

# ABORIGINAL OSSUARIES IN MARYLAND: AN UPDATE

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## Abstract

Data collected on Maryland's aboriginal ossuaries since the 1999 publication of *Feast of the Dead* are presented. This includes new, and newly acquired, information from seven localities on the Eastern Shore.

## Introduction

Ever since the publication of *Feast of the Dead* (Curry 1999), I have been compiling additional information on the then-known ossuaries, keeping track of references to ossuaries that I overlooked in the original study, and recording information on any new ossuary finds. This article compiles that data—from seven ossuary locales, all on the Eastern Shore (see Figure 1)—and serves as an update to the original book.

Of the seven sites discussed here, updated information is presented for four sites (Oxford, Sandy Hill, Cambridge Jail, and Indian Bone); one site (Brinsfield Gravel Pit)—with a brief reference to an ossuary published in 1953 and information recorded in the Maryland Historical Trust site files since the 1970s—was overlooked during my original research; one site (Ship Point) was revealed in a recently discovered 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspaper article; and one ossuary (Harbor Point) was newly unearthed since 1999.

## Site Descriptions

### Oxford Ossuaries

In 1992, the Hurt Ossuary (18TA248) was exposed by utility line installation at a residence in Oxford.



FIGURE 1. Location of sites discussed in text.

Examination by Maryland Historical Trust staff was limited, but a small edge of an ossuary pit estimated at three meters in diameter yielded the remains of at least five to six individuals; it was further estimated that the entire ossuary easily could contain several dozen individuals (Curry and Kavanagh 1992). Following examination in the field, displaced bones were replaced in the utility trench abutting the exposed portion of the ossuary, and the trench was backfilled, protecting the remainder of the ossuary in a sideyard of the residence.

Interestingly, several years ago Carol Ebright—researching a proposed streetscape project in the town of Oxford for the Maryland State Highway Administration—inquired as to the probability that more ossuaries might exist in the vicinity. I replied that I thought there was a good chance that the Hurt Ossuary was not the only such feature in the area, reasoning that multiple ossuaries were often found grouped in one area, that the setting on a high point of land overlooking the Tred Avon (Third Haven) River was an ideal location, and that the Oxford area appeared to have a long history of burial ceremonialism dating back to the Middle Woodland Oxford site (18TA3) located across Town Creek. It was not until recently, however, that my assumption would seem to be proven in this brief notice found in the *Baltimore Sun*:

OXFORD AN INDIAN GRAVEYARD.—While digging a post-hole in Oxford, Monday week, Capt. James H. Benson struck a grave and dug out five human skulls and numerous other bones. The jaw-bones were well preserved, and the teeth were perfectly sound. From their appearance they were evidently Indian bones, and may have been buried hundreds of years. One of the jaw-bones was large and heavy, and may have belonged to a famous warrior, whose exploits are not recorded in the annals of our modern city of Oxford.—*Easton (Md.) Star*.

(Anonymous 1878)

Almost certainly, this multiple-individual grave unearthed by Capt. Benson in 1878 was another ossuary in Oxford. Furthermore, examination of an 1877 plan of the town of Oxford (Figure 2) shows the property of Capt. Benson to be immediately adjacent to the property on which the Hurt Ossuary was found. And two observations made during Benson's discovery were duplicated at the Hurt Ossuary, suggesting possible contemporaneity: at both sites, the bones were described as "well preserved" and Benson's characterization of the teeth as "perfectly sound" was also documented by photographs of caries-free teeth in jaw fragments dislodged from the Hurt Ossuary (Curry and Kavanagh 1992).

