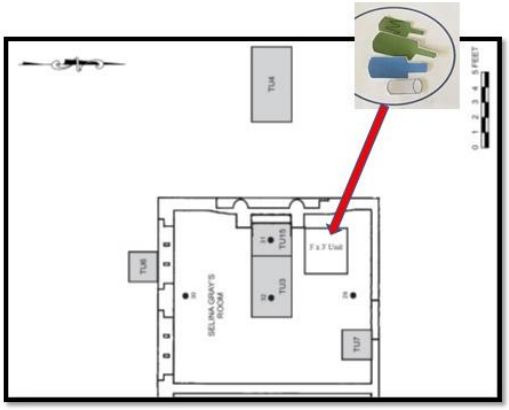
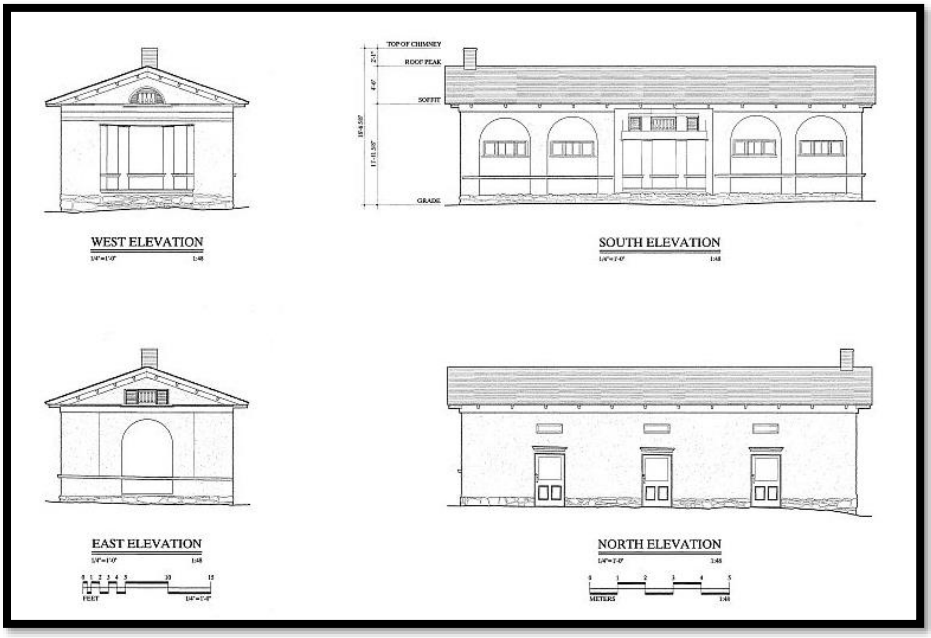
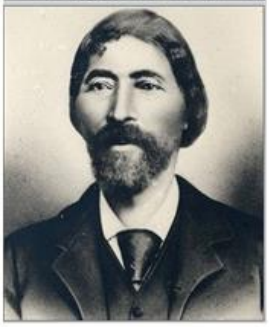
Rehabilitation of Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial
South Dependency/Slave Quarters - Discovery of a Subfloor Storage Pit Shrine
Supplementary Section 106 Archeological Investigations
Related to the 2017-2020 Rehabilitation Program

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial
Arlington County, Virginia







Matthew R. Virta, Cultural Resources Program Manager

National Park Service - George Washington Memorial Parkway

2021

Cover Graphics (clockwise from upper left):

Fireplace and Subfloor Pit Location, South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters, Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial – NPS Photograph by B. Krueger 2019 adapted by M. Virta, National Park Service-George Washington Memorial Parkway

Drawing of Previous Archeological Excavations Showing Fireplace and Subfloor Pit Excavation Unit Illustrating Positioning of Bottles Discovered, South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters, Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial – NPS Drawing by M. Virta 2020, National Park Service-George Washington Memorial Parkway, based on Louis Berger Group, Inc. drawing and B. Krueger illustration

Selina and Thornton Gray – from National Park Service Museum Management Program Exhibit, https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/arho/index.html

Elevation Drawings of South Dependency/Slave Quarters, Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial – National Park Service Historic American Building Survey Collections HABS VA 443A; https://www.loc.gov/item/va1924/.

Rehabilitation of Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial
South Dependency/Slave Quarters - Discovery of a Subfloor Storage Pit Shrine
Supplementary Section 106 Archeological Investigations
Related to the 2017-2020 Rehabilitation Program

Virginia Department of Historic Resources File # 2015-1056

Archeological Site # 44AR0017

George Washington Memorial Parkway

Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial

Arlington County, Virginia

Matthew R. Virta, Cultural Resources Program Manager

National Park Service - George Washington Memorial Parkway

Department of Interior – Region 1 – National Capital Area

2021

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

The present archeological report provides an initial accounting of the investigations at Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial related to a significant find made during the archeological monitoring of construction that was part of a major Rehabilitation project at the site. Preparation of the report was underway during the Coronavirus Pandemic and subject to the resulting work/life restrictions that began in the United States during early 2020 and has continued to affect daily life around the world. Typical avenues of supporting research, analytical testing and further consultation utilizing archival repositories, archeological laboratories, colleagues, and other means were not readily available due to Covid-19 health and safety protocols, so the goal of the reporting was to provide as much information as possible in a timely manner. Further research is expected to occur and may augment the findings of this report.

Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial is a National Park Service (NPS) unit under the administration of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) that preserves a portion of an antebellum plantation. It is located in Arlington County Virginia just south across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. The site honors the legacy of its builder, George Washington Parke Custis, and his son-in-law, Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who resigned his Union Army commission while residing there. The extant mansion and the outbuildings, which include quarters for enslaved individuals, were constructed by Custis using slave labor on a Virginia hillside overlooking Washington, DC between 1802 and 1818. The house was built, in part, as a memorial to Custis' adoptive grandfather, George Washington.

The Custis and Lee families occupied Arlington House and presided over an 1,100-acre plantation worked by some 63 enslaved individuals until the advent of the Civil War, when Lee became the commanding general of the Confederate forces and the family fled south. Union Army forces subsequently occupied the plantation which then initially served as the Headquarters of the Army of Northeastern Virginia and played an important role in the Defenses of Washington throughout the war. The land was confiscated by the federal government and by war's end 200 acres were initially set aside to become a military cemetery administered by the War Department; evolving into what is now Arlington National Cemetery.

The NPS began administering the mansion and immediate grounds as a park site beginning in 1933 with the mission of restoring and interpreting the site to the period of the Civil War beginnings. The remainder of Arlington House estate stayed with the War Department as Arlington National Cemetery. Over the years legislation was enacted to transfer more of the larger setting around Arlington House to the NPS, including the Dependencies/Slave Quarters, the Kitchen and Flower Gardens, the former Stables Building (reconstructed as an Administration Building), and the wooded ravine known as Arlington Woods behind the mansion grounds. Referred to in modern times as the Custis-Lee Mansion, Congress specified in 1955 that it should be known as a memorial to Robert E. Lee and later in 1972 authorized a name change to Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial. This document uses the NPS acronym for the site (ARHO) and also Arlington House, as well as Arlington, in reference to the mansion, immediate site grounds, and/or the traditional plantation estate as context dictates.

The ARHO park site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and today the property consists of 16 acres; 4 acres including the mansion, outbuildings, and immediate grounds (designated as archeological site 44AR0017) and 12 acres of the Arlington Woods (containing archeological site 44AR0032, a multi-component prehistoric and 19th century historic site). The house and grounds saw a major rehabilitation effort undertaken from 2017-2020 as a follow-up and expansion to a preceding rehabilitation project from 2006-2012. With the addition of major funding from philanthropist David Rubenstein, the NPS continued the earlier efforts to preserve the historic structures, restore landscape elements, and upgrade visitor services at the site. Archeological investigations were conducted prior to both rehabilitation programs to help inform the planning and to satisfy federal agency responsibilities under National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Archeological monitoring of construction activities was also taking place during the rehabilitation work.

During the latest rehabilitation project, workmen were in the 40 ft x 20 ft South Dependency performing a floor leveling task in the 18 ft x 16 ft west room that served as slave quarters and uncovered an interesting find. The workmen shovel-skimming modern fill away dug too deeply in a spot and uncovered four glass bottles clustered in the historic period soils below and immediately reported it to the archeological monitor on site who joined the discovery scenario. Following notification of the find and inspection of the site, GWMP Cultural Resources Program Manager and Archeologist Matthew Virta requested a work stoppage so that a 3 ft x 3 ft archeological excavation unit could be placed at the site of the discovery for further exploration.

The resulting archeological investigations by GWMP archeologists of the unanticipated discovery have identified that there were four northward-pointing bottles in what was a subfloor storage pit adjacent to and northeast of the fireplace hearth that was most likely a feature associated with the enslaved Selina and Thornton Gray family occupying the west room quarters in the mid-nineteenth century. Analysis of the findings indicate that the pit functioned as a type of shrine and had contained what may be an enslaved people's "spirit bundle" with "conjuring bottles"; exhibiting West African religious connections (Haq 2016, Samford 2007) and creolized Hoodoo Rootwork religious/folk magic practices (Chireau 2003, Kraus etal 2010, Leone 1999, Unger 2009) that demonstrate resistance to their state of bondage and their perseverance for freedom. Placement of a spirit bundle and/or conjure bottles by an enslaved individual as part of a ritualistic religious/magical shrine served variously to ward off evil, promote self-preservation, cast spells to harm others, and host a protective Nkisi spirit or entrap malevolent entities (Haq 2016, Hoggard 2019, Lane 2008, Manning 2012), functioning as a talisman to combat the harsh and de-humanizing realities of slavery and to safeguard the future.

This report provides an initial accounting of the investigations of this significant feature, with much more analytical work and research recommended. As indicated, the bulk of the report was prepared during the Coronavirus Pandemic while the author was on telework status, many avenues of research and analysis were limited due to Covid 19 protocols restricting access to resources to conduct further study. While much can be said for internet sleuthing and remote consultations, limitations are acknowledged, and many research questions remain to be explored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The South Dependency/Slave Quarters archeological investigations at Arlington House were part of a larger program of archeological monitoring, testing, and formal excavations related to the major rehabilitation project. Work was carried out to ensure federal agency compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), to follow NHPA Section 110 guidance, and to provide information to assist the rehabilitation goals. Most often this type of endeavor takes some level of a team effort beyond those conducting the immediate archeological work to complete all the required tasks. It is imperative to acknowledge certain individuals who have aided *most directly* in these accomplishments, realizing that everyone can't be mentioned by name.

Bradley Krueger, then GWMP Cultural Resource Specialist and Archeologist, provided the most assistance with the field work part of the project for the recent overall rehabilitation program and was key with pre-construction project tasks, construction monitoring, and helping with the South Dependency/Slave Quarters investigations. Along the way other archeologists participated in the larger archeological efforts across the ARHO site during the rehabilitation including Dr. Michael Roller of the NPS Washington Office, Emily Roberts who was a NPS Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program intern with GWMP, and Will Rowe who was a temporary hire archeologist with GWMP. The current GWMP Cultural Resources Specialist and Archeologist Dr. Megan Bailey reviewed draft versions of the report.

Dr. Mark Leone at the University of Maryland looked at very early draft material intended to form the core of a paper that was presented at the 2021 Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) Virtual Conference and to inform this report; as did Bradley Krueger (currently the Cultural Resources Program Manager at Rock Creek Park) and Dr. Joshua Torres, National Park Service, National Capital Area (NPS-NCA) Regional Archeologist and current Acting NPS Chief Archeologist at the Washington Office and Department of Interior Departmental Consulting Archeologist (DCA). Bob Sonderman, retired Regional Curator and Senior Archeologist for NPS-NCA, offered assistance with artifact identification and commented on draft materials as well.

Former GWMP Resource Management Division Chief Simone Monteleone recognized the importance of the discovery and helped to allow time for appropriate investigations. Current GWMP Resource Management Division Chief Maureen Joseph and park leadership including Superintendent Charles Cuvelier have encouraged continued work on the research as workload and time permits. Previews of the initial archeological findings that formed the basis for the SHA paper were provided to and feedback was received from the Arlington plantation enslaved descendant community and from descendants of Robert E. Lee.

Besides other park responsibilities filling workdays and limiting additional research and writing abilities, it has been pointed out that the bulk of the report was compiled during the Coronavirus Pandemic, when many work places were shuttered and employees were placed in telework status, including the author. Access to additional resources was restricted or not at all possible due to closures, and the report was assembled with the best information available at hand in an effort to get information out in a timely manner. It is recognized that there are many other

avenues of inquiry yet to be pursued and hopefully future research will be possible related to the findings and with the archeological collection. A final thanks go to all of my contacts, workmates, and colleagues who provided various means of assistance during these times. While others have influenced the writing of this report, the conclusions presented are those of the author, and any errors of omission or commission are mine.

Matt Virta, NPS-GWMP Cultural Resources Program Manager/Archeologist
MAA Anthropology/Archeology and Cultural Resources Management

April 2021

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

"Ooh, lordy, troubles so hard, don't nobody know my troubles but God" from Trouble So Hard - Traditional African American Spiritual (Vera Hall 1937)

"She gonna send out a worldwide hoodoo, that'll be the very thing that'll suit you" from Thirty Days (Chuck Berry 1955)

1.1 Introduction

A major rehabilitation project was undertaken from 2017-2020 at Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial, a site under the administration of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) of the National Park Service (NPS) located in Arlington County, Virginia. Funded through a generous grant by philanthropist David Rubenstein and the NPS line item construction project budget, the rehabilitation program sought to make improvements for visitor access, enhance interpretation, and undertake restoration efforts for the early 19th century mansion, dependencies, and grounds. This effort augmented a 2006-2012 rehabilitation project.

During the recent rehabilitation, workmen performing a floor leveling task in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters uncovered an interesting find. Removal of a 20th century reconstructed brick flooring, vapor barrier and sand layer was taking place, and minor excavation of the underlying modern fill soils was underway in preparation for possibly establishing a more historically accurate (based on research) lower floor elevation. The workmen shovel-skimming the modern fill away dug too deeply in a spot and uncovered four glass bottles clustered in historic period soils below. GWMP Cultural Resources Specialist and Archeologist Bradley Krueger, who was monitoring several work sites of the rehabilitation project simultaneously, was just outside the South Dependency doorway and went in to take possession of the bottles and note their discovery, as had been the protocol for isolated finds during construction. As no deeper excavation was to occur, the workmen were allowed to continue the remainder of the room floor leveling exercise under observation. When notified later of the nature of the find, GWMP Cultural Resources Program Manager and Senior Archeologist Matthew Virta immediately sought to further explore the intriguing discovery after inspection of the site and notified the Rehabilitation Construction Program Manager of the need for a temporary work stoppage so archeological investigation could take place.

Resultant archeological excavations by Virta and Krueger identified a subfloor storage pit northeast of the fireplace hearth that is most likely associated with the enslaved Selina and Thornton Gray family occupying the west room quarters in the mid-nineteenth century. Analysis of the findings suggests that the pit functioned as a type of shrine and had contained what may be an enslaved people's "spirit bundle" featuring four north-facing "conjuring bottles"; exhibiting West African religious connections (Haq 2016, Samford 2007) and creolized Hoodoo Rootwork religious/folk magic practices (Chireau 2003, Kraus etal 2010, Leone 1999, Unger 2009) that demonstrate resistance to their state of bondage and continued perseverance for their freedom. This type of religious/magical shrine served in a ritualistic capacity to variously ward off evil, promote self-preservation, cast spells to harm others, and host protective Nkisi spirits or entrap malevolent entities (Haq 2016, Hoggard 2019, Lane 2008, Manning 2012), functioning as a talisman to combat the harsh and de-humanizing realities of slavery and to safeguard the future.

1.2 Background

Figure 1 - Arlington House Location (NPS Image)

Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial (ARHO), is located on a hillside in Arlington County, Virginia overlooking Washington, DC across the Potomac River. ARHO is a site listed in the National Register of Historic Places that preserves a 16-acre portion of what had been an 1,100-acre antebellum plantation estate worked with slave labor. A 2014 update to the ARHO National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination and a Cultural Landscape Report (Hanna 2001) provide a detailed history of the site. The extant mansion, outbuildings, and grounds were set aside to honor the legacy of its builder, George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted grandson of President George Washington. The plantation estate was originally known as Mount Washington, later to be called Arlington. The site also interprets and memorializes the life of Custis' son-in-law, Robert E. Lee, who lived there when not on military postings following his 1831 marriage to Custis' daughter Mary Anna Randolph Custis until he resigned his Union Army commission in 1861 to lead Virginia's troops and become the Confederacy's commanding general during the Civil War.

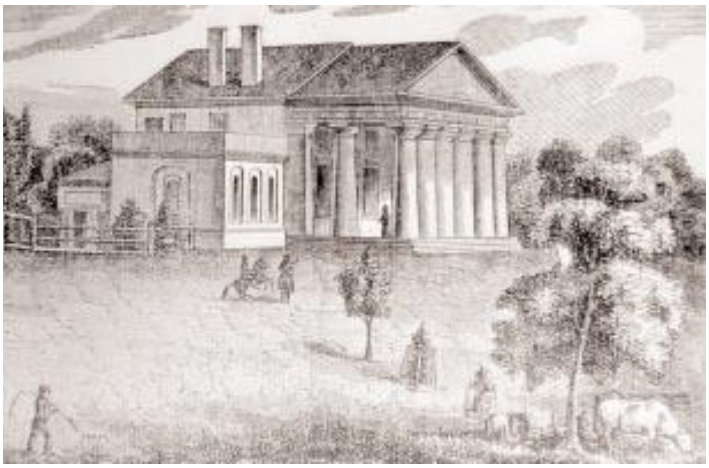


Figure 2 - Arlington House circa 1845 (adapted from Hanna 2001 – Museum Resources Conservation Center)

The mansion and outbuildings, which featured slave quarters, were constructed by Custis using enslaved labor between 1802 and 1818 on a hillside facing east across the Potomac River to overlook the developing federal core of the nation's new capital of Washington, DC. The house was built, in part, as a memorial to Custis' adoptive grandfather, George Washington, as Custis displayed his "Washington Treasury" of many relics of the nation's founding father there. The Custis and Lee families operated a plantation on the original 1,100-acres using enslaved labor until the advent of the Civil War, when Lee became the commanding general of the Confederate forces and the family fled south. Union Army forces subsequently occupied the plantation which then initially served as the Headquarters of the Army of Northeastern Virginia and played an important role in the Defenses of Washington throughout the war. The federal

government took possession of the property in 1864 for unpaid taxes and set aside 200 acres around the mansion for a military cemetery, eventually becoming what is now Arlington National Cemetery. The Army controlled the mansion and outbuildings as part of cemetery operations and made improvements and conducted various restoration efforts until 1933, when first the house and later some of the grounds and outbuildings were transferred to the NPS.

Following the 1933 transfer, the NPS continued the upkeep efforts and, after a Congressional designation of the site as a memorial to Robert E. Lee in 1955, began administering the mansion and immediate grounds with a mandate of restoring and interpreting the site to the period of the eve of the Civil War. The bulk of the former plantation lands stayed with the War Department as Arlington National Cemetery, but over the years legislation was enacted to transfer more of the larger setting around ARHO to the NPS, including the Dependencies/Slave Quarters, the Kitchen and Flower Gardens, the former Stables Building (reconstructed as the Administration Building), and the wooded ravine known as Arlington Woods behind the mansion grounds. The ARHO park site property today consists of 12 acres of Arlington Woods (containing archeological site 44AR0032, a multi-component prehistoric and 19th century historic site) and 4 acres including the mansion, outbuildings, and immediate grounds (designated as archeological site 44AR0017).

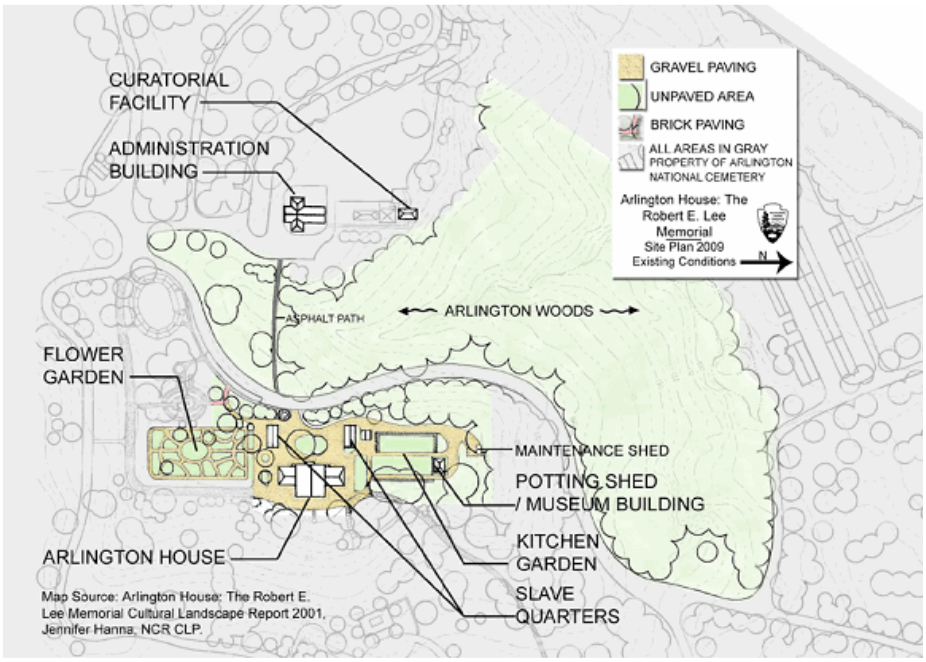


Figure 3 - Arlington House Site Plan circa 2009 (NPS Image from NPS 2006a)

Rehabilitation projects at the site have been executed by the NPS over the years, including in the 1960s, early 2000s, and the recent effort from 2017. Historical research and archeological investigations have contributed to the planning and design of these projects and have satisfied National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 responsibilities. One of the current rehabilitation goals was to possibly restore the historic floor level elevation (considering accessibility) in the west room of the South Dependency based on archeological findings (Louis Berger Group 2005), while protecting potential archeological resources associated with the historical occupancy. Returning the elevation ***closer*** to the historic elevation was proposed with the caveat that "*Some infill dirt should remain above the historical level to protect potential archeological artifacts*"

(Fisher et al 2009b: 102). To aid in this effort, recommended archeological monitoring of rehabilitation construction activities was underway when the unanticipated find occurred.

1.3 Discovery & Supposition

Figure 4 – Virta examining the depression and unconsolidated soils of the west room floor at site of the find (NPS Photograph)

Following the workmen's discovery of four complete bottles (though one was broken by the crew), the bottles were examined and attempts were made by the archeological monitor Bradley Krueger to understand the recovery scenario. After the find was later reported to archeologist Matthew Virta, a site visit to the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters was quickly made by Virta accompanied by Krueger and the initial re-examination of the recently leveled floor grade of the west room in the area of the find identified evidence of a depression and unconsolidated soils surrounding the spot where the four glass bottles had been discovered (Figure 4). The four different types of bottles recovered were complete (three intact, one broken) mouth blown and hand formed or partial mold formed varieties typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century, and included what may be generically described as a squat spirits bottle (broken), a tall champagne bottle, a pour-spout liquids bottle, and a wide-mouth foodstuff bottle (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Four early to mid-19th century bottles recovered from the apparent subfloor storage pit (NPS Photograph)

Some probing of the area where the bottles had been removed indicated that the looser soils seemed to occupy a larger area than just the bottle retrieval locale. Inquiry of the

Portuguese-speaking workmen as to the nature of their find was aided by using paper cut-out bottle shapes and an illustrated drawing of the west room taken from an archeological report documenting previous archeological investigations at the site (Louis Berger Group 2005). When asked to depict their find, the cut-out bottle shapes were placed by the workmen on the room drawing at the site of the depression, which was located adjacent to and northeast of the room's fireplace and hearth (Figure 6). The bottle cut-outs were set in a side by side arrangement, all bases oriented to the south with the openings or mouths pointing northward. This was confirmed as the understanding of the circumstances by archeological monitor Krueger who inspected the scene of the find immediately after the workmen's discovery.

