ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT GUNSTON HALL PLANTATION (44FX113)

Report of 2008 Activities

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The program is indeed fortunate in that it is assisted by a corps of accomplished volunteers. Those providing assistance during 2008 were: Carol Boland, Janice Brose, Charles Carbone, Katie Carbone, Denver Davis, Art Eaton, Jerry Foster, M.J. Grabulis, Gloria Hamley, Susan Hardenburgh, Susan Marquis, Wendy Miervaldis, Ann Oliver, Kaley Phelps, Karl van Newkirk, and Gretchen Wendelin.

Since its founding in 1997, the Gunston Hall archaeology program has maintained a close relationship with the Fairfax County Park Authority's Heritage Resources Division. During 2008, this relationship was formalized, with Dr. Elizabeth Crowell officially becoming an advisor to the program. In addition to meeting with us on a regular basis, both Dr. Crowell and her colleague, Mike Johnson, have always willingly made themselves available to provide advice and assistance whenever requested.

INTRODUCTION

The current archaeology program at Gunston Hall was established by Dr. Andrew Veech in June of 1997. This followed a ninety day preliminary project completed by Dr. Veech and the present writer the preceding year. The initial intent of the program was to uncover evidence that would permit a more accurate representation be made of the garden on the riverfront side of the mansion. Although the project to reconstruct the garden was later put on indefinite hold, the focus of the archaeology program remained almost exclusively on the riverfront side until the past several years when several investigations were undertaken on the landfront side of the mansion. It is expected that all excavation work done during the 2009 field season will be done on the landfront (Shonyo 2008b)

In fact, it had been intended to work exclusively on the landfront during the 2008 field season. As it turned out, no excavation work was done during the year pending the re-issuance of an excavation permit by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. However, several tasks preliminary to excavation were completed, as described below in the sections on the Gunston Colored School and the cherry tree avenue.

The pause in excavation work also provided an opportunity to catch-up on some maintenance of the artifact collection and records which had fallen somewhat in arrears after the reduction of the archaeology staff from three to one individual. It was also possible to bring all artifact processing and data entry up to date.

During this period, artifact data which had been maintained on the Re:discovery program was converted for use on Microsoft Access. This was done at recommendation of several former users of the Re:discovery archaeology module. The main problem with the latter program was the near impossibility of effectively retrieving data. It also has a rather complicated user interface, and lacks transparency to the data tables. With Access, it was possible to set up a data entry form which can be quickly learned and is easy to use by volunteers. Further, data retrieval is fast and effective.

Artifacts have been curated in an area above the laboratory, which is essentially an attic with built-in shelving but without any sort of climate control. This was obviously not a suitable place to store an archaeological collection. Initially, arrangements were made to relocate the materials to the Fairfax County Park Authority curation facility, and a number of boxes of artifacts were moved there.

However, the Gunston Hall artifact collection is a working collection. For example, when the museum curator is interested in acquiring a particular antique, she checks with the archaeology department to find out if anything similar has been found. A search is made of the database, and any potentially relevant artifacts are retrieved from the collection for examination. Having the collection off-site would make this process extremely awkward.

Late in the year, it came to my attention that there was space at Gunston Hall that would meet the applicable Federal standard for environmental control, security and safety. This was an area which had been used to house the Gunston Hall library before it was moved to the new Ann Mason Building. After the move, the space had been co-opted by the administrative and education departments as a general storage area. The only repair required was the replacement of the pump used to remove dehumidifier condensate. By the end of the year, the area had been cleared of stored items, cleaned and made ready to receive the artifact collection.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gunston Colored School

In 1882, Edward and Flora Daniels, then the owners of Gunston Hall Plantation, deeded one acre of plantation land to the Mount Vernon School District to serve as the site of a school that would serve the African American community on Mason Neck (Daniels 1867-1890). The site was located along the entrance road to Gunston Hall, approximately a half mile from the mansion (Fig's. 1 and 2). The school came to be known, at least informally, as the Gunston Colored School (Fig. 3). It provided a basic formal education for children aged five through seventeen for a period of 50 years, finally closing in 1932 (Elsey 1997: 98, 100). In 1954, ownership of the one-acre lot was returned to Gunston Hall. The school building had stood vacant in the intervening years. Late in 1954 it was dismantled, and the materials removed by a salvager.

In 2007, Gunston Hall organized the "Seeds of Independence" program, which serves as a focal point for individuals interested in researching and publicizing the history of the African American residents of Mason Neck. It has become clear that along with the Shiloh Baptist Church, the Gunston Colored School had been a center of cohesiveness for that community. One of the projects of the program was the production of video oral history by the only known surviving student of the Colored School, centenarian Gladys Bushrod (Zeavin 2008). It was also thought appropriate to memorialize the school by exposing at least part of the building's foundation.

The site of the school is in a now completely wooded and seldom visited area near the northwestern corner of the plantation. The only hint that there may have been a structure there is a slight scatter of brick bats and window glass sherds among the undergrowth. The lone feature of obvious archaeological and historical interest is the sunken trace of the original Gunston Hall entrance road (Fig. 2). This road, which is over six feet below

Figure 1. The spatial relationship the Gunston Colored School (1) and the Gunston Hall mansion (2) is shown in this detail from an aerial photo made in April 1937 by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

the surrounding surface in places, was built by George Mason and served until the entrance drive was re-routed shortly after the school closed.

