s original occupants, hoped to preserve these elements of their family’s past. After evaluating the integrity of the ruin and establishing a plan for stabilizing and maintaining the deteriorating architectural elements, an archaeological survey was undertaken to establish the site’s boundaries and confirm the integrity of the below-ground resources. A single test unit adjacent the colonial chimney and later cellar walls confirmed the chronology of the manor house construction and the survey helped guide subsequent timber harvesting, avoiding sensitive areas (including a cemetery) and removing tree that could potentially damage the building foundations. The project will result in recommendations for preserving the site and all of its components.

St. Paul’s Cemetery, Norfolk

In 2014 DATA Investigations continued its seasonal testing program within the churchyard at St. Paul’s in Norfolk. Building on the results of prior test unit excavations, this year’s excavations uncovered evidence of additional unmarked burials, lost burial markers, and potential evidence for the earlier 1699 church. The recovery of floor tiles, likely associated with the earlier church, brought attention from both parishioners and the general public while the identification of additional unmarked graves highlighted the benefit of focused archaeological testing within this complex urban landscape. The archaeological identification of significant fill and landscaping episodes is slowly revealing how this preserved time capsule of colonial Norfolk is as much a representation of the 19th- and 20th-century city as it is the earlier port town. Excavations will continue in the coming months as public interest and community support brings greater attention to the remarkable archaeology of this important city.
Bernard K. Means discusses in Jamestown's lab the printed and painted butchered dog mandible while a butchered horse bone is scanned. Both are from the starving time.

The Virtual Curation Laboratory celebrated its second year of existence with funding from a new Department of Defense Legacy Project (13-334) beginning in October 2013. This project, entitled Virtual Mobility Archaeology Project: Further Applications of Three Dimensional Digital Scanning of Artifacts, is designed with the ideal of created digital archaeological type collections of diagnostic chipped stone tools, as well as animal bones from various species. The project is expected to be completed in May 2015.

October 2013 also saw presentations and demonstrations by student workers and interns in the Virtual Curation Laboratory. The papers were published in a special issue of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia, and included:

Ellrich, Aaron

Huber, Allen

Hulvey, Rachael

McCuistion, Ashley

Means, Bernard K.

Volkers, Lauren

Zechini, Mariana

VCU student staff and interns also presented and demonstrated earlier in the year at the Middle Atlantic...
These papers are focused more on our initial two years in the Virtual Curation Laboratory. For a more publicly accessible article, some readers may be interested in the following:

McCuistion, Ashley  

Means, Bernard K.  


Zechini, Mariana  

These papers are focused more on our initial two years in the Virtual Curation Laboratory. For a more publicly accessible article, some readers may be interested in the following:

Means, Bernard K.  
2014 Virtual Curation and Virtual Collaboration. In Blogging Archaeology, edited by Doug Rocks-Macqueen and Chris Webster, pp. 121-144. Landward Research, Ltd. In Association with Succinct Research and DIGTECH LLC.

This is freely available at: http://dougsarchaeology.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/blogging-archaeology.pdf.

Our ability to conduct research, do demonstrations, and support our outreach efforts to the public (more on that below) depend on the generous access providing by individuals and institutions throughout the Middle Atlantic.
Since August 2013, we have travelled to and scanned artifacts at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Archaeology laboratory, The State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the Fort Lee Regional Archaeological Collections Facility, George Washington’s Ferry Farm (multiple times), Jamestown Rediscovery (multiple times), the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference, the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology annual meeting, and George Washington’s Mount Vernon (yesterday, May 13, 2014, as I write this. We even scanned parts of the Space Shuttle Discovery at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. These research trips are described and posted on our blog (or, soon will be) at: http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/. Digital animations of the artifacts we scan are available at our sister blog site: http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com/.

Increasingly, we are using our digital models of artifacts and printed replicas as part of public outreach efforts. In January 2014, a series of short videos were filmed in the Virtual Curation Laboratory by Archaeology in the Community and broadcast on their Instagram series The DIG: 365 Days of Artifacts. Each of our videos features a plastic replica of an artifact and a student talking about the significance of the original object from which it was derived. We have also spoken at Clover Hill High School and the Richmond Waldorf School, both in the Richmond area, about archaeology, with plastic replicas of artifacts being a key feature of these talks.