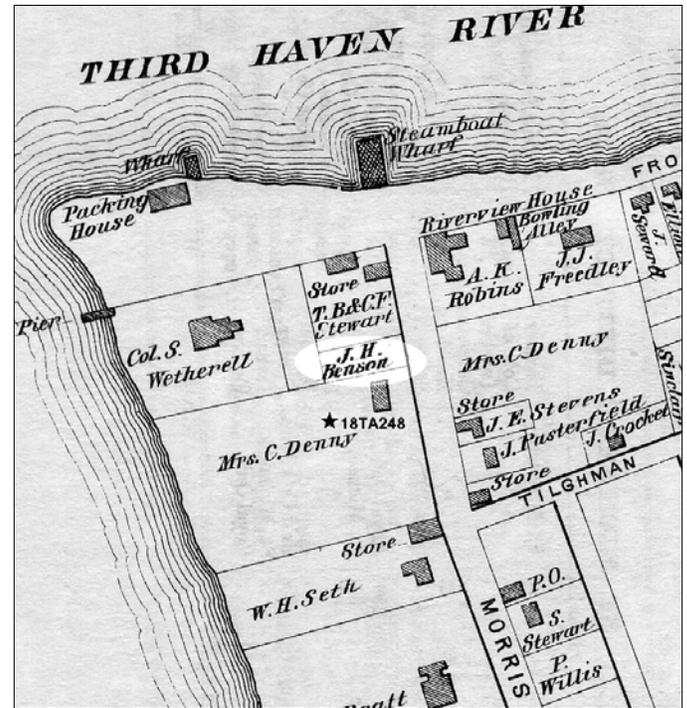


FIGURE 2. Section of the map of Oxford from the Atlas of Talbot and Dorchester Counties (Lake et al. 1877) showing the location of J.H. Benson's plot of land relative to the location of the Hurt Ossuary (18TA248).

### Ship Point

Approximately 2.5 miles upstream from Oxford on the Tred Avon (Third Haven) River, at its confluence with Trippe Creek, was the apparent site of at least one ossuary at Ship Point (18TA388). All that is known about this site comes from the following *Baltimore Sun* article:

#### Skeletons Found on Third Haven.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

Easton. Nov. 23.—Some farm hands at work on the Third Haven shore of Mr. Banning's farm, about fifty yards from Ship Point, found human teeth and bones in the sand. The farm is at the end of Bailly's [sic] Neck, and Ship Point is a narrow strip only a few yards wide. Mr. Banning made an investigation and found nine skeletons at the foot of the river bank, which is a little bluff in form three feet high. The bones had become exposed by the waves of the Third Haven washing away the bank and narrowing the strip year by year between the river and the [Trippe] creek. The bodies were buried originally about three feet deep, in one hole, body across body, and when

discovered were a confused mass of ribs and vertebrae, arms, legs, hands and feet bones, so that an anatomist could hardly have straightened them out to tell the tally but for the skulls. These lay so close to each other that a large wash-tub might have covered the lot. The bones were all so friable from age that a sharp knife passed through the soil would cut bones and clay alike, and it was no easy matter to rescue an entire skull, or large bones even, from the surrounding clay. Such as were removed entire soon became dry and strong enough to bear handling. Some jaw bones had teeth worn down, indicating middle life to their owners; others showed the perfect and even teeth of youth. The land hereabouts is somewhat prolific in relics of Indians, arrow and spear-heads, hatchets, celts, hammer-stones, &c., while beds of shells show that oysters were appreciated by the aborigines. Years and years ago human bones were found in close proximity to these shells. The rounded foreheads of the skulls and the wide, massive jaws prove that these are Indian skeletons, and the incongruous consignment of nine bodies in one hole indicates a very hasty and unceremonious burial.

(Anonymous 1891)

The vivid description of this feature clearly indicates a small ossuary at the site. The fact that “years and years ago” human bones were encountered close to the nearby shell middens also hints at the possible presence of additional ossuaries on this point of land, both in the past and possibly still today.