It should be mentioned that a Gunston Colored School site was registered with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), and assigned site number 44FX2862. However, the registration papers located the site on the property of the adjacent Pohick Bay Regional Park. The registration was done by a volunteer with the Fairfax County Park Authority archaeology program as part of her ASV/COVA/DHR archaeology technician certification requirements. It is not clear whether the volunteer found a site on park property and assumed that it was the Colored School, or found the actual school site

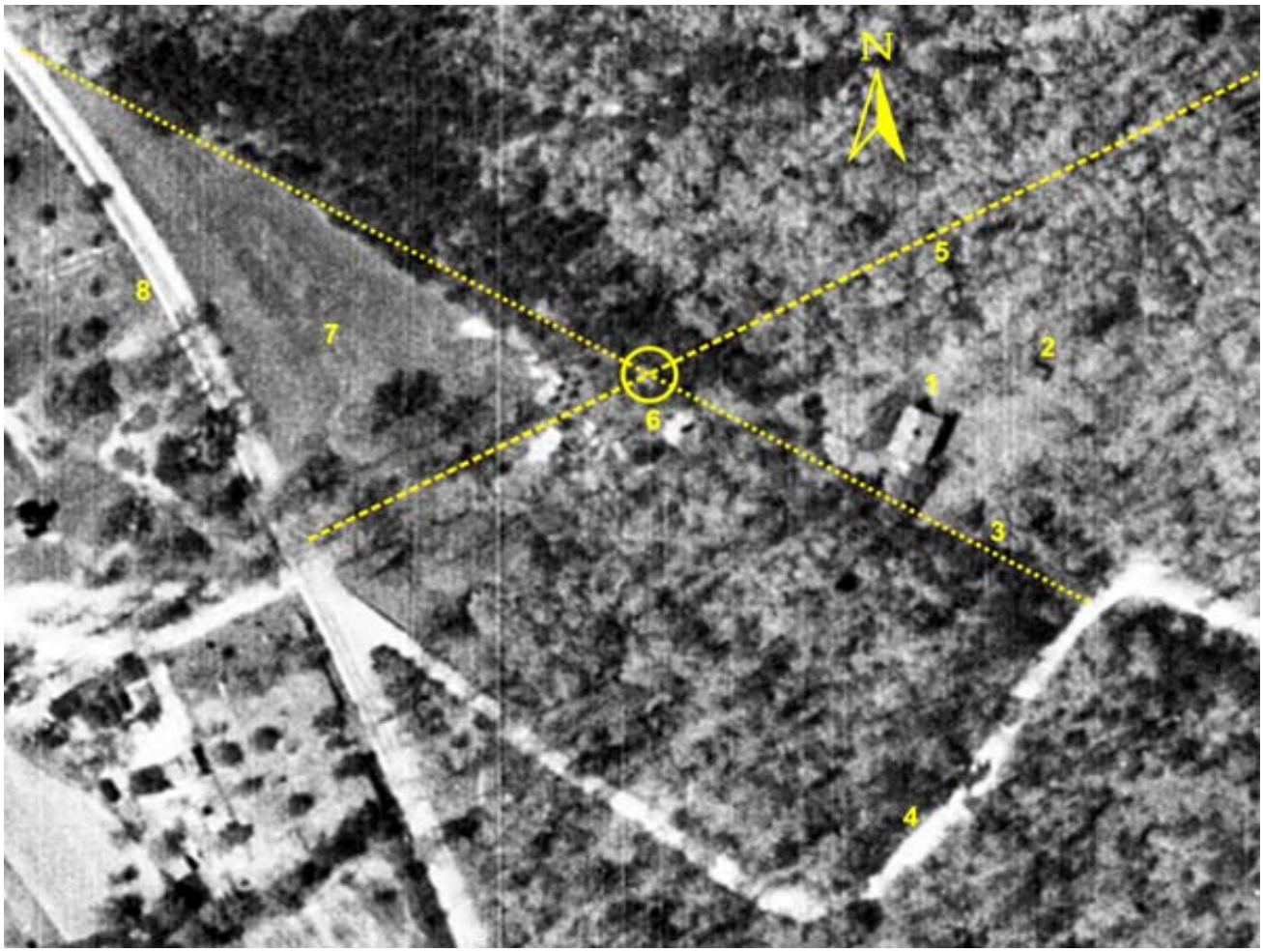

Figure 2. A further enlargement of the 1937 aerial photo shown in Fig. 1. Numbered features are: **1**. Gunston Colored School building. **2**. Outbuilding associated with the school. **3**. Trace of original entry road to Gunston Hall, which was still in use at the time the school was closed. **4**. Present entry road. **5**. Boundary between Gunston Hall Plantation and Pohick Bay Regional Park. In the 18th Century, this was the boundary between Gunston Hall and Springfield Plantation. **6**. Possible location of "red gate." **7**. Shiloh Cemetery. **8**. Gunston Road.

