# “BY THE RIVER POTOMAC”

## AN HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
## OF FORT HUNT PARK
## GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY
## MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA



**MATTHEW R. LAIRD, Ph.D.**

**Cultural Resources, Inc.**

**AUGUST 2000**

AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

# "BY THE RIVER POTOMAC"

## AN HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
## OF FORT HUNT PARK
## GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY
## MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA

**Prepared For:**

National Park Service
National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, S. W.
Washington, D.C. 20242
(202) 208-3100

**Prepared By:**

Matthew R. Laird, Ph.D.
Cultural Resources, Inc.
705 Caroline Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401
(540) 370-1973

**August 2000**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER** **PAGE**


LIST OF FIGURES ..... iii

LIST OF TABLES ..... v

FOREWORD ..... vi

1. PISCATAWAY NECK TO CLIFTON'S NECK (6000 B.C. – A. D. 1759) ..... 1

2. GEORGE WASHINGTON'S RIVER FARM (1760 – 1799) ..... 12

3. SLAVE PLANTATION TO YANKEE FARM (1800 – 1900) ..... 27

4. "THEM CRAZY SOLDIERS" (1893 – 1917) ..... 36

5. A NEW DEAL FOR AN OLD FORT (1918 – 1942) ..... 67

6. "P. O. BOX 1142": FORT HUNT IN WORLD WAR II (1939 – 1945) ..... 88

7. FORT HUNT AS PUBLIC SPACE (1946 – 2000) ..... 118

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 124

APPENDICES

A. EARLY LAND PATENTS, LEASES, AND WILLS, 1653 - 1768 ..... 132

B. FAIRFAX COUNTY TITHABLES FOR THE RIVER FARM, 1761 - 1774 ..... 136

C. SLAVES AT RIVER FARM, FEBRUARY 1786 ..... 138

D. SLAVES AT RIVER FARM, JUNE 1799 ..... 139

E. WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RIVER FARM, 1799 ..... 141

## LIST OF FIGURES

**FIGURE** **PAGE**


1. Savage's survey of Brent's Patent, Piscataway Neck, 1738 ..... 4
2. Washington's map of the River Farm, 1766 ..... 8
3. Projected location of 1766 tenant farm ..... 9
4. Washington's map of his Mount Vernon Farms, 1793 ..... 18
5. Fort Hunt Park boundaries projected onto Washington's 1793 map ..... 19
6. Extract of Military Map of Northeast Virginia Showing Forts and Roads, 1865 ..... 29
7. Detail of Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County, 1879 ..... 32
8. Route Surveyed for a National Road from Washington, D.C. to Mount Vernon, 1893 ..... 34
9. Plan of Battery Mount Vernon, 1902 ..... 39
10. Plan of Batteries Porter and Robinson, 1902 ..... 41
11. Plan of Battery Sater, 1902 ..... 43
12. Battery Sater, 1923 ..... 44
13. An aerial view of Fort Hunt, 1923 ..... 45
14. Fort Hunt features ca. 1906 projected onto modern base map ..... 47
15. The post hospital, 1923, later code-named "The Creamery" ..... 48
16. Enlisted men's barracks, 1923 ..... 49
17. NCO quarters, 1923 ..... 50
18. Officer's quarters and the Administration Building, 1923 ..... 51
19. Parade grounds, 1923 ..... 52
20. Temporary World War I buildings, 1923 ..... 53
21. Warehouse and attached office, 1923 ..... 54
22. Wharf and wharf house, 1923 ..... 55
23. Arthur F. Curtis in Manilla, 1899 ..... 61
24. Fort Hunt football team ..... 64
25. Lieutenant Alphonse Strebler ..... 65
26. Fort Hunt features ca. 1938 projected onto modern base map ..... 78

## LIST OF FIGURES

**FIGURE** **PAGE**


27. First Aid Instruction, CCC Co. 2387 .....80
28. Exhibit of national CCC activities,1939 .....85
29. Inspection of the CCC camp by the King and Queen, and the First Lady as reported in the CCC newspaper, *Happy Days*, 1939 .....86
30. Fort Hunt features ca. 1945 projected on modern base map.....94
31. Enclosure A, Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II .....96
32. Enclosure B, Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II .....97
33. Windowless Army bus used to transport POWs, World War II .....99
34. Typical POW double room, World War II .....101
35. Chief Monitor Control Board, Enclosure A, World War II.....110
36. Interior of the Administration Building, Enclosure A, World War II .....111

## LIST OF TABLES

**TABLE** **PAGE**


1. Post Buildings at Fort Hunt, 1898-1929 ..... 46
2. CCC Buildings at Fort Hunt, 1935-1942 ..... 77
3. Commanding Officers, Joint Interrogation Center, Fort Hunt, 1942-1945. ..... 92
4. Structures at Fort Hunt, February 1945 ..... 93

# FOREWORD

Numerous individuals contributed their time and expertise to the creation of this historic resource study. I would like to thank Gary Scott for his patience and guidance throughout the course of the project; Matthew Virta (National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Parkway) for generously sharing his office and files; Norbert Erickson (National Park Service, National Capital Region) for his assistance in researching historic maps of Fort Hunt; and Barry Wood (National Park Service, George Washington Memorial Parkway) for providing digital mapping of the park.

I appreciate the assistance of the staff of National Archives I and II, particularly Mike Meier, Gene Morris, and Judith Koucky. Thanks also to Noel Harrison (National Park Service, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park) for sharing his research on Camp Alger during the Spanish-American War; and to Creg Howland for sharing his experience with Fort Hunt's historic resources.

Within Cultural Resources, Inc., I appreciate the creative and skilful efforts of Allison Johnson and Justin Atkins in producing the digital versions of historic Fort Hunt maps. And thanks to Laura Welborn, for her enthusiastic and insightful editing.

# CHAPTER 1:
# PISCATAWAY NECK TO CLIFTON'S NECK
# 6000 B.C. - A.D. 1759

The story of human occupation in the vicinity of Fort Hunt Park begins more than 8,000 years ago. Over the past 30 years, archaeologists have identified the remains of sites dating to the prehistoric Archaic Period along the Potomac River shoreline between Fort Hunt and Little Hunting Creek. Coinciding with the end of the Pleistocene epoch, this period witnessed a dramatic change both in climate and natural resources, with warmer, drier conditions spawning a greater diversity of food types. In turn, the local human population adapted to the changing environment by developing new strategies of subsistence that emphasized seasonal mobility. Organized in small bands, the Archaic peoples of Virginia's coastal plain appear to have congregated in base camps for part of the year, then moved across the landscape at other times to exploit seasonal food sources. The junction of Little Hunting Creek and the Potomac River would have proved an ideal setting for such temporary prehistoric campsites, and archaeological evidence confirms that native peoples came to this area regularly over many centuries.[1]

Beginning about 1200 B.C., prehistoric Virginians began to develop a radically different way of life. Experimenting with pottery and agriculture, they became increasingly sedentary, establishing more permanent villages that were occupied year-round. Defined by archaeologists as the Woodland Period, this era was marked by more stable population growth and increasingly complex social organization. Woodland villages in the Potomac River Valley were typically located on bluffs, terraces, or high floodplains near rivers or major tributaries, while smaller seasonal satellite camps tended to be established along smaller interior streams. Diagnostic pottery and projectile points found near Fort Hunt Park indicate that, like their predecessors, Woodland peoples also found this location ideal for exploiting the river's resources.[2]

By about 1500 A.D. warfare had become endemic among the native peoples of the Mid-Atlantic region. Archaeological evidence suggests that the cultural groups of the inner coastal plain of the Potomac, including Maryland and Virginia, began to develop a defensive alliance in the early sixteenth century under the authority of a paramount leader with centralized power and authority. The resulting Conoy chiefdom of Maryland was a hierarchical, stratified society that encompassed a variety of Algonquian-speaking peoples, including the Nacothtanks, Pamunkeys, Nanjemoys, Potapacos, Yaocomacos, Tauxenents, and Piscataways. Though no permanent village sites are believed to have been located on or near Fort Hunt Park, this land lay between two important Conoy villages. The eponymous "metropolis" of the Piscataways was situated almost directly across from Fort Hunt Park at the confluence of the Potomac and Piscataway Creek. The largest and most powerful of the Conoy tribes, the Piscataway's "tayac," or ruler, governed all the groups of the chiefdom. On the Virginia side of the Potomac, the

---

1 Richard J. Dent, Jr., *Chesapeake Prehistory: Old Traditions, New Directions* (New York, 1995); Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Archaeological Sites Inventory.

2 William M. Gardner, "Early and Middle Woodland in the Middle Atlantic: An Overview," in Roger W. Moeller (ed.), *Practicing Environmental Archaeology: Methods and Interpretations*, American Indian Archaeological Institute, *Occasional Paper* No. 3: 53-86; VDHR Archaeological Sites Inventory.

principal village of the Tauxenents was seven miles downriver from Fort Hunt Park at Mason Neck. The Tauxenents, whose territory encompassed Fort Hunt, appear to have been closely allied with the Piscataways during the Late Woodland. [3]

In the early seventeenth century, the Conoys were confronted with a strange new people. John Smith and a small exploratory party of Englishmen met the Tauxenents and other nearby tribes on their expedition up the Potomac River in the summer of 1608; they "did their best to content us," Smith recorded, in typical laconic fashion. The new English arrivals guessed that the Tauxenent village claimed "40 able men," which suggests a total population of about 170. It is unlikely that any of these people lived permanently on or near Fort Hunt Park, though this area would have seen frequent use for seasonal hunting and fishing. [4]

Despite Smith's initially warm welcome, it was not long before the tenuous Anglo-Indian relationship had worn thin. In March 1623, Captain Henry Spelman and 19 fellow colonists were killed on a trading voyage up the Potomac, about 15 miles south of Fort Hunt. The Virginians blamed the Nacotchtanks, a group of Maryland Conoys, and later that year Governor Sir Francis Wyatt led a punitive expedition to "revenge the trecherie of ye Pascoticons [Piscataways] and theire assocyates." The English force of 90 men reportedly "putt many to the swoorde," burned numerous Piscataway and Nacotchtank houses, and destroyed their corn supplies. The subsequent arrival of increasing numbers of English traders and settlers in the upper Potomac Valley would mark the beginning of the end for the traditional Conoy way of life. Now known as the Doegs, the Tauxenents were still living at Mason Neck as late as the 1650s, and archaeological evidence shows that they were actively trading with the new English settlers of Virginia and Maryland. About this time, however, many Doegs began to move south to new lands along the Rappahannock, relinquishing their former territory to tobacco-growing Englishmen. The Piscataways would survive somewhat longer in their original territory along the Potomac, but they, too, had left the area by about 1680.[5]

In the mid-seventeenth century, the lands lying north of the Rappahannock and east of the Potomac comprised Virginia's northernmost frontier. Captain Giles Brent of Maryland was the first Englishman to settle in the "freshes" of the Potomac, in what is now Stafford County. Brent first arrived in Virginia during the 1620s, and is mentioned as a witness in a Jamestown court proceeding. He evidently left Virginia soon after; as a Catholic, he likely would have refused to accept the Oath of Allegiance and Subservience required of new settlers. Brent reappears in the Maryland records in November 1638, arriving at St. Mary's City aboard the *Elizabeth*, accompanied by his sisters, Mary and Margaret, and his brother, Foulke. An old Catholic Somersetshire family, the Brents had

---

3 Stephen R. Potter, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (Charlottesville 1993): 20, 117, 180; Christian F. Feest, "Nanticoke and Neighboring Tribes," in Bruce G. Trigger (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15: *Northeast* (Washington, D.C., 1978): 240-43.

4 Edward Wright Haile (ed.), *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Account of the Virginia Colony, The First Decade, 1607-1617* (Champlain, Virginia, 1998): 260-61, 605.

5 Potter, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs*, 197, 204; Feest, "Nanticoke," 243.

close personal connections to Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, who personally provided large land grants for them in the new colony.[6]

Giles Brent immediately took up 60 acres in St. Mary's City, was given a 1,000-acre tract near Kent Fort, and another 1,000 acres in the location of his choice. Brent was invited to sit in the Maryland Assembly in 1639, and became Lord of the Manor of Kent Fort in 1642, a position that entailed sweeping political, judicial, and military power in the region. The following year, Governor Leonard Calvert decided to return to England, and appointed Brent Deputy Governor in his absence. About 1645, Brent married Kittamaquund, the twelve-year-old daughter of the chief of the Piscataways. Later dubbed the "Maryland Pocahontas," Kittamaquund had been adopted by Brent's sister, Margaret, several years prior, and renamed Mary after her baptism by Jesuit Father Andrew White. That same year, a Captain Richard Ingle arrived in the colony under the authority of Parliament, then embroiled in civil war with King Charles I. Ingle seized Brent, a staunch Royalist, and took him hostage to London. After a near brush with death, Brent returned to Maryland in 1646 to put his affairs in order. Almost immediately he became locked in a futile dispute with Lord Baltimore over his claims to large portions of the colony allegedly inherited from his father-in-law, the chief of the Piscataways. Increasingly disillusioned with the Maryland government and wary of the growing Protestant influence in the colony, Brent moved across to Virginia with his young bride in 1647. Here he established a plantation on the Widewater peninsula at the confluence of the Potomac River and Aquia Creek, optimistically naming it *Peace*.[7]

Eager to capitalize on the potential Indian trade of the upper Potomac Valley, Brent soon began to patent large tracts of land upriver from his settlement. During 1653-54, Brent patented two tracts totaling 1,800 acres in the name of his infant son, Giles Brent II, thus becoming the first English owner of what would become Fort Hunt Park. Lying along the Potomac between Hunting and Little Hunting creeks in what was then Westmoreland County, these lands lay almost directly across from his wife's former village. For the next century, this land would be known as "Piscataway Neck" (Figure 1).[8]

Under Virginia's "headright" system, Brent was entitled to 50 acres of land for each person whose passage he paid to the colony. In order to maintain these claims, however, he had to "seat and plant" the land within a year, which could be accomplished by clearing an acre of land, building a structure, keeping animals on the site, or settling servants or slaves on the property. No record remains of who may have lived on the property during Brent's lifetime, or how much land was brought into production, but it is likely that he maintained a modest quarter on the tract, where tenant farmers or

---

6 Chester Horton Brent, The of Coll$^{o}$ Giles Brent, Cap$^{t}$ George Brent, and Robert Brent,$^{Gent.}$, Immigrants to Maryland and Virginia (Rutland, Vermont, 1946): 51.

7 Brent, *Descendants*, 50-64.

8 Nell Marion Nugent (ed.). *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants*, Vol. 1: 1623-1666 (Richmond, Virginia, 1992): 279, 315, 398. The lands of Fort Hunt Park have been encompassed by five Virginia counties since the seventeenth century. Originally part of the Chickacoan Indian District, it became part of Northumberland County in 1648. In 1653, the year Giles Brent patented his first Fort Hunt parcel, the land was transferred to the authority of Westmoreland County. It was then subsumed by Stafford County in 1664, Prince William in 1731, and finally by Fairfax in 1742. Michael F. Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia, 1734-1895* (Athens, Georgia, 1987).

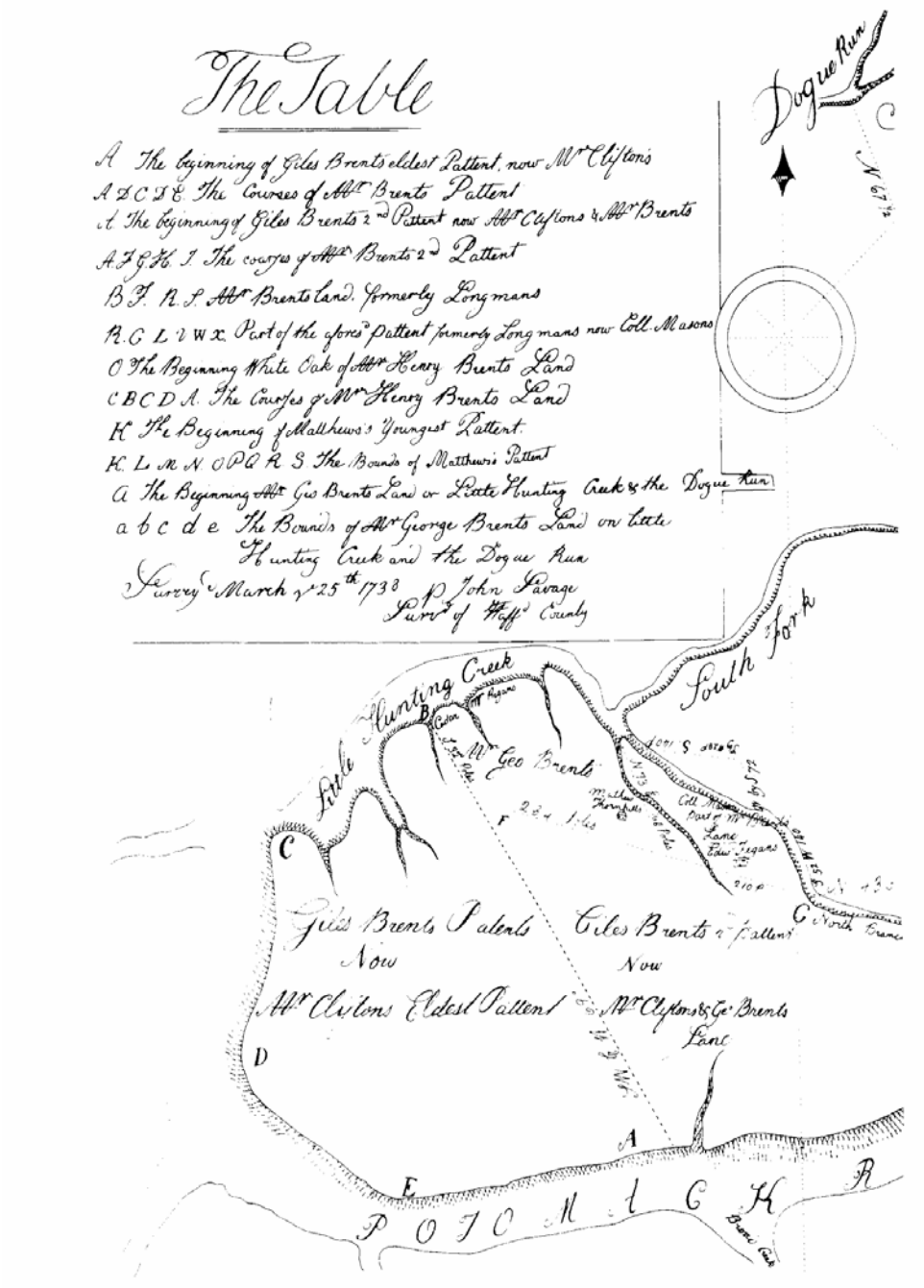



Figure 1. John Savage's survey of Giles Brent's Patent, Piscataway Neck, 1738 (source: Beth Mitchell (ed.), *Beginning at White Oak…Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County, Virginia*, McGregor and Werner, Fairfax, Virginia, 1977).

indentured servants gradually cleared the land and planted tobacco. Given the typical pattern of seventeenth-century settlement in Virginia, it is likely that the first occupants on the property would have situated themselves near the confluence of the Potomac and Little Hunting Creek.

When Brent died in 1671, he willed his lands in England, Maryland, and Virginia to his 19-year-old son, Giles. When he came of age, the younger Giles sold 500 acres in the north part of the Piscataway Neck estate to his cousin, George Brent. Not long after, he married his cousin, Mary Brent. Their union evidently was not a happy one, and in 1679 Mary was granted a judicial separation from her husband—only the second in Virginia's history—on grounds of cruelty. Aside from his hot temper, Giles is best remembered for his ambivalent involvement in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676. After an English servant in the Northern Neck was murdered by Doeg Indians, Brent led a party of vindictive Virginians into Maryland, where they surprised and slaughtered a number of Doeg villagers and took one of the chief's young sons hostage. As Anglo-Indian tensions heightened along the Potomac, Brent raised a force of 1,000 men and joined rebel leader Nathaniel Bacon in a march against the Indians. After Bacon burned Jamestown, however, Brent led his troop south to defend Governor Sir William Berkeley. Brent's private army lost heart when they heard that Bacon had ejected Berkeley from Jamestown, and the majority of his force deserted. Brent did not survive long after the failed uprising. After separating from his wife, he moved to a Middlesex property he had inherited from his aunt, Margaret Brent. He died there that same year.[9]

The will of Giles Brent II does not survive, but it appears that his eldest son, Giles Brent III, inherited the Piscataway Neck tract. The Order Book of the Stafford County Court records that on February 10, 1693, "Giles Brent son and heir of Col. Giles Brent late deceased came into Court and did choose Capt. George Brent to be his guardian which accordingly was granted." Since these lands would later be associated with this branch of the Brent family, it is possible that the wealthy and politically well-connected George Brent of "Woodstock" may have assumed control over Giles's holdings when he died prematurely in 1694 at the age of 24. [10]

George Brent died in 1699, leaving the Piscataway Neck estate to his son, George. Now including 1,143 acres, this tract was described in Brent's will as that "on which Robert Williams is tenant." Little is known about Williams, who appears only occasionally in the records of the Stafford County Court. He was definitely living on the Neck land by 1690, when the deed for a neighboring parcel mentioned him as Brent's tenant. Williams was also one of the "subscribers" to a 1686 petition submitted on behalf of the residents of what was then northern Stafford County. Prompted by fears of unrestricted Indian movement in their region, this petition underscores the fact that this part of Virginia remained an unsettled frontier:

> Whereas the upper parts of Stafford being daily alarmed by the sight and sign of Indians, but whether neighbors or strange Indians unknown to the

---

9 Brent, 84-88.

10 Ruth and Sam Sparacio, *Order Book Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1692-93* (McLean, Virginia, 1988): 68; Brent, *Descendants*, 89.

> subscribers, therefore the subscribers thought good to make their grievance known by this instrument. Viz. That the neighboring Indians goes out and bring in strange Indians to their town which the subscribers supposed are that the Indians that are daily seen or sign of them and these with the neighboring Indians do endeavor to fright the inhabitants of these parts so that they may leave their plantations . . . . We think it a grievance that the Indians are permitted to come to every man's house to trade, but rather that they may be confined to a certain place for trade.[11]

The younger George Brent would not enjoy possession of the Piscataway Neck lands for long, as he died only a year after his father in 1700. In his will, he divided the Robert Williams tenement tract between his brothers, Henry, Nicholas, and Robert. In 1701, the 20-year-old Robert went to Bermuda to represent the interests of his older brother Nicholas in the settlement of a family estate. While there he married Susannah Seymour, granddaughter of a former Bermudian Governor-General. Robert returned to Virginia when Nicholas died in 1711. Since his other brother, Henry, was no longer living, Robert was left with the entire 1,143-acre Piscataway Neck tract.[12]

Since Robert Brent lived at the family estate of Woodstock until he died in 1722, most likely he leased the family lands in Piscataway Neck to tenant tobacco planters. Robert Williams may still have occupied the land, but no extant records detail exactly who lived on the tract, or where. At his death, Robert Brent divided his substantial Virginia holdings between his children, and his daughter Elizabeth, then only six years old, received a partial share in the Neck lands. About 1730, Elizabeth married William Clifton, a fellow Catholic who had emigrated from England some years earlier. Members of the Clifton family had lived in Virginia and Maryland since the mid-seventeenth century, and had long-standing business and family connections to the Virginia Brents. William and Elizabeth Clifton appear to have been living on Elizabeth's Piscataway Neck land by 1739, when William purchased an additional 500 acres from his brother-in-law, George Brent. The following year Clifton bought another 555-acre tract, known as "Budgins," from Henry Brent, another of Elizabeth's brothers. Ultimately, William Clifton would amass an estate of 1,806 acres through his wife's inheritance and purchases from her brothers. This land, including what would become Fort Hunt Park, would henceforth be known as Clifton's Neck.[13]

During the 1740s and 1750s, the Cliftons lived on a 500-acre parcel in the eastern portion of the Neck, and rented the remainder of the property to tenant planters. Fort Hunt Park appears to have been occupied by two neighboring leaseholders after 1741. In August of that year, Clifton leased 200 acres to John Sheridine along the Potomac River, including what would come to be known as Sheridan Point, and rented an adjoining parcel of the same size to Jane Hester and her sons (See Appendix A). Both leases were for the lifetime of the leaseholder and their heirs. The annual rent was to be paid on

---

11 Brent, *Descendants*, 73-74; Ruth and Sam Sparacio, *Deed and Will Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1689-93* (McLean, Virginia, 1989): 53, 115.

12 Ruth and Sam Sparacio, *Deed and Will Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1699-1709* (McLean, Virginia, 1987): 14; David M. French, *The Brent Family* (Alexandria, 1977): 52.

13 Brent, *Descendants*, 90-95, 105; French, *Brent Family*, 58; Donald Jackson (ed.), *The Diaries of George Washington* (Charlottesville, 1976), I: 238; Prince William County Deed Book D: 267-69, Deed Book E: 103-04.

Christmas Day, assessed at 830 pounds of tobacco in Hester's case, while Sheridine owed 730 pounds. Since both tracts included the same acreage, it is likely that Hester's parcel included somewhat more "improved," or cleared land. The leases stipulated that neither Sheridine nor Hester were to sell or sublet the tracts, though both were allowed the privilege of cutting wood on other unleased portions of Clifton's estate. A final condition stipulated that both were to plant orchards of at least one hundred apple trees and keep them "under good fence."[14]

A map of Clifton's Neck drafted in 1766 after George Washington had acquired the property offers some clue as to how Fort Hunt Park might have looked under Clifton's ownership (Figure 2). The boundary between the Sheridine and Hester tenant tracts appears to have been the eastern line of Washington's Field No. 1, which ran north from the Potomac through a ravine. The Sheridine leasehold likely lay to the east of this line, encompassing approximately two-thirds of Fort Hunt Park, while the Hester tract included the western third of the property. Washington did not include the Sheridine parcel on his map, most likely because the family was still living there and farming the land for themselves. The Hester parcel is depicted, however, and the map indicates that two buildings—possibly the dwelling house and kitchen, or other outbuilding—were situated west of the ravine, most likely within Fort Hunt's current boundaries (Figure 3). The apple orchard that Hester was required to plant under the terms of her lease appears to have been located a short distance west of the buildings.

Though scant documentary evidence remains to illuminate how Fort Hunt Park may have looked during the mid-eighteenth century, the few fragmentary records that have survived open a window onto the life of a Fairfax County tenant farmer in the years before the American Revolution. John Sheridine's son, also named John, died in 1768, leaving his aging father and his widow Barberry (or Barbara) still living on the 200-acre tract they leased from William Clifton. In his will, Sheridine left his estate to his wife, with the exception of his "wearing clothes," saddle, and bridle, which he gave to his father (See Appendix A). Officials of the Fairfax County Court probated his estate in the following months: the picture of Sheridine that emerges is of a modestly successful tenant planter, not wealthy enough to own his own land, but living a comfortable life by the standards of eighteenth-century Virginia (See Appendix A).[15]

By the time Fairfax County was created from Prince William in 1742, nearly all of its usable land had already been granted or patented, in tracts that generally ranged between 200 and 500 acres. Since the Potomac River was still the region's primary artery of trade, transportation, and communication, the fertile land along its shores was a valuable commodity. A man of modest means such as Sheridine would have found it nearly impossible to purchase such desirable land in the mid-eighteenth century. In fact, by the time of the Revolution, only 36 percent of Fairfax County householders owned their own land; the majority leased their farms from wealthier landowners of the William Clifton variety.[16]

---

14 Prince William County Deed Book E: 419-21, 421-23.

15 Fairfax County Will Book C-1: 29, 40.

16 Nan Netherton et al., *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, 1978): 15, 26, 30-32; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986): 135.

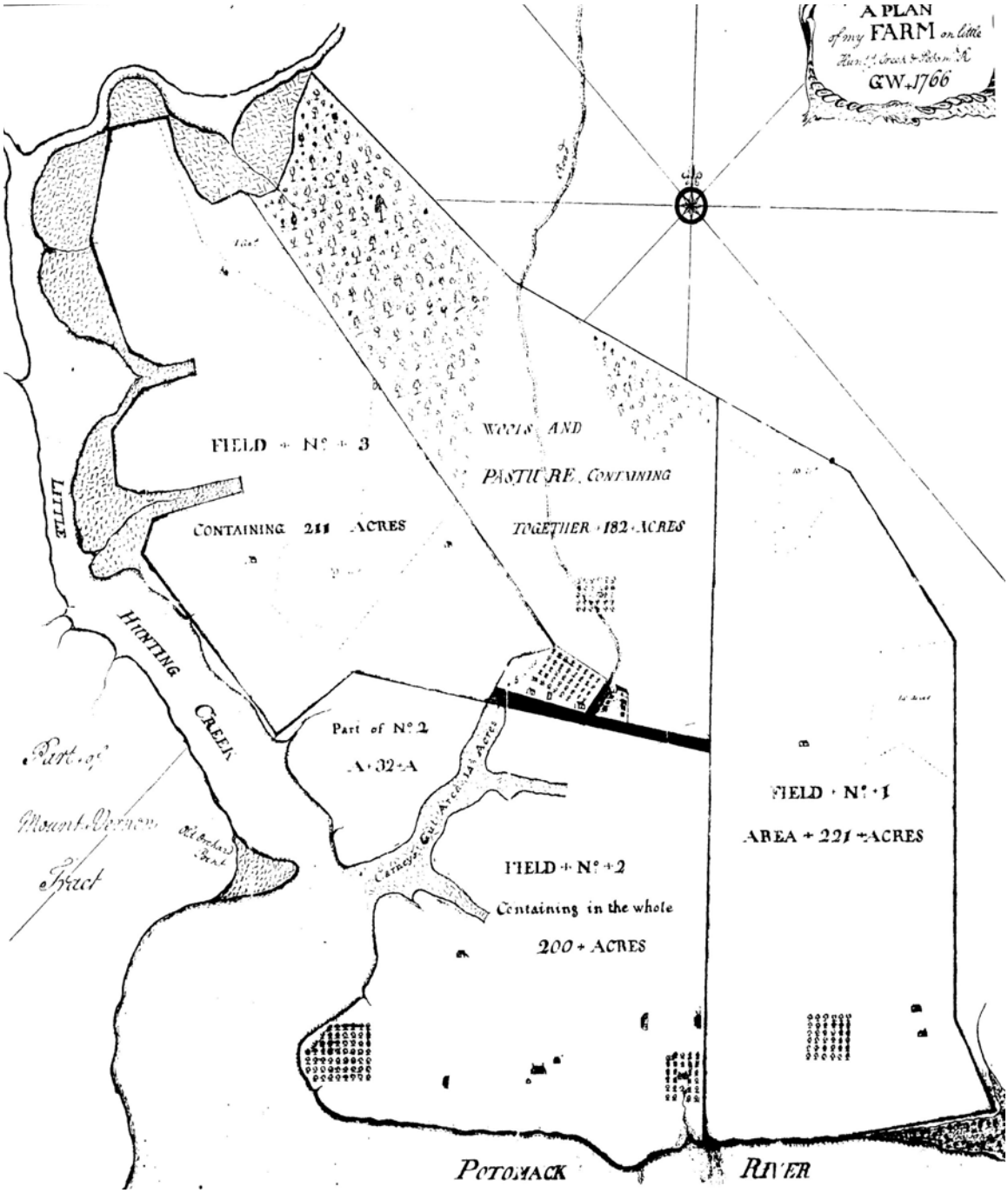



Figure 2. George Washington's map of the River Farm, 1766 (source: Lawrence Martin (ed.), *The George Washington Atlas*, United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Washington, D.C., 1932).

Figure 3. Projected location of 1766 tenant farm (source: Martin (cd.), *The George Washington Atlas*, Plate 3).

But what of economic standing? Where did John Sheridine fit in the Fairfax County hierarchy of wealth and status? Here his inventory proves an invaluable comparative tool. When he died, Sheridine owned three black slaves, two adult males valued at £50 and £35, and a girl worth £35. Though Fairfax County slave ownership was becoming increasingly widespread in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, it was still relatively unusual for a tenant planter to own slaves. In 1749, only about 17 percent of white adult males in the county owned slaves, the majority of whom held 6 or fewer. The proportion of slaveowners had increased somewhat by the 1780s, but a large majority of adult white males still did not own a single slave by the end of the Revolution. The total value of Sheridine's personal property, including his slaves, livestock, tools, and household goods was £241 7s. 3d. To put this figure in perspective, the annual rent of 730 pounds of tobacco he paid to Clifton was equivalent to about £4 13s., less than 2 percent of his net worth.[17] An analysis of similar inventories for neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland, from the 1770s determined that the mean estate value of slaveowning tenant planters was £121, only half of Sheridine's total. Even the value of Sheridine's slaves was significantly higher than the average for Prince George's County slaveowners who owned their own land.[18]

Though Sheridine may have ranked among the higher levels of Fairfax County's small planters, he still did not share the benefits of owning real estate enjoyed by his landlord. Besides leasing portions of his estate, Clifton could augment his income in other ways. Beginning in the mid-1740s, for example, Clifton operated a ferry service from the Neck. A 1745 "Act for appointing several new ferries" passed by Virginia's House of Burgesses allowed a public crossing "on Potomac river, from the land of William Clifton, in Fairfax County, over the said river, to the land in the tenure of Thomas Wallis, in Prince George County, in Maryland, the price for a man, one shilling, and for a horse, the same." This ferry proved popular with Fairfax County travelers, and was frequently used by George Washington when venturing out from his neighboring Mount Vernon estate. Yet, despite this additional revenue, by 1747 Clifton was deeply in debt. In that year he mortgaged his 1,806-acre estate on the Neck to Charles Carroll, William Digges, and John Addison of Maryland, a transaction that created a vexing legal entanglement that would not be resolved completely for 50 years.[19]

By 1755, Clifton had defaulted on his mortgage, and his Maryland creditors brought suit against him in the Fairfax County Court. Acting in chancery, the court ordered the Neck lands to be sold to pay Clifton's debts of more than £1,000, and later that year the property was purchased by George Johnston. Clifton launched a countersuit to regain the land, and in April 1759 the General Court in Williamsburg nullified the sale. To settle the issue, the Williamsburg authorities appointed a panel of local commissioners, including George William Fairfax, John West, Jr., Charles Green, and Thomas Colvill to arrange the sale of the property within four months, and to work out an

---

17 In 1750, the Fairfax County Court set the official value of tobacco at 12s. 6d. per hundredweight. Netherton et al., *Fairfax County*, 59.

