

**Poplar Forest Archaeology:
Studies in African American Life**
Excavations and Analysis of Site A, Southeast Terrace and
Site B, Southeast Curtilage
June 2003-June 2004

Report to the Public Welfare Foundation

By:
Barbara J. Heath, Randy Lichtenberger, Keith Adams, Lori Lee and
Elizabeth Paull
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Introduction and Historic Overview

In 2003-2004, the Department of Archaeology and Landscapes received funding from the Public Welfare Foundation to support ongoing archaeological investigations of two important plantation sites. The Southeast Terrace is an artificial landform lying southeast of the Jeffersonian octagonal house and due south of two mid-nineteenth century brick structures. It contains a multicomponent, stratified site ranging in date from the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. This site has been designated Site A in the following report. Immediately east of the terrace in an area known as the Southeast Curtilage, archaeologists have located a second, possibly related site known as Site B. The Southeast Curtilage is bounded to the west by an historic fenceline that forms the outer edge of the terrace (Figure 1). This fenceline falls approximately 20-30 ft. east of a fence documented in an 1813 survey of the property, and is believed to be a later replacement for that important structuring component of the early nineteenth-century landscape.

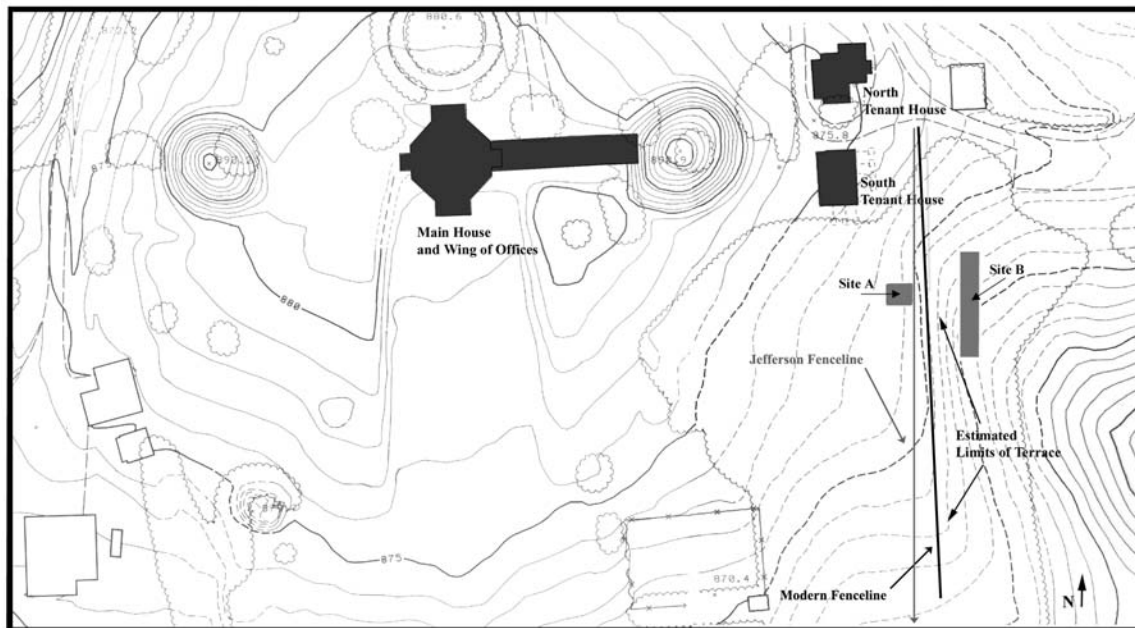


Figure 1: Site Map.

The Southeast Terrace has been historically associated with plantation laborers. Enslaved workers and free tenants (both European and African American) lived in the adjacent brick houses since the middle of the nineteenth century, with oral tradition holding that the northern structure originally housed an overseer and his family, while enslaved families occupied the house to the south. Following Emancipation, workers employed on the property resided in these structures (now known as the North and South Tenant Houses) a practice continued by the Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest until the late 1990s. Excavation at Site A has yielded yard and garden features created by post-Emancipation tenants, two features associated with an antebellum slave cabin, a thick layer of cultural fill believed to have been used to create the level terrace prior to 1820, and an as-yet-unidentified cultural stratum beneath the fill that appears to date to the early-nineteenth century. Excavations from 2002-2003 yielded thousands of artifacts that relate to each of the periods of occupation. While cataloguing and analysis of a portion of

the site is complete, much research remains unfinished. One focus of the 2004-2005 grant cycle will be to catalogue, analyze and conserve the remaining artifacts from this site before removing the fill layer. This will enable us to more fully understand the history and use of the area during the ante- and post-bellum periods.

Archaeologists working at Site B in the summer of 2003 and spring of 2004 have discovered evidence of a late eighteenth to early nineteenth-century structure that was previously unknown. The area was plowed into the twentieth century, yet well-preserved features survive beneath the approximately 1.0 ft. thick plow zone. Currently, only a small portion of the site has been exposed. Within this area, a line of brick and stone rubble from a foundation wall bounds a deep deposit of fill. The fill contains building materials and domestic artifacts and extends to the east for a distance of 22 ft. Together, these features suggest the presence of a large, substantially built structure with a below-grade floor or shallow cellar. The structure's northern and southern limits have not yet been determined. Testing undertaken north of the structural remains revealed a deposit of mottled red clay matching the fill deposit on the Southeast Terrace. This seals a layer of dark brown loam. The presence of these soil layers suggests that the terracing activities may have extended further east than was previously believed, and that an intact (unplowed) soil layer survives beneath it. Determining the size, function and lifespan of the building at Site B is a major goal for 2004-2005.

Sites A and B lie midway between Jefferson's 1806 retreat house and the location of the "old Plantation," the locus of settlement established by Peter Randolph or John Wayles in the years prior to Jefferson's ownership of the property. Both sites lie just north of the documented route of an early nineteenth-century plantation road, and were therefore well situated for the development of plantation housing, transportation-related structures like stables, or storage facilities that needed to be easily accessible by wagon or cart. It is clear that the archaeological evidence from both sites has the potential to provide fresh evidence of early plantation life, and will further our understanding of how institutionalized slavery and individual African Americans shaped the Poplar Forest landscape.

African Americans at Poplar Forest

A century of Enslavement: 1760s-1860s

Enslaved African Americans formed the backbone of the plantation economy from at least as early as the mid-1760s until the 1860s. John Wayles, the first owner of Poplar Forest known to have used enslaved labor on the plantation, left a single enslaved family and a number of young single adult men and women living at Poplar Forest to his heirs, Thomas and Martha Jefferson. During the Jefferson period of ownership (1773-1826), the enslaved population grew. By 1819, 94 people, of which more than half were children, lived and worked on the property. These individuals performed a variety of plantation jobs, from the agricultural round of animal husbandry, clearing and enclosing land, planting, harvesting and transporting crops, to blacksmithing, coopering and carpentry, textile production, gardening and domestic service on the nearly 5,000 acre estate (Chambers 1993; Heath 1999a). Excavations at two quarter sites (c. 1770-1812) that largely predate Jefferson's regular visits to the property and at the Wing of Offices, attached dependencies located on the east side of Jefferson's house, provide details about housing, material culture, and work routines on the property during the Jefferson period

of ownership, but leave many questions unanswered (Heath n.d., 1999a; Kelso et al. 1991). Little is yet known about housing or domestic life for enslaved families after Jefferson began making regular visits to Poplar Forest. No quarters dating between 1812-1826 have as yet been investigated.

Thomas Jefferson left nearly 1100 acres of the Poplar Forest plantation to his grandson, Frances Eppes. By 1826, Jefferson had also transferred ownership of at least thirteen people to his son-in-law, and through him, to his grandson. Among them were Hannah, Jefferson's cook and housekeeper, and four of her sons; Hannah's sister Sally Hubbard and five children; and Maria and her two children.

From 1823, when Francis Eppes moved to Poplar Forest, until 1828, when he sold the property and relocated with his family to Florida, the number of enslaved individuals he owned varied from as many as 23 to as few as 12. In addition to the people he owned, Eppes also borrowed enslaved laborers from family members for various purposes (Marmon, part 3, 1991). This practice may account for some of the fluctuation in population. To date, no slave quarters dating to the Eppes period have been investigated, and it is likely that enslaved families continued to use cabins constructed during the Jefferson era.

Documentary evidence records the names of six individuals that served the Eppes family at Poplar Forest: Peter, a cooper, Suckey (Susan Gillette) and Nancy, nurses, Lucy and Josephine, house servants, and Cato. Cato and most of the other unnamed slaves were probably field laborers. Jefferson had relocated Susan Gillette, the daughter of Monticello slaves Edward and Jane Gillette, to Poplar Forest in 1824. Her brother, Israel Jefferson, served as a domestic servant at Poplar Forest during Jefferson's lifetime (Marmon part 3, 1991; Stanton 2000:95).

Poplar Forest's enslaved community underwent a dramatic transformation with the sale of the property in 1828 to William Cobbs. He and his wife, Marian Scott Cobbs, brought men and women of their own to work the land and serve their domestic needs. Cobbs received three slaves from his father during his father's lifetime, and five additional individuals from his father's estate in 1829. When he purchased Poplar Forest, Cobbs may have acquired some bondpeople from Francis Eppes as well. An 1829 tax list indicates that he owned 19 slaves, yet how many of these people formerly were the property of Jefferson or Eppes is unclear. Oral history, substantiated by meager historical documentation, holds that Cobbs purchased "Aunt Katie" who may have been enslaved by Thomas Jefferson. No further documentation sheds light on the degree of continuity of the enslaved community in the transition from the Eppes to Cobbs residencies (Marmon, part 3, 1991).

Cobbs's daughter Emma married Edward S. Hutter in 1840. Although William Cobbs kept separate title to his slaves until his death, by 1842, E.S. Hutter had assumed effective management of all enslaved people at Poplar Forest.

Cobbs and Hutter organized the labor of the enslaved community like many other antebellum plantation owners throughout the Upper South. They divided the work force into field and house slaves. Hutter did not split the property into quarters as Jefferson had done, since the reduced acreage necessitated a smaller work force. The number of

Cobbs/Hutter field hands ranged from 11 to 19, with consistently low totals after 1848. The gender ratio in the fields was usually half male to half female. At most, Cobbs and Hutter purchased eight to ten slaves and later sold or transferred eight individuals.

One very significant change in the antebellum period was Hutter's practice of hiring out enslaved laborers. The leasing of slaves was a common practice in Virginia in the 1840s and it increased in the 1850s. Market conditions and Poplar Forest crop requirements determined the number of slaves expendable for leasing annually. Hutter leased slaves to local planters and businesses on a regular basis. The percentage of slaves that were hired out in 1853-54 went from 10% to 39%, with the number of leased slaves exceeding those working in the Poplar Forest fields in 1854.

In the period 1844-1854, the years Hutter kept a farm journal, the number of domestic slaves ranged from seven to eleven. Only the enslaved woman Mima served as a house servant for the entire period 1844-1854. Other house servants died, or Hutter transferred them to the fields or leased them (Marmon part 3, 1991).

The Cobbs/Hutter enslaved community, in contrast with the community formed during Jefferson's years of ownership, was not characterized by substantial family growth. Slave mortality, particularly among young children, was considerably greater during this period. In consonance with the paternalistic ethos that existed in the South in the final decades preceding the Civil War, Hutter and his descendants often referred to the enslaved as their "black family." Letters document expressions of sadness at the death and illnesses of particular slaves and the Farm Journal documents some assistance that the white family provided to enslaved African Americans. However, in his journal, Edward Hutter continued to list the enslaved, and refer to their deaths, in the same manner in which he recorded names, births and deaths of livestock.

Court records indicate that enslaved people practiced passive and active resistance. This took the form of several reported cases of malingering, running away, and physical insubordination. Slave owners feared retaliation for hard work or brutal treatment at the hands of their slaves. Of particular concern to them was the use of poison or the practice of arson. When the house at Poplar Forest was damaged by fire in 1845, Edward Hutter's father, Christian Jacob Hutter, considered the possibility of arson. In a letter to his son, he wrote "Query. Might it not possibly be that crazy Harry ascended that ladder in the night before the fire, in order to make his prophecy good and then died a voluntary death out of fear to be discovered after all?" Harry was a runaway slave who had returned shortly before the fire and died of mysterious causes shortly afterward (Chambers 1993:183).

During Union General Hunter's campaign in June 1864, Federal troops came to Bedford for the first time. Some years later, Emma and Edwards's youngest son reported that Hunter "carried off everything with life except of about 10 faithful negroes out of 48 slaves" (Chambers 1993:194).

Prior to the current excavations, information about the material culture of the Cobbs/Hutter period enslaved community was based primarily on limited documentation and on excavations at the Wing of Offices, which continued to be used for domestic work and probably for living quarters in the antebellum period. The cabin site currently under

study at Site A was occupied into the late 1850s and possibly as late as the early 1860s, and is providing important information about plantation life during the final years of slavery.

Emancipation and Modern Life: 1865-1980s

The Civil War severely impacted the plantation economy of Poplar Forest. After Emancipation, Edward Hutter hired, or made share-cropping arrangements with, black tenant farmers. Although Hutter family papers do not contain their names, the 1870s US census records the names of individuals listed in sequence who may have worked at Poplar Forest in that year. They include Israel Anderson, who was married to Matilda, a former Hutter slave, and their sons Philip and Beverly. John, Richard, Hugh, Elijah, and Randall Poindexter, George Adams, William Waller and Lucinda Callaway also appear in that portion of the census. Washington Brown, a former Hutter slave, may have worked at Poplar Forest during the 1860s and 1870s. He purchased a number of items at an estate sale there in 1877 that might later have been used to establish his own farm (Marmon, part 3, 1991:106-107).

Edward Hutter briefly tried using German immigrant laborers around 1870, but quickly returned to employing African American tenant farmers throughout the Reconstruction period (Marmon part 3, 1991:107). At present, little is known of the late-nineteenth century individuals and families that lived on the property generally, and the South Tenant House specifically. Two African American women associated with the property during this period are Liddy Johnson, said to have cooked at Poplar Forest for 75 years, and Mary Armistead, Mrs. Christian Hutter's childhood nurse, who was buried on the property in 1900 (Marmon part 3, 1991: 107; Lynchburg News, Feb. 6, 1900 p5c5).

Few documentary resources regarding twentieth-century African Americans at Poplar Forest have yet been collected. Hutter family photographs provide some information. In addition to Ms. Liddy Johnson, photos and accompanying captions identify Ms. Mandy Robinson, Ms. Lizzie Poindexter and other unnamed individuals. Census data suggest that Daniel Davis, R.W. Poindexter, James Jackson, Frederick Henderson, Abraham Slaughter, Charles Young, Robert Hicks, Marshall Austin and John Jones might have worked as laborers on the property (Marmon, part 3 1991:107). Together, these sources suggest that the Hutter family continued to rely on African American workers during the early twentieth century.