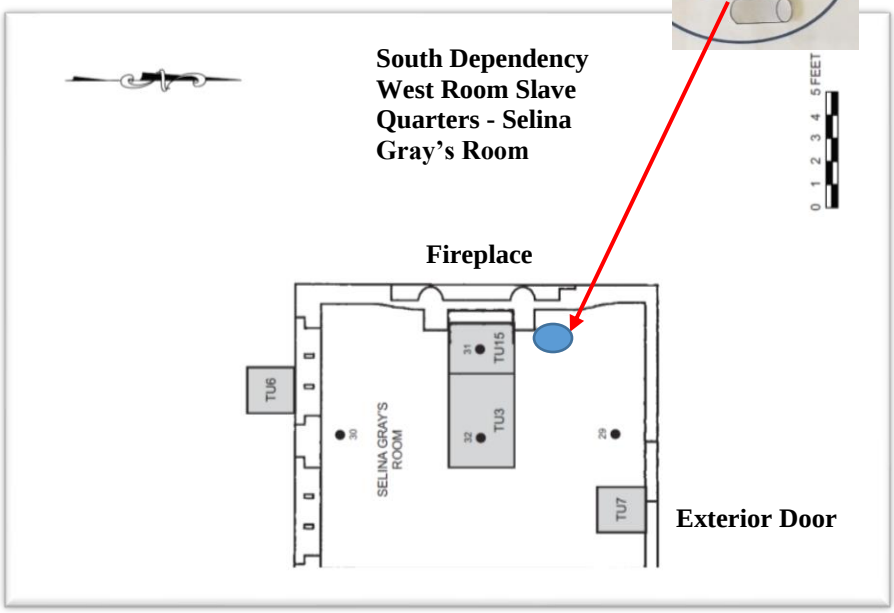


Figure 6 – Placement of cut-out bottle shapes by workmen on room drawing (NPS Illustration adapted from Louis Berger Group 2005)

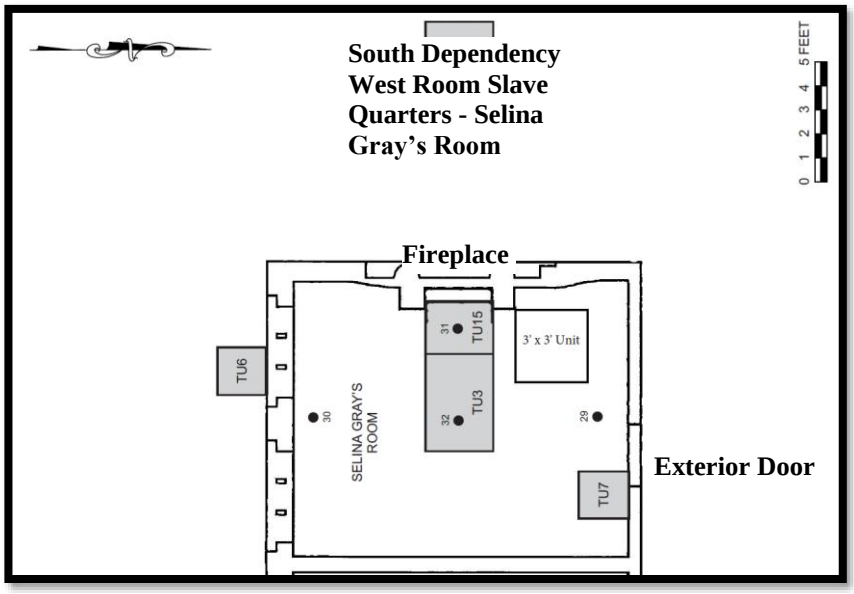


Figure 7 – Placement of 3ft x 3ft Excavation Unit relative to fireplace and previous excavation units (NPS Illustration adapted from Louis Berger Group 2005)

The nature of the find was highly suggestive to Virta of a purposeful placement of objects within a subfloor storage pit by enslaved individuals, perhaps indicating a spiritual feature, and required a work stoppage for detailed archeological investigation. After roughly defining an apparent ovoid-shaped pit, a 3 ft by 3 ft excavation unit (EU) was laid out (Figure 7) over it for investigation of the area to the northeast of the firebox cheek wall/jamb with the south unit edge abutting the hearth and adjacent to previous archeological EUs (Louis Berger Group 2005) excavated in front of the fireplace prior to the 2006-2012 rehabilitation.

The overall initial appearance of the pit area was a roughly 1.5 ft x 2.3 ft D-shaped ovoid, with the southern straight-edge along a line of a few old fragmented dry-laid bricks that appeared to form an earlier hearth kerb/edge (Figure 8). These early bricks were exposed after the reproduction brick floor with vapor barrier and sand layer were removed and the underlying fill soils were excavated by the workmen. Brickwork had been discovered under the reproduction brick floor in the fill soils by the previous investigations (Louis Berger Group 2005) within and directly in front (east) of the fireplace and was postulated as being a circa 1871 War Department former hearth pavement placed over the historic antebellum dirt floor levels. The kerb's dry-laid fragmented bricks were below this 1871 hearth elevation and seemingly associated with the original dirt floor levels.

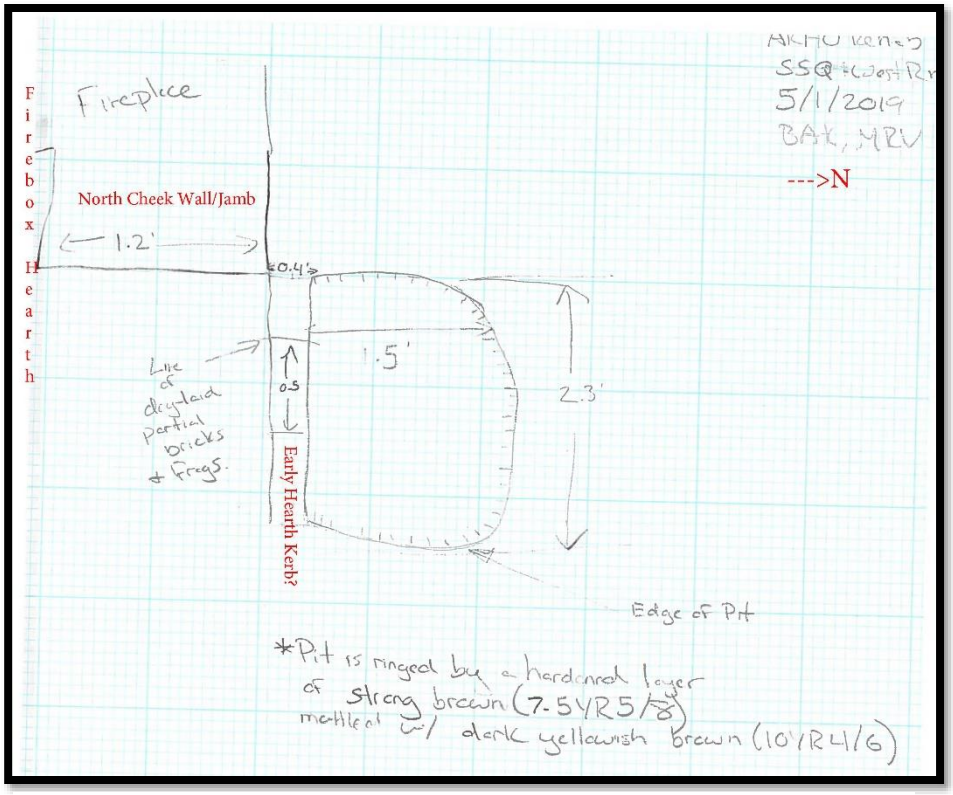


Figure 8 – Appearance of pit area relative to fireplace and prior to beginning excavations (NPS Drawing)

With a 3 ft x 3 ft excavation unit laid out over the depression/pit area, controlled archeological investigation of the apparent subfloor storage pit feature could be carried out during a temporary work stoppage of the rehabilitation project tasks in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters. The presence within enslaved people's living spaces of sub-floor storage pits or buried caches containing items of material culture, most frequently positioned near a room's hearth, entryways, or room corners, has been documented in archeological literature as possibly magical or religious in nature (Leone and Fry 1999, Samford 1996, 2007, Unger 2009). Explanations for the occurrence of these pits and their contents have also ranged from the utilitarian to the sacred. Food storage pits, personal possession caches, purloined goods' hiding places, and religious or magical shrine-like chambers have all been put forth as possibilities for their existence (Hatch 2009, Samford 2007, Unger 2009). Location of the pits and presence or absence of certain artifact classes may or may not help explain the pits' purposes, as placement of pits vary and often it is thought that the original contents may have been removed, replaced, used, or left behind during the life span of the pit and unrelated fill materials may have been used to bury a cache or seal an abandoned pit. The condition and circumstances of the pits' discoveries also influence the ability to archeologically investigate them. The South Dependency had undergone

many modern-era restoration episodes under Department of the Army ownership when part of Arlington National Cemetery and later by the NPS as part of ARHO. It is quite remarkable that a likely subfloor storage pit containing four bottles had survived mostly unscathed.

From the initial observations, the location of the presumed subfloor storage pit and the positioning of the bottles within the pit were highly suggestive of a scenario of the ritualized practice of enslaved peoples establishing a shrine with magical or religious powers employing "conjuring bottles", placed in a manner within their dwelling to ward off evil and promote self-preservation (Samford 2007). All four bottles were lain side by side with openings pointing northward, possibly toward freedom, within a pit located to the north and east of the fireplace and hearth (east toward a new day's sunrise or toward home). These cardinal directions are certainly suggestive of important spiritual imagery in enslaved people's lives and could possibly have West African ties to the northeastern quadrant (corresponding to birth and life) of the Bakongo Cosmogram, which depicts the relationship between the spiritual and physical worlds and the life cycle (Boroughs 2004, Samford 2007, Thompson 1983).

As indicated previously, the four different types of bottles recovered were complete (three intact, one broken) and were mouth blown and hand formed or partial mold formed varieties typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century, and included what may be generically described as a squat spirits bottle (broken), a tall champagne bottle, a pour-spout liquids bottle, and a wide-mouth foodstuff bottle. The bottles have yet to be subject to more careful examination, but initial inspections indicated none had stoppers or corks associated with them, and all but one appeared to be empty of any contents save for small trace amounts of dirt residue. The one bottle that contained something was the narrowest mouth specimen, the pour spout bottle. Upon preliminary inspection, a small, long and thin, flat profile animal bone fragment was observed and carefully extracted (Figure 9). This bone fragment was about 4 -1/4 inches long by 3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter/width and is possibly a sheep or goat rib. The presence of the bone in the bottle, considering the small mouth opening, was likely a purposeful placement rather than an archeological accident. The inclusion of bones among objects in an enslaved person's shrine bundle has also been documented in the archeological literature (Leone and Fry 1999, Samford 2007, Unger 2009). The nature of the four bottles with the bone and the other artifacts discovered later strongly suggest they were part of a subfloor storage pit shrine of enslaved occupants of the quarters, but who, when, and why?

Figure 9 – Narrow mouth, pour spout bottle contained a thin animal bone rib fragment (NPS Photograph)

CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT (adapted from Virta 2019)

2.1 Natural Setting

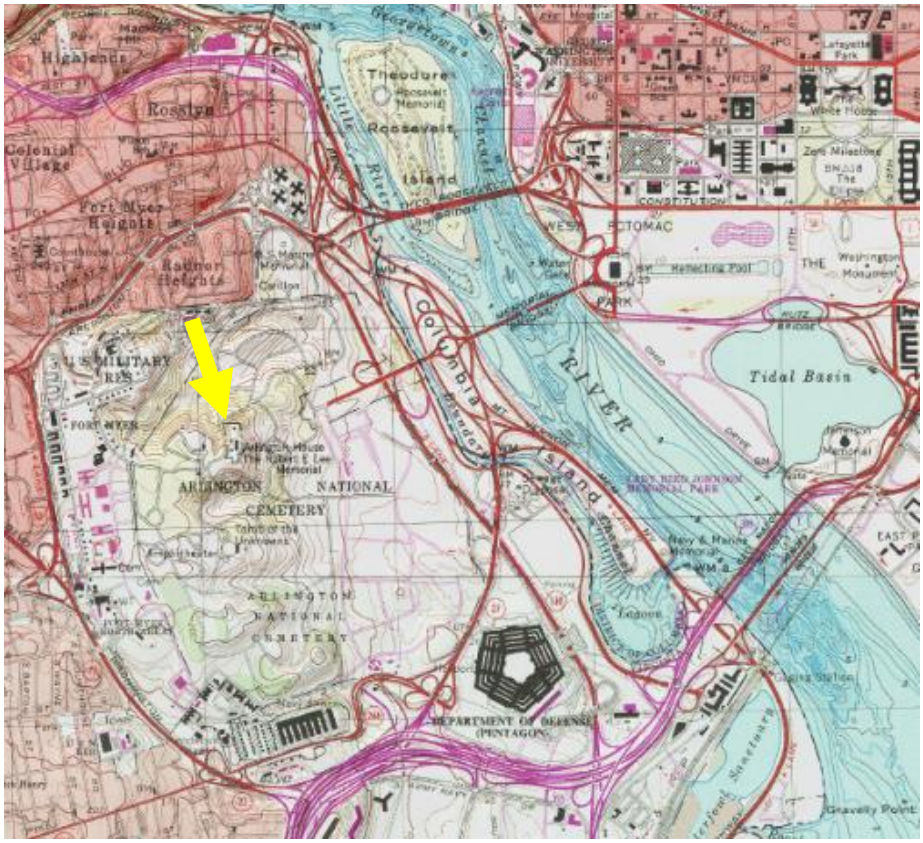


Figure 10 - ARHO Environs (adapted from Topozone.com)

ARHO is located within Arlington County, Virginia to the west across the Potomac River from Washington, DC and is surrounded by Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). Situated on a hilltop, the site overlooks the Potomac River and the nation's capital from along a geographic feature known as Arlington Ridge or Heights, a relatively low-lying rise of 200 ft above sea level and the river valley floodplain. ARHO and ANC are bordered on the north and west by Marshall Drive and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, to the east by VA State Route 110 Jefferson Davis Highway, and to the south by VA State Route 244 Columbia Pike and VA State Route 27 Washington Boulevard.

ARHO is within an upland section of the Coastal Plain physiographic province of Virginia sitting adjacent to and just south or downstream of the fall line or zone forming the border with the Piedmont Plateau. The geology of the area is typified by late Pliocene Upland Terrace Deposits including gravel, sand, silt, and clay and early Cretaceous Potomac Formation sand and gravel (http://gis.arlingtonva.us/Maps/Standard_Maps/Environmental_Maps/Geology.pdf - Arlington County). Soils around ARHO are loamy to clayey and mapped as mostly being National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Arlington County, VA (VA013) Map Unit 5-Arlington National Cemetery series while adjacent soils are Map Unit 12-Urban land-Udorthents complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes series (http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx).

Little is left of the original prehistoric era natural setting around ARHO as development of the surrounding ANC has greatly altered the landform with turf-grass burial fields dotted by trees and laced by an extensive roadway circulation system. Besides the cemetery development of the former Arlington plantation, the central portion setting of ARHO historically saw the clearing of the hilltop for construction of the mansion, outbuildings, and gardens and associated walks and

drives with a park setting and fields along the Potomac River frontage. Arlington Woods, a more natural ravine area to the west of the ARHO mansion setting, is currently composed of 12 acres of forest containing old growth trees. This wooded area is all that remains of the original much larger forested grounds of the estate which served as a backdrop to the mansion setting and where the Custis and Lee families recreated, hunted, and enjoyed the preserved woodland (Hanna 2001). In 1975 ANC had transferred a 24-acre tract known as Section 29 to the NPS, which was the last modern-day vestiges of Arlington Woods, to help maintain the historic setting. This woodland contained five distinct forest types: 1) Mixed Hardwood Forest, 2) Northern Red Oak Forest, 3) Chestnut Oak Forest, 4) White Oak Forest, and 5) Disturbed Hardwood Forest. The wooded hillsides along the stream centered within the ravine contained some trees over 200 years old (Millis etal 1998). By the late 1990s, ANC was worried about running out of burial space, and desired to regain Section 29. A 2001 Defense Authorization bill divided the tract into two 12-acre sections, with the NPS maintaining the half closest to the mansion to maintain as the original wooded backdrop and ANC obtaining the other half, which has since been developed for internment purposes.

2.2 Cultural Background

Prehistoric/Precontact Period

The earliest evidence of human activity in the ARHO vicinity is contained within the prehistoric archeological record of the region documenting the Native American Indians who inhabited the area. The prehistory of human occupation in the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River areas of the Middle Atlantic Region of the United States, and in the greater Washington, D.C. vicinity, has been examined elsewhere in a variety of references. Those consulted by this study include Feest (1978a and 1978b), Jennings (1978), Humphrey and Chambers (1985), Potter (1993), and Dent (1995); as well as survey/overview reports more specific to the Arlington County and ARHO vicinity by Kreisa and Marzella of Stantec Consulting Services Inc.(2018), Williams of Goodwin & Associates (2002), Millis et al of Garrow & Associates, Inc. (1998), and Cissna of the NPS (1990). General summary descriptions and site information have been derived from these sources for this section, unless otherwise noted.

The prehistory of the area can be divided into three distinct eras as defined by archeologically recovered evidence of Native American Indian subsistence and settlement patterns. These time periods of prehistoric occupation span from approximately 17,000 years ago up to the time of European contact in the early 1600s. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) web site contains a page (https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/first-people-the-early-indians-of-virginia/) on First People: The Early Indians of Virginia and define these eras to include the Paleo-Indian (15,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C.), the Archaic (8,000 B.C. to 1200 B.C.), and the Woodland (1200 B.C. to A.D. 1600) periods (VDHR 2018). The VDHR web site also includes post European Contact periods of Indians (A.D 1600 to 1800) and Modern Indians (A.D.1800 to present).

The earliest of these periods, the Paleo-Indian (ca.15,000 B.C to 8,000 B.C.), occurred near the end of the Wisconsin Glaciation of the Pleistocene Epoch and has been generally characterized

as a time of much cooler climates when northern boreal coniferous forests dominated the land. The inhabitants led a highly nomadic existence and specialized in big game hunting of elk, deer, bison, and other large animals of the Late Pleistocene and also incorporated the exploitation of riverine and plant resources into their subsistence.

Archeologically, early Paleo-Indian sites are usually characterized by the presence of the seminal diagnostic artifact of Clovis-style large, fluted, lanceolate-shaped projectile points. Mid and Late Paleo-Indian era sites are associated with Cumberland and Debert then Dalton and Hardaway style projectile points. Cryptocrystalline lithic materials like jasper and chert were preferred. While points from the Paleo-Indian era have been found across North America, there have been few reliable finds in the vicinity of ARHO. About 3 miles north, a fluted point was discovered as an isolated find in nearby Arlington's Beechwood Hills neighborhood and a possible basal fragment of a Paleo-Indian point was found from a disturbed context in the Gulf Branch Site (44AR5) collections, (Cissna 1990, Johnson 2001). A Clovis point of quartzite was found over 6 miles south in Alexandria, VA at the Freedmans's Cemetery Site (44AX0179) (Sipe et al 2014).

The Archaic Period, ca. 8,000 B.C. to 1200 B.C., witnessed a transition to a climate of more temperate conditions when a deciduous forest of oak, hickory, and chestnut gradually replaced the boreal forest. The Chesapeake Bay formed as rising sea levels from melting northern glaciers drowned the former Susquehanna River Valley. Seasonal rounds of subsistence based on resource availability within a region became the norm as Native American Indians became less nomadic and took advantage of the more diverse and abundant wild plant and animal resources emerging within the changing ecosystem. Greater subsistence emphasis on anadromous fish runs and other marine resources developed during this time as did longer periods of habitation at particular sites.

Archeologically, for diagnostic artifacts, the transition from the Paleo-Indian to Archaic era saw the introduction of projectile points notched near the base in the corners/sides instead of basally thinned. More local lithic materials began to be used, usually quartz and quartzite in the ARHO area. Food preparation tools such as grinding stones and pestles appear, and steatite pots for food cooking were introduced in the Late Archaic era. Adjacent to the ARHO mansion grounds, the Arlington Ravine Site (44AR0032), includes a component consisting of a Late Archaic lithic procurement area/quarry, located within the Arlington Woods (Millis et al 1998).

The last of the prehistoric periods, the Woodland (ca. 1200 B.C. to A.D. 1600), experienced a climate and ecosystem more similar to that of today and saw the appearance of pottery, a greater reliance on horticulture, and the development of permanent village settlements. Populations grew, more complex societies arose, and political boundaries emerged amongst the distinct cultural groups that evolved across the Mid-Atlantic Chesapeake region. Mortuary ceremonialism, trade and exchange networks, and localized styles became part of the social fabric. In the latter part of the Woodland Period the Native American Indian populations had grown into distinct tribal cultures that saw the arrival of Europeans in the early 17th century, an event that effectively closed the chapter on the prehistory of the area.

Archeologically, diagnostic artifacts of the Woodland era include a variety of pottery types of different temper ingredients and decorative motifs and projectile points of local lithic material

which generally became smaller teardrop or triangular-shaped. This also coincided with the switch from spear to bow and arrow technology. Of the Native American Indian villages recorded by John Smith during his 1608 exploration of the Potomac River, one, Namoraughquend, was located on the west bank of the Potomac River nearby the future ARHO vicinity somewhere between the modern site of the Pentagon and Theodore Roosevelt Island.

Archeological surveys/overviews in the Arlington County and ARHO area conducted by Kreisa and Marzella (2018), Williams of Goodwin & Associates (2002), Millis et al of Garrow & Associates, Inc. (1998), and Cissna of the NPS (1990), as well as archeological site records of the VDHR and NPS, note the existence of prehistoric Native American Indian sites ranging from the Archaic through the Woodland periods within a few miles upstream and downstream of ARHO on terraces and stream valleys along the Potomac River's Virginia shoreline and atop the heights overlooking the river. About two dozen archeological sites with prehistoric components have been identified near ARHO and within a roughly 8-mile long corridor in Arlington County along the GWMP centered about ARHO. The nearest recorded site with a prehistoric Native American Indian component is the Arlington Ravine Site (44AR0032), a Late Archaic lithic procurement site, located within the Arlington Woods. (Millis et al 1998).

Contact

The early 17th century marks the period of contact in the Potomac River valley between the Native American Indian populations and Europeans, whose records provide information on the native inhabitants of the time. The earliest recorded European presence in the area around the future ARHO site dates to Captain John Smith's voyage up the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River from the English colony of Jamestown in 1608, when he navigated beyond present day Washington D.C. to explore past Little Falls, about 5 miles above ARHO, as far as Great Falls,

Figure 11 – Section of John Smith's Map from 1608 Exploration (adapted from Library of Congress)

about 15 miles upriver of ARHO. Smith noted and mapped locations of Indian villages and settlements along the Potomac River that would have been situated just downriver and nearby where ARHO would be established (Figure 11) as belonging to the Algonquian-speaking

Nacotchtank (or Necostin) and Tauxenent, groups that were part of a larger chiefdom of tribes known collectively as the Conoy. The Conoy territory stretched mainly through southern Maryland from the mouth of the Potomac River at the Chesapeake Bay to the Great Falls area, but occupied both sides of the Potomac River at and just below present day Washington, DC. The Conoy were bordered by the tidewater Virginia Algonquians to the south (including the Patowomekes), the related Delaware group to the northeast, and the Iroquoian-speaking groups to the northwest, including the Susquehannock (Cissna 1990, Feest 1978a and 1978b, Jennings 1978, Potter 1993).

At the time of John Smith's exploration, the area of the Potomac River, or "trading place" as translated from the Algonquian, was for the Native American Indians "becoming a political frontier between rival factions on opposing banks and between the Conoy chiefdom of southern Maryland and the rapidly growing Powhatan chiefdom of tidewater Virginia" (Potter 1993: 174). The complex Native American Indian societies that had arisen by the Late Woodland period were vying for control of resources and territory along the Potomac River, and the larger area saw relationships amongst the groups consisting of "a complex web of trade and military alliances, raids and warfare" (Ibid: 179). The appearance of Englishmen upon the scene with the establishment of colonies in Virginia at Jamestown in 1607 and in Maryland at St. Mary's City in 1634, and the subsequent settlements these colonies spawned, added to the unstableness of the region for the Native American Indians. Potter writes that the "*aboriginal frontier was exploited by the invading Englishmen at Jamestown, as they sought to enlist the Patawomekes as allies in their fight against Powhatan. In doing so, they alienated groups of the Conoy chiefdom, who later sided with Englishmen at St. Mary's City in their struggle against the alliance between the Jamestown English and the powerful Iroquoian-speaking Susquehannocks*" (1993: 174). As history shows, the Englishmen gained the upper hand in the power struggle and eventually displaced the native inhabitants as the dominant culture in the region through a process of conquest that saw warfare between all sides, the Indian population dwindle through mortality from European diseases, native groups move from their original territories, and the loss of Indian lands necessary to maintain their traditional lifestyle.

Historic Period

Early Colonial Era

The founding of the English colony at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 marks the beginning of more permanent European land claims and settlement in the Chesapeake Bay region. Besides John Smith's 1608 voyage up the Bay and Potomac River past the vicinity of the future ARHO site, other Englishmen from the Virginia colony visited the territories stretching up to the Potomac below the falls during the early 1600s to explore, trade, fight, and live with the Native American Indian populations. Young Henry Spelman, a fourteen year old boy, was sent from Jamestown to live with the neighboring Powhatans in 1609 and later made his way north to the territory of the Patawomekes, where he was picked up by Captain Samuel Argall in 1610 during a trade mission with the Patawomekes. Argall and others made subsequent visits to the Potomac River tribes, chiefly to obtain maize to help the Virginia colony survive the early years and later to participate in the beaver fur trade. In 1623, a grown up Captain Henry Spelman and 19 other

colonists were killed during a trading voyage near present day Washington, DC by the Nacotchtanks, who held one of the trading party, Henry Fleet, captive for five years. After the period of his captivity, Fleet would later become a principal in the fur trade with the Indians (Gutheim 1968, Neill 1876, Potter 1993).

The lucrative fur trade brought many Englishmen up the Potomac River in their dealings with the Indians. During a trading foray in 1632 up the Potomac to the head of navigation, Captain Henry Fleet anchored in the area of Little Falls just a few miles above the site of present day ARHO. Fleet noted that "*This place without all question is the most pleasant and healthful place in all this country, and most convenient for habitation, the air temperate in summer and not violent in winter. It aboundeth with all manner of fish. The Indians in one night will commonly catch thirty sturgeons in a place where the river is not above 12 fathom broad. And as for deer, buffaloes, bears, turkeys, the woods do swarm with them, and the soil is exceedingly fertile, but above this place the country is rocky and mountainous like Cannida*" (Fleet in Neill 1876: 27).

