

ALEXANDRIA  
ANTIQUITY  
1984

ALEXANDRIA ANTIQUITY

1984

Edited by

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and

Pamela J. Cressey

Alexandria Archaeology  
Office of Historic Alexandria  
City of Alexandria, Virginia



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# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

*301 King Street*

*Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

*703-838-4500*

All-America City

CHARLES E. BEATLEY, JR.  
MAYOR

February 21, 1985

The City of Alexandria is a community where history is held in high regard by the citizens and city officials. When the 300 and 400 Blocks of King Street were being re-developed as part of the City's urban renewal program artifacts were collected from the eighteenth and nineteenth century wells. This was the beginning of what became the Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program.

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission is the citizen's board which provides guidance and support to the Archaeology Program. The members of this commission, along with professional staff and volunteers, have made a city-wide contribution to understanding and preserving Alexandria's heritage. The chronology in this publication traces the development of this program, the preservation measures instigated by the Commission, and the archaeological projects completed by the professional staff.

It is appropriate that the publication of this volume coincides with the tenth anniversary of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission. The reader will find in this monograph not only a history of Alexandria Archaeology, but also a sample of the elements which have made this program such a great success. These elements include the interest of citizens in preserving the City's heritage as demonstrated by the active volunteer program, the leadership and vision that the Archaeological Commission provides, and the dedication of the professional staff in bringing archaeology to the public.

Let us join in the celebration of the Alexandria Archaeology Commission's ten years of outstanding service to the City. Thanks to the commission members, the archaeological staff, and the innumerable volunteers, Alexandria Archaeology is an example for other cities to follow.

Sincerely

*Chuck Beatley*  
Charles E. Beatley, Jr.  
Mayor

*"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"*



## THE ALEXANDRIA ASSOCIATION

The Alexandria Association for Restoration and Preservation heartily congratulates the Alexandria Archaeological Commission on the celebration of its Tenth Anniversary. We are pleased in this connection to be able to underwrite this valuable new publication, and anticipate other opportunities for cooperation.

We have been deeply interested in the archaeological program in the city since it was begun about twenty years ago. History is never fully written. Since the Commission was formed in 1975, the Association has had an official representative on it, and we have received regular reports on your expanding and developing program. We are particularly interested at this time in the waterfront project as the promotion of parks and beautification of the waterfront is one of the goals to which our Association is firmly committed.

With best wishes,

  
Wilton C. Corkern, Jr.  
President



This volume is  
dedicated to  
John K. Pickens  
whose concern for Alexandria's  
heritage has made  
Alexandria Archaeology  
a reality

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The  
Alexandria Archaeological  
Commission

1985  
Commission Members

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Melanie J. Biermann	Vivienne Mitchell
Wilton C. Corkern, Jr.	Jean L. Rengers
William J. Dickman	Dudley S. Slate
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Diane G. McConnell	Frederick Tilp
Nicholas F. Veloz	





Volunteer of the Year  
1978-1984

\* \* \*

An annual award to the volunteer(s) who  
have contributed the greatest amount of  
their time to the City of Alexandria through  
Alexandria Archaeology  
\* \*

Philip Erickson  
1984

John Janney and Theodore McCord, Jr.  
1983

John Heideman  
1982

Peggy Weiss and Richard Wheeler  
1981

Sara Revis  
1980

Eugenia Luckman  
1979

Charles Tenney  
1978



## INTRODUCTION

This is the first of a series of Alexandria Archaeology reports to the community. Alexandria Antiquity 1984 is designed to answer questions which volunteers and visitors to our public laboratory frequently ask: What is it like conducting archaeology in such a public manner? Why do people volunteer? How do commissioners, professionals and volunteers interact to create Alexandria Archaeology? How did the program start? How do archaeologists communicate with the community? What did you find out about the Courthouse Site? Was that you digging on Royal Street and what could have been in that vacant lot? How do archaeologists go about studying a city?

The publication of Alexandria Antiquity 1984 arrives at an important date in the history of archaeology in Alexandria. February 25, 1985 marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission through City Council Resolution 371. It is a fitting occasion on which to initiate the community reports.

This volume is composed of five sections. A chronology of events and projects which have contributed to Alexandria Archaeology is presented first. Complimenting the chronology is a group of photographs that highlight these activities. The second section includes updates on projects in which more than 2500 volunteers have participated between 1977 and 1984.

The third section incorporates seven papers which were originally presented at the symposium, "Archaeology in the Community." It was organized by Pamela Cressey for the 1982 annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The intention of the symposium was to demonstrate to a national group of archaeologists how a community program operates through papers delivered by individuals representing all segments of Alexandria Archaeology. Archaeological Commission members, volunteers of different ages and motivations, and staff discussed their views of community archaeology from distinctive perspectives. The wording of these papers reflects the oral format with which they were delivered. It is retained in this volume to convey the tone of the symposium and the individuality of participants.

The fourth section of this volume consists of three papers written by volunteers relating their research. Many Alexandria Archaeology volunteers have amassed valuable information on specialized topics. The publication of such findings increases their usefulness for others. One paper describes the development of the current system of faunal analysis as it has been created by two volunteers of long standing. The following paper employs this faunal system to discuss what Alexandrians ate based upon bones excavated from several sites. The third paper chronicles important events in Alexandria's Potomac River military defenses in the eighteenth century. This information was gathered during a two year study of the City's waterfront history aimed at locating important areas for archaeological investigation.

Finally a bibliography of Alexandria Archaeology papers and publications is included in this volume. It is not intended as a listing of sources on Alexandria history. The bibliography is a compilation of papers presented by Alexandria Archaeology staff at professional meetings, written by students and volunteers, prepared by special consultants, or published by either the City of Alexandria or others. All papers are available through or on file at Alexandria Archaeology.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Alexandria Association in the publication of Alexandria Antiquity 1984.

S.J.S. and P.J.C.





## ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY: A CHRONOLOGY

This chronology is an outline of the major events which led to the establishment of an archaeology program for the City of Alexandria. It also documents the projects which have been undertaken by the program. The names of all the people who have contributed to Alexandria Archaeology are not related here in the interest of brevity. The results of their efforts are the substance of this listing.

- 1961 Dorothy Starr persuades the City Council to purchase Fort Ward and restore the northwest bastion. As part of this work the first archaeological investigation was conducted and report prepared.
- 1965 Citizens, led by John K. Pickens, arrange for the Smithsonian Institution to undertake rescue excavation work in the urban renewal areas of the 300, 400, and 500 Blocks of King Street. An archaeological laboratory is established in the Torpedo Factory, 201 N. Union Street and Richard Muzzrole serves as rescue archaeologist.
- 1971 Jean Keith forms the "Committee of 100," whose members donate funds monthly to support continued rescue archaeology after the Smithsonian ends its involvement.
- 1973 City Council establishes a city archaeologist staff position which is filled by Pamela J. Cressey in 1977.
- 1975 The Alexandria Archaeological Commission is established by City Council Resolution No. 371.
- 1977-1978 The south side of the 500 Block of King Street is excavated yielding thousands of artifacts representing the household possessions of middle class Alexandrians. The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (VHLC) supports the 500 Block King Street Project with a series of four grants (1978-1984) funding excavation, artifact analysis and conservation, plus interpretation of the research.
- 1978-1981 The Alexandria Regional Preservation Office is created through VHLC funding as an adjunct to the Alexandria Archaeology Program; this office carries out site preservation and survey work with a final goal being a preservation plan for the City.
- 1979 The Alexandria Archaeology Research Museum is established in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union Street. The first exhibit interprets the 500 Block King Street findings and is entitled "Three Households."

- 1979 The Alexandria Canal Lock and Pool No. 1 are located archaeologically and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. This is the beginning of the Alexandria Waterfront Project designed to study historic waterfront structures and activities. Excavation at the Carlyle-Dalton Wharf (1982), archaeological survey of Jones Point Park (1984), and the study of Alexandria's maritime history (1984) are all included in this project.
- 1979 Excavation of the nineteenth-century Afro-American neighborhood, "The Bottoms," consisting of the blocks to the east of the Alfred Street Baptist Church begins. This initiates the Alexandria Afro-American Neighborhood Project, which undertakes to define and study free black life in Alexandria.
- 1980 Excavation of the Coleman site, 418-422 S. Royal Street, in the nineteenth-century Afro-American neighborhood, "Hay-ti," begins. Fieldwork on this site is continued in the summers of 1981 and 1983. The VHLC supports the Alexandria Afro-American Neighborhood Project which focuses on the Coleman Site.
- 1981 Proposal is made to City Council by the Archaeological Commission for the City to assume stewardship of Jones Point Park from the Department of Interior.
- 1981 The Archaeological Commission proposes to City Council that a memorial to Margaret Brent, original owner of the site of Alexandria, be established at Jones Point Park.
- 1981-1984 The National Endowment for the Humanities funds the Alexandria City Survey Project. This project is designed to delineate historic neighborhoods (c. 1790-1910) and identify differences in material culture. Documentary, archaeological, architectural, and oral history sources are used in studying how the parts of the historic city relate to one another.
- 1982 Alexandria Canal Lift Lock and Pool No. 1 are uncovered with funding by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Maritime Preservation Program, in order to provide information essential for planning their restoration.
- 1982 First Alexandria Waterfront Forum held with funding provided by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy. Entitled, "The Alexandria Waterfront Forum: Confrontation and Consensus," papers are presented on the historic land use of this area and future plans for preservation and development. A public discussion follows. This forum which is held in conjunction with the Red Cross Waterfront Festival, is an annual event.
- 1982 Alexandria Archaeology moves out of the Torpedo Factory and the Museum closes in preparation for Torpedo Factory renovation. Staff and architects design new facilities to be in the new Torpedo Factory Art Center.

- 1984 In March the new Alexandria Archaeology public laboratory and offices open in the newly renovated Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street.
- 1984 Formal announcement is made by Savage/Fogarty Co., Inc. of the plans for restoration of the Alexandria Canal Tide Lock according to professional standards as part of the TransPotomac Canal Center Project.
- 1984 All artifacts and field records from excavations at the Slave Pen, 1315 Duke Street, are donated to Alexandria Archaeology by the property owner, Mr. and Mrs. J. Peter Dunston.







Volunteers working in the Torpedo Factory with artifacts recovered from King Street urban renewal blocks.



Eighteenth-century handpainted creamware bowl, restored following recovery from a well behind Arell's Tavern in Market Square, 300 Block of King Street.



Archaeologists and visitors at the excavation of a well/privy at the Courthouse Site on the 500 Block of King Street.



China trade porcelain tea service (c.1800) excavated from a well/privy at 522-524 King Street, as part of the 500 Block King Street Project.





Volunteer Jan Herman restoring a musket, manufactured c. 1822, which was recovered from a well/privy at the Courthouse Site on the 500 Block of King Street.



Bruce Weindruch, educating Alexandria school children on the purpose and ethics of archaeological investigation in the Alexandria Archaeological Research Museum.





Discovery of a wall section of Alexandria Canal Lock No.1 (or Tidelock) in 1979 in order to nominate the site to the National Register.



View of the Alexandria Canal Lock (center) and Pool No. 1 (center foreground) exposed by archaeological excavation in 1982 in order to determine potential for restoration.



The eastern end of the Carlyle-Dalton wharf built in 1759 and discovered under the 100 Block of Cameron Street in 1982.



Ben Brenman, chairman of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission speaking at the second annual Waterfront Forum 1983.





Laura Henley with Howard University students and Alexandria Archaeology volunteers excavating in "The Bottoms" neighborhood as part of the Afro-American Project in 1979.



Excavation of a stable/outbuilding at the Coleman site, located in the nineteenth-century free black neighborhood, "Hayti," by George Washington University students in 1980.

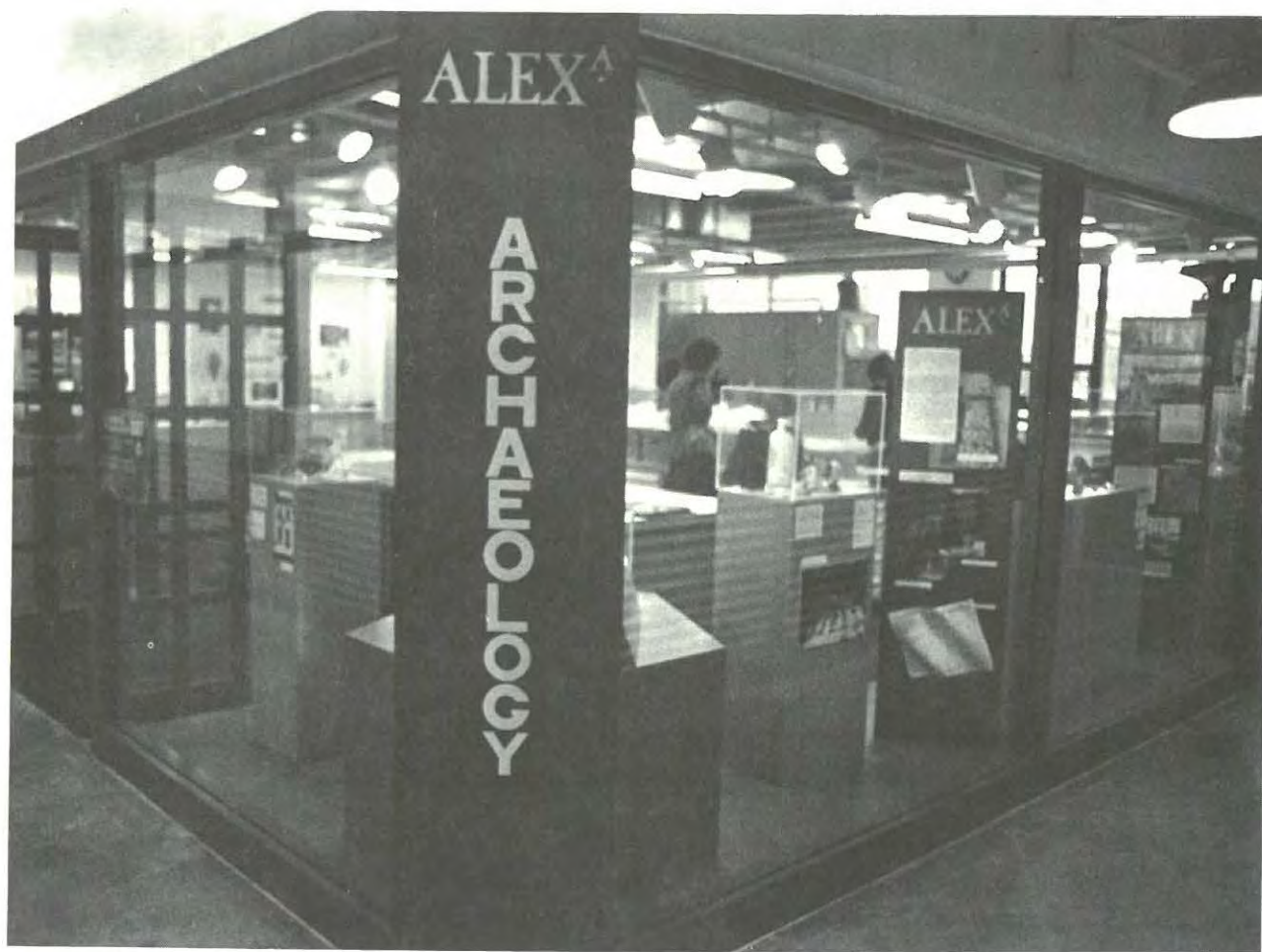




Urban archaeology at its best--volunteers excavating through a brick driveway during the City Survey Project in 1984.



