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The Maryland Archeology Month Committee gratefully acknowledges the leadership of Sara Rivers Cofield, Curator of Federal Collections at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, who served as Principal Partner for this year’s event. Sara’s many contributions to Maryland Archeology Month 2019 include the theme, the poster design, and the booklet content.

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Maryland Archeology Month Events

Numerous special events celebrating the archeology of Maryland will be held throughout the State during the month of April. These include museum displays, talks and lectures, workshops, and archeological lab and field volunteer opportunities. Please visit the Maryland Archeology Month website often at www.marylandarcheology.org to learn of other events – the list of events there will be updated throughout the month!

Here's a sampling of the many free events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Day/Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discovering Archaeology Day</td>
<td>Interactive learning and fun, including an archeological dig for kids, archeological site and lab tours, exhibits, games, and crafts.</td>
<td>Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum</td>
<td>JPPM, 10515 Mackall Road, St. Leonard, MD</td>
<td>April 20, 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Sherwana Knox, 410-586-8501, <a href="mailto:jef.pat@maryland.gov">jef.pat@maryland.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of 3-D imaging for archaeology</td>
<td>Presentation at Mid-Potomac Chapter meeting by Tom McLaughlin</td>
<td>Mid-Potomac Chapter of the Archeological Society of Maryland</td>
<td>Needwood Mansion, 6700 Needwood Rd., Derwood, MD</td>
<td>April 18, 7:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Don Housley, <a href="mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net">donhou704@earthlink.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland’s Cinderella: Archaeology of the Belvoir Slave Quarter</td>
<td>Dr. Julie Schablitsky will discuss the archeological investigation of a slave quarter just outside of Annapolis.</td>
<td>Upper Patuxent Archaeology Group</td>
<td>9944 Route 108 (Clarksville Pike), Columbia, MD 21042</td>
<td>April 8, 7:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Kelly Palich, 410-313-0423, <a href="mailto:kpalich@howardcountymd.gov">kpalich@howardcountymd.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging Local: Hear from the Archaeologists that Unearth History</td>
<td>An in-depth look at Frederick County archeological sites from the archeologists who studied them, focusing on the colonial era</td>
<td>City of Frederick</td>
<td>C. Burr Artz Library, Community Room, 110 E Patrick Street</td>
<td>April 9, 6:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Christina Martinkosky, <a href="mailto:cmartinkosky@cityoffrederick.com">cmartinkosky@cityoffrederick.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural History Society of MD Annual Victorian Gala: Superstition!</td>
<td>Join the NHS for its Victorian Gala and learn about the history and archeology of superstitions in Maryland. (There is a fee.)</td>
<td>Natural History Society of Maryland</td>
<td>6908 Belair Road, Baltimore, MD, 21206</td>
<td>May 11, 6:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Bronwyn Strong, 410-882-5376, <a href="mailto:nhsm@marylandnature.org">nhsm@marylandnature.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What “Magic” Means in Archeology

“Magic” in anthropological terms, is anything people do to try to influence the supernatural. That includes personified supernatural forces like gods, ghosts, and ancestral spirits, and impersonal supernatural forces like luck. Usually when people try to influence the supernatural there is a clear end in mind and a ritualized procedure to follow. When you pick a penny up and say, “find a penny, pick it up, and all day long you’ll have good luck,” an anthropologist would classify that as a magic ritual.

There is a joke in archeology (a sub-discipline of anthropology) that any artifact of unknown purpose must be “ritual,” which is really code for “I have no other explanation.” That joke was born out of legitimate criticism, but it has scared some people away from considering ritual and magic in archeology. The burden of proof that something is “magic” is very high. However, it is a disservice to our understanding of past belief systems if we fail to consider possible ritual and magic uses of artifacts, especially if the context calls for it.

A perfect example is this horseshoe from the Smith’s St. Leonard plantation, which was occupied ca. 1711-1754. The default interpretation of a horseshoe is that it was used to shoe a horse, but historical records indicate that it was rare to shoe horses in Maryland prior to the 1750s because the soft clay soils did not require it. Over 200 units have been excavated at the site, resulting in over 450 boxes of artifacts from the main house, a kitchen, a laundry, at least three slave quarter buildings, a store house, and a stable. Only one horseshoe was found, and it was not near the stable, but in a kitchen cellar that was filled with debris from a remodeling episode. Horseshoes have a long history as objects placed on thresholds, near hearths, or in ritual concealments to ward off evil or bring good luck. Thus, history and context suggest that this horseshoe was a magical object.

It is not always possible to determine whether an everyday object was put to a magical purpose, and that is where the “mystery” of the “Magic and Mystery” theme comes in. There are many finds that might be evidence of magic, but there is no way to know with certainty. It is still worthwhile to consider the possibility though because it calls for an understanding of how the people who used these artifacts viewed the world. The following essays offer more examples of artifacts that offer insight into Maryland’s “magical” past.

Sara Rivers Cofield
Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory
Maryland Archeology Month

Table of Contents

1. Ancient Rituals at the Pig Point Site, Stephanie Sperling ....................... 3
2. Witch Bottles and Bottle Charms, Rebecca Morehouse .......................... 5
3. Coin Magic, Sara Rivers Cofield ............................................................... 7
4. Fleet Street Bundle, Mark Leone .............................................................. 9
5. A Crystal in the Kitchen, Lauren Schiszik ............................................. 11
6. Concealed Objects in Architectural Spaces, or “Anybody seen my shoes”?, Matthew Cochran and Jeanne Ward ......................... 12
7. An Interesting Chicken Burial at London Town, Amelia G. Chisholm ......................................................... 14
8. Expressions of African Spirit Practices in Maryland’s Archeological Record, Julie M. Schablitsky ............................................. 16
9. Magical Objects at the Brome Slave Quarter, Historic St. Mary’s City, Silas Hurry.............................................................. 18
10. Seeing Power in Buried Iron Objects, Kirsti Uunila .............................. 19
11. Hoyt’s Cologne, Patricia Samford .......................................................... 21
Archeology Volunteer Programs ................................................................. 23
Messages from Institutional Sponsors .......................................................... 26
Messages from Supporting Organizations ................................................ 28
Sampling of Maryland Archeology Month Events ...................................... 40
Maryland Archeology Month 2019 Sponsors ............................................. Inside back cover

This year the Archeological Society of Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust will conduct their annual Tyler Bastian Field Session in Maryland Archeology on the grounds of the Billingsley House in Prince George’s County between May 24th and June 3rd. Visit www.marylandarcheology.org for more information, and plan to join the effort!

How do you spell archeology? You will notice that throughout this booklet the spelling of “archeology” – or “archaeology” – is somewhat fluid. It’s one of those words that different people and programs spell differently. There are many explanations for this, and most are apocryphal. For an interesting read, google “spelling of archeology” and look for the result titled “Why are there two different spellings: archaeology and archeology” with the www.saa.org url!
The Pig Point site (18AN50) in Anne Arundel County is one of the most important pre-contact Native American sites ever investigated in Maryland. Archeologists excavated the site from 2009-2014 under the leadership of Dr. Al Luckenbach and discovered a large base camp on a bluff overlooking the Patuxent River where people lived for at least 10,000 years. The “Lost Towns Project” team of professionals, volunteers, and students found over half a million artifacts and hundreds of features at the site, many of which had ritualistic meaning.

The archeologists found three separate activity areas at Pig Point. A feasting area was situated near the edge of the bluff, where people gathered around large fires for thousands of years. Feasts had spiritual significance in many tribal ceremonies. Nearby, stains in the soil marked where structures made of saplings were built in the same place for centuries. Some of these buildings were unheated and might have been used for religious purposes, although they could have also housed people who lived here during warm weather. And near the top of the bluff, archeologists were amazed to find five large, circular burial pits that contained human remains, copper beads, and deliberately broken stone blades. The “exotic” stone objects were from the Ohio River Valley and the mound-building Adena people, demonstrating a trading network that spanned the Appalachian Mountains over 2,000 years ago.

While broken artifacts are commonly found on archeological sites, many of the artifacts in the burial pits were intentionally destroyed for unknown reasons. Interestingly, several deliberately broken slate gorget fragments were found in the Pig Point feasting and living areas but were missing from the burial pits. Gorgets are highly polished, relatively flat, rectangular or oval objects found on pre-contact sites across Maryland and have occasionally been found in burial contexts. Archeologists are not entirely sure why Native Americans used gorgets but they probably served any number of purposes, from status symbols worn on the body to fishing reels.
Mandy Melton studied the Pig Point gorgets and found that many were marked in mysterious ways (Melton published this work with Luckenbach in *Maryland Archeology* in 2013). Some had scars from repeated bashing with a hard, small object, while others were sanded down to remove the polished finish. Two or three gorget fragments had helix-shaped cuts and one even appeared to have a scratching of a bird under dozens of crisscrossed lines. Bird motifs, like ravens or thunderbirds, are common symbols of Native American mythology. Perhaps most intriguing of all, two fragments with very different marks mended together. This suggests someone broke a gorget in half and then two different people altered their fragment in distinct ways.