The lands of northern Virginia along the Potomac River (part of the Northern Neck), including what is now ARHO, did have a lot to offer. With the English claim on this part of the New World established through the efforts of the Virginia Company's Jamestown Colony in 1607, greater interest in acquiring land holdings was generated. With the revocation of the bankrupt Virginia Company charter in 1624 by King James I, ownership of property in Virginia became complex and varied, as there were often competing claims made by the English monarchy, the early colonial Virginia government, and landed gentry. During the English Civil War of the mid-1600s, the exiled King Charles II had granted lands in northern Virginia from the Chesapeake Bay to the Blue Ridge along the Rappahannock River and the Potomac River to several of his supporters, forming the Northern Neck Proprietary in 1649 overseeing some 5 million acres, including the future site of ARHO. (Figure 12). This grant wasn't realized until

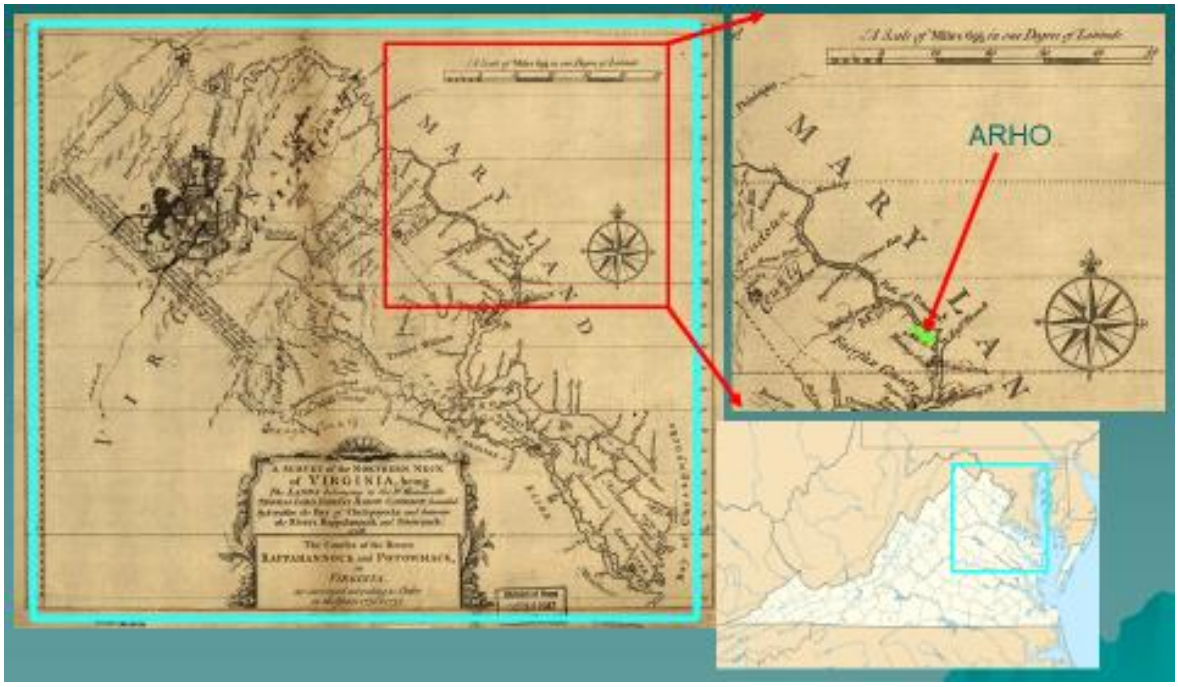


Figure 12 – Warner Map Showing Northern Neck Proprietary (adapted from Library of Congress)

after the defeat of the Commonwealth parliamentary government and the Restoration of the Crown in 1660. A large portion of the area eventually came under control of one family of the original Proprietors, the Culpeppers, and by the end of the 17th century, had passed through marriage of Catherine Culpepper to Thomas, fifth Lord Fairfax and thence into the Fairfax family (Library of Virginia 2002, Mitchell 1977, Netherton et al 1978).

Much of the Northern Neck and the area along the Potomac River had remained unsettled and forested through early colonial times, as the lands had been part of the vast proprietary grant issued by the Crown and initially held by mainly absentee owners for speculation. Expansion of the colonial presence was primarily in southern Virginia and slowly crept deeper into the frontier of the northern Virginia and Native American Indian territories. Land titles to individuals did get sold by agents of the Proprietary, but there were also frequently competing claims to land from patents issued by the colonial government. Property surveys weren't necessarily precise, so confusion often existed over boundaries, acreage, and ownership. One of the first patents for lands that would include where ARHO would later be established was issued by the Colonial Governor of Virginia in 1669 to Robert Howsing (alt. Howson) for his transportation of 120 settlers to Virginia. Under the headright system, 50 acres were provided for each emigrant provided transport to the colony, and the intended 6,000 acre tract extended from Hunting Creek north along the Potomac River upstream to near My Lord's Island, the present day Theodore Roosevelt Island (Figure 13). As was often the case with early land titles, Howsing's ownership was speculative in nature and he sold the property (which was actually over 8,000 acres) just six months later to John Alexander (Hanna 2002, Library of Virginia 2002, Mitchell 1977, Netherton et al 1978, Rose 1958).

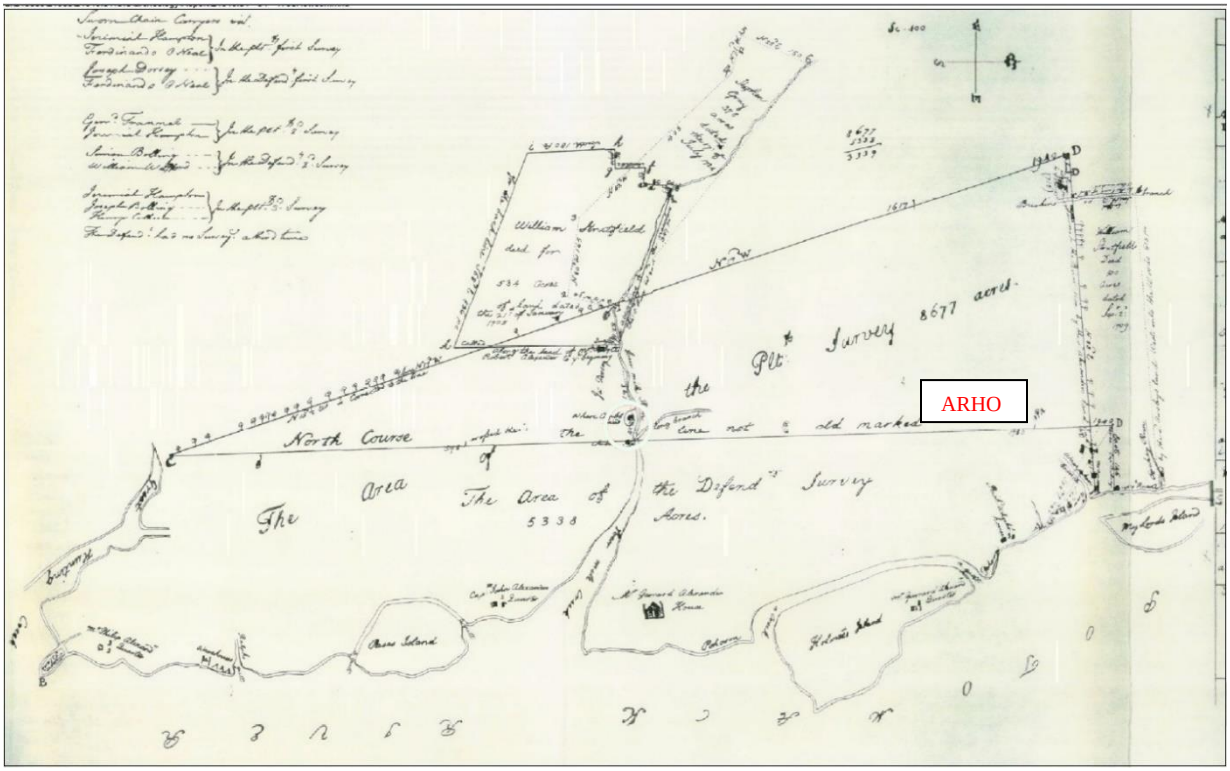


Figure 13 – Approximation of Howsing Tract from Daniel Jennings 1750 Survey of the Alexander Property (Library of Congress Maps Division adapted from Mullen 2009)

The Alexander property would remain in the family for over a century (though technically still under the Northern Neck Proprietary control), during which time the land began to be occupied for agricultural purposes. Tobacco was the primary crop in Virginia during the 17th and into the 18th century, and small acreages on the larger tracts were often cleared for farming by tenants using labor of indentured servants and later by enslaved peoples. These tenants worked small acreages for some personal benefit but mainly to satisfy absentee property owners' requirements to "seat and plant" the land and to pay annual quitrents on the properties with tobacco proceeds. While the Alexanders were settling their family property, Thomas, the 6th Lord Fairfax, came to control the Northern Neck Proprietary lands through inheritance in 1719 and had the holdings re-mapped in 1736-1737 and recertified, through legal proceedings, to solidify Fairfax family claims to ownership. Most of the original 5 million acres then became known as the Fairfax Grant and within it was established Fairfax County in 1742 from the Occoquan River to Difficult Run. (Figure 14), which included lands that would become the site of ARHO. (Hanna 2002, Library of Virginia 2002, Mitchell 1977, Netherton et al 1978).

Figure 14 – Fairfax County in 1747, Section of Northern Neck Proprietary Lands in Virginia (adapted from Warner map in Library of Congress)

Colonial Expansion

During the first half of the 18th century, the area of Fairfax County saw increased growth and development. The monoculture of tobacco drove the early colonial economy and influenced the development of the region (Gutheim 1968, Netherton etal 1978, Walsh and Fox 1983). While river travel had been the primary form of transportation, rolling roads evolved, often along the old Indian trails, and ferries crossed rivers to transport hogsheads of tobacco to warehouses and ports. Near Hunting Creek, a tobacco inspection warehouse was established in 1732. Francis Awbrey operated public ferries by 1738 between Virginia and Maryland across the Potomac River at the mouth of Pimmit Run in the Little Falls area and near present day Theodore Roosevelt Island. A tobacco warehouse was set up by the Lees in 1742 at the mouth of Pimmit Run on the Virginia shore and the Maryland Assembly established a tobacco warehouse in

1747at the mouth of Rock Creek on the Potomac River (which became the port of Georgetown in 1751) to handle tobacco commerce. With the establishment of Fairfax County in 1742 out of what had been Truro Parish, the first courthouse was soon after centrally located inland at the intersection of early roads (Figure 15), but was later moved in 1752 to the developing town of Alexandria founded in 1749 on the Potomac River near the site of Hunting Creek tobacco inspection warehouse (Boyd 1879, Cissna 1990, Cooke 1977, MacMaster and Hiebert 1976, Sweig 1995).

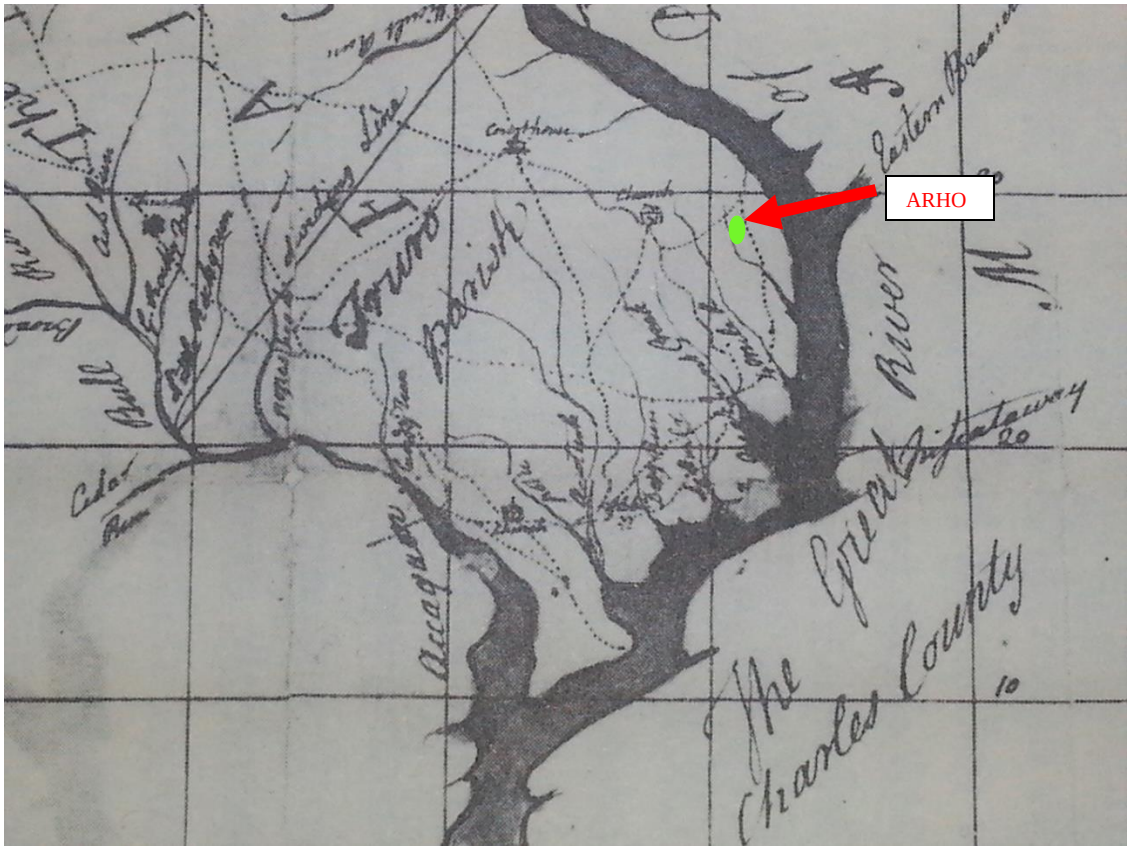


Figure 15 – Fairfax County Roads mid-18th Century, Section of Daniel Jenings Map of Fairfax County 1745-1748 (adapted from Library of Congress)

While Fairfax County was starting to evolve in the first half of the 18th century, Gerrard and John Alexander, grandsons of the elder John Alexander who had purchased the former Howsing tract in 1669, began developing their inherited portions of the property following the death of their father Robert in 1735. Gerrard had constructed a house and settled on his property just north of Four Mile Run, while John did the same on the property just south of Four Mile Run (see Figure 2.4). Both also had tenant farmers and enslaved peoples working the land for them, as plantation agriculture surrounding the growing of tobacco using enslaved Africans had become firmly established in Virginia. While the first arrival of Africans to Virginia at Point Comfort occurred in 1619, labor in the colony was initially supplied through indentured servants. However, toward the latter half of the seventeenth century, the demand for enslaved labor would increase:

> *As plantation agriculture spread up the Potomac River, the demand for field workers exceeded the supply of people in the colonies and England willing to do such work. The economic solution was to obtain laborers from another source - slaves from Africa,*

imported through the Caribbean islands as well as directly from that continent. In the 1660's, the demand for labor in Virginia exceeded the supply of indentured servants from England after the end of the civil war there.
http://www.virginiaplaces.org/population/slaveorigin.html

The population of Fairfax County by the mid-eighteenth century was constituted of some 6,035 individuals and of these, 1,752 or about 29% were enslaved Africans or descendants who labored on large plantations owned by the county's wealthiest individuals as well as on smaller farms of the less well-to-do. A 1760 map of Fairfax County shows landowners and the numbers of enslaved peoples they held (Figure 16), indicating Gerrard Alexander had 24 enslaved and John Alexander had 12. This area along the Potomac River was prospering on the eve of the American Revolution, and many who would play a role in American independence had interests here. George Mason had acquired property to the north and operated a ferry across the Potomac River at Mason's Island (the current Theodore Roosevelt Island), and George Washington settled in at Mount Vernon to the south. While tobacco was still a mainstay of the plantation economy, by the mid-eighteenth century it was recognized as depleting the soil so planters began to look to other crops to raise. Gerrard Alexander's plantation at the northern portion of the former Howsing tract would come to be divided amongst his children upon his death in 1761, with his son Robert getting 904 acres and the family house near Four Mile Run while his other son and namesake Gerrard received the northern section with some 900 acres. Both properties would have a role in the eventual establishment of the Arlington plantation, but Gerrard's northern section contained the lands that would ultimately comprise ARHO (Hanna 2002, Nelligan 1955, Netherton et al 1978, Sweig 1995).

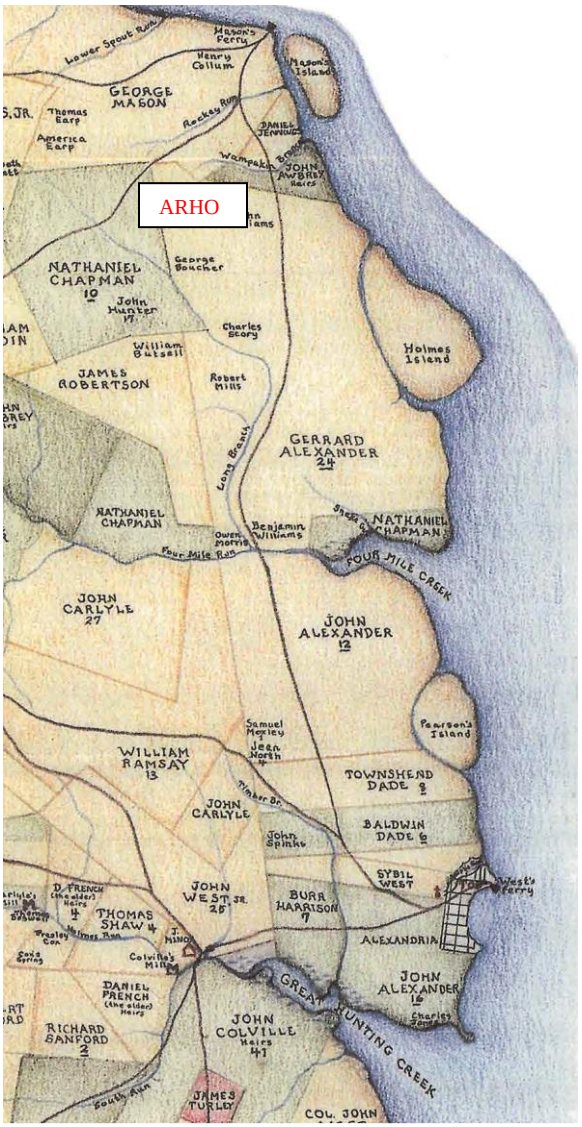


Figure 16 – Section of Fairfax County in 1760, Showing Landowners and Slaves Held (adapted from Beth Mitchell 1987 for Fairfax County)

Nascent Nation to New Country

In the second half of the eighteenth century, English colonial settlement further westward from the Fairfax County area and the Atlantic Seaboard at large was met with challenges, first by the Indian native inhabitants and then the French. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763),

English General Edward Braddock, who was joined by young Virginia Militia Lieutenant Colonel George Washington, dispatched a portion of his troops in April of 1755 from Alexandria, Virginia to march along the west bank of the Potomac River, crossing into Maryland via the ferry at Georgetown near the mouth of Rock Creek, and head toward the Ohio River Valley frontier and Fort Duquesne to confront the French. As the British Crown sought to control and protect its colonies in America from foreign interests, the colonists were slowly becoming restless under English rule. The various taxes, acts, and decrees put in place by the monarchy and issues of government and state became intolerable as the 18th century progressed, culminating in the American Revolution in 1776. During the war years, no engagements were fought in Fairfax County, and the area was relatively unscathed by the conflict. (MacMaster and Hiebert 1976, Netherton et al 1978).

George Washington, gentleman planter of Mount Vernon, played a major role in the American Revolution as Commanding General and in the formation of the new United States of America as its first president. Washington had come to own the Mount Vernon estate in 1761 through family inheritances (he was renting the property in years previous) and had married the former Martha Custis in 1759, taking her two young children John Parke Custis and Martha Parke Custis as his own to live at Mount Vernon. John (Jacky) and Martha (Patsy) were raised in the Washington household and when Jacky came of age he inherited Custis family properties. Jacky married Eleanor Calvert in 1774 and the couple split time between Mount Vernon and the Custis White House plantation in New Kent County, Virginia. The couple soon had children, and Jacky was eager to acquire property near Mount Vernon, settling in 1778 on the Gerrard and Robert Alexander tracts along the Potomac River between Four Mile Run and Mason's Island (the current Theodore Roosevelt Island). They moved into Robert Alexander's house near Four Mile Run and renamed the estate Abingdon. Unfortunately, Jacky's residency at Abingdon was short-lived, as he passed away in November of 1781. He had embarked on a trip to Williamsburg during the last months of the American Revolution to join his stepfather George Washington as a volunteer aid-de-camp prior to the Siege of Yorktown, passing away from camp fever weeks later just after the British surrender at Yorktown. Following the war, the two youngest children of John Parke Custis and his widow Eleanor, George Washington Parke Custis (born 1781) and Eleanor (Nelly) Parke Custis (born 1779), would come to spend much time with their grandmother Martha Washington and adoptive grandfather George Washington (Figure 17) at Mount Vernon (Hanna 2001, Mount Vernon.Org(a) n.d., Nelligan 1955, Netherton et al 1978). George Washington Parke Custis was born in 1781 just several months before his father's war time departure and untimely death, so he looked to George Washington as a father figure, learning much about agriculture,

Figure 17 – The Washington Family by Edward Savage (National Gallery of Art)

politics, and society from the father of the country. George Washington's stature as former commander of the American Revolutionary forces, successful and innovative planter, and eventual first president of the new United States of America instilled in the young Custis a sense of inspiration and pride as he grew up and Washington provided his namesake adopted grandson many life lessons until his death in 1799, when George Washington Parke Custis was just eighteen years old. It was during this time period of the late 18th century that saw the beginning of the end for the primacy of tobacco agriculture in Fairfax County, as years of harvesting the crop had exhausted the soils. Planters such as George Washington had begun embracing scientific farming techniques and diversifying their crops; others left the county for new lands. Following the death of George Washington and then Martha in 1802 and with Custis' coming of age, he inherited Washington and Custis family property (including enslaved individuals), securing the northern part of the former Alexander brothers' tracts that had remained in the Custis family during the prolonged settling of his late father John (Jacky) Parke Custis' estate debts. This particular property was well situated geographically, politically, and socially. The ferry crossing to Georgetown was just to the north and a road between the major ports of Georgetown and Alexandria crossed along the Potomac River frontage of the property. A pre-Revolutionary War proposal by John Ballendine for improving Potomac River navigation was picked up and acted upon by George Washington with the founding of the Patowmack Canal Company in 1785 to build skirting canals along the river to facilitate trade with the Ohio River Valley. In 1790 the location for the new nation's capital was chosen just up the Potomac River from Mount Vernon on lands ceded from Virginia and Maryland near the port of Georgetown, and new president George Washington played a major role in the siting of the 10-mile square federal district and oversaw and influenced its early development. The Virginia hillsides of the Custis property and future site of ARHO were included within the Territory of Columbia (Figure 18) and located west across the river from and overlooking the developing new City of Washington (Crowl 2002, Hanna 2001, MacMaster and Hiebert 1976, Mount Vernon.Org(b) n.d., Nelligan 1955, Netherton et al 1978, Sweig 1995).

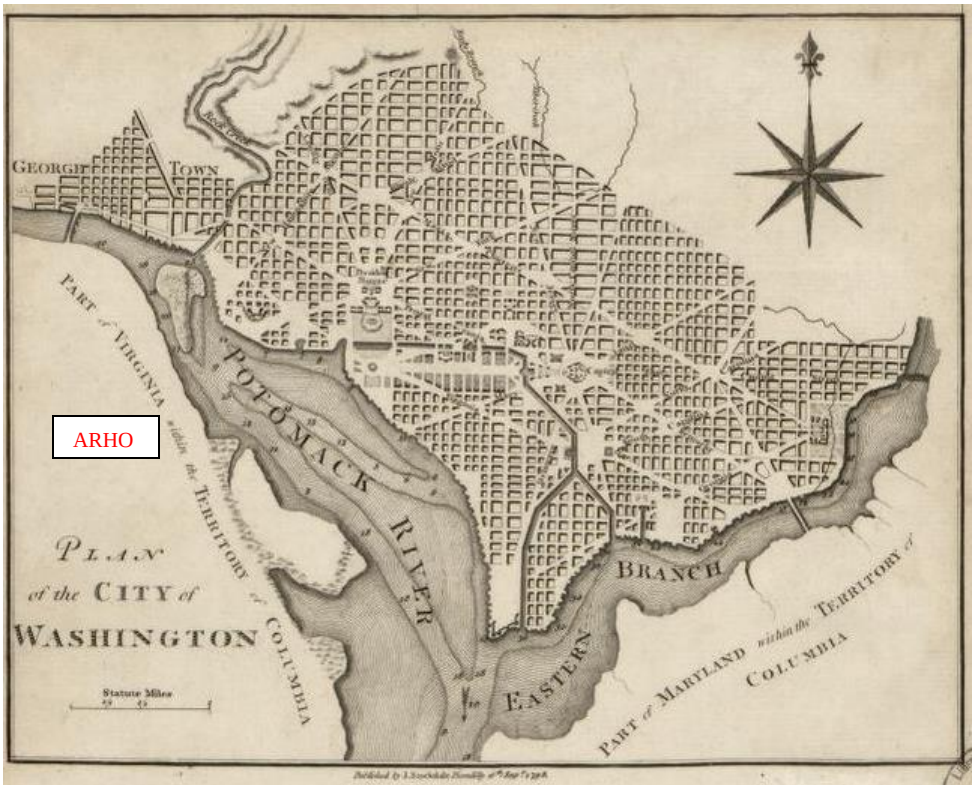


Figure 18 –City of Washington (adapted from J. Stockdale map, Library of Congress)

19th Century Expansion/Antebellum Period

As the 19th century began, George Washington Parke Custis was mourning the loss of his surrogate parents George (1799) and Martha (1802) Washington. With Martha's passing in May of 1802, Custis moved from his adopted home of Mount Vernon into the house of a former tenant farmer of Gerrard Alexander on the property he inherited along the Potomac River across from the new nation's capital city, which had developed enough by 1800 to allow the relocation of the federal government from Philadelphia. It was on this 1,100 acre estate, which Custis initially had called Mount Washington but later changed to Arlington after an ancestral Custis plantation, that he began his independent adult life. The estate was mostly covered in timber, with only a few of former tenant farmers' fields under cultivation, and Custis would rely on his other inherited income-producing plantations for support as he would develop the Arlington property. Custis had received through Martha's will many of the Washington household items and had purchased others from the estate, including many of George Washington's possessions. It was this collection of George Washington memorabilia, known as the Washington Treasury, which helped spur Custis to build his formal manor home that was also part temple to honor the Father of the Country and house the Washington Treasury. Eager to move from the cramped and damp tenant quarters on the riverfront, Custis almost immediately began construction of a permanent dwelling and was said to have engaged English architect George Hadfield to formally design the seat of his Arlington estate high on a hillside so as to overlook the City of Washington to the east; the residence being built in the manner of a classical Greek temple on a scale so as to be easily seen from the city below (Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

Figure 19 – 1824 John Farley Sketch of Arlington House (adapted from Hanna 2001 - courtesy Mount Vernon Ladies Association)

