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COUNCIL FOR NORTHEAST HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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Northeast Historical Archaeology seeks manuscripts dealing with historical archaeology in the Northeast region, including field reports, artifact studies, and analytical presentations (e.g., physical anthropology, palynology, faunal analysis, etc.). We also welcome commentary and opinion pieces. To submit a manuscript or request preparation of manuscript guidelines, write to Maria O'Donovan, Editor, *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, c/o Public Archaeology Facility, Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000. odonovan@binghamton.edu

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CNEHA 2020, A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

Like you, I was excitedly planning to attend this fall's CNEHA conference in Plymouth, Massachusetts. That meeting would have commemorated the anniversary of the Pilgrims' 1620 landing in Plymouth and was being co-sponsored by the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology. A team of CNEHA stalwarts, including David Landon, Christa Beranek, and Karen Metheny, were on the organizing team. However, as is true with so many things, the Covid 19 Pandemic has caused us to pause and take stock of our plans. Acting out of an abundance of caution and with our membership's health in mind, we have decided to postpone the Plymouth Conference to 2022. Our plan is to host an online conference this fall. You should have received an e-mailed survey discussing various options for that conference. Although, it will be challenging to replicate the fellowship and camaraderie that characterizes our annual fall conference, we will do our best to create a worthwhile virtual alternative. Our hope and expectation is that we will be back on track with a physical conference in 2021 at St. Mary's City. For those of you eager to follow in the footsteps of the Pilgrims, don't fret, our Plymouth Conference Committee is already working on a rescheduled conference. We should be heading to Massachusetts in 2022.

I would be remiss if I did not note that we are living in a period of great social unrest. Police brutality and the stark inequities visible in our society have led to protests across the United States and internationally. CNEHA was born during the Civil Rights Movement and historical archaeology has long worked to illuminate the lives of individuals overlooked by traditional histories, especially people of color, women, and working-class folks. As archaeologists we are more than just silent witnesses to the past. Through our research and our publications we can provide future generations with a useful past that informs a better, more inclusive, and more equitable future.

Thank you for your patience and forbearance during these challenging times. Stay well and if you are housebound and at loose ends, consider sharing some of your research through a virtual paper this fall or an article for our journal *Northeast Historical Archaeology*.

Sincerely,
Rich Veit, CNEHA Chair

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UPDATE--*Northeast Historical Archaeology*

Reported by: Maria O'Donovan

Hello, I hope everyone is well and safe during these challenging times. We have been working throughout the Covid-19 lockdown on journal production and now that our printers have reopened, Volume 47 should be in your mailbox by June or July. I know many of you may not have regular access to campus mail; **if you would like your issue of Volume 47 mailed to a different address please email me immediately at neha@binghamton.edu**. We still plan on publication of Volume 48 in the Fall of 2020 and are still pushing to get back on a regular publication schedule by the Fall of 2021. I thank you for your patience and for hanging in there with us as we have experienced some production challenges. Our membership deserves the best and we are striving to give this to you through a high quality journal produced on a regular schedule.

We have very interesting content for future issues of the journal. This includes thematic sections on working class heritage, the history of archaeology and community outreach at Strawberry Banke, and research on Newfoundland and Labrador that involves cutting edge technology. The inaugural section of brief studies in material culture will debut in Volume 49 and we have several contributions in preparation, including one on an uncommon Victorian ceramic tableware. I discussed the new journal section on material culture in the Spring 2020 newsletter; briefly, it will feature short articles on specific artifact types that are often ignored in the analysis of large data sets. If you have an idea for one of these material culture studies, please contact me at neha@binghamton.edu for more information.

I know that many of you are facing significant new demands on your time and may not be able to conduct field research this summer. This may not be the best time to start a new writing project but I hope that you will think about contributing to *Northeast Historical Archaeology*. We are always eager to receive submissions and it is important in this uncertain time that we stay engaged in work that we find personally rewarding. If you have any questions about submitting to the journal or would like to discuss your ideas for a publication, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please also note that with the SHAs and many other conferences going virtual, purchases of back issues and posters will be limited to on-line orders.

Ordering information for back issues of *Northeast Historical Archaeology* and *Telling Time* posters: e-mail me at neha@binghamton.edu or visit our web page at <https://www.binghamton.edu/programs/public-archaeology-facility/neha/ordering.html>. Posters are priced at \$10.00 each plus shipping and back issues of *Northeast Historical Archaeology* at \$10.00-\$13.00 plus shipping.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

Reported by: David Starbuck

Please send me copy for the October 2020 issue (No. 107) of the CNEHA Newsletter by October 1 to ensure that the newsletter is ready to go on-line by late October.

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WEST VIRGINIA: This position is now open. If you are interested, please contact David Starbuck.

