

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF A SITE NEAR THE ALUMNI HOUSE AND THE EARLY COLLEGE BOUNDARY, COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY, CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA



PREPARED FOR:

The Lemon Project
The College of William and Mary

PREPARED BY:

William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research

Archaeological Assessment of a Site near the Alumni House and the Early College Boundary, College of William and Mary, City of Williamsburg, Virginia

WMCAR Project No. 15-07

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research conducted an archaeological assessment of a parcel located southwest of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and College Terrace from May 20 through 27, 2015. The main purpose of the work was to assess the potential for any unmarked graves within a small parcel of what was likely the northwestern edge of the original 330 acres of College-owned land dating back to 1693. The study area is approximately 2 acres in size and consists of a relatively level upland drained by unnamed tributaries of College Creek.

Fieldwork began with the establishment of a metric control grid over the study area, followed by pedestrian walkover and careful surface inspection to identify any surface features or deposits that may relate to historic use of the property, either as a cemetery or from some other historic occupation or activities. Based on the results of the surface inspection, the project archaeologist selected four areas with the greatest potential for subsurface archaeological features or deposits. Hand excavation of a 1-x-10-m trench in each of these four areas revealed the shallow interface between the heavily bioturbated topsoil and generally undisturbed subsoil. All trenches were raked prior to excavation, and the surface of each trench was carefully examined for any surface depressions that might indicate the presence of grave shaft features. All observed depressions were related to rotted stumps or root balls from fallen trees.

Excavation of Trenches 2 and 4 exposed a stratum distinguished by scattered flecking and chunks of brick occurring throughout the soils across the entirety of both trenches, and a possible posthole feature was observed in the northwest corner of Trench 4. Apart from this possible posthole, no subsurface features were observed in any of the trenches. Among the artifacts identified and documented in the field were fragments of brick, nineteenth-century ceramics, window pane

glass, dark green bottle glass, oyster shells, possible fire-cracked rock, and coal. Similar artifacts were noted in the exposed, graded subsurface beneath the pavement of nearby Harrison Avenue, which was undergoing resurfacing at the time of the investigation.

This assessment has provided the College the opportunity to investigate the archaeological potential of a portion of the grounds that documentary records indicated may have been situated along an early boundary of the College. By extension, and together with other circumstantial indications, this parcel had the potential to contain an unmarked cemetery or unmarked graves of enslaved workers at the College during the early colonial period. The proximity of the parcel to the nineteenth-century domestic complex of the Bright family's farm (i.e., the current site of the College Alumni House), coupled with indirect indications in the documentary record that antebellum property owners managed a large slave-holding farm, also suggested a potential for associated archaeological resources representing outbuildings, quarters, and/or activity areas.

Although the assessment yielded no evidence or archaeological indications of an unmarked cemetery or unmarked graves within the parcel, a previously unrecorded domestic site (44WB0137) dating from the first half of the nineteenth century was identified on the most elevated, northwestern portion of the parcel adjacent to Harrison Avenue. Documentary research findings for this study indicate that the Bright House, now the Alumni House, was constructed ca. 1871–1872 after the end of the Civil War. From their homes in downtown Williamsburg, however, members of the Bright family made use of the labor of dozens of enslaved workers to operate a large farm on an adjacent property beginning ca. 1839 and on land that encompassed the study area from 1849 until slavery in Virginia ended in 1865.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1: Project Background

INTRODUCTION

The William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) conducted an archaeological assessment of a parcel located southwest of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and College Terrace, from May 20 through 27, 2015 (Figures 1 and 2). The main purpose of the work was to assess the potential for any unmarked graves within a small parcel of what was likely the northwestern edge of the original 330 acres of College-owned land dating back to 1693. The work was funded in part by the Lemon Project, a program at the College that, among other goals, supports research into the relationship between the College of William and Mary and African Americans over the College's 300-year history.

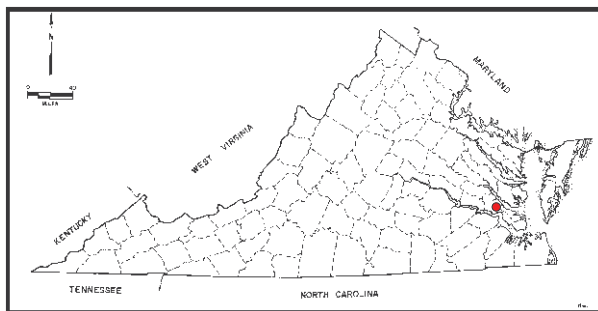


Figure 1. Study area location.

The investigation was carried out under the general supervision of WMCAR Director Joe B. Jones. Project Archaeologist Elizabeth J. Monroe was responsible for organization and implementation of the field program and preparation of the final report. Dr. Monroe was assisted in the field

by Senior Field Archaeologist Kevin Goodrich and WMCAR staff members Michele Brumfield, Chris Godschalk, and Stephanie Smith. Deborah L. Davenport consulted on historic artifact identification. David W. Lewes researched and wrote the historical context and produced the final report. Eric A. Agin prepared the final illustrations. All project-related documentation is stored at the WMCAR in Williamsburg, Virginia, referenced under project number 15-07.

DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area, approximately 0.8 ha (2 acres), lies within Southern Coastal Plain region. Specifically, it is located on the northern edge of the College of William and Mary Campus, south and west of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and College Terrace, within the City of Williamsburg, Virginia. The study area is located on relatively level land drained by unnamed tributaries of College Creek, itself a tributary of the James River, and lies at an elevation of 24 m (80 ft.) above mean sea level. The area is forested, with a mature secondary growth of pine, tulip poplar, sweet gum, and beech trees, as well as an understory of holly and pawpaw trees. Several of the trees are estimated to be at least 100 years old, indicating that this area has not been cleared or plowed in over a century. A wide variety of modern beverage containers were noted on the surface along with other modern trash. Generally, soils in the study area are Craven-Uchee Complex soils. These are somewhat well-drained to moderately

well-drained soils derived from marine sediments (CSRL 2015). Wildlife typical of this area include gray squirrel, rabbit, white-tailed deer, eastern box turtle, black snake, blue jay, crow, barred owl, hawk, wild turkey, and migratory and resident waterfowl (Kricher and Morrison 1988).

The eastern portion of the study area is uneven and appears to have been an area used for dump-

ing soil and yard waste; vegetation that tends to colonize recently disturbed ground or modified landscapes, such as poison ivy, greenbrier, and periwinkle, is present throughout this area. In contrast, the central portion of the study area is relatively level and has little undergrowth. The western portion of the study area dips to a bench that is bound on either side by steep ravines.

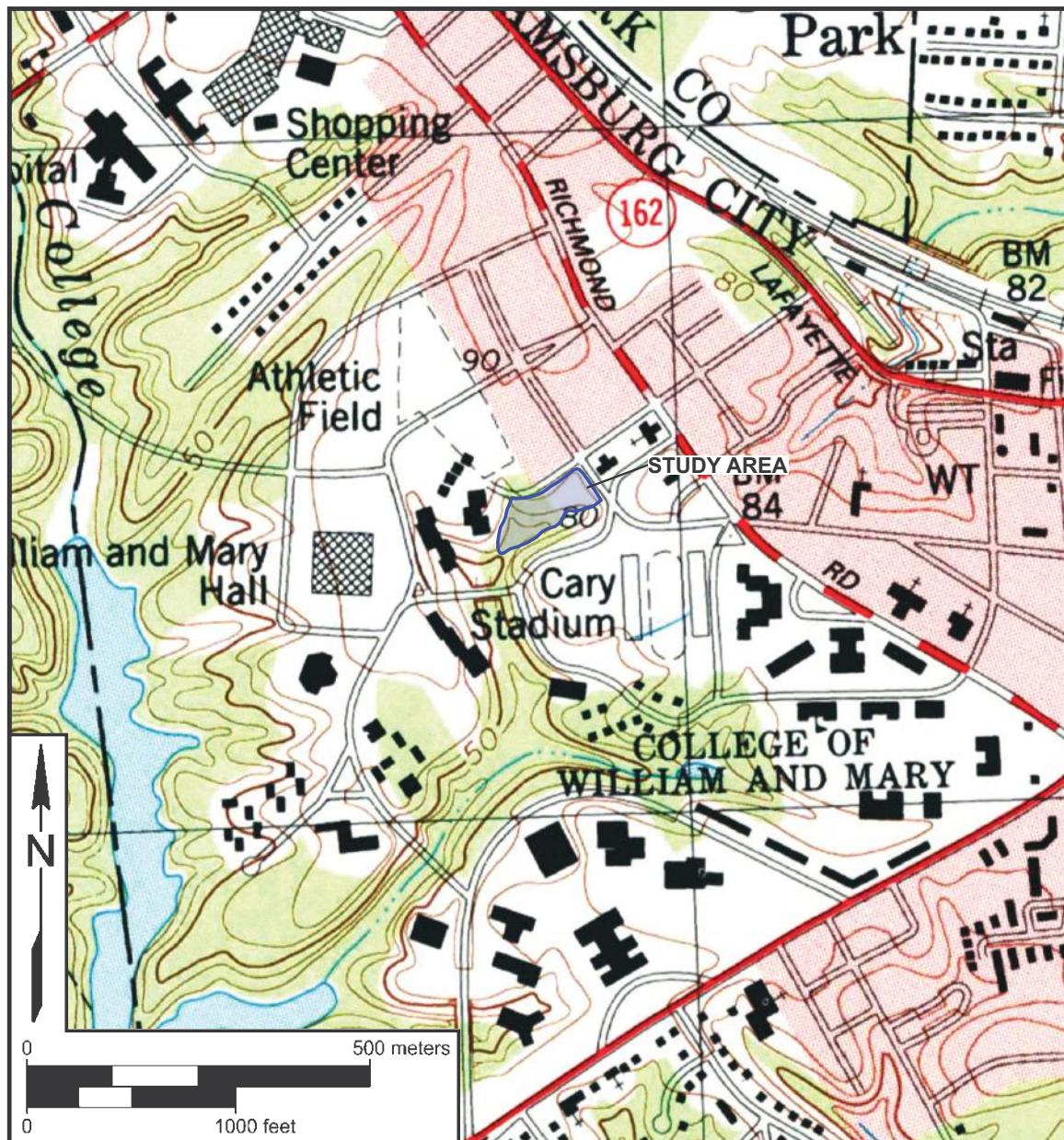


Figure 2. Study area and environs (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 1981, 1983).