Our latest major public outreach effort involves the creation of unique chess sets that feature artifacts that we have scanned re-imagined as chess pieces. Our first set featured a Frozen Charlotte Doll from DC Archaeology as the Pawn, an Deer toe bone from the Virginia Museum of Natural History as the rook, a World War I doughboy toy soldier from Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest as the knight, an Adena point from George Washington’s Ferry Farm as the bishop, and headless figurines of a man and a woman from George Washington’s Mount Vernon as the king and queen. A copy of this chess set was provided to the fourth grade class of the Richmond Waldorf School, and was featured on a number of online news sources, including gaming web sites: http://www.purplepawn.com/2014/04/vcus-archaeology-chess-sets/. We have since made a chess set devoted to Jamestown 1607-1610 (which we gave to Jamestown Rediscovery), and two projectile point sets auctioned off to raise money for the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology conference. The Virtual Curation Laboratory has developed a particularly close relationship with Jamestown Rediscovery, and they are incorporating into their public outreach efforts printed plastic replicas of items we scanned of their finds, including a butchered dog mandible.

I expect the second half of 2014 to be as exciting and active as the first half.
Archaeology at the Old Colchester Park and Preserve, Fairfax County, Va

Christopher Sperling, Fairfax County Park Authority

Since September 2010, The Colchester Archaeological Research Team (CART) has been conducting identification and evaluation-level excavations at the Old Colchester Park and Preserve (OCPP). Much of the emphasis has been on historical archaeological sites, in particular the park’s namesake, the historic tobacco port town of Colchester and a separate but contemporary mid-18th-century site. These sites present themselves overtly, with intact structural features and relatively high artifact densities. A good example is the recent discovery of a stone foundation at a spot that the 1781 Rochambeau map suggested a structure had been located (Figure 1). In contrast, prehistoric sites on the park proved considerably more elusive, consisting of widely dispersed, generally low-density deposits. As CART excavates more in the prehistoric activity areas, a better archaeological balance is being achieved.

Interestingly, excavation of a historic feature resulted in methodological shifts that are bringing better understanding of the function and sequence of the park’s prehistory. In 2011 and 2012, CART investigated a mid-18th century on a bluff overlooking a wide floodplain and terrace of the Occoquan River, near its confluence with a small tributary, historically referred to as Bailey’s Gut. Though primarily historic, this site yielded small amounts of lithic artifacts from the ¼ inch fraction of non-feature contexts, including one projectile point tentatively typed as a Selby Bay/Fox Creek. This diagnostic suggested a Middle Woodland prehistoric context (VDHR n.d.). However, what was most surprising was that approximately 80 percent of the prehistoric assemblage derived from the water screened, window screen mesh fraction of a subfloor pit feature (Sperling and Veness 2013). The ridgeline on which this historic site is located had been the focus of previous archaeological investigation; elsewhere on this landform, several low-density prehistoric sites had been identified through pedestrian. A shovel test pit (STP) survey, conducted in 2006 found no artifacts at the recorded locations of these prehistoric sites, despite relatively close interval testing (WSSI 2006). The combined results of the previous investigations and the CART excavations at the historic site on the ridgeline stood in conflict. Accordingly, CART re-surveyed the ridges utilizing methods devised for archaeological investigations on the park, most notably the excavation of 50 cm x 50 cm “Mini Test Units” (MTU) in lieu of STPs. The results of this re-survey confirmed the presence of prehistoric activity on the ridgeline, extending into the interior upland portion of the OCPP (Pettitt and Mayes 2012). The added vertical control afforded by the larger MTU also suggested that the prehistoric deposits, though low density, could be intact and stratified. The re-survey recovered a bifurcate point, likely a LeCroy, approximately 50 cm below surface (Pettitt and Mayes 2012:57).