Archaeological surveys at Placentia Island, Maine. In search of contact-period Basque sites at the Mount Desert area

[Submitted by: Iosu Etxezarraga (Albaola Basque Maritime Heritage Foundation), Rebecca Cole-Will (Acadia National Park), Xabier Alberdi (Albaola Basque Maritime Heritage Foundation) and Brad Loewen (Université de Montréal)]
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A new research project was born in 2015, involving researchers from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, which pursues the location of archaeological data on early Basque fishermen and traders' presence in the Gulf of Maine. Members of Albaola Maritime Heritage Foundation, based in Pasaia (Basque Country, Spain), realized that traditional interpretation of certain recounted events on both chronicles of Bartholomew Gosnold's very first voyage to nowadays Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts could be understood in a different way. After checking this new hypothesis with cartographical data, the Mount Desert area in Maine could have been the southernmost fishing and trading area of the Basques.

Fortunately, this research thread was very excitedly embraced by Rebecca Cole-Will, Chief of Resource Management at Acadia National Park, who made this first archaeological field work possible. Other researchers and contributors joined the team, such as Julia Gray – former curator at the Abbe Museum – and Dr. Richard Will; a cultural educator, such as Peter Neill – founder and director of the World Ocean Observatory; members of the local community, such as John Mackechnie; among others.

First results encouraged this transnational research team to face further survey seasons, performed in 2016, and the addition of other academic researchers: for instance, Dr. Brad Loewen – professor of the Université de Montréal – and Mathieu Mercier – professional field and submarine archaeologist.

Along the following lines we aim to make public the results of this research so far, as an attempt to advise on a credible existence of certain cultural diversity among the European vessels and crews visiting the southern shores of the Gulf of Maine in the late 1500s and early 1600s. We expect to draw attention among local researchers about fishing and trading expeditions involving Basques from both France and Spain, which are already well known in Newfoundland, Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Clue

When Bartholomew Gosnold arrived on the coast of North America in 1602, two of his men recorded the most relevant events that took place in this voyage – Gabriel Archer and John Brereton. In connection with our research, the fact that stands out on this chronicle is the account of the first encounter of the English with the Natives, near Cape Neddick, Maine (Archer 1602:73; Brereton 1602:3). As both relate, May 14th 1602, at noon, the expedition was surprised by a “Baske” boat, according to Brereton, and “Biscay shallop”, as described by Archer, in which a crew of eight autochthonous men navigated. *Basque* and *Biscayn*, in particular, are the names used in that period to name Northern and Southern Basques. The shallop (*txalupa*, in current Basque) was the main and most common small boat used by those for fishing, but it was also multipurpose and versatile.

Several aspects other than the boat itself, including their outfit and some words they used, revealed a contact of this indigenous crew with European people. In fact, Archer explains that, at first, the English thought they were “Christians distressed”.

Following this, the Native sailors named what apparently seemed to be “Placentia of Newfoundland”. Archer is the only author who relates this event, but he may have not been

convinced about the information he noted, because he wrote “could” as a possibility, not being utterly sure at all.

On the other hand, Brereton provides indubitable information on the Native testimony about Basque presence in the area. In his words, they related that “some Basks or of *S, Iohn de Luz*, have fished or traded in this place, being in the latitude of 43 degrees”. Certainly, St.-Jean-de-Luz – *Donibane Lohitzune* in current Basque – was one of the main fishing ports in the south of Bordeaux (France), which had a primary role in the Basque fisheries of Canada (Loewen & Delmas 2002).

As a result, this information led Xabier Agote, director of Albaola Foundation, and his colleagues, to track other clues that would permit the discovery of cultural evidence of early presence of Basque fishermen in the American shores of the Gulf of Maine. This came after finding an extremely encouraging place name in the Penobscot Bay area. Current marine charts showed an island called Placentia, south of Mount Desert, in front of the Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse.

The question arose immediately: was it possible that the Native American crews’ mention was related to Placentia in Maine, and not to that in Newfoundland? Evidence shows it is a very reasonable hypothesis that was welcomed and agreed to by our American counterparts.