Volunteer, Ken Ward, analyzing Tildon Easton Kiln artifacts in the new Alexandria Archaeology laboratory, specially designed during the remodeling of the Torpedo Factory Art Center.



The Alexandria Archaeology laboratory designed to encourage the sharing of archaeological research methods with the public, opened in March 1984.



## ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT SUMMARIES

### The King Street Project

Alexandria's commercial corridor, King Street, was the original focus of archaeological work in the City. Initiating in the mid-1960's with urban renewal, the 300, 400, and 500 blocks facing King Street have been archaeologically investigated. The artifacts recovered from these blocks span more than 200 years of Alexandria's history and form the nucleus of the Alexandria Archaeology Collection. Items associated with houses and shops of Alexandria china and glass merchants, butchers, doctors, bakers, druggists, tavernkeepers and grocers have been identified and catalogued. A wide assortment of ceramic dinnerware sets, Alexandria-made stoneware and redware kitchen jars, animal bones and seeds from discarded food, bottles, stemmed wine glasses, shoes, clothing, sewing implements, and toys form the King Street artifact assemblage.

Most of the artifacts from the urban renewal blocks were rescued from destruction, carefully catalogued, and reconstructed into whole vessels. The last block to be developed, however, provided the opportunity for systematic archaeological excavations in 1977 and 1978. With the support of grants from the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and the assistance of approximately 1200 volunteers, the south side of the 500 Block of King Street (the Courthouse Site) was excavated. All artifacts associated with selected locations were recovered and related to individuals inhabiting the block between the 1760's and the 1960's. Ceramics, glass and bone materials have been catalogued using a computer-based data management system. Selected items from the block compose comparative study collections for identifying artifacts discovered in other sites. Many of the artifacts from all the King Street blocks are used in Alexandria Archaeology exhibits. The exhibit now being planned for 1985, "Artifacts, Advertisements, and Archaeology" features the wealth of materials recovered over 14 years of King Street study.

A number of articles and books have also been written centering on the 500 Block King Street artifacts. Steven J. Shephard, Assistant Director of Alexandria Archaeology, has completed his doctoral dissertation on artifacts from the site entitled An Archaeological Study of Socioeconomic Stratification: Status Change in Nineteenth-Century Alexandria, Virginia. Dr. Philip Terrie has written a manuscript on the social history of the block's inhabitants. Many other articles and research papers have been written by staff members and students which detail specific aspects of the site's findings. King Street study continues with the 1983 and 1984 excavations on the 1100 and 1400 Blocks. Numerous wells and nineteenth-century artifacts have been recovered from the north side of the 1100 Block. Recently the Tildon Easton Pottery Kiln was excavated on the south side of the 1400 Block. This relatively unknown potter operated on the western edge of the City for a brief time from 1841 until 1843 and left an abundant sample of his stoneware for archaeological investigation.



## The Afro-American Neighborhood Project

In 1979 Alexandria Archaeology began to locate and define the boundaries of the City's black neighborhoods in order to select locations for excavation. The earliest nucleations of black residential areas were apparent when information from the 1810 tax records and census was placed on maps. "The Bottoms" to the south of Duke Street and west of Washington Street was the area with the greatest concentration of black homes. The first excavations aimed at interpreting Alexandria Afro-American heritage were conducted in this part of town near the Alfred Street Baptist Church.

In 1980 a second neighborhood, "Hay-ti," on the 400 Block of South Royal Street was studied through the excavation of three contiguous household lots. While owned by the Coleman family living on South Fairfax Street, the "Coleman Site" was the location of black families from circa 1830 until 1907 when the houses were razed. More than 56,000 artifacts were excavated from the backyards alone. Additional excavations through 1983 yielded thousands more artifacts from the house foundation area.

Oral history with several long-time residents of Alexandria has assisted in developing a fuller picture of black life in the nineteenth century. Shopping and eating patterns as well as room arrangements and home activities discerned from oral history accounts have been compared with the information obtained from the artifacts and written records. Ted McCord's social history of the Coleman Site, Across the Fence, but a World Apart, describes the Royal Street neighborhood from a historical perspective. Archaeological results from the site are reported in Pamela Cressey's doctoral dissertation, The Alexandria, Virginia City-Site: Archaeology in an Afro-American Neighborhood, 1830-1910.

## The Alexandria Waterfront Project

The Potomac River is a visible feature of Alexandria's landscape today. Yet, the City's waterfront heritage is not as easily discernible to the eye. Alexandria Archaeology began the Waterfront Project specifically to determine what activities, structures, and topography once occurred along the river's edge and pinpoint their locations. A continuous series of documentary research projects has tied together a number of major archaeological investigations from the northern to the southern edge of the historic waterfront.

Cameron → The Carlyle-Dalton Landing was discovered in 1982 under the 100 Block of Street. Built in 1759 by John Carlyle and John Dalton, leading citizens of the new town, the wharf jutted out from their properties into the tidal flats. The archaeological examination and subsequent documentary research assisted in determining the original height of the Fairfax Street bluff which overlooked the Potomac River. Additional information was also gained about the deliberate land-filling process carried out between 1770 and 1790. This activity created the two city blocks currently between the Potomac River and Lee (once named Water) Street and buried the Carlyle-Dalton Landing. The research compiled during the wharf's investigation has led to a six foot long pen-and-ink drawing of the Alexandria waterfront circa 1760. The wharf remains under Cameron Street awaiting further study. Excavations



in John Dalton's house on North Fairfax Street uncovered a large ice well in the basement. A manuscript has been prepared by Barbara Magid detailing the artifacts found entitled "The Dalton House Ice Well, A Report on the Artifacts."

The site of Lift Lock No. 1 of the Alexandria Canal has been the focus of archaeological study since 1979 when it was first located and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Subsequent study assisted by a grant from the National Historic Trust for Historic Preservation, Maritime Preservation Program, fully delineated the perimeter and depth of the lift lock and adjoining pool. Portions of one of the wooden gate's horizontal timbers and two iron wicket gates which regulated the water flow were found during excavation. The entire structure was found to be in an excellent state of preservation and worthy of restoration. Dr. Thomas Hahn has written two interesting reports recounting the Canal's history and archaeological investigation. By 1986 the lift lock and part of the pool will have been restored as central to the new TransPotomac Canal Center development. In this manner the northern end of Alexandria's historic waterfront will be re-created.

The southern boundary of the waterfront is Jones Point. Long known to be an historically significant location, Jones Point assumed a study priority with the City of Alexandria's plans to assume stewardship from the National Park Service. A broad historical and archaeological survey of Jones Point has been conducted to outline the vast array of historical activities which have occurred on this land over the last 8,000 years. Evidence indicates that prehistoric Native Americans once used the area for a hunting and fishing camp site. A wide range of other uses occurred sequentially in the historic period - a colonial tavern, pest house, 1790's fortification, ropewalk, and shipyard.

A full-scale documentary study has also been completed of Alexandria's submerged archaeological resources which lie within the Potomac River. Donald Shomette has written a lengthy volume describing the numerous ships, goods, and artifacts that once constituted the vast array of the City's submerged heritage.

### **The City Survey Project**

While each of the other project areas developed by Alexandria Archaeology addresses particular sections of the City, the City Survey Project examines the whole historic community. It has been through this perspective of the city-site that each of the other study areas - King Street, the black neighborhoods, and the waterfront - has come more clearly into focus. In 1978 the City Survey began with a grant from the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission which established the Alexandria Regional Preservation Office. This office was one of several created in Virginia to develop preservation plans through archaeological survey. The work in the Preservation Office led to the methods for an urban archaeological survey in Alexandria. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a grant for implementation of the City Survey in 1981.

Completed three years later in the Fall of 1984, the City Survey has produced a series of maps which delineate historic neighborhoods from 1790 to 1910. More than twenty sites have been excavated to determine what archaeological information is contained in these neighborhoods and to compare lifestyles of Alexandrians. Ceramics, glass, and bone materials totaling more than 30,000 have been catalogued and entered into a computer-based data system. Dating the various soil levels by the artifactual remains and relating them to the historical inhabitants has permitted a study of daily life, trade, foodways, and the effects of industrialism as Alexandria's role within the region shifted through the nineteenth century.

A number of publications are based upon the information obtained through the Preservation Office and the City Survey. Dr. John Stephens has written two papers on the Survey's historical methods, which are published through the City of Alexandria. Two articles prepared by the Alexandria Archaeology staff appear in the first book on urban archaeology, The Archaeology of Urban America (Academic Press 1982). The final report on the Survey has also been written by Pamela Cressey, Barbara Magid, and Steven Shephard. By studying the parts of Alexandria as individual entities and by approaching the city as a totality, the historic nature of the town is now available to enrich the experience of those of us living in the contemporary community.





THE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

## ALEXANDRIA'S VISION OF COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

Bernard Brenman  
Chairman  
Alexandria Archaeological Commission

For generations Alexandria was a sleeping giant with limited construction activities. As a result, there was only a limited interest in preserving Alexandria's past; after all, if there is little chance of losing an asset, why spend time, money and effort saving it? Then came an increasing interest in urban renewal; after all, a city chartered in 1749 certainly had some areas which needed renewing. Government employees from Washington, D.C., found in Alexandria a lovely, safe, quaint place in which to live, relax, dine and enjoy life on a higher plane. There were even parking spaces available. And... the sleeping giant stirred; with the stirring came construction of an unpredicted magnitude. Down came the old, up went the new; the city above ground was disturbed and the historic city beneath ground was also disturbed. As the construction continued, the historic landscape was exposed and destroyed.

As in all times of destruction there came a positive reaction. In 1971, a group of Alexandrians vowed to save its historic treasury. Under the aegis of Jean Keith, about 100 interested citizens bound together, albeit loosely, under the title of, what else, the Committee of One Hundred with the avowed purpose of saving our historic archaeological treasures. There were no appropriated funds; so following the lead of their noble ancestors, they each pledged \$10.00/per month for as long as necessary. The funds were used to procure a salvager and the materials necessary to save as much as they could, as well as photographic equipment to record what they could not save. At the same time, they lobbied City Hall to pass laws which would result in saving, restoring, and preserving our historic past. City Hall reacted at once within their immediate capability by providing storage and laboratory space in the Torpedo Plant on the waterfront. And so, the seed which was sown by the citizens who refused to see the mother lode of Americana die, began to grow.

As the salvage archaeological activities grew, a new recognition arose - the need to progress from rescue operations to a more formal Archaeological Program, complete with qualified people who would organize, plan, establish priorities, publish, educate, exhibit, involve schools and the public, and acquire the money needed to accomplish all these and more. At this point, the banner was passed to John K. (Jack) Pickens who developed a document designed to establish an Archaeological Commission. In 1975, he presented this document to the Mayor and City Council; they were enthusiastic and they approved the Commission. The Mayor and City Council also allocated money for a City Archaeologist, a Field Specialist, and a Laboratory Specialist.

While the papers in this volume speak to our achievements of the past and present. I will deal primarily with our future aspirations, and what we will look like when we get there. Ambitious? We certainly are! So let's look into the future, with short, medium, and long range goals.



At a recent Joint Federal Government/City of Alexandria Public Hearing, the Archaeological Commission proposed acquisition, archaeological evaluation, and development of the recently rediscovered tidelock of the Alexandria Canal on our north waterfront. We seek a completely restored tide lock and historic park, and we are going to work to create a beautiful gateway to Northern Alexandria. We also plan to establish a canal museum near the site. [Editor's Note: Col. Brenman's dream of restoring the tide lock is being fulfilled through Savage/Fogarty Companies, Inc., developers of TransPotomac Canal Center, who have agreed to restore the lock and provide space for a canal museum.]

At the same meeting we also proposed Alexandria stewardship over Historic Jones Point on our south waterfront. In 1984, we will be conducting an archaeological and historical study of the Point. This area is important to our heritage since activities from many major time periods occurred there. We will be surveying to locate the remains of a prehistoric trade site and historic contact point, a fort dating to 1795 and a shipyard. And, we will establish a Margaret Brent Memorial in honor of the first landowner in Alexandria and first woman in early America to request the right to vote!