18 Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 140.

19 William Waller Hening, The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619 (Richmond, 1819), v. 5: 364, v. 6: 19; Fairfax County Deed Book B-1: 290.

equitable settlement with Clifton's creditors. The Fairfax commissioners still had not resolved the situation by October 1759, and when Thomas Colvill stepped down as commissioner, he was replaced by Clifton's young neighbor, George Washington. And so the future President of the United States would begin his lifelong association with the lands of the Fort Hunt Park.[20]

[20] Fairfax County Deed Book D-1: 165-69,171-75, 178-84; W.W. Abbott (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series* (Charlottesville, 1983-98), 9:409-10n.

# CHAPTER 2:
# GEORGE WASHINGTON'S RIVER FARM
# 1760 - 1799

> I shall begrudge no reasonable expense that will contribute to the improvement and neatness of my farms, for nothing pleases me better than to see them in good order, and everything trim, handsome, and thriving about them; nor nothing hurts me more than to find them otherwise.
>
> *George Washington to William Pearce, 6 October 1793*[1]

The year was 1760, and George Washington had finally arrived home. A young man of 28, he was now a husband and father, having just married Martha Dandridge Custis the year before and assumed responsibility for her children. He was also fresh from the battlefield, having helped to wrest the continent from the hands of the French, and change the course of North American history. But, after a youth spent winning an empire on the frontier, Washington now yearned for a more settled life. And so, he returned to his ancestral lands along the Potomac River to take up the role of gentleman farmer. His goal: to bring prosperity and order to the farm at Mount Vernon where he had spent a part of his youth, and where he would end his days as the Father of the new American Republic.

This Fairfax County neighborhood of river farms had been home to the Washington family for nearly a century when George returned to Mount Vernon. In 1674 George's great-grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel John Washington, along with Colonel Nicholas Spencer, patented 5,000 acres in what was then Stafford County, "in near land of Capt. Giles Brent . . . ."[2] When George's father, Augustine, inherited the tract, it hardly possessed the carefully crafted aura of Georgian respectability for which Mount Vernon is now universally known. Rather, this was a large, though largely undeveloped, piece of ground, with a modest planter's house and little else. The family was living at Wakefield on Pope's Creek in Westmoreland County when George was born in 1732, though they soon moved to the Mount Vernon land—then known as Epsewasson—where they stayed until George was six. When their home was destroyed by fire, the family once again was forced to relocate, this time to Ferry Farm on the Rappahannock River in Stafford County, near the new town of Fredericksburg. George would return to Mount Vernon frequently during his youth, to visit his brother Lawrence, who had inherited the land, and pay his respects to the nearby Fairfax family, whose daughter Sally was his first love. But until Lawrence died prematurely in 1752, George likely did not dream that one day he would become master of this ground.[3]

Marriage changed George Washington, and Washington soon began to change Mount Vernon. In a society in which such unions were conceived as much to transfer wealth and privilege among the colonial gentry as for romantic love, George could not

---

1 Donald Jackson (ed.), *The Diaries of George Washington* (Charlottesville, 1976), I: xxvi.

2 Nell Marion Nugent (ed.), *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants*, (Richmond, 1977), II: 178.

3 James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (Boston, 1974), 43.

have made a better match. George would come to love Martha deeply, but much of the initial attraction was clearly fiscal. Widow of the wealthy Daniel Parke Custis, Martha transformed George from a "run-of-the-mill planter to a man of substance."[4] Though George had by no means endured an impoverished young life, he was never allowed to forget that his modest family circumstances demanded that he make his own way in life. So, when he suddenly came into a third of the vast Custis estate, and was likewise responsible for the other two-thirds as guardian of Martha's children, it is hardly surprising that George began to spend, and not always wisely. Looking back on his younger self, an older and more cautious Washington admitted that his strivings for a gentrified respectability "swallowed before I knew where I was, all the money I got by my marriage. Nay more, brought me into debt."[5]

As a new member of Virginia's landed elite, George assumed that the key to his success as a gentleman farmer lay in increasing his farm's productivity. This meant acquiring more land. Gazing out across Little Hunting Creek to the scattered tenant farms on his neighbor William Clifton's property, George surely imagined one day adding these acres to his growing estate. By 1760, the time must have seemed right: Clifton appeared eager to sell and be done with the legal wrangling over the property that had plagued him for years; and now Washington had the money to make a respectable offer. "Mr. Clifton came here and we conditioned for his land," Washington recorded in his diary on Thursday, February 14, 1760. "I am to have all his land in the Neck (500 Acres about his house excepted) and the Land commonly called Brents for £1,600 Currency."[6]

Given his complicated legal position, Clifton should not have been so quick to make this offer; and considering his own involvement as a commissioner charged with resolving the Clifton case, it is surprising that Washington should have shown such optimism. Nonetheless, these informal discussions over the sale of the Neck continued relatively amicably through February. Though he seemed to Washington a changeable personality, occasionally putting on "airs of indifference" and wavering on price, Clifton evidently was committed to the transaction, noting only that he must first get his wife to acknowledge her right of dower, a supposedly minor detail. Over the following days, however, the pages of Washington's diary reveal his bewilderment and exasperation as the deal began to unravel.

Sunday, March 2, 1760: "Mr. Clifton came here to day," Washington noted, "& under pretence of his Wife not consenting to acknowledge her right of Dower wanted to disengage himself of the Bargain he had made with me for his Land on the 26th past and by his Shuffling behaviour on the occasion convinced me of his being the trifling body represented . . . ."[7] Washington was then outraged to learn that Clifton also had agreed to sell the land to Thomson Mason, younger brother of George Mason of Gunston Hall. Washington could barely restrain himself, and his reaction seems to betoken more a

---

4 Flexner, *Washington,* 43.
5 Flexner, *Washington*, 44.
6 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: 237.
7 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: 250.

bruised sense of dignity than mere disappointment over potentially losing a valuable piece of real estate. This blatant betrayal, Washington wrote, "convinced me that he was nothing less than a thorough pac'd Rascall—disregardful of any Engagements of Words or Oaths not bound by Penalties."[8] Washington's characteristic sense of honor and propriety was deeply wounded by Clifton's actions, but this did not prevent him from haggling. Offering £50 more than Mason, Washington wooed Clifton back to their original agreement. "I did not think Myself restrained by any Rules of Honour, Conscience or & ca. from making him this offer," he rationalized, "as his Lands were first engaged to me by the most Solemn assurances that any Man could give."[9]

Pinning down the fickle Clifton had been no easy task, but sorting out the legal aspect of the sale would prove even more difficult. Meeting on March 28, 1760, the commissioners—Washington included—finally agreed upon the final disposition of the property. Rather than allowing Washington to buy Clifton's Neck in a private sale, they determined that the land would be offered at public auction in Alexandria on May 20th. On the appointed date, Washington's bid of £1,210 sterling was accepted, and the deed duly registered with the clerk of the Fairfax County Court.[10] Not unexpectedly, Thomson Mason, Washington's thwarted rival, threatened to appeal the sale decree, and a handful of Clifton's creditors refused to acknowledge the transfer. In fact, more than 30 years would pass before Charles Carroll's son and Ignatius Digges's widow, Mary Carroll Digges, finally gave Washington clear title to the land. But, for all intents and purposes, Washington now legally owned the 1,806 acres of Clifton's Neck.[11]

Ownership aside, Washington's enjoyment of the property was hampered from the start. To begin with, the deed of sale allowed Clifton to reside on the land for a year while he put his affairs in order. Washington also was limited by the fact that a number of Clifton's tenants remained on the property and, though they now paid their annual rent to Washington, the terms of their original leases were unaffected by the sale. It appears that former Clifton tenants Richard Rollins and William Crump left the Neck shortly after Washington bought the land, but several others, including John Carney, Samuel Johnston, Gilbert Simpson, and John Sheridine, remained on their leaseholds as late as the 1770s. In fact, Washington could not incorporate much of what now comprises Fort Hunt Park into his Clifton's Neck plantation until 1773, when he bought out the remainder of Sheridine's lease from his widow, Barberry, who was still living on the property with her new husband, Samuel Halley.[12]

The earliest known map that depicts Clifton's Neck as part of Mount Vernon was drafted by Washington himself in 1766 (see Chapter 1, Figure 2). Less than 1,000 of the property's 1,806 acres were included in this survey; it appears that only those fields that Washington was actively farming, not those still occupied by leaseholders, were shown.

---

8 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: 252.

9 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: 255.

10 Fairfax County Court, Deed Book D-1: 759-68.

11 W.W. Abbott (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series* (Charlottesville, 1983-98), 9: 409-10n. Within three years Washington had purchased an additional 238 acres of Neck land from Charles Brent, bringing the total acreage to 2,044. Fairfax County Deed Book D: 839.

12 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, II: 43; III: 115, 155; 248-49; V: 102.

Five years after taking over the Neck, Washington had divided the tract into six discrete components. Fields 1, 2, and 3 encompassed the bulk of the acreage, their boundaries likely coinciding with those of the Clifton era tenant farms. A number of structures, and what appear to be orchards or garden plots, are situated within each field, and likely represent former tenant dwellings. A 182-acre parcel to the north of the farm fields is labeled "woods and pasture," and would have provided pasturage for livestock, as well as the large quantity of wood necessary for fuel and fencing. At the head of Carney's Cut, a tributary of Little Hunting Creek that runs southeast from the heart of the property, is a small, well-defined area with at least three buildings and adjacent gardens. This was the location of the "quarter" that housed the slaves who worked the surrounding fields. [13]

The current boundaries of Fort Hunt Park do not fit neatly into Washington's 1766 depiction of his new property. The modern Sheridan Point (named for John Sheridine, the Clifton/Washington tenant) marks the extreme southeast boundary of the survey, so only the western portion of the National Park Service property is depicted in "Field No. 1" of the 1766 map. The remainder, which included the Sheridine leasehold, lies directly to the east of Field No. 1, and is not included in the map. Since Washington did not have access to this ground—and would not for another several years—he likely did not see the utility in including this acreage in the survey. The two unidentified structures depicted in the southeast quadrant of Field No. 1 appear to be located within the current boundaries of Fort Hunt Park (see Chapter 1, Figure 3). These buildings may represent the tenant farm of Jane Hester, who leased 200 acres adjacent to John Sheridine from Clifton in the years before Washington purchased the property. By 1766, Hester or the subsequent tenant had likely vacated the leasehold, however, and the fields had come into production as a part of Washington's farm on the Neck.[14]

In the two centuries since his death, historians and the general public alike have tended to view Washington through the prism of his public persona as soldier, statesman, and Founding Father. It is clear, however, that Washington saw himself in a much different light: as a farmer, frequently called away from his fields to serve the public interest. The pages of his diaries are filled with notations on the minutiae of plowing, crops, soils, and the weather. Washington loved the land, and clearly it occupied nearly all his mental and physical energy when he was at home.[15]

The very year that Washington acquired Clifton's Neck, 1760, also marked what is generally recognized as the beginning of an "agricultural revolution" in England. Pioneered by agriculturalist Jethro Tull, this blossoming interest in farming methods and theory marked a profound break with the medieval tradition of three-year crop rotation. Tull and others developed a far more sophisticated system of land management that included, among other advances, the introduction of fertilizers, forage crops, roots, and non-native grasses to stave off soil exhaustion. Washington's early diaries reveal that during his first years at Mount Vernon he was still heavily wedded to tobacco as his primary cash crop. But, like his fellow planters throughout Tidewater Virginia in the

---

13 Washington did not regularly use the name "River Farm" to identify this property until fairly late in his tenure. From the 1760s through the 1780s, he generally referred to it in his diaries and correspondence as "the Neck," as in "Clifton's Neck." The name "River Farm" appears to have gained currency only by the early 1790s. For example: "William Gardener—my new Overseer for the Neck, arrived (by Water) with his family today (December 10, 1789)." Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, V: 432-33.

14 Prince William County Court Records, Deed Book E: 419 (14 August 1741).

15 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: xxvi.

second half of the eighteenth century, Washington increasingly found the old tobacco economy untenable. Tobacco was at root a wasteful crop, devouring land almost as quickly as it could be cleared; and it did not take too many seasons before Washington realized that Mount Vernon's soils were simply exhausted from the annual round of tobacco planting and harvesting. He could no longer afford to bring substantial new tracts of land, such as Clifton's Neck, into production to maintain his output without destroying valuable woodland necessary for firewood, and his farms could not produce enough manure to fertilize already depleted soils.[16]

By the 1760s Washington had accepted the inevitable and begun to diversify his farms, phasing out tobacco production in favor of various other crops. Though he never abandoned tobacco entirely, by the Revolutionary era Mount Vernon had become the model of a diversified plantation economy. Before his death, Washington had raised—or at least experimented with—over 60 different crops at Mount Vernon, including: barley, buckwheat, burnet, clover, chicory, corn, carrots, cabbage, field peas, flax, guinea grass, hemp, horsebean, Jerusalem artichoke, millet, oats, orchard grass, potatoes, pumpkins, rye, sainfoin, Siberian melilot, spelt, tick trefoil, turnips, timothy, and wheat. Washington experimented enthusiastically with various types of fertilizers, including animal dung, marl, green crops plowed under, and even mud from the Potomac River. He shared Jefferson's interest in the new agricultural machinery, and an inventory of equipment at the River Farm taken after his death noted the presence of a threshing machine, a recent innovation. In addition to a wide range of crops, the River Farm was also home to some of Washington's livestock, including sheep, cattle, swine, and poultry. Throughout his years at Mount Vernon, Washington was fascinated with the new scientific study of agriculture and animal husbandry; his library was filled with books on the subject, and he corresponded enthusiastically with English and American experts, including fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson, on all matters relating to farm life.[17]

It would be disingenuous, however, to continue with a discussion of the plantation economy of Mount Vernon, and the daily workings of the River Farm, without first addressing the means by which Washington's agricultural schemes were realized. Slavery was well entrenched in Virginia long before Washington was born. Though he arguably became a "lukewarm abolitionist" in his later years, throughout his adult life Washington acted the traditional part of the large Virginia slaveowner. As with Thomas Jefferson, historians have been quick to seize on the irony of Washington's reputation as a pillar of republican virtue when he also held hundreds of fellow humans in bondage. In the final analysis, it is clear that Washington was a product of time, place, and social class: a "scientific farmer" of the late eighteenth century who managed his slaves as closely as his crops, and a 'benevolent master" who provided food, shelter, and medical care to his charges, yet always with an eye towards maintaining productivity.[18]

By the time he moved permanently to Mount Vernon, Washington was already well accustomed to owning slaves. He had inherited 10 slaves from his father as a boy, then 18 more when his elder brother Lawrence died in 1752. But only after marrying

---

16 Jackson (ed.), *Diaries*, I: xxvi-xxx.

17 Fritz Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (Columbia, Missouri, 997), 1-8.

18 Fritz Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (Columbia, Missouri, 997), 1-8.

Martha Custis did he truly join the ranks of Virginia's largest slaveowners. Marriage made Washington the caretaker of dozens of "dower slaves" who, though still owned by his wife, now came under his direct authority. In 1760, the year Washington bought Clifton's Neck, he paid tax on 49 slaves at Mount Vernon. As Washington's holdings expanded, eventually into five "farms" (Mansion House, Dogue Run, Muddy Hole, Union, and River Farm), his demand for slave labor increased accordingly. Each farm operated as an independent unit under the direction of either a resident white overseer or a black "driver." Washington himself closely monitored every aspect of work and output on each farm while he was at Mount Vernon, and when absent relied on a series of estate managers to ensure that plantation affairs ran smoothly.[19]

As he brought the fields on the Neck into production during the 1760s and 1770s, Washington moved increasing numbers of laborers to the quarter at the River Farm. There, they answered to James Cleveland, who served as overseer between 1765 and 1775. Fairfax County's lists of titheables, or taxable slaves over the age of 16, indicates that the number of laboring slaves living and working on the River Farm rose steadily from 6 in 1761 to 33 in 1774 (see Appendix B). After the Mansion House Farm, the River Farm was the largest of Mount Vernon's agricultural units, at its height in the 1790s housing upwards of 57 black men, women, and children.[20] A 1793 map of Mount Vernon shows that the main quarter at the River Farm was still located at the head of Carney's Cut, in the central portion of the tract, though it now was considerably larger than it had been in 1766 (Figure 4). A row of four structures was depicted along the edge of a large orchard and grass lot. A short distance to the south, on the opposite side of the cut, was a larger building, likely the overseer's house, alongside the farm's main barn and gardens.

Washington expected a great deal of his slaves and their overseers. At heart he was a businessman, and expected Mount Vernon to function in a rational and efficient manner. "To request that my people may be at their work as soon as it is light—work 'till it is dark—and be diligent while they are at it can hardly be necessary," Washington wrote to one of his overseers in 1789, "because the propriety of it must strike every manager who attends to my interest, or regards his own character . . . the presumption being, that, every labourer (male or female) does as much in 24 hours as their strength, without endangering their health, or constitution, will allow of."[21]

Though Washington's letters and diaries record the manifold details of agricultural operations at the River Farm, and the problems inherent in coaxing labor from sometimes recalcitrant slaves, he offered little descriptive detail about "his people"as human beings. As a result, the best sources for understanding the living conditions of slaves at the River Farm are provided by outsiders. Throughout Washington's life, Mount Vernon was host to a steady stream of visitors, including foreigners who were intrigued by Washington's slaves and their situation. One such guest, the Polish nobleman Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, recorded his impressions of a visit to the quarter.

---

19 Hirschfeld, *Washington and Slavery*, 11-21.

20 John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington, From the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (Washington, D.C., 1931-44); 37: 262-63.

21 Abbott (ed.), *Papers: Presidential Series*, 1: 223.

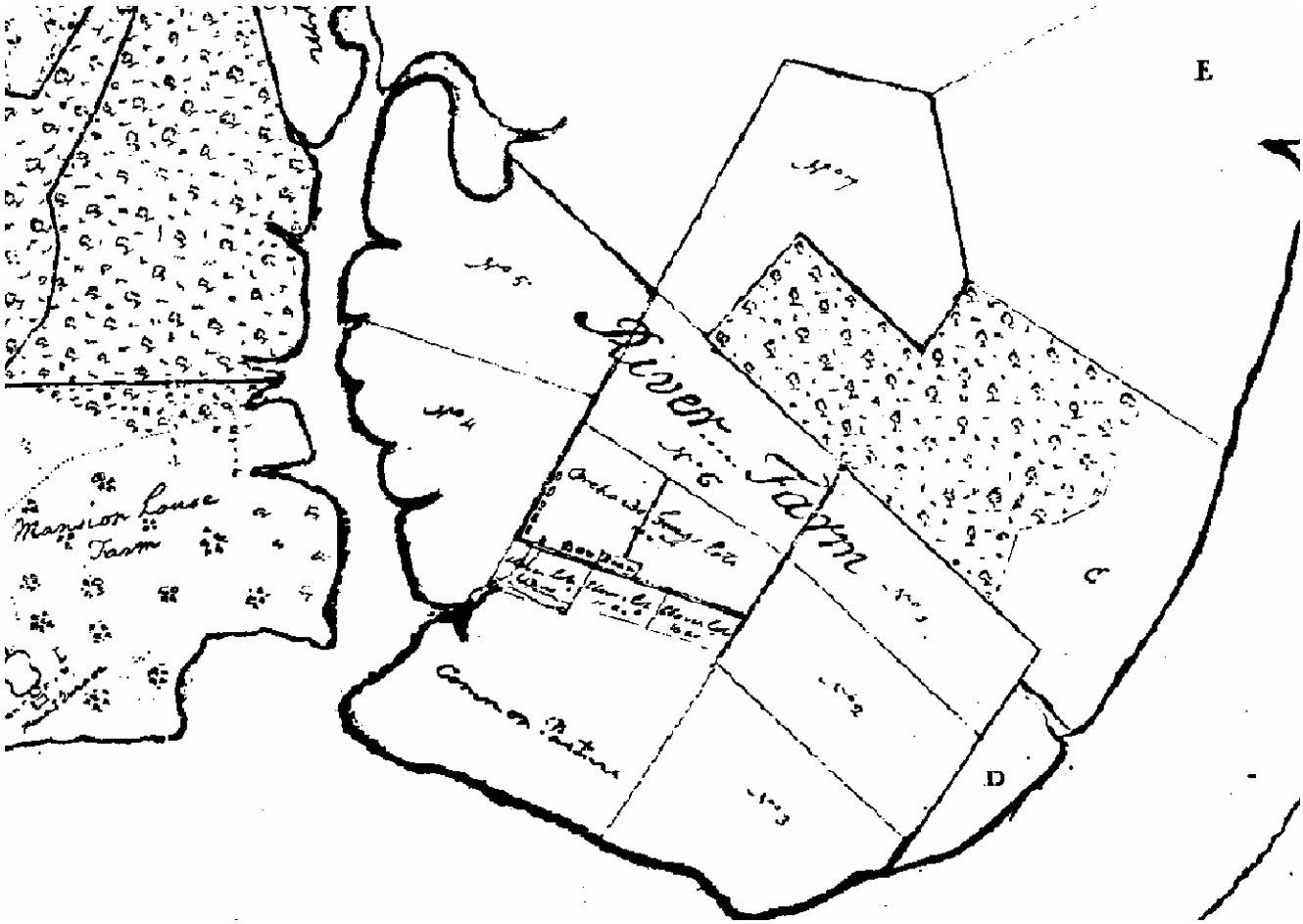



Figure 4. Detail, George Washington's map of his Mount Vernon Farms, 1793 (source: Lawrence Martin (ed.), *The George Washington Atlas*, United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Washington, D C., 1932).

Figure 5. Fort Hunt Park boundaries projected onto George Washington's 1793 map of the Mount Vernon Farms (source: Library of Congress, G 3882.M7 1793.W34).

"We entered one of the huts of the Blacks," he described,

> for one can not call them by the name of houses. They are more miserable than the most miserable of the cottages of our peasants. The husband and wife sleep on a mean pallet, the children on the ground; a very bad fireplace, some utensils for cooking, but in the middle of this poverty some cups and a teapot . . . . A very small garden planted with vegetables was close by, with 5 or 6 hens, each one leading ten to fifteen chickens. It is the only comfort that is permitted them; for they may not keep either ducks, geese, or pigs. They sell the poultry in Alexandria and procure for themselves a few amenities. They allot them each *one pack* [peck], one gallon of maize per week; this makes one quart a day, and half as much for the children, with 20 herrings each per month. At harvest time those who work in the fields have salt meat; in addition, a jacket and a pair of homespun breeches per year.[22]

Though little in the way of descriptive detail was ever recorded concerning the slaves who called the River Farm home, Washington did take two detailed inventories of is Mount Vernon slaves in 1786 and 1799 (see Appendices C and D). From these names and numbers can be teased some significant details that Washington simply took for granted and evidently felt no need to discuss. In the 1786 inventory, Washington divided his 52 River Farm slaves by sex and age, and differentiated between his own and Martha's "dower" slaves. At the head of the list was Davy, "overseer," and Molly, his wife. Davy was a mulatto slave who had previously served as overseer of the Muddy Hole Farm before Washington brought him to the River Farm in 1785 to replace the recently deceased superintendent, John Alton. At any given time it was not unusual for one of the Mount Vernon farms to be run by a trusted black overseer. Though still in bondage, the "driver" and his family were allowed special privileges in accordance with his elevated status. Living in separate quarters, they received extra rations and provisions, and were sometimes allowed to leave Mount Vernon to attend events such as horse races in Alexandria.[23]

River Farm in 1786 was home to 9 adult "laboring men," and 17 "laboring women." Though he did not purchase any new slaves after 1772, the black population at Mount Vernon had continued to grow considerably as the result of natural increase. Thus, the 23 children who also lived at the River Farm can be seen in pragmatic terms as the byproduct of Washington's encouragement of his female slaves to procreate. In one sense, Washington was all too glad to rely on "homegrown" labor, particularly in the years following the Revolution when, under increasing public scrutiny, he resolved to stop trading in slaves. But this policy ultimately backfired. Having also made a commitment to keep slave families together as best he could, Washington found himself unable to sell off excess laborers, as his less scrupulous fellow planters did, to relieve the population pressure on his estate. By the 1790s, Mount Vernon had become

---

22 Hirschfeld, *Washington and Slavery*, 54.
23 Hirschfeld, *Washington and Slavery*, 39-40.

overpopulated with slaves, about half of whom—children, the infirm, and elderly—were "unproductive," yet still required food, shelter, clothing, and medical care.[24]

Washington's 1799 inventory of River Farm, taken only weeks before his death, paints a similar picture of a large, self-contained slave community of 57 individuals, many of whom had several children living with them. Certain minor notations in this inventory shed unintended light on what Washington expected of his slaves. For example, at 80 years old, the slave Robin was considered "*nearly* past labor" [emphasis added]. At the opposite end of the age spectrum, 14-year-old Cecelia was recorded as having "no husband," suggesting that by her age she conceivably might have already found a match and begun to bear children. These few details reinforce a picture of slave life at the River Farm in which difficult labor was expected of even the most aged of slaves, and the reproductive capacity of young women—or girls—was valued as their principal asset.

Washington was considered by his contemporaries to be a humane master, strict and demanding, but never brutal. Though later in life he clearly came to see the contradictions inherent in a republic of slaveholders, he also held the typical eighteenth-century Southern view of blacks as essentially shiftless and inferior to whites. Perhaps the most succinct comment on slavery at Washington's Mount Vernon was offered by his private secretary, Tobias Lear "The negroes are not treated as blacks in general are in this Country," remarked the educated, liberal New Englander, "they are clothed and fed as well as any labouring people whatever and they are not subject to the lash of a domineering Overseer—but they are still slaves. . ."[25]

Though he rarely delved into the personal lives of his slaves, Washington spared no ink in describing the daily operations at the River Farm in those years, admittedly few and far between in the later 1770s and 1780s, when he actually lived at home. The following selected entries from his journal between January and December 1788 describe what amounts to a "year in the life" of the property, a detailed picture of the annual round of planting, harvesting, and countless other tasks that occupied Washington's mind, and his slaves' muscle, through each season.[26]

> **4 January**
> In the Neck the Men were getting Posts & rails for fencing; & the Women were threshing Oats.
>
> **22 January**
> at the Neck: the Men were getting Posts & rails—some of the women cutting down Corn Stalks & gathering them into heaps—8 others of them at the Mansion House.
>
> **14 February**
> In the Neck 7 Plows were at Work in the field by the Barn—frost some interruption to the Plows. The Women grubbing along the Branch below the Spring. Men at work as usual.

---

24 Hirschfeld, *Washington and Slavery*, 13-18.
25 Hirschfeld, *Washington and Slavery*, 52.
26 Jackson, *Diaries*, 5: 261-438.

**19 February**
The Men were getting & preparing for fencing. The Women, some were grubbing and others throwing down old fences in order to erect them a New.

**15 March**
In the Neck, the Women were spreading Dung on the ground intended for Oats and Barley—being the West part of No. 2.[27] At this place also I caused to be sown a bed of Reynold's Turnip rooted Cabbages for the purpose of raising plants to put in my Corn Rows.

**26 March**
Finished sowing so much of the West cut of No. 2 in the Neck as received the Oats raised from the Seed of General Spotswood; and Clover & Timothy thereon; & harrowed & cross harrowed them in, but could not roll them in on account of the damps on the Surface. Began to Sow Oats in the Easternmost cut of this field which was finished plowing this Morning and to plow in the middle cut for Barley.

**7 April**
In the Neck, the Posting, Railing & ditching was completed this Morning up to the Gate; and the other part, to the Gut, set about. The Plows would, about Noon, finish breaking up the Middle Cut of No. 2 and a particular part of which being very cloddy and stiff, I ordered it to be crossed. . . . The Women would about have done picking up & heaping the Corn Stalks in No. 3 to day (having finished those in No. 7) and would repair the fence round No. 6 and Orchard Inclosure.

**28 April**
In the Neck, as at Dogue Run, the planting of Corn had been suspended on account of the rains, and the extreme wetness of the Earth . . . . Began the brick work of the Dairy at this place to day. And ordered the holes for the Reception of Corn to be made to morrow.

**2 May**
In the Neck, all hands except the Plowers & Carters were planting Corn—one plow laying off in the Barn Inclosure for Sundries—one harrow for Buck Wheat—3 plows listing for Carrots and Cabbages . . . .

**14 May**
In the ground which had been ridged here for Pease & ca. 5 Men (besides the Overseer, who only worked occasionally) 11 Women, and one boy made 72 rows of hills, which rows could average 300 hills each—in the whole between 21 ad 22 thousand hills in that day.

---

[27] Washington's 1793 map of Mount Vernon indicates that the current Fort Hunt Park encompassed the majority of the River Farm's Field No. 3 and the southern portion of Field No. 2.

**14 June**
At the River Plantation, all hands were planting Potatoes & weeding Corn. The Plows were throwing a furrow (on each side) to the Corn, covering Potatoes, & ca. The Pumpkins were also weeded and the Planting of Potatoes completed at this place.

**18 June**
Examined the grain in the Neck which appears as follows—viz.—the Wheat in field No. 7 which I expected would have been very fine scarcely merits the epithet—Middling the whole being too thin being injured by the frosts of Winter & the wet of this Spring. Of the red wheat which was sown in this field scarcely any is to be seen and of the white (both imported from England) the ground was but thinly covered. The Corn ground Wheat in No. 3 was too thin every where—in places scarcely any.

**22 July**
In the Neck—the Oats were cut down about Noon, & the last of the Wheat about five Oclock, when the Cradlers assisted in binding and securing the grain. One harrow in the Corn and five Plows finished Weeding the Pumpkins after dinner.

**25 July**
*[The previous day a fierce hurricane hit the Chesapeake, inflicting serious damage between Norfolk and Baltimore.]*
In the Neck—all the River Fence being carried away, All hands (plow people as well as the rest) were collecting rails to repair it, to keep the stock out of the fields of grain except One or two who were righting some shocks of grain and Setting up Flax which had been pulled and blown all about.

**11 August**
Overlooked the Stock here, and separated 13 (besides 2 Work Steers which will follow as soon as they can be spared) to go to the feeding Pasture at French's viz. 5 steers & 9 cows. Separated the Lambs 45 in number from the Ewes, & put them in field No. 2. Drew 12 old weathers and 38 old ewes for killing and Marked and put them in Field No. 7. The residue—viz. 29 weathers & 79 ewes were turned in the Common Pasture.

**23 August**
The rest of the hands were about finishing weeding the Pease & *pulling* the large weeds from among the Pompions—after which would gather up the apples under the trees.

**12 September**
In the Neck. The Ploughs and harrows from the different Plantations were at Work, preparing for, and putting in wheat—one harrow in the Corn and the Waggon & Carts drawing in Wheat. The other hands were clearing Wheat (which had been tread out yesterday) and picking up apples.

**29 September**
In the Neck—All the tops were cut and blades pulled from the Corn on Saturday lasst, but not got in being too green. All hands, except 5 people at the Plows, getting them in to day.

**9 October**
In the Neck—the People having pulled up all the Pease that were planted in Hills had begun to dig the Irish Potatoes between the Corn rows in order to Sow Rye. The Carts & Waggons were getting in the Pease and one man was cutting down with a scythe those Pease which had been sown in Broadcast.

**29 October**
In the Neck—Ordered the Pumpkins at this and all the other plantations to be taken up & secured as a severe frost might be expected.

**1 November**
In the Neck—all the Plows were putting in Rye, and all the Hoes employed in taking up Potatoes & hoeing in Rye between the Corn.

**18 November**
In the Neck the Plows were at Work breaking up field No. 8. The other hands were stripping the Seed off the flax in order to Spread.

**4 December**
In the Neck the Plows were stopped by the frost which had frozen the ground quite hard. The greater part of the hands had been working on the public roads the two preceeding days. To day they were removing Potatoes into the Barn from the Corn House.

**10 December**
William Gardener—my new Overseer for the Neck, arrived (by Water) with his family today.

And so the cycle of seasons, and the rhythm of work, began anew.

