

Future Events

March 3
1:30-2:30, 2664 Riva Road
17th and 18th-Century Ships

Historian John Wing will describe the colonial ships that traveled between continents and along Maryland's coastlines.

April 5
9:00-2:00, London Town
Public Dig Day

Lost Towns archaeologists invite the public to help screen soil looking for artifacts, take tours, and attend workshops.

April 7
1:30-2:30, 2664 Riva Road
The London Town Burial

Field Director Lisa Plumley will discuss the excavation and interpretation of the child's burial found last fall at London Town.

May 5
1:30-2:30, 2664 Riva Road
The Early Days of Lost Towns

County Archaeologist Al Luckenbach will describe early sites excavated by *Lost Towns*.

May 10
9:00-2:00, London Town
Public Dig Day

Lost Towns archaeologists invite the public to help screen soil looking for artifacts, take tours, and attend workshops.

June 14
9:00-2:00, London Town
Public Dig Day

Lost Towns archaeologists invite the public to help screen soil looking for artifacts, take tours, and attend workshops.

Letters from Lost Towns

Surprise Burial Found at London Town

Lisa Plumley

Archaeologists at London Town have been excavating postholes associated with fencelines, animal pens, and structures for several years with few surprises. This monotony ceased last fall when Jordan Swank, excavating a feature in the area of the 'Carpenter's Shop', hesitantly called me over to confer. This call for a second opinion was the first of many in the weeks and months that followed.

Some aspects of what we discovered that day are not debatable. The stain visible from the ground surface below plowzone was 3.8 feet by 1.1 feet and represented, as Jordan suspected, a grave shaft. The presence of English Brown salt-glazed stoneware in the grave shaft dates the burial to the first half of the eighteenth century. This hole was originally dug by hand to bury a small wooden coffin, which measured 3.5 feet by one foot wide. Contained within this coffin were the scant remains of a body of a child.

Only the enamel from the teeth of the child survives; the 250-year-old bones of a child generally do not survive in the ground. Based on the teeth and the size of the body, the adolescent was around six years old. At this point, the 'facts' describing the findings end and the interpretation of this information begins.

Long before I came to the Project, *Lost Towns* crew removed the plowzone covering the area lying in front of the William Brown House. Over a period of several years, Al Luckenbach and Jason Moser dissected the data of the hundreds of stains intruding upon the sterile clay, looking for patterns indicating earthenfast structures. This analysis uncovered evidence of at least three buildings, including the 'Carpenters' Shop.' These structures lined Scott Street, the main thoroughfare that led to the ferry landing. Deeds for the ownership of lot 86 – the 'Carpenters' Shop' lot – begin as early as 1707 with the familiar David Macklefish. He died and left the property to his daughter, Jane Macklefish, in 1709 who in turn sold the lot to Stephen West, Sr. in 1723. Stephen West was the second owner of Rumney's Tavern, the adjacent building. William Brown purchased the land in 1758, although he was probably renting the property for at least five



Slave traders in the Caribbean, depicted in an eighteenth-century painting



Teeth recovered from the burial at London Town

years prior. The deed from 1758 discussed a “workshop of the said William Brown,” who was a carpenter.

I pass along these names and dates not as extraneous information, but rather to provide context. The burial appears to fall within direct alignment of the structure lying on lot 86 – with a twist. It lies within the confines of the structure, indicating the child might have been buried beneath the floorboards. No one on our staff had come across anything like this, so we started researching the tradition. No European connection was found, although former Lost Towner Liz West recalled some occurrence of the practice in Guatemala. The strongest linkage to this tradition stemmed from tribes located in western Africa, including modern-day Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, and Cameroon. This custom was transplanted to Barbados and Jamaica with individuals sold into slavery. Handler and Lange, in their book *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, state that in 1788 a governor reported that “Negroes are superstitiously attached to the burial places of their ancestors and friends...It is frequent to inter a near relation under the bed-place on which they sleep...” According to Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito, *Lost Towns* historian, nearly one-third of the trade with Annapolis was with the Caribbean, almost half of which was with Barbados. The most common import coming into Anne Arundel County from Barbados was slaves. The conclusion, therefore, though circumstantial, is that the child buried beneath the floorboards of the structure at London Town was a slave.

