



Letters from Lost Towns

Winter 2006

17th -Century Tobacco Box Found at Swan Cove

~ Shawn Sharpe

Dennis Curry of the Maryland Historical Trust discovered one of the most interesting artifacts found during this year's field season. Recovered from a trash pit at Swan Cove during the ASM field school was a copper tobacco box lid. In addition to being a rare find in and of itself, this box lid was inscribed, *Richard Bennison 1678*. The date tells us that the pit where it was found must have been filled after 1678. Further, artifacts dating after 1700 were common in the overlying plowzone, yet nothing in the pit post-dates 1700. Thus, the pit was filled sometime in the last two decades of the 17th century.

So who was this Richard Bennison? The name had never come up in *Lost Towns* archival research. What was his tobacco box doing in a pit at Swan Cove? Was Bennison friends with the Drue family or with Henry Merriday? With this new Providence character to investigate, several documents relating to Richard Bennison have come to light.



Richard Bennison's Tobacco Box Lid, dated 1678.

Richard Bennison lived in Anne Arundel County in the 1680s, and in 1684 he acquired Slaid's Hope, a tract of land just north of Swan Cove, near present day Route 50. Bennison died in 1687, leaving all his belongings to his wife Susan and his daughter-in-law Mary Ball. This information, brief as it is, helps us to better understand the people living in Anne Arundel County during the 17th century. No other Bennison has shown up in the county records so it would seem that Richard was the first and last of that name to live here. All that remains of him are a handful of records in the Maryland State Archives and his copper tobacco box. Which leads us to the next obvious question; does his home site survive somewhere in St. Margaret's?

Future Events

2006 Public Dig Days

May 6, July 8, and Sept. 9, 2006

9:00 - 2:00, London Town

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

Monday Lecture Series

Come to the Anne Arundel County Heritage Center to stay abreast of our most recent archaeological finds and research. See page 3 for details.

2006 Conferences

See page 6 for a list of upcoming archaeology conferences in the region and across the Nation.

Lost Towns Gear :

T-shirts, Hats Now Available

Contact John Kille or Erin Cullen for the latest in *Lost Towns* gear!

2006 Archaeology Calendar

It's only January!

Get yours before its too late!

There are still a few 2006 *Lost Towns* Calendar's available. Contact John Kille at 410-222-7441 or check out the *Lost Towns* website at www.losttowns.com

Swan Cove: The 2005 Field Session in Maryland Archeology

~Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito

Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project* hosted this year's *Annual Tyler Bastian Field Session in Maryland Archeology* at Swan Cove (18AN934) from September 16 to 25, 2005. The site represents two periods of occupation; that of Emanuel Drue (ca. 1650-1669) and Henry Merriday (to ca. 1721). Excavations focused upon continued plowzone removal, and upon excavation of two large pit features, one from each period of occupation.

It was an excellent turnout this year with 61 registered participants. *Lost Towns* staff and ASM'ers were divided into three groups, one for each feature complex, and a third for the field lab. Most everyone took turns with sod removal, unit documentation, feature excavation and screening for artifacts. Many chose to stay out of the sun and heat while working in the lab processing the many finds.

Jane Cox oversaw the excavation of feature 18, a cellar presumed to be from the later Merriday occupation. ASM'ers re-opened the feature, half of which was removed in 2002. Everyone took turns "in

the hole," removing nearly five feet of fill dirt. That exercise took two whole days!

Efforts proved worthwhile as the domestic Merriday cellar produced faunal remains (animal jaws, teeth, bones, oysters and small fish bones), along with varied late 17th century ceramics, a fork, a spoon, a set of dividers, scissors, and part of an iron kettle.

A major accomplishment of this field session was gaining a better understanding of the Merriday structure. Plowzone units were removed, revealing two structural posts, four supporting posts, and a burned hearth area. These features suggest the Merriday home was an 18 x 30 foot building with a central chimney, and of course, a substantial cellar pit.

Shawn Sharpe and his crew worked on the western side of the site within the Drue complex of features (including features 25 and 51). This area dates to the Drue occupation and this year's finds were markedly more domestic in nature than the past field session at Swan Cove. Pipes, along with an abundance of North Devon Sgraffito and a spoon were discovered. This

year's excavation did not seem to produce as much kiln debris as the southern section of the site.

Interesting pipe-related industrial items included two pieces of brass wire used to make bores in the pipes. One was found still lodged in place in a white Drue pipe stem.

Feature 51 revealed the most exciting find of the session: an oval shaped tobacco tin, engraved with the name "*Richard Bennison 1678.*" Another wonderful find was a brass "seal top" spoon. Its maker's mark is being scrutinized by the *Lost Towns* lab for provenience.