2: Site-Specific Background Research

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH METHODS

The main purpose of this research was to trace the property history in order to ascertain whether the study area historically may have included a cemetery or other domestic or activity areas. Through chain of title research among the court records at the Circuit Court clerk's office of James City County and Williamsburg, the ownership was traced back to the Bright family, who owned the property from the late 1840s to 1944. Prior to the late 1840s, the study area was part of the original 330-acre tract on which the College of William and Mary was established. With this ownership history in hand, additional details about the use of the property were researched among the holdings of the Special Collections department of William and Mary's Swem Library, the Virginia Historical Society, the Library of Virginia, and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Rockefeller Library. In addition, the research included a thorough review of relevant secondary sources, as well as historical maps of the vicinity of the study area, available from the above-mentioned research repositories as well as online through the Library of Congress and other institutions.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The study area is part of the original tract of land purchased for the College of William and Mary in the late seventeenth century. On February 8, 1693, King William III and Queen Mary II issued a charter to establish "a perpetual College of Divinity, Philosophy, Languages, and other good Arts and Sciences" in their stable and prospering

Virginia colony (Kornwolf 1989:13–14). Later that year, the House of Burgesses approved the purchase of 330 acres at Middle Plantation, conveniently located halfway between the colony's capital at Jamestown and the population cluster at recently established Yorktown. Selection of this tract allowed the College to be constructed "as neer the church now standing in Middle Plantation old ffields [Bruton Parish Church] as convenience will permitt" (Kornwolf 1989:35).

Middle Plantation began in the 1630s as a foray of English settlement into the interior of the James-York Peninsula, an early step in venturing beyond the fortified settlements along the banks of the James River. The dispersed neighborhood of plantations stretched along the east side of a palisade that spanned the peninsula, defining a boundary with the Powhatan Indians' territory to the west (Muraca 2009:3). By 1675, the concentration of wealthy landowners at Middle Plantation led to its growing prominence. Eventually, several dwellings, a church, an ordinary, and other brick buildings clustered near a horse path that snaked through the present historic area of Williamsburg. After the burning of Jamestown during Bacon's Rebellion, the government met at various locations in Middle Plantation before the colony's capital moved to the newly established Williamsburg in 1699 (Jones 2000:18–20).

The original 330-acre tract for establishing the College of William and Mary was a part of Rich Neck Plantation, owned by Secretary of the Colony Thomas Ludwell since 1665 (Muraca 2009:6). The Ludwell family's mansion stood to

the southwest, south of present Jamestown Road on the landform between College Creek and Route 199. Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists uncovered the remains of this substantial brick building in the 1990s (Muraca et al. 2009). In 1675, Ludwell sold 330 acres at the eastern end of Rich Neck to Col. Thomas Ballard for £110 (Kornwolf 1989:67, n 9).

In 1678 (the year Thomas Ludwell died), Robert Beverley prepared a plat showing the lands Ballard had purchased (Figure 3). The surveyor's measurements and bearings are precise enough to approximately georeference the boundary to modern aerial imagery (Figure 4). There are some discrepancies between the angles of the lines drawn on the plat compared to the accompanying metes and bounds. Overall, however, the courses of streams at the western edge of the tract allow an overlay of the plat that is only slightly distorted through the "rubbersheeting" process, which matches common points on the current landscape with identifiable landmarks labeled by Beverley. According to this overlay, the study area straddles the northern edge of the 330-acre tract.

Although the plat does not depict the locations of any buildings within the boundary, a label at one of the corners south of Jamestown Road refers to a nearby "negroes quarter." This slave quarter would have stood far to the south of the study area. The predecessor of Jamestown Road does not appear on the plat, but "New Kent Road" provides a reference feature, largely following the alignment of present Richmond Road and marking the northeast boundary of the tract where it abuts a 60-acre parcel of John Page, possibly also divided from Rich Neck. The point where the New Kent Road meets the southeast boundary of the tract corresponds to the present intersection of Jamestown and Richmond roads at the eastern entrance to the historic campus. At the western end of the tract, the boundary follows "the severall courses of Archers Hope Swamp," or the headwaters of College Creek. At the southwest corner, the stream course is now submerged under

Lake Matoaka, originally created as a mill pond in the first half of the eighteenth century. Along the western edge of the 330-acre tract, Beverley labels a tributary of Archer's Hope Creek as "Valley and runne of the divideing branch." This stream is now a branch feeding into the east side of Lake Matoaka. The ravines along the southeastern and western edges of the study area are at the uppermost limits of the "divideing branch."

On December 20, 1693, Thomas Ballard sold the 330-acre tract he had acquired from Thomas Ludwell to the College for £170. After the appropriation of construction funds the following June 1694, workers began firing the first bricks needed for the College buildings, and on August 8, 1695, builders laid the cornerstone of the Wren Building. Construction proceeded haltingly until enough work had been done for the building to be usable for teaching in 1699 (Kornwolf 1989:35).

By 1700, the Wren Building was completed, and a small group of faculty and scholars took up residence. Throughout the colonial period and until the mid-nineteenth century, the College retained the 330-acre tract that extended west of the Wren Yard, along with thousands of acres in various Tidewater counties that were farmed or timbered to fund an endowment (Farish 1964:69–70). During this period, the home tract provided a fringe benefit for the faculty. Beyond the Wren Yard and a small botanical specimen garden in the location of the present Sunken Garden, the College lands consisted of pasture and woods where the faculty could graze livestock and cut firewood free of charge (Sacks 1984:8). As the study area lies at the western edge of the tract, far beyond the historic campus and botanical garden, the marginal sloped land of the study area probably was wooded. Most quarters for enslaved servants of the College likely would have stood at the margins of the historic campus containing the President's House, Brafferton Building, and Wren Building rather than the more distant study area. Convenient access to this area would have





Figure 4. Boundaries of the 330-acre College tract georeferenced to modern aerial imagery, showing the location of the study area along the northern boundary.

been important for the typical tasks performed by enslaved College servants: cooking and serving food to the faculty and students, serving as doorkeeper, drawing water and laying fires in the academic and residential buildings, and cultivating garden produce to supply the dining hall, running errands, and cleaning and laundry (Oast 2008:169, 176). Only the quarters for enslaved workers tasked with cutting and hauling firewood or tending livestock may have been more likely located in the more remote portions of campus near the study area.

No detailed maps of the study area are known for the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. By 1781, however, intensive military activity in Williamsburg during the American Revolutionary War resulted in several maps by French engineers that show topography, streams, and individual buildings. The most useful is a map by Nicholas Desandrouins (published in 1782) showing the positions of American and French troops as they gathered in Williamsburg in October 1781 for a decisive assault on Lord Cornwallis and his forces at Yorktown (Figure 5). By this time, the upper reaches of College Creek had been dammed to create a millpond for “Ludwell’s mill,” which stood on the south side of the predecessor of Jamestown Road. The Ludwell family of Rich Neck Plantation, located south of the mill, owned that property. The map shows that woods covered the study area at the head of the Dividing Branch tributary of College Creek. French and American troops set up camp on the elevated ridges overlooking the small stream. The French artillery encampment appears between two clusters of buildings that may have been associated with the predecessor of New Hope Farm, a property later owned by the Bright family in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first property acquired locally by the Brights (originally from Elizabeth City County) was Porto Bello, a plantation overlooking Queen’s Creek on what is now Camp Peary Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity. Previously, Porto

Bello had belonged to the last colonial governor of Virginia, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore. As Williamsburg residents grew increasingly hostile to the governor in June 1775, he evacuated the Governor’s Palace and fled to Porto Bello. From there, he boarded a British naval ship and eventually left Virginia. After the Virginia Convention seized Dunmore’s Virginia assets in 1776 and auctioned them to the public in 1779, the next identified owner was Francis Bright (Historic American Buildings Survey [HABS] 1998:2).

In the early nineteenth century, the Porto Bello property passed to one of Francis Bright’s relatives, Samuel F. Bright. Born on Back River in Elizabeth City in 1803, Samuel Bright married his first wife, Susan, in 1827. She died on March 20, 1830, only 12 days after the birth of their daughter, also named Susan. In 1834, Samuel married Elizabeth Maria Jerdone Southall at her uncle’s house in Baltimore. The couple had two boys, Francis Peyton Bright (died at age three in 1839) and Robert Anderson Bright (born 1839). Elizabeth Bright died on July 21, 1839, less than four months after Robert’s birth (Anderson 1903:32–33).

By the 1830s, Samuel Bright resided in Williamsburg, and his daughter, Susan, and her husband, William L. Henley, lived at Porto Bello (Historic American Buildings Survey 1998:2–3). Built ca. 1800, this building replaced the old hunting lodge that had belonged to Lord Dunmore. According to Samuel Bright’s account ledger, there were 26 enslaved workers at Porto Bello in 1828, 39 in 1838, and 26 in 1848. The labor force grew corn, wheat, and castor beans; raised livestock; and harvested timber on the property. Bright calculated net profits from these activities at \$1,430 for 1838, \$600 for 1839, \$1,200 for 1840, and \$1,522 for 1841. Porto Bello also included a prime oyster bank along Queen’s Creek and served as the base for harvesting oysters farther afield, probably on the York River and Chesapeake Bay. With the cost of hiring additional labor and the outlay for two boats and sails, oysters yielded



Figure 5. Location of study area on Revolutionary War-era French military map (Desandrouins 1781).

modest profits of \$182.92 in 1839 and \$40.02 in 1840 (Bright 1828–1861:9).