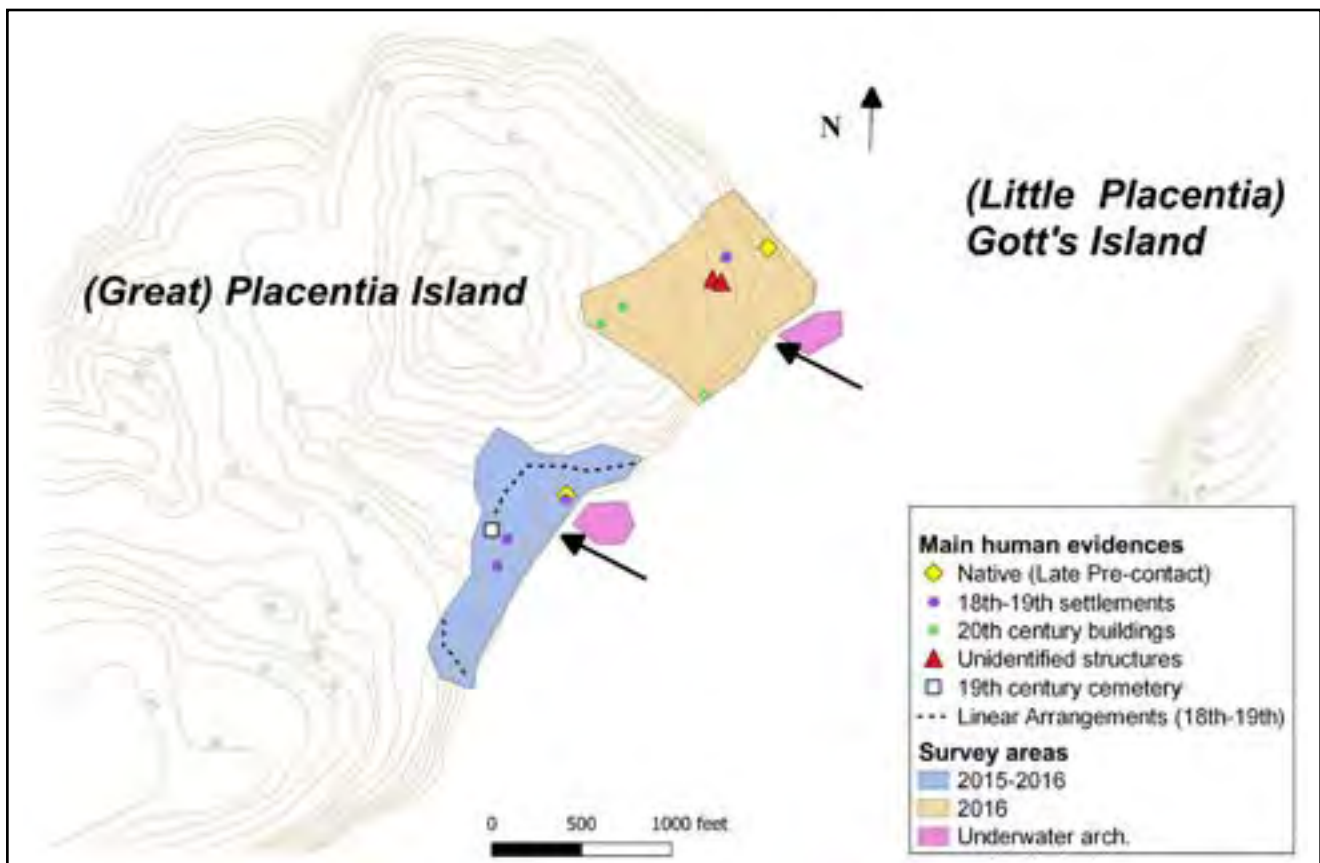


Figure 1. This map displays the surveyed areas and main findings addressed in this project in 2015 and 2016.

The Surveys

Placentia is a 1.54-miles-long and 0.65-miles-wide island, bearing north-east to south-east, and rises 57 ft. at maximum from sea level. Currently, spruces cover most of its surface, which is quite flat, despite the existence of two main heights of rocky appearance that are separated by a swampy area. This depression is crossed by a narrow stream of fresh water that flows into the main beach on the southern side of the island. From the 1700s onwards, a few Anglo-American and, possibly, prior French farms were installed all along the place. In the second half of the 20th century, the island was definitely abandoned, and now it belongs to the Maine Nature Conservancy. (Figure 1.)

In August 2015, a team of Basque archaeologists and maritime heritage experts performed first field works at Placentia Island. Dr. Xabier Alberdi, chief researcher of Alabaola, and Dr. Rebecca Cole-Will assumed direction tasks. After preliminary topographical and cartographical reviews were done, the whole shoreline of the island was visually surveyed in order to determine the most archaeologically interesting spots and areas. We were trying to identify appropriate landing beaches, flat soil surfaces or any other sign of whaling or cod-drying stations or settlement evidences.

As a result, an archaeologically fertile zone was detected in the northeastern end of the cited main beach. Adjacent to the shoreline, at 10 ft. of height, a flat surface extends, where different vegetation could be identified. In the slope towards the beach a shell midden was located, which confirmed human use of the place in the past. A trench survey was performed from the edge towards the inland woods, perpendicular to the slope. The cultural sequence of the site was quite simple but offered interesting contexts. The most recent of the findings was a ditch, parallel to the slope and near its edge, which was filled with remains of concrete and other building materials, mixed up with prior contexts, such as the cited midden. This feature was interpreted as an Anglo-American structure with nothing directly connected to previous occupations.

