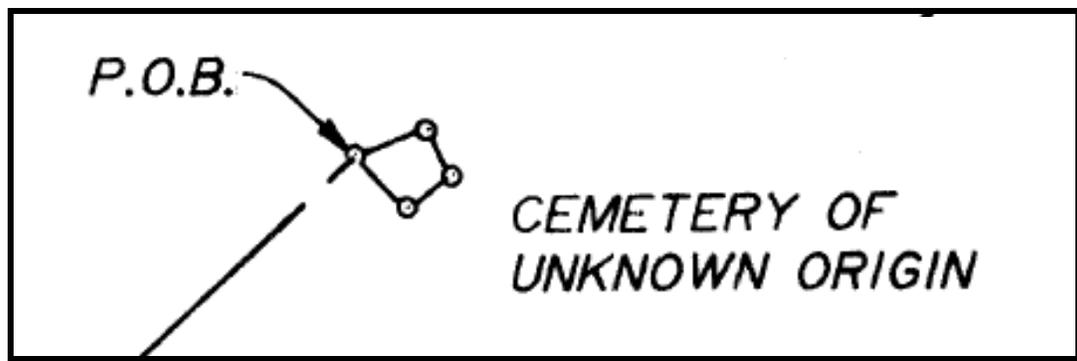


Archaeological Investigation of a “cemetery of unknown origin” in the L. Barnes Brockman, Sr. Business and Industrial Park, Amherst, Virginia.



Project Number 20120631

December 19, 2012

*Submitted to:
Town of Amherst Industrial Development
Authority; Jack Hobbs, Secretary*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From November 26 through November 30, 2012, Hurt & Proffitt, Inc. (H&P) conducted an archaeological field investigation of a purported unmarked cemetery in the L. Barnes Brockman, Sr. Business and Industrial Park (Brockman Park) in Amherst, Virginia. This investigation was undertaken at the request of the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and was intended to definitively establish the existence and locations of any graves associated with the cemetery.

Archaeologists employed a combination of pedestrian survey, subsurface testing and mechanical stripping of topsoil to locate subsurface features. The fieldwork led to the identification of archaeological Site 44AH9999 (temporary site number), the remains of a barn or other outbuilding of late 19th to early 20th century origin. It was likely destroyed sometime prior to the mid-20th century. Excavation has exhausted the information potential of the site.

Stripping and hand cleaning at the depth of culturally sterile subsoil revealed that no burials were present within the area first mapped as a cemetery by H&P in 1988. It is our belief that the unidentified outbuilding had been torn down by the mid-20th century and that its piers were mistaken for grave markers. A later generation of landowners appears to have placed a wire fence around the “cemetery” to mark the location and protect it from foraging livestock and other incursions.

To summarize, this project has demonstrated that no burials lie within the boundaries of the “cemetery of unknown origin.” It appears that the supposed cemetery originated from a misinterpretation of rock piles associated with the ruins of an outbuilding. H&P recommends that the cemetery be removed from tax maps and plats henceforth and that no further work regarding the cemetery is required.

1. INTRODUCTION

From November 26 through November 30, 2012, Hurt & Proffitt, Inc. (H&P) conducted an archaeological field investigation of a purported unmarked cemetery in the L. Barnes Brockman, Sr. Business and Industrial Park (Brockman Park) in Amherst, Virginia (Figure 1). This investigation was undertaken at the request of the Town of Amherst Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and was intended to definitively establish the existence and locations of any graves associated with the cemetery. The project follows an historical assessment of the “cemetery of unknown origin” conducted by H&P in October 2012 (Lichtenberger and Clarke 2012). That study concluded that, while no written evidence of the cemetery could be found, oral history provided enough evidence to conclude that burials might exist in the study location.

Fieldwork was directed by Mr. Keith Adams and Mr. Robert Clarke with the assistance of Mr. David Coleman and Mr. Melvin Lester. Randy Lichtenberger, Director of Cultural Resources for H&P, was responsible for project coordination. All key personnel meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (48 FR 44738-9) for Archaeology. Although this project is not mandated by federal or state cultural resources laws, the work performed is intended to comply with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources' (VDHR's) *Guidelines for Conducting Cultural Resources Survey in Virginia (VDHR 2011)*.