In addition to Porto Bello, Samuel Bright owned a large James City County property immediately west of the College lands called New Hope, probably purchased in 1839. The property comprised 594 acres, including 322 acres purchased at \$10.15 per acre, 270 acres at \$2 per acre, and an additional 2 acres purchased from an adjoining landowner, Samuel Pryor. In 1841, Bright received \$1,150 for the sale of a 270-acre portion of New Hope, reducing the property to 324 acres (Bright 1828–1861:3). A subsequent description of lands that Bright purchased from the College ca. 1847–1849 indicates that New Hope extended westward from the old campus line at present Harrison Avenue (James City County [JCC] Deed Book [DB] 2:409). The boundary may have run along Richmond Road as far northwest as present New Hope Road, which was probably named for this early farm. With a western boundary extending back from Richmond Road to the upper reaches of College Creek, a rough polygon drawn in ArcGIS encompasses an area of 330 to 400 acres, comparable to New Hope's size of 324 acres after 1841.

Beginning in 1839, Bright made a series of repairs and improvements to the New Hope property. That first year, he spent \$100 for the construction of an ice house. He also had a "Corn House" erected (\$200) and rebuilt a dwelling (\$750). The following year, construction of a "negro quarter" cost \$60 and a kitchen, \$350. Bright also noted the \$800 expense for devoting the full-time labor of "Four men, one woman and two boys" toward clearing, fencing, marling, and manuring the fields. By May 1841, he sold 270 acres, as mentioned above. Some of the improvements may have been on the portion sold, which brought a price of \$4.26 per acre. On the remaining 324 acres of New Hope Farm, Bright continued to invest in buildings and soil improvement during the summer and fall of 1842. He built a substantial barn (\$425), a "New Negro quarter for

Billy Saunders & family" (\$100), a smokehouse (\$40), and two shed-roofed additions on the barn (\$75). By January 1844, workers had brought 1,330 ox cart loads of manure from stables in Williamsburg and spread it over the New Hope fields in order to improve the soil's productivity (Bright 1828–1861:3).

In 1845, Bright compared the return on capital at New Hope against the amount he would have earned on equivalent funds deposited in a savings account with a standard annual interest rate of 6 percent. The \$11,000 of capital at New Hope included "Land and improvements" (\$6,615), "Value of Negroes on it" (\$3,500), and "Value of Stock, Team, Farming utensils and years provisions" (\$1,000). He estimated annual expenses at only \$12 for taxes and \$24.50 for clothing, shoes, and blankets for his enslaved labor force (he did not count the laborers' food, which must have been provided from New Hope livestock and crops). Gross revenue amounted to \$733.50 through the sale of corn (\$250 for 125 barrels), wheat (\$227.50 for 260 bushels), corn furnished to his Porto Bello estate (\$50 value for 25 barrels), veal and beef (\$44), oats (\$120 for 300 bushels), and fodder (\$42 for 6,00 lb.). According to Bright's estimates, his profit on the farm exceeded by \$37 the interest (\$660) he would have earned at a bank on money equivalent to his capital investment at New Hope (Bright 1828–1861:4).

In 1844, there were 10 enslaved individuals at New Hope. In 1845, Bright tallied purchases of clothing and blankets for the following workers on the property: Daniel, Billy, Jesse, Peter, Patsy, Rico (a boy), Martha, Jane, Lavinia, Randall, Mary Jane, Maria, and Charles. The clothes included jackets, trousers, shoes, and summer trousers. For two of the women, Patsy and Caroline, he purchased "frocks" instead of jackets. Another account of clothing purchases indicates 18 enslaved individuals were working at New Hope in 1848 (Bright 1828–1861:n.p.).

The enslaved population of New Hope appears to have varied as Bright's work force requirements

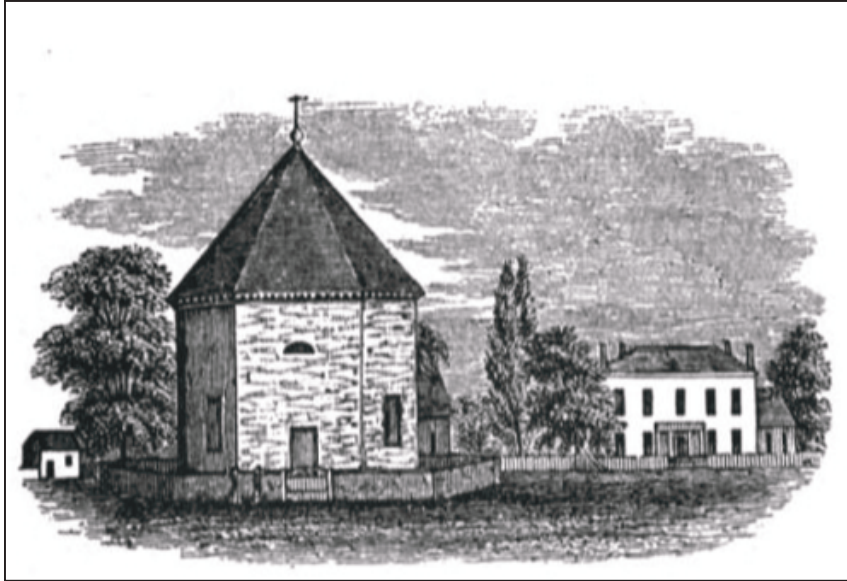


Figure 6. Sketch of the Samuel F. Bright house, located on the lot at the southwest corner of Francis and England streets until its destruction by fire in 1873 (Tyler 1907:223).

changed not only for Porto Bello and New Hope, but for other ventures as well. In 1841 and 1842, Bright undertook a contract to furnish 20,000 bricks to the mental asylum in Williamsburg. However, he appears to have hired additional workers to perform these specialized tasks (Bright 1828–1861:15). In addition, Bright’s accounts for 1847 and 1848 indicate income from 19 hires of enslaved workers to various businesses and individuals (Bright 1828–1861:16).

Despite owning large properties at Porto Bello in York County and New Hope in James City County, Samuel Bright chose to live in downtown Williamsburg. As late as 1839, when his son Robert A. Bright was born, he lived in one of the dependencies of the Governor’s Palace (Bright ca. 1904). Probably sometime between 1839 and 1841, Bright moved to a house on the lot at the southwest corner of Francis and England streets. The property also included the building that had served as the James City County courthouse from sometime after 1715 until 1770. After the courthouse functions moved to a new courthouse building on Duke of Gloucester Street, this small building on the northeast corner of the lot was used as a business office by Samuel Bright and earlier owners. The large five-bay, hipped-roofed

eighteenth-century dwelling stood at the center of the lot and appears on the 1782 “Frenchman’s Map” of Williamsburg (Anonymous 1782). Historian Lyon Gardiner Tyler included an illustration of the Bright House in his history of Williamsburg (Ragland 1990; Tyler 1907:223) (Figure 6). The historian’s father, John Tyler, had lived in the house from 1837 until a date no later than the beginning of his term as President of the United States in 1841 (Tyler 1907:253). Samuel F. Bright’s residence there began sometime after President Tyler vacated the property and may have continued until Bright’s death in 1868.

Between 1847 and 1849, Samuel F. Bright expanded his New Hope property with the purchase of an adjacent 132.5-acre tract from the College of William and Mary. Evidence of the transaction appears in three documents. First, the account book of Samuel F. Bright contains the following note of the sale and a brief boundary description:

Purchased College lands in Oct 1847
 From Mill Pond to the open land is 616 yds.
 From commencement of open lands to the corner at College lot is 594 yds. From Mill Road [Jamestown Road] in line with backs of garden to the Richmond Road is 412 [yds.]. From

corner on Richmond Road to New Hope line is 450 [yds.].

The second reference to the sale is in a deed of trust recorded on August 5, 1848, and re-recorded on July 4, 1864. The document indicates the sale price of \$1,989 that Bright paid for the 132.5 acres to the “President and Masters or Professors of the College of William and Mary in Virginia” (Baldwin 1972). Although no plat of the purchased tract survives from the late 1840s, a map of large properties on the James-York Peninsula between Williamsburg and Yorktown shows the boundary between the Bright property and the reduced College lands in 1871 (Figure 7). The third piece of documentation for the sale is a note in the 1850 land tax list stating that Bright acquired the tract “By Deed from Wm & Mary College in 1849” (James City County [JCC] Land Tax 1850).

The sale occurred during an episode of crisis in the history of the College—one so drastic that the institution closed for an entire academic year due to a heated dispute between the faculty and Board of Visitors. It is very likely that the situation caused the delay between the 1847 sale noted in Bright’s account book and the 1849 conveyance noted in land tax records. The dire chain of events at the College began to unfold when President Thomas Dew died during his honeymoon in Paris in 1846. Though an erudite professor of history, metaphysics, and political economy, Dew is notorious today for writings that defended the institution of slavery. In 1847 the Board of Visitors selected mathematics professor Robert Saunders, the senior faculty member, as president pro tem; Bishop Jay Johns as president and professor of moral philosophy; and Frederick Holmes to teach history and political economy. When Johns declined the offer, the Board selected Archibald Peachy to teach moral philosophy. Selection of this son of Dr. Thomas Peachy, a long-serving member of the Board, drew the ire of Saunders and most of the faculty. Archibald Peachy, they contended, had an indif-

ferent academic reputation and had received the offer through nepotism. With excitable students joining the outcry, the incident almost erupted into violence as a mob gathered at the Peachy residence. Although Professor Beverley Tucker managed to prevent a potential shooting, the rift between the factions led to Saunders’ resignation and a plot by some of the faculty to set up a new rival college in Richmond (Johnson 1992; Rouse 1992). When the Board met in March 1848, they asked for the faculty’s resignation. To justify this drastic measure, they cited a list of infractions that included raising student board in the middle of the year, irregular conduct in the dismissal of a student who was a son of a board member, and for “selling land contrary to statute”—evidently a reference to the 132.5 acres offered to Samuel Bright (Johnson 1992:24). When several of the faculty declined the offer of reappointment in July 1848, the College was obliged to close its doors for the following academic year, while the Board hired additional faculty and eventually convinced Jay Johns to serve as president.

