

Summary - Fletcher-Allen Cemetery Delineation Report

Attached is the report titled, "Fletcher-Allen Cemetery, DHR# 076-06017, 16151 John Marshall Highway, Broad Run, Prince William County, VA, True Limits Survey (Browning 2021)." Within this report are the results of the cemetery delineation for the Allen-Fletcher or Fletcher-Allen Cemetery (the name varies depending on the speaker). Also included in the report are findings for areas archaeologically tested outside of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. These areas were suspected Native American burial locations that were identified by Mr. Matthew Howard.

This report was requested and paid for by Jason Doucette, the owner of parcels surrounding the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery, in response to a report prepared by Native American Matt Howard that claimed possible Native American burials outside of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery (included in this report as an Appendix) and also in response to burials from the Fletcher-Allen cemetery that extended outside of this cemetery's parcel onto land owned by Mr. Doucette.

Report Takeaways

- The limits of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery were defined archaeologically on three sides. The east side was defined by the road. See page 8 of the report.
- Headstones were surveyed and mapped.
- The Fletcher-Allen Cemetery was recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and given the state architectural # 076-6017.
- No burials were found during testing outside of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery, i.e. the possible Native American burial locations.

FLETCHER-ALLEN CEMETERY
DHR# 76-6017
16151 JOHN MARSHALL HIGHWAY
BROAD RUN
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA
TRUE LIMITS SURVEY

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FLETCHER-ALLEN CEMETERY TRUE LIMITS SURVEY

At the request of the owners, Flint Rock Builders, LLC, a property was investigated in order to determine the limits of a cemetery for the Fletcher-Allen family. The cemetery is represented by 4 rows of gravestones in an open grassed area along a property line and access road. The property address is 16151 John Marshall Highway, Broad Run, Prince William County, VA. The property is recorded by Prince William County as: GPIN 7198-82-09670.

The landform abutts onto the John Marshall Highway on the north and on the Norfolk Southern Railway track on the south. It has arbitrary property boundaries to the east and west. The cemetery is located in an open and grassed field in the side yard of the former owner, Frettie Washington, wife of John Hill Washington. Both are buried in the cemetery. The cemetery has 30 visible graves.

Figure 1 shows the location on the USGS 100k Quad. Figure 2 shows the location on the Thoroughfare Gap 24K USGS Quad. Figure 3 shows the project drawing. Figure 4 shows a plan view of the graves in relation to their surroundings.. Appendix A has the site form. Appendix B has site photographs. Appendix C has the Howard Report.

Project Description

The cemetery was on a separate parcel of land among the several now combined parcels. Based upon visual examination and followed by a land survey, burials were outside the limits of the parcel. In order to determine whether burials were present, the owners commissioned a True Limits Survey by Browning & Associates, LTD, a Cultural Resources Management firm. In addition, per discussion below, concerns were expressed about the size and scope of the cemetery as being far larger than the parcel and possibly extending over most of the property.

Three areas were investigated. Area 1 was to the west the Fletcher-Allen cemetery in a wooded area designated as a possible burial area denoted by the presence of what was erroneously called an "effigy stone" but which was in fact a geological remnant with smooth, unworked edges that showed evidence of recently having been placed vertically. The stone showed clear evidence of having been at the surface and partially buried along one side. As the area was a former agricultural field, the most likely scenario was that it was plowed to the surface.

Area 2 was the crest of the hill west of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. It was also designated as a possible burial area, although no explanation was given other than the orientation of the landform. A single trench was placed along the crest of the landform.

Area 3 was the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. A True Limits Survey was performed around the three sides (North, West, South) of it by the removal of topsoil down to subsoil.

Prior Investigation

Prior to this investigation, a group of individuals had gone onto the property and made assertions based on what they had interpreted as burials of possible Native American and African-American origin. Matthew "Maasaw" Howard ("American Indian Researcher"), Ingrid Howard (P.E., D.GE, Geotechnical Engineer and soil expert with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Alex Zito, (History Ph.D.) and Kesia Zito (former NOVA Attorney). Appendix C contains their report. At the former Washington property containing the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery, they noted several depressions which they asserted to be graves. In point of fact, they were all the locations of standard drainfield test areas conducted by the current owners for soil studies relevant to their proposed development.

Their narrative then identified these areas "potentially a large cemetery". They went into a wooded area to the west of the open area and found what they called an "effigy stone" with a "bird face petroglyph. However, their terminology is incorrect. A petroglyph is a carving *into* a rock face that depicts whatever the person who made it desired. Examination of this stone showed no intentional removal of any of the surfaces of the rock. This is probably a manifestation of pareidolia which "the tendency to perceive a

specific, often meaningful image in a random or ambiguous visual pattern" (Merriam-Webster definition). The 1937 USAS Vertical Aerial Photo (Figure 14) of the area shows the stone was located in a slight swale in an open field. There are current cemeteries that are limited to what land they own and may use slight swales for burials. But for family cemeteries, burial in swales was a non-event. As the area was in a former plowed field, the likelihood of it being used as a cemetery is vanishing small. However the area was tested in order to determine whether graves were present. They were not. We also saw evidence that the stone had been moved and placed vertically in the ground. Photographs of the stone were taken as well as the position in which it was found. The stone clearly had been for some time lying nearly totally on its side and had not been vertical until recently. The stone was within a topsoil/plowzone that was uniform where tested and gave no indication of disturbance other than by former agricultural practices.

Survey Procedures

A mini-excavator with a smooth 52" bucket was used to investigate the areas of concern. The objective was to remove the plowzone overlying subsoil and to examine the surface of the subsoil such that the characteristic rectangular stains resulting from infilled grave shafts would be visible against the subsoil in the area. The working standard was that as topsoil was removed any graves were visible and easily defined at the interface between the topsoil and subsoil. If a grave was encountered, the plan was for the stripping to continue until at least 15 feet of undisturbed soil was encountered past the last grave. Each grave corner was to be flagged and geolocated by transit for transfer to site plans. The grave corners, edge of excavation and cemetery fence proposed locations were placed onto the CAD site plans.

Stripping began in Area 1 which was a wooded area that had been posited as a possible cemetery extension to the west of the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. One linear trench was excavated near a mis-identified "effigy" stone and a cross trench was excavated as shown on Figure 3. This area was in a swale and was formerly an agricultural field. A 1'± plowzone overlay a mottle yellow/reddish clay subsoil. No features were identified.

Area 2 stripping consisted of a single trench excavated down the length of the terrain top adjacent to the tree line. As the owners will keep a large cherry tree *in situ*, stripping was halted at the root line so as not to damage it. No features were identified.

Area 3 was the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. At the deeded cemetery property limits (GPIN 7198-82-09670) were previously staked, it was clear that burials had extended beyond those limits. As the cemetery is to be fenced, it was decided to measure 5 feet past the three edges of the outermost grave markers in the cemetery as a starting point for topsoil stripping. The fourth side was an access road with a small ditch that was outside the project property. From the 5 foot line, stripping extended 15 feet farther in order to demonstrate a lack of burials. Had burials been encountered, the edge where burials were found would have been extended to 15' past the last burial(s). A thin topsoil was noted overlying a very rocky substrate consisting of decayed bedrock with an admixture of soil.

