

Alexandria Archaeology

VOLUNTEER NEWS

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Spring 2009



Battle of the White House-- The Only War of 1812 Battle in Fairfax County

A free lecture with local historian
Patrick O'Neill

Held in conjunction with FOAA's
Annual Meeting.

Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m.
Alexandria Archaeology Museum
105 N. Union St., #327

Light refreshments.

Reservations required:
archaeology@alexandriava.gov

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FORENSICS ON QUEEN STREET

by Steven Shephard and Marya Fitzgerald

"Written in Bone: Forensic Files of the 17th Century Chesapeake," a new exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, capitalizes on the current high public interest in archaeology and anthropological forensics. In February, Alexandria Archaeology staff attended the opening and was treated to tours led by NMNH anthropologists Dr. Douglas Owsley and Kari Bruwheide.

Alexandria Archaeology has had a working relationship with the Smithsonian forensic anthropologists for many years. In 1994, we were excavating part of the Quaker Burial Ground on Queen Street, where a large library addition was scheduled to be built. Arrangements were made for forensic experts from the Smithsonian to undertake the analysis of the skeletal remains at the site. These anthropologists were Doug and Kari, aided by a team of their colleagues.

The Alexandria Monthly (Quaker) Meeting--which leases the Barrett Library expansion site to the City--had decided that analysis of the remains could be conducted only on-site, and so the Smithsonian scientists did their work at the cemetery. They analyzed a total of 19 burials, including one in a cast-iron coffin. The best-preserved burial was found in a brick vault constructed at the bottom of the grave shaft, the bones encased within a deteriorated wooden coffin within a coffin box. This was the skeleton of a man between 55 and 65 years of age, who stood at 5 feet, 7 to 10 inches, tall; his teeth showed the pipe



Field excavation of the Leavy Neck skeleton in 2001 by archaeologist Jane Cox. This person was buried ca. 1665-1670 in what is Anne Arundel County, Maryland, today. Image courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

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BENEATH BRADLEE CENTER

by Dave Cavanaugh

There is renewed interest in the history of the Seminary Hill area, including the settlement of African Americans after the Civil War at the Fort (Fort Ward) and near what is now the Oakland Baptist Church. At the conclusion of the war, the Fairfax Seminary Hospital on the grounds of the Episcopal Seminary and the nearby forts were closed down. Recovery was slow, but freedmen and returning professors and property owners found ways to adjust to new economic hardships. Cassius Lee and his family witnessed the transition of the Seminary Hill area; in future, their story should become an integral part of the historic interpretation of the Seminary Hill area.

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FOAA: 2008 YEAR IN REVIEW

Last year was a busy one for FOAA, with lots of outreach and community activities and welcoming of new members.

April 19, 2008: At its annual meeting, FOAA's board welcomed new member Margarete Holubar.

April 24: Volunteer Anna Lynch was honored as a nominee for Alexandria's Living Legends Award. Museum Educator Ruth Reeder and FOAA President Marya Fitzgerald accompanied Anna to the reception and photo exhibition for Living Legends at the Lyceum.

June 12: At the Maury School's Science Fair, Museum staffer Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, FOAA Secretary Cat Sumner, Marya Fitzgerald, and education intern Natasha Davis presented a series of Potter's Art adventure lessons to 64 students from first through sixth grade.

June 21: FOAA sponsored a water-taxi trip across the Potomac to National Harbor and its grand hotel. More than 30 FOAA members and friends joined Archaeology staff in celebrating the Summer Solstice, which culminated in a wild ride back across the river pursued by a roiling thunderstorm.

During the warm months, FOAA Treasurer Kathy Scheibelhoffer assisted with public Dig Days at the Shuter's Hill site.

August: FOAA presented farewell "I Dig" T-shirts to Natasha Davis and to summer intern Hsiung Kai-Ping of Taiwan in recognition of their contributions to the Museum. Hsiung's main work was on a GPS project with Fran Bromberg, and Natasha assisted with adventure lessons and special projects.

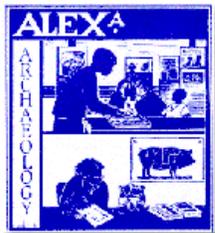
September 12: Cat Sumner assisted with the Museum's Potter's Art program at the Alexandria Festival of the Arts.

During Virginia Archaeology Month in October, FOAA participated in several events.

Oct. 9: John Sprinkle filled in very ably for Jordan Poole as the FOAA-sponsored guest speaker for the TFAC "Dig It" night. For his excellent presentation on George Washington's smithy at Mt. Vernon, FOAA presented John with an "I Dig" T-shirt.

Oct. 22: Mary Kay Ricks received a FOAA totebag in thanks for her informative discussion of her book, *Escape on the Pearl: The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad*.

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Alexandria Archaeology Volunteer News

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FOAA

P.O. Box 320721

Alexandria, VA 22320

Individual - \$20 Family/Groups - \$25 Sponsor - \$50 Benefactor - \$100 Corporate - \$500

2009-2010 FOAA Board of Directors

Marya Fitzgerald and Margarete Holubar, co-presidents; Joan Amico, vice-president; Kathy Scheibelhoffer, treasurer; Catherine Sumner, secretary; Dave Cavanaugh, AAC representative; Laura Heaton, board member



POINTS OF INTEREST

AHS Donation Honors Ticer, Funds Education Program

This past October, 30 Alexandria City Public School teachers attended an in-service training on the different programs available through the Office of Historic Alexandria's museums. Marya and Terilee presented information about Alexandria Archaeology's many school programs, as well as information about Alexandria Archaeology's other resources, such as the Teacher's Guide, other publications, and our webpage.