In 1850, Samuel Bright’s James City County estate (now comprising New Hope augmented with the 132.5-acre College tract) was a highly productive farm with 300 improved acres and 160 unimproved acres valued at a total of \$13,000. Like many local farmers, he concentrated on growing grain, with yields of 700 bushels of wheat and 1,900 bushels of Indian corn. The farm’s livestock included work animals (three horses, one ass/mule, and six oxen) as well as animals raised for dairy (100 lb. of butter) and meat (four dairy cows, 11 other cattle, 45 swine). In addition to the \$500 worth of livestock present at the time of the census, animals slaughtered within the previous year had a value of \$100. Farming implements were worth \$200.

In 1850, the U.S. census enumerator noted the genders and ages of 14 enslaved individuals present on Samuel Bright’s James City County property. They included five children between the ages of one and 8, a 14-year-old female, five adult

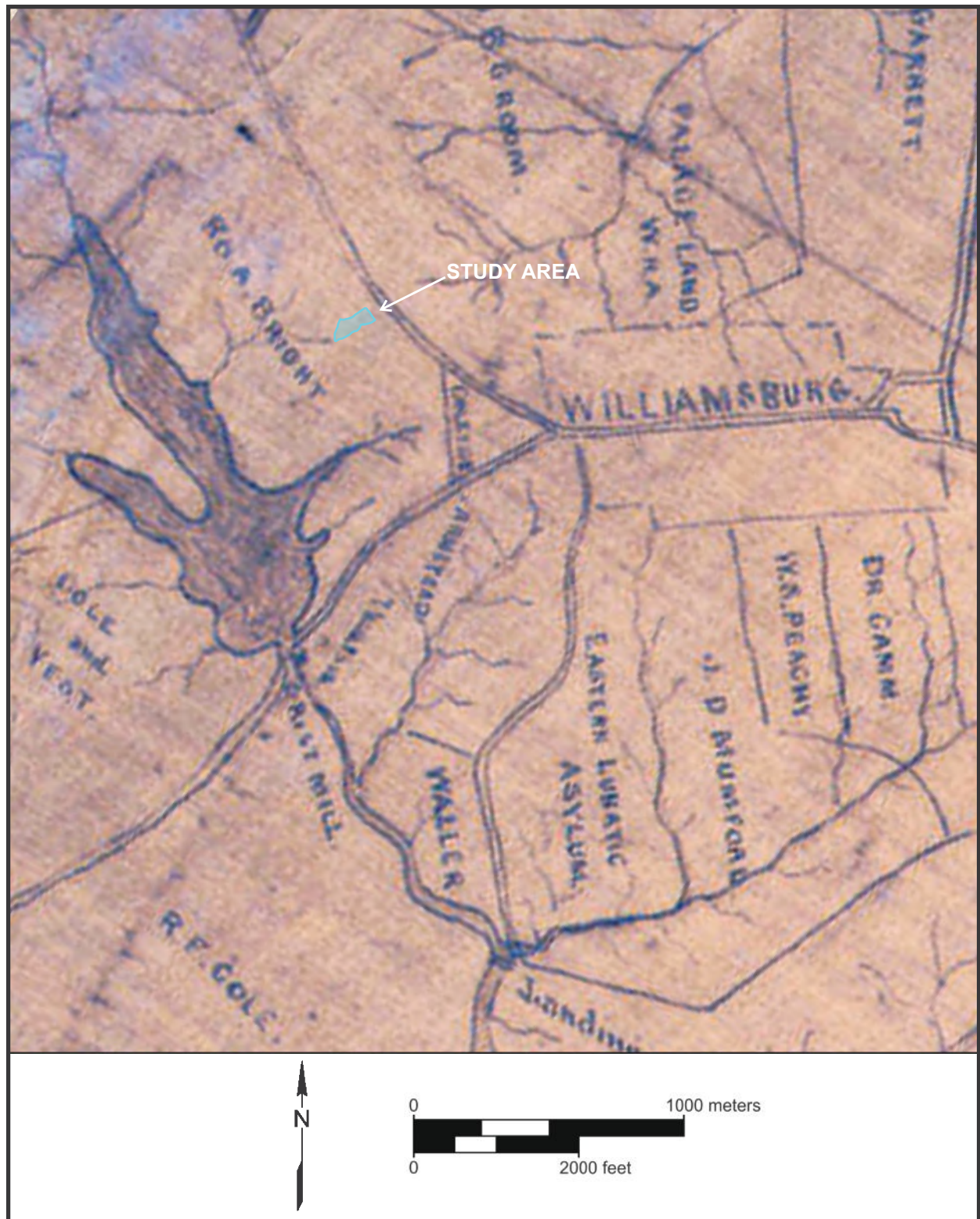


Figure 7. Map of large properties on the James-York Peninsula, showing the boundary between the Bright property and the College in the second half of the nineteenth century (Anonymous 1871).

women (ages 20 to 55), two 30-year-old men, and a 60-year-old man. Depending on the schedule of tasks at his two farms, enslaved workers at New Hope (James City County) may have been shifted to Porto Bello (in York County) at the time of this census. It is also possible that some of the 12 enslaved individuals recorded in the same 1850 census at Bright's property in Williamsburg also worked periodically at the New Hope Farm (U.S. Census, Slave Schedules 1850). Two years later, Bright noted that 44 slaves were present on the New Hope farm (Bright 1828–1861:n.p.).

Despite some recently published suggestions that the Bright House predates the Civil War (Meyers 2007), evidence from the sale of the 132.5 acres of College lands, combined with a review of James City County land tax records, demonstrates that the Bright farmhouse/present Alumni House was not built before 1871–1872.

The land tax records of James City County chronicle the value of buildings on both the New Hope Farm (where Samuel Bright made substantial improvements in the 1840s) and the 132.5-acre College tract that was listed on a separate line from Bright's original New Hope holdings in 1849 and 1850. From 1844 (the earliest tax list examined) through 1848, Samuel Bright's 322.9-acre property (New Hope) included buildings worth a total of \$800. In 1849, the building value for the same 322.9-acre tract increased slightly, to \$928.34. On the next line, the tax assessor listed the 132.5-acre tract with taxes assessed on the land alone; there were no buildings on that property. This is significant in that the 132.5 acres included the site of the present Bright House/Alumni House, confirming that neither a plantation house, nor a slave quarter, nor a building of any value stood on the property when it came into the possession of Samuel Bright. Likewise, in 1850, the tax assessments remained unchanged for both tracts. A year later, the tax assessor combined the adjacent tracts on one line, 455.25 acres with a total building value unchanged at \$928.34, indicating that no additional construc-

tion had occurred the previous year. In 1851, the building value declined to \$650, and then rose to \$800 in 1852 and remained unchanged through 1856. From 1857 through 1861, the building value was \$1,000. The increase of \$200 could reflect improvements to existing buildings or the addition of minor structures—clearly not the construction of an imposing brick dwelling like the Bright House/Alumni House. During this period, moreover, the 1860 census again recorded Samuel Bright as a resident of Williamsburg, not James City County. No land tax records exist for 1862–1864, but by the end of the Civil War the 1865 land tax list indicates that no buildings were standing on the property.

On May 30, 1866, Robert A. Bright purchased the New Hope property from his father for \$10,500. By now Robert was a 27-year-old veteran who had served on Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett's staff at Gettysburg. Educated at the College of William and Mary and the University of Virginia, he returned to Williamsburg intent on making a living as a farmer, despite the dismal economic climate (Krick 2003:83). In 1867 and 1868, Robert Bright paid taxes on 463 acres (the slight increase in size may reflect a re-survey associated with the transfer of title or an additional purchase of adjacent land), but none of the taxes were for buildings on the still-desolate landscape. Only in 1869 did the assessment for buildings increase very modestly to \$100, and again to \$150 in 1871. At the time of the 1870 census, Robert A. Bright lived in the town of Williamsburg, probably in the family's home on Francis Street. Samuel Bright had died in 1868 and Robert's household included his maiden aunt, Elizabeth B. Bright (age 60), as well as seven other individuals of various ages (U.S. Population Census 1870). The following year, Robert Bright married Nannie Munford, the daughter of his late father's neighbor, John Munford, who lived at Tazewell Hall on England Street.

It is not perhaps coincidental that only a year after his marriage, the value of buildings on Robert

Bright's property in James City County increased dramatically, to \$6,800—a value commensurate with a substantial two-story brick dwelling like the Bright House/Alumni House. Prior to major renovations in 1949 that lent a more Georgian appearance to the Bright House/Alumni House, the building bore many of the characteristic traits of Victorian architecture that were popular in the 1870s, including a pedimented, cross-gabled dormer on the front slope of the side-gabled roof. Photographs from the 1920s–early 1940s show the cross-gabled dormer, shutters, a full-width front porch supported by chamfered posts, and decorative trim under the eaves of the porch and the cross-gabled dormer (Hanbury 2015) (Figures 8 and 9).

Further evidence that the Bright House/Alumni House was not built prior to the Civil War can be deduced from military records. A detailed map of Williamsburg and environs produced by Union Army engineers bears no evidence of a major structure at the easily identifiable location along Richmond Road (Worrett 1862) (Figure 10). It is unlikely that such a prominent, isolated structure on the outskirts of Williamsburg would have been overlooked by topographical engineers who documented similar-sized farm houses and other isolated buildings in the countryside to the east and west. If a supposed antebellum Bright farmhouse on the 132.5-acre tract had resembled the extraordinary building depicted by Priv. Robert Knox Sneden, with its oversize cupola, it surely would not have escaped the attention of Union engineers, nor any officer in the Confederate or Union Armies filing reports of the frequent raiding and reconnaissance activities conducted in the area between 1862 and 1865. In fact, a search of the Civil War's Official Records compiled by the U.S. Department of War yielded no hits for such obvious terms as "Bright House," "Bright Farm," "New Hope Farm," "S. F. Bright," or "Samuel Bright." Only two references to the family name appear. The first records the promotion of 1st. Lt. Robert A. Bright to acting adjutant general on the

staff of Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett (U.S. War Department [OR] 1880-1901, Series 1, Vol. 51, Part 2, p. 776). The other involves the testimony of Robert's father and aunt in defense of a relative who was accused of being a Union spy (OR Series 1, Vol. 2, pp. 1365–1366).