The supposition that this was a slave child is based on the fact that the body apparently was buried under the floorboards of the structure. The teeth collected from the burial were sent to George Washington University

for study. Al talked with a couple other forensic-types, including the well-known and respected Doug Ousley from the Smithsonian. The outcome of these discussions and study is debated and therefore inconclusive, but might indicate mulatto ancestry.

Regardless of whether this individual was a slave or not, the possibilities for discussion are important. The probability of the child being a slave gives London Town an opportunity to talk about slavery within a town setting, rather than the plantation, which is the most dominant image. People often do not imagine slaves in an urban setting like London Town, where a high percentage of slaves were skilled craftsmen like carpenters. London Town docents, historians, and archaeologists will also have the opportunity to discuss the larger and hotly debated subject of whether second or third generation slaves continued to practice the African customs of their ancestors. The possibility of this individual being a slave, the tradition of burying the dead beneath the floorboards, and African influence over individuals far removed from their roots are certainly subjects that encourage lively discussions. Meanwhile, London Town will be hosting a reinterment ceremony that will celebrate the life and heritage of this child.

Lost Towns Goes to Providence

Erin Piechowiak

...Rhode Island, that is. The annual meetings of the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) were held at the Westin Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island in the middle of January. This year’s theme centered on trade and industrialization, which attracted a large crowd of archaeologists, historians, historical preservationists, anthropologists, and museum professionals from around the world. The conference gives people the chance to get together and find out what the historical archaeology field has been digging up in the past year, including where people have been, what has been found, what types of research was conducted, and new theories and methods. Many people attended this year’s conference, including an abundance of professionals, graduate students, and professors.

Seven members of our staff attended the conference. In addition to going to talks

and workshops and participating in small talk in the hotel’s bars, some of our staff gave papers at the conference, including John Kille, Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito, Lisa Plumley, and our real lost “Lost Towner,” Jason Moser. You may have caught versions of some of these papers at Monday volunteer

The Lab is Moving!

If you’ve ever been to the *Lost Towns* archaeology lab, you know that it’s a crowded and busy place. Help is on the way; the lab will soon move to upstairs until the construction of our permanent facility at London Town. So, when we’d normally be hunkered in, washing and cataloging artifacts and doing some writing, we instead find ourselves preparing for the big move. While far from spacious, our new quarters are larger than our current ones, and provide increased storage capacity.

There have been difficulties associated with this process, not the least of which has been the removal of our washing sink two weeks ago. We have had to make do as best as we are able while the finishing touches are being put on our new space. We are waiting for new locks, but in the meantime many of the boxes are packed and we anxiously await moving day.

Despite the inconveniences, we are trying to press on as usual, finishing the ongoing processing and analysis of the artifacts from this summer’s Homewood’s Lot excavations. It is always a pleasure to work with such a unique and informative collection. Once the move is completed, we expect to begin cataloging these artifacts. This is a challenging task, so volunteers with artifact and database experience are always appreciated for such an endeavor. Our hope is to include the catalog in a master database of Homewood’s Lot field records, maps, and photographs, which would make a useful analytical and educational tool.

For those interested in seeing the lab or in volunteering to do some lab work, please call the lab at (410) 222-7328 a day before you plan to come. The new lab will be located on the second floor of building 2666.