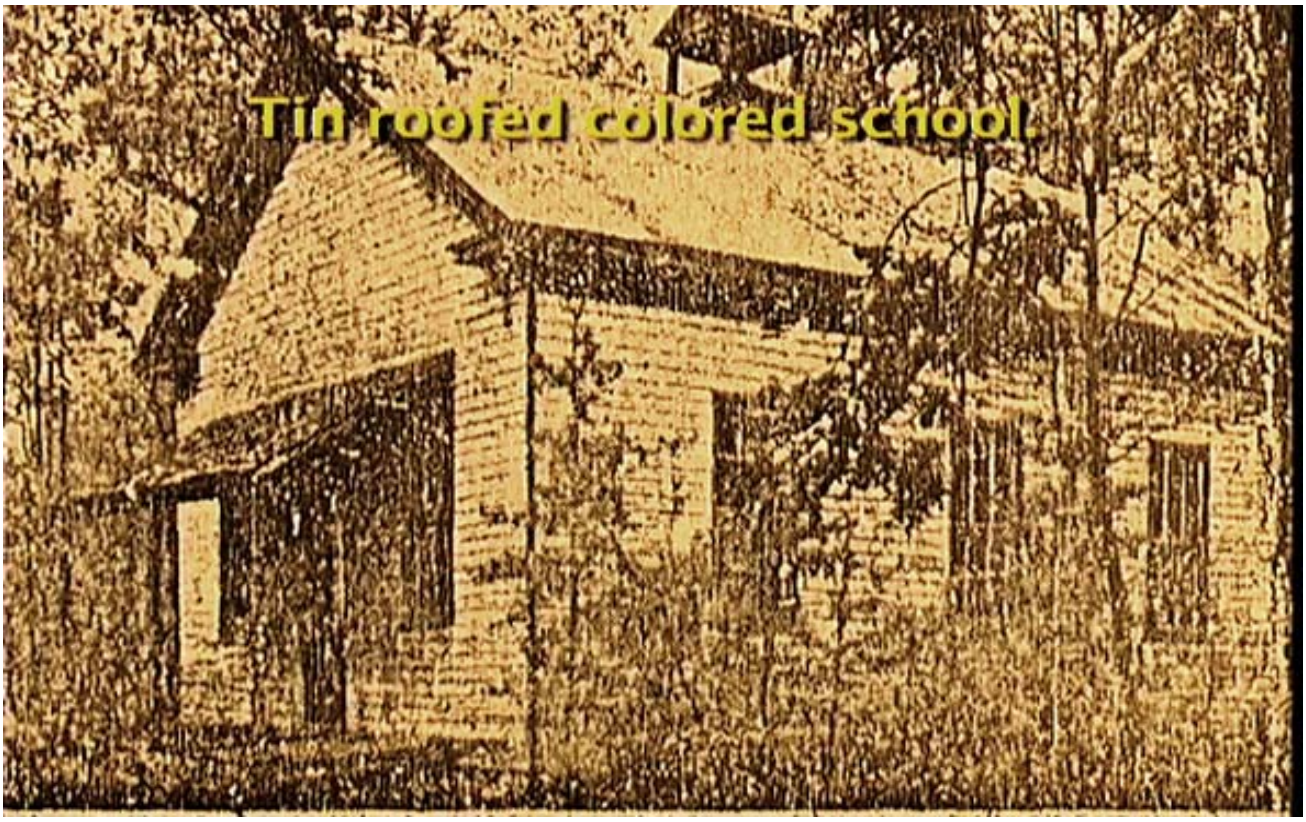

Figure 3. The Gunston Colored School building. This undated photo was taken sometime after the school was abandoned in 1932. (Screen capture from Zeavin 2008.)

and assumed that it was on park property. In any case, site number 44FX2862 is being used provisionally until the matter can be resolved.

The site of the school structure was relocated using a soil probe. The 25’ x 32’ foundation seems to be complete, with the top ranging from about 0.6’ to 0.9’ below the soil surface. Undergrowth and other obstructions were cleared from the area. A datum point was established and a site grid surveyed in.

In is not intended to do a full archaeological study of the site – at least not in the near term. The foundation will exposed to only about three inches below its upper surface. Nevertheless, good archaeological practice will be employed with respect to site controls, data collection and artifact collection. During the 2009 field season, it is planned to expose only the four corners of the foundation. This, together with the shallow excavation, should give visitors a good idea of the size and location of the school

building while limiting the chance of damage to the feature. Further excavations may be carried out during subsequent field seasons.

The Colored School investigation lies outside the scope of the objectives of the Gunston Hall archaeology program. However, there may be a feature near the School site which would have a bearing on the goal of piecing together the "built" landscape as it existed in the time of George Mason IV. This was the plantation entrance gate, referred to as the "red gate" by the 19th Century Mason biographer and descendant, Kate Mason Rowland (Rowland 1892: 106). George Mason's son, John ,wrote that his father had erected a fence "made of uncommon height" along the property line between Gunston Hall Plantation and Martin Cockburn's Springfield Plantation (Dunn 2004: 77). This fence would have crossed the 18th entry road near the school site (Fig. 2, feature 6). There would almost certainly have been a gate at this point. (It should be noted, however, that Rowland (*ibid*) said that the red gate was located where the entry road met the public road. That would have somewhat to the northwest, on Springfield property.)

During the 2009 season, several excavation units will be opened in the area where the entry road and property line cross (see Shonyo 2008b: 9-10). If post holes are found, additional work will be done in the area to attempt to determine the line of Mason's boundary fence. In view of the impracticality extending the Gunston Hall site grid this far from the historic core, the grid based on the datum point established for the Colored School site will be used.

Cherry Tree Avenue

One of the most intriguing elements of George Mason's landscape design is the avenue formed by four rows of trees which flanked a portion of the Gunston Hall entry road. This feature provides a striking example of the use perspective and visual illusion in 18th Century landscaping.

John Mason, in his *Recollections*, described the avenue in greater detail than any other landscape element on the plantation: "On the north front [of the mansion], by which was

the principle approach, was an extensive lawn kept closely pastured, thro' the midst of which led a spacious avenue girded by long, double ranges, symmetrical rows of that hardy & stately cherry tree, the common black-heart, raised from the stone & so the more fair & uniform in their growth, commencing at about 200 feet from the house and extending thence for about 1200 feet, the carriage way being in the center & the foot ways on either side between the two rows forming each double range of trees… A common center was established, exactly in the middle of the outer door way of the mansion on that front, from which were made to diverge at a certain angle, the four lines on which the trees were planted" (Dunn 2004: 74.)

The arrangement described is known as a "goose's foot." The trees are aligned on lines that converge on a single point, in this case located on the center of the mansion door (Fig. 4). This kind of placement of trees or hedges originated in the great formal landscapes of France. No other goose's foot avenue involving trees is known from colonial America. This placement of trees created several interesting visual effects, two of which are described by John Mason: "But what was most remarkable and most imposing in this avenue was that the four rows of trees being so aligned as to counteract that deception in our vision, which, in looking down long parallel lines, makes them seem to approach [each other] as they recede." (*Ibid.*) In other words, the lines of trees are placed at just such an angle that they counteract the effect of optical perspective, and do not appear to converge on a vanishing point. Rather, they appear parallel to each other.

The second visual effect was described by John Mason in some detail: "The plantation not commencing but at a considerable distance [from the mansion] (about 200 feet as before mentioned) and so carefully and accurately had they been planted & trained and dressed in accordance, each with the others as they progressed in their growth, that from the point described as taken for the common center – and when they had gotten to a great size – only the first four trees were visible. More than once I have known my father, under whose especial care the singular and beautiful display of trees had been arraigned and preserved, and who set great value on them, amuse his friends by inviting some gentleman or lady (who visiting Gunston for the first time… may have not seen the avenue) to the north front to see the grounds. And then by placing them exactly in the middle of the doorway and asking, 'How many trees do you see before you?' 'Four,'