The exact meaning behind the broken, modified gorgets has been lost to time. But they, along with the feasting and burials, clearly suggest that Pig Point held important ritual significance for Native Americans. Even though the gorgets were discovered nearly 100 feet away from the burial pits, Melon and Luckenbach pointed out that, “North American groups practiced a diversity of symbolic ritual/ceremonial performances that may or may not have included the presence of the physical body of the deceased.” This suggests that Native Americans may have considered the entire Pig Point bluff to possess magical significance unlike anything seen elsewhere in Maryland.
Another way is to stop the urine of the Patient, close up in a bottle, and put into it three nails, pins, or needles, with a little white salt, keeping the urine always warm: if you let it remain long in the bottle, it will endanger the witches life: for I have found by experience that they will be grievously tormented making their water with great difficulty, if any at all...The reason...is because there is part of the vital spirit of the Witch in it, for such is the subtlety of the Devil, that he will not suffer the Witch to infuse any poisonous matter into the body of a man or beast, without some of the Witches blood mingled with it....” Instructions on how to make a witch bottle from the Astrological Practice of Physick by Astrologist Joseph Blagrave, published in London, England in 1671.

In early modern England, as well as in the British colonies, the belief in a “witch” as inherently evil and a tool of the Devil was widespread. The Christian church’s focus on salvation from the evil forces of “devilry” fostered this belief. The daily struggles of human life were seen as a direct result of the great cosmic battle between God and the Devil, with the witch as one of the Devil’s primary weapons. Communities felt compelled to identify the witches in their midst and to find ways to protect themselves from their malevolent intentions. Outbreaks of witchcraft hysteria and subsequent mass executions began to appear across Europe and America. Individuals turned to ritual magic to counter witch’s curses or to ward off evil spirits from their homes. Evidence of these magical charms in the form of “witch bottles” have been found on archeological sites throughout England and America, with five known examples in the state of Maryland’s archeological collections.

While there are variations, most witch bottles were made by filling a glass bottle or ceramic jug with urine, human hair and/or nail clippings, animal bone, and sharp objects, such as nails or pins. The bottle was then buried inverted by the entrance to a home or under a hearth. When created as a counter-curse, the placement of sharp objects in the victim’s urine was believed to turn the curse back on the witch, making the witch unable to urinate, and ultimately leading to the witch’s demise. Inverting the bottle when buried also symbolized the reversing of the witch’s magic. While it is impossible to know the true intent behind the creation of any specific witch bottle, many may have simply been preemptive protective charms rather than a counter-curse directed at an individual witch.
The two examples of witch bottles from 17th-century sites in Maryland are both represented by multiple bottle burials. The remains of four case bottles were found in a small pit near a possible chimney or entranceway to an earthfast house at the Patuxent Point site in Calvert County. Three corroded nail fragments, a pig’s pelvic bone, and the lower jaw of a small mammal were also recovered. All four bottles were broken; however, it appeared that they all went into the ground intact, indicating an intentional burial. At the Addison Plantation site in Prince George’s County, three wine bottles were found buried together at the top of the passageway leading from the cellar of a structure similar to the one at Patuxent Point. While no additional artifacts were recovered, the burial location and the inverted position of the bottles support the identification of these as a possible protective charm.

An example of an 18th-century witch bottle burial was found at the White Oak site in Dorchester County. A wine bottle neck, horseshoe, bottle glass sherds, and bone fragments were recovered by a brick hearth. Several straight and bent pins had been inserted into a solid stopper in the bottle neck, both on the inside and outside of the bottle. The horseshoe may have also been associated with the ritual burial, as iron in any form holds its own protective powers.

Two examples of possible witch bottles made from ceramic vessels have also been found in Maryland. These may represent an evolution of the traditional witch bottle into a good luck “bottle charm”. One was a coarse earthenware jar that was found buried with a horseshoe below a hearth in an 18th-century house in Fells Point in Baltimore City. The location of the jar and the horseshoe indicates that this ritual burial may have played a similar role to witch bottles found on the colonial sites in Maryland. The other example is a redware ceramic jar, likely dating to the 19th century, that was found buried in the southeasternmost corner of the brick manor house cellar at the Addison Plantation site. No other artifacts were recovered, so it is possible this vessel was simply used for storage. However, its similarity to the vessel from Fells Point is intriguing.

These witch bottles and bottle charms are clear evidence that folk magic, deeply rooted in European traditions, was alive and well, not just in the early years of the colonies, but well into the 19th century. While such efforts may seem amusing to us in the 21st century, these magical objects represent sincere efforts by individuals to protect themselves from what were perceived as very real threats from the supernatural world.
The use of coins for luck or protection from evil dates back thousands of years. For example, ancient Greeks placed coins in strategic locations on ships for good luck and protection. When the English arrived in Maryland in the 17th century, their belief in the magical properties of coins came with them.

As early as the 1300s, the English had a custom of bending a coin — usually in thirds folded over the center — as a vow to a saint in times of crisis. The coin binder was then obliged to carry the coin on a pilgrimage and leave it at a shrine to the saint. That may be how a 1596 silver sixpence with two worn fold lines came to be at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station’s Webster Field Annex. It was surface collected at a ca. 1637-1750 Jesuit plantation site that may have been the best pilgrimage destination a Maryland colonist could find after anti-Catholic legislation closed the chapel at St. Mary’s City in 1704.

Silver coins, especially those with crosses on them, have also been used as amulets that protected dairies against the effects of witchcraft. Witches were often blamed when dairy cows failed to produce milk or cream would not churn into butter, so people buried silver coins in the corners of dairies for protection or kept a silver sixpence on hand to place in or under the churn as needed. Silver coins were also recommended for use as ammunition to shoot at hares suspected of being witches in disguise.

At the 2018 Archeological Society of Maryland field session at the Calverton site (18CV22), a silver James I shilling (minted 1603-1604) was found on the edge of a posthole for the probable doorway of a 17th-century post-in-ground structure. Similarly, half of a French silver five sols coin, minted from 1702-1704 and exhibiting two worn fold lines, was found deep in a post feature at the entrance to a storehouse cellar at the ca. 1711-1754 Smith’s St. Leonard plantation (18CV91). The placement of these coins at
entryways points to their use as protective amulets designed to keep
witches or other evil forces out.

Smith’s St. Leonard also yielded a pierced silver two pence coin dating
to the English Commonwealth (1649-1660). This coin was recovered in the
plowzone over the chimney hearth; an area often seen as vulnerable to
invasion by evil forces like witches. A cellar by that same hearth yielded
the only horseshoe found at the site, another object often used for
protection and luck.

While fear of witches decreased
during the 18th-century
Enlightenment, the use of coins as
lucky or protective charms continued.
For example, sixpences were once
included in the prescribed formula for
good luck in weddings, “Something
old, something new, something
borrowed, something blue, and a silver
sixpence in her shoe.” In 19th-century
County Leitrim Ireland it was
supposedly tradition for a groomsman
to give a groom a crooked sixpence so
that the groom could kill a magpie, slit
its tongue with the coin, and bury the
bird and coin under the hearth with a
horseshoe for good luck.

Coin bending seems to have
deaclined when thin hammered coins
gave way to thicker milled coins, but
coin alteration by piercing increased.
Pierced coin charms are found on sites
dating into the 19th and 20th centuries.
Today people tend to relegate the idea
of lucky coins to implausible
superstition, but anyone who has
picked up a “lucky” penny can testify
that coin magic is still part of our
culture.
Bundles are found throughout the Atlantic Coast of Africa and were noticed by the Portuguese as early as the 15th century, when they first colonized the areas now known as Kongo and Angola. Some bundles were even Christianized with the knowledge of missionizing Jesuits in the 16th century, according to Linda Haywood and John Thornton’s *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660*.

The contents of bundles is patterned and involves items of great interest to surrounding spirits, including the migrating souls of ancestors. The point of a bundle is always to have a spirit achieve something human for some recognized human purpose.

The first bundles in the Chesapeake area appear in the early 18th century as exemplified by the one illustrated here from the gutter running along the public road now called Fleet Street in Annapolis. The bundle was deliberately placed upright in this water course and was left there for some time, allowing water-driven sand and pebbles to mount up against its higher side where the bundle met the running water.