As stated, this building affected prior vestiges. Underneath these colonial remains, other cultural evidence was detected. Surrounding the remnants of a hearth, stone flakes, modeled pottery and malacofauna were discovered, forming an occupation surface that clearly constituted a Native site. Several artifacts permitted dating the site at possibly coetaneous period to Gosnold's voyage. In the first place, a black glass bead was located in the waste extracted when the colonial period ditch was dug. This evidence was originally kept at the Native context, together with exterior fabric-impressed shell tempered ceramics, which appears to date to the Late Pre-contact period. (Figures 2 and 3.)

Other Native and later occupation evidence was located during that first survey season, concretely in the north-east point area, but no sign of Basque presence was detected.

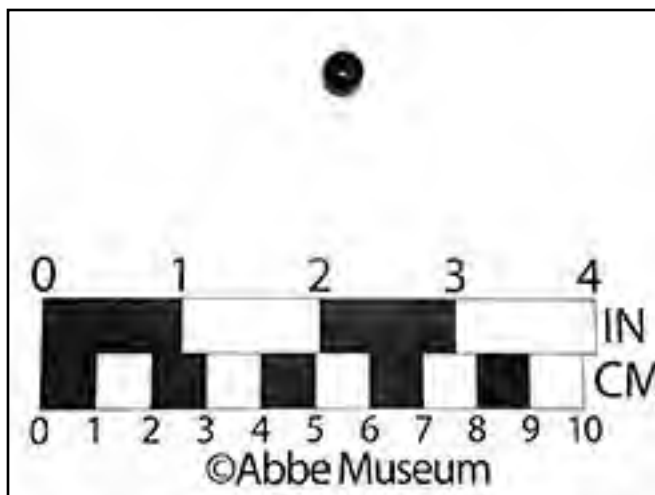


Figure 2. Picture of the glass bead recovered at the Native site adjacent to the southeast beach.



Figure 3. Picture of a hand modeled indigenous pottery fragment, recovered at the Native site adjacent to the southeast beach.

One year later, in August 2016, a new surveying season was developed, which aimed to detect evidence of Basque settlements in Placentia and both Gott's Islands (north-east of the previous one). This group of isles forms a 2600-foot-wide channel, and cartographical reviews showed relation between them, as formerly Gott's had been named "Little Placentia".

Field work focused in tracking anthropic surface features in order to select the most interesting of those to be analyzed in sub-soil. Mostly Modern evidence was detected in the banks of the freshwater stream, such as several colonial dwellings, dry stone enclosures, a cemetery, etc. However, no Basque or Contact Period evidence was found in the area.

Subsequently, directors decided to move and focus towards the northern side of Placentia Island, where another beach appropriate for landing had been located. Briefly, 3 attractive spots were selected in this area. The first one was a flat

surface that extended in almost 650 ft., easily accessible from the sea and apparently perfect for a settlement or a cod drying facility. After dozens of shovel test pits, some 19th century waste materials (pottery, glass, etc.) were located, dispersed in a clear grass field. At the same time, another Native site was discovered at the edge of the field, at the limit of the slope that descends to the beach. However, neither of these showed any evidence of Basques.

On the other hand, nearly 300 ft. south-west, another human-made feature was discovered. Mostly sub terrain, it is made up by means of a square plant trench, of 32x32 ft., in a way that a central protuberance arises, which reaches the same height as the perimeter. Inside, slopes are covered with dry walls, formed by big unshapely rocks. American researchers confirmed it is a colonial housing foundation.

A third, and definitely most confusing set of evidence, was located 145 ft. south-south-east of the dwelling and is formed by two dry stone arrangements. The eastern one is oval shaped (26 ft. long and 10 ft. wide) and empty inside the perimeter ring. A flat rock appears placed in the center of the space. After cleaning this structure, a survey trench was dug laterally, in order to learn how it was constructed. Beneath the dry stone ring a perimeter ditch could be detected, on which the whole structure was founded. Post-depositional processes eroded the wall, and it fell apart outwards. Thus, fallen rocks covered what appeared to be a hearth, partially

dug in the soil and filled with charcoal and ashes. It definitely seemed to be related to the structure. Several test pits were dug around the feature, but, despite identifying what could be a post hole, neither of them contributed to a cultural attribution. Just one artifact was kept inside, a big mammal bone, clearly sectioned with a sharp tool.

In order to get more data about this arrangement, two radiocarbon dates were obtained. Charcoal of the hearth offered a 1070 ± 30 BP result (σ_1 : AD 905-920, 8.7%; σ_2 : AD 948-1027, 86.7%). On the other hand, the animal bone showed a 18th or 19th century origin (σ_1 : AD 1811-1920, 72.3%; σ_2 : AD 1692-1728, 23.1%). Consequently, these analyses were more confusing than we expected. (Figure 4.)

A second feature is close to this, consisting of a dry stone mound (26 ft. long and 20 ft. wide) that displayed three depressions on top. A test hole was carried out at the north-western end, with no satisfactory evidence arising. The only interesting attribute of the tumulus was that the biggest rocks had been placed at the bottom, which signifies a non-accidental disposal of the elements. (Figure 5.)