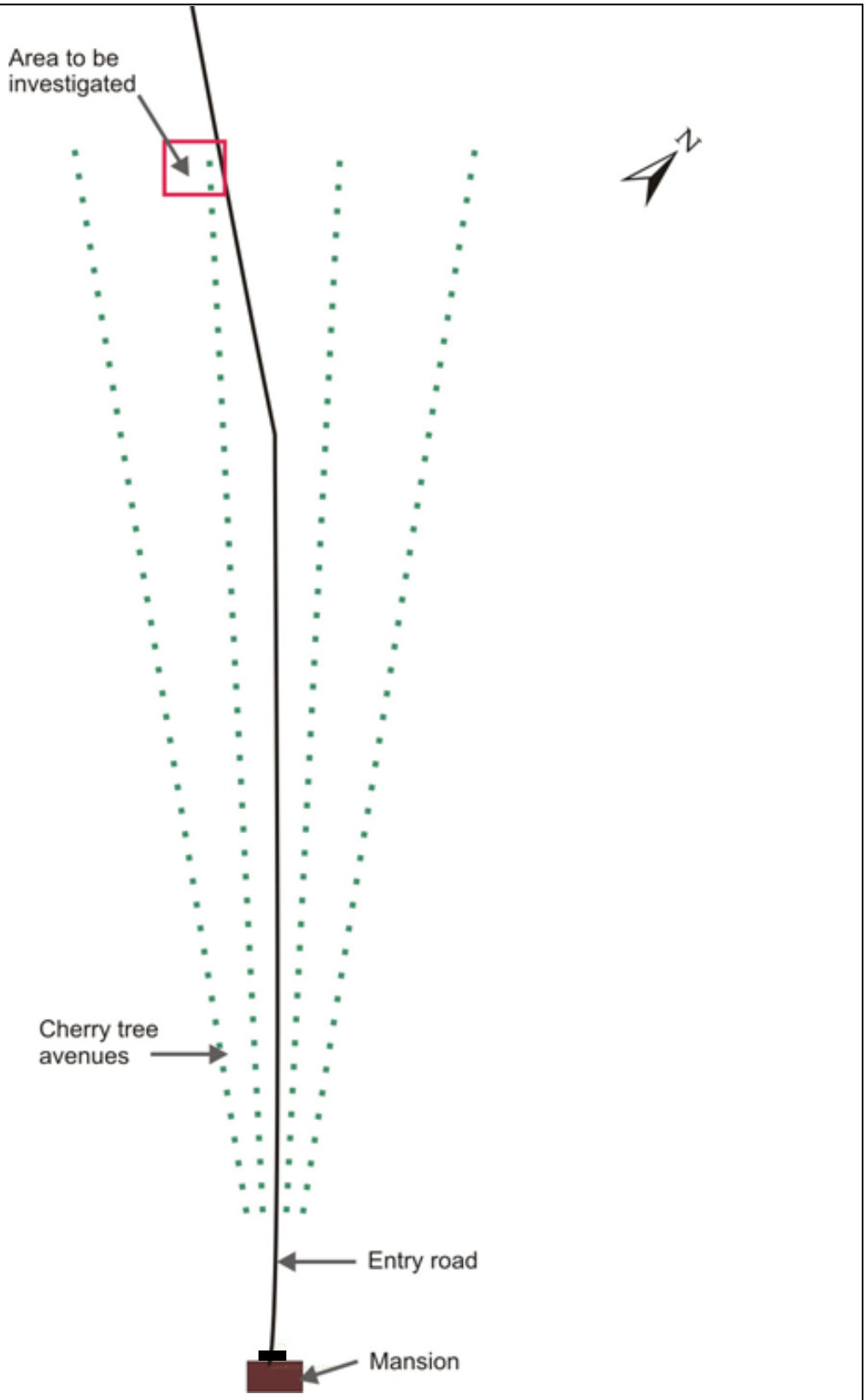

Figure 4. A diagrammatic representation of a possible alignment of rows of cherry trees on the landfront side of the Gunston Hall mansion.

would necessarily be the answer, because, the fact was, that those at the end of the four rows next [to] the house, completely – and especially when in full leaf – concealed from that view, body & top, all the others, tho' more than fifty in each row. Then came the request, 'Be good enough to place yourself now close to either side of the door way & then tell us how many you see.' The answer would now be with delight and surprise, but as necessarily, 'A great number, and to a vast extent, but how many it is impossible to say!' And in truth, to the eye placed only about two feet to the right or left of the first position, there were presented, as if by magic, four long and apparently close walls of wood, made up of the bodies of the trees, and above as many of rich foliage constituted by their boughs stretching as seemed to an immeasurable distance." (Dunn 2004: 74-75.)

There are descriptions of a number of past attempts to determine the exact arrangement of these rows of trees. For example, Louis Hertle, the last private owner of Gunston Hall, describes Prof. Sargent of Arnold Arboretum and architect Glenn Brown attempting to simulate the positions of the trees by laying out rows of books (Hertle 1934: Sec. 1914/4). They were not successful. In fact, there is no recorded instance of anyone achieving a configuration that meets all of the requirements of John Mason's description. Those requirements are as follows:

1. The rows start about 200 feet from the front of the mansion, they are each about 1,200 feet long and there are about 50 trees in each row.

2. The "four trees" illusion is apparent from the center of the mansion doorway, but not from a slight distance from this point.

3. The rows are at such an angle with respect to each other and the road that, when viewed from the mansion side, they seem to be parallel to each other, and not converge on a vanishing point.

4. Even though the rows of trees splay outward as they progress away from the mansion, they must terminate near the road. The "foot ways" running between two double rows would quite likely be convenient to the road at the far ends of the rows to enable, for example, persons arriving at Gunston Hall to dismount their carriage and stroll the

remaining distance between the trees. In addition, Rowland (1892: 106) tells us that in George Mason's time, the avenue of trees ended at the "white gate," again implying that the rows of trees terminated close to the road.

It was decided to attempt to establish the probable location of the rows of cherry trees. This was done both to help more fully understand Mason's landscape design and to form a basis for the possible eventual re-creation of the avenue.

John Mason gives some of the information needed to determine the configuration of this landscape feature: The four rows of trees started about 200 feet from the landfront side of the mansion, each row was about 1,200 feet long and there were about 50 trees in each row. A critical piece of missing information is the distance between each of the first trees in each row. If the rows were exactly 1,200 feet long, and there were exactly fifty trees in each row, then the trees in the rows would be 24 feet from each other. Therefore, the first trees in each of the two inner rows were also assumed to be 24 feet apart (Fig. 5). The trees in each of the two outer rows were presumed to be 24 feet from the centerline of the entry drive, which itself was 12 feet wide. This would place the first two trees in each double row 12 feet apart.