Each gravestone was photographed and surveyed onto the site plans. Information was taken from each stone including the names of those buried, their birth and death dates, the type of gravestone and other relevant information. The information is provided in the following table shown on page 14.

A total of 32 graves with 28 markers were noted in the cemetery. No graves were noted outside of the 5' limits line within the 15' area that was stripped beyond (outside) the 5' line.

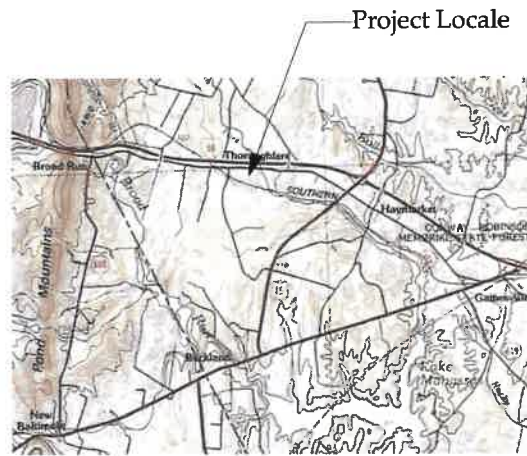


Figure 1. 100k USGS Quad & Project Area.

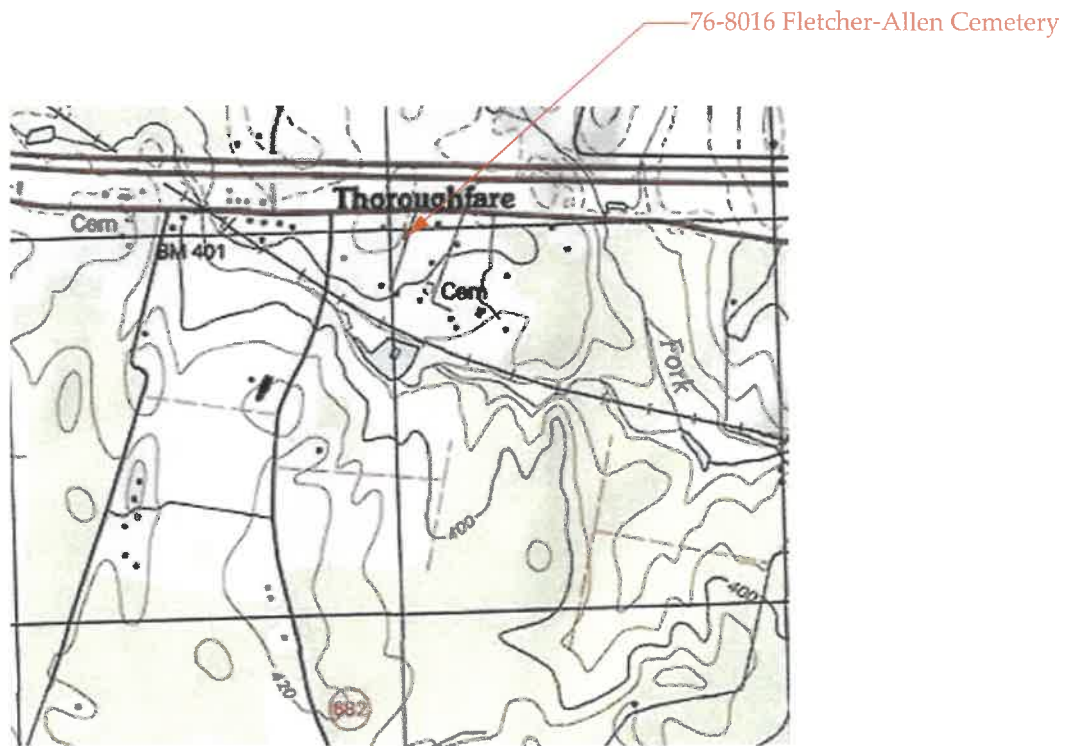


Figure 2. Thoroughfare Gap 24k USGS Quad & Project Area.

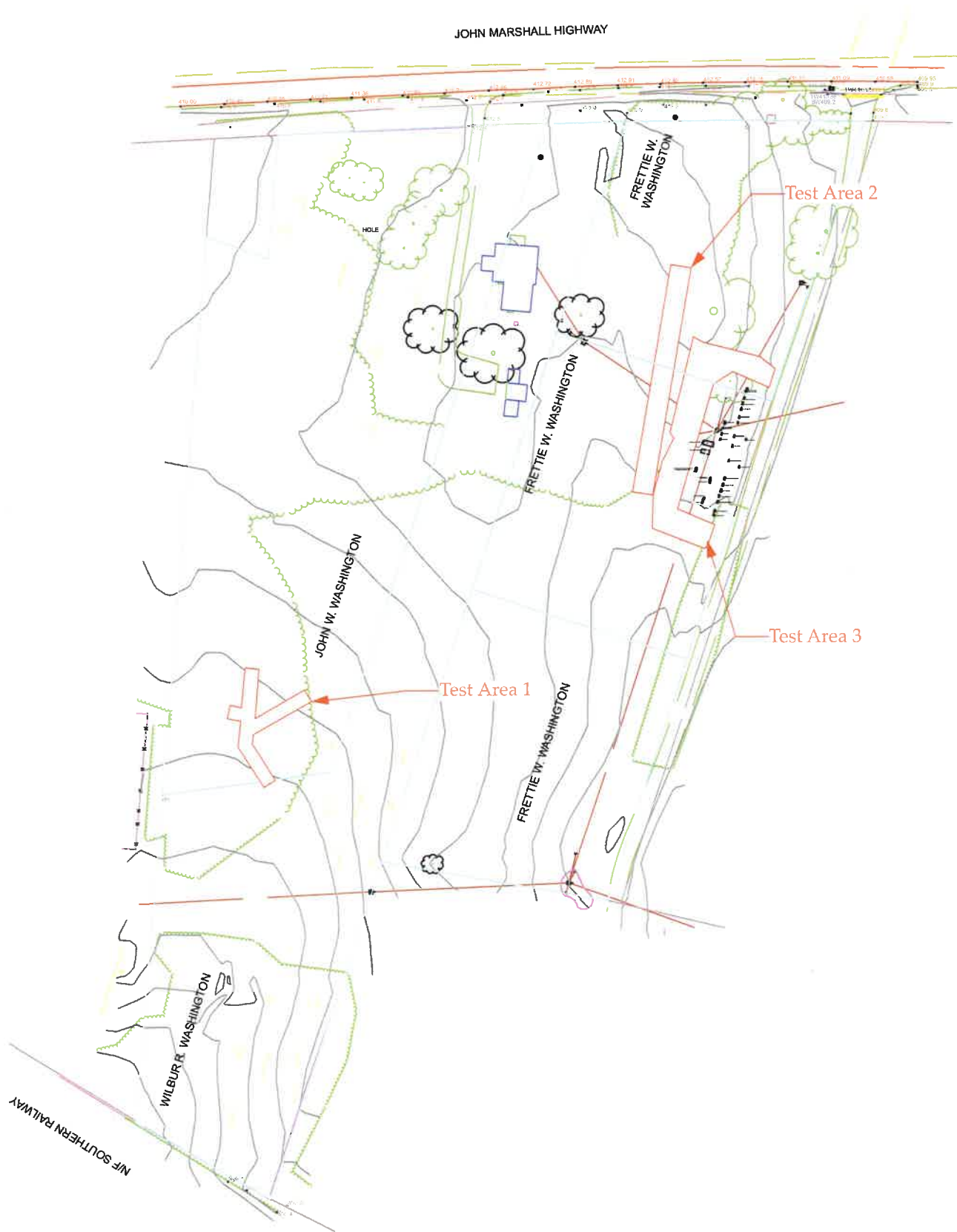


Figure 3. Project Survey Map.