Finally, other surveys were completed in Gott's and Little Gott's Islands, but no interesting evidence was identified. Although underwater explorations were also carried out, no positive results were obtained.



Figure 4. Partial view of the dry stone oval perimeter feature.



Figure 5. *Partial view of the dry stone mound feature.*

In Conclusion

While our field work did not result in the discovery of a Basque site, we think our hypothesis is still solid. Written sources seem to be quite clear about Basque presence on the coast of Maine during the early years of the 1600s and the finding of a glass bead in a Native site in Placentia could be a proof of this.

From an archaeological point of view, our opinion is that Basque material evidence could have been invisible for researchers, as any pre-English but European artifacts could have been described just as French. In fact, we would suggest that other “French” sites, some excavated and others not yet researched, could provide new data on this subject. In consequence, a review of the collections of early Contact Period sites in Maine should be reviewed by specialized researchers in order to track the extension of trade between Natives and Basques.

Other kinds of research appear to be quite encouraging, such as checking ancient charts and place names, which has been very productive to track Basque sites on Canada’s eastern shores (Egaña Goya, 2000; Weyers, 2009). A preliminary examination of available cartography reveals the existence of suggestive toponomastics such as Biscay Pond, southeast

of Damariscotta and north of Pemaquid Point. As stated earlier, this name is clearly of Basque origin and could be an evidence of their presence even southwards of Mount Desert. At this point, the territory liable to be studied in the context of this investigation could extend to over hundreds of miles and uncountable islands on the American coasts of the Gulf. In consequence, extensive human and financial resources would be necessary to fulfill the research in a minimum extent of the area. This is the main reason this report was written, aiming to gather some attention from North American researchers and contact other investigators willing to collaborate with the above cited team.

Thus, we are confident that new written, archaeological and oral data will lead to new archaeological field work and discoveries. Apart from a necessary more exhaustive study on the unique dry stone features from Placentia Island, our team plans to survey other surrounding areas of the Penobscot Bay and Mount Desert.

In summary, while our results are not at all definitive, we think a new research perspective is now open. Frankly, we are willing to establish a transoceanic net that could improve our knowledge about this unknown part of both Basque and North American history.

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New York State

Reported by: Michael T. Lucas

Revolutionary War Period Cemetery in Lake George
[Submitted by Lisa Anderson, New York State Museum, and Charles Vandrei, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation]

Since May of last year, the New York State Museum and a group of dedicated volunteers have been working to recover human remains and associated artifacts from a Revolutionary War period cemetery in Lake George, NY. The cemetery was unearthed during the construction of an apartment building



The excavation at the Revolutionary War Period Cemetery in Lake George NY.

on the site. The partial remains of 15 individuals were previously recovered from disturbed in situ graves in February. Fragments of at least 15 more individuals have since been recovered by sifting a large spoil heap of construction soil at the site. Preliminary skeletal analysis has determined that many of the individuals were under 20 years old and at least two were children under 10 years of age. Efforts to reconstruct individuals from the fragmentary, commingled remains have been ongoing in order to reconstruct patterns of trauma, disease, nutritional, and mechanical stress. The project is led by Lisa Anderson, of the New York State Museum, and Charles Vandreï, of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Military coat buttons recovered from one burial are associated with the First Pennsylvania Battalion. This unit was raised near Philadelphia in November 1775. In January 1776, the unit was sent north to reinforce the American Army that had invaded Quebec in the fall of 1776. They arrived in Canada in time to participate in the waning engagements of the campaign and the retreat. Smallpox broke out and wrought havoc in the retreating Army. The retreated stopped at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and a general hospital was established at Lake George. Several thousand were admitted to the hospital in the summer and fall of 1776. Hundreds died. The graves at Courtland Street represent a handful of those individuals and likely represent campaign veterans and later reinforcements who fell ill.

Work has been halted since mid-March due to the pandemic. Work will resume as soon as safety conditions allow it.

Archaeological Investigations at the George and Sarah Fowler House

[Submitted by Allison McGovern, PhD, RPA, Senior Archaeologist at VHB]

Archaeologists from VHB Engineering, Surveying, Landscape Architecture and Geology, P.C. (VHB) conducted archaeological investigations at the George and Sarah Fowler House in the Freetown neighborhood of East Hampton, New York, in March 2018. The archaeological project was sponsored by the Town of East Hampton, which owns the site, in response to concerns by stakeholders that a proposed renovation to the building would disturb potential archaeological deposits. The site is an East Hampton Town Landmark. The George and Sarah Fowler House was the home of a Montaukett family from c.1885-1980. George Fowler was born at Indian Fields, the Montaukett ancestral village in Montauk, New York, around 1859. In the 1880s, as a resident in his parents' home in Indian Fields, he and his siblings were dispossessed by Arthur Benson, who purchased more than 10,000 acres of Montauk land at public auction. According to a Town restriction that accompanied the sale, Benson was expected to respect the rights of the Montaukett to live at Indian Fields in perpetuity. However, Benson employed local agents to assist him in negotiating the sale of individual Montaukett residency rights to him, in exchange for small plots of land in Freetown. Some of the Montaukett homes were moved from Montauk to Freetown (a segregated neighborhood in East Hampton Town), and the rest were burned. Based on this history, questions have developed regarding the age and history of the Fowler house: was it moved from



Fowler House c.1920. Courtesy of East Hampton Library Long Island Collection.



