

# MENOKIN

## **Chronology of archaeology effort to identify a site for Menokin's new conservation building under SAT project**

Prepared by Doris Lackey, Executive Director  
April 30, 2003

1. November 13, 2002 – meeting with Doug Sanford, chief archaeologist, Mary Washington College; architect Carlton Abbott; and architectural historian Camille Wells, to discuss Menokin projects under auspices of the SAT award of September 2002. Walked over the plowed field south of the roadway to look at proposed site identified for new conservation building. Initiated discussion with D. Sanford for a proposal to test prospective building site and drainfield area.
2. December 20, 2002 – received proposal from Mary Washington to, in stage 1, perform surface identification of artifacts by walking and flagging entire field, “roughly 360,000 square feet,” in 50 foot square blocks, and then to sample 15% of the area in 25 x 25 foot blocks. Cost -- \$10,860.00.  
  
Stage 2 would be to further examine identified building site and drainfield and parking area (about 200 x 200 feet) and do a 25 x 25 foot surface survey. If it appeared that the location may be an archaeological site, a 10% sample of 5x5 foot blocks would be selected for excavation to subsoil for cultural features. Cost \$46,800.00. (Proposals attached.)  
  
Caveat that if, at this point, it was not possible to select another site, additional fieldwork, not yet budgeted, to mechanically remove the plow zone and excavate features will be required.
3. December 20, 2002 – by email D. Lackey replied to D.Sanford that the costs exceeded budget allowance and requested a proposal to test a 250 x 250 foot area identified by the architect, saying that if the proposed area was too close to any possible archaeological sites, or at one, the building site would need to be moved. No response until January 20, 2003.
4. January 2003 – D.L. consulted Bill Kelso, chief archaeologist at Jamestown Rediscovery, for references of other appropriate archaeologists or archaeological firms who might be contacted to help with Menokin testing.

5. January 7, 2003 Bill Kelso recommended James River Institute for Archaeology (JRIA) and their archaeologist Matthew Laird. After consultation with Menokin officers Martin King and Ed Chappell, D. Lackey contacted Matthew Laird to describe project and request a proposal.

6. January 8, 2003 – **received a proposal from JRIA to conduct Phase 1 archaeological testing “of a proposed drainfield of approximately ¼ acre and a proposed 50x100 foot site for a building. The testing “to include surface inspection of the cultivated field and excavation of screened shovel tests at regular intervals across the proposed impact area in order to identify cultural artifacts or features that would indicate the presence of an archaeological site.” JRIA would then prepare a summary of the testing results and offer recommendations about possible impact on significant archaeological resources. Cost -- \$675.00. (Proposal attached.)**

7. January 9, 2003 – D. Lackey visit to DHR; delivered initiation of 106 review process letter; and met with DHR chief architect and Menokin ex-officio Board member Calder Loth to discuss Menokin objectives and plans. (106 initiation letter attached.)

8. January 13, 2003 – meeting of Menokin executive committee; review and approval of JRIA proposal; confirmation of proposed construction boundaries with architect Carlton Abbott. Agreed to have surveyor Sterlin Headley survey site, establish coordinates, and do topographical report.

9. January 20, 2003 – received communication from Doug Sanford and Mike Klein of Mary Washington College with revised proposal to perform surface survey and do some excavation of a 250 x 250 foot area where footers might be set. Cost \$7200.00.

10. January 21, 2003 -- replied to D. Sanford that Menokin had chosen another firm for this particular work, and that we would be back in touch with them for proposals on future archaeological efforts. Acknowledgement from D. Sanford on January 22.

11. January 24, 2003 -- Matt Laird of JRIA began Phase 1 testing at Menokin building site.

12. February 6, 2003 – contacted D. Sanford about a missing map that accompanied an earlier surface survey conducted at Menokin by Mary Washington College in 1998. Although the report from that period did not indicate heavy artifact discovery in the area of the proposed new site, it did indicate two areas on the south side of the Menokin road that had an artifact

concentration, one of them being at the ravine head on the west side of the field near the road leading down to Menokin Bay. The other one was in the southeast corner of the field. It was our hope to overlay this map on the current map being generated by JRIA to glean additional information, and aid in the selection of a site for the building. (N.B. D. Lackey, Matt Laird, and Dennis Pogue of Mount Vernon have requested this map on several occasions. It has not been forthcoming.)

D. L. also informed D. Sanford, who is a member of the Menokin Advisory Committee, of a meeting of the committee called for February 19, but advised that she and the officers felt it would be inappropriate for potential contractors for future work at Menokin under the aegis of the SAT grant to attend the meeting, as RFP content and potential work plans would be discussed. If he did not intend to bid on future jobs he was encouraged to attend. (Doug Sanford did not attend the meeting, but he and other archaeologists from Mary Washington College subsequently joined Dennis Pogue of Mount Vernon in volunteer work at the Menokin site.)