There were several prehistoric finds at Swan Cove this year, including a small gorget fragment. Points (including a "Fishtail" type) and debitage were found among the domestic fill in feature 18. Low-fired red earthenware, usually associated with the Late Woodland, was also found in feature 18.

Once again, the annual ASM field school was a great success. The *Lost Towns Project* thanks everyone who participated this session and we hope to see all of you back out in the field soon.



Tobacco pipe with brass wire lodged inside



Merriday Cellar, F18 with artifacts in situ.

VOLUNTEER EDUCATION

Colonial Archaeology in the Chesapeake

2006 Historic London Town Winter Lecture Series

Hosted by Donna Ware, Director, London Town Foundation
Moderated by Al Luckenbach, Director, Lost Towns Project

January 31st – David Muraca, Ph.D. (Washington's Ferry Farm)
What Archaeology Can Teach Us about the Past.

February 7th – Wayne Clark, M.A. (Maryland Historical Trust)
The John Smith Project.

February 14th – Dennis Pogue, Ph.D. (Mount Vernon)
Archaeology and Reconstruction at Washington's Distillery.

February 21st – C. Jane Cox, M.A. (Lost Towns Project)
A Decade of Archaeology at London Town.

February 28th – Julia King, Ph.D. (Jeff/Patt Park & Museum)
Comparative Archaeology of the 17th-Century Chesapeake.

Lectures will be held at Historic London Town and Gardens in Edgewater, MD at 10 am. To RSVP or for directions, contact Nancy Nelson or Eve Huntington at 410-222-1919.

Lost Towns "Monday" Lecture Series

March 27th – Mark Barron (Lost Towns Project & UMCP)
Archaeology of Quakers in Anne Arundel County.

April 24th – Stephen Israel, M.A. (ASM, Inc.)
Researching Ten Hills: A 1910 Neighborhood in Catonsville/Baltimore.

May 22nd – Carolyn Gryczkowski (Lost Towns Project)
The History of Buttons and their Manufacture from the London Town Almshouse Period.

Lectures will be held at 2664 Riva Road, in the Anne Arundel County Heritage Complex from 1 to 2 pm (Chesapeake Room, 2nd floor). Contact Erin Cullen for directions at 410-222-7441 or by email at erncullen@yahoo.com.

Lost Towns Project Collaborations

~ Jane Cox

The *Lost Towns Project* has been working with other Chesapeake scholars this year on two very exciting projects; a collaboration with the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian, and a National Endowment for the Humanities research project.

"Written in Bone": Stories of Life and Death in the Colonial Chesapeake is an exhibit proposed for installation at the Smithsonian NMNH in October 2007 that will focus on how forensic science expands our understanding of life in the 17th century and unveils untold stories of those who lived (or died) through the hardship of colonial life. (Think 'CSI' for history buffs!)

It will incorporate burials from the most formal and upper class, like the lead coffins from St. Mary's City, to those from Jamestown, Virginia, to our own Leavy Neck cellar burial. The rather unconventional burial of an indentured servant at Leavy Neck will figure prominently in the exhibit as an example of the hardships that the servant class in the colonial Chesapeake experienced. There is even a chance that our Leavy Neck man will have a facial reconstruction. Stay Tuned!

"A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture" is an exciting foray that has brought together copious data from eighteen colonial sites in the Tidewater region. The project consolidated data from these sites into

A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture

a cooperative study funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Virginia Dept of Historic Resources



A New Look at Early Sites in the Chesapeake

Using detailed comparisons of the archaeological assemblages from 18 early sites in the Chesapeake, this project explores the material conditions of culture contact, plantation development and organization, the rise of slavery, and consumer behavior. Comparable artifact databases have been created for the 18 sites, and analysis of artifact distributions has provided great insight into differences and similarities.

In the pages of this site you will find detailed summaries of the sites, with artifact distribution maps, functional analysis by feature, and images of important or unusual artifacts. All data, including the artifact databases, can be downloaded for the use of other scholars.



contributing institutions | project staff | credits | contact us | copyright notice

Check out the website at <http://www.pastportal.com/compcolculture/index.htm>

Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project includes contributions by researchers from Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project*, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, George Washington's Fredericksburg Foundation, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Monticello, and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities: Jamestown Rediscovery Project.

Conferences Attended this Fall

~Cara Fama

Representatives from the *Lost Towns Project* attended two conferences this Fall, namely the Council for Northeastern Historical Archaeology (CNEHA) and "Conservation of Archaeological Materials: current trends and future directions."

CNEHA was held in Trenton, New Jersey, in October. Archaeologists from Northeastern States and Canada presented a variety of information; everything from lead shot to punch bowls. In a session on colonial taverns, Mechelle

Kerns-Nocerito presented a paper titled, "Rumney's Tavern and Freeman's Ordinary: A Comparative study of two 18th-Century taverns in Anne Arundel County, MD," written by Kerns, Fama and Luckenbach. The paper was well received and inspired interesting questions from researchers who are working on tavern sites.