In 1788, Washington was still a man in his prime, rising at dawn and spending hours touring his estate, not content merely to admire his land from horseback, but plunging into every detail of management, from deciding how to plow to when to pick the pumpkins. But as the years passed, and he began to lose his renowned vigor,

Washington longed to abdicate as ruler of Mount Vernon, a huge plantation that literally comprised a small, self-sufficient village. Washington envisioned leasing the plantation's four outlying farms, while retaining the mansion house and grounds for his own use. The following advertisement, describing the River Farm and his other Mount Vernon properties, appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper in early 1796:

> The largest of these, called River Farm, contains 1207 acres of ploughable land; 879 of which, are in seven fields, nearly of a size, and under good fences; 212 acres (in one enclosure) are, generally in a common grass pasture; and 116 acres more, are in *five* grass lots, and an orchard (of the best grafted fruit) all of them contiguous to the dwelling house and barn. On the premises, are a comfortable dwelling house (in which the Overlooker resides) having three rooms below, and one or two above; an old barn (now in use) and a brick one building 60 by 30 feet; besides ends and wings, sufficient for stabling 20 working horses, and as many oxen; and an excellent brick dairy, with a fine spring in the middle of it. Thirty black labourers (men and women) being the usual number which have been employed on this farm, are, with their children, warmly lodged chiefly in houses of their own building. The soil is a loam, more inclined to clay than sand, and with slight dressings yields grain well, particularly wheat. Encompassed on two sides by the river Potomack, and on a third by a navigable creek, the inlet therefrom, in a variety of places, afford an inexhaustible fund of rich mud for manure and compost. The water abounds in a variety of fish and wild fowl; and one or more shad and herring fisheries might be established thereon.[28]

Despite his flair for salesmanship, Washington was unable to find a tenant willing to take on the management of the River Farm, or any of his other properties. When his long-time personal secretary, Tobias Lear, married Martha's niece Frances in 1795, Washington gave them a rent-free lease of 360 acres in the extreme eastern part of the River Farm as a wedding gift. This property, known variously as "Wellington" and "Walnut Tree Farm," included William Clifton's former home tract. A Harvard graduate, Lear had arrived at Mount Vernon from his native New Hampshire in 1785 on the recommendation of a mutual acquaintance. A one-year appointment turned into a fourteen-year association, and Lear was at Washington's side when the General died. Lear and his stepsons, George Fayette and Lawrence Augustine Washington, lived intermittently at Wellington until he was sent abroad on diplomatic service during the Jefferson presidency.[29]

By the summer of 1799, Washington sensed that his death was imminent, and he set about drafting his will. "Upon the decease of my wife," he ordered, "it is my Will & desire that all the Slaves which I hold in *my own right*, shall receive their freedom." Though Martha retained control over the distribution of her "dower slaves," Washington's death ultimately released dozens of slaves from their labors at the River

---

28 Fitzpatrick, *Writings of Washington*, 34: 433-34.

29 Stephen Decatur, Jr., *Private Affairs of George Washington, From the Records and Accounts of Tobias Lear, Esquire, His Secretary* (Boston, 1933), 303.

Farm. The land itself went to his nephews, George Fayette and Lawrence Augustine Washington, to be divided equally between them when they reached their majority. In the interim, their stepfather, Tobias Lear, would assume responsibility for the property.[30]

For nearly 40 years, George Washington had invested tremendous energy in the River Farm, through drought and storms, and numerous overseers, good, bad, and indifferent. He would have been sorely disappointed to see, however, how quickly his accomplishments at Mount Vernon, his most prized life's work, began to disintegrate once he was gone. Thirty years after Washington's death, a Fairfax County writer offered this appraisal of the current condition of Mount Vernon: "any curious to mark the operation of time upon human affairs," he noted,

> would find much for contemplation by riding through the extensive domains of the late General Washington. A more widespread and perfect agricultural ruin would not be imagined; yet the monuments of the great mind that once ruled, are seen throughout. The ruins of capacious barns, and long extended hedges, seem proudly to boast that their master looked to the future.[31]

[30] Fitzpatrick, *Writings of Washington*, 37: 289-90.

[31] Jackson, *Diaries*, I: xxxvii.

# CHAPTER 3:
# SLAVE PLANTATION TO YANKEE FARM
# 1800 - 1900

Until rescued by the visionary efforts of Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, George Washington's estate had slipped inexorably into decay in the years following his death. No longer a component of Mount Vernon, the River Farm was now in the hands of Tobias Lear's stepsons, George Fayette Washington and Lawrence Augustine Washington. When they inherited the 2,077-acre property in 1799, both boys were still minors, and Fairfax County land tax records for the early years of the nineteenth century reveal that the land continued to be attributed to George Washington's estate. Lear held the neighboring 360-acre Wellington estate, which he entrusted to farm manager Albin Rawlins when he went as President Jefferson's consul to Santo Domingo in 1801. It is unclear exactly how the River Farm operated before the Washington heirs reached their majority, but it is likely that Lear leased the land to tenants on their behalf. When Lear took his own life in 1816, the 360-acre Wellington estate was transferred to his stepsons; and after the young Lawrence Washington died at a young age while visiting Cadiz, Spain, the River Farm passed entirely to his brother George.[1]

In 1813, the 23-year-old George Fayette Washington married Anna Maria Frame in Charles Town, Virginia (now West Virginia). Fairfax County tax and census records suggest that Washington and his new bride lived on his River Farm property (probably on the Wellington estate) between 1818 and 1825. Personal property tax rolls list Washington for the first time in 1818, at which time he was assessed on 9 black slaves over the age of 16, a slave between 12 and 16, and 10 horses. The 1820 Federal Census indicates that Washington was then living in Fairfax County. His household included a white female between 26 and 45, presumably Anna Maria, and 16 slaves, including 10 men and 6 women of various ages. It is unclear whether Washington used his slaves to work the entire River Farm plantation, or whether he may have leased portions of the land to tenants. In 1826, Washington left the River Farm, moving his family and slaves to the "Waverly" estate in Frederick County, seven miles northeast of Winchester. For the next 28 years, Washington presumably leased the farm to tenants, though the county records are silent on this matter.[2]

On June 22, 1852, George Fayette Washington sold 791.25 acres of the River Farm, including the future site of Fort Hunt Park, to Henry Allen Taylor of Alexandria for the sum of $8,444. Three years later, Taylor and his wife Ann transferred a 300-acre parcel at Sheridan's Point to Lewis Linton, a 50-year-old physician from Gloucester County, New Jersey, for $5,000.[3] The Lintons were only one of hundreds of Yankee families who relocated to Fairfax County in the years before the Civil War. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the county had reached its economic and social

---

1 Eugene E. Prussing, *The Estate of George Washington, Deceased* (Boston, 1927): 211-12; Ray Brighton, *The Checkered Career of Tobias Lear* (Portsmouth, 1985): 175, 179; Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1800-1823.

2 John W. Wayland, *The Washingtons and Their Homes* (Staunton, 1944): 257, 259, 323; Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1818-25; Federal Census, 1820, Fairfax County, Population Schedule.

3 Fairfax County Deed Book R-3: 252; V-3: 463

nadir. Decades of careless farming had exhausted the land, and the subsequent outmigration of county residents caused the population to drop by more than 30 percent between 1800 to 1840. But the agricultural life of the area was given a much-needed boost in the 1820s, albeit from an unlikely source. A native of Westmoreland County, Virginia, and a naval hero of the War of 1812, Thomas ap Catesby Jones inherited a tract of land near the Great Falls of the Potomac. Taking up the cause of "scientific" farming, Jones experimented with a variety of fertilizers, including a batch of South American guano. His efforts succeeded remarkably, and proved an example to many northern farmers eager to take up new land. Fairfax County would prove the perfect location. Its overworked and unproductive lands were cheap to buy, but had the advantage of proximity to the growing urban markets of Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington.[4]

By 1847, about 200 Northern families had moved to Fairfax and invested more than $200,000 in land, which they set about improving with a vigor and ingenuity that impressed their Virginian neighbors. In 1850, just before the Lintons arrived, roughly one in three adult white males in Fairfax hailed from the northern states or European countries. Most were farmers who took up moderately sized parcels, typically between 150 and 200 acres, but the new arrivals also included a few professional men, such as Linton. These Yankee newcomers, including many Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quakers, were inherently anti-slavery, though not aggressively so. By improving their farms with free white labor, they hoped to show Southerners that black slavery was not simply immoral, but also economically unsound.[5]

Fairfax land records indicate that there were no taxable buildings on the property when Linton purchased it; however, he appears to have built a house soon after, since buildings valued at the respectable sum of $500 were assessed on the tract by 1857. Maps of the Mount Vernon area drafted during the 1860s indicate that Linton's house was situated in the southern portion of the current Fort Hunt Park (Figure 6). The Federal Census of 1860 recorded that Linton's household included his wife, Sarah, aged 51, a daughter, Harriet, 26, and two sons, John, 22, and Frank, 11. A 23-year-old white man named William Cook also lived with the Lintons; the newly relocated Yankees owned no slaves, so Cook probably worked as a farm hand. According to the agricultural schedule of the census, 175 acres of Linton's Sheridan's Point farm consisted of "improved" land (i.e. cleared and under cultivation), while the remaining 125 acres were wooded. The total value of his real estate, including land and buildings, was $6,000. Linton's livestock included four horses, four milch cows, seven cattle, and six hogs, with a combined value of $400. Over the previous year, the farm had yielded 75 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of Indian corn, 75 bushels of oats, 100 bushels of Irish potatoes, 500 bushels of sweet potatoes, 200 pounds of butter, and 5 tons of hay. Most of this produce would have found its way to market in nearby Alexandria. In 1856 Virginia's General Assembly had authorized the construction of the Alexandria, Mount Vernon, and Accotink Turnpike. While providing easier access to Mount Vernon for tourists, the new toll road also allowed area farmers unprecedented access to urban consumers. The Lintons were

---

4 Nan Netherton, et al., *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, 1978): 251-59.

5 Netherton et al., Fairfax County, 259-284; Dorothy Troth Muir, Potomac Interlude: The Story of Woodlawn Mansion and the Mount Vernon Neighborhood (Mount Vernon, 1979): 40, 52.

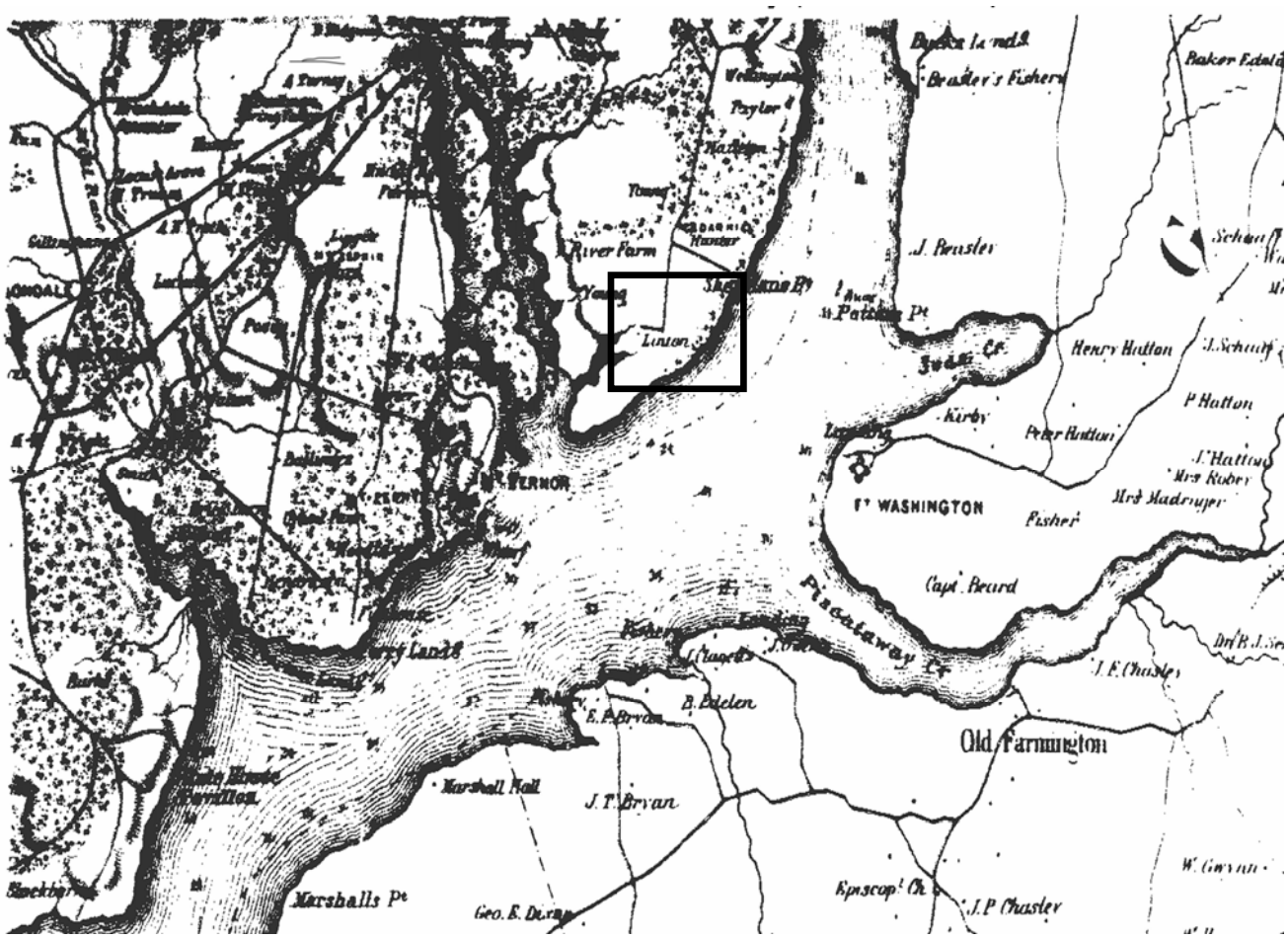



Figure 6. Detail, U.S. War Department, Engineer Bureau, *Extract of Military Map of Northeast Virginia Showing Forts and Roads*, 1865 (source: Fairfax County Regional Library, Fairfax, Virginia), approximate vicinity of Fort Hunt indicated.

perfectly situated to take advantage of the route, which ran past their farm a short distance to the north.[6]

Not long after the Lintons had established their Fairfax County farm, their neighborhood was engulfed by war. In January 1861, as sectional conflict seemed inevitable, a company of U.S. Marines sailed on the steamer *Philadelphia* from the Washington Navy Yard to Fort Washington, on the Maryland side of the Potomac within view of the Linton farm. Here they garrisoned the old stone fort and began to make much-needed repairs. Meanwhile, the majority of Alexandrians prepared to support the secessionist cause. Alexandria's importance as a port, and its proximity to Washington, D.C., meant that it was only a matter of time before Union forces arrived to secure the area. On May 24, 1861, Federal troops entered Alexandria on the heels of the fleeing Confederate defenders, and the city would remain occupied by Union forces until the end of the war.[7]

The war interrupted the daily lives of the Lintons in numerous ways. Having voted against secession, Linton would not have been popular with his neighbors. In fact, in the early days of the war, Unionist sympathizers in the area were frequently harassed by pro-Confederate Virginians. The arrival of Federal troops ended this persecution, though the military occupation brought its own inconveniences. The Linton farm lay beyond the ring of Federal fortifications built to defend Alexandria and the capital from Confederate assault, but numerous roadblocks and checkpoints along the major county roads made it difficult to travel even short distances. Sarah Tracy, Ann Pamela Cunningham's secretary who lived at Mount Vernon during the war years, recalled that progress was so slow on the seven-mile route between Alexandria and her home that on one occasion she was forced to stop and spend the night along the way.[8]

No actual fighting occurred within miles of Mount Vernon, though the war was never far away. Tracy remembered that throughout the day and evening of July 21, 1861, the sound of guns from the First Battle of Bull Run literally shook the ground at Mount Vernon. The Federal occupation quickly disrupted farm life in the area, as troops regularly confiscated food and other necessary supplies from the surrounding Fairfax County farms. But since they tended to target mainly secessionist households, the Lintons were likely spared the most destructive effects of "hay-soldiering" (foraging for horses) and "pie-rooting" (feeding hungry soldiers). They would have soon grown accustomed to the sight of Federal troops, however, since Washington's Mount Vernon proved a popular tourist destination for off-duty officers and men garrisoned in the Washington area.[9]

Despite the many inconveniences of the Federal occupation, the Linton farm survived the war years relatively unscathed. County tax records indicate that the value of buildings on the property remained constant after the war, and the land was still productive. After the war, the aging Linton evidently let his sons run the farm. The 1870 Federal Census indicates that he was now retired, while his household had expanded to

---

6 Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1855-57; Federal Census 1860, Fairfax County, Population and Agricultural Schedules.

7 James G. Barber, *Alexandria in the Civil War* (Lynchburg, 1988): 3-15.

8 Edith M. Sprouse (ed.), *Fairfax County in 1860: A Collective Biography* (Fairfax, 1996), v. 4: 1221; Dorothy Troth Muir, *Mount Vernon: The Civil War Years* (Mount Vernon, 1993): 74-77.

9 Barber, *Alexandria in the Civil War*, 15-22.

include: John Linton, 31, a farmer, and his English-born wife, Mary, 28; Frank Linton, 21, also a farmer; Caroline Smith, 16, who may have been a relative or servant; Robert Linton, a 60-year-old retired merchant from Pennsylvania, perhaps Lewis Linton's brother; Jerome Linton, 28, a farmer, his wife Jane, 24, and their children, Caroline, 8, and Henry, 2; and finally Spencer Watts, a white Virginian who boarded as a farm hand.[10]

The Agricultural Schedule for the 1870 census gives a better indication of how the Linton farm was organized. The eldest son, John, presided over 200 acres, 175 of which were improved. His farm included 5 horses, 3 milch cows, 7 cattle, and 21 hogs. The previous year he had raised 80 bushels of winter wheat, 30 bushels of rye, 100 bushels of Indian corn, 30 bushels of Irish potatoes, $400 of market garden produce sold in Alexandria, 150 pounds of butter, and 4 tons of hay. Jerome Linton oversaw work on the remaining 100 acres, 75 of which were in cultivation. He owned three horses, two milch cows, and eight hogs. Though his farm was considerably smaller, Jerome's output nearly equaled that of his brother, with 70 bushels of winter wheat, 10 bushels of rye, 100 bushels of Indian corn, 30 bushels of Irish potatoes, 5 bushels of sweet potatoes, 200 pounds of butter, and 200 tons of hay. In addition, Jerome sold $50 worth of forest products, most likely firewood.[11]

In March 1871, Lewis Linton formally deeded the farm to his two younger sons. Frank received the 100-acre tract known as the "Homestead Farm," or "Park Farm," while Jerome acquired 100 acres at Sheridan's Point. Together, these two parcels encompassed what is now Fort Hunt Park.[12] Frank took over buildings worth $1,000 on his parcel and, by 1873, Jerome had added improvements to his Sheridan's Point Farm valued at $700, including a house and farm buildings.[13]

On August 4, 1877, the unmarried Frank Linton sold the Park Farm to Nicholas Eckhardt of Washington, D.C. For the first time in its history, the land encompassing Fort Hunt Park was now owned by more than one family. Later that year, Jerome Linton claimed a Homestead Exemption on his Sheridan's Point Farm, which now included 92.5 acres, since he had sold a small portion to his neighbor, William Hunter, the year before. An 1879 map of the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County indicates the location of Jerome Linton's farmhouse near Sheridan's Point, while the former Lewis Linton home was now identified as "Eckhardt," and "Piney Grove" (Figure 7).

By 1879, Jerome Linton had defaulted on his mortgage. The Sheridan's Point Farm was sold at public auction in Alexandria on August 26th to Thomas F. Boroughs, a city merchant with a store at the corner of Franklin and Patrick streets. By this time, the value of buildings on the property had increased to $1,000.[14] In April 1880, Boroughs sold the Sheridan's Point Farm to Annie M. Pelton of Washington, D.C. The Federal

---

10 Federal Census, 1870, Fairfax County, Population Schedule.

11 Federal Census, 1870, Fairfax County, Agricultural Schedule.

12 Fairfax County Deed Book N-4: 497; 4-O: 50. When Lewis Linton died in 1877, he ordered his executors to sell the remaining 100 acres, known as the "West Farm," and distribute the proceeds between his daughters, Emma Smith, Harriet Fuller, Ellen Steward, and Deborah Devler.

13 Fairfax County Personal Property Tax Records, 1871-1873.

14 Fairfax County Deed Book V-4: 181; V-4: 251; V-4: 443; Y-4: 31; Fairfax County Personal Property tax Records, 1880.




Figure 7. Detail of Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1879 (source: (Stephenson, *Cartography of Northern Virginia*, 1981, Plate 76), approximate vicinity of Fort Hunt indicated.

Census of that year indicated that the Pelton household consisted of Julius Pelton, a 46-year-old farmer, his wife, Anna (Annie) M. Pelton, 43, and a 9-year-old black girl named Sally Pollard. The Peltons were transplanted New Englanders; Julius was born in Massachusetts, and Annie in Connecticut. Just as the Lintons had exemplified the influx of Northerners into Fairfax County in the years before the Civil War, the Peltons were representative of the second wave of Yankee newcomers who took up land in the neighborhood in the postwar years. Meanwhile, in March 1882, Eckhardt and his wife Sarah Jane of Washington, D.C., transferred their 100 acres, now known as "Piney Grove," to Louisa J. Grau of St. Michaels, Talbot County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The value of buildings on both farms had declined considerably in recent years, dropping from $1,000 to $600 on the Grau tract, and from $1,000 to $500 on the Peltons' new farm.[15]

An 1890 map drafted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a proposed "National Road" from Washington, D.C., to Mount Vernon, offers a relatively detailed picture of the landscape of the property that would soon become Fort Hunt (Figure 8). Two buildings, evidently representing the former Jerome Linton farmstead now occupied by the Peltons, are situated at the end of a farm road that ultimately connected the property with the main road to Alexandria. These structures would have been situated in the southwestern portion of the present Fort Hunt Park, near Sheridan Point. Curiously, however, the Grau farmstead at "Piney Grove," which should have been situated a short distance to the north, does not appear on the map. It is possible that the main house was no longer standing by that date; the Grau family does not appear in the 1900 Federal Census for Fairfax County, suggesting they lived elsewhere by this date. However, land tax records still indicate buildings worth $600 on their land at this time, so their absence on the Corps of Engineers map may simply have been an oversight.[16]

Between 1874 and 1882, the steamboat *Mary Washington* operated between Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon, ferrying tourists and mail along the Potomac River route. But, in subsequent years, planners once again looked to improve the land route south into the county. After the success of the first trolley line in Richmond, a syndicate was formed in 1892 to bring an electric railway to Alexandria. The New Alexandria Land and River Improvement Company set about purchasing 1,600 acres of land between Alexandria and Mount Vernon for a right-of-way, and within four months, the Washington, Alexandria, & Mt. Vernon Electric Railway had been completed. This new form of transportation had a profound effect on the Mount Vernon area. Significant residential development would not begin immediately: the Snowdens subdivided portions of their property along the new rail line, but could sell only a few lots. However, with 30 trains operating between Mount Vernon and Alexandria each day, 1.74 million people were soon using the railway each year. Mount Vernon students now had the opportunity to attend schools in Washington, D.C., and rapid access to urban markets gave a tremendous boost to the area's dairy industry.[17] The Pelton and Grau families no doubt grasped the potential economic benefits of the new rail line, which ran

---

15 Fairfax County Deed Book Z-4: 34, B-5: 161; Federal Census 1880, Fairfax County Population Schedule; Netherton, et al., *Fairfax County*, 410; Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1885-90.

16 Federal Census, 1900, Fairfax County Population Schedule; Fairfax County Land Tax Records, 1890.

17 Netherton et al., *Fairfax County*, 477-81.

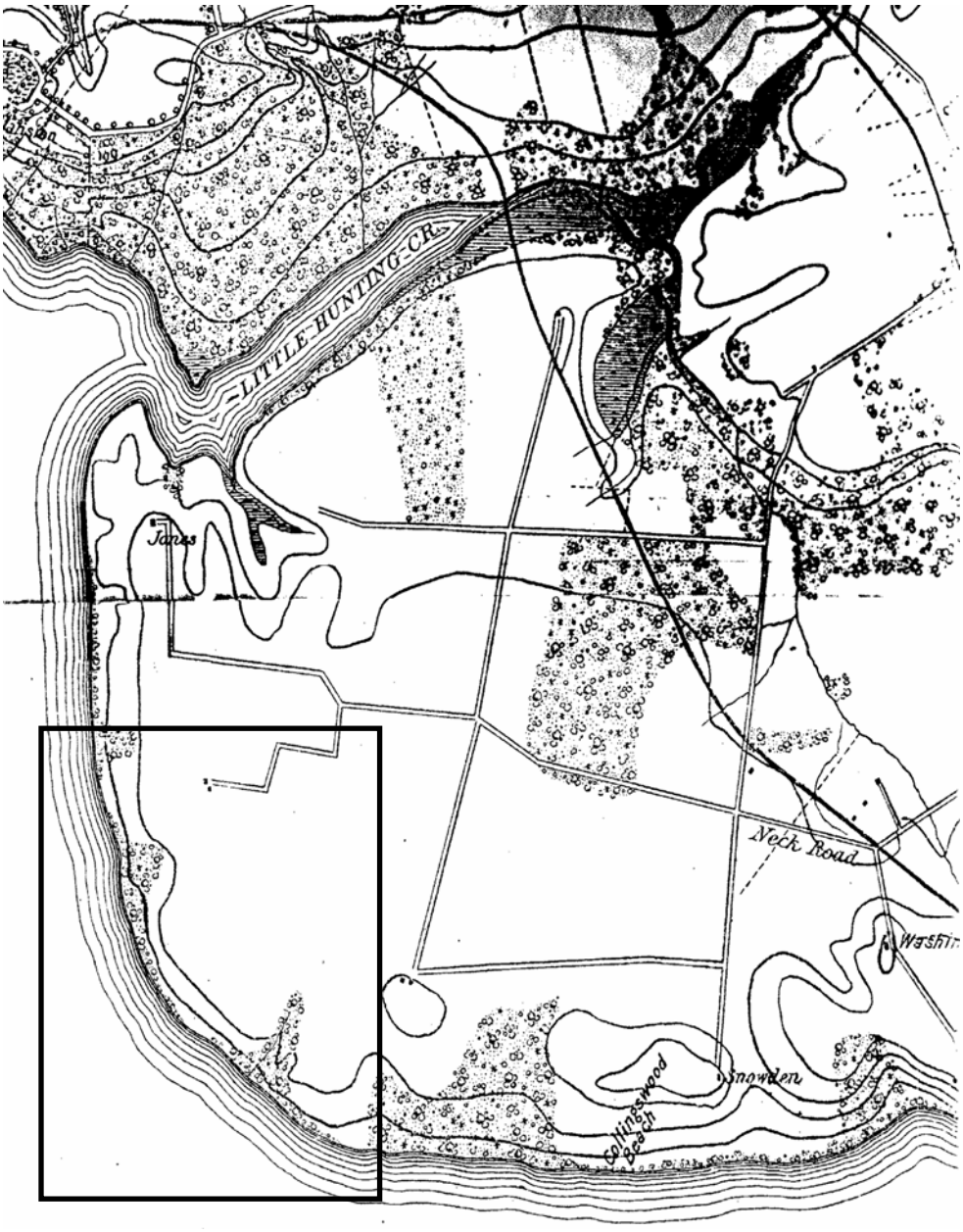



Figure 8. *Portions of Alexandria and Fairfax Counties, Virginia, Showing the Route Surveyed for a National Road from Washington D. C. to Mount Vernon, Virginia,* U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1893, Fairfax County Regional Library, Fairfax, Virginia (approximate vicinity of Fort Hunt indicated).

only a short distance north of their farms. Though they could not have envisioned the rapid suburbanization of their neighborhood over the next 50 years, they were about to face a more tangible and immediate transformation of their quiet, rural way of life—not in the form of commuting civil servants, but in concrete bunkers and 8-inch guns.

# CHAPTER 4:
# "THEM CRAZY SOLDIERS"
# 1893 - 1917

> In the mean time we have acquired great riches and apparently dreamed that prosperity should inspire friendship and not envy in less favored peoples—forgetting that riches are a temptation, and that the plunder of one of our sea-ports might abundantly reimburse an enemy for the expenses of a war conducted against us.
>
> *Report of the Board on Fortifications or Other Defenses, 1886*[1]

By the mid-1880s, the United States was well on its way to becoming an international power, with economic and "imperial" interests around the globe. The "New Navy" that emerged during this period replaced the antiquated Civil War era fleet, launching the United States into the age of "gunboat diplomacy." At the same time, American military planners recognized that the nation's aging system of coastal defense had become dangerously outdated. Congress responded to these concerns by passing an act on March 3, 1885, stipulating that President Grover Cleveland would appoint a board to "examine and report at what forts fortifications or other defenses are most urgently required, the character and kind of defenses best adapted for each, with reference to armament; the utilization of torpedoes, mines, or other defensive appliances, and for the necessary and proper expenses of said Board . . . ."[2]

In due course, Cleveland appointed the Board on Fortifications or Other Defenses, otherwise known as the Endicott Board, after its President, Secretary of War William C. Endicott. The Board consisted of two officers of the Engineer Corps, two officers of the Ordnance Corps, two officers of the line of the Navy, and two civilians. The Board divided the task of reporting to Congress among six committees, charged with compiling a wide variety of information, from the penetration and effect of shot on armor, to the size and armament of foreign naval vessels, and the character and extent of existing defenses for the most important American ports.[3]

The Endicott Board formally presented their findings to Congress the following year. Though the report included reams of technical data, its overarching message was abundantly clear. The United States, the Board found, was simply not equipped to repel a seaborne attack by a major naval power. "Without enlarging upon this subject," they declared, "it suffices to state that the coast fortifications, which in 1860 were not surpassed by those of any country for efficiency, either for offense or defense, and were entirely competent to resist vessels of war of that period, have, since the introduction of rifled guns of heavy power and of armor plating in the navies of the world, become

---

1 Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947* (Annapolis, 1980): 349-50; William C. Endicott *et al*., *Report of the Board on Fortifications or Other Defenses Appointed by the President of the United States Under the Provisions of the Act of Congress Approved March 3, 1885* (Washington, 1886): 6.

2 Board on Fortifications, *Report*, 3.

3 Board on Fortifications, *Report.*

unable to cope with modern iron or steel-clad ships of war; far less to prevent their passage into the ports destined for attack."[4]

The Board made numerous recommendations for beefing up America's coastal defenses. To begin with, the report ranked the 11 ports where "fortifications or other defenses are most urgently required." These included, in descending order of importance: New York, San Francisco, Boston, The Great Lakes ports, Hampton Roads, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Portland (Maine), and the Rhode Island ports in Narragansett Bay. With respect to Washington, D.C., the Board noted that the channel of the Potomac River narrowed considerably above Mount Vernon, above which point the capital could easily be shelled. Protection for the upper Potomac was particularly important since the existing defenses at Fort Wool and Fort Monroe in Hampton Roads could not bar foreign vessels from the Chesapeake Bay, and Fort Washington, at the confluence of Piscataway Creek and the Potomac, alone could not effectively repel a naval assault on Washington. The Board recommended that the Potomac River defenses be updated to include a total of 13 "disappearing" guns, including seven 12-inch, and six 10-inch breech-loading rifled pieces, at a cost of $683,000. With an additional $520,000 for masonry and earthwork fortifications, and $120,500 for submarine mines and other equipment, the total cost of constructing adequate defenses for Washington was projected to be $1,323,500, or 3.5 percent of the estimated $37,965,000 necessary for improving the entire nation's seacoast fortifications.[5]

In March 1890, the Army's Engineer Board recommended the construction of a coastal artillery battery at Sheridan's Point, to operate in coordination with Fort Washington to defend the capital from naval assault. At this time, the Board urged the purchase of the farms then owned by the Peltons, Graus, and Linton heirs, for a total of nearly 300 acres. On August 18th of that year, the 51st Congress passed an "act making appropriations for fortifications and other works of defense, for the armament thereof, for the procurement of heavy ordnance for trial and service, and for other purposes." The act allocated $500,000 "for the procurement of land, or right pertaining thereto, needed for the site, location, construction, or prosecution of works, for fortifications and coast defenses," and empowered the Secretary of War to initiate legal condemnation proceedings, if necessary, to acquire privately held land for these purposes.[6]

Annie and Julius Pelton had been living at Sheridan's Point for 10 years when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first approached them about purchasing the land in 1890. The Peltons initially were receptive to the idea of selling, but they could not reach an agreement with the Corps of Engineers concerning the price. The government subsequently launched condemnation proceedings to obtain the land "for the site, location and construction of batteries and works for fortifications and coast defenses." On September 15, 1892, the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District at Alexandria upheld the condemnation of the tract. Ironically, the court established the appropriate compensation at $13,576.87, more than the Peltons had wanted to begin with. On June

---

4 Board on Fortifications, *Report*, 5.

5 Board on Fortifications, *Report*, 16, 22, 24, 28, 182.

6 Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, General Correspondence, Document File 16228/1; *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December, 1889, to March, 1891, and Recent Treaties, Conventions, and Executive Proclamations*, vol. XXVI (Washington, 1891): 315-20, NA RG 77.