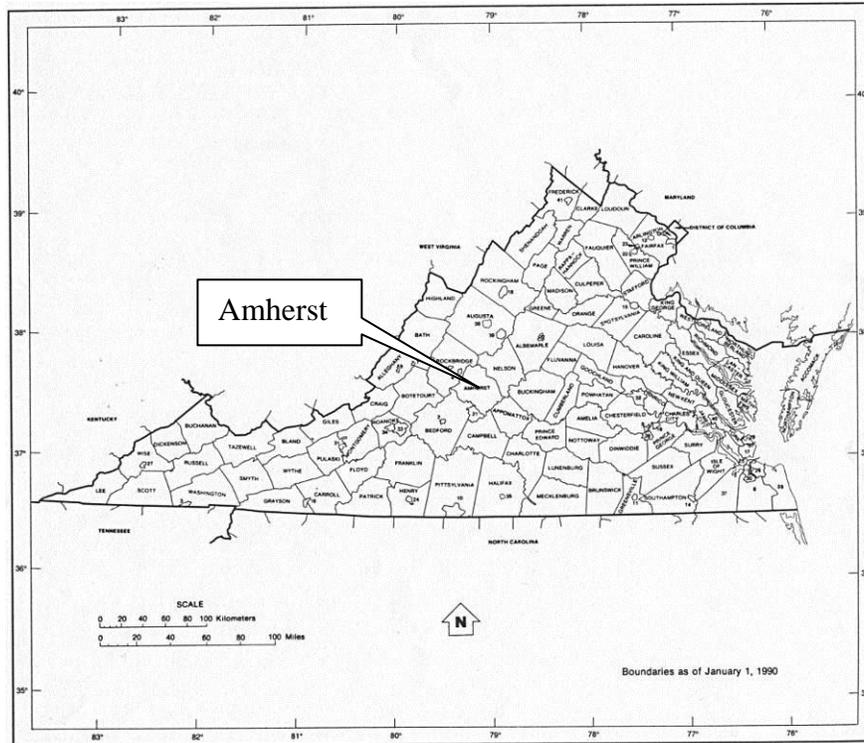


Figure 1. Project location.

2. FIELD AND LABORATORY METHODS

The goal of the present archaeological survey was to confirm the identification of a possible cemetery located in Brockman Park. If graves were indeed present the field studies were intended to result in detailed mapping of these features to aid in the preparation of a removal and reburial plan. The survey methodology employed to meet these goals was chosen with regard to the project's scope (i.e., the project's potential to affect significant resources, should they be present), the potential of the study area to contain significant archaeological resources, and local field conditions.

The study area for archaeological resources for the Brockman Park project was defined as the footprint of a cemetery noted on a 1988 plat prepared by H&P. The purported cemetery was roughly diamond-shaped and measured 59 ft. x 38.7 ft. x 42.85 ft. x 57.23 ft. on its sides. It encompassed approximately 1/16th acre of land located 450 ft. (135m) north of the end of Brockman Park Drive (Appendix A-1; also see Lichtenberger and Clarke 2012:Figures 2 and 3).

Archaeologists employed a combination of pedestrian survey, subsurface testing and mechanical stripping to locate subsurface features. The property was forested and there was limited surface visibility. Several loose stones and stone piles and a linear stone feature were noted. An old logging road ran along the west portion of the property. A large trash dump of 20th century debris is located approximately 150 feet east of the site location. Surface finds at the site included a number of 20th-century artifacts including 1 unidentified sheet iron, a steel bracket, a mason type white metal fruit jar lid with glass liner and 2 wire nails. Due to the proximity to the farm dump, surface finds were noted but not collected. A total of four transects of shovel test pits (STPs) spaced at 25 ft. (7.5 m) intervals were excavated across the property (Figure 2). The STP transects were labeled 1 through 4 from south to north (Appendix A-1).



Figure 2. H&P crewmembers laying out shovel test pit locations.