Informed by the various surveys of the ridgeline as well as the excavations at the historic site on the same landform, methods for the evaluation-level excavations of the prehistoric deposits currently being conducted incorporate fine mesh recovery and stringent vertical controls. The revised methods entailed the excavation of 1 m x 1 m test units with 5 cm arbitrary levels within natural strata. A sandbag of soil is retained from every level and water screened through window mesh. Although these investigations remain ongoing and the artifacts have not been analyzed, a cursory look at the water screened fraction revealed high numbers of small pressure flakes that would have evaded ¼ inch recovery. Furthermore, the small flakes distribute unevenly across levels, strongly indicative of multiple distinct and discernable prehistoric occupations. The stratigraphic sequence being revealed in current excavations supports the notion of intact soils. This sequence appears to consist of an organic, A horizon, overlaying a light-colored E horizon underlain by B horizons. Artifacts continue through the base of the first B horizon, at a minimum.

Figure 1. A stone foundation (detail) at a spot that the 1781 Rochambeau map suggested a structure had been located.
The current investigations have also yielded more diagnostic artifacts. To date, at least two additional projectile points have been recovered from the ridgeline landform. Both consisted of contracting stemmed, relatively thick points with “rudimentary shoulders” tentatively typed as Piscataways (VDHR n.d., Figure 2). These points suggest a Late Archaic through Middle Woodland context (Luckenbach et al 2010, VDHR n.d., MAC-Lab 2002). In addition, several pieces of pottery have also been recovered. The pottery is almost universally sand or crushed quartz tempered; some specimens exhibit cord marking. Stratigraphically, the points derived from the A horizon and the interface with the suspected E horizon. Pottery has been recovered from all strata above the B horizons. Given the depth and context from which of pottery has been recovered, it is suspected that the majority are Accokeek variants rather than Potomac Creek types.

Temporally, CART excavations are providing insight into prehistoric use of present-day parkland. Broadly speaking, evidence of activity throughout prehistory has been recorded. However, based on the collective results, it appears that the most intense utilization of the park occurred during the Terminal Archaic through Early Woodland period. Furthermore, the site appears to have been frequented during the (late) Early to (early) Middle Archaic periods. Based on relative stratigraphic dating, earlier deposits are possible. However, to date no temporally diagnostic artifacts predating the LeCroy point have been recovered. Functionally, the presence of small pressure flakes in the lower horizons strongly suggests final sharpening of stone tools, presumably immediately prior to hunting during the early prehistoric periods. The presence of later, in particular Early Woodland period, pottery suggests that as climate and cultures changed, so too did use of the land. A thorough analysis of the water screened, window mesh fraction and vertically mapping the distribution of pressure flakes across the ridgeline landform will provide a better understanding of prehistoric land use over time and subsistence strategies.

References

Luckenbach, Al, Jessie Grown, and Shawn Sharpe

Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC-Lab)

Pettitt, Alisa and Jonathan Mayes

Sperling, Christopher and Megan Veness

Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR)

Wetland Studies and Solutions
2006 Phase I Archaeological Investigation of the 144-Acre McCue - Occoquan Tract. Prepared by Thunderbird Archaeological Services, a unit of WSSI.
Over the course of the past year, staff from the WMCAR completed a historical resource context study for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park in Frederick County, Virginia. The project report expands the context of the Civil War Battle of Cedar Creek to three other thematic areas that are interrelated by the Park’s unique cultural landscape: prehistoric settlement, development of a kin-based open country neighborhood, and the late 19th- to 20th-century memorialization of the battle. The contexts eventually will contribute to an update of the National Register documentation for the Park and also serve as a reference for Park personnel as they manage cultural resources and develop interpretive materials.

Battle of Cedar Creek

Staff of the WMCAR also had the opportunity over the past year to conduct systematic archaeological survey of a specific, and intensively fought-over, tract of land within the battlefield of the Battle of Cedar Creek. Few Civil War battles in the Valley of Virginia stir the imagination as does the Battle of Cedar Creek. With its dramatic turn of events and final outcome, what occurred on the battlefield on October 19, 1864 still has a remarkable story to tell. What began as a brilliantly planned early morning attack by Confederate forces under the command of Lt. Gen. Jubal Early eventually unraveled due to a massive afternoon counterattack by Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan’s Army of the Valley and a resounding Union victory. Within this historic battlefield setting, the WMCAR conducted systematic archaeological investigations on a 12.5-acre parcel recently acquired by the National Park Service that was the site of one of the most intensely fought episodes of the battle. In this steeply sloped ravine on the east side of the Valley Turnpike, 164 men of the 8th Vermont Infantry mounted a furious defense of their battle flags while nearly surrounded by Confederate forces. Their stout resistance stalled the Confederate advance long enough for the XIX Corps and VI Corps to their rear to withdraw most of their men and materiel, allowing the Union Army to regroup and counterattack later that day. The initial stage of the investigation involved the excavation of 326 systematically placed shovel tests, followed by systematic metal detector sweeps along 13 transects. The second stage of work involved the excavation of 13 test units strategically placed in areas of highest artifact concentration and feature potential based on the survey results. As anticipated, the investigations revealed an extensive Civil War site (44FK0060) that encompasses the entirety of the property, and the presence of well-preserved deposits with potential to address research issues, through artifact distributions and features, that pertain to Civil War camp structure and foodways, and the flow of the battle as it unfolded.
Virginia State University (VSU) and the Ettrick Historic District

