

# 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Symposium on Archeology

Presented by the

Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.,

Saturday, April 18, 2026

At

The Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

8:30-9 am Registration, Coffee

9:00-9:15 am Welcome

9:15-9:55

## The 2025 Richard E. Stearns Memorial Lecture

**The Richard E. Stearns Memorial Lecture is named in honor of Richard E Stearns (1902-1969), curator of the Department of Archeology at the Natural History Society of Maryland for more than 30 years. Mr. Stearns located numerous archeological sites in the Chesapeake area, and carefully documented his surface and excavated finds. He published numerous archeological articles and several monographs, and donated his collection to the Smithsonian Institution. A commercial artist by profession, he was nonetheless a pioneer in Maryland archeology, instrumental in recording much of Maryland prehistory.**

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“Transforming Southern Maryland Landforms: 40 years of Archaeological Observations”

Presented by: James G. Gibb

*Abstract:* Conducting archaeological investigations in Maryland, and particularly in the five southern counties, since 1987, one observation consistently emerges from each of the 300 projects I have completed: the landforms—the topography and hydrology—that we see today are products of radical changes. Some were intentional, most were not. In this presentation I provide a handful of seemingly unrelated research projects that intersect at a 300-year-old process in the region: the erosion and redeposition of soils, in some cases blanketing and protecting sites, in many others destroying them.

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10-10:40 “Trowels to Teaching: A Case Study in Embedding Archaeology Education in Applied Archaeology Programs”

Presented by: Katherine Sterner

*Abstract:* Archaeology is not new to public education. However, scholars of archaeology education have noted the lack of a systematic approach to the field in the last two decades. In our case study of the Trowels to Teaching Workshop, a five-day professional development program for Maryland K-12 educators conducted in 2025 through the Baltimore Community Archaeology Lab at Towson University, we offer a model for embedding archaeology education in existing applied archaeology programs in the academy. The workshop combined hands-on field and laboratory training, collaboration with Indigenous representatives from the Piscataway Conoy Tribe and the Pocomoke Indian Nation, and active

participation by undergraduate student employees who both learned and taught archaeological skills. Formal pre-and post-assessments demonstrated significant learning gains among participating teachers, including increases in archaeological knowledge, confidence in lesson design, and awareness of descendant perspectives. The outcomes highlight how applied archaeology programs in universities can integrate teacher professional development into existing research, provide undergraduates with transformative teaching experiences, and deepen collaborations with descendant communities.

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## Coffee Break and Silent Auction Viewing until 11:00

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11:00-11:40 “The Patowomeck Frontier: Migration and Culture Change along Goose River”

Presented by: John Henshaw

*Abstract:* Archaeological narratives often treat the Chesapeake Bay region as an outlier in the centuries preceding European colonialism, positioned alongside, but apart from, Eastern Woodlands histories of climate stress, migration, and political transformation. This talk argues otherwise. I reframe the Potomac–Shenandoah drainage (ca. AD 1400–1600) as a Native-made frontier: a shifting zone of interaction where communities negotiated identity, mobility, and intercultural tensions. I argue that migration amid late precolonial climate volatility contributed to new collective strategies, as people reconfigured exchange networks, redrew social boundaries, and created regional ties that crossed linguistic lines. Drawing on multiple lines of archaeological and climatic evidence, I show how Indigenous communities produced this riverine frontier on the eve of European colonization. This work places the Chesapeake squarely within comparative Eastern Woodlands narratives where it belongs.

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## Lunch and Silent Auction 11:45-1:00

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1:00-1:40

### The 2025 Iris McGillivray Memorial Lecture

**Iris McGillivray was a founding member of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc., ably serving the Society for over thirty years as Secretary, President, Newsletter Editor, Field Session Registrar, and Membership Secretary. She is perhaps best known, loved, and respected for her organization of the annual Spring Symposium, first held in 1965, arranging all aspects of the day-long program. In 1991 Iris was presented with the Society's William B. Marye Award to honor her services to archeology in Maryland.**

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“The Past Present and Future of Historic Blandair: Saving an Enslaved Landscape”

Presented by: Kelly Palich

*Abstract:* Kelly Palich, Archaeologist with Howard County Recreation and Parks will present on Historic Blandair, a late 18th-19th century Piedmont Plantation in Columbia, Maryland, focusing primarily on the enslaved landscape. This presentation will highlight over twenty years of historic preservation efforts and archaeological research to preserve and interpret the intact landscape as well as address future goals for interpretation.

## Student Spotlight

1:45-2:25 "Subsistence, Seasonality, and Settlement Patterns in the Late Woodland Chesapeake: Insights from a Shell Midden Outside Baltimore."

Presented by: Reagan Britt

*Abstract:* It is a commonly held archaeological premise that throughout the Eastern Woodlands during the Late Woodland period, Native American peoples became increasingly sedentary, settling in semipermanent villages where they produced pottery and practiced horticulture. However, past studies of seasonally occupied Late Woodland shell midden sites along the Chesapeake Bay suggest a more variable settlement/subsistence pattern. Previous shell midden research has focused primarily on sites along the Potomac River and the southern Chesapeake, with previously examined sites stretching as far north as southern Anne Arundel County. The current study examines one of two extensive shell midden sites approximately 30 miles further north, outside of Baltimore. Using multimodal paleoenvironmental reconstruction and a combination of shell metrics and stable oxygen isotopes, we situate a Late Woodland site from the northern Chesapeake within the larger body of literature on seasonality, settlement patterns, and subsistence strategies in the Middle Atlantic.

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2:30-3:10 "Underwater Archaeology and the Maryland Maritime Archaeology Program"

Presented by: Troy Nowak

*Abstract:* The Maryland Maritime Archaeology Program was created in 1988 within the Maryland Historical Trust to manage archaeological sites in, partially in, or submerged beneath state waters. These range from inundated landscapes preserving information related to Maryland's earliest inhabitants to significant archaeological examples of watercraft and maritime infrastructure from the modern era. The Program's responsibilities, operation, and current work will be explained, and opportunities for public involvement in underwater archaeology will be presented.

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3:30-4:00

**Silent Auction Results and Banter**

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