### **Sandy Hill**

In my original discussion of Sandy Hill (18DO30; Curry 1999:54-55), I noted the presence of three ossuaries at the site: one excavated by Elmer R. Reynolds sometime around or before 1888 (the exact date was unspecified), and two superimposed ossuaries excavated by Henry Chapman Mercer in 1892. A number of newspaper articles recently found seem to add additional information about these ossuaries, and hint at the possibilities of other burial features at the site. The first of these articles deals with human bones eroding from the cliff at Sandy Hill around April or May of 1886:

Bits of rude pottery and flint arrow-points gathered along the banks where the drifting sand has left them bare, with other traces of the red man, have long marked the locality as the site of an Indian village. Several weeks ago a mass of bones were found projecting from the side of the bank about fifteen feet below the surface. An exami-

nation disclosed that they were the bones of Indians, some of them of almost giant size. When first discovered the bodies appeared to lie in order, but when exposed immediately fell to pieces and mixed with the loose earth. They lie in a mass and form a strata [sic] about six or eight feet wide. The depth is not known, as no excavation of any extent has been made. Small pieces of charred bones are found; not large enough, however, to be distinguished. These are thought by some to be the bones of animals upon which the Indians feasted. A remarkable feature of the discovery is that in all the skulls found the teeth are perfect and without blemish. The bones are in some instances immense. While the indications point to an Indian burying-ground, the great mass of bodies unearthed give rise to the theory that they are the remains of Indian warriors who fell in battle and who were buried in a mass.

(Anonymous 1886a)

A month later, a notice appeared that “Mr. R.G. Henry, of Cambridge, Md., sent Indian bones, pottery &c., exhumed from bluffs in Dorchester county [to the Maryland Academy of Sciences]. The relics were found 15 feet below the surface” (Anonymous 1886b).

These two references seem to add perspective to the ossuary dug by Reynolds if—as it is assumed here—they refer to the same feature (Reynolds says the cliff was 70 feet high and the bones were located 16 feet below the surface; the *Baltimore Sun* article (Anonymous 1886a) says the cliff was 60-70 feet high and the bones were 15 feet below the surface). It appears that the ossuary was found eroding in April-May of 1886, but no real excavations were carried out. Bones and artifacts were apparently collected at that time—either from the feature itself or from the eroded talus on the beach below—and these were conveyed by Mr. Henry to the Maryland Academy of Sciences in June of that year. It is then likely that Reynolds carried out his excavations sometime between May 1886 (when the discovery was reported) and September 1888 (when he presented his findings to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Bath, England). Also, records indicate that two separate collections from the site were donated to public institutions (Henry’s to the Maryland Academy of Sciences, and Reynolds’s to the Army Medical Museum).

Four years later, in August 1890, we find the following in the *Baltimore Sun*:

Col. Love Discovers an Indian Mound.

Col. Wm. H. Love discovered a mound containing Indians’ bones at Sandy Hill, near Cambridge, Dorchester county, on his recent vacation trip. He sent an account of his find to the

Smithsonian Institute, Washington. It was thought to be a burial mound of the Chesapeake tribe.  
(Anonymous 1890a)

A day later, a nearly identical notice—adding only that Love was from Baltimore—appeared in the *Washington Post* (Anonymous 1890b).

[Interestingly, on June 12, 1890, Elmer R. Reynolds presented a lecture entitled “Prehistoric Mortuary Remains of Maryland and Virginia” at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. (Anonymous 1890c). In this lecture, Reynolds discussed burial practices of the Chesapeake Bay region, including ossuaries, and presumably related his experience at Sandy Hill. I would dearly like to know if Col. Love traveled from Baltimore to Washington for this lecture, and if what he heard there influenced his upcoming vacation plans!]

Again, however, it seems that no excavations took place in August of 1890 (Love was, after all, on vacation). Yet, Love was anxious to share his discovery, sending notice to the Smithsonian (as well as, apparently, press releases to the *Baltimore Sun* and *Washington Post*). Could it have been from one of these sources that the well-connected Mercer learned of the burials at Sandy Hill? And could the feature found by Col. Love be the same superimposed ossuaries excavated by Mercer at the site in 1892?

Adding to the story of Sandy Hill, this *Baltimore Sun* article recalls the 1892 excavations (attributed to the Smithsonian Institution, although perhaps Mercer was working on their behalf):

Four years ago [1892] an Indian Mound was found at Sandy Hill, which is on the Great Choptank river, one mile below Cambridge. The hill is in the neighborhood of 100 feet in height, and, being composed of sand and exposed to the force of the river and elements, is rapidly washing away. When the remains were deposited in the mound it was undoubtedly some distance from the water, but now [1896] the hill is at least two-fifths gone from the constant wearing. This washing has brought to the surface great quantities of Indian bones and pottery.

