

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT 1400 JANNEY'S LANE (44AX191)

For most of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, the land at 1400 Janney's Lane, on the southeast corner of Janney's Lane and North Quaker Lane, was home to a series of residents who wished to escape the confines of the City of Alexandria. More recently, it became the site of a church, and the house built in the early twentieth century was used as a parsonage. But during the years of the Civil War, this property and the landscape around it was a very different place; what had been a quiet residential neighborhood became a center of activities relating to the war.

In 2003, plans were under way to develop the lot at 1400 Janney's Lane. Because of the land's long history as a residential site and because of its location so close to known Civil War sites, the City of Alexandria recognized the high potential for archaeological sites on the property and required that the developer hire professional archaeologists to conduct an evaluation. Archaeological investigations were conducted on the property from October through early December of 2003. These investigations resulted in the discovery of a single archaeological site that contained evidence of both the residential use of the property and its use as a camp ground by soldiers during the Civil War.

### *Ownership History of 1400 Janney's Lane*

The property at 1400 Janney's Lane was originally part of a 627 acre tract granted to John Carr and John Simpson on November 20, 1678, for the transportation of 13 persons into the colony. Between 1681 and 1753 the land was divided and conveyed to various owners until it was once again joined under the ownership of Hugh West. The land eventually passed to his grandson, Thomas West, who sold 300 acres of the original tract to Josiah Watson in 1791. Watson, a tobacco factor, importer of goods, and a resident of Alexandria, filed for bankruptcy in the late 1790s. His property, then known as "Stump Hill," was seized and put up for sale for the benefit of Watson's creditors. To maximize its value, Stump Hill was subdivided into 49 lots of four to seven acres each. To provide access to the lots, two new "avenues" were created running north-south through the property. One of these became what is now known as North Quaker Lane.

By the late 1820s, several lots totaling 24 acres on the east side of "Stump Hill Avenue" (later Quaker Lane) were owned jointly by Francis Peyton and William Moss. In 1828, they agreed to divide the property; Moss received 13

acres on the north side, and Peyton received 11 acres on the south. Later, the road that became known as Janney's Lane followed the dividing line between these two tracts. The lot at 1400 Janney's Lane is roughly the western half of Peyton's 11 acre tract.

At the time Peyton received his share of the Stump Hill property it had not been improved. It remained without buildings until 1832 when Peyton evidently had a modest house built that he probably intended to rent. Peyton himself remained a resident of King Street in Alexandria, where he was a merchant, a politician, and, for a time, the mayor. Peyton died in 1836, and the Stump Hill property remained in his estate until 1850. In a chancery case heard during



Public Auction Notice for the Sale of "Oak Hill,"  
Alexandria Gazette, April 8, 1850.

the January term of that year, the Stump Hill tract, also known as "Oak Hill," was ordered to be sold at public auction. An advertisement for the public sale of Oak Hill appeared in the April 8, 1850, issue of the *Alexandria Gazette*. The brick house and frame kitchen, evidently in disrepair, together with the land in "one of the most pleasant neighborhoods in

the county" were sold to James Green on June 1, 1850. According to tax records, the older buildings on Oak Hill were destroyed shortly after the sale and Green replaced them with far more valuable structures. While it is not altogether certain where the first buildings were located on the property, Civil War period maps show that Green's house and out-buildings were on the western half of the property and within the lot that is now 1400 Janney's Lane.

James Green, father of John and James Green, immigrated from Sheffield, England, to Alexandria in 1817. In 1823, James Green (the elder) went into the cabinet making business in Alexandria, later branching out into the real estate, coal, and lumber business. In 1848, he purchased the Bank of Alexandria, and in 1849 he built the Mansion House Hotel in Alexandria. His son, John W. Green, joined the business in 1850, and in 1857, the cabinet making business was turned over to this two sons, John and James. Just prior to the Civil War, in July of 1860, James Green sold Oak Hill to Aguila Lockwood.

Following the Civil War, Aguila Lockwood sold the Stump Hill property to John W. Green, son of James Green the elder. Green then resided at Oak Hill during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Fairfax County tax records for the first years after the turn of the century show that there were no longer improvements on the property, suggesting that by then the dwelling shown on earlier maps had been destroyed. In 1908, John W. Green sold a portion of the property, which

included the project area, to Winslow Randolph. Tax records show no improvements on the property until 1911, when the property is recorded with improvements and Randolph is shown as being in residence on the property. In 1915, Green's son and heir sold Randolph a second lot that lay adjacent and to the east of the first lot. These lots were subsequently sold in 1936 to Lowell Mellett.