George Washington Parke Custis was a busy young man during the first years of the 19th century, striking out on his own from Mount Vernon and initiating the construction of Arlington in 1802, managing his other inherited properties, and taking Mary Lee Fitzhugh as his wife in 1804. Custis, though land rich, was short on capital and the Greek Revival mansion he would eventually complete featuring a two story central section with a massive columned, pedimented portico and two flanking wings would take years to construct. The exact building chronology has been an area of ongoing study,

but current research indicates that the manor house was constructed in stages between 1802 and 1818, with follow-up periods of renovations and final touches. The north wing was thought to have been built first as a stand-alone structure between 1802 and 1804, and served as the initial residence while the rest of the house was being constructed. The south wing was completed during 1804, and the two wings would serve as primary living quarters for years. The central section main block was completed in 1818 along with alterations to the north wing as the entire house was being built according to the Hadfield plan (Arnest and Sligh 1985, Fisher et al 2009, Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

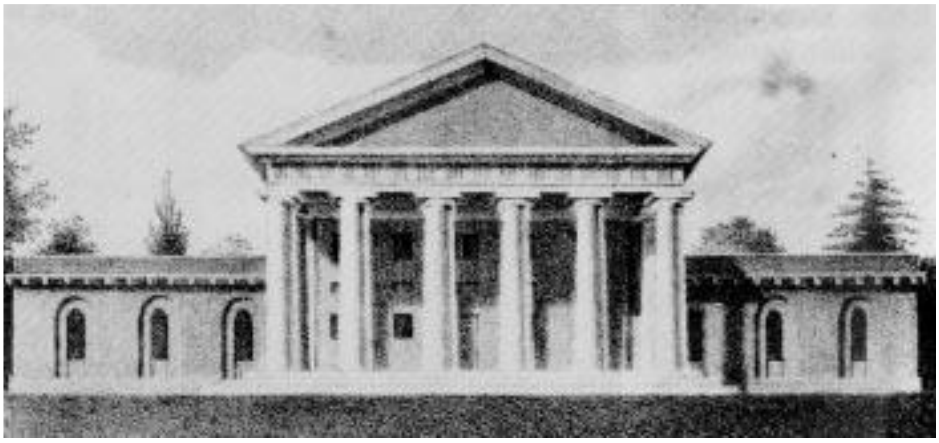


Figure 20 –Arlington House, east façade, illustration in *Washington Guide* by William P. Elliott, 1826 (adapted from Hanna 2001)

During this time period of house construction, George Washington Parke Custis was also setting up his Arlington plantation, engaging the enslaved people he owned through inheritance and purchase in not only helping to clear the house building site and constructing his home but also getting his agricultural and livestock-raising pursuits on the property underway. One of Custis' passions was to raise an improved breed of sheep that would provide fine wool and choice mutton. He also carried on his namesake George Washington's tradition of encouraging progressive agricultural methods such as soil augmentation with fertilizers and deep plowing. As Custis and his wife Mary were settling in, they also began to start a family. Tragically, three of the four children died, one daughter at birth in 1805 and a second daughter and a son while infants in 1807 and 1810. A third daughter born in 1808, Mary Anna Randolph Custis, would be the only child to live to maturity and she grew in her mother's image with deep religious and moral convictions that manifested in both their efforts to educate the enslaved individuals in their charge and look after their spiritual needs. Daughter Mary would also have a major role in the future of Arlington with her eventual marriage to Robert E. Lee (Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

While getting his plantation up and running, in addition to building the mansion, Custis also had constructed sometime between 1802 and 1818 two dependencies (North and South) to the rear of the house flanking the main building's north and south wings and enclosing a work yard. To the north of these outbuildings was eventually established a kitchen garden and to the south was a flower garden, along which the main entry carriage drive to Arlington (from the Alexandria to Georgetown Road along the Potomac River below) wound up the hill and around the garden's floral displays to the impressive porticoed front of the mansion and the spectacular view of Washington, DC below. A stables building was also constructed during this time period a short distance west of the main house and work yard, and this outbuilding mimicked the Greek Revival design of the mansion. The North and South Dependencies also complemented the site architecture, having classical embellishments with engaged columns, arches and cornices, and

the structures provided quarters for the household enslaved and rooms supporting the mansion's domestic operations. The North Dependency was built into east to west down-sloping terrain and included a basement level and upper floor and the structure, now thought to have been constructed with an interestingly almost split-level style interior, contained a kitchen and a slave quarters room on the lower level and three slave quarters rooms on the upper level. The South Dependency was built on more level ground as a single story structure and contained a storeroom, smokehouse, and a slave quarters. Enslaved field workers lived in cabins down along the river flats by the agricultural fields and farm buildings and Custis constructed an entertainment complex for socializing along the river at the site of Arlington (Custis) Spring that included a kitchen, pavilion, benches, and support structures to host public sheep shearings, dances, picnics, and other social events (Fisher et al 2009, Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

Figure 21 –1930 Sketch of Arlington House Plantation Based Partly on Former Slave Remembrances, US Army QMC Construction Division from ARHO collections

As Custis was building out his property, changes were afoot during the first half of the 19th century with development and growth of the nation's capital in the City of Washington and the District of Columbia (DC). The town of Alexandria, which had grown into a major port city, and northeastern Fairfax County (known as Alexandria County of DC) had been included within the boundaries of the federal district, but most development of the government was taking place on the Maryland side of the Potomac River. The County at-large was in a bit of agricultural decline in the early 1800s, as it was slow to recover from the 18th century tobacco growing heydays that had drained the soils of nutrients and many farmers had left the area. It wouldn't be until the 1840s when "Yankee farmers" moved in from the north to take over depleted lands and used more scientific farming methods and diversified crops that that the area rebounded. Alexandria fared a bit better in the early 1800s as it continued to serve as a commercial center for the larger Fairfax County area and could also provide amenities like inns, taverns, banks, and other businesses not yet plentiful in Washington, DC as the nation's capital was growing. Internal improvements were underway as more roads were constructed and bridges built spanning the Potomac River, with Chain Bridge north of DC opening in 1797 (and improved several times in the early 1800s) and the Long Bridge south of Mason's Ferry opening in 1809. New federal government buildings in DC were dealt a blow during the War of 1812 as the invading British burned many of the governmental structures, but the City rebounded and the federal government and support services and residences grew. Construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal, the heir to the failed Patowmack Canal, was begun in 1828 along the Washington, DC and Maryland shorelines of the Potomac River. The Canal brought numerous workers to the area and would provide opportunities for local farmers, manufacturers, and merchants to get their goods to Georgetown and other markets and stimulate commercial activity along its route. Not to be outdone, the city of Alexandria built and opened in 1843 an aqueduct bridge to extend the C&O Canal across the Potomac River from Georgetown to a canal extension connecting to Alexandria's ports. Virginia lands comprising DC were retroceded back to the Commonwealth in 1847 (MacMaster and Hiebert 1976, Millis et al 1998, Netherton et al 1978, Sweig 1995).

George Washington Parke Custis continued developing his Arlington estate throughout the first half of the 19th century, creating more of an English country manor house setting for showcasing the Washington Treasury than a working plantation, as he came to rely on his other properties for income producing agriculture or proceeds from sales of lands. Though almost always seeming short on capital, Custis and his family managed to live within the higher levels of society, much as other land rich and cash poor gentry did. In 1831, daughter Mary wed Robert E. Lee, a young army officer of regal Virginia lineage through the Lee and Carter families. While Lee was away on many of his career army postings, Mary primarily remained at Arlington raising their family, which came to consist of four daughters and three sons. With the death of her mother in 1853 and her father in 1857, Mary became heir to Arlington. Robert E. Lee had assisted as he could with operations of the plantation during the 1850s, especially with the elder Custis' declining health prior to his passing in 1857. Lee returned to Arlington on leave from his military service to help settle the Custis will, which included future provisions for freeing the enslaved, and became much more involved in the day-to-day running of the estate for his wife and eldest son George Washington Custis Lee, who was to eventually inherit Arlington according to his namesake grandfather's will. Robert E. Lee set about doing many improvements to the house and grounds during his leave, only to be interrupted a few short years later by the nation's bloodiest conflict, the U.S. Civil War (Fisher et al 2009, Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

Civil War & the Development of Arlington National Cemetery

The official outbreak of the Civil War commenced with the bombing and capture by Confederate forces of Union-occupied Fort Sumter from April 12-14, 1861. This was shortly followed by Virginia's April 17 declaration of secession from the Union, and Robert E. Lee's subsequent declination of command of the Union forces and resignation of his commission from the US Army on April 20. The Arlington plantation, occupying the heights overlooking Washington, DC, soon became a liability to the security of the nation's capital as Lee departed for Richmond soon after his resignation and accepted command of the now Confederate sympathizing Virginia military forces on April 23. Virginia militia troops briefly occupied Arlington at the beginning of May and Mary Lee, heeding advice from her husband and hearing that the Union Army would soon descend, departed her beloved home May 14; leaving her entrusted enslaved maid Selina Norris Gray to safeguard the mansion and maintain the plantation. The Union Army, seeking to clear Arlington and Alexandria of Confederate troops, moved into northern Virginia and occupied the Arlington estate on May 24 (Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955, Netherton et al 1978).

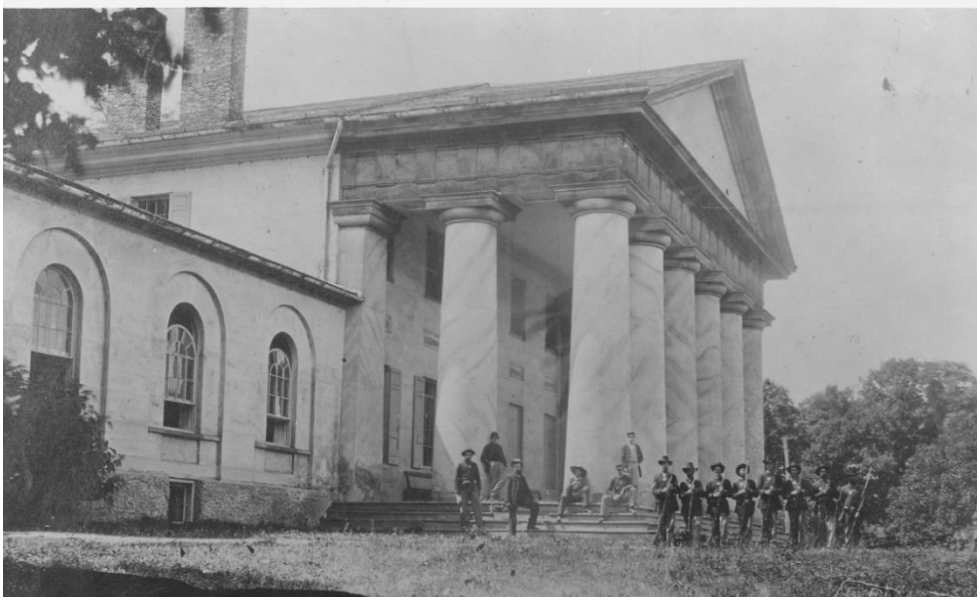


Figure 22 – Union Troops on Front Lawn of Arlington 1864 (National Archives & Records Administration ID#533118)

Arlington initially served as a headquarters for the Army of Northeastern Virginia and played an important role in the Defenses of Washington during the war. Following the arrival of troops to the site, tent camps were set up, barracks constructed, moderate defensive works were erected, and the mansion itself was occupied. A large corral and stables complex for Union Army mules and horses was constructed below the mansion in the farm fields near Arlington Springs and a new access road from the northeast climbed the hill from the Arlington-Georgetown Road and ran up behind the mansion and dependencies, terraced into the slope leading down to the ravine. Following the 1st Battle of Manassas in July 1861, which demonstrated how close to the nation's capital the rebel forces were, the heights of the Arlington plantation became part of the larger Defenses of Washington when earthwork fortifications were hurriedly erected to form a perimeter around Washington, DC and the mansion continue as a headquarters. The Arlington Line of fortifications defended the Virginia heights above the Potomac River to the north and southwest of the nation's capital, and several were located at Arlington including Forts Cass, Whipple, Tillinghast, and McPherson (Hanna 2001, Cooling and Owen 1988, Millis et al 1998, Nelligan 1955, Netherton et al 1978).

As the Civil War dragged on and with the number of Union war dead growing throughout the conflict, burial space was at a premium in the Washington, DC area. In the early years of the war, most of the regional area casualties were buried at the US Soldiers' Cemetery in DC and the Alexandria National Cemetery in Alexandria, VA, but by 1863 these sites were nearly full. The War Department US Army Quartermaster Corps (QMC) had already been authorized by Congress to investigate possible locations for new burial sites, and the failure of Mary Lee to pay newly enacted property taxes on the Arlington plantation led to its forfeiture sale to the US government in January of 1864, making it a prime candidate for a new cemetery location. The military-occupied estate had already been put to use in 1863 to establish the Freedman's Village on its southern boundary to house and assist individuals escaping enslavement in the South, especially after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs looked favorably on finding other uses for Arlington, the home of Meigs' former military mentor Robert E. Lee but now looked upon as a traitor. The need for internment space had already grown to a point by May of 1864 when Stanton authorized use of Arlington for the site of a national cemetery and burials started occurring May 13, 1864 along the northern border of the Arlington estate property; and on June 15, 1864 Meigs made the formal proposal for using 200 acres of the estate for a new military cemetery. This was the beginnings of what would become Arlington National Cemetery. But Meigs was unhappy that the first burials were in plots away from the house, as he and others had no desire to see the Lees ever return to their home. He installed military personnel of the QMC to oversee operations of the new cemetery from the mansion, evicting officers stationed there and directed burials of prominent Union officers (and suggested re-interments of those already buried) to take place along the Flower Garden closer to the house, which occurred in August 1864. Even following the war's end, Meigs continued to make efforts to ensure the estate would never be re-occupied and ordered construction of a tomb for unknown Civil War dead in the woodland grove adjacent to the Flower Garden in April of 1866 (Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1955).

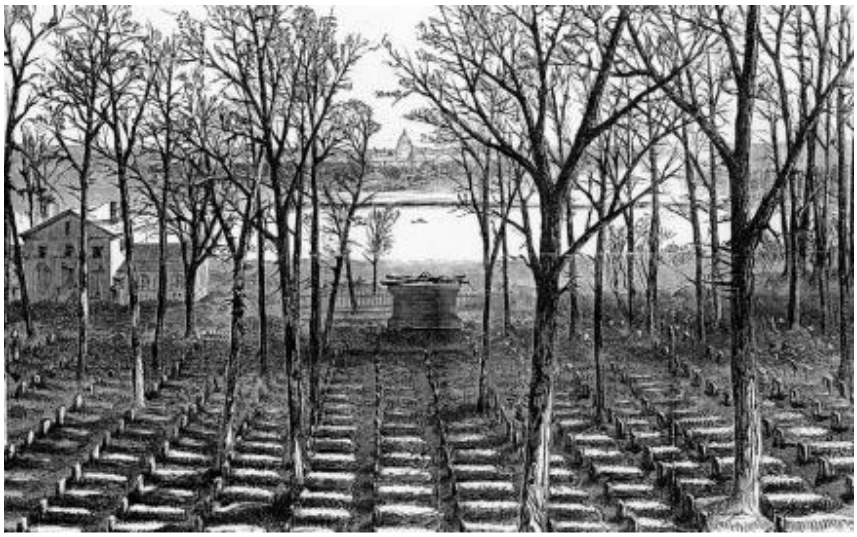


Figure 23 – <u>Harper's Weekly</u> Artist's Fanciful Depiction of the Tomb of the Unknown Civil War Soldier (no individual burials were associated with it) in the Woodland Grove by the Flower Garden South of the Mansion (adapted from Hanna 2001)

Following the cessation of hostilities, the War Department maintained control of the Arlington plantation not only for the growing cemetery, but for maintenance of a military post evolving from Forts Cass and Whipple (today's Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall). The formerly enslaved at Arlington had mostly departed, and Freedmen's Village would continue operations through the 19th century but the federal government closed it by 1900. In the post-Civil War years, the War Department set about more earnestly to facilitate operations at all national military cemeteries. In 1867 Congress passed the "Act to Establish and Protect National Cemeteries" in

part to provide overall guidelines for operations and maintenance and shortly thereafter construction of a Seneca sandstone wall around Arlington National Cemetery was begun. The next decade after the Civil War saw a number of improvements made by the QMC, including re-establishment of plantings in the Flower Garden and installation of landscaping around the mansion featuring Deodar Cedar trees in the west work yard and Magnolia trees in the east front in the 1870s, installation of a glass roof over the house Conservatory room in 1874, construction of a Memorial Amphitheatre in the woodland grove in 1874, erection of a small greenhouse at the northeast corner of the Flower Garden circa 1875, and an enclosure and addition of pumps for the well circa 1880. The mansion and dependencies were also being used as residential quarters and office space for the staff and for storage of supplies and equipment used in cemetery operations (Hanna 2001). The South Dependency was identified as having been part of a "restoration campaign" for the dependencies in 1871 to make them "habitable" that saw the former West Room Slave Quarters altered as the War Department added fill soils to the room to raise the floor level, modified the fireplace and installed a brick firebox paving (and likely brick room flooring), and replastered and painted the interior walls (Fisher et al 2009b, Louis Berger Group 2005). The enslaved Thornton and Selina Gray family had lived in this room through the Civil War and after (Syphax and Wilson 1929), but had vacated by 1870 (Bestebreurtje 2017).

Arlington National Cemetery Expansion into the 20th Century

As the 19th century ended, more military veterans were passing away, monuments were being established in cemeteries, and the use of cemetery grounds as public parks was gaining additional acceptance. The QMC embarked on additional improvements for not just operating a national military cemetery but also providing for the public visitation. In the 1880s a Temple of Fame (a) honoring Civil War elite was placed in the center of the flower garden south of the mansion, a water tower (b) constructed in center of the work yard west of/behind the mansion, a comfort station (c) placed just north of the north dependency, a greenhouse and potting shed (d) built in the east half of the kitchen garden north of the mansion, and a service road (e) established along the west edge of the kitchen garden (Figure 24). In the 1890s a paved walkway with steps was

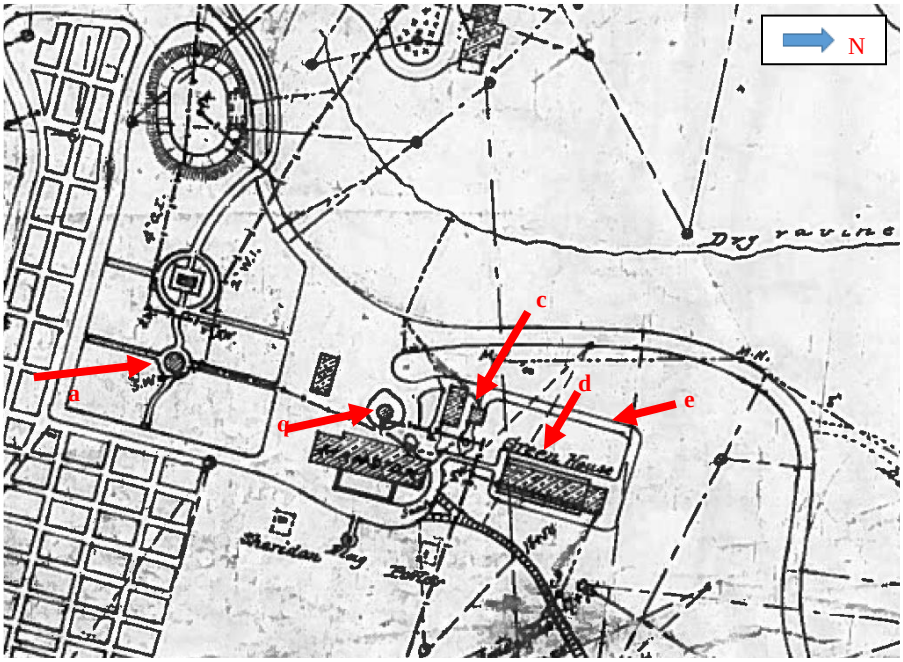


Figure 24 – Map Section Recording late 19th c. Changes Around the Mansion Grounds (War Dept. QMC January 10, 1894 – NPS GWMP Collections)

established from the cemetery gate at the base of the hill leading up to the Arlington mansion (today's Custis Walk) from along the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon electric rail line to facilitate access, cemetery roads and walks were paved as was the area around the mansion, and decorative plantings were placed around the site. At the turn of the century, former plantation fields along the Potomac River became a government experimental agricultural research farm for the Department of Agricultural (Hanna 2001).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, there came a renewed interest in the history of the Arlington plantation. The QMC had been operating Arlington National Cemetery with small regard to historical considerations, concentrating instead on the infrastructure needed to establish and expand a cemetery that was becoming the primary armed forces burial ground and a pilgrimage site as a national shrine containing an ever-growing number of monuments and memorials. Maintenance of the site was mainly for practical purposes. In 1921, the small Comfort Station to the north of the North Dependency was enlarged and upgraded with a heating system for the buildings and separated bath facilities for cemetery workers and was attached to the North Dependency via a breezeway connecting building (Fisher et al 2009a, Virta 2019).

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), which was established in 1910 to review proposed changes and developments in Washington, DC and environs for conformance with the McMillan Commission Plan and to uphold general aesthetics, began playing an influential role in how the War Department was undertaking improvements for Arlington House and its immediate grounds. There were numerous proposals for restoration scenarios of the mansion and its setting, with the CFA in favor of a period of restoration to the original construction and occupancy of the Custis years. Others felt Robert E. Lee should be honored by a restoration to the time period just prior to the Civil War. Eventually, Congress issued legislation in 1925 directing the War Department to restore the mansion and grounds to their immediate pre-Civil War period appearance and the QMC soon embarked on restoration projects that were also influenced by the slightly moderating CFA input. Efforts of the era though had less in common with historical accuracy than it did with a romantic interpretation of what the past had looked like, and incorporated Colonial Revival embellishments to beautify the setting like brick-lined walks and boxwood hedge plantings, taking a page from the Williamsburg and Mount Vernon schools of aesthetic restoration (Hanna 2001, Kinzey 2003).

QMC drawings from 1929-1930 indicate fairly extensive efforts were undertaken with the mansion, support buildings and grounds. Some level of historical research, structural analysis, and oral history interviews with former enslaved individuals of the Arlington estate led to major renovations with some levels of historic interpretation in mind (Hanna 2001). The North and South Dependencies were to no longer to house cemetery workers and operations, and the North Dependency was significantly altered with War Department reinterpretations of the structure as likely originally having exterior sub-grade entry stairwells to the lower level (versus at-grade entries and internal upper level to lower level access). The renovations set about to construct stairwell entries at the east and west ends of the south elevation and also included removal of the recently completed connection breezeway structure to the Comfort Station (Fisher et al 2009a, Virta 2019). The South Dependency mainly saw maintenance and upkeep efforts such as

repairing the brick work and stucco, fixing the roof and gutters, and repainting and replastering interiors but also included "relaying the old brick floors at their original levels" (Fisher et al 2009b). This indicates a brick flooring was in place at the time, and is likely indication that it had been installed as early as during the 1871 renovations. There may have been adjustments to the brick floor levels from the late 19th century to early 20th century, as indicated by the reference to "relaying the old brick floors ***at their original levels***". A 1924 QMC sponsored drawing of the South Dependency (Figure 25) shows the elevations and floorplan which includes the passageways cut between the west room to the center and east rooms by the enslaved Thornton Gray while his family still occupied the structure post-Civil War (Fisher et al 2009b, Syphax and Wilson 1929). It is thought these passages were sealed off during the 1929-30 renovations to restore the rooms to their original appearance and construction as individual chambers accessed only from the exterior and containing separated rooms for storage (east room), a smokehouse (center room), and slave quarters (west room) (Fisher et al 2009b).

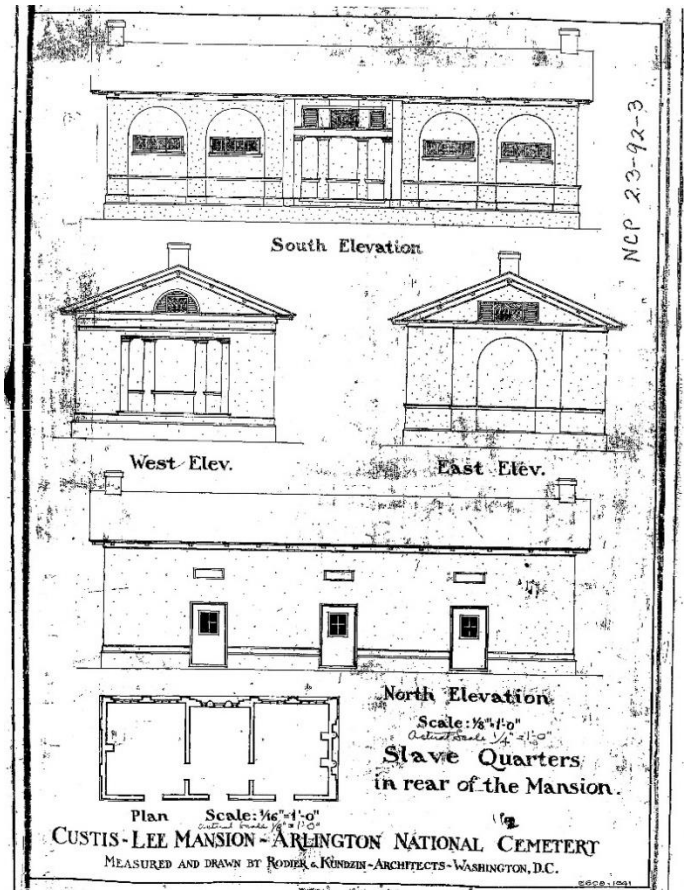


Figure 25 – Elevations and Plan of South Dependency Showing Door Passages Cut between Rooms by the enslaved Thornton Gray (War Dept. QMC 1924 – NPS GWMP Collections)

National Park Service Administration to Present

As the 20th century progressed, management of the mansion and immediate grounds would slowly be transferred from the War Department to the Department of Interior, leaving the larger surrounding plantation estate grounds as the military cemetery. Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 6166 June 10, 1933 that provided for the transfer of many federally owned monuments, historic properties, and memorials including former War Department managed sites to the NPS, including Arlington House. Initially, just the mansion and some of the immediate grounds were transferred to the NPS, but over the years more property was transferred to provide the surrounding setting that included the gardens and eventually the larger grounds which make up the 16 acre site today that includes 4-acre mansion setting and the 12-acre Arlington Woods ravine area. The NPS would commence upon years of research and historic preservation efforts (that are still ongoing) to slowly create its interpretation of an appropriate period restoration of the site. However, in the early NPS ownership years, the dynamic between the CFA and QMC Colonial Revival style plans and NPS desire for historical accuracy played out. Almost

immediately the NPS continued to deal with QMC staff holdover intentions, as a plan to replace the mansion east portico main entry wooden steps with ones of limestone was rejected in late 1933 as historically inappropriate. However, other QMC plans developed as part of the Congressional mandate for restoration were implemented for at least an interim measure of site rehabilitation. The green house over the eastern half of the Kitchen Garden (land still under Arlington National Cemetery control at the time) was removed in 1934 (but the potting shed remained) so as to allow the QMC landscape treatment plan restoring the garden that was approved by the CFA to proceed. The stables building to the far west of the mansion was rehabilitated in 1935 by the QMC for Cemetery staff offices and a new greenhouse was added to the rear of that structure. Other relatively piece-meal attempts at renovations were undertaken through WWII, often with a mix of historical accuracy and aesthetic considerations (Fisher et al 2009a and b, Hanna 2001, Mackintosh 1996, National Park Service 2014).