The archaeologists of the Smithsonian Institution hearing of this discovery sent an expedition to investigate the matter. The search was eminently successful, as one of the men who helped to unearth the specimens says twelve barrels of bones and pottery were collected and removed.

Unfortunately, however, the archaeologists were called away unexpectedly, thus leaving the field comparatively unexplored and rich with interesting relics.

(Anonymous 1896)

Finally, in 1901, in a *Baltimore Sun* article discussing a “supposed pottery kiln” located “within a few hundred yards of Sandy Hill,” we are presented with the following description of burials, presumably at Sandy Hill:

A few hundred yards from the pottery is an old burial ground of the Abaco Indians, where the bones of Tequehapan, Hard Swamp, Winacco and many others of their chiefs are now supposed to rest. Upon the north and river exposure of the old cemetery, which also is upon, or rather within, a hill, bleached human bones are washed out by the rains and drop upon the beach below. Implements of war and many pieces of broken earthenware are exposed with the bones, and at one point upon the sheer plane of the cliff, 50 feet above the beach, appear a great number of the mingled remains, ready to fall from the crumbling earth.

Why the pottery is in such a fragmentary condition, even when washed out with the bones, is a source of surmise, as the deeper deposits which could not have been exposed to casualties are in a broken condition and nothing of whole form has been so far found. A peculiar chaos also exists in the position and condition of the bones. Like the earthenware, the bones of one immediate locality frequently seem to bear no relation to each other.

Contrary to the custom of placing the dead in a sitting or reclining posture which has been shown in the excavation of other Eastern burial sites, these remains seem to have been dumped promiscuously into a pit or were left to be covered by the shifting sands, which during high windstorms bank up in drifts like snow.

(Anonymous 1901)

The 1896 account speculated that much of the Sandy Hill site yet remained, and from this 1901 article it is apparent that—some nine years after Mercer’s excavations—human remains were still eroding from the cliff, and that additional ossuaries were (and may still be) present at Sandy Hill. Furthermore, it is also possible that John Widgeon removed multiple burials from Sandy Hill in 1905 for the Maryland Academy of Sciences (Anonymous 1905, 1906).

One final note on Sandy Hill is warranted. As noted in my original study (Curry 1999:54), the ossuaries at Sandy Hill are distinct from the large Adena cemetery—replete with large exotic stone blades, blocked-end tubular pipes, banded slate gorgets, copper paint cups and beads, etc.—salvaged and looted at the site from the 1930s to 1950s. The fact that all of the reports from Sandy Hill—Reynolds, Henry, Love, Mercer, and various newspaper accounts—fail to mention exotic artifacts from the site is almost certain confirmation that the Adena component remained unknown until the 1930s.

### Cambridge Jail

The Cambridge Jail site (18DO42) was described by Reynolds (1889:846) as a circular ossuary—16 feet in diameter and 7 feet high and containing 16 Indians “seated on rocks, facing inward”—found during construction of the “new” Cambridge Jail in 1883. Given the probable secondhand nature of Reynolds’ account, I questioned the accuracy of his description, and even questioned whether or not this site was an ossuary (Curry 1999:55-56). Additional uncertainty arose when contemporary accounts of the demolition of the “old” jail failed to mention any discovery of bones (Anonymous 1883).

Two 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspaper accounts provide additional information concerning the situation in Cambridge, although details remain somewhat ambiguous. The first article, from 1853, recounts,

*Discovery of Indian Relics.*—In cutting away a part of the hill on which the new court house in Cambridge is being erected, some curious deposits of bones have been found, which, from their position and general appearance, are supposed to have belonged to the Choptank Indians, a powerful and numerous tribe formerly in possession of this county, and from whom the Choptank river, (Indian for blue water,) takes its name. The bones found are larger than the ordinary race of men, and if put together, would form twenty or thirty entire frames. On Friday last a skeleton was discovered entire, and in a sitting posture, having at the head a stone of moderate dimensions, cut in the shape of a common pestle. Many of the skulls are broken and injured as if by violence, and one in particular, has a round hole in the top of the forehead, apparently made by a bullet.

