

# Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory Institutional CV



**ORGANIZATION:** Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab)

**ADDRESS:** Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, 10515 Mackall Rd, St. Leonard, MD 20685

**START DATE:** Opened in 1998

**PARENT ORGANIZATION:** Maryland Historical Trust/Maryland Department of Planning

**CURRENT STAFF NUMBERS:** 10 permanent and contractual staff.

**WEBSITE:** <https://jefpat.maryland.gov/Pages/mac-lab/mac-lab.aspx>

**OVERVIEW OF MAC Lab:** The Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory is a state-of-the-art archaeological research, conservation, and collections storage facility located at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in southern Maryland. Curators estimate the facility contains 7 to 10 million state owned and federally curated artifacts; this estimate is continuously refined as the inventorying of all collections proceeds. Almost all of these collections were recovered from archaeological sites in Maryland and represent a priceless part of the state's rich heritage. The MAC Lab serves as a clearinghouse for archaeological collections recovered from land-based and underwater projects conducted by state and federal agencies throughout Maryland. The MAC Lab also houses a number of major collections acquired through private donation to the Maryland Historical Trust. All of these collections are available for research, education, and exhibit purposes to students, scholars, museum curators, and educators. In our state-of-the-art conservation laboratory, the staff treats a full range of archaeological artifacts, cleaning and stabilizing them in order to preserve them for future generations.

**AREA OF EXPERTISE:** Treatment and curation of large collections and individual artifacts from prehistoric and historic contexts. Treatment of metal and metal/organic composite artifacts from terrestrial or submarine sites. Treatment of waterlogged organic materials. Laboratory development and design.

**LABORATORY EQUIPMENT:** 320kV x-radiograph, electrolytic reduction tanks w/ power supplies and heated circulators, PEG tanks w/ filtration and circulation, 2 freeze-driers, 2 air-abrasives, pneumatic cleaning tools, density meter, pH/ISE meters, Fourier-Transform Infrared Spectrophotometer, UV-Vis Spectrophotometer, darkroom & photo studio, digital cameras, networked database, climate-controlled treatment and storage space, dedicated solvent workspace.

## **STAFF:**

### ***Director Patricia Samford, PhD:***

Patricia Samford holds a doctorate in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and an MA and BA in Anthropology from the College of William and Mary. Her research interests include African diaspora archaeology in the American South and in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ceramics. She was a staff archaeologist for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for thirteen years and has also worked in North Carolina, Maryland, and Bermuda. Samford's dissertation research was published by the University of Alabama Press and is entitled *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia* (2007). She has also co-authored *Below Baltimore: An Archaeology of Charm City* (2023), a book on archaeology for children entitled *Archaeology for Young Explorers: Uncovering History at Colonial Williamsburg* (1995) and *Intrigue of the Past: North Carolina's First Peoples; A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth Through Eighth Grades* (compiled and edited by Margo L. Price, Patricia Samford and Vincas P. Steponaitis; Research Laboratories of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2001).

### ***Deputy Director Scott Strickland:***

Scott Strickland is currently the Deputy Director of the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. He received his B.A. degree in Sociology/Anthropology from St. Mary's College of Maryland and his M.Sc. degree in Archaeological Computing from the University of Southampton. In addition to serving as Deputy Director, he also serves as adjunct faculty at St. Mary's College of Maryland where he teaches Geographic Information Systems and Computational Anthropology. His research interests include pre-Contact Native settlement patterns, post-Contact Anglo-Native Relations, and seventeenth and eighteenth-century Chesapeake history.

***Curator of State Collections Rebecca Morehouse:***

Rebecca Morehouse received her B.A. in Anthropology and English from the State University of New York, College at Geneseo in 1995 and her M.A. in Anthropology with a concentration in Museum Studies from The George Washington University in 1997. She has twenty-five years of experience in archaeological collections curation. Prior to becoming the Curator of State Collections at the MAC Lab, she was the Curator for the State Highway Administrations Archaeological Collections (1998-2002). As part of her studies in Anthropology, she interned at the National Park Service, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Office (1997), Alexandria Archaeology (1996), the Ford's Theatre National Historic Site (1996-1997), and the New York State Museum (1994).