At mid-century, with the release of NPS ARHO Historian Murray Nelligan's PhD dissertation and social history of the Custis and Lee families at the site (Old Arlington, the Story of the Lee Mansion National Memorial 1953), additional sources of information were provided to offer data for rehabilitation efforts. Nelligan's review of period literature, documents, letters, and other materials captured not only glimpses of the day to day lives of the Custis and Lee families, but also featured tidbits of information on how the house and grounds were maintained and improved. In the late 1950s to early 1960s renovations of the dependencies were planned by the NPS, especially the North Dependency for which a two-part Historic Structures Report was compiled (Swartz and Roberts 1960 and 1961). Major changes were planned to the North Dependency that began to reverse some of the War Department's interpretations of the structure, only to be interrupted by further needs for research by the NPS. More modest repair and maintenance improvements were made to the South Dependency during this time period (Fisher et al 2009a and b).

In the last half of the 20th century, the NPS continued preservation maintenance of the site and made additional improvements to interpret the site and serve growing numbers of visitors. The former potting shed in the north Kitchen Garden was transformed into a museum to tell the story of the Custis and Lee families. The south Flower Garden was transferred to the NPS in 1959 and plans for its restoration were made that saw the Temple of Fame removed in 1967 and a garden recreated. Some brick walkways and boxwood and other plantings, vestiges of the Colonial Revival restoration of the 1920s, were removed (Hanna 2001). Several Historic Structure Report volumes were produced for the mansion detailing the building's construction history and pointing out deficiencies for rehabilitation needs and included such items as the need for floor framing support, roof bracing and repairs, installation of fire detection and security systems, moisture remediation, and a host of other recommendations; some of the more pressing were implemented while others would await funding (Arnest 1979, Arnest and Sligh 1985, Sasser and Askins 1985, Snell 1980, 1982, & 1985). An accompanying archeological report contributing site construction history data gleaned from investigations was also produced (Pousson 1983).

By the early 2000s, the NPS recognized that the entire site was in need of major rehabilitation to the structures and grounds. Studies were undertaken to support this effort and planning

documents and reports were drafted, including an archeological report (Louis Berger Group 2005) and Historic Structures Reports (HSR) for the dependencies (Fisher et al 2009a and 2009b). Previous HSRs were reviewed for the mansion. An Environmental Assessment (NPS 2006b) included several proposals for remediation:

- Previous reconstructions of the North and South Slave Quarters were known to be inaccurate based on current research, so a more factual based rehabilitation was needed
- There was lack of an adequate fire protection system to safeguard historic buildings and the museum collections housed within those structures, so installation of a new fire detection and suppression system in all structures was proposed
- A deficient mechanical system existed that was not capable of preserving the historic buildings and collections, so a new physical plant to provide HVAC to structures was planned for a bunker outside the immediate historic grounds, removing the potential fire hazard of the existing system from the mansion
- The presence of the non-contributing 1921 Comfort Station in the historic Kitchen Garden intruded into the setting, so it was slated for removal and replacement with a facility at the edge of the historic grounds
- The inappropriate interpretation and re-creation of the 1861 Work Yard and Kitchen Garden would be corrected with an updated landscape plan based on current research
- The deteriorated foundations of Arlington House, suffering from drainage issues, would be repaired

These items were mostly funded and undertaken during a major rehabilitation effort at ARHO from 2006-2012, however a number of the desired improvements were not able to be accomplished. Since the time period of the rehabilitation, the NPS secured even more funding from a generous grant from philanthropist David Rubenstein and NPS construction budgets to continue previously planned improvements that were unfulfilled and to complete additionally identified rehabilitation needs and upgrade the interpretive program. This work has been underway since 2017 and continued to 2021. The current archeological report focuses on one area undergoing rehabilitation work during this latest effort, the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters, also known as Selina Gray's Room.

2.3 Historical Focus – The South Dependency and Lives of the Enslaved

The South Dependency at Arlington House was thought to have been constructed during the latter years of the build-out for the mansion and grounds, likely completed by 1818 or as late as 1824 (Fisher et al 2009b). Its early history of use is uncertain, but is believed to have traditionally been a partitioned three-room building with separate entries containing a Store Room at the east end, a central room Smokehouse, and a Slave Quarters in the west room. Various sources including oral histories and formal architectural studies have been consulted to provide an understanding of the structure and its occupants.

South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters and Its Occupants

Historical records and research indicate that Thornton Gray, his wife Selina Norris Gray, and their family occupied the West Room Slave Quarters of the South Dependency in the mid-nineteenth century (Fisher et al 2009b, Hanna 2001, NPS n.d. (c), Syphax & Wilson 1929). So who were the Gray family members? As with most enslaved people, their background history is somewhat unclear. Interviews conducted by personnel of Arlington National Cemetery in the 1920s and 1930s with four of Selina and Thornton Gray's children, sisters Emma Gray Syphax & Sarah Gray Wilson (1929) and Annie (Annice) Gray Baker & Ada Gray Thompson (1930), offer some insights but mainly concentrate on the physical layout of the mansion and grounds. Historical research on the house, outbuildings, and grounds discuss the Gray family (Fisher et al 2009b, Hanna 2001, Nelligan 1953). Other sources have recorded some information on the Grays, but often have the uncertainty of unearthing truly reliable information. The NPS, Arlington House Foundation, The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery, The Black Heritage Museum of Arlington County, VA, and HistoryNet have prepared brief web article histories of the family based on documentary research and oral histories (Arlington House Foundation n.d., Black Heritage Museum n.d., The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery n.d., Historynet LLC n.d.(a), National Park Service Arlington House 2013, National Park Service Museum Management Program n.d. a, b, c & d). Former ARHO historian Karen Byrne also wrote about Selina Gray (Byrne 1998).

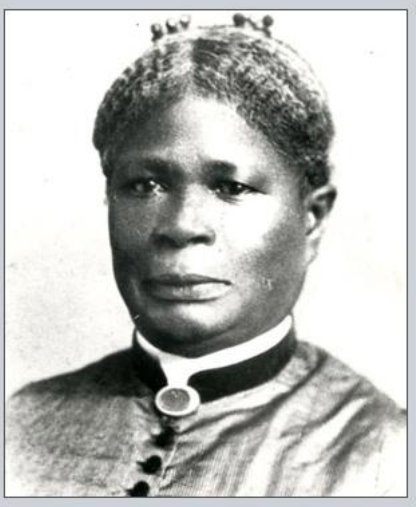


Figure 26 – Selina Norris Gray (NPS Museum Mgmt Program Exhibit)

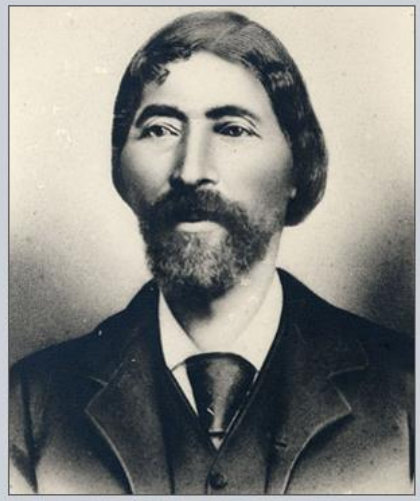


Figure 27 – Thornton Gray (NPS Museum Mgmt Program Exhibit)

By these various accounts, Selina Norris Gray was born into slavery in 1823 at the Arlington plantation, the daughter of Leonard and Sally Norris, who were enslaved by George Washington Parke Custis. It is not known if the Norris family occupied the west room of the South Dependency Slave Quarters prior to Selina and Thornton Gray later residing there. Thornton Gray was also enslaved at Arlington and was thought to be the son of a woman who had been enslaved at Mount Vernon and owned by George Washington. Custis had inherited from his grandmother, Martha Dandridge Custis Washington, several of the enslaved from his adoptive grandfather's Mount Vernon plantation, who were brought by Custis to Arlington to help develop the property and continued in bondage on the estate. The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery (n.d.) article indicates Thornton Gray was likely born at Arlington around 1825 as the son of enslaved parents from Mount Vernon, but also includes an erroneous dated passage (Snowden 1902) speculating he had been "another of Washington's servants".

The Grays were probably members of several generations of enslaved people originally descended from Africans brought over for bondage in service to the Custis and Washington families. Walsh (2001) indicates that in the early Chesapeake colonial plantations of the Custis family, Africans from Angola predominated among the enslaved, making the Gray ancestors likely from West Africa. The Washington enslaved passed along to George Washington Parke Custis were likely from the holdings of his grandmother, Martha Dandridge Custis Washington, as George Washington's will intended to free the enslaved individuals he controlled outright from his family holdings and his purchases following Martha's passing (Mount Vernon n.d.(c)).

The various web history articles and research studies noted earlier indicate Selina Norris married Thornton Gray around 1847 in an unusual ceremony led by an Episcopal clergyman arranged by Custis's daughter Mary and allowed to be held in the same Family Parlor room of the mansion where she earlier in 1831 had wed Robert. E. Lee. Selina served as a trusted personal maid to Mary Custis Lee and as head housekeeper and was favored by Mary; while Thornton was a handyman and stable hand. Selina and Thornton Gray had eight children at Arlington: Emma, Annice (Annie), Florence, Sarah, Ada, Selina, John, and Harry. Selina and Thornton and six of their children (who were born by 1858) appeared as property in the "Inventory of the Personal Estate of Major George W.P. Custis," recorded at the Alexandria County Court House on September 11, 1858 (The Black Heritage Museum of Arlington County, VA n.d.).

The Gray family occupied the 16 ft x 18 ft west room of the South Dependency, which included an attic loft space for most of their time at Arlington (Figure 28). They later expanded their living space into the adjoining central and east rooms of the structure after the Civil War as indicated in interviews of the Gray sisters (Emma Gray Syphax & Sarah Gray Wilson in 1929) and by historical research (Fisher et al 2009b). It is unclear exactly when Selina and Thornton Gray first took up residency (possibly after their 1847 marriage) or exactly when they left (likely late 1860s), or if Selina's parents Leonard and Sally

Figure 28 – Reproduction furnished west room of the South Dependency circa 1958 (NPS ARHO Collections)

Norris or other enslaved individuals, had occupied the west room quarters previously. The South Dependency, built late in the main mansion's construction period of 1802-1818 (and possibly as late as 1824), is a 40 ft x 20 ft, three room, 1-1/2 story (loft over west room) structure that also contained an east room storehouse and central room smokehouse (Figure 29). The South Dependency appearance mirrored the North Dependency across the work yard at the rear of the mansion. The North Dependency, also built late in the 1802-1818 mansion construction period, is a two-story structure that included a lower, sub-grade level kitchen and rooms on both levels as slave quarters for those serving the mansion (Fisher et al 2009a & b). While most enslaved people at Arlington lived in small cabins of rough log construction away from the mansion and nearer the Potomac River and labored in the agricultural fields, the household enslaved servants like the Grays in the South Dependency and the cook, coachman, nurse and others in the North Dependency had accommodations in comparatively spacious and well-built, architecturally embellished structures of stone, brick, and mortar near the mansion (Baker & Thompson 1930, The Black Heritage Museum of Arlington County, VA n.d., Fisher et al 2009 a & b).

Figure 29 – South Dependency NW Corner in 1938, looking SE (NPS ARHO Collections)

Enslaved Lives, Religious Beliefs, and the Gray Family at Arlington

Evidence collected during the field investigations of the archeological record in the West Room Slave Quarters of the South Dependency, which is presented later in this document, points to the creation of a subfloor storage pit religious/magical shrine in the quarters as most likely occurring toward the mid-nineteenth century, when the Thornton and Selina Gray family occupied the room. During the Gray family tenure as enslaved individuals at Arlington under the Custis and Lee families, they witnessed the passage of an era from the times of traditional slave-holding practices on a plantation estate to the uncertainty of the Civil War period and to a welcomed but uncharted and undefined future of freedom. Their lives at Arlington amongst other enslaved household servants may have allowed them a slightly better physical existence than the enslaved field hands through access to amenities like an improved housing situation in the mansion outbuildings, but they were still held in bondage and denied their freedom (The Black Heritage

Museum of Arlington County, VA n.d.). It is not known if any other advantages were afforded by this proximity with the Custis and Lee family (e.g. better food, clothing, and household goods), but often closer scrutiny by the plantation owners in such a relationship may have outweighed any benefits.

Selina Gray was known to have been favored by Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee and became a close personal maid and confidant. Mary arranged for Selina and Thornton to be married in a wedding ceremony attended by an Episcopal clergyman in the mansion's Family Parlor, the same room where Mary had wed Robert E. Lee. With the opening of war between the states, Lee's resignation from the U.S Army and departure from Arlington, and the inevitability of Union troops occupying the estate, prior to her evacuation in May 1861 Mary left Selina Gray in charge of the plantation and entrusted her with the keys to the mansion and the store-room of the Washington Treasury so lovingly assembled by her late father (Byrne 1998, National Park Service - National Register of Historic Places (2004b).

George Washington Parke Custis' wife Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis and daughter Mary were devout Christians and valued education, principles they shared in practice with some of the enslaved people at Arlington. Mrs. Custis was said to have overseen the construction of a chapel by the enslaved for their use in worship and she was likely the force behind her husband being an early member and contributor to the American Colonization Society (Byrne 2002, Kinzey 2005, National Park Service Museum Management Program n.d.(d)). Both Mrs. Custis and daughter Mary disliked the institution of slavery and they were known to tutor those they held in bondage to read and write and encouraged them to attend religious services and read the Bible. This custom was carried on after Mary wed Robert E. Lee, as Mary and her daughters continued to educate the enslaved and advocate Christian religion (Nelligan 1953, National Park Service Museum Management Program n.d.(c)). Two of Selina Gray's daughters recall being taught Sunday School lessons and singing hymns in an upstairs dressing room (Figure 30) behind the Lee girls' bedroom in the mansion (Baker & Thompson 1930). Hanna (2001), also refers to the slave schoolhouse or church/chapel south of the core of the mansion's setting where the enslaved received educational instruction and practiced religious services.

Figure 30 – Dressing Room Behind Lee Girls' Bedroom Where Lessons Were Taught and Hymns Sung with Enslaved Children (NPS ARHO Collections)

During the Gray's tenure on the Arlington estate in Virginia, those held in slavery had been freed by Congressional legislation in the neighboring District of Columbia April 16, 1862 and then in

the slave-holding secessionist states by the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln January 1, 1863 (National Park Service Arlington House n.d.(b)). Lee himself, had actually executed a deed of manumission for the enslaved at Arlington during the Civil War on December 29, 1862 just days before Lincoln's Proclamation, theoretically honoring terms of his father-in-law's will to free the Custis-owned enslaved within 5 years of his death (Hanna 2001, National Park Service Arlington House n.d.(a)).

Temporary camps were being set up by the federal government to handle the groups of formerly enslaved people who through escape or manumission were able to make their way to Union controlled areas in the north as the Civil War raged on. A more enduring camp, Freedman's Village (Figure 31), was established by the federal government War Department in 1863 on the grounds of the Arlington plantation well south of the mansion to help house contraband and

Figure 31 – Freedman's Village on the Southern Portion of the Arlington Plantation (Library of Congress/Harper's Weekly, v. 8, 1864 May 7)

escaped or newly freed enslaved individuals in an effort to experimentally socialize those formerly held in slavery into a version of life in a free society and to centralize initial provision of services and goods such as food, clothing, housing, job opportunities, educational instruction, and medical care (Bestebreurtje 2018, Schildt 1984). Churches soon sprouted up amongst the frame houses of the inhabitants of Freedman's Village, and today's oldest African-American church in Arlington County, VA, the Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, has its roots as the circa 1863 Wesley Zion Church in Freedman's Village (National Park Service - National Register of Historic Places 2004a). After leaving their quarters in the South Dependency at Arlington in the years after the Civil War, Gray family members are believed to have lived briefly in Freedman's Village (Bestebreurtje 2017, National Park Service - National Register of Historic Places 2004(b)), so it is probable they had developed connections there while still living in the South Dependency at Arlington through likely attendance at Christian religious services in the churches that were established in the Village.

If the Grays were inured into a Christian religious belief system, would they have practiced the conjure or hoodoo folk magic customs seemingly manifest in the subfloor storage pit bottles and shrine that exhibited West African spiritual traditions? The Grays likely descended from West Africans held by the Custis families over the years, as Walsh (2001) indicates that in the early Chesapeake colonial plantations of the Custis family, Africans from Angola predominated

among the enslaved. But the Grays were several generations removed from their ancestors who were transported from Africa, so would West African imagery have held meaning for them in the mid-19th century? Many of the enslaved in the Americas were noted as having blended African traditions with Christianity. Yvonne Chireau writes in Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition (2003), that a supposed dichotomy of African religions and Christianity is a false analysis of African-American slave spiritual practices, indicating that for enslaved blacks "*…older cosmologies gradually merged with concepts that were extracted from newly formed Afro-Christian ideas such as a radical monotheism, dualistic notions of good and evil, and concepts of spiritual intervention. Elements of the older African worldview also intersected with a network of Anglo-American supernatural traditions. The simultaneous emergence of African-based supernaturalism (later identified as Conjure and Hoodoo) and black Americans' embrace of Christianity resulted in the reinforcement of magic and religion as convergent phenomena*" (p.7).

Chireau (2003) goes on to say that "*Conjure is a magical tradition in which spiritual power is invoked for various purposes, such as healing, protection, and self defense. The relationship between Conjure and African American religion—in particular, Christianity—is somewhat ambiguous. Conjure is usually associated with magical practices, unlike Christianity, which is seen as a "religion," a dichotomy that suggests that they are in conflict with one another. Yet from slavery days to the present, many African Americans have readily moved between Christianity, Conjure, and other forms of supernaturalism with little concern for their purported incompatibility*" (p. 12). So the Grays, given their likely West African ancestry, could have been candidates for creators of the religious/magical shrine discovered in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters as part of a practice of conjure or hoodoo folk magic customs that exhibited West African spiritual elements.

It is difficult to pinpoint when Thornton and Selina Gray first occupied the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters, but it may have been after their 1847 marriage. It is also unknown as to when exactly they and their children left their residence in the South Dependency and the Arlington plantation, but it is believed to be sometime after the Civil War and likely between 1867 and 1870. Various sources offer different scenarios on the timing of the Gray's departure. The 1929 interview (Syphax & Wilson 1929) by Arlington National Cemetery War Department QMC personnel with two of Thornton and Selina Gray's daughters, Emma (Gray) Syphax

Figure 32 –Civil War era stereogram of Selina Gray and who are believed to be two of her daughters at the South Dependency (NPS ARHO Collections)

and Sarah (Gray) Wilson, records the daughters indicating that leading up to, during, and following the Civil War they lived in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters and post-war their father was given permission to cut doorways through the central room Smokehouse walls to the east Storehouse Room, enabling them to expand beyond the west room quarters to use the entire South Dependency as their residence.

A number of sources (Arlington County 2016, Arlington County Historical Society 1973, Bestebreurtje 2017, The Black Heritage Museum n.d., National Park Service - National Register of Historic Places 2004b) variously indicate that the Grays became residents of Freedman's Village sometime following their manumission in December of 1862, or that Selina Gray left the Arlington plantation six years after Mary Custis Lee entrusted her with the mansion keys in 1861, or that post-Civil War the Grays either rented from the federal government or acquired in a private purchase 10 acres or 15 acres in the Green Valley section of Arlington in 1866 or 1867. Some of this contrasts with the remembrances of the Gray's daughters (Syphax & Wilson 1929) of having still lived in the South Dependency during and after the Civil War when their father was allowed to cut doorways between the three divided rooms so they could inhabit the entire structure. It is also unclear in the various sources if the 10 or 15-acre rental/acquisition in 1866 or 1867 was just for land or included a residence.

During the Civil War, many enslaved individuals seized opportunities to self-manumit themselves or found themselves suddenly freed as contraband of war after Union troops captured southern territory. Congressional legislation ended slavery in the District of Columbia April 16, 1862, Robert E. Lee manumitted the Arlington enslaved December 29, 1862, and President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation January 1, 1863 ending slavery in secessionist states (National Park Service Arlington House n.d.(b)). Scores of formerly enslaved individuals crowded into northern cities, including Washington, DC, seeking refuge in temporary camps. Many of those in the nation's capital were relocated to the Arlington plantation after the federal government opening in June 1863 of Freedman's Village along the southern portions of the estate to provide shelter, food clothing, education and training, and employment, some being

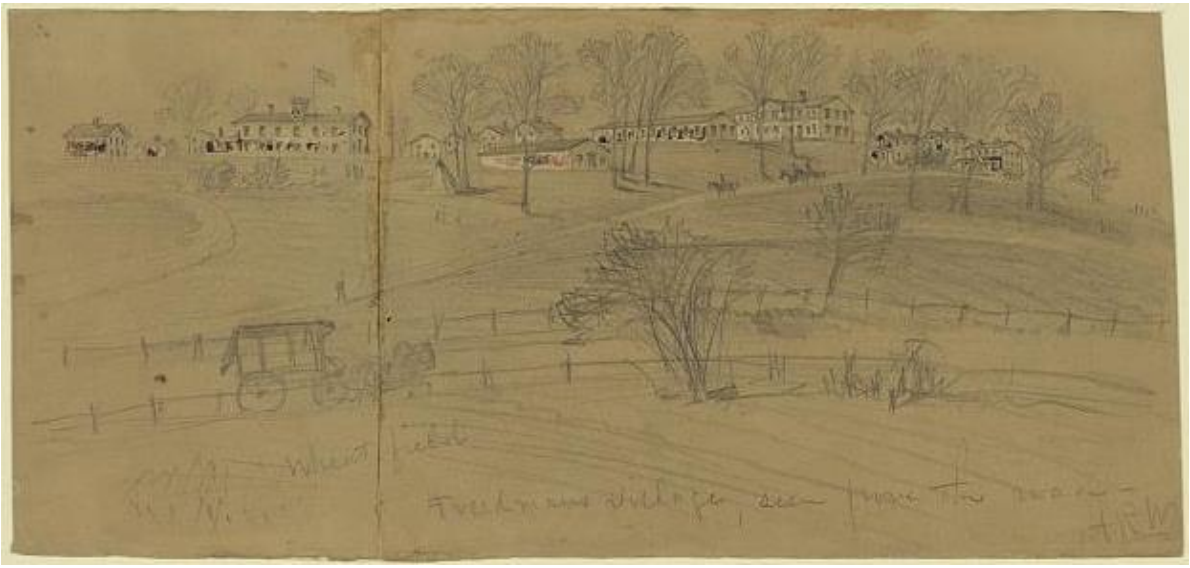


Figure 33 – Freedman's Village period sketch by Alfred Waud circa 1864 (Library of Congress)

paid to raise crops in the former plantation fields for government use (Bestebreurtje 2018, Schildt 1984). Approximately 100 of the eventual 3,000 residents of Freedman's Village residents were able to begin small scale farming on 5 or 10-acre rented plots at the government established Arlington Tract Farms on the outskirts of the Village and some later bought the land and moved to these farm tracts and built houses (Bestebreurtje 2017 and 2018). It is possible that the Grays, while living in the South Dependency post-Civil War or having moved sometime thereafter to Freedman's Village for a brief period, had perhaps farmed a plot of land assigned to them and eventually purchased it and possibly moved there after constructing a house, but this is doubtful. Interestingly, other sources indicate that the Grays rented a 15-acre plot for farming as early as 1866 (National Register of Historic Places 2004b) or bought fifteen acres of land in 1867 where they lived and farmed (The Black Heritage Museum n.d.).

Bestebreurtje (2017), citing an Arlington (formerly Alexandria) County Government Deed Book, indicates that the Grays purchased ten acres in 1867 in Green Valley and relocated from Freedman's Village to this land; moving into "a large stucco house on ten acres bordering the Jones property" (Bestebreurtje 2017: 95). In follow up conversation with the Arlington County Land Records Division (2021) and examination of a copy of the deed (*Arlington County Deed Book, H-Z,* No. 9, p 222), indications are that Thornton Gray purchased ten acres of property on June 26, 1867 from John and Jane Taylor, private landowners. The deed implies that the sale was for land only, noting no improvements on the property, so they likely did not move there immediately in 1867. This acreage was probably a farming plot for the Grays while they lived elsewhere and as a private purchase would have been outside the federal government's Freedman's Village or Arlington Tract Farms, so is likely the Green Valley locale. The G.M. Hopkins Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington for 1879 shows Thornton Grey (sic) owning a property well to the south of Freedman's Village and the Arlington plantation.