True Limits Survey Exterior Cemetery Edge

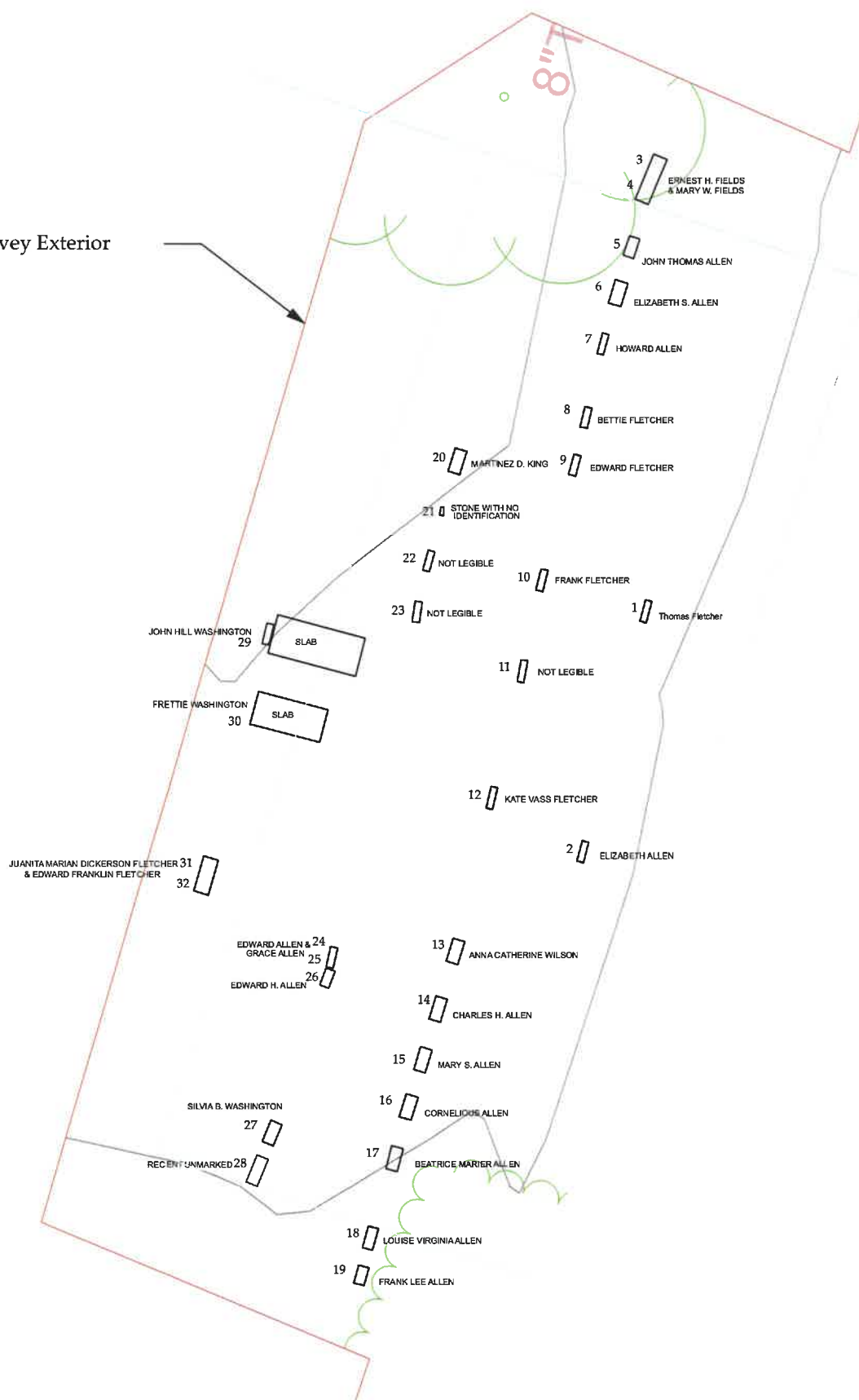


Figure 4. Fletcher-Allen Cemetery Layout.

Archival Investigation

The general locale was part of the 2039 acre Cloverland Plantation in the 18th to 19th centuries. Robert Carter was granted the property in 1724. The plantation main house was constructed in 1797 and was torn down in the second half of the 20th century. After the Civil War, the area is notable as a settlement area for newly freed African-Americans who established small farms within the overall community.

Figure 5 shows the property on the McDowell 1862 map. Figure 6 shows the property on the Pope 1862 map. Figure 6 shows the property on a 1901 map. Figure 7 shows the property on a 1904 map. Figure 8 shows the property on a 1923 map. Figure 9 shows the property on the 1933 Middleburg 15' USGS Quad. Figure 10 shows the area on the 1937 USAS Vertical Aerial. Figure 11 shows the area on a 2021 satellite view

The Civil War Battle of Thoroughfare Gap was fought west of the project. Both the core area and the NRHP Battlefield by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program are west of the project. The John Marshall Highway (Rt. 55) corridor was deemed a possible NRHP nomination area that includes the project area. Figure xx shows that graphic.

The website WWW.FINDAGRAVE.COM is a standard research tool for the identification of burials within graveyards around the country. The Fletcher-Allen Cemetery had been recorded previously but has not been updated within the last 15 years. Unfortunately, the website does not provide maps and the burials are listed alphabetically, making locational platting impossible. The website often contains additional information such as middle names and familial associations that often cannot be ascertained by burial position. While it is the norm that husbands are buried on the left of wives, it is not unusual for them to be buried separately within the cemetery for various reasons. The website was able to provide information to close those gaps. Where there were discrepancies as to dates, the dates on the gravestones were viewed as dispositive.

Map Investigation

Map research was performed in order to possibly determine the location of the cemetery in relation to the historic property upon which it was situated. John Smith's 1612 map was the first to show the project locale, although it is labeled as "by relation" rather than from an actual eyes-on survey. The 1755 Frye-Jefferson map shows the area but not in detail. The 1827 Boye Map was the first relatively coherently detailed state map (excluding the rather schematic Woods map series). It shows enough detail to identify the project locale.

The standards of Civil War cartography are those maps by Jeremy Francis Gilmer and Jedediah Hotchkiss. Neither produced maps of Prince William as a separate map entity. Their maps are of areas near by not within the project area. The excellent post-war maps by Nathaniel Michler were also not of the project area.