(Anonymous 1853)

This short passage seems to indicate that an ossuary containing 20-30 individuals was encountered during construction of the courthouse (as we will see, below, the courthouse is situated on the same tract of land as the Cambridge Jail). In addition, a single primary interment, possibly flexed, possibly containing a pestle for a grave offering, was found on “Friday last” [May 20, 1853]. The references to violence, and especially the “bullet” hole, can almost certainly be attributed to postmortem breakage commonly noted for such burial features found during construction.

Thirty years later, the *Baltimore Sun* provides the following additional information:

In making excavations in late years, when building the present courthouse and jail, large numbers of Indian bones, darts, arrows and banks of shells were unearthed, which leads to the conclusion that

an Indian settlement had previously marked the spot. The first jail is said to have stood on Locust street, where the old brick stable now stands; in fact it is said to be the same building. It was here that Freeborn Garrison [sic] was incarcerated for preaching the doctrine of John Wesley, and at the last General Conference of the Methodist Church in Cambridge the building was of much interest to the visitors. The old jail, in the rear of the courthouse, lately demolished to give place to the present building, was built somewhere about 1790.

(Anonymous 1884)

From these articles, we can draw a number of conclusions. First, large numbers of Indian remains were found on at least two occasions (in 1853 and 1883). The combined descriptions provided by both the *Baltimore Sun* and Reynolds (1889)—along with the predilection for ossuary burial on the Eastern Shore—support the notion that ossuary features were encountered at the site. The additional discovery of darts, arrows, and oyster shells points to the presence of a likely habitation site as well, although that component was not necessarily contemporaneous with the burial features. And finally, the sequence of courthouses, jails, and exposures of burials discussed in the various accounts can be reconstructed:

- 1686/7** A contract to build the original Dorchester County Courthouse was awarded to Captain Anthony Dawson (Radoff 1960:75). It is not known whether this courthouse was ever built, but court was being held in Cambridge as early as 1695; the location(s) of the original courthouse(s) is unknown (MHT 1982).
- ca. 1687** The “first” jail, located on Locust Street, presumably was built soon after the courthouse. It was used as a jail for around 100 years, later served as a fire house (Commissioners of Dorchester County 1977:86), and was no longer extant by 1925 (Jones 1925:63).
- 1770** The second courthouse (between High Street and Gay Street, east of Church Street [see Figure 3]) was built in 1770; this was destroyed by fire in 1852 and the replacement structure was completed on the same site by the summer of 1854 (MHT 1982), fitting the time frame of the first *Baltimore Sun* article reporting a 20- to 30-person ossuary and a single-person burial at the site.
- ca. 1790** The “old” jail, located to the rear of the 1770 courthouse, was built. When this was demolished in circa 1883, news accounts make no mention of Indian burials being encountered.