During the summer the Alexandria Historical Society had donated money to Alexandria Archaeology for use in education programs in memory of Jack Ticer, the husband of Virginia State Senator Patsy Ticer. It seemed fitting, with the Ticer family's interest in Alexandria's history and education, to offer a teacher funding to bring her class to Alexandria Archaeology. For many teachers the lack of money for bus transportation prevents their classes from taking part in on-site Museum programs.

Teachers at the in-service training who were interested in bus funding filled out a brief form describing why visiting Alexandria Archaeology would enrich their class. Rosetta Stewart, a teacher at Maury Elementary school, was selected to use the donated money for bus transportation to bring 50 second graders to both Alexandria Archaeology and the Carlyle House in March. Her enthusiasm and interest in participating in Alexandria Archaeology's education programs are a wonderful tribute to the donation made in honor of Jack Ticer.

1797 Washington Medal Found at Shuter's Hill Now on Display in "Hail to the Chief" Exhibit *by Steven J. Shephard*

Volunteers excavating an old posthole at Shuter's Hill in 1998 made an exciting find! When the dirt was sifted through the screen, a very tarnished large metal disk appeared. It looked like a very old coin, with a profile of a man on one side and writing on the reverse, but no date evident. When it was examined in the laboratory, it was identified as a George Washington commemorative medal, of which there were numerous varieties. The obverse showed a familiar profile with "GEORGE WASHINGTON" arched above, while the reverse listed five events and dates associated with Washington's generalship and presidency:
GENERAL OF THE AMERICAN ARMIES, 1775

*RESIGN'D THE COMMAND 1783
ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES 1789
RE-ELECTED 1793
RESIGN'D 1797*

Because the white metal was in a fairly deteriorated state, there was no clear date on the medal. The disk was carefully conserved and stored away with the rest of the artifacts from the site.



Early this year, spurred by the upcoming inauguration of Barack Obama, we planned a small exhibition to display artifacts relating to past presidents. The medal was retrieved from storage, and an expert numismatist, Louis Jordan, was asked to identify and date the medal. He readily recognized it as a George Washington Baker 66 Medal dating to 1797.

The exhibit, titled "Hail to the Chief," displays this medal along with other artifacts excavated in Alexandria. These include a pearlware mug with a scene of "Cornwallis Resigning his Sword at York Town on Oct. 19, 1781"; a teapot fragment with a raised portrait of George Washington; a large commemorative creamware pitcher memorializing the death of Washington in 1799, with an unusual likeness of the President and "HE IN GLORY ~ AMERICA IN TEARS"; a small whiteware pitcher with a portrait of William Harrison over the words "Harrison & Reform"; a 1917 Lincoln cent (a coin first produced in 1905 and the first time the likeness of a president appeared on a U.S. coin); an 1872 Ulysses S. Grant political token; and a transfer-print mug manufactured in China in 2008, with portraits of all 44 presidents, including, of course, Barack Obama.

The Shuter's Hill Site, where the George Washington medal was found, actually has a number of connections to George Washington. Ludwell Lee bought this property from the John Mills estate in 1790. He lived there with his family for the next nine years. The structures were valuable enough that Lee took out an insurance policy in 1797. This document records the mansion and two symmetrically placed frame outbuildings, a laundry and a gardener's house. George Washington was a friend of Lee's and visited Shuter's Hill, once noting in his diary that he had met there with Lee's father, Richard Henry Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. We know too that Washington purchased 50 bushels of rye grown here by Lee in 1797. Washington used this rye to produce a supply of whiskey at his distillery located just west of Mt. Vernon.

Medal continued on page 9

Alexandria Archaeology Visits Plymouth Haven Preschool

Recently Alexandria Archaeology had a unique opportunity to conduct an outreach education program for the Plymouth Haven Preschool in Alexandria. The preschool's students range in age from two to five. Terilee Edwards-Hewitt visited the school on February 19 as part of the school's science education unit.

Because the students had been learning about science at an age-appropriate level, they were ready to learn about archaeology. The students were fascinated with the Museum's new portable stratigraphy case. Having a three-dimensional representation of stratigraphy made understanding that older artifacts are found at lower levels easier for the students. For Archaeology staff conducting off-site programs, having a portable stratigraphy case has been very useful.

The students enjoyed being able to touch artifacts, including a large sherd from a Milburn milk pan and a sherd from a brown salt-glaze stoneware jug. Touching allowed students to discuss how the sherds were similar and how they were different, and how people used to store their milk compared to how people store their milk today (in plastic). The children also handled oyster shells for a discussion of how archaeology tells us what people ate in the past and reproduction stone points for a brief discussion of the Native American history of Alexandria.

Because of the wide age range of students, after 15 minutes of the education program, the 2-year-olds returned to their classroom and the older students were encouraged to ask questions of the archaeologist. A fun and educational time was had by all, including Terilee.

Remembering Gene Luckman

by Barbara Magid

It is with sadness that we note the passing of long-time volunteer Eugenia Luckman. Gene volunteered with us for nearly twelve years, from September 1977 until she moved from the area in March 1989. Gene contributed a total of 3,009 hours – the equivalent of 1½ years of full-time employment.

Gene, along with Sara Revis and Vivienne Mitchell, was one of the original lab volunteers when Pam Cressey first came to work in Alexandria. When I came to Alexandria in 1980, Gene stood out as knowledgeable, competent, and a natural leader, and I soon came to think of her as

the leader of the lab ladies, able to help with on-the-job training of our new recruits. Gene and Vivienne developed the ceramic study collection, which is still in use with some modification. Gene also dug with us and helped to organize slides.