Electrical submersible pump identified along the south wall of the Fowler House.

Indian Fields, or moved from elsewhere in East Hampton, or built on site by Benson for Fowler?

George Fowler and his wife Sarah Horton Fowler raised their seven children in the Fowler house, and the site was home to their children, grandchildren, and their extended family through the 1980s, when the last resident of the house, Leonard Horton (George and Sara's grandson), had died. The Fowler house is significant as a material reminder of the Montaukett Indian presence. It is the only landmarked Montaukett site, and its period of significance is directly connected to the time when New York State detribalized the Montauketts. The Montauketts remain actively pursuing tribal re-recognition by New York State.

The archaeological investigations were designed to (1) recover archaeological deposits associated with the Fowler occupation of the site and (2) recover potential data on architecture, structural layout, and activity areas/features. These data would assist the Town in its plans to renovate the structure and to properly interpret the 19th through 20th century occupation of the site.

Renovation work had already begun at the site when the archaeological investigations took place, thus disturbing the perimeter of the building and obscuring evidence of builders' trenches, if they were indeed present. In addition, a brick drywell beneath the rear wall of the house had been removed by construction workers before it could be documented by archaeologists. The flooring had been removed and the floor joists were exposed by the time archaeologists arrived. Seven

units/trenches were dug between the exposed floor joists. Unit placement was distributed throughout the rooms of the first floor, and measurements for each of the units were based on accessibility (i.e., available space for excavation between floor joists). In addition to the seven excavation units, three shovel test pits were excavated in areas outside the main part of the house (one within the extension, one outside the front door, and one 15 meters west of the southwest corner of the house). Archaeological investigations recovered an archaeological assemblage (with notable evidence for children's activities and sewing) that dates to roughly c.1885-1930s. There is documentary and structural evidence of a renovation around 1940, and the installation of an asbestos shingle floor apparently sealed the archaeological deposit. The building lacked a basement or any subsurface storage, and the site was never connected to municipal water sources. Archaeological investigations revealed the installation of an electric submersible pump below a sink in the kitchen that had a pipe exiting grey water to the brick drywell; this was the only form of plumbing within the house.

Research at the site is ongoing, and stakeholder participation is encouraged through the Mapping Memories of Freetown project. Descendants and people who are interested in learning more about this site and Freetown history are encouraged to connect with "Friends of the Fowler House" on Facebook.

References:

McGovern, Allison Manfra and Anjana Mebane-Cruz 2019 Mapping Memories of Freetown: the Meanings of a Native American House in a Black Community. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology Network*, Volume 8, 2019- Issue 1-2. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21619441.2019.1650475>.



Fowler House restored. Courtesy of East Hampton Library Long Island Collection.

Maryland

Reported by: Silas D. Hurry

St. Mary's City

Due to the COVID quarantine, all summer public archaeology events have been suspended at Historic St. Mary's City.

Virginia

Reported by: Laura Masur

Next Steps for Managing Alexandria's Derelict Merchant Fleet

[Submitted by Tatiana Niculescu, MA, RPA, Archaeologist, Office of Historic Alexandria-Alexandria Archaeology]

On a cold day in January 2016, archaeologists working along the Potomac River's edge excavated the fragmentary remains of a ship at the Hotel Indigo Site (44AX229). At the time they had no way of knowing that this moment would be the beginning of a multi-year odyssey that would lead to the discovery of three more historic vessel remnants just one block south at the Robinson Terminal South Site (44AX235). Due to Alexandria's unique Archaeological Protection Code and recent large-scale development along the waterfront, we stand to learn a great deal from these sites about a number of topics including 18th century shipbuilding, the land-making process in Alexandria, and what life was like on the waterfront of this bustling port city. Since these four ship remnants were excavated, they have embarked on several unique and at times innovative preservation journeys.

The Hotel Indigo Site remnant is undergoing documentation and conservation at Texas A&M University's Conservation Research Lab (CRL). The CRL 3D laser scanned each timber and from the half a ship that remained preserved, reconstructed the lines of the full vessel. From this work, the CRL created a 1:12 scale model using 3D printed timber remnants and an extrapolated wire frame hull. This model anchors a new exhibit in the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. It is made of a combination of non-traditional (not wood) materials that help visually convey the portion of the vessel found archaeologically and the portion of the model that is an interpretation based on historic documents. The CRL is continuing the time-consuming process of conserving the ship remnant and the timbers are currently undergoing chelation. We expect it to arrive back in Alexandria in the next few years.