A study sponsored by VSU has demonstrated the value of interpretive video production as a tool for mitigation of impacts to historic districts. As part of its campus expansion, VSU has been acquiring property that encompasses approximately one-third of the Ettrick Historic District. A mitigation plan for the proposed project included preparation of an oral history of the village in the 20th century and presentation of an electronic video exhibit with clips selected from 21 interviews conducted with current and former residents, historic images, maps, outdoor video footage, narration, and music. The interviews document a broad time span, with birth dates of the participants ranging from 1911 through 1960. The pool of interviewees is representative of the largely white population that lived in this working class village during much of the 20th century, but also documents the historic African American presence at VSU, which began in the 1880s, and the shifting demographics following desegregation and other historical trends.

The broader scope of the electronic exhibit is divided into four videos and draws on documentary sources to tell the story of Ettrick’s dynamic industrial base in the 19th century. By the 1850s, some 800 residents worked at the cotton mills, cottonseed mills, and gristmills that crowded the banks of the Appomattox River below the village. Along with Petersburg, Ettrick comprised one of the most intensively developed industrial centers of the antebellum South. The collection of domestic and commercial architecture from this period of rapid growth is one of the Ettrick Historic District’s outstanding features. Following the Civil War, the village and its industries continued to prosper until an electrical company acquired the rights to water power along this stretch of the Appomattox in the early 20th century. Until the 1970s, Ettrick continued to thrive as a distinct community, with its own grocery stores and other small businesses, even as many of its residents earned their living across the river in Petersburg. In the last three decades, the community has suffered economic decline as several major employers have moved out of the region. VSU, however, continues to thrive and expand, providing the village with a much-needed source of cultural and economic activity.

Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Nottoway Counties, Va.

Staff from the WMCAR recently completed a two-year project that involved assessment of identified archaeological resources and development of a predictive model for archaeological sensitivity across as-yet unsurveyed acreage within the Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett, in Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Nottoway counties, Virginia. The assessment is based on the records of sites and survey data from previously completed archaeological surveys over a total acreage of 44,663 acres (18,075 ha) officially recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources before the end of August 2012. This includes approximately 3,538 acres (1,450 ha) of parcels transferred to municipal, county, and state ownership in recent decades as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure review process.

The study assessed the resources within the larger geographic and cultural regions in which Fort Pickett is situated and provides historical and cultural background for evaluating the potential eligibility of resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This assessment of resources at Fort Pickett benefits from consideration of various approaches that have been used with mixed success in other large-area assessments and predictive models in recent decades. The predictive model was designed to make use of the results of the assessment to delineate unsurveyed areas at Fort Pickett as having either high or low sensitivity for archaeological resources of potential significance. It is important to recognize that such predictive information offers value to planners who must consider the potential effects of proposed undertakings or activities on significant archaeological resources; accurate predictions of archaeological sensitivity may prove to be useful in maximizing the efficiency (without sacrificing the accuracy) of archaeological survey efforts required by environmental regulations, for example. The assessment and predictive model development also served as an opportunity, however, for archaeologists to treat the 44,663 acres as a specific study area of both prehistoric and historic-era settlement patterns, and resulted in observation of interesting and often predictable correlations between environmental and/or map-based variables and the occurrences of certain types of archaeological sites. There was also a series of interesting research questions and suggestions for future research that arose out of this opportunity for focused assessment of settlement patterns of certain specialized site types within the 44,663-acre study area of the southern Virginia Piedmont.
DHR Collections

Katherine Ridgway, Conservator, DHR

For just over a year now the DHR has played host to the skeletal remains of several former residents of Tangier Island. When super storm Sandy hit the Eastern seaboard it caused catastrophic damage to the coastline. The island was already eroding heavily, and storm surges associated with Sandy accelerated that erosion. Following the storm, a current resident of Tangier Island discovered human remains and coffin hardware exposed on a beach, and contacted the police. They determined that it was a matter for the State Archaeologist and deferred the matter to the VDHR.

