

**EYEWITNESSES TO SURRENDER:  
DOMESTIC SITE ARCHAEOLOGY AT APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

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A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts

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By

Mark Kostro

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APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

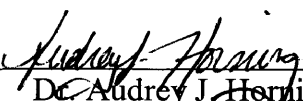
Master of Arts

  
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For Mom and Dad.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	v
List of Figures	vi
Abstract	ix
Introduction	2
Chapter I. The Lost Cause	8
Chapter II. Landscape Archaeology	20
Chapter III. Historical Context	29
Chapter IV. Archaeology at Appomattox Court House	44
Chapter V. Conclusions	93
Bibliography	99
Vita	110

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Location of Appomattox County in Virginia	2
2. Detail from John Wood's 1820 map of Prince Edward County	33
3. Original 1845 lot layout of Appomattox Court House	34
4. Samuel McDearmon's plantation house overlooking Appomattox Court House	35
5. Detail from Brig. Gen. N. Michler's 1867 map of the Appomattox Court House vicinity	40
6. Detail from the 1866 Henderson & Co. lithograph of Appomattox Court House	41
7. Locations of Investigated Archaeological Sites	44
8. Adam Plecker's 1892 photograph of the village faintly showing The Academy Dwelling House in the distance on the left hand side	47
9. Photograph showing the east chimney of the Academy Dwelling House ( <i>circa</i> -1940)	48
10. The locations of archaeological test units at the Academy Dwelling House site	49
11. Plan view of west end stone chimney base	49
12. Horizontal distribution of the total number of artifacts from the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts with respect to their relative location to the Academy Dwelling House.	53
13. Horizontal distribution of artifacts per square foot from the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts with respect to their relative location to the Academy Dwelling House.	53
14. Horizontal distribution of seven different artifact types relative to the location of the Academy Dwelling House	54

15.	Horizontal distribution of ceramic ware types relative to the location of the Academy Dwelling House.	55
16.	Nineteenth-Century sketch of the Presbyterian Church (Union Academy building) at Appomattox Court House	58
17.	The locations of the archaeological test units at the Union Academy and Hall site	59
18.	Plan view of the stone foundation walls in test units at the Union Academy and Hall site	60
19.	Artifacts recovered from the Union Academy and Hall site	60
20.	Large trapezoidal-shaped steel measuring weight recovered on or after the Union Academy and Hall site	62
21.	Jenyns C. Battersby's sketch of the last round fired by Confederate Artillery from the front lawn of the Peers House	64
22.	George Frankenstein's painting of the rear of the Peers House from the northeast	65
23.	Circa-1890 photograph by Adam Plecker of the Peers house taken from the west	65
24.	The locations of the archaeological test units at the Peers House	66
25.	Plan view of the rectangular privy feature	67
26.	Rectangular-shaped privy feature at the Peers House	68
27.	Artifacts recovered from nineteenth-century contexts at the Peers House	70
28.	Photograph of the Conner-Sweeney Cabin looking northwest	72
29.	Floor plan of the expanded Conner-Sweeney Cabin in 1984, prior to its restoration (from Engle 1984)	73
30.	Location of test units at the Conner-Sweeney Cabin site	74
31.	Test unit locations at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	77

32.	Distribution of slag across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	78
33.	Distribution of iron objects across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	78
34.	Distribution of nails across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	79
35.	Distribution of window glass across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	81
36.	Distribution of whiteware fragments across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	82
37.	Distribution of Creamware and Pearlware fragments across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site	83
38.	1937 aerial photograph of Appomattox Court House	86
39.	The locations of test units at the Pryor Wright House site	87
40.	Photograph of the brick rubble feature at the Pryor Wright House site	88
41.	Photograph of the feature filled with architectural debris at the Pryor Wright House site	89
42.	Photograph of the ditch feature at the Pryor Wright House site	90
43.	Distribution of artifacts within the project area of the Pryor Wright House site	90

## ABSTRACT

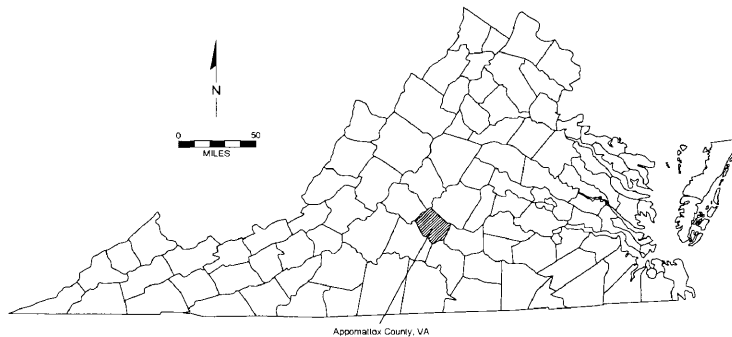
On April 9, 1865, Confederate Army General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union Army General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in central Virginia, marking the beginning of the end of the American Civil War. After the war, the divergent interpretations of Northerners and Southerners, as well as those between blacks and whites, competed with one another in attempts to secure their respective perspectives in the public memory of the Civil War. During this period, the commemorative movement known as the “Lost Cause” became extremely influential in the development of the public memory of the Civil War. The Lost Cause drew upon a combination of nostalgia and romanticism to celebrate the honor and courage of the soldiers who fought and sacrificed for what they believed in, but excluded from its memory potentially divisive topics such as the war’s causes, its impacts, or recognition of the role that the war had in securing freedom for African Americans. As a way of reinforcing its interpretation in the public memory, the Lost Cause became a driving force behind promoting Civil War commemorative holidays, monuments, and parks which were typically focused on reenacting battles, honoring common soldiers, or celebrating the generals who led them. Among the many parks created with an eye towards the Lost Cause’s ideals was Appomattox Court House National Historical Park.

As a result of the Lost Cause’s influence, the interpretation of Appomattox Court House has always been focused on the surrender meeting, the preceding military engagement, and the paroling of soldiers in the weeks after the surrender. In contrast to this long-standing interpretive tradition, recent archaeological excavations at the park have been focused on examining the previously overlooked civilian community of Appomattox Court House. This thesis examines the results of those excavations using a landscape archaeological approach with the goal to understand and interpret Appomattox Court House, not just as a passive canvas against which the surrender took place, but rather as a dynamic landscape shaped by people, while simultaneously shaping the people who experienced it. This change in research focus is part of a recent broader initiative on behalf of the National Park Service to expand its interpretations at its Civil War parks to include themes such as political and social contexts, causes and impacts, as complements to the National Park Service’s long-standing tradition of battlefield interpretation.

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## INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 1865, Confederate Army General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union Army General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in central Virginia, marking the beginning of the end of the American Civil War (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Location of Appomattox County in Virginia (C. Alblinger, CWF).**

Although the military conflict was over, an altogether new conflict over how the war was to be remembered emerged almost as soon as the surrender documents were signed. The divergent interpretations of Northerners and Southerners, as well as those between blacks and whites, competed with one another in attempts to secure their respective perspectives in the public memory of the Civil War. According to historian David Blight (2001:2), as an outcome of this process of memory making, three distinct visions of the war's legacy emerged: national reconciliation of the

deadly conflict between the North and South; racial segregation as the product of the discomfort that many white Northerners and Southerners had with the newly founded racial equality of African-Americans; and finally, the emancipationist vision which strove to remember the war as a fight for African-American freedom from slavery. By the end of the nineteenth century, the theme of national reconciliation overwhelmingly prevailed as the most widely held vision of the war. As a result, in the eagerness to maintain amorous relations between the North and South, potentially divisive topics such as the war's causes, its impact on American society, or recognition of the role that the war had in securing freedom for African Americans were deliberately excluded from the national public memory (Blight 2001; Foster 1987; Gallagher and Nolan 2000; Osterwies 1973).

Particularly influential in the spread of this perspective was the popular commemorative movement known as the "Lost Cause." The Lost Cause drew upon a combination of nostalgia and romanticism to celebrate the honor and courage of the soldiers who fought and sacrificed for what they believed in. Initially restricted to the South, by the 1880s it had become a national phenomenon that emphasized the shared military experiences of all Civil War veterans. Adding to the Lost Cause's legitimacy was its endorsement by prominent political figures, including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Theodore Roosevelt, who hoped that it would help to ease sectional tensions between whites in the North and the South lingering since Reconstruction (Blight 2001; Foster 1987; Gallagher and Nolan 2000; Osterwies 1973).

As a way of reinforcing its interpretation in the public memory, the Lost Cause became a driving force behind promoting Civil War commemorative holidays, monuments, and parks. These commemorations were typically focused on reenacting battles, honoring common soldiers, or celebrating the generals who led them (Shackel 2001:622). Among the many parks created with an eye towards the Lost Cause's ideals was Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. The park was founded in the 1930s after a successful campaign by local residents and veteran's organizations who persuaded the federal government to commemorate the landscape of Appomattox Court House as a tribute to the reunification of the country. To emphasize this interpretation, the National Park Service decided to reconstruct and restore only the buildings and landscape features that could be directly associated with the surrender meeting, the preceding military engagement, or the paroling of soldiers in the weeks after the surrender (Hosmer 1981:620-626). As a result, other potential interpretive themes, such as the pre-Civil War history of the village, the impact of the war on civilian life in the village, slavery and emancipation, and the impact of the war on the surrounding landscape were purposefully excluded from the park's interpretive programs out of concern that they might distract from the memorialization of Appomattox Court House as the so-called birthplace of reunification (Hosmer 1981:735). In other words, the ideology of the Lost Cause was analogous to a filter through which the Civil War was to be presented, allowing only certain aspects of the war's history to pass into public interpretation.

Consistent with the Lost Cause-inspired perspective of the park's founders, the buildings, landmarks, and events associated with Lee and Grant's surrender meeting have been the interpretive thrust of the park since its inception. In contrast to this long-standing interpretive tradition, archaeological excavations were recently carried out in the park with the aim of recovering information with regard to the previously ignored civilian community at Appomattox Court House. This change in focus is part of a recent broader initiative on behalf of the National Park Service to expand its interpretations at its Civil War parks to include themes such as political and social contexts, causes, and impacts, as complements to the National Park Service's long-standing tradition of battlefield interpretation (National Park Service 2000). The recent archaeological excavations and the National Park Service's broader initiative of inclusion parallel a recent trend in the archaeology of the Civil War that expands beyond the war's battlefields to include aspects of the social history of the war and its impact (Hennessy 2002).

The archaeological investigations at Appomattox Court House were carried out in the summer of 2001 as part of a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Archaeological Research (Kostro 2002). This thesis examines the results of those excavations using a landscape archaeological approach in order to understand and interpret Appomattox Court House, not just as a passive canvas against which the surrender took place, but rather as a dynamic landscape shaped *by people*, while simultaneously shaping *the people* who experienced it.

Although it is without question that the most significant single event in the history of Appomattox Court House was the surrender meeting that ended the Civil War, the history of Appomattox Court House did not begin nor end on the day of the surrender, as the current National Park Service interpretive program might lead one to conclude. The community of Appomattox Court House included poor, middling and wealthy farmers, merchants, craftsmen, businessmen, free African Americans, and slaves. They existed as a community before and after the war, and represent a microcosm of rural society at the time of the war that researchers have only recently begun to examine. While their stories are yet to be told at Appomattox, the recent archaeological excavations have begun the process to include them into the park's future interpretations.

This thesis, on the archaeology and interpretation of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, is organized in the following manner. Chapter One is an overview of the origins and development of the Lost Cause as a commemorative movement and as a determinant of Civil War public memory. It also discusses the specific role of the Lost Cause in the creation and interpretation of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. Chapter Two discusses the history of landscape studies in historical archaeology, and how the landscape concept is relevant to the example of Appomattox Court House. Chapter Three introduces the history of the village of Appomattox Court House and sets the stage for the discussion of recent archaeological research carried out at there. Chapter Four details the results of those archaeological excavations, with particular emphasis on how the excavations revealed

a much more crowded landscape, how that landscape changed over time, and what the daily lives of the people living in Appomattox Court House may have been like. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the research results, and puts forth an argument for their inclusion into the interpretive program at Appomattox Court House. The intent of this thesis is not to blindly reject all past interpretive programs, but rather, it is to suggest that the discussion of the war's causes and impacts on civilian life are equally significant subjects necessary for understanding the complexity of Civil War, and should be included in the National Park Service's interpretive programs alongside of more traditional displays on the war's battlefields, soldiers, and generals.

CHAPTER I:  
THE LOST CAUSE AND APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE

“The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present.”

- David Thelan (1989:1117)

Historians recognize that public memory is a powerful mechanism often used by dominant groups to manipulate history in order to explain or reinforce current political or social conditions, to create cultural pride, and to build and maintain self-esteem, among other goals (Lowenthal 1985; Frisch 1990; Glassburg 1990; Kammen 1991; Bonder 1982). The formation of public memory is a complicated process that includes not just the recollection of historical events, but also the deliberate exclusion of elements that do not contribute to the narrative supported by the proponents of a particular perspective, also known as a group’s collective memory. Thus, a public memory is created when a specific group succeeds in promoting their particular collective memory as a singular authentic past to be accepted by all (Thelan 1989; Shackel 2003). In this way, public memory denies a multi-vocal interpretation and presentation of history that is currently recognized by many historians, and especially by anthropologists and archaeologists.

The maintenance of public memory often relies upon outside stimuli such as landscapes, monuments, commemorative ceremonies, and even archaeology, to

reinforce a particular idea or concept (Thelan 1989; Shackel 2003). Once again, however, as maintenance strategies, these places and events do not always singularly promote a single perspective as they are inherently multi-vocal, and thus subject to multiple interpretations. Only recently, however, have these alternative perspectives been allowed to co-exist with mainstream interpretations.

In the United States, among the most overt examples of how a particular collective memory succeeded in becoming the public memory is the American Civil War. Driven by a diverse set of goals in the post-war period, the present public memory of the Civil War is one that honors its veterans, memorializes its battlefields as shrines to sacrifice and loyalty, but neglects any assessment of the War's causes or its impact. These tenets are authenticated to the public by both "official" agencies of memory such as the National Park Service, as well as through popular culture with such documentary films such as Ken Burn's *The Civil War* (1990), and most recently with feature films such as the Civil War-themed movie, *Gods and Generals* (2003). This overtly military orientation of the Civil War in the public memory has until recently been equally influential in history and archaeology. Library and bookstore shelves across the country are brimming with Civil War history books the singularly focus on battles, battlefield tactics, generals, and the individual experiences of the war's veterans. Similarly, the archaeology of the Civil War has also been heavily weighted towards the study of battlefields, military tactics, and encampments (Espenshade 2002; Geier 1999; Geier and Winter 1994; Geier and Potter 2000; Scott *et.al.* 1989). Although Civil War archaeologists have made significant strides in the

study of warfare, until recently comparatively little research has focused on the impact of the war on the landscape or on the lives of civilians (Geier 1999:263).

The present-day military orientation of the public memory of the American Civil War, as well as the National Park Service's interpretive programs at its Civil War parks, can be directly linked to the post-war commemorative movement referred to today as the "Lost Cause." The Lost Cause drew upon a combination of nostalgia and romanticism to celebrate the honor and courage of soldiers who fought and sacrificed for what they believed in. The term "Lost Cause" is not one invented by historians of the war. Rather, its earliest use occurred in 1867 when Edward A. Pollard, editor of the *Richmond Examiner* published, *The Lost Cause: The Standard Southern History of the War of the Confederates*. Pollard's term for the Confederate defeat, The Lost Cause, was adopted by former Confederates to foster a heroic image of the war so that they would be able to feel pride in their sacrifice regardless of the war's outcome (Gallagher and Nolan 2000:14).

Beginning in the 1880s, the Lost Cause's tradition of celebrating Civil War veterans evolved into a national phenomenon that paid tribute to the shared experiences of all Civil War veterans. Men like Oliver Wendell Holmes and Theodore Roosevelt deliberately emphasized the shared military experiences of the Union and Confederate Veterans as means to further resolve lingering sectional tensions between the North and the South after Reconstruction. The emphasis on reconciliation between the North and South, however, was almost exclusively a white movement. As the Lost Cause helped to ease tensions between the white North and

South, it infuriated former abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, who considered the Civil War as an ideological conflict with deep moral consequences (Blight 1989:1162). Douglass realized that public historical memory was the outcome of struggle between rival versions of the past (Blight 1989:1159). Accordingly, he campaigned vigorously until his death in 1895 against proponents of the Lost Cause in order to secure an abolitionist legacy of the war (Blight 1989:1178). In spite of his efforts, much of the public memory of the Civil War continued to exclude the abolition of slavery as an outcome, and remained focused on healing the rift between the North and the South.

Although acknowledging the role that the Lost Cause had in successfully re-forging relations between the North and the South, the neglect to include the abolition of slavery as part of the public memory of the Civil War has been harshly criticized by many historians (Foster 1987, Gallagher and Nolan 1999, Osterwies 1973). In commenting on the impact of the Lost Cause, Gaines Foster observed:

The rapid healing of national divisions and damaged southern self-image, however, came at the cost of deriving little insight or wisdom from the past. Rather than looking at the war as a tragic failure and trying to understand it, or even condemn it, Americans, North and South, chose to view it as a glorious time to be celebrated. Most ignored the fact that the nation had failed to resolve the debate over the nature of the Union and to eliminate the contradictions between its equalitarian ideals and

the institution of slavery without resort to bloody civil war.

Instead, they celebrated the war's triumphant nationalism and martial glory (Gaines 1987:196).

The military focus and reconciliatory emphasis of the Lost Cause is particularly evident in the present-day interpretive programs of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. The park was founded in the 1930s after a successful campaign to commemorate Appomattox Court House in accord with the dominant Lost Cause ideology of national reconciliation. The campaign was led by prominent local residents, Eula May Burke and former Congressman, Joel W. Flood, with the support of veteran's organizations, such as the Confederate Southern Memorial Association of Richmond and the Appomattox Historical Park Association. Just as they had been crucial in convincing the federal government to establish a park at Appomattox Court House, Burke, Flood, and the veteran's organizations were equally influential in the planning of the park (Hosmer 1981:620-626).