This bundle is layered with 300 pieces of lead shot lining the bottom of the pouch. Above these and also in the pouch, there was a layer of two dozen nails and pins, many bent. Above this, and protruding above the opening of the pouch, was an axe. The axe in the bundle is a prehistoric stone item reused in place of what, in Africa, would usually have been an iron instrument associated with Shango or Ogun. These are deities connected to iron-working, which means both cultivation and protection, or plowing and agriculture, or swords and violence.

In the course of working in Annapolis since 1990 and under the guidance of African-American scholars from the Banneker-Douglass Museum interested in customs of African origin, my colleagues, graduate students,
undergraduates, and I discovered about 18 bundles buried throughout important buildings in Annapolis. The one from upper Fleet Street is the only one that was not buried when it was made. However all the bundles are similarly patterned. Virtually all contain nails and pins, many contain sharp objects. Many contain round or reflective objects. Many either are in water or represent running water. So, there is a constellation of common characteristics. John Thornton, professor of History and Director of the African American Studies Program at Boston University, noted in an email to Mark Leone that “These are the kinds of power objects that were made all around the African Atlantic, not just in central Africa or in Kongo.”

“To cut to the chase, the basic idea is that the purpose of the object is to hold a spiritual entity to it, and that to attract the sort of entities that would be captured there, it was important to put materials that had the physical properties or visual characteristics of the sort of work it was expected to do, or would be attractive to a spiritual being. Usually the spirit in question was not an ancestral spirit but one of the sort of random spirits that many people posit exist freely. The logic of capture could be pretty creative, and the real source of the capture and fixing was the spiritual power of the human being who, possessed with that spirit, could make it work outside of his or her bodies for someone else.” While this is John Thornton’s description of 19th- and 20th-century bundles in Atlantic Africa, the WPA Slave Narratives (Library of Congress, www.loc.gov), and Zora Neale Hurston (Mules and Men, 1935, a study of folkways among the African American population of Florida) show similar uses in North America in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
In southwestern Baltimore City, Carroll Park encompasses the surviving acreage of Mount Clare, the showpiece estate of Charles Carroll the Barrister. The site is designated as a National Historic Landmark for its excellent Federal style architecture. Like all American plantations, Mount Clare was a predominantly black landscape, with African and African American people far outnumbering Caucasians. The historical record offers very little information about this majority of people, who built the federal-style mansion, who worked the Carroll farmland, brickyards and ironworks, and who fed and clothed the Carroll family.

Over 30 years of excavations at Mount Clare uncovered a rich archeological record. Investigations found the remains of the greenhouse (which inspired George Washington’s greenhouses at Mount Vernon), orchards, formal and kitchen gardens, and former additions to the main house that include an office and a kitchen. Investigations have not yet found the slave quarters. In 1986, while excavating the circa 1767 kitchen, archeologists recovered a 4-inch-long, heavily worked, colorless crystal. This was later identified by archeologist George Logan as an intentionally buried object, likely by a person from Africa or the diaspora. Based on its archeological context, Logan believed that it was intentionally buried underneath the doorway of the kitchen.

There are several cultural and spiritual traditions in West Africa and the Caribbean in which objects that are believed to be imbued with ancestral spiritual power are buried under thresholds or by hearths, either to activate the object’s power or to protect it from being found. As Dr. Teresa Moyer explores in her book Ancestors of Worthy Life: Plantation Slavery and Black Heritage at Mount Clare, this discovery is very unusual. Crystals are uncommon in buried caches, particularly one as large as the one found at Mount Clare. Also unusual is the fact that this crystal was found in the kitchen of the mansion, where black and white people coexisted. Moyer posits that perhaps a cook buried the crystal as an act of protection against Margaret Carroll and the hired servants. If these interpretations are correct, this crystal is an example of the continuity of cultural and religious traditions in spite of forced assimilation, and represents the exertion of personal agency by a person who was allowed none.
Concealed Objects in Architectural Spaces, or “Anybody seen my shoes”?

Matthew Cochran and Jeanne Ward
Applied Archaeology and History Associates, Inc.

Beginning in early 2018 Applied Archaeology and History Associates, Inc. (AAHA) has been fully immersed in the restoration of Cloverfields, one of Maryland’s oldest standing structures, and home to the prominent 18th-century Hemsley Family for nearly two-hundred years. Located on the eastern shore, in Queen Anne’s County, Cloverfields dates to ca.1705 and is owned by the Cloverfields Preservation Foundation (CPF). In 2017, CPF assembled a team of highly qualified professionals to meticulously and conscientiously restore the house and grounds to their ca.1784 appearance. Team members include Lynbrook of Annapolis (restoration and project management); Willie Graham (head architectural historian); Devin Kimmel of Kimmel Studio Architects (lead architect and landscape architect); Sherri Marsh-Johns of Retrospect Architectural Research, LLC (project research historian); and AAHA (archaeological consultant).

In the spring of 2018, while documenting the original configuration of the entrance to the Cloverfields’ cellar, AAHA staff made a unique archeological discovery. Buried in a shallow pit, immediately beneath the bottom cellar stair-tread was a large river cobble capping the intentional concealment of two men’s leather shoes. The same feature contains what appears to be the intentional placement of a single iron horseshoe. An analysis of the shoes determined that they were not a matching pair. Al Saguto, formerly of Colonial Williamsburg, dated the shoes to post 1820-30 based on the form and the wooden pegged soles. The shoes and horseshoe may have been concealed during a major remodeling episode in the 1840s.

While 1841 tax records indicate that Cloverfields was possibly occupied by a tenant at that time, it’s also possible that one of the nine enslaved individuals listed in Levy Tax records as occupying the Cloverfields property could have placed the shoes beneath the stairs. But why conceal a mismatching pair of shoes underneath the cellar stairs?

The intentional concealment of shoes within architectural spaces is not an anomaly. Thousands of shoes have been found hidden throughout houses in England. They have been concealed in fireplaces, stuffed in rafters, and buried...
under floors. The well-documented practice of shoe concealment in fairly inaccessible locations of houses suggests intentional placement rather than incidental loss. It is easy to misplace a pair of shoes under the couch, but nobody ever lost a pair of shoes in the rafter of a house, or mistakenly bricked them up behind a fireplace, or inadvertently put them underneath a large rock, in the cellar, or under the stairs.

At least a dozen instances of concealed shoes have been recorded in Maryland. Documented examples include a single woman’s calfskin boot dating from ca.1835-1860s in the cornice of the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, 22 men’s and women’s shoes and shoe soles hidden in the attic of the ca.1861-1869 Enlisted Men’s Barracks at Fort Washington, and a pile of boots along with a carved two-headed figurine in the attic of the Captain’s House at Wye House Plantation on the Eastern Shore. But the question remains, why conceal shoes in relatively inaccessible parts of houses?

In England the concealment of shoes within architectural spaces is interpreted as a means of warding off bad luck, of capturing malicious spirits, or, in some instances, as a house offering to bring good luck. This well-documented practice dates from the 15th to the early 20th century. The underlying premise of using concealed shoes as a means of personal or household protection lies both in the shoe’s shape as well as the personal qualities imbued in a shoe by the wearer. Shoes take on the literal shape of the wearer and therefore can act as a form of proxy for the wearer. If a malicious entity is presumed to be haunting you, the concealment of the shoe in a relatively inaccessible space, such as the cellar or the attic, may draw the malicious entity to the shoe instead of you. And, if luck holds, the malicious entity may become trapped in the shoe.

Similar practices were also documented by folklorists throughout the American south at the turn of the 20th century. One particularly relevant account comes from Chestertown, approximately 25 miles north of Cloverfields, in 1896. According to the informant, the burial of old shoes, in particular the soles of old shoes, was done on a Monday to keep the Devil down through the rest of the week.

It is hoped that the intentionally buried shoes in the Cloverfields cellar brought good luck to the person who buried them in the 1840s. It has certainly brought good luck more than 150 years after the fact. The archeology at Cloverfields has been the most exciting project with which the staff at AAHA have ever, or probably will ever, be involved. The archeological documentation of more than 300 years of life at this property has produced more than 60,000 artifacts and ecofacts from well documented intact contexts, and it is expected that researchers will be combing through them for decades to come.
An Interesting Chicken Burial at London Town
Amelia G. Chisholm, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resource Section

When archeologists discover something for which they don’t have a frame of reference, how do they make interpretations? An interesting case from Anne Arundel County concerns a pit full of chickens. During the 2004 field season at Historic London Town, archeologists discovered directly underneath the plowzone a shallow, five-sided, flat-bottomed pit. At each of the points of the pit was an articulated chicken skeleton with no visible remains of their heads. The interior of the pit contained the fragmentary bones of other fowl, including, perhaps, a turkey. There were no other artifacts contained within this pit, and it was not associated with any other features. London Town has been a place of constant human activity during the recent past. Beginning in 1683 until roughly 1790 this place was a colonial port town, and between 1824-1965 a large portion of the town land became the County poor house. When was this pit dug? Who could have deposited the chickens? What could it mean? It was unusual that the remains were laid out so carefully: if the chickens had been butchered to be eaten the bones would be in disarray, not complete skeletons; and one would suspect that if the chickens had died from something like disease a regular conical hole would be dug and the bodies disposed of less carefully.