In 1982, Gene asked me why we didn't have a newsletter. She really thought we should have one, and she was willing to be editor. We thought this was a great idea but said it couldn't be called a "monthly" until we were sure we were up to the task. The first issue of the Alexandria Archaeology *Volunteer News* came out in November 1982 and was indeed a monthly. Gene was eventually joined by Linda Javins as co-editor, and Linda continued the newsletter until she too moved away. The newsletter has been sporadic in the last few years, but we hope to begin producing it more regularly.

Gene was also a founding member of the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) in 1986. Gene, Julie (Renard) Twining, Lowell Klock, and Liz Dietrich formed the original board. Gene was Volunteer of the Year in 1979, for contributing the most hours, and again in 1986, together with Julie, Lowell, and Liz, for their efforts to start the Friends group.

Gene was a graduate of GWU and worked for the Woman's Army Corps for the Army Air Force, and then for 31 years as a budget analyst for the Commerce Department with the Bureau of International Congress. In 1989, she moved from Alexandria to the retirement community Westminster



From left to right: Marge Livingston, Mary Jane Nugent, Edith Ettinger, Joanne Moyer, Steve Shephard, Pam Cressey, Gene Luckman, Barbara Magid, and Vivienne Mitchell in 1989.

Canterbury in Winchester, Virginia. She had a lovely, large apartment there and many friends. In the early years, she was part of a group that met for happy hour before dinner and took trips in the van to Alexandria, stopping to visit us. Volunteers Lowell Klock, Dee Schofield, and I used to visit Gene in Winchester. One day a few years ago, Vivienne Mitchell and I picked up Gene and drove to Orkney Springs for the weekend, staying in a 19th-century resort hotel, now a retreat center. Vivienne and I were bemoaning the fact that the hotel was dry and we hadn't brought a bottle, when Gene piped up that she had brought snacks and Southern Comfort (primarily decanted into a glass jar).

Gene went on many wonderful trips after retirement, before and after moving to Winchester. She's my inspiration! For some years, she was going on three big trips a year, to Canada and the US, most of Europe, Latin America, Egypt, West Africa, the Near East, India, China, Tibet, Australia and New Zealand. She went on a number of birding and archaeology trips all over the world. Even though she lived in a retirement community, Gene liked being with people of all ages and would complain if everyone on the trip was "of a certain age." As much as Gene enjoyed all of her trips, she told me she loved the Galapagos the best. I was so surprised that she had a favorite place that I was determined to get there.

Gene was in poor health the last two years before she passed away on December 28, 2008, at age 92. She left no family but had many friends at Westminster Canterbury, where a memorial service was held on Friday, January 2. For those who knew and loved Gene, contributions can be made to Westminster Canterbury Fellowship Fund, 300 Westminster Canterbury Drive, Winchester, VA 22603.



Mike Miller excavating the Courthouse site (AX1) sometime around 1977

Millergram: The Legendary Mike Miller Is Retiring

by Pamela Cressey

Congratulations and huge thanks to T. Michael Miller, our research historian for the City of Alexandria. Mike is retiring this spring after nearly 29 years of service to the City

of Alexandria, first at the Alexandria Library Special Collections and then at the Office of Historic Alexandria. Even earlier, Mike worked at the Lee-Fendall House and produced a massive history of that site. Actually, Mike first encountered the history of Alexandria through the dirt, when he joined us as a volunteer in 1977 in excavating the Courthouse Site in the 500 block of King Street. We knew that Mike was special when we discovered that he simply could never stop digging--not even when we said, "Stop!" Mike just had to get that plate or cup out of the dirt, regardless of the rules for proper archaeological recordation.

But Mike soon discovered that his passion for the past could be much better fed by digging through archives. He jumped in and started research into Robert Miller's cistern and water filtration system, which we found at the Courthouse Site. Afterward Mike never returned to the dirt in the ground again. He is the most-published author about Alexandria's past in history! But Mike never forgot his archaeological roots. Anytime we have excavated, he either did the research about the site before our trowels

hit the ground or was busy bringing us daily updates as we were digging. Mike's "Millergrams," as we fondly called his prodigious outpouring of mailings and faxes, fill our files and often were the missing link in understanding what we had found in the ground.

Mike has produced many indexes and compilations of primary research that all Alexandria history researchers use daily. Those of us in archaeology are particularly indebted to Mike for his research on several key topics. His work on Shuter's Hill has been the mainstay of our multiyear study of this site on the grounds of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. His quick research on African American history added greatly to the Office of Historic Alexandria's ability to develop and install the exhibit "Securing the Blessings of Liberty" at the Black History Museum. When we asked Mike to produce an overview to each decade of the city's history for our "Discovering the Decades" series in our newsletter, he threw himself into the project. Many people today still express thanks for this great compendium of knowledge, which was edited and produced by Tim Dennee. Unfortunately, the project got stalled at the 20th century, but the information on the earlier decades provides a basic understanding of the changes and key points in the town's past. We also use Mike's book with Bill Smith, *Seaport Saga*, daily; it continues to be the most complete compilation of historic photos of the town.

And, of course, we must acknowledge Mike for his groundbreaking research on Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery. He found the catalytic reference to this cemetery by reading late-19th-century newspapers and pinpointed the site's location. Eventually, the presence of graves was confirmed by archaeological fieldwork a decade later. Without his uncanny research abilities and desire to preserve the past, we would never have had the community effort that will result in 2011 with the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial.