The initial plan authorized by Congress in June 1931 called for the purchase of one-acre for a monument to be erected by the War Department. The monument, however, was not built, and in 1933 the property was transferred to the National Park Service. Over the next decade, a debate over how to memorialize Appomattox Court House ensued. In 1933, Horace Albright, director of the National Park Service, testified that it would be "interesting to the public...to restore the McLean house where the surrender took place and dramatized somewhat the situation there" (cited in

Hosmer 1981:622). Six years later, on September 5, 1939, Branch Spalding, the coordinating superintendent for Appomattox, submitted a report showing a more ambitious goal to reconstruct the village of Appomattox Court House in order to interpret the society of rural Virginia. Spalding envisioned the fully restored Appomattox as “an arresting challenge to the Park Service” because it presented such a tremendous opportunity to depict a way of life at the time of the Civil War (cited in Hosmer 1981:624). In contrast, chief Park Service historian, Ronald Lee opposed any reconstruction at Appomattox Court House citing questions about the authenticity of historical reconstructions and impact to the archaeological remains of the McLean house. Lee’s position, however, was particularly unpopular with local park supporters, all of whom strongly pushed for the reconstruction of the McLean House, but not of the rest of the village (Hosmer 1981:624-625).

Ultimately, the influence of local supporters prevailed over Lee’s concerns, and in 1940 it was agreed to reconstruct the McLean House and courthouse, but no mention was made of reconstructing any of the village’s other structures. According to Herbert Evison, the associate regional director of the National Park Service, the consensus of those planning the park was that the reconstruction of the McLean House was deemed all that was necessary, as the village of Appomattox had no historical importance beyond the surrender meeting, and that the reconstruction and interpretation of the entire community would detract from the Civil War theme (Hosmer 1981:734-735). As a result of the planning committee’s decisions, potential interpretive themes, including the pre-Civil War history of the village, the impact of

the war on civilian life in the village, slavery and emancipation, and the impact of the war on the surrounding landscape, were deliberately ignored in the public exhibits and promotional literature featuring Appomattox Court House. From that point to the present day, national reunion has been the primary theme of the park, while the community at large was rendered a silent backdrop.

Recent studies have demonstrated how the Lost Cause was similarly influential in the development of Civil War interpretive programs at other National Park sites including: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia (Shackel 2000a), Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia (Martin Seibert 2001), and Antietam National Battlefield Park in Sharpsburg, Maryland (Temkin 2001). At each of these parks, the Lost Cause inspired interpretive displays and exhibits have typically consisted primarily of battlefield descriptions, explanations of troop movements and battlefield tactics, and biographical accounts of the war's generals. Rarely have these displays provided any context with regard to the communities in which the battles were fought, or how the war impacted those communities. Similar to Appomattox Court House, the military focus of these exhibits is attributed to the long-lasting public memory perpetuated by the Lost Cause on remembering the Civil War on military terms rather than from the standpoint of social or political consequences.

The Lost Cause-inspired interpretation of the Civil War remained essentially unchallenged in the mainstream until relatively recently. Social historians, beginning in the 1980s, were among the first to examine non-military aspects of the Civil War

including demographic changes, socioeconomic impacts, and the roles of women and minorities (Vinovskis 1990:vii). Shortly thereafter, the National Park Service followed suit and began to sponsor new historical and archaeological research with the intention of broadening its interpretations at its Civil War parks to include previously neglected themes (National Park Service 2000). In some cases, the archaeological evidence has supplemented traditional Lost Cause inspired interpretations, while in other instances it has completely contradicted them. In those instances where new research has challenged pre-existing interpretations, the National Park Service has proceeded very carefully in incorporating new interpretations, while the subject of the Civil War remains a complicated, symbolic, and deeply emotional issue, with many differing opinions and points of view. As a result, the acceptance of new interpretations over long-held assumptions has been a relatively slow and cautious process (National Park Service 2000). Most recently, the sensitivity of Civil War memory was exemplified by the wide range of reactions to the recent unveiling of the new Lincoln monument in Richmond, Virginia. Opponents of the memorial, contend that the placement of the memorial in Richmond is an attempt to erode Confederate heritage, while proponents argue that the memorial's purpose is educational, not confrontational (Holmberg 2003).

Some of the most compelling new research on the Civil War has been as a result of archaeological investigations. These studies represent a new trend in the archaeological research of the Civil War that expands beyond the war's battlefields to include aspects of the social history of the war and its impact (Hennessy 2002).

Notable among the National Park Service's Civil War parks where archaeological research has successfully led the way for a broader understanding of the war has been Harper's Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia. During the war, Harper's Ferry was a strategically important industrial town that was laid siege to, and captured by Stonewall Jackson<sup>1</sup>. Until recently, the interpretative thrust of the National Park Service at Harper's Ferry has been focused on Jackson's siege and capture of the town. Over the last decade, however, archaeological research at Harper's Ferry has been a significant factor in broadening the interpretation of the town to include previously ignored themes, such as the impact of the war on civilian life in the town during the war and during its reoccupation in the Victorian era. The archaeological research program at Harper's Ferry is remarkable not only because of the insightfulness of the archaeological interpretations, but because many of these results are actively influencing the development of new interpretive displays and exhibits at the park (Shackel 2000a, 2000b).

Significant new research, however, is not always readily accepted. At Virginia's Manassas National Battlefield Park, the site of two major Civil War engagements, research results that have shed new light on the local African-American community present at the time of the battle have yet to be included in the park's public interpretations. Among the significant research results is archaeological evidence that suggests that African Americans at Manassas had, and continue to have,

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the war, Harper's Ferry also gained notoriety as the place of the attempted raid on a federal arsenal by John Brown in 1859. How this incident is interpreted to the public has been an equally divisive aspect of the park's interpretive program (see Shackel 2003:51-76).

a strong sense of identity and culture that they were successfully able to maintain through the middle passage, slavery, emancipation, and into the present (Galke 2000). In addition, a companion study of the area's architecture suggests that African-Americans may have used their houses to reassure the white community of their subordinated position by not overly embellishing their homes, thus reducing the potential for racial conflict (Martin et al. 1997). Although the African-American community was well established at Manassas before, during, and after the war, opposition to the public interpretation of non-military features by personnel at the park has prevented their inclusion into the park's interpretive programs (Martin-Seibert 2001:68; Shackel 2003:146).

Another such example includes the examination of the impact of battle on the agrarian landscape at Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland. The Battle of Antietam, and the subsequent Federal occupation of Sharpsburg, caused total devastation to the highly organized and well-maintained farms, fields, and orchards that characterized Sharpsburg's landscape prior to the war. Archaeological excavations of the yards associated with thriving Civil War-era farms in the area, however, found little difference between the time prior to the battle and the time afterwards. One intriguing theory that accounts for this phenomenon is the hypothesis that Sharpsburg's farmers were quick to rebuild their battle-torn landscape in order to provide a bridge between their way of life and values before and after the war (Manning-Sterling 2000). The discussion of the evolution of Antietam's landscape, however, is also not included in the interpretation of the park as a result of

the park's decision to "freeze" the Antietam landscape to the date of the battle (September 17, 1862) as a battlefield memorial. As a result, non-battlefield related components of the landscape, including the analysis of the transformation of the landscape from farmland to battlefield and back to farmland, currently has no place in the park's interpretive programming (Temkin 2000).

Discrepancies between traditional public interpretations and archaeological evidence are not limited to Civil War commemorative parks. Archaeological investigations recently carried out at Colonial National Historical Park and Shenandoah National Park have similarly demonstrated how archaeological research can reveal a version of the past other than the one currently on display to the public. More specifically, deliberate landscape manipulation at both parks has obscured unwanted pasts, while forming new landscapes that better conform to the ideals of the parks' developers (Horning 2001). The impact of archaeological research has been felt outside the National Park Service as well. At museums such as Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello, archaeological research in the last twenty years has also been at the forefront of developing historical narratives that attempt to more accurately portray the complexity of eighteenth-century life, particularly with regard to the role of African Americans and other minorities (Department of Archaeological Research 2003).

As a result of the Lost Cause's influence during the planning and early development of the park, the interpretation of Appomattox Court House has always been singularly focused on the surrender meeting, the preceding military engagement,

and the paroling of soldiers in the weeks after the surrender. *The Lost Cause*, however, has limited the ability to tell the stories of the war's impact on civilian life in the village, slavery and emancipation, and the impact of the war on the surrounding landscape. In contrast, the remainder of this thesis on the history and recent archaeological excavations at Appomattox Court House is focused on examining the previously overlooked domestic occupation of the village rather than its military occupation. This thesis approaches the study of Appomattox Court House not just as a surrender site, but as a diverse landscape that existed before and after the Civil War with multiple histories, and multiple interpretations.

## CHAPTER II.

### LANDSCAPES

Recent decades have seen a steady rise in the inclusion of landscapes as components of archaeological research designs and interpretations (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Bender 1993, 1998; Bender and Winer 2001; Kelso and Most 1990; Kryder Reid 1994; Mayne and Murray 2001; Nassaney *et al.* 2001; Rossignol and Wandsnider 1992; Rotman and Nassaney 1997; Tilley 1994; Ucko and Layton 1999; Yamin and Metheny 1996; Young 2000). Initially the realm of cultural geographers, landscape-based approaches have recently been adopted by a wide variety of disciplines ranging from ecology, history, and anthropology, in addition to archaeology. As a result of this cross-disciplinary interest in landscapes, the approaches used in their study are as varied as their promoters. Accordingly, the following chapter focuses on how landscapes are examined by archaeologists, while it also seeks to identify the methodological and theoretical issues associated with what has become known as *landscape archaeology*.

In order to understand what is meant by *landscape*, and thus what the archaeological study of *landscapes* consists of; it is useful to trace the etymology of the word. The word *landscape* is a perversion of the German term and concept of *landschaft*, which first emerged as “a way of seeing the external world” in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was not introduced into the English language

until the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (Cosgrove 1984:46). In the original German, *landschaft* meant a small collection of dwellings and other structures crowded together within a pasture, meadow, and fields and surrounded by forests or marshland. The forests were part of the wilderness, while the *landschaft* was the land shaped by people. From its Germanic origins, *landschaft* first diffused to Holland, where it became *landschap* and became synonymous with idealized paintings of natural settings popular in Holland in the sixteenth century. From Holland, the word spread to England where the Dutch *landschap* was further distorted into the English *landscape* (Stilgoe 1982:12-25). In recognition of the intellectual origins of the concept of landscapes as man-made features that cultural geographer John Stilgoe adopted his definition of landscapes as, “shaped land, land modified for permanent human occupation, for dwelling, agriculture, manufacturing, government, worship, and for pleasure. A landscape happens not by chance but by contrivance, by premeditation, by design....Landscapes are created by men intent on ordering and shaping space for their own ends” (Stilgoe 1982:3). Implied within Stilgoe’s definition is an important distinction that landscape is *not* equivalent to the natural environment (Olwig 1995:318). In order to further clarify the distinction between natural and man-made landscapes, many archaeologists sometimes prefer the term *cultural landscape* to signify “that part of the terrain which is modified according to a set of cultural plans” (Deetz 1990:2). Also implied in Stilgoe’s definition is the perception of the landscape as a commodity, something useful, something that has value that can be bought and sold. In these terms, the concept of landscape is

intrinsically linked to capitalism (Thomas 1995:22). Consequently, the study of landscapes has emerged as an extremely popular pursuit for many historical archaeologists who view the field of historical archaeology essentially as the archaeology of capitalism (Leone 1995).

In spite of the recent popularity of landscape archaeology, the study of landscapes has historically had somewhat of an uncomfortable fit within the discipline. As James Deetz (1990:1) pointed out, “Of the three dimensions of archaeology (form, time, and space), the spatial dimension seems to have been approached somewhat discontinuously.” The reason for the discontinuity is due in large part to the traditional emphasis within archaeology to search for, excavate, and interpret sites, not landscapes (Dunnell 1992:21). As a result of this early focus on sites, archaeologists have too often regarded landscapes simply as passive backdrops that are occupied by sites (Robin and Rothschild 2002:160). Further hindering the study of landscapes is their large size, which makes them difficult to examine using traditional archaeological methods of investigation (i.e. excavation) (Deetz 1990:2). To overcome this problem, various methodological techniques have been developed to supplement traditional excavation with the expressed intent to increase the understanding of landscapes, including: regional surveys, geophysical prospecting, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and aerial photography.

Prominent among the earliest approaches to the examination of landscapes are regional settlement pattern studies that view the landscape as a physical phenomenon that can be measured, quantified, and understood in functionalist or positivist terms.

In this way, understanding a landscape is akin to the way an archaeologist might examine an artifact such as ceramic sherd or projectile point (Darvill 1999:105). Accordingly, Elizabeth Kryder-Reid correctly categorizes these landscape studies as materialist as opposed to ideational (Kryder-Reid 1991:47).

Gordon Willey's *Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Viru Valley, Peru* published in 1953 marked the beginning of the regular application of settlement patterning studies to address questions regarding landscapes. In his landmark *Viru Valley* study, Willey was primarily concerned with site type, configuration of particular sites, and the distribution of sites with respect to one another and the natural environment. Settlement pattern studies were subsequently influenced by the inclusion of "locational analysis," an approach that emphasized aggregate populations and "the interaction between population aggregations" rather than just individual sites (Plog 1974:78). More recently, settlement pattern studies have expanded to include the influence of social factors on settlement location (O'Brien 1984). Notable settlement pattern studies by historical archaeologists include: James Deetz's study of seventeenth-century sites at Flowerdew Hundred, Virginia (Deetz 1987, 1993); Andrew Edwards and Marley R. Brown III's study of seventeenth-century sites at Martin's Hundred, Virginia (Edwards and Brown 1993); and Robert Paynter's study of the changes in settlement of the Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts from a world systems approach (Paynter 1982). In addition, as a result of the cross-disciplinary interest in landscape-based approaches, there exists a considerable volume of literature devoted to non-archaeologically derived settlement patterns as

well (e.g. Earle 1975; Fausz 1971; Grim 1977; Haggert 1966, Hartshorne 1968, Kelly 1979; Langhorne 1976; Swedlund 1975).

In contrast to the functional approach of settlement patterns, an alternative approach is the ideational view that landscapes are social constructs imbedded with symbolic meaning (Layton and Ucko 1999:2). Over the past twenty-years, historical archaeologists have been particularly astute in exploring the symbolic dimensions of landscape. Among the best-known studies in this vein is Mark Leone's (1984) interpretation of formal gardens as symbols that legitimized and naturalized social inequalities in eighteenth-century Annapolis. Other historical archaeologists have similarly explored how hierarchical power relationships are symbolically imbedded in landscapes. Mrozowski and Beaudry (1990) argue that conscious and unconscious ideologies governed the shaping and use of the Boot Mill industrial complex in Lowell, Massachusetts. Meanwhile, James Delle (1998) examined the effects of the changing global and local economy on class relations involved in the production of sugar and coffee in colonial Jamaica.

In contrast to those who interpret landscapes as features that help to control and reify social order, Dell Upton (1985, 1990) and others (Yamin and Metheny 1996, Darvill 1999, Layton and Ucko 1999) emphasize the multivocality of landscapes. Their essential argument is that the same landscape could have different meaning or significance to different individuals depending on their social, economic, or political point of view. To illustrate this point, Upton offers the example of how masters and slaves in eighteenth-century Virginia experienced and conceptualized the

same landscape in distinctly different ways. “The gentry landscape was experienced dynamically....It was a landscape in which the parts were related sequentially in space and time” (Upton 1990:75). Meanwhile, slaves saw the landscape as “an unrelated collection of barriers or pitfalls with no relation to any other part of the landscape” (Upton 1990:74). Upton argues that the differences in the perceptions of landscape between the gentry and their slaves was directly tied to their contrasting social standings.

The meaning or significance of a particular landscape is also highly variable not just between individuals, but through time as well. Landscapes are not static entities, but rather dynamic ones that are in constant states of flux and reinvention. As a result, argues Darvill (1999:107), no two experiences of the landscape will ever be the same. This point is particularly interesting for critiquing reconstructed “frozen” landscapes like those presented at museums such as Colonial Williamsburg, which deny the natural evolutionary character of landscape. In addition, when combined with the potential for multivocal interpretations of landscape, reconstructions of historic landscapes are inherently biased toward a particular interpretation in time and experience (Temkin 2001). This is further complicated by the assertion of some critics that there exist no real or true histories, only the stories that we tell in the present and are inherently reflective of our present voices, concerns, and knowledge (Handler and Gable 1997:223). As Brown and Samford (1994) observe, the reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg is just as much a reflection of Depression-Era romanticism of the colonial era as it is the actual colonial past.

As this review suggests, the study of landscapes is a complicated and challenging endeavor. Far from being static backdrops, landscapes are active, multivocal, and imbedded with cultural meaning, and not only shape our daily experiences, but our experiences also shape the landscape. Because of the variety of different variables affecting the study of landscapes and the diversity of disciplines interested in the study of landscapes, multi-disciplinary approaches have the greatest potential, and should be aggressively pursued for elucidating reconstructions of historical landscapes. Echoing Layton and Ucko (1999:15), archaeologists should seek to “break free of current academic boundaries to link the strictly scientific with the historic, ethnographic, and even artistic.” Historical archaeologists, already trained in the multi-disciplinary approach to the archaeological and historical records, appear to be particularly well suited for understanding landscapes, and thus should have the advantage in synthesizing the contributions of the various disciplines into a single narrative.

The example of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park is a good illustration of the complexity in interpreting past landscapes. As a result of the surrender meeting between Generals Lee and Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, this otherwise ordinary and anonymous rural landscape was instantly transformed into a landscape laden with symbolic meaning. Prior to the surrender, the landscape of Appomattox Court House was primarily agrarian, consisting of large and small farms centered on a small courthouse village whose significance existed only as the place where the local administrative and political needs of the community

were satisfied. In the post-war period, Appomattox Court House's landscape was infused with an altogether new and different significance that reached far beyond the concerns of the local citizenry. The construction of war memorials and visits to the courthouse village by those wishing to pay tribute to the past were just two symptoms of Appomattox Court House's new significance in the national public memory of the Civil War.