STPs were stratigraphically excavated to the depth of sterile subsoil and each measured a minimum of 15 in. (38 cm) in diameter. Soil color and texture were recorded using Munsell Soil Color Charts and standard soils nomenclature (Kollmorgen Instruments Corporation 1992). All soil was screened through 0.25 in. (0.64 cm)

hardware mesh. Artifacts were recovered and bagged by level within each pit. All provenience data and a preliminary artifact inventory were recorded in the field.

Following the completion of shovel testing, a backhoe and operator were employed to remove the soil across the site to the depth of culturally sterile subsoil. The backhoe used for this work possessed a 4 ft. wide smooth bucket in order to minimize disturbance to potential features. Archaeologists followed behind the backhoe and hand scraped the exposed subsoil with flat-bladed shovels and trowels in order to expose potential cultural features. All soil was replaced upon completion of the project.

Laboratory processing and the curation of artifacts were carried out at the Sweet Briar College Archaeological Materials Laboratory in accordance with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Collections Management Standards (VDHR 2011). All recovered artifacts were cataloged using Microsoft Word 2003. Artifacts and original field notes are curated with the Town of Amherst.

3. RESULTS

A total of nine STPs was excavated during the course of the Brockman Park cemetery location project, three of which (STP's B-1, C-2 and C-3) were positive for artifacts that consisted of one wire nail, one melted clear glass fragment and one piece of mortar. In addition, three surface features were noted consisting of two brick and stone structural piers and one linear feature of stone along the south edge of the site (Figure 3). Feature 1 consisted of a large collection of disarticulated stones adjacent to a mortared stone pier measuring approximately 2 feet square. The stone piles associated with this feature, the easternmost pier, were particularly reminiscent of grave markers (Figure 4). Only after the loose stones were removed did Feature 1 become clear (Figure 5). Feature 2 was a slightly smaller stone and brick pier measuring approximately 15 inches square (Figure 6). This feature appears to have been constructed by placing the stones and bricks in a mortar matrix within a wooden form, the traces of which remained in the mortar. The hole excavated for the pier was then backfilled with soil. This feature appears to have been impacted by the old logging road along the west side of the site (Appendix A-1).

