

Diggers excited by floor stones

By EILEEN MEAD

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Archaeologists from Colonial Williamsburg are intrigued by what they have uncovered at the site of Prince William County's third courthouse in the town of Dumfries, and they want to return to do more work.

Archaeologist William H. Adams and Carl Lounsbury of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

said Thursday it appears that the courthouse, built in 1762, may have had two arcades, making it a more sophisticated building than many other Virginia courthouses of that era.

The Prince William Historical Commission contracted the archaeologists to do an initial study after researchers from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation found pencil sketches at Gun-

ston Hall which they thought might be early designs of the courthouse at Dumfries.

Lounsbury said the Dumfries Courthouse may have been patterned after the courthouse in Richmond County which was built in 1748.

All the artifacts found are to be given to the Weems-Botts Museum in Dumfries, she said.

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If so, the sketches would have been consistent with those found at Gunston Hall.

After uncovering paving stones next to the north and south walls, Lounsbury said it appears that they may have been the floor of the arcades.

Originally, the researchers thought that the entrance to the building may have been on the west side. Now, it appears that it

may have had entrances on the south and north sides, Lounsbury said.

Both said they would like to return to do further work to uncover the fallen walls, so they could tell what the building actually looked like.

"Right now, we have just uncovered the 20th Century level of dirt," Adams said.

The county could get matching funds from the state for continuing the project, Lounsbury said, and volunteer labor would be counted as part of the county's share.