Ms. Mary Coles, who grew up in Pittsylvania County and now resides in Washington, D.C., recalls working as a nanny for the Hutters in the 1930s and living in the ground floor of the South Tenant House during her summers on the property. She refers to that building as the "slave house" located next to the "tenant" house (Interview with Mary Coles, July 2, 2003), and recalls that the tenant house (known today as the North Tenant House) had a porch.

Ms. Coles also remembered Gertrude, who lived in a tenant house approximately ½ mile north of the main house at that time. This is likely the same Gertrude that married Courtney Clark,¹ as Gertrude Clark recalled in an 1989 interview that she came to Poplar

¹ Further research with the 1930 census might shed light on Gertrude's identity and help trace her family back in time.

Forest about 1927 when she was 10 or 11 years old. Her mother cooked for the Hutters.² The family lived in “a frame house on a hill to the north of the main house, near the entrance road.” Gertrude recalled walking with her siblings to the back porch (South Portico) of the brick octagon to wait for her mother to finish work, and walking back home together. Their house burned in the 1950s, and was rebuilt soon afterwards. By the 1960s, A man named Russel and his family lived in a tenant house on the property, most likely the building that replaced Gertrude’s home. Another African American man, Fred Anderson, lived with his family in a tenant house south of the main house (Courtney and Gertrude Clark interview, November 1, 1989; William Burchette correspondence, June 3, 2004).

Beginning in the 1950s, Courtney Clark served as a caretaker for the Watts family who owned the property from 1946-1979, and for Dr. James Johnson who owned it from 1979-1983. Initially, Mr. Clark lived in the South Tenant House, continuing a long tradition of housing African Americans in this structure. He later moved to Lynchburg, but returned to live full time in the basement of the main house in 1979 (News and Daily Advance, Saturday, March 10, 1984). Gertrude Clark had a longer association with the property, having worked as a maid for both the Hutter and Watts families, and a cook and nanny for the Watts family as well (Courtney and Gertrude Clark interview, November 1, 1989).

The Andersons, Clarks, Poindexters and Robinsons had extended family networks in the Forest area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and further research is needed to elucidate the relationships between these families and their historic ties to Poplar Forest.

A brief history of the Southeast Terrace

Site A sits approximately 60 ft. south and 30 ft. east of the southeast corner of the South Tenant House on the Southeast Terrace. It contains a complex chronological sequence of landscape features and structural remains of which the tenant houses are the last survivors. Although archaeological evidence continues to provide the clearest evidence of the history of this section of the property, documents suggest some possible uses of the terrace over time.

A surviving memorandum from 1812 indicates that the southeast portion of a circular road, centered on the main house and 540 yards in circumference, ran through the northwest corner of the area under study (Betts 1944:494). An intersecting radial plantation road, connecting the circular road to the Lynchburg-Salem Turnpike that lay along the southeast boundary of Poplar Forest, cut across part of the terrace (John Organ Survey, November 27, 1817, ViU). An 1813 map of the property depicts a square enclosure of ten acres surrounding the main house, with portions of this enclosure bounding the terrace to the east and south. This nineteenth-century landscape division has persisted in the modern landscape, and fence lines continue to delineate the terrace’s eastern and southern edges close to the early nineteenth-century boundaries (Figure 2).

² According to a Washington Post article, Gertrude’s family lived in Forest, the community that surrounds Poplar Forest, for generations and had kin with the surnames Jefferson and Cobb (Washington Post, April 11, 1976).

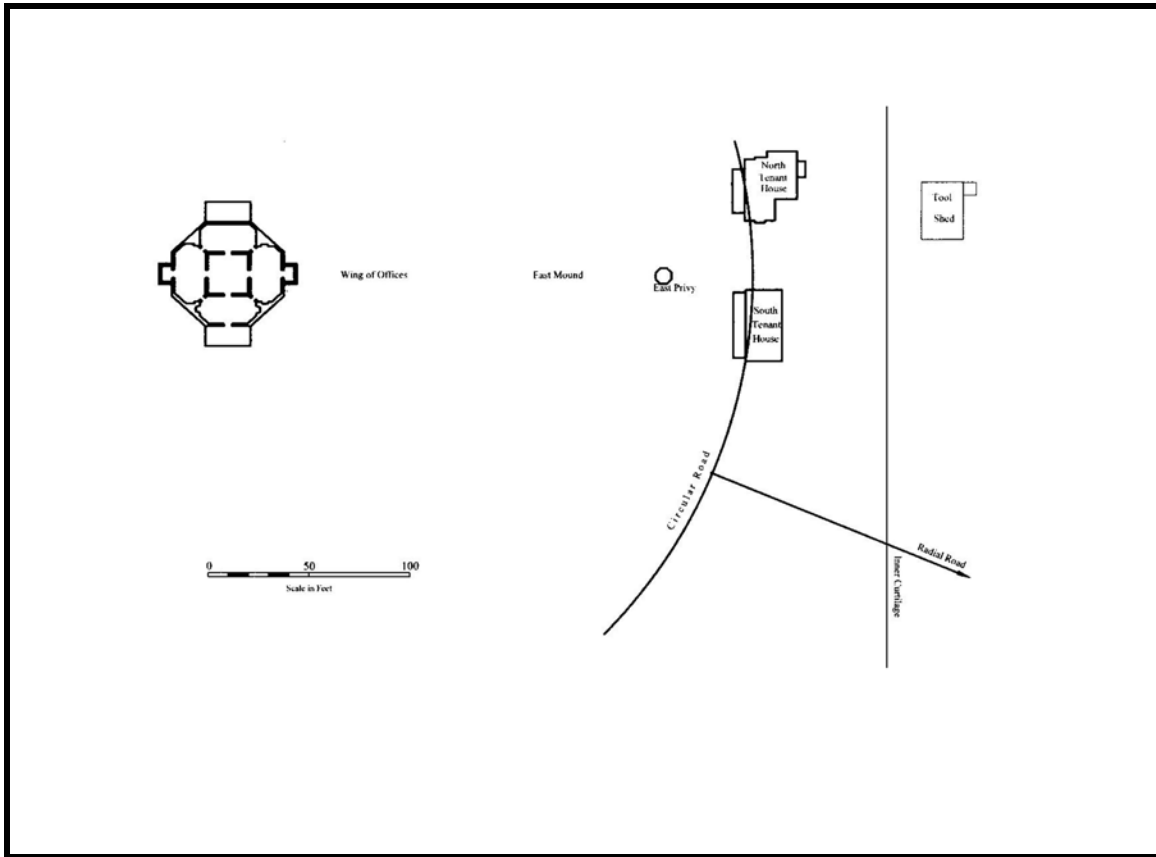


Figure 2: Early 19th-century landscape features relating to the terrace.

Additional documents from the early nineteenth century indicate that contemporary slave cabins, a kitchen garden and nursery, and two stables were related spatially and lay along a plantation road. While documentation does not specify the location of that road, internal evidence suggests that it may have been the radial road that cut across the terrace. An 1811 reference to Jefferson's use of an existing "truck patch" suggests that his kitchen garden may have evolved out of an earlier plantation garden that predated the construction of his retreat house. If this were the case, the garden was most likely associated with the "old Plantation" quarter established by John Wayles or his business associate, Peter Randolph, who sold Wayles the property in 1764. Late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century maps place this complex some 600 ft. east of Site A. Reference to a stable as "old" in 1816 suggests that it too predated the brick octagon and may have been an element of the "old Plantation" (Betts 1944: 464-465; Thomas Jefferson to Jeremiah Goodman, December 10, 1814, Missouri Historical Society; Thomas Jefferson to Joel Yancey, March 15, 1816, MHi; November 10, 1818, MHi). Other potential structures in the area are a retreat-period spinning house (Thomas Jefferson to Jeremiah Goodman, March 5, 1813, DLC) or earlier outbuildings or quarters associated with the "old Plantation."

Archaeological work in 2002 and 2003 indicates that the Terrace itself is an artificial landform. An 1813 memorandum suggests one possible origin for the fill that was used to create it. An entry in Jefferson's Weather Memorandum book for that year referred to the excavation of the foundation for the Wing of Offices, a dependency constructed east of

the octagonal house that consisted of a storage room, kitchen, cook's room and smokehouse.

1813. Sep. In digging the foundation of offices at Pop. For. 4.f. deep of very hard clay, without stone 6. constant diggers, 2. fillers, 2. carters who help fill, & 2 oxcarts with a yoke of oxen in each, dig 42. cub. yards of earth a day and carry it 100. yds. each cart carrying 1. cub. yard at a load. (Weather Record 1776-1818, Series 7, Volume 2, Library of Congress)

This reference to the construction of the 100ft.-long east dependency wing calls for the removal of soil to a depth of 4ft., with the spoil to be carted and dumped 100 yards from the Wing. Significant landscaping of the sunken lawn south of the octagonal house between c. 1813-1820 may have been another good source of fill soil (Trussell 1999). Other contemporary episodes of earthmoving, as yet undiscovered, may be identified in the future.

No documents making specific reference to the Southeast Terrace have been identified for the Eppes or Cobbs/Hutter periods of ownership of Poplar Forest, although other more oblique references may exist. An 1857 payment to S. H. McGhee for "making brick and building cabins," for example, may relate to the construction of the Tenant houses themselves (Hutter Income and Expense Journal, 1856-1861, April 6, 1857). Two years later, Hutter paid insurance on his house and furniture, a barn, and cabins (Hutter Income and Expense Journal, 1856-1861, August 4, 1859). Whether the insurance covered McGhee's structures or others standing on the property is not clear. An 1884 sale advertisement for the property, which was ultimately unsuccessful, provides information about extant postbellum structures.

The dwelling house...contains 11 rooms and 13[?] closets, with a deep cellar underneath. Near by are two good brick houses for tenants, each containing 4 rooms; also barn, stables and cabins (Lynchburg Virginian, September 21, 1884).

Again, their location is uncertain, but it is possible that some of the cabins stood on the Terrace.

More is known about the twentieth-century landscape of the Terrace. Early in that century, the South Tenant House served as both temporary living quarters and a storage area, with a woodshed on the south side. It was reoccupied sometime after 1950 when Courtney Clark lived there. A former resident of the North Tenant House from 1939-1950 recalled that the remnants of a chimney stood southeast of the tenant houses when he was a boy, and believes that this was dismantled while he was living on the property. This chimney does not appear to be related to Site A, but suggests the presence of another nearby dwelling. Twentieth-century features of the terrace included a water system, a chicken house and pens for pheasants (Barger 2002; Hutter 1987), as well as a large garden.

Archaeology of the Southeast Terrace

Initial Testing

A dense grove of bamboo, planted by the Watts family in the 1970s, limited visibility and access to the Southeast Terrace through the 1980s and 1990s. Its removal in early 2001 facilitated more extensive archaeological testing of the area. Previous small-scale survey had been undertaken on the Terrace in 1990. Archaeologists excavated 15 2 ft. square test units east and south of the South Tenant House (ERs 434-448). These units contained shallow deposits of disturbed soils, and staff refrained from additional testing at that time (Figure 3).

From 2001-2002, archaeologists excavated five parallel lines of 4 ft. squares spaced at 25 ft. intervals south of the South Tenant House, for a total of 27 units. Three additional 5 ft. square units were placed judgmentally (Figure 3). A shallow berm running roughly east-west across the site between the second and third rows of test units, approximately 60 ft. south of the south wall of the South Tenant House, indicated the edge of an abandoned garden. Photographic evidence revealed that the remainder of the terrace, from the berm to the fences that bounded the area to the east and south, was plowed during the middle of the twentieth century (Figure 4). North of the berm, however, early twentieth-century layers and features survived above a nineteenth-century plow zone, yielding a variety of artifacts and landscape features relating to the occupation of the South Tenant House during this period. Earlier layers and features were preserved beneath the plow zone in some units.

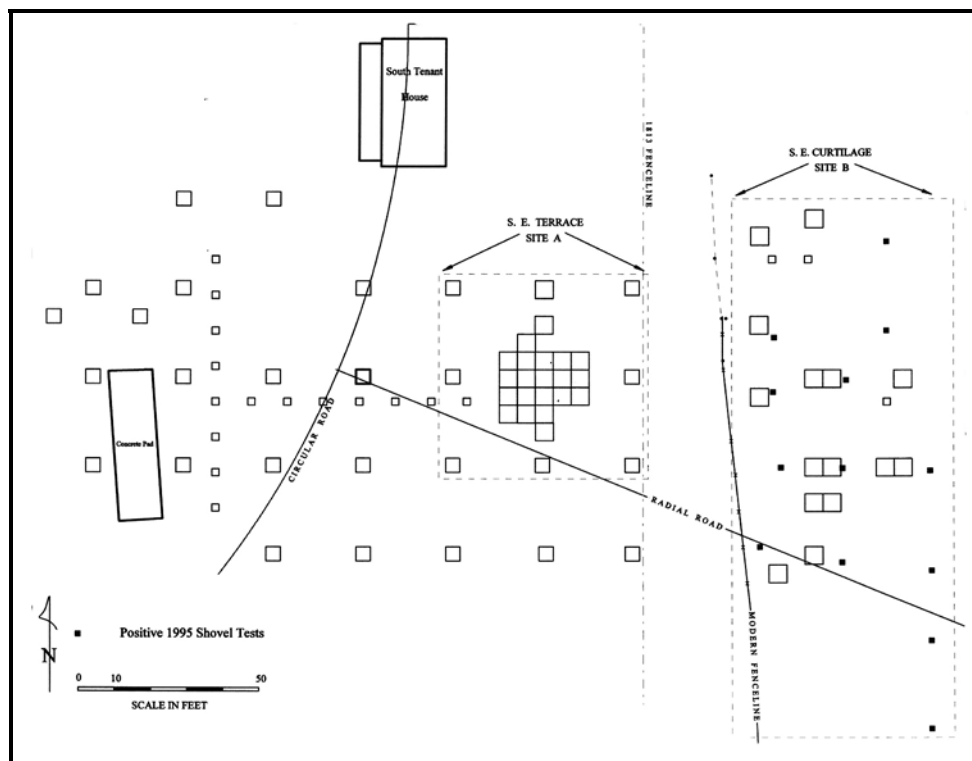


Figure 3: Location of Excavations 1990-2004

Along the eastern edge of the terrace, archaeologists found the best level of preservation at the site. Beneath the plow zones, intact stratigraphy survived. In fact, this area contains some of the deepest, most well-preserved archaeological deposits found to date at Poplar

Forest. Some of the most complex stratigraphy occurs in the northeast corner of the terrace where as many as seven strata exist in a single test unit (ER2292, ER2395). Eight of the more complex units are clustered near the eastern terrace boundary. These units are characterized by the presence of several post-1850 strata overlying a layer of nearly sterile red clay fill. Below the fill, four of the eight units contained a deeply buried layer of cobbles (ER2287, ER2292, ER2350, ER2355) containing artifacts dating to the first quarter of the nineteenth century and associated with Jefferson's ownership of the property. One unit (ER2350/1) contained a feature sealed by the fill and intruding the layer that appears to be a post hole. Subsequent excavation in ER2353 confirmed the presence of the cobble layer in that unit.

Block Excavation

Based on high artifact densities and concentrated stone rubble discovered during testing, archaeologists expanded around unit 2353. By the close of the 2003 field season, the site contained 21 contiguous 5 ft. square excavation units resulting in a 25 ft. x 35 ft. open area excavation (Figure 5).

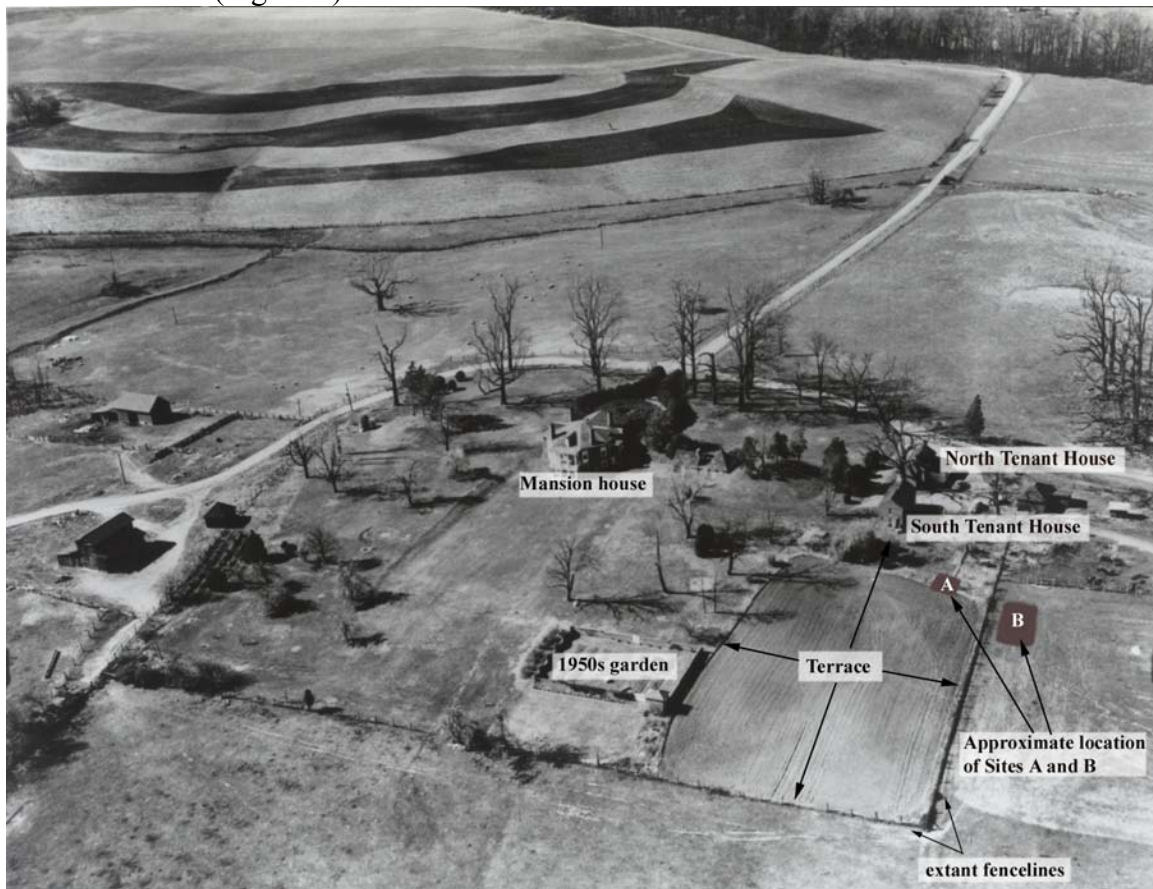


Figure 4: Aerial Photo ca. 1955 showing site locations.

GARDEN AND YARD FEATURES, C. 1870-1940

Beneath topsoil, excavators revealed a layer of plow zone disturbed by several features (Figure 6). These included three parallel, east-west trending planting trenches (trench 1: 2331B/3, 2331B/4, 2332B/4, 2332C/4, 2332D/3, 2332E/3, 2332F/3; trench 2: 2352B/2,

2353B/2, 2354B/1, 2354B/3; trench 3: 2332D/4, 2333D/3) and three deep post holes (ER2352G/4 [surface], 2352EE/4 [mold] and 2352FF/4 [hole]; 2333L/3 [mold] and 2333M/3 [hole]; 2354K/3 [mold] and 2354L/3 [mold]) believed to be associated with gardening activities in the early twentieth century.

The middle and southern parallel trenches extended beyond the block excavation and varied in width from 0.8-1.8 ft. Excavators exposed only the edge of the northernmost trench which fell along the northern edge of the excavation boundary, but it is most likely of equal width. This trench sealed the top of the northernmost of the three post holes (2333L/3 and M/3), indicating that the fence was gone before the trenches were created. The trenches averaged 0.5ft. in depth. They contained a mix of mid-nineteenth-century

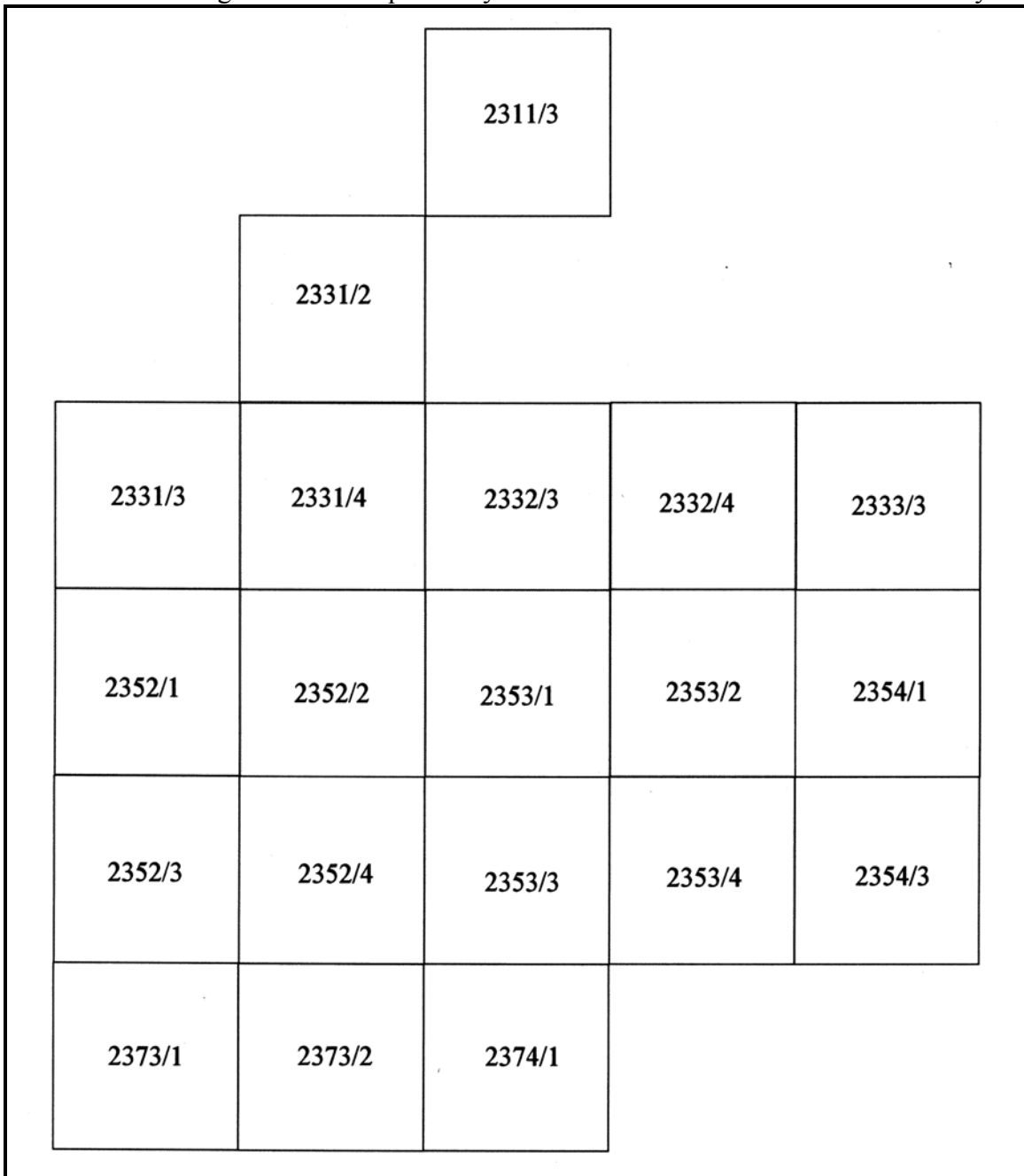


Figure 5: Block Excavation Locator Map.

through early-twentieth-century artifacts, most likely the result of trenching through earlier deposits and filling with a mix of earlier and contemporary artifacts. With the exception of ER2354B/1, the dates of the most modern artifacts in the features (*tpq*, see discussion below under antebellum cabin analysis) cluster around the turn of the twentieth century, with the latest post-dating 1904. This suggests that the garden was created sometime after that year. ER2354B/1 contained plastic fragments that date to the middle of the twentieth century. Further research will establish if these intruded the feature or are part of the original fill, will tighten the date of these objects and will more clearly situate the garden in time.

A series of circular features were exposed near the bottom of the trenches, most prominent in the middle trench. These averaged about 0.5ft. in diameter and were spaced 1ft. apart. Their fill had a high sand content and appears to have been imported. Several of these circular features were excavated as separate planting holes.

The post holes, spaced on 11 ft. centers, appear to form a corner, with one post due west of the center post and another due north. The post holes contained a variety of domestic artifacts, including window glass, cut and wrought nails, transferprinted whiteware and brick fragments, most of which were likely redeposited from the underlying layers when the posts were dug. A piece of Portland cement found in 2354K/3, the mold of the southeast corner post, dates the feature to after 1876. Most likely, it dates to after 1899, when Portland cement was produced in quantity.

The close proximity of the planting trenches to the South Tenant House suggests that they were part of the tenants' kitchen garden. Unfortunately, the block excavation falls just outside of the area recorded in an 1924 aerial photograph of this part of the property. A c.1955 aerial photo taken in winter or early spring does show the vicinity but there is no clear evidence for this garden (Figure 4). Instead, this later aerial shows that most of the Terrace was part of a plowed field. Site A falls on the north boundary between the field and a grassy yard.

The middle planting trench cut into a rectangular feature measuring 1.9 ft. by 1.5 ft. When excavated, it contained dark, organic soil to a depth of approximately 0.3 ft. surrounding a fully-articulated dog skeleton (ER2331G/3) (Figures 7 and 8). A small number of domestic artifacts, most likely redeposited in the grave shaft when it was filled, were found with the skeleton. Relative dating, drawing on the stratigraphic association of the grave shaft with surrounding layers and features, suggests a late nineteenth-century date for the interment.

The dog burial cut into the surface of an earlier plow zone layer. Beneath it, archaeologists discovered two lines of east-west trending planting holes, numbering eleven in all (ER2352F/1, 2352G/2, 2352J/1, 2352K/1, 2352L/1, 2352N/4, 2353G/2, 2353G/4, 2353H/3, 2354J/1 and 2354J/3) (Figure 7). They contained a scattering of domestic artifacts, most of which originated from the occupation of an antebellum cabin that stood on the site before the garden was created. Later artifacts most likely come from residents of the South Tenant House dumping trash in the area. Solarized glass fragments recovered from two holes indicates that they were dug after 1875, when that

manufacturing process for decolorizing glass was invented.³ The planting holes represent an earlier phase (c. 1875-1900) of gardening at the site by residents of the South Tenant House.

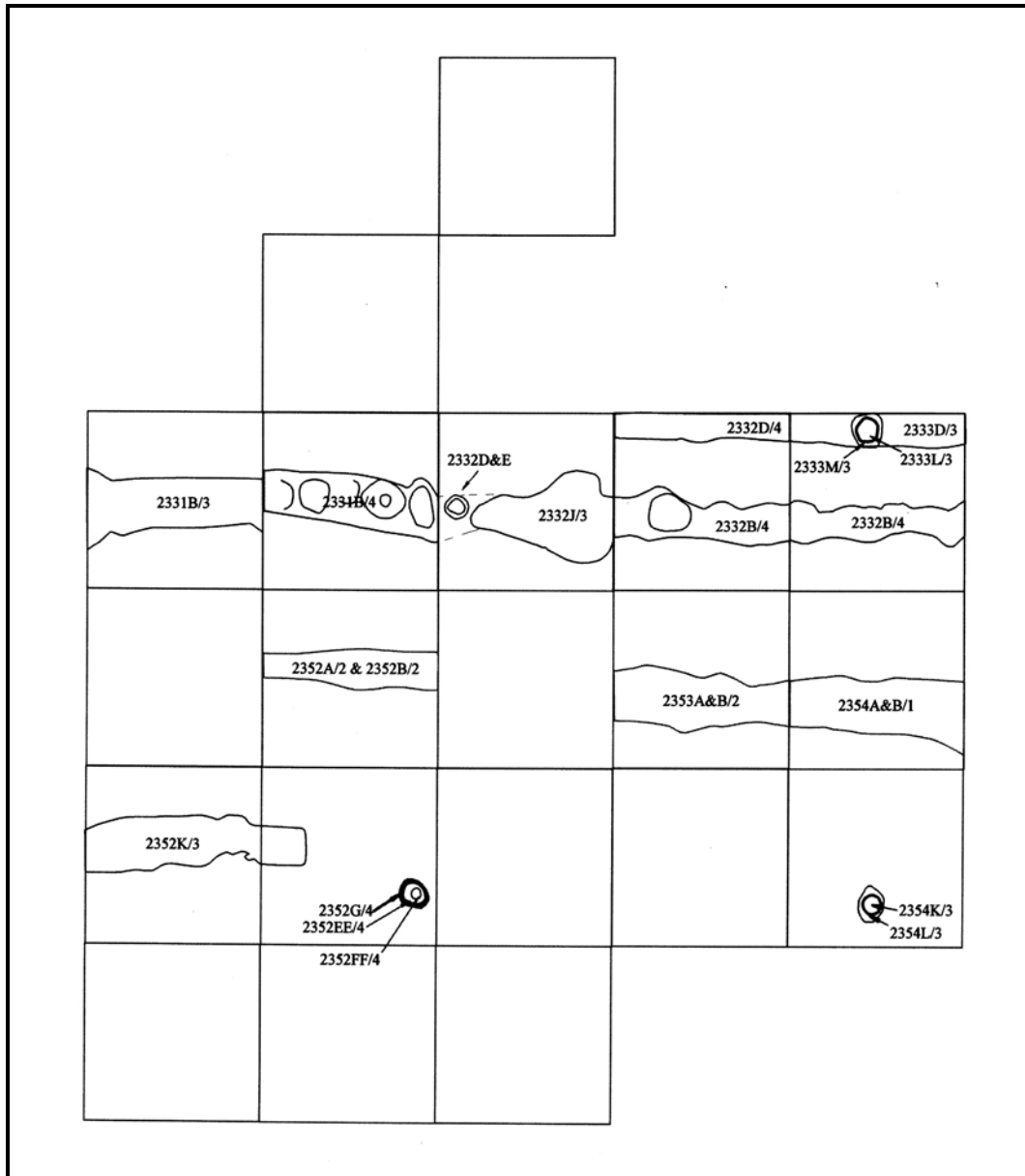


Figure 6: 20th Century Features.

The planting holes cut into a very thin transitional layer of soil that overlay the clay terrace fill and cut the fill as well. Roughly circular in shape, they measured on average 1 ft. in diameter and were approximately 0.5ft. deep in the center. The holes were spaced at 4ft. to 5ft. intervals within rows, with the rows spaced about 4ft. apart. The alignment suggests the arrangement of a border. The plants that originally occupied these holes may have marked the boundary between the South Tenant House “yard” area and the

³ A wire nail was found in ER2353J/3, but this feature was cut by a plow scar and the nail may have been intrusive.

larger northeast corner of the Terrace. The dog burial located just to the north of the northernmost line of planting holes supports the interpretation that this was the edge of a yard.

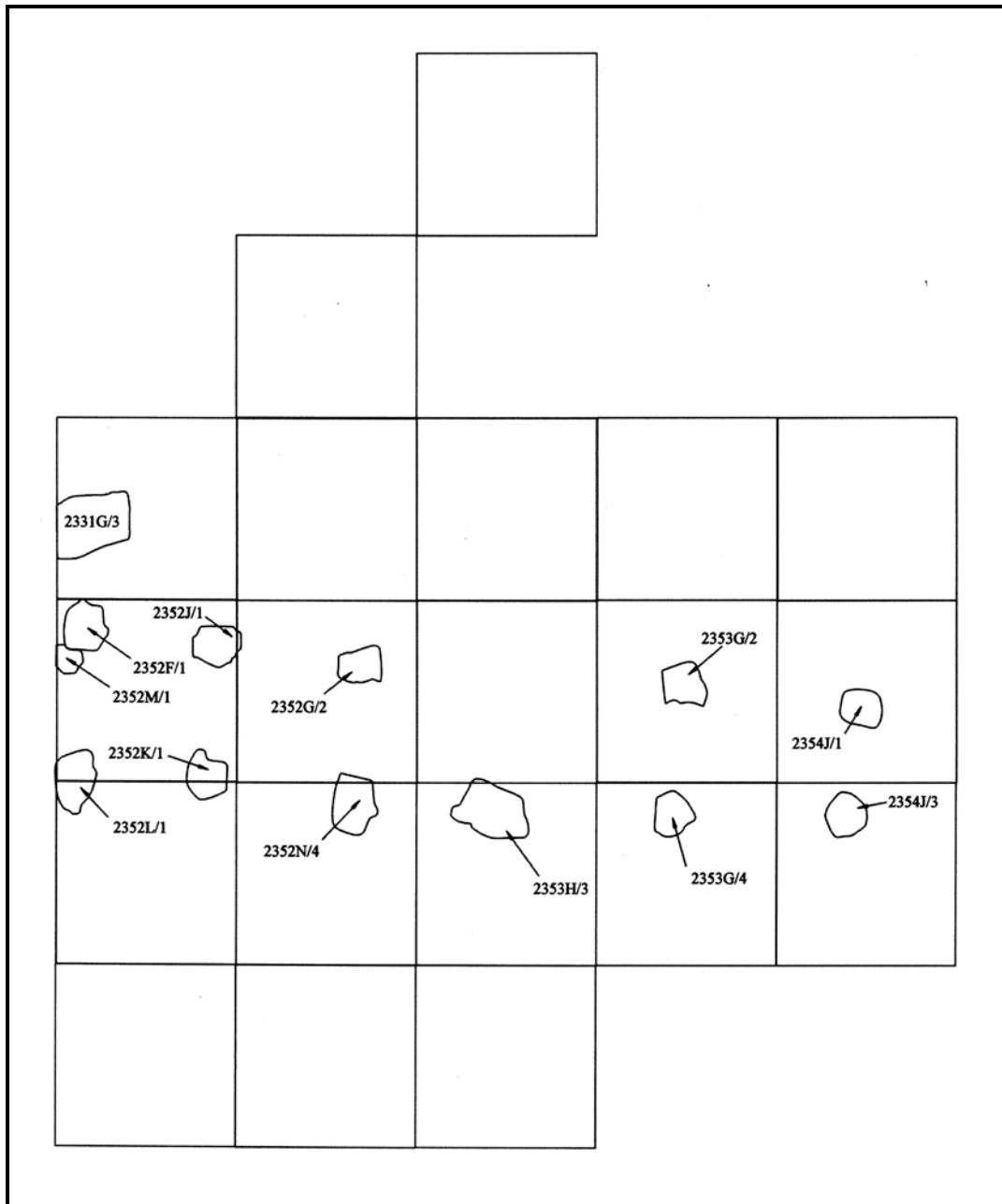


Figure 7: Late-19th-Century Features.

THE ANTEBELLUM CABIN AND TERRACE

Following removal of two plow zones, the garden- and dog-related features, plow scars and rodent burrows, archaeologists exposed the top of a thick layer of slightly mottled red clay, believed to be part of a large deposit of imported fill soil deposited in this area during the early-nineteenth century. The soil was used to transform the existing slope into a relatively level terrace. The fill layer and layer beneath it were intruded by a large stone-filled feature and subfloor pit, both associated with an antebellum slave cabin



Figure 8: Excavated Dog Burial.

(Figure 9). These features fell out of use and were backfilled by c.1860. The subfloor pit ended in hard clay subsoil at a depth of 2.2-2.4 ft. below modern grade.

The cabin's construction date has not been ascertained, but both of the features and the surrounding plow zones contained a high density of domestic artifacts dating primarily from the 1840s and 1850s, suggesting that this was a post-Jefferson and probably a post-Eppes period structure. Further analysis of plow zone artifact types and distributions will help refine the date range of this building. Dating of feature fill is discussed in the individual feature summaries below.

The Stone-Filled Feature

Most soil layers overlying the stone-filled feature had been removed by earlier field work in this area, with only a small portion of the feature remaining to be defined in 2003. Prior excavations revealed a deposit of large field stones, mortar, and brick fragments associated with a parallel deposit of small stone (schist) fragments. Some of the larger stones had finished edges, suggesting that they had been shaped by masons. Modern analogy with contemporary masons working elsewhere on the property suggests that the smaller stones resulted from construction-related stoneworking. Lodged between the large stones were numerous domestic artifacts dating to the mid-nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the 2003 field season, staff believed that the feature preserved the remains of two phases in the lifespan of a stone chimney: the smaller stones were

associated with construction debris deposited by stonemasons when the chimney was erected, while the larger stones resulted from destruction activities following the building's abandonment. Specifically, we believed that one or more nineteenth-century workers had dug around the base of the chimney, dismantled the stack, recycled the stones that were usable, and dumped the remaining stones back in the hole that had been dug, filling in around them with trash from the abandoned building.

Field and laboratory work in 2003 tested these hypotheses. In the field, staff removed all remaining overlying soils and defined the edges of the feature as it cut into the terrace fill. When fully exposed, the feature measured 8ft. by 5 ft. In the fall of 2003,

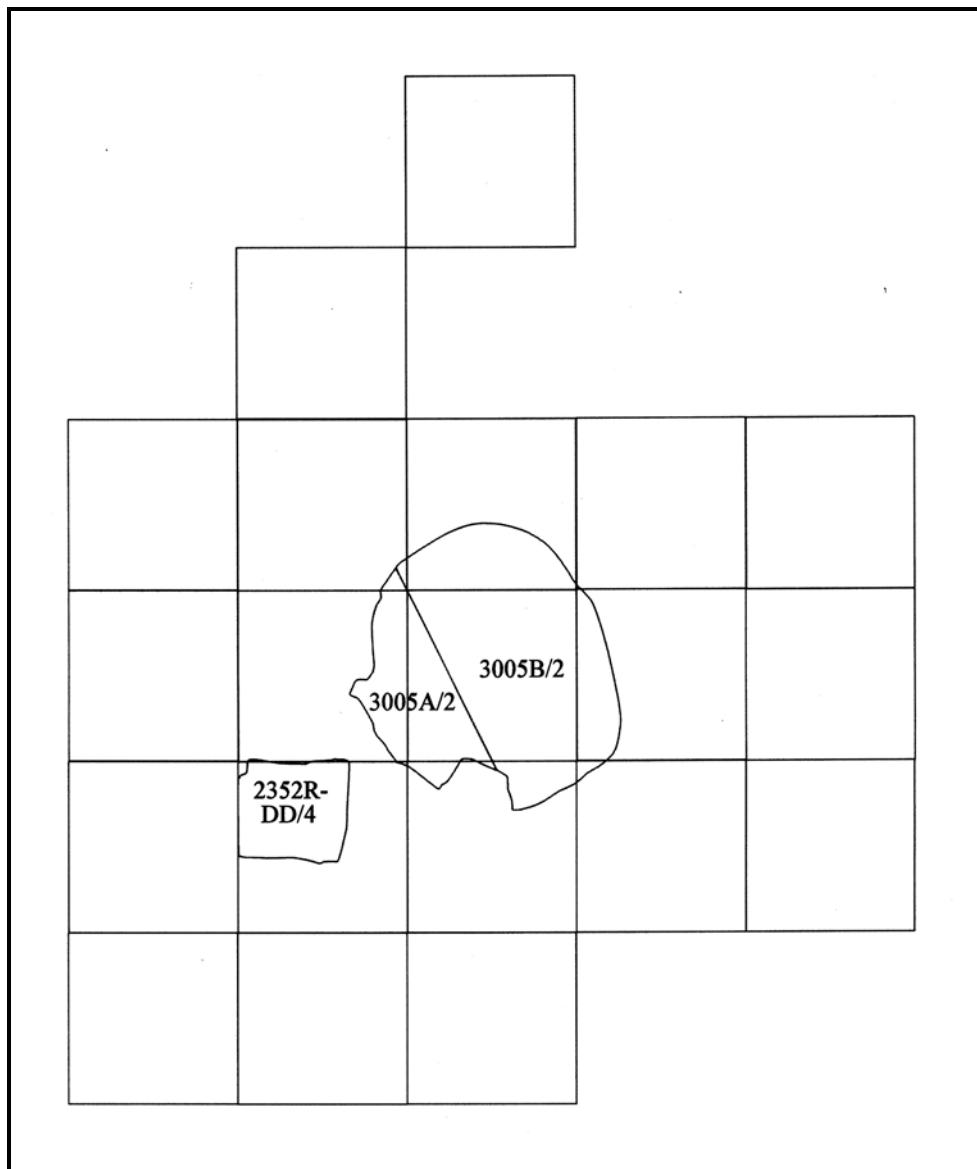


Figure 9: Subfloor Pit and Stone Features.

archaeologists removed the south half of the feature and left the north in situ (Figure 10). Excavation revealed that the larger stones (ER3005B/2) sat within a shallow, oval pit. They sealed a thin deposit of smaller schist pieces (ER3005A/2) that extended across the

entire base of the pit. The feature base was flat and sloped gradually downward to the east. The smaller stone layer thickened abruptly on the west side of the feature, sloping upward to meet the top of the red clay fill layer. What little soil there was between the larger stones had already been removed in the process of exposing them; however, the smaller stones sat in a matrix of red (10R4/6) silty loam with charcoal flecking.



Figure 10: Photo of Bisected Stone Feature.

Several layers of soil above the feature contained domestic artifacts that undoubtedly relate to it. However, they had been impacted by subsequent plowing and other gardening activities that possibly introduced later artifacts into an earlier-dating deposit. The two contexts discussed here (ER3005B/2 and 3005A/2) were sealed beneath the plow zone and appear to have been undisturbed since they were created. Thus, the artifacts recovered from these contexts provide crucial dating information about the formation of the feature.

ER3005B/2, the deposit of larger stones, contained a variety of domestic materials, including animal bones and eggshell fragments, buttons, straight pins and a furniture tack, bottle glass, window glass, brick, mortar and limestone fragments, wrought and machine cut nails, and a range of imported ceramics. In this assemblage, ceramics provide the tightest control over date, as various ware types and patterns were produced for relatively short periods of time in the mid-nineteenth century.

Two methods were used to establish dates for the feature. The use of a *terminus post quem* (*tpq*) date requires determining the earliest date of manufacture for each artifact in an assemblage for which a date can be assigned. The most recently manufactured artifact type sets the *tpq*, based on the assumption that the deposition period of a soil layer must postdate its production in order for it to be present in the assemblage. In this case, the presence of red and blue sponge-spattered whiteware and flow-blue, transferprinted ironstone in the Amoy pattern within the larger stone deposit confirms that these stones were deposited sometime after 1845, the earliest date of introduction for both ceramic types in the United States. The absence of wire nails, which became common after 1880, suggests that the stones were in place sometime earlier than that date.

Establishing the earliest and latest dates of deposition is one means of establishing chronological control. When paired with the mean ceramic date (MCD) statistic, an understanding of site occupation dates becomes more robust. The MCD statistic provides information about the midpoint of occupation of a site based on the production dates attributed to ceramics found there. For sites with short-term occupation, this statistic can be quite accurate, although it does not account for the possibility of time lag between production and discard. This question is a particularly relevant one when analyzing slave quarter or other assemblages associated with people living in poverty, as the likelihood of them acquiring out-of-date or second-hand vessels is presumed to be high. Time lag was not found to be a significant analytical problem in the Jefferson-period quarters analyzed at Poplar Forest.

To arrive at a mean ceramic date, the centerpoints of the ranges of production for each type of dateable ceramic within an assemblage are averaged by dividing the sum of all centerpoints by the number of dateable ceramics in the group. When such analysis was applied to the sample from context ER3005B/2, a mean ceramic date of 1857 was computed.⁴ Given the small sample size of 12 total sherds, this statistic should be used with caution. However, it is consistent with dates computed for the assemblage from the subfloor pit, the other major feature associated with the use and abandonment of the antebellum cabin site.

Fewer artifacts were found associated with the deposit of smaller stones (ER3005A/2). These included domestic material similar in type and variety to the artifacts found in 3005B/2. Animal bone, a button, straight pin, fragment of copper alloy strip, wrought and cut nails, brick, lime and limestone fragments, window, bottle and jar glass and ceramics were recovered. For this deposit, the *tpq* is 1833, the introduction date of black transferprinted whiteware in the Napier pattern. The small sample of dateable ceramics precludes an accurate calculation of a mean ceramic date, but it is interesting to note the presence of pearlware--a ceramic common in the first quarter of the nineteenth century--and the absence of ironstone, a ceramic ware introduced in 1842 and in common use by the 1850s. It is possible, given the evidence currently in hand, that the smaller stones and

⁴ Several of the ceramic types used to compute the mean ceramic date (MCD) have very long production ranges extending into the twentieth century. To tailor this analysis more specifically to the data recovered from this particular context on the site, an end-date of production of 1880 was used for all wares whose dates did not predate this year. The year 1880 was chosen because no wire nails were found in the assemblage, and these nails are common in deposits following that year. Thus, this modified MCD allows for tighter temporal control. Using the standard method that incorporates full date ranges, an MCD of 1875 was computed for 3005B/2.

their associated artifacts were discarded ten or twenty years earlier than the larger stones. One layer may represent a construction phase for the cabin, while the other likely relates to its destruction.

Excavating the remainder of the feature and analysis of the recovered artifacts will provide additional information for assessing the formation and function of the stone feature; however the artifact dates presented here are consistent with our hypothesis that this feature represents a dismantled chimney.

The Subfloor Pit

Archaeologists discovered a 3 ft. by 3 ft. subfloor pit in ER2352/4, approximately 2ft. southwest of the stone-filled feature (Figure 11). Such features are commonly associated with colonial and federal slave quarters throughout Virginia, dug by enslaved residents to provide storage space for foodstuffs and personal belongings. Their presence on antebellum Virginia sites is less common, as views on slave housing, sanitation and storage changed during this period.

ER2352F/4, a 0.19 – 0.49ft. thick layer of plow zone described as dark red (2.5YR4/6) silty loam, sealed the feature. The large artifact assemblage recovered from that layer was very similar to the assemblage recovered from the subfloor pit. Heavy charcoal streaking at the base of the plow zone and a concomitant rise in the quantity of artifacts confirmed that an unknown portion of the subfloor pit had been sheared off by plowing in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. In addition, several features had impacted the top of the pit. A planting hole (2352N/4), two plow scars (2352M/4 and P/4) and a rodent burrow (2352Q/4) were each removed from the surface of the pit. Each contained artifacts that appear to have originated from the pit fill. A portion of a later trench feature (2352L/4) also cut the top of the subfloor pit. Only a small section of this trench had been previously exposed, and at the end of the 2002 season it was thought to represent the top of a second pit. When excavation was complete in 2003, it was clear that the dark soil stain did not represent a second, overlapping pit.

Excavation revealed a total of 11 layers and lenses (very thin deposits, usually representative of short-term deposition) within the pit fill, suggesting that the feature was



Figure 11: Photo showing the relationship of the subfloor pit to the stone feature.

filled in discrete dumping episodes (Figures 12 and 13). Artifact analysis, however, suggests that this filling took place over a very short period of time. For the most part, the layers were thickest at the edges of the pit and sloped downwards towards the center, where they were significantly thinner. Some of the thicker layers contained micro-lenses of different soil as inclusions. These were noted and included with the larger layers.

All soil removed from the subfloor pit was screened through $\frac{1}{4}$ in. mesh. With the exception of small, standardized samples removed for future soil chemistry and microbotanical analysis, 100% of screened soil was processed with a Flote-Tech flotation machine by context. The decision to float the entire contents of the pit was based on the excellent state of preservation and the high density of small artifacts, faunal and floral materials observed, and by the potential that such finds have to contribute to the understanding of environment, diet, health and well being, adornment, and other aspects of daily life at the quarter.

Flotation samples were processed in 2.5 liter increments or smaller when enough soil did not remain from a specific context to meet that standard sample size. One hundred and forty bags each of light and heavy fraction were recovered. Processing of samples is currently underway and most samples have not yet been catalogued. Therefore, the following discussion of artifacts relates only to objects recovered during excavation or screening, and does not incorporate flotation results.

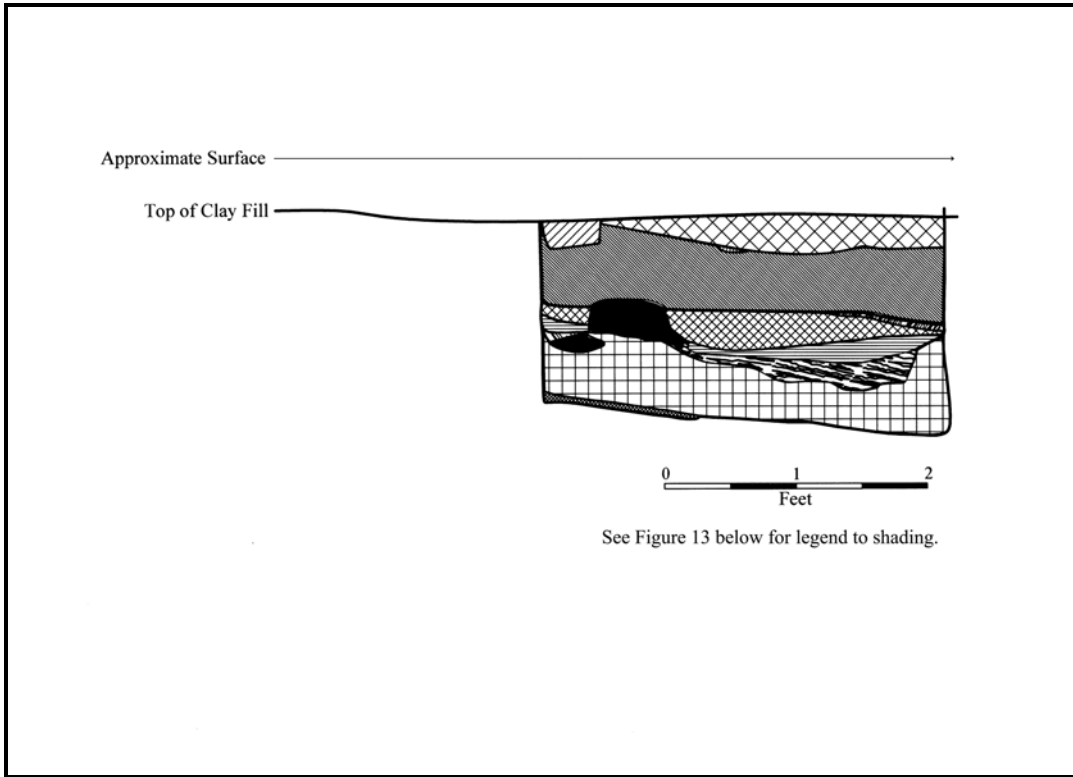


Figure 12: West wall profile of subfloor pit.

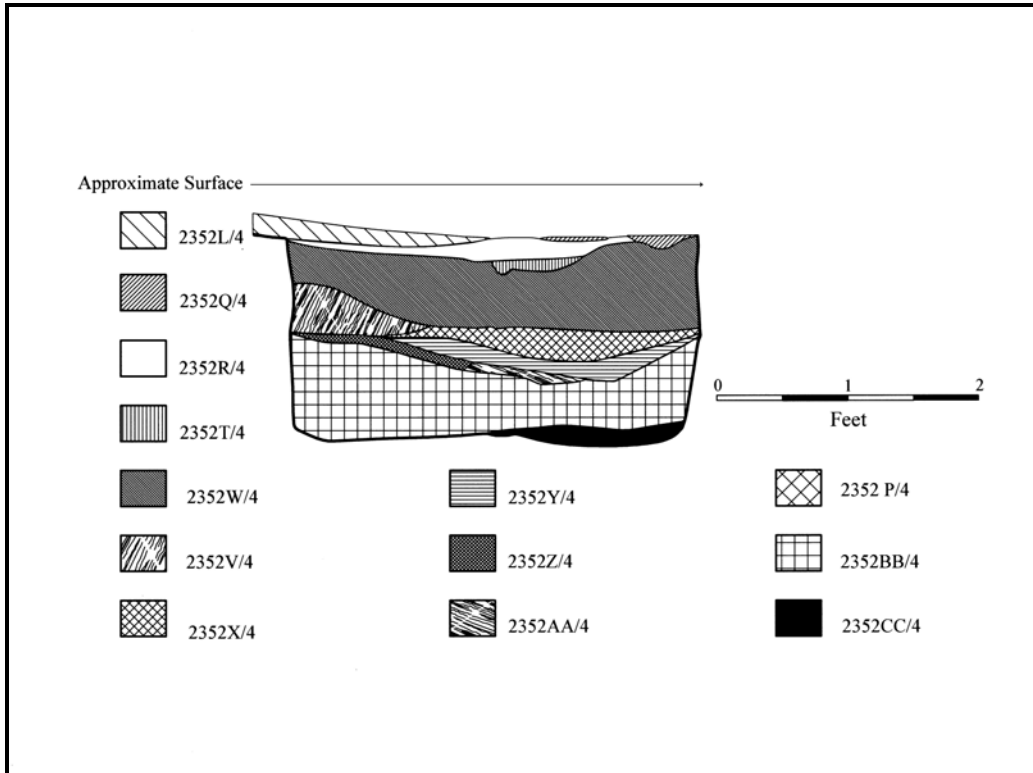


Figure 13: North wall profile of subfloor pit.

Subfloor Pit Stratigraphy

The uppermost surviving layer of the feature (ER2352R/4) consisted of dark brown (7.5YR3/3) loam mixed with red (2.5YR4/6) clay. Unlike most of the layers, R/4 was thickest in the center, measuring 0.3ft. It averaged 0.15ft. in the southwest, northwest and northeast corners but measured only 0.07ft. thick in the southeast corner. The original thickness of layer R/4 is unknown, however, since some portion of it was cut away by plowing. A significant part of the layer was also impacted by later rodent and gardening activities. A *tpq* of 1858 was assigned to this layer based on the presence of a variegated clay marble known as a “jasper” (Gartley and Carskadden 1998:72-73). This and other *tpqs* for the feature are summarized in Table 1.

Contexts ER2352S/4, ER2352T/4 and ER2352W/4 were all visible beneath layer R/4. ER2352S/4 was a lens of dark brown (7.5YR3/3) sandy loam mixed with red (2.5YR4/6) clay. The lens was roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 2.5ft. north-south by 1.5ft. east-west. The northwest corner of the lens coincided with the northwest corner of the subfloor pit. This lens measured only 0.1ft. thick and may have been a part of layer 2352R/4 that simply contained a higher sand content. Its *tpq* of 1858 matched the layer above, and was also based on the presence of a “jasper” marble.

A rodent burrow, designated ER2352T/4, abutted the east edge of ER2352S/4. The burrow started as a 0.25ft.-wide tunnel at that point and ran approximately 0.5ft. to the center of the pit, where it ended in an ovoid den that was approximately 0.5ft. in diameter. The feature was 0.09ft. thick at its deepest point in the center of the den. The fill of this small rodent intrusion was composed of dark brown (7.5YR3/3) loam mixed with red (2.5YR4/6) clay. It was the only context in the pit from which no artifacts were recovered during excavation. The entire matrix, however, was bagged unscreened as a general sample.

Layer ER2352W/4 was comprised of dark brown (7.5YR3/3) loam mixed with approximately 50% red (2.5YR4/6) clay. Altogether it comprised 26% of the pit fill, measuring up to 0.7ft. thick at the eastern extremity of the pit. The most striking characteristic of this layer was how it overlay context ER2352V/4 on the west side of the pit. Layer V/4 was a wedge-shaped deposit that was thickest along the west pit wall and sloped sharply downward to the center of the pit. As a result, ER2352W/4 was relatively thin (0.25ft.) along the west wall and thickened abruptly toward the east. The soil in ER2352V/4 was noticeably siltier than the layers above it, consisting of dark reddish brown (2.5YR3/4) silty loam. It sloped upward from the center of the pit to a maximum thickness of 0.51ft. in the northwest corner. The thin eastern edge of context 2352V/4 slightly overlapped layer 2352X/4 near the center of the pit. Both layers W/4 and V/4 have an assigned *tpq* of 1845 based on the presence of sponge-decorated whiteware.

ER2352X/4 was comprised of red (10R4/6) silty clay. It was the uppermost of four relatively thin deposits (including 2352Y/4, 2352Z/4 and 2352AA/4) that filled a depression on the east central part of the subfloor pit. ER2352X/4 covered the entire east half of the pit and extended westward underneath layer V/4 approximately 0.15ft. The X/4 layer was thickest in the center (0.3ft.) and sloped upward toward its edges to where it measured less than 0.1ft. thick. A large schist rock measuring 0.6ft. long by 0.5ft. wide by 0.35ft. thick protruded through layer X/4 in the south center of the pit. This rock was subsequently found to be resting atop layer 2352BB/4. Like the deposits

above it, layer X/4 has an assigned *tpq* of 1845 based on the presence of sponge-decorated whiteware.

2352Y/4 closely conformed to the horizontal dimensions of layer 2352X/4 that sealed it. This layer was composed of dusky red (2.5YR3/2) loam mottled with red (2.5YR4/6) silty clay. Its maximum thickness was 0.24ft. near its western edge. Layer Y/4 derives its *tpq* of 1842 from ironstone recovered from the fill.

Three different contexts were visible beneath layer 2352Y/4. The two remaining lenses filling the depression (2352Z/4 and 2352AA/4), were confined to the center and west half of the pit, while layer 2352BB/4 was exposed on the east side of the pit. 2352Z/4 and 2352AA/4 were both quite thin overall, measuring less than 0.1ft. in most places. Lens AA/4 was somewhat thicker near the center of the depression, measuring up to 0.2ft thick at that point. At the center of the pit, where these two lenses adjoined, excavators determined that ER2352Z/4 slightly overlapped AA/4. The matrix of Z/4 consisted of reddish brown (5YR4/4) clay loam while AA/4 contained a mixture of red (10R4/6) silty clay and dark reddish brown (2.5YR3/4) silt loam. An 1853 silver dime set the *tpq* for 2352Z/4, while a gutta-percha button dating to 1848 or later provided the *tpq* for AA/4 (Woshner 1999:14, 62).

Layer ER2352BB/4 was the thickest context in the subfloor pit, comprising 34% of the soil volume of the feature. It measured 0.8ft deep at the pit's west edge. The soil in ER2352BB/4 consisted primarily of dark reddish brown (5YR3/3) clay loam. The layer also contained mottles of red (2.5YR5/6) clay. In addition to the large piece of schist noted above, several large artifacts including an iron rod and most of a whiteware bowl rested on the surface of this layer (Figure 14). Micro-lenses were grouped as part of BB/4. A hard rubber comb set the *tpq* for this layer at 1851 (Woshner 1999:15).

A more extensive lens was revealed at the base of BB/4 in the southeast corner of the pit. It was assigned context ER2352CC/4 and was excavated separately. The rest of BB/4 rested on subsoil, or the original floor of the pit. ER2352CC/4 was composed of red (2.5YR5/6) silty clay mottled with dark reddish brown (5YR3/3) clay loam. The two soils were present in roughly equal amounts. CC/4 covered primarily the southeast corner of the pit. The lens was triangular in shape and measured 0.2ft. thick at its center. 2352CC/4 contained no dateable artifacts.

ER2352CC/4 sealed context 2352DD/4, a lens that represented the first episode of pit fill. Soil in context DD/4 consisted of dark reddish brown (5YR3/3) clay loam mottled with red (2.5YR5/6) silty clay. The lens was 0.16ft. thick at its center. This thin lens may have covered the entire bottom of the pit, but because it was so similar in



Figure 14: Photo showing the top of layer 2352BB/4 within the subfloor pit.

Context	Object	Date
ER2352R/4	jasper marble	1858
ER2352S/4	jasper marble	1858
ER2352T/4	no artifacts	
ER2352V/4	sponge decorated whiteware	1845
ER2352W/4	sponge decorated whiteware	1845
ER2352X/4	sponge decorated whiteware	1845
ER2352Y/4	ironstone	1842
ER2352Z/4	dime	1853
ER2352AA/4	gutta percha button	1848*
ER2352BB/4	hard rubber comb	1851
ER2352CC/4	nothing dateable	
ER2352DD/4	machine cut nail	1805

Table 1: *tpq* dates

composition to layer BB/4 it may have been combined with it in areas where lens CC/4 was not present to separate the two. A cut nail set the *tpq* for this layer at 1805. The *tpq* dates provide basic dating information for each layer, confirm that filling of the feature began after 1851, and indicate that at least the upper layers were still open until 1858 or later. Mean Ceramic Date statistics were also used to better understand the temporal midpoint of ceramic use for those vessels used to fill the feature.

Many of the ceramic types found on the site, such as whiteware and ironstone, had long periods of production, a factor that can bias the results when these two types comprise the majority of the assemblage. To counteract this bias, two sets of dates were computed. The first (MCD1), used the standard approach of considering the entire manufacture span of ceramics found at the site, while the second (MCD2) used an end date of 1880 for ceramics with manufacturing spans that continued into the twentieth century. The year 1880 was chosen as an end date based on the absence of wire nails in the pit assemblage and the stone-filled feature which is believed to be contemporary, and their absence in all but one of the individual planting holes that clearly post-date the cabin's destruction.

As illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, calculations for the entire assemblage yielded dates of 1862 (MCD1) and 1850.1 (MCD2). When paired with *tpq* dates, the latter date is believed to more accurately reflect the midpoint of occupation at the site.

type	count	pattern/dateable	date range	midpoint	product
Black basalt	2		1760-1850	1800	3600
Ironstone	13	Edwards backstamp	1842-1851	1846.5	24004.5
	7	flow patterns	1845-1910	1877.5	13142.5
	19	undec	1842-1930	1886	35834
	7	Amoy	1845-1887	1866	13062
Pearlware	4		1779-1830	1804.5	7218
	1	willow	1795-1830	1812.5	1812.5
	3	stippled tfp	1805-1830	1817.5	5452.5
Whiteware	2	Ch. Birdcatchers	1820-1835.	1827.5	3675
	5	Napier	1833-1846	1839.5	9197.5
	1	unscalloped shell edge	1840-1860	1850	1850
	13	Sponge decorated	1845-1930	1887.5	24537.5
	77				143386
MCD1			1862.2		

Table 2: Mean Ceramic Date Calculation (Method 1), Subfloor Pit

Site Formation and Layer Relationships

To understand the sequence of deposition within the feature more fully, staff analyzed the relationship between layers and lenses in several manners, including raw artifact counts and soil volumes per layer/lens, artifact densities per layer, crossmends, and artifact type distributions. While analysis is ongoing, the following results offer some insights into the relationships between layers and suggest possible origins for the fill.

type	count	pattern/dateable	site range	midpoint	product
Black basalt	2		1760-1850	1800	3600
Ironstone	13	Edwards backstamp	1842-1851	1846.5	24005
	7	flow patterns	1842-1880	1862.5	13037.5
	19	undec	1842-1880	1861	35359

	7	Amoy	1845-1880	1862.5	13037.5
Pearlware	4		1779-1830	1804.5	7218
	1	willow	1795-1830	1812.5	1812.5
	3	stippled tfp	1805-1830	1817.5	5452.5
Whiteware	2	Ch. Birdcatchers	1820-1835.	1827.5	3675
	5	Napier	1833-1846	1839.5	9197.5
	1	unscalped shell edge	1840-1860	1850	1850
	13	Sponge decorated	1845-1880	1862.5	24212.5
	77				142457
		MCD2		1850.09	

Table 3: Mean Ceramic Date Calculation (Method 2), Subfloor Pit

Table 4 summarizes, by layer, the total volume of soil removed from the feature and the total number of artifacts recovered via hand excavation or screening.

As noted in the discussion of stratigraphy, ER2352BB contained the largest volume of soil in the feature (34.3%), followed by ER2352W at nearly 26%. Layers V and R each comprised between 10-12% of soil volume, ER2352X contained 7%, and the remaining layers and lenses represented less than 3%. Layer 2352BB also contains the majority of artifacts from the feature, followed by layer V, with the remainder of the pit contexts containing less than 10% each (Table 4).

Context	Liters/layer	Soil/layer (%)	Artifacts/layer	Artifacts/feature (%)
ER2352R/4	30.5	10.2	178	5.6
ER2352S/4	2	0.7	15	0.47
ER2352V/4	36.3	12.2	669	21.1
ER2352W/4	76.25	25.5	174	5.49
ER2352X/4	21.6	7.2	193	6.09
ER2352Y/4	6.1	2	91	2.87
ER2352Z/4	5	1.7	104	3.28
ER2352AA/4	6	2	109	3.4
ER2352BB/4	102.5	34.3	1633	51.53
ER2352CC/4	7.5	2.5	1	0.03
ER2352DD/4	5	1.7	2	0.63

Table 4: Soil Volume and Artifact Distribution, by Layer in Subfloor Pit

An analysis of artifacts per liter of soil, however, demonstrates that layer 2352BB falls closer to the midpoint in comparison with other layers in the feature (Table 5) in terms of artifact density. In fact, the contexts with the highest artifact density also tend to have low volumes of soil (Figure 15).

Context	Artifacts per Liter	Liters per Layer
2352R/4	5.8	30.5
2352S/4	7.5	2

2352V/4	18.4	36.3
2352W/4	2.3	76.3
2352X/4	8.9	21.6
2352Y/4	14.9	6.1
2352Z/4	20.8	5
2352AA/4	18.2	6
2352B/4	15.9	102.5
2352CC/4	0.13	7.5
2352DD/4	0.4	5

Table 5: Artifacts per liter of Soil in Subfloor Pit in Descending Order (table does not include artifacts recovered from flotation)

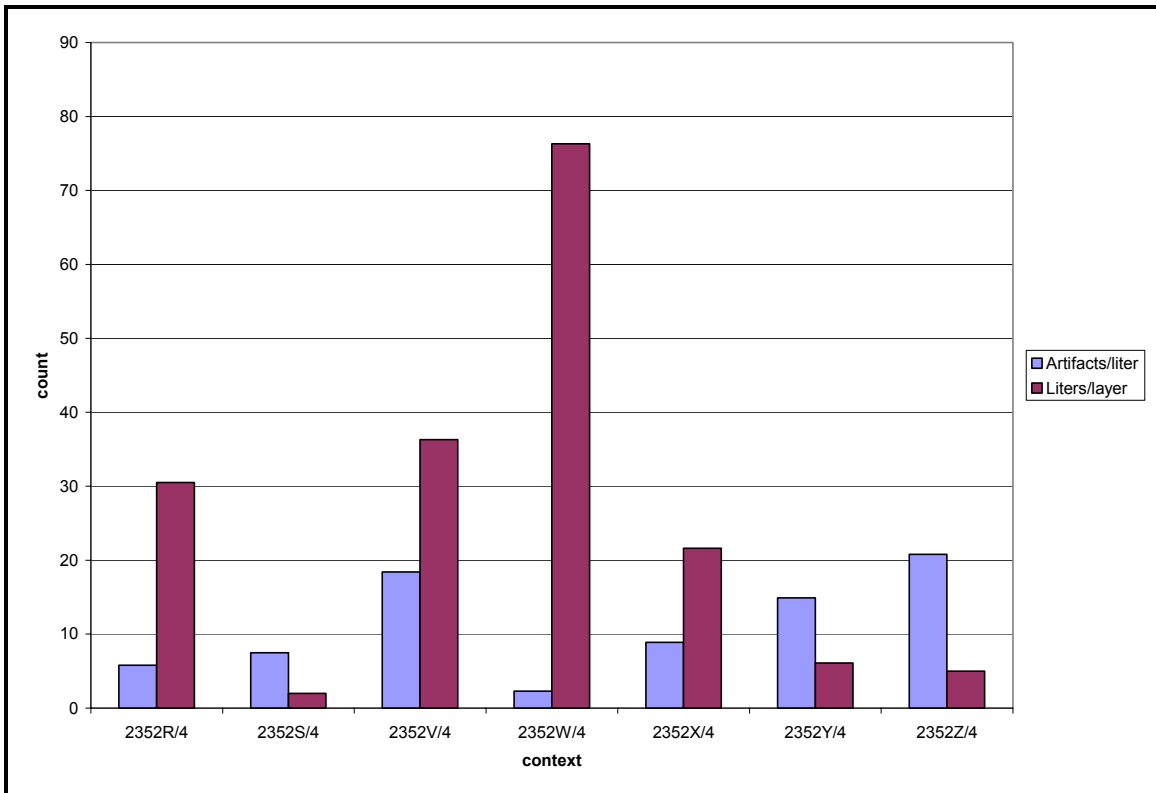


Figure 15: Soil Volume Versus Artifact Density.

This analysis suggests that different formation processes account for the deposition of layers R/4, V/4, X/4, W/4 and BB/4 than the remainder of layers and lenses in the unit. These thicker deposits suggest the mixing of soil and artifacts, while the thinner lenses argue for direct deposition of trash within the pit.

Archaeologists often argue that pit fill originates from a combination of primary deposition—artifacts falling into the pit from above and being lost; artifacts placed in the pit or intentionally left there, or artifacts forgotten after its abandonment—and secondary deposition. Secondary deposition typically results from using artifacts and soils from yard middens (sheet refuse) to fill openings such as pits and cellars when structures are abandoned. Preliminary review of the diversity of bone artifacts, faunal materials, and

the frequency of small finds such as straight pins and seed beads argues against extensive deposition from middens. Rather than representing trash randomly collected, mixed, and dumped, many of the artifacts within pit deposits appear to have been collected from a single source and deposited together, while some may have been lost or left in place. While as yet unquantified, this impression is based on the presence of large, mendable fragments of ceramics and glass within layers and the recovery of extremely fragile artifacts (such as fine-toothed lice combs and a nearly-intact egg) that would not have survived in a midden context. Further, more in-depth analysis of weathering, gnawing and breakage of bone, artifact size distributions and quantification of the distribution of small finds between layers and lenses should help resolve this question.

While the origins of the fill remains unclear, the temporal relationship between layers is further refined through a technique known as crossmending. Crossmending identifies and quantifies the frequency of matching fragments of individual broken vessels from discrete deposits. Successful matching during crossmending suggests contemporaneity of deposition, since pieces of a single vessel are likely to be discarded at the same time and deposited in the ground within a very short period. Crossmends from six ceramic vessels were found within the pit fill, linking six layers temporally (V/4 and X/4, V/4 and BB/4, W/4, X/4 and BB/4, Z/4 and BB/4 and AA/4 and BB/4, Table 6). Low overall artifact counts in contexts S/4, CC/4 and DD/4 make successful crossmending unlikely; however, a lack of mends between layer R/4 and the rest of the feature fill suggests the possibility of a temporal break between this deposit and those buried more deeply, or a different origin for the fill soil.

Description	ER	Count	ER	Count	ER	Count
ironstone plate, 7.5 in. dia.	V/4	4	X/4	4		
whiteware saucer, red and blue sponge/spatter	V/4	2	X/4	2		
ironstone saucer, Amoy pattern	V/4	1	BB/4	8		
ironstone dish, Amoy pattern	W/4	1	X/4	1	BB/4	2
ironstone plate, 9.25 in. dia., geometric molded rim	Z/4	2	BB/4	5		
whiteware saucer, handpainted floral	AA/4	1	BB/4	6		

Table 6: Ceramic Crossmends from Subfloor Pit.

Preliminary analysis of other artifact types and distributions suggests a close relationship between contexts V/4 and BB/4. Layer BB/4 contained the highest number of nails and the greatest volume (by weight) of building materials, followed by layer V/4. Similarly, BB/4 and V/4 had the most diversity in button types found within the pit, in nearly identical proportions (Figures 16 and 17).

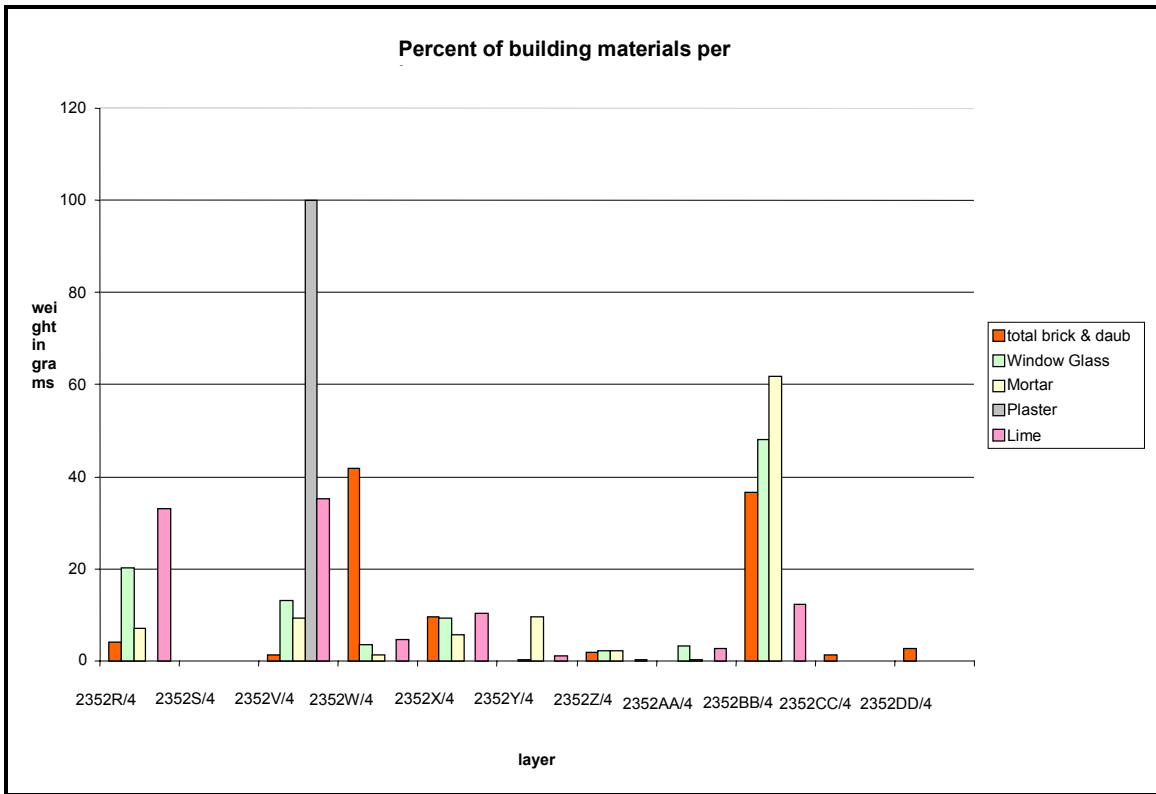


Figure 16: Percent of Building Materials Per Layer.

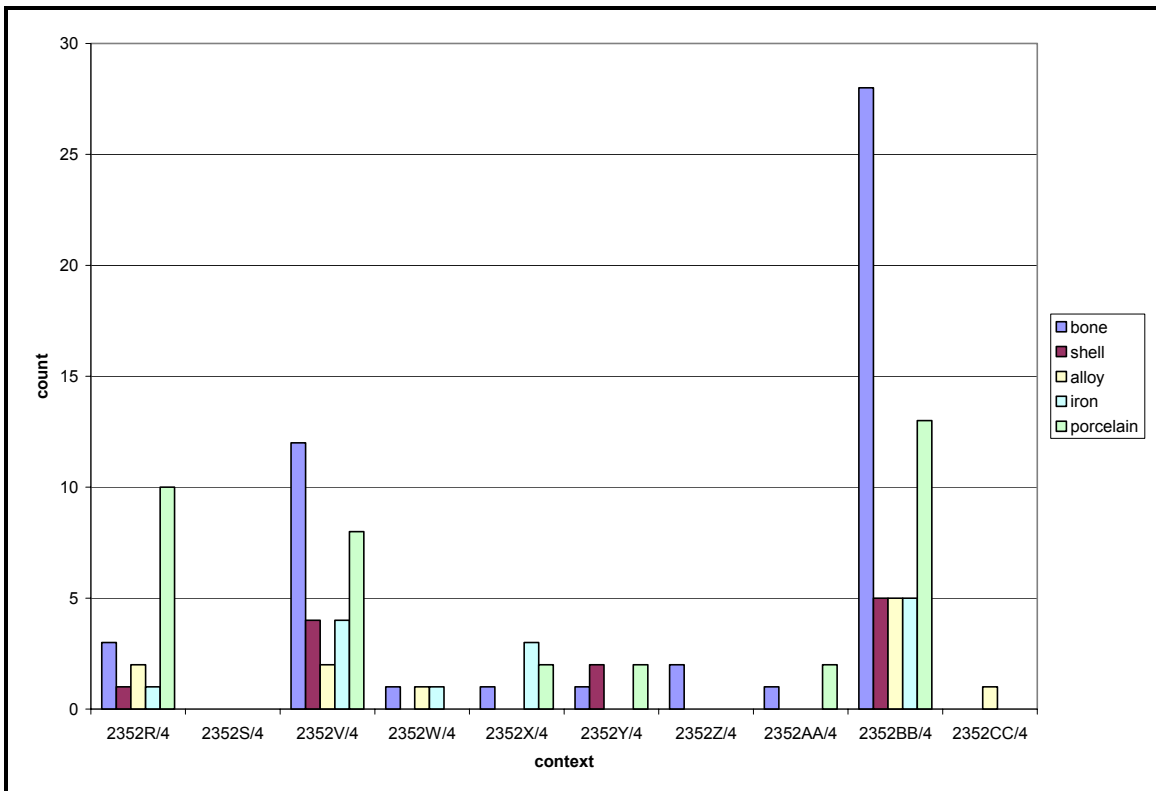


Figure 17: Button Types By Context.

CABIN DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Evidence uncovered to date suggests that an antebellum slave cabin stood at Site A sometime after 1833 and was destroyed sometime after 1858. While further analysis of plow zone deposits and further excavation of the stone feature might refine these dates, it seems clear that the building stood for 30 years or less, and was torn down in the late 1850s or early 1860s.

The relationship of the stone-filled feature to the pit remains somewhat problematic. While artifact dates support the hypothesis of construction and destruction activities outlined above, the two features do not share alignment. Most pits excavated at quarter sites are either adjacent to and aligned with the hearth, or are located along walls. If the stones do represent the location of a chimney, the pit fits neither of these patterns. While it would have been in close proximity to a hearth, it is not aligned with it, nor, by projection, with the walls that must have aligned perpendicular to the chimney.

No firm evidence has yet been found of the walls themselves; however it is currently hypothesized that, like other outbuildings dating to this period, the structure was built of log.

Jefferson specified the use of logs for domestic structures at Monticello and Poplar Forest, and archaeological evidence of two late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century quarters at Poplar Forest confirm this practice. Jefferson-era quarters typically incorporated clay-lined wooden chimneys, while he reserved masonry chimneys for higher status dwellings. An almost complete lack of window glass at the early quarters supports the notion that window openings were covered with wood shutters for protection from the elements, but that Jefferson saved the expense of glazed windows for his own dwelling.

While no Eppes or Cobbs' period slave dwellings are documented, Edward Hutter provides much useful information about slave cabins during his tenure at Poplar Forest. In an 1846 entry in his Farm Journal, he refers to "daubing" cabins, suggesting the use of logs for construction. This suggestion is confirmed the following year when he records "hauling logs for cabins" and "hauling house logs" in October, "raising cabin" and "hauling rock for chimney to cabin" in November, and "working on cabin" in December. By year's end, Ellen, a field hand, and Matilda, a house servant, had moved into a new double pen cabin (Hutter Farm Journal 1847 and 1848). The structure Hutter described consisted of log exterior walls with a wood-shingled roof. Hutter's repeated reference to "chimney" rather than "chimneys" suggests a single, central chimney stack rather than two end chimneys, a common feature of double pen cabins. A later entry in the Farm Journal chronicles the death of 2-year old Essex in 1854, when his mother's double pen cabin caught fire (Hutter Farm Journal 1854).

Overall, the quality of materials associated with the cabin site suggest an improvement in living conditions when compared with the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century quarters examined to date. In spite of the tragedy recorded in Hutter's 1854 journal entry, masonry chimneys provided a much safer heat source than their wooden counterparts. Similarly, the presence of glazed windows in the structure allowed residents

Some ceramic patterns from the site, such as “Amoy” (a flow-blue chinoiserie-style pattern made by Davenport), “Napier” (a chinoiserie-style black transfer-printed pattern produced by John Ridgway), and “Blantyre” (a Romantic-style black transfer-printed pattern made by John and George Alcock), are consistent with ceramics associated with the main house during the contemporary Hutter occupation (Figure 19). However, there are also suggestive differences at Site A, such as the presence of several sponge-spatter decorated wares and clobbered transfer-printed patterns that have not been identified elsewhere at Poplar Forest. Sponge-decorated wares appear to have appealed to the African-American aesthetic and are found at other contemporary African-American sites in the Caribbean (Howson 1995: 215).



Figure 19: Some Ceramic Patterns from the Cabin Site A.

Several spoons, knives and forks have also been found. Two different styles of bone handle have been identified for the three forks recovered to date. No knife handles have survived burial. Two of the spoons are from a matched set, but do not match the forks. Interestingly, one of the spoon bowls appears to have been incised with an X. The practice of modifying spoons through incised decorations, reshaping and hole-punching has been reported from the Garrison plantation in Maryland and the Kingsmill and Rich Neck plantations in Virginia (Klingelhofer 1987; Franklin 1997). Archaeologists have

attributed these modifications to West or West-Central African cultural traditions, drawing parallels with similar practices observed among the descendants of maroons in Surinam (Klingelhofer 1987:114-115).

One hundred and twenty three buttons were found in the fill of the subfloor pit alone, with many more found in the layers associated with the stone feature and the surrounding plow zone (Figure 20). Glass beads, paste jewels, clothing fasteners, earrings, hard rubber and bone combs are examples of the extensive array of personal adornment items found at the cabin site. Recent research has demonstrated that enslaved men and women in Virginia were active consumers, selling or bartering fruits and vegetables, poultry, animal skins, handicrafts or their own labor at local stores and markets in exchange for consumer goods. In addition to food-related items, cloth and adornment items were the most popular items they purchased, suggesting that objects relating to personal or group identity and self-portrayal had an important role in enslaved communities. Slaves used self-selected clothing and adornment objects to distinguish their private lives and identities from their work lives, to mark important periods of transition, such as funerals or weddings, and to alter their identities as runaways (Heath 1999b). The acquisition and use of materials that were new to the market in the 1850-1860 period, such as hard rubber and gutta-percha, suggests that these items quickly saturated the market and were available to and valued by enslaved consumers.

Red clay elbow-shaped tobacco pipe fragments, two harmonica plates, and several marbles provide information about some of the leisure activities of the site occupants. Pharmaceutical bottles and vials provide clues about the intersection of African-American and dominant European American health practices. Floral remains—in the form of carbonized seeds from fruits, vegetables and wild edible herbs—recovered at earlier Poplar Forest quarter sites provided a wealth of information about eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century African American approaches to health and well being. Analyses of medicine bottles and floral remains at the cabin site could provide important insights into how health and healing practices persisted or changed within the enslaved communities over time, as commercialized medicines competed with older folk remedies.

Perhaps the most evocative artifact found to date was recovered from the fill above the chimney base. Known as a “hand charm,” the object depicts a raised, clenched fist centered in a circle and stamped out of sheet brass (Figure 21). Archaeologists have recovered seven other charms, similar and in some cases identical to the Poplar Forest example, from quarters at Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, a cabin associated with the Hilderbrand house in Memphis, a cabin at Wynnewood resort in Sumner County,



Figure 20: Sewing and Adornment Artifacts layer ER 2352BB/4 within the Subfloor Pit.

Tennessee and the Charles Calvert House in Annapolis, Maryland (McKee 1992, 1995; Russell 1997; Smith 2001; Thomas 1998; Yentsch 1994). With the exception of the Maryland object, which was recovered from an urban household made up of black and white residents, the charms are consistently associated with antebellum slave quarters. While the function of this tiny artifact remains debated, archaeologists have hypothesized that enslaved people used the “hands” as protective charms, objects hidden from view that helped shield people from physical and spiritual harm. The small size of the “hands” may indicate that these objects were especially useful for protecting infants and small children from calamity in an age with high infant mortality through disease and accident.

THE CLAY FILL LAYER

At the end of the 2003 excavation season, archaeologists had identified a red clay fill layer in nine 4ft. x 4ft. test units and in the entire block excavation of Site A (Figures 10 and 11, layer surrounding stone-filled feature and subfloor pit). Within the Terrace, excavators have defined the western edge of the fill, while to the east, it clearly ends where a break in topography follows an historic fenceline. South of the block excavation surrounding the antebellum cabin, the fill corresponds to a narrow shelf along the terrace edge. Testing has revealed that the deposit is thickest in this area (0.93ft. on average) and it probably runs 50 ft. or more to the end of the visible terrace. Its northern extent has not yet been defined.



Figure 21: Brass Hand Charm.

The fill has been excavated from a total of eleven units (ERs2284G/3, 2287F/4, 2292K/4, 2311D/3, 2348E/1, 2350E/2, 2353H/4, 2395E/3, 2397E/4, 2460E/2 and 2960K/2). It is characterized as a red (2.5YR4/6) silty clay with few inclusions (Figure 22). The average depth below surface ranges from a low of 0.81ft. in ER2960 to a high of 1.41ft. in ER2292, while the average thickness ranges from 0.5ft. in ER2292 to 1.4ft. in 2397. The layer is confirmed to cover an area of at least 4,375ft.². At an average overall thickness of 0.79ft. volumetrically, the layer consists of 3,325ft.³ or 128 cubic yards. This volume closely approximates Jefferson's equivalent of 128 oxcart loads or approximately 3 days of work specified in his 1813 memorandum for digging the foundation for the Wing of Offices.

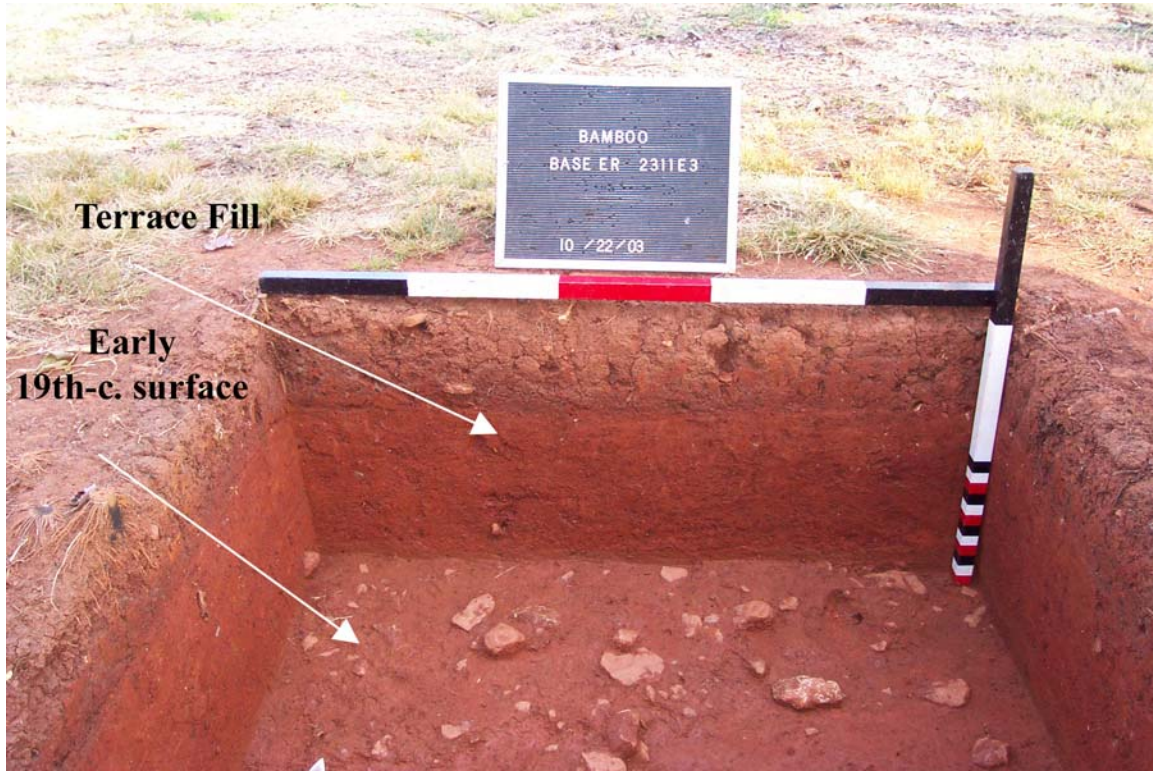


Figure 22: Terrace fill overlaying the early 19th century surface.

Both the subfloor pit and the stone-filled feature intrude into this layer, indicating that it was in place prior to the construction of the antebellum cabin. Overall, artifact densities within the layer were quite low (Table 7).

ER Unit	Artifact count	cubic feet	density/cubic foot	liters	density/liter
2284G/3	6	17.28	0.35	489.3	0.012
2287F/4		9.44		267.3	
2292K/4	3	8	0.4	226.5	0.013
2311D/3	3	27.5	0.1	778.7	0.004
2348E/1	17	11.04	1.5	312.6	0.054
2350E/2	2	11.52	0.2	326.21	0.006
2353H/4	15	14.25	1.05	403.515	0.037
2395E/3		10.1		286	
2395G/3	1	22.4	0.04	634.297	0.002
2395J/3		14.08		398.701	
2397E/4		8.96		253.719	

Table 7: Artifact Densities, Fill Layer

Six of the contexts do not contain artifacts to which a date can be assigned. Two contexts contain artifacts with *tpqs* that predate 1813: ER2292K/4 (*tpq* of 1762 based on the presence of creamware) and ER2350E/2 (*tpq* of 1805 based on the presence of cut nails).

While no dateable artifacts were recovered from ER2311D/3, the layer beneath it contained pearlware, indicating that 2311D/3 must postdate the introduction date of 1779 for that ceramic. ER2348E/1 and ER2353H/4 contained fragments of whiteware, a ceramic invented in 1805 but not common on American sites until after 1820. The whiteware found in ER2348E/1 was recovered at the interface of the fill and the layer above, and excavators noted it as possibly intrusive when it was found. A single sherd of whiteware lay deeply buried within the fill in ER2353H/4, and was not identified as an intrusion at the time it was uncovered. However, this unit falls within the block excavation where features cutting the fill layer were so numerous that it is possible that excavators did not recognize a rodent burrow or other intrusive feature. A larger sample size of artifacts, derived from further excavation of the fill, should clarify the date for this layer.

Currently, we hypothesize that the fill originated from either the excavations at the Wing of Offices or from other earthmoving episodes, such as the re-landscaping of the South Lawn c. 1814-1820, associated with Jefferson's ownership of the property. The varying depth of the fill suggests that it was deposited over a natural slope, and represents an intentional episode of large-scale modification to the landscape in order to create a terrace. Limited excavations have exposed an intact, late eighteenth- or early-nineteenth century surface beneath the fill. This surface may relate to landuse practices that pre-date the construction of Jefferson's octagonal retreat house, or may represent an c. 1805-1810 use of the property that Jefferson later abandoned and covered to create the terrace above. Although excavations as yet provide limited information about the nature of this earliest deposit, concentrations of stone rubble and brick fragments in a few units suggest that a well-preserved building site may be sealed beneath the terrace.

Ten feet west of the block excavation in test unit 2350, excavators located a possible post hole beneath the terrace fill. The circular feature measured 1.1 ft. by 1.2 ft.. Although it has not yet been excavated, artifacts recovered from the surface of the feature included brick fragments and wrought and cut nails, suggesting deposition after 1805 (the introduction date for cut nails) and destruction prior to the filling of the terrace.

The Archaeology of the Southeast Curtilage: Site B

Initial Testing

As part of a property-wide survey undertaken in 1995, archaeologists tested the field lying east of the terrace and west of the curtilage boundary. Transects, spaced at 50 ft. intervals contained test units placed no more than 50 ft. apart. Closer-interval testing was undertaken around locations where artifacts or features were discovered.

Positive units located just east of the terrace contained a variety of historic-period artifacts, including brick fragments, wrought and cut nails, window glass, creamware and pearlware, green glazed and slipped earthenware, dark green bottle glass and fragments of a cast-iron pot lid. Archaeologists concluded that "the nature of the artifacts indicate the presence of one or more domestic structures" (Adams 1996:44).

In August 2003, staff and participants in an annual seminar for teachers returned to the site and opened up eight 5 ft. by 5 ft. units (ERs 2317/3, 2380/1, 2464/4, 2360/2, 2361/1, 2402/4, 2465/2 and 3004/1) (Figure 23). All of the units were characterized by a thin layer of topsoil overlying less than 1 ft. of plow zone, and all contained a variety of

domestic artifacts ranging in date from the late eighteenth- through the twentieth-century. Material dating from c. 1790-1830 dominated the assemblage. In two units, 2360/2 and 2402/4, quantities of stone and brick rubble in the plow zone, as well as intact features below the plow zone, confirmed the location of a site, since designated as Site B.



Figure 23: Teachers excavating at Site B.

In the spring of 2004, staff and field school students began excavation of five additional units with the goal of investigating features located previously (2403/3, 3008/4, 3009/3, 2323/4 and 2324/3). Unit 2402/4 was expanded to the east to expose a portion of extant wall running in a north-south alignment (Figures 23 and 24). Soil probes west of the wall revealed relatively shallow deposits, while east of the wall they indicate the presence of a 1 ft. -2 ft. thick layer of fill overlying subsoil to a distance of 22 ft. Currently, excavations are underway to define the eastern edge of the fill by locating a parallel wall line or other features defining its edge. Testing in 2003 failed to find structural evidence in ER2465/2, located 25 ft. south of the wall. In 2004, units 2323/4 and 2324/3 have been opened up 10 ft. south of the wall in order to trace its route or locate a corner. To date, large quantities of brick and stone rubble have been found throughout this area, but no further sections of wall have yet been exposed.

While excavations in this area have just begin, it is currently hypothesized that the stone feature represents the masonry foundation of a Jefferson-period structure that was oriented north-south and spanned a distance of 22 ft east-west. While the function of the structure is as yet unknown, quantities of domestic artifacts recovered in close proximity

to it suggest that enslaved people were housed here. The building might be the remains of a cabin, but might instead have served some other function (plantation storage, stable) with living areas incidental to rather than central to its function. Further work during the summer will seek to define the limits of the building and sample its fill.

The proximity of Site B to the Jefferson-era layer sealed beneath the antebellum cabin at Site A suggests that these two areas may be components of a larger site that predates the construction of the terrace. The presence of a red clay layer in 2361/1 that looks like the Terrace fill layer lends support to the hypothesis that there are strong relationships in time and depositional events between the two sites.

While Site B has been heavily impacted by plowing, the proximity of features to the surface will enable archaeologists to explore the site more quickly, and to more clearly define research problems to be addressed in the future at the better preserved (and more deeply buried) site A.

Conclusions

Excavation and analysis of findings at Sites A and B will continue with support from the Public Welfare Foundation through June 30, 2004. Due to the large number of artifacts recovered from Site A, we propose to focus on laboratory analysis for this site during 2004. This will include further analysis of the cabin-related features including flotation samples and faunal analysis. The proposed work for 2004 will also entail completion of cataloguing artifacts from the overlying plow zones and completion of analyses that may help to better date the occupation span of the structure and its layout. Staff will continue to clean, label, catalogue and analyze finds from the 2003 and 2004 seasons, to prepare objects for conservation, and to photograph and record them. Future work will include a variety of quantitative and qualitative analyses that will enable researchers to compare the findings from Sites A and B with early slave quarters at Poplar Forest and throughout the region, placing the material from these sites in a broader context.

In the field, staff will open up a number of excavation units to define the size and characteristics of the building recently discovered at Site B, and will sample features associated with it in order to determine its original function and life span. Results of this excavation will inform future work on the Jefferson-period component associated with Site A.

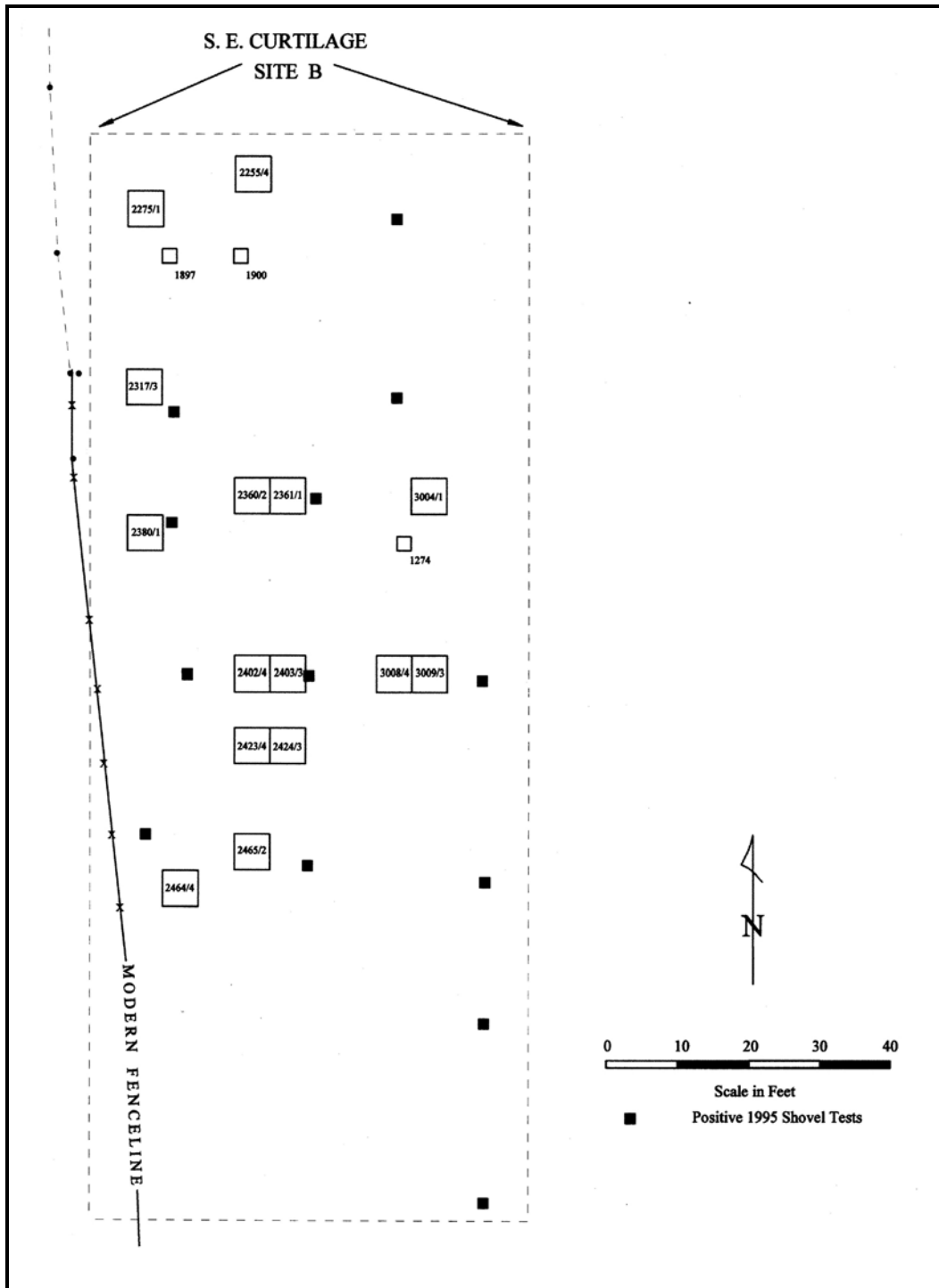


Figure 24: Site B Excavation Locator Map.

In addition to increasing our understanding of slave life at Poplar Forest, work at both sites has already enabled us to share insights into the archaeology of African American life with the public through site tours and a new exhibit. Throughout the spring of 2004, staff has interpreted Site B to hundreds of students visiting Poplar Forest in school groups, and to adults in individual and group tours. Special “behind the scenes” tours have brought visitors into the lab to see and talk about the objects emerging from work at

the site. During the 2004 season, the window exhibit in the archaeology laboratory focuses on artifacts recovered from the antebellum cabin at Site A, with an accompanying video display depicting excavations of the subfloor pit. Images from Site A will be included in Virginia's annual archaeology month poster this fall with a theme highlighting African American archaeology throughout the Commonwealth.

During the summer of 2004, graduate-level students are participating in an intensive archaeological field school at Site B, learning to excavate, analyze and interpret archaeological evidence, and studying African American history and material culture for five weeks. Later in the summer, participants in a summer seminar geared towards educators will work at the site, bringing their new knowledge and insights back into numerous classrooms to share with their students.

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