After excavation, Alexandria staff moved the three ship remnants from the Robinson Terminal South Site to a city facility where the timbers have been stored in pools of water to prevent deterioration. In September 2019, CRL in coordination with Alexandria Archaeology embarked on an ambitious project to digitally document, reconstruct, and model these remains for future preservation and interpretation. As of Spring 2020, documentation was nearly complete and the

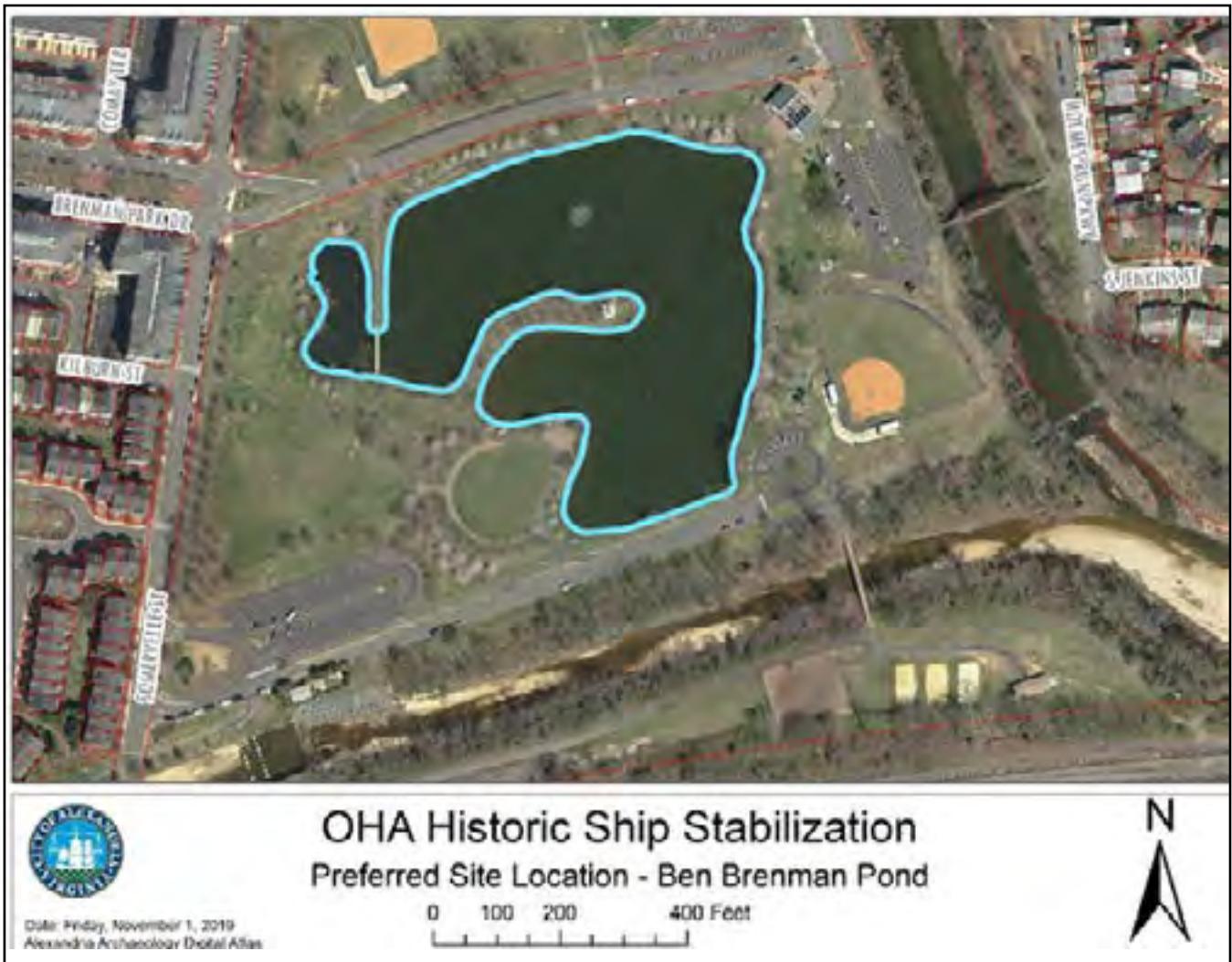


*Laser scanning a ship timber.
(Credit: Alexandria Archaeology)*

timbers almost ready for the next step of their journey.

Storing over 1000 ship timbers in above ground swimming pools at a shared city facility was a creative yet short-term, immediate solution. Alexandria Archaeology, in collaboration with city staff from the Department of Project Implementation and Transportation and Environmental Services and conservators from the Maryland Archaeological Conservation (MAC) Lab, sought a medium-term storage option for the ship remnants. The team recommended ponding many of these artifacts in Ben Brenman Pond (a stormwater pond in one of the City's popular parks). This option allows us to preserve the remains while reducing the amount of staff time needed to care for these important pieces of history and return the city facility to previous uses. This medium-term storage solution (roughly 20 years) preserves the possibility of future study and/or conservation at a later date. A few diagnostic timbers, like bows or other unique features, that may be conserved sooner will not be ponded and will instead be retained in pools of water for easier access.

