

A periodic newsletter chronicling the preservation of Menokin Plantation.



Alfonso Narvaez, Carey Howlett, Tim Lavoie and Will Arsonow bring out a summer beam.

WORK TO PRESERVE THE MENOKIN RUIN BEGINS

Two construction trailers sit in the shadow of the Menokin ruin. Pallets and bins and wood to build boxes to hold and protect the artifacts are stacked by the office trailer. Computers and mechanical cleaning equipment sit on newly assembled plywood tables.

The Foundation has contracted with the firm of John Milner Associates (JMA) of Alexandria, Virginia to work on the historic Menokin ruin. The work is being done under the auspices of the Foundation's Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.

The contract calls for stabilization of the Menokin ruin and a pilot project to extract, conserve and document structural material and artifacts that have collapsed in the southeast quadrant of the house. Project director is JMA's John Mott, FAIA, director of architectural and historic preservation in the firm's Alexandria office. Architectural conservator and technical director Alfonso Narvaez leads the on-site work effort.

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Narvaez and the JMA staff are joined by Hank Handler and his team from Oak Grove Restoration Contractors, and conservator F. Carey Howlett. The consulting structural engineer is John Matteo, P.E., of Robert Sillman Associates, and digital laser scanning and base drawing of the Menokin ruin are provided by Eric Hoffman of Quantapoint, Inc.



Laser scanning and the engineer's investigation were aided by a high-lift.

JMA began work on the ruin in mid-November and concludes the first phase on the southeast quadrant by mid-December.

The project was initiated with a complete laser scan of the structure and the production of base drawings, followed by the structural engineer's assessment and subsequent bracing and stabilization measures. Then the extraction and cataloging work began.

"It's fascinating to see the material that comes out of the cellar, and to begin to parse it," said JMA's Narvaez. "We have evidence of some very interesting and unusual building practices. It's a very special project".

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CELEBRATING MENOKIN AT MOUNT AIRY

In the historic setting of Mount Airy's forecourt, architectural historian Calder Loth dubbed Menokin "a child of Mount Airy". He then discussed the architectural and cultural significance of both structures for the more than 130 guests at Menokin's ancestral reunion event and fund raiser at Mount Airy in October.

Guests were treated to tours of the great house and grounds, and enjoyed Chesapeake style oysters, crab balls and ham biscuits under the APVA tent erected in the forecourt. A good time was had by all!



Anne Tayloe Neuman welcomes guests to Mount Airy.

What follows are excerpts from Calder Loth's speech at Mount Airy. Loth is senior architectural historian at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and an honorary member of the Menokin Board of Trustees.

"... And now Menokin. I think we can safely say that Menokin is Mount Airy's son. If it hadn't been for Mount Airy, there would be no Menokin.

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