As a result of the triumph of the Lost Cause as the dominant interpretation of the Civil War, Appomattox Court House was heralded a symbol of the end of the long war and the reunification of the country. This interpretation was further sustained through the transformation of Appomattox Court House into a national park dedicated to promoting the site as a symbol of national reconciliation. In order to secure this interpretation in the public's experience when visiting the park, those landscape features that could potentially evoke alternative, non-conforming interpretations were either hidden from view, or physically removed from the landscape. In the opinion of the park's developers, this was necessary in order to not distract the visitor's attention from properly experiencing Appomattox Court House in terms of reunification and reconciliation (Hosmer 1981:735). Examples of the types of features either hidden or removed include: the homes of civilians of all economic, social and ethnic backgrounds; outbuildings and other support structures; and civic, commercial, and industrial buildings. As a result, the present-day landscape and interpretation of Appomattox Court House is just as much a reflection of the influence of the Lost Cause on Civil War interpretation, as it is an accurate reconstruction of the day of the

surrender. Ignored are the pre- and post-war landscape histories of the community; the impact of the war on Appomattox Court House's civilian community; and the acknowledgement of the symbolic significance of Appomattox and the war held among those excluded from the mainstream interpretations (e.g. African Americans).

In recent years, however, the National Park Service has begun to move away from strict adherence to its long-held Lost Cause-inspired interpretations. As part of the process of revising and updating its interpretive programs, the physical landscapes of its Civil War parks are being scrutinized through documentary and archaeological research not just as battlefields, or as in the case of Appomattox Court House, not just as tributes to national reunion and reconciliation. Following Upton's assertion of the multivocality of landscapes, new interpretative programs at the National Park Service's Civil War parks are attempting to provide forums for previously ignored aspects of Civil War sites, especially with regard to understanding the war's causes, impacts, and the perspectives of those outside the mainstream.

### CHAPTER III: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before the discussions of how the Civil War is presented at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, or the potential of recent archaeological excavations to impact the presentation of Civil War history can begin, it is useful to understand the historical context of the community that would eventually serve as the host of the surrender meeting between Generals Lee and Grant.

Since the end of the war, historical research regarding Appomattox Court House has consisted of only a very small handful of accounts compiled primarily by local history enthusiasts. While these histories are significant because they represent the earliest attempts to tell the story of Appomattox Court House from a community perspective rather than a military one, they typically consist of little more than romanticized reminiscences of nineteenth-century village life, supplemented with biographies of some of county's most prominent citizens (*cf.* Gills 1948; Featherstone 1998; Moore 1980; Smith 1949). Although these histories are all explicit in their intentions to discuss Appomattox Court House as a community and not as a military site, they nonetheless have typically been biased toward emphasizing the histories of the structures associated directly with the surrender meeting, or those structures reconstructed by the National Park Service. Almost no research has been carried out on the homes of the village's poor, slaves, freedmen, etc. This tradition has continued to the present day resulting in the publication of historical reminiscences of

Appomattox Court House in major popular history magazines such as *American Heritage* and *American History Illustrated* (Smith 1999, Wilson 1986). In addition, little to no effort has been made to examine the social or political climate of Appomattox Court House leading up to the outbreak of war, or the impact of the war on the local community.

Recently, this trend has slowly begun to reverse itself upon the urging of social historians in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus far, the most significant contribution in this vein is Civil War historian William Marvel's book, *A Place Called Appomattox* (2000), which provides a detailed description and analysis of the pre-war development of Appomattox Court House, the impact of the war on the community, and the community's economic decline in the latter portion of the nineteenth century. Marvel contends that the story of Appomattox mirrors the experience of the greater South: "To tell the story of Appomattox Court House...is to tell the history of the South in the Civil War – as struggle that lasted not four years but a lifetime between the first sectionalist rumblings to the last gasp of reactionary rhetoric" (Marvel 2000:x). Another notable resource is a draft manuscript on the history of the village compiled by National Park Service archaeologist, John F. Pousson (2001). Particularly significant regarding Pousson's history is the emphasis on linking site-specific historical documentation and archaeological evidence into a single narrative. The following synopsis of the community history of Appomattox Court House draws primarily from Marvel's and Pousson's works.

*c.1700-1844*

European settlement of Virginia's Piedmont began near the end of the seventeenth century, and by the 1770s at least three quarters of the land within the Piedmont had been patented (Kulikoff 1986:141). As the early settlers ventured west, small farmsteads were established, and large tracts of land were cleared for cultivation. Access to transportation corridors was a primary factor influencing early settlement of the Piedmont, and thus the earliest settlements were situated along the region's navigable waterways and early stage roads (Isaac 1982).

Large plantations were also established throughout the Piedmont. Similar to the Tidewater, these plantations included large Georgian-styled mansions for the plantation owners, in addition to numerous less substantial buildings erected in the fields and on hillsides as barns, overseer's houses, and slave quarters. Accompanying the establishment of farms and plantations was the importation of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean slaves. These slaves were transported into the Piedmont to serve as field laborers or as domestic servants in the planters' homes (Isaac 1982).

As the Piedmont's population grew and as settlement pushed toward the Blue Ridge Mountains, new counties were formed in the lands to the west of the Fall Line (Isaac 1982:12). By the end of the eighteenth century, the lands at the headwaters of the North Fork of the Appomattox River were divided between Buckingham County to the northeast of the river, and Prince Edward County to the southwest. Thus far, very little research on the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history of the area has been researched or published. The only known property investigations from this

period have been in regard to the extant Clover Hill Tavern complex and the Wright family lands along Plain Run to the south of the Clover Hill property. According to these limited investigations, the Clover Hill Tavern, presently located directly north of the courthouse square, represents the oldest structure within the village core and predates the establishment of Appomattox Court House by over twenty years (Pousson 2001:5-6).

Alexander Patteson built the tavern and several support structures in 1819 along the Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road. By taking advantage of the tavern's location on the road, the Clover Hill Tavern also served as the headquarters of the stage line that Patteson had opened with his brother several years earlier. Upon Patteson's death in 1836 John and Eliza D. Raine purchased the Clover Hill tavern and the accompanying 206-acre property. Economic difficulties, however, forced the Raines to sell the tavern and property to John's brother, Hugh Raine in 1842 (Marvel 2000:1).

To the south of the Clover Hill tract, Pryor Wright, Sr. and Pryor Wright, Jr., purchased land from William Sweeney and his wife Mourning, and from Nathaniel and Elizabeth Kelly in 1812. The Wrights intended to construct a mill on the property to be located along Plain Run southeast of Clover Hill. Two years later, the younger Wright consolidated the property under his name. Between 1823 and 1849, Pryor Wright, Jr. and his family lived in the structure now known as the Mariah Wright house. The house, believed to have been built by Wright Jr. *circa*-1823, still remains today and is located southeast of the courthouse square. The locations of the

Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road, the Clover Hill Tavern, and the Wright mill site are all illustrated on John Wood's 1820 map of Prince Edward County (Figure 2).

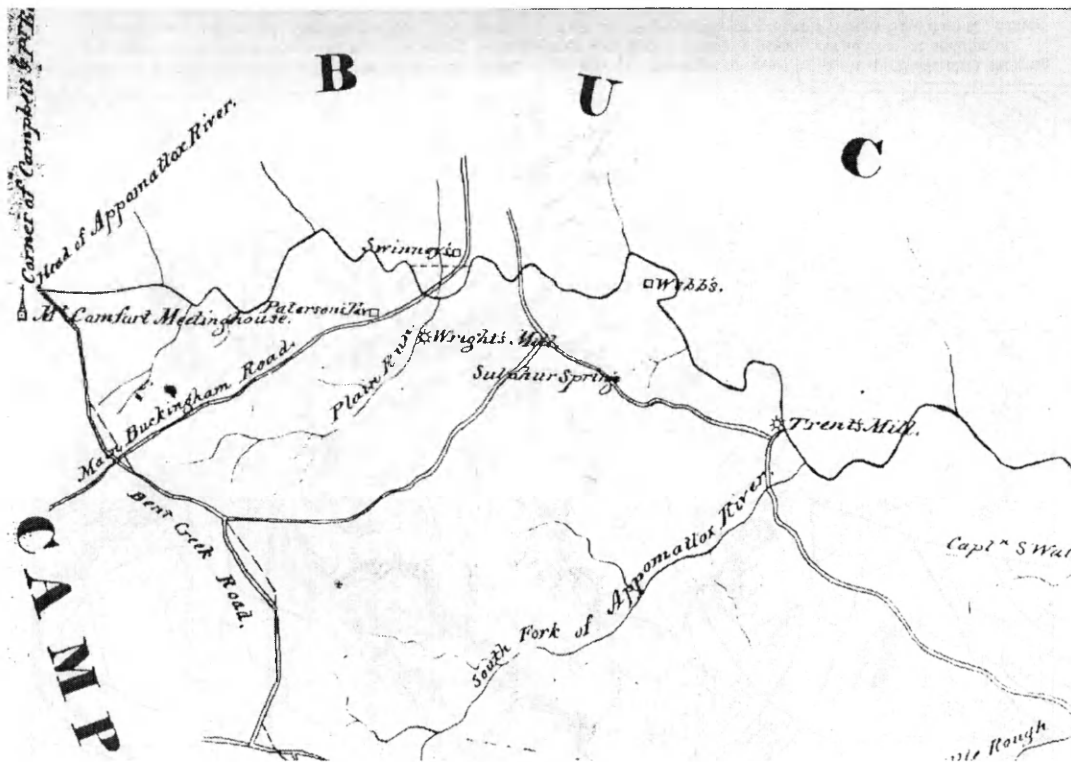


Figure 2. Detail from John Wood's 1820 map of Prince Edward County.

1841-1860

Appomattox County was formed in 1845 from portions of Buckingham, Prince Edward, and Charlotte Counties. Upon the formation of Appomattox County, the area known as Clover Hill was selected as the location for the new county seat and was renamed Appomattox Court House. The new county was formed after decades of complaints by residents who had previously been forced to travel long distances on poor roads in order to get to their respective county seats. Attempts to

form a new county, with Clover Hill as its center, had begun as early as 1824. These attempts, however, were unable to garner enough support within the respective county governments. Finally on February 6, 1845 a bill authorizing the formation of Appomattox County was passed in the House of Delegates, and the state senate ratified the bill two days later. During the following month, the plans were laid out for a prospective village consisting of forty-three lots spread out over 30-acres, surrounding a central courthouse square (Figure 3). The village would straddle the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road at Clover Hill, near the well-known tavern and stagecoach stop. The 30-acres of land for the village was to be carved out from the 206-acre Clover Hill tract, then owned by Hugh Raine (Marvel 2000:4).

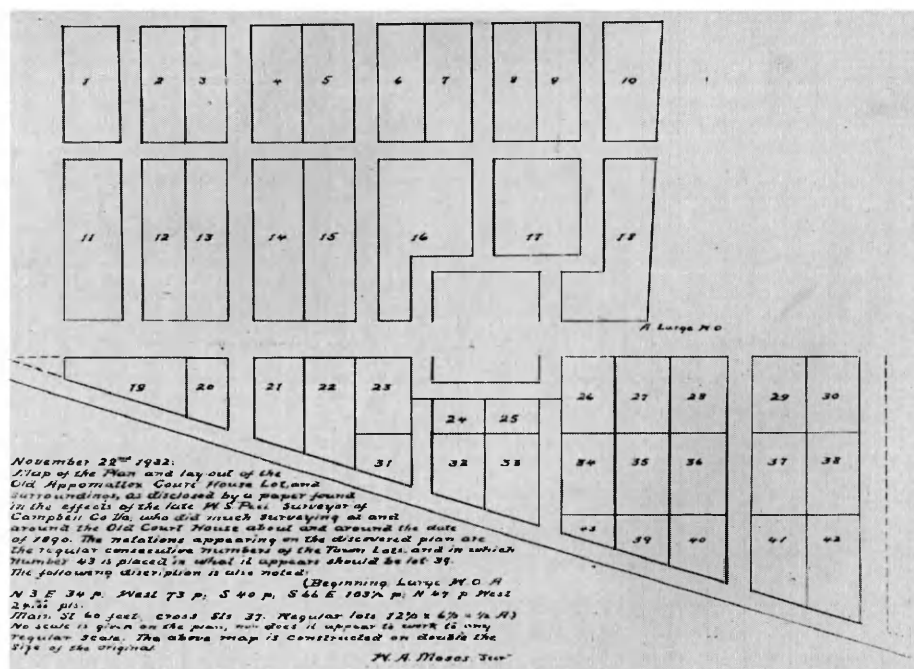


Figure 3: Original 1845 lot layout of Appomattox Court House (ACHNHP archives).

In the decade prior to the official formation of the county, land speculators began to acquire the property around Clover Hill in anticipation that a new county would be soon established. These speculators believed that upon the formation of a new county, Clover Hill would grow into a prosperous administrative and commercial center. Among the speculators were John Raine and his brother Hugh, who purchased the Clover Hill Tavern and property in the early 1840s. Mounting debts, however, prevented either brother from profiting from the county's long awaited formation. In 1845, the Raines sold the Clover Hill Tavern, the 30-acres laid out for the courthouse village (with the exception of lot 21 which they continued to own), and the remaining 176-acres of the Clover Hill tract to Samuel D. McDearmon, a young and ambitious politician and entrepreneur (Marvel 2000:4-5; Pousson 2001:12).



**Figure 4: Samuel McDearmon's plantation house overlooking Appomattox Court House (circa-1960) (ACHNHP archives).**

By 1846 a new courthouse and accompanying jail were under construction in the village square, and McDearmon hoped to sell the tavern property and the other village lots for a quick profit on his investment. McDearmon's confidence in his conviction that he would make a large profit on the Court House lots was symbolized by the large plantation house he constructed for himself on a small knoll overlooking the village (Figure 4). Unfortunately for McDearmon, village property sales were much slower than he had anticipated, and to make matters worse, John Raine opened a competing tavern in the village on lot 21 in 1846. By the end of the decade only a small number of lots had been sold and even fewer new buildings had been constructed in the village.

In the 1850s, the depressed real estate market in the village was dealt another blow. In 1851 the Southside Railroad announced plans for a new line between Petersburg and Lynchburg. Much to the frustration of and expense to McDearmon, the new tracks and accompanying depot were to be located three-miles west of the Appomattox Court House, instead of passing through the village. From that point forward, the site of the railway depot, known as Appomattox Station, began to eclipse the village as the new commercial and transportation center of the county. As a result, in the decade since the formation of the county, the growth of Appomattox Court House had been limited to only a small number of residences, two taverns, a couple of blacksmith shops, a saddlery, small stores, and small number of law offices (Pousson 2001:12-15).

The limited growth of Appomattox Court House was an extreme financial disappointment for Samuel McDearmon. By 1854, as the primary investor in the village, McDearmon was virtually bankrupt, due in part to the village's slow development as well as other failed investments. Although McDearmon managed to protect some of his assets in recognition of his wife's dower rights, most of his property, including his newly constructed plantation house overlooking the village, was placed under the administration of trustees to dispose of in order to satisfy his many creditors (Marvel 2000:34-38; Pousson 2001:12-15).

#### *1861-1865*

On the eve of the Civil War, voting results indicate that the citizens of Appomattox County were very strongly in support of the Southern cause. In the presidential elections of 1860, John C. Breckinridge, a Southern Democrat, received 563 out of the 794 votes cast. Breckinridge did not initially support secession from the Union, but he held that under the Constitution slavery could not be excluded from a territory, a view that made him a popular candidate in the Deep South.<sup>2</sup> Other candidates included Constitutional Unionist John Bell, who received 221 votes, National Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, who received only 10 votes, and Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln, who did not receive a single vote. When war finally did break out with the firing upon Fort Sumter in April 1861, four companies of soldiers

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<sup>2</sup> Ultimately Breckinridge's efforts to secure constitutional guarantees for slavery failed, at which point he did endorse Confederate secession.

from Appomattox County were mustered on behalf of the Confederate Army (Greenough 1985:6).

The Civil War lasted from April 1861 until April 1865. For most of the war, Appomattox County escaped any engagements between the Union and the Confederacy. The fact that Appomattox managed to stay out of the path of either army may have been what attracted Wilber McLean to move to Appomattox Court House after his property located at Manassas had been destroyed during the battle there in 1861. Ironically, the war seems to have followed McLean, and it was in the parlor of McLean's house at Appomattox Court House that the surrender meeting between General's Lee and Grant took place on April 9, 1865.<sup>3</sup>

For several days following the surrender, the two armies remained encamped in and around the village. The Clover Hill Tavern was appropriated as the headquarters for Union General George H. Sharpe, who was in charge of printing up paroles for the more than twenty-eight thousand members of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Formal surrender ceremonies were held in the village on April 12, 1865, after which the paroled Confederates and most of the Union troops left the village for their own homes (Greenough 1985:6).

Realizing the significance of the day, many of the soldiers took souvenirs from the village to commemorate the end of the war. Among the many and varied

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<sup>3</sup> Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House was the result of a failed attempt to retreat from Petersburg, Va., and regroup his army in North Carolina. The discussion of Lee's retreat and the circumstances that ultimately led him to surrender, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. For those interested in understanding the details of Lee's retreat and the events of the final days prior to surrender, the interested reader is referred to Chris Calkins (1987) descriptions of those events in *The Battles of Appomattox Station and Appomattox Court House: April 8-9, 1865*.