"Conservation of Archaeological Materials" was hosted by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and included conservators, archaeologists and collections managers

from many countries. Caralyn Fama presented her plans to implement an archival system for the *Lost Towns Project* archaeological documents. The conference featured conservation efforts to protect artifacts from many different types of sites, from ancient sites in Egypt to protecting American Civil War fort sites in Florida that have been damaged in recent years by hurricanes. Cara's paper will likely be published with the conference proceedings in the coming months.

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a publicly accessible website, developed with researchers in mind.

Now, when we want to compare our finds here in Anne Arundel County with those at comparable 17th- or early 18th-Century sites, we simply go to the database and search for select artifacts. Jane Cox and Cara Fama will be presenting research conducted using this new resource at the March MAAC conference. (See pg. 6)

Colonial Wine Bottle Seals from Providence

~ Cara Fama

Wine bottle seals are a unique diagnostic artifact that often creates a buzz of excitement with its discovery, as bottle seals may display initials, a date, or symbols of a coat of arms or profession. Bottle seals are decoration for wine bottles, and as such, reflects the status of the individuals who could pay for that type of personalization. To create a bottle seal, a blob of molten glass would be applied to the shoulder area of a bottle and then pressed flat with a decorative stamp – much like wax seals are formed. This step took careful timing; the bottle maker must stamp the glass after it has cooled enough to keep from sliding out of place, but before it hardens beyond the point of using the stamp.

The wine bottle seals shown here represent the initials and symbols of prominent individuals in 18th century Anne Arundel County. Starting with the top row, and from left to right, we have the seals of Charles



Bottle Seals featured in the 2006 *Lost Towns* Calendar

Carroll, Daniel of St. Thomas Jennifer, Thomas Homewood, and Amos Garrett. The last two seals are currently unidentified. As you can see, seals range in style from standard block letters to intricate coat of arms designs. While none of these seals feature dates, as some seals do, identification of particular individuals can be narrowed down by the context of an archaeology dig and archival research.

Exhibiting Archaeology at the Historic London Town Visitor Center

~ John Kille

In the fall of 2006, visitors to the new museum facility at Historic London Town and Gardens will have the opportunity to stand face to face with many of the artifacts excavated by the *Lost Towns Project* over the last two decades. Al Luckenbach, Donna Ware, John Kille, and Cara Fama have spent the last year working closely with Knowtis Design of Alexandria, Virginia creating exciting interpretive displays detailing London Town's rich history, from prehistoric times through the colonial period to the present day.

In case you have not heard, this newly constructed facility is innovative in that the entire exhibit area is located underground, within the



The London Town Museum
Exhibit Gallery, December 2005

shell of a former wastewater treatment plant. As visitors descend the stairway to the below-ground exhibit area, they will literally be transported back in time and experience how archaeologists unearthed discoveries related to the Town. The facility also features a first floor state-of-the-art archaeology lab and orientation area, as well as a lower level classroom that will serve the regular education program of the site.

The new exhibit design is being built around several broad themes, including archaeology, transportation, and the Chesapeake Bay. The physical layout of the space is arranged to provide visitors with an introduction to prehistory and the

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The New Lab Needs You!

**The Lost Towns Lab
will be opening in
March 2006... but we
still don't have
chairs!**

**We are looking for
your help to furnish
the new lab with fur-
niture, computers,
shelves and supplies.**

**Any level of financial
support will help and
your donations are
tax-deductible**

Donations can be sent to:

**Anne Arundel County
Trust for Preservation, Inc
PO Box 1573
Annapolis, MD 21401**



Laboratory in December 2005, we look forward to opening in March

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Upcoming Conferences in 2006

**January 11-15, 2006: Society for Historical Archaeology
Sacramento, California**

"Life on the Edge: Historical and Underwater Archaeology"

* Mechelle Kems-Nocerito is chairman and a presenter in the general session entitled, "What Does it All Mean? Pots, Shaving Mugs, Mail, and the Like: How Artifacts and Historical Research Can Help us Explain the Past."

www.archaeocommons.org/sha2006

**March 23-26, 2006: Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Conference
Virginia Beach, Virginia**

"Terrestrial and Underwater Archaeology in the Mid-Atlantic Region"

* Jane Cox will give a talk on "Locally Made Tobacco Pipes in the Colonial Chesapeake: A Comparative Study."