I want to thank Mike for all of us in Alexandria Archaeology, the historical community, and everyone who cares about the town's past. What would our historical knowledge be of Alexandria today without Mike Miller for the last 32 years? Mike has jumped into every preservation issue in the city, tried to save old buildings and records, conducted interviews with many long-time residents, helped hundreds (if not thousands) of people find historical information, and produced an unparalleled compendium of information. We are fortunate that Mike selected Alexandria on which to concentrate his immense talents, energy, and curiosity. Mike, we are eternally grateful for what you have assembled for Alexandria and its researchers.

A "City Star!" is Born

On February 24 Terilee Edwards-Hewitt received the City Star! Award at the City Council meeting. In the audience that evening were her mother, her husband, her friends, and her colleagues. The City Star! proclamation was read and presented by Councilman Rob Krupicka. City Manager Jim Hartmann praised Terilee for inspiring budding archaeologists through educational programs at the Museum and in local schools. Terilee concluded with a few words about the joys of working with Alexandria Archaeology.



Councilmember Krupicka, Terilee, and City Manager Jim Hartmann in Council Chambers

The City Star! Award is presented to an employee who has demonstrated excellence in their work and has exemplified the City's values of respect, integrity, responsibility, teamwork, communication, diversity, and leadership. Terilee will receive eight hours of paid administrative leave and her photo will hang in City Hall.

Keeping Up-to-Date with Alexandria Archaeology: FOAA List-Serve

The Friends of Alexandria Archaeology maintain an email list-serve that allows you to learn about the latest happenings at Alexandria Archaeology and gives you news regarding historic preservation and archaeology in the city, regionally, and nationally. The list-serve will keep you informed about upcoming lectures, events, and volunteer opportunities at Alexandria Archaeology and other locations in Northern Virginia. You could also receive the newsletter electronically, helping to save on paper and postage. Email archaeology@alexandriava.gov to have future newsletters emailed to you.

The list-serve generates approximately three messages a week, and your email will not be shared with anyone. Additionally, anti-spam features have eliminated the chance of third-party spam to the list-serve.

To join, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/foaa/ and sign up. If you do not have web access, ask Terilee Edwards-Hewitt to help you. Her email is Terilee.Edwards-Hewitt@alexandriava.gov, or give her a call at the Museum on Saturdays. If at any time you wish to unsubscribe to the list-serve, you can send an email to FOAA-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com, or again contact Terilee. Nearly 500 people subscribe to the FOAA list-serve. Don't be left out!

Forensics continued from page 1

facets and tobacco stains of a pipe smoker. Such insights of the forensic anthropologists were invaluable in contributing to interpretation of the burials uncovered at this significant Alexandria site.

Through forensic studies of bones, anthropologists and archaeologists use the technology of the twenty-first century to shed light on the people, places, and stories of the past. "Written in Bone" examines history through 17th-century bone biographies, including those of colonists teetering on the edge of calamity at Jamestown, Virginia, and those of wealthy and well-established individuals at St. Mary's City, Maryland. For the first time anthropologists have the technological capability to help tell this tale and share their insights with Museum visitors.

In the forensic lab connected to the exhibit, visitors learn that forensic science is far more mysterious and engaging than forensic fiction. They can use real human bones to identify and describe the gender and status of people from the past and draw conclusions about their lives. The mission of the lab programs is to teach visitors to use the tools and problem-solving skills of forensic anthropology to collect and analyze data the way that forensic anthropologists do. This engaging and informative exhibit continues at Natural History until March 2011. For more information, go to anthropology.si.edu/writteninbone/index.html

FOAA continued from page 2 -----

Oct. 25: FOAA and AAC members joined forces to provide hospitality at a rest stop for the Heritage Trail bike ride.

Oct. 30: Terilee Edwards-Hewitt and Marya Fitzgerald presented an Archaeology workshop at the in-service "Exploring Alexandria's Historic Resources" attended by 30 teachers from Alexandria Public Schools.

Early November: Katy Cannady of AAC, FOAA board member and volunteer Margarete Holubar, Marya Fitzgerald, and Ruth Reeder cut out and baked about 350 "cookie" dough ornaments for the Ornament Decorating Workshop.

November 15: Archaeology staff once again held a splendid Volunteer Appreciation Party, with wonderful food by Fran Bromberg, great music by Mark Barker, and a slide show by Steve Shephard. Once again Joan Amico, who contributed 706 hours, was Volunteer of the Year. FOAA used this gathering to honor Officer Carl Wortham with the John Glaser Award. Officer Wortham and his bike unit were recognized for four years of assisting with the Heritage Trail bike rides. Also that night, FOAA presented Alexandria Archaeology with its annual gift—\$2,000 this year.

November 22: FOAA sponsored the light refreshments served at the Knapper Family gathering at the Museum. The Knappers are descendants of Arthur and Lucy Lomax, who are buried at Freedmen's Cemetery. Vice President Joan Amico helped photograph and identify most of the family members in attendance.

December 6: The Museum's holiday Ornament Decorating Workshop was presided over by Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, Tamara Mihailovich, and Marya Fitzgerald. Children and parents decorated the ornaments enthusiastically all afternoon.

February 10, 2009: The annual FOAA board meeting-cum-potluck nominated the coming year's officers, and Treasurer Kathy Scheibelhoffer presented the draft of the annual budget.