27, 1893, the Clerk of the Fairfax County Court duly registered the deed to the federal government, and the property became public land.[7]

The task of building the new defensive works at Sheridan's Point was given to Major Charles J. Allen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and preparatory work began in earnest in the later months of 1896. Working with a total budget of $100,000, Allen initially estimated the cost of construction, including gun emplacements, platforms, ammunition hoists, conveyors, cranes, storage batteries for electrical lighting, and a wharf to receive supplies at $77,110. The largest single expense would be the 7,150 cubic yards of concrete for the emplacements, which alone accounted for $35,750. The funds remaining in the budget after construction, Allen suggested, should be allocated to "wear and tear of plant, profits, contingencies of engineering, inspection, etc." The Corps of Engineers advertised the project for bid in November 1896, and awarded the contract to the Baltimore firm of Douglas and Andrews on December 16th. Allen was pleased to report that the low bid had been so low, in fact, that now he could afford to build three emplacements rather than the two he had planned.[8]

Douglas and Andrews were authorized to begin work at Sheridan's Point as of December 27, 1896, with an anticipated completion date of September 1, 1897. While the project was ongoing, the construction inspectors and sub-inspectors, some with their families, lived on-site in the former Pelton/Linton farmhouse. It appears that no other sizable buildings were situated on the property at this time, since Allen complained that he had no place to store the three disappearing 8-inch gun carriages that were scheduled to arrive by water. As the September 1st deadline loomed, it became clear that the construction work would not be completed according to schedule, and Allen granted the first of six extensions to the contractor. The pace of work became "exceedingly slow" in the early months of 1898, as the freezing temperatures hindered the progress of the concrete work. Some portions, in fact, had to be re-poured. By March, however, the pace of construction accelerated in response to events overseas. War with Spain now appeared imminent, and the Army was anxious to have the Sheridan's Point battery operational as soon as possible. Though the emplacements were not entirely finished, Allen authorized the Alexandria firm of Littlefield, Alvord & Co. to mount the three 8-guns. The armaments were ready for service by April 1st, fully 20 days before war was declared, as Allen proudly pointed out (Figure 9).[9]

As the Sheridan's Point battery (later known as Battery Mount Vernon) was being armed to defend against a potential Spanish armada, Battery K of the 4th U.S. Artillery occupied the post and took control of the guns, rubbing shoulders with the contractors who were frantically trying to finish the emplacements. Soon the artillerymen were joined by several companies of a Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment, who went into temporary camp at the post. Construction of the battery would outlast the brief war with Spain, however. Douglas and Andrews finally completed their work on August 15, 1898, nearly a year past the original deadline. Measuring approximately 420 feet long by 90 feet wide, the concrete battery was now an imposing figure on the landscape along the

7 Fairfax County Deed Book O-5: 587; P-5: 323.
8 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 16228/1, 13, 15, RG 77.
9 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 16228/34, 36, 37, 42, 62, NA RG 77.

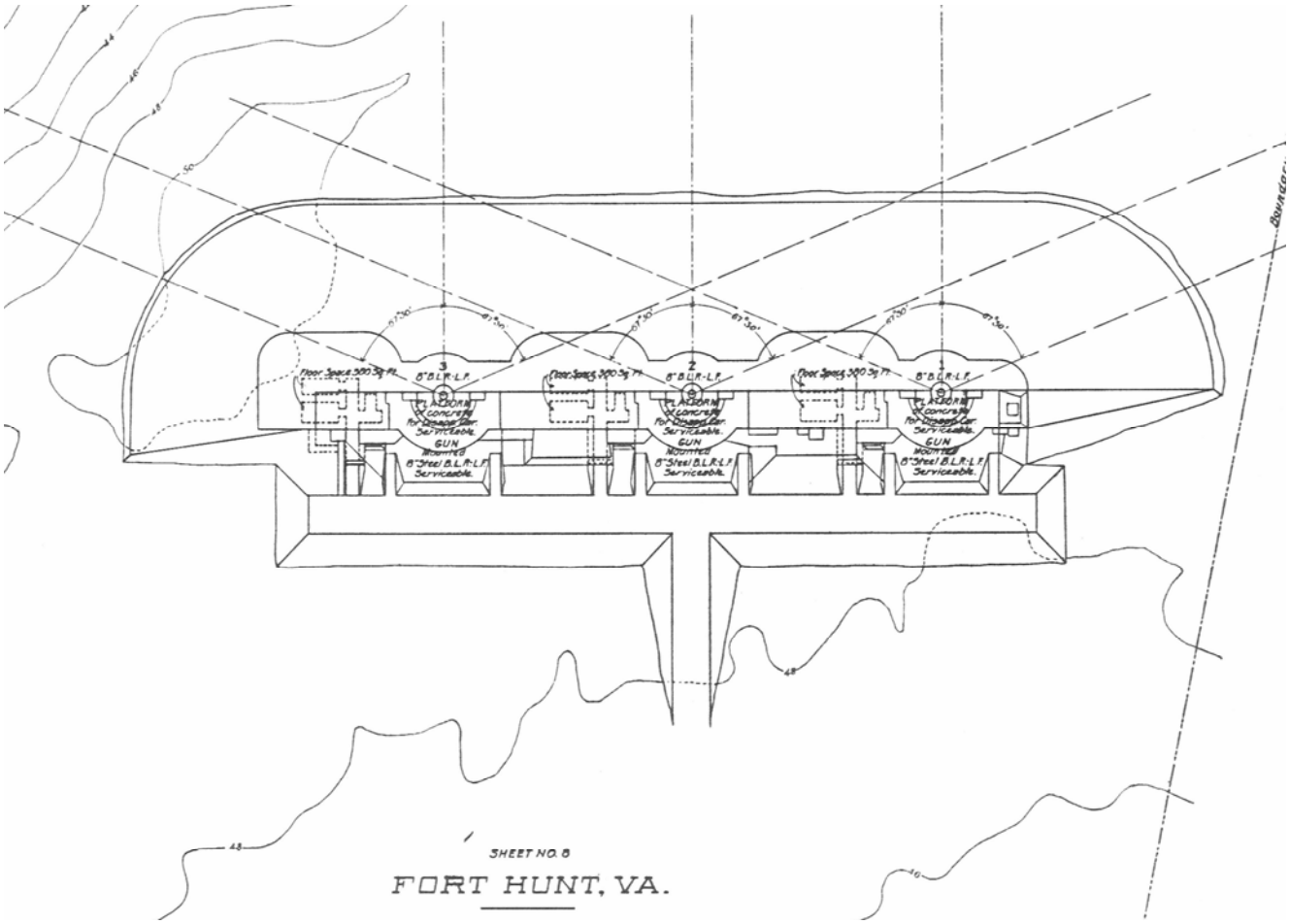



Figure 9. Plan of Battery Mount Vernon, 1902 (record of armament at Fort Hunt cartographic records, NA RG 77, Drawer 252, Sheet 7-14).

western edge of the Pelton tract. And its 8-inch rifled guns, mounted in three emplacements 135 feet apart, promised a hot reception to potential invaders.[10]

Though the guns were now manned, it would still be several months before the fortifications were fully operational, as Allen completed the necessary inspections and testing of the equipment, and worked out minor problems with the physical plant, such as doors that already were warping. Allen also received permission to move the old Pelton/Linton farmhouse to another location on the reservation, since it was in the battery's line of fire. But, on the whole, the Major was satisfied with the final result. "Considering that the structure was put up by contract, at low prices," he remarked to the Chief of Engineers, "the general quality of the work was very good." He also was pleased to report that $6,600 remained in the construction budget, which he recommended be spent on an electric-light plant for the post. By order of President McKinley, on April 13, 1899, the Sheridan's Point post was officially named "Fort Hunt", in honor of the late Brevet Major General Henry Jackson Hunt (1819-1889), an artillery officer who had seen distinguished service in the Mexican and Civil wars, and later had been governor of the Soldiers' Home in Washington. Finally, on December 21, 1899, three years after ground was broken at Sheridan's Point, Allen recommended that the Corps of Engineers officially turn the reservation over to the troops.[11]

In September 1898, soon after the work on the main 8-inch gun battery had been completed, Allen submitted plans for two smaller batteries (later known as Batteries Porter and Robinson). Armed with a 5-inch rapid-firing gun on balance pillar mounts, both emplacements were designed to draw enemy ships into range of the main battery's guns. After considerable debate concerning the proper positioning of the new batteries, Allen was ordered to begin construction in October 1898 with a total budget of $14,484. One battery (Robinson) would be situated approximately 135 yards from the river, while the other (Porter) would be located 420 yards from the left flank of the 8-inch gun battery. Construction began almost immediately and proceeded through September 1899. Though by now the emplacements were ready to receive the ordnance, the guns themselves were not available. In fact, Allen would have to wait another year before he could resume work on the project. In December 1899, he informed the Chief of Engineers that the cost of materials had increased in the interim, and that he would require an additional $1,900 to complete the work. The gun mounts arrived at Fort Hunt on January 1, 1901, though the guns themselves would not arrive until June 1902. After months of delay, the 60-foot-square concrete batteries were turned over to the artillery in August 1902, nearly two years overdue (Figure 10).[12]

While the work on the two 5-inch batteries was ongoing, Allen initiated yet another project at Fort Hunt: the construction of a battery commander's station, an observation tower equipped with range-finding and sighting equipment for directing the fire of the guns. In July 1899, Allen submitted the plans for the construction and location of the structure, and a proposed cost of $4,259. Situated along the western edge of the Pelton tract, approximately 263 feet northwest of the left flank of the 8-inch battery, the

---

10 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 16228/48, 57, 62, NA RG 77.

11 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 16228/48, 57, 62; *CIS Index to Presidential Orders & Proclamations* (Washington, 1987), General Orders, 1899 No. 71; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York, 1988): 326-27, NA RG 77.

12 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 27716/1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, NA RG 77.

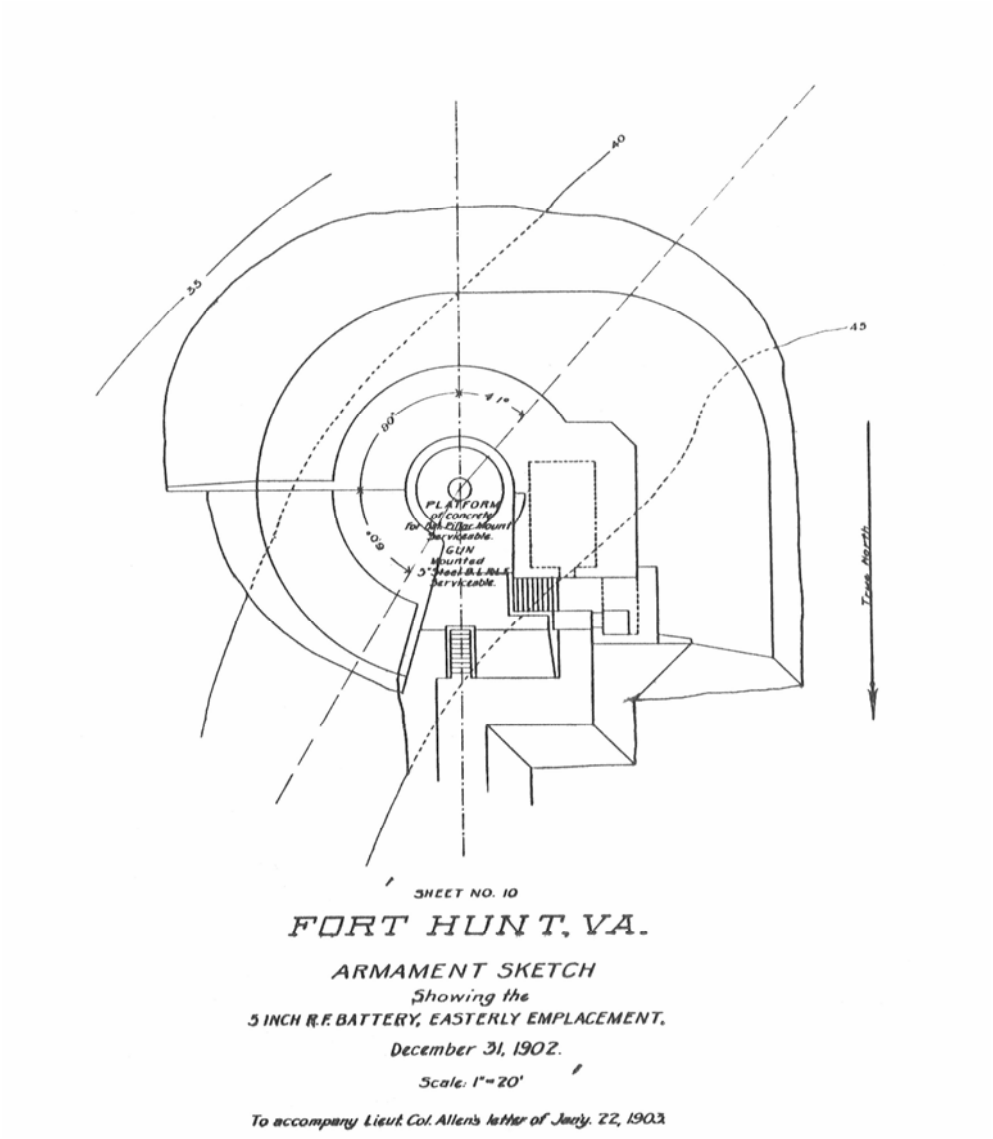



Figure 10. Plan of Batteries Porter and Robinson, 1902, (record of armament at Fort Hunt cartographic records, NA RG 77, Drawer 252, Sheet 7-16).

concrete tower measured approximately 30 feet tall and 15 feet square. A steel platform was situated 20 feet above ground: above the platform level the concrete walls were 2 feet thick; below they were 2.5 feet. Construction of the battery commander's station proceeded without delay, and the tower was turned over to the garrison in August 1901. Allen was pleased to report that the project had come in under budget by $1,069.73.[13]

The last major construction project Allen undertook at Fort Hunt was a battery of three 15-pounder rapid-firing guns (later known as Batter Sater). He began work in June 1900 with a budget of $15,100; but, as with the two 5-inch gun emplacements, he soon ran into unanticipated delays. Though the three emplacements were ready to receive their guns by the summer of 1901, the ordnance did not arrive from the Driggs-Seabury Gun and Ammunition Company of Derby, Connecticut, until November 1903. Though Allen was forced to request an additional $1,823.70 to complete the job, he was able to finish the construction work and mount the guns without further delay. The completed battery was turned over to the troops in January 1904. The new position was situated approximately 300 yards east of the original 5-inch battery (Mount Vernon), and was of similar concrete construction, measuring 110 feet long and 60 feet wide (Figures 11 and 12).[14]

Though Fort Hunt was now fully armed, its four batteries were still known by temporary letter designations. In early 1900, the Chief of Engineers had solicited suggestions for naming the new coast artillery installations then under construction around the country. Since McKinley had already named Fort Hunt, Allen suggested calling the original 8-inch gun position "Battery Scott," after General Winfield Scott, a native Virginian whose distinguished Army career had spanned 50 years, from the War of 1812 through the beginning of the Civil War. For the smaller rapid-firing gun batteries that were still under construction, Allen proposed the names "Vernon" and "Fairfax." When President Theodore Roosevelt finally ordered the official naming of Fort Hunt's batteries on May 25, 1903, however, Allen's suggestions were largely ignored. The first and largest position of 8-inch guns was named "Battery Mount Vernon," in recognition of Washington's neighboring estate. The two 5-inch rapid-firing emplacements were designated "Battery Robinson," for First Lieutenant Levi H. Robinson, killed in action with Indians near Laramie Peak, Wyoming, on February 9, 1874, and "Battery Porter," honoring First Lieutenant James E. Porter, who died fighting the Sioux Indians at Little Big Horn River, Montana, June 25, 1876. The last emplacement of 15-pounder guns, Lieutenant William A. Sater, killed on July, 1, 1898, at the Battle of San Juan, Cuba.[15]

When the first contingent of artillery and infantry arrived at Sheridan's Point in the spring of 1898 the only permanent structure on the post was the former Pelton/Linton house, and it was occupied by the construction inspectors. For several months the troops lived under canvas until permanent frame structures could be built. By early 1900, however, the majority of Fort Hunt's public buildings had been completed, including housing for officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men, both married and single. Officers and NCOs were accommodated in more spacious semi-detached

---

13 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 32043/1-3, 12, 14, NARA RG 77.

14 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 35223/1, 5-7, 9, 15, 19, NA RG 77.

15 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 23284/27; *CIS Index to Presidential Orders*, General Orders 1903 No. 78, NA RG 77.

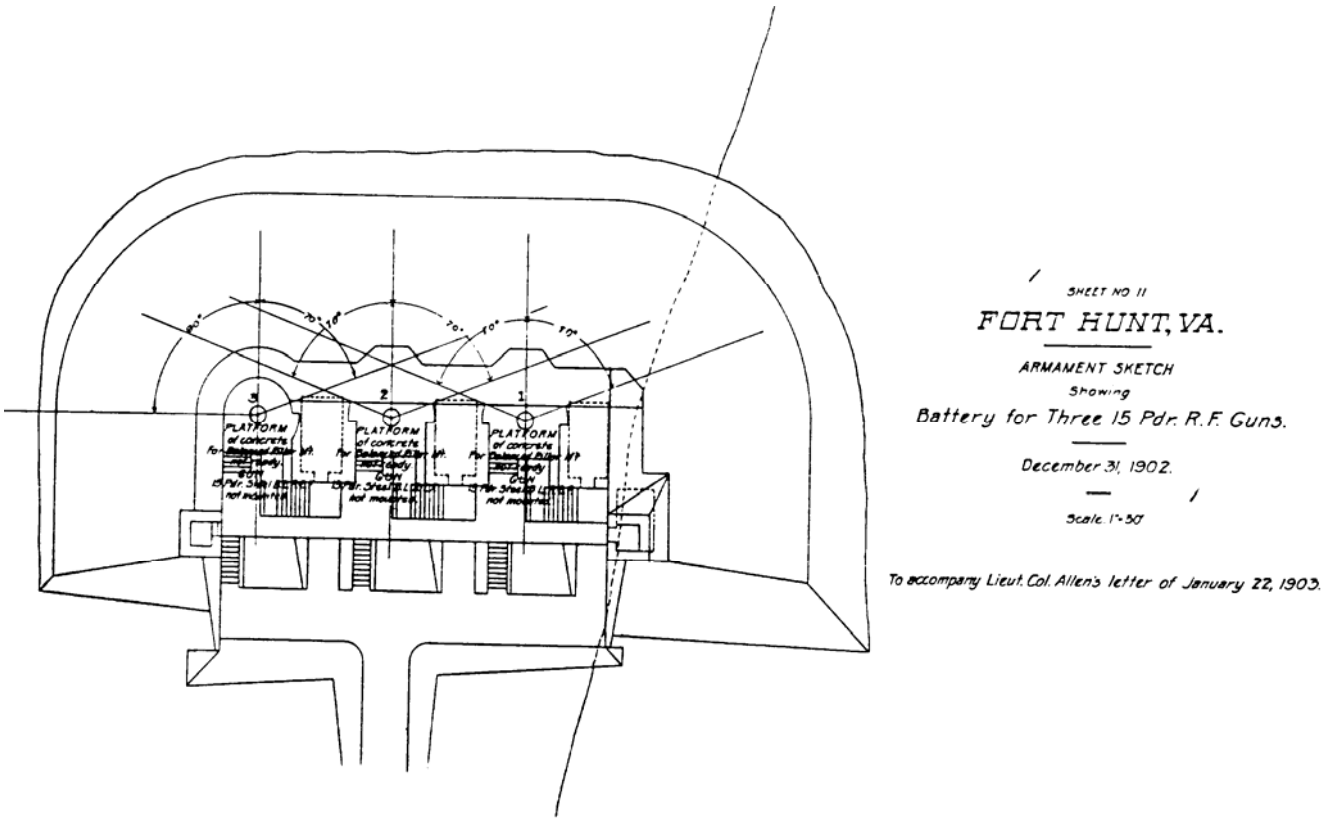



Figure 11. Plan of Battery Sater, 1902 (record of armament at Fort Hunt cartographic records, NA RG 77, Drawer 252, Sheet 7-19).



Figure 12. Battery Sater, 1923. This emplacement's three 15-pounder rapid firing guns were removed in 1917. All four batteries remained overgrown and neglected until 1942, when the National Archives renovated them to store flammable nitrate film (National Archives 111-SC-92122).

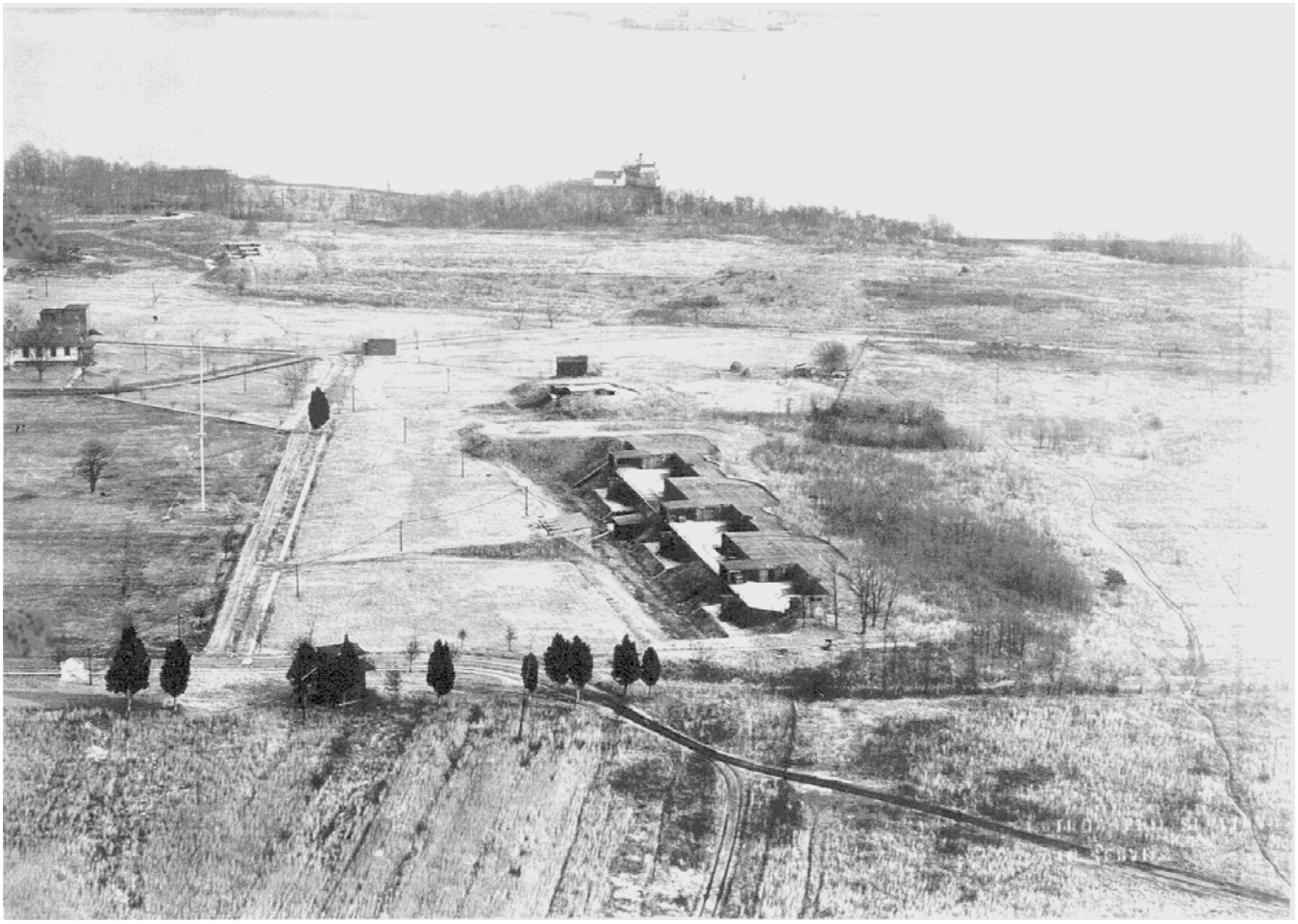


Figure 13. An aerial view of Fort Hunt, 1923. Taken by fliers from nearby Bolling Field, this image shows the four abandoned gun emplacements (center), the wharf house (top center), Battery Commander's Station (lower left) and part of the post hospital (top left) (National Archives, AGO doc. File 680,41 RG 407).

residences, while the majority of the enlisted men bunked in communal barracks. At least 23 support structures also were built at Fort Hunt between 1900 and 1918, including a mess hall, hospital, barns, storehouse and equipment buildings, power plants, stables, a wharfhouse, and latrines (Table 1; Figures 14-22).

**Table 1.** Post Buildings at Fort Hunt, 1898-1929.[16]

| Building Number | Purpose | Construction Date | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Double-set officers' quarters | 1900 | |
| 2 | Double-set officers' quarters | 1900 | |
| 3 | Administration Bldg., Post HQ | 1900 | |
| 4 | Barracks (14 rooms, 91 men) | 1900 | |
| 5 | Fire Station/Non-comm. staff quarters | 1900 | |
| 6 | Quartermaster and Commissary storehouse and office | 1900 | |
| 7 | Mess Hall | 1900 | |
| 8 | Recreation, Gymnasium, School Room, Bowling Alley | 1900 | bowling alley added 1903 |
| 9 | Bakery (later radio station) | 1900 | |
| 10 | Hospital | 1900 | |
| 11 | Guard House | 1900 | |
| 12 | Non-comm. Staff quarters, double-set | 1905 | |
| 13 | Ordnance Storehouse | 1905 | |
| 14 | Old Quartermaster and Commissary storehouse and shed | 1898 | demolished 1914 |
| 15 | Wagon Shed | 1907 | |
| 16 | Old Stable, Plumber's Shop, Tool House | 1898 | |
| 17 | Temporary Hospital, Enlisted Men's quarters | 1898 | sold and removed 1923 |
| 18 | Coal shed | 1907 | |
| 19 | N.C.O. quarters (old pump house) | 1900 | enlarged 1903 |
| 20 | Oil house | 1900 | |
| 21 | Stable | 1900 | |
| 22 | Non-comm. staff quarters, double-set | 1900 | |
| 23 | Non-comm. staff quarters, double-set | 1900 | |
| 24 | Coal shed | 1900 | |
| 25 | Pumping and power plant | 1910 | |
| 26 | Post lavatory | ca. 1900 | |
| 27 | Power plant coal house | 1903 | |
| 28 | Wagon shed/stable | 1903 | |
| 29 | Frame building, enlisted men's quarters (old Pelton house) | ca. 1880 | demolished 1916 |
| 30 | Barn, flagstaff | barn unknown, flagstaff 1905 | barn demolished 1910 |
| 31 | Married enlisted mens' quarters | 1898-99 | sold and removed 1923 |
| 32 | Carpenter's shop, teamster's quarters, saddle shop | 1898 | |
| 33 | Reservoir (concrete) | 1909 | |
| 34 | Water tank (30,000 gals.) | 1909 | |
| 35 | Wharf house/boat shelter | 1922 | |
| 36 | Temporary officers' quarters | 1918 | changed to NCO quarters 1923 |
| 37 | Temporary officers' quarters | 1918 | changed to NCO quarters 1923 |
| 38 | Temporary Mess Hall (120 men) | 1918 | |
| 39 | Temporary Lavatory (120 men) | 1918 | |
| 40 | Temporary Barracks (60 men) | 1918 | |
| 41 | Temporary Barracks (60 men) | 1918 | |

[16] Office of the Quartermaster General, Historical Record of Buildings, Fort Hunt, NA RG 92 (Entry 1067).

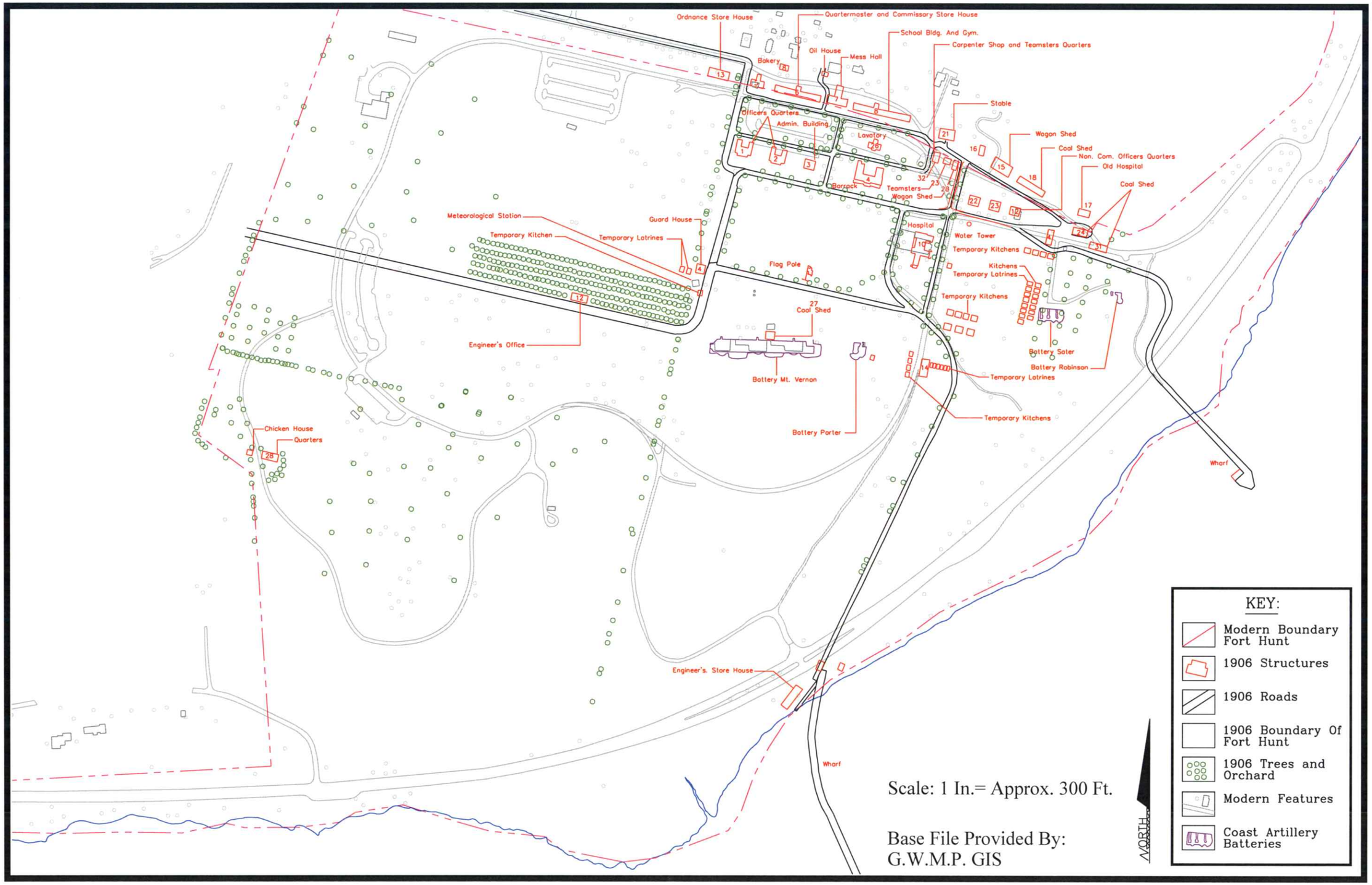



Figure 14. Fort Hunt Features ca. 1906 projected onto modern base map (source: Records of the Judge Advocate General's Office, NA RG 153).



Figure 15. The post hospital, 1923, later code-named “The Creamery”. (National Archives , 111-SC-92125).



Figure 16. Enlisted men's barracks, 1923. Fort Hunt's Finance School occupied this building in the early 1920s (National Archives, 111-SC92124).



Figure 17. Two double-set NCO's quarters, and the single NCO quarters, 1923 (third from left) which still stands (National Archives, 111-SC-92119).



Figure 18. Two double-set officers' quarters and Administration Building, 1923. These buildings were home to the post commander and his subordinate officers (National Archives, 111-SC-92129).



Figure 19. Fort Hunt's parade grounds, 1923. The post flagpole and water tower are visible to the left, with the enlisted men's barracks in the center (National Archives, 111-SC-92130).



Figure 20. Two of the temporary of the World War I buildings, 1923. They were removed soon after this photo was taken (National Archives, 111-SC-92117).



Figure 21. Warehouse and attached office, 1923. These were typical of Fort Hunt's ca. 1900 utilitarian buildings (National Archives, 111-SC-92131).




Figure 22. Fort Hunt's wharf and wharf house, 1923. Fort Washington is visible across the river (National Archives, 111-SC-92120).

Fort Hunt boasted water and sewer connections to most major buildings, a post school for the children of officers and men, as well as recreation and athletic facilities, including a bowling alley. Although the first electrical power plant at Fort Hunt was intended solely to furnish power and light to the gun emplacements, most public buildings on the reservation were wired for electricity by 1902. In fact, the degree to which the post depended on electric power became evident when the main generator failed in the summer of 1907. In his capacity as Quartermaster Officer, First Lieutenant C. M. Condon complained that the post lacked sufficient non-electric lamps, and that at night the sentries could barely find their way around the post, which was now in "total darkness." "The post is badly crippled without the plant," he concluded.[17]

Though the Board of Engineers had recommended as early as 1890 that the government purchase the Pelton, Grau, and Linton tracts for the planned Sheridan's Point reservation, the Corps of Engineers had been satisfied for several years with the 90-acre Pelton farm alone. Rather than opposing the construction of the fortifications, William Grau regularly offered his neighboring property to the government. He had been approached by the Corps of Engineers at the same time as the Peltons in 1890, but then heard nothing more over the following years. In 1892, he withdrew his initial offer of $65 per acre, claiming that the construction of the new electric railway line had raised property values as much as 60 percent in the area.[18]

As construction of Battery Mount Vernon was winding down in the spring of 1898, and war with Spain seemed inevitable, the Corps of Engineers once again took an active interest in the neighboring property, though not in the form that Grau would have preferred. Major Allen wrote to Grau in New York City, asking his permission—in case of war—to cut brush and trees on the lower portion of his farm that interfered with Battery Mount Vernon's guns. Grau agreed, though he would come to regret the decision. "You may imagine my feeling," he recalled, "when I was able to visit my farm, and saw every standing tree cut down, five acres of solid timber ruined, besides shade trees in the pasture for cattle, one oak tree among them, which stood there since George Washington owned the place, and was a beauty to look at . . . ."[19]

By 1901, Grau was using every argument he could muster to sell his land to the government: he and his neighbors would soon subdivide the land into building lots, that would increase the asking price considerably, he claimed; the cutting of trees on the property, meanwhile, had compromised the value of his property as farmland, and he was having difficulty finding tenants; he also was considering selling the land to someone else who might build a house on elevated ground that would obstruct the fort's guns. Finally, in a letter to Secretary of War Elihu Root himself, he used strategic concerns to bolster his case: "I would further like to draw attention to the Honorable Secretary," he noted, "that Fort Hunt has no protection from an attack by land whatever: in case of war a small body of men could take guns and turn them on the city of Washington." Presumably, the acquisition of his farm would allow for a more vigorous defense of the nation's capital.[20]

---

17 Office of the Chief of Engineers, Gen. Corr., Doc. File 38958, NA RG 77.

18 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 17156/1, 2, 8, NA RG 77.