***Curator of Federal Collections Sara Rivers Cofield:***

Sara Rivers Cofield received her Bachelor of Arts from Murray State University in 2000 and her Masters of Applied Anthropology from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2002. She has seven years of experience in prehistoric and historic archaeological fieldwork and its associated laboratory processing stemming from projects in Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Jamaica, and Belgium. Since 2002, Sara has focused on curation, collections management, and material culture research. Her past positions include Adjunct Faculty at St. Mary's College of Maryland (2009-2015), Curation and Conservation Assistant at Historic St. Mary's City (2002-2004), Research Assistant at Monocacy National Battlefield (2001-2002), and Archaeological Laboratory Aide for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission of Prince George's County (2000-2004). Sara is a member and past chair of the Archaeological Collections Consortium, and a past member of the Board of Directors of the Society for Historical Archaeology (2020-2023).

***Collections Technician Megan Kearns:***

Megan Kearns holds an MA in Museum Studies with a concentration in Collections Management from The George Washington University and a BA in Classical Mediterranean Archaeology from Lycoming College. Megan has worked with archaeology, history, and ethnology collections. Prior to joining the staff at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Megan was Museum Technician at Yosemite National Park (2022). She created custom storage enclosures for ethnographic objects, including some of the prized basketry collection. She worked with mid-Atlantic National Park Service collections at the Museum Resource Center including Arlington House and the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (2019-2021). She served as inventory team lead for the facility's 100% collections inventory and rehoused many collections. She also cataloged incoming born digital collections at the Chevy Chase Historical Society (MD, 2020). She began her museum work as an intern at the Thomas T. Taber Museum in Williamsport, PA (2018). Her specialties include creating custom storage enclosures for 3D objects conducting museum inventories. Megan joined the MAC Lab in January 2023 as Collections Assistant working with the state archaeological collections.

***Patterson Archaeologist Alexandra Glass:***

Alex Glass holds an MSc. in Environmental Archaeology from the University College London, a B.A in History, and B.A in Anthropology from the University of Maryland at College Park. She has 13 years of experience conducting both field and lab work primarily in the Mid-Atlantic, as well as England and Italy. Prior to rejoining the MAC Lab, she served as the Lab Director for Applied Archaeology and History Associates in Annapolis, Maryland where she facilitated the processing, analysis, and curation of artifacts generated through CRM and private projects. Her research interests include foodways, plant use, and the archaeology of the colonial Chesapeake with recent research projects consisting of macro-botanical, zooarchaeological, and artifact analyses of both historic and precontact period site collections.

***Head Conservator Nichole Doub:***

Nichole Doub holds an MSc in Conservation for Archaeology and Museums and a MA in Principles of Conservation from University College London in England and a BA in Classical Archaeology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her specializations include archaeometallurgy and East Mediterranean/Eastern European archaeology. Before coming to work at the MAC Lab, Nichole was the Archaeological Objects Conservator at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, England where she worked on a range of Roman, Anglo Saxon and Medieval material from the Princesshay excavations. She has also participated in conservation projects at the Fitzwilliam Museum (University of Cambridge), the National Trust, English Heritage and the archaeological excavations at Çatalhöyük, Turkey, Noviodunum (Romania) and Kaman Kalehöyük (Turkey).

***Conservator, Arianna Johnston:***

Arianna Johnston received her MSc in Conservation Practice from the School of History, Archaeology, and Religion from Cardiff University and her BA in Fine Arts from Alfred University. Arianna has interests in composite artifacts and in refining health and safety practices in conservation. She has previous experience working with the Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum, University of Aberdeen, Birmingham Museums Trust, Mathers Museum of World Cultures, and in private practice in objects conservation in Indiana and northern Virginia. Arianna has served on the Board for the Washington Conservation Guild since 2017.