February 16: A group of stalwart FOAA members with family and friends marched with the Museum staff and other history enthusiasts in the City's annual George Washington Birthday Parade (*below*).



HATS OFF!!

The dynamic duo of Joan Amico and Marya Fitzgerald continue to manage the Museum area, greet visitors, answer phones, and keep the place and staff humming. Where would we be without them?!

Last month our A+ education volunteers, Marya and Anna Lynch, welcomed Hoosey Hughes to their ed team. During FY08 they, along with Ruth Reeder and Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, presented Archaeology Adventure Lessons to 1,174 students. Of the twenty-eight lessons offered so far for FY09, teachers have evaluated nineteen as Excellent and nine as Very Good!

Oral history volunteers Jo Ann Lafon, Laura Little, Richelle Brown, Fran Rosenstein, Dave Mills, Barbara Murray,

Hats Off! continued on page 10

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Menokin, the home of Cassius F. Lee and his wife Ann Eliza, once stood on 125 acres now occupied by the Bradlee Shopping Center, Lee Braddock Apartments, Minnie Howard School, and Fairlington Towne.

Menokin was built in 1854 to accommodate the large and growing Lee family. Originally a summer home, it became a popular place for family gatherings and social calls with professors and friends associated with the nearby Episcopal Theological Seminary. The gate off Braddock Road opened to a tree-lined drive, which led to the two-story house with a large front porch. From the back of the home, visitors had a distant view of Washington, D.C.

Robert E. Lee was Cassius Lee's first cousin. They grew up together and remained close lifelong friends. Cassius, unlike his cousin, did not leave the Alexandria area to join the Confederacy. The day before Virginia secession took effect, Cassius dispatched a short letter to Robert E. Lee expressing his hope that civil war could be averted and that "God make you instrumental in saving our land from the dreadful strife." Although Cassius was a slave owner, he opposed secession. However, over time he came to resent Union control, restrictions on his civil liberties, and the determination of Union forces to put down the insurrection.

With the beginning of the Civil War, Union troops marched into Virginia and fanned out, occupying the ridge lines overlooking Washington. Menokin faced the hastily constructed Fort Ward a short distance away, and white Union tents could be seen in every direction. In 1863, under fear of being arrested and jailed, Cassius and his family left Menokin. They went to New York and Massachusetts, visiting Ann's relatives, and finally sought refuge in Canada. During their absence the house was used by Union officers and soldiers and was left in poor condition. Returning after the war in mid-1865 with little money, the family began the difficult task of repairing and restoring the property.

In October 1865, shortly after they returned, worried that Cassius might have to sell Menokin, Ann used her inheritance to pay Cassius for his interest in the property. In July 1870, Robert E. Lee stayed at Menokin. Ann died at Menokin in 1885 and Cassius later in 1890. Both are buried at the Christ Church Cemetery in Alexandria. Menokin was sold in 1908.

FAMILY FOUND! While exploring the Alexandria Legacies website, Lois Whelan thanked us for posting the interview with Ethel Abramson. Ethel was her dad's niece: "THANK YOU! I certainly know what I'll be doing this evening. I so appreciate this, whether or not I learn anything new. Ethel (Abramson) was the daughter of my dad's older brother and we visited her several times a year as we lived in DC and her children were the same age as my brother and I ... I am so grateful for the beautiful site your organization has created and wish that there had been something similar my parents might have been involved in... Fondly, Lois Whelan"

ORAL HISTORY UPDATE 2008: DEL RAY CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

by Jen Hembree, Oral History Coordinator

In 2008 the Alexandria community of Del Ray (formerly known along with the communities of Mt. Ida, St. Elmo, and Hume as the Town of Potomac) celebrated its 100th anniversary.

On May 31, 2008, the Choreographers Collaboration Project (www.ccpdance.org) presented its spring concert, "Celebrate Del Ray," at the George Washington Middle School. The dances were choreographed by the performers, inspired by Del Ray street scenes and the community's history. Choreographers worked with local artists and community groups, including the City's oral history program. With backdrops of Del Ray photomontages (historical and current) and interludes that included audio-excerpts of Alexandria Legacies oral history recordings, the dancers represented Del Ray through its phases and many faces. Alexandria Legacies is honored to have been a part of this celebratory and memorable performance.

In collaboration with the Del Ray Citizens' Association, Alexandria Legacies assisted in celebrating the community's centennial by interviewing long-time residents of the area. We conducted nine oral history interviews in total. Local residents Ione Hile, Buddy Smallwood, Norm Hatch, William and Loretta Spittle, Gloria Gardner, Gordon Daniels, Pat McArtor, and Miss Kate shared their stories of Del Ray with us. Thank you to Lee Perna, the Del Ray Citizens' Association and its members, as well as all of our oral history volunteers who made this project a grand success!

Del Ray Memories...

Gloria Gardner: And, of course, we played outdoors. We didn't have computer things and all that. Over where Glendale Avenue is and all those places are, that was what we called "woods"-- even down this side of Luray Avenue. Those houses weren't built until just before the war or just after the war. But I'm pointing over my shoulder because there's a whole--the 200 block of Luray Avenue are the houses I'm talking about--they're all-brick houses and you wouldn't notice. But behind that was what we just called "the woods." And there was a little stream about this wide--I'm showing my fingers about two inches apart--that ran down there. And there was this big old tree--I have no idea what kind of tree--which was referred to by the kids as "the big tree." Now, the boys climbed the tree, but they

didn't allow the girls. After a couple of years, they nailed boards like in steps and let us go up, you know, as long as they were there and in control. But we went over there and played at that big tree or got water out of there and made mud pies and everything.