In the early 1900s, when the graveyard was in active use, it was much further inland than it is today. Known locally as Uppards Cemetery, the graveyard is associated with a small town called Canaan Ridge. The town, as well as other settlements on the northern part of the island, was abandoned in the 1930s due to erosion and the closing of the local school. In the 1940s there was a report that the graveyard had sustained damage during a hurricane. Erosion continued over the years until the graveyard became almost a sand bar near the remains of the abandoned town.

Over the course of two visits in December 2012 and April 2013, VDHR archaeologists removed five sets of remains and transported them to the archaeological conservation lab in Richmond. The tides and weather conditions worked against the archaeologists, making excavation difficult and requiring that the burials be recovered both quickly and thoroughly. To prevent more damage to the skeletal remains, whole sections were removed in block, to be excavated in the lab so that time could be taken to make sure that the remains and any associated artifacts were fully recovered with the least possible damage. The waterlogged remains were kept wet to prevent the salt that had been absorbed from the water of the Chesapeake Bay from re-crystallizing inside the bones and thus causing more deterioration.

Once in the lab the painstaking work of removing the remains from the blocks of earth by the conservator could begin. During this process, many small artifacts were discovered that might have otherwise been lost due to the onsite conditions. Small balls of lead that were identified as bird shot were recovered, giving archaeologists insight into the diet of the local population that apparently included more than just fish. Small beads from necklaces, a ring, and an earring helped shine a light on the types of personal effects that were buried with the dead.

The desalination of the skeletal material was a challenge with limited space in the lab. A system was created that allowed for the water to access the remains, but also protected them so that each set of remains could be desalinated as a group. This method consisted of containing more robust remains in plastic window screen with monofilament (fishing line) and more fragile remains inside of plastic containers that had a number of holes drilled into them to allow for water flow. In this way all the remains could be put into a much larger container filled with water. This also made it easier and safer to change the water making the salt removal process more efficient.

Once the salt had been removed from the remains by soaking in successive baths of de-ionized water, they were slowly dried and then packaged for transport to the Smithsonian for further analysis and eventual reburial. The silver lining to this environmental disaster is that we have learned a great deal about an isolated and insular community that might otherwise have quietly washed away.

Burial and disassociated headstones.
COVA GRANTS

COVA Grants for Preservation, Public Education, and Research

We are soliciting members to submit proposals for projects to be considered for funding under the COVA grant program. Project topics must fall within one of the three main categories that traditionally have made up the core of COVA’s mandate: Preservation, Public Education, and Research. Projects that have as broad a reach as possible (i.e. are aimed more at state-wide issues rather than focusing on site-specific activities) are strongly encouraged. The membership has authorized the expenditure of up to $500 per proposal ($1000 total). The review process is competitive, and COVA reserves the right to award less than the allotted amount.

To apply, submit a 2-3 page prospectus, to include the names and specific qualifications of the project participants, a complete budget, proposed work schedule, and detailed portrayal of the final product and its value to Virginia archaeology. To qualify, the project must be led by a full COVA member in good standing at the time the application is submitted. COVA grant monies need not be the sole source of funding for projects.

The deadline for receiving proposals will be announced in the winter and typically falls prior to our spring meeting. The successful applicant(s) will be announced via the COVA email list soon after the spring meeting.

Attach the proposal to an e-mail addressed to:

Derek Wheeler, Chair

COVA Budget Committee, dwheeler@monticello.org

PUBLICATIONS

Have you purchased your copy of COVA member John Sprinkle’s book Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation (Routledge 2014)? [http://www.amazon.com/Crafting-Preservation-Criteria-National-Register/dp/0415642566] This “lively history” documents the creation of the National Register’s criteria of significance and “transforms our understanding of policies” at the core of American historic preservation. John presents the “fascinating evolution of ideas” through a “meticulous historical approach” resulting in a “wonderful and revealing” publication. COVA member Esther White recommends this book for your book shelves as well as your vacation beach reading as the stories Sprinkle relates are classics, full of “politics and personalities.”