In a special agreement related to his marriage to Nannie Munford, Robert A. Bright conveyed the family property in trust to William H. E. Morecock on June 30, 1871 (JCC DB 2:409). In the event of Robert Bright's death, his wife would inherit life rights to his property. Nannie's father, John Munford, owed considerable debts and it appears that Robert Bright hoped to protect his estate from Munford's creditors through the assignment of a trustee. The agreement further confirms that the Bright Property consisted of New Hope farm and the 132.5-acre "College Land" that Samuel F. Bright had acquired in 1849. In the deed, Robert Bright proposed that the combined 442 acres should be called "Mondawmin." In addition to the real estate, Morecock would hold in trust "four horses, all cattle, hogs, farming implements, crops and household and kitchen furniture" on the property.

In 1872, Nannie Bright bore the first of three children, Robert Southall Bright (Leonard 1908:97). He was followed by a sister, Nannie, in 1878 and a brother, Alexander Macaulay, in 1879. In a memoir of his early years in Williamsburg, Robert S. Bright recalls that he spent much of his youth in the Munford house, Tazewell Hall, located at that time on England Street near the old Bright House. Based on the 1880 census, the Robert A. Bright family lived in Williamsburg (possibly still at Tazewell Hall; the old Bright House on Francis Street had burned in 1873) rather than in James City County (New Hope) (Bright 1941:1–2; Tyler 1907:253). Robert S. Bright graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1891 and then served an apprenticeship with a Philadelphia lawyer. He moved there permanently and led a successful career as a lawyer and banker (Malone 1963). His sister,



Figure 8. Early twentieth-century photograph of the Bright House with porch and cross-gabled dormer (Baldwin 1972)



Figure 9. View of the Bright House façade following renovations in 1948 (Baldwin 1972).

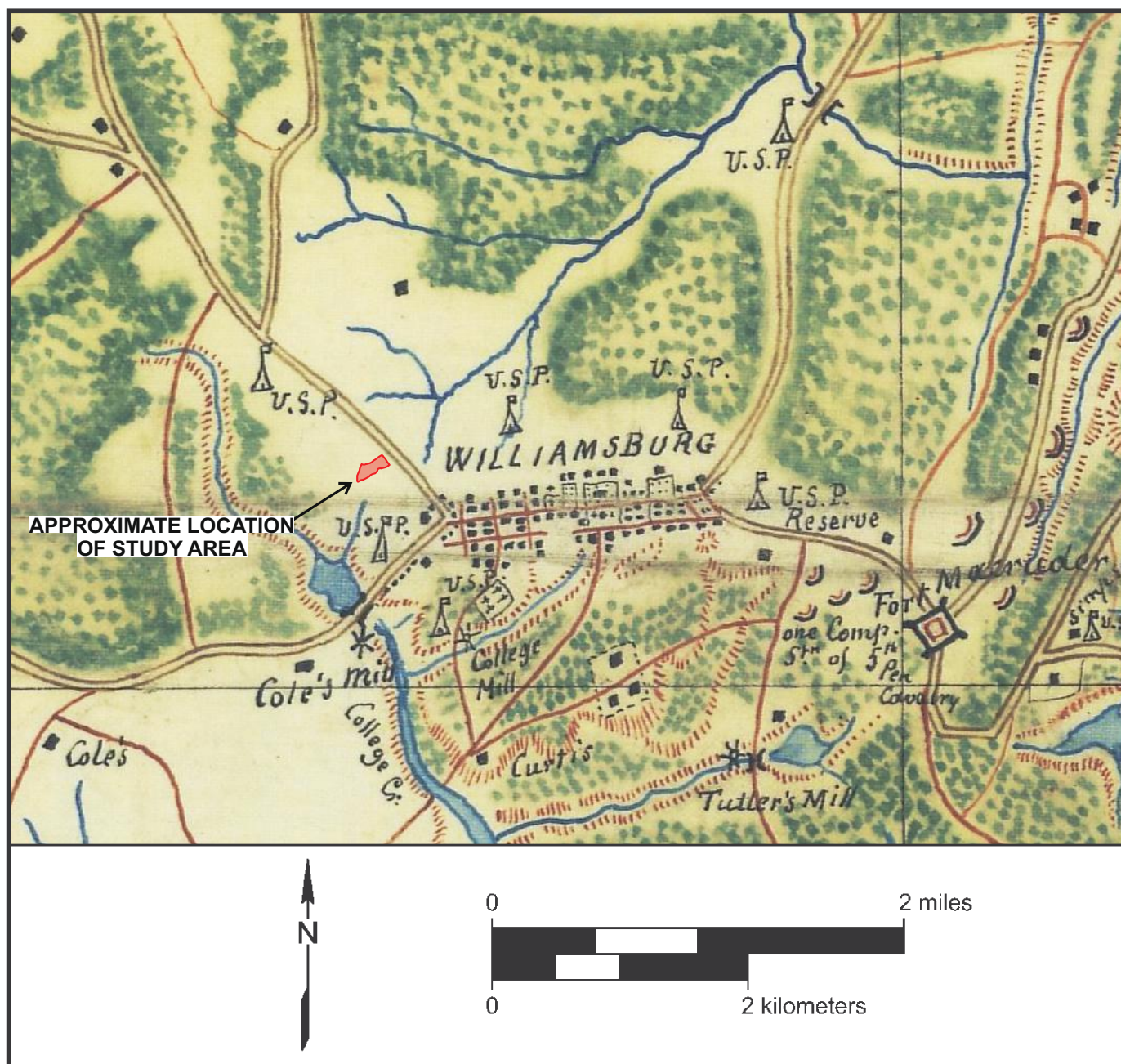


Figure 10. Detail of Williamsburg and vicinity on a Union Army engineer's map of the James York Peninsula (Worrett 1862).

Nannie, eventually married Gustavus Cook, a banker and renowned amateur astronomer, whom she may have met through Robert's connections. Alexander also was in Philadelphia by 1904 (U.S. passport application). None of the 1890 census records survive, but by 1900 the Robert A. Bright household resided at New Hope in James City County with two elderly African American housekeepers (U.S. Census 1900).

As the College of William and Mary expanded in the early twentieth century, it began to reacquire some of the property sold to Samuel F. Bright in 1849. On January 23, 1904, Robert S. and Caroline Bright, and Alexander Macauley Bright sold a 15-acre strip of land to the College for \$1,500 (JCC DB 9:381; PB 1:4; Sacks 1984:Figure 8) (Figure 11). This open land, which extended north-south between Jamestown and Richmond roads, provided room for new construction west of the historic campus.

When Robert A. Bright's children inherited the New Hope/College tract property following his death in 1904, it was leased to tenants. The earliest lease found during the course of this research dates to April 1914, when Robert S. Bright and his sister, Nannie Cook, executed a three-year lease for the property, "known as 'Brights,'" to R. P. Cocke of Williamsburg for \$250 per year beginning on June 10, 1914. The lease agreement gave Cocke the option to renew for an additional three years on January 1, 1917 (Robert Southall Bright, *Legal and Business*, 1906-1930).

By 1919, the energetic College president J. A. C. Chandler had embarked on an ambitious program of increased enrollment and expansion. That year, he first approached the Brights about purchasing New Hope Farm. On October 1, 1923 Robert S. Bright with his wife, Caroline De Beelen Lovett Bright, and Nannie Munford Bright Cook with her husband, Gustavus W. Cook, all residents of Philadelphia, entered into an agreement to sell the 274-acre Bright family farm to the College of William and Mary (JCC DB 22:247-250). The sale would exclude the 10-acre

home lot with "brick residence and out buildings" that fronted Richmond Road. Georeferencing of the boundaries of a September 24, 1923 plat that accompanied the agreement shows that the 10-acre house parcel encompasses the study area (JCC DB 22:251) (Figures 12 and 13). Even though the College did not have title to the property yet, an article in the student newspaper reported that engineers would begin laying out a new athletic field for the College on a portion of the property known as the Bright Orchard. Plans for the new athletic park included a cinder track with a 220-yard straightaway, two football gridirons, and two baseball diamonds; with private funds, it was hoped that a new grandstand could be constructed (*The Flat Hat* 10/12/1923:1, 8).

Despite the exclusion of the 10-acre tract from the 1928 sale, the Bright House was used by the College as early as 1919 when history professor Richard Morton and botany professor Earl Grimes shared the house with their wives through a sublet to President Chandler. Each couple occupied one floor and together they undertook major repairs to the neglected dwelling (Baldwin 1972).

On October 1, 1923, Nannie Munford Bright Cook conveyed her half interest in the Bright property to her brother, Robert S. Bright (JCC DB 21:153). Despite this conveyance of interest, in a September 1924 transaction the following year, the College of William and Mary received the consent of Robert Bright and wife, Caroline, as well as Nannie Munford Bright Cook and her husband, Gustavus. The consent was for the College to sell timber rights for trees larger than 8 inches in diameter to H. D. Bozarth for a total of \$8,000 (JCC DB 21:420-421). This had the double benefit of generating income for the College and clearing land for new construction. In the block bounded by Richmond Road, Boundary Street, and Armistead Avenue, the Bozarth family operated several business, including a lumber yard (Rouse 1989:122; Sanborn Map Company 1910, 1921).