-Dave Gadsby and Sarah Andrews

lectures. All of the papers were very interesting. Mechelle's paper, entitled *London Town, Tobacco Port: Maritime Trade in Eighteenth Century Maryland*, used historical research to help define London Town in the context of colonial maritime trade. Lisa's talk, titled *Segregation of the Disenfranchised: Anne Arundel County Almshouse (ca. 1825-1910)*, deconstructed the social relationships that existed within the almshouse community using historical documents, archaeological excavations and scholastic research. These talks reflected very well on the *Lost Towns Project*, and explained much of what was going on in London Town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

John Kille's paper, called *Finding the Lost 17th-century Town of Herrington*, focused on the processes followed in order to locate and begin the study of this 'lost town.' Last but not least was the paper given by Jason Moser, entitled *For Want of Cordage: The Rise of Ropemaking and Other Chandlery Industries in the Colonial Chesapeake Bay*. He examined the development of ropewalks and other industries such as iron-making, which suggested a broad shift from consumption of British manufactured goods toward locally fashioned items. Both of these talks were very well explained, and the visual aspects of all the papers were wonderful. Good job guys!

This is the temporary end of the road for the *Lost Towns* travels. We had a lot of fun in Rhode Island, but were joyful to come back to Anne Arundel County and begin our next big adventure, the Shah property. Until next time, we keep on diggin' up the past.

Hell Froze Over the Shah Property

Lisa Plumley

The long awaited, much anticipated excavations on the Shah property finally occurred at the end of January and beginning of February. As dedicated readers of this publication will remember, first murmurings of being able to investigate the property adjacent to London Town began in the fall of 2001. Word of the owners tearing down the standing house and replacing it with another brought hope to the hearts of archaeologists that drive by the property



Digloo II - (Somewhat) Heated screening - how decadent!

everyday, wondering what secrets it contained. Frequent teasing then began, as the "any minute now" phrase was uttered every week at staff meetings. Permits needed to be issued before any work began, and other projects were halted in anticipation for the Event.

The last permit was issued over a year after the talks began and allowed us exactly three weeks to conduct the work. Luckily, the Maryland Historical Trust gave the Project an emergency grant of \$20,000 to support the work. The timing, however, could not have come at a worse time: the majority of the staff was in Providence, Rhode Island attending a professional conference; Jane Cox, the assistant County Archaeologist, was off for two weeks sailing in the Bahamas; John Kille, assistant director of the Project, had pneumonia; we had not been in contact

with the temporary staff we had on stand-by for several months; and lastly (and perhaps most importantly), the temperatures were setting records with their negative digits. Nevertheless, a team of Project staff, ~~temporary hires, and~~ extremely dedicated volunteers set out to discover the magnitudes of London Town-related clues to the past.

Over the course of two and a half weeks, this team excavated 27 5x5-foot units – 21 of which contained very little evidence of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Spread systematically over the area designated for excavation, these units told us the area was graded and therefore stripped of any London Town-related occupation layers or features. Two of these 21 units contained a shallow pit containing late nineteenth-century trash, while four more contained a concentration of oyster shells that were probably related to modern-day landscaping. The most exciting finds, however, turned up the Thursday before we were supposed to cease excavations. This is common in the archaeology world, finding what you are looking for the day before, or in many cases, the last day, of work.

Close to the standing house in the ornamental grasses, crew discovered the remnants of a late seventeenth-century structure. Key finds include the remnants



Dave Gadsby excavating bottle cache

of a hearth; a pit containing a cache of 11 onion-shaped wine bottles and the majority of a tin-glazed earthenware punch bowl; two and possibly three structural postholes with molds; and a line of smaller postmolds, indicating a wattle and daub chimney. Because of these finds, the land owners extended the excavation by three days, allowing us to salvage what we could and fill the area with frozen soil and sod.

The property held high hopes because it was once part of London Town’s acreage. It is located directly across colonial period Scott Street, the main thoroughfare that led to the popular ferry landing. Excavations on the London Town Park next to Scott Street have been extremely fruitful, as evidenced by our discoveries at Rumney’s Tavern and the Carpenter’s Shop. Documentary evidence indicates that the property once held the Black Residence, Pierpont’s Tavern, and a structure acting as the county’s courthouse from 1684 through 1695.