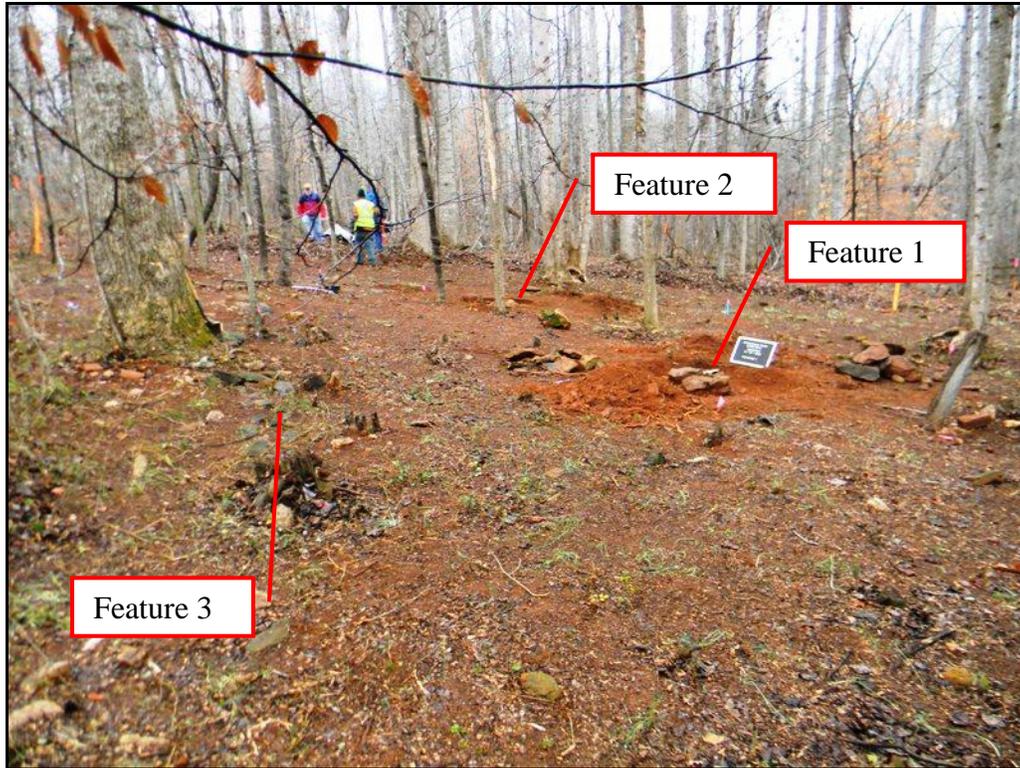


Figure 3. Overview of site facing north-northwest.



Figure 4. View of what was believed to be potential grave markers (Feature 1) after raking.



Figure 5. Feature 1 after excavation.



Figure 6. Feature 2 after partial excavation.

The two pier features were spaced 16 feet apart and 14 feet north and parallel to a row of stones (Feature 3) at the south edge of the mapped cemetery boundary (Figure 7; Appendix A-1). The three features are the likely remains of an outbuilding with the piers acting to level the structure with the stone footing (Feature 3) upslope to the south. A number of additional stones were noted across the site and some appeared to be associated with the ruins of the two pier features. Some had traces of mortar and their arrangement could give the casual observer the appearance of grave markers. The piers, stone footing and associated artifacts were recorded as Site 44AH9999 (temporary site number) using the VDHR's Data Sharing System (DSS).



Figure 7. View along Feature 3, a loose stone footer.

After shovel testing was completed the site was machine stripped to locate possible subsurface features. Spoil was piled outside the boundaries of the study area while approximately 98 percent of the surface within the “cemetery” was exposed. Three larger trees were pedestaled to avoid causing deep disturbance; however, none of the trees were located within the probable boundaries of the historic wire fence.

Archaeologists inspected the subsoil around the trees and determined that no cultural features are likely to have been located beneath the earthen pedestals. Two piles of asphalt roof material were located just below the ground surface to the east and south of features 1 and 2 and probably represent the remains of the building that sat on the piers. Archaeologists hand scraped the entire subsoil surface with flat bladed shovels and trowels as the backhoe worked. No trace of grave shafts or additional cultural features was observed. Subsoil was particularly stony in the central portion of the property and a vein of quartz was noted in the northwest portion of the property (Figures 8 and 9; Appendix A-2). The two piers, Features 1 and 2, were left in place during the backhoe excavation and removed only after careful inspection around and under them (Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 8. South-southwest view of the site following topsoil stripping.



Figure 9. Northeast view of the site following topsoil stripping.



Figure 10. Feature 1 following its removal.



Figure 11. Exposed subsoil beneath Feature 2 following its removal.

Soils were nearly uniform throughout the survey area. On average, they consisted of 0.9 feet (11 cm) of reddish brown (2.5YR5/4) loamy clay overlying 0.9-2.1+ feet (18 cm) of red (2.5YR4/6) clay subsoil (Figure 12). It appeared that the upper stratum had developed naturally from forestation. The survey area was level to gently sloping (3-5%) to the north. Select cutting of hardwoods within the property area left a tall canopy of Poplars with very little underbrush. Scattered holly trees and green brier accounted for virtually all of the undergrowth.

Stratum I 0-.9 ft.	2.4YR5/4 Reddish Brown Loamy Clay
Stratum II .9-2.1+ ft.	2.5YR4/6 Red Clay

Figure 12. Typical shovel test profile.

A total of three artifacts were recovered in shovel testing that are likely associated with the former outbuilding (Site 44AH9999 (temporary site number)): One burned and melted fragment of clear glass that was otherwise unidentifiable; one wire nail (10-penny spike); and a small eroded fragment of lime mortar (Table 1). Only the nail is a datable artifact, yielding a likely date of the very late 19th Century in this area. The nail is consistent in type and slightly larger than those found during preliminary survey in the remains of fence-posts. The nail showed no evidence of use and may be associated with the construction or repair of what was likely a barn or other outbuilding that rested in part on the piers identified during excavation. The small fragment of sandy lime mortar is similar to that used in the construction of Pier One (See Sample Inventory above). The glass is likely clear bottle glass as it is too thick to be window glass, but further identification is not possible due to burning and melting. All of these artifacts are consistent with the presence of a small outbuilding and not with a cemetery or burial site.

