

## 1997 Curles Field Season Summary

There were fifteen students enrolled this year, three Archaeological Society of Virginia volunteers, Dick Helm, Donny Gargias, and Steve Thomas and from time to time former students and employees came out to volunteer. The season ran from June 16th through July 17th. Bob Mark of Mark Video Production was out filming this year in hopes of producing a documentary about the field school experience.

This year we made a departure from the main Harris/Bacon/Randolph complex to go in search of the Randolph laundry building shown on a 1806 Mutual Assurance Society Insurance plat.

Based on the location of the excavated Randolph mansion and partially excavated icehouse we pulled tapes to approximate the location of the laundry according to the insurance plat.

The new grid was established with a transit. The 175N line over the main part of the site was extended and three oak stakes were laid at 175N 192.5E, 175N 212.5E, and 175N 232.5E. With the transit at 175N 180E the 180E line was laid by swinging north 90 degrees from the 175N line. After the removal of the plowzone, the transit was placed at 187.5N 180E and grid points were reshot in along the 187.5N line to 200E. The remainder of the grid points were set by triangulation in the plowzone and should be checked prior ot use. All datum depths for 1997 were taken on July 7, 1997 from 175N 180E. The transit height was 1.47 meters above the ground surface. The datum depths and their proveniences are listed in the 1997 field directors notebook.

Twenty-five 2.5 meter square plowzone units were excavated. The southwest quadrant of each plowzone unit was screened. The artifacts from the remainder of each unit were culled by hand during excavation.

The following is a brief description of what we found this year, for detailed feature descriptions see the 1997 feature list. The artifact analysis is in progress.

Two intact brick features and other features were visible on the surface directly under the plowzone. The first brick feature (189.6N 181.5E) was Feature 97-3, a short brick wall segment floating by itself. There is no evidence of robbing around it, but the fill surrounding it was not excavated. The second brick feature was a mortared English Bond wall Feature 97-4 three meters long. This feature may be the back of a chimney base. It abuts the western wall of a half brick foundation that was uncovered and is thought to be part of the laundry.

The robbed trenches for a 6 1/2 by 6 1/2 meter foundation were uncovered and assigned Feature numbers: 97-6 south wall, 97-11 east wall, 97-14 north wall, and 97-17 west wall. These were uncovered at different times. At the time of excavation only two of the four feature numbers were used, 97-6 and 97-17. They are interchangeable. The fill in the robber's trenches was full of unmortared half brick fragments. A few of the brick fragments did have mortar on them but the majority did not. The top 10-20 cm was robbed. Underneath was an intact unmortared foundation made of half bricks (Feature 97-26). The bricks along the southern wall of the building slope toward the interior. All of the eastern and southern walls were uncovered and a portion of the western and northern wall. There is still robber's trench fill along the interior of the southern wall. The building forms a 6 1/2 by 6 1/2 meter square. This dimension fits the 20 feet wide insurance description well, however, the plat describes a building that is 40 feet long.

There are several features west of the half brick foundation that may represent a later addition. Feature 97-23 is a 1 meter wide line of brick rubble and mortar 6 1/2 meters west of the foundation. It is in the correct place and angle to be the west wall of the laundry. At this time there is no indication of a continuation of the northern and southern walls. Feature 97-24 is a small pocket of bricks poking through fill where the southern wall should be. However, this is exactly how the robber's trenches for the half brick foundation looked before they had all of the fill removed and were cleaned several times. These features were uncovered and mapped just before the end of the season.

There are two different deposits covering the square half brick foundation. Feature 97-7 is a yellow clay fill with few artifacts in it. The clay was probably brought in to level the site. Feature 97-19 is a destruction layer. This feature was partially excavated and appears to be intermingled with the clay fill. The exact relationship is yet to be determined. The clay and destruction layer may have been mixed when the clay was deposited to fill the robbed trenches and level off the site. The destruction lense is less than 10 cm where it has been removed from the interior of the foundation. The soil is dark brown loam that bakes to light gray in the sun. The soil is mixed with fragments of brick, shell, mortar, charcoal, ash, nails, ceramics, pipe stems, and glass. This feature is partially mapped and partially excavated.

Between the possible second west wall (Feature 97-23) and the excavated west wall for the half brick foundation (Feature 97-26) was a tightly packed cobble feature. The cobbles (Feature 97-2) were 5-8 cm in diameter approximately 10 cm deep. A dark brown and yellow mottled sand layer (Feature 97-25) lies under the cobbles. It is possible that the cobble and sand features are intrusive to the

laundry and have removed any evidence of a continuation of the southern wall. The cobble feature was not completely excavated. The western and southern boundaries have yet to be determined. The eastern boundary of the cobbles feathered up to the robber's trench for the half brick foundation. They do not extend over or on the interior of the half brick foundation. The northern edge seems to end with the floating unidentified brick pad (Feature 97-3).

Approximately 2 meters east of the half brick foundation (Feature 97-26) is a series of shallow trash filled deposits. Five were uncovered in a 9 by 4 meter area. The pits are all amorphous and range in size from approximately 1 meter to 2 1/2 meters in length. They are similar in their shallowness, on average 5 cm deep, and content. Features 97-8, 9, 20, and 21 were full of large fragments of pig and cow bones, wine bottle fragments, and some ceramics. The exception is Feature 97-5 the largest of the deposits which was full of decayed brick bats along with the bone and other artifacts. The bottoms of the features are irregularly flat with gently sloping sides. They are low areas, possibly dog wallows, in the east work yard of the laundry that became filled with trash.

Also this year, Dan took a few students and dug four shovel tests directly east of the laundry at the edge of the uncultivated field, south of the tree grove. Shovel tests 1 and 3 were situated on a ridge approximately at 240E. Shovel tests 2 and 4 were on lower ground across a ditch from 1 and 3 respectively at approximately 237E. Shovel tests 1, 3, and 4 contained a similar amount of brick, glass, nail and ceramic fragments, less than 30 count. Shovel tests 1 and 4 each contained 1 colono ceramic sherd. Shovel test 2 came down into a feature. The test contained 90% of a local salt-glazed stoneware milkpan, and fragments of slip dipped white salt-glaze stoneware, Westerwald, tin-enamel, pearlware, basalt, pipe stems, wine bottle glass, nails, oyster shells, and bricks. This test was much deeper than the others. The tests were marked with flagged nails and backfilled with modern pennies.

The orientation of the building we have uncovered is at the same angle as the Randolph mansion and the kitchen foundation. All three are facing north. A great deal of colono ware was found this year, more than has been found in ten years of excavating in other areas of the site.

#### Summary list of features

97-1 ditch, not excavated

97-2 cobbles, partially excavated

97-3 brick, not excavated

97-4 , brick, not excavated

97-5 trash pit, completely excavated

97-6 robber trench south wall, partially excavated

97-7 clay fill, partially excavated  
97-8 trash pit, completely excavated  
97-9 trash pit, completely excavated  
97-10 charcoal feature, completely excavated  
97-11 robber trench east wall, partially excavated  
97-12 brick feature, not excavated  
97-13 mortar feature, partially excavated  
97-14 robber trench north wall, partially excavated  
97-15 post hole, completely excavated  
97-16 oval feature, not excavated  
97-17 robber trench west wall, partially excavated  
97-18 stratum in trench 2, not excavated  
97-19 destruction lense, partially excavated  
97-20 trash pit, completely excavated  
97-21 trash pit, completely excavated  
97-22 hearth?? feature, completely excavated  
97-23 brick feature, west wall?, not excavated  
97-24 brick feature, not excavated  
97-25 sand, not excavated  
97-26 brick half brick foundation walls, not excavated