19 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 17158/8, NA RG 77.

20 Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 17158/10, 51; *Alexandria Gazette*, "Price Fixed by Commission," 1 April 1903; Fairfax County Deed Book N-6: 282, NA RG 77.

Necessity, rather than Grau's persistence, ultimately convinced Major Allen that the government should acquire the adjoining property. As Fort Hunt expanded, it had become evident that more land would be required to construct additional post buildings. Ownership of the Grau tract would also solve the problem of tree cover blocking the line-of-sight downriver. As had happened with the Pelton tract, Grau and the Corps of Engineers could not agree on a selling price. The issue was complicated by the fact that Grau had recently spent a considerable sum dredging the river channel and constructing a brick-making plant on his property. Once again, a condemnation case was heard in Federal Court, which decided on March 31, 1903, that Grau would be paid $28,800 for the 100-acre tract, as well as an additional $8,800 for the buildings and machinery on the property.[21]

The Grau tract was the last major land purchase made to augment Fort Hunt. On June 1, 1906, however, the federal government acquired a right-of-way for a roadway to serve the post. The road was on the edge of the 100-acre parcel that Lewis Linton had willed to his daughters, and in compensation the government paid $100 to the beneficiaries of the Linton estate, including F.G. Percival, Ellen Steward, Deborah C. Fowler, and Charles H. Fowler. The right-of-way consisted of a 30-foot strip along the northwest corner of the reservation, running a distance of 1,152 feet. According to this arrangement, the Lintons could continue to use the road, though the government would be responsible for its maintenance, as well as the construction of a "substantial fence" along their side of the right-of-way. Once the new road had been constructed, the existing roadway across the Linton property would be abandoned. Subsequently, on October 11, 1906, the government paid $50 to John and Sarah B. Miller for a tract of 1.633 acres adjoining the northeast boundary of Fort Hunt. This would be the final addition to the reservation, which now included 197.413 acres, acquired by the government at a total cost of $42,526.87.[22]

No foreign power challenged Fort Hunt's guns during the years it served as a coast defense installation, and its defenders never fired a shot in anger. The monthly post returns dutifully submitted to the Department of the Army detail, were for the most part, a mind-numbing routine of garrison activities, punctuated by target practice, official inspections, parades, and annual training exercises at Fort Monroe in Hampton Roads. From April 1899 until August 1903, Fort Hunt was manned alternately by Batteries K, A, and N of the 4th U.S. Artillery, which rotated between Forts Hunt, Washington, and Monroe.

In 1901, however, the U. S. Army Artillery was reorganized into field artillery batteries and 82 coast artillery companies. The Army subsequently established Coast Artillery districts, and Fort Hunt was included in the Artillery District of the Potomac, headquartered across the river at Fort Washington. After February 1901, the post was garrisoned permanently by the newly formed 47th Company of the Coast Artillery Corps (CAC).[23]

---

21 Fairfax County Deed Book U-6:342;V-6:162.

22 Fairfax County Deed Book U-6:342;V-6:162

23 Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916: Fort Hunt, Virginia, 1899-1913. Microcopy 617, Rolls 499-500. When the Coast Artillery Corps was created, the 47th Company was formed from Battery N, 4th Artillery, which had already seen service at Fort Hunt, NA.

During this period Fort Hunt operated as a one-company post, occupied by a contingent that varied in size between 80 and 120 men. The post commander typically ranked as a captain, though occasionally a first lieutenant was given interim authority during personnel changes. The commanding officer was usually assisted by two or three lieutenants and a surgeon, all of whom necessarily wore a number of hats. For example, in December 1904, post commander Captain Arthur F. Curtis oversaw the activities of First Lieutenant Willis C. Metcalf, who served as Ordnance Officer, Post Treasurer, Summary Court Officer, Officer in charge of the Post School and Post Library, Range Officer, Artillery Engineer, and Surveying Officer; First Lieutenant Alphonse Strebler, who filled the role of Recruiting Officer, Quartermaster and Commissary Officer, Superintendent of Athletics, Adjutant, Battery Officer, and Officer in Charge of the Bowling Alley; and Surgeon James W. Hart who, in addition to his medical duties, also acted as Exchange and Surveying Officer. Non-commissioned officers at the post grew in number and specialization over the years, eventually including an Ordnance Sergeant, Commissary Sergeant, Post Quartermaster Sergeant, Master Electrician, Electrician Sergeant First Class, Fireman, and Hospital Corps Sergeant First Class. The fort also regularly employed three civilians, including a clerk at $75 per month, an engineer at $60, and a part-time "scavenger" at $9.[24]

Fort Hunt occasionally hosted other units during special training exercises. In May 1905, several other artillery detachments, including the 14th Company CAC from Fort Screven, Georgia, and the 19th Company from Fort Caswell, North Carolina, arrived at Fort Hunt to participate in the Joint Army and Navy exercises of the Artillery District of the Potomac from June 11th through the 17th. And during the summer of 1908, nearly 800 men of the District of Columbia Militia went into camp at the post in conjunction with the joint Army and Militia Exercises. Training for the resident 47th Company eventually became more rigorous, as well. In September 1912, the post commander received orders that the men should make daily practice marches in the vicinity of the post. The men were then instructed in the skills of outpost duty, advance guard, rear guard, signaling, road sketching, entrenching, concealment, wagon packing, individual cooking, latrine and sink digging, and general field service regulations. "Greatest distance marched in one day," noted the commanding officer, "eighteen miles."[25]

Daily life at Fort Hunt may have been characterized by dull military routine, but the occasional desertion or barroom brawl in Alexandria served to enliven the monotony at the Potomac River post.[26] And, in August 1902, Fort Hunt suffered its first and only casualty in the line of duty when a Private Singleton accidentally shot himself with his own rifle while on guard. "Chances for recovery favorable," read the laconic entry in that month's official post return. Fort Hunt's soldiers undoubtedly looked forward to the change of scenery afforded by the steamship trip en route to the annual service practice held at Fort Monroe in the late summer or fall. In the absence of invading foreign

---

24 M-617, rolls 499-500, NA.

25 M-617, rolls 499-500, NA.

26 In the summer of 1898, while Fort Hunt's first battery was still under construction, military officials expressed concern that the "mixing of soldiers" from Sheridan's Point and nearby Camp Alger in Fairfax County "often terminated in great disorders." *Daily Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), "Restricting Passes to Soldiers," 28 June 1898.

gunboats, Fort Hunt's soldiers also became fodder for the endless round of parades, ceremonies, and dedications that characterized official life in Washington, D.C. Every February, a contingent from Fort Hunt marched in the Washington's Birthday parade in Alexandria. They likewise suffered through frequent unveilings of statues in the capital, including those of Casimir Pulaski, Thaddeus Kosciusko, John Paul Jones, and Philip Sheridan. The 47th Company went furthest afield in their ceremonial duties in the spring of 1909, when one officer and 75 men made a three-day trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to participate in the dedication of a monument to the Regular Army. Even their equipment was occasionally drafted into service for the public benefit: in February 1909, Fort Hunt's searchlights were transported to Washington to help illuminate the Capitol during the week of President Taft's inauguration.[27]

But in the early months of 1905, the tedium of garrison duty was briefly and dramatically interrupted, and the post racked with scandal. In the span of just a few weeks, the post commander was arrested, court-martialed, and transferred, while one of his lieutenants deserted the Army. The trouble began innocently enough for commanding officer Captain Arthur F. Curtis on December 1, 1904, with a visit of a Colonel Greer of the Ordnance Department. According to Curtis' later testimony, Greer requested a test firing of Battery Sater's three new 15-pounder rapid-firing guns. Judging it unsafe to fire down river, since the view was obscured by the intervening high ground, Curtis ordered the gunners to deliver six shots directly across the Potomac and up Piscataway Creek, at a range of 3,000 to 3,300 yards. No one involved gave the incident a second thought; at least not until a letter arrived at the War Department from an irate Maryland farmer. "Sir," wrote George Lowis of Accokeek Post Office, on December 12,

> I am compeled to complain to you about your officers and soldiers at Fort Hunt firing canons over my farm. There was five shot came on my place on the first of this month which I have got & will show you if required & my crop of corn is laying out in the field rotning because I cant get any help to go out there to help me to save it on account of them crasey soldiers shooting up in the land. Pleas let me know what I am to do & how I am to make a living for my family if I cant gather my crops.[28]

When no reply came, Lowis tried again on the 24th. "I have the honor of writing you this secont complaint," he began,

> as my first one was not answered. I take it for granted that you did not get it. It is this, that since you soldiers have been firing projectiles all over my farm, I have lost all my crop that I have been all of one seson working on, as all of my hands left the field & will not work there any more, as they say there is no telling when they are going to shoot there again. My corne is laying under the snow & I think I aught to be paid something for my loss as I am a

---

27 M-617, rolls 499-500, Gen. Corr. File 38958/135, NA RG 77.

28 Office of the Adjutant General (Military Secretary's Office), General Correspondence, Doc. File 953409, NA RG 94.

> pore man & have a family to suport. Hoping you will give this your kind attention.[29]

By now, the Military Secretary's Office in Washington was indeed giving his complaint their full attention. In his own defense, Captain Curtis explained that he had taken this course of action to accommodate the visiting Colonel Greer, and that none of the officers present had observed any ricochets from the shots. "There has never been a shot fired "over" any private property," he claimed.

> Mr. Lewis's [*sic*.] statement to that effect is therefore false and misleading, as is also the implication that by *frequently* firing up Piscataway Creek this garrison has prevented him from harvesting his crops. Mr. Lowis might easily, at any time, have assured himself of immunity from all danger of the kind complained of, by rowing over to this post, and lodging his complaint.[30]

Unfortunately, the War Department took a dim view of Curtis' actions, and on February 4th, the Chief of Staff of Army Headquarters, Department of the East, forwarded to Curtis the following comments of the Chief of Artillery:

> Accepting the facts as stated in the letter of the Commanding Officer, Fort Hunt, dated December 21, 1904, the firing to test the 15-pdr. guns and mounts (Battery Sater) was improperly conducted. Shots should not be fired in narrow channels or landlocked waters, except at ranges sufficiently long to ensure "no richochet." This rule is clearly indicated in paragraph 57, G.O. 141, W.D., 1904. An examination of the range table for the service 15-pdr. R.F. gun would have shown that for the ranges used—3,000 to 3,300 yards—a ricochet was practically inevitable. Assuming that it was the duty of the senior artillery officer present to exercise all necessary precautions for safety, he should have pointed out to Colonel Greer, Ordnance Department, that there was no safe water range at Fort Hunt to be used in making the desired tests, provided that such was the case. However, it is the opinion of the Chief of Artillery that there was a safe range down the river, which would have been under full observation from the depression position finding tower of Battery Mount Vernon, and that such range could have been safely employed for the test. It is the judgment of the Chief of Artillery that Captain Curtis, A.C., is clearly responsible for the manner in which the test was conducted, and for its consequences.

But accidentally bombarding a local farmer would soon be the least of Curtis' worries, for by the time he received the reprimand he was under arrest, charged with misrepresenting the disposition of post accounts to his commanding officer, neglecting to keep proper accounts and, most seriously, with embezzling federal funds. For Curtis, this

---

[29] Adj. Gen., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 953409, NA RG 94.
[30] Adj. Gen., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 953409. NA RG 94

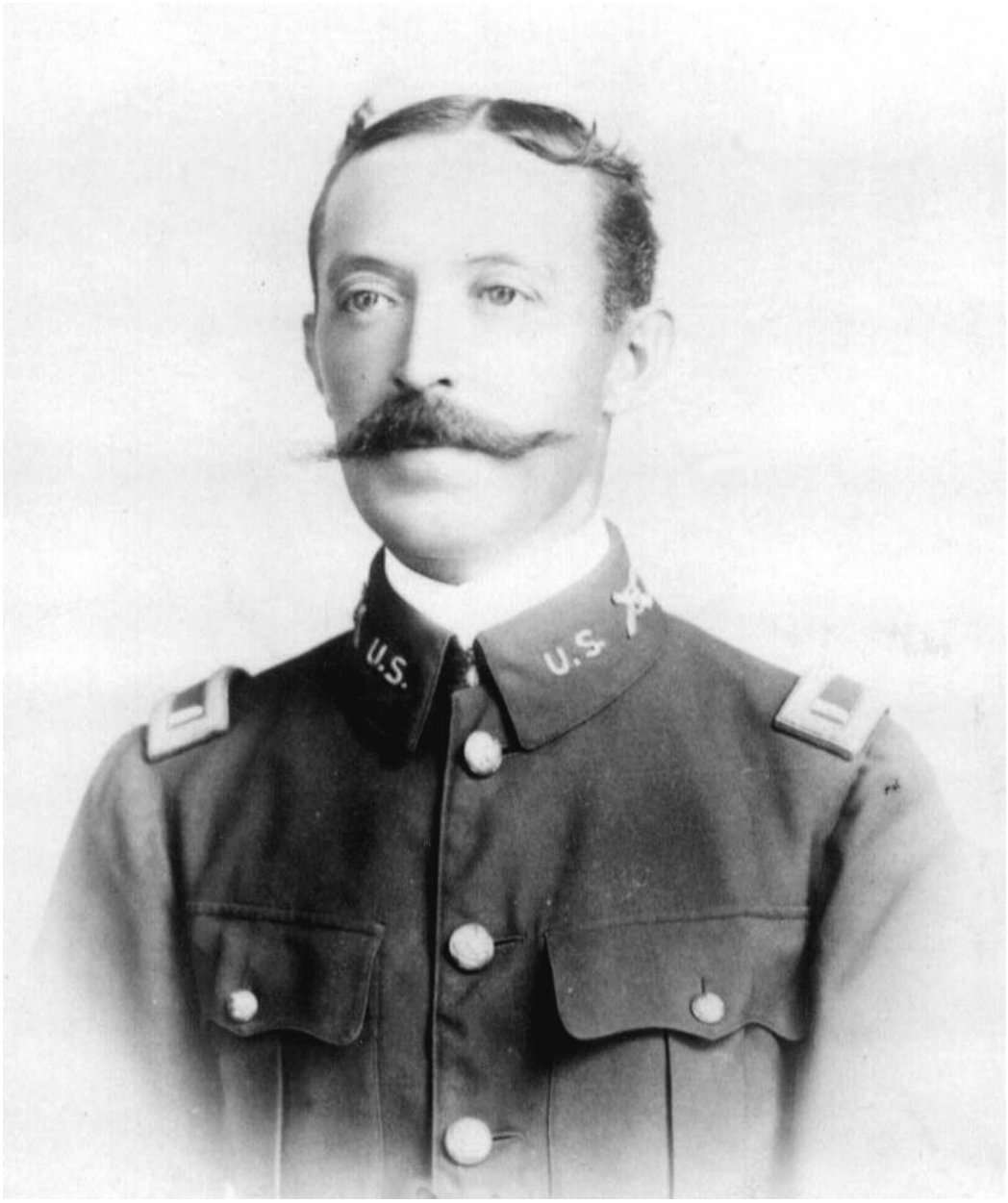



Figure 23. Arthur F. Curtis (then a first lieutenant) in Manilla, Phillipine Islands, 1899 (National Archives, AGO Doc. File 4318 ACP 85, RG 94).

was the beginning of a downward spiral in his personal and professional life that would ultimately bring an embarrassing end to his 20-year Army career.

A West Pointer who graduated near the top of his class, Curtis had shown great promise as a junior artillery officer. But, as his wife later recounted, his character appeared to have changed considerably when he returned from war service in the Philippines. In his private life, Curtis was continually overwhelmed with debt, his official file literally bulging with the irate letters of merchants from Maine to South Carolina demanding payment for bills that were months, sometimes years, overdue. To compound his financial problems, while serving at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, one of his subordinates stole more than $800 from the Post Exchange and deserted. Curtis was held responsible for the theft, and required to reimburse the Army at the rate of $75 per month. And, unfortunately, by the time Curtis was posted to Fort Hunt in November 1903, it appears that he was suffering from full-blown alcoholism. Only a month after his arrival, Curtis' commanding officer requested that he be transferred to Fort Washington where he could be observed more closely. "He is addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating liquors," Colonel B. K. Roberts reported, adding that "he should not have the latitude and freedom of a post commander." However, the Army chose to ignore these warnings, a decision that would only allow Curtis to make a further shambles of his career.[31]

Late in 1904, while the Lowis incident was ongoing, Colonel Roberts found reason to suspect that Fort Hunt's commander also was responsible for certain serious discrepancies in the post accounts. As a result, Curtis was placed under house arrest at the post on January 9, 1905, to await trial by general court martial. During his confinement, the captain clearly was becoming emotionally unhinged. At this time he wrote to one of his many creditors, a Dr. Percy G. Brown of East Boston, Massachusetts, who had delivered one of his children in 1897 and still not been paid. In an excruciatingly forthright letter, Curtis admitted that:

> you must consider me a perfect "chump" for not replying. Yet, if you could realize the struggle I have had ever since I went to the Philippines—a struggle that is far from ended—you would, I know, rather be inclined to sympathy than to blame. At this date I am at probably the *worst* crisis of my life. I hope to pass through it, and soon be a free man again, but just at present I am almost distracted. Like a wounded dog, I have, through false pride, concealed my troubles from my family and friends, in the hope that *something* might turn up to change the aspect of things: but nothing has as yet materialized, and I am in a fix. I can only request that you will not at this time take any action against me that will increase my difficulty, but that you will continue to give credence to my *word* that I will surely pay you as soon as the storm blows over. Thanking you for your kind consideration in the past, and relying upon a continuance of the same. I remain, with kindest regards and best wishes from Mrs. Curtis, Anna, and Buster, Yours Sincerely, A. F. Curtis, Capt. Arty. Corps.[32]

---

31 Office of the Adjutant General, Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch, Document File 4318 ACP 85, NA RG 94.

32 Adj. Gen., Doc. File 4318 ACP 85, NA RG 94.

In March 1905, a military court determined that Curtis had gravely neglected his duties in managing Fort Hunt's accounts, but found no conclusive evidence of criminal wrongdoing. They subsequently sentenced him to be reduced 15 files on the lineal list of Captains of Artillery and officially reprimanded him. Though Curtis had escaped with a relatively light sentence, he continued steadily on his course of self-destruction. Transferred from Fort Hunt to the Presidio in San Francisco, he was hospitalized on several occasions for "chronic alcoholism" and numerous minor injuries sustained while intoxicated, including a broken hand from striking an "unknown person" in the city. In the following months, Curtis was charged twice more for drunkenness on duty and "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." Mercifully, the Army allowed Curtis to resign before his third court martial in March 1906, after which he disappears from the official record.[33]

Incredibly, while Curtis was in detention at Fort Hunt awaiting trial, First Lieutenant Alphonse Strebler was also arrested for embezzling post funds. A 30-year-old native of Alsace-Lorraine, Strebler had begun his military career 12 years earlier as an enlisted man in the infantry. He was commended for gallantry in action while serving in the Philippines, and given command of a detachment of Philippine Scouts, a Filipino counterinsurgency force. Strebler served with distinction, and was responsible for capturing high-ranking rebel leader General Vicente Lucban. In recognition, he was recommended for a Regular Army commission. The promotion was granted, but at the time the only vacancy was in the Artillery Corps. Strebler was the first to admit that he lacked the qualifications and education necessary to be an effective artillery officer, but his continual requests to be transferred back to the infantry were ignored. Despite his poor showing in training courses, and the recommendations of his immediate superiors that he was better suited to another position, the Army saw fit to keep Strebler in the artillery. And so, he arrived for duty at Fort Hunt in May 1903, just a few months before Captain Curtis took command. Strebler's brief tenure at Fort Hunt was unexceptional, until an enlisted man fingered him for embezzlement and fraud. In an affidavit sworn in Fairfax County Court, Private Thomas Bradley claimed that in July 1904, Strebler had called him into his office and asked him to falsely endorse a government check made out to an Alexandria contractor who had recently painted the quarters at Fort Hunt. At the officer's request Bradley took the check to Washington, cashed it with a liquor merchant and paid Strebler's bill there, then used the remaining funds to settle Strebler's personal accounts at various other businesses in Washington and Alexandria. Bradley claimed, perhaps somewhat disingenuously, that he had only followed orders and was aware of no wrongdoing. He thought nothing of the episode until he later overheard the Quartermaster Sergeant and a clerk mention that the contractor had been demanding payment for the painting job, but that the check had somehow disappeared. At this point, Bradley reported the incident to acting post commander First Lieutenant Willis C. Metcalf.[34]

Digging through Strebler's confiscated files, an Army investigator found that the lieutenant had been using his position as Quartermaster, Commissary, and even Athletics

---

[33] Adj. Gen., Doc. File 4318 ACP 85, NA RG 94.

[34] Office of the Adjutant General (Military Secretary's Office), General Correspondence, Document File 73551, NA RG 94.



Figure 24. When Lieutenant Alphonse Strebler broke arrest and fled Fort Hunt he destroyed all photographs of himself in his quarters. Acting post commander Lieutenant Metcalf found this image of Strebler on the base and forwarded them for identification purposed to the War Department. In this image, Strebler (at right, in uniform) poses with what appears to be the Fort Hunt football team. Strebler had used his position as Athletics Officer to steal post funds. The building directly behind the men is the post hospital, while the water tower, and two double-set NCO's quarters are visible in the left background (National Archives, AGO Doc. File 680.41, RG 407).

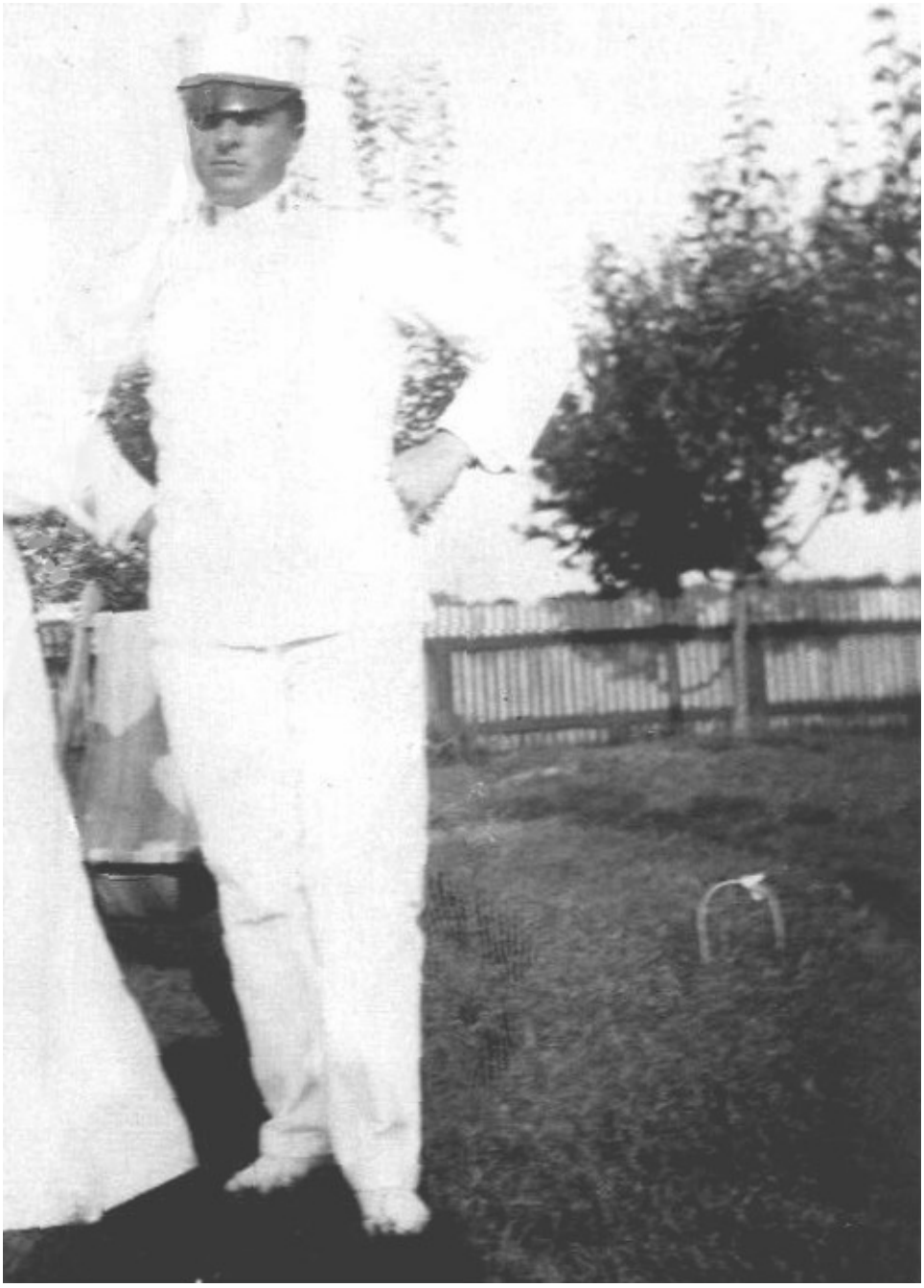


Figure 25. Lieutenant Strebler in happier times, dressed in his summer whites (National Archives AGO Doc. File 73551, RG 94).

Officer to skim money from various post accounts. Strebler was placed under arrest in his quarters on February 9th, leaving Metcalf the only post officer not under suspicion of theft. It is unclear whether Strebler and Curtis may have colluded in any of these shady financial dealings. No such claim surfaced during Curtis's court martial, through fragmentary documentation in Strebler's personnel file indicates that the two officers had applied jointly for a loan from a local bank. Perhaps further evidence linking the men would have emerged at Strebler's trial, but the following day he broke arrest and fled Fort Hunt. Searching his quarters, Metcalf discovered that Strebler had destroyed all photographs of himself before escaping. Three months later, the errant officer still had not been apprehended, and was dropped from the rolls of the Army as a deserter.[35]

Garrison service would continue at Fort Hunt in subsequent years with no occurrence to rival the drama and intrigue of the Curtis and Strebler incidents. Meanwhile, mobilization around the time of the First World War initiated a reorganization of the establishment at Fort Hunt, and ultimately brought an end to its period of active service. Immediately following U.S. entry into the war, the nation's Coast Artillery districts were reorganized and all companies were renumbered by station. In April 1917, the 47th Company, Coast Artillery Corps, was re-designated the 1st Company, Fort Hunt. Two months later a 2nd Company was established, and housed in new temporary barracks at the post. But this reorganization would be short-lived. In September 1917, the two units became the 1st and 2nd Companies, Coast Defense Command of the Potomac, subsumed under the new Middle Atlantic Coast Artillery District.[36]

Despite this flurry of bureaucratic activity, Fort Hunt's days of defending the District were numbered. By 1917, German U-boats posed a far greater threat to American territory and commerce than conventional warships and, consequently, Fort Hunt no longer served a compelling defensive purpose. In response to the overwhelming need for armament in Europe, guns of various size were removed from non-essential coastal defense installations and shipped to France, where they were frequently mounted on railway cars and used in support of American infantry operations. In August 1917, Fort Hunt's guns were requisitioned for use "on railway mounts abroad," and removed. Meanwhile the Chief of Coast Artillery ordered that all repair or upgrading work on the emplacements should be discontinued. After 19 years of service, Fort Hunt was suddenly superfluous.[37]

---

35 Adj. Gen., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 73551, NA RG 94.

36 *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917-19), Zone of the Interior*. Vol. 3, Part 2 (Washington, 1949), 1203.

37 *Order of Battle*, vol. 3, part 1: 152; NA RG 77, Chief of Eng., Gen. Corr., Doc. File 38958/299.

# CHAPTER 5:
# A NEW DEAL FOR AN OLD FORT
# 1918 - 1942

Stripped of its guns in the summer of 1917, Fort Hunt became merely a convenient location to house troops in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. The artillery did maintain a token presence at the post for the next several years, though resident units were plagued by nearly constant reorganization. This busy reshuffling, however, belied the fact that, with its armament now trained on the Germans, Fort Hunt could not have stopped a hostile dinghy from reaching the capital city.[1]

Fort Hunt briefly entered the Jazz Age in 1920, with one of the Coast Artillery officers allegedly running a "speakeasy" out of his quarters. This period saw a marked decline in the garrison's morale, with the junior officers of Fort Hunt and Fort Washington feuding with their commanding officer, Colonel Wilmot E. Ellis. A heavy-handed career Army man, Ellis alienated most of his subordinates, who described him variously as "neurasthenic," an "old Army fossil," and an "irritable crank." The Adjutant General's Office received so many complaints about his behavior from soldiers and local citizens that the Inspector General's Office launched an investigation into conditions at both posts. Facing an inquiry himself, Ellis attempted to turn the tables on his rival officers. On April 28, 1920, Ellis proceeded to Fort Hunt, arbitrarily assumed command, and made a surprise inspection of the quarters occupied by Lieutenant Victor N. LaMarre, the alleged bootlegger. "It was repeated to me," Ellis later recounted, "it was common talk that he was engaged in this business and his house was a rendezvous (presumably for the purpose of obtaining liquor) for Captains Gray and Goorick." Perhaps LaMarre was innocent, or his "still" well hidden, but Ellis found no incriminating evidence. Within a matter of weeks, the Inspector General's Office recommended that the colonel was "temperamentally unfit for command." He subsequently was forced to retire, while the remaining post officers were scattered to other commands.[2]

In an ironic twist, Fort Hunt—the scene of various fiscal irregularities in earlier years—briefly became the site of a U.S. Army Finance School in the early 1920s. When the United States entered the First World War in 1917, no centralized agency existed to handle the finances of the War Department. In the progressive spirit of efficiency and bureaucratic reorganization, the Army created the Finance Service in 1919, which was then absorbed by the new Finance Department the following year. In 1921, the War Department established a Finance School at Fort Hunt to train enlisted men of the Finance Department and other branches. Though the program was equipped to handle classes of 35 students, enrollment at the Fort Hunt school never reached these limits. In fact, by May 1923, there were only 23 men remaining at Fort Hunt: 2 officers and 8 men of the coast artillery company, 2 ordnance men, and 2 instructors and 9 students of the Finance School. By now, the War Department was considering whether to abandon the post entirely. A recent study of the nation's harbor defenses by the War Plans Division

---

1 *Order of Battle of the Unites States Land Forces in the World War (1917-1919), Zone of the Interior*, vol. 3, part 2 (Washington, 1949), p. 1203.

2 File 330.14, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, NA RG 407.

had recommended that both Forts Washington and Hunt be discontinued by the spring of 1924, the projected completion date of new coast defenses at Cape Henry, Virginia. The War Department could no longer justify the expense of maintaining a small garrison in an obsolete fort; the Finance School was subsequently transferred to new quarters in Washington, while the remaining artillerymen were detached to Fort Washington. By the end of 1923, only a caretaker remained at Fort Hunt.[3]

With land valued at $80,000, and 26 buildings, a water plant, and wharf worth $309,725.55, the War Department understandably was eager to find a new use for Fort Hunt. And there was certainly no shortage of imaginative proposals from interested parties. The City of Alexandria expressed interest in turning the post into a municipal park and bathing beach; the District Commissioners considered the property as the site of an Industrial Home; the National Guard of the District of Columbia eyed the land as a potential training ground; and numerous developers and private citizens would have jumped at the chance to buy the land for agricultural or residential development. Reminiscent of George Washington's experimentation with various crops at the River Farm, the Secretary of Agriculture also briefly considered establishing a "pathological station" at Fort Hunt to support the field activities of the Bureau of Plant Industry.[4]

But one proposal, above all, received the most serious consideration. In November 1923, Russell R. Whitman, President of the Roosevelt Military Academy in Englewood, New Jersey, wrote to Secretary of War, John W. Weeks. Whitman explained that his school was seeking to relocate to the Washington area, and his Board of Trustees—including Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former President—felt the Fort Hunt site would be an ideal location. From the outset, the War Department was receptive to the idea, clearly enchanted with the school's ambitious object: "to imbue the youthful generation with the red-blooded Americanism practiced and preached by the late Theodore Roosevelt." But, after much optimistic correspondence, the deal began to unravel when it became clear that the property could be transferred only by act of Congress. The War Department offered a generous five-year lease at $5,000 per year, with the understanding that the existing buildings and emplacements would be maintained, and that the Army be allowed to re-occupy the post in case of national emergency. Unfortunately, Whitman explained, the Board of Trustees simply could not raise the funds needed to relocate the school without the security of owning the land. By the time Fort Hunt was officially declared surplus on April 5, 1924, the Roosevelt Academy deal was off. The next generation of red-blooded Americans would have to be forged elsewhere.[5]

Fort Hunt sat vacant over the next four years. All usable equipment was removed from the installation, but—since the War Department foresaw the use of the post by the D.C. National Guard—the existing buildings were left relatively intact. In the summer of 1925, the Adjutant General's Office recommended that three of the temporary World War I buildings, including two barracks and a bath house, be demolished, since they already were "falling to pieces and a fire hazard." Otherwise, Fort Hunt remained idle

---

3 *Order of Battle*, vol. 3, part 1, pp. 207-20; File 602.1, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, RG 407, NA. [3] File 680.41, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, NA RG 407.