13. February 14, 2003 – received Matt Laird’s report on Phase 1 testing of potential building site. **Surface inspection, collection of artifacts, and screened shovel tests performed at 25 foot intervals “to determine site stratigraphy and evaluate the potential for intact subsurface cultural layers or features,” was included in the work of an approximate 100x75 foot area. The archaeologist reported a density and variety of artifacts, saying that “JRIA recommends that any construction activity involving grading below the level of disturbed plowzone should be preceded by further archaeological investigation....Because the site is characterized by disturbed plowzone, and a relatively comprehensive plowzone sample has been obtained through surface collection and shovel testing, the most direct and effective means to evaluate the presence of subsurface features would be to allow an archaeologist to monitor the mechanical removal for the plowzone overburden within the proposed construction area, and to inspect the exposed subsoil surface for evidence of archaeological features. At a minimum, all cultural features should be mapped and photographed. If feasible, sampling or full excavation of the features should also be considered.”** (Report attached.)

14. February 14, 2003 -- forwarded copies of this report to Menokin officers Martin King and Ed Chappell. Called secretary-treasurer and other executive committee members to report it.

15. February 18, 2003 – DL message to Matt Laird “we’re going to want to do some more first phase testing in other section of the big field, and it appears we’re getting executive committee consensus to take your suggestion to strip the plowzone area in the slab area and look for features. Would you like to propose on each of these two pieces of work....”

Response that it would be better to do two separate proposals and that a backhoe with a 3 x 4-foot smooth bucket would be needed, and that we should be prepared to decide what

to do should there be features – deal with them immediately or backfill immediately and move to another location.

16. Renewed attempts to obtain map from Mary Washington College of earlier survey. Grad student report on 1998 survey found and shared with archaeologist.

17. February 18 – response from archaeologist that “I read through the MWC

Archaeological report.....It’s helpful in the sense that they did identify a number of other sites on the property similar to the one we found, but it does not appear – at least from this report – that their survey coincided with ours.”

18. February 19, 2003 – Menokin advisory committee meeting postponed because of snow. New date March 12.

19. February 21, 2003 -- received two JRIA proposals for next stages of archaeological testing. **Phase 1 archaeological testing of approximately 10 acre cultivated field with both surface inspection and excavation of screened shovel tests at 50 foot intervals across the study area in order to identify cultural artifacts or features that would indicate the presence of an archaeological site. Map to include location of all shovel tests and site locations. Cost \$2,626.00**

( Subsequent negotiations identified an area for testing of approximately 4.8 acres that did not include the front of the field within the viewshed of the ruin, as that area had been initially excluded as a potential site for the new building.)

Second proposal – **JRIA will “monitor the mechanical removal of plowzone within the proposed slab and drainfield site previously surveyed.” Purpose is “to remove the disturbed plowzone layer and examine the sterile subsoil for evidence of archaeological features. If no archaeological features are noted, JRIA will have the area backfilled immediately. If any archaeological features are identified, they will be mapped and photographed. At that point, JRIA will recommend whether further archaeological work should be pursued.” Cost \$675.00 plus \$1000 for equipment and operator. (See JRIA proposal of 21 February 2003.)**

(Proposals attached).

20. February 24, 2003 – Menokin finance committee meeting. Consensus to go forward with new JRIA proposals. Potential need to find alternative site for the conservations building agreed on.

21. March 10, 2003 – Phase 1 testing of large field and mechanical removal of

plowzone at the Phase 1 tested site accomplished. Features found. Notification of officers and Advisory Committee given.

22. March 12, 2003 – Meeting of Menokin advisory committee – Dave Hazzard, DHR; Dennis Pogue, MountVernon; Travis McDonald, Poplar Forest; Calder Loth, DHR; and Board members Martin King, Ed Chappell, Helen Murphy, and Camille Wells; staff members Doris Lackey and LaToya BallTate. Also attending, Jane Tims, a writer engaged to do oral history interviews about Menokin’s 20<sup>th</sup> century history.

Advisory Committee, Board members and guests arrived at Menokin on the morning of March 12<sup>th</sup> and proceeded to the site where the archaeological features were discovered. Press was also present. Archaeologist Matt Laird had arrived early and was cleaning at the site with help from Dave Hazzard. The assembled group spent more than an hour viewing and discussing the discovery.

Subsequently, at the committee meeting, Dennis Pogue of Mount Vernon protested the testing methodology that had been utilized to try to locate a site for the conservation building, and was particularly critical of the mechanical stripping of the plowzone layer. He charged that the procedures employed at Menokin represented outdated 30 year old archaeology practices now in disrepute, and that activities at Menokin violated the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and he threatened to go to the National Park Service and tell them to pull Menokin’s SAT grant. **Discussion of the need to map, photograph and record the features before re-covering the site then ensued. Although JRIA had, in their proposal of February 21, said that they would “map and photograph” any features that might be found, advisory committee member Pogue volunteered that he and a team of archaeologists that he would put together would do the appropriate site work before the site was re-covered, and provide the Menokin Foundation with a report and any artifacts that were recovered.**

**The officers and executive director agreed to this proposal if it could be done in a timely fashion.**

(News stories of the discovery attached.)