The 1862 Pope map published as Plate XXII.6 in the Official Military Atlas of the Civil War (OMACW) is the first to show sufficient detail to relate ground activities (Figure 5). The 1862 McDowell map published as Plate VII.1 in the OMACW shows fields at the project. Figure 6 shows a detailed view. It shows the John Marshall Highway as well as the Manassas Gap Railroad alignment. In particular it shows the project area as heavily settled with multiple fields.

Figure 7 shows the Second Bull Run Campaign and the project area. Figure 8 shows the Northern Virginia Campaign and the project locale. Figure 9 shows the NPS Thoroughfare Gap Battlefield Map with the project area shown along the road corridor.

The 1901 William Brown Map of Prince William does not show Fletcher as an owner but does show Dulaney to the east.

The 1904 Burr Maneuver Grounds Map shows Fletcher as an owner.

The 1923 USPS Rural Delivery Map of Prince William shows structures along the John Marshall Highway at the project vicinity.

The 1933 Middleburg 15' USGS Quad shows the project area. Houses are shown along the highway and then back off the road backing onto the railroad.

The 1937 USAS Vertical Aerial Photo shows the project area with the parcels annotated.

Figure 5. 1862 Pope Map Of The Bull Run Campaign & Project Locale.

Figure 6. 1862 McDowell OMACW Plate VII.1 With Project Area Fields.

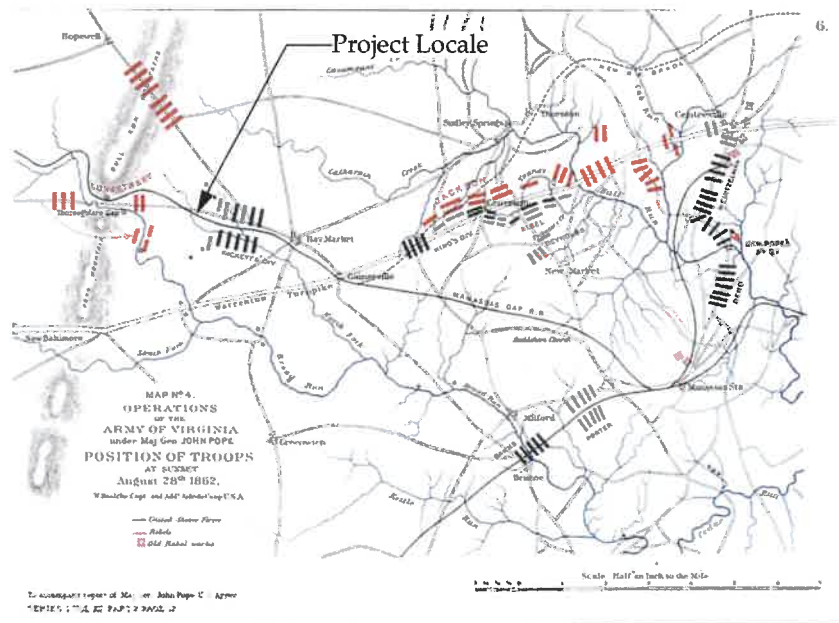


Figure 5. 1862 Pope OMACW Plate 22.6 With Troop Movements In Relation To Project Area.

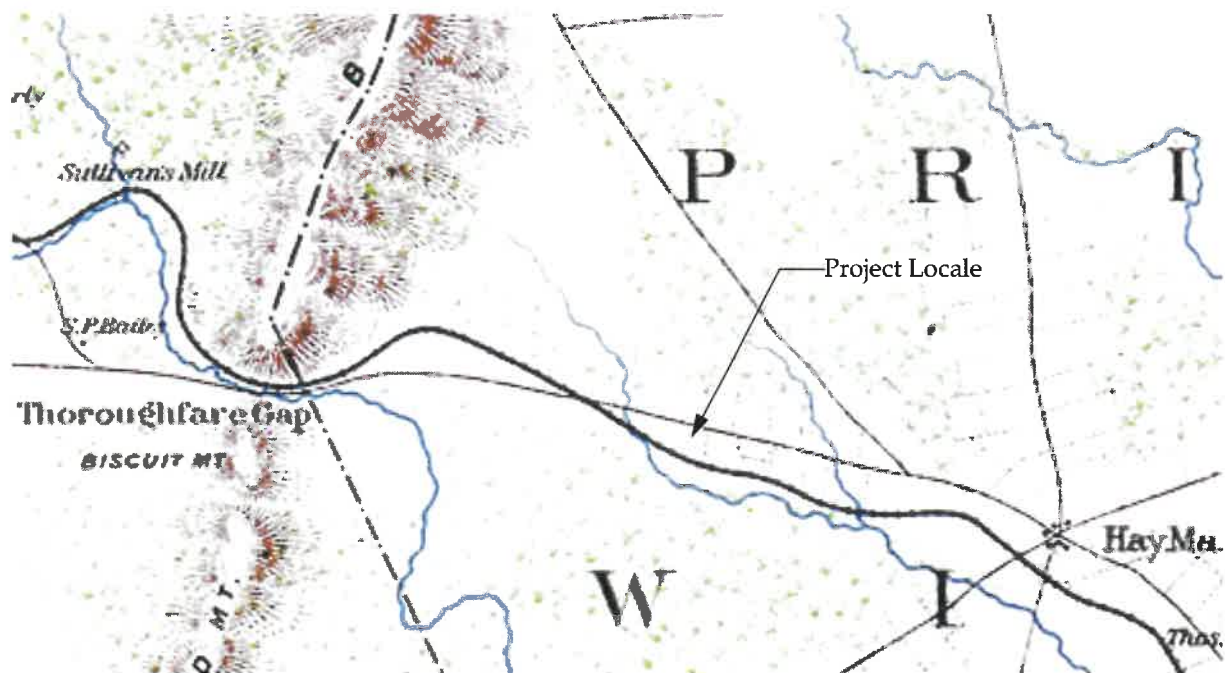


Figure 6. 1862 McDowell OMACW Plate 7 Showing Fields In Relation To Project Area.

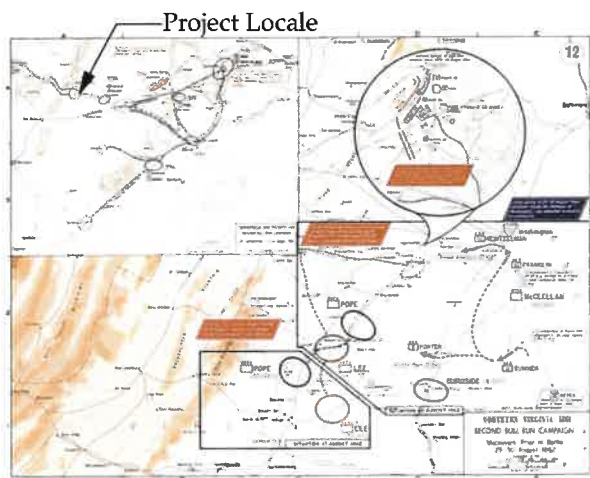


Figure 7. Second Bull Run Campaign With Project Area.