Ione Hile: There was the furniture store; fact is, there were two stores. There was C. L. Barnes and then the block before that there was the Del Ray Furniture Company. And then, a long time ago, down where Mancini's Restaurant is--is that Mancini's?--that was a Safeway. And next door to that was a doughnut shop; it was Helen's Bakery.

Shirley Grimm Warthen: Down the Avenue? There was some houses on the avenue, and some businesses. The drugstore and...the one thing that we always used to stop at...there was a little place called the Mighty Midget. And, I'm trying to remember what street...it was on Mt. Vernon Avenue, right on the way to school. And it was one of these little metal, about, I'd say about twice or three times as big as a telephone booth. And it was a metal housing thing. And they made hamburgers and hot dogs, and they had potato chips and peanuts and candy bars.

Miss Kate: Oh, the Scott Shop used to be down on Mount Vernon. And Mr. Scott got these dresses somewhere. He had the most beautiful dresses. If you wanted a good looking dress, go to Mr. Scott, and the ladies from all around came for dresses at Mr. Scott's shop.

Norm Hatch: I arrived in Mount Ida. It wasn't Del Ray in 1951. When we moved in, being in a neighborhood of single-family houses, just about everybody had a garden of some sort. I raised tomatoes, cucumbers, and my wife grew a variety of flowers. Most of the property was quite old. My house was built in 1902, and the house across the street in 1921. That was a common age range across the area. The 1920s was when most of the building took place. Some of it was grand, and some of it was very basic. There were Sears & Roebuck houses, all for the cost of about \$2,000, although you had to erect them yourself. They were delivered by rail. The trolley existed on what is now the grass median strip between North and South Commonwealth Avenue. It was built originally for workers to get into Washington, D.C. The main drag--Mt. Vernon Avenue--was pretty quiet. There wasn't as much commerce as there was in earlier days. Across the street

from the post office stood Doc Carneal's Drugstore. That was sort of the center point of town because everybody needed drugs. There was a restaurant called the Blue Fox at the site of the recently closed Los Amigos. The Blue Fox, which was around for about 23 years, was owned and operated by Bruce Morris. It was the typical bar and restaurant for the workingman. There was a shoe store next to Doc Carneal's, which was new. There was a large store selling only women's clothing that occupied almost the entire 2300 block, called the Scott Shop. For an area that was considered middle- to low-class, it had very upscale clothing. People came from Old Town to shop there.

Virginia Knapper Remembers

Virginia Knapper was born December 25, 1897, in a house located at 911 North Fairfax Street. She was interviewed by Pamela Cressey in 1982 and shared memories of her family, local stores, and her neighborhood, Cross Canal, which featured the former Alexandria Canal.



Pam Cressey interviewing Mrs. Knapper in 1982

Pam Cressey: So, there was still water in there [the Canal]?

Mrs. Knapper: There was still water. Water used to come up about two feet. When it was freezing, we used to skate on it. Some of it was deeper and wouldn't freeze; we'd get our feet wet. So, we would come home cold.... Yeah, we used to do that right across in front of the school—our old school. We'd skate and we'd be late. We had a lot of good times skating down there....

Pam Cressey: How far south did you have to keep coming down before you got into town—like Oronoco?

Mrs. Knapper: Let me see, no, I'd have to say it was Princess. We used to go out to Carper's Bakery, which was on Cameron Street, the lower end of Cameron Street. It was already baked bread—just four cents a loaf, fresh from the bakery. They baked every day, and they worked 24 hours a day. They had a night shift and a day shift so there was always hot bread.

Mrs. Knapper also recalled working in the Old Dominion Glass Factory in Cross Canal.

Mrs. Knapper: When glass was made, it was runny, soupy, like dough that you would use for pancakes. They would

mold it on a stick and when it came out, you could see the...

Pam Cressey: The lip of the bottle?

Mrs. Knapper: And they'd set it on something—it looked like tarpaper.

Pam Cressey: To dry?

Mrs. Knapper: Then they would put it on something like a shovel.

Pam Cressey: That's quite a system. You remember everything about it too. Now what part did you play in the factory?

Mrs. Knapper: I was a mold girl once. And then, I was what you call a snapper. When the mold comes out, I would snap it off.

Medal continued from page 3

In 1799, the Shuter's Hill mansion and plantation were sold to Benjamin Dulany. Dulany had married Washington's ward, Elizabeth French, in 1773, and Washington actually gave the bride away at the marriage, Elizabeth's father having died many years before. During the Revolution, Dulany served as one of Washington's aides and loaned him a horse, "Blueskin," to ride during the war.

The posthole in which the medal was found was located at the site of the eighteenth-century laundry that was recorded on Ludwell Lee's insurance document. The original Mills/Lee/Dulany mansion burned down in 1842 and a brick house was built in the 1850s. The east wall of this house was built over the foundation of the west wall of the old laundry. We began excavations there in 1995 on the grounds of The George Washington Masonic National Memorial at the invitation of the Masons, who have graciously supported the work ever since. The memorial building, built in the 1920s, houses a monumental (17 feet tall) bronze statue of Washington as well as a reproduction of the Alexandria-Washington Lodge meeting room, which originally was located in City Hall beginning in 1802.

So it seems fitting that the archaeologists discovered this medallion, possibly even once owned by Lee or Dulany, on the property of Washington's friends and a place visited by the first president himself. The medal is now on exhibit in the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, located on the top floor of the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Come down and see it in the new presidential display, "Hail to the Chief!"