* Cara Fama will talk about "The Lost Towns Project Archaeology Archives: Preserving the Records of a Destructive Science at a Small Institution."

www.maacmidatlanticarchaeology.org/conference.htm

**April 20-22, 2006: Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference
Baltimore, Maryland**

The goal of MARAC is to provide archival advocacy and education, for archivists and other keepers of the historical record throughout their careers.

www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/conferences/conferences.html

**These conferences are open to all.
Check out the websites and we hope to see you there!**

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Providence Settlement, prior to entering the area where London Town's birth, life, death and reconstruction will be discussed. Within this framework, individual sections will discuss many topics, particularly London Town's relation to tobacco and international trade, the diversity of town life, and the buildings that dotted its landscape over three centuries.

A wealth of archaeological artifacts (or "assets" as they are called by exhibit designers) will illustrate

these stories. We will be pulling many important finds from storage, including prehistoric artifacts from the Dick and Marjorie Johnson collection; personal effects and architectural items from the Providence Settlement; clay tobacco pipes and kiln furniture from Swan Cove; ceramics and glassware from the Rumney/West Tavern; and many other items from excavations at London Town. Several displays in the exhibit area will be interactive, with animated reconstructions of a pe-

riod tavern scene and Emanuel Drue's pipe kiln.

While these new exhibits will display a wide range of priceless historical resources, they ultimately reflect the hard work, dedication, and commitment of thousands of volunteers, school children, and families who have supported the *Lost Towns Project* over the years. We look forward to seeing each of you at the grand opening after the exhibits are completed, and hope you will consider the new facility "your" museum.

The Intern Files: Where Are They Now?

Jessie Grow

~ Lauren Franz

As the *Lost Towns Project* celebrates its tenth year, we began to reflect on the many interns (both high school and college) with whom we have had the pleasure to work. Usually, our interns spend a few months learning about archaeology from the *Lost Towns* team, then go on to finish school and eventually get jobs in the field of archaeology. Some, like Mechelle Kerns, Jeannette Agro, and myself, continue on with the Project on a professional basis. We thought we'd begin a newsletter series to track down a few of the ninety-some interns who have worked with us over the years.

Our first featured "ex-intern" is one who began with the project when she was still in high school. Jessica Grow came to the *Lost Towns Project* as an official intern during her sophomore year in high school (1999). She had been out to our public Dig Days and was always enthusiastic about archaeology. Her internship included both

field and lab experience but she showed a particular skill for working with school groups at London Town. In the fall of 2000, as a senior in high school, Jessie came back to us, completing an independent study internship on the vassalization of 17th- and 18th-century artifacts from Homewood's Lot (18AN871). After graduation, she went off to Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania, returning for a brief visit in 2004 as a volunteer during her summer break.

Jessie graduated from Mercyhurst in May, 2005 with a B.A. in anthropology and a minor in history. This past summer, Jessie was a "shovel bum" for a local contract firm, Applied Archaeology and History Associates. Jessie will begin coursework at the University of Maryland College Park this fall working towards a Master's in Applied Anthropology. Unlike so many students right out of college,



Former *Lost Towns* Intern, Jessie Grow

she knows exactly what she wants to do. Ms. Grow is going into Public Archaeology, incorporating public interest, and education in archaeology and history. She says, "above all I want to be an archaeologist." She is also hoping to acquire a Historic Preservation Certificate, to learn the legal issues associated with archaeology and the preservation of historic sites. In short, she said, "I want to do what Erin does...work with volunteers and school kids at London Town." We have no doubt that Jessie will accomplish just that and so much more.

How do I get involved?

Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project* is a team of professional archaeologists and historians assisted by volunteers and interns. Field, lab and archival opportunities are always available.

Field days vary depending on the weather and particular projects. Call Erin at (410) 222-7441 for information and schedule.

The lab (located at 2666 Riva Road, 2nd floor) is open Monday through Friday from 9 am - 4 pm. Call the lab phone, (410) 222-7328 for more information.

Tax-deductible donations can be made to the Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation (ACT), P.O. Box 1573, Annapolis, MD 21401. Please note "*Lost Towns Project*" in any correspondence.

Letters from Lost Towns is published three times a year 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 Erin Cullen, Office of Environmental and Cultural Resources, 2664 Riva Road, MS 6402, 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.

Newsletter edited by Lauren Franz

Who makes up the Lost Towns Project?

Al Luckenbach.....Director/County Archaeologist

Jane Cox.....Assistant County Archaeologist

John Kille.....Assistant Director, Operations/Grant Administration

Cara Fama.....Lab Director

Donna Ware.....Architectural Historian

Carolyn Gryczkowski.....Lab Specialist

Tony Lindauer.....Historian/Equipment Manager

Sherri Marsh..... Architectural Historian

Erin Cullen.....Archaeologist/Education and Volunteer Coordinator

Lauren Franz.....Archaeologist/Intern Coordinator/ Newsletter Editor

Shawn Sharpe.....Field Director/ Conservation Specialist

Jeannette Agro.....Research Associate

John Rouse.....3-D Specialist

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