



A periodic newsletter chronicling the preservation of Menokin

Spectacular Doorway and Surprising Woodwork Finds

This past fall, Menokin's front doorway rose up from the more than 1,000 pieces of interior woodwork now in storage at the King Conservation and Visitors Center, and once again welcomes guests to Francis Lightfoot Lee's plantation. The doorway was located on the north, or land side, of Menokin, and



Menokin's Front Entry Reassembled and on Display at the King Center

functioned as its primary and finest entrance. Currently on display at the King Center, the doorway was in 27 pieces of varying sizes, consisting of: the main doorframe; frame-and-paneled jamb; and associated jamb molding. The two original wrought hinges remain on the proper right side of the doorway frame.

In January, consulting conservator and architect Charles A. Phillips, AIA, identified and sorted the other components of woodwork, according to their original location in the house. Among these assemblages are the paneling, cabinets, shutters and window seats of the northwest (or front, right) room of Menokin, which is identified as a chamber in the 1769 presentation draw-

ings. Unlike the other three rooms on the primary story, the northwest chamber was never documented by photographs or measured drawings, and it was assumed that the room had modest detailing. Surprisingly, the identified woodwork shows highly developed joinery with raised paneling and a floor-to-ceiling cabinet that was adjacent to the fireplace.

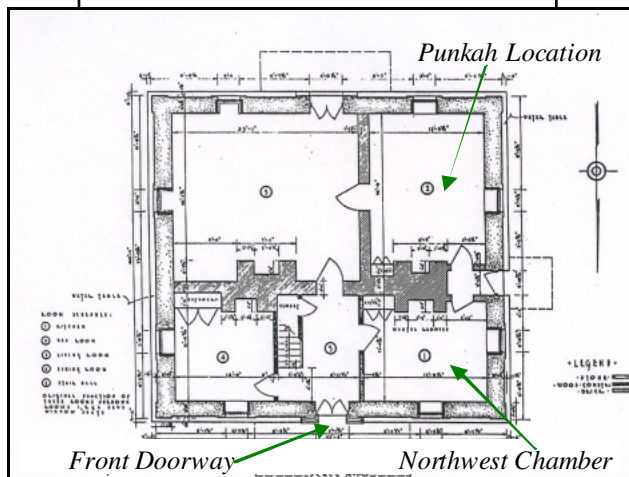
Also during the January identification project, Phillips came to the conclusion that the southwest (or back, right) room once contained a *punkah*, which was probably installed in the first or second quarters of the 19th century during the Tayloe or Boughton ownerships. A *punkah* is a type of large wooden fan hung from the ceiling, usually over a dining table. A slave or servant would pull the fan back

and forth by one or two ropes, providing cooling and helping to keep insects off the food below.

In 2005, the Menokin conservation team excavated a fallen ceiling joist from the southwest quadrant of the ruin. Nailed to the joist was a curious strip of wood, about one foot in length, notched on each end, and decorated with a Prussian blue finish. The joist



Northwest chamber woodwork. Assembled are wall paneling and window frames. The cabinet is shown in the center of the floor with window shutters on either side.



was documented, tagged and transported to the Foundation's storage barn. Over a year later, as Phillips identified and sorted the woodwork from the first-floor, southwest room of Menokin, he noticed a rather crude wooden pulley nailed to a piece of window molding. Through Phillips' detective work, we now understand the relationship of these two elements—the notched strip of wood nailed to the joist an-

chored the punkah to the ceiling, and the pulley kept the rope taut as it was pulled by a slave or servant. These unusual finds are significant as only a few original punkahs are known to exist in America; in Virginia the only known punkah is at Prestwold in Mecklenburg County.

Executive Director, Sarah Dillard Pope commented on this latest project, "Menokin continues to hold exciting clues for us, and each year—really each month—we understand more about this National Historic Landmark."

Menokin Foundation to Hold Conservation Workshop with RCC

The Menokin Foundation and Rappahannock Community College (RCC) will hold a three-day workshop, June 1-3, 2007, on

the latest conservation methods used at Menokin. The course will provide an intensive overview of 18th century framing and building techniques, and the conservation of historic masonry and wood elements, using

Menokin as a teaching laboratory. Geared to architects, craftspeople, contractors, historic site administrators and the public-at-large, the course will

be held at Menokin's King Conservation and Visitors Center. Continuing education credits are available through RCC and tuition is \$200 for the three day program, which includes lunch each day.