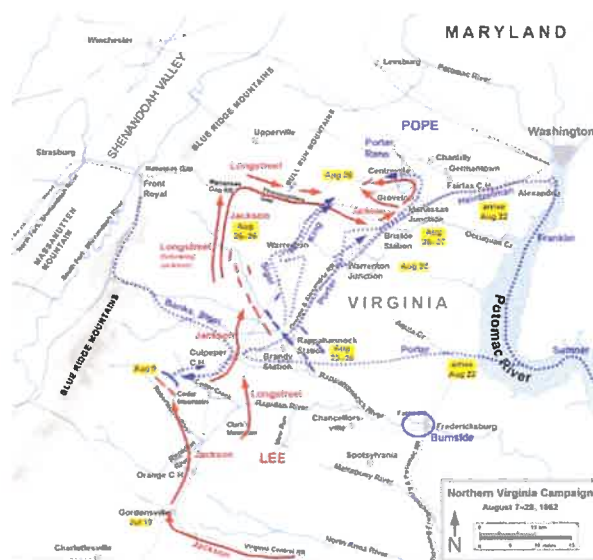


Figure 8. Northern Virginia Campaign

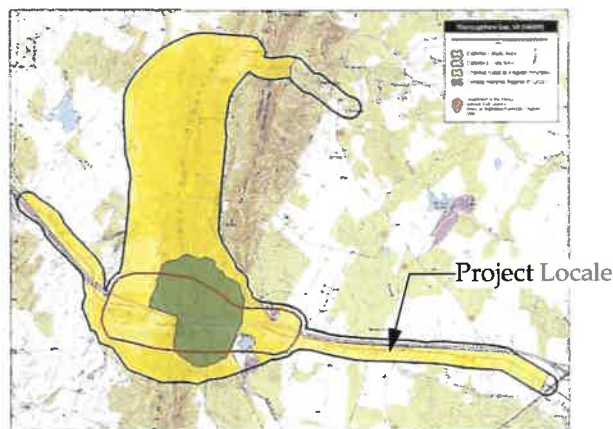


Figure 9. NPS Thoroughfare Gap Battlefield Map.



Figure 10. 1901 Brown's Map of Prince William



Figure 11. 1904 Maneuver Grounds Map.



Figure 12. 1923 Rural Delivery Routes

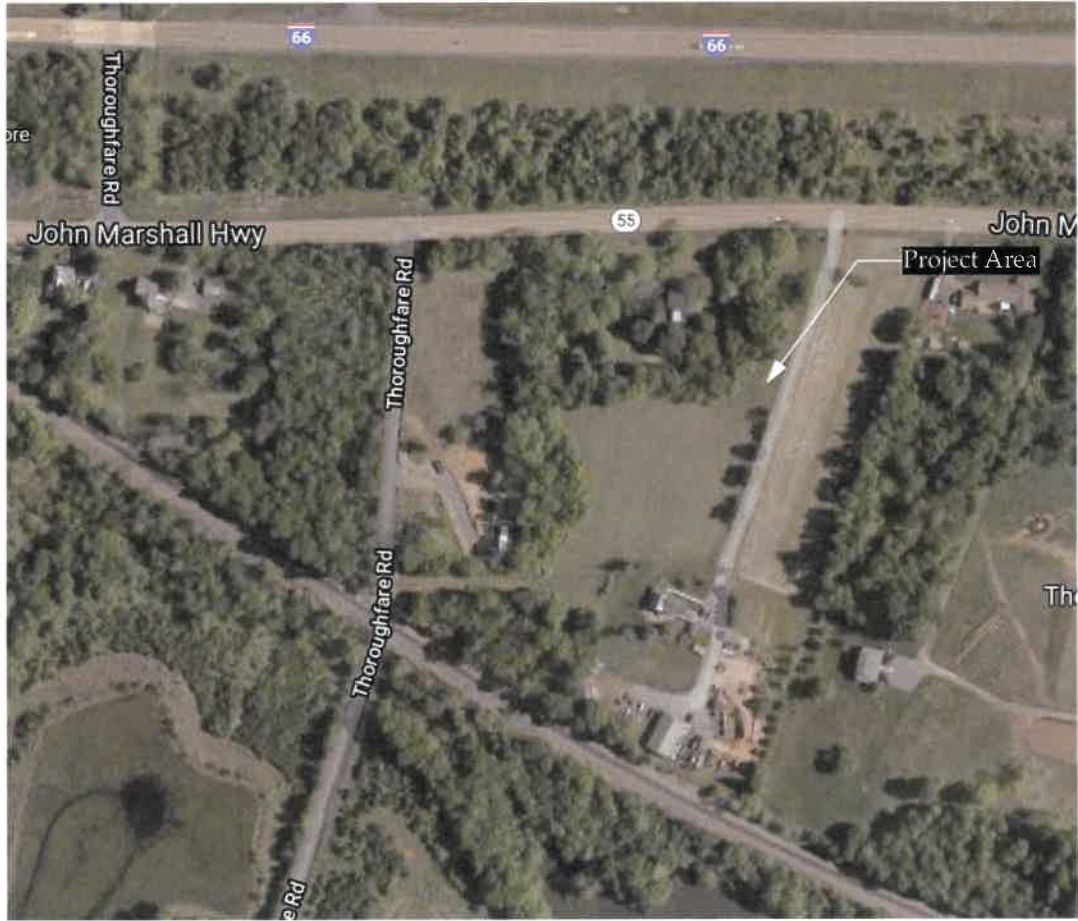


Figure 16. 2021 Google Satview of Project Area.

Figure 16 shows a 2021 satellite view of the project area. It shows the surviving building, the fields and the forested margins on the north and west. The graveyard is clearly visible.

List of Burials in the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery:

#	Lname	Fname	DOB	DOD	Material	Type
1	Fletcher	Thomas Sheridan	7/18/1879	1929	Cement	Aluminum plaque
2	Allen	Elizabeth		1920	Cement	Aluminum plaque
3	Fields	Ernest Hampton	8/5/1921	2/14/2005	Granite	Engraved
4	Fields	Mary Virginia Washington	6/28/1931	8/5/2012		Engraved
5	Allen	John Thomas	6/22/1898	4/9/1976	Granite	Aluminum plaque
6	Allen	Elizabeth S.	5/9/1921	6/24/1983	Granite	Engraved
7	Allen	Howard		1902		1994
8	Fletcher	Bettie	1/22/1881	6/27/1884	Cement	Aluminum plaque
9	Allen	Edward		1902		1994
9	Fletcher	Elizabeth S.		1884	Cement	Aluminum plaque
10	Fletcher	Franklin	7/12/1824	12/17/1917	Cement	Aluminum plaque
11	Unknown				Marble?	Unmarked
12	Fletcher	Kate Vass	3/15/1838	10/12/1915	Cement	Aluminum plaque
13	Wilson	Anna Catherine Fletcher Farrish	11/15/1870	8/31/1949	Granite	Engraved
14	Allen	Charles H.	8/5/1884	4/9/1913	Granite	Engraved
15	Allen	Mary Susan Fletcher	7/7/1861	7/29/1930	Granite	Engraved
16	Allen	Cornelius		1850		10/5/1941
17	Washington	Beatrice Marier Allen	6/12/1896	11/8/1973	Granite	Engraved
18	Allen	Louise Virginia	9/21/1888	10/5/1977	Granite	Engraved
19	Allen	Frank Lee	2/1/1888	6/12/1984	Granite	Engraved
20	King	Martinez D	5/15/1956	7/18/2014	Granite	Engraved
21	Stone, No ID					
22	Illegible				Cement	Iron plaque
23	Illegible				Cement	Iron plaque
24	Allen	Edward			Cement	Aluminum plaque
25	Allen	Grace			Cement	Aluminum plaque
26	Allen	Edward Henry	5/23/1900	9/1/1971	Granite	Engraved
27	Washington	Sylvia B.		1944		2020
28	Unknown					Very Recent, no marker
29	Washington	John Hill	5/24/1883		1965	Cement
30	Washington	Frettie		1910		1973
31	Fletcher	Juanita Marian Dickerson, Ph.D.	12/16/1917		5/8/1999	
32	Fletcher	Edward Franklin (Ernest Edward)	1/24/1913		7/19/1990	
	Peyton	Sarah Frances Fletcher Washington	2/1/1863		11/2/1950	
	Dawes	Lena		1902		1996
	Fletcher	Edward	12/27/1874		4/17/1905	

Survey Results

The objectives of the investigation were two-fold. The primary objective was to determine the limits of the burials that were within the designated Fletcher-Allen Cemetery and within the separate tax parcel as well as determining how many more people were buried outside the parcel boundary but still within what would be uniformly identified as the cemetery by close proximity.

That determination of the existence or non-existence of burials outside of the parcel and outside of the visible burials was achieved as the trenches that were dug starting 5 feet beyond the outside limits of the visible burials and extending 15 feet beyond that outward to the south, west and north showed no burials within those trenches. The standards of a True Limits Survey were met and exceeded.

The cemetery was surveyed, photographs of individual tombstones were taken and the locations of each of the burials was transit surveyed and noted on the site plans. Burials were found to extend slightly outside the parcel on the north, west and south. A total of 32 individuals were identified as to name and/or location within the cemetery by the existence of marked tombstones. Markings consisted of inscriptions into the gravestones or by the addition of metal plaques and/or by funeral home temporary markers, or by the presence of an unmarked upright stone consistent with a grave marker. All of the markers were headstones. No footstones were present. Two graves had slabs of cement overlying the graves. Three tombstones were marked with the names of the husband and wife buried there. The location of each of the stones is shown on Figure 4. One set of tombstones for Edward and Grace Allen was adjacent to a single tombstone for Edward H(enry) Allen with birth and death dates. It is presumed that the Edward Allens were the same individual. The total number of tombstones was 28. One burial was identified as very recent by ground disturbance.

FindAGrave.com had additional information that was added to the list. The three names at the bottom of the list are presumed to correspond with the illegible and/or unmarked burials visible although there are four markers and three named individuals.

The numbering on Figure 4 corresponds with the list shown above.

The secondary objective was to investigate the claims made by the Howard group that claimed a far larger area of African-American and Native American burials based upon the evidence presented in the Howard Report in Appendix C. Despite the descriptive terminology errors and the erroneous attribution of percolation test holes as burials, a good faith effort was made to objectively test their assertions. Trenches were dug where they indicated a possible burial presence due to what they referred to as an effigy stone. These trenches were extensive and showed no activity in the area other than former agricultural fields with a plowzone/topsoil.

The Figure 4 Fletcher-Allen Cemetery layout shows the graves that were identifiable by the presence of gravestones, field markers or in one case by a recent grass disturbance. There are four rows of graves. Each row is described below and the information on each burial is shown in the table above. We did not investigate to determine how many graves were present within the limits of the graveyard and cannot make a determination. Note that FindAGrave has more burials listed than we were able to discern. However, these may be contained in the graves that had the rusted and illegible iron markers.

The westernmost row has 2 graves (Elizabeth Allen, Thomas Fletcher) with stones. The next row to the west has 16 gravestones, one of which is a double tombstone for husband and wife. A presumptive total of 17 people are buried in that row. The next row west has 7 tombstones. There is one recent grave on the south end. Two adjacent gravestones are for Edward Hamilton Allen and for Edward Allen and Grace Allen. These are presumed to be husband and wife with the second tombstone placed after the death of the remaining person of the couple. The 4th and westernmost row has a double burial and two individual burials. It has 3 tombstones.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is my professional opinion that the true limits survey has obtained the outer limits of the burials at the Fletcher-Allen Cemetery. If it becomes necessary to disturb the cemetery, the area is recommended for further study to determine who is buried there, how many graves are there and to perform forensic and

scientific analysis of the remains to gain information about the burials with a view to determining who they are and when they were buried. If the burials are not to be disturbed, further work is not recommended.

As to the Howard Report, the assertions that bare patches in the grass area south and east of the cemetery were graves was disproved by the fact that they were percolation tests done as a normal part of geo-technical due diligence and mandated surveys. The swale area to the west was claimed as a possible burial area by the presence of a fieldstone that was claimed to be an effigy stone. However, the stone had no indications of having been worked in any fashion. The area was trenched to determine whether burials were present. No burials were found and the area was shown by testing to have been a former agricultural field based upon soil strata and by archival investigation that also showed it to have been a former field. No evidence of burials was noted outside the above described investigatory limits. The trenches were placed on the top of the landform that the Howard Report indicated as a potential Native American habitation site. No evidence was found to substantiate the claim. Terrain analysis is part and parcel of any cultural resources investigation and while ridge tops are certainly part of the inventory of possible sites, ground-truthing showed the area to be devoid of evidence of habitation in the historic or prehistoric past. Furthermore, terrain is broken down into probability zones for use based upon several factors, among which is proximity to water, to which this site is not adjacent. Hunting/kill/butchering areas are another factor to be considered. Swales leading up to ridge and then down the other side to watercourses have consistently been shown to have been areas where game animals were harvested. That terrain type does not exist in the project area.

The project area was shown to have a late 19th and 20th century cemetery that had slightly exceeded the parcel boundary for it. This is considered normal for burials that are long-term for family groups. The limits of burials were established by standard archaeological testing of topsoil removal to expose graveshafts cut into subsoil. In this case, an offset of 5' was used beyond the visible limits and a farther extension of 15' was trenched. No graveshafts were noted.

This project is recommended to proceed to construction after the extent of the current cemetery is extended to encompass the graves that were placed beyond the parcel limits. No further work is recommended.

Appendix A – Site Form

Property Information

Property Names

Name Explanation	Name
Descriptive	Frettie Washington
Function/Location	Cemetery, 16151 John Marshall Highway

Property Evaluation Status

Property Addresses

Current - 16151 John Marshall Highway

County/Independent City(s): Prince William (County)

Incorporated Town(s): No Data

Zip Code(s): 20137

Magisterial District(s): No Data

Tax Parcel(s): No Data

USGS Quad(s): THOROUGHFARE GAP

Additional Property Information

Architecture Setting: Hamlet

Acreage: .5

Site Description:

2021 Browning: The Fletcher-Allen Cemetery is located near the John Marshall highway on the north and a railroad track on the south. It is situated on open grassed land more or less in the side yard of a mid-20th century house. It is marked by 29 tombstones

Surveyor Assessment:

2021 Browning: The cemetery started in 1884 and is still active. There are a range of upright tablet type tombstones ranging from multiple cement types to black granite. The cemetery is for the Fletcher, Allen, Washington and related families. The local area was an important Reconstruction Era set of farmsteads for freed African-Americans.

Surveyor Recommendation: Recommended Not Eligible

Ownership

Ownership Category	Ownership Entity
Private	No Data

Primary Resource Information

Resource Category: Funerary

Resource Type: Cemetery

NR Resource Type: Site

Date of Construction: 1884

Date Source: Site Visit

Historic Time Period: The New Dominion (1946 - 1991)

Historic Context(s): Funerary

Other ID Number: No Data

Architectural Style: Other

Form: No Data

Number of Stories: No Data

Condition: Excellent

Threats to Resource: None Known

Architectural Description:

2021 Browning: The cemetery 4 rows of burials. It has 2 tombstones on the east, 16 on the next, 8 on the next and 3 on the east. Some are doubles. The total number of burials visible is 29, one of which has no marker due to the recent burial. Tombstones are of cement, some have aluminum markers, others have embedded iron markers that have rusted to illegibility and others are of black granite including the accomplishments of the deceased.

Cemetery Information

Current Use: Family
Historic Religious Affiliation: Unknown
Ethnic Affiliation: African Descent
Has Marked Graves: Yes
Has Unmarked Graves: Yes
Enclosure Type: None
Number Of Gravestones: 26 - 50
Earliest Marked Death Year: 1884
Latest Marked Death Year: No Data

Secondary Resource Information

Historic District Information

Historic District Name: No Data
Local Historic District Name: No Data
Historic District Significance: No Data

CRM Events

Event Type: Survey:Phase I/Reconnaissance

Project Review File Number: No Data
Investigator: Lyle Browning
Organization/Company: Browning & Associates, LTD
Photographic Media: Digital
Survey Date: 6/8/2021
Dhr Library Report Number: No Data
Project Staff/Notes:
No Data

Project Bibliographic Information:

Fletcher-Allen Cemetery
True Limits Survey
16151 John Marshall Highway
Broad Run, VA
Browning & Associates, LTD
138 Scoggins Creek Trl
Hartfield, VA 23071

Bibliographic Information

Bibliography:

No Data

Property Notes:

2021 Browning: The property is scheduled for development into residential structures. The cemetery will be expanded to include all of the burials and will be fenced. It will not be disturbed.

Appendix B – Project Photographs



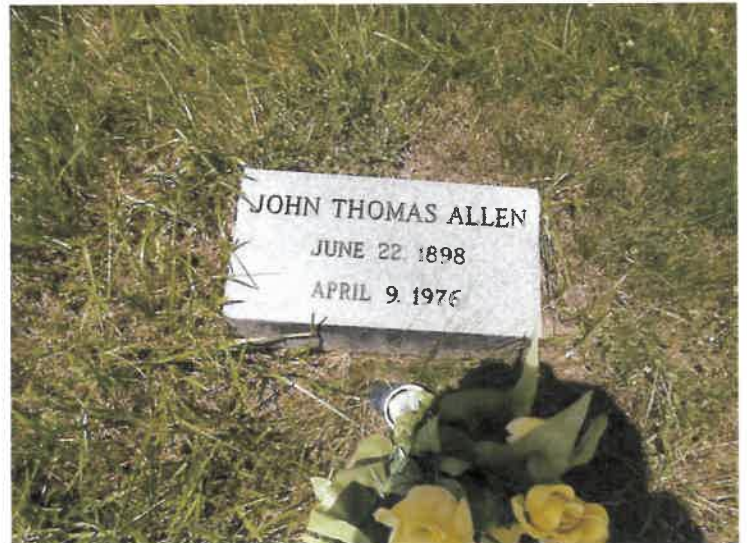
1. Fletcher, Thomas Sheridan



2. Allen, Elizabeth



3 & 4. Fields, Ernest H. & Mary W.



5. Allen, John Thomas



6. Allen, Elizabeth S..JPG



7. Allen, Howard.JPG



8. Fletcher, Bettie.JPG



9. Fletcher, Edward



10. Fletcher, Frank



11. Illegible



12. Fletcher, Kate Vass



13. Wilson, Anna Catherine



14. Allen, Charles H.



15. Allen, Mary S.



16. Allen, Cornelius



17. Washington, Beatrice Marier



18. Allen, Louise Virginia



19. Allen, Frank Lee



20. King, Martinez D.



21. Unmarked Stone



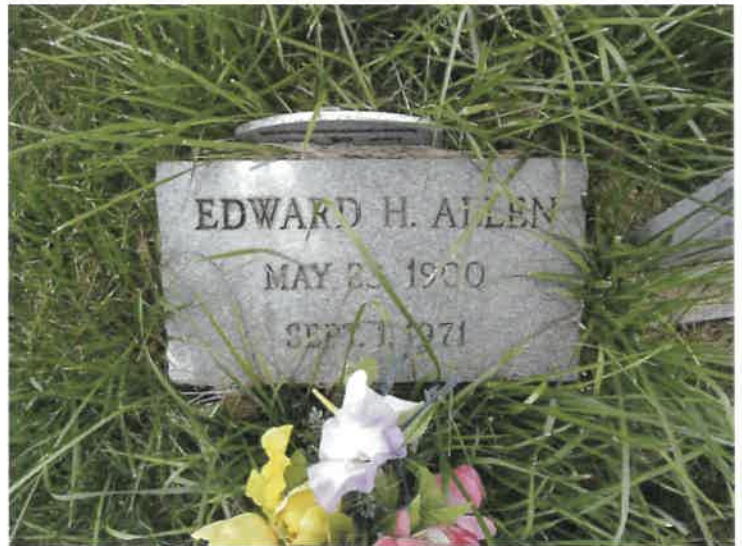
22. Illegible



23. Illegible



24 & 25. Allen, Edward & Grace



26. Allen, Edward H.



27. Washington, Sylvia B.



28. New Grave



29. Washington, John Hill



30. Washington, Frettie

Appendix C – Howard Report

Thoroughfare Cemetery Report

May 18, 2021

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At the request of Shawnee Elder woman Sheila Hansen, on May 16th, 2021, I made a site visit to the three cemeteries known as Scott, Fletcher-Allen, and Peyton. In attendance with me at my request to assist with this investigation was Ingrid Howard, P.E., D.GE, who is a Geotechnical Engineer and soil expert with the US Army Corps of Engineers and has a private company called IMH Engineering, PLLC. Also in attendance was Alex Zito, who holds a PhD in History, and his wife Kesia Zito. Kesia is a former attorney from Northern Virginia.

Upon arriving at the Fletcher-Allen cemetery, I was greeted by Harvey Washington, and his son Frank Washington. I also met several other members of this family. We surveyed the modern portion of the Fletcher-Allen cemetery and then moved into the cleared and well-manicured field to the south of it. This field is geographically a prominent knoll that gently slopes to the Northeast and Southwest. This is important because it is the tradition of American Indians that in most cases, they chose either plateaus that overlook valleys, rivers, streams, lakes, etc., or, if that were not available topographically speaking, they would choose the top of knolls and hills with grave placement usually on the Southwest side. This tradition is based on being buried to face the summer and winter solstice directions. A compass reading verified that this practice was followed in the choice of this cemetery location.



Modern Fletcher-Allen Cemetery



Open field area to the South of the modern cemetery

The Peyton and Scott cemeteries lie to the east of the Fletcher-Allen plot. Based on tradition and cemetery location, it appears the Fletcher-Allen was the first cemetery that was started in the early to mid-1800's and the Peyton and Scott cemeteries were then later started for other local families.

As we entered the open field area, I immediately noticed that along the north tree line edge, that there was a line of depressions in the ground spaced apart that followed the edge of the tree line. Some of these depressions in the ground had a rectangular shape. The depressions were usually 2-4" lower than the surface area around them. There was also a different color in the soil in the depressed areas in comparison to the surrounding areas. These areas were redder in color. Some of these rectangular depressed areas also show an absence of grass growing. It is possible some of these areas devoid of grass may be simply poor soil.



Examples of sunken rectangular areas devoid of grass

Another observation is that on top of some of these rectangular depressions, were deposits of broken shale. Throughout this area we did not encounter any surface shale deposits or outcrops. The shale lying on these depressed areas may have occurred as these graves were being dug the shale could have been on or just below the surface and broken as they dug down, or, when the holes were dug, they may have encountered shale at a deeper depth and removed it into a spoil heap that was used to cover the graves upon completion.

As we moved away from the tree line into the center of the field, I saw more individual areas that are visibly depressed. Some were rectangular in shape, while others were partial shaped. In this open field area, there appeared to be over twenty different depression areas. I did not see any headstones in the open field area.

Understanding now that this was potentially a large cemetery area, I ventured into the forested area that is to west of the open field area. As we walked into the forest, not more than thirty feet inside the tree canopy we began to find small field stones that were used as simple grave markers. I gently touched these stones to see if they were just lying loosely on the surface or were entrenched. I was not able to move these stones and they were firmly entrenched into the ground. One of these stones bares the distinct markings of an American Indian burial marker as the field stone was placed into the ground in a vertical manner as a "standing stone." This practice I have seen at multiple American Indian burial sites such as Bear Spirit Mountain, Gerrardstown and the Gananoque site in Canada. This standing stone was also made into the effigy of a bird face petroglyph. Upon close inspection of this glyph, I can see that there is clear evidence of the sandstone being carved to show the features of this bird face that include two eyes, eyebrows, an upper beak and a lower beak.

Below are photos of a couple of the headstones including a split photo of the bird face petroglyph head stone.



Carved or painted animal effigies are very commonly found in American Indian burial grounds. The artist in most cases would have used a deer antler or a harder local stone such as Basalt to “knap” or break off flakes and then peck into the rock the fine detail to create the image. Basalt scores an 8 out of 10 on the Moh's scale of rock hardness. They may have also imported Jasper which was used for making into petroglyphs as well as tools. It has a hardness rating of 6.5-7 on Moh's scale of rock hardness.

I also observed that there is a mixing of cultural practices in the burial methods at these sites. While the Christian tradition of placing a single headstone is demonstrated here, we also see the use of American Indian practices of aligning the cemetery sites with Summer/Winter solstice directions, the use of standing stones, and creating animal petroglyphs on the headstones. These people were honoring multiple cultural traditions during funeral procedures.

We explored these woods and determined that at the minimum, this cemetery site extended at least to the neighbor's construction fence to the north and that there were at least ten more potential burial sites inside of these woods as well. I also believe that there are potentially more burials behind the modern Fletcher-Allen cemetery that are also located in the woods behind it. Both locations warrant further archaeological research to identify these potential graves.

After surveying the forest area, we then moved over to see a single modern gravestone that Harvey Washington described as his deceased uncle. This single headstone is located close to the Peyton cemetery. I also noticed a field stone identical to the other field stone markers that was located near this modern grave marker that could be another burial.



Photo of the modern grave marker

We concluded looking at these markers and walked over to the Peyton cemetery. This cemetery is clearly marked, and each burial can be easily identified. Great care has been extended in the maintenance of this cemetery recently.

I also saw several spoil heaps left at different locations from when graves were dug into the soil and the removed soil placed into piles above the grave site at the time of the burials. I suspect there may be more burials outside of the fenced areas to the north, west and south of the established cemetery area. Further archaeological investigation should be undertaken.



Peyton Cemetery

Our last stop was to visit the Scott cemetery area that had recently been deforested. This area is suspected of having burials as well. Due to the stripping of the topsoil and attempted leveling by heavy equipment, it is impossible to now identify if there are any burials under the soil. Any head stones or depressions that could mark a burial site in the original condition of the soil has been either removed or greatly changed into an unrecognizable condition. To the northwest of this area near the county road are dump piles from the stripping of the soil. There are also scar marks in the soil of heavy equipment tracks that were scraping the soil after the tree removal. All tree stump holes were filled in by leveling as there are no tree root ball holes remaining. This was verified by our Geotechnical (soil) engineer.



Photos of the Scott Cemetery Area

Conclusion

The goal of this investigation was to determine if there are additional potential burials in addition to the established modern burial sites that have visible headstones marking each deceased person. I saw a lot of evidence of depressed areas that are potential burial locations. Some of these depressions were outlined in a rectangular shape where it was evident where it began and where it ended and measured in estimation to a human body length. Other depressions were partial in nature and may or may not be grave sites. I also feel that although there are three separate family cemetery areas, that these three cemeteries almost blend into each other in proximity.

In the early 19th century and in agreement by all these families that lived in this Thoroughfare locale, the area that the two hills are located at would be specifically designated and used as cemetery areas. As more people were buried, all three of these cemeteries moved toward each other thereby shrinking the distance between each cemetery. Over time, their descendants would build structures and introduce agriculture near the burial sites. The remaining simple headstones used in the 19th century that we found to mark a burial scream loudly to us that we are here, and there are many of us that need protection from being erased forever.

I hope to see further archaeological investigation where our team has brought to your attention these areas where potential burials are located. In the past, I have personally made use of geophysical testing methods such as ground penetrating radar (GPR) and electric resistivity (ER) testing at American Indian burial sites that successfully provided the scientific evidence that is needed for a definitive conclusion.

Regardless of the opinions of all involved, if there is just the potential of burials that need further investigation, we are obligated to find the correct answer before any further development can be allowed.

Thank you for allowing my team to be a small part of this investigation. I hope we provided some additional insights to the questions that are being asked about this location.

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About the author:

Matthew “Maasaw” Howard is a professional American Indian researcher that has located (15) American Indian ceremonial/burial sites ranging from Canada to Virginia. He is part Cherokee and part Tuscarora American Indian.

Matthew has published two books about American Indian burial and ceremonial practices. “Adonvdo Yona (Bear Spirit) Mountain, An Ancestral Awakening” was published in 2018. It won second place for “best new book” in the history category. “As I Rest, Let My Face Touch Heaven” was published in 2021. Matthew is also an expert at identifying American Indian rock art and rock structures used in ceremonial and burial practices. He often gives lectures at the local community level and has been a guest lecturer at several state archaeological society conventions producing the findings of his research.