Once the usual answers seemed to be at odds with the data, archeologists began to wonder if this was evidence of ritual activity. Reviewing research done at other archeological sites showed that chicken burials have been discovered in a number of places across the southern United States. A burial of three chickens in a pit under the floor of a cabin of an enslaved person at the Levi Jordan Plantation in Texas, a completely articulated chicken buried upright with its wings

Remains of multiple articulated chickens interred in a shallow pit near the Rumney/West Tavern at Historic Londontown.
At Historic St. Mary’s City, a museum on the site of Maryland’s first capital, explore an un-ordinary ordinary, help a planter tend his fields, and step on board a tall ship. Discover the world of the Yaocomaco people and the place where Roman Catholics first freely worshipped in the British colonies. At the St. John’s Site Museum, gain insight into ways historians and archeologists reconstruct the past and the ways Lord Baltimore’s design for Maryland foreshadowed the First Amendment rights guaranteed by our Constitution. Take an easy drive from the metro areas and discover one of the nation’s most beautiful historic places in tidewater Southern Maryland.

240-896-4990  www.hsmcdigshistory.org/  800-SMC-1634
Info@HSMCdigshistory.org

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Archaeology Program, Natural and Historical Resources Division (NHRD), Prince George’s County. Since 1988, the NHRD Archaeology Program has been exploring the diversity of Prince George’s County’s archeological resources. Through excavations, exhibits, public outreach and cultural resource management, the Archaeology Program supports the M-NCPPC’s numerous museums and historic sites. Hands-on volunteer programs and student internships provide opportunities for citizens and students to discover the past by participating in excavations and artifact processing and analysis. For information call the Archaeology Program office at 301-627-1286 or email Stephanie Sperling at stephanie.sperling@pgparks.com.

The Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc. (ASM) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to the investigation and conservation of Maryland’s archeological resources. ASM members are professional, academic, and avocational archeologists. The Society sponsors publications, research, and site surveys across the State as well as hosting a Spring Symposium and a Fall general meeting and co-hosting with the Maryland Historical Trust a Spring Workshop and late spring field/excavation session where members and the public work along side professional archeologists. In addition, ASM has eight chapters representing most of Maryland’s geographic regions, each with its own local meetings and activities. All ASM and chapter activities are open to the public. Visit us at www.marylandarcheology.org to learn more about our activities.

The common thread between all of these burials was that they occurred in contexts related to enslaved persons. Careful research at Kingsley Plantation, for example, showed that the early 19th century enslaved peoples were mostly African-born and came from a wide array of nations including Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. Animal sacrifice was and is currently a common practice across many nations in Africa, especially among the Ibo peoples of modern day Nigeria. Chickens are routinely sacrificed to mark births, deaths, dedications, and purification rituals among other acts. In the Americas, similar rituals occur to this day among the Gullah culture in South Carolina and in creolized religions like Santeria, Haitian Vodou, and Obeah.

To try to determine if this pit may have been associated with African or African American enslaved persons, it is crucial to understand where it was found. Archeologists know that many London Towners were slave owners and some were directly involved with slave merchants and captains. Four slave ships are confirmed to have docked and sold 845 enslaved people from Sierra Leone, Angola, Benin, and the Gold Coast at London Town. More specifically, Stephen West, Sr., a prominent London Town merchant, ferry owner, and ordinary (inn) keeper owned Lot 86, the parcel where the chicken burial was discovered. He owned seven enslaved women and men at the time of his death. West built a workshop on Lot 86 that was rented to and then owned by carpenter William Brown, who is also known to have owned enslaved individuals. West also ran the tavern located next door on Lot 87 and staffed it with enslaved labor. There is tangible evidence of the enslaved individuals who lived and worked in the Carpenter’s Shop with the discovery of a child’s burial under the floor of the workshop. As the burial was contemporaneous with the use of the workshop, it is believed that they were buried while the building was occupied. Subfloor burials within a house have been seen historically in Ghana and are seen archeologically in enslaved contexts in the Caribbean. This burial, then, is another example of how African traditional cultural or ritual practices may have been translated in America under a system of slavery.

It is then no stretch to suggest that this chicken burial could be the material remains of African religiosity or social practice by enslaved peoples or their descendants either living in London Town or, later, in the Alms House. It may never be clear exactly who buried these chickens and for what purpose, but this one small feature offers tantalizing hints of the complex beliefs and practices of a past inhabitant of London Town.
In the 1970s, archeologists began to question the appearance of strange symbols and curious caches of objects on sites occupied by enslaved Africans. The Garrison Plantation (18th -mid-19th century), near Baltimore, was one of the first sites in Maryland where indigenous magic was recognized by archeologists. Here, spoons decorated with herringbone lines and geometric shapes were found within the slave quarter.

Soon after, University of Maryland students began to find collections of glass, buttons, and bones secreted under the floors of the homes of elite Annapolitans. They even found a clay mass containing a stone axe with straight pins, lead shot, and bent nails, four feet under a street (see essay by Mark Leone). The association with the metal and stone axe brought some to believe it may be associated with Yoruba and the Fon people of Benin, who considered the axe blade a symbol of Shango, their god of thunder and lightning.

Archeologists have interpreted these odd scratches and collections of otherwise prosaic items in curious contexts as African spirit practices. Sometimes called hoodoo, folk magic, or root work, this belief system was brought from Africa and carried out in secret. In creative attempts to hide this knowledge and preserve their beliefs, African Americans began to incorporate Christian images into their practice. The incorporation of such symbols and saints within their practice is not assimilation or creolizing of an African religion. Instead, the use of these familiar symbols allowed West African spirit practices to be displayed in public and without consequence.
Certificate and Training Program for Archeological Technicians

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Archaeology Program
Needwood Mansion
6700 Needwood Road
Derwood, Maryland 20855

Maryland Historical Trust
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100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032
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The recognition of these spirit practices in archeological sites is exciting since it provides a template and an awareness to help us recognize Africa in Maryland. Just as important is the ability to know when this cultural expression is not present. Archeologists working on the Belvoir Slave Quarter (1780s-1870) in Anne Arundel County, for example, did not find evidence of African spirit practices. It is possible this home’s nearness to the manor house dissuaded the enslaved community to practice at the quarter; or they simply may not have adhered to these African beliefs.

Site map showing locations of projectile points and stone axe surrounding the Jackson Home.
Magical Objects at the Brome Slave Quarter, Historic St. Mary’s City
Silas Hurry, Historic St. Mary’s City

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During demolition of the original quarter chimney in preparation for moving the building, workers were surprised to find an ancient, prehistoric stone axe within the brick. This was intentionally placed in the chimney during construction, but why? Ancient folk beliefs in both Europe and in West Africa held that placing such objects in the attic of a house or in a chimney would prevent lightning from striking the structure. It appears that the African American builders of this quarter also followed this practice.

This Mexican real dates to the 1850s and was discovered at a single quarter site adjacent to the duplex quarter. Pierced coins are relatively common on enslaved sites, were believed to offer spiritual protection, and were presented to new-born babies. Perhaps this coin defended a young child from harm. This coin was pierced in the center which depicted a Liberty cap.
Maryland Archeology Month

A complete Hoyt’s Cologne bottle from the Jackson Homestead Site (18MO609) and a partial bottle from a residential site believed to have been an African-American homestead.

The other Hoyt’s Cologne bottle was found in St. Mary’s County, at a small residential site believed to have been occupied into the 1940s by African American tenant farmers (18ST747). The bottle is embossed “Hoyt’s Nickel Cologne”, which places its manufacture after the turn of the 20th century, when the smaller sizes were introduced (see figure below, right).

Hoyt’s Cologne can still be purchased today in ¾ and 2-ounce sizes from online spiritual supply stores and from more standard retailers like Walmart. It is touted as bringing “great good luck to gamblers” and for use in dressing mojo bags. One store sells the ingredients for a mojo bag for attracting love; one of the ingredients is Hoyt’s Cologne, and the cologne is dabbed on the completed mojo bag in a very specific pattern.

April 2019

Seeing Power in Buried Iron Objects
Kirsti Uunila, Calvert County Government

It is helpful to find iron objects on historic sites. The distribution of corroded nails in the soil might indicate the presence and layout of buildings. Common objects made of iron—such as stoves, cookware, and tools—can reveal where past occupants carried out everyday activities. Iron objects are occasionally found in unexpected locations where they appear to have been intentionally placed, and suggest less common, or ritual activities.