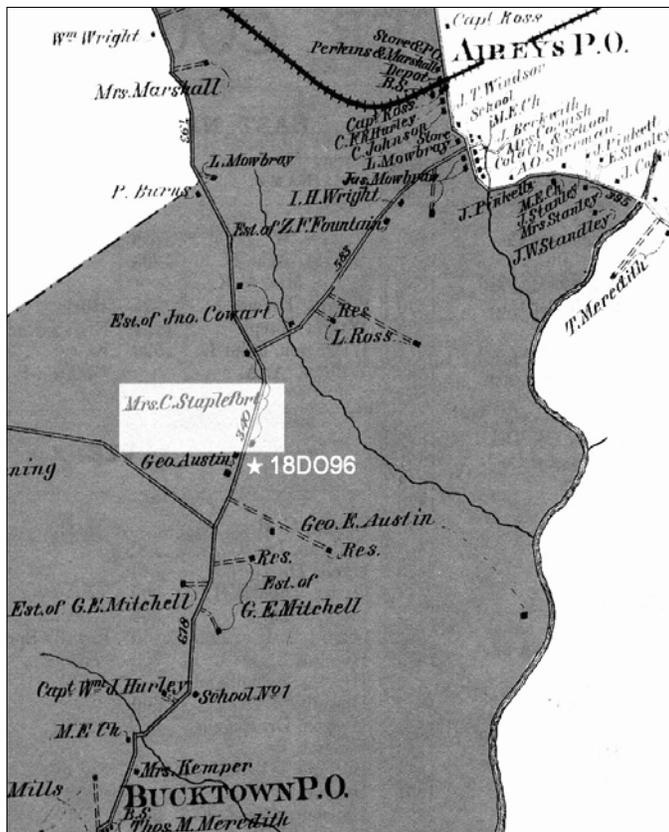


FIGURE 4. A section of the Atlas of Talbot and Dorchester Counties (Lake et al. 1877) showing the vicinity of Indian Bone Ossuary (18DO96) and property belonging to the Staplefort family; note also the proximity of property belonging to George Austin.

and that the “bones went into the road building of the state along with the gravel” (Flegel 1977b:2). Surviving portions of the site subsequently yielded scrapers, large flat blades, and broadspears. The predominant lithic materials included a slate-like stone, argillite, and rhyolite, and pottery mostly belonging to the Townsend group. Flegel also notes that shell was evident on the ground surface, but that no pits had been located (indicating at least some subsurface testing had been carried out at the site). According to the Maryland Historical Trust archeological site files, in 1975 Flegel reported that a dugout canoe was exposed in the marsh north of this site. He also notes,

A small cemetery [sic] is on the site, and a stone (much poorer quality) than the others stands in the plot. It is marked with the name of “Tonwas” with dates 1802–1822. The story has been handed down that this represents the body of a faithful Indian farm hand who worked for the family.

(Flegel 1977b:2)

### Harbor Point

On February 10, 2004, the Salisbury Police Department contacted the Maryland Historical Trust to report that human bones (determined to be “ancient” by the Medical Examiner) had been unearthed at a residential construction site on a point of land overlooking the Wicomico River to the south and east. Archeologists from the Trust visited the site on the following day and determined that an aboriginal ossuary had been badly disturbed by backhoe excavation of a footer trench and subsequent digging by the police as part of their investigation. Subsequent discussions between Trust staff, the developer, and members of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs determined that the best course of action would be to archeologically remove the intact remains (and recover the already displaced remains), perform non-destructive inventory and analysis of the remains, and ultimately re-bury all of the remains. As a result, an archeological consultant firm was employed to oversee and undertake excavation of the feature, assisted by Trust staff (Otter 2005). A physical anthropologist was also retained to examine the skeletal remains to record information such as age, sex, and minimum number of individuals (Kollmann 2004).

Archeological observations regarding the Harbor Point ossuary (18WC23) can be summarized as follows (Curry 2004; Otter 2005):

- The feature had been severely disturbed prior to the arrival of archeologists on the scene. It appears that the initial backhoe excavation just clipped an edge of the ossuary, probably disturbing less than 10% of the feature. The police (in trying to recover evidence of a crime scene) disturbed and/or removed an estimated 70% of the ossuary. Only 20% or less of the feature remained in situ for archeological excavation.
- The ossuary pit measured approximately 4-feet in diameter (it may have been slightly larger at its upper surface) and was 18-24 inches deep (see Figure 5). The one remaining edge of the ossuary was fairly steep-sided, giving the impression that the ossuary pit was more bowl-shaped than shallow basin-shaped.
- A cluster of upright long bones at the edge of the pit appeared to be the remains of a bundle burial, and other bundles became apparent upon further excavation. Semi-articulated bones occasionally occurred.
- At least 4 skulls (or large portions thereof) remained in situ, and it appeared that some skulls may have rested on bundled long bones. Some of the skulls contained phalanges.