ANTIQUES IN ALEXANDRIA

The annual antiques show, Antiques in Alexandria, took place at Cole Field House at Episcopal High School March 5 – 8. For the second year in a row, Alexandria Archaeology was represented in the show catalogue and exhibit. This year’s exhibit was titled “Anchors Aweigh: Sailing the Sea to Defend Country, 1775-1875.” Our contribution to the exhibit was two cases of commemorative ceramic wares from the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, featured in Barbara Magid’s article, “Commemorative Wares in Alexandria, ca. 1800-1815.” This article was excerpted with permission from a longer article that appeared in *Ceramics in America 2006*. The exhibit also featured commemorative wares and naval-related artifacts from a private collector, prints from the Navy and collectors, and a Civil War-era Ellsworth pitcher from the Lyceum.

Creamware pitcher, ca. 1800. Photo by Gavin Ashworth, courtesy Ceramics in America.

FOAA JAVA JOLT: THE BATTLE OF THE WHITE HOUSE

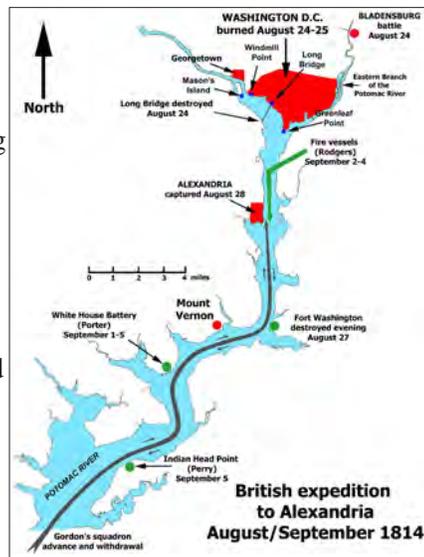
Join Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) on Saturday, March 21, for a Java Jolt lecture titled “The Battle of the White House,” with historian Patrick O’Neill. The lecture will begin at 10 a.m. in the Museum. The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. Please contact archaeology@alexandriava.gov or 703.838.4399 if you are interested in attending.

The lecture is held in conjunction with the FOAA annual meeting and election of 2009-10 board of directors. Join us for an entertaining morning of interesting discussion, light refreshments, and an opportunity to meet the new FOAA board.

Discover the facts behind the British burning of Washington on August 24, 1814, and their intended march down the Potomac under protection of their own ships. The Potomac Squadron, as the ship convoy was called, was late and the British went back the way they came. However, the Potomac Squadron did cause the destruction of Fort Washington on August 27, and held Alexandria hostage from August 28 to September 1.

To “annoy and destroy” the Squadron on their descent, U.S. Commodore John Rodgers and Captains David Porter and Oliver Perry brought 500 seamen and, with 1500 Virginia Militia under Brigadier General John Hungerford, engaged the British for five days at the White House on Belvoir Neck within sight of Mount Vernon. The morning presentation will include a display of artifacts from the battle.

Patrick O’Neill has a B.S. in Anthropology and an M.A. in History. He is a good friend of FOAA’s, having presented a previous Java Jolt in 2004 based on his book, *Images of America: Mount Vernon*. He is the current President of the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV).



Hats Off!! continued from page 7

been logging in hundreds of hours conducting and transcribing interviews. We always welcome new oral history volunteers who want to assist in interviewing, transcribing, and/or updating our website. Oral History Training Sessions are held seasonally. Contact jen_hembree@hotmail.com if you would like to volunteer in any of these capacities.

GWU Interns Sara Belkin, Laura Dawson, and Katie Reid worked through the fall to update an inventory of the artifact collection, using a new database created by the City’s IT department. They are continuing to work a few hours a week, now as employees, to complete this immense and important project. The inventory team proofed the old inventory records against the content and location of the actual boxes in the storeroom, and added more detailed information.

This collection was previously inventoried in 1989, recording general information in a database for each box. The Museum also maintained separate databases for the collections catalogue, accession records, and loan records. In the past year, collections manager Barbara Magid worked with Curtis Ney and Gregory Anderson of the City’s IT department to convert the database to Access, and to create a relational database that links all four types of records. This project allowed us to conduct a much more detailed inventory, specifying which artifacts are stored in each of the 3,375 boxes. If we had not converted to new software, we would still have needed to update the inventory, to make sure that it is still accurate, to update box location information, and to set the framework



Sara Revis attempts to crossmend hundreds of coarse earthenware sherds.

for an updated conservation survey. The database upgrade enabled us to produce a much better product.

The lab volunteers are finishing two large projects: cataloguing artifacts from the 2008 season at Shuter's Hill and those from eight privy/wells excavated around 1970 on the 300 block of King Street, across from City Hall. The volunteers are now working with artifacts from a privy behind 109 S. Fairfax St. The lower levels contained artifacts discarded around 1800-1810. Above the privy layers were artifacts discarded at the time of Old Town's catastrophic fire of 1827, which started elsewhere on the block. A smaller quantity of mid-19th-century trash was also discarded in the privy. This feature contained a lot of early wine bottles and some attractive engraved and cut-glass tumblers and decanters. Volunteers will catalog artifacts from another Urban Renewal block until the 2009 field season begins. These "Friday Lab Ladies" include Joan Amico, Cynthia Ford, Sue Gagner, Sandra Humphrey, Montie Kust, Anna Lynch, Mary Jane Nugent, and Sara Revis.