While we were the first in the Nation to propose a National Survey of America's archaeological sites, we want to be the first one to complete the study of each of ours. We propose a door to door archaeological evaluation of every houselot.

We have been working with high schools and colleges in cooperative archaeology, but we are not satisfied; we insist on going farther. We want to see an Archaeological Junior Achievement Program in the high schools, and we are exploring the feasibility of an Archaeology Explorer Scout Troop. We are looking forward to shallow, safe "digs," under professional supervision, for junior high schools and grade schools. We believe that they are never too young to appreciate and participate in Alexandria Archaeology.

We are looking forward to archaeological museum and laboratory potters and artists in residence. We dream of the time when every home in Alexandria will have at least one place setting of certified-true copies of Piercy Pottery; certified on the back by the City Archaeologist and the official Alexandria Archaeology Potter. We visualize an original painting in every Alexandria home, depicting Alexandria artifacts in their household context.

We plan to have literally dozens of Alexandria street-front museums and bank lobby and hotel lobby archaeological displays. We dream and work toward the time when we will have mobile archaeological museums to take archaeology to the people wherever and whenever they want them. We await the time when every neighborhood in Alexandria will have its completed history, and we look forward to helping them develop their histories. We anticipate neighborhood museums, and we relish our effort in their establishment.

We eagerly look forward to the completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Encyclopedia with its volumes on archaeology, architecture, history, pre-history, families, maritime activities, and anthropology. We have started, we will continue, and we will complete it.



We have plans for a VAACUM. It is an acronym for Volunteer Alexandria Archaeological Crisis Unit, Mobile. We visualize a truck, fully equipped with "A" frames, hawsers, buckets, survey and photographic equipment, preservation supplies, tape recorder, two-way radio and telephone - everything necessary to respond to an archaeological emergency. Like a volunteer fire truck, it will have a full time driver who will proceed to the site of a new or potential discovery. There VACCUM will be joined by other professionals and volunteers.

We have plans to conduct "how-to" schools for Alexandria citizens who would like to register their own sites or buildings. We will teach them. We will assist them, and we will cooperate in the final examination - completion of the registration documents. Along the same lines, we will shortly establish our "Certification Program" in consonance with the Department of Interior 1980 Amendments to the 1976 Historic Preservation Documents.

We are planning the establishment and maintenance of the Alexandria Golden Book of Archaeology. This book will contain a listing of all historic, prehistoric, archaeological and architectural sites in Alexandria. We plan to issue an appropriate city certificate to the owners of every site in the Golden Book. We plan to plaque each and every archaeological site in the City. These are only a few of our plans, desires, and wishes. Time prohibits continued discussion, but we are available to you for future discussions.

We have a history of accomplishment. We have a great record of putting into practice that which we plan; we have a proven capability to dream and to achieve. We shall continue! We will not be denied! While we may not achieve all our goals at once, we will strive to do so. We will continue to serve our City, our Populace, and our Dreams.



## THE HISTORY OF A CITY'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAM: ALEXANDRIA'S EXPERIENCE

Vivienne Mitchell

When the time came to decide on topics and writers for this symposium, it seemed to me that I was a pretty good choice to speak on the history of our present-day archaeology program. For one thing, I have been around Alexandria for a long, long, time and have always had an avid interest in the city's history. I have seen the growth and changes within the city, and at the present time, when many cities are suffering from a construction recession, Alexandria building is booming. Businesses are moving from Washington, D.C., to Northern Virginia, particularly to Alexandria. Office buildings are going up, residences are being built. I am not saying that I am in favor of this so-called progress. I am saying that we must have strong archaeological and historic preservation programs in face of this constant disturbance of archaeological and historic sites if we are going to be able to document and interpret evidence of our city's past. After all, this is the city of George Washington, Robert E. Lee, and of equal importance to our history the business people, the middle class, and the poor who lived here over the years from the founding of the city until today.

Alexandria was a planned town. It became a town on July 13, 1749, by an act of the Virginia General Assembly. Long before that time it had been designated as the site for one of the tobacco warehouses set up by law, for tobacco inspection. Tobacco, of course was the mainstay of the economy at the time.

The town grew rapidly, settled mainly by Scottish merchants. It became a seaport and shipbuilding center but could never attain the importance of a New York or Philadelphia. Its economy suffered as a result of the War of 1812, and one of its lowest periods occurred during its occupation by Federal troops during the Civil War. For many years the town has taken on more of a residential quality than a commercial one.

But how did our archaeological program get started in Alexandria? Why are we able to accomplish so much today to document and interpret evidence of our past? It goes without saying that we now have an excellent professional staff. But it all came about by community effort led by dedicated Alexandrians who refused to allow our heritage to be lost by the action of the bulldozers. These are people who have been instrumental in urging the city to acquire historic properties, who have worked for the preservation and restoration of old buildings, who have been active in societies that promote public education in local history, and finally have initiated an archaeological program for the entire city.

I have to admit that when I was told that my thoughts follow the paper by Ben Brenman, I said, "Oh, no, he has so much enthusiasm and knowledge, it is a hard act for me to follow." But then I realized that I should use Ben as the perfect example of why we have today's program. There have been others in our city with dedication to this same goal of preserving evidence of our history. Those who were instrumental in fighting for the programs we are now able to have.



To start at the beginning -- archaeological work in the city goes back to 1961, over 20 years ago, when an archaeology graduate student was employed for a short time that year to do a survey of the northwest bastion of the city's Civil War Fort Ward. Fort Ward was built as part of the Federal defenses of Washington. Altogether 68 forts were built to circle and protect the capital city during the war. Of these, only two have been restored, Fort Ward in Alexandria and Fort Stevens in Washington, D.C. The property on which Fort Ward stands had been bought by a realtor and was to be subdivided into building lots. Because of the lobbying of certain local people, led by a very interested and aggressive woman, Dorothy Starr, the city bought the land from the realtor. Funds were allocated for the restoration of the northwest bastion of the fort, hence the need for an archaeological survey and examination of that area. So now we are very proud of the restored section of the fort and the museum that was built within this city park.

But none of this happened easily. After the city had bought the Fort Ward property, the plan was to level the area for a park without restoring the bastion. Dorothy Starr said, "No, the bastion should be restored." There is a picture of her standing in front of a bulldozer, stopping the workers from tearing up the area of the presently restored bastion. One of Alexandria's early historic activists, she won her point.

The next archaeological project began as part of a long-term urban renewal program of the early 1960's in the Old Town area of Alexandria. The King Street Urban Renewal Project included portions of the original 1749 town and blocks in subsequent eighteenth century annexations. These renewal blocks were the location of the homes and businesses of early residents and taverns where they congregated. The buildings on these blocks were to be leveled in preparation for development. This allowed a certain amount of time to salvage historic materials before the construction of new buildings occurred. However, there were no funds available locally for this proposed salvage.

Again, because of the intervention of some of our strong-minded citizens led by a local attorney and avocational archaeologist, the late Jack Pickens, help came from the Smithsonian Institution on a limited basis. The Smithsonian contributed the services of one staff member Richard Muzzrole, for a limited time to do rescue work in this area. This consisted mainly of retrieving artifacts from the old wells and privies uncovered during the urban renewal and doing as much research on the properties as time would allow. Although this was strictly salvage archaeology with the big machines breathing down your neck, without it, some of the great treasures from Alexandrians of other centuries would have been lost forever. The wells and privies had been the ideal places to throw broken dishes, worn out clothes, garbage, everything. So, at least, this was better than no archaeology at all.

This rescue program began in 1965 and ended in 1971 when the Smithsonian withdrew its financial support. Although several blocks had been excavated, much more was left to be done.



The city council at that time was still unwilling to invest in archaeology. If the archaeological excavations were to continue, individuals would have to take action. And they did. Richard Muzzrole continued excavating and reconstructing artifacts, volunteering his time to keep Alexandria's archaeological heritage alive, and the "Committee of 100" was established by Jean Keith, a local historian of note. He organized a group of people who were shocked to realize the Smithsonian program in Alexandria was at an end. They were determined to find other means of continuing support, refusing to allow Alexandria's history to be crushed and destroyed by the bulldozers. They had seen the retrieval of artifacts by the Smithsonian program that would be forever helpful in writing the history of the city -- the excavations of the market square and the old tavern square, the area of historic Gadsby's Tavern. But now other blocks in the Old Town were to be leveled and the material remains would be lost. The blocks had a great deal of historic value, since the homes and businesses of prominent Alexandrians instrumental in the city's development were located there.

In 1971 the members of the "Committee of 100" dipped into their pockets and financed the rescue program themselves. It is hard to believe, but financing in this manner continued for nearly two years. We may not have had a sophisticated program, but the money allowed for a small stipend for Richard Muzzrole and a few meager supplies. The city did allow space in the Torpedo Factory for a laboratory.

Recently, I looked over a list of names on this committee, and I was reminded that these were ordinary people such as my husband and myself. This was not a matter of soliciting money from big business. It simply was a group of local people who were willing to fill in the monetary gap as long as necessary while they were working to convince the city government to take over this responsibility.

During this time, Jack Pickens was doing his political best to convince the city fathers of the importance of a permanent archaeological program for our historic town. Finally, this time Jack met with success. In 1973, the city established a permanent archaeologist position. Subsequently, two other positions were added to create the Alexandria Archaeology Program.

In 1975, the Alexandria Archaeological Commission came into being by City Council Resolution No. 371, charging the members with the responsibility of overseeing the continuing Archaeology Program. Jack Pickens, who had intervened to set the Smithsonian rescue program in motion, was the first chairman. We have several members of the Commission who have been interested enough in the program to have continued their membership on the commission since its beginning.

The commission is composed of twelve city residents, appointed by city council. They include: four members appointed at large, one from each of the three planning districts, one representative from the Alexandria Association, one from the Historic Alexandria Foundation, one from the Alexandria Historical Society (these three societies obviously are interested in various phases of historic preservation and educating the public), one representative from the Alexandria Tourist Council (after all, the promotion of Historic Alexandria is important), and one from the Alexandria Bicentennial Commission (until 1983 when this commission ended its activities). We meet

once a month or more often, when necessary. At our meetings we discuss current archaeological projects with the staff and help solve problems as they arise. Individual commission members work many hours throughout the month. We really go to work when budget time comes around. Although we may think we have a permanent Archaeological Program, we certainly have to prove our worth when the budget hearings are called. And of course, we do seek and receive grant money to supplement our program. May I say, as a member of the commission, that I feel we have a wonderful relationship with the staff. We work extremely well together. I have often said that one of the smartest things the commission has ever done is to hire Pamela Cressey as the director of the Alexandria program.

Ben Brenman has related where we are today and the progress we have made in the last few years and I have gone back into the past to tell you a little about how it all started in the first place. All I can say is, thank goodness for some of our Alexandrian citizens who saw the importance of this program. We may have rough days ahead, particularly with budgetary problems, but the same old crowd of people along with a lot of new ones will be there to make sure the Alexandria Archaeology Program continues.





## COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY IN ALEXANDRIA

Pamela J. Cressey

The papers presented here express in large part the type of relationship existing between the public and the city archaeologists in Alexandria, Virginia. This relationship can be characterized, I believe, as one of constant dialogue and interaction. The interaction occurs through formal mechanisms, including a public commission "to establish goals and priorities"; a volunteer program to provide public education and participation in archaeological work; a publication series to disseminate archaeological results, methods, and training procedures; and a museum to exhibit tangible evidence of the archaeological process.

However, the Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program has grown into a community endeavor primarily because of informal methods of interaction, which evolved within our specific cultural setting. Since Alexandria is one of the first American communities to pursue its history with a public archaeology program, we are developing these methods. Without other models, the informal interactions may appear like a bumper car ride at an amusement park -- lots of energy moving in many directions. Although this bumper car analogy may conjure up a disharmonious image, the process of bumping minds and hearts together has truly built Alexandria Archaeology. I would like to summarize my experience in Alexandria by discussing the value, pleasures, and issues of conducting public urban archaeological work. This work consists not only of studying the City's past, but also interpreting it for present and future generations of Alexandrians.

The actual relationship between the Alexandria community and its archaeologists is shaped by a cultural dialogue through which new levels of mutual understanding and knowledge are reached. Perceived in this manner, our seemingly random bumping together becomes less analogous to the amusement park ride. However, like the riders of those bumper cars, the Alexandria experience includes good-natured laughing along the way. And, to tell the truth, often the sensation at day's end is like climbing out of a bumper car -- slightly wobbly legs, a rush of adrenalin, and a sense of pride that I have survived. More importantly, I am thankful that if my archaeological life resembles an amusement park ride, I at least have a car which is equipped with a steering wheel. A city archaeologist can be more than a passenger on a roller coaster, careening from heights to depths of a Matterhorn; and more than a driver of a Disneyland teacup, spinning faster and faster in dizzying circles. A city archaeologist has the opportunity to create and share a community's heritage.

The direction forward for a community archaeology program is not clearly marked, nor is it well-traveled. In Alexandria we share a common sense that together we can move across difficult terrain and discover the frontier we are seeking: a partnership between professionals and citizens in Alexandria for recognizing and appreciating the community's heritage. There is no map held by any single person or group; yet, if our aspirations, needs, and world-views are allowed to interact freely together, we can produce knowledge which actually touches our daily lives.