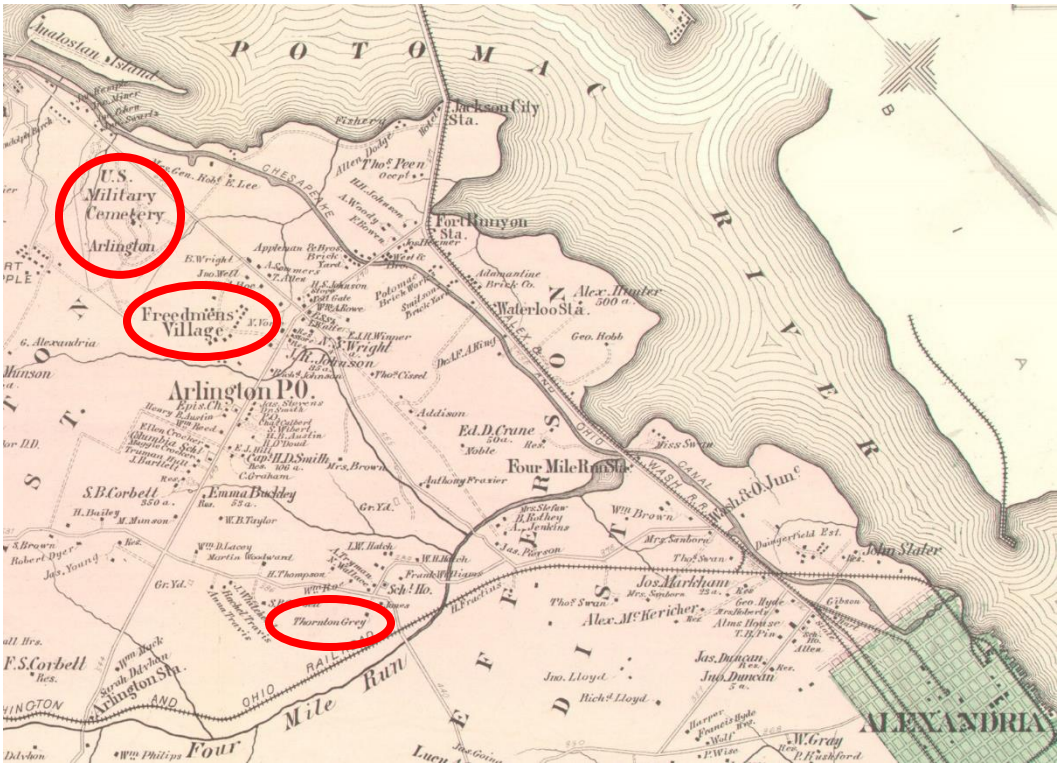


Figure 34 – Section of (former) Alexandria County (now Arlington) map in G.M. Hopkins Atlas 1879 (Library of Congress)

The War Department's records of management of Arlington National Cemetery include the Cemetery Superintendent's reports to the QMC, which do not mention the status or condition of the dependencies until an April 1869 report which states that the old kitchen and the servants' quarters behind the mansion were in a state of decay (Fisher et al 2009b). Further reports in 1870 indicate that the dependencies were still in poor shape and in 1871 funds were requested and received for a restoration campaign that took place in late 1871 to make the South and the North Dependencies, both former slaves' quarters, "habitable", likely for Cemetery staff (Ibid). The Grays would have vacated the South Dependency by this time to take up residency elsewhere in either Freedman's Village or the Green Valley property, and possibly left the dependency just in advance of the April 1869 Cemetery Superintendent report that commented on the state of the dependencies for the first time.

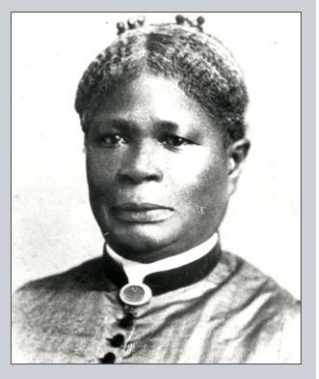
It is perhaps important to note that the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau), the federal government agency created within the War Department in 1865 to assist resettlement of formerly enslaved individuals, was responsible for taking over operations of the Freedman's Village at Arlington, established in 1863 by the War Department during the Civil War. Attempts to close the Freedman's Village and disband the Freedmen's Bureau began as early as 1868, and the federal government's efforts to shutter Freedman's Village at Arlington had continued even beyond the cessation of the Freedmen's Bureau's operations in 1872 (Bestebreurtje 2018).

Bestebreurtje (2017) indicates that Selina and Thornton Gray were among the prominent community leaders at Freedman's Village who moved to the Green Valley area when pressure against the Village's existence became too strong. Were the Gray's actually Village residents or possibly non-resident community leaders who were still living in the nearby Arlington South Dependency but immersed in the Freedman's community? The Gray family may have participated in religious services in the churches, farmed land set aside by the government just outside the Village, utilized the schools, or had other dealings with the community.

Selina Gray had penned a letter to Mary Custis Lee in 1872 (Virginia Historical Society n.d.) recounting her times at Arlington House and the difficulties she faced dealing with the occupying Union troops pilfering items and indicating that she remained at Arlington as long as she could but now had a comfortable home on ten acres of land half-way to Alexandria. An undated voter registry that lists black voters in the Arlington Magisterial District includes Thornton Grey (sic) as a forty-five year old laborer living on the "Arlington Tract", as opposed to residing like other voting blacks at "Freedmen's (sic) Village" or "near Freedmen's (sic) Village" (Arlington County Historical Society 1973). Thornton Gray's birth year was believed to be 1825, so this would indicate the voter registry was from 1870, which is supported by U.S. Census records in 1880 listing Thornton Gray as a fifty-five-year-old farmer (National Register of Historic Places 2004b). The distinction between Thornton Gray being noted as a "laborer" in 1870 versus listed as a "farmer" in 1880 could indicate he was employed as a laborer while residing at the Arlington South Dependency, Freedman's Village, or the Arlington Tract when information was gathered for the 1870 voter registry and that by the time of the 1880 census he was living at and farming his own property in Green Valley full time.

With a number of interpretations of the Gray family's movements post-Civil War, it is difficult to pinpoint when they actually departed their residence in the South Dependency and where they relocated. Perhaps the Grays saw the handwriting on the wall regarding their occupancy on the Arlington estate and left a home in the Freedman's Village/Arlington Tract (or departed the South Dependency) sometime around the 1869 to 1872 period; finally taking up a residence of their own at their Green Valley 10-acre plot, which they acquired in 1867. Selina Gray's very own letter to Mary Custis Lee in 1872 (Virginia Historical Society n.d.) recounting her times at Arlington House indicates that she had established a comfortable home of her own half-way to Alexandria on 10 acres.

Additional research will need to be done, but it would appear that the Grays possibly departed the South Dependency by April of 1869 (when cemetery officials first inventoried conditions of the Arlington dependencies) for perhaps a brief stay at Freedman's Village or the Arlington Tract (Thornton Gray listed on 1870 voter record as living on "Arlington Tract") before settling circa 1870-1872 (Selina Gray's 1872 letter) into a residence built on their Green Valley area 10-acre plot acquired in 1867. This possible scenario, coupled with inferences that Selina and Thornton Gray were raising their family in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters for some years prior to the Civil War and lived there afterward (Gray daughters interview Syphax & Wilson 1929), certainly indicates that the Grays occupied the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters during the time period identified by the archeological investigations for the creation, use, and abandonment of the subfloor storage pit religious/magical shrine.



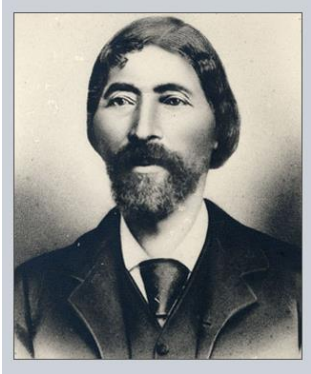


Figure 35 – Selina Norris Gray and Thornton Gray (NPS Museum Management Program Exhibit)

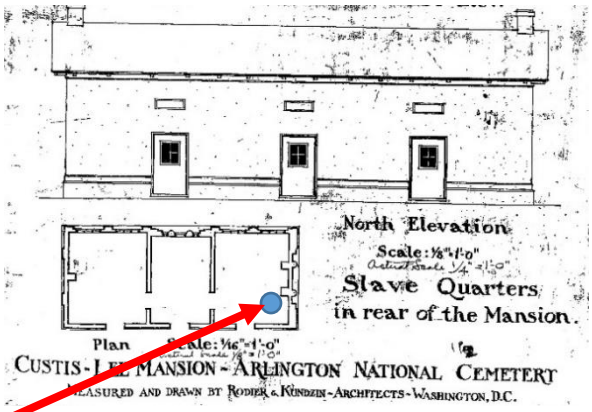


Figure 36 – Arlington House South Dependency (NPS GWMP Collections_

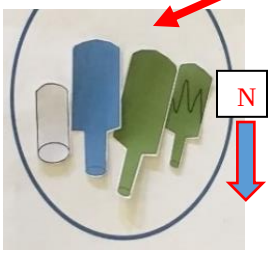


Figure 37 – Four Northward Pointing Mid-nineteenth Century Bottles Recovered from a Subfloor Storage Pit Religious/Magical Shrine Northeast of the Fireplace (NPS GWMP Collections)

CHAPTER 3 – THE ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 Methodology

The recent archeological investigations at the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters formally began after monitoring of the rehabilitation construction actions identified an odd find of four bottles clustered together. Because previous archeological excavations (Louis Berger Group 2005) had been conducted in the room and a historic dirt floor level elevation identified, an archeological monitor was on site during the rehabilitation. The modern fill soils in the room that had lain over the historic floor level were being removed to just above the historic floor elevation when workmen discovered four intact bottles laying side by side after apparently having dug a bit too deeply and excavated into historic period soils.

After GWMP Cultural Resources Specialist Bradley Krueger reported the interesting finds of the bottles while monitoring the construction, GWMP Cultural Resources Program Manager Matthew Virta arranged to visit the site and first impressions indicated that the discovery of the cluster of four bottles, the nature of their location, and the physical appearance of the area of the find all strongly suggested the historical presence of a subfloor storage pit. A 3x3 ft. excavation unit was proposed at the locale for further investigation by more controlled archeological excavation methods, albeit in somewhat disturbed contexts left by the workmen's labors.

The resultant archeological investigations of this unanticipated discovery were overseen by Cultural Resources Program Manager Virta with the assistance of Cultural Resources Specialist Krueger, both archeologists meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards. The archeological work took place over a period of three days in May of 2019 during a temporary construction work stoppage in the room.

Investigations of the apparent subfloor storage pit consisted of hand digging the 3x3 ft. excavation unit, and soils were generally excavated stratigraphically by natural or cultural layers based on soil characteristics and screened through ¼" mesh hardware cloth for artifact recovery. Notes on artifacts and soil characteristics were recorded on field excavation forms and artifacts were bagged by provenience levels. Due to construction disturbances, soil samples were not taken, but artifacts were left unprocessed for potential residue analysis of surfaces.

At the time of preparing this report, preliminary artifact identification of the unprocessed field collection has taken place, keeping the collection as undisturbed as possible pending the determination of a strategy for other scientific testing and analysis. Eventual processing of the collection (cleaning, cataloging, and curation of artifacts and filing field records) is anticipated at the NPS National Capital Area Museum Resources Center (MRCE) in Landover, MD.

Other project activities have included conducting historical background research on the site and its occupants, undertaking comparative archeological literature review, looking at documentation of African American and historic enslaved populations' spiritual practices, consulting with other professionals, and performing other limited support work. Analysis and report writing have taken place as time has permitted in the months since the investigations due to other priority workloads in the park and owing to protocols put in place during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

3.2 Archeological Findings

Initial findings of the archeological investigations from preliminary assessments of the materials recovered (collection withheld from processing pending examination for potential diagnostic testing) and review of the field notes provide a plausible explanation for the origins of the pit feature in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters, but more analysis remains to be done. To more fully investigate the depression where the bottles were found, believed to be a subfloor storage pit, a 3 ft x 3 ft Excavation Unit (EU) was placed surrounding the find (Figure 38). The beginning excavation elevation levels surrounding the depression, the grade at which the workmen shoveled out and re-positioned dirt to level the room floor beneath the removed "reproduction" brick floor, vapor barrier, and sand layer, averaged 0.65 ft below the West Room Slave Quarters entry door sill level (established as a Datum Point). The brick flooring was likely established during the circa 1929 rehabilitation of the quarters by Arlington National Cemetery and was re-laid by the NPS in 1959 and again in the 1990s with a sand layer and plastic vapor barrier (Louis Berger Group 2005, Fisher et al 2009b). Elevations within the disturbed pit area from where the bottles had been retrieved averaged 0.75 ft to 0.85 ft Below the Datum (BD) of the sill, some 0.10 ft to 0.20 ft deeper than the surrounding soil matrix due to soil subsidence in the pit area.

Figure 38 – 3 ft x 3 ft Excavation Unit surrounding the pit with old hearth kerb brick at left edge and pit in center (NPS Photograph)

Previous archeological investigations (Louis Berger Group 2005) identified a historic antebellum dirt floor grade at approximately 0.85 ft below the entry door sill level, which was also used as a Datum then. It is believed this was the original door sill height, but it is not known if it had been adjusted with rehabilitation efforts that established the reproduction brick flooring. Through some of the looser soil stirred up by the workmen as they leveled the floor, a harder packed clayey soil was observed surrounding the depression, suggesting a possible floor level. The bottles had been removed from a slight depression, so it is presumed they had lain within the upper portion of the storage pit. It is believed by examination of historic records that no earlier rehabilitation efforts dug into historic antebellum floor levels, but had added soil fills to establish new higher interior grades post-occupancy by enslaved individuals and ultimately finished with the reproduction brick flooring level present when the rehabilitation began. And it is not known for certain how much the workmen's recent floor-leveling task mixed soils from within and surrounding the pit, but is believed to have been minimal in nature.

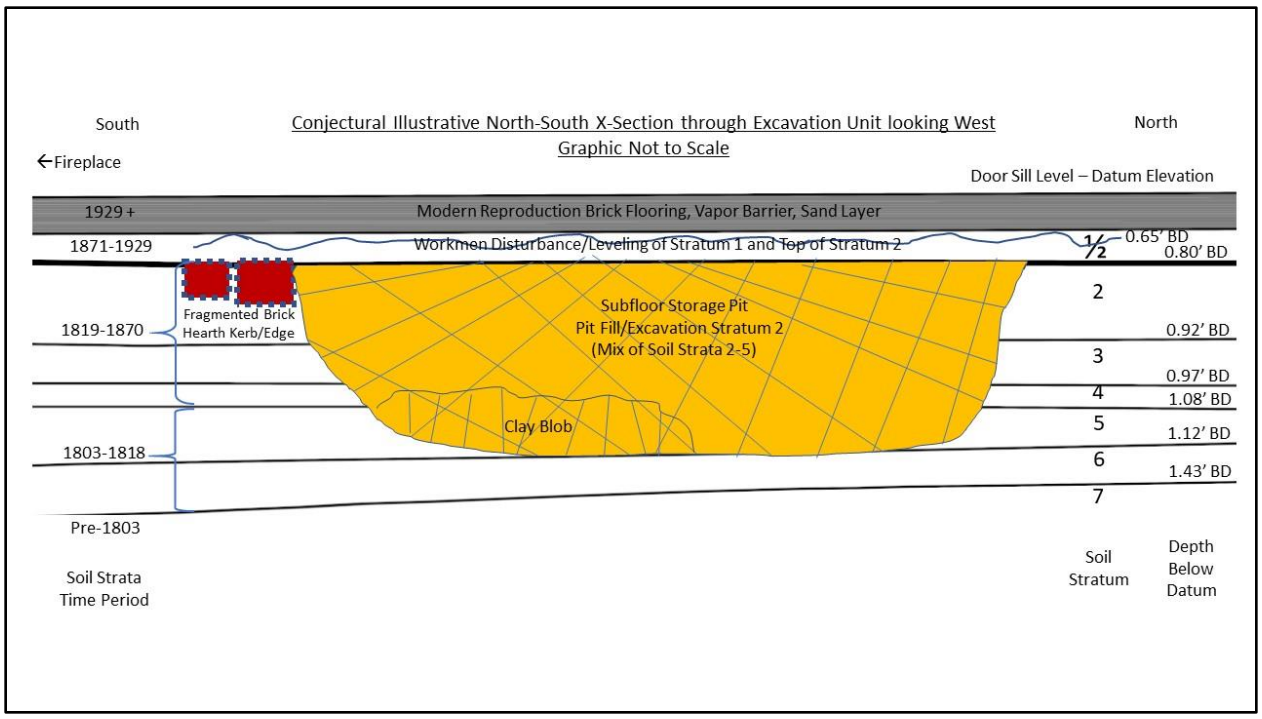


Figure 39 – Conjectural illustrative North-South X-Section through EU looking West showing pit and soil strata. Graphic is not to scale and is for descriptive purposes only. (NPS Drawing)

The first Soil Stratum excavated (Stratum 1/Stratum 2 mix) included the remaining loose soils (from removal of the bottles) across the EU and was a mingling of a more modern fill soil level with the historic one below. Soils were composed of mottled sandy and silty loams with inclusions of brick, plaster, and mortar specks and ranged in color from Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 3/3 dark brown through dark yellowish browns to 10 YR 6/6 light yellowish brown. The likely pit was visible within the loose soils, appearing as a depression of a roughly 1.5 ft x 2.3 ft D-shaped outline, with the southern straight-edge along a line of old fragmented dry-laid bricks that looked to form an earlier hearth kerb/edge of the adjacent fireplace (see Figures 39, 40 and 41). Soil cores taken confirmed suspicions of a pit and showed less consolidated soil fill of the depression continuing a few tenths of a foot in depth below the exposed surface before the core encountered harder packed soils underneath the pit.

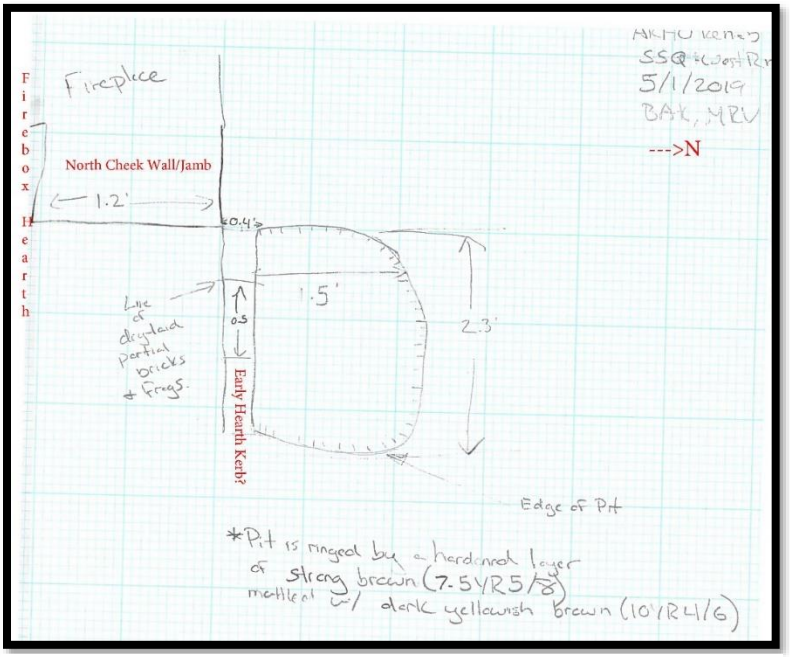


Figure 40 – Appearance of pit area relative to fireplace prior to and just beginning excavations (NPS Drawing)

Modern and historic vintage artifacts (n = 17) recovered from across the overall EU during the initial excavation/clean-up of soils included architectural (small fragments of 5 unidentified/cut nails, 2 rough and 1 finish coat plaster, 1 flat glass) and domestic (5 unidentified bone bits, 1 sliver coal) items. And, while recovering artifacts from this soil level over the pit area, found were a 5/64" - 6/64" diameter bore white clay smoking pipe stem and a ½" diameter cork, appearing too small (but desiccated) for any of the four bottles discovered.

Figure 41 – Removal of Soil Stratum 1 exposing Stratum 2 and better-defined pit edges (NPS Photograph)

Removal of Soil Stratum 1 (loose dirt of 1 & 2) from the EU revealed a hardened layer of soil underneath, deemed Soil Stratum 2, consisting of a Munsell Soil Color Chart 7.5 YR 5/8 strong brown clayey loam with 10 YR 4/6 yellowish brown mottling at an average elevation of 0.80 ft BD surrounding the pit area and better identifying an edge to the pit (Figure 41). The elevation of Stratum 2 at 0.80 ft BD matched up fairly well with that of the previous archeological investigations (Louis Berger Group 2005) which encountered an apparent hard-packed historic era dirt floor surface approximately 0.85 ft below the entry door sill level. Interestingly, these previous investigations included EUs that were placed directly in front of (east) of the hearth to obtain information on the fireplace and hearth construction and look for subfloor storage pits. Placement of the EUs just missed the currently identified subfloor storage pit that was offset to the northeast of the hearth (Figure 42).

Figure 42 – Previous Excavation Unit of Louis Berger Group in front of (east) of the room's hearth and just south of the subfloor pit location in the current EU (Louis Berger Group 2005 Photograph - NPS Collections)

With Stratum 1 removed, the EU and the pit feature were bisected at this point

and excavation of the northern half of the pit was undertaken side by side with the excavation of the surrounding soil matrix of the north half of the EU. Stratum 2 of the soil matrix surrounding the north end of the subfloor pit, including the soil interface with the pit (edge of pit), was a Munsell Soil Color Chart 7.5 YR 5/8 strong brown clayey loam with mottling. Only ten artifacts (n = 10) were recovered from this surrounding matrix, including fragments of faunal material/animal bone (n = 3), a nail, a coal lump, some plaster and paint chunks (n = 4), and a brick fleck. Stratum 2 soils surrounding the pit ended at a depth averaging 0.92 ft BD.

Soil Stratum Level 2 of the pit feature/the pit fill included just a bit of the same amalgam of soils of Stratum 1 (1 & 2 mix) in the very upper portion, but was more compact and consolidated in nature; and as excavation proceeded became mainly composed of Munsell Soil Color Chart 10YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown and 10 TR 5/8 yellowish brown silty loams with brick and charcoal flecks. Artifacts recovered from the pit consisted of the already discovered four bottles removed by the workmen and archeological monitor and eighty other items (n = 80) which included an 1868 Indian Head small One Cent coin, a one-hole 7/16" diameter bone button blank or backing, 3 bottle glass shards from the broken bottle of the removed foursome, 3 eggshell bits, 7 unidentified/cut nails fragments, 37 flat glass shards, 5 brick bits, 4 rough and 1 finish plaster fragments,10 small bone pieces and an oyster shell fragment, 3 charcoal flecks, 1 coal bit, 1 mica schist fragment, and 2 small quartzite pebbles (1 black and 1 white).

The 1868 coin may indicate that the subfloor pit originated post-Civil War (less likely) or was actively used or abandoned into the era (more likely), when the Gray family was still in residence. As the bottles had lain in this Stratum 2 context, the artifacts found at this level could have been placed in conjunction with the bottles as part of a larger (and perhaps ongoing) spirit bundle. Coins, eggshell, bone, glass, shiny items, stones, red items like brick fragments, white items like plaster/mortar, and other seemingly inconsequential items have been associated with purported subfloor shrines and take on importance and other meaning as an assemblage of materials possibly forming an offering or as an arranged ritualized grouping (Leone and Fry 1999, Samford 2007, Unger 2009).

Because of the nature of the South Dependency construction of brick and stone masonry versus wood frame, coupled with the circumstances of the discovery of the subfloor pit during a construction project, along with the previous remodeling episode to the structure just post occupation by the enslaved Gray family, it would be difficult to assign architectural materials like red brick or white plaster, to the status of a shrine inclusion. Historic soils likely contained architectural refuse from the construction, and the upper sections of the pit may have had intrusive architectural materials from the post-Gray family occupation included. Other materials found in association with the level of the pit where the bottles had lain could also be similarly simple historic period domestic refuse re-deposited in backfill; and it's unfortunate that the placement of these items vis-à-vis the bottles positioning could not be better determined archeologically due to the removal of the bottles by the workmen. The general association of artifacts with the bottles and pit lends some possibility that these types of items, which have been identified as parts of other spiritual artifact caches, could have been part of a spirit bundle in the pit. Certainly the unique black and white quartzite pebbles stand out as possibilities.

During removal of the pit feature fill/Stratum 2, there emerged two distinct soil characteristics at the 1.00 ft to 1.05 ft BD elevation. First, centered within the pit was a more dense, very compact hard clay "blob" of roughly a foot in diameter tending toward a Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 5/3 brown (Figure 43). Surrounding this was chiefly the less compacted Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown silty loam of the pit. The clay blob in the center could be suggestive of a platform or mound of soil within the pit, and its differing soil characteristics sets it aside from the rest of the pit soils. Was this clay blob a miscellaneous chunk of soil within the pit, or perhaps a purposeful small platform onto which shrine objects had been arrayed? And later only to have subsequent activities fill in the pit with soils and disturb the arrangements of items? Additionally, with the circumstances of the bottle recovery, it is not known to what level the workmen's shovels and act of retrieval of the bottles dislodged surrounding artifacts. The last bits of the pit fill/Stratum 2 soils within the depression were then removed and the subfloor storage pit feature appeared to bottom out at depth averaging 1.15 ft BD, making the pit roughly 0.35 ft or 4-1/4 inches deep. Soils revealed here below the pit were mottled silty clays of coloration ranging from Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 5/6 yellowish brown to 4/6 dark yellowish brown to 4/3 brown and contained a large amount of brick fragments. With the storage pit soils removed, the area surrounding the pit was then excavated, which consisted of the pit interface and the rest of the EU soils.