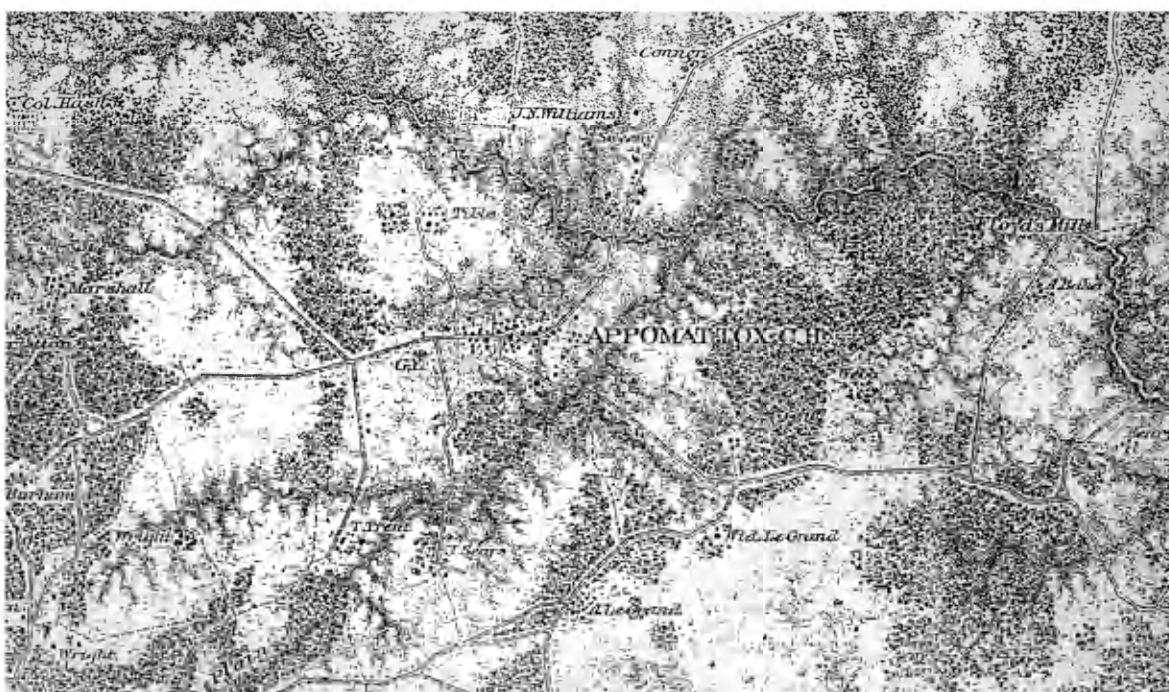
examples of souvenirs taken home by the soldiers was the apple tree under which General Lee allegedly slept as he awaited General Grant's response to his request for a meeting to discuss surrender. Local legend suggests that the tree was uprooted and carved into hundreds of splinters that were carried off by Confederate troops upon being informed that a surrender agreement had been reached.

Appomattox Court House remained occupied by a small contingent of Union troops until November 1865. The federal troops stationed in the village had a range of responsibilities including: maintaining order; countering any rebel guerrilla bands hiding in the countryside; encouraging industry and the cultivation of new crops; promoting the employment of freedmen, providing humanitarian aide; mitigating land disputes; and overseeing the establishment of the Freedman's Bureau office in the village. Other than a handful of minor encounters, the seven month long federal military occupation of Appomattox Court House was generally without incident (Greenough 1985).

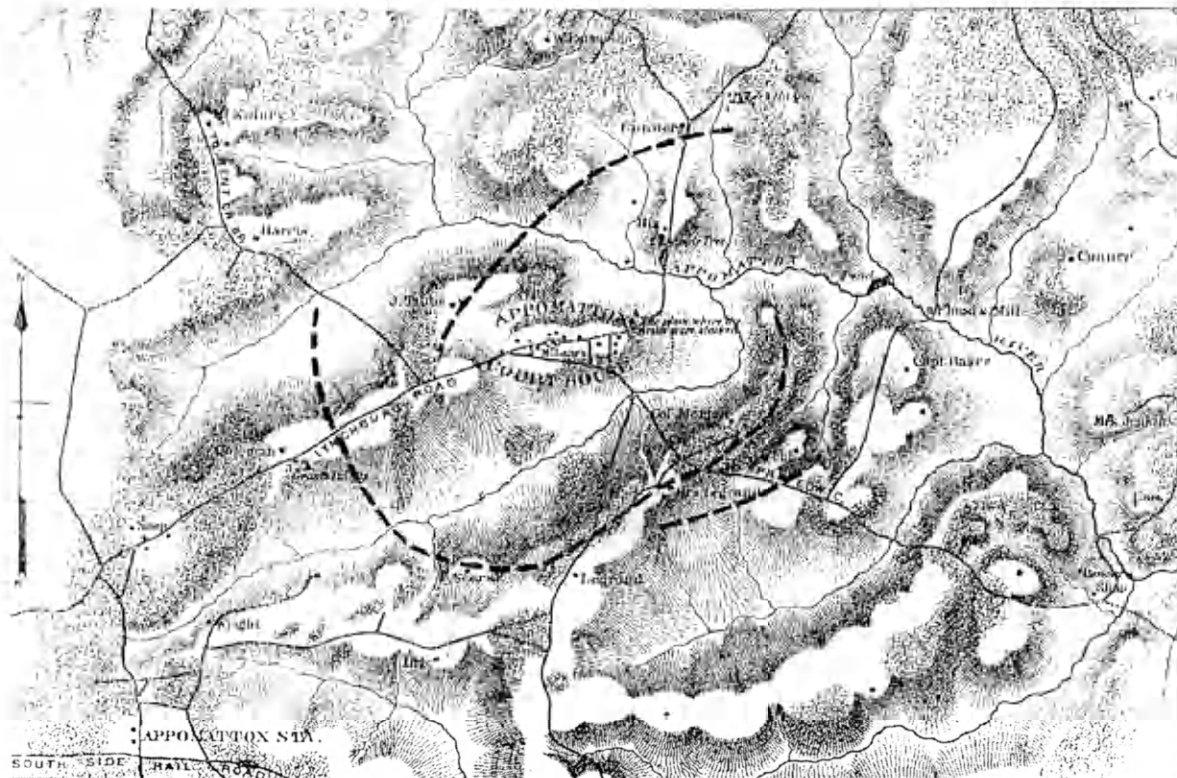
### *1866-1893*

After the war, slow real estate development continued to plague the community, even in spite of the village's newfound notoriety as the place most commonly associated with the war's end. Maps produced by the military around the time of the surrender depict the village at Appomattox Court House as a small cluster of houses, shops and outbuildings surrounding the courthouse (Figure 5). The maps suggest that in the twenty years since the village's founding there had been very little, if any, significant growth. The future proved to echo the past. The size and

composition of the village remained essentially unchanged, save for the addition of a few outbuildings, until 1892 when the county courthouse caught fire and burned to the ground. After the fire, the county seat was relocated near the train depot at Appomattox Station, three miles west of the village and to where many of the local businesses had already relocated. The decision not to rebuild the courthouse proved fatal for the survival of the community at Appomattox Court House. By the end of the century, most of the village residents had moved away.



**Figure 5:** Detail from Brig. Gen. N. Michler's 1867 map of the Appomattox Court House vicinity.



**Figure 6: Detail from the 1866 Henderson & Co. lithograph of Appomattox Court House.**

Although few residents of Appomattox Court House could find any incentive to remain in the village, the village did evolve into a popular destination point for both Union and Confederate veterans seeking to commemorate the Civil War. Some local entrepreneurs produced maps of the area depicting landmarks (McLean House, Grant's Headquarters, Lee's Headquarters, troop positions) associated with Lee's surrender (Figure 6). Visitors to the village frequently collected "relics" from the village -- a practice begun by many of the soldiers and officers present during the surrender -- either by purchase or by simply finding and taking (Pousson 2001:16). Among the most popular relics collected were bricks from the McLean House where the surrender meeting had been held. The house had been purchased and dismantled

in 1891 with the intention of reconstructing it in Washington D.C. as the centerpiece of a planned historical exhibition. Ironically, the move never took place, and the dismantled house remained on site as nothing more than a pile of bricks.

### *1892-2002*

After the decision not to rebuild the courthouse, and through the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Appomattox Court House as a community essentially ceased to exist. The site of the village was quickly reduced to little more than a cluster of crumbling buildings along an old dirt road. Nevertheless, the area continued to attract a steady influx of tourists who were interested in visiting the landmarks associated with the war. To assist visitors in finding the relevant locations within the village, local residents along with veterans groups erected a small number of monuments to commemorate the locations of specific encampments and gravesites. In 1893 the War Department replaced the locally produced wooden signs with iron tablets. Beginning in the 1920s interest began to grow in erecting a national monument in the area to commemorate the Civil War. On June 18, 1930, Appomattox Court House was designated as a United States War Department Battlefield Site. In 1935 the Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument was established as a park encompassing the area of the village, and by the mid-1950s the road through the village (the old Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road) was rerouted to the south, and the park was designated as Appomattox Court House National Historical Park (Pousson 2001:26-28).

The community of Appomattox Court House spanned less than a single century. It began as a remote stagecoach stop in the early eighteenth century, and slowly grew into a small administrative center by mid-century. In spite of the grand ambitions of the village's promoters, the community struggled to survive its early years. On April 9, 1865, the fortunes of the small village suddenly changed forever, when the community played the unlikely host for the surrender meeting that marked the beginning of the end of the American Civil War. In spite of its newfound notoriety, the community continued to struggle in the post-war period, ultimately leading to its abandonment near the end of the century. Shortly thereafter, the symbolic significance of the site in the Lost Cause-inspired public memory of the Civil War transformed the village from a virtual ghost town into a memorial to the conclusion of the war. Although it has been a national park for seventy-years, the historical research into the community of Appomattox Court House is just beginning.

CHAPTER V:  
ARCHAEOLOGY AT APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE

In July through early August 2001, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Archaeological Research (DAR) conducted archaeological excavations at six sites within Appomattox Court House National Historical Park (APCO) in Appomattox, Virginia (Figure 7). The sites examined as part of the study were selected by National Park Service personnel in order to better understand the economic, social, and racial diversity within the village community at the time of the Confederate surrender on April 9, 1865, the interpretive focus of the park.

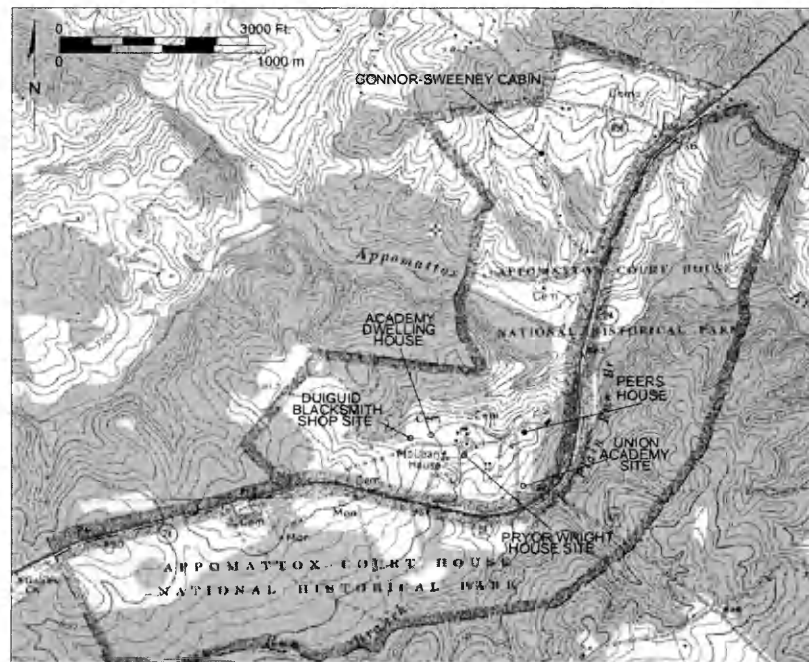


Figure 7: Locations of Investigated Archaeological Sites (U.S.G.S., *Vera Quad*).

The sites investigated include: the Academy Dwelling House site, the residence of several successive local merchants; the Union Academy and Hall site, the site of a former Freedman's school and church; the Peers House, the home of a county administrator; the Connor-Sweeney Cabin, the residence of a poor local farmer; the Charles Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site, the home and shop of a free African American and his family; and the Pryor Wright House site, the home of a wealthy planter. The six sites were investigated using a combination of geophysical prospecting and limited archeological testing. In general, the geophysical survey was carried out first, and its results were used to target the locations of the archaeological test units on the locations predicted to most likely to contain archaeological features. The following descriptions and analyses have been summarized from a more detailed report submitted to the National Park Service (Kostro 2002).

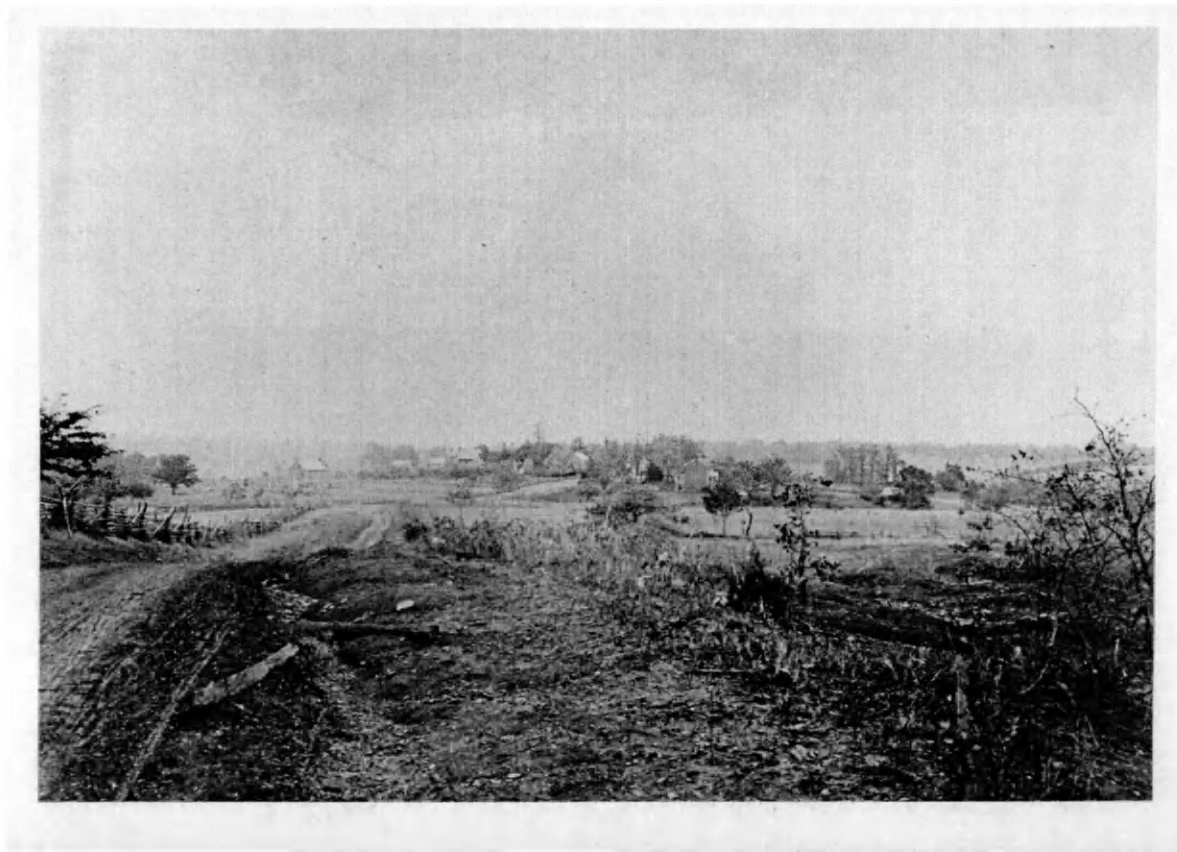
### *Academy Dwelling House Site*

The Academy Dwelling House Site is located within a grass field on the north side of the old Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road and to the west of the Court House Square. The Academy Dwelling first appears on the tax rolls in 1857 and is listed as being owned by Samual D. McDearmon, who may have built the house in anticipation of rising property values after the completion of the nearby courthouse building (Pousson 2001:64, Marvel 2000:365). McDearmon, however, was essentially broke, and was unlikely to have had the financial resources to build a house in 1857, suggesting that the construction of the house may have occurred

several years earlier, prior his financial demise (Kostro 2002). By 1861 the house and property were purchased by John Flood and Lewis Isbell, trustees of the local Union Academy (Pousson 2001:64). Shortly thereafter, they rented the property to the proprietor of a barroom in the village, Thomas Landrum, who resided in the house with his family until 1865 (Marvel 2000:168; Pousson 2001:64). Francis and Maria Meeks, proprietors of the store located on the courthouse square, purchased the house and lots from the Union Academy trustees after the war (Marvel 2000:296). The Meeks lived at the Academy Dwelling house from 1866 until Francis' death in 1870. Francis Meeks's widow, Maria, continued to live at the house until 1872, at which point she moved away from Appomattox Court House but remained as the owner of the property until 1881. When Mrs. Meeks moved away from Appomattox, the house was rented out to various tenants.

In 1890, county clerk George Peers described the Academy Dwelling as a 2-story frame house, 18 x 42-feet, two rooms above and below (depicted with a central hall between the rooms), and with chimneys at each end (cited in Pousson 2001:64). An 1892 photograph of the village taken from the stage road looking east by Adam Plecker, is the only known photograph of the house (Figure 8). According to Hanson and Happel (1942), researchers for the park's first historical base map, the house was reputedly last occupied around the turn-of-the-century "by a colored family named Watts" (cited in Pousson 2001:64). The dates of the house's abandonment and demolition are unknown, although photographs of the park from the 1930s indicate

that the house was no longer standing by that date, with the exception of the east chimney, which survived intact until the middle of the twentieth century (Figure 9).



**Figure 8.** Adam Plecker's 1892 photograph of the village faintly showing the Academy Dwelling House in the distance on the left hand side (*ACHNHP archives*).



**Figure 9. Photograph showing the east chimney of the Academy Dwelling House (circa-1940) (ACHNHP archives).**

Archaeological testing of the site revealed architectural features, drainage features, and a wide scatter of domestic artifacts across the site area (Figure 10). Features related to the house included a brick and stone chimney base seated directly upon subsoil, as well as a portion of the Academy Dwelling's west wall (Figure 11).