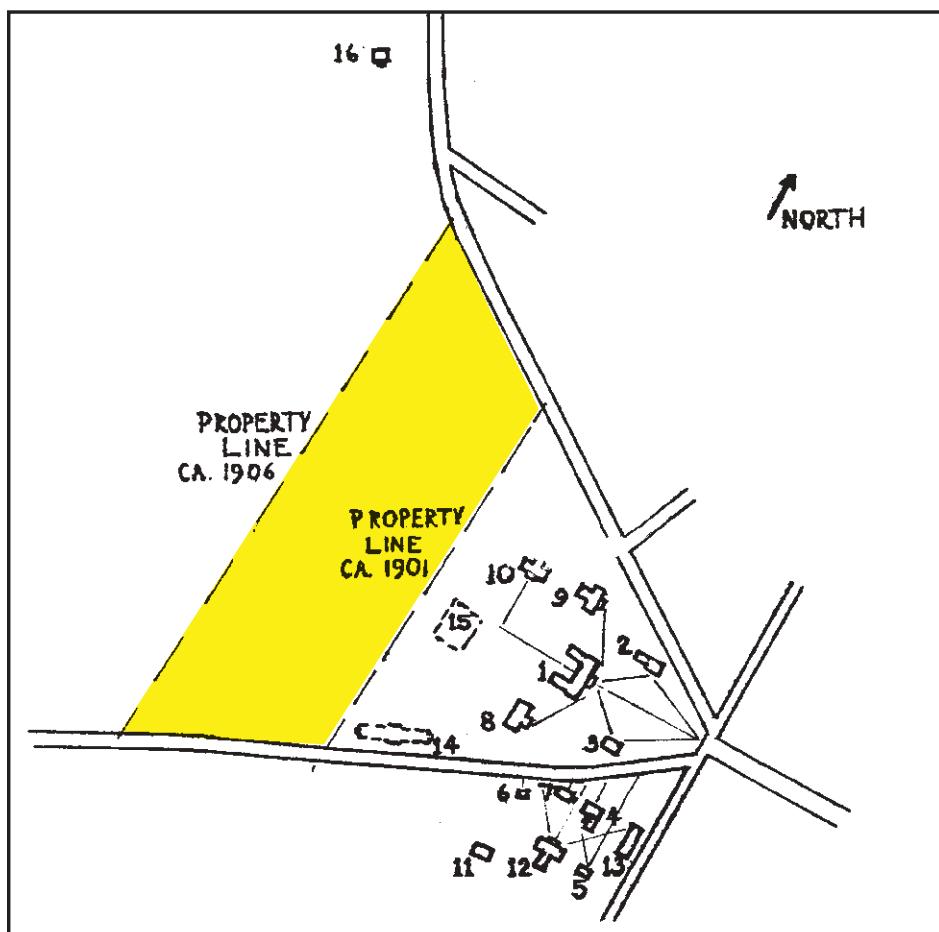
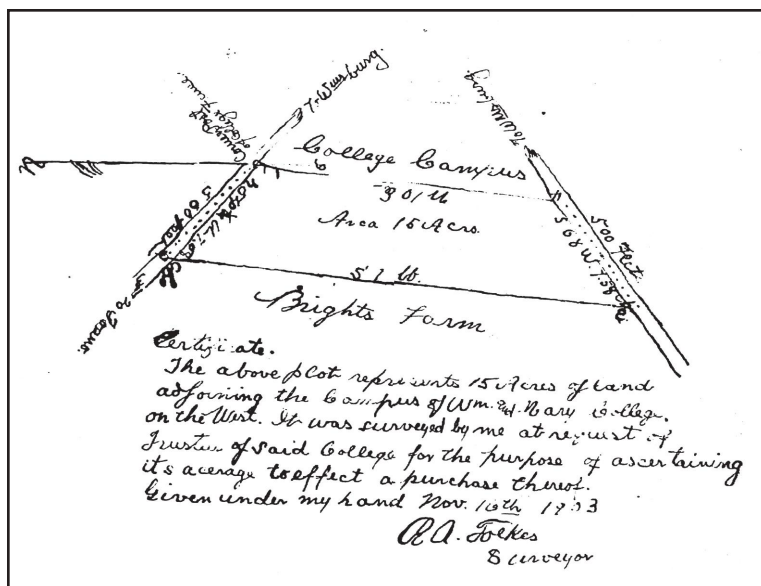


Figure 11. Plat of a 15-acre strip of the Bright property sold to the College of William and Mary in 1904 (top) and its location (yellow) on a schematic drawing of the incremental expansion of College property in the early twentieth-century; Bright House is labeled 16 (above) (JCC DB 9:381; PB 1:4; Sacks 1984:Figure 8).

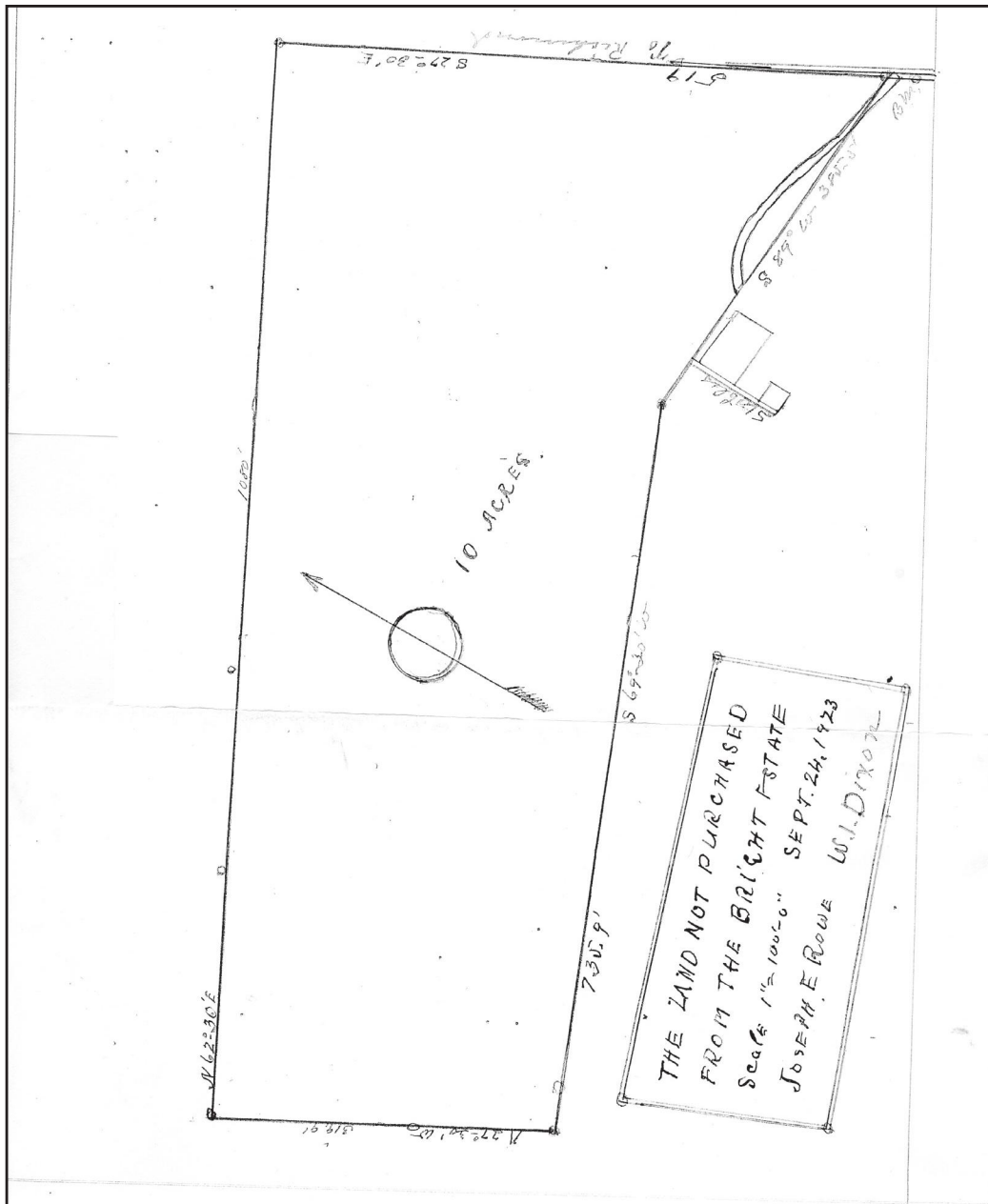


Figure 12. Plat showing the 10-acre portion of the Bright property excluded from the sale of land to the College of William and Mary in 1928 (JCC DB 22:251); the property line along Richmond Road is at the top of the drawing.

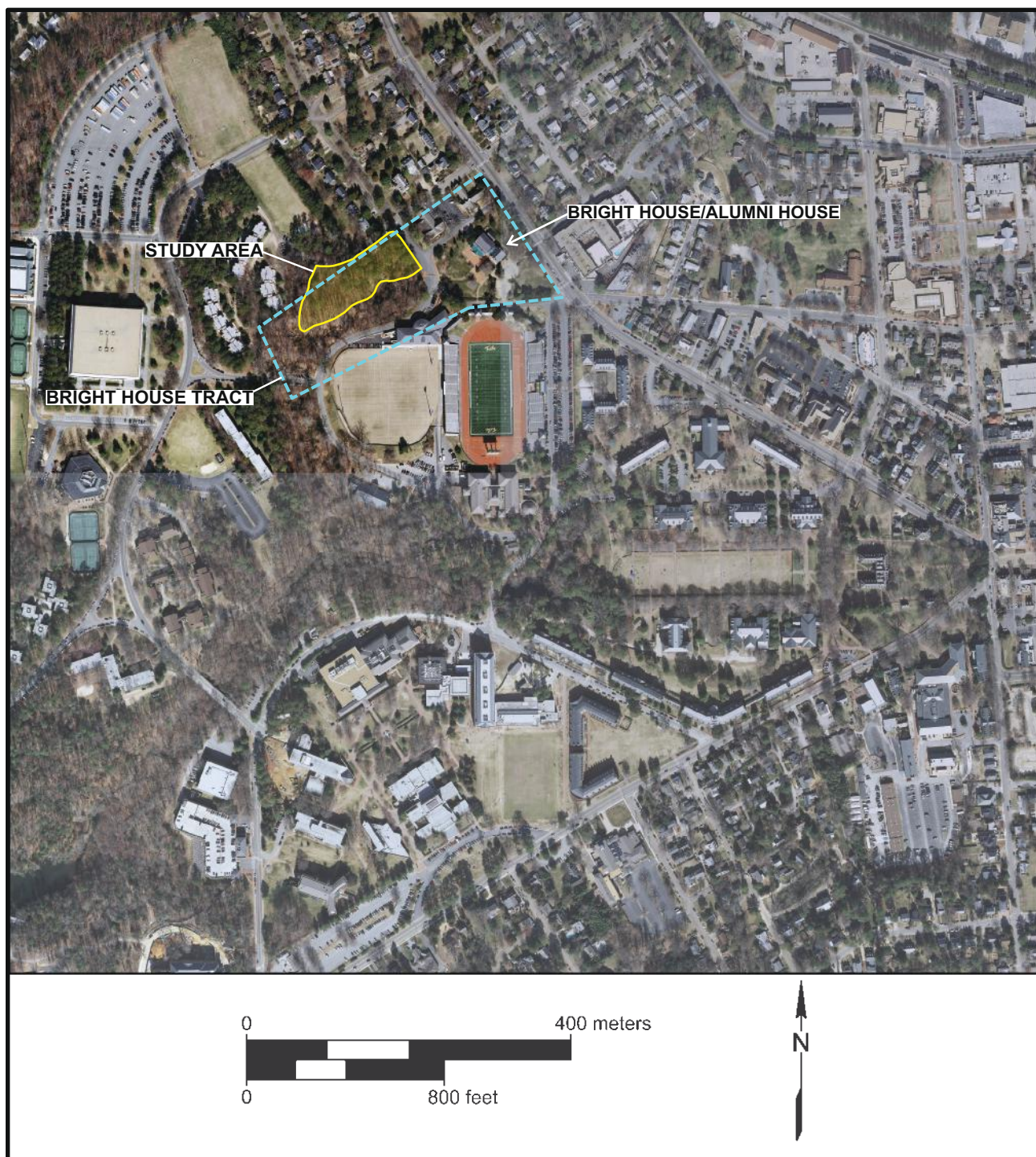


Figure 13. Georeferenced overlay of the boundaries of the 10-acre Bright House property on modern aerial imagery (from JCC DB 22:251).