Openings in a building such as doors, windows, and chimneys offer a route into private spaces and may be vulnerable to unwanted intruders and uninvited guests. A variety of objects have been and are used by people all over the world to mark the margins between inside and out and may be seen as charms or expression of ritual life or belief. Many of these objects are iron. Archeologists at the Molly Berry Site in Prince George’s County found horseshoes beneath the windows of the cabin, for example.

The Indian Rest Site in Calvert County yielded a number of iron artifacts in such locations. Indian Rest is a nineteenth-century log cabin site that was excavated over a number of years by volunteers working with archeologists from Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum and Calvert County Government. The dwelling there was occupied from at least the 1870s until 1934 by a succession of African American families. It has been vacant since then.

A small cache of objects was found near the surface by the eastern doorpost of the main entrance to the house. It consisted of nails, a button, peach pits, beads, mica, and a fragment of a tractor headlamp bearing the trademark ‘Ford’. Together these bear similarities to minkisi and may represent the work of someone placing the items as a blessing, a curse, or an attempt to make someone do something. The objects were probably originally in a bag or bundle, the organic remains of which have deteriorated in the soil.

About 18” beneath the items in that cache, at the base of the fieldstone foundation, we found a forged iron hoe blade partially under one of the stones that make up the foundation of the cabin. The blade was corroded but otherwise intact. Why would someone bury a serviceable tool like a hoe blade in the builder’s trench of the cabin in the 19th century? The answer maybe that the iron itself was significant.
Metalwork and specifically ironwork was valued in areas of Africa from which many enslaved people were brought into the Chesapeake. Iron was associated with Ogun, an orisha or vodun, whom believers invoked to intervene in human affairs. The use of iron continued in the west, perhaps with new influences. A contemporary practitioner of vodou in New Orleans, upon hearing about the finds at Indian Rest and examining illustrations of the unit in plan and in profile, offered an insight about the two deposits: she said “whoever put the toby [the cache] that was found near the top didn’t know about the hoe blade at the bottom or they wouldn’t have bothered.” That suggests that the deposits were made by different people at different times. She added that she didn’t know of a special significance attached to the form of the hoe but noted that to open her ceremonies, the officiant would strike a plowshare with an iron spike. She said that act is called “playing the hoe.”

The builders of the cabin may have placed the hoe blade under the foundation at the time of construction to summon Ogun to protect the dwelling.

There are other reports of iron hoes with seeming ritual use on archeological sites; for example, a hoe blade was found between the floors of a house in New Jersey, near a chimney.

Near the chimney at Indian Rest was a collection of items that included an iron spoked wheel probably from a child’s toy and threads indicating that it was buried with red cloth, which supports interpreting it as a cache. Not only was it near the chimney—a common site for concealed objects—but red fabric was often used by people of African descent to create amulets, according to persons interviewed and cited in WPA interviews.

The objects mentioned above are but a few of the kinds that people have used and still employ as markers between spaces. Diverse examples include a mezuzah on the doorframe of a Jewish household, and a horseshoe above the doorway or fireplace in a Midwestern American home. Can you think of others?

Over the centuries, all manner of objects and substances, from the exotic to the mundane, have been pressed into service as magical items. Liquids, ranging from the first rainfall in May, to blood and urine, are believed to have powers to convey good luck, to heal, to bring harm or even bestow everlasting love. An inexpensive cologne developed after the Civil War became one of those everyday items that crossed over into magical realms.

In 1868, Eli Waite Hoyt created Hoyt’s Cologne, which he sold out of his Lowell, Massachusetts apothecary shop. After its rebranding as “Hoyt’s German Cologne” in the early 1870s, this men’s toiletry gained great popularity. Its light and fresh fragrance was a mix of roses, violets, cloves and citrus. The 1895 Montgomery Ward Company catalog offered the toiletry in three different sizes, but by the early 20th century, the company had begun offering small bottles that sold for five and ten cents.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Hoyt’s German Cologne became favored as a good luck product by some segments of the African American community. It was considered particularly useful for individuals engaged in card playing and other games of chance. The cologne could be added to bath water, used as a hand wash just before gambling, or even employed to bless dice or cards. The five-volume study on Southern hoodoo, conjuring, witchcraft and rootwork, published between 1936 and 1940 by Harry M. Hyatt, contains numerous mentions of “Hearts Cologne” in reference to gambling and money matters. “Hearts” is widely believed to be a mis-interpretation of the word “Hoyts”.

In Maryland, at least three Hoyt’s bottles have been found on early 20th-century African American home sites and their presence could represent either magical thinking or the more mundane purpose of scenting the body.

Two complete Hoyt’s Cologne bottles were recovered from the Montgomery County homestead of Malinda Jackson (18MO609). When the house caught fire around 1910, the Jackson family had no time to remove personal possessions from the residence, so archeologists essentially excavated a time capsule from the day of the fire. One cologne bottle was found in front of
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the hearth in the parlor, while the other was found in the room’s southwest corner. Neither bottle showed any evidence of burning or heat damage (see figure below, left). It is possible that these two bottles had been stored in an upstairs bedroom and fell into the parlor as the flames consumed the house or they could have been placed in the two parlor locations to help attract luck and money.

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Archeology Volunteer Programs

Following are examples of programs in Maryland that offer opportunities to get involved in archeology. For more information about these and other similar programs visit www.marylandarcheology.org.

Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum: Public Archaeology Program
Smith’s St. Leonard Site; May 7 – June 29, 2019

Join Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum archeologists in the excavation of early 18th century buildings at the Smith’s St. Leonard Site. The program runs from May 7 through June 29. Tuesdays and Thursdays are “Lab Days,” while Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays are “Field Days.” To register contact Ed Chaney at (410) 586-8554 or ed.chaney@maryland.gov.

Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum
10515 Mackall Road
St. Leonard, Maryland 20685
Ph: 410.586.8501  www.jefpat.org/publicarchaeology.html

Anne Arundel County’s Archaeology Program

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program works with the non-profit The Lost Towns Project to promote archeological research and public education programs. We seek dedicated volunteers and interns, no experience required, to help with all aspects of field and lab work. Join us to discover history at a variety of dig sites across the County or to process artifacts at our lab in Edgewater. To learn more, please email volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call 410-222-1318.

Anne Arundel County's Archaeology Laboratory
839 Londontown Road
Edgewater, Maryland 21037
By appointment

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George’s County Department of Parks and Recreation

Experience Prince George’s County’s history first-hand through volunteering with the Archaeology Program. Individuals, 14 years and up, can learn how archeologists investigate the past and assist them with excavations and lab work. Volunteer registration is required through www.pgparks.com. For information call the Archaeology Program office at 301- 627-1286 or email Stephanie Sperling at stephanie.sperling@pgparks.com.

Archaeology Program
Natural and Historical Resources Division
8204 McClure Road
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

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Maryland Archeology Month

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Site map showing locations of projectile points and stone axe surrounding the Jackson Home.
Expressions of African Spirit Practices in Maryland’s Archeological Record
Julie M. Schablitsky, Maryland Department of Transportation

In the 1970s, archeologists began to question the appearance of strange symbols and curious caches of objects on sites occupied by enslaved Africans. The Garrison Plantation (18th -mid-19th century), near Baltimore, was one of the first sites in Maryland where indigenous magic was recognized by archeologists. Here, spoons decorated with herringbone lines and geometric shapes were found within the slave quarter.

Soon after, University of Maryland students began to find collections of glass, buttons, and bones secreted under the floors of the homes of elite Annapolitans. They even found a clay mass containing a stone axe with straight pins, lead shot, and bent nails, four feet under a street (see essay by Mark Leone). The association with the metal and stone axe brought some to believe it may be associated with Yoruba and the Fon people of Benin, who considered the axe blade a symbol of Shango, their god of thunder and lightning.

Archeologists have interpreted these odd scratches and collections of otherwise prosaic items in curious contexts as African spirit practices. Sometimes called hoodoo, folk magic, or root work, this belief system was brought from Africa and carried out in secret. In creative attempts to hide this knowledge and preserve their beliefs, African Americans began to incorporate Christian images into their practice. The incorporation of such symbols and saints within their practice is not assimilation or creolizing of an African religion. Instead, the use of these familiar symbols allowed West African spirit practices to be displayed in public and without consequence.

Infant of Prague Medallion is believed to offer protection.
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The common thread between all of these burials was that they occurred in contexts related to enslaved persons. Careful research at Kingsley Plantation, for example, showed that the early 19th century enslaved peoples were mostly African-born and came from a wide array of nations including Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. Animal sacrifice was and is currently a common practice across many nations in Africa, especially among the Ibo peoples of modern day Nigeria. Chickens are routinely sacrificed to mark births, deaths, dedications, and purification rituals among other acts. In the Americas, similar rituals occur to this day among the Gullah culture in South Carolina and in creolized religions like Santeria, Haitian Vodou, and Obeah.