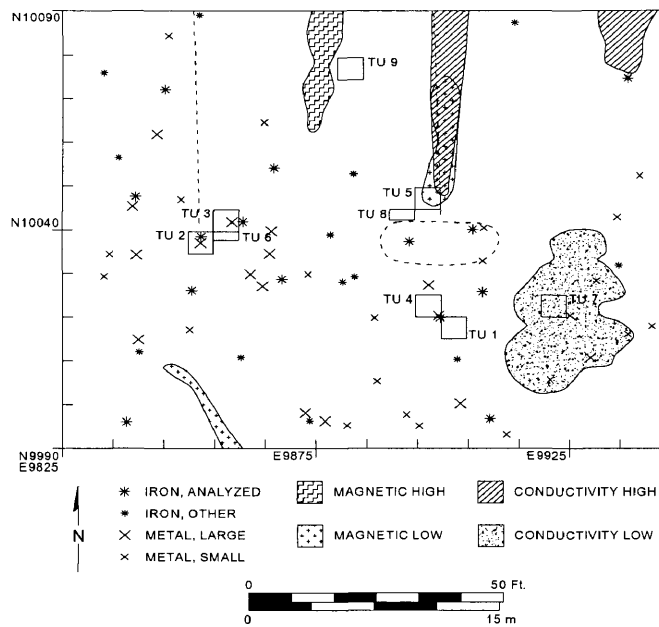


Figure 10. The locations of archaeological test units and major geophysical features at the Academy Dwelling House site (C. Alblinger, CWF adapted from Bevan 2000).

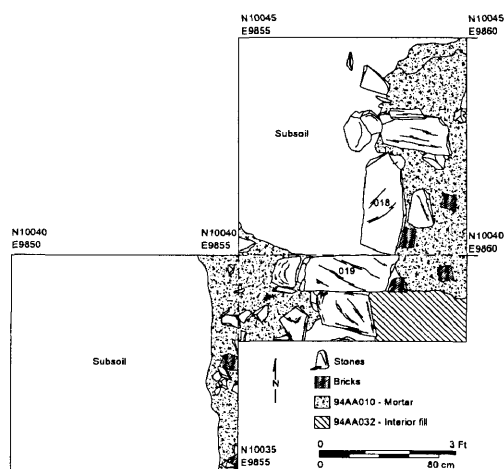


Figure 11. Plan view of west end stone chimney base (C. Alblinger, CWF).

Corresponding with the approximate locations of the Academy Dwelling's stone chimneys were two, three-foot wide parallel ditches. Each ditch was clearly visible at ground surface running to the north out of the project area, while the southern terminus of each ditch coincided with the chimney base locations. Testing of the eastern ditch revealed that the ditch post-dated the construction and early occupation layers associated with the Academy Dwelling House.

The function of the ditches can be hypothesized from their respective locations. The house site is situated in the middle of a gradual slope running down from the northeast and leading to the southwest corner of the project area. Both ditches originate at or near the predicted locations of the Academy Dwelling's chimneys, and extend northward from there. It is possible that the ditches may have been excavated in order to redirect the water coming down the slope of the hill away from the house in an effort to alleviate a drainage problem resulting from its location on the slope.

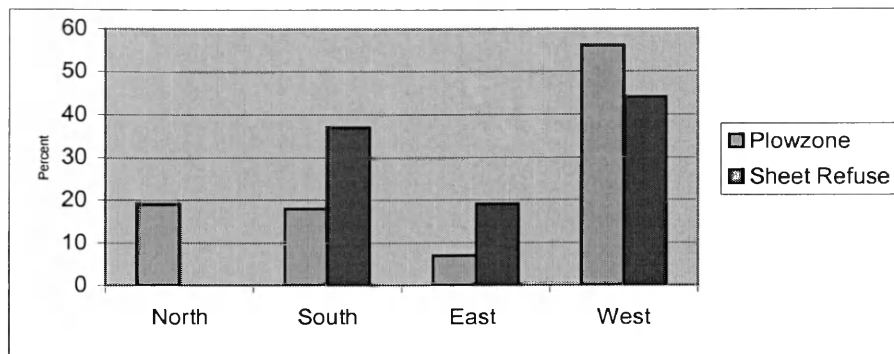
Equally significant as the identification of the structural and landscaping features at the Academy Dwelling House site was the identification of a layer of sheet refuse around the house that was preserved below a layer of plowzone. Both layers contained a large number of third and fourth-quarter nineteenth-century domestic artifacts including: whiteware, yellow-ware, bone china, bottle glass, table glass, window glass, nails, a harness buckle, a shotgun cartridge, a clothes button, and a slate pencil, among other artifacts. The *terminus post quem* for the sheet refuse was determined to be 1880, based on the recovery of manganese solarized bottle glass.

The site is sufficiently isolated from other sites in the village to assume that the artifacts from the layer are associated solely with the occupants of the Academy Dwelling. However, due to the relatively late *tpq*-date of the layer, determining to which specific household (Landrum, Meeks, or Watts) the refuse is associated is less certain. The nature of the sheet refuse, as an aggregate feature that had formed over an extended period of time, suggests that its formation spanned the duration of all three households.

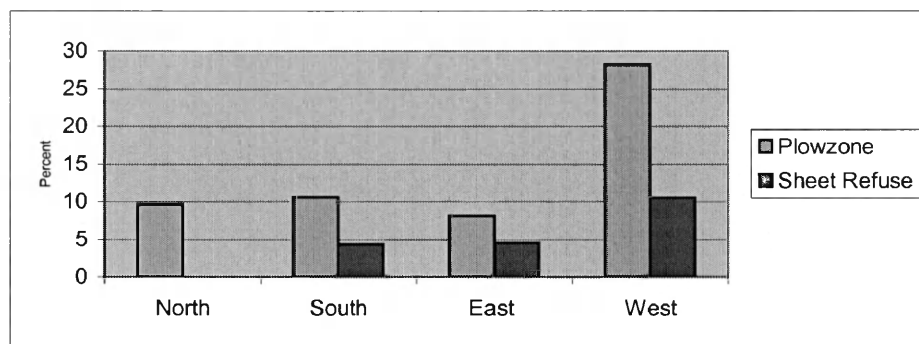
The fact that refuse continued to be deposited in the yard through the end of the nineteenth century contrasts with Elise Manning-Sterling's (2000) study of trash distribution on nineteenth-century farmsteads in northern Virginia. Manning-Sterling (2000) suggests that with the emergence of popular agricultural reform movements that advocated clean appearances of homes, household trash was not only disposed of further and further away from the main house, but also in more private areas. At the Academy Dwelling site, however, no temporal distinctions were observed in the spatial distribution of the artifacts, suggesting the possibility that the impact of agrarian reform movements at Appomattox was not as great as in northern Virginia. Alternatively, the fact that the occupants of the Academy Dwelling were primarily renters, rather than owners of the property (with the exception of the Meeks family between 1866-1872) may be the reason for the difference. Without the incentive of improving the appearance of one's own property, the discretion with which trash was removed from one's home may not have been a priority.

Although temporal differences were not evident, the examination of the horizontal distribution of the artifacts from the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts did revealed several other interesting patterns. The total number of artifacts combined from both the plowzone and refuse midden contexts were divided into four groupings or quadrants (North, South, East, and West) defined with respect to the location of the former Academy Dwelling House (Figure 12). A common characteristic of both the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts was that the largest percentages of artifacts were consistently recovered from test units to the west of the chimney base: 40% of the sheet refuse artifacts and 56% of all plowzone artifacts were recovered from the test units along the west side of the Academy Dwelling.

However, the fact that highest percentage of artifacts was recovered from test units west of the Academy Dwelling House may be factor of differences in sample size rather than actual differences in distribution. For example, to the west of the house site two and a half 5x5 foot test units were excavated, while on the east side of the house site only a single test unit was excavated. In order to account for the differences in sample size, the density of artifacts recovered per square foot for both the plowzone and the sheet refuse layers was calculated (Figure 13). The results of the calculation indicate that the highest density of artifacts per square foot was indeed recovered from test units to the west of the house. For both the plowzone and the sheet refuse layer, the density measurements of the artifacts from the western test units, as compared to all the other test units, matched or exceeded a ratio of two to one.



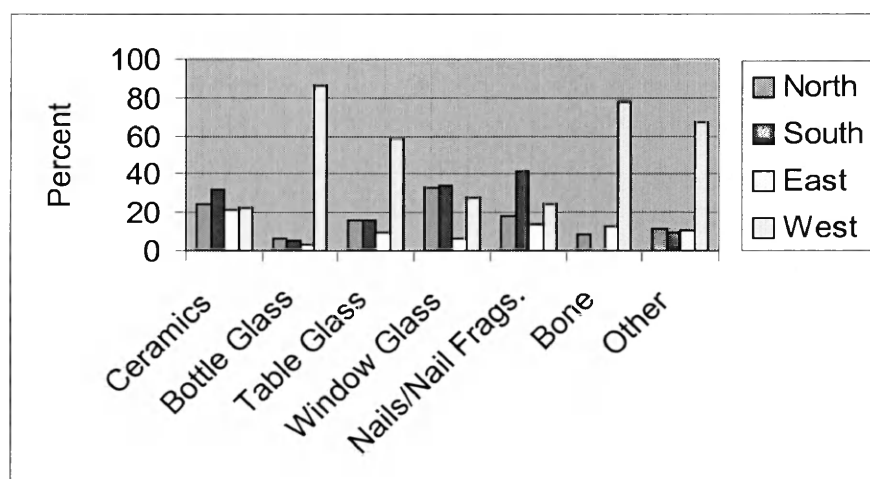
**Figure 12. Horizontal distribution of the total number of artifacts from the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts with respect to their relative location to the Academy Dwelling House.**



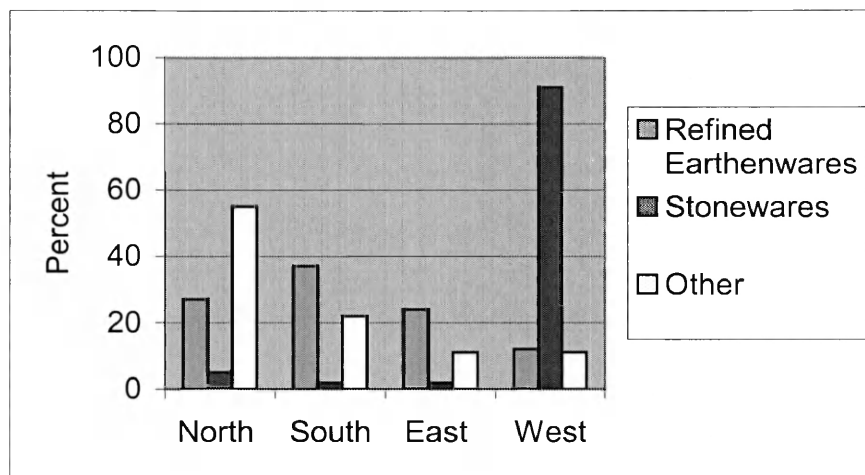
**Figure 13. Horizontal distribution of artifacts per square foot from the plowzone and sheet refuse contexts with respect to their relative location to the Academy Dwelling House.**

The high percentage of artifacts and the high density of artifacts from the west side of the house suggests that the deposition of artifacts was the most concentrated along the west side of the Academy Dwelling. Among the domestic artifacts, bottle glass was especially abundant among the artifacts to the west of the house site: it accounted for over 65% of the all artifacts from the western test units and for 86% of all the bottle glass from the entire site. The vast majority of table glass fragments and animal bone were also concentrated to the west of the house. Ceramics, on the other

hand, were more or less evenly distributed across the project area (Figure 14). A more detailed examination of the ceramic ware types, however, reveals some important differences in their distribution. While the refined earthenwares and other service related ware types are fairly evenly distributed across the project area, stoneware fragments typically associated with food and beverage storage were heavily concentrated in the west quadrant (Figure 15). The distinct high concentration of food and beverage storage vessels (both glass bottles and stoneware ceramics) and faunal remains suggests that the building's kitchen may have been located in the vicinity.



**Figure 14. Horizontal distribution of seven different artifact types relative to the location of the Academy Dwelling House.**



**Figure 15. Horizontal distribution of ceramic ware types relative to the location of the Academy Dwelling House.**

In summary, the archaeological investigation of the Academy Dwelling House site was able to pinpoint the location of the house and identified previously unknown landscaping features possibly intended for site drainage. In addition, the excavations also revealed an intact layer of sheet refuse corresponding with the occupation of the house in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century preserved under the plowzone. Analysis of the horizontal distribution of these artifacts suggests the residents of the Academy Dwelling were either not aware of, or ignored recent agrarian reform ideals that advocated maintaining the space around homes clear of household debris. Analysis of the artifact distribution did however identify potential specialized activity areas at the site based on the functional distribution of artifacts including a dense concentration of food and beverage storage vessels, and faunal remains. The identification of the concentration suggests that the house's kitchen may have been located near or attached to the west end of the house.

### *Union Academy and Hall Site*

The Union Academy and Hall site is situated on a one-acre lot just outside of the platted village on the east side of the Prince Edward Court House Road. The site's name is based on the theory that it was once the location of the Union Academy school, although there exists no evidence to corroborate this claim, except that the building was later owned by trustees of the Union Academy. In fact, the actual Union Academy in Appomattox County was not even located in the village, but rather in Spout Spring, several miles to the west of the village (Marvel 2000:24; Pousson 2001:71). Soon after the formation of the village of Appomattox Court House in 1845, real estate speculator, Samuel D. McDearmon, acquired nearly all of the village lots. Although the one-acre Union Academy and Hall lot was not within the platted portion of the village, by 1849 McDearmon had also acquired the property. In that year, McDearmon financed the construction of a small structure, the original function of which remains uncertain. Nevertheless, between 1850 and 1857 the property tax assessment for the one-acre lot was \$1100, which included an assessment for the building.

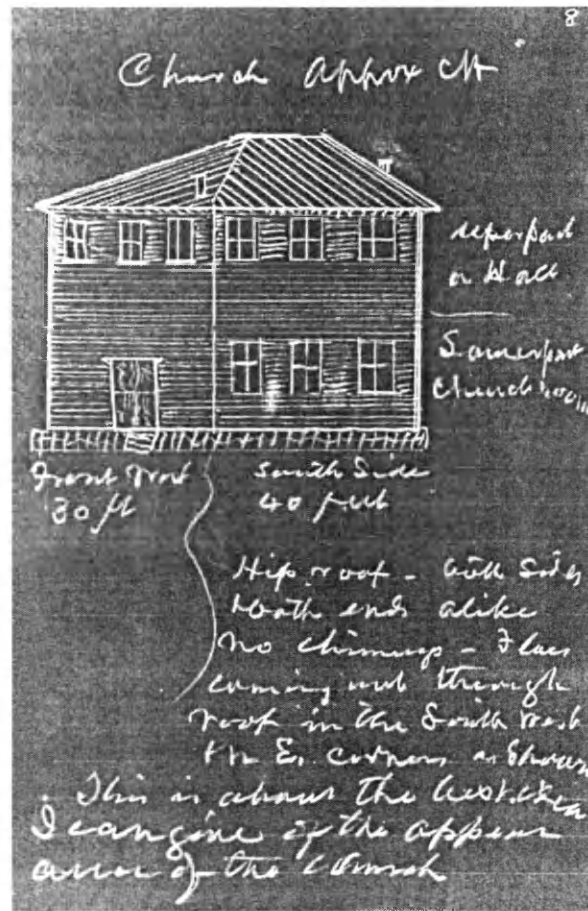
After nearly ten years of slow real estate sales and minimal development in the village, McDearmon was forced to sell off his properties at discounts in order to satisfy his many creditors. By 1854, the building and accompanying one-acre lot were sold to John West, the owner of the county poorhouse. West may have operated

the poorhouse in the building during his short ownership of the property (Marvel 2000:365; Pousson 2001:71).

In 1857, a fire destroyed the neighboring home of John Moffit, located on the lot directly north of the Union Academy and Hall site along Prince Edward Court House Road. The relatively close proximity of Moffit's home, and the fact that no buildings were assessed any tax value after 1857, has led some historians to speculate that the fire may have spread south to John West's property and damaged or destroyed the building there as well (Marvel 2000:365; Pousson 2001:71). The year after the fire, John Flood and Lewis Isbell, the trustees of the Union Academy, purchased the property from West, but how they used the property is unknown. In 1865, John Rosser purchased the one-acre Union Academy lot from the trustees (Marvel 2000:111). Shortly thereafter, the property was used as a by the Freedman's Bureau for a school for recently emancipated former slaves after the conclusion of the Civil War. By 1869, the Freedman's Bureau no longer operated its school on the lot, and a local Presbyterian Church purchased the property. Thereafter, the church's congregation met in the former schoolhouse building (Marvel 2000:300; Pousson 2001:72).

A nineteenth-century sketch of the building on file at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park indicates that the Presbyterian Church building was a large two-story frame building with a hipped roof. The front of the building faced west and measured 30 feet across. The building had no chimneys, although flu pipes

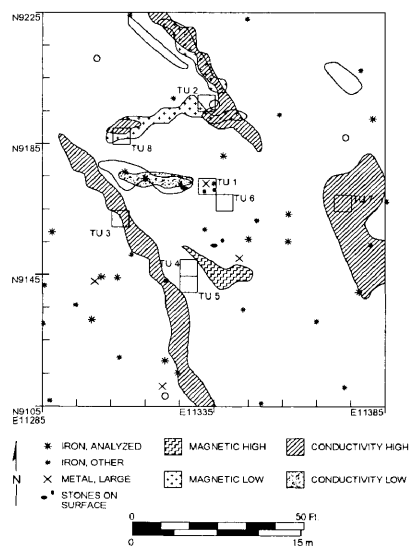
came through the roof at the southwest and northeast corners, suggesting that as many two stoves were used to heat the building rather than a fireplace (Figure 16).