A standard transit was placed on the presumed location of the first trees of each of the four rows, and sighted to the center of the mansion door. The transit telescope was then turned 180° and a 1,200 foot transect was shot from each position. Pin flags were placed at fifty-foot intervals along each transect to simulate the positions of the individual trees.

The resultant configuration meets all of the conditions of John Mason's description. Since the lines of sight of the four rows converge on the center of the door, a person viewing from this position would indeed see only the first tree in each row (assuming that the branches were pruned in the appropriate way and the girth of the first trees were at least as great as the further trees). Moving a few feet one way or the other would reveal the apparent "walls of wood" mentioned by John Mason.

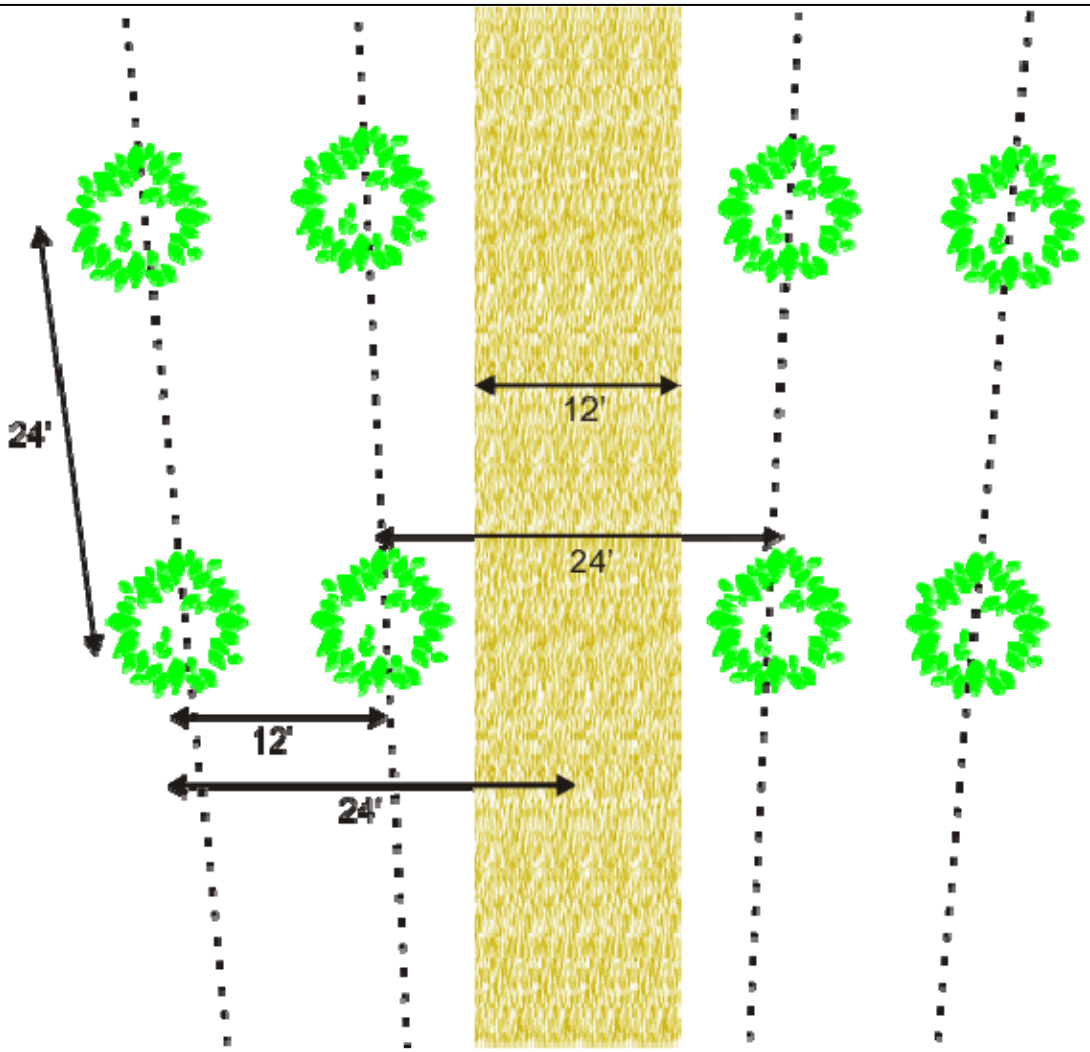

Figure 5. Configuration of the first trees on the mansion end of the cherry tree avenue. The bottom row is 200 feet from the side of the mansion. The dotted lines converge on the center of the mansion door. A segment of the entry road is in the center of the diagram.

Normal optical perspective is also contradicted by the configuration when viewed from the mansion side. The lines of trees in each double row appear to be parallel to each other, even though they are diverging from each other. Also, the rows immediately flanking the entry road appear to parallel the edge of the road, even though they are angling away from the axis of the road.

At about 900 feet from the mansion, the road crests a small rise and drops from view. Just beyond this point, it angles slightly to the left (Figures 1, 4). This shift in direction is not

visible from the mansion side and is barely perceptible when traversing it. (There are a number of reasons to believe that the road followed the same course in Mason's time.) As a result of this shift, the western-most of the double rows terminates very close to the edge of the road. In fact, the fiftieth pin flag, marking the end of the inner 1,200 foot row, was located only a few feet from the edge of the road (Figure 4). This is consistent with the idea that persons arriving at the plantation had the option of proceeding to the mansion via a convenient footway between the rows of trees. It is also consistent with the statement that the trees ended at a white gate on the entry road.

When viewed facing toward the mansion, the angle of convergence of the rows of trees is exaggerated. The resultant illusion is something like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. The mansion appears further away than it actually is, and thus the property itself seems larger. However, the mansion could not be seen by persons arriving by the entry road until they crested the aforementioned rise. Even then, the trees would frame the portico. The rest of the mansion would be masked until the arrivals passed the trees closest to the house.

The area near where the rows of trees approach the road may be of importance in understanding George Mason's landscape. This will be the first area to be investigated during the 2009 season. John Mason commented that: "The north west side of the lawn or enclosed ground was skirted by a wood, just far enough within which, to be out of sight, was a little village called Log Town…. Here lived several families of slaves serving about the mansion house." (Dunn 2004: 77.) The "enclosed ground" may well have been the mansion's curtilage, and it was probably bounded by a fence (or, less likely, a hedge). Further, this fence may well have been attached to the "white gate."