4 File 680.41, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, NA RG 407.

5 File 680.41, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, RG 407, NA.

until it was re-garrisoned in January 1928. At that time, the headquarters and headquarters company of the 16th Infantry Brigade transferred to the Potomac River post from Fort Howard, Maryland. The new contingent was relatively small, so Fort Hunt was designated a sub-post of Fort Humphreys, Virginia, for general supply, and a sub-post of Fort Washington for Signal Corps supply.[6]

Elements of the 16th Infantry Brigade remained at Fort Hunt for the next three years. In the spring of 1931, the War Department permitted an African-American ROTC unit to train at the installation; these troops would subsequently return to drill at the site over the next two years. The black trainees established their temporary quarters, mess, and lavatory west of Battery Mount Vernon and south of the range-finding station. But, in a reprise of the post closure in 1923, the War Department once again realized that Fort Hunt's meager military value did not justify the expense of its upkeep, and the installation once again was slated for disposal in May 1931. The 16th Infantry Brigade detachment was transferred, and by October Fort Hunt was once again unmanned. This time, however, the old fort would find an eager patron.[7]

As early as the 1880s, a group of Alexandria businessmen had proposed building a "national road" from Washington to Mount Vernon to accommodate the growing number of tourists making the "pilgrimage" to the home of the first president. The development of the Washington, Alexandria & Mount Vernon Electric Railway in the 1890s temporarily forestalled any serious road-building efforts; but thanks to Henry Ford, by the 1920s many visitors were arriving at Mount Vernon by automobile. Local roads—virtually unchanged since Washington's day—were ill suited to this increased vehicle traffic, and modern travelers were faced with a long and visually unsatisfying trip "through crowded commercial districts, over hazardous railroad crossings, around dangerous curves, and along narrow, poorly maintained roads."[8]

In 1924, the United States Commission for the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington was authorized to construct a "suitable memorial highway" in time for the planned bicentennial celebrations of 1932. The highway would provide a direct, yet scenic, route between the capital and Mount Vernon, and include ample green space and parks for public recreation. On May 23, 1928, Congress passed "an act to authorize and direct the survey, construction, and maintenance of a memorial highway to connect Mount Vernon, in the State of Virginia, with the Arlington Memorial Bridge across the Potomac River at Washington." The Bureau of Public Roads would conduct the work under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, who was given the power to condemn land for the proposed route.[9]

Construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway—the first modern road built by the federal government—began in 1929 and was completed in January 1932. Immediately it became a model of parkway design. Widely praised as "America's Most

---

6 Files 602.1, 311.12, 330.321, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, RG 407, NA.

7 Files 313.6, 354.1, Office of the Adjutant General, Central Files, RG 407, NA; "Fort Hunt, Virginia" (map), 5/1/31, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Map 4, 117.6-2

8 Timothy Davis, *Highways in Harmony: George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C.* (Washington, 1994).

9 U.S. 45 Stat. 721; Davis, *Highways in Harmony;* EDAW, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway*, vol. 1 (Alexandria, Virginia, 1989).

Modern Motorway," the road incorporated such novel features as limited access with separated entrances and exits, overpasses to avoid congestion at intersections, broad, tree-lined right-of-ways, "colonial" style signage and concession buildings, and a thoughtful use of the existing landscape to provide scenic views while ensuring that the drive was easy and safe. The right-of-way traversed the easternmost portion of Fort Hunt as it followed the Potomac River, essentially cutting the reservation off from its former river frontage. But the construction of the parkway would have broader implications for Fort Hunt. This obscure post may have retained little military value, but now it was easily accessible from Washington, and lay along a well-traveled tourist route. As a result, Fort Hunt would come to host an impressive array of visitors unimaginable in previous years.[10]

Soon after the highway was completed, the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Lt. Col. U. S. Grant III—who, incidentally, had served as trustee of the Roosevelt Military Academy during its earlier negotiations for the Fort Hunt site—purchased the land from Secretary of War John B. Shuman under the authority of the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930. Now, for the first time in nearly 40 years, the property once again came under civilian authority. The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital subsequently maintained Fort Hunt until 1933, when the functions of that agency were assumed by the newly expanded National Park Service.[11]

By the time the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway was opened to motorists, the United States was mired in the worst depression in its history. Though joblessness, hunger, and despair cut across all social groups and regions, it was the veterans of World War I who initiated the most organized and vocal demand for government assistance. The idea of a "bonus" for veterans already had a long and complicated ideological and legislative history, but it was the Great Depression that brought the idea to the forefront of public discourse.

Veterans groups with considerable political clout, particularly the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, had lobbied vigorously since 1919 for additional payment they felt they had earned for their war service. Though the American economy of the mid-1920s was robust, most legislators still were reluctant to authorize the immediate payment of billions of dollars in compensation to a single group of citizens. By 1924, however, Congress and veterans' groups had reached what appeared to be an ideal compromise solution. Rather than issuing payment immediately, the government would invest the bonus funds so that by 1945, the projected date for disbursal, each veteran would receive a more valuable "Adjusted Service Certificate" worth $1,000. This plan initially received widespread support. But with the stock market crash of 1929, and the severe global economic depression that ensued, the bonus payment date of 1945 began to look very distant to veterans who had lost their jobs, and whose families were now going hungry.[12]

As the depression dragged on, veterans across the country looked to the bonus—money they felt the government owed them—as critical to their economic survival. The

---

10 46 Stat. 59; Davis, *Highways in Harmony.*

11 U.S., 46 Stat. 482; Executive Order 6166).

12 Donald J. Lisio, *The President and Protest: Hoover, Conspiracy, and the Bonus Riot* (Columbia, Missouri, 1974).

bonus movement soon coalesced under the impromptu leadership of Walter W. Waters, an unemployed former Army sergeant from Portland, Oregon. Beginning on May 11, 1932, Waters led a group of veterans on a cross-country trip to Washington, D.C., where they planned to lobby Congress for immediate payment of the bonus. Thousands of veterans from across the nation soon joined what came to be known as the "Bonus Expeditionary Force," and by the time the marchers converged on the capital they had national press coverage. As many as 20,000 veterans flooded into the District in the summer of 1932, in one of the longest and most massive protests the city had ever seen. Though local citizens feared the worst, District Police Superintendent Pelham D. Glassford was sympathetic to the veterans, and personally worked to obtain food and shelter for the visiting protestors. At the height of the march, the Bonus Army occupied 27 separate camps throughout the District, though the largest and most prominent was located on the Anacostia mud flats in southeast Washington.[13]

Despite the efforts of Chief Glassford and various local and federal organizations, living conditions at Anacostia and the other temporary camps were far from ideal. Public health officials warned repeatedly that the sprawling settlements were a potential breeding ground for disease. In response, President Herbert Hoover ordered Frank T. Hines, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, to provide a 300-bed hospital for the marchers at Fort Hunt. Construction of this temporary facility was supposed to be kept secret, since Hoover was anxious to avoid setting a precedent for direct federal relief for the veterans, or any other group. However, Alexandria's mayor, Edmund F. Ticer, got wind of the plan, and entered "a vigorous protest against the use of Fort Hunt for the purpose of hospitalization of these men that are physically unfit to continue the drive on Congress."[14] Ticer's protests were duly registered and ignored, and construction of the the hospital went forward. On August 18, 1932, Hines officially thanked Army Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, for his assistance:

> My Dear General,
>
> Under date of June 11, 1932, the Veterans' Administration decided to open a temporary hospital in order that sick veterans among the bonus marchers camping in Washington might receive appropriate care and treatment.
>
> Through your kind offices, Fort Hunt, Virginia, was designated as the place where the emergency hospital should be established. Through the kindness of the Surgeon General of the Army, a station hospital was furnished from the Brooklyn Depot, which arrived at Fort Hunt, June 13, 1932. The hospital was opened for patients on the afternoon of June 15, 1932, and continued to receive patients up until July 31st. All patients were evacuated from the hospital by August 5th, and it was officially closed August 12, 1932. Many courtesies were extended during the organization and development of this hospital by the Commanding Officers of the various Posts in the vicinity of Fort Hunt.

---

13 Lisio, *The President and Protest*.

14 Lisio, *The President and Protest*; AG 240 Bonus, Correspondence of the Adjutant General's Office, 1926-1939, RG 407, NA.

> I wish to take this occasion to personally thank you for your cooperation and aid given the Veterans' Administration in carrying through to a successful conclusion this emergency hospital, rendering as it did, care and treatment to the sick ex-servicemen who were temporarily camped here in the District.[15]

Initially, the compelling presence of the bonus marchers appeared to be paying off, but on June 17, 1932, the Senate crushed a Bonus Bill passed by the House. Though Congress was about to take its summer recess, and the Bonus Army appeared defeated, Waters remained with the majority of the marchers in the District to continue the protest. Eager to see them on their way, Hoover authorized $100,000 in transportation "loans" to allow the veterans to return home. But few took the President up on his offer. Hoping to begin the process of "repatriating" the marchers, Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley urged Hines to let the women and children of the Bonus Army take up temporary residence at nearby Fort Hunt. But Hines refused, fearing his department inevitably would become responsible for all the marchers. The timing and character of the veterans' evacuation was soon solved by force. In what would become a public relations disaster for Hoover—and arguably cost him re-election—the marchers were evicted forcibly from their camps on July 28th by Army troops, under direct orders from General MacArthur. In the wake of the infamous "Bonus Riot," the remaining veterans straggled out of the city.[16]

Though Hoover's perceived mishandling of the bonus march in the summer of 1932 undoubtedly gave a significant boost to his Democratic opponent, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in that year's presidential election, FDR's stance on the bonus issue actually differed little from Hoover's. Roosevelt opposed the bonus payment, particularly at a time when fiscal stringency in government seemed essential. In fact, Roosevelt's "Economy Act" of March 1933 angered many by cutting certain existing benefits to veterans. Once again, the bonus payment issue became the subject of political debate, but this time the cause was taken up by the Veterans National Liaison Committee, a group with explicit ties to the American Communist Party. So, while the initial protest of 1932 had generally been apolitical—even overtly anti-communist—the second bonus march was influenced more heavily by the Left. As a result, the 1933 protest attracted fewer veterans, and garnered far less public interest and support. Roosevelt was also much savvier in handling the marchers than Hoover had been. Between May 7th and 12th, approximately 3,000 delegates to the bonus convention arrived in Washington by car, bus, and train. But this time government officials were ready. Veterans Administration Chief Hines had secured the use of Fort Hunt to house the marchers before their planned arrival date. By now the reservation was occupied by only a small ROTC contingent, and the distance of the post from the capital promised to keep the protestors bottled up at a comfortable remove from anxious citizens and legislators. When they arrived in the District the veterans were driven to Fort Hunt by bus, where they were housed in the

---

15 AG 240 Bonus, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA.

16 Elements of the 16th Infantry Brigade, formerly posted at Fort Hunt, participated in the "Bonus Riot;" earlier, they had helped set up the temporary hospital. AG 240 Bonus, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, Lisio, *The President and Protest.*

existing buildings and in tents. The VA generously footed the bill for housing and feeding the veterans.[17]

Hoover had been widely criticized for not visiting the first bonus marchers, so Roosevelt was careful to ensure that he maintained an "official" presence among the protestors, even if he did not make a personal appearance. On May 13th, FDR's secretaries Louis Howe and Stephen Early met the Bonus Army at Fort Hunt and stayed for "chow," enjoying "generous helpings of baloney, macaroni, potatoes, prunes, bread and butter and coffee."[18] And, in what would be the most publicized event of the second Bonus March, Eleanor Roosevelt paid a visit to Fort Hunt on May 16th. In her memoirs, the First Lady recalled her surprise when, on one of her frequent drives with Louis Howe, he suggested they stop at Fort Hunt to see the bonus marchers. "When we arrived," she recalled,

> he announced that he was going to sit in the car but that I was to walk around among the veterans and see just how things were. Very hesitatingly I got out and walked over to where I saw a line-up of men waiting for food. They looked at me curiously and one of them asked my name and what I wanted. When I said I just wanted to see how they were getting on, they asked me to join them.[19]

Mrs. Roosevelt's brief visit to Fort Hunt made national news, and the following day the *New York Times* reported her visit in detail:

> Mrs. Roosevelt, accompanied by Louis Howe, secretary to the President, visited the bonus camp at Fort Hunt late this afternoon, waded through mud ankle deep to inspect the site and food the men were eating, and then led them in singing "There's a Long, Long Trail," after she had asked them how many knew the words and they had shouted, "We all do." In a brief address to the men who congregated in the big convention tent to hear her, Mrs. Roosevelt said she was sorry she could not talk to them about the matter they had in mind. "I can tell you that I have always had a deep interest in soldiers and never have forgotten the war days," she said. "I lived in Washington then and worked in a canteen in the railway yard; I served many sandwiches and lots of coffee. I saw the boys when they came back and often I went to the hospitals, so I saw two sides of the war." She was interrupted by a tremendous cheer, and continued. "I never want to see another war. I would like to see that everyone had fair consideration, and I will always be grateful to those who served their country. I hope we will never have to ask such service again and I hope that you will carry on in peace times as you did in the war days, for that is

---

17 The Army's Finance Department figured the value of supplies used by the bonus marchers at Fort Hunt at $11,126.46. This included the cost of 427 blankets and one bugle sling that "disappeared" after the march, and one pyramidal tent damaged by fire. AG 240 Bonus, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA; Roger Daniels, *The Bonus March: An Episode of the Great Depression.* (Westport, Connecticut, 1971).

18 "Roosevelt Aides Praise Camp," *New York Times*, May 14, 1933, p. 29.

19 Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (New York, 1949), p. 112.

> the duty of every patriotic American." A Negro veteran whose breast bore many decorations stepped forward and was introduced. He sang "Mother Machree" and the First Lady applauded him."[20]

Though most of the veterans had gladly welcomed Eleanor Roosevelt's visit in the spirit of goodwill she obviously intended, the more hard-bitten among them perceived the political purpose of the short stop-over. "Hoover sent the army" sneered one marcher; "Roosevelt sent his wife."[21]

The second Bonus March of 1933 ended far less dramatically than the first. On May 19th, the veterans were bussed from Fort Hunt to Washington. They then were allowed to march from the Washington Monument to the gates of the White House, where FDR spoke briefly to a small delegation. Though the President ultimately took no action on the bonus question, he shrewdly solved the problem of dispersing the veterans by offering to enroll all willing veterans in his new "Forest Army," the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). A few of the hard-line Communists grumbled at the notion of Roosevelt's "forced labor camps," but the overwhelming majority of men—2,657 out of the roughly 3,000 marchers—enrolled in the CCC as the convention broke up. The Veterans Administration, meanwhile, provided the remaining vets with transportation home from Fort Hunt, and the camp was emptied after May 22nd.[22]

When Roosevelt authorized the enrollment of the bonus marchers in the CCC, the program had been in existence less than two months. What began as a temporary solution to the critical problem of youth joblessness ultimately became one of the most popular and long-lived projects of Roosevelt's New Deal, employing 2.5 million men over a period of nine years. When FDR took the presidential oath of office in March 1933, at least 25 percent of young men aged 15 to 24 were totally unemployed, while another 29 percent worked only part-time. At the height of the Depression, one quarter of a million teenagers were essentially homeless, wandering the country in search of work. As governor of New York, Roosevelt had considered the idea of putting young men to work on forest conservation projects, and several states had already initiated similar efforts. Less than a week after taking office, FDR consulted with the secretaries of agriculture, interior, and war, and sketched out a plan by which unemployed youths would be recruited and organized by various federal agencies, and used to perform important conservation work. Roosevelt signed the Federal Unemployment Relief Act into law on March 31, 1933, instituting Emergency Conservation Work, popularly known as the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC.[23]

Though various changes were made to the program over the course of its nine-year existence, the basic aims and methods of the CCC remained consistent. Enrollment was open to young men between the ages of 18 and 25 (later expanded to include those

---

20 "Bonus Camp Viewed by Mrs. Roosevelt," *New York Times*, May 17, 1933, p. 10.

21 Daniels, *The Bonus March*, p. 339n.

22 Daniels, *The Bonus March*, p. 222.

23 Though the press consistently referred to the program as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) did not officially become the CCC until 1937. John A. Salmand, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, North Carolina, 1967), v, 3-25; John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 3-10.

aged 17 to 28) who were American citizens, in good health, and with no physical handicaps. Enrollees were provided with food, shelter, and clothing; in return they were expected to send $25 of their $30 monthly pay home to their families. Each enrollment period lasted six months, and participants could remain in the program for up to two years. Though the CCC was designed primarily to employ young men, classified as "Juniors," FDR ultimately allowed the enrollment of veterans—as in the case of the bonus marchers—Native Americans, and residents of American territories. "Most of the youths," noted a contemporary description of CCC membership,

> came from impoverished families caught in the Depression. They were in their late teens or early 20s. And all had known hunger. They had grown up in the streets and cluttered alleys of the tenement districts, undernourished, undereducated, underprivileged—forgotten flotsam on the backwash of an economic system which temporarily had broken down. Altogether too many of them were tough, embittered and anti-social.[24]

The CCC was a complex organization, relying on the support and direction of a number of state and federal entities. The basic organizational unit of the CCC was the company, comprised—at least on paper—of 200 enrollees. The company was posted at a camp, which might be located in a state or federal park, or on other federal or private lands. The camp commander, who had authority over all internal camp functions, was either a regular or reserve Army officer. The commander was assisted by a number of civilian employees, while the Army also provided a part-time doctor, dentist, chaplain, and educational advisor. A civilian camp superintendent representing the host agency was responsible for overseeing the various work projects conducted by the enrollees. The superintendent also had the discretion to hire a number of older and more experienced "locally employed men" (LEMs) as foremen and equipment operators. The work projects undertaken by the CCC varied widely by camp and region, but most involved forest improvement and fire suppression, road, bridge, and trail building, the construction of campgrounds and recreation-related structures, survey work, flood control, tree disease and insect control, and general landscaping. Though forest conservation and park improvement occupied most of the CCC companies across the country, a number of parks also employed the enrollees in building and maintaining historical and interpretive exhibits and facilities.[25]

Civilian Conservation Corps camp NP-6, located at Fort Hunt, was first occupied on October 17, 1933, at the beginning of the CCC's second enrollment period. By this date, the property was under the authority of the National Park Service, so the work program undertaken by the Fort Hunt enrollees was conducted within the National Capital Parks system. During the first six-month period, 200 enrollees of Company 1241, comprised of young men from New York and Virginia, lived and worked under the authority of Camp Commander Captain E. C. Marshall (U.S. Army Reserve), and National Park Service Camp Superintendent R. W. Martin. Thirty-one of the enrollees were detailed to camp work, while the rest labored at clearing dead timber and

---

[24] Paige, *The CCC and the NPS*, 73-76.
[25] Paige, *The CCC and the NPS*, pp. 11-18.

underbrush, performing tree surgery, constructing bridle paths, and landscaping in the National Capital Parks.[26]

When Company 1241 first arrived at Fort Hunt at the end of 1933, the enrollees were housed in tents and the remaining Army buildings. Since most CCC camps around the country had to be built from scratch, the Army had designed a sturdy, all-purpose building for CCC use. These inexpensive, "pre-fabricated" structures were comfortable, weatherproof, and easy to ship and assemble; with only slight alteration they could serve as administrative and recreational buildings, mess halls, and barracks. Once erected, they were usually creosoted and covered with tar paper, though occasionally they were painted brown or green. By October 1935, Fort Hunt's enrollees had put up 18 new portable buildings. Only two structures, the officers' mess (frame) and the oil house (masonry) were of "rigid," or more permanent construction. Coal stoves heated the living and working spaces, and many of the buildings had water and sewer connections. Except for a few service structures, all the buildings were wired for electricity. Table 2 summarizes the function and characteristics of the CCC structures in use at Camp NP-6 by February 1942.[27]

The work of CCC Co. 1241 was interrupted in May 1934 by the third and final Bonus March of disgruntled World War I veterans. Prompted by the failure of yet another bonus bill in Congress, about 1,500 protestors came to Washington in what has been described as the "smallest, the most Communist-dominated, and the least noticed" of the marches. On this occasion, the arrangements were handled by Harry L. Hopkins, the Federal Relief Administrator, whose agency ultimately spent $30,000 to accommodate and feed the veterans during their convention of May 12-27, 1934. Following the precedent set by the previous year's march, Hopkins arranged once again to have the veterans housed at Fort Hunt, where they were left essentially to their own devices at a safe distance from official Washington. The veterans, including 270 African-American representatives, hailed from 45 states; their average age was 41. About 500 of the men occupied the temporarily abandoned camp buildings, while the rest lived in tents.[28]

Though they were given national radio time, as well as a typewriter and mimeograph machine that they used to produce a camp newspaper, the third Bonus March fizzled, garnering no legislative or popular support. In a subtle editorial comment on the protest, the *New York Times* lead story on the camp included a photograph of veterans pitching horseshoes on the grounds of Fort Hunt, titled "Throwing Ringers While Awaiting Bonus." But most would not be idle long. Once again, Roosevelt authorized the enrollment of the marchers in the CCC. Nearly 600 applied, and 565 were accepted.[29]

---

[26] Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

[27] Paige, *The CCC and the NPS*, pp. 70-71; Office of the Chief of Engineers, Historical Record of Civilian Conservation Corps Buildings, Third Corps Area (Virginia), Camp NP-6, NA RG 77.

[28] In May 1934, the Army shipped 225 pyramidal tents with hoods from Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, to the Washington Quartermaster Depot for use at Fort Hunt. AG 240 Bonus, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA

[29] Daniels, *The Bonus March*; *New York Times*, "Bonus March Leaders Deny Split in Ranks," May 12, 1934, p. 1, and "Bonus Colony Increased 100; Split Denied," May 13, 1934, p. 1 (2nd section).

**Table 2.** CCC Buildings at Fort Hunt, 1935-1942.

| No. | Designation | Size (feet) | Construction | Rooms | Cap-acity | Water | Sewer | Sinks | Lava-tories |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Recreation Hall | 20 x 100 | frame, portable | 2 | 100 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| | *Recreation Hall | 20 x 85 | frame, portable | 1 | 100 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| | *Post Exchange | 20 x 15 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Infirmary | 20 x 40 | frame, portable | 6 | 6 | yes | yes | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | Barrack "A" | 20 x 140 | frame, portable | 1 | 50 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Barrack "B" | 20 x 140 | frame, portable | 1 | 50 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Barrack "C" | 20 x 130 | frame, portable | 1 | 46 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Barrack "D" | 20 x 140 | frame, portable | 1 | 50 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | Administrative | 20 x 140 | frame, portable | 5 | -- | yes | yes | 1 | 1 |
| | *Orderly Room | 20 x 40 | frame, portable | 2 | -- | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| | *Technical Room | 20 x 40 | frame, portable | 2 | -- | yes | yes | 1 | 1 |
| | *Supply Room | 20 x 60 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Mess Hall | 20 x 170 | frame, portable | 4 | 200 | yes | yes | 6 | 0 |
| | *Mess Hall | 20 x 110 | frame, portable | 1 | 200 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| | *Kitchen | 20 x 30 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | yes | yes | 4 | 0 |
| | *Store Room | 20 x 30 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| | *Scullery | 10 x 10 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | yes | yes | 2 | 0 |
| 9 | Bath House | 20 x 45 | frame, portable | 2 | 27 | yes | yes | 2 | 12 |
| 10 | Latrine | 20 x 37.5 | frame, portable | 1 | 19 | yes | yes | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Officer's Mess | 22 x 22 | frame, rigid | 1 | 8 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Officer's Quarters | 20 x 40 | frame, portable | 7 | 5 | yes | yes | 0 | 2 |
| 13 | Technical Quarters | 20 x 80 | frame, portable | 11 | 10 | yes | yes | 0 | 2 |
| 14 | Army Garage | 24 x 60 | frame, portable | 1 | 4 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | Education Building | 20 x 130 | frame, portable | 7 | 80 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | Oil House | 10 x 16 | masonry, rigid | 1 | -- | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | Garage | 24 x 60 | frame, portable | 1 | 5 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | Garage | 24 x 60 | frame, portable | 1 | 5 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | Garage | 24 x 60 | frame, portable | 1 | 5 | no | no | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | Blacksmith Shop | 20 x 20 | frame, portable | 1 | -- | yes | yes | 1 | 0 |

When the last of the bonus marchers de-camped, CCC Company 1241 re-occupied Fort Hunt and resumed operations. A typical day for the enrollees began with reveille at 6:00 am. The boys had a half-hour to wash and dress before doing 15 minutes of calisthenics. After exercising, they ate breakfast, made their beds, cleaned the barracks, and policed the grounds. Food at Fort Hunt was plain, but ample and nourishing. A typical day's menu (in this case, for Tuesday, March 1, 1938) included:

> *Breakfast*: oranges, corn flakes, egg omelet, fried potatoes, coffee, fresh milk, butter, and bread.
> *Lunch*: beef stew, dumplings, mashed potatoes, lima beans, cole slaw, jam, hot cocoa, and bread.
> *Dinner*: boiled franks, sauerkraut, creamed corn, mashed potatoes, pickled beets, bread pudding, coffee, bread and butter.

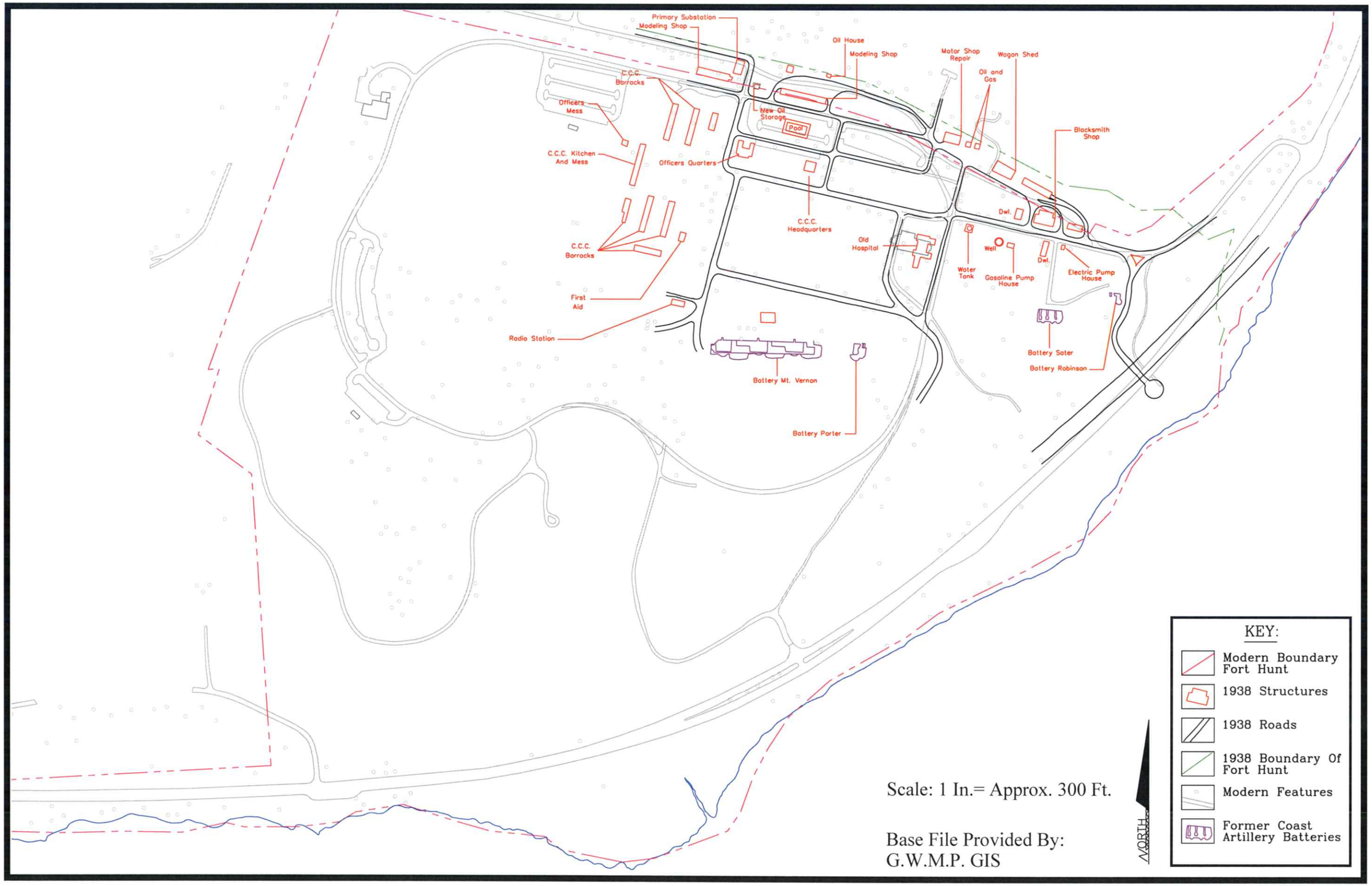



Figure 26. Fort Hunt Features ca. 1938 projected onto modern base map (source: National Park Service, National Capital Region, map file #117.6-23).

Complaints about the food at Fort Hunt were few, particularly since many of the boys—who came mainly from urban Pennsylvania—were not accustomed to getting three square meals a day. Bread was made daily in the camp bakery, fresh fruits and vegetables were bought locally, the meat was delivered from area butchers on contract, and canned goods were shipped from a central warehouse in Pennsylvania. In only one instance did the menu provoke official consternation. On September 27, 1939, 53 enrollees became violently ill after breakfast, and spent an uncomfortable day in the camp infirmary. The incident provoked a flurry of anxious correspondence. When laboratory analysis of the remains of the morning meal yielded no definitive answers, the Adjutant General's Office closed the books on the incident by declaring that the smoked ham had been contaminated. Camp officers were understandably suspicious of the official explanation, since some of the stricken had not consumed any meat. But the real reason for the retching would remain a mystery, since the evidence had been entirely eaten.[30]

Nausea notwithstanding, the company typically was at work, or at least en route to the job site, by 8:00 am. During the month of July 1938, for example, CCC Company 2387—which had replaced Co. 1241 at Fort Hunt in October 1937—performed a variety of jobs throughout the National Capital Parks system, including planting and maintaining trees and shrubs along the parkway, improving beaches, top-soiling and grading, preparing the soil and repairing damage to the parks, digging ditches for mosquito control, and helping to restore historic structures across the river at Fort Washington, Maryland. However, not all the CCC work was hard, outdoor labor. Between 1933 and 1938, some 20 of the enrollees worked under eight Park Service technical personnel, building relief maps and models for many large East Coast parks at Fort Hunt's "Model Laboratory." Whatever their task, the company took a one-hour lunch at noon, then continued to work until 4:00 pm, when they returned to camp. Before dinner, the boys had the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports and other recreational activities. Basketball, pool, ping-pong, and card games were camp favorites. Fort Hunt's company also distinguished itself in baseball and track and field competitions with other CCC camps.[31]

During the evening hours, the boys were encouraged to take a variety of academic and practical courses offered under the direction of the camp's educational advisor. Fort Hunt's enrollees could choose from a variety of subjects, including the traditional core courses in arithmetic, English, and mathematics. More popular, however, were the vocational programs in auto mechanics, carpentry, journalism, radio, surveying, truck driving, typewriting, cooking, photography, weaving, health and safety, and foreman training. Staff members gave weekly lectures on topics covering health, safety, courtesy, vocations, and employment, and films were shown regularly on the camp's 16mm projector. Fort Hunt also boasted an enviable camp library, "well equipped" with "tubular chrome furniture, adequate heat, good ventilation, and excellent lighting." Enrollees had access to more than 1,500 books, as well as a variety of magazines and newspapers, including the CCC's own weekly paper, *Happy Days.* Camp officers

---

30 Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

31 Paige, *The CCC and the NPS*, pp. 79-80; Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.



Figure 27. First Aid Instruction, CCC Co. 2387, Fort Hunt late 1930s (National Archives, 35-SU-2L-11).

regularly suggested, however, that increasing the stock of popular fiction, particularly westerns and mysteries, would further boost camp literacy.[32]

After an evening of instruction and camp meetings, "lights out" came at 10:00 pm, and a bed check was made at 11:00 pm. All enrollees worked 8 hours a day, 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Weekends were reserved for cleaning the camp and recreational activities, though the company sometimes worked on Saturdays to make up for time lost to inclement weather. The company made occasional weekend field trips into Washington to visit museums and other attractions. But Saturday nights were most anxiously awaited, since the enrollees were allowed to attend movies and dances in Alexandria and the surrounding area. Camp members also put on musical or theatrical productions, such as the "blackface Christmas comedy" the boys staged for the Alexandria Elks Club. Clowning aside, the CCC also had a serious concern for the boys' spiritual health. On Sundays the enrollees were encouraged to attend church services. A "contract clergyman" conducted a weekly service at Fort Hunt, while camp members were also transported to Alexandria to attend other churches.[33]

For the most part, no serious disciplinary lapses occurred at Fort Hunt during the CCC occupation. However, considering the difficult backgrounds of many of the enrollees, not to mention the expected high-spiritedness of a community of young men in close quarters, it was inevitable that certain problems would arise. Desertions plagued every CCC camp and district, particularly in the latter years of the program when the quality of recruits began to diminish and the increasing availability of permanent jobs lured enrollees away from the program. Fort Hunt was no exception to this trend. Between July 1940 and June 1941, for instance, Company 2387 lost 82 boys through "dishonorable desertion," a considerable number, since company strength rarely reached the 200-man target. In a scenario uncannily reminiscent of the financial improprieties at Fort Hunt 35 years earlier, CCC officials discovered in October 1940 that the camp canteen steward had embezzled the post exchange fund over the course of a year. A subsequent investigation revealed that the perpetrator had conspired with another enrollee who drove the mail truck to steal certain pieces of mail.[34]

Fort Hunt also witnessed a brief "strike" in May 1941. During that month, 50 members of Camp SP-19 at Westmoreland State Park in Baynesville, Virginia, were detailed on detached service to Fort Hunt. The day after they arrived, 25 of them refused to go back to work after lunch, and 17 were subsequently dismissed from the CCC. Seventeen more enrollees were sent from Baynesville to Fort Hunt as replacements, but they, too, refused to work. Special Investigator Ross Abare interviewed a number of the individuals involved, and filed a particularly incisive and sympathetic report concerning the cause of the disturbance. Some of the enrollees complained that when they arrived the Fort Hunt boys had stolen their possessions, while others griped that the lunch they were served on their first day did not live up to Baynesville standards. But Adare perceived a deeper concern. "Here we have a group of boys," he noted, "enrolled into the CCC only six weeks ago, on an average."