- Both adults and juveniles were present.
- Cremated bone and ash deposits were present (and the interior of one unburned cranium recovered by the police contained cremated remains), but there were no indications of in situ burning. All burning of the bone took place on de-fleshed remains (Kollmann 2004:45).
- Observed teeth were worn flat, but no evidence of caries was seen in the field. The few incisors noted were deeply shovel-shaped.
- No artifacts were found in the burial pit fill. Ceramics (Coulbourn ware and Townsend ware), a few flakes, and some oyster shells were found in the plowzone and in the backdirt, but none were very numerous.

The physical anthropological study of the Harbor Point skeletal remains was severely hampered by the post-mortem breakage of bones during the initial police investigation. Nonetheless, it was possible to ascertain salient details regarding this population (Kollmann 2004).

Thirty-five individuals were interred in the ossuary (14 male, 13 female, 8 undetermined). Age distributions are shown in Table 1, revealing an average age at death of 30.7 years. The mean age at death for adults was 37.9 years, and males died earlier (average age=35) than females (average=41). In general—despite the identification of a number of pathologies (osteoarthritis, osteopenia, periostitis, osteomyelitis, cribra orbitalia, ectocranial porosis, porotic hyperstosis, dental caries, antemortem tooth loss, and alveolar abscessing)—the majority of the Harbor Point skeletons were relatively healthy, indicating that their lifestyle was not significantly stressful.

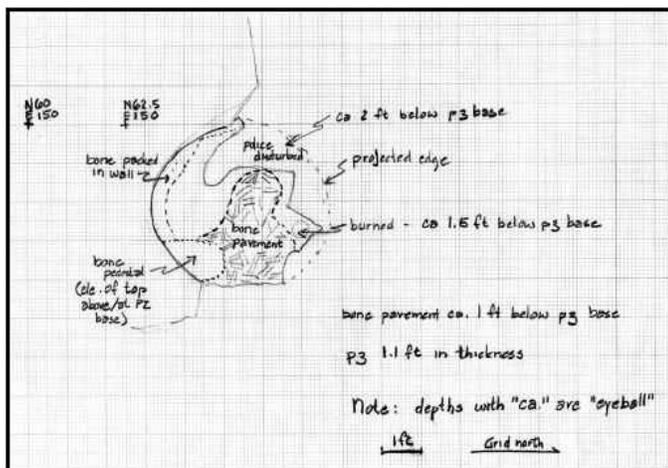


FIGURE 5. Sketch map of the Harbor Point ossuary prepared by Trust archeologist Charlie Hall prior to archeological excavation (from Otter 2005:Figure 3).

TABLE 1. Age distributions from the Harbor Point ossuary (from Kollmann 2004:68).

<u>AGE AT DEATH</u>	<u>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS</u>
newborn	1
1-4 years	4
5-9 years	3
10-14 years	0
15-18 years	2
20-29 years	7
30-39 years	6
40-49 years	4
50-59 years	7
60-69 years	1

The human remains from the Harbor Point ossuary were returned to the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs on April 2, 2004. They were subsequently reburied at an undisclosed location.

### Discussion and Summary

The “Discussion” section of the original ossuary study (Curry 1999:68-91) consisted of a series of observations grouped in a number of broad categories. Those same categories, when applicable, are used to consider the significance of the newly reported data presented in this article.

**Site Setting.** It has been noted that topographic high points—especially with a view of open water—seem to have been preferred settings for ossuaries, as was noted previously at Sandy Hill (18DO30) and Hurt (18TA248). This trait is reinforced here for Sandy Hill in one of the *Baltimore Sun* articles:

The rolling hills of sand, from which one of the farms mentioned derives its name [Sandy Hill], are the highest elevations, commanding altitudes of from 60 to 70 feet. Standing on the summit of one of these hills a magnificent water view is obtained, the view extending down the river until the vision is exhausted in the waters of the Chesapeake [at least five miles distant].

(Anonymous 1886a)

Similarly, the apparent recollection of a second ossuary in Oxford reinforces the selection of this type of elevated setting, and both the Cambridge Jail site and the Harbor Point site—located in nearly identical positions on the Choptank River and Wicomico River, respectively—afford expansive views of open water. Likewise, the Ship Point site—described as “a little bluff in form three feet high” (Anonymous 1891)—offers an unimpeded view down the Tred Avon River all the way to Oxford, about 2.5 miles away.