Archaeology in Alexandria seeks to provide a foundation for viewing the future from the perspective of the past. Alexandria Archaeology builds this foundation through the study of cultural continuity. While providing professional archaeologists with data on the development of the urban environment, the perspective of cultural continuity also assists Alexandrians to understand their waterfront, neighborhoods, streets, houses, social groups, and land use patterns. Thus, contemporary residents have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the past occupants of their city as well as the choices which have led, unconsciously or consciously, to modern-day Alexandria. Recognizing the persistence over generations of Alexandrians in their neighborhoods, landscapes, attitudes, and aspirations helps to underscore the community's continuity.

The role of archaeology in describing and explaining cultural continuity is not revolutionary. It is a major function which archaeology has always performed. However, the decision to research and interpret a community's past for its citizens is a new function for American Archaeology. The decision, moreover, does not intrinsically explain how research and interpretive goals should be defined and pursued. For instance, how does an archaeologist translate the past? How does an archaeologist retain scientific objectivity and still create formats that encourage people to experience the past? And how can the public be motivated to volunteer in archaeology if the city archaeologists and the available work fail to correspond to the major stereotypes?

One stereotype - the romantic, mysterious adventurer - is personified by Indiana Jones in Raiders of the Lost Ark and glorifies the pursuit of treasure. Another stereotype portrays a scientific researcher as a remote individual consumed by precise activities and lost in a private world of the past. These stereotypes can bring into question the relevancy of archaeology as a tax-supported service in local government. They also may encourage the public to volunteer for purposes that are not consonant with the aims of professional archaeology.

To avoid being stereotyped and to launch our joint venture with the public, we have listened very closely to many different people and observed how individuals respond to exhibits and special projects. We have also learned much from budgetary deliberations, and questions from taxpayers. After listening to citizens, I forced myself to ask, "Why do I care about archaeology, especially in the public arena?" I have also concluded that while the profession does suffer from popular stereotypes, it suffers far more by failing to grapple publicly with those images.

What I have learned in the last year is that few individuals have an understanding of the possibilities for contemporary archaeology in a public setting. This is particularly true for urban archaeology which deals predominately with more recent history. If archaeological stereotypes contributed to the Program's establishment as a rescue operation in 1973, their perceived lack of public purpose might be its undoing in the 1980's. They may grease the tracks for dismantling or drastically altering the Program in the future.



Fortunately, our Program's direction has been continually evolving thanks to hard "bumps" from all segments of the public. As community archaeologists we act as resource people rather than as raiders of lost treasures or as scientific outsiders who cart off artifacts to distant laboratories. Our course is guided by reciprocity and seeks to reinforce a public-professional partnership for the past. Like other partnerships, this one consists of dialogue and disagreement. It requires new mechanisms for public interaction beyond the traditional museum exhibit or publications which are not meant to be conversations between partners. One method of creating a dialogue is through public forums. This mechanism brings together historical professionals, planners, community activists, business people, and interested citizens to share a heritage through a common experience. The experience involves a variety of media, including lectures, printed materials, photographs, oral history videotapes, and dialogue between different generations of Alexandrians.

Our first public forum, "Alexandria Responds", consisted of four sessions, each held on concurrent Saturday mornings. This forum explored Alexandria's responses to the urban environment and to historic and recent decision-making about its development. The first session, centering on the 500 Block of King Street, discussed the social history of its residents from the 1860's to the 1950's in relation to the archaeological findings. The architect, who designed the new courthouse that replaced all earlier structures, discussed how the design was intended to create continuity with the past and with the "Main Street" concept, while at the same time increasing office and rental space and changing part of the land use pattern. The second session focused on King Street as the City's commercial corridor and as a middle class neighborhood capable of archaeological interpretation. Historical professionals discussed economic history in terms of the aspirations held by past generations of Alexandrians. Public discussion, set against a background of a historic photographic exhibit, followed a planner's interpretation of the goals of the street's urban renewal and its effects on the area today.

In the third session one neighborhood - Del Ray - an early twentieth-century streetcar suburb, was explored from both a historical perspective and that of a civic association concerned with the present and future of the area's character. The fourth and final session centered on the whole city-site, exploring how its responses to economic, technological, and demographic developments shaped the regional role of contemporary Alexandria. The Planning Director, Engin Artemel, summarized the findings as they pertain to alternatives for the City's future. In each forum City Council members introduced the session and participated in the discussion.

The public discussion forum is intended not merely as a vehicle to disseminate research information. It is intended to focus the dialectic of public-professional interaction within a concrete situation. It's goal is to generate new understanding by synthesizing different perspectives on the information under consideration. But, we allow the synthesis to occur spontaneously, with audience participation. And without dictating to the speakers, the theme of cultural continuity was constantly discovered both in the professional presentations and in the perspectives of those attending.

Our first experience led us to make some modifications of this mechanism. We are now scheduling a one day forum, "The Alexandria Water-front: Confrontation and Consensus". It brings together diverse groups to discuss the evidence and personal feelings about how those in attendance will shape it in the 1980's. Both forums are funded by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy.

These forums are a learning experience for us and allow a compendium of knowledge to be developed and alternative views to be expressed. We have also found, as Mayor Charles Beatley recently expressed, that archaeology has a unique role in our City. It presents physical aspects of our past in a political atmosphere which can bind community members through a common experience. We as archaeologists are well suited to collect historical information and create the experiences which allow the community to recognize itself.

So, we embark upon this path with the public and for the public while continuing our own commitment to scholarship. We have found that there is no conflict between public and professional goals. What the public appreciates and the professionals value about the past are one in the same. We are pioneers with a vision rather than little bumper cars.

I was struck recently by the similarity between the feelings expressed in an account of Martha Lick Wooden's pioneer experiences and my own in the last few years. She moved from the East to the Kansas frontier in 1878 with some concern about the unknown. Her daughter recounted Mrs. Wooden's first experience in Kansas after a harrowing journey:

"There was a plain road winding across the prairie for a few miles, then it seemed to lose itself in the thick matted buffalo grass. All went well while daylight lasted. Just at dusk the team suddenly began a steep descent....Darkness deepened rapidly in the canyon and the trail was difficult to follow. Somewhere in its windings the driver made the wrong turn, and after going on for perhaps a half hour, he said, Well I guess I'm lost. Lost! Out here on this lonely prairie?....The driver had become prairie wise, turned his team and with lantern in hand walked ahead of the team while she drove, back to the draw where the wrong turn had been made. After some difficulty the right road - little more than a wagon track - was found and soon the light of home flashed out." (Pioneer Women, Joanna L. Statton, Simon and Schuster, 1981)

In many ways urban archaeology and community archaeology do not have well established pathways. It is easy to think that you are lost. In fact, Alexandrians are pioneers and are creating the roads. Many Alexandrians have held the lantern along our way. Alexandria has surely offered a home to Archaeology.





KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED:  
SOME MEANS OF DISSEMINATING ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Steven J. Shephard

From as early as 1787, when Thomas Jefferson's account of his excavation of an Indian mound was printed, American archaeologists have acknowledged the obligation to publish the results of their research (Thomas 1979:49). While this has usually meant the reporting of descriptive or interpretive data to other professionals, today there is an ever-increasing need to disseminate knowledge to the public. Charles McGimsey has stressed the importance of communicating with the public as a factor in determining the future of archaeology as a discipline (1981:380). The dim prospects for this field of inquiry in a time of dwindling federal and state funding, can be improved by fostering public understanding and support of archaeological research.

Archaeological publications can enhance public support by acting as educational sources. They can also provide a means for gaining a sense of continuity with a community's past, while serving as a basis for interpretation and preservation of this heritage. Writing for the public, however, requires professional archaeologists to exchange the traditionally dry, technical style used to communicate with their peers, for a clear and interesting manner of expression. This does not mean adoption of a condescending style, but rather an elimination of jargon and a reduction of unnecessary details for the sake of the broader message. This is not always easily accomplished by the professional who has been rewarded throughout his or her training for the mastery of technical terms and reporting of the minutest details of research. One approach the professional can use in writing for the public is to set clear goals as to what points will be communicated and present these in an orderly fashion. Inclusion of anecdotal information on the individual level, or description of unusual or unexpected discoveries in understandable terms is helpful in maintaining the reader's interest. For instance, explaining that the collection of doll fragments, coins, marbles, and pebbles found beside the back step of a nineteenth-century house, shows that this was probably a play area for children, is much more intriguing than reporting that an artifact concentration adjacent to an historic structure suggested the location of a specialized activity area.

Certain magazines and books have been published which successfully convey archaeological subject matter to the public. National Geographic comes immediately to mind, featuring articles describing spectacular or exotic discoveries with titles like, "China's Incredible Find" (Topping 1978) or "Graveyard of the Quicksilver Galleons" (Peterson 1979). The magazines, Archaeology and Early Man, are two other publications which present articles on archaeological subjects and list sites available for public visitation. Numerous books on various aspects of archaeology have been written by authors skilled in reaching the public. Examples of these are works by Anne Terry White (1941), C.W. Ceram (1951), Brian Fagan (1972), Ivor Noël Hume (1963), and James Deetz (1977), to name only a few. Such authors demonstrate that archaeology can be successfully presented to the public without the technical format, while retaining a meaningful message. More publica-



tions are needed, however, which relate the knowledge gained from the interesting, though less exotic, research being carried out throughout America. Each year numerous projects investigate the archaeology of both rural and urban areas. By communicating the knowledge gained in these studies to the local community where the work is carried out, the people for whom this information is perhaps the most meaningful, gain a better understanding of both their heritage and of archaeology.

The Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program operates at just such a community level and is in the position of being responsible for disseminating knowledge acquired through research to a variety of audiences. The written media used to fulfill this obligation are the subject of this paper.

To begin with, as responsible archaeologists, the program staff must provide fellow professionals with reports on the data gathered from archaeological research in Alexandria. Because of the anthropological orientation of the program's research design, these data are presented not only in a descriptive format, but are interpreted within a processual framework as well. In addition, as an integral part of the city's Office of Historic Alexandria, the Archaeology Program has an official mandate to provide knowledge of Alexandria's heritage to City officials, staff, and citizens. Community volunteers who participate in the program's research efforts need technical information, as well. Obviously, these diverse groups require different forms of written communication which are tailored to suit their particular needs and interests.

Fulfillment of these responsibilities is not accomplished without a certain amount of strain on the staff, however. Inside all of us there is the conflict between getting information to the public we serve, and writing for professional publication which we know is the real way our career progress is measured. A few archaeologists are admonishing their colleagues on the importance of communicating with the public (e.g. McGimsey 1972:19, and 1981:380; Fagan 1977:124), but academic publications still maintain ascendancy. In addition, we have very limited support staff, so the coordination of all stages of production, from writing or editing the original manuscript to sales of final products, rest on our shoulders. This means that the formats used must remain relatively simple, and locally available media, such as newspapers, are utilized whenever possible.

Currently we are disseminating information to professionals and the public through five channels. These are: 1. production of reports and articles in the accepted format of the archaeological profession, 2. creation of Alexandria Papers in Urban Archaeology, 3. publication of informative articles in the City of Alexandria newsletter, Municipal Highlights, 4. distribution of educational brochures, and 5. contribution of news releases and information for articles in local and national newspapers.

Archaeologists and other researchers require certain kinds of technical information which may be neither interesting nor relevant to the general public. Advancement of the field of archaeology requires that information on problem orientation, research methodology, forms of data collected, analysis results, and interpretation be produced for all projects. For this audience of colleagues, updates on current research activities are included in professional newsletters (see The Society for Historical Archaeology



Newsletter 1981:14:4:35-36), and articles concerning various aspects of archaeological research in Alexandria are included in publications on urban archaeology (see Cressey et al. 1982). In addition, the Alexandria Papers in Urban Archaeology, which is divided by subject into a number of separate series, contains many volumes which should prove useful to professionals and the public alike. At present there are five series, which consist of: 1. a preservation planning series, 2. educational manuals, 3. museum-related publications, 4. King Street Project studies, and 5. Afro-American Project publications. Volumes within these series present discussions of survey techniques; excavation, lab and archival research procedures; descriptions and analyses of data, plus anthropological interpretations of research results. In fact, the papers in this symposium will be produced as a special volume in the Alexandria Papers as well. The format for these publications is inexpensive. Covers and texts are printed by the offset process, utilizing the original typed manuscripts. Copies are bound with heavy staples. Line drawings are used for illustration and some forthcoming volumes will contain reproductions of black and white photographs.

The Education Series of the Alexandria Papers consists of a volume on the volunteer program and a set of manuals designed to benefit the volunteers who participate in our research. The volunteers require special types of written information including specific descriptions of the procedures to be followed in gathering and processing data. To fill this need the manuals detail the procedures used by the Archaeology Program to carry out archival research, to conduct surveys, to excavate sites, and to process artifacts in the laboratory. The education manuals are useful for instructing volunteers when they begin their work and also serve as references for clarification of procedures as they continue their association with the Program. For those volunteers interested in more detailed information about certain artifact types, the Museum Series is available. Two examples of this type of publication are: The Potter's Art, which is a detailed, illustrated history of stoneware production in Alexandria, and a booklet, Musket in a Privy, in which a volunteer relates the discovery, restoration and history of a musket recovered from an archaeological site in Alexandria.

Many volunteers also request information on the final results of the research projects in which they have invested their energies. The volumes in the individual project series serve this need. These forthcoming volumes will include not only full descriptive and interpretive reports on the historical and archaeological data, but also in-depth studies on such subjects as nineteenth-century diet as inferred from faunal remains, or transfer-printed ceramics recovered from well/privies.

The officials and employees of the City of Alexandria are another important group to be informed of archaeological research efforts being undertaken in the city. Besides the fact that many of these people have a general interest in archaeology, it is essential that they be aware of the work in which the Archaeology Program is involved. This can increase understanding and support of such activities from within the city government and serve to promote historic preservation in city planning. Municipal High-lights, the city employee newsletter, provides a written vehicle for communicating with this audience. Articles written by the program staff for this publication describe current projects or relate glimpses into Alexandria's past as derived from archival and archaeological research.