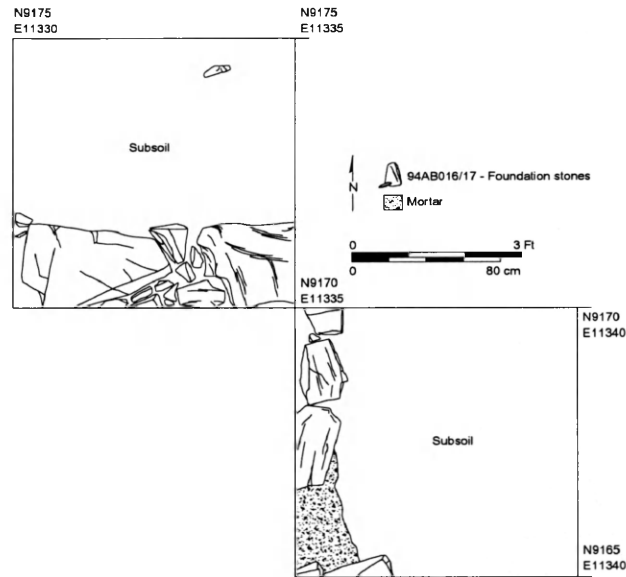
**Figure 16. Nineteenth-century sketch of the Presbyterian Church (Union Academy building) at Appomattox Court House (ACHNHP archives).**

A total of eight test units were excavated as part of the archaeological investigation of the property (Figure 17). The results of the excavations include the exposure of a portion of the building's corner (Figure 18), and the recovery of a large quantity of artifacts consisting primarily of window glass and nails were also recovered (Figure 19). Fragments of window glass accounted for 87% of the artifact

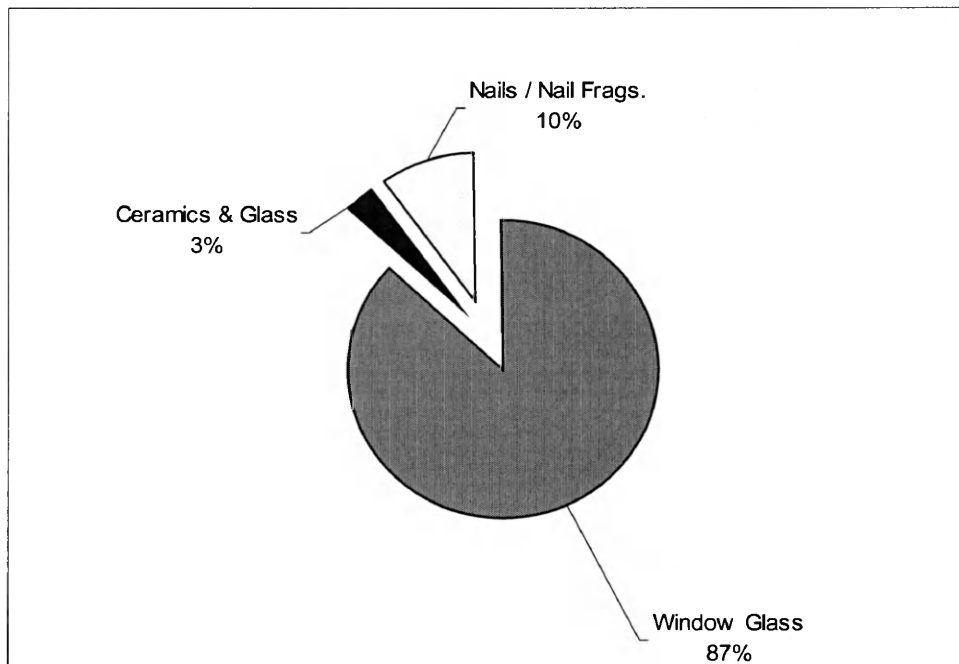
total, most of which were recovered from the four test units exhibiting structural evidence of the Union Academy building. Machine cut nails and other nail fragments accounted for 10% of the artifact total and were similarly recovered primarily from test units containing structural evidence of the building. The large quantity of window glass and nails suggests that upon abandonment of the site, little effort was made to salvage any of the building materials. In particular, the window glass scattered across the site area suggests that the building's windows may have been left in place, and simply broken out as part of the building's demolition.



**Figure 17. The locations of the archaeological tests units at the Union Academy and Hall site (C.Ablinger, CWF adopted from Bevan 2000).**



**Figure 18. Plan view of the stone foundation walls in test units at the Union Academy and Hall site (C.Ablinger, CWF).**



**Figure 19. Artifacts recovered from the Union Academy and Hall site.**

The absence of domestic debris at the site suggests a couple of possibilities; most obvious is that the site was not used as a residence, an interpretation that is consistent with the documentary history of the site. Alternatively, the lack of debris may also be the specific result of the use of the building as a church in the latter portion of its history. Reverent parishioners may have gone to extra efforts to maintain the cleanliness and orderliness of the property as a place where people came to worship. A sense of pride in their faith may have inspired the members of the church to pick up any ground litter and dispose of it elsewhere, rather than allowing it to accumulate around the church and detracting from its appearance. The cleanliness of the site is in stark contrast to the Academy Dwelling site where household debris was allowed to accumulate all around the property with no apparent attempt to keep the property clean. The fact that so little post-abandonment debris exists may also be due to legacy of the site a church. Although no longer used for services, the memory of the site as a church may have kept people from using the site as trash dump.

Of the small number of non-architectural finds, the recovery of a large trapezoidal-shaped, steel, measuring weight for a scale or balance was particularly intriguing (Figure 20). The weight was found along the exterior of the north foundation wall. Similar weights are typically used for measuring heavy quantities of commercial goods, a use which is inconsistent with the typical activities associated with a poorhouse, school, or church. Does the weight represent a hereto-unknown occupation at the site, or was there a secondary use of the property when the poor, freedmen, or churchgoers were not using the building? Or, perhaps there was a

secondary usage of the weight, possibly to weigh something down, or as a doorstop? Yet another possible interpretation is that the significance of the weight was not functional, but symbolic.



**Figure 20. Large trapezoidal-shaped steel measuring weight recovered from the Union Academy and Hall site (*M.Kostro, CWF*).**

As the site of several successive institutions established for the maintenance of the community's welfare, the Union Academy site is unique within the context of the village. While various residences, stores, taverns, and shops were scattered across the village, only the Union Academy and Hall site and the courthouse square were properties associated with community centers and local government respectively. A particularly striking result of the archaeological investigation of this site was the near total absence of any refuse on the property, save for demolition debris. The "cleanliness" of the site suggests considerable effort was exercised to maintain the property. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that the site was once a church, held in the esteem of its congregation, and was well maintained by that congregation.

While local histories of Appomattox Court House all stress the community's economic decline that ultimately led to the village's abandonment, the apparent property maintenance as suggested by the archaeological record of the Union Academy and Hall site suggests a prideful community, which diligently maintained their religious centers in spite of prevailing economic conditions.

### *Peers House Outbuildings*

The Peers House is a two-story wood frame structure situated on a hilltop overlooking the village, just beyond its western margin. Dr. William B. Abbitt and his wife Sarah financed the construction of the two-story frame house in 1855 (Marvel 2000:47). Shortly thereafter, however, Abbitt and his wife moved out of town, at which point David Plunkett, a local shopkeeper and postmaster, purchased Abbitt's frame house overlooking the village (Marvel 2000:51). Plunkett died mysteriously two year later, leaving behind his wife and four small children. Shortly thereafter, Mary Plunkett moved in with her parents near the train depot so that they could help raise her four small children, and she rented the former Abbitt house to George Peers in 1860 (Marvel 2000:71). That same year, Peers became the county clerk, and would hold that position for most of the next five decades (Marvel 2000:73). Peers eventually purchased the house, although the date of the transaction remains unknown. Peers, his wife Jennie, and their children would occupy the house for the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth century.

The house claims some notoriety as the site where the final shots of Confederate artillery were fired. Jenyns C. Battersby memorialized the event in a sketch that appeared on November 4, 1865 in *Harper's Weekly*. Peers' house and the outbuildings are all visible in the background of the illustration; however, it depicts the Confederate cannon facing in the wrong direction (Figure 21). Evidently, the artist made the sketch after the cannon had already been removed. Additionally, nineteenth-century sketches, photographs, and maps of the property similarly depict an assortment of outbuildings to the east and northeast of the dwelling house (Figures 22 & 23).



**Figure 21.** Jenyns C. Battersby's sketch of the last round fired by the Confederate Artillery from the front lawn of the Peers House (*Harper's Weekly*, November 4, 1865).

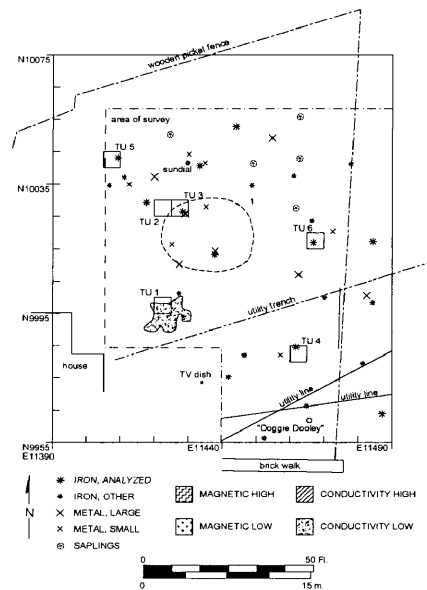


**Figure 22: George Frankenstein's painting of the rear of the Peers House from the northeast. Several outbuildings are clearly evident to the east and northeast of the building (*ACHNHP archives*).**

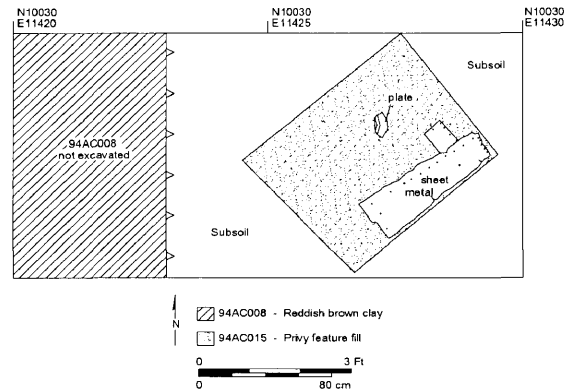


**Figure 23. Circa-1890 photograph by Adam Plecker of the Peers House taken from the west. Once again several outbuildings are evident in the rear yard of the house (*ACHNHP archives*).**

The archaeological assessment of the rear yard of the Peers property consisted of the excavation of six 5 x 5-foot square test units (Figure 24), two of which were located within a large circular depression to the northeast of the house. The investigations recovered evidence of at least one structure in the rear yard as well as a layer of nineteenth-century sheet refuse.



**Figure 24. The locations of the archaeological tests units and major geophysical anomalies present at the Peers House Outbuildings site (C. Alblinger, CWF adapted from Bevan 2000).**



**Figure 25. Plan view rectangular privy feature (C.Ablinger, CWF).**

The top of a rectangular-shaped feature believed to be a privy pit was found along the slope of the north bank of the depression (Figures 25 & 26). The feature measured approximately 3 x 4-feet, and was orientated at an approximate forty-five degree angle to the dwelling house. The uppermost layer of the feature fill consisted of a lens of clay that contained late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artifacts, including a 1927 penny. Below the lens, the fill changed dramatically to a mixture of ash, sand, and clay. Recovered from the interface between the two layers of feature fill were several large flat fragments of sheet metal, which was probably used as roofing or siding material.



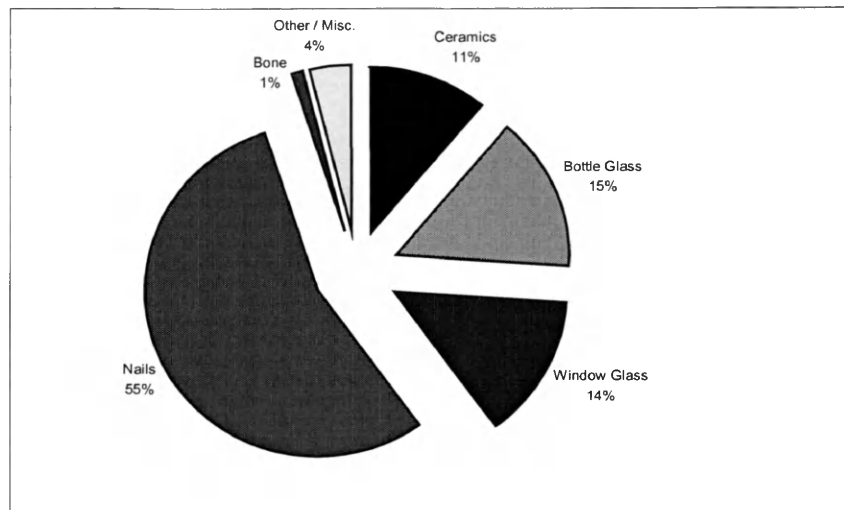
**Figure 26. Rectangular shaped privy feature at the Peers House. The sheet metal fragments are visible in the foreground (M.Kostro, CWF).**

Corroborating the conclusion of the feature as a privy is Adam Plecker's photograph (*c.*1890) of the property that depicts a small structure with a sloped roof resembling an outhouse or privy situated at an angle to the house approximating the angle of the feature (see Figure 23). The combination of the archaeological and photographic evidence strongly suggests that the rectangular feature is a privy that served the house from at least the 1890s and possibly through the 1920s. Furthermore, the location of the privy pit along the bank of the depression, rather than through its center, may be an indication that the privy was a secondary use of the depression. It is reasonable to expect that if a privy were the original function of the depression, it would have been excavated through its center, rather than through its side. Unfortunately, no information regarding the original function of the depression was identified during the 2001 field season. Nevertheless, there appear to have been significant changes in the layout and the types of structures, in the rear yard of the

Peers property in successive decades of the late nineteenth century. The relatively late date regarding the filling of the privy feature also indicates that modern conveniences, such as indoor plumbing, may not have been installed in the Peers House until fairly late in the house's occupation.

In the southern part of the rear yard of the Peers House, a layer of what may represent undisturbed nineteenth-century sheet refuse was detected below a layer of landscaping and driveway fill. In addition, the test unit to north of the house and on the crest of the hill yielded no evidence of any disturbance to the nineteenth-century deposits located there. From these contexts, a total of 1015 artifacts were recovered. Artifacts included a variety of ceramics, bottle glass, window glass, cut and wire nails, animal bone, bullets, a nipple wrench for a rifle tool kit, parts of a door lock, parts of an oil lamp, and a piece of cast iron pot, among other artifacts.

The majority of the artifacts from these contexts were architecturally related. Window glass and nails account for 14% and 55% respectively of the artifacts recovered from these three contexts (Figure 27). The recovery of such a high number of architecturally related materials is not surprising given the historical data that indicates a large number of outbuildings located east of the house in the nineteenth century. Although none of those structures have survived, artifacts related to their construction, repair, and demolition during the nineteenth century have obviously been preserved below ground.



**Figure 27. Artifacts recovered from nineteenth-century contexts at the Peers House.**

Household refuse composed the remainder of the artifact assemblage.

Ceramic artifacts accounted for 11% of all the nineteenth-century context artifacts and included a variety of common ware types including: decorated and undecorated whitewares, pearlware, yellowware, Albany-slipped stoneware, and porcelaneous wares. Fragments of various glass bottles were also recovered and accounted for 15% of all the artifacts from the nineteenth-century contexts. A very small fraction of animal bone was also recovered, but only accounted for 1% of the artifacts. The recovery of household debris from the rear yard of the house is consistent with the practice of disposing household refuse into sheet middens around dwelling and kitchen buildings. Similar to the Academy Dwelling House site, household trash continued to be dumped into the yard into the nineteenth century, although the filled privy suggests that at some point it became a receptacle for household refuse as well.

In summary, the results of the excavations included the identification of a late nineteenth-century privy feature and the recovery of nineteenth-century sheet refuse. The filled privy and sheet refuse combine to suggest how the rear yard of the Peers property changed over time. Initially, household trash apparently was discarded indiscriminately across the yard. This practice, however, changed with the installation of household plumbing. Once installed, the old privy became the primary trash receptacle, and the disposal of trash into the yard apparently stopped. This may have occurred as a late response to agrarian reform and sanitation advocates, or simply out of coincidence.

### *Conner-Sweeney Cabin Site*

The cabin site is currently situated within a large field located approximately one-half mile north of the courthouse village. According to brief interviews conducted in 1984 with nearby residents Miss Claudine O'Brien and Clyde G. O'Brien, M.D., both in their eighties at the time of the interviews, indicate that the land on which the cabin is currently situated was originally purchased by Jennings Conner from an individual named Sackwett (Engle 1984).

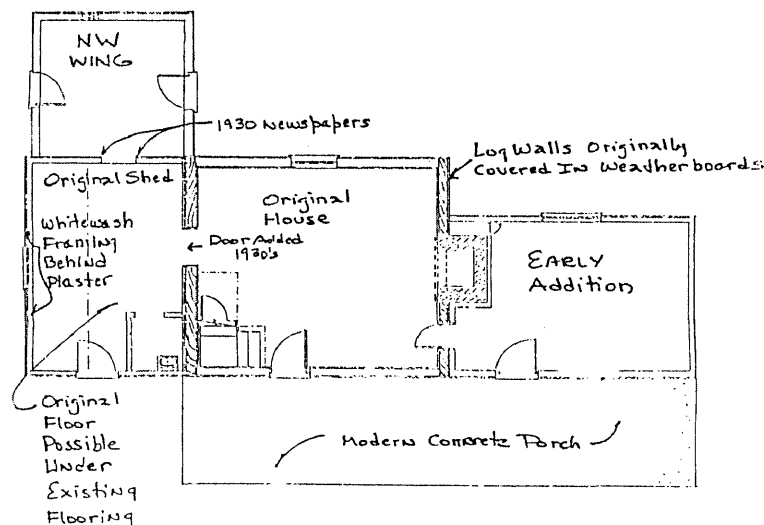


**Figure 28. Photograph of the Conner Sweeny Cabin Site looking northwest (*M.Kostro, CWF*).**

The accuracy of this account has yet to be confirmed, although a man named Charles Sackwett is known to have owned property within the courthouse village after the Civil War (Marvel 2000:305, 308). Sackwett is also the maiden name of George Peers' wife Jennie (Marvel 2000:294).

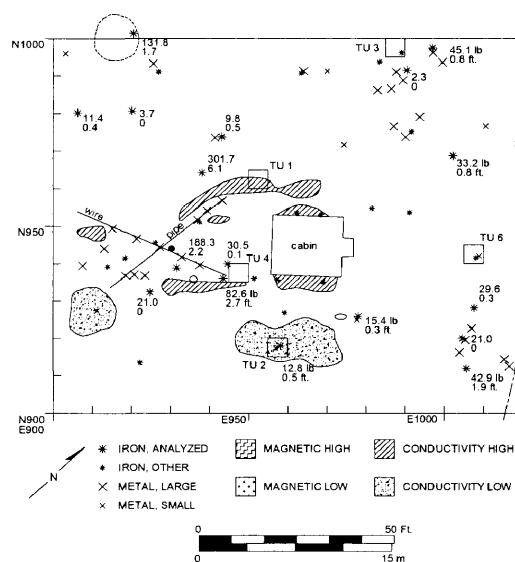
Jennings Conner built the original cabin sometime between 1860 and 1865 (Engle 1984; Pousson 2001:85; Marvel 2000:296). The cabin built by Conner was a one and a half stories on a fieldstone foundation with a single end chimney (Figure 28). All that is known about Jennings Conner is that he married Missouri Sweeney and that he served the Confederate Army, as indicated by the fact that he drew a Confederate pension in 1900. Nothing else is known about the property until 1927, when Jennings Conner's estate is listed as consisting of 70-acres, which included the property around the cabin (Pousson 2001:85).