In 1960, the Janney's Lane property,

then identified as Oak Grove, was sold by Lowell Mellett and others to the Second Presbyterian Church. At the time of the archaeological evaluation in 2003, the church built by the Presbyterians and Randolph's 1911 house were the only structures standing on the property.

#### *1400 Janney's Lane During the Civil War*

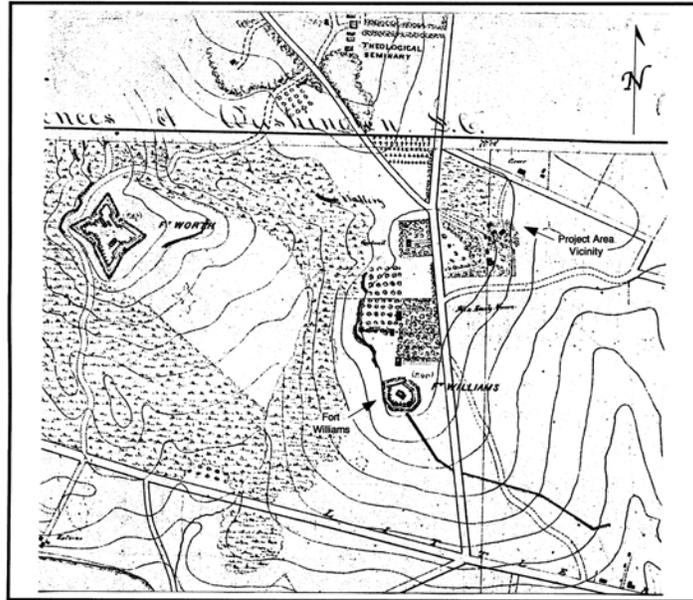
Early in the war, the U.S. government recognized the need to build fortifications to defend the capitol city of Washington, D.C. The western line of these defenses reached the western fringes of Alexandria and included a series of ridges north of Hunting Creek.

Fort Worth was constructed in 1861 not far to the west of Oak Hill, and Fort Ellsworth was constructed near Shooter's Hill to the east. The Episcopal Theological Seminary, located just across Quaker Lane and to the north,

was requisitioned by the U.S. Army in 1861 to be used as a headquarters and hospital. By 1863 it was evident that another fort was needed to close the gap between Fort Worth and Fort Ellsworth. The location selected for this new fort was Cooper's Hill, the site of

Samuel Cooper's house located across Quaker Lane and just to the south. Cooper's house was razed by Union troops, and Fort Williams was built on its site. Additional gun batteries were constructed west and southwest of the fort, and a line of rifle pits stretched eastward from Fort Williams towards Fort Ellsworth.

During the Civil War years, then, the lot on Janney's Lane was located in the center of these strategic sites. Of greatest importance was the headquarters and hospital located just adjacent to the property. While no documents were found that record how this land and the buildings on it were used during those war years, the



Portion of an 1863 Map Showing the Location of Fort Williams and the Vicinity of the Project Area.

archaeological investigations of the property reveal that the land was certainly used by soldiers who camped at that location and left their refuse scattered across the property.

*Archaeological Investigations at 1400 Janney's Lane (44AX191)*



Miscellaneous Brass Hardware Items: top, brass stirrup fragment; bottom left, brass scabbard finial; bottom right, brass key.

Initial testing of the property involved the excavation of a series of small shovel test pits at regular intervals across the property and a metal detector survey. Once it was established that archaeological resources were present on the property, additional testing involved the hand excavation of small areas and the use of a backhoe to dig deeper test trenches in selected locations.

The archaeological testing of the property yielded several results. First, the testing showed that the entire property had been disturbed by plowing and that large areas of the property had been massively disturbed by cutting and filling, probably associated with the construction of the church and its associated parking lots. Second, the testing showed that there was a fairly even scatter of artifacts dating to the nineteenth century strewn across the

property. These artifacts included a great many fragments of glass bottles, the vast majority of which once contained liquor, spirits, champagne or brandy. Also among the artifacts were Civil War period bullets and miscellaneous bits of metal hardware associated with Civil War military uniforms and equipment. These artifacts fit the profile of what would be the expected refuse at a Civil War encampment. The investigations, however, failed to produce any evidence of the tent platforms, company streets, pits, or hearths that might have remained of a camp.