Many, many thanks to the *incredible* volunteers who came to assist in the excavations at the Shah property. They endured extreme temperatures and barren buckets - with no complaints and frequent encouraging smiles! There is no way to thank you enough for your commitment to Anne Arundel County Archaeology and support of the *Lost Towns Project*.

New Image of London Town Discovered

Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito

For many years now the *Lost Towns Project* has been trying to understand the historical landscape of London Town. Recently, we discovered much about the Almshouse Period (1826-1965) with excavations on the bluff of the park property. The longest phase of occupation at London Town but until recently the least studied, almshouse period investigations studied a structure that housed the black residents of the population during the first phase of the period. Research and London Town’s oral history project also re-discovered photographs of other buildings that once made up the almshouse compound, as well as images of the residents who walked its paths. Now, a mislabeled photograph helps provide more information on the Almshouse Period at London Town.



Photograph of London Town from 1899

While hunting on the internet for information on 19th-century ferry service on the Chesapeake, I stumbled upon an 1899 image of the William Brown House. At first I did not recognize the area because of its hereto-undocumented buildings, but the outline of the structure was unmistakable. The image comes from a book titled *Cruises: Mainly of the Bay of the Chesapeake* by Robert Barrie and George Berrie, Jr., published in Pennsylvania in 1909. Chapter 4, “Haunts of the Bugeye,” outlines a trip through Anne Arundel County by land and water. The author visited London Town to “stop on the way to make a view of another curious old house” – the almshouse. The park was a tourist site even then! Interestingly, the caption on the photograph reads: *Cortelyou Mansion, South River, now used as a County Almshouse*. A little genealogical research found that the Cortelyou Mansion is located in West Hempstead, Long Island, New York and was the residence of the Onderdonk Family (Dutch). It is unclear why the image of the William Brown House was called Cortelyou Mansion but it may have to do with the author’s connection with New York. “Haunts of the Bugeye” was originally published in *The Rudder*, a local New York sailing magazine.

Whatever the case, this turn of the century image depicts buildings we know very little about and provides a glimpse into the more recent past at London Town. At this point, the utility of the structures is unknown, but we believe one was a communal outhouse.

Located in lower right of the image, down by the water, is a four bay structure that appears to be a privy. An 1830 physician’s report by Dr. Marriott (Almshouse Minute Book, MSA-MS24) outlines the want of such facilities:

There should be two privies, one for the male and the other for the female patients and so placed as to be out of the sight of each other, or if they adjoin, they should be accessible by private avenues particular to each sex. This contrivance will be found to cherish delicacy in women and favor health, for I believe many of them both in private houses and public institutions prefer suffering rather than exposing themselves in a walk to the privy to the sight of our sex.

Further study and excavation will hopefully reveal the use of these structures.

The image was obtained from the original 1909 publication held at the A. bin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and was provided by Drew Algren, Reference and Special Collections Librarian. Many thanks to Drew for his assistance.

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 • Congratulations to Donna Ware, •
 • who was just named the Interim •
 • Director of London Town! •
 • We wish you success on your •
 • future endeavors •
 • while in this position! •

Chaney Foundation Continues Generous Support of *Lost Towns*

At a time when everyone is tightening their belts with apprehension during the State and County budget process, the *Lost Towns Project* received much needed support once more from the Eugene Chaney Foundation. The Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation received their generous donation of \$5,000 in early January, in support of the Moss Fund, the archaeological arm of ACT, Inc. Such support is invaluable for the project to acquire needed supplies, including items to help outfit the new laboratory space and make it a comfortable and workable facility, as well as support our hard-working interns.



As many of you may have heard, the County is working under a rather constrained budget this fiscal year and money is certainly going to be tight. The generosity of the Eugene Chaney Foundation will help *Lost Towns* through a difficult time and is much appreciated! If you'd like to support the *Lost Towns Project* through the Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, donations can be sent to ACT, Inc., attn: Moss Fund, P.O. Box 1573, Annapolis, MD 21404.

-Jane Cox

The Digitization of Our History

Jordan Swank

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to scan thousands of mounted slides into a computer database? Of course you have - who hasn't? As "the new guy" I was bestowed with this incredible opportunity to make this dream a reality.