23. March 19, 2003 -- **Menokin Foundation received JRIA’s report on the mechanical stripping of the plowzone, and on the Phase 1 testing of approximately 4.8 acres of the plowed field. “Of the 92 shovel tests, 18 (19.6%) were positive, yielding cultural material. Most of the positive shovel tests were located within 100-150 feet of the stripped area (Transects A and B), and appear to be associated with the previously identified site. (Full report attached)**
24. March 20, 2003 – forwarded two JRIA reports by email to archaeologists on Advisory Committee – Pogue, Hazzard, and Fraser Neiman of Monticello -- Martin King, and Calder Loth..

25. March 21, 2003 -- message from Dennis Pogue that, because of rain, the archaeologists on his team would not be at Menokin the coming weekend.
26. March 26, 2003 -- requested and received a description of anticipated work by Dennis Pogue and his team of archaeologists. (Attached.)
27. March 28, 2003 -- a team, consisting of 16 archaeologists --Dennis Pogue and his staff from Mount Vernon, and Fraser Neiman and his staff from Monticello, worked at the site to map, record, photograph and clean. (See news story in NN News.)
28. April 2, 2003 -- contacted NPS and DHR to describe situation. Sent JRIA reports and new proposal for additional testing of plowed field to look for a new site to Ethel Eaton, chief of 106 reviews, at DHR.
29. April 4 and 5, 2003 -- Archaeologists, with Dennis Pogue, working at Menokin site.
30. April 11, 2003 -- Martin King and Doris Lackey meet with Ethel Eaton, DHR archaeologist in charge of 106 reviews, to discuss Menokin archaeology, proposals, procedures, and reports. It is understood that only DHR defines acceptable procedures for archaeological testing and work under the auspices of the SAT grant, and that all work proposals and work plans will be vetted by DHR. Dr. Eaton did suggest, however, that Menokin staff make an effort to obtain recommendations from advisory committee archaeologists for next stages of work.
31. April 13 and 14 -- Archaeologists at Menokin site. Conclusion of research, mapping etc. on April 14.
32. April 14, 2003 -- meeting at Menokin office with Matt Laird (JRIA) and Dennis Pogue of Mount Vernon to discuss methodology for re-covering of open site and next steps for testing in the large field to find an appropriate site for the new building. Telephone conversation with Fraser Neiman of Monticello at that time. Consensus reached on next step which would be to initiate 25 foot shovel tests in the open field. Consensus also that mapping and recording work at the open site is concluded and re-covering of site could begin. (Attempt to reach Dave Hazzard for consultation was unsuccessful.)
33. April 16, 2003 -- Menokin Board of Trustees meeting. Report and full discussion of archaeology efforts and activities to find appropriate site for conservation building. Charge by

architectural historian and Board member Camille Wells that 80 to 90% of the information available in the plowzone area of the scraped site was lost. Charge disputed by others. Inconclusive. (See JRIA reports of 14 February 2003 and 19 March 2003, and Pogue report of April 25, 2003)

34. April 17, 2003 – NPS grant administrator advises that complaints have been lodged against Menokin by archaeologists and “others” on archaeology work at Menokin. Dennis Pogue is named.

DHR reviewer also advises of complaints from COVA (Council of Virginia Archaeologists) about Menokin archaeology.

35. April 17, 2003 -- JRIA archaeologist meets with DHR archaeologist to discuss procedure and process for future testing. JRIA submits proposal for future testing to identify building site to Menokin Foundation.

36. Telephone conversation (D.Lackey to Dennis Pogue) to request final report from Pogue and his team regarding work at the Menokin site. Assurance of a summary report by April 25, and a detailed report and return of artifacts collected to follow.

37. April 18, 2003 – Menokin executive director submits JRIA proposal for testing procedures to DHR for approval. Copy also sent to NPS. (Proposal attached –Alternative A -- Cost, \$5900.00)

38. April 24, 2003 – email received from NPS grant administrator to proceed under direction of SHPO (State Historic Preservation Officer) which is the Virginia Department of Historic Resources – Kathleen Kilpatrick, executive director; Dr. Ethel Eaton, principal archaeologist and 106 review chief.

39. April 25, 2003 – verbal permission from Ethel Eaton at DHR to proceed with Phase 1 testing as described by JRIA in their proposal; written document to follow, with additional instructions on closing the open site.

40. April 25, 2003 – received summary report from Dennis Pogue on archaeology work done by Dennis Pogue and his assembled team.

41. April 28, 2003 – received letter of resignation from Menokin Advisory Committee from Dennis Pogue and copy of letter he sent to Richmond Times-Dispatch critical of archaeology at Menokin and of participating agencies and contractors. (Copy attached.)

42. April 29, 2003 – additional testing to find appropriate site for conservation building, sanctioned by DHR and conducted by JRIA begins.

##