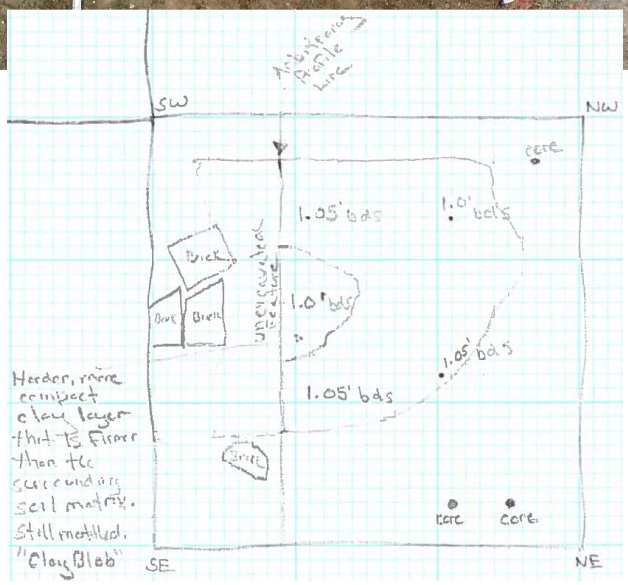


Figure 43 – Clay Blob Near Center of Pit Feature (NPS Photographs and Drawing)

Soil Stratum 3 of the matrix surrounding the pit area and pit interface consisted of a Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown fairly sandy silt with a good bit of brick fragment inclusions. A total of sixty-three artifacts (n = 63) were recovered, including 17 nail fragments, 9 plaster bits, 8 brick pieces, 4 coal bits, 8 animal bone pieces, 10 eggshell fragments, an oyster

shell bit, and 6 glass (3 container and 3 flat) shards. Soil Stratum 3 extended to depths averaging 0.97 ft BD.

Soil Stratum 4 of the matrix surrounding the pit area and pit interface consisted of a Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown loamy silt mottled with Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 4/6 to 3/6 dark yellowish brown. A total of seventy-one artifacts (n = 71) were recovered, including 6 nail fragments, 10 plaster bits, 8 brick pieces, 9 coal bits, 3 slag fragments, 3 stone bits, 6 animal bone pieces, 11 eggshell fragments, 4 oyster shell bits 6 glass (3 container and 3 flat) shards, a plain whiteware sherd, an 1819 (partially illegible date) "Classic Coronet Liberty Matron Head style" One Cent coin, a slightly bent cupric straight pin with bulbous head, and two 11 mm 4-hole white porcelain-like buttons of the Prosser-manufacture type (post 1840) with "orange peel texture" back (Sprague 2002), one a plain dish-style and one a pie crust style. Soil Stratum 4 was a thin lens of soil and extended to depths averaging 1.08 ft BD.

Figure 44 – Buttons, coin, and pin from Soil Stratum 4 surrounding the subfloor pit (NPS Photograph)

Soil Stratum 5 of the matrix surrounding the pit area and pit interface consisted of a heavily mottled clayey silt of color ranging from Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 4/6 dark yellowish brown to 4/3 brown to 5/6 yellowish brown with a heavy amount of brick fragment inclusions. A total of nine artifacts (n = 9) were recovered, including 3 nail fragments, 1 plaster bit, 1 brick piece, 2 micaceous schist stone fragments, 1 animal bone piece, and a whiteware sherd. Soil Stratum 5 extended to depths averaging 1.12 ft BD. Soil Stratum 5 had the appearance of a construction fill level from the time period of building the South Dependency with non-occupation of the site (very few domestic artifacts and mostly architectural materials in a level of soil, including micaceous schist stone used in the foundation).

Soil Stratum 6 of the EU, which extended across the entire unit and would have been just at the base of the subfloor storage pit, consisted of a Munsell Soil Color Chart 10 YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey silt with a heavy amount of large brick fragment inclusions. A total of fifteen artifacts (n = 15) were recovered, including 2 plaster bits, 5 brick pieces, 4 micaceous schist chunks, 3 animal bone pieces, and a coal piece. This soil stratum was of the same characteristic

as the soil which appeared beneath the base of the subfloor storage pit and was excavated as such, so Stratum 6 extended under the pit and it was likely dug into somewhat and formed the base of the pit. Appearing within Soil Stratum 6 were larger micaceous schist stone pieces of the type that had been used in the dependency's foundation. Due to time constraints with an impending restart of the construction project, Soil Stratum 6 was only excavated to depths averaging 1.18 ft BD but a soil core was taken which indicated it extended to depths averaging 1.43 ft BD. Soil Stratum 6 had the appearance of a construction fill level from the time period of the clearing of the building location down to subsoil and erection of the South Dependency, with non-occupancy of the site (few domestic artifacts in the soil level, building stone and mostly architectural materials in the level).

Under Stratum 6 the soil core revealed a very homogenous grayish clay of a color ranging from Munsell Soil Color Chart 2.5 Y 5/3 light olive brown to 2.5 Y 6/4 light yellowish brown, which would likely be the natural subsoil and labeled as Soil Stratum 7. This soil was probably exposed during the original construction period as the ground was excavated and more organic soils removed in preparation for the creation of the foundation and building of the structure.

3.3 Stratigraphy and Feature Analysis

Analysis thus far of the archeological findings suggests a scenario occurring within the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters whereby enslaved individuals excavated a subfloor storage pit in their living space sometime after the construction of the building circa 1818 and likely before or during the Civil War era and then maintained the pit as a religious/magical shrine featuring four bottles seemingly through the conclusion of the War. The known occupants of the slave quarters at the time of the Civil War were the Thornton and Selina Gray family, who were enslaved household servants of the Custis and Lee families and resided in the structure until the late 1860s - 1870.

The subfloor storage pit was located to the northeast of the hearth and four early to mid-nineteenth century bottles within the pit were all placed side by side with mouths pointing northward (Figure 45), with one bottle containing a likely sheep or goat rib bone fragment.

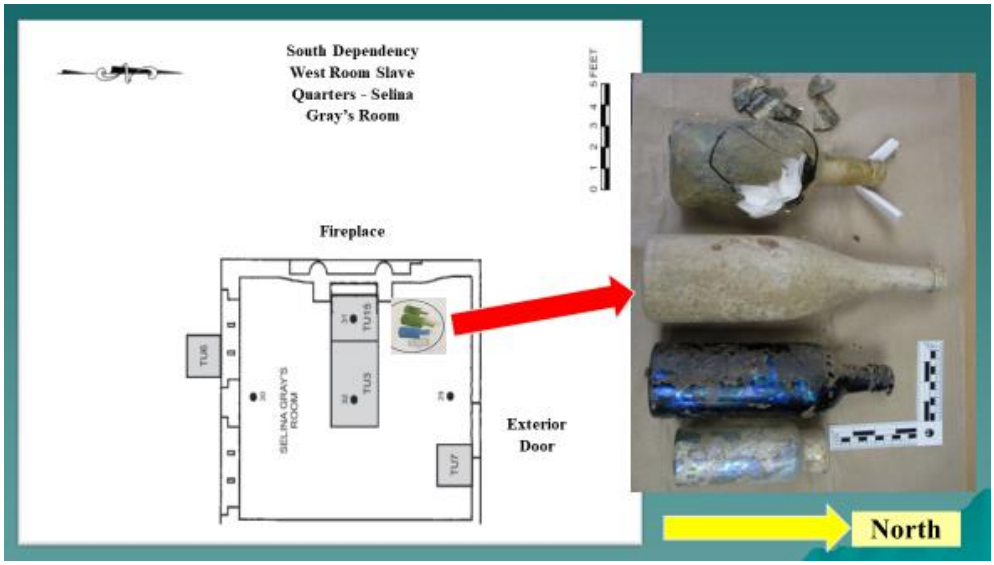


Figure 45 – Four north-facing bottles recovered from the subfloor storage pit northeast of the hearth (NPS Photograph and Drawing adapted from Berger 2005)

The four different types of bottles recovered from the pit were complete (three intact, one broken) mouth blown and hand formed or partial mold formed varieties typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century (Figure 46). Included were:

- a light olive green mouth blown/free blown squat spirits/beer/ale bottle (broken) measuring 4.00 inches in diameter by 8.50 inches tall with evidence of a pointed sand pontil in the kick-up and an applied flare ring finish,
- an olive green to green mouth blown/free blown tall champagne bottle measuring 3.75 inches in diameter by 12.00 inches tall with evidence of a rounded pontil in the kick-up and an applied band/champagne finish,
- a light amber mouth blown into a 3-part Ricketts Type Mold pour-spout liquids (oil/ink) bottle measuring 3.25 inches in diameter by 9.50 inches tall with an applied pouring spout lip, and
- an aqua mouth blown into a dip mold wide-mouth foodstuff bottle measuring 2.50 inches in diameter by 6.00 inches tall with a blow pipe/glass ring pontil scar and a rolled lip finish

Figure 46 – Four early to mid-19th century bottles recovered from the subfloor storage pit (NPS Photograph)

The location of the pit within the room in relation to the hearth and the orientation of the bottles within the pit suggest links to cardinal directions important in African and enslaved African American peoples' cosmology. The four bottles were pointing northward, as if toward freedom, and the pit was north and east of the fireplace/hearth, possibly east toward a new day's sunrise or toward home. The northeastern quadrant of the West African Bakongo Cosmogram (Figure 47) corresponds to birth and life, perhaps in this case representing the hope for a new day and new life of freedom.

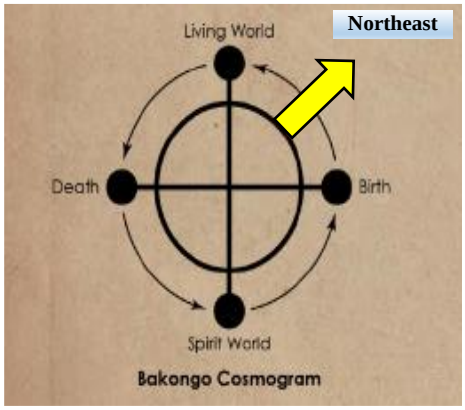


Figure 47 – Bakongo Cosmogram, NE Quad (adapted from Stottman & Stahlgren 2017)

A coin, bone button blank/backing, eggshell fragments, stones, and other items were recovered within the pit in a context associated with the bottles, and there were other artifacts like a white clay pipe stem and a cork in proximate association as well. Because of the disturbed nature of the find during a construction excavation task, it is not possible to definitively link the bottles to these other artifacts. However, the types of artifacts recovered in association with the bottles are similar in nature to

materials included in spiritual bundles identified in enslaved individuals' subfloor storage pits by other archeological investigations (Haq 2016, Leone and Fry 1999, Manning 2012, Samford 2007, Unger 2009). The white clay pipe stem, measuring 5/64" – 6//64" diameter in bore size, was interesting. J.C. Harrington's (1954) dating method would place this artifact in the 1680-1750 range, minimally over 50 years prior to occupation of the Arlington plantation.

In reviewing the archeological fieldwork findings, it is important to note the discovery scenario of the bottles in the subfloor storage pit as a result of archeological monitoring of construction activities which uncovered an unanticipated find. Previous archeological investigations had been conducted in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters (Louis Berger Group 2005) in advance of proposed rehabilitation actions and information was gained regarding the developmental history of the structure and lifeways of its inhabitants. Proposals for rehabilitation of the slave quarters room utilized archeological findings and were presented in the Historic Structure Report for the South Dependency (Fisher et al 2009b):

> *Through meetings with NPS staff, the decision was made to treat this room as a museum exhibit, depicting the quarters of Selina's family at the time of Robert E. Lee's residency at Arlington. There was consensus that the appropriate way to accommodate public access was to provide an accessible entrance from the outside and provide for a platform viewing area on the inside. The platform would be raised above the historic floor level and would control public access within the space. This would allow the exhibit within the room to reflect the importance to Arlington history of the African- American family that lived there. It would also permit the dirt floor level to be returned closer to the original level without greatly disturbing the historic artifacts and debris that remain in the ground. Some infill dirt should remain above the historical level to protect potential archeological artifacts. Furthermore, it will allow the fireplace hearth to be returned to its historic appearance while retaining surviving original fabric. The entrance from the outside and the platform would be fully accessible.* (p. 102).

The rehabilitation goal was to possibly restore the historic floor level elevation in the room ***while protecting potential archeological resources*** associated with the occupancy of the space. Returning the elevation ***closer*** to the historic elevation was proposed and it was recommended that "*Some infill dirt should remain above the historical level to protect potential archeological artifacts*" (Fisher et al 2009b: 102). Archeological monitoring of construction activities was thus recommended for the rehabilitation project with the thought that the floor leveling exercise would be confined to the more modern disturbed soils above the historic floor level.

The current archeological investigation effort following the unanticipated discovery and removal of the bottles is attempting to piece together the formation process of the archeological record surrounding the subfloor storage pit's creation, and more research and analysis is expected to occur. The previous archeological investigations "*revealed a very complex stratigraphic sequence in Selina Gray's room, beginning with the natural grade and including multiple episodes of construction and restoration from the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century*" (Louis Berger Group 2005: 51). Those investigations recognized Depositional Units of various soil strata that were divided into temporal periods related to pre-construction soils (pre-1803), the construction of the South Dependency (1803-1818/1824),

historic period occupancy (1818/1824-1871), War Department rehabilitation efforts (1871-1929), and the modern period (post 1929 with a reproduction brick floor last rehabilitated/set in the 1990s). The current archeological work has identified similar depositional patterns (Figure 48) which will be described based on preliminary analysis of the findings.

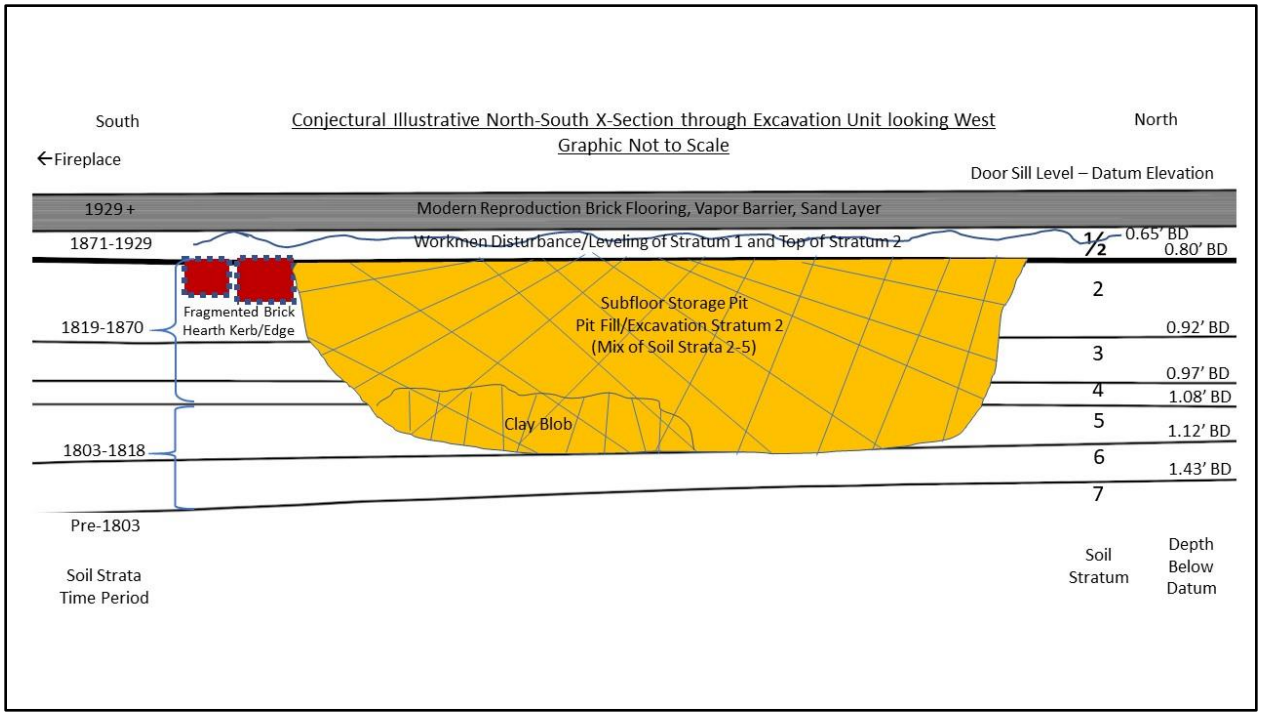


Figure 48 –Conjectural illustrative North-South X-Section through EU looking West showing pit and soil strata. Time periods for Depositional Units of soil strata provided at left. Graphic is not to scale and is for descriptive purposes only. (NPS Drawing)

Starting with the earliest period, Soil Stratum 7 was identified as a very homogenous grayish clay of a color ranging from Munsell Soil Color Chart 2.5 Y 5/3 light olive brown to 2.5 Y 6/4 light yellowish brown and recognized as the pre-construction period (pre-1803) natural subsoil. This soil stratum may have been exposed through stripping of the organic soil cover and was likely excavated into during the 1803-1818 construction period in order to grade the site for a more level building platform and lay the foundation stones.

Soil Strata 5 and 6 correspond to activities and construction deposition/fill soils from the South Dependency construction period (1803-1818/1824) Depositional Unit. Large fragmentary pieces of the micaceous schist stone building foundation were found in Stratum 6 along with brick fragments and some plaster, possibly illustrating the initial setting of stone of the foundation and the beginning of the laying of the brick walls of the structure. Stratum 5 included lesser amounts and smaller bits of micaceous schist stone with a lot of brick and mortar fragments along with other architectural material like nails and plaster, likely indicating the finishing of the structure's brick walls and upper wood frame attic and roof construction. Few domestic artifacts were recovered indicating non-occupation of the immediate site while under construction.

The next Depositional Unit proposed is comprised of Soil Stratum 2 (somewhat disturbed), Stratum 3, and Stratum 4, all surrounding the pit and likely matching up with the historic period

occupancy (1818/1824-1870). These strata seem to represent the fine-tuning of the interior construction and initial occupation (finalizing grade, finish work, set-up of the space, etc.) and then the prolonged occupancy of the room through the Civil War period. Soil Stratum 4 included an 1819 "Classic Coronet Liberty Matron Head style" One Cent coin, a slightly bent cupric straight pin with bulbous head, as well as post 1840 Prosser type "china" buttons. Architectural debris, food items, and domestic artifacts were found throughout Soil Strata 2, 3 and 4, consistent with an extended occupation of the room until circa 1870. Stratum 2, which contained brick work forming an early hearth kerb/edge feature, originated at an average of 0.80 ft below the entry door sill and appeared to be a harder packed dirt floor surface which matched with the historic floor level elevation reported by the previous archeological investigations (Louis Berger Group 2005) at approximately 0.85 ft below the entry door sill level.

The upper levels of Soil Stratum 2 and the upper portions of the pit fill/Stratum 2 seemed uneven and somewhat disturbed by the recent rehabilitation project actions of the workmen who were leveling the floor and likely mixed Soil Stratum 1 (assigned to the 1871-1929 War Department rehabilitation period Depositional Unit) with underlying upper soils of the historic occupation period (1818/1824-1870). Soil Stratum 1 and these upper levels of Stratum 2 included blue painted plaster fragments, a marker identified by the Louis Berger Group (2005) archeological reporting as belonging to the 1871-1929 War Department rehabilitation period Depositional Unit. An initial rehabilitation effort of the West Room Slave Quarters by the War department during the 1870s employed plaster that was painted blue which was then removed circa 1929 during that later rehabilitation campaign. A mortared brick hearth and flooring were initially established and likely rebuilt on fill soils during the various actions of the 1871-1929 War Department rehabilitations. The more modern "reproduction" brick flooring surviving up to the current rehabilitation was originally set in 1929 at a level creating a walking surface more closely even with the entry door sill elevation (well above the historic dirt floor elevation). This brick was seemingly set atop some 0.50 ft or more of modern fill soils and the remnants of the earlier War Department hearth reconstructions. The original earth floor of the historic period occupancy was at a level below the entry door sill that would have created a step down when entering the structure.

The exact date of the subfloor storage pit feature's origin during the occupation of the West Room Slave Quarters is unknown. It was apparently cut into Soil Strata 2, 3, 4, and 5 and just into the top of Stratum 6. From that accounting, the pit likely would have been excavated later in the historic period occupancy by enslaved individuals. An 1868 Indian Head small One Cent coin was found in the upper layers of the pit associated with the bottles, indicating it was likely still in use then and/or the upper fill in the pit dates to 1868 or thereafter.

It is not clear as to the precise timing associated with the formation of the individual soil levels of the historic period occupancy (1818/1824-1870) Depositional Unit, i.e. the timing of the deposition of Stratum 4, followed by Stratum 3, followed by Stratum 2. With the 1819 coin and Prosser-manufacture style buttons (post-1840), Soil Stratum 4 deposition would have been occurring during the 1819 to minimally the 1840s period, and Stratum 3 and then Stratum 2 could have followed soon after or several years later. With the rough, dry-laid partial brick pieces forming an apparent early hearth kerb/edge appearing with Soil Stratum 2, could this have been an enslaved person's attempts at improvements of the original non-structural dirt hearth?

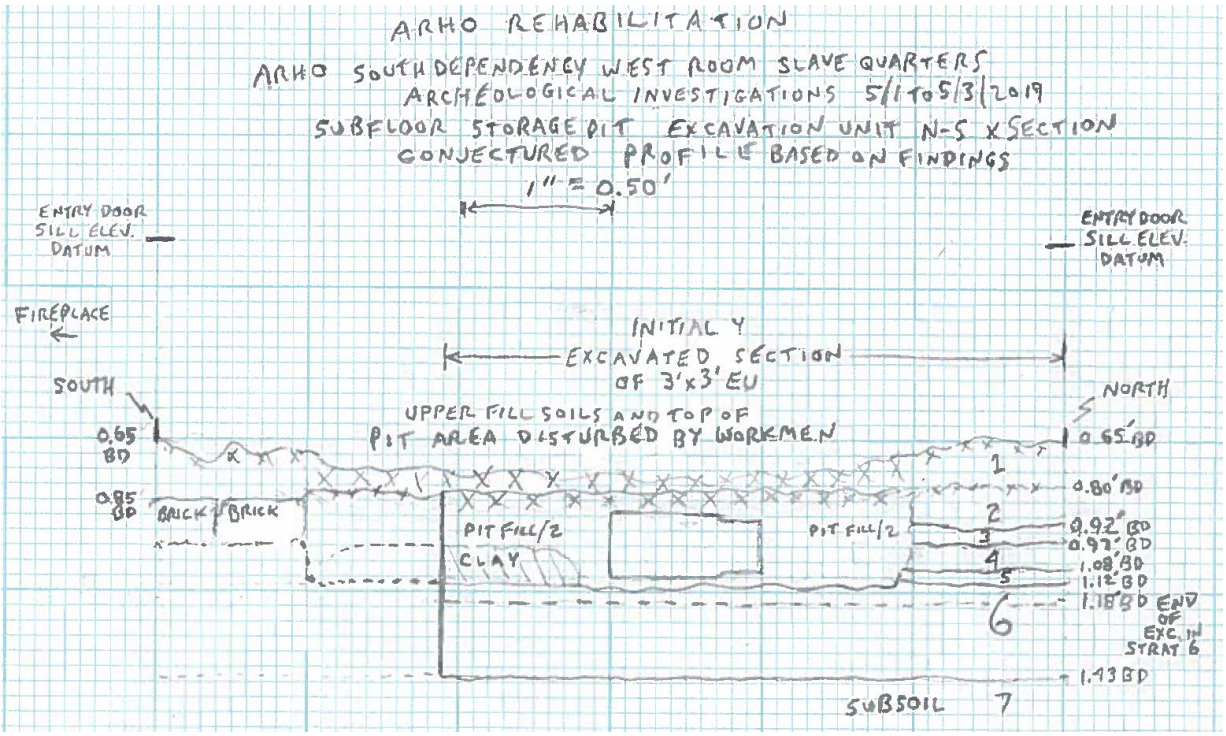


Figure 49 – North to South cross-section (looking west) of Excavation Unit and the subfloor storage pit with conjectural wide-mouth foodstuff bottle placement, 1 of 4 bottles within pit (NPS Scale Drawing)

Earlier archeological investigations identified a hard-pan heat-altered soil surface in the hearth area, and indicated that the base of the hearth at some point in time was at the same level as the associated hard pan dirt floor and that the hearth was likely earthen and did not rest on a stone or brick platform, materials that are usually not conducive to the formation of hard-pan surfaces (Louis Berger Group 2005: 59). Perhaps at some time during the 1840s or after, attempts were made by an enslaved individual to upgrade/define the original dirt floor hearth by adding some brickwork to form a kerb. Access to scrap, discarded, leftover brick materials may have been possible by a household enslaved person living in the South Dependency Slave Quarters. This scenario could have coincided with a circa 1847 possible occupancy of the room by the newly married Selina and Thornton Gray and the start of their family life in the quarters.

Augur tests in the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters by the Louis Berger Group investigations (2005) also discovered dry-laid brick in the hearth vicinity at lower depths below mortar and brick fragments and their subsequent archeological excavations identified a mortared brick paving and hearth surface in the fireplace area attributable to the 1871-1929 War Department Restoration period Depositional Unit. This mortared brick hearth/paving was at an elevation associated with their Stratum G, which approximated the current archeological investigation's Soil Stratum 1 level that extended from 0.65 ft BD to 080 ft BD and consisted of the rehabilitation project workmen-disturbed post historic occupancy War Department 1871-1929 fill mixed with some inadvertently excavated historic occupancy soils. Soil Stratum 1 lay above the Soil Stratum 2 historic occupancy dirt floor level identified by the present investigations (equivalent to the Louis Berger Group Stratum H) and also Stratum 1 had covered the dry laid brick fragments of the hearth kerb/edge observed with Stratum 2 during the current

excavations. It appears evident that the hearth kerb/edge had formed the southern perimeter of the subfloor storage pit, which was dug into Soil Strata 2, 3, 4, 5 and the top of 6. Based upon the artifacts found and the soil stratigraphy, the pit may have been excavated post 1840s during the likely Gray family occupancy of the room.