A series of excavations will be undertaken starting in the area indicated by the red rectangle in Figure 4 in an effort to locate 1) root molds of the cherry trees, 2) the foot path that ran between the double row of trees, 3) a post hole/mold from the white gate, and 4) post holes/molds associated with the fence. If there was a fence here it would most likely trend first in a southwesterly direction, then eventually turn 90 degrees to run southeasterly. Assuming that this fence bounded the "enclosed ground," the Log Town

quarter would be a short distance from the later leg of the fence. Finding the fence location would give a fixed point from which to begin searching for Log Town.

Terrace Deposit

During the 2007 field season, a series of units was excavated on the terrace which drops away from the south end of the one acre garden (Figure 6). The objective was to attempt to further understand the configuration of the terrace structure at it appeared during George Mason's time. A description of the work and a preliminary interpretation are given in the Annual Report for 2007 (Shonyo 2008a: 12-20).

There is evidence that the broad terrace step on which the excavations took place was created in the late 19th Century (*ibid*). At the time that the terrace was modified, or a reasonably short time thereafter, an approximately 1.5 foot thick layer of soil was laid, presumably to form a garden bed. The upper portion of this deposit had been disturbed by gardening activities and contained a mix of 18th through 20th Century artifacts. However, all of the dateable artifacts found in the lower, undisturbed part of the deposit were items which could have been present during George Mason's time. That this soil mass and its included artifacts constituted a secondary deposit was made incontrovertibly clear by the fact that it rested directly upon a pebble and crushed shell surface (Figures 7, 8). The artifacts found in contact with and within the surface were typical of a late 19th Century assemblage, and the surface was similar in composition to 19th Century walkways found elsewhere on the plantation.

A preliminary examination has now been made of the artifacts recovered from the undisturbed strata of the terrace excavations.[*] The artifact mix was essentially similar in all of the excavation units, so it is treated here as a single assemblage. The artifacts are of particular interest both because they represent items which could have been here during Mason's time and because the assemblage does not resemble any other yet seen on the plantation.

[*] Specifically, the artifacts came from stratum 3 (see Figure 8) of excavation units 2-07, 4-07, 5-07, 7-07, 8-07, 9-07 and 13-07. The strata are "undisturbed" in the sense that they appear not to have been disturbed by gardening activities since being deposited on the terrace.

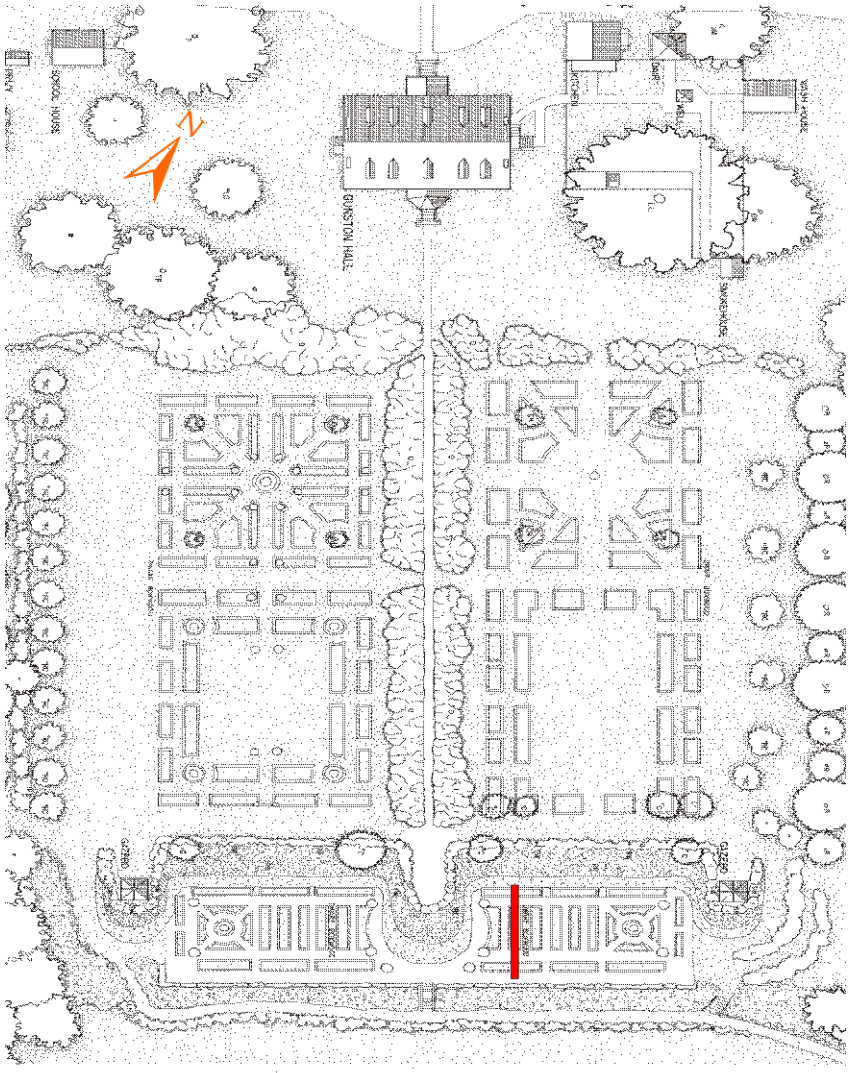

Figure 6. The terrace excavation area, indicated by the red rectangle near the bottom of the drawing, shown relation to the mansion and one-acre garden. (The base map is a detail from a 1981 drawing made for the Historic American Building Survey. The planting beds are from the mid-20th Century colonial revival garden, and no longer exist.)

Some of the characteristics of the assemblage that contribute to its uniqueness are:

1.) The more frangible artifacts (ceramics, glass, bone) are generally broken into unusually small pieces. One gets the impression that that the material was originally deposited on a surface that received a considerable amount of foot traffic.

2.) There is a relatively high percentage of faunal materials (Figure 9). Aside from being broken into small pieces, the bone is in a better state of preservation than that seen elsewhere on the plantation

3.) This is the first place on the plantation that fish remains have been recorded (except for a few gar scales). This relative abundance may reflect favorable conditions for preservation, or the special nature of activities taking place at the original site of deposition.