On March 21, 1928, five years after execution of the purchase agreement with the Brights and the Cooks, the College acquired the 274-acre tract (minus the 10-acre house tract) for \$33,000 (JCC DB 24:144). A brief description of the property's boundaries appears in the deed. On the east and southeast was land already owned by the College. On the south and southeast was the old road from Williamsburg to Jamestown "as existing prior to the re-location of the new State Highway." On the southwest, west, and north, the tract abutted Jones' Mill Pond, recently renamed Lake Matoaka, the properties of the grantors, and a tract conveyed from Alex Macauley Bright to Hugh E. Jones in 1902.

On May 19, 1932, Robert S. Bright and his wife, Caroline De Beelen Bright, both residents of Philadelphia, conveyed a portion of the 10-acre house tract to the Right Reverend Andrew J. Brennan, Roman Catholic Bishop, who lived in Richmond. Under Bishop Brennan, the diocese of Virginia established a Catholic College Chapel on the property that same year. In 1939, the chapel became the church of the newly established St. Bede Parish (St. Bede Catholic Church 2015).

Caroline Bright died in June 1933, and on December 1, 1934 Robert S. Bright married Mary McCaw Haves (Hurst 2007; Malone 1963).

When Robert S. Bright died on December 18, 1943, he still owned the Bright House and the surrounding 10 acres. In his will, Bright appointed his wife, Mary, and J. Gower Roper as executors of his will (City of Williamsburg [CW] DB 5:263). On June 21, 1944, Mary Bright, J. Gower Roper, and the First Merchant National Bank of Richmond (trustee) conveyed the property to George A. Nea for \$25,000 (CW DB 20:26; *Virginia Gazette* 1946). On February 27, 1946, George A. Nea and his wife, Anne, sold the Bright House property to the College of William and Mary for \$25,000 (CW DB 20:444).

Throughout the continued ownership by the Bright family and then the Neas through 1946, the Bright house was used by the College. Other faculty succeeded the Mortons and Grimeses through 1925, when the Alpha Kappa fraternity moved in and remained there until sometime in the 1940s (Baldwin 1972). The house served as a College dormitory at least until 1946-1947. Meanwhile, in 1947, two students set up a ham radio station in the attic (*The Flat Hat* 5/24/1949:12). By April 1948, major reconfiguration as student apartments also included removal of the porch and the cross-gabled dormer, giving the facade its present appearance (*The Flat Hat* 2/10/1948:9) (see Figure 9).

3: Archaeological Field Methods, Results, and Recommendations

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the study area was examined for surface features that may relate to the historic use of the area, either as a cemetery or other functional categories. In particular, areas adjacent to the ravine bordering the study area to the south were checked for linear depressions that might suggest the locations of interments. Other surface features, such as a modern path and a linear ditch-like feature, were noted, as were numerous depressions associated with fallen trees or stumps.

The archaeological methods used were tailored to the type of investigation. A typical archaeological survey would consist of the excavation of 40-cm- (15-in.-) diameter shovel test pits at regular, systematic intervals across the survey area. This method of investigation is intended as a sampling strategy for cultural materials that are scattered across a site. Shovel tests that yield artifacts then typically lead to expanded or more intensive sampling of the area. Excavation of additional shovel tests at closer intervals helps to define the edges of the site and provides additional information on time period and site function. Where the intent of the investigation is to identify unmarked cemeteries/graves, however, the odds are high that shovel test sampling could completely miss the interments or inadvertently intrude into the graves and possibly disturb the associated grave goods or interment.

Given that the primary goal of this assessment was to determine presence/absence of an

unmarked cemetery and/or unmarked graves on the parcel, fieldwork for the project consisted of establishment of a metric control grid over the study area followed by pedestrian walkover and careful surface inspection to identify any surface features or deposits that may relate to historic use of the property, either as a cemetery or some other historic occupation or activities. Based on the results of the surface inspection, the project archaeologist selected four areas with the greatest potential for subsurface archaeological features or deposits. Hand excavation of a 1-x-10-m (3.28-x-32.8-ft.) trench in each of these four areas revealed the shallow interface between the heavily bioturbated topsoil and generally undisturbed subsoil. The trenches were placed near the edge of the landform, a marginal area that professional experience indicates has a higher potential for the occurrence of low-status burials.

Fieldwork commenced with the establishment of a metric grid across the study area to provide control over mapping and documentation of the fieldwork strategy and results. The trenches were oriented at 45 degrees east of magnetic north, and were excavated to expose the shallow interface between the heavily bioturbated topsoil and generally undisturbed subsoil. The orientation of the trenches was intended to increase the likelihood of encountering grave shaft features, if present and organized in the rows and/or patterns that would be expected for historic-period burials. All trenches were raked prior to excavation and the surface of each trench was carefully examined for depressions that might indicate the presence of grave shaft features. All observed depressions



Figure 14. Trench 3, following raking; view to east.

were related to rotted stumps or root ball depressions from fallen trees (Figure 14). A shovel test was placed within two of the trenches in order to clarify stratigraphy and assess subsurface integrity. Profiles were recorded on standardized forms using Munsell color and U.S. Department of Agriculture descriptive terminology (Kollmorgen Instruments Corporation 1992). Artifacts were documented in the field but not collected.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS

Systematic surface examination identified a shallow ditch running parallel to the edge of the landform within the central portion of the study area (Figures 15 and 16). An iron post was noted near the ditch, and a second one in the western portion of the study area. Iron fencing material was observed within the trunk of a large pine at the southern edge of the central portion of the study area. Nearby and just off the crest of the landform is a section of oxidized sheet metal that

may be a remnant of tin roofing (Figure 17). The only other cultural feature noted on the surface of the study area is a modern path that crosses the central portion of the parcel and stops at the edge of the ravine.

As noted above, four trenches were hand excavated within the study area (see Figure 16). Trench 1 was placed on a bench at the junction of two ravines in the western portion of the study area (Figure 18). The average depth of Trench 1 was 34 cm (1.12 ft.), which was the top of the interface with culturally sterile subsoil. Oyster shell fragments, coal, and possible fire-cracked rock fragments were observed and noted but not collected. No subsurface features were observed in this trench.

Trench 2 was placed in the vicinity of the surface ditch feature in the central portion of the study area. The depths of excavation at Trench 2 ranged from 7 cm to 19 cm (0.23 to 0.62 ft.); excavation was halted within the upper portion of Stratum II, where it became apparent that