Ever since field notes were written on cocktail napkins, *The Lost Towns Project* has been documenting their finds, staff, volunteers, and various other things (like dragonflies and feet, depending on the mood or competence of the archivist) through the lens of a SLR camera. Unfortunately slides are not the best archival medium to store history. This, like most things, can best be expressed with a trite saying, "slides, like our memories, eventually fade and then disappear behind the messy desk of time" (or Jordan's messy desk). Slides and memories are fast being replaced by the much more efficient digital camera and computer.

Lost Towns director Al Luckenbach has seen this change coming for as long as he can remember - or at least since last June when he asked me to spearhead this project. Al allocated funds to buy a fantastic slide scanner and attachment enabling someone (me) to scan up to fifty slides at a time. The

ultimate goal of this project is to have all information about one site on just a couple of CDs. This includes all scanned photographs, digital pictures, papers and publications, and eventually field notes. Upon the completion of the project the ease and speed with which one could browse and search the site database will be invaluable. Not only will all information be archivally stable, copies will be stores in several secure areas like a safety deposit box or Al's garage. *The Lost Towns Project* is well on the way to our bright digital future, and I am happy to help take us there! When I scan the last slide in about forty years, we'll finally be there...

Lost Towns Intern Update: Winter 2003

Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito

Our most recent interns may be gone but they are not forgotten! Here is an update. Brad Nolen successfully completed his semester as part of Southern High School's Professional Internship Program. On January 27, 2003, Brad made an oral presentation that outlined his experience with us. His PowerPoint display described what he learned about archaeology while on his internship, as well as *the Lost Towns Project's* organizational chart, daily activities,

and his work in the archaeology lab. At the end of this demonstration, he informed the group that his experiences with the *Lost Towns Project* had resulted in a desire to pursue either archeology or forensics during his college education. Brad received the most questions (to his chagrin) because everyone thought his internship was so interesting. He made us proud!

Lauren Franz also finished her internship. She graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in December. In early January she accompanied us to Providence, Rhode Island to attend the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), her first professional conference. This experience was undoubtedly great preparation for her own upcoming paper presentation at the 33rd meeting of the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference (MAAC) in March. Lauren will present a paper on her work this fall with Stephen Bilicki (with the State of Maryland's Maritime Archaeology Program), titled *Bodkin-Gateway to Baltimore: Survey for Historical Significant Chesapeake Bay Vernacular Vessel Types*. In the meanwhile, she is looking for an internship (or job) for the summer while she applies for graduate school. Lauren was a great addition to the *Lost Towns* family and she will be missed!



Mechelle and Brad all smiles in the lab

Who makes up the Lost Towns Project?

Al Luckenbach.....Director/County Archaeologist
Jane Cox.....Assistant County Archaeologist/Assistant Director, Technology
David Gadsby.....Lab Director
John Kille.....Assistant Director, Operations/Grant Administration
Lisa Plumley.....Field Director
Donna Ware.....Architectural Historian
Sarah Andrews.....Lab Specialist
Carl Gehrman.....3-D Specialist
Carolyn Gryczkowski.....Lab Specialist/Curator
Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito.....Historian/Archaeologist
Tony Lindauer.....Historian/Archaeologist
Sherri Marsh.....Assistant Architectural Historian
Erin Piechowiak.....Archaeologist/ Volunteer and Education Coordinator
Shawn Sharpe.....Archaeologist/Conservation Specialist
Jordan Swank.....Archaeologist/Lab Specialist

Letters from Lost Towns is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November by Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project*. Contributors consist of *Lost Towns* staff and volunteers. To be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact Lisa Plumley, Office of Environmental and Cultural Programs, 2664 Riva Road, MS 6401, Annapolis, MD, 21401 or call (410) 222-7441. Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project* is supported by the Anne Arundel County government, in cooperation with the Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, Inc. and the London Town Foundation, Inc.



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