To try to determine if this pit may have been associated with African or African American enslaved persons, it is crucial to understand where it was found. Archeologists know that many London Towners were slave owners and some were directly involved with slave merchants and captains. Four slave ships are confirmed to have docked and sold 845 enslaved people from Sierra Leone, Angola, Benin, and the Gold Coast at London Town. More specifically, Stephen West, Sr., a prominent London Town merchant, ferry owner, and ordinary (inn) keeper owned Lot 86, the parcel where the chicken burial was discovered. He owned seven enslaved women and men at the time of his death. West built a workshop on Lot 86 that was rented to and then owned by carpenter William Brown, who is also known to have owned enslaved individuals. West also ran the tavern located next door on Lot 87 and staffed it with enslaved labor. There is tangible evidence of the enslaved individuals who lived and worked in the Carpenter’s Shop with the discovery of a child’s burial under the floor of the workshop. As the burial was contemporaneous with the use of the workshop, it is believed that they were buried while the building was occupied. Subfloor burials within a house have been seen historically in Ghana and are seen archeologically in enslaved contexts in the Caribbean. This burial, then, is another example of how African traditional cultural or ritual practices may have been translated in America under a system of slavery.

It is then no stretch to suggest that this chicken burial could be the material remains of African religiosity or social practice by enslaved peoples or their descendants either living in London Town or, later, in the Alms House. It may never be clear exactly who buried these chickens and for what purpose, but this one small feature offers tantalizing hints of the complex beliefs and practices of a past inhabitant of London Town.
Maryland Archeology Month

An Interesting Chicken Burial at London Town
Amelia G. Chisholm, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resource Section

When archeologists discover something for which they don’t have a frame of reference, how do they make interpretations? An interesting case from Anne Arundel County concerns a pit full of chickens. During the 2004 field season at Historic London Town, archeologists discovered directly underneath the plowzone a shallow, five-sided, flat-bottomed pit. At each of the points of the pit was an articulated chicken skeleton with no visible remains of their heads. The interior of the pit contained the fragmentary bones of other fowl, including, perhaps, a turkey. There were no other artifacts contained within this pit, and it was not associated with any other features. London Town has been a place of constant human activity during the recent past. Beginning in 1683 until roughly 1790 this place was a colonial port town, and between 1824-1965 a large portion of the town land became the County poor house. When was this pit dug? Who could have deposited the chickens? What could it mean? It was unusual that the remains were laid out so carefully: if the chickens had been butchered to be eaten the bones would be in disarray, not complete skeletons; and one would suspect that if the chickens had died from something like disease a regular conical hole would be dug and the bodies disposed of less carefully.

Once the usual answers seemed to be at odds with the data, archeologists began to wonder if this was evidence of ritual activity. Reviewing research done at other archeological sites showed that chicken burials have been discovered in a number of places across the southern United States. A burial of three chickens in a pit under the floor of a cabin of an enslaved person at the Levi Jordan Plantation in Texas, a completely articulated chicken buried upright with its wings
Under floors. The well-documented practice of shoe concealment in fairly inaccessible locations of houses suggests intentional placement rather than incidental loss. It is easy to misplace a pair of shoes under the couch, but nobody ever lost a pair of shoes in the rafters of a house, or mistakenly bricked them up behind a fireplace, or inadvertently put them underneath a large rock, in the cellar, or under the stairs.

At least a dozen instances of concealed shoes have been recorded in Maryland. Documented examples include a single woman’s calfskin boot dating from ca.1835-1860s in the cornice of the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, 22 men’s and women’s shoes and shoe soles hidden in the attic of the ca.1861-1869 Enlisted Men’s Barracks at Fort Washington, and a pile of boots along with a carved two-headed figurine in the attic of the Captain’s House at Wye House Plantation on the Eastern Shore. But the question remains, why conceal shoes in relatively inaccessible parts of houses?

In England the concealment of shoes within architectural spaces is interpreted as a means of warding off bad luck, of capturing malicious spirits, or, in some instances, as a house offering to bring good luck. This well-documented practice dates from the 15th to the early 20th century. The underlying premise of using concealed shoes as a means of personal or household protection lies both in the shoe’s shape as well as the personal qualities imbued in a shoe by the wearer. Shoes take on the literal shape of the wearer and therefore can act as a form of proxy for the wearer. If a malicious entity is presumed to be haunting you, the concealment of the shoe in a relatively inaccessible space, such as the cellar or the attic, may draw the malicious entity to the shoe instead of you. And, if luck holds, the malicious entity may become trapped in the shoe.

Similar practices were also documented by folklorists throughout the American south at the turn of the 20th century. One particularly relevant account comes from Chestertown, approximately 25 miles north of Cloverfields, in 1896. According to the informant, the burial of old shoes, in particular the soles of old shoes, was done on a Monday to keep the Devil down through the rest of the week.

It is hoped that the intentionally buried shoes in the Cloverfields cellar brought good luck to the person who buried them in the 1840s. It has certainly brought good luck more than 150 years after the fact. The archeology at Cloverfields has been the most exciting project with which the staff at AAHA have ever, or probably will ever, be involved. The archeological documentation of more than 300 years of life at this property has produced more than 60,000 artifacts and ecofacts from well-documented intact contexts, and it is expected that researchers will be combing through them for decades to come.
Maryland Archeology Month

Concealed Objects in Architectural Spaces, or “Anybody seen my shoes”?
Matthew Cochran and Jeanne Ward
Applied Archaeology and History Associates, Inc.

Beginning in early 2018 Applied Archaeology and History Associates, Inc. (AAHA) has been fully immersed in the restoration of Cloverfields, one of Maryland’s oldest standing structures, and home to the prominent 18th-century Hemsley Family for nearly two-hundred years. Located on the eastern shore, in Queen Anne’s County, Cloverfields dates to ca.1705 and is owned by the Cloverfields Preservation Foundation (CPF). In 2017, CPF assembled a team of highly qualified professionals to meticulously and conscientiously restore the house and grounds to their ca.1784 appearance. Team members include Lynbrook of Annapolis (restoration and project management); Willie Graham (head architectural historian); Devin Kimmel of Kimmel Studio Architects (lead architect and landscape architect); Sherri Marsh-Johns of Retrospect Architectural Research, LLC (project research historian); and AAHA (archaeological consultant).

In the spring of 2018, while documenting the original configuration of the entrance to the Cloverfields’ cellar, AAHA staff made a unique archeological discovery. Buried in a shallow pit, immediately beneath the bottom cellar stair-tread was a large river cobble capping the intentional concealment of two men’s leather shoes. The same feature contains what appears to be the intentional placement of a single iron horseshoe. An analysis of the shoes determined that they were not a matching pair. Al Saguto, formerly of Colonial Williamsburg, dated the shoes to post 1820-30 based on the form and the wooden pegged soles. The shoes and horseshoe may have been concealed during a major remodeling episode in the 1840s.

While 1841 tax records indicate that Cloverfields was possibly occupied by a tenant at that time, it’s also possible that one of the nine enslaved individuals listed in Levy Tax records as occupying the Cloverfields property could have placed the shoes beneath the stairs. But why conceal a mismatching pair of shoes underneath the cellar stairs?

The intentional concealment of shoes within architectural spaces is not an anomaly. Thousands of shoes have been found hidden throughout houses in England. They have been concealed in fireplaces, stuffed in rafters, and buried.
In southwestern Baltimore City, Carroll Park encompasses the surviving acreage of Mount Clare, the showpiece estate of Charles Carroll the Barrister. The site is designated as a National Historic Landmark for its excellent Federal style architecture. Like all American plantations, Mount Clare was a predominantly black landscape, with African and African American people far outnumbering Caucasians. The historical record offers very little information about this majority of people, who built the federal-style mansion, who worked the Carroll farmland, brickyards and ironworks, and who fed and clothed the Carroll family.

Over 30 years of excavations at Mount Clare uncovered a rich archeological record. Investigations found the remains of the greenhouse (which inspired George Washington’s greenhouses at Mount Vernon), orchards, formal and kitchen gardens, and former additions to the main house that include an office and a kitchen. Investigations have not yet found the slave quarters. In 1986, while excavating the circa 1767 kitchen, archeologists recovered a 4-inch-long, heavily worked, colorless crystal. This was later identified by archeologist George Logan as an intentionally buried object, likely by a person from Africa or the diaspora. Based on its archeological context, Logan believed that it was intentionally buried underneath the doorway of the kitchen.