During the occupation of the cabin, several extensive additions were added to the original structure that eventually more than doubled its original size (Figure 32). An architectural inspection of the building in the mid-1980s revealed that a room was added to the east side of the cabin early in its history. Another room, accessed only from the exterior, was also added to the west side of the cabin at an unknown date. An internal door between the original cabin and the western room was not added until the 1930's. According to Miss O'Brien and Dr. O'Brien, this room was used as a kitchen. The final addition was added to the north side of the kitchen addition sometime between 1930 and 1940. Electricity was not brought into the cabin until after World War II (Engle 1984). The architectural evidence and oral history both indicate that the house remained occupied until at least the middle of the twentieth century. The structure was restored back to its original size by the Park Service in 1986-1987.



**Figure 29. Floor plan of the expanded Conner-Sweeney Cabin in 1984, prior to its restoration (Engle 1984).**

The archaeological investigation of the Connor-Sweeney Cabin site consisted of the excavation of five 5 x 5-foot test units around the exterior of the cabin, and one 4 x 5-foot test unit within the interior of the structure (Figure 30). The results of the archaeological testing revealed extensive ground disturbance to the east, west, and north of the extant cabin, and no intact archaeological layers or features pre-dating the 1960s. In contrast, to the south of the cabin, a thin layer of sheet refuse that spanned the occupation of the cabin was identified.



**Figure 30. Location of test units and major geophysical anomalies at the Connor-Sweeney Cabin site (C. Alblinger, CWF adapted from Bevan 2000).**

Both nineteenth- and twentieth-century artifacts such as ceramics, glass, nails, a buckle, bullets, and other objects were recovered from the layer in roughly equal proportions suggesting that it may have accumulated over a long period of time spanning the occupation of the cabin from the 1860s through the middle of the

twentieth century. The debris was located directly in front of the front door of the cabin suggesting that trash was thrown out the front door. The relatively high proportion of twentieth-century debris suggests that this practice of trash removal out the front door may have continued well into the twentieth century. In contrast, at the Peers House, which was also occupied into the twentieth century, trash disposal into the yard did not regularly occur by this point.

### *Charles Duiguid Blacksmith Shop Site*

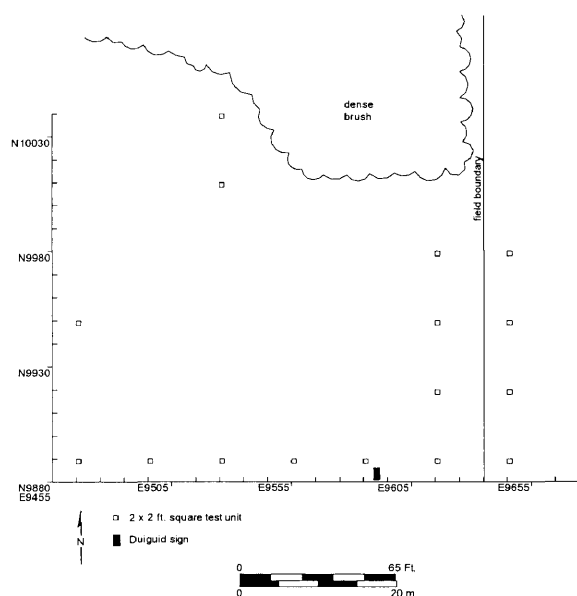
The Charles Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site is located on the north side of the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road just beyond the western edge of the courthouse village. In 1854, Charles Duiguid, a forty-nine year old freed slave, purchased a half acre lot on the west side of village lot 11 on which he then opened a blacksmith shop. By the following year, the size of Duiguid's property had increased to three acres. Taxes were assessed for the lot and a building between 1854 and 1856. No taxes were assessed for a building after 1856 until 1870 (Marvel 2000:42, 63, 74; Pousson 2001:62).

At an unknown date, Duiguid married a slave named Sarah. According to census records, Sarah Duiguid was thirty years old in 1870, while Charles Duiguid would have been sixty-five years old in that year. By 1870, the Duiguid household also included nine children ranging in age from one to fourteen. Among the Duiguid children, according to historian William Marvel, was a son named Jeff Davis

Duiguid. For that reason, Marvel suggests that Charles Duiguid may have been an unlikely Confederate sympathizer during the Civil War (Marvel 2000:84).

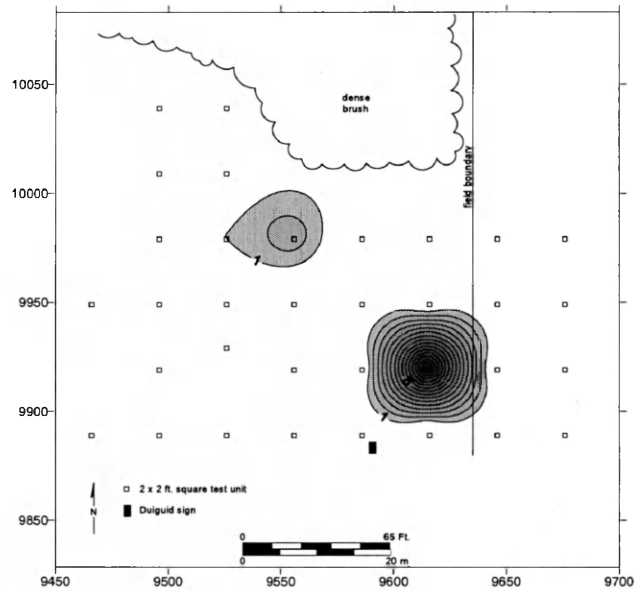
During the Civil War, Duiguid was apparently not living within the village. Census records for the year 1860 indicate that he was living elsewhere at the time. Nevertheless, he tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to get compensation for one of his cattle he claimed had been taken by Union forces in April 1865 (Pousson 2001:62). Duiguid apparently reestablished his blacksmith operation in 1870, possibly on the same location as his previous (1854) shop. The building, however, disappears from on the tax rolls after 1871 (Marvel 2000:303; Pousson 2001:62). In addition to the blacksmith shop, Duiguid and his family also lived on the property in a small frame house or cabin on the north half of the lot, behind his blacksmith shop. In 1890, a description of the property mentions a “Small frame one story House, chimney at the West end, low Shed at the end of the chimney” located on the northern portion of the lot. The same account also describes the blacksmith shop as a “Dilapidated Black Smith shop on the road, made of ??? with a bound roof” (Peers 1890). Duiguid’s descendants owned the property until the 1950s (Pousson 2001:62).

The primary objective of the archaeological survey of the site was to delineate the location of Charles Duiguid’s nineteenth-century blacksmith shop. The survey consisted of thirty-four 2 x 2-foot test units evenly spaced at thirty-foot intervals (Figure 31).

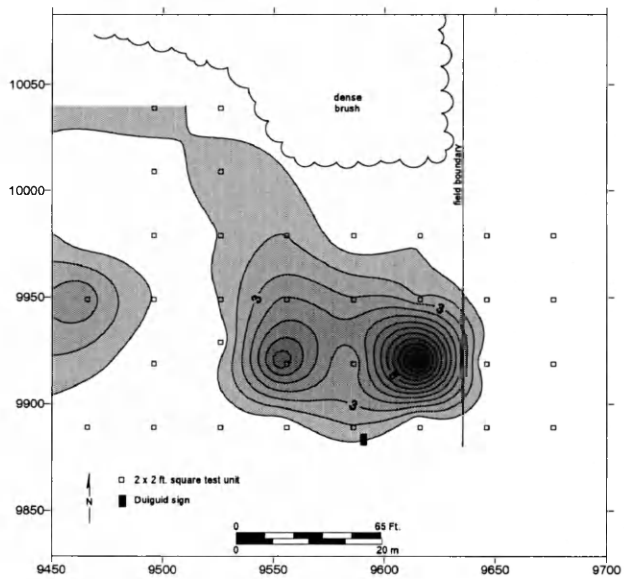


**Figure 31. Test Unit locations at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site (C. Alblinger, CWF).**

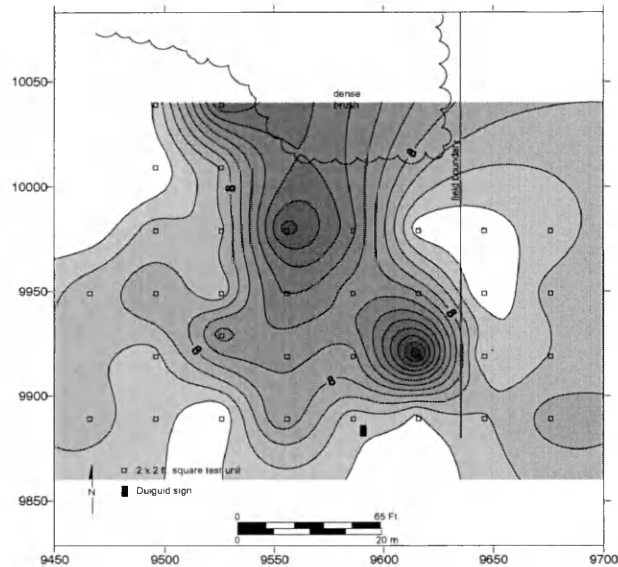
Although no structural features related to Duiguid’s shop were located during the survey, ample alternative evidence was recovered to suggest the location of the blacksmith shop. The best evidence of the location of the blacksmith shop was the discovery of a heavy concentration of slag, a by-product of blacksmithing. A second, but much smaller concentration of slag, was also recovered forty-feet to the northwest of the first concentration (Figure 32). The recovery of slag at these locations strongly suggests the location of a blacksmithing operation at or near these coordinates. No slag was recovered from anywhere else across the surveyed project area. The identification of two distinct concentrations may indicate two different shop sites – possibly Duiguid’s 1854-56 shop, and the later 1870 shop. Alternatively, the two slag concentrations may simply represent different activity areas around the same site.



**Figure 32. Distribution of slag across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**



**Figure 33. Distribution of iron objects across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**



**Figure 34. Distribution of nails across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**

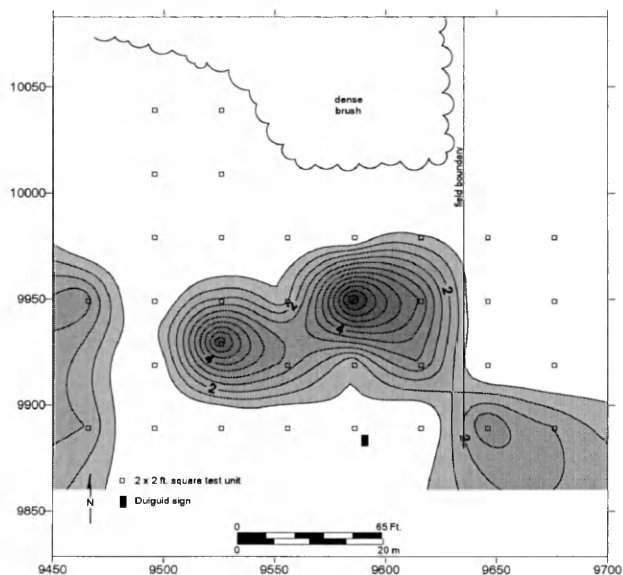
Additional evidence corroborating the location of Duiguid's shop was the distribution of iron objects (Figures 33). These iron objects included mostly wrought or forged fragments of unknown function, most of which were probably fragments of leftover scrap or unfinished products. The distribution of these iron objects closely matches the distribution of slag. Similarly, the concentration of nails and nail fragments also coincided with those of slag and iron scrap (Figure 34). A second concentration of nail fragments also coincided with the smaller concentration of slag at that same location. Nails are significant because they can represent either a potential product of the blacksmith, or they may have been used in the construction of the actual shop. Regardless, their coincidence with slag and iron objects suggests an association between the nails and Duiguid's blacksmith shop.

By plotting the distributions of slag, iron, and nails across the project area, a clear pattern emerges. The coincidence of each of these distributions at the same location is strong evidence to suggest that Duiguid's shop was located at or near those coordinates. The identification of a smaller, less dense concentration of slag and nails to the northwest also hints at a second shop or a possibly a secondary activity area within the same site.

In addition to the evidence of Duiguid's blacksmithing operation, the archaeological survey also recovered a wide scatter of domestic artifacts and architectural materials including ceramics, bottle glass, window glass, and animal bone. The ceramics fragments at the site included a variety of ware types common in the late nineteenth century as well as varieties that are more commonly associated with late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century sites. Among these ceramics was a single sherd of Creamware (*tpq* = 1762), and a thirty-nine sherds of Pearlware (*tpq* = 1775). The implication of their recovery is that the occupation of the lot may have begun much earlier than any of the other sites investigated as part of this study, and may potentially pre-date the formation of the village.

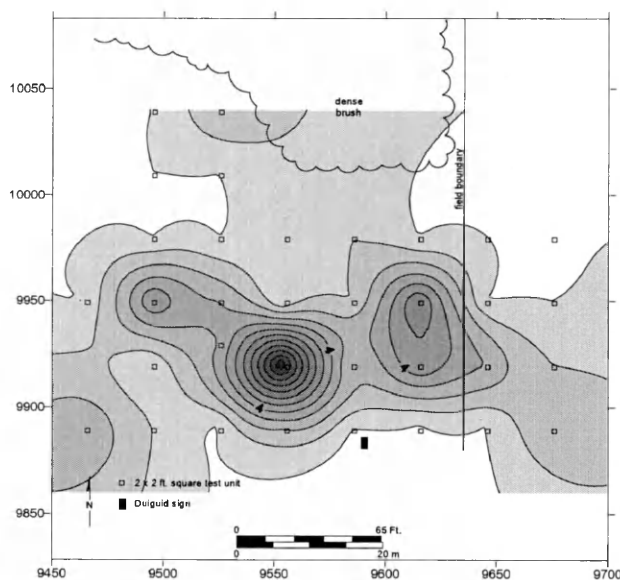
It is unknown from the historical background of the property if any other individual or individuals had occupied the lot prior to Duiguid's purchase of the property in 1854. However, the available historical information does indicate that in addition to his blacksmith shop, Duiguid also maintained a residence for himself and his family on the property at the same time during which he operated his blacksmith shop. Accordingly, the recovery of the domestic artifacts, the mid to late nineteenth-

century ware types in particular, are most likely related to Duiguid's residence on the lot. In attempting to isolate the possible location of Duiguid's dwelling on the site, the horizontal distribution of window glass fragments was plotted across the project area (Figure 35). Glass windows were common features in residential and retail structures, but were less likely to have been included in industrial structures, such as blacksmith shops. At the Duiguid site, window glass fragments were concentrated northeast of the predicted location of the blacksmith shop within a broad 50 x 125-foot area close to the approximate center of the project area. A second concentration was located along the western edge of the project area and appears to continue to the west beyond the project area boundaries, suggesting the possibility that a second structure may have been also located there.

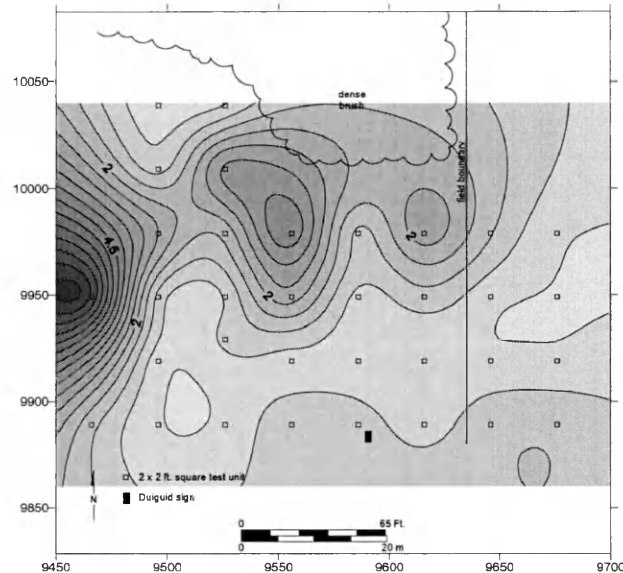


**Figure 35. Distribution of window glass across the project area at Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**

Domestic artifacts, refined earthenwares in particular, were also plotted according to their horizontal distribution in order to determine if there existed a correlation between the distributions of ceramics and window glass. Earlier ware types (Creamware and Pearlware) were plotted separately from the later ware types (whiteware) in order to try and determine if there were any temporal differences in how the artifacts were distributed across the project area. Whiteware fragments were initially plotted, since they were the ones most likely associated with Duiguid's residence (Figure 36). The highest concentration of whiteware was found in direct association with the high concentration of window glass fragments in the center of the project area (see Figure 35).



**Figure 36. Distribution of whiteware fragments across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**



**Figure 37. Distribution of Creamware and Pearlware fragments across the project area at the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site.**

In contrast, the combined plot of the Creamware and Pearlware fragments was centered on an entirely different location, along the western boundary of the project area (Figure 37). Interestingly, the Creamware / Pearlware distribution corresponds with the secondary concentration of window glass that was illustrated in Figure 35. These results suggest that not only did two domestic structures exist within the project area, but also that the structures may have dated to two different time periods.

In summary, the archaeological survey of the former Duiguid property recovered substantial artifactual evidence to suggest the location of Charles Duiguid's blacksmith shop. Specifically, the archaeological survey recovered a heavy concentration of slag, a byproduct of blacksmithing, within a small discrete locus of the project area. In addition, a second, but smaller locus was also identified. The loci may represent two different blacksmith sites, or different activity areas within the

same site. Concentrations of other artifacts, iron fragments and nails in particular, also corresponded with the locations of the slag deposits.