CHAPTER 4 – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Preliminary analysis of the archeological findings and collections, as well as initial efforts in historical background research and comparative literature review, have led the author to believe a subfloor storage pit was created by enslaved individuals inhabiting the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters in the mid-19th century and utilized as a West African type magical/religious shrine which featured four bottles as major elements. The archeological collection remains unprocessed and awaits further detailed analysis and examination, so more information will hopefully become available in the future. However, with the evidence presented so far, a strong argument can be made for the subfloor storage pit's purpose and origins.

Figure 50 – Four early to mid-19th century bottles recovered from the subfloor storage pit (NPS Photograph)

The four different types of bottles recovered (Figure 50) from the pit were complete (three intact, one broken) mouth blown and hand formed or partial mold formed varieties typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century, and included what may be generically described as a squat spirits bottle (broken), a tall champagne bottle, a pour-spout liquids bottle, and a wide-mouth foodstuff bottle. All four bottles were lain side by side with openings pointing northward, possibly toward freedom, within a pit located to the north and east of the fireplace and hearth (Figure 51), east toward a new day's sunrise or toward home. These cardinal directions are

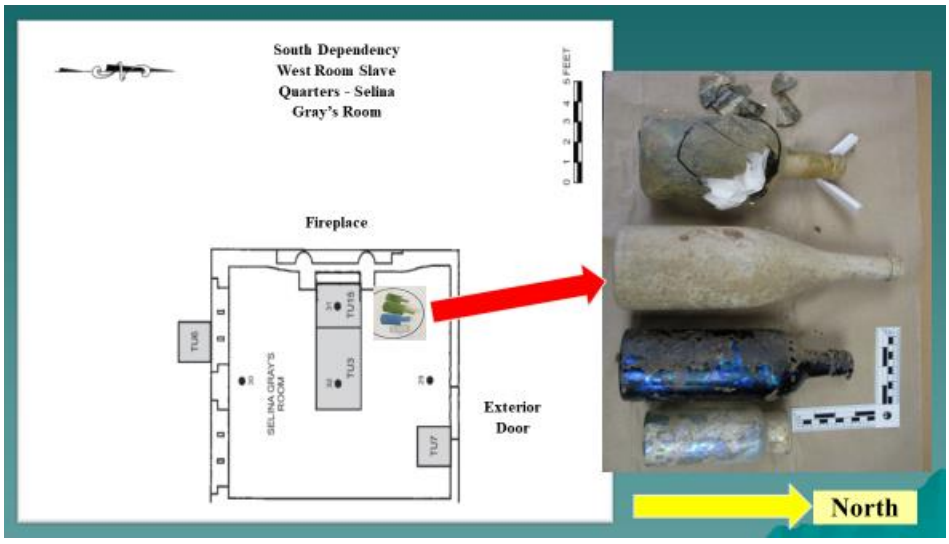


Figure 51 – Four early to mid-19th century bottles recovered from the subfloor storage pit (NPS Photograph and Drawing adapted from Berger 2005)

certainly suggestive of important spiritual imagery in enslaved people's lives and could possibly have West African ties to the northeastern quadrant (corresponding to birth and life) of the Bakongo Cosmogram, which depicts the relationship between the spiritual and physical worlds and the life cycle (Boroughs 2004, Samford 2007, Thompson 1983).

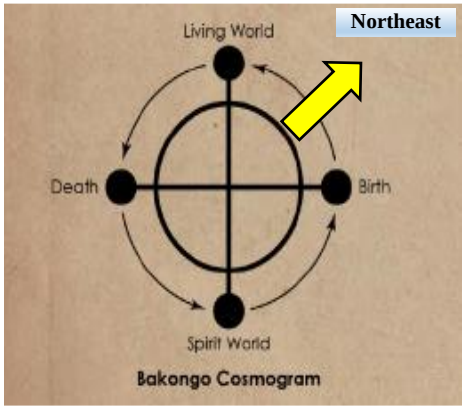


Figure 52 – Bakongo Cosmogram, NE Quad (adapted from Stottman & Stahlgren 2017)

Other specific questions concerning these four north-facing bottles unearthed from the pit by the workmen's unanticipated discovery, await answer. As indicated, no contents were seen within the four un-stoppered bottles save for dirt residue and a likely sheep or goat rib bone fragment in the narrowest mouthed pour-spout bottle. Chemical analysis could provide clues to past contents, especially if possibly used in the manner of traditional "witching" bottles that may have contained hair, urine, iron or copper objects, or other materials. However, researchers (Hoggard 2019) point out that some bottles may not have been purposed as specifically "witch bottles" against a particular antagonist but may have been for more overall protective purposes warding off negative forces or serving as spirit traps. Perhaps the inclusion of materials wasn't necessary and placement of the bottles, empty or not, more key. Or maybe in this case the un-stoppered bottles caused organic materials to deteriorate or perhaps the workmen's recovery of the bottles simply caused items to fall out. Or maybe the bottle contents had been a libation element of a ritual and were drained completely of contents before placement in the pit.

Because of construction disturbances of soils at the site, the artifacts found in association with the bottles within the subfloor storage pit cannot definitively be assigned as expressly related to the bottles for the purposes of defining a spirit bundle of artifacts. However, the types of artifacts recovered in association with the bottles are similar in nature to materials included in spiritual bundles identified in enslaved individuals' subfloor storage pits by other archeological investigations (Haq 2016, Leone and Fry 1999, Manning 2012, Samford 2007, Unger 2009). A coin, bone button blank/backing, eggshell fragments, stones, and other items were recovered within the pit in a context associated with the bottles, and there were other artifacts like a white clay pipe stem and a cork in proximate association as well in somewhat disturbed overlying soils.

The white clay pipe stem with a 5/64" – 6//64" diameter bore size, was especially interesting. J.C. Harrington's (1954) dating method would place this artifact in the 1680-1750 range, minimally over 50 years prior to the earliest occupation of the Arlington plantation circa 1802. What was an artifact of this type doing here? Importation in fill soils for construction purposes from elsewhere offsite is highly unlikely, given availability of close sources of fill. No earlier colonial sites were known to exist in the nearby vicinity. Could this pipe stem have perhaps come from a relic smoking pipe that had traveled to Arlington with enslaved individuals from Mount Vernon inherited by George Washington Parke Custis? Could an heirloom have become an apotropaic artifact that had been maintained within an enslaved family as a magical/religious object? And then placed as an offering a generation removed with other artifacts along with the

bottles whose contents may have been part of a libation ritual? Samford (2000), in her dissertation on subfloor storage pits and West African spiritual rituals in colonial Virginia, presents a West African ritual scenario whereby an enslaved woman assembles offerings for inclusion in a libation ritual to the goddess Idemili. The ritual involves the expectoration of brandy into a subfloor storage pit over an assemblage of artifacts including white clay tobacco pipes, cow bones, and fossil scallop shells and is performed in hopes that her husband, who is living on a neighboring plantation, be allowed to come live with her. Samford (2000) writes:

> *The woman named Ebo knelt in the southeastern comer of the darkened cabin. She had long waited for this moment, but now the time was here. She carefully maneuvered the cork from the mouth of the brandy bottle on the floor beside her…*
>
> *She brought the bottle to her lips, carefully took in a mouthful and held it there a moment before leaning over and spitting the brandy into the rectangular hole she had cut through the earthen floor of the cabin. Although the hole was in shadow, she knew what rested on the slight mound of earth built up on the bottom of the hole. There, in addition to the seven shells representing water and Idemili, the female deity of water, she had arranged the bones of cows - sacred to the Igbo people of her homeland, and the white clay tobacco pipes representing an offering to Idemili. She took another mouth of brandy, leaned over and spit into the hole again. This action she would repeat for six more nights. The seven shells and the seven nights of prayers and offerings were critical, since seven was the number of continuity and cyclical movements of life for her ancestors. After the seven days, she would carefully fill the hole, sealing the shell, pipes, and bones so that no one could disturb these sacred items.* (p xvi).

One cannot but help notice some potential similarities with the subfloor storage pit and artifacts of the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters. A cork was found in proximate location to the bottles and, though appearing too small for any of the bottles, could have been desiccated to the degree that it had shrunk and had actually been a stopper to one of the bottles that may have contained libations. A large lump of clay at the bottom of the pit could have been a platform on which objects were arrayed, similarly to the mound of earth described in Samford's (2000) description of a subfloor pit. An animal bone was located within the most-narrow mouthed of the bottles, perhaps as an offering, and the white clay tobacco pipe stem has been described as a peculiar artifact for the site and may have been part of a spirit bundle.

Other objects of note found in association with the bottles in the pit included a bone button blank/backing (a 7/16" diameter disc with a piercing in the center), a coin, and a black pebble and a white pebble. Of course these artifacts and other domestic debris were found in the pit fill, and the collection of items is unfortunately undiscernible from random backfill or as part of spirit bundle inclusions due to a degree of modern disturbance and inability to detect if artifacts had been purposely arranged. Fesler (2021) argues for establishing a "Criteria of Intentionality" for archeologists positing that the presence of certain artifacts may be a part of a spirit bundle versus random household debris. Artifacts thought to possess spiritual or magical powers must meet certain criteria posed by Fesler regarding artifact type, treatments or alterations, positioning, arrangement, placement, depositional history. The subfloor storage pit feature in the South

Dependency West Room Slave Quarters had been excavated to the northeast of the fireplace hearth and four bottles were arranged side by side in the pit pointing northward, with one bottle containing an animal bone. This evidence in and of itself suggests the use of the pit as a magical/religious shrine. While more analysis is expected on the collections, certain of the artifacts previously discussed (especially as found in contexts with the bottles) do appear to be of a nature that they were inclusions as offerings in a spirit bundle, based on similarities to other archeological findings (Boroughs 2004, Kraus et al 2010, Leone and Fry 1999, Pullin et al 2003, Reeves 2014, Samford 1996, 2000 and 2007, Unger 2009).

The exact date of the subfloor storage pit feature's origin during the occupation of the South Dependency West Room Slave Quarters is unknown. The stratigraphic evidence records it was apparently excavated into Soil Strata 2, 3, 4, and 5 and just into the top of Stratum 6. From that accounting, the pit likely would have been excavated later in the historic period occupancy by enslaved individuals, perhaps post 1840s from indications of artifacts like the Prosser style buttons in surrounding soil matrices that were cut through by the pit. An 1868 Indian Head small One Cent coin was found in the upper layers of the pit associated with the bottles, indicating it could have been still in use then and/or the upper fill in the pit dates to 1868 or thereafter.

The Thornton and Selina Gray family was known to have occupied the 16 x 18-foot west room of the South Dependency, which included an attic loft space, before and through the Civil War and the whole South Dependency thereafter, likely to the late 1860s. It is most plausible that they were responsible for creation of the subfloor storage pit shrine. Ethnographic evidence, in the form of the interviews with the Gray sisters (Syphax & Wilson 1929 and Baker & Thompson 1930), provide additional clues that Thornton and Selina Gray may be the originators of the shrine. The Gray sisters indicated that they recalled the bed of their parents was positioned to the right of the entry door as you came into the west room from the outside (Syphax and Wilson 1929). This places the bed close to the northeast corner of the hearth where the subfloor storage pit was located and would offer it some concealment under the bed, providing some level of additional support that

Figure 53 – Reproduction furnished west room of the South Dependency pictured on early 20th century postcard, view from exterior doorway to room with bed to right of doorway adjacent to hearth (NPS ARHO Collections)

the Grays had been responsible for the subfloor storage pit shrine. More research is required to further ascertain the exact nature of the pit feature as a shrine. Was it a onetime event and sealed immediately (as related for other shrines in the literature), or could it have remained open yet concealed under the bed for repeated ritual offerings?

The Gray family's occupancy of the west room of the South Dependency speaks a bit to their status amongst the enslaved at Arlington. While not spacious, the slave quarters of the South Dependency were far better accommodations in this stone foundation, brick and mortar structure behind the mansion than that of the enslaved field hands in small, rough wood cabins down by the river. Serving the Custis and Lee family households likely gave the Grays access to what little benefits could be derived from a closer relationship with their enslavers. Besides better housing, they may have been able to receive an improved diet, higher level of household goods and clothing, and other day to day lifeway items.

Figure 54 –Rare Civil War era stereogram of Selina Gray and who are believed to be two of her daughters at the South Dependency (NPS ARHO Collections)

Selina Gray was known to have been favored by Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee and became a close personal maid and confidant. Mary arranged for Selina and Thornton to be married in a wedding ceremony attended by an Episcopal clergyman in the mansion's Family Parlor, the same room where Mary had wed Robert E. Lee. Site histories also record that the Custis and Lee ladies of the house provided for religious and educational instruction for some of the enslaved including the Grays and there was a chapel or schoolhouse for the enslaved population southwest of the mansion (Hanna 2001, National Park Service n.d. (d)). Oral histories of Selina and Thornton Gray's daughters Annie and Ada (Baker and Thompson 1930) and Emma and Sarah (Syphax and Wilson 1929) recalled that the Lee daughters Mildred and Annie also taught them A, B, C's and used a little backroom of a bedroom in the mansion as a Sunday school where they received instruction and were taught hymns.

Selina Gray is famously known for her efforts during the Civil War to protect the Custis collection of "Washington Treasury" relics from the estate of George Washington which began being pilfered by Union troops occupying the site. Left in charge of the plantation by Mary Custis Lee when the Lees fled south at the start of the War, Selina initially kept the day to day operations of the plantation going and notified commanding officer General McDowell of the thievery of Washington's items from the house and he arranged for safer storage (Byrne 1998).

If the Grays had been responsible for creating the subfloor storage pit shrine, was this an act seemingly in conflict with their supposed benevolent treatment and favored status, their outward behaviors, and Christian teachings? The action of an enslaved individual in establishing a shrine with magical or religious powers employing "conjuring bottles" placed in a ritualistic manner within their dwelling was an effort to ward off evil and/or promote self-preservation (Samford 2007). While the Grays were possibly among the favored individuals of the enslaved population at Arlington, they were still held in bondage and recorded as property while being forced to labor on the estate and thus would have reason for imploring supernatural assistance. And studies on enslaved peoples' religious practices note that those adopting Christianity often retained elements of African religions, developed African-American supernatural folk magic components, and readily moved between or combined these with little thought of any discordancy (Chireau 1997, 2003, Wilkie 1997). The West African traits of the subfloor storage pit shrine illustrating Bakongo religious elements align with the Grays probable ancestry, having likely descended from earlier enslaved individuals who were from Angola and held in bondage by the Custis family (Walsh 2001).

If the subfloor storage pit and associated shrine objects featuring presumed conjuring bottles are associated with the Gray family, what specific motivations might they have had to create it? The day to day existence of an enslaved family was a tenuous one, and a lot depended on their relationships with their enslavers. The Custis and Lee family histories contain a dichotomy of treatment of the enslaved peoples on the Arlington plantation. First and foremost, it is acknowledged that individuals of African descent were held in slavery at Arlington, which is inhumane on any level of measure. Therefore, it is dangerous to classify different types of treatment of the enslaved as more benevolent and compassionate or more unkind and malevolent. However, it is important to point out the varying levels of treatment by those who were in charge of the enslaved populations.

George Washington Parke Custis has been characterized as more kindly and less demanding of those he owned as enslaved servants, and he and his wife Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis were supporters of the American Colonization Society effort to resettle freed individuals back to Africa through a program of emancipation, purchase and eventually freeing, and providing freed blacks passage to resettle (McCormick 1968). Critics of slavery, Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis and her daughter Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee and later her daughters were known to teach some of those held in servitude at Arlington to read and write and encouraged religious practices, the enslaved Selina Norris and Thornton Gray were allowed to be wed in the mansion, and Selina Gray was left in charge at Arlington and famously entrusted by Mary Custis Lee with the keys to the mansion and the Washington Treasury at the outbreak of the Civil War when the Lees fled south and Union troops occupied the house (Syphax & Wilson 1929, Byrne 1998, Hanna 2001).

While George Washington Parke Custis has been portrayed as more kindly and easy going with the enslaved population, Robert E. Lee was characterized as more severe and "business-like" in managing the plantation and the enslaved after Custis's death. Lee, as his father-in-law's executor, took leave from his Army responsibilities from late 1857 through 1859 in attempts to improve the financial status and physical conditions of Arlington and the other Custis estates and

to settle debts accumulated by Custis (McCormick 1968). In his efforts of taking over operations Lee reportedly had a sterner hand with the enslaved population by turning those "used to light toil into efficient operatives" (Ibid: 6). Lee saw fit to hire out certain enslaved individuals to outside plantations for capital gains and to shift other of the enslaved amongst the Custis estates for better productivity, often separating families in the process (National Park Service Museum Management Program(c) & (d), Paquette 2020). The American Civil War Museum notes in a web article that

Following the death of his father-in-law, George Washington Parke Custis, in 1857, Lee assumed command of 189 enslaved people, working the estates of Arlington, White House, and Romancoke. Custis' will stipulated that the enslaved people that the Lee family inherited be freed within five years.

Lee, as executor of Custis' will and supervisor of Custis' estates, drove his new-found labor force hard to lift those estates from debt. Concerned that the endeavor might take longer than the five years stipulated, Lee petitioned state courts to extend his control of enslaved people.

The Custis bondspeople, aware of their former owner's intent, resisted Lee's efforts to enforce stricter work discipline. Resentment resulted in escape attempts. In 1859 Wesley Norris, his sister Mary, and their cousin, George Parks, escaped to Maryland where they were captured and returned to Arlington. (The American Civil War Museum n.d.)

Lee reportedly then had the individuals whipped as punishment for their escape attempt and they were sent away from Arlington to continue their servitude (The American Civil War Museum n.d., Burriss n.d.). This purported act is clearly in opposition to any acts of kindness that the enslaved may have received from their masters. The harsh realities of slavery were ever present in the daily lives of those held in bondage on the Arlington plantation, whether tempered by any compassionate treatments.

It is from the circumstances surrounding the death of George Washington Parke Custis in 1857 and Robert E. Lee's subsequent management of the plantation that there is perhaps a motivation for Selina and Thornton Gray to have created the religious/magical shrine. In his will Custis made a declaration of sorts of his intent to free individuals he held in bondage no later than five years after his passing by which time the financial standing of his plantations would be improved so that his bequeathed legacies could be paid (Custis will in Decker and McSween 1892, Paquette 2020); a condition subject to legal interpretation and that was largely unknown by the enslaved at Arlington who expected they would be manumitted upon his death (National Park Service Arlington House 2013, National Park Service – Museum Management Program (d), Paquette 2020). This belief was a hopeful promise of freedom seemingly being extinguished by Robert E. Lee's contradiction of their understanding and his subsequent drive to restore the family estate holdings to prosperity. This likely was a crushing blow to any thought of liberty by the enslaved at Arlington and would be reason alone to implore supernatural intervention through creation of a ritualistic shrine. However, the escape incident that would take place a few years later may have been even more motivation.

The aftermath of Custis's passing and Lee's taking over management of the estate resulted in attempts by a number of the enslaved to forcibly gain their freedom through self-manumission from bondage at Arlington (National Park Service Arlington House 2013, Paquette 2020). In 1859 three individuals who attempted escape, Wesley Norris, his sister Mary Norris, and their cousin George Parks, were direct kin relatives of Selina Norris Gray, who was sister to Wesley and Mary (all were children of Leonard and Sally Norris) and cousin to George (Arlington House Foundation n.d., HistoryNet LLC n.d.(b), National Park Service Arlington House 2013, Sweig 1982). Could the subfloor storage pit shrine in the Gray's residence have been a ritual offering for the safety of the relatives seeking liberty? The main features of the religious/magical shrine, the four "conjuring bottles" pointing northward, toward freedom, may represent the three escapees (three empty bottles) with the fourth bottle containing an animal bone as an offering for a spirit guide or guardian. The timing of Custis's passing in 1857 and the 1859 escape attempt fit well with a late 1850s to early 1860s date of supposition for the creation of the subfloor storage pit feature based on archeological evidence.

Another circumstance that may have served as an impetus for the Grays in creating the subfloor storage pit shrine is presented in correspondence from Robert E. Lee in late 1860 to his son George Washington Custis Lee, who was actively helping to manage the Arlington plantation with his father. The elder Lee had assumed the main responsibility for administering operations and was attempting to bring the estate back to prosperity through any means possible, which included hiring out of enslaved individuals to other plantations to raise capital. Lee's December 5, 1860 letter to his son suggests the possibility of hiring out two of Selina and Thornton Gray's children, Harry and Sarah, and another individual Amanda Parks (cited in National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center 2016). This practice separated families and would be a traumatic emotional experience for the Grays if the intention were known and might have been a stimulus for creation of the religious/magical shrine. The three individuals under consideration for hiring out may be represented by the three empty bottles of the shrine while the fourth bottle containing an animal bone was to serve as an offering to a supernatural entity. A late 1850s to early 1860s date of supposition for the creation of the subfloor storage pit feature would coincide with the timing of the proposed hiring out of the individuals.

If not a reaction to their freedom being denied by Lee's interpretation of Custis's will and the subsequent escape attempts, or the possibility of their children being hired out, maybe Selina and Thornton Gray and family were moved to create the religious/magical shrine even later from events associated with the outbreak of the Civil War and uncertainty of its outcome. Robert E. Lee's resignation from the Union Army and departure from Arlington in April 1861 was followed by his wife Mary Custis Lee's decision to abandon her lifelong home the following month. Mary entrusted Selina Gray with the mansion keys and had expectations that Selina would continue the plantation operations and safeguard the house and protect her late father's prize possessions from George Washington. The arrival of Union troops on May 24, 1861 to occupy the Arlington estate and take over the lands, the pilfering of relics from the Washington Treasury, and the unknown prospects of the War's ending may have caused consternation and worry about the Grays' future in a world turned upside down where their potential freedom and

subsequent social and civil rights might not be a given of simple reckoning. This later period during the Civil War for the origins of the shrine would also be plausible.

The oppressive conditions of slavery and the enslaved populations' manner of coping, resisting, or taking some control over their situation may have taken many forms, from subtle work slow-downs and "broken" tools to feigned illnesses to thefts of materials or supplies to brazen escape attempts or revolts (Mount Vernon.Org n.d.(d)). It is also believed to have been expressed by many through ritualistic/magical acts that manifest themselves in the archeological record as subfloor storage pits containing certain objects that created a shrine-like feature which would help to protect them and promote self-preservation (Leone and Fry 1999, Samford 1996, 2007, Unger 2009). Whatever the reasoning, it appears that the enslaved Thornton and Selina Gray family created a subfloor storage pit to the northeast of the fireplace hearth in their quarters in the west room of the South Dependency for use as a magical or religious shrine, quite possibly sometime in the period following Custis' death in 1857 through the Civil War years. The pit contained a "spirit bundle" with four north-facing "conjuring bottles" and other artifacts; demonstrating West African and African-American religious and folk magic ritualistic practices (Haq 2016, Kraus etal 2010, Leone 1999, Samford 2007, Unger 2009). The placement to the shrine to the northeast of the hearth may have ties to the Bakongo Cosmogram northeast quadrant corresponding to birth and life, with the four north-facing bottles pointing toward freedom. The feature's purpose was conceivably to take control of the threatening environment and times the Grays found themselves in and serve as an act of resistance to the harsh and de-humanizing realities of slavery while providing for a more secured future when they could perhaps foresee their and others' complete manumission and rebirth into freedom.

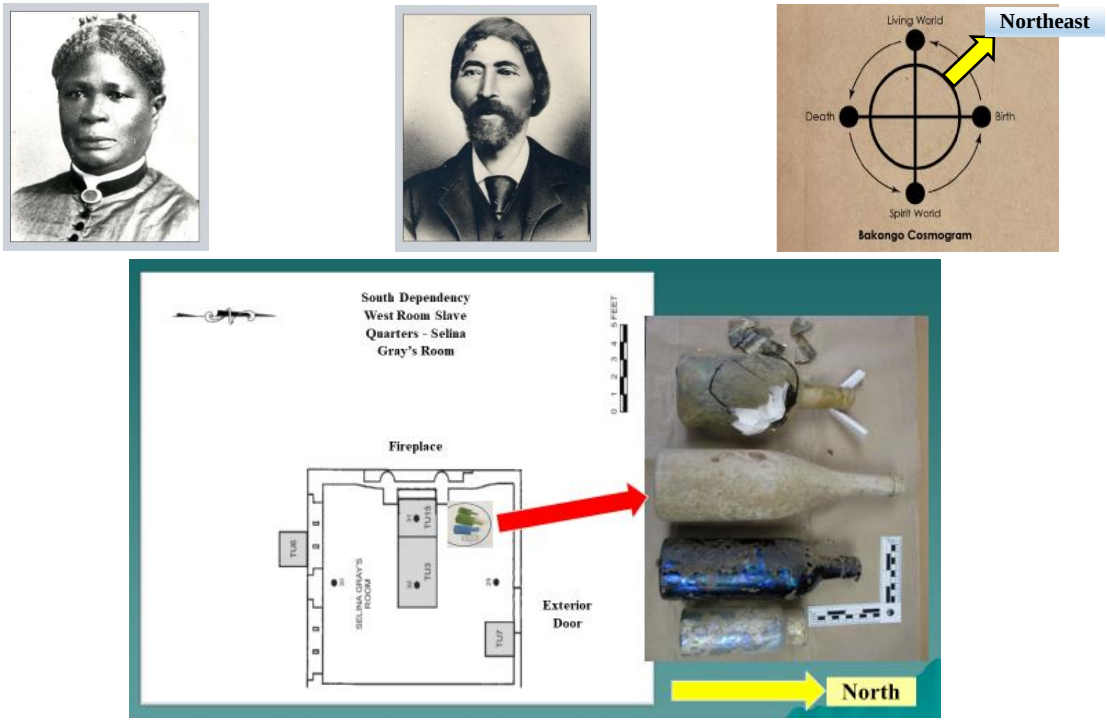


Figure 55 – Selina & Thornton Gray, the Bakongo Cosmogram, Four Northward Pointing Bottles Recovered from a Subfloor Storage Pit Religious/Magical Shrine Northeast of the Fireplace Hearth (NPS Museum Mgmt Prgm Exhibit, Stottman and Stahlgren 2017, NPS GWMP Collections adapted from Berger 2005)

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