***Conservator Monica Kitner:***

Monica Kitner received her MSc in Conservation for Archaeology and Museums and a MA in Principles of Conservation from University College London in England. She completed her BA in Archaeology, Art History and Religion at Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA. She has experience conserving archaeological and historical objects and has also assisted in the conservation of monumental architecture. Before coming to the MAC Lab, she interned at The Scott Polar Museum and The Fitzwilliam Museum

in Cambridge, England and also spent time working in private practice in the D.C. metropolitan area.

***Conservator, Heather Rovardi:***

Heather Rovardi was awarded an MA in the Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects from Durham University in the United Kingdom, and a BA in Archaeology and Culture of the Ancient Near East from Lycoming College. In conjunction with archaeological objects, she specializes in the conservation of historical/technical objects and her interests include outdoor sculpture conservation, disaster preparedness and emergency response, and collections care. Heather has previously worked at the Lincolnshire Archives, the Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum, Historic St. Mary's City, and in private practice within the greater Washington, D. C. metropolitan area.

**CURATION**

**State Curation Experience:** The State of Maryland's archaeological curation program is responsible for the long-term care and preservation of the State's archaeological collections and their associated documentation. These collections, an estimated 10 million artifacts, include a wide range of cultural material representing 12,000 years of human history in Maryland. The majority of these collections have been generated through professional archaeological investigation, although some of the collections have been donated by avocational archaeologists. Along with the perpetual care of the archaeological collections, it is the mission of the State of Maryland's archaeological curation program to make these collections accessible for research and exhibit.

**RECENT ACCESSIONS:**

**Archeological Society of Maryland Excavations at the Billingsley site, 18PR9:** Native American Archaic base camp and Woodland village site

**Excavations at the William Paca House and Gardens, 18AP1:** 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>-century mansion house and formal gardens

**Investigations at the Caile-Bayly House, 18DO536:** 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>-century house site, probably the oldest dwelling in Cambridge

**Excavations at the Reynold's Tavern site, 18AP23:** 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>-century tavern and stable

**Excavations at the James Holliday House, 18AP116:** Early 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>-century African-American townhouse site

**The South Mountain Battlefield Project, 18WA507:** Mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Civil War battlefield (Battle of South Mountain, 9/14/1862)

**Robert Ogle Collection:** Artifacts collected from sites throughout southern Maryland (avocational collection)

**CURRENT AND RECENT CURATION PROJECTS:**

The following collections are currently being rehoused and organized, replacing all unstable and acidic packaging materials, identifying artifacts that may need conservation and pulling artifacts into study collection cabinets to make them more accessible to future researchers:

**Higgins site, 18AN489:** Paleoindian through Late Woodland Native American site

**Brice House, 18AP38:** 18<sup>th</sup>-century house site

**Sebastian Derr House, 18FR638:** Mid-18<sup>th</sup> to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmstead

The following projects are being conducted in preparation for the collections move that will take place prior to the upcoming MAC Lab expansion and renovation project:

An inventory of all study collections in cabinets in Collections Storage.

A conservation assessment and full rehouse, where necessary, of all oversize objects.

All digital files associated with the archaeological collections are currently being organized and inventoried.

The following collections are currently be catalogued by volunteers at the Maryland Historical Trust's archaeology lab:

Levering Coffee House, 18BC51: late 18<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>-century residential and commercial buildings

Reeves site, 18WC15: Native American Woodland village site

#### **CURRENT LOANS TO INSTITUTIONS FOR EXHIBIT OR RESEARCH:**

RFL Museum of African American History, Baltimore MD

Fort McHenry, Baltimore, MD

Historic London Town and Gardens

Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD

University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research, Newark, DE

National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian, Washington, DC

Havre de Grace Maritime Museum. Havre de Grace, MD

Susquehanna State Park

Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area/Sailwinds Visitor Center

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

University of Maryland, College Park

St. Mary's College of Maryland

**Federal Curation Experience:** Curation of 1,108 cubic feet of artifacts, 56.8 linear feet of records, and 33.6 GB of digital data for 29 Federally-owned facilities or military installations. The MAC Lab ensures that these collections are stored and inventoried in accordance with Federal regulation 36CFR§79. In addition to maintaining the artifacts according to professional museum standards, the Federal curator administers loans, creates educational materials for clients, and generates web pages that make the collections accessible for research.