---

32 Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

33 Paige, *The CCC and the NPS*, pp. 82; Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

34 Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

> These boys quite naturally looked forward to their life in the CCC with some misgiving. Finding themselves at the Baynesville Camp, having been assigned there from the enrollment point in Pennsylvania, it is probable that all were agreeably surprised by the camp itself, by the reception which they were given by the entire personnel of the camp, both enrolled and supervisory, and by the camp life itself as it unfolded to them day by day. At the end of the six weeks the average member of this group is just passing from what might be termed the rookie stage to that of an established full-fledged member of the camp, now ready and eager to accept his place and his full responsibility within the company. Now, just at this point this member is suddenly selected, without any prior warning or notice, for transfer to another camp where everyone and everything is strange to him, and what happens? He does not stay at the new camp even long enough to become acquainted. He does not even give the new camp a fair trial. He stays only until the realization of what has happened comes to him, that all about him is again strange, that he is again regarded much as a rookie would be, that he has to establish himself all over again, and it is too much for him and in desperation he seeks the only way out which he can see, refuse to work and probably they will send me back. That is exactly the case in this instance. Not one of those who refused to work had originally wanted a discharge from the CCC for it has been definitely established that their first request was to be returned to Baynesville as exemplified by the slogan they adopted of "Back to Baynesville or Bust."[35]

In the end, the CCC authorities were not as understanding as Adare, and all those who refused to work were dishonorably discharged from the Corps. Aside from the Baynesville incident and a relatively unexceptional rate of desertion, the Fort Hunt CCC camp was in every other respect a model facility. Given its admirable reputation and proximity to the capital, the camp received its fair share of VIP visitors, including a future British Prime Minister and two reigning monarchs.

During an unofficial goodwill visit to the United States, the Right Honorable Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P., paid a brief visit to Fort Hunt on Tuesday, December 13, 1938. Formerly Britain's high-profile foreign secretary, the handsome, 41-year-old "Lord Eyelash" briefly escaped a throng of female admirers while touring the CCC camp on his way back to the capital from Mount Vernon. "Four platoons of the fresh-faced boys, drawn ready in parade formation, stood in military quiet as Eden, Camp Superintendent C. S. Watson, Camp Commander Capt. Blair Henderson and Assistant CCC Director James S. McEntee passed through the lines," reported the *Washington Post*.

> Rapidly the group walked through a dormitory, where shoes, bedding and duffle had been stowed for the inspection, past the recreation hall, where a radio was blaring "Flat-Foot Floogie with the Floy-Floy," and into the mess-hall, where photographers vainly implored Eden to pose beside an

[35] Adare to Charles H. Kenlan, 24 May 1941, CCC Division Inspection Reports, Fort Hunt, NA RG 35.

> impressive display of freshly-baked berry pies—his only refusal to pose throughout the day. Eden told McEntee that he was deeply impressed with the camp's efficiency, and was startled when the latter told him that there were 300,000 youths enrolled throughout the Nation. "You mean 30,000, don't you?" said Eden. He was perceptibly impressed when McEntee repeated the 300,000 figure.[36]

Clearly intrigued by the possibility of initiating a similar program in his own country, Eden requested more detailed information about the CCC to bring back to Britain. "And perhaps now," opined a CCC reporter in *Happy Days*, "while he is on the ocean en route home, he is learning some more surprising things about the CCC."[37]

Though George Washington had entertained numerous foreign dignitaries at Mount Vernon, the general undoubtedly would have been amazed to learn that, 140 years after his death, the King and Queen of England would set foot on his modest River Farm. The capital was abuzz during June 1939, while President Roosevelt and the First Lady hosted King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on the southern leg of their North American tour. On Friday, June 9th, the monarchs visited Mount Vernon, where they laid a wreath on Washington's tomb. On their way to Arlington National Cemetery, the royal motorcade pulled up at CCC Camp NP-6. In her memoirs, Eleanor Roosevelt described her second visit to the site in vivid detail:

> On the way home we stopped at Fort Hunt to visit a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. My husband, of course, could not walk with the king and queen, but I have a vivid recollection of that visit; it taught me a great many things.
>
> The king walked with the commander of the camp towards the boys who were drawn up in two lines in the broiling sun. A large bulletin board had been put up with pictures of the various camps throughout the country, showing the different kinds of work done by the boys, but he did not stop to look at it then.
>
> As we went down the long line, the king stopped at every other boy and asked questions while the queen spoke to the intervening boys. I, of course, walked with the queen. At the end of the first line, the commandant was prepared not to go down the second one, but the king turned automatically and started down. He asked really interested questions, such as whether they were satisfied with their food, what they were learning and whether they thought it would help them to obtain work and lastly, how much they were earning. He had explained to us beforehand that for a long time he had had a summer camp where boys

---

[36] Sidney Olson, "Eden, at Washington's Tomb, Finds Peace After Busy Day," *The Washington Post*, Wednesday, December 14, 1938, p. 1.

[37] "Anthony Eden Oh's and Ah's While Learning of American CCC in Virginia Camp," *Happy Days*, Saturday, December 17, 1938, p. 11.

> from the mining areas of Great Britain went. He had been deeply troubled to find that many boys had no conception of doing a full day's work, because they had never seen their fathers do a day's work, many of Great Britain's miners having been on the dole for years. This spoke volumes for the condition of the mining industry in Great Britain, but the king seemed interested chiefly in the effect it had on these young men; he wanted to set up something as useful as the CCC camps in Great Britain.
>
> When we reached the end of the second row of boys, the commandant said: "Your Majesty, the day is so hot that, while the boys have prepared their barracks and mess hall for your inspection, we shall all understand if you do not feel it wise to cross the field in this sun." The king responded: "If they expect me to go, of course I will go." That was a kind of noblesse oblige that I had not often seen in our own officials with whom I had inspected CCC camps and NYA activities and other projects.
>
> The queen and I followed slowly across the field in the hot sun, and I saw one of the most thorough inspections I have ever witnessed. They looked at the shelves where supplies were kept, and when they heard the boys made their own equipment, they had tables turned upside down to see how they were made; they looked into the pots and pans on the stove, and at the menu; and when they left there was very little that they did not know. In the sleeping barracks the king felt the mattresses and carefully examined shoes and clothes.
>
> Finally we trudged back across the field and when we reached the bulletin board with all its pictures, the queen murmured gently in my ear that the heat had made her feel very peculiar and did I think she could return to her car. I assured her that no one would mind and we went back and sat in the car while the king examined every picture.
>
> After arrangements were made to send him a full set of pictures, the motor cavalcade started off for Arlington Cemetery . . . .[38]

"King and Queen Get Chummy with Men at CCC Inspection," proclaimed the bold headline of the next day's issue of *Happy Days*, which devoted the entire front page to the royal visit, and profiled the excited enrollees of Company 2387 who had "chinned" with the Windsors. After days of hectic preparations, the CCC boys now had plenty of time to "compare experiences, and fix the details in mind for the home folks."[39]

Less than three months after the King and Queen visited Fort Hunt, Hitler invaded Poland, drawing Europe into the Second World War. By 1940, President Roosevelt and Congress were making serious preparations for possible U.S. involvement in the European conflict. The reserve military officers who had served as CCC camp

---

38 Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (New York, 1949), 192-93.

39 *Happy Days*, Saturday, June 10, 1939, pp. 1, 20; "George Keenly Interested in CCC Cuisine," *The Washington Post*, Saturday, June 10, 1939, p. 5.

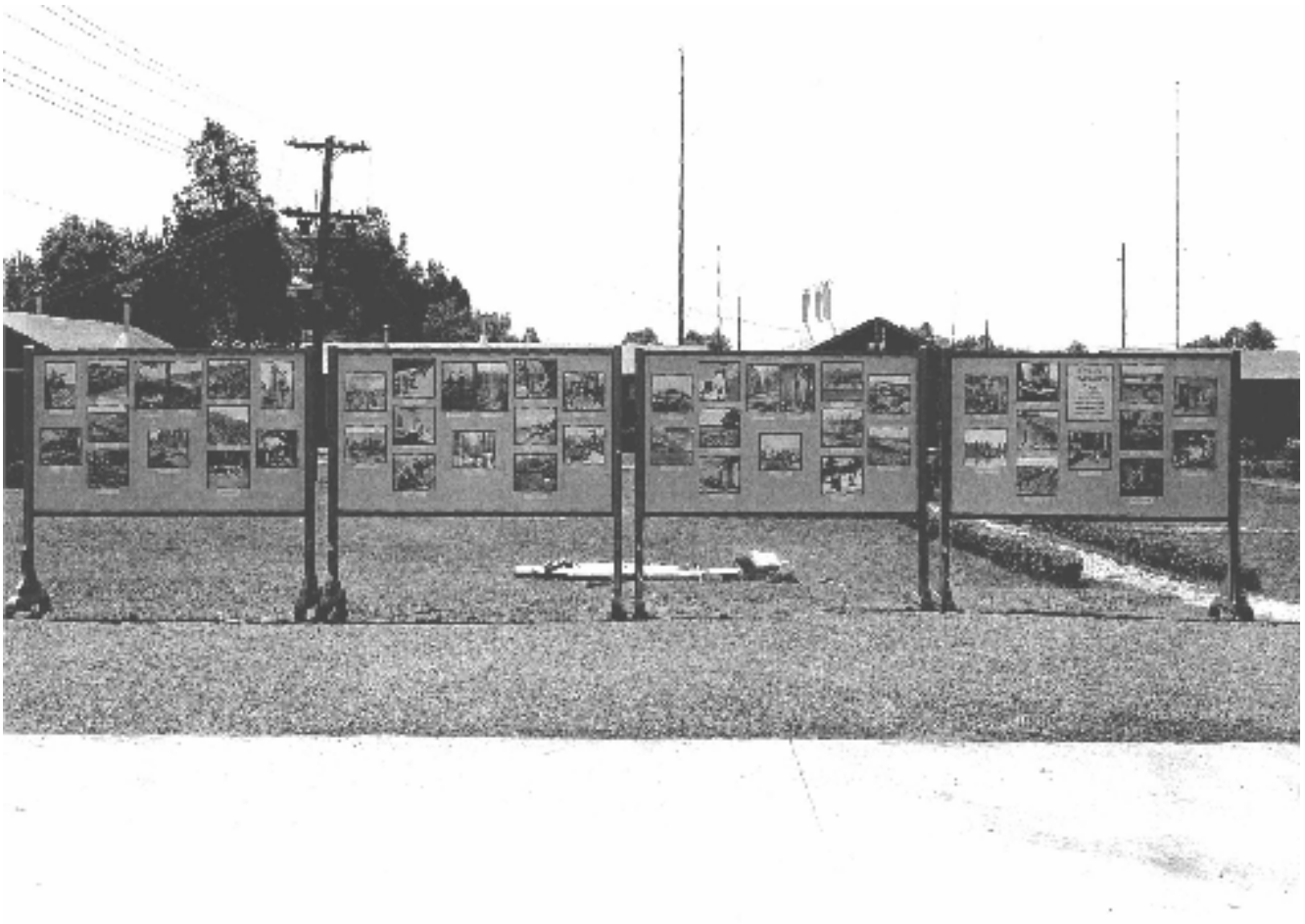
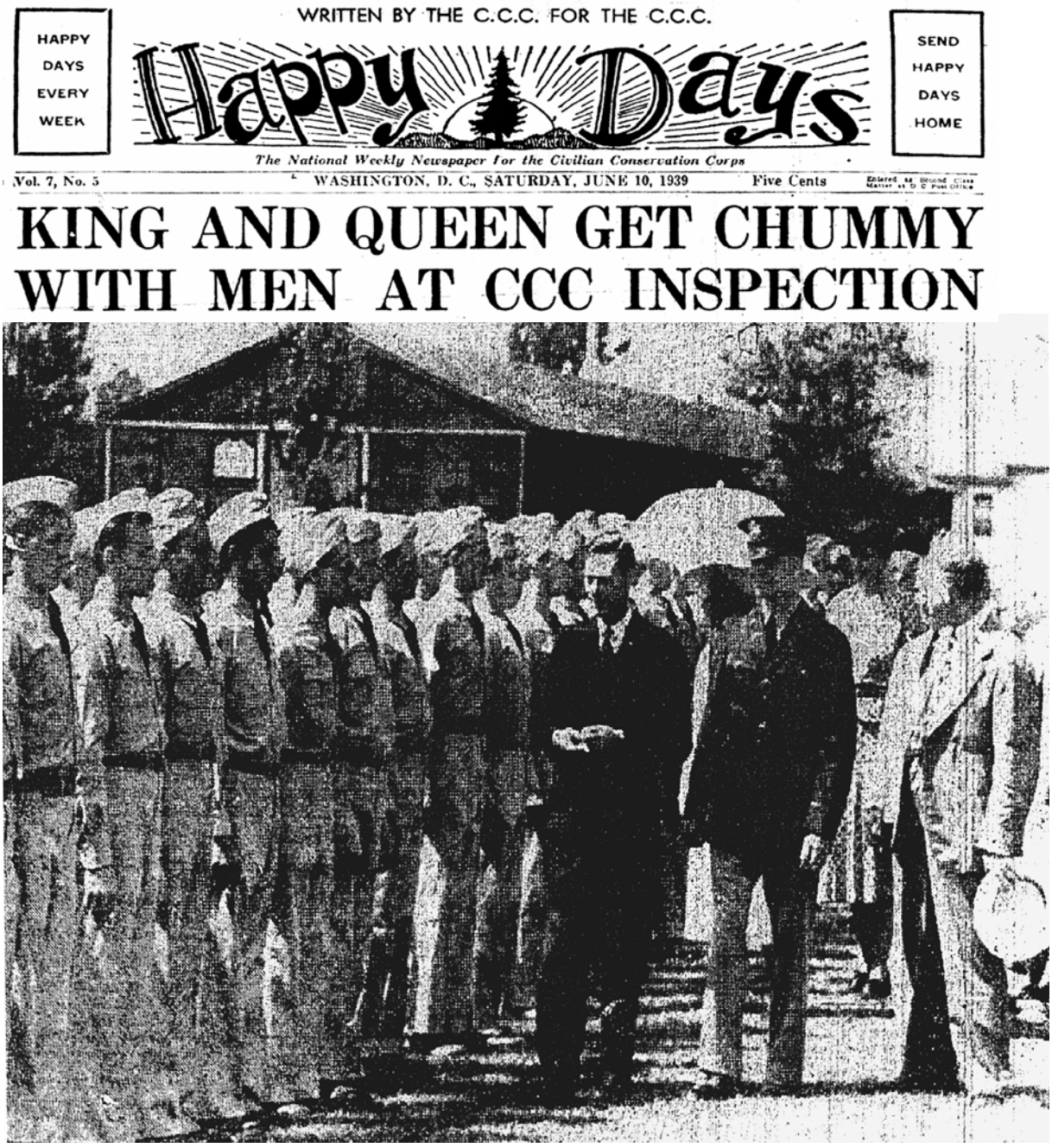


Figure 28. Exhibit of national CCC activities prepared for the visiting royals, Fort Hunt, June 1939 (National Archives, 35-GE-2C).



HAPPY DAYS EVERY WEEK

WRITTEN BY THE C.C.C. FOR THE C.C.C.

Happy Days

SEND HAPPY DAYS HOME

*The National Weekly Newspaper for the Civilian Conservation Corps*

Vol. 7, No. 5 WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1939 Five Cents

KING AND QUEEN GET CHUMMY WITH MEN AT CCC INSPECTION

Figure 29. CCC Director Robert Fechner and Camp Commander, Captain Blair E. Henderson, escort the King and Queen, and the First Lady on their inspection of Fort Hunt, June 1930, (source*: Happy Days*, Saturday, June 10, 1939, National Archives).

commanders gradually were called up to active duty, and enrollees increasingly were used to perform national defense work. In 1941, Fort Hunt was designated a "Defense Camp" by the War Department, and renamed CCC Camp NP(D)-6. Enrollees trained in civil defense procedures, and work projects were geared towards improving war readiness. For example, in the summer of 1941 part of Company 2387 was detached to a temporary "side camp" at Fort Belvoir, where the enrollees participated in base improvement projects, while others worked in Arlington to help build a "Transient Camp," or recreational facility for servicemen on leave.[40]

Nationwide enrollment in the CCC dwindled throughout 1941 as young men found jobs in the burgeoning defense industry or the military. When the United States finally declared war on the Axis powers in December, the fate of the CCC was sealed. After considerable debate, and over the President's objections, Congress decided to terminate the program as of July 2, 1942. Along with dozens of other CCC camps around the country, Camp NP(D)-6 at Fort Hunt was "liquidated" at the end of the 18th enrollment period in March 1942. But the post would not remain idle for long. After nine years of helping hundreds of young men survive the Depression, Fort Hunt now had an important part to play in winning the war.[41]

---

40 Paige, *The NPS and the CCC*, 29-34; Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

41 Paige, *The NPS and the CCC*, 29-34; Division Inspection Reports, 1934-42, Fort Hunt, Records of the CCC, NA RG 35.

# CHAPTER 6:
# "P.O. BOX 1142": FORT HUNT IN WORLD WAR II
# 1939 - 1945

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Fort Hunt had been preparing for war for nearly two years. Even before the Civilian Conservation Corps contingent was redesignated as a "Defense Camp," the War Department established a secret radio monitoring station on the site, a "listening post" designed to collect critical information from potential enemies of the United States.

The Signal Intelligence Service was created as a field agency of the Chief Signal Officer in 1938, a product of the United States military's preparations for an impending world war. The mission of this specialized Signal Corps branch was to perform "intercept work," monitoring radio traffic from the four countries that posed the greatest perceived threat to American national security: Mexico, Japan, Germany, and Italy. In addition to basic radio monitoring, the Signal Intelligence Service also included cryptoanalytic and translation units that rendered the intercepted transmissions useful to Army intelligence. Though seriously undermanned, and perennially hard-pressed to find and retain qualified technicians, the service performed a valuable strategic function in the pre-war period.[1]

In September 1939, Chief Signal Officer Major General J. O. Mauborgne wrote a memorandum to the Army's War Plans Division recommending that a monitoring station be established in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. This new post, he proposed, would be manned by a new detachment of the 2nd Signal Service Company, Signal Intelligence Service, then stationed in Hawaii and Panama. The Secretary of War agreed and, within a matter of weeks, had secured the approval of the National Park Service and the CCC to locate the monitoring station at Fort Hunt. According to this arrangement, the 26 enlisted men of the 2nd Signal Service Company detachment would set up shop in the old post hospital and mess with the CCC company, while the Chief Signal Officer lived off-base and commuted in a "reconnaissance car" provided by a nearby light tank unit. In return, the War Department would compensate the CCC for the use of the hospital building, then being used by the enrollees for recreational and educational purposes.[2]

In late September and early October 1939, the Army renovated the old hospital at a cost of $4,280. By the end of October, the Signal Corps personnel had moved in with their specialized "eavesdropping" gear, including radio sets, tape recording machines, radio antennae, and other receiving equipment. Due to its limited size, the unit was attached to the 17th Signal Service Company for administrative purposes, and was supplied by Fort Myer, Virginia. Within a short time the monitoring station was up and running, providing military intelligence to the War Department. In February 1940, the Army once again upgraded the hospital building. This time, they installed 650 feet of

---

1 AG 321.924 Signal Intelligence Service, Correspondence of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA.

2 AG 321.924 Signal Intelligence Service, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA.

steel fence around the building "to keep out unauthorized visitors," ostensibly the CCC enrollees, who must have been curious about the secret goings-on within their camp.[3]

But the Signal Intelligence Service monitoring station was only a prelude to more significant classified operations. In fact, the official entry of the United States into World War II ushered in the most dramatic, and well-publicized, chapter of Fort Hunt's history. Though the post's suburban neighbors scarcely realized the importance of the site, during the war years Fort Hunt served both Army and Navy intelligence-gathering branches as a special interrogation center for enemy prisoners of war. But even the interrogators did not know that the installation also housed the War Department's super-secret MIS-X program, which communicated via coded correspondence with American POWs in European camps, and created and coordinated the shipment of "escape and evasion" kits disguised as humanitarian aid packages. Only within the past 15 years—with the declassification of archival material, and the persistent investigations of former MIS-X operative, Lloyd Shoemaker—has this remarkable episode of Fort Hunt's history come to light.

Throughout 1941, the dreaded German "wolfpacks" of U-Boats had exacted a terrible toll on Allied shipping in the North Atlantic. The U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) correctly predicted that, should the United States enter the war, the first Axis prisoners of war would likely be German merchant seamen and submariners. In preparation, ONI detached a young naval reserve officer, Lieutenant Harry T. Gherardi, to London between June and December 1941 to study British methods of interrogating POWs. As a result of this study, the Army and Navy jointly determined that a centralized interrogation system would yield the most positive results, and agreed that all POWs would become the responsibility of the Army when they arrived in the United States. Citing the amount and quality of military intelligence the British were obtaining from their prisoners, the report also recommended that the Secretary of War establish at least two "detailed interrogation centers," one in California, and the other in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. When initial attempts to imitate the British model of housing POWs in impressive country estates proved impractical, other less luxurious sites were considered. Once again, Fort Hunt's facilities and proximity to the capital proved attractive to military authorities. By May 15, 1942, the Secretary of War had obtained a special use permit from the Department of the Interior allowing the Army to establish a "Joint Interrogation Center" at Fort Hunt. The permit was granted for the duration of the war plus one year, and included all the Fort Hunt property, except the "old powder magazines and antiquated gun emplacements" then serving as the National Archives Nitrate Film Depository.[4]

The day after Pearl Harbor was bombed, top National Archives officials had convened a "Committee on Protection Against the Hazards of War." Meeting regularly over the following weeks, the committee developed plans and procedures to protect archival materials from sabotage or enemy attack. One of their most serious concerns

---

[3] AG 321.924 Signal Intelligence Service, Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, NA.

[4] Records of the War Department General Staff, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence Division, Captured Personnel and Materials Branch, Enemy POW Interrogation File (MIS-Y), 1943-45, Interrogation Center, CPM, Box 360, NA RG 165; John Hammond Moore, *The Faustball Tunnel: German POWs in American and Their Great Escape* (New York 1978), 30.

was the storage of motion pictures and still photographs comprised of cellulose nitrate film. Prone to decomposition even under benign conditions, nitrate film was also extremely flammable; the collection could literally vanish in a flash, releasing toxic fumes that posed a serious threat to archives personnel. In January 1942, the National Archives began searching for a temporary film storage facility. Having considered, and rejected, a potential site in Yorktown, Virginia, the committee decided to use the abandoned gun emplacements at Fort Hunt. By July, contractors had renovated and waterproofed the 4 batteries, creating 45 storage vaults with the capacity for 13,428 cubic feet of material. The National Archives subsequently transferred their nitrate motion picture and still photographic holdings to Fort Hunt, and offered the remaining space to other federal agencies. Ultimately, the Nitrate Film Depository accepted materials from the War Department, Veterans' Administration, Navy Department, Library of Congress, Treasury Department, Lend-Lease Administration, Post Office Department, Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Agriculture Department, and Office of Strategic Services.[5]

Almost immediately, however, the Archives staff realized the shortcomings of the Fort Hunt facilities. The batteries were prone to dampness, and 12 vaults were so wet that they were essentially unusable. Although representatives of the Archives were to be allowed periodic access to Fort Hunt to check the condition of the materials, in reality their monitoring was minimal, particularly since the post commander had prohibited women from entering the reservation. Proposals for building new storage facilities at Fort Hunt were entertained, but never approved. By the middle of 1945, archivists had moved all the still photos and much of the motion picture film back to the National Archives Building. By now, plans were underway for a temporary film storage facility at Suitland, Maryland. The Suitland depository was completed in April 1946, and by the end of the year all remaining film had been removed from Fort Hunt.[6]

While the National Archives was working to protect the nation's historical record, the Department of the Interior also sought to protect the physical integrity of Fort Hunt during its wartime occupation. The special use permit issued to the War Department outlined the following provisions and conditions:

1. That precaution shall be taken to preserve and protect all objects of a geological and historical nature.

2. That wherever possible, structures, roads, as well as trees, shrubs and other natural terrain features, shall remain unmolested.

3. That every precaution shall be taken to protect the area from fire and vandalism and personnel and equipment shall be made available by the Permittee for fire suppression within the area.

---

5 Records of the National Archives, Audio Visual Records Branch, 1941-1961, Records Relating to the Fort Hunt, Virginia, Depository and Nitrate Film, Box 1, NA RG 64.

6 Fort Hunt Depository and Nitrate Film, Box 1, NA RG 64; National Archives. *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States for the Year Ending June 30, 1947.* (Washington, 1948).

4. That the War Department is granted permission to erect additional housing facilities if and when the necessity arises therefore, the exact location of such structures to be determined by the Superintendent, National Capital Parks, and the proper Army authorities. That the buildings shall be constructed generally in accordance with preliminary layout plans to be submitted by the War Department and approved by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. If such plans should be modified or supplemented, the National Park Service shall be furnished with copies of the altered plans.

5. That upon the termination of the use of the area by the War Department, within one year after the President has declared the present war to be ended, all buildings and other structures except those of a strictly military technical character erected by it on land covered by this permit shall be transferred to the Department of the Interior or shall be removed by the War Department and the site restored as nearly as possible to its condition at the time of the issuance of this permit, at the option of the Secretary of the Interior.

6. Structures of a strictly military technical nature, disposition of which is not otherwise covered by this permit, shall be removed by the War Department at the expiration of the need for same and the site restored as nearly as possible to its condition at the time of issuance of this permit.[7]

By the end of May 1942, the Army's Chief of Engineers had allocated $217,000 for the necessary construction at Fort Hunt, now known by its code name of "P.O. Box 1142," the post's Alexandria mailing address. For a time, the Army had logistical difficulties obtaining the necessary state-of-the-art sound equipment for recording interrogation sessions and monitoring POW conversations, but the main prison facility had been completed by July 22, 1942. Within a week the furniture had been received, telephones were installed, and 14 listening machines were ready for operation.[8]

Meanwhile, the War Department had been working out the administrative details of the new interrogation system. The Prisoner of War Branch of the Army's Military Intelligence Service (MIS) had a subdepartment, MIS-Y, concerned exclusively with interrogating POWs; the Navy's equivalent was known as Op-16-Z. Both Joint Interrogation Centers, Fort Hunt and its West Coast counterpart in Byron Hot Springs, California, would come under the jurisdiction of the Provost Marshal General, though the facilities would be available for use by both MIS and ONI. The War Department was careful to note that these centers were to be classified as "Temporary Detention Centers," *not* POW camps. This semantic distinction had important ramifications in the context of

[7] MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.
[8] MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.

international law. The Geneva Convention of 1929 specifically outlined the rights and privileges of POWs (e.g. diet, exercise, access to mail, etc.), some of which would have impeded the interrogation strategies. Though it would become a point of contention later in the war, the War Department remained steadfast in its position that the interrogation centers were *sui generis*.[9]

Initially, the Fort Hunt interrogation center fell under two distinct commands. The portion of the reservation inside the prisoner enclosure—the "Interrogation Center" proper—was the responsibility of the Chief of MIS, Colonel Catesby ap Jones. The remainder of the installation fell under the immediate authority of the Post Commander, who coordinated the normal functions of the 400-man garrison, including service, supply, and POW mail. After several months of operation, however, it became clear that this dual system of command was simply not working as efficiently as hoped. After numerous recommendations for change, in April 1943 the Assistant Chief of Staff of Army Intelligence (G-2) dispensed with the Post Commanders, and placed the Senior Military Intelligence Officer in charge of the entire camp. This consolidation of command reportedly resulted in significantly smoother operations.[10]

**Table 3.** Commanding Officers, Joint Interrogation Center, Fort Hunt, 1942-45.

| Commanding Officer | Dates |
|---|---|
| Col. Daniel W. Kent | 7/1/42 – 10/21/42 |
| Col. Russell H. Sweet | 10/21/42 – 2/1/43 |
| Col. John L. Walker | 2/1/43 – 7/18/45 |
| Col. Zenas R. Bliss | 7/18/45 - end |

In less than two months, Fort Hunt was transformed from a small, undermanned post into a bustling military facility of key strategic importance. While the Army made use of the existing buildings—including the remaining ca. 1900 fort buildings and the CCC barracks—they also constructed numerous new temporary buildings. By the time the Fort Hunt interrogation center opened its doors in July 1942, the reservation boasted 87 buildings, including barracks, latrines, and mess halls for the garrison troops, officers quarters, and numerous supply and physical plant buildings (Table 4). The general layout of the post remained essentially the same, however, with the majority of buildings arrayed around the central parade ground (Figure 30).[11]

9 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165; Moore, *Faustball Tunnel*. 37.
10 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.
11 *Utility Survey, Ft. Hunt, Va.* (February 1945), National Capital Parks, National Park Service, Map File 117.6-86.