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation’s official list of places worthy of preservation, but where did the criteria that shape the construction of a useable past come from? Sprinkle tells how the criteria were crafted over three decades (from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s) of trial and error by a cadre of public servants and interested citizens. The National Park Service mandate was to create an orderly, balanced, and comprehensive panorama of historic sites that illustrated a textbook of United States history, while the pragmatic goal was to deter and deny acquisition by the agency, because there were simply too many historic sites and not enough money in the treasury. Published by Routledge, this book elucidates the “prehistory” of the National Register of Historic Places, with a special focus on the evolution of the concept of archaeological significance, and helps practitioners and students alike connect with the origins of preservation’s contemporary paradigm.
The Archeological Society of Virginia is calling for archaeological papers for their 2014 Annual Meeting. Members of the ASV, COVA, colleges and universities, and others are encouraged to participate. Chapters are encouraged to present updates of their activities. A fine time will be had by all.

Formal presentations - 20 minutes.
Student papers - 20 minutes
Chapter presentations - 10 minutes.
Presenters must be members of ASV and registered for the meeting.
Poster sessions welcome.
Book Room
Handouts are encouraged.

Deadline for abstract submission is September 1, 2014. Please complete the form below and submit abstract as Word document.

NAME ________________________________________________
COMPANY/AFFILIATION ______________________________________
ADDRESS _____________________________________________
CITY ______________________________ STATE _________  ZIP ___________
PAPER TITLE___________________________________________________________________
E-mail ______________________     ASV Member _______     COVA member _______
Audio-Visual needs:  slide projector _____           computer projector _____           overhead projector _____

Please mail ASV member abstract and biographical information to:
Michael B. Barber, State Archaeologist, 540 387-5398, Mike.Barber@dhr.virginia.gov
Western Regional Preservation Office
962 Kime Lane, Salem, Virginia 24153
Eastern States Archaeological Federation
81st Annual Meeting
Hosted by the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.
October 30-November 2, 2014
Holiday Inn—Solomons, Maryland
(410)-326-6311
SPECIAL EVENTS
THURSDAY TOUR - Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum and St. Mary’s City
Program Co-Chairs
Kate Birmingham and Emily Swain: Katherine_Birmingham@nps.gov & Swemsoc11@gmail.com

SEAC 2014
71st ANNUAL MEETING
Hosted by the South Carolina Institute for Archaeology and Anthropology
November 12-15, 2014
Hyatt Regency Greenville - Greenville, South Carolina
Contact Program Chair Karen Smith: smithky2@mailbox.sc.edu for information

AAA 2014
113th Annual Meeting
Producing Anthropology
December 3-7, 2014
Washington, DC
Mary L. Gray and Rachel Watkins, Co-Executive Program Chairs aaameetings@aaanet.org 1-703-528-1902

Council for Northeast Historical Archaeological Conference
November 6-9, 2014
Ocean Place Hotel and Resort, Long Branch, NJ
Program Co-Chairs
Richard Veit (rveit@monmouth.edu) and Edward Morin (ed.morin@urs.com)

Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference
March 12 –15, 2015
Clarion Fontainebleu Hotel, Ocean City, MD
1-800-638-2100
Program Co-Chairs: James Lee and Gregory Lattanzi
Attend CoVA’s Meetings!

The Fall meeting will be held at the ASV annual meeting in Richmond on October 10th. Please mark your calendars and check cova-inc.org for information on the details.

**CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 10, 2014</td>
<td>COVA FALL MEETING—Richmond, VA</td>
<td>cova-inc.org</td>
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<td>January 6-11, 2015</td>
<td>SHA ANNUAL MEETING—Seattle, Washington</td>
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<td>March 12-15, 2015</td>
<td>MAAC ANNUAL MEETING— Ocean City, MD</td>
<td>midatlanticarchaeology.org</td>
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<td>April 15-19, 2015</td>
<td>SAA ANNUAL MEETING— San Francisco, CA</td>
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