Figure 7. Part of EU 5-07, looking south. EU's 7-07 and 8-07 are similar. The floor is the cobble/pebble/sand mix which forms the natural "fabric" of the terrace structure. Resting directly on this floor was a man-made surface of pebbles mixed with crushed shell. (Some of the shell can be seen flecking the floor.) None of the artifacts in the deposit are earlier than the 19th Century. This surface is visible as a dark band at the base of the sidewalls. Overlying this is a fine sandy loam fill containing artifacts indicating that it was removed to this location from an 18th or early 19th Century deposit. The upper approx. 0.80' of the fill has been disturbed by gardening activities, and contains of 18th through 20th Century artifacts. (From Shonyo 2008: 15)

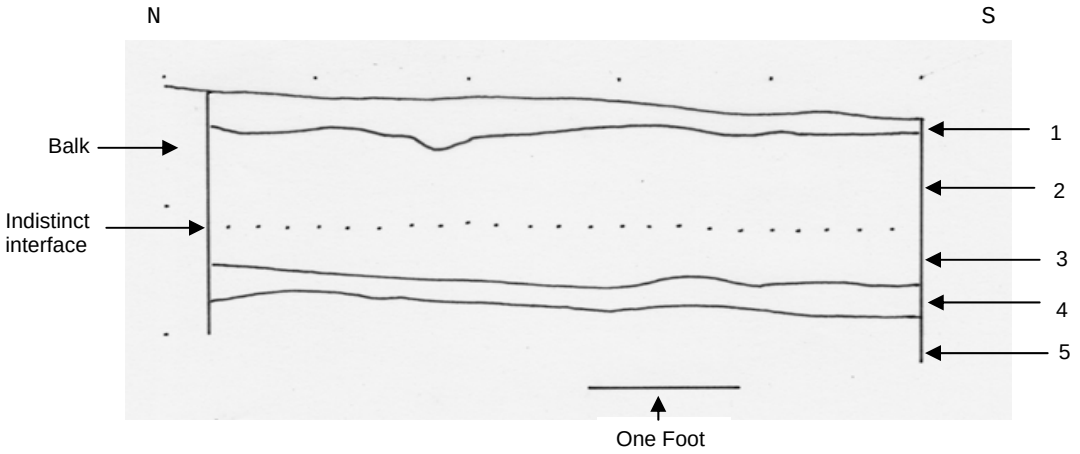

Figure 7. Drawing of the east sidewall of EU 7-07. Strata are: 1 – Top soil (10YR 4/3 brown humic silty loam); 2 – Planting zone (10YR 5/4 yellowish brown fine sandy loam with various mottles; 3 – Undisturbed fill (10YR 5/4 fine sandy loam); 4 – 19th Century pebble and crushed shell surface; 5 – Subsoil (closely packed cobbles and pebbles in sand matrix). (Based on a measured field drawing. From Shonyo 2008: 16.)

4.) Ferrous materials exhibited an unusually high degree of corrosion. There were many small, unidentifiable ferrous pieces.

5.) All of the olive bottle glass was uniformly covered with a brownish patina of a kind not seen elsewhere on the plantation (Fig. 9).

A listing of the general categories of materials recovered from the undisturbed stratum 3 is given on page 21 and 22. The only uncontaminated 18th Century deposit previously excavated at Gunston Hall, referred to as the "landing road deposit," could be dated to within the period 1770 to the mid-1780's. The terrace deposit is somewhat later. Whereas there was no pearlware in the landing road deposit, this ceramic type is present in the terrace deposit. The initial manufacturing date for pearlware is 1779 (Miller et al. 2000: 12). There is no evidence that Mason imported pearlware during the war years, so the first ceramics of this type probably did not arrive on the plantation until at least the mid-1780's. Therefore, the *terminus post quem* of the terrace deposit is considered to be the mid-1780's, just as this serves as the *terminus ante quem* of the pearlware-free landing road deposit. The terrace deposit assemblage did not include any whiteware or other ceramic types which originated in the19th Century. Since

whiteware is considered not to have arrived in America before about 1820 (*ibid*: 13), that year is considered the *terminus ante quem* date.

Also consistent with the assignment of the terrace deposit a latter date that the landing road deposit is that the terrace deposit contained coal burning refuse (coal bits, cinder, slag), while the latter did not. The only other artifacts that were diagnostic by visual inspection were the nails. Although the majority of nails were corroded beyond recognition, those that could be identified were all wrought. It is always risky to use nails as a dating tool, since it is very

Figure 8. Example of faunal materials recovered from screening approximately four cubic feet of soil through quarter-inch hardware cloth. (Excavation Unit 8-07 stratum 3 level 1.) The artifacts shown are: Top row, left to right – oyster shell, gar scales, fish vertebra; middle row – mammalian bone fragments in the center, flanked by burned bone of the left and calcined bone on the right; bottom row – mammalian teeth.

Figure 9. All of the olive bottle glass from the terrace had a brownish patina, unlike that seen on glass from elsewhere on the site. The rightmost sherd is a bottle seal fragment. (From Excavation Unit 5-07 stratum 3 level 1.)

probable that they came from a structure that predated the time of deposition. Yet, if the deposit was made any significant distance into the 19th Century, one would expect to find at least a few cut nails. The presence of only wrought nails probably biases the date of deposit toward the middle or earlier part of the mid-1780's to c.1820 time frame.