Other types of artifacts were also found at the site, and these included ceramic sherds, architectural items such as nails and windowpane glass, and



Miscellaneous Munitions: top left, lead Sharp's long bullet; top left center, lead Sharp's long bullet; top right center, lead Sharp's carbine bullet; top right, lead sharp's carbine bullet; bottom left, lead ball shot; bottom center, lead ball shot, impacted and carved; bottom right, .58 caliber musket ball, impacted.

miscellaneous materials such as animal bone (food waste), oyster shells, and large amounts of coal and slag. These materials were concentrated on the southern portion of the project area where the 1911 house stands and in the vicinity of where buildings were shown on Civil War period maps. These items were clearly associated with the former

domestic use of the property. Further testing in this southern part of the property also revealed evidence of a single buried brick foundation. The foundation likely supported a dwelling, although no evidence of a hearth was found in the portions of the foundation that were exposed during these investigations.

The foundation measured 38 by 16 feet, and a small porch foundation extended from the center of the north wall. The foundation wall was two bricks wide and extended at least five courses deep; it did not enclose a cellar. The testing around the wall also showed that multiple layers of fill had been deposited within and around the foundation remains. No

evidence of an intact floor or ground surface was found. Because the surrounding soils had been so disturbed, the age of the foundation could not be determined from the archaeological evidence.

### Conclusion

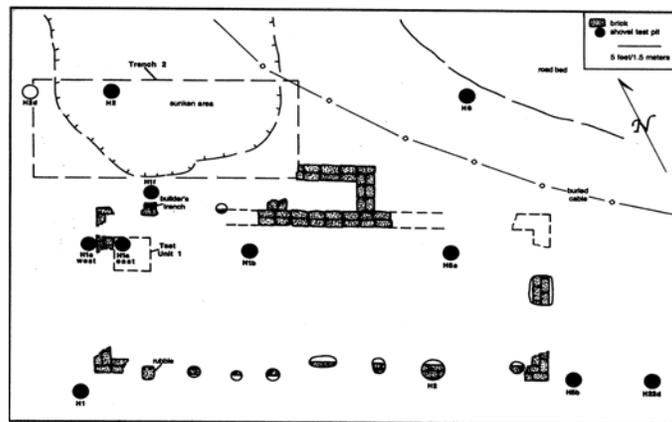
The archaeological evaluation of 1400 Janney's Lane resulted in the identification of archaeological materials reflecting two aspects of the former use of the property. Artifacts left by Union soldiers who camped on the land were found scattered across the entire property. These artifacts consist of typical camp refuse, mostly fragments of

bottles that once contained alcoholic beverages, bullets, and miscellaneous fragments of hardware once associated with military uniforms or equipment. All of the artifacts recovered, however, had been disturbed by plowing and other earth-moving activities. Because of its proximity to the Seminary, the property at Janney's Lane was very likely a convenient camp location for troops who were passing through or visiting the headquarters/hospital. No evidence of a long-term encampment was found, and it

is more probable that the ground was used repeatedly by different troops for short-term camps. While we do not know precisely which regiments may have used this ground, the

preponderance of cavalry pistol bullets found at the site suggests that the cavalry were perhaps the most frequent campers at this particular location.

While materials relating to the Civil War period use of the property were scattered across the entire lot, archaeological evidence associated with the former domestic use of the property was concentrated in the southern portion of the property. Ceramic sherds, nails, windowpane glass, food refuse, and coal stove waste were among the materials found in this portion of the site. In addition, the investigations revealed a single buried brick foundation that most likely supported one of the earlier



Plan View of Foundation in the Southern Section of 44AX191

houses on the property. The age of the foundation could not be determined on the basis of the archaeological evidence; however, the ownership history of the property suggests that it could have been associated with one or both of the earlier houses on the property. The earliest house was built in 1832 when the land was owned by Francis Peyton; the second house was built by James Green in the early 1850s.

Once again a quiet residential neighborhood, the area around 1400 Janney's Lane bears few visible traces of the defensive structures, troops, and activities that dominated it during the years of the Civil War. The results of the archaeological investigations at 1400 Janney's Lane provide evidence of troop activity during those difficult times, as well as of the land's long use as a private residence.