Alexandria Archaeology has a long legacy of conducting community-based archaeology and this project is no differ-



This map shows Ben Brenman Pond, the recommended location for submersion. (Credit: Alexandria Archaeology)

ent. An important component of our decision-making process is reaching out to the community to provide information about the project, receive feedback, and answer questions about the proposed work. This process requires speaking with civic organizations, City commissions, and other stakeholder groups. Additionally, archaeology staff are working with the Alexandria Archaeological Commission on site interpretation and programming for the submersion location.

Submerging large waterlogged wooden archaeological collections poses a unique set of challenges. It is not a widely used preservation strategy largely because very few entities have this much waterlogged wood in their care and mobilizing the necessary resources to submerge remains is a major undertaking – akin in the eyes of other city staff to a construction project. There is some precedent from Maryland when the MAC Lab submerged the remains of the Nanticoke wreck at a pond at Jefferson Patterson Park and lessons learned during that project will be invaluable for this effort (Enright, Fulk, and Linville 2017). Reburial of archaeological materials has seen more extensive study in Europe, particularly through the RAAR project (Nystrom

et al 2009). Submerging archaeologically recovered ship timbers is a complex operation. It requires wrapping each timber in geotextile, trucking them to the pond, using machinery to unload, ferrying them out into the pond, and then using divers to submerge and fasten the timbers to geogrid located on the bottom. Once in the pond, archaeology staff, with the help of a team of divers, will check on these timbers every five years. A few timbers will be closely monitored and assessed with a wood density meter to check their condition over time. This project will provide more information on the viability of submersion for preservation.

From excavation to documentation to preservation, managing Alexandria’s derelict merchant fleet has been a massive resource investment over the past four years. The next step, ponding and selective conservation, will be no different. These ships are an important part of Alexandria’s history, literally holding up the City’s shoreline. At every step of the process, they have posed a unique set of challenges, but they have also provided us with an amazing data set for understanding the 18th century maritime world through the lens of one port city. They will also be an invaluable resource for

understanding the potential and limitations of large-scale submersion efforts for preserving archaeologically recovered waterlogged wood.

References:

Enright, Jeffrey, Travis Fulk, and Nick Linville
2017 Phase I and II Underwater Archaeology Investigations of the Nanticoke River Shipwreck (Site 18DO497) Dorchester County, Maryland, State Highway Administration Archaeological Report 489. Prepared for Skelly and Loy and Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration by SEARCH.

Nystrom, Godfrey, I., T. Bergstrand, C. Bohm, E. Christensson, C. Bjordal Gjelstrup, D. Gregory, I. MacLeod, T. Nilsson, E.E. Peacock, and V. Richards
2009 Reburial and Analysis of Archaeological Remains. The RAAR Project. Project Status and Cultural Heritage Management Implications Based on the First Preliminary Results. In *Proceedings of the 10th Annual ICOM Group on Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Conference*, Amsterdam, 10-15 September 2007, pp. 169-196.



City staff and MAC Lab conservator visit potential medium-term storage sites. (Credit: Alexandria Archaeology)



Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology

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Permission to publish E-Mail address in Newsletter/ Permission de publier l'adresse électronique en Bulletin:
 Yes / Oui No / Non

YOU MUST INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL SINCE WE HAVE MOVED TO AN ELECTRONIC ONLY VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER! (see below)

Make checks payable to CNEHA. / Établir les chèques à l'ordre du CNEHA.

The last printed edition of the Newsletter was October 2015 Newsletter (No. 92). In an effort to maintain current membership rates, the Board has voted to transition all subsequent newsletters to an electronic format that will be sent to all members via email.

Le bulletin (no. 92), celui du mois d'octobre dernier, aura été le dernier numéro imprimé. Afin de maintenir les taux d'abonnements actuels, l'exécutif a voté en faveur d'un format électronique pour les bulletins. Tous les bulletins seront donc envoyés aux membres par courriel à l'avenir.

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(1) Must send copy of current student I.D. Veuillez inclure une preuve de statut d'étudiant pour l'année courante.
 (2) For two people at the same mailing address receiving only one copy of publications. Pour deux personnes résidant à la même adresse postale – elles ne reçoivent qu'un seul exemplaire des publications.
 (3) For those who feel a primary commitment to Northeast Historical Archaeology and wish to support the work of the Council at a higher membership rate. Pour les personnes qui s'intéressent hautement à l'archéologie historique du Nord-Est américain et qui veulent aider à soutenir l'action du Conseil en versant une cotisation plus élevée.