There are several cultural and spiritual traditions in West Africa and the Caribbean in which objects that are believed to be imbued with ancestral spiritual power are buried under thresholds or by hearths, either to activate the object’s power or to protect it from being found. As Dr. Teresa Moyer explores in her book *Ancestors of Worthy Life: Plantation Slavery and Black Heritage at Mount Clare*, this discovery is very unusual. Crystals are uncommon in buried caches, particularly one as large as the one found at Mount Clare. Also unusual is the fact that this crystal was found in the kitchen of the mansion, where black and white people coexisted. Moyer posits that perhaps a cook buried the crystal as an act of protection against Margaret Carroll and the hired servants. If these interpretations are correct, this crystal is an example of the continuity of cultural and religious traditions in spite of forced assimilation, and represents the exertion of personal agency by a person who was allowed none.
undergraduates, and I discovered about 18 bundles buried throughout important buildings in Annapolis. The one from upper Fleet Street is the only one that was not buried when it was made. However all the bundles are similarly patterned. Virtually all contain nails and pins, many contain sharp objects. Many contain round or reflective objects. Many either are in water or represent running water. So, there is a constellation of common characteristics. John Thornton, professor of History and Director of the African American Studies Program at Boston University, noted in an email to Mark Leone that “These are the kinds of power objects that were made all around the African Atlantic, not just in central Africa or in Kongo.”

“To cut to the chase, the basic idea is that the purpose of the object is to hold a spiritual entity to it, and that to attract the sort of entities that would be captured there, it was important to put materials that had the physical properties or visual characteristics of the sort of work it was expected to do, or would be attractive to a spiritual being. Usually the spirit in question was not an ancestral spirit but one of the sort of random spirits that many people posit exist freely. The logic of capture could be pretty creative, and the real source of the capture and fixing was the spiritual power of the human being who, possessed with that spirit, could make it work outside of his or her bodies for someone else.” While this is John Thornton’s description of 19th- and 20th-century bundles in Atlantic Africa, the WPA Slave Narratives (Library of Congress, www.loc.gov), and Zora Neale Hurston (Mules and Men, 1935, a study of folkways among the African American population of Florida) show similar uses in North America in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Conjectural reconstruction (left) of the Fleet Street Bundle, based on the X-Ray (center). Drawing by Brian G. Payne, image courtesy of Archaeology in Annapolis, University of Maryland.
Bundles are found throughout the Atlantic Coast of Africa and were noticed by the Portuguese as early as the 15th century, when they first colonized the areas now known as Kongo and Angola. Some bundles were even Christianized with the knowledge of missionizing Jesuits in the 16th century, according to Linda Haywood and John Thornton’s *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660*.

The contents of bundles is patterned and involves items of great interest to surrounding spirits, including the migrating souls of ancestors. The point of a bundle is always to have a spirit achieve something human for some recognized human purpose.

The first bundles in the Chesapeake area appear in the early 18th century as exemplified by the one illustrated here from the gutter running along the public road now called Fleet Street in Annapolis. The bundle was deliberately placed upright in this water course and was left there for some time, allowing water-driven sand and pebbles to mount up against its higher side where the bundle met the running water.

This bundle is layered with 300 pieces of lead shot lining the bottom of the pouch. Above these and also in the pouch, there was a layer of two dozen nails and pins, many bent. Above this, and protruding above the opening of the pouch, was an axe. The axe in the bundle is a prehistoric stone item re-used in place of what, in Africa, would usually have been an iron instrument associated with Shango or Ogun. These are deities connected to iron-working, which means both cultivation and protection, or plowing and agriculture, or swords and violence.

In the course of working in Annapolis since 1990 and under the guidance of African-American scholars from the Banneker-Douglass Museum interested in customs of African origin, my colleagues, graduate students,
entryways points to their use as protective amulets designed to keep witches or other evil forces out.

Smith’s St. Leonard also yielded a pierced silver two pence coin dating to the English Commonwealth (1649-1660). This coin was recovered in the plowzone over the chimney hearth; an area often seen as vulnerable to invasion by evil forces like witches. A cellar by that same hearth yielded the only horseshoe found at the site, another object often used for protection and luck.

While fear of witches decreased during the 18th-century Enlightenment, the use of coins as lucky or protective charms continued. For example, sixpences were once included in the prescribed formula for good luck in weddings, “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a silver sixpence in her shoe.” In 19th-century County Leitrim Ireland it was supposedly tradition for a groomsman to give a groom a crooked sixpence so that the groom could kill a magpie, slit its tongue with the coin, and bury the bird and coin under the hearth with a horseshoe for good luck.

Coin bending seems to have declined when thin hammered coins gave way to thicker milled coins, but coin alteration by piercing increased. Pierced coin charms are found on sites dating into the 19th and 20th centuries. Today people tend to relegate the idea of lucky coins to implausible superstition, but anyone who has picked up a “lucky” penny can testify that coin magic is still part of our culture.
The use of coins for luck or protection from evil dates back thousands of years. For example, ancient Greeks placed coins in strategic locations on ships for good luck and protection. When the English arrived in Maryland in the 17th century, their belief in the magical properties of coins came with them.

As early as the 1300s, the English had a custom of bending a coin — usually in thirds folded over the center — as a vow to a saint in times of crisis. The coin bender was then obliged to carry the coin on a pilgrimage and leave it at a shrine to the saint. That may be how a 1596 silver sixpence with two worn fold lines came to be at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station’s Webster Field Annex. It was surface collected at a ca. 1637-1750 Jesuit plantation site that may have been the best pilgrimage destination a Maryland colonist could find after anti-Catholic legislation closed the chapel at St. Mary’s City in 1704.

Silver coins, especially those with crosses on them, have also been used as amulets that protected dairies against the effects of witchcraft. Witches were often blamed when dairy cows failed to produce milk or cream would not churn into butter, so people buried silver coins in the corners of dairies for protection or kept a silver sixpence on hand to place in or under the churn as needed. Silver coins were also recommended for use as ammunition to shoot at hares suspected of being witches in disguise.

At the 2018 Archeological Society of Maryland field session at the Calverton site (18CV22), a silver James I shilling (minted 1603-1604) was found on the edge of a posthole for the probable doorway of a 17th-century post-in-ground structure. Similarly, half of a French silver five sols coin, minted from 1702-1704 and exhibiting two worn fold lines, was found deep in a post feature at the entrance to a storehouse cellar at the ca. 1711-1754 Smith’s St. Leonard plantation (18CV91). The placement of these coins at
The two examples of witch bottles from 17th-century sites in Maryland are both represented by multiple bottle burials. The remains of four case bottles were found in a small pit near a possible chimney or entranceway to an earthfast house at the Patuxent Point site in Calvert County. Three corroded nail fragments, a pig’s pelvic bone, and the lower jaw of a small mammal were also recovered. All four bottles were broken; however, it appeared that they all went into the ground intact, indicating an intentional burial. At the Addison Plantation site in Prince George’s County, three wine bottles were found buried together at the top of the passageway leading from the cellar of a structure similar to the one at Patuxent Point. While no additional artifacts were recovered, the burial location and the inverted position of the bottles support the identification of these as a possible protective charm.

An example of an 18th-century witch bottle burial was found at the White Oak site in Dorchester County. A wine bottle neck, horseshoe, bottle glass sherds, and bone fragments were recovered by a brick hearth. Several straight and bent pins had been inserted into a solid stopper in the bottle neck, both on the inside and outside of the bottle. The horseshoe may have also been associated with the ritual burial, as iron in any form holds its own protective powers.

Two examples of possible witch bottles made from ceramic vessels have also been found in Maryland. These may represent an evolution of the traditional witch bottle into a good luck “bottle charm”. One was a coarse earthenware jar that was found buried with a horseshoe below a hearth in an 18th-century house in Fells Point in Baltimore City. The location of the jar and the horseshoe indicates that this ritual burial may have played a similar role to witch bottles found on the colonial sites in Maryland. The other example is a redware ceramic jar, likely dating to the 19th century, that was found buried in the southeasternmost corner of the brick manor house cellar at the Addison Plantation site. No other artifacts were recovered, so it is possible this vessel was simply used for storage. However, its similarity to the vessel from Fells Point is intriguing.

These witch bottles and bottle charms are clear evidence that folk magic, deeply rooted in European traditions, was alive and well, not just in the early years of the colonies, but well into the 19th century. While such efforts may seem amusing to us in the 21st century, these magical objects represent sincere efforts by individuals to protect themselves from what were perceived as very real threats from the supernatural world.
A Witch Bottles from Addison Plantation.