The residents of Alexandria are another important audience which the Archaeology Program strives to reach with two basic goals in mind. Since many citizens know nothing about archaeological concerns, one goal is to increase their awareness of the city's historical and archaeological resources and their importance in understanding Alexandria. A brochure has been created and distributed which outlines a plan for cooperation between citizens and professionals in forming a "partnership for the past." This publication explains the importance of studying and preserving Alexandria's past and suggests actions homeowners, developers, and architects may take to help achieve this purpose.

A second goal is to keep the citizens informed of current archaeological work taking place in Alexandria. This is accomplished through articles in local newspapers. These describe current research such as excavating the kitchen of an upper class household, or announce exhibits of artifacts located in the Archaeological Museum. In this way the public can learn about the kinds of efforts being made to explore the city's past and understand the role that archaeological interpretation and historic preservation must play in planning Alexandria's future. In addition, articles on Alexandria archaeology appearing in newspapers with a national circulation, such as the New York Times Magazine, help to focus attention on the responsible role the city has taken in providing for the proper study and interpretation of its cultural resources.

In conclusion, it is important to reiterate that while archaeologists have traditionally accepted the tenet that publication of research methods and results is crucial for the continued advancement of the discipline, few have considered communication of this knowledge to the public as of much consequence. This attitude is changing as the cultivation of public understanding and support is increasingly seen as beneficial. The Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, as a facility ultimately responsible to the citizens of an historic city, is in a position where communication of archaeological information to the public is essential. By utilizing a variety of written formats, both professional and public commitments can be fulfilled.

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VOLUNTEERS AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY:  
A VOLUNTEER'S VIEW

Eugenia Luckman

When recruiting volunteers for an historical archaeology program, what characteristics and experience should you look for? Are there special signs or clues which will tell you who has the potential for being a long-lasting, dedicated volunteer? Is there such a person as a "typical volunteer?" As a volunteer myself, with over four years of seeing volunteers come and go at the Alexandria Archaeology Program, I've been interested in these questions. We will probably never have clear-cut answers, but it seemed a worthwhile project to find out about the make-up of our volunteer force and their motivations and goals.

Personal interviews with the large number of project volunteers did not seem to be feasible. Instead, the first step was a review of the personal information forms submitted by 150 people who have been active in the Program during the last two years (see Appendix I). This review resulted in a statistical profile of what might be called a "typical volunteer." A "typical volunteer" with the Program is a woman, a college graduate who has had courses in anthropology, archaeology, and/or history, and she has a full-time job in business or government. She is over 30 years of age and is more likely to be over 50, and she has had some prior volunteer experience, mostly in fields other than archaeology. The male volunteers, who total about 20 percent, also fit this basic pattern.

But, these statistics don't tell us anything about individual motives. They don't explain the motivation of such people as the young man who spent almost two years of his spare time restoring an early nineteenth-century flintlock musket that came out of the mucky bottom of the privy of one of Alexandria's early merchants. This volunteer had no prior, related experience and he found that none of the staff or the outside experts whom he consulted had ever restored a firearm of this type with quite the same problems as this one had. But they gave him advice and encouragement, he persisted, and the cleaned, restored musket is now a prize exhibit. [Editor's Note: The Alexandria Archaeology brochure, Musket in a Privy, by Jan Herman, gives an account of this restoration.]

Statistics don't explain the young woman who two years ago volunteered to work in the Archaeology Museum, and when funding expired for the professional museum staff, she volunteered to be responsible for keeping the museum open and operating over the weekend days. She also developed and conducted a successful children's educational program, including slide shows and museum tours. Unfortunately for Alexandria Archaeology, her enthusiasm for historical archaeology led her to resign her full-time government job and enroll in a midwestern university to work for a degree in archaeology.

Then there is the 15-year old high school student who came to the first dig in the summer of 1977 as a project for his American history class. He became a daily member of every dig every summer and holiday every year until he went off to college. He did all the odd jobs, all the dirty jobs, and became not only a proficient excavator but also a very helpful lab technician. And he still comes back to work with us every summer and holiday period.



Also, statistics don't explain my own involvement with the Program, which began with a newspaper story describing Alexandria's Archaeology Program and calling for volunteers. This article appeared in August, 1977, just one week before I was due to retire from the Federal Government. I had no special retirement plans. My professional background was in budget analysis but I had a long-standing and frustrated interest in archaeology, and I lived only two blocks from the dig. The call for volunteers couldn't have come at a better time for me. I've been with the Program ever since, working mostly on ceramics but also learning all I can about other aspects of the archaeological process.

In an effort to get behind the basic statistics and to find out what motivated volunteers in historical archaeology, we recently sent out a questionnaire to current volunteers and to a sampling of former volunteers who had served more than three months (Appendix II). Instead of asking that time honored question, "Why did you volunteer?" which usually brings the glib response, "I've always been interested in archaeology," the questionnaire asked two basic questions: "When you first volunteered for the program, what did you expect to give to the program?," and "What did you expect to receive from the program?"

As to the first question, the volunteers seemed somewhat uncertain as to what they had to give. In general, they felt their contributions were an inquiring mind, some related experience or educational background which could be useful, and especially, free time to work on something they thought would be interesting.

They were more certain about what they expected to receive. They wanted to learn. They wanted to learn about historical archaeology, to learn about Alexandria's history, and to learn new skills. The social aspects of being useful and making new friends were mentioned by a few, but in a secondary sense.

As to learning about Alexandria's history, it is interesting to note that only 25 percent of the volunteers active in the last two years have been residents of the City of Alexandria, while 43 percent have come from other areas of Northern Virginia, with the balance from the District of Columbia and Maryland. This is not as anomalous as it may seem, for the history of Alexandria is part and parcel of the entire region. As one volunteer said, she hoped to learn "more about Alexandria and by that, about colonial America."

This residential spread is interesting in another way. Anyone who has spent some time in the Washington metropolitan area knows that traveling within the area is difficult, frustrating, and time-consuming. And free parking near the Archaeology facility is almost non-existent. Yet the volunteers continue to come from all over the metropolitan area.

Both current and former volunteers were asked if their original expectations had been fulfilled. The staff has been grateful to know that 79 percent answered "yes." One person who answered "no," explained that "It's not as glamorous as I thought." Where criticism was offered or suggestions made for improving the role of the volunteers, these predominantly concerned an increase in learning opportunities. Specifically, volunteers want more



on-the-job training and more communication with the professional staff. Some want the opportunity to rotate their work assignments so as to learn the various aspects of historical archaeology. Sixty-eight percent want seminars, workshops, or round table discussions on Alexandria history and on archaeology in general, and they want more information about what is going on in other parts of the program and about future plans.

Current volunteers were asked if they would attend in-house classes in ceramics, glass, or other subjects. Seventy-five percent said "yes." What is most significant is that the large majority (65 percent) said they would prefer that these classes be held in addition to their regular volunteer time.

We do not always know why a volunteer drops out of the program and this is a worrisome question for the staff. So it was rather a relief to learn from the survey that 93 percent of the former volunteers had dropped out for reasons unrelated to the program itself, such as moving to another city, increased job workloads, personal or family problems, or transportation or parking problems.

The parking problem has always been a troublesome one which Alexandria Archaeology and the City have not yet been able to solve, although they are still working on it. With \$15 parking tickets being all too frequent, it is surprising that more volunteers have not dropped out for this reason.

Finally, the questionnaire asked both current and former volunteers whether they would be interested in having a formal, periodic newsletter on a subscription basis or would prefer a monthly update in xerox format. Here again, the desire to learn and be informed was foremost, with 62 percent responding "yes" to the newsletter proposal. However, only 46 percent said they would subscribe. The majority felt that a monthly update in xerox format would be preferable at this time. As one person explained, it would be "more in keeping with economics of the period." [Editor's Note: A monthly newsletter is now being produced with Eugenia Luckman as editor.]

Although the results of the survey clearly indicate that the learning process is foremost, and that the social aspects of being useful and making friends are secondary, these so-called secondary goals are implicit in the whole process and help to keep enthusiasm at a high level.

For example, our weekend volunteers and the weekday volunteers fall naturally into two distinct age groups. The weekend groups are mostly young working people under 30 years of age with some high school students. The weekday groups are all over 30, and almost half of them are over 50. Each of these groups has found common interests and backgrounds which stimulate socializing both within the work area and outside it.

To a harried staff member who has a tight work schedule, this socializing can often be annoying and frustrating, especially during the first 30 or 40 minutes of the work day when everyone catches up with each other's doings of the past week. But after they get through the preliminary chitchat, get a cup of coffee, get their supplies together, figure out where they left off last week, and finally settle down to work, the patience of the staff member is rewarded by a harmonious, friendly team that works well together. The



teams change from time to time, old friends leave, new faces appear, but the common age levels continue the socializing aspects, thereby strengthening the learning process and at the same time implicitly providing the sense of being useful. And it is one of the major reasons why so many volunteers continue their work not just for months but years.

During the summer months both high school and college students make up a large part of the excavation force. During the rest of the year, Alexandria's active restoration and construction industries bring unexpected and short-term digging opportunities which can only be supported by the current volunteer force. Although most of the volunteers work in the lab, the museum, or on archival research, it is remarkable how many turn out when an emergency dig is announced. Both the young weekend groups and the older weekday groups are enthusiastic and effective diggers and screeners. They seem to find it not only a means of gaining experience in excavation techniques, but also a useful means for comparing work experiences with the other volunteers whom they do not normally see.

These two examples of mixing socializing with learning are not idealized or infrequent examples. It is the way it has been in the four years that I have been with the Archaeology Program, the way it is now, and the way I am sure it will always be as long as people like getting together in groups to do interesting work. And it is one of the reasons we keep coming back week after week.

To summarize what we have learned from our brief survey: Our volunteers are eager to learn, want to be kept informed of what's going on in the program and in other archaeological projects, want to have good communications with the professional staff, and enjoy working with people of similar interests. This describes your enthusiastic, conscientious volunteer!

## Appendix I

### Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program Alexandria, Virginia

#### Summary of Active Volunteers (Sept. 1979 through Sept. 1981)

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male . . . . .	26
Female . . . . .	74
 <u>Education:</u>	
College Graduate . . . . .	64
(BA/MS, 43%; MA/Ph.D., 21%)	
Some college . . . . .	17
High school only . . . . .	4
High school student . . . . .	15
 <u>Professional background:</u>	
Business/government . . . . .	33
Anthropology/archaeology . . . . .	7
The Arts . . . . .	9
Teachers . . . . .	13
Homemakers . . . . .	6
Students . . . . .	26
(HS, 15%; College, 11%)	
None, or not listed . . . . .	6
 <u>Prior to Volunteer Education:</u>	
Anthropology/archaeology . . . . .	19
Other fields . . . . .	40
None, or not listed . . . . .	41
 <u>How they learned about the program:</u>	
Newspapers, radio, TV . . . . .	28
Word of mouth . . . . .	23
School or profess. society . . . . .	26
Visit to Torpedo Factory . . . . .	16
Not listed . . . . .	7
 <u>Residence:</u>	
City of Alexandria . . . . .	25
Northern Virginia . . . . .	44
Maryland and D.C. . . . .	31

**Source:** Information sheets submitted by 150 volunteers during the period September 1979 through September 1981.



## Appendix II

### Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program Volunteer Questionnaire

#### Summary of Results

	<u>Percent</u>
Total Volunteer responses: Male	18
Female	82
Age groups: Under 30	26
30 to 49	38
50 and over	36
Education: BA/MS degree	26
MA/PhD. degree	31
Some college	18
High school only	10
No response	15
When you first volunteered for the Alexandria Archaeology program, what did you expect to give to the program?	
a. Related experience or education	44
b. An inquiring mind; a desire to learn	23
c. Interest in archaeology and/or history	15
d. Had time; wanted to help	18
What did you expect to receive from the program?	
a. Learn more about archaeology	36
b. Learn new skills	21
c. Learn about Alexandria's history	23
d. Be useful and make new friends	2
e. All of the above	18
Were your expectations fulfilled?	
a. Yes	79
b. No	3
c. Somewhat	18
Inactive volunteers: Why did you drop out of the program?	
a. Personal/family reasons	15
b. School or job workloads increased	27
c. Transportation or parking problems	12
d. The work was not as interesting as I expected	7
e. Moved away (applies to mail returned by the post office)	39

# APPENDIX II (cont.)

	<u>Percent</u>
What suggestions do you have for improving the role of volunteers in the program?	
a. Increase learning opportunities:	
More on-the-job training	22
Work in different areas of the program	3
More staff availability, supervision	12
Use experienced volunteers to assist in training or supervision	6
Better feed-back, communications between volunteers and staff	15
Hold seminars, workshops, roundtable discussions	6
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>65</u>
b. Key volunteers informed of work and progress in all areas of A.A.	6
c. Improve work space, supplies, library	9
d. Miscellaneous	20
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>35</u>
No suggestions made	36
Would you participate in special in-house training courses? (Active volunteers only)	
Yes: Ceramics	20
Glass	-
Both	40
Other	15
No, or no response	25
Would you attend in addition to your regular volunteer hours?	
Yes	65
No	15
No response	20
Would you be interested in monthly seminars about Alexandria archaeology, results and/or other archaeological projects? Would you come?	
Yes	72
No	10
No response	18
Do you feel that a newsletter with descriptions of current projects, results, and opportunities would be valuable?	
Yes	62
No	5
No response	33



APPENDIX II (cont.)