Andrew Flora and Neil Pelletier continue to produce a steady stream of illustrative work. Andy has spent hundreds of hours producing scale drawings of the prehistoric material and coffin hardware excavated from Freedmen's Cemetery. Neil is producing a series of delicate water colors inspired by patterns found on the Museum's collection of ceramics.



Andy creates a scaled drawing of a prehistoric stone tool excavated from Freedmen's Cemetery.

Research volunteer Rachel Reilly is compiling information of the United States Colored Troops for the Museum's website. Ted Pulliam continues his research on the history of the City's waterfront and has just completed an exten-

sive article on the town's early wharf and West's Point. Diane Riker is working on waterfront history and determining the origin and use of the term Bellhaven for early Alexandria. Dave Cavanaugh is researching the Seminary area and writing up his findings for the web, as well as continuing with his African-American research around the Seminary and the Fort neighborhood where Fort Ward Park is now located.

Hoosey Hughes joins Marya Fitzgerald and Joan Amico's newsletter team!

"Robert H. Miller, Importer: Alexandria and St. Louis"

Barbara Magid's article on ceramics importer Robert H. Miller appeared in *Ceramics in America 2008*. In 1822, Miller opened a china shop on King Street, and in 1835, taking advantage of the burgeoning westward expansion and new transportation routes, he opened a second store, in St. Louis, Missouri. In the Alexandria Archaeology collection, we have two objects marked "MANUFACTURED / for Rob't H Miller / ALEXANDRIA / D-C," but it was the discovery of a washbasin marked "MANUFACTURED FOR R-H Miller & Co St LOUIS M" that led to research into Miller's business.

An interesting collection of surviving documents shed light on Miller's two stores. *Ceramics in America* is a beautifully illustrated interdisciplinary journal intended for collectors, archaeologists, curators, decorative-arts students, social historians, and studio potters. Barbara's article can be read in the Museum or library. *Ceramics in America* can be purchased at Amazon.com and other booksellers.

An informative related article to our forensics cover story can be found in this month's *Carlyle House Docent Dispatch*. Their cover story, "Indentured Servitude: Was It Slavery?" by Steve Kimbell, ties in with the Leavy Neck skeleton featured in the Smithsonian's "Written in Bone" exhibit. Visit www.CarlyleHouse.org to download the *Carlyle House Docent Dispatch*.

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See page two for details

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat., March 21 – “The Battle of Washington: The Only War of 1812 Battle in Fairfax County.” Lecture with local historian Patrick O’Neill. Presented in conjunction with the FOAA Annual Meeting. The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. Light refreshments. Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 N. Union St. See page 10 for details.

Wed., March 25 - “Alexandria: From Farm, to Port, to Town, and the Importance of the West Family.” Alexandria Historical Society lecture. James D. Bish will speak at 7:30 p.m. Free; open to the public; no reservations needed. Information at www.alexandriahistorical.org or 703-683-2636. The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

Sat., March 28 - “Spring into Reading: Book Fair Fun!” 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Join in the fun at this historical event for families. Children can play sleuth on a scavenger hunt at The Lyceum and earn their own detective badges. Story times, crafts, and “please touch” artifacts will be featured. Usborne Books will offer a variety of books, and sale proceeds will benefit the museum’s education and collections programs. Free admission. The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

“Researching African American Families -- Beyond the Basics”

Part I: Sat., April, 4, 9am - 1pm,

Part II: Sat., April 11, 9am - 1pm

with genealogist Char McCargo Bah. FREE. Reserve your seat

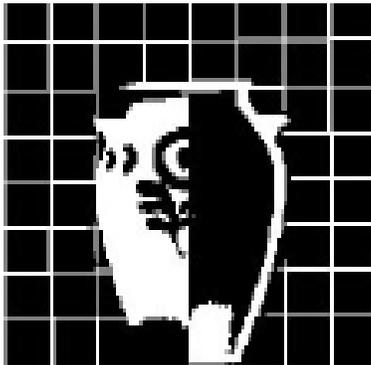
by Friday, March 27 at (703) 838-4577 x213 or email lmorales@alexandria.lib.va.us Special Collections, Alexandria Library, 717 Queen St.(703) 838-4577 x213

Wed., April 22 - Alexandria History Awards, presented by the Alexandria Historical Society at 7:30 p.m. Also, the 2009 Alexandria High School History Awards will be given to an outstanding student from each of Alexandria’s four high schools. The guest speaker will be Dr. Ben Vinson III, who himself received a 1988 Alexandria High School History Award. A reception will follow the awards ceremony and lecture. Free; open to the public; no reservations needed. Information at www.alexandriahistorical.org or (703) 683-2636. The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

Mon., April 27 - Lincoln Assassination lecture. Elizabeth Steger Trindal will discuss her book *Mary Surratt: An American Tragedy* at 7:30 p.m. Presented by the Alexandria Historical Society. Mary Surratt, who was educated in Alexandria, was hanged for complicity in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Free; open to the public; no reservations needed. Information at www.alexandriahistorical.org or 703-683-2636. The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

May 18-22, 26-30 - Field School in Public and Historical Archaeology with Alexandria Archaeology and The George Washington University. www.gwu.edu/~specprog/institutes_archaeology.html

Sat., June 6 - Field Orientation 10 a.m.- noon. Required for all new field volunteers. Participants must be at least 16 years old. Free, but reservations required. Contact Alexandria Archaeology for details. 703.838.4399 or archaeology@alexandriava.gov



Alexandria Archaeology

105 North Union Street, #327

Alexandria, VA 22314



Alexandria Archaeology is owned and operated by the City of Alexandria

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