Witch Bottles and Bottle Charms
Rebecca Morehouse, Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory

“Another way is to stop the urine of the Patient, close up in a bottle, and put into it three nails, pins, or needles, with a little white salt, keeping the urine always warm: if you let it remain long in the bottle, it will endanger the witches life: for I have found by experience that they will be grievously tormented making their water with great difficulty, if any at all... The reason... is because there is part of the vital spirit of the Witch in it, for such is the subtlety of the Devil, that he will not suffer the Witch to infuse any poynsonous matter into the body of a man or beast, without some of the Witches blood mingled with it...” Instructions on how to make a witch bottle from the Astrological Practice of Physick by Astrologist Joseph Blagrave, published in London, England in 1671.

In early modern England, as well as in the British colonies, the belief in a “witch” as inherently evil and a tool of the Devil was widespread. The Christian church’s focus on salvation from the evil forces of “devilry” fostered this belief. The daily struggles of human life were seen as a direct result of the great cosmic battle between God and the Devil, with the witch as one of the Devil’s primary weapons. Communities felt compelled to identify the witches in their midst and to find ways to protect themselves from their malevolent intentions. Outbreaks of witchcraft hysteria and subsequent mass executions began to appear across Europe and America. Individuals turned to ritual magic to counter witch’s curses or to ward off evil spirits from their homes. Evidence of these magical charms in the form of “witch bottles” have been found on archeological sites throughout England and America, with five known examples in the state of Maryland’s archeological collections.

While there are variations, most witch bottles were made by filling a glass bottle or ceramic jug with urine, human hair and/or nail clippings, animal bone, and sharp objects, such as nails or pins. The bottle was then buried inverted by the entrance to a home or under a hearth. When created as a counter-curse, the placement of sharp objects in the victim’s urine was believed to turn the curse back on the witch, making the witch unable to urinate, and ultimately leading to the witch’s demise. Inverting the bottle when buried also symbolized the reversing of the witch’s magic. While it is impossible to know the true intent behind the creation of any specific witch bottle, many may have simply been preemptive protective charms rather than a counter-curse directed at an individual witch.
Maryland Archeology Month

Mandy Melton studied the Pig Point gorgets and found that many were marked in mysterious ways (Melton published this work with Luckenbach in *Maryland Archeology* in 2013). Some had scars from repeated bashing with a hard, small object, while others were sanded down to remove the polished finish. Two or three gorget fragments had helix-shaped cuts and one even appeared to have a scratching of a bird under dozens of crisscrossed lines. Bird motifs, like ravens or thunderbirds, are common symbols of Native American mythology. Perhaps most intriguing of all, two fragments with very different marks mended together. This suggests someone broke a gorget in half and then two different people altered their fragment in distinct ways.

The exact meaning behind the broken, modified gorgets has been lost to time. But they, along with the feasting and burials, clearly suggest that Pig Point held important ritual significance for Native Americans. Even though the gorgets were discovered nearly 100 feet away from the burial pits, Melon and Luckenbach pointed out that, “North American groups practiced a diversity of symbolic ritual/ceremonial performances that may or may not have included the presence of the physical body of the deceased.” This suggests that Native Americans may have considered the entire Pig Point bluff to possess magical significance unlike anything seen elsewhere in Maryland.

Re-fitted “killed” gorget fragment exhibiting multiple (and multi-episode) transformations.

Gorget fragment exhibiting incised decoration, including possible bird representation (highlighted right).

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The Pig Point site (18AN50) in Anne Arundel County is one of the most important pre-contact Native American sites ever investigated in Maryland. Archeologists excavated the site from 2009-2014 under the leadership of Dr. Al Luckenbach and discovered a large base camp on a bluff overlooking the Patuxent River where people lived for at least 10,000 years. The “Lost Towns Project” team of professionals, volunteers, and students found over half a million artifacts and hundreds of features at the site, many of which had ritualistic meaning.

The archeologists found three separate activity areas at Pig Point. A feasting area was situated near the edge of the bluff, where people gathered around large fires for thousands of years. Feasts had spiritual significance in many tribal ceremonies. Nearby, stains in the soil marked where structures made of saplings were built in the same place for centuries. Some of these buildings were unheated and might have been used for religious purposes, although they could have also housed people who lived here during warm weather. And near the top of the bluff, archeologists were amazed to find five large, circular burial pits that contained human remains, copper beads, and deliberately broken stone blades. The “exotic” stone objects were from the Ohio River Valley and the mound-building Adena people, demonstrating a trading network that spanned the Appalachian Mountains over 2,000 years ago.

While broken artifacts are commonly found on archeological sites, many of the artifacts in the burial pits were intentionally destroyed for unknown reasons. Interestingly, several deliberately broken slate gorget fragments were found in the Pig Point feasting and living areas but were missing from the burial pits. Gorgets are highly polished, relatively flat, rectangular or oval objects found on pre-contact sites across Maryland and have occasionally been found in burial contexts. Archeologists are not entirely sure why Native Americans used gorgets but they probably served any number of purposes, from status symbols worn on the body to fishing reels.
Table of Contents

1. Ancient Rituals at the Pig Point Site, Stephanie Sperling ................. 3
2. Witch Bottles and Bottle Charms, Rebecca Morehouse ......................... 5
3. Coin Magic, Sara Rivers Cofield ....................................................... 7
4. Fleet Street Bundle, Mark Leone ............................................................ 9
5. A Crystal in the Kitchen, Lauren Schiszik ............................................ 11
6. Concealed Objects in Architectural Spaces, or “Anybody seen my shoes”??, Matthew Cochran and Jeanne Ward ......................... 12
7. An Interesting Chicken Burial at London Town, Amelia G. Chisholm .......................................................... 14
8. Expressions of African Spirit Practices in Maryland’s Archeological Record, Julie M. Schablitsky ........................................... 16
9. Magical Objects at the Brome Slave Quarter, Historic St. Mary’s City, Silas Hurry .......................................................... 18
10. Seeing Power in Buried Iron Objects, Kirsti Uunila ................................. 19
11. Hoyt’s Cologne, Patricia Samford ......................................................... 21
    Archeology Volunteer Programs .......................................................... 23
    Messages from Institutional Sponsors .................................................. 26
    Messages from Supporting Organizations ............................................ 28
    Sampling of Maryland Archeology Month Events ................................. 40
    Maryland Archeology Month 2019 Sponsors ........................................ 41

This year the Archeological Society of Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust will conduct their annual Tyler Bastian Field Session in Maryland Archeology on the grounds of the Billingsley House in Prince George’s County between May 24th and June 3rd. Visit www.marylandarcheology.org for more information, and plan to join the effort!

How do you spell archeology? You will notice that throughout this booklet the spelling of “archeology” – or “archaeology” – is somewhat fluid. It’s one of those words that different people and programs spell differently. There are many explanations for this, and most are apocryphal. For an interesting read, google “spelling of archeology” and look for the result titled “Why are there two different spellings: archaeology and archeology” with the www.saa.org url!
Maryland Archeology Month

April 2019

What “Magic” Means in Archeology

“Magic” in anthropological terms, is anything people do to try to influence the supernatural. That includes personified supernatural forces like gods, ghosts, and ancestral spirits, and impersonal supernatural forces like luck. Usually when people try to influence the supernatural there is a clear end in mind and a ritualized procedure to follow. When you pick a penny up and say, “find a penny, pick it up, and all day long you’ll have good luck,” an anthropologist would classify that as a magic ritual.

There is a joke in archeology (a sub-discipline of anthropology) that any artifact of unknown purpose must be “ritual,” which is really code for “I have no other explanation.” That joke was born out of legitimate criticism, but it has scared some people away from considering ritual and magic in archeology. The burden of proof that something is “magic” is very high. However, it is a disservice to our understanding of past belief systems if we fail to consider possible ritual and magic uses of artifacts, especially if the context calls for it.

A perfect example is this horseshoe from the Smith’s St. Leonard plantation, which was occupied ca. 1711-1754. The default interpretation of a horseshoe is that it was used to shoe a horse, but historical records indicate that it was rare to shoe horses in Maryland prior to the 1750s because the soft clay soils did not require it. Over 200 units have been excavated at the site, resulting in over 450 boxes of artifacts from the main house, a kitchen, a laundry, at least three slave quarter buildings, a store house, and a stable. Only one horseshoe was found, and it was not near the stable, but in a kitchen cellar that was filled with debris from a remodeling episode. Horseshoes have a long history as objects placed on thresholds, near hearths, or in ritual concealments to ward off evil or bring good luck. Thus, history and context suggest that this horseshoe was a magical object.

It is not always possible to determine whether an everyday object was put to a magical purpose, and that is where the “mystery” of the “Magic and Mystery” theme comes in. There are many finds that might be evidence of magic, but there is no way to know with certainty. It is still worthwhile to consider the possibility though because it calls for an understanding of how the people who used these artifacts viewed the world. The following essays offer more examples of artifacts that offer insight into Maryland’s “magical” past.

Sara Rivers Cofield
Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory