

**Documentary Study, Archaeological Evaluation and Resource Management Plan
Virginia Theological Seminary Faculty Housing, Alexandria, Virginia
44AX173**

PUBLIC SUMMARY

Cole and Denny, Inc., retained John Milner Associates, Inc., (JMA) to conduct documentary and archeological investigations on an approximately 3.4-acre parcel of land belonging to the Virginia Theological Seminary (Seminary). The Seminary proposes to construct two faculty residences and associated storm water detention areas within this parcel. The purpose of the investigations was to determine whether significant cultural resources were present in the areas to be disturbed by new construction. The project area is wooded with heavy underbrush, and contains over 30 years of cut tree debris, mulch, construction debris and soils removed from other areas of the Seminary. In order for the archeological investigation to proceed, Seminary groundskeepers, under the direction of JMA archeologists cleared some of the accumulated debris from the ground surface.

JMA reviewed the history of the Seminary property to gain understanding of the types of cultural resources that might be present. The research revealed a history reaching back into the seventeenth century. The Seminary purchased a 59-acre parcel of land, which would later become the grounds of the modern Seminary, from Jonah Thompson in the early nineteenth century. The southern part of Thompson's land had been part of a land grant given to John Carr and John Simpson in 1678 (Mitchell 1977). The northern part of Thompson's land purchased by the Seminary had been part

of a tract of 1,261 acres granted to Francis Awbrey in 1729 (Mitchell 1977:116). Both parcels of Thompson's land had changed owners several times before he acquired it.

The Virginia Theological Seminary was approved by the general convention of the Episcopal Church in 1817. It was established in 1823 at St. Paul's Church in Alexandria but soon moved to a house at the corner of King and Washington Streets because of the increase in enrollment to 14 students (Booty 1995). By 1827, the need for more space dictated a move to a newly acquired 59-acre parcel located approximately three miles west of what was Old Alexandria. The first buildings were constructed on the new seminary grounds between 1827 and 1835. This land was partially cleared, had some forest and meadow, and included a brick house and outbuildings, and another house. After the Seminary purchased the land, these houses became the faculty residences (Goodwin 1923:163).

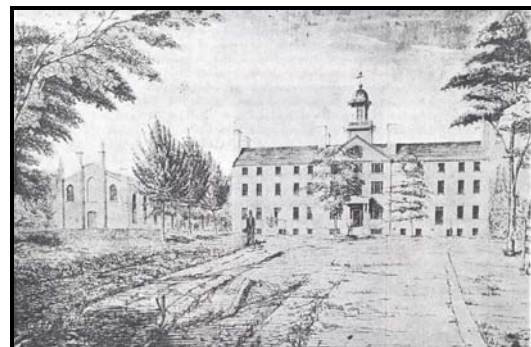


Figure 1. The Seminary settled in the "Wilderness" west of Alexandria in 1827 and soon built a classroom and dormitory building and a chapel (from Goodwin 1923).

In 1838, the Seminary purchased an additional 10-acre parcel, adjoining the south boundary of the original parcel, from Augusta Lockwood. A house may have existed on this property or was soon built on the property and was occupied by faculty (Goodwin 1923:159, 163). The following year the Seminary purchased a 100-acre parcel of land from William Alexander and his wife. This land is where the Protestant Episcopal High School was built. The southwest corner of this parcel, approximately 23 acres, was transferred from the High School to the Seminary in 1913 (Westover 1991); the project area is located on this parcel.

During the 1850s the Seminary experienced a period of steady growth. Many new buildings were constructed, in 1855 the Chapel was expanded and in 1856 St. George's Hall was built for more dormitory space. The original buildings were replaced by Aspinwall Hall, which was flanked by Meade and Bohlen Halls on the north and south, and the new fireproof library for 8,000 volumes was finished by 1860 (Booty 1995:91-96).

The Civil War had a tremendous impact on the Seminary. The Seminary's faculty was from the north and financial support came from both the north and the south (Booty 1995:87). During the 1860-1861 semester, half of the student body was from the north; these students left the Seminary to return to their homes and join the Union Army. Only one professor and seven students remained. Finances became a serious problem, and the remaining professor and students left the campus. Classes were conducted at a professor's home in Staunton, Virginia, from 1862 until 1865 when the war ended (Booty 1995:104-105).

In June 1861, the campus and buildings of the Seminary and the high school were commandeered for a hospital and campground for Northern troops. Tent camps were set up, and barracks and other buildings were erected on the Seminary grounds. Seminary buildings and professors' houses were broken into, property stolen, and a great deal of damage done (Booty 1995:110). One professor's house was converted into a bakery and the library was used as an office for the Surgeon in Command (Booty 1995:110).

The Seminary was occupied by the troops of Kearny's Division in autumn of 1861 through the winter of 1862. Other troops using the Seminary grounds included the 8th and 19th Maine, 121st Pennsylvania, 137th and 186th Pennsylvania (Jirikowic et al. 2004). The camp of the 15th New York is shown on the triangular-shaped piece of land that the Seminary bought from Lockwood in 1838. Fort Ward is located just to the north of the Seminary, and Fort Worth is just to the south. A series of infantry trenches and field artillery positions connected the two forts. These trenches were just west of the Seminary.

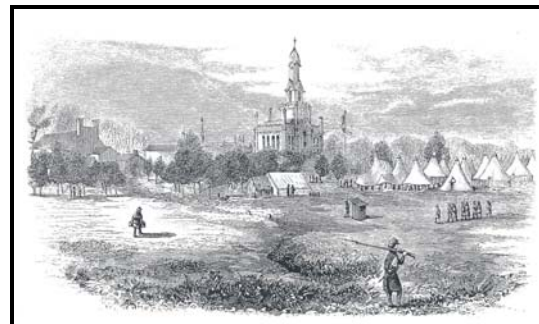


Figure 2. Tents and barracks were constructed on the Seminary grounds as it was turned into a hospital at the beginning of the Civil War (Encampment of Troops at the Seminary, Strother 1866).

After the war, the Seminary needed money for restoration. Many buildings were damaged; all the fences and most of the trees were gone, cut up for firewood, and the high school buildings were unusable (Booty 1995:122-123). Slowly things improved and by 1867 conditions were almost normal. Finances improved and a new chapel was built in 1881. The faculty increased to five full-time professors by 1894.

In the twentieth century, funds were raised for capital improvements and salaries were increased. The student population increased steadily and, in the mid-twentieth century, blacks and women were admitted. There were changes in the composition of the faculty, and the student body began to have greater participation in the affairs of the Seminary. The institution adjusted to changing circumstances, yet kept the essential Episcopal traditions (Booty 1995).

The archeological investigations consisted of a walkover, a systematic shovel test survey, and a metal detection survey. The walkover determined that a large portion of the area to be affected by the proposed new construction was disturbed in the past. Ninety-three shovel tests were excavated on a 30-ft. (ft.) interval grid. Two shovel tests contained artifacts. A shattered yellowware vessel was discovered in one shovel test, and an isolated quartz flake was found in the other. Additional testing adjacent to the two artifact locations did not find more artifacts.

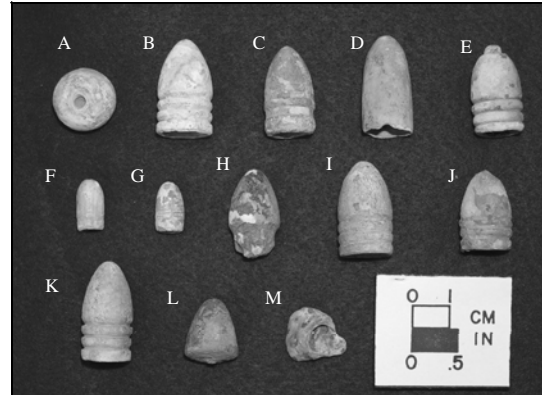


Figure 3. Range of Civil War ammunition from Site 44AX173a: (A) pulled .69 caliber round ball [MD 21/1]; (B) .58 caliber minie ball [MD 30/1]; (C) .52 caliber Sharps carbine [MD 1/2]; (D) Pressed and turned .54 caliber, no grooves, six-spoke conical base [MD 8/1]; (E) .58 caliber minie ball [MD 23/2]; (F) .31 caliber pistol [MD 5/1]; (G) .31 caliber pistol [MD 2/2]; (H) carved .58 caliber minie ball [MD 3/1]; (I) .58 caliber minie ball [MD 16/1]; (J) .54 caliber Burnside carbine [MD 28/1]; (K) .54 caliber minie ball [MD 27/1]; (L) carved .58 caliber [MD 14/1]; and (M) possible minie ball base [MD 11/1].

A metal detection survey was undertaken across the entire project area. The majority of the metal detector hits were late twentieth-century debris including fence wire, aluminum cans, and pop-tops, and bottle caps. These artifacts were not retained. Three isolated historic artifacts, a horseshoe for a draft horse, a door hinge, and a rain gutter support were found in the west end of the project area. Metal detection adjacent to the where artifacts were found in shovel tests did not encounter any artifacts.

The metal detection survey resulted in the identification of a Civil War period site (44AX173a). This, approximately 60-by-230-ft. site, is situated along the north side of a private access road. Metal detector hits revealed 16 bullets, 2 buttons, 3 pieces of melted lead, and a possible gun part from the Civil War.

The southwest end of the site will be destroyed by the construction of a storm water detention area; the central portion of the site is extensively disturbed; and the north end is within a tree retention area.

In order to investigate the portion of 44AX173a to be disturbed by the construction of the storm water detention area, the topsoil was mechanically stripped from the area. Although a small number (4) of Civil War artifacts were recovered from the subsoil, no features dating to the Civil War were found. Six modern planting features were uncovered.

area, or a short-term camp. The majority of the site area has been disturbed by past Seminary activities. No features were encountered. Further investigations would not contribute significant information on the Civil War period at the Seminary or in Alexandria. No additional investigations are warranted, and the proposed construction will have no impact on significant archeological resources.

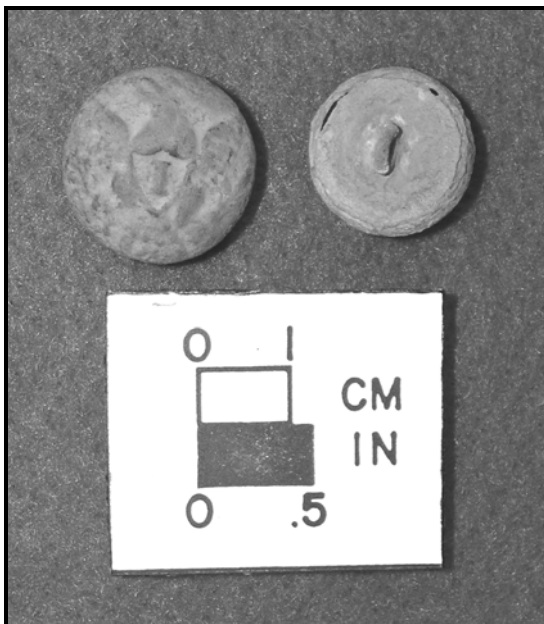


Figure 4. Civil War buttons from Site 44AX173a: (A) two-piece brass Federal Eagle I button [MD 24/1]; (B) three-piece brass button back [MD 2/1].

The Civil War site is associated with an intensive Federal occupation of the Seminary grounds and with earthworks associated with the Defenses of Washington, D.C., located west of the project area. The investigations resulted in a determination that the site is likely to have been used as a rest area, staging

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