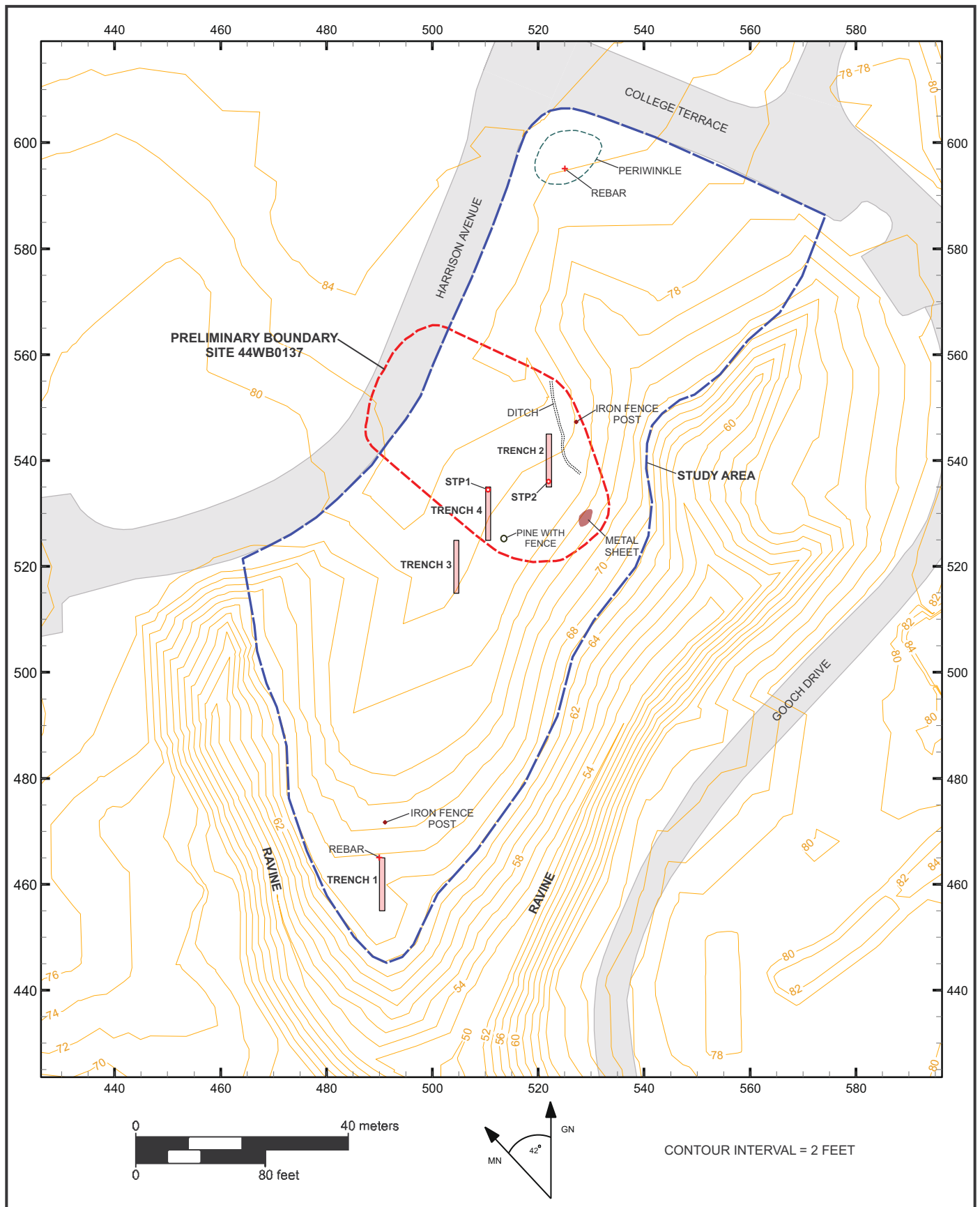


Figure 15. Study area map, showing Trenches 1-4, various surface features, and provisional site boundaries for Site 44WB0137.



Figure 16. Trench 2, base of excavation; note shallow ditch feature to the right of the trench (pink flags); view to east-northeast.



Figure 17. Oxidized sheet metal roofing; view to northeast.

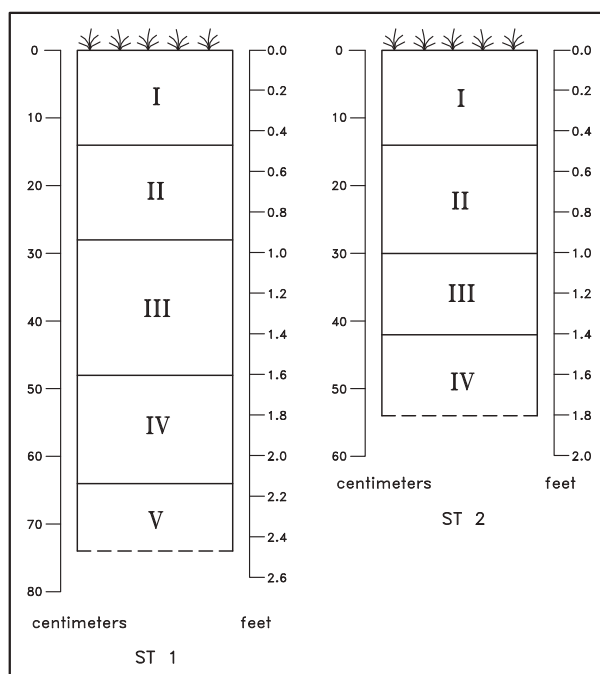


Figure 18. Trench 1, base of excavation; view to north.

Stratum II was distinguished and characterized by scattered flecking and chunks of brick throughout the stratum across the entire area exposed within the trench. No subsurface features were observed in this trench. A shovel test placed in the southwestern end of the trench revealed three strata over subsoil (Figure 19). Stratum I is approximately 14 cm (0.46 ft.) thick and consists of very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty loam. Stratum I has a diffuse boundary with Stratum II, which is a dark yellowish brown (10YR4/6) silty loam plowzone remnant that measures 16 cm (0.52 ft.) thick; this is the stratum that produced small fragments of brick. Stratum III is a 12-cm- (0.39-ft.-) thick layer of brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sandy loam. Subsoil is a light yellowish brown (10YR6/4) sandy clay. In addition to brick fragments, a rusted pair of pliers and nineteenth-century dark green bottle glass fragments were observed/noted but not collected.

Trenches 3 and 4 were placed to the west of Trench 2. Trench 3, which is at a slightly higher elevation than Trenches 2 and 4, was excavated to an average depth of 22 cm (0.72 ft.). Brick, a fragment of architectural stone, and one possible fire-cracked rock were observed/noted but not collected. No subsurface features were identified in this trench.

Trench 4 is located in a swale between Trenches 2 and 3. The average depth of excavation for this trench was 17 cm (0.56 ft.). Like Trench 2, excavation was halted within Stratum II, where the soil change revealed scattered flecking and chunks of brick as well as fragments of nineteenth-century window pane glass and ceramics. A subsurface feature that likely represents a post hole was observed in the northwest corner of Trench 4; no other features were identified. A shovel test was placed adjacent to the west wall of the trench, west of the subsurface feature, revealing four strata over



SHOVEL TEST 1

- I - Very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty loam
- II - Dark yellowish brown (10YR4/6) silty loam
- III - Brick rubble and decomposing brick in a reddish yellow (7.5YR6/8) sandy loam matrix
- IV - Brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sandy loam
- V - Light yellowish brown (10YR6/4) sandy clay (subsoil)

SHOVEL TEST 2

- I - Very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty loam
- II - Dark yellowish brown (10YR4/6) silty loam
- III - Brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sandy loam
- IV - Light yellowish brown (10YR6/4) sandy clay (subsoil)

Figure 19. Site 44WB0137, Shovel Tests 1 and 2, profiles.

subsoil (see Figure 16). Stratum I is a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty loam measuring 14 cm (0.46 ft.) in thickness. The boundary between Strata I and II is diffuse. Stratum II is a 14-cm- (0.46-ft.-) thick layer of dark yellowish brown (10YR4/6) silty loam. Stratum III is composed of brick rubble and decomposing brick in a reddish yellow (7.5YR6/8) sandy loam matrix; this stratum measures 20 cm (0.66 ft.) thick. Stratum IV, which is 16 cm (0.52 ft.) thick, consists of a brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sandy loam; this stratum may represent an old plowzone. Subsoil is a

light yellowish brown (10YR6/4) sandy clay. A cut nail and an unidentified nail, as well as fragments of window pane glass that most closely resemble nineteenth-century window pane glass and large fragments of brick were noted in the sediments of the shovel test.

Coincidentally, at the time of the fieldwork, the asphalt pavement on Harrison Avenue immediately adjacent to the study area was milled and the graded earthen road bed was exposed in preparation for resurfacing the roadway. Though direct access to the graded road bed was restricted given the active construction, it was possible to conduct a limited surface inspection of the exposed road bed, which led to identification of several amorphous loci characterized by anomalously dark sediment and concentrations of brick fragments, oyster shell, historic-period ceramic sherds, and coal/charcoal.

In summary, no evidence or indications of an unmarked cemetery or unmarked graves was found during the assessment. In spite of careful examination of the ground surface and excavation of four 1-x-10-m (3.28-x-32.8-ft.) trenches, no features or other evidence of unmarked graves were observed. The results do indicate, however, that there is a previously unidentified domestic site dating from the first half of the nineteenth century (Site 44WB0137) that is focused on the most elevated, northwestern portion of the parcel adjacent to Harrison Avenue.

Site 44WB0137 likely represents the archaeological remains of a domestic site dating from the first half of the nineteenth century. Provisional boundaries for the site indicate that it measures, at minimum, 53 m north-south by 27 m east-west (174 x 88 ft.). The site may extend into the area currently occupied by Harrison Avenue, as indicated by the fact that the several loci of concentrated cultural material mentioned above that were exposed by the roadway milling and resurfacing are focused in that portion of Harrison Avenue. The identification of brick and nineteenth-century window pane glass in Trench

4 and a dense subsurface deposit of brick rubble identified as Stratum III within Trench 4 suggest fairly immediate proximity to the site of a historic building that likely stood just uphill of Trench 4 and closer to Harrison Avenue. Diagnostic ceramic sherds and bottle glass fragments observed in Trench 4 deposits are typical of domestic sites that were occupied during the first half of the nineteenth century. In addition to the artifacts observed during the excavation of Trenches 2 and 4, the site includes the section of oxidized sheet metal roofing and the shallow ditch feature located adjacent to and east of Trench 2. **Given that the vicinity of the study area has not been cultivated or otherwise developed for at least a century, it is likely that Site 44WB0137 has retained sufficient subsurface integrity and research potential to address Domestic themes during the Antebellum Period (1830–1860) on the Southern Coastal Plain of Virginia. As such, Site 44WB0137 is considered potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D; Criteria A–C are considered not applicable. Site 44WB0137 should be avoided; if avoidance is not feasible, additional work is recommended.**

This assessment has provided the College the opportunity to investigate the archaeological potential of a portion of the grounds that available documentary records indicate may have been situated along an early boundary of the College. By extension, and together with other circumstantial indications, this parcel was considered

to have a potential for holding an unmarked cemetery or unmarked graves of enslaved workers at the College during the early colonial period. The proximity of the parcel to the nineteenth-century domestic complex of the Bright family's farm (i.e., the current site of the College Alumni House), coupled with indirect indications in the documentary record that antebellum property owners managed a large slave-holding farm, also suggested a potential for associated archaeological resources representing outbuildings, quarters, and/or activity areas.

The results of the archaeological fieldwork, however, include no evidence or indications of an unmarked cemetery or unmarked graves within the parcel. Based on the artifacts observed during the investigation, however, there is a previously unidentified domestic site dating from the first half of the nineteenth century (Site 44WB0137) that is focused on the most elevated, northwestern portion of the parcel adjacent to Harrison Avenue. Furthermore, documentary research of the history of the parcel for this study indicates that the Bright House, now the Alumni House, was constructed ca. 1871–1872 after the end of the Civil War. From their homes in downtown Williamsburg, however, members of the Bright family made use of the labor of dozens of enslaved workers to operate a large farm on an adjacent property beginning ca. 1839 and on land that encompassed the study area from 1849 until slavery in Virginia ended in 1865.

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