The original site of deposition was obviously an activity area which included food preparation or consumption or both. Even though the presence of a few fragments of George Mason and William Eilbeck* bottle seals strongly suggest that the original deposit was made on Gunston Hall property, the assemblage is different than anything seen in the vicinity of the mansion kitchen yard or elsewhere in the historic core. The good bone preservation and the brown patina on the olive glass may indicate that the

* William Eilbeck was the father of Ann Eilbeck Mason, the first wife of George Mason IV.

original deposition site had a different soil chemical environment than that found in the historic

Artifacts Recovered From Stratum 3 of the Terrace Excavations

Artifact Type	Count or (Weight)
"Fine" Ceramics	
Cauliflower ware	1
Clouded	1
Creamware	101
Jackfield	4
Manganese mottled	1
Nottingham stoneware	5
Pearlware	30
Porcelain, hard paste	27
Tin-glazed earthenware	38
White-bodied earthenware, unidentified	19
White salt-glazed	104
Yellow-glazed earthenware	1
Total fine ceramics	332
"Utilitarian" Ceramics	
Black-glazed redware	19
Brown salt-glazed	16
Colonoware	1
Gray salt-glaze	11
Red-bodied earthenware, lead glazed	16
Red-bodied earthenware, unglazed	9
Staffordshire slipware	16
Total utilitarian ceramics	88
Other ceramic bodies	
White ball clay pipe fragments	22
Brick fragments	263

Brick fragments, glazed	30

Continued

Artifacts Recovered From Stratum 3 of the Terrace Excavations (Cont.)

Artifact Type	Count or (Weight)
Faunal remains	
Bone, mammal	1,531
Teeth, mammal	83
Bone, bird	15
Bone, fish	27
Scales, gar	56
Scales, other fish	27*
Teeth, fish	7*
Oyster shell, hinge pieces	22
Oyster shell, fragments	(351.9g)
Other materials	
Olive bottle glass	280
Other container glass	39
Window glass	32
Wrought nails	21
Unidentified nails	216
Unidentified ferrous objects	32
Knife blade, ferrous	1
Straight pins	2*
Upholstery tack, brass	2
Lead sheet	5
Mortar	80
Plaster	4
Coal\cinder\slag	101
Charcoal	(8.3g)
Seeds (Brassica, Poaceae)	7*

* From fine screen only. Approx. four gallons of soil from EU 5-07 str. 3 lvl. 2 were washed through window screen to sample small artifacts.

Gunflint, English	5
Projectile points, quartz	2

core. On the other hand, these effects may be the result of gardening chemicals and soil additives the artifacts were exposed to after being redeposited on the terrace.

There are some indications that the deposit may have been taken from a former African-American occupation area. Only a very few gar scales had been previously been found at Gunston Hall. Poor preservation is probably not a factor in this since, like teeth, gar scales tend to survive very well even in conditions where bone does not. The relative abundance of gar scales in the terrace deposit, therefore, suggests that gar was being processed and perhaps consumed on the site of original deposition. Gar was generally not considered palatable by the 18th Century Virginia plantation elite, but their African and African-American contemporaries seemed to have no problem with consuming the fish. For example, the Polish Count Niemcewicz (1805: 101), reporting on his visit to Mount Vernon in the 1790's, remarked that the red flesh of the gar was "little esteemed" and was used "only as food for negroes."

It is generally difficult to distinguish the ceramic artifact assemblage of "domestic" slaves (as opposed to "field" slaves) from that of that of their owners (e.g., Pogue and White 1991). In the case of the terrace deposit, the mean ceramic date of all 378 ceramic sherds recovered was 1773. The mean ceramic date for those labeled "fine ceramics" in the above table was 1769. Both dates are obviously earlier than the *terminus post quem* of the deposit (and earlier than the pearlware found in assemblage was first manufactured). During the mid-1780's to c.1820, most of the fine ceramics types listed were no longer being manufactured. This suggests that the ceramic objects being used at the original deposition site were quite old at the time of their disposal – certainly not the currently fashionable ceramics with which the Mason family would have graced their tables. The use of older, out of fashion ceramics would be consistent with persons of a lower economic status. Again, this suggests the locale of the original deposit may have been a salve occupation area.

The location of the place of original deposition remains a mystery, although it probably was not in the historic core. The question is, from where could a large volume of soil

been stripped which would not have been otherwise of use for agriculture or horticulture? A possibility would be a site on or near the shore, perhaps associated with one of Mason's several fisheries. Such a location would be prone to frequent flooding. That might provide a rich soil in a place otherwise unsuited for agriculture, and might also account for a soil chemistry different from that encountered in the historic core.

This, however, is speculation. Additional work has been proposed to help elucidate the configuration of Mason's garden terrace (Shonyo 2008a: 27; Shonyo 2008b: 14-16). Depending on the extent of the stratum 3 deposit of the 2007 excavations, it may be possible to also extract further clues concerning the original site of the deposit and the people who created it.

PLANS FOR 2009

Work during the 2009 field season will focus entirely on the landfront side of the mansion. The rationale and strategy for the projects has been discussed in Shonyo (2008b) and, in some cases, earlier in the present document. The investigations to be undertaken are:

• **Gunston Colored School**. At a minimum, the four corners of the foundation will be exposed. Two to three 5' x 5' units will be excavated over each corner to a depth of about three inches below the top of the foundation. The purpose will be to provide visual aid to the public interpretation of the school.

• **White gate area**. A series of 5' x 5' units will be excavated in an effort to locate evidence of the white gate, a fence associated with the white gate, the cherry tree avenue and the foot path associated with the avenue. If root molds of the cherry trees are located, sufficient additional units will be excavated to establish the spacing of the trees and the transects along which they were arraigned. If evidence of a fence is found, additional excavations will be undertaken to establish the point west or southwest of the gate where the fence turned and the trend of the fence after it turned.

• **Red gate**. One or more 5' x 5' units will be excavated as close as practical to the point where the old Gunston Hall entry road meets the property line. If evidence of the 18th Century entry gate is found, an effort will be made to find at least three associated fence post molds in order to establish the course of the old boundary fence. This project will be done concurrently with the Colored School project.

If time permits, one or more of the following projects may be initiated:

• **Log Town**. If a fence associated with the white gate is found, the northwest to southeast trending leg of the fence will be used as starting point for a shovel test pit

(STP) survey westward of the curtilage. The objective will be to determine if there exists an artifact scatter or other features that might be associated with the Log Town quarter. It is expected that a positive result will lead to a Phase 3 investigation, perhaps in 2010.

• **Service road**. An attempt will be made to locate this road on the landfront side and determine its route. It is known that the road went to Mason's landing to the south. On the north, it would have been blocked by topography from directly meeting the public road, and so probably merged with the entry road. It is also possible that it ran close to the end of the easternmost double row of cherry trees.

• **Carriage circle**. Efforts to find evidence of this feature will continue, following the strategy outlined in Shonyo (2008b: 10-11).

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