The survey also recovered a broad scatter of domestic and architectural refuse from all across the project area. The comparison of the distribution of different artifact types suggests that two temporally distinctive structures may have been situated within the project area. A concentration of mid to late nineteenth-century ceramics and window glass was located northwest of the predicted blacksmith shop location, within the approximate center of the project area. A second concentration of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century ceramics and window glass was recovered from the west end of the project area. The full extent of this concentration, however, was not determined during the current study. Additional interval testing continuing to west is recommended in order to fully understand the dimensions of this earlier concentration. Nevertheless, based on the results of the current study, the archaeological evidence suggests that two structures were situated within the project area, one at the turn of the nineteenth century, and a second structure in the second half of the nineteenth century. The late nineteenth-century structure may have been the home of Duiguid, his wife, and their nine children.

### *Pryor Wright House Site*

The Pryor Wright House site is located within in an open field immediately to the south of the reconstructed courthouse within the village core. Previous to the formation of Appomattox County, Pryor Wright, Jr. was a well-to-do local farmer

who lived with his family in the nearby house, built by Wright in 1823 and known today as the Mariah Wright House. After the village was laid out in 1845, Wright was among the first individuals to acquire village property, when he purchased the west portions of lots 24 and 32 directly south of the new courthouse building. By 1849, Wright had constructed a two-story brick house on the lots, facing north onto the courthouse square. Between 1849 and 1869 the value of the house was consistently valued at \$500 (Pousson 2001:66; Marvel 2000:16-17).

Five years after moving into his new brick home, Wright died at the age of sixty-four. Upon her husband's death, Mariah Wright and her children moved out of the brick house on the courthouse square and relocated a short distance back to the house that they had lived in prior to the founding of the village. After the Wright family moved out, it is unclear if the brick house in the village remained vacant, or if it was rented out to tenants (Pousson 2001:66; Marvel 2000:47).

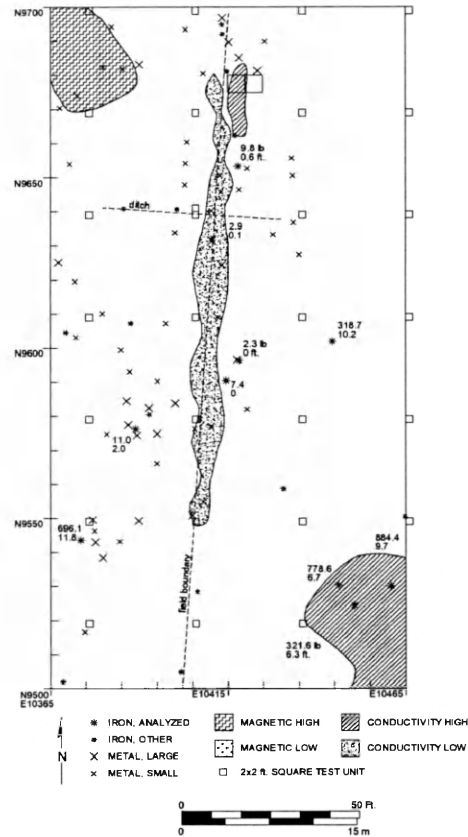
By 1870 the property had been acquired by an absentee landlord from New York, Joseph Dixon, who owned a total of eleven lots and parts of two others in the village (Marvel 2000:304). According to local historian Nathaniel Featherston, Cornelia Hill may have occupied the house at this time. The 1870 census indicates that a dry-goods merchant named C.Hill was living in town with his family and had no property of his own, supporting the possibility that Hill was living in Wright's former brick house. After 1870, the value of the house decreased to \$400 (cited in Pousson 2001:66).

William Rosser, a local blacksmith, purchased the Pryor Wright house and property in 1876, by which time the value of the house decreased again to \$250. Featherstone also suggests that the house was occupied by Gus Watson, a black man who was employed as a blacksmith in the shop owned by Rosser (cited in Pousson 2001:66). The value of the building decreased again in 1881, and was now listed in the tax records as a brick store. By the 1890s the former Pryor Wright House, now described as an old storehouse, had been destroyed by a fire (Pousson 2001:66).

An aerial photograph of Appomattox Court House dated 1937 does not depict any structures or any obvious ruins of structures to the south of the courthouse square (Figure 38). The photo does reveal, however, a berm separating the house lot from a recently plowed agricultural field to the east.



**Figure 38.** 1937 aerial photograph of Appomattox Court House (*ACHNHP archives*).



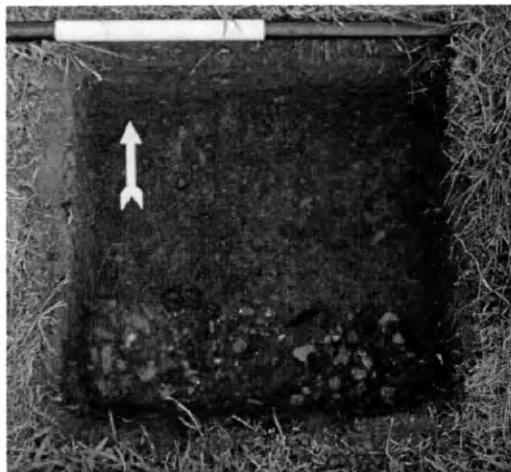
**Figure 39. The locations of test units at the Pryor Wright House site (C. Alblinger, CWF adapted from Bevan 2000).**

The investigation consisted of two 5 x 5-foot test units, and twenty-eight 2 x 2-foot test units spaced apart at 30-foot intervals across the project area (Figure 39). In the north end of the project area, the excavations exposed a wide and dense deposit of brick rubble (Figure 40) that was likely demolition debris from the destruction of the Pryor Wright House, which had been constructed entirely of brick.



**Figure 40. Photograph of the brick rubble at the Pryor Wright House site (*M.Kostro, CWF*).**

Two additional subsurface features were also identified in the course of the survey. A feature filled with architectural debris consisting of large chunks of plaster and ash was partially exposed below the plowzone in a test unit at the northern boundary of the project area (Figures 41). The feature was clearly cut into subsoil, although its extent and depth remain undetermined. The presence of architectural debris within the interior of the feature suggests that the feature may have filled with rubble from the fire that burned Pryor Wright House, or the subsequent demolition of the house.



**Figure 41. Photograph of the feature filled with architectural debris (*M. Kostro, CWF*).**

In addition, a filled ditch feature oriented east-west was located below the plowzone within a test unit at the approximate mid-point of the project area (Figure 42). Close inspection of the ground surface around the filled-in ditch feature revealed a slight depression at those coordinates extending approximately 20-feet east and west from the small portion of the ditch exposed in the test unit. Surprisingly, no trace of the ditch was detected during the geophysical survey of the property. The ditch is possibly a marker intended to denote the boundary between lots 24 and 32.

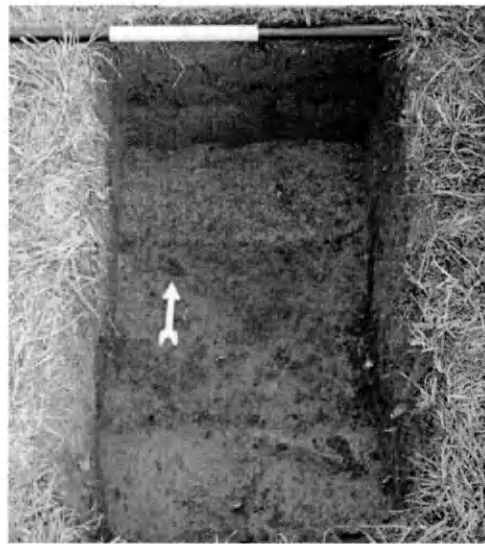


Figure 42. Photograph of the ditch feature (*M.Kostro, CWF*).

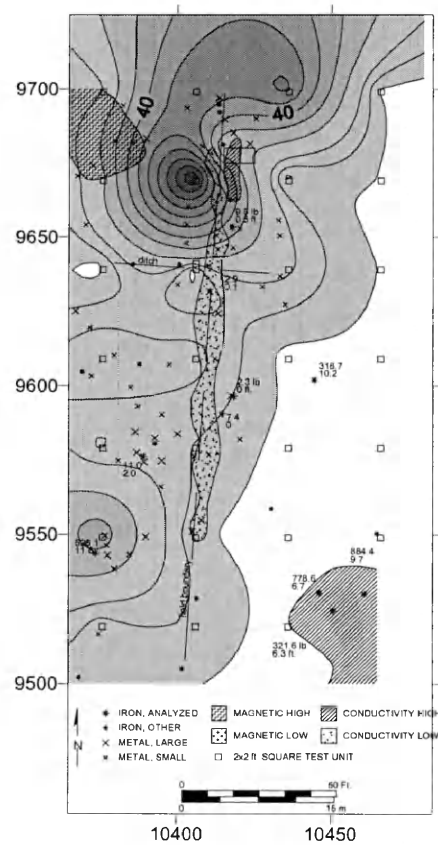


Figure 43. Horizontal distribution of artifacts within the project area at the Pryor Wright House site.

In addition to these features, a concentration of nineteenth-century domestic refuse was recovered from the north half of the project area and to the west of the earthen berm (Figure 43). Their deposition at that location suggests an association with the Pryor Wright, Jr.'s house, but also reflects the variations in land use around the capital in the late nineteenth century. To the west of the berm, on the site of the house, the artifacts formed a distinct concentration. To the east of the berm, however, no substantial development ever occurred in that portion of the village, and is attested to by the paucity of artifacts recovered from there. Most likely this portion remained agricultural after the formation of the village in spite of its choice location and McDearmon's efforts to develop it.

To summarize the archaeological investigations, strong evidence of additional structures, representing the entire chorology of Appomattox Court House, from early settlement to the mid-twentieth century were found. The structures included domestic buildings, outbuildings, and commercial structures, as well as religious and civic buildings. In addition to the discovery of the structural features, spatial patterning of sheet refuse deposits suggests that the disposal of household trash in the yards of homes of all economic standing was a very common practice in the village into the twentieth century. An interesting contrast is the case of the Union Academy and Hall site, which had very little domestic debris. The fact the building was once a church is hypothesized to be the determining factor that prevented trash from accumulating around the building. As a church property, and a strong community symbol, the desire to keep clean and maintain the structure overruled the temptation of discard

trash on the property. It is interesting that similar care was not evident at any of the domestic sites within the village, in spite of the agrarian reform movements that were advocating cleanliness in the appearance of homes and yards. The lack of influence that these agrarian reforms had on Appomattox Court House suggests that the locals were either not persuaded as to the benefits of cleanliness, or that they were not aware of the movements. The fact that some effort to maintain the church was made, however, does suggest that there was at least an aesthetic appeal to a well-maintained landscape, even if it was not practiced at home.

The archaeological investigations described herein are just the beginning of the potential for archaeological research at Appomattox Court House. Additional archaeological research can lead to the discovery of other undocumented sites that pre-date the formation of the village. Similarly, focused excavations can also enlighten on the subject of those typically excluded from historical documents, most notably slaves, but other minorities as well, including free blacks, women, immigrants, among others. To complement the archaeological research, additional primary source research is desperately needed. Through a combination of the two, it could be possible to develop phased plan maps of the village that illustrate the whole history of the community from stagecoach stop to monument.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The public interpretation of Appomattox Court House has traditionally been focused on preserving a public memory of the surrender meeting, the preceding military engagement, and the paroling of soldiers in the weeks after the surrender. The narrow emphasis on only these components of the village reflects the ideals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Lost Cause movement that sought to memorialize the Civil War by honoring its veterans in the spirit of reconciliation after Reconstruction. The long lasting result has been a public memory of the Civil War that was nearly completely from a military perspective, without any analysis or interpretation of the war's causes or its impacts. Beginning in the 1990s, however, National Park Service personnel and Civil War scholars began to broaden the study of the war to include previously neglected themes.

The recent archaeological excavations at Appomattox Court House represent the first attempt to go beyond Lost Cause-inspired interpretations at the park by focusing on the cultural landscape of the village and its civilian occupation, rather than only focusing on the village's significance as the site of the surrender. Previously, the civilian community at Appomattox Court House was at best perceived as a backdrop for the interpretation of the surrender meeting, and at worst, it was viewed as a distraction and was completely ignored. While the surrender meeting is certainly the most important single event to occur at Appomattox Court House and

should remain the focal point of the interpretive program, this does not mean that it is inappropriate to include additional themes into the displays and exhibits of the park. By including exhibits on the causes, impacts, and other alternative perspectives, the experience of the visitor is made richer by exposing them to a broader interpretation of the war, not just a military conflict but as a consequence of the historic social, economic, and political maneuverings that motivated a country divide and battle against itself, and most remarkably to reunite.

The results of these initial excavations were relatively small in scale when compared to data recovery excavations, or even systematic surveys of large areas. Nevertheless the excavations were extensive enough to demonstrate the intactness of the archaeological record as well as hinting at some potential avenues of future archaeological and historical research. In general, the results indicate a much more crowded landscape at the time of the surrender than is currently reconstructed or interpreted. The excavations also suggest variation in how different properties were maintained over time based on ownership, economic status, and site function. From a thematic standpoint, the results can also be broken down into several themes that could be included as guidelines for future Park Service interpretations. Among them are: pre-Appomattox Court House settlement of Clover Hill; town planning and development; slavery; free blacks in the community; the lives of local merchants and government officials, local elites, and poor and middling farmers; commercial and industrial development of Appomattox Court House; post-war government institutions; and the post-war economic decline of the community. Some of the

themes are represented by only one site, while other themes are represented by multiple sites. Some sites are also potential contributors to more than one theme. Each of these could be further explored through the examination of additional not yet investigated sites, and the re-examination of previously excavated sites.

Previously, the settlement of Clover Hill, the community that preceded the formation of Appomattox Court House in 1845 was only known from the property records and limited archaeological testing of the Clover Hill tavern complex and the Mariah Wright House (Pousson 2001). The 2001 archaeological assessment of the park, however, unexpectedly identified at least one other potential pre-1845 site within the village. While searching for evidence of Charles Duiguid's blacksmith shop, an isolated scatter of late eighteenth-century creamware and pearlware ceramic fragments was located at the extreme west end of the village. Unfortunately, at this time, no known historical associations have been linked between the archaeological evidence and the late eighteenth / early nineteenth century occupation of the property. Nevertheless, the identification of the site represents significant new information on the nature and extent of Clover Hill's settlement that is currently poorly understood.

In 1845, the village of Appomattox Court House was carved out of Clover Hill as the county seat of newly formed Appomattox County. Although the documentary record is clear as to the village developer's intentions for the subdivision of the village, how well those intentions were imposed on the landscape is not well known. Physical evidence of the division of lots within the village was identified at the Pryor Wright site located on the courthouse square. Test excavations

of the property identified a filled in ditch feature oriented east-west through the property. Comparisons with the 1845 village plan revealed that the ditch corresponded very closely with a property division between two lots within the village. Previously, how the different properties were demarcated was unknown. However, the identification of the ditch feature at the Pryor Wright site strongly suggests that lots may have been partitioned with boundary ditches to indicate the extent of the individual village lots. The fact that the property was so clearly marked raises some interesting questions regarding the early development of Appomattox Court House. Why bother expending the time and money to divide the individual village lots so clearly? One hypothesis is that the village's principal landholder, Samuel McDearmon, expected swift sales of the village lots. By distinctly indicating what those properties consisted of, McDearmon hoped to avoid property disputes between potential buyers that could slow sales. If this was the case, it appears that it was in vain, as property sales of Appomattox Court House never came close to McDearmon's expectations.

In addition, excavations at the Academy Dwelling site, Union Academy and Hall site, Peers House, and Pryor Wright House site all identified significant evidence of the above ground development of Appomattox Court House. While the present-day reconstruction of the village exhibits only a few scattered structures, the archaeological investigation of the village revealed evidence of a variety of structures that would have made the landscape of the village to appear much more crowded. In addition, the excavations at the Peers House revealed evidence of significant changes

over time in the variety and type of structures present on that property, indicating the dynamic nature of the village's landscape in spite of nineteenth-century economic struggles, and twentieth-century interpretations.

Slave labor was undoubtedly a very important component of Appomattox County's rural economy prior to the war. Unfortunately, none of the 2001 excavations was expressly focused on a known slave site to understand further the lives of enslaved African Americans in the community, although slave quarter sites are known on other village and county properties and have been tagged for future investigation (Allan Cooper, personal communication). Nevertheless, among the 2001 sites, the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site represents an interesting opportunity. Charles Duiguid, himself a former slave, was married to a slave, and his children were born into slavery. The archaeological survey of the Duiguid Blacksmith Shop site revealed evidence of possible domestic occupation coinciding with the known occupation of the site by the Duiguid family (in addition to the earlier late eighteenth- / early nineteenth-century occupation). The site represents the opportunity to study this unique marriage of a freed man to an enslaved woman in the years prior to the outbreak of war.

In addition, excavations of the Union Academy and Hall site revealed the architectural ruins of a structure used as a school by the Freedmen's Bureau after the war. The treatment and lives of freed people in the immediate post-war period in Appomattox County is currently poorly understood. Institutions such as the Freedman's Bureau were established to aid in the transition. Accordingly the further

examination of the site represents a very important opportunity to examine the war's impact on African Americans in Appomattox.

The domestic occupation of the village included a variety of individuals from a variety of economic and social backgrounds. Excavations at the Academy Dwelling, Peers House, Conner-Sweeney Cabin, Duiguid Blacksmith Shop, and Pryor Wright House site all represent the diversity and complexity of the village's nineteenth-century demography. While the current study focused on the basic identification of these sites, future research should include comparisons between the different sites to understand better how different members of the community were involved in the greater market economy of the Virginia Piedmont.

These are just of the few potential themes that the 2001 archaeological excavations were able to bring to light. At the time of the village's reconstruction, each of sites was deliberately excluded from the reconstruction because it did not conform to the Lost Cause's ideals on how to memorialize the Civil War. This study, along with studies from other Civil War parks (Martin Seibert 2001; Shackel 2000a, 2003; Temkin 2000) illustrated how such a perspective inhibits the interpretation of other aspects of the war and its impacts. While the intention of the park's developers to dedicate the interpretation of Appomattox to the nation's reunification and the memory of its combatants was certainly admirable, the scholarship and interpretation of the war should be expanded to include its causes and its impact, and should be included in future displays and interpretations alongside the presentations of the war's military history.

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