The punkah at Prestwold, Mecklenburg County (from Interiors of Virginia Houses of Colonial Times, Edith Tunis Sale, 1927)

The Menokin Foundation believes that the hands-on preservation learning process is as important as the final completion of conservation work at the Menokin ruins.

Foundation President Helen Turner Murphy elaborated on this concept saying, "Here we have a historic house of which one-quarter remains standing with original plaster, floorboards and framing, while the remaining parts of the house, including all of the exquisite interior woodworking, exist in pieces. The rare, original presentation drawings and 1940 Historic American Building Survey documentation provides a "road map" to understanding how these pieces fit together."



Masonry conservation work at Menokin, Spring 2007

Dr. Elizabeth H. Crowther, President of RCC and a Menokin Foundation Trustee, commented on the collaboration, "The current state of Menokin provides an extraordinary

opportunity for students to receive edu-

cation and training on a broad spectrum of architectural conservation issues, including: moisture problems;

making and using historic repair mortars; woodwork repair and consolidation; techniques for removal of Portland cement pointing, and window restoration."

Visit www.menokin.org for registration information and course activities, or contact the Foundation at 804-333-1776, e-mail: menokin@menokin.org.

Two New Members Elected to the Menokin Foundation Board & Long-Time Trustees Honored for Their Work

At its January 25 meeting, the Menokin Foundation Board of Trustees elected two new members: C. Dudley Brown, FASID, and Hulon P. Fillingane, Captain, U.S. Navy (retired). Mr. Brown and Captain Fillingane bring years of preservation and leadership experience to their new roles as Trustees.

Mr. Brown is president of C. Dudley Brown & Associates, an interior design firm based in Washington, D.C. that specializes in period furnishings and historic preservation. Mr. Brown has long been known for his distinguished work in historic preservation and restoration, and has received numerous awards for projects throughout the United States, including a 2006 Mayor's Award for Excellence for Historic Preservation in the District of Columbia. He is currently working on the restoration of Landsdowne, once home to Francis Lightfoot Lee's brother, Arthur Lee, in Urbanna, Virginia.

Captain Fillingane moved to Westmoreland County with his wife Shelby from Vienna, Virginia, in 2004. A career officer, Captain Fillingane trained as an aviator and flew with patrol squadrons on the East Coast, served as assistant naval attaché in

**4TH ANNUAL MENOKIN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2007**



**Featuring Grammy Nominated
Blue Highway**

As a friend of The Menokin Foundation, we would like to thank you for supporting us over the past year by offering \$5.00 off the regular admission price of \$20.00 for this year's Menokin Bluegrass Festival. The festival will be held on Saturday, April 21, from 12 noon to 6 pm (or until the cows come home!). Appearing will be Grammy nominated **Blue Highway, Old School Freight Train, The Infamous Stringdusters, The Barrel House Mamas, and Ga\$ Money Band**. Vendors will provide food, golden beverages, crafts and wares. This celebration of our national heritage at the home of Declaration of Independence signer Francis Lightfoot Lee promises to be an event you won't want to miss!

Please return your payment along with the coupon below to The Menokin Foundation. **This limited time offer expires on March 31, 2007** (offer good on advanced tickets only). Limit 2 discount tickets per member household. For additional information visit www.menokinbluegrass.com or call (804)333-1776 or (804)333-0512.

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Email: menokin@menokin.org



**Return by March 31, 2007 (offer good on advanced tickets only)
Limit 2 discount tickets per member household**

Yes, I/We will attend the 4th Annual Menokin Bluegrass Festival on Saturday, April 21. Enclosed is payment in the amount of \$15.00 (for 1 discount ticket) or \$30.00 for 2 discount tickets at \$15.00 per ticket. Please send the tickets to:

Name(s): _____

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Make checks payable to: The Menokin Foundation, P.O. Box 1221, Warsaw, VA 22572

Rome, and retired in 1978 after five years in the Pentagon. He retired from his civilian career in January 2007, having worked with Riverside Research Institute and then Xontech, Inc., a small R&D firm that was acquired by Northrup Grumman Corporation in 2003.

Dr. Charles F. Bryan and Mr. D. Anderson Williams were recognized by President Helen Turner Murphy for their commitment and work to the Menokin Foundation during their tenures as Trustees, which concluded at the January 25 meeting. Pres. Murphy commented, "Your vision and guidance have led the Menokin Foundation into its second decade." As a founding member of the Menokin Foundation, Mr. Williams was elected by the Board to serve as an Honorary Trustee.



Honorary Trustee Andy Williams receiving a framed reproduction of the Menokin presentation drawings for his years of service to the Foundation.

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