Shovel Test Pit Number/Layer	Identification	Size (longest dimension)	Weight	Condition
B-2/A	Wire Nail (Spike)	9.8 cm	17.6 grams	Whole, Corroded
C-1/A	Clear Glass	3.5 CM	6.6 grams	Burned, Melted
C-3/A	Lime and Portland Mortar	1.5 CM	1.5 grams	Eroded

Table 1. Artifact Inventory.

Mortar samples were taken from Features (Piers) 1 and 2 for laboratory analysis (Table 2). The mortar samples are of two different types: The samples from Pier One are of a soft sandy lime mortar used in the area up until the 20th Century. The fine grain size of the lime additive and the general homogeneity of the mortar may place it later within the date range for lime mortar use in the area. The sample from Pier Two was harder and contained Portland cement. Though the Portland cement mortar may date to the very last of the 19th Century, it more likely indicates an early 20th century date for the construction of Pier Two. The presence of the two mortars might be simply a case of using what was at hand.

Sample Context	Identification	Size	Weight
Pier 1 - Sample 1	Soft Sandy Lime Mortar	4.6 CM	4.0 grams
Pier 1 - Sample 2	Soft Sandy Lime Mortar	10.5 CM	143.3 grams
Pier 2 - Sample 1	Hard Sandy Portland Mortar	7.5 CM	7.5 grams

Table 2. Mortar Sample Inventory.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Archaeological testing and topsoil stripping at the so-called “cemetery of unknown origin” led to the identification of archaeological Site 44AH9999 (temporary site number), the remains of a barn or other outbuilding of late 19th to early 20th century origin. The site produced a very light scatter of historic period artifacts and just three features; two mortared stone piers and a dry-laid row of stones. The piers would have raised the back or downslope side of the building to the elevation of the entrance situated facing current Route 60. As noted above, the artifact assemblage and construction materials suggest this building was constructed between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was likely destroyed sometime prior to the mid-20th century. Excavation has exhausted the information potential of the site. The site’s limited data has no potential to contribute significant new information to an understanding of the Subsistence/Agriculture theme in the Upper Piedmont during the Reconstruction and Growth (1865-1917) to World War I to World War II (1917-1945) periods (VDHR 2011).

Stripping and hand cleaning at the depth of culturally sterile subsoil revealed that no burials were present within the area first mapped as a cemetery by H&P in 1988. During H&P’s 2012 historical investigation, an informant, Mr. Granville B. Shrader, confirmed what he believed to be the cemetery location. He recalled that a wire fence had enclosed the cemetery as late as the 1980s and noted that the single remaining post at the site had been part of that fence. H&P subsequently identified several other posts in the vicinity. It is clear when comparing the post locations to the 1988 cemetery boundaries that the H&P surveyor at the time simply mapped around the fence leaving a

buffer of 5 to 10 feet on all sides to insure that any graves would be contained within the boundaries (Appendix A-1).

Coincidentally, the wire fence which enclosed the supposed cemetery also enclosed the ruins of the two stone piers associated with Site 44AH9999 (temporary site number). As these piers were exposed during the current investigation, they appeared at first glance to represent two or three potential grave sites. The southeastern pier had collapsed into two distinct elongated piles of stone (see Figure 4). It is our belief that the unidentified outbuilding had been torn down by the mid-20th century and that its piers were mistaken for grave markers. A later generation of landowners appears to have placed a wire fence around the “cemetery” to mark the location and protect it from foraging livestock and other incursions.

To summarize, this project has demonstrated that no burials lie within the boundaries of the “cemetery of unknown origin.” It appears that the supposed cemetery originated from a misinterpretation of rock piles associated with the ruins of an outbuilding. H&P recommends that the cemetery be removed from tax maps and plats henceforth and that no further work regarding the cemetery is required.

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