**Proximity to Village Site.** The abundance of occupational debris consistently has been noted at Sandy Hill (18DO30), and the 19<sup>th</sup> century accounts cited in this article reinforce the proximity of a village site to the ossuaries, although the association between the two remains unclear. Likewise, the Brinsfield Gravel Pit site (18DO4) and the Harbor Point site (18WC23) both exhibit evidence of a village occupation at or near the ossuaries found there (in fact, the Harbor Point site was originally recorded in 1971 as a major Middle and Late Woodland habitation site). The presence of “darts, arrow and banks of shells” at the Cambridge Jail site (Anonymous 1884) may also indicate the presence of a nearby village.

**Disease and Health Status.** Of the sites discussed here, only at the Harbor Point site (18WC23) were human remains examined by a modern physical anthropologist. And, while a number of pathologies were identified (osteoarthritis, osteopenia, periostitis, osteomyelitis, cribra orbitalia, ectocranial porosis, porotic hyperstosis, dental caries, antemortem tooth loss, and alveolar abscessing), the majority of the Harbor Point population was found to be reasonably healthy.

**Cremation.** Charred bones were once again reported at the Sandy Hill site (Anonymous 1901), although in this instance it is unclear whether they derived from humans or animals. At the Harbor Point site, the practice of cremation was found to be carried out only on de-fleshed bones (Kollmann 2004:45).

**Arrangement of Skeletal Remains.** Contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century accounts of the arrangement of bones at Sandy Hill (18DO30) provided conflicting pictures—either the bones “lie in order” (Anonymous 1886a) or they were “dumped promiscuously into a pit” (Anonymous 1901). The more modern examination of the ossuary at Harbor Point (18WC23) noted apparent discrete bundles and the possibility that some skulls may have rested on bundled long bones, but the severely damaged nature of this feature precluded any real analysis of patterning.

**Cemetery Areas.** In the original ossuary study, the grouping of multiple ossuaries in apparent cemetery areas was more evident on Western Shore sites (e.g., Moyaone, Nanjemoy, Warehouse Point). The data presented in this article now extends this pattern to Eastern Shore sites where at least strong circumstantial evidence indicates multiple close-proximity ossuaries at Oxford, Ship Point, Sandy Hill, Cambridge Jail, and Indian Bone. The Harbor Point site also offers the strong possibility for multiple ossuaries, a fact that was conveyed to the property developer in 2004.

**Use of Skulls as Containers.** Crania from the Harbor Point site (18WC23) contained phalanges, and one unburned skull contained cremated remains, all suggesting the use of skulls as containers to transport materials.

### **Grave Offerings and Artifact Associations.**

Artifacts are mentioned in accounts from Sandy Hill (Anonymous 1901), Cambridge Jail (Anonymous 1884), and possibly Brinsfield Gravel Pit, but it is unclear if these were found in general occupation levels or in the ossuaries themselves, and if so, whether they were intentionally included as grave offerings or merely mixed with the grave fill. The statement that “nothing of whole form has been so far found” would seem to imply that the writer was bemoaning the lack of whole, intentional burial pots (Anonymous 1901). At the Harbor Point site, it is explicitly stated that “no artifacts were found within the burial pit” (Otter 2005:8,10), although the fact that, prior to archeological investigation, 70-80% of the feature was disturbed must temper the certainty of this statement.

As was the case following publication of *Feast of the Dead*, new information on Maryland’s ossuaries will almost certainly continue to come to light. Researchers who encounter such information are encouraged to contact the author, who plans to soon begin anew a list of entries for the next update.

### **Acknowledgements**

My sincere thanks go to Carol A. Ebricht of the Maryland State Highway Administration for directing me to the online historical archives of the *Baltimore Sun* (<http://www.prattlibrary.org/findanswers/database.aspx?id=23026>). A few minutes of searching this archive quickly led to a number of fascinating historical minutiae, spurred more in-depth research, and prompted the preparation of this article.

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