	<u>Percent</u>
Would you be willing to subscribe?	
Yes	46
No	15
No response	39
Or, would you rather have a monthly update in a xerox format to inform everyone of general events and activities?	
Yes	54
No	15
No response	31



**VOLUNTEERS IN THE LABORATORY:  
HOW TO STUDY TWO MILLION ARTIFACTS IN LESS THAN A LIFETIME**

**Barbara H. Magid**

Since 1977, over 1500 volunteers have worked with the Alexandria Urban Archaeology Program, sharing special skills and knowledge, or simply valuable time and enthusiasm. Community volunteers have participated in all aspects of our research, including excavation, survey, archival research, artifact processing and analysis, conservation, drafting, and public interpretation in our museum.

The components of a successful volunteer program have been discussed by Steven Shephard and John Stephens in The Volunteer in Alexandria Archaeology, published in the Alexandria Papers series. And, in this symposium, Gene Luckman, a volunteer of long standing, has provided a profile of "the typical volunteer." Her questionnaire uncovered a number of issues which have been the basis for a re-evaluation of the program by the professional staff.

Both volunteers and staff have raised similar issues. These have arisen from the Program's greatest strengths: the number, quality and diversity of our volunteers. The large number of people necessary to study the approximately two million artifacts which have resulted from three major excavations in five years requires careful scheduling, organization and supervision. The high caliber of our volunteers requires that their abilities be recognized, appreciated and utilized to the fullest; through adequate training, supervision and guidance. The diversity of their skills and interests, and of our research needs, requires a real juggling act on the part of the supervisors, to keep diverse projects on track, and to absorb the great amount of knowledge brought to the program by the volunteers or discovered in the course of their work.

While the questionnaire has made us more aware of the volunteer's needs and opinions, changes in our research focus have also necessitated a re-evaluation of the volunteer program. The focus of our research has changed from the in-depth study of three major sites, to a broader-based survey of the history, archaeology and architecture of the city. At the same time, ongoing lab projects have progressed from the more general steps of artifact processing to cataloguing and analysis of the data. The work of the volunteers is becoming more specialized and diversified, requiring greater attention to training, closer supervision and better integration so that all program participants are aware of how each project fits into the program as a whole. The first step in upgrading the volunteer program is to understand its current problems and complexities, followed by a well planned program of change in structure and training.

Our evaluation began with the compilation of a list of problems in the program, both from the viewpoint of the professional staff and that of the volunteers. In analyzing these problems, it was discovered that they all related to six basic issues: Time, Communication, Quality, Fragmentation of Knowledge, Motivation and Recognition. Moreover, it was discovered that each of these issues affect both volunteers and staff. The volunteers'



problems are also our problems. This enables us to work together with the volunteers, to deal with mutual problems and to improve the program for the benefit of all.

The first issue, Time, is an all pervasive one, affecting our ability to deal effectively with each of the other issues. Supervision, in-depth training and administration of volunteers compete with other requirements of our work. Even in-depth discussion of one volunteer project may interfere with supervision of others. Conflicting city requirements, including interdepartmental meetings and myriad telephone calls all too often interfere with what should be uninterrupted time to work together with the volunteers.

Our time problems have been partially alleviated by limiting lab hours to two days per week. When the program began, volunteers and staff worked together every day. While this sped along the work of artifact processing, it led to excessive conflicts between City and volunteer requirements. We now attempt to focus all of our attention on the volunteers and their work two days per week leaving the remainder of the week for other business. (All in-house volunteer activities, including archival and computer work as well as lab work, are now conducted on the same days).

Communication is the second issue. This area includes communicating our research goals, methods and results to the volunteers, as well as personal communications between staff and volunteers about their needs, expectations, and problems.

An orientation session, which is required of all new volunteers, is designed to inform prospective participants of the Program's goals, various volunteer opportunities, and our expectations and requirements. Continuous reinforcement of the ideas presented at this first session, is required in on-the-job training, to insure that the volunteers understand the value of their work. A written description of each volunteer project is being prepared, and will be given to the volunteer along with a description of their activities within the project.

The questionnaire has shown that many of our present volunteers would welcome seminars or training sessions to further their knowledge of Alexandria Archaeology. A monthly seminar series, bringing in guest speakers from the Washington area, was held in 1980, and this year we plan a series of in-house seminars which we feel will better meet the needs of the current volunteers. A community college course is also planned.

In addition, lab training sessions were instituted to train groups of volunteers in the steps of lab work, and to familiarize them with artifacts of the period. Most further training is done on an individual, informal basis as supervisors help volunteers to identify artifacts and to recognize patterns in the data.

Communications with volunteers are primarily on an informal basis. The staff should make time to meet individually with each volunteer periodically, to discuss work-related needs, problems, and suggestions. However, the time factor once again enters the picture when one staff member regularly deals with more than 30 volunteers. Close supervision can allow issues to be dealt with as they arise and should insure that volunteers understand their work.

Both increased training and educational activities, and more formal communications between staff and volunteers, should lead to a smoother running program, less confusion, and better informed volunteers. Improved communications are an important step in dealing with the third issue, Quality.

Quality of work is, of course, a major concern of any volunteer program. Accuracy and consistency is of the utmost importance in the archaeology lab, and care must be taken that volunteer work is of high caliber. We have no prerequisites other than a minimum of age of 16 (recently raised from 14) for our volunteers. Thus, the burden of maintaining quality rests on the supervisory staff. We must evaluate the capabilities of each volunteer, assign appropriate work accordingly, provide adequate training, and consistently check the work being done.

To maintain high quality, we utilize an apprentice system in which volunteers receive on-the-job training and close supervision by working together with supervisors or with more experienced volunteers.

Another method of increasing the quality of work is to assign special projects, according to interests and skills, which encourage participants to become specialists in one area. Volunteers have become specialists in glass, ceramics, seeds, bones, and even in the restoration of a musket. Some read extensively about their subjects, and attend outside lectures and exhibits. We may assist these people in accomplishing work of high quality by the purchase of specialized equipment, chemicals, or books, or by suggesting appropriate professional contacts. We have also found that we can aid them in the analysis and reporting of the data by becoming actively involved in their projects. The volunteers may know more than we do in their specialized field, and thus be very important contributors to the project.

The Fourth issue, Fragmentation of Knowledge, is closely related to both quality and communications. Many volunteers are, because of work, family and other volunteer commitments, only able to come our minimum of nine hours per month. As a result they do not see the full range of our activities. Also, many work intensively in one aspect of the program and are unfamiliar with other areas. Again, seminars and increased personal communications should increase awareness and a feeling of cohesiveness among all participants.

Fragmentation of knowledge is also a problem from the staff's viewpoint. The staff must coordinate work done by a number of individuals, including that done in areas in which he is unfamiliar. And, there is always a danger that a volunteer may leave the organization without adequately imparting the knowledge which he has gained in his work. Regular meetings on all special projects, and standard reporting formats may help to reduce the problem. But one way of alleviating this problem has been instituted by the volunteers: the presentation of seminars and writing of reports detailing preliminary results or methodology. Volunteers bring and share their knowledge; we process it and compile a compendium of knowledge for all to draw from.



The fifth issue is Motivation. The volunteers require interesting work, a feeling that they are needed, and an agreeable social environment. Although our questionnaire indicated that the main motivation for volunteers is a desire to learn and to participate in a field of interest, a secondary and still very important motivation is the social aspect of volunteering. All benefit from the camaraderie present at a dig or in the lab. The most important aspect is the informal communication in the lab - a smile, praise for a job well done, or simply small talk and the sharing of ideas. Communal lunches in the lab are organized by the volunteers, as is after-hours socializing in the local pub. Parties are often given by individuals or hosted by the Program.

Finally, there is a need to provide Recognition for the volunteers' work. All volunteers deserve recognition for the donation of their time and energy to the Program, including special recognition for special work. In Alexandria, the City gives formal thanks at the annual Volunteer Recognition Party. Appreciation is expressed by the Mayor, City Manager, Chairman of the Archaeological Commission, as well as by the program staff. Many gag awards are also presented. Individual recognition may take other forms; for instance, one long-time and trusted volunteer was asked to supervise an excavation, and others are contributing to our publications series. Several volunteers have been named Project Coordinators and given a larger role in planning and supervising activities.

By more carefully organizing our time and establishing better communications networks, we can improve the quality of the work, decrease fragmentation of knowledge, and improve volunteer motivation and recognition. There is still room for improvement in all of these areas, but we are justly proud of our program as it stands. And we are working together with our volunteers to improve the program, to our mutual benefit.



**VOLUNTEERS IN THE MUSEUM:  
WHY DO WE WORK SO HARD ON OUR DAYS OFF?**

**Barbara J. Lumbis**

Sometimes I consider myself crazy. Why do I work ten and a half hours a day Monday through Thursday and then put in at least fourteen hours on Friday and Saturday at the Alexandria Archaeological Research Museum? [Editor's Note: This museum was located in the Torpedo Factory from 1979 to 1982.] It's due to two basic reasons, really: first, the Museum itself; and secondly, the people working with Alexandria Archaeology. The Alexandria Archaeological Research Museum is not very big as museums go, nor is it endowed with magnificent display cases. Volunteers and staff members pitched in and cleaned, built and painted the museum area. We were lucky to get some used Smithsonian Institution display cases for our use. The grid system framing one wall of pictures is really a series of painted rain gutter sections. It's not the materials we use, but how well we make use of what we have.

We have about 1,000 square feet of museum space. The building we are in is a World War II torpedo factory that the City of Alexandria converted into a haven for local artists. We are the only non-artist group in the building, though the practice of archaeology may be considered an art form in itself. Because the Torpedo Factory as a whole is well known throughout the East, we benefit from the many visitors who come to tour it. One thing our museum tries to give these visitors is a small sample of Alexandria's history. It is good public relations for the City if our visitors can go home knowing some little incident in the City's history that might not be in the official guidebook. We don't go into a lot of detail -- just little things like "Where you're standing now used to be part of the Potomac River," or "The marks on some of the houses around town are fire insurance marks - meaning the homeowners had bought and paid for fire insurance. If their home caught fire, the fire department would come and put it out." Or maybe we ask "Guess which was the first southern city occupied by northern troops during the Civil War?"

A major incentive for me to get out of bed on Friday and Saturday is that I believe very much in the Museum and what it is doing. I'm not an expert in archaeology, but I am interested in it. Not being a professional archaeologist helps me relate to the visitors in the Museum. We can help them understand what we're doing and why, because we speak their language, and don't get bogged down in scientific talk. Instead of talking about a waster dump at a kiln site, for example, I talk about the place where the potter threw his discards, (maybe the ones that were the apprentice's practice pots).

We schedule our school tours of the Museum on Friday mornings, since that is my day off from work and I can give the tours. One high school student who works on Saturdays as a volunteer has found giving school tours an excellent reason for missing school on Fridays. One particular Friday we had tours scheduled for nine, ten, and eleven a.m. The first group came ten minutes late, the second came fifteen minutes late, and the third group came twenty minutes early. Thank goodness for Susan, who had come from school to



help. She took a blue willow pattern plate we kept for emergencies and kept the last group occupied in the hallway by telling them the love story that it depicts while I finished up with the second group.

Together, docents from many of the historic buildings and museums in Alexandria have created a fourth grade level project for teaching Alexandria history. We spent nearly two months this fall redoing our slide show to conform to the fourth grade level. I never realized how much fourth graders didn't know until I started this project. After all that work, guess who our first slide show of the school year was for? - advanced eighth graders.

It really helps when the teacher prepares the students before they come to the Museum. One teacher created an entire imaginary civilization for her class. When they came to the Museum, I had a box of "Who Knows What It Is?" objects for them to examine. They did not need a rehash of what archaeology was, but they did need practical, hands-on interaction with artifacts.

If possible, when a tour is arranged, we find out how much the students know about Alexandria and the area, what they are studying in school, and what the teacher wants them to get out of a field trip to the Museum. We hope they will tell us they want the children to get more out of the tour than just a break from the classroom or a breather from teaching for themselves. If at all possible, the slide show is tailored to teacher's answers.

Every December, Alexandria has a Christmas Walk that attracts thousands of people. Our Museum is on the list of properties to visit. We have been known to have over 500 visitors come through in one day, and so we put our slide projector on automatic and let it run. Eventually we would like to have an accompanying tape recording for the slide show. We also present public forums on different aspects of archaeology. We've had volunteers speak on their favorite research areas, and recently a potter demonstrated how pottery is made using a wheel. During the month of May we had seminars every Saturday morning on Alexandria archaeology and the history of the King Street area of the City. In addition, we like to have one of the volunteers give a lecture if we can talk them into doing it.

The Living Lab is probably the most popular area, with visitors and volunteers alike. We do a little bit of anything we can there. Everyone's favorite, of course, is gluing the pieces of broken ceramics back together. This summer we had ten boxes of pottery that had been excavated from a kiln site and visitors got a kick out of seeing us sitting there crying after a month of trying to put something together. We would allow the visitors to sit down and try to put two pieces of something together that matched. Interestingly enough, most of those who sat down and became engrossed were adults. It made them sit up and take notice to what you were telling them when you casually mentioned to them that the pieces they were holding date back to around 1825.

Another technique we use is to have someone in the Living Lab working in such a way that people looking through the front windows cannot quite make out what they are doing. It drives visitors crazy. We have the volunteer concentrating on some intricate task like sorting flotation samples, which are tiny seeds and bones recovered by fine screening. The



result is that I've had many people walk in and say "I give up. What in the world are you doing?" Then I explain and the visitor has learned something new. They can also learn about archaeology by visiting our reference area. Copies of several archaeology magazines are available along with reference books, and we encourage visitors to sit down and read at their leisure.

Something else we have learned, is to be honest...well, pretty honest, anyway. I have surprised more people by telling them that separating the various artifacts in those flotation samples are a pain in the "you know what" and I am taking a break because I am sick of it. Honesty can mean education, too. Most people do not realize how much time and effort must be put in before digging can begin and the great amount of time required for artifact analysis. That is one thing we emphasize when we talk with visitors. They seem surprised to hear that we spend a lot more time researching and analysing than digging.

In the title of this talk I asked why we work so hard on our days off. I could stand here and give you fancy reasons, but the truth of the matter is that I am still not sure. I have spent as much time trying to answer that question as I have working on the rest of this paper altogether.

One of the main reasons I keep coming back is **THE PEOPLE**. Each visitor sees things a little bit differently -- from the little girl who cried pathetically because everything was broken, to the man who comes in every once in awhile and asks us why we don't leave old things alone and spend our time more constructively. Never knowing just what situation we'll be faced with next has given each of us working in the Museum a chance to develop maturity, poise, and a quick reply.

Then, there are the staff members we work with. Never once have I been laughed at or made fun of because of a dumb question I have asked. And, if anyone can ask dumb questions, believe me, I can. Everyone, and I mean everyone, is more than willing to answer any question which may be asked. Many times a simple question has turned into an impromptu lecture and if a volunteer has a special interest, the Program staff does their utmost to have them work in an area relating to it. If a volunteer does something extra, the staff will recognize it and give credit where it's due. We're small enough so that if someone wants to take responsibility, they will get it, maybe even more than they anticipated. If someone wants to come in and do nothing more thought provoking than washing and numbering artifacts, he's also welcome.

The staff works with the volunteers. The **"WITH"** is very important. It is difficult to describe the feeling of unity and comradeship formed when visitors to a site cannot tell a grimy supervisor from a grimy volunteer. That feeling, I guess, answers the question of why I volunteer with Alexandria Archaeology as well as anything else I could say.

If, out of all the people who have come through the Museum, we have made a lasting impression on just one person -- if we have helped someone who lives in Alexandria learn more about his city, or helped a child realize that history is people, people who lived, worked, and died not so differently than herself -- if we have helped just one person realize that history is much more than just words or dates on the pages of a book --- then I know, as does everyone who works in the Museum, that no matter how tired we may be, it's worth it!!!





## RESEARCH RESULTS

CAT BONES AND DUCK FEET:  
DEVELOPMENT OF FAUNAL ANALYSIS IN ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

Peggy Weiss

Richard Wheeler and I began our joint volunteer career with the Alexandria Archaeology Program in October, 1977, some four months after the excavation of the 500 Block of King Street began.

Richard Wheeler is a retired professional archaeologist. I have had some academic background in physical anthropology, but neither of us had any real experience in faunal identification when we met.

Richard Wheeler and Pamela Cressey, the program director, had originally planned to sort the faunal material into identifiable and unidentifiable categories, and ship the identifiable material out periodically to be examined by an expert. This plan failed to materialize for various reasons, one of which was the very large quantity of material coming out of the King Street Site. This assemblage contained hundreds of complete, or nearly complete, elements and we felt that with the Smithsonian collection so near at hand, we could at least make a stab at identifying as much of it as possible. I would like to reconstruct the procedures we followed in developing our faunal analysis project with Alexandria Archaeology.

We began our work on Feature B of the King Street Site. This feature was a well that had later been used as a privy and trash receptacle. It dates from approximately 1800 to 1900. The feature was dug in 20 centimeter units, numbering 41 levels in all.

Level 41 (the deepest) contained only a few bones, but level 40 contained almost 1400 elements or fragments, most of which were identifiable. Having this large number of bones to work with right from the beginning was extremely fortunate, because level 40 contained elements of 13 different kinds of animals. These were: cat, cow, pig, rabbit, sheep, chicken, duck, turkey, alewife, catfish, white perch, rockfish, and shad. At this stage, we could only identify chicken and large mammal.

Our first sorting of the bones in this level gave us a large number of elements which we tentatively identified as rodent by comparison with drawings in some publications on mammal osteology. A quick trip to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History resulted in a positive identification of Rattus norvegicus, the common rat of urban areas. We assembled as complete a skeleton as possible from these elements to provide the first specimen in our own comparative collection.

As we examined more levels of Feature B, certain patterns began to develop. There were large numbers of immature chicken bones, also many immature small mammal bones. The humerus, maxilla, mandible, and scapula were so similar to those of the mature cat that we felt comfortable in labeling these bones as immature cat. The other immature elements were not so easily identified. Some, we found later, to be rabbit; others are still unidentified.



Because there were so many immature chicken and cat bones, we decided to catalogue them separately from the mature species. As we were also finding many unfused epiphyses, we were forced to ask ourselves "What constitutes classification as mature?" We decided that in our cataloging system we would define those under-sized, ill-defined elements as immature, and label the adult sized, well-developed bones lacking epiphyses as young adult.

The large mammal material consisted, for the most part, of cut pieces of bone which had resulted from the butchering of meat. The rest of the material represented fairly complete skeletons of individual animals. We decided to weigh each identified large mammal bone separately, in order to estimate the amount of meat represented; whereas, for the birds and fish, we chose to estimate the amount of meat by calculating the minimum number of individuals.

In the course of examination, we found examples of disease and healed injuries. These elements have been removed to a special collection to be easily available for study. Some examples were:

- radius and ulna of cat -- probable periostetis
- femur, unknown animal -- excess bone growth probably due to fracture
- 2 phalanges, tibia tarsus and coracoid of chicken -- osteomyelitis
- goose ulna, chicken femur and humerus -- fractures
- unknown large mammal -- fused ribs
- goose skull -- perforated (first evidence of the practice of trepanning among geese!)

After we finished our initial sorting of Feature B and Feature D (the latter of which was a 500 Block well/privy similar to Feature B) we begun our first revision of the material. We had been making regular trips to the Museum of Natural History with our bags of bones to study and consult with the experts there. After seeing the enormous bird and mammal skeletal collections, we were dismayed to find that there was not a similar collection of fish. Most of the research in that area is done on soft tissue material. This fact forced us to put more effort into building up our own comparative collection. Fortunately, fish are easily obtainable and easy to prepare. At present, we have 44 different animals represented by partial or complete skeletons in our study collection:

- 14 mammal ---- 4 from excavation
- 17 bird ----- 10 from excavation
- 13 fish ----- none from excavation
- 3 turtle ---- 1 from excavation

Some material such as the passenger pigeon skulls and the human bones obviously come from the dig itself. Other materials are the remains of food donated by staff members or friends, such as: a Thanksgiving turkey, Christmas goose, and Passover lamb shank. One never knows where comparative material will turn up. For instance, I collected four duck feet from the plates of my luncheon companions at the Dim Sum restaurant in Washington, D.C. However, the law of averages was working against me that day -- they are all right feet. Most of the small animals and birds in our collection have come from road kills or accidental discovery.

In the course of the first revision of our cataloging technique we gained more knowledge and redesigned our procedures. We have not felt bound to a particular format. If it can be clarified, we make modifications. Lack of time and lack of knowledge force us to limit the effort we make to identify each element. We concentrate on those elements that are diagnostic for a species. We have found Stanley Olsen's chart on the relative value of fragmentary remains to be a useful guide for efficient use of our time.

A summary of the work on the two features I have mentioned shows that we have cataloged 21,730 bones, representing 34 different animals. These break down as follows:

- 5,116 large mammal bones, of which 57% were identified
- 2,965 small mammal bones, of which, 92% were identified
- 4,547 bird bones, of which 77% were identified
- 8,985 fish bones, of which 81% were identified





## WHAT DID ALEXANDRIANS PUT ON THEIR PLATES?

Richard P. Wheeler

This paper presents some of the results of the faunal analysis conducted by myself and Peggy Weiss, as discussed in her earlier paper. First, we will be dealing with faunal remains found in refuse deposits in four features excavated at three historic sites in the City of Alexandria, Virginia. And secondly, we will be considering estimated amounts of consumed animal protein and fat derived only from domestic mammals and birds and from fish whose bones were identifiable. This faunal assemblage consisted of a total of 9,200 identified elements out of a grand total of approximately 20,000 bones and bone fragments. The time frames of the deposits have been established by documentation and the association of the osteological material with dated ceramics.

The first two samples are from well/privies at Site 44 Ax1, commonly referred to as the 500 Block King Street Site, located in downtown Old Town Alexandria. The site was formerly occupied by white middle-class householders. The two well/privies were vertical shafts lined with stretcher bond laid brick, originally built as wells and later used for the disposal of trash, kitchen refuse, and human waste. They were situated at the back corners of two lots, adjacent to each other at right angles, which fronted on King and South St. Asaph Streets, in the northwest quadrant of the 500 block.

The features, called Features D and B, were dug in arbitrary 20 centimeters levels to depths of 7.5 meters and 8.2 meters, down to sterile earth. In Feature D, faunal remains were recovered from 32 of the 35 culture-bearing levels, in a mucky matrix; and in Feature B, faunal material occurred in 27 of the 31 cultural levels, also in a mucky matrix.

Cluster analysis of the inclusive datable ceramics from Features D and B indicates three periods of use for each feature prior to "modern times," where the uppermost levels of the features were thoroughly disturbed by bulldozing and hard-topping for temporary parking purposes. The periods, dates, and embraced arbitrary levels are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Periods of use of Features D and B, Site 44Ax1, as determined by cluster analysis of the inclusive datable ceramics.

FEATURE D			FEATURE B		
III	1854-97	(Levels 12-21)	III	1845-56	(Levels 17-23)
II	1833-60	(Levels 22-31)	II	1834-54	(Levels 24-29)
I	1820-35	(Levels 32-39)	I	1828-40	(Levels 30-41)



Following this time frame, we have prepared two additional tables (Tables 2 and 3) which compare the pounds and percentages of consumed animal protein and fat derived from three domestic mammals and based on butchering units extrapolated from identified skeletal elements (see Lyman 1979). The data was derived from domestic birds and from fish and are based on the whole carcasses (except in the case of the very large, mature sturgeon) of the minimum numbers of individuals (MNI) identified (see Barber 1976).

In the earlier time period, the total estimated pounds of consumed animal protein and fat (ECAP) in the Feature D sample were about 11 percent greater than those in the Feature B sample. The same taxa of domestic mammals (3) and of domestic birds (4) were identified in each sample, but only 6 of the 7 fish taxa were identified in each case.

The food supply as reflected by the total ECAP in the Feature D early period sample was found to be somewhat more ample than that reflected in the Feature B sample (850.6 pounds compared to 682.9 pounds). As to the matter of diet, there were notable differences in the composition of the two samples. The ECAP from domestic cow, pig and sheep were three-and-a-half times greater in Feature D than in Feature B, whereas the ECAP from domestic birds were more than twice as great in B as in D. The ECAP from fish were practically the same in each sample (180 pounds in D, 191 pounds in B).

The food supply for the later period as reflected by the total ECAP in Feature D's sample was somewhat greater than that reflected in Feature B's (1264.2 pounds compared to 1075.7 pounds). With respect to diet, the samples showed interesting differences and similarities. The ECAP from domestic mammals were about one-tenth greater in the Feature B sample than in the Feature D sample, but the ECAP from fish were more than three times greater in D than in B. The ECAP from domestic birds were roughly the same in each sample.

Now comparing the composition of the two samples diachronically, we find that in the case of Feature D, the ECAP from domestic mammals were slightly less in the later period (426.70) than in the earlier one (495.10). However, the ECAP from domestic birds and from fish were, respectively, nearly three times greater in the later period than in the earlier one (837.5 compared to 355.5 pounds).

Our third sample is from a privy/trash pit, designated Feature E, at Site 44Ax8 on Gibbon Street, in "The Bottoms," an area of Alexandria inhabited by black artisans and laborers, many of whom were descendants of the free blacks who settled here in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Feature E was excavated in 16 arbitrary levels, each 20 centimeters thick, to a depth of 3.2 meters. Lined with three wooden barrels stacked one on top of the other, the feature was originally a well, constructed around 1810 and later was used as a privy/trash pit. Its mucky matrix yielded 148 ceramic vessels, fragments of wood, leather, bottles, window glass, and floral and faunal remains.

Analysis of datable ceramics indicates the feature saw two periods of use as a privy/trash pit: an earlier period, c.1840-50, embracing Levels 16 to 9, and a later period, c.1860-1900, encompassing Levels 8 to 1.



Table 2

Estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from 14 identified taxa represented by faunal remains from Features D and B, Site 44Ax1, during time period I (1820-35 at Feature D, 1828-40 at Feature B).

Taxa	Feature D		Feature B	
	Est. pounds consumed protein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat	Est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat
Mammals	495.10	58.20	137.90	20.19
Cow	331.30	38.94	33.90	4.96
Pig	99.70	11.72	86.70	12.70
Sheep	64.10	7.54	17.30	2.53
Birds	175.50	20.63	354.00	51.83
Chicken	93.00	10.93	177.00	25.92
Turkey	45.00	5.29	117.00	17.13
Duck*	13.50	1.59	30.00	4.39
Goose	24.00	2.82	30.00	4.39
Fish	180.00	21.17	191.00	27.98
Shad	72.00	8.47	108.00	15.82
Alewife	29.00	3.41	27.00	3.95
Catfish	38.00	4.47	26.00	3.81
White Perch	37.00	4.35	22.00	3.22
Yellow Perch	1.00	.12		
Rockfish	3.00	.35	6.00	.88
Sea Bass			2.00	.30
TOTAL	850.60	100.00%	682.90	100.00%

\*Some individuals may have been wild rather than domesticated forms.

Table 3

Estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from 16 identified taxa represented by faunal remains from Features D and B, Site 44Ax1, during time period II (c.1833-60 in Feature D) and periods II-III (c.1834-56 in Feature B).

Feature D			Feature B	
Taxa	Est. pounds consumed protein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat	Est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed pro- tein and fat
Mammals	426.70	33.76	505.20	46.96
Cow	183.90	14.55	346.10	32.17
Pig	217.90	17.24	151.80	14.11
Sheep	24.90	1.97	7.30	.68
Birds	493.50	39.03	469.50	43.64
Chicken	247.50	19.58	202.50	18.82
Turkey	153.00	12.10	216.00	20.08
Duck*	63.00	4.98	45.00	4.18
Goose	30.00	2.37	6.00	.56
Fish	344.00	27.21	101.00	9.40
Shad	102.00	8.07	30.00	2.79
Alewife	140.00	11.07	5.00	.46
Catfish	54.00	4.27	6.00	.56
White Perch	35.00	2.77	2.00	.19
Yellow Perch	3.00	.24		
Perch Family	1.00	.08		
Rockfish	9.00	.71	36.00	3.35
Sea Bass			2.00	.19
Sturgeon			20.00	1.86
TOTAL	1264.20	100.00%	1075.70	100.00%

\*Some individuals may have been wild rather than domesticated forms.



Twin tables (Tables 4a and 4b) show the estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat derived from identified taxa represented by the faunal remains from Feature E during the earlier and later time periods.

The food supply as reflected by the total ECAP was considerably greater in the earlier period than in the later one (215.4 pounds compared to 114.9 pounds). As to sources of the ECAP in the diets of the earlier and later periods, the triad of domestic mammals (cow, pig and sheep) was foremost in the earlier period followed by 3 taxa of domestic birds and, in turn, 1 taxon of fish. In the later period, 2 taxa of domestic mammals (cow and pig) provided the largest portion of ECAP, followed by 2 taxa of domestic birds (chicken and turkey), followed in turn, by 3 taxa of fish.

The fourth and last sample we are dealing with here is from a midden deposit designated Feature 26B, at Site 44Ax30 (known as the Coleman Site), in the 400-block of South Royal Street, in Old Town Alexandria. The feature was excavated according to natural levels down to sterile earth. It lay at the rear of three lots, the dwellings of which fronted on South Royal. They were rented in the middle and latter half of the nineteenth century, mainly by free black unskilled laborers. The houses were demolished in 1907 and the lots were then consolidated into a single garden plot.

Table 5 shows the estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from a total of 5 taxa which were consumed by the occupants of the Coleman Site properties during the earlier and later periods (Levels 3 and 2, respectively) in the building up of Feature 26B.

Little can be said about the ECAP in the earlier period beyond noting that elements of one domestic mammal, pig, were identified and a small amount of consumed protein and fat (3.2 pounds) resulted therefrom. In the later period of Feature 26B, the familiar triad of domestic mammals produced the bulk of ECAP (166 pounds), to which 12 pounds of chicken were added.

By way of summing up we would like to offer the following observations:

1. The first two samples discussed, those from Features D and B of Site 44Ax1, are quite comparable in quantity and quality, and are moderately informative. The third sample, from Feature E at Site 44Ax8, is considerably smaller than the first two and its array of taxa is rather restricted. The fourth sample, from Feature 26B at the Coleman Site, is not really comparable to the other three since weathering and mechanical disturbance had extensively altered the integrity of the salvagable refuse.

2. The likenesses and unlikenesses among the samples at a given time may be attributed to the differing socioeconomic status of those who produced them, but may have been affected by the nature of the features themselves -- the type of structure, the character of the enveloping matrix, and so on.

3. Differences in the composition of the ECAP's of the samples through time may be the result of changing availability of meat, poultry, and fish; changing dietary habits and food preferences; or variation in the occupants' status.

Table 4a

Estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from 8 identified taxa which represented by faunal remains from Feature E, Site 44Ax8, during the earlier time period.

## Earlier Period (c.1840-50)

Taxa	Est. Pounds consumed protein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed protein and fat
Mammals	182.40	84.68
Cow	149.40	69.36
Pig	28.40	13.18
Sheep	4.60	2.14
Birds	27.00	12.53
Chicken	3.00	1.39
Turkey	18.00	8.35
Duck	6.00	2.79
Fish	6.00	2.79
Catfish	6.00	2.79
TOTAL	215.40	100.00%

\*Some individuals may have been wild rather than domesticated forms.



Table 4b

Estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from 7 identified taxa represented by faunal remains from Feature E, Site 44Ax8, during the later time period.

## Later Period (c.1860-1900)

Taxa	Est. Pounds consumed protein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed protein and fat
Mammals	67.40	58.66
Cow	51.00	44.39
Pig	16.40	14.27
Birds	34.50	30.03
Chicken	16.50	14.36
Turkey	18.00	15.67
Fish	13.00	11.31
Catfish	2.00	1.74
White Perch	1.00	.87
Sturgeon	10.00	8.70
TOTAL	114.90	100.00%

Table 5

Estimated pounds and percentages of animal protein and fat from 4 identified taxa represented by faunal remains from Feature 26-B, Site 44Ax30, (Coleman Site) during the earlier and later periods.

Earlier Period (Level 3)

Taxa	Est. Pounds consumed protein and fat	% total est. pounds consumed protein and fat
Mammals	3.20	
Pig	3.20	
TOTAL	3.20	

Later Period (Level 2)

Mammals	166.00	93.26
Cow	80.30	45.11
Pig	83.30	46.80
Sheep	2.40	1.35
Birds	12.00	6.47
Chicken	12.00	6.47
TOTAL	178.00	100.00%



4. Although we have made a number of flat statements in this paper, we do not pretend that we have been infallible in all our identifications of all the skeletal elements in our samples, nor can we claim irrefutability in all the inferences we have drawn from those identifications. Nevertheless, in our study we have found another dimension to the interpretation of Alexandria's past, which we think will be worth pursuing a great deal further.

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NOTES ON  
THE MILITARY DEFENSES OF ALEXANDRIA  
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Philip Erickson

In conducting documentary research into Alexandria's waterfront history, I encountered a number of interesting facts related to the defenses of the city. My curiosity peaked, I have developed this chronology to trace the military defenses of Alexandria through its early period until 1800. These defenses were never formidable, nor prepossessing, but they were an important part of this port city during the American Revolution. We will proceed chronologically, tracing the development of Alexandria's defenses through glimpses provided by the documentary record.

**Sixteen December 1773.** The Boston Tea Party took place and news of this soon spread throughout the British Colonies-local protests followed. Committees of Correspondence were formed locally so that neighboring cities and colonies might be aware of the latest developments in this growing protest movement.<sup>1</sup>

**Twenty-nine May 1774.** John Carlyle and John Dalton sent a letter to the Council in Williamsburg which indicated that they had heard from the citizens of Baltimore and Annapolis and had established a similar committee of correspondence in Alexandria. The Committee of Correspondence for Alexandria consisted of the following citizens: John Carlyle, William Ramsay, John Dalton, Dr. William Rumney, Robert Adam, James Kish, James Hendricks, Robert Harrison, George Gilpin, and Captain Hasper.<sup>2</sup>

**August 1775.** All of the Maryland and Virginia Counties along the Potomac had established Companies of Minutemen and Councils of Safety or Committees of Correspondence.<sup>3</sup>

**January 1776.** Lund Washington, the nephew of George Washington and the caretaker of Mt. Vernon, warned Alexandrians he had received a report that five British ships were in the Potomac and suggested that entrenchments along the city's waterfront from Great Hunting Creek to the upper end of the town be constructed. This warning threw the City of Alexandria into a panic, as their militia had gone to Williamsburg and had taken their weapons with them. Lund Washington, reported to his uncle that this caused the women and children to leave Alexandria and to stow themselves in every little hut they could find out of cannon's reach. Every wagon, cart, and pack horse was engaged in moving goods out of Alexandria. When it was discovered the ships were merely oyster boats, panic subsided.<sup>4</sup>

**Thirty-one January 1776.** George Mason and John Dalton wrote a letter to the Maryland Council of Safety stating that they had been empowered by the Committee of Safety of Virginia to build two "row galleys," one to carry a 24 pounder and the other an 18 pounder and to provide three armed cutters to provide for the protection of the Potomac River. In addition, they hoped that the Maryland Council would adopt a similar plan for the same purpose. Interestingly enough the Marylanders replied that they were not used to such construction and so demurred on this project.<sup>5</sup>



**Early Spring 1776.** In response to a query from the Commissioners in Virginia, John Dent of Charles County, Maryland, reported to the Maryland Council of Safety that he had worked with the Virginians and had agreed to set up a system of 20 signal beacons from the mouth of the Potomac to Alexandria. Twenty such signal stations were to be established, 13 in Maryland and the remainder in Virginia. These signals were to warn of the approach of enemy vessels which might be coming up the Potomac. These signals were described "to be in the form of the alarm post, which, is to be a kind of iron grate suspended by a chain on the end of a sweep fixed with a swivel so as to be turned agreeable to the wind."<sup>6</sup> (We have been unable to locate any sketches or models of these devices but later correspondence indicates they were in place.)

**October 1776.** Mason wrote a letter to the Continental Congress to John Hancock requesting 16 cannon for the defense of Alexandria. These cannon were to come from the Hughes Factory in Frederick, Maryland. This request was approved.<sup>7</sup>

**Eighteen December 1776.** The Internal Defenses Act of Virginia was passed and Alexandria was authorized to form two militia companies. One of these was to be an artillery company and to consist of 50 natrosses. This ruling went on to say that the companies were to be duly exercised at the batteries in Alexandria. So, in these two moves of October and December, George Mason had gotten the Continental Congress to pay for the cannon for Alexandria and the State of Virginia to pay for the militia defending Alexandria. The row galleys originally requested by George Mason and John Dalton had been built by this time but they were no longer needed now that town had these two batterys.<sup>8</sup>

**December 1776.** The threat posed by Lord Dunmore then Governor of Virginia had ceased as Dunmore's base at Gwin's Island had been destroyed. Time passed and on 3 April 1781, Colonel Peter Wagener of Alexandria wrote to Governor Thomas Jefferson about the defenses of Alexandria, noting that Maryland had loaned Alexandria some gun powder and two nine pounders. These had already been received from Annapolis. Wagener noted that previously Alexandria had two 12 pounders. Wagener also mentioned in his letter that he had appointed a company of artillery to man these guns. His request to the governor was for money to mount these guns.<sup>9</sup>

**Six April 1781.** Thomas Jefferson, with the approval of the Council, issued a warrant for five thousand pounds upon account to have the cannon at Alexandria mounted.<sup>10</sup>

**Twenty-eight January 1794.** A U.S. House Committee recommended 18 coastal fortifications to be built. Alexandria was not included at this time, but was later added by the Legislature.<sup>11</sup>

**Twelve May 1794.** Secretary of War Knox gave orders to Engineer John Vermonnet about the buildings of fortifications in Alexandria and Annapolis. Pertinent portions of Vermonnet's orders were:

Alexandria will claim your immediate attention....

The sum to be expended for the works to defend Alexandria, is not to exceed \$3,000 exclusively of the expense of cannon...

It will be readily perceived, by the lowness of the estimate, that the parapets of the works intended to be erected, are to be of earth; or where they cannot easily be obtained of an adhesive quality, the parapets may be faced with strong timber, and filled in with such earths as can be had. It is however conceived that, in most cases, earths may be procured, and that a parapet, made, thereof, will not only form a solid defense, but even be durable, if the earth be tenacious and properly sloped and sodded inside and out, and the seed of know grass sown, so that as to bind the sods and the earths together.<sup>12</sup>

**Seventeen June 1794.** Vermonnet advised the Governor of Virginia that he had selected to fortify Alexandria and that in as much as the fund was small, he had chosen Jones Point as the seat of a battery. In the meanwhile, he had ordered his men to collect materials and to construct a crossway through the marsh to permit easy transportation of earth and supplies.<sup>13</sup> Vermonnet also reported to Secretary Knox that logs, planks and other timber were not to be had in the neighborhood without an enormous price, so that he had to send to the Bay to get them.<sup>14</sup>

**Five July 1794.** In a follow-up report to the Secretary of War, Vermonnet stated that the Battery at Jones Point would be a barbette, structured to receive 12 pieces of heavy cannon.<sup>15</sup> (A barbette is a raised platform within a fort from which guns fire over the raised wall, or parapet).

**Twenty August 1794.** Vermonnet reported to the Secretary that the materials he had requested still had not come but that the crossway was finished, the drainage ditches opened and the palisades begun.<sup>16</sup>

**Sixteen September 1794.** Vermonnet reported his materials had come and stated that he hoped to forward the work greatly by the end of October. Actually the work was not completed until 1795.<sup>17</sup>

During this period of 1794 and 1795 the funds expended by the U.S. Government for the defense of Alexandria were the following: \$3,728.36 in 1794 and \$1,208.00 in 1795. No money was authorized or spent thereafter. An unfavorable report was submitted to the Secretary of War in 1796 and no further work was done on the Jones Point battery.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Colonel Williams, in a report of 6 February 1808 to the Secretary of War on a survey of the defenses of Washington reported that he and Colonel Burbeck arrived in Alexandria on 2 February and walked to a point about a mile below that town where they saw the vestige of the old fort and two small bastions in the rear, "the whole ditched round in the usual way." He went on to observe that the fort did not occupy the whole ground, but appeared to be tolerably well designed and the small size of the bastions in the rear indicated that only a picket defense by musketry had been contemplated. The spot appeared "excellently well calculated for a water battery with very little expense."<sup>19</sup>



In retrospect, it is evident that the leaders of colonial Alexandria were for the most part dependent upon their own local resources for the city's defense and the more astute they were in bargaining the better able they were to protect themselves. George Mason should be recognized for his major role in planning the defenses of both Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. Although his means were limited at times, persistence and resourcefulness often achieved the desired ends. This leader as well as the other early citizens of Alexandria and its environs deserve much credit for their part in insuring the continuity of Alexandria.

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