#### **CURRENT AND RECENT FEDERAL CURATION PROJECTS:**

**Naval District Washington:** Projects are underway to ensure that all of the Navy's collections and project reports are represented in the Digital Archaeological Record (tDAR), and to create educational exhibits for the Naval Air Station Patuxent River and its Webster Field Annex.

**U.S. Army Garrison Aberdeen Proving Ground:** An exhibit is in development for a new installation at the Harford County Historical Society about the Old Baltimore site, first county seat of Baltimore County.

#### **Recent new clients:**

National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP)

#### **Current Loans for Exhibit:**

Naval Air Station Patuxent River Golf Club: Charles' Gift collections

Historic Annapolis Foundation: Towne Neck collections

Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture: A hoe from the Old Baltimore site

Historic London Town and Gardens: Dutch tiles from the Towne Neck site

Naval Air Museum: Mattapany collections

#### **CONSERVATION**

#### **CURRENT AND RECENT CONSERVATION PROJECTS:**

**Alexandria Archaeology: Carlyle Warehouse** - The first public building in Alexandria, VA was uncovered during development excavations. The wood foundations were removed by the MAC Lab conservation staff and are currently undergoing polyethylene glycol impregnation and vacuum freeze drying, making it possible for the timbers to go on future display.

**AECOM: West Shipyard Excavation** - Excavations along the Philadelphia waterfront exposed some of the city's earliest shipping wharfs occupied by shippers and tradespersons. The MAC Lab conservation department is assisting with the project by conducting x-radiography surveys of the recovered metal artifacts and stabilizing the many waterlogged organic objects recovered including a large assemblage of leather shoes.

**George Washington's Mount Vernon** - Conservators at the MAC Lab are assisting in the repair of glass window panes removed from the mansion at Mount Vernon. These glass panes are etched with signatures from guests to the house but have suffered cracks and breakage. Once repaired, the glass will be restored to the house by Mount Vernon's architectural preservation staff.

## RESEARCH

**Southern Maryland Regional Center:** The Southern Maryland Regional Center (SMRC) is a satellite office of the Maryland Historical Trust, and is currently administered by the MAC Lab. Since its creation in the early 1980s, the SMRC has conducted archaeological fieldwork throughout Southern Maryland, and has provided local citizens, non-profit institutions, and government agencies with advice and guidance on numerous issues related to archaeology and historic preservation. Hundreds of newly-found sites have been recorded by SMRC archaeologists over the years. Excavations have been conducted on sites as diverse as a Late Woodland palisaded village, a Contact Period Native American house site, the 17<sup>th</sup>-century home of the third Lord Baltimore, and a 19<sup>th</sup>-century lighthouse and Civil War hospital.

**JPPM Public Archaeology Program:** This project, administered by MAC Lab staff, has been ongoing since 1996. It is designed specifically to allow members of the public, of all ages, to join professional archaeologists in the excavation of an actual site. Field work takes place for about 2 months a year, with lab work the rest of the year. Hundreds of volunteers from across North America have gotten to help excavate a 17<sup>th</sup>-century quarters site, a post-bellum African-American house site, and an 18<sup>th</sup>-century plantation complex.

## CURRENT AND PAST RESEARCH PROJECTS:

### **Witnesses of Wallville: Documenting a Rural Southern Maryland Community**

The "Witnesses of Wallville" project, funded by a National Park Service Civil Rights grant, will use an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates archaeological, documentary, and oral history data to examine how the Black residents of a small rural community in Southern Maryland crafted lives from the postbellum era to the mid-twentieth century. The project will allow the preparation of a synthetic history of the southern portion of this community, home to four prominent and interconnected families.

**Equestrian Artifacts of the English Tobacco Colonies:** Federal Curator Sara Rivers Cofield received a \$25,000 grant from The Conservation fund to study horse-related artifacts of colonial Maryland and Virginia for purposes of expanding the Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland website and authoring a scholarly publication on the artifacts of the saddle horse. DAIM sections on spurs, stirrups, bridle bosses, and leather ornaments will be expanded, and new sections will be added on bits, saddles, horseshoes, and artifacts of horse care.

**Diagnostic Artifacts of Maryland:** This project, initially funded by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, was designed to create an on-line identification guide to the artifacts typically found on archaeological sites in Maryland. It started with prehistoric and colonial ceramics and has since been expanded to include various types of small metal objects, projectile points, toys, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramics (2009-2023). Other artifact classes will be added in the future. It is intended for use by both professionals and non-professionals and has been very well received by both audiences.

### **Maryland Unearthed: A Guide to Archaeological Collections at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory:**

*Maryland Unearthed* provides searchable online access to archaeological collections from 268 archaeological sites curated by the lab. General information about each site, including site type, a brief description and number of archaeological features is available, as well as site summary pages and more detailed site descriptions from the Maryland Historical Trust's Archeological Synthesis Project.

**20,000 Years of Environmental Change in Maryland:** This project, funded by an anonymous donor, examined all known paleobotanical data from archaeological sites in Maryland. More than 80 sites were found to have good paleobotanical data. This information was entered into a database, and summaries of each of the sites were prepared. This information will all be made available on-line, along with a synthesis of environmental change in Maryland since the arrival of humans, which will be written for a popular audience. The paleobotanical database will hopefully be combined with similar data from Virginia and elsewhere.

**Developing a Computerized Catalog for the State of Maryland's Archaeological Collections (NEH I):** This project was designed to make some of Maryland's most important archaeological collections more easily accessible by researchers, educators, and institutions. More than 30 collections, representing a wide range of time periods and geographical locations in the state, were selected for inclusion in the project. Using funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland State Highway Administration, and the Academy of Natural Science's Estuarine Research Center, approximately 3,000,000

artifacts from these 30+ collections were cataloged, and the information entered into a database. Finding aids summarizing the discoveries at each of the sites were written and posted on the JPPM webpage.

**Developing a Records Catalog Database for the State of Maryland's Archaeological Collections (NEH III):** This was a follow-up to the NEH I project. The field and lab records and photos from each of the 30+ NEH I sites were organized, scanned, and re-housed in archival storage containers. Nearly 100,000 pages and images were scanned during this project. The scanned records were entered into a database that allowed .pdfs of the records to be viewed. The NEH I project finding aids posted on the JPPM webpage were modified to reflect the addition of the records data.

**A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture (NEH II):** This project was designed to synthesize the field and artifact data from 18 colonial sites from Maryland and Virginia. It was conducted by a consortium of institutions, including the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the Anne Arundel County Lost Towns Project, George Washington's Fredericksburg Foundation, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities Jamestown Rediscovery Project. The Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory served as the lead institution. Funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (RZ-20896-02) and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. As a result of the project, a database was developed ([www.chesapeakearchaeology.org](http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org)) that included summaries of each of the sites, a downloadable artifact database and selected artifact distribution maps, a gallery of artifact photos, copies of reports and papers about the sites, and other analytical data.

#### **CURRENT AND RECENT PUBLIC OUTREACH PROJECTS:**

**Artifacts of Outlander Online Exhibit:** The popularity of the travelling exhibit led to the creation of an online exhibit with more detailed information on each object displayed in the original exhibit. <http://www.jefpat.org/Outlander/index.html>