**Table 4.** Structures at Fort Hunt, February 1945 (entries without a "T" denote original Fort Hunt post buildings; the identity of the POW buildings was masked).

| Building No. | Description | Building No. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| T-1 | Barracks | T-107 | Officers' Quarters |
| T-2 | Barracks | T-108 | Officer's Quarters |
| T-3 | Barracks | T-109 | Officers' Quarters |
| T-4 | Storeroom | T-110 | Officers' Latrine |
| T-5 | Barracks | T-111 | Officers' Quarters |
| T-6 | Barracks | T-112 | Officers' Latrine |
| T-7 | Barracks | 114 | Stable |
| T-8 | Barracks | T-115 | Small Office |
| T-11 | Post Headquarters | 118 | Dwelling |
| T-15 | Recreation Buildings | 119 | Supply Room |
| T-16 | Substation | 120 | Coal Shed |
| T-20 | Guard House | T-121 | Gate House |
| T-21 | Gas Pump & Oil Storeroom | T-122 | Well House |
| T-22 | Garage | T-123 | Utilities |
| T-23 | Garage | 124 | Water Reservoir (underground) |
| T-24 | Repair Shop & Garage | 125 | Well House |
| T-25 | Garage | 126 | Water Tower |
| T-26 | Carpenter Shop | T-127 | Warehouse & Office |
| T-27 | Grease Rack | 128 | "Creamery" (old Hospital) |
| T-30 | Storeroom | T-129 | School & Office |
| T-31 | Latrine | 180 | Flag Pole |
| T-32 | Latrine | 201 | Old Emplacement |
| T-33 | Latrine | 202 | Old Emplacement |
| T-35 | Mess Hall | 203 | Storeroom |
| T-36 | Officers' Quarters | 204 | Tool Room |
| T-37 | Infirmary | 208 | Storeroom |
| T-38 | Barracks | T-210 | "Office" (Monitoring Building) |
| T-39 | Barracks | T-212 | "Special Building" (Enclosure B) |
| T-40 | Latrine | T-214 | Hutment |
| T-41 | Fire House | T-215 | Hutment |
| T-42 | Barracks | T-216 | Hutment |
| T-43 | Barracks | T-250 | Villa |
| T-45 | N.C.O. Quarters | T-301 | Guard Tower |
| T-46 | Post Exchange | T-302 | Guard Tower |
| T-47 | Tower | T-303 | Guard Tower |
| T-50 | N.C.O. Club | T-304 | Guard Tower |
| T-52 | Barracks | T-305 | Sentry Box |
| 101 | Officers' Quarters | T-306 | "Special Office" (Editing and Evaluations) |
| T-102 | Office | T-307 | "Special Office" (Intelligence Operations) |
| 103 | Office | T-308 | "Special Office" (Intelligence Administration) |
| 104 | Swimming Pool | T-309 | Stand By 10 KWA Set |
| 105 | Brick Storeroom | T-310 | "School" (Enclosure A) |
| T-105A | Office | T-312 | Library, Maps & Files |
| T-106 | Carpenter Shop | T-315 | Hutment |

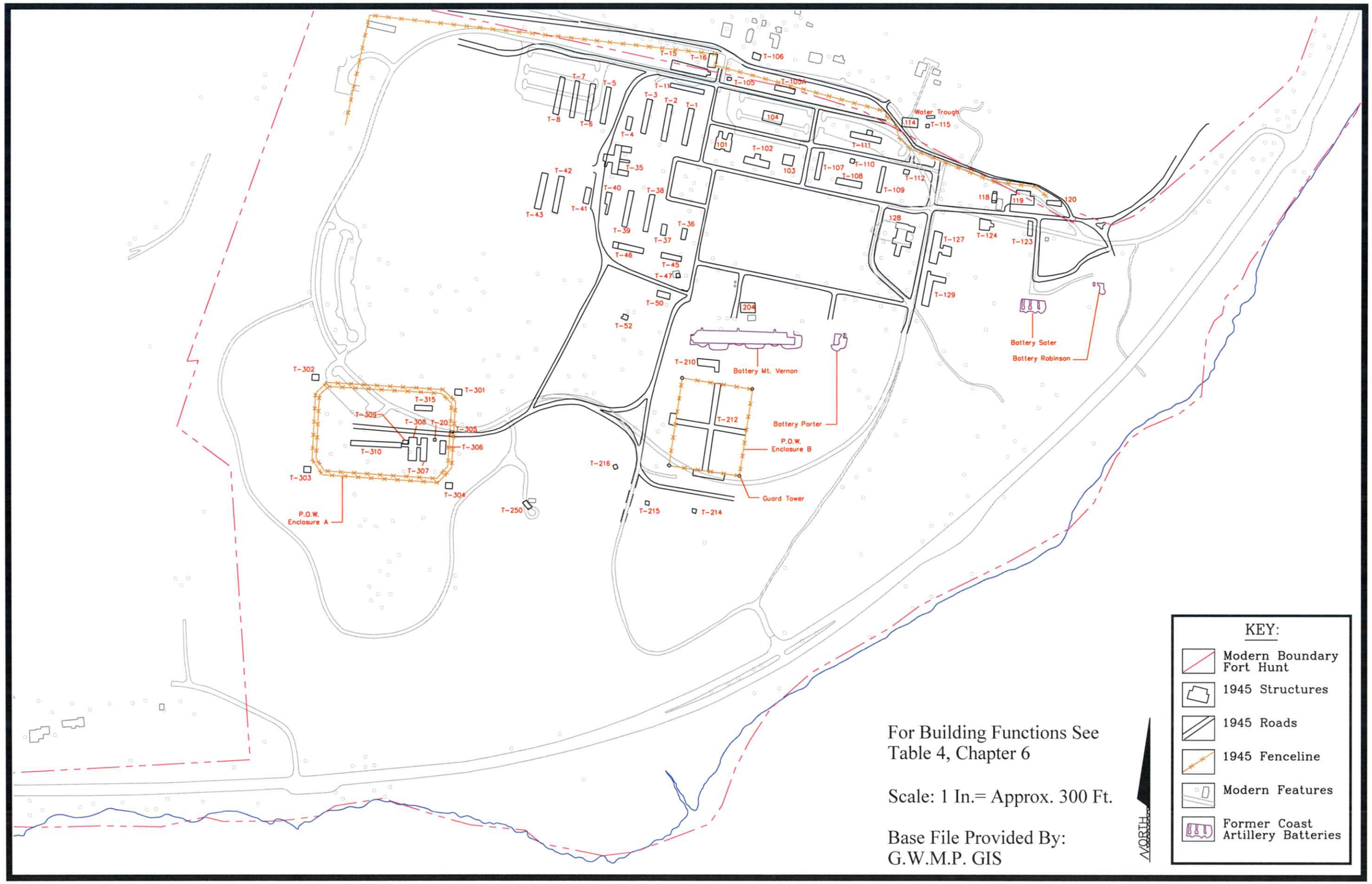



Figure 30. Fort Hunt features ca. 1945 projected on modern base map (source: National Park Service, National Capital Region, map file # 117.6-86).

The largest and most imposing of the temporary wartime buildings at Fort Hunt were the POW compounds. The first, known as "Enclosure A," was first occupied in August 1942; situated in the southwest portion of the reservation, it was somewhat removed from the rest of the camp (Figure 31). This self-contained complex included a two-story rectangular structure with 22 rooms for POWs. Nineteen of the rooms were designed to hold 3 prisoners each, while the remaining 3 rooms were for solitary confinement. This building also included five interrogation rooms, a kitchen, guard room, control officer's room, and miscellaneous store rooms. Two single-story buildings within the compound contained the offices of the MIS and ONI personnel and their technical equipment. These buildings were attached to the east side of the main building in the form of a double crossed "T." An Evaluation Building and Document Section Building were also located nearby. The compound was surrounded by two "cyclone" wire fences separated by a 15-foot-wide grassy corridor. Four guard towers, one in each corner of the rectangular compound beyond the wire, overlooked the buildings and grounds.[12]

By 1944, interrogation activities at Fort Hunt had increased so significantly that the Army built a second POW compound, known as "Enclosure B" (Figure 32). This complex, which was operational by April, was situated directly south of the old Battery Mount Vernon. The new facility was of radically different construction, incorporating numerous improvements recommended on the basis of practical experience with the original POW compound. Enclosure B consisted of four wings radiating from a central hub surmounted by a guard tower. The Administration Building was located at the outer entrance of the west wing, and the kitchen was separated from the guard room by the main entrance corridor leading through the south wing. The main building contained 24 two-man POW rooms, five interrogation rooms, an assembly room, welfare officer's room, and control officer's room. The processing section was housed in the south wing, and included reception, disrobing, shower, medical examination, and clothing issue rooms. Each wing had its own latrine and guard room. The complex had four "exercise pens" with wire barrier and wood screening erected parallel with the POW room windows to prevent contact between prisoners. The pens were enclosed by concrete walls and "cyclone" fence, topped by barbed wire. An additional level of security was provided by an electrical contact system along the walls that registered in the central guard tower and Control Officer's office.[13]

As a "Detailed Intelligence Center," Fort Hunt was designed for the "scientific" and intensive interrogation of enemy POWs suspected to possess "long term technical or strategic information." The Army (MIS-Y) and Navy (Op-16-Z) interrogation branches offered the following guidelines for selecting and classifying POW subjects:

1. Target information respecting industrial centers, bombing damage, etc., which could reasonably be expected from an intelligent prisoner coming from the area in question.

[12] MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.
[13] MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.

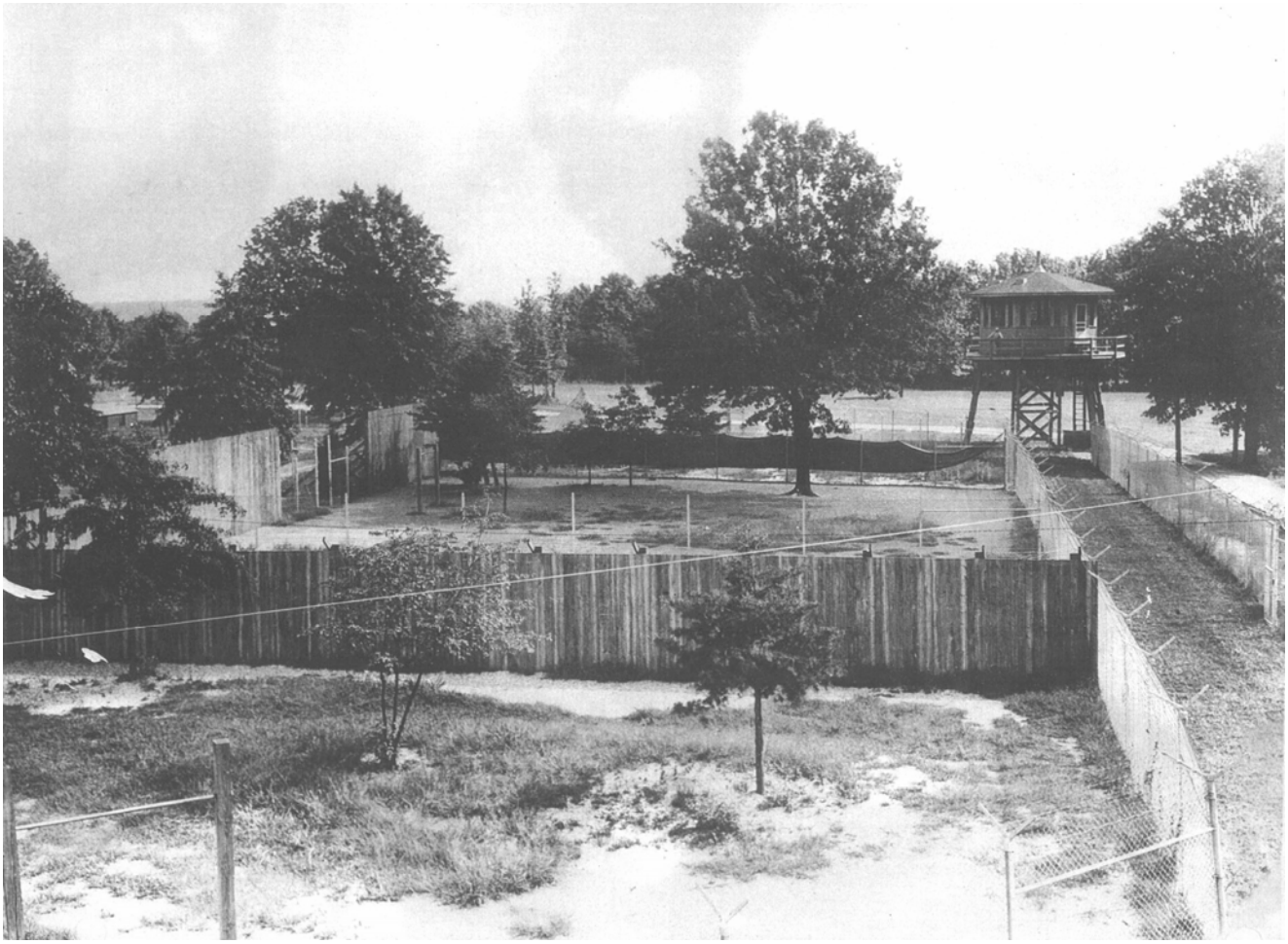


Figure 31. "Enclosure A," Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II. This was the original POW compound used by Army and Navy intelligence branches. U-Boat commander Werner Henke was shot and killed attempting to escape over this wire in June 1944 (National Archives, G-2 (MIS-Y), CPRM Branch, Box 360, RG 165).

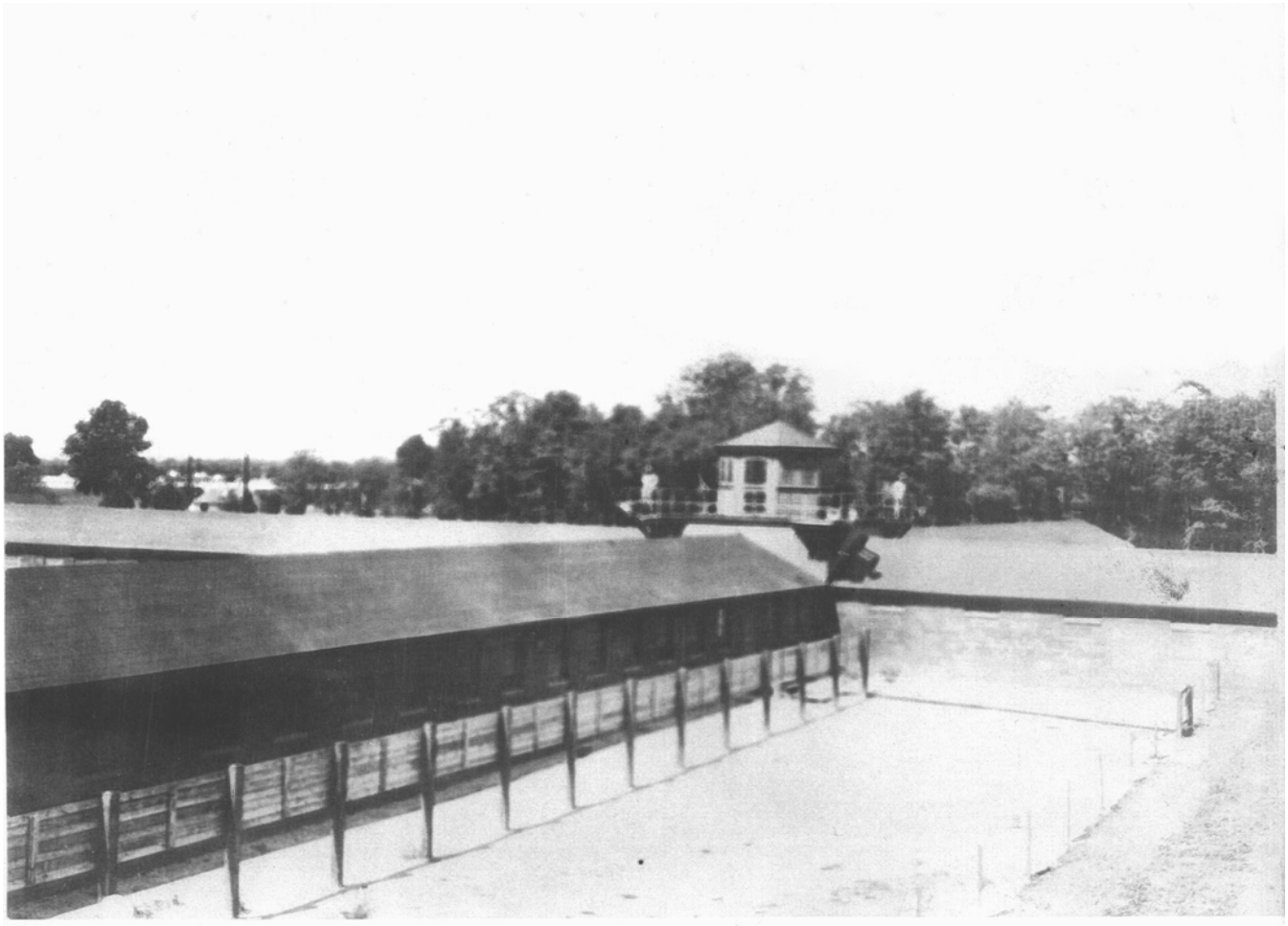


Figure 32. "Enclosure B," Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II. Built in 1944, this second POW compound incorporated new security measures, including a central guard tower (center) and concrete outer walls (National Archives, G-2 (MIS-Y), CPM Branch, Box 360, RG 165).

2. Signal personnel, tank crews, machine gunners, ordnance personnel, artillerymen, may be swiftly included in a tentative selected list without too much detailed screening.

3. Prisoners known to have been previously employed by munitions plants, armament or airplane manufacturers, chemical works, etc., may be assumed to be capable of providing valuable details respecting these particular plants, etc.

4. S.S. ABWEHR and SICHERHEITS DIENST personnel may usually be selected upon recognition, unless such personnel is abundantly available.

5. Often selections may be made in conformity with particular requests, because of previous party affiliations, previous record of alleged criminal record, or because of some record of service which may make their information useful to a special agency, such as Psychological Warfare, OSS, AMG, FBI, the State Department, the Treasury Department.[14]

The first assessment of a POW's intelligence potential was made "in the field," aboard ship in the case of captured U-Boats, or in "First Detailed Interrogation" facilities just behind the front lines. If a prisoner appeared to possess significant information, he was earmarked for shipment to Fort Hunt. Similarly, POWs arriving at the major debarkation ports of Newport News, Brooklyn, and Boston were quickly examined, and all potentially useful subjects identified. As the war progressed, and the number of POWs arriving in the United States mounted, the War Department established a special holding camp for "marked" POWs at Pine Grove Furnace, Pennsylvania, in May 1943. Prisoners remained at the 3300th Service Unit, POW Camp at Pine Grove Furnace, until space was available at Fort Hunt. They were then transported via Fort Meade, Maryland, to Fort Hunt in unmarked, windowless Army buses (Figure 33). The POWs were not meant to know their final destination (they were sometimes told they were at Fort Belvoir) though several astute prisoners did ascertain their general location. At least one German "guest" realized he was at Fort Hunt. He had lived in Alexandria before the war, and had often "parked" with various girlfriends nearby along the river.[15]

With an increasing number of POWs to choose from, the Army and Navy interrogation specialists could afford to be more selective about who they interviewed at Fort Hunt. At times, only 20 percent of the prisoners being held at Pine Grove Furnace ever made it to P.O. Box 1142. With time and experience, the interrogation procedures employed to extract information from the inmates also became more sophisticated and effective.[16]

---

14 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.
15 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165; Moore, *Faustball Tunnel*, 37.
16 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.



Figure 33. One of the windowless Army buses used to transport POWs to and from Fort Hunt, World War II (National Archives, G-2, (MIS-Y), CPM Branch, Box 360, RG 165).

The tenure of a POW at Fort Hunt followed a well-established procedure: after arriving at the post and surrendering all personal possessions, the prisoner was placed in his room, which contained two beds, two benches, and a built-in table (Figure 34). The Evaluation of Documents Officer then examined the confiscated materials, including personal letters, snapshots, and the like. The newcomer would be briefly discussed at the next meeting of the Interrogation Officers, and the information gathered from the initial screening process would be outlined. The prisoner was then assigned to the appropriate intelligence section (Air, Geographic, Army, etc.) for interrogation. Finally, the section head would pick the interrogating officer best qualified by temperament and experience to handle that particular prisoner.[17]

After three to six hours of preparatory work, the Interrogating Officer would meet the prisoner in an interrogation room, while simultaneously notifying the monitor to commence recording the discussion. To put the prisoner at ease, the interrogator would typically assume the rank (and often the service) of his interviewee. Though he was briefed on what type of information to seek, each interrogator was given the latitude to develop his own questioning style. Some made liberal use of liquor and cigarettes to get the POW to relax and "open up," while others took a more confrontational tack, pressing the prisoner on politics and the conduct of the war.[18]

Some prisoners were cooperative, others not; some were gregarious and talkative, while others simply clammed up. Officers, who presumably had more useful intelligence at their disposal, received considerably more time and attention. A low-ranking enlisted man probably had less vital information to provide, and might get only a cursory debriefing. Interrogators recognized that loyalty to the Nazi Party was also a fairly reliable indicator of how helpful—or obstructionist—a prisoner might be under questioning. Statistical records compiled from the interrogations at Fort Hunt in 1944-45 indicate that just over half (51.2 percent) of the POWs were categorized as "anti-Nazi," while the remainder appeared to harbor Nazi sympathies. Interestingly, officers tended to have stronger Nazi leanings (64.5 percent Nazi vs. 35.5 percent anti-Nazi), while the enlisted men were somewhat less enthusiastic about Hitler's regime (55.1 percent anti-Nazi vs. 44.9 percent Nazi).[19]

Fort Hunt's Interrogating Officers conducted nearly 5,000 interviews with POWs during the war. As an example of an interrogation, the following is a verbatim transcript of a session with Matrosenobergefreiter (Seaman 1st Class) Johann Mycke dated September 8, 1942. Mycke's submarine, the U-210 was sunk in the North Atlantic by a Canadian ship, the H.M.C.S. Assiniboine, on August 6, 1942. The sub's captain, Rudolf Lemcke, one other officer, and four crewmen were killed in the action; 21 men were transferred to a nearby British ship and brought to England, while Mycke and 15 of his crewmates were handed over to the Americans and sent to Fort Hunt for questioning.[20]

---

17 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.

18 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.

19 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165.

20 Navy Department, Final Report on the Interrogation of Survivors from U-210 Sunk by H.M.C.S. Assiniboine, August 6, 1942. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Serial No. 4 (Washington, D.C. 1942).

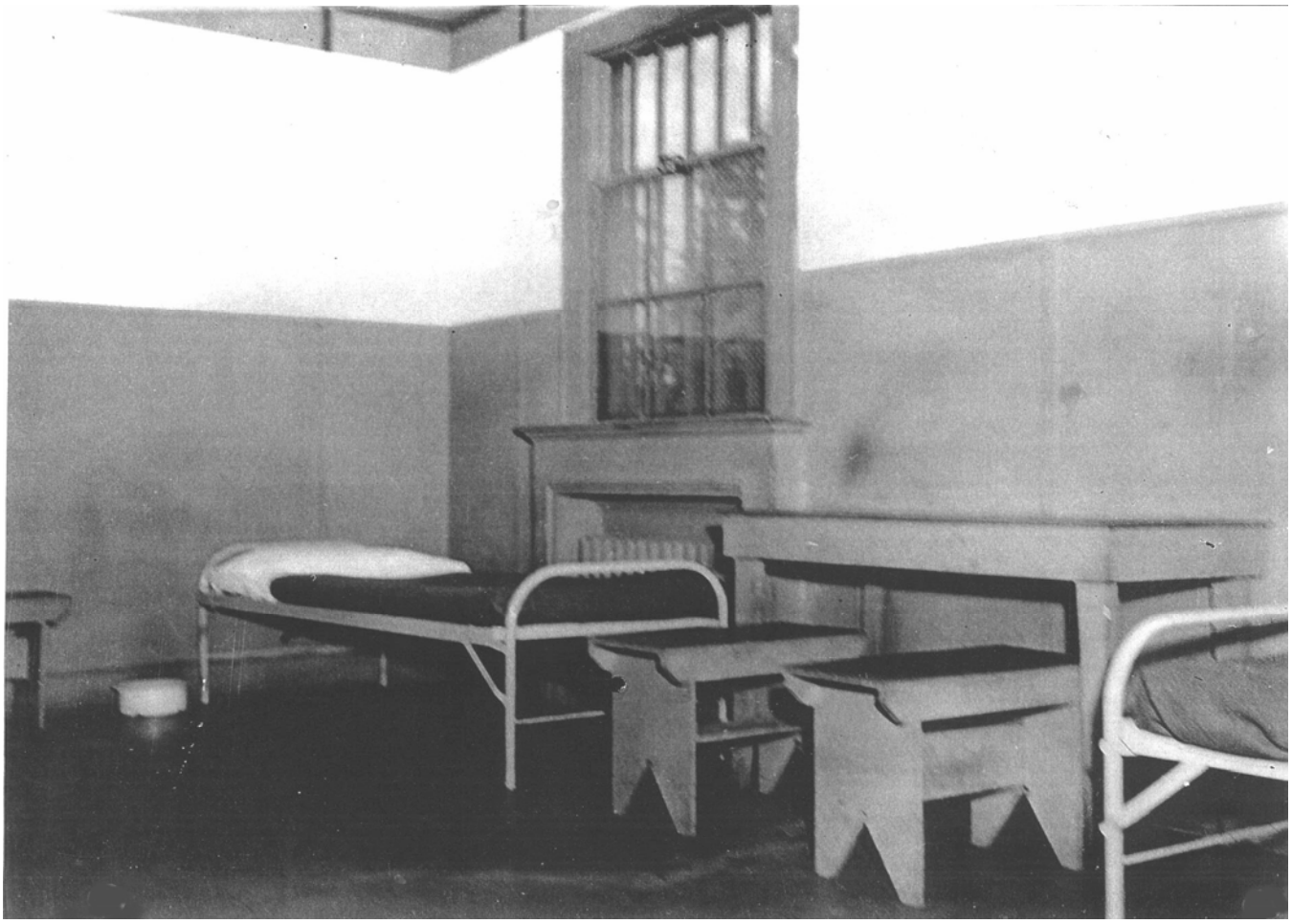


Figure 34. A typical POW double room, Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II (National Archives, G-2 (MIS-Y), CPM Branch, Box 30, RG 165.

Typically, the interrogator would open with a few "softball" questions, aimed at getting the prisoner to relax. The interrogator probably already knew most of this basic information, but the informal chatting paved the way for more intensive probing.

Q. How old are you?
A. 37.

Q. Pretty old.
A. Not too old (laughing).

Q. I see you are tattoed, too.
A. I have had that since I was 18 or 19 years old.

Q. Is that right. That was when you were quite young.
A. That is right.

Q. Do you want a cigarette?
A. Yes, thank you, this is the first one today.

Q. Are you a Bavarian?
A. No, I am from the Rhineland.

Q. What part of the Rhineland are you from?
A. Koblenz.

Q. When is your birthday?
A. 28th of November, 1904.

Before long, the conversation would turn to the prisoner's current situation, and the events surrounding his capture.

Q. What boat did you belong to?
A. U-Lemke.

Q. That was the U-210, right?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. When were you taken prisoner?
A. 6th of August, 1942.

Q. You were captured by a Canadian ship, right?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. When did you come here?
A. I don't know exactly, but we have been here for about four weeks now. Do we actually stay here in America?

Q. Yes, you are an American prisoner of war.
A. I did not know where I belonged to either Canada or America.

Q. You are definitely an American prisoner of war.
A. As you most probably know, I used to work on American boat.

Q. What line did you work for?
A. I worked for almost every line there is.

Q. I see. Do you speak English?
A. I used to speak, however, I was not here in the last seven years and would have to brush up on it before I could carry on a conversation in English. I am a diver now.

Usually the interrogator would inquire about family members and friends, hoping to gain information about the prisoner's home and Germany, as well as details of living conditions and morale.

Q. Do you have friends or relatives in America?
A. Yes, I do have some relatives here by the name of Mike, but unfortunately I do not know where they live.

Q. Mike, did you say?
A. Yes, sir, he is an uncle of my father, but I don't know where he lives.

Q. Don't you know anybody else, maybe a friend?
A. There is a captain whom I know, in fact, I was on his boat. His name is Kowalsky.

Q. Do you know where he lives?
A. I am sorry I don't. It was long ago that I knew him. He was German born, but an American citizen.

Q. I see. Is your father still living?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where does he live?
A. In Hamburg.

Q. What is his name?
A. Anton.

Q. Did you notify him of your being a prisoner?
A. I wrote to my wife but not to my father.

Q. So you are married?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. What is your wife's first name?
A. Annaliese.

Q. Do you have any children?
A. Yes, one boy.

Q. Where do they live?
A. In Hamburg, too.

Q. Exactly where do they live?
A. Hamburg—21, Schumannstrasse 47.

Q. Well let us do a little talking. How is everything at home?
A. Well, there is not much to say. I have always been working but when war broke out I had to switch over to the navy and learn something entirely new. It took me almost two years to become a diver. Before the war I was not given the opportunity to advance, at one time I was out of work for two years, I never had any money at all and never was able to save any money at all. Those were terrible times. One did not know what to do.

Q. I can see that.
A. When the present German Government took over, I was not at home and when I finally returned to Germany, I trusted them very little. I was very pessimistic as to their ability to remove the enormous unemployment we had at that time and to their ability to improve the conditions in Germany altogether. However, I was more and more convinced that they were really doing a job and I must now say that everything has turned out fine.

Discussions with the POWs naturally gravitated to politics, with interrogators probing to determine how sympathetic a prisoner was to the Nazis.

Q. I can readily understand that some people feel happy under the present German regime. They found jobs and are pretty well off. However, sometimes I am wondering how the German people could sit back and watch the Nazi's preparing themselves for another war.
A. I don't think Germany did prepare for war, it only wanted to prepare enough so as to be able to defend her borders. That is just like in any other country. I don't think America would want to yield any of her land and Germany now wants to protect what is hers and used to be hers. And to protect your frontiers you must have an army. We did not want any war.

Q. What do the Germans say about our being in the war?
A. We are very sorry that the Americans interfered and were finally drawn into it. Germany had to declare war on America.

Q. The Germans declared war upon us after the Japanese had made their sudden attack on American land and property.
A. I guess both sides have their own opinion about that. We had a pact with Japan and it was part of the pact that called us to the aid of Japan in case she is at war with another country.

Q. That may be true, but why did Japan not come to the aid of Germany when Germany attacked Russia?
A. Our Fuehrer said that the German-Russian war has nothing to do with Japan. Japan did not attack America as such. She is only fighting for her liberty. She wants liberty of the seas so as to continue her trade. They are not interested in coming over here and taking America. What would they do here? And the same goes for us, we are a country of 90 million people and we have to eat. We want our colonies returned to us. After all they belonged to us. Where can we get the food for 90 million people? Why doesn't England give us our colonies back. In fact we were not even ready for war with England. That is the truth and I am at liberty to say so. We still had hopes that England would give in and until the very last minute, we did not give up hopes for an understanding between England and Germany, after all England has enough for both England and Germany to live on.

Q. Don't you think the Germans think about what happened in 1918?
A. Sure we do. That is exactly what we are trying to avoid.

Q. You know what happened in '17 and '18? No food or anything.
A. We are in a different position today.

Q. How long do you think you can hold out economically? America hasn't even started! And Russia, that is something else again. Why are you at war with Russia? What happened to all of your friendliness?
A. We found papers of Russia's intentions. Russia was all right until she started to fortify her frontiers. We gave part of Poland to her and then wasn't satisfied and took more. Why did she start to fortify her borders?

Q. Maybe she was afraid of you?
A. We had no intentions of attacking Russia, and she did not have to be afraid on account of her might. She was very well armed. We recognized the Russians as a mighty people. If the Russian soldiers

were as good as the German soldiers, I don't think we could have made any advances, because they have very modern war material and are armed to the teeth. Just imagine what would have happened if Russia would have attacked Germany—there would have been a revolution and that is why we had to attack first.

Q. You attacked them because you were afraid they might become too strong?
A. Bolshevism must be exterminated because they have always threatened to take over the whole world.

Q. Well, let's not argue about it any more. Forget about it. Were you in the Navy in 1918?
A. No. I was much too young, then.

Q. But they used to employ young people, too.
A. I made my first trip to England in 1919. That time we brought some material to England but we were not even allowed to go on land.

Interrogators were instructed to elicit detailed information on what effect the Allied bombing campaign was having on German defenses, industry, and the civilian population.

Q. Does your wife work?
A. No. She is at home.

Q. How is the food in Germany today; do you get enough?
A. Most of it is rationed on account of the war. However, what we have is evenly being distributed and nobody dies of starvation. We have eggs, butter, meat, etc.

Q. I see. Well, I understand you employ prisoners of war in factories, etc. Is that right?
A. Some Polish prisoners are working on farms, etc., but we have quite a number of Italian workmen who came across the border to work in factories and build houses and all that. We have some French prisoners who are given complete liberty of moving around. You can meet them on streets and street cars. Of course, Germans are not allowed to talk to them. Some of them escaped to France and they come back after a while to find themselves a job.

Q. What did Kiel look like after it had been bombed. Did you observe much damage?
A. Oh, yes quite a bit, but mostly apartment houses instead of military installations. Of course, that can't be helped you cannot always hit your objective, we know that our fliers don't always hit what they

are trying to hit. Besides, Kiel is an old city and one bomb is liable to destroy a whole block.

Q. How about Hamburg, any damage there?
A. Yes, Hamburg has been bombed pretty severely and that is why I would like to know about my people. I don't even know if they are alive.

Q. Well, let's hope that nothing has happened to them.
A. Yes, but it makes one nervous.
Q. Of course.

(Prisoner now complains that everything was taken away from him, that he has had nothing to smoke and so forth)

Q. Were many people killed during the raid on Kiel?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did they score any hits on boats in the harbor, such as the Scharnhorst, etc.
A. Yes, they scored a hit on the Scharnhorst but the Gneisenau was not there at the time. Nobody knows where she is.

Q. Were then any sailors on the Scharnhorst when she was hit? You see I only read it in the papers.
A. No. There was a (Wohnschiff) ship laying right next to the Scharnhorst which was used as a barracks. This ship received a direct hit and burned down and that is where they had enormous losses of live. You see I was in Kiel at that time and I know what went on.

Q. Did you see the aircraft carrier "Graf Zeppelin" at the time you were in Kiel?
A. Well, I heard once that this particular ship had never been completed, in fact, it was supposed to have been dismantled. I have never seen it.

Q. You have never seen it?
A. No sir. However, I have seen sketches and pictures of what it was supposed to look like after its completeness.

Q. I am greatly surprised that the Germans don't make any use of their airships. They built two big airships and they don't use them at all.
A. The Hindenburg burned down here in America, as you most probably know.

Q. I watched it burn down. That was terrible. Were you ever in Berlin?
A. Once, for only about 5 hours.

Q. Have you been in France since the outbreak of the war?
A. No, sir.

Q. When did you actually join the Navy?
A. In 1935.

In the early stages of the war, the Allies were eager to gain as much information about German U-Boat operations as possible. Interrogators attempted to gather technical and ordnance information, details about crew composition and officers—any data that would help them in the Battle of the North Atlantic.

Q. Was that last trip of yours, your first and only trip?
A. Yes, sir. Despite me being a seamen, I have always done ground duty. I received my training on a schoolship and afterwards I was entrusted with the training of other seamen. I was in charge of some little camp later on, and then I was put on this ship for active duty.

Q. Your captain was a good man was he not?
A. Oh yes, he was a very fine and understanding man. We told him all our troubles and he would always give us a helping hand. He was very popular.

Q. Some of the other boys told me the same thing.
A. One could talk to him about everything. Sometimes he would call me in his office and talk to me for hours and hours.

Q. Room is very restricted on a U-boat, is it not?
A. Yes, it is very narrow.

Q. I know your commander. I met him once in Baltimore. He was on the Karlsruhe then.
A. Is that right, I was in Baltimore once myself.

Q. Were you really?
A. Yes, sir. I liked it there too. I met some nice people and that is why I was a little surprised when I first came here. We had no towels, no soap, and we had no comfort at all.

Q. We were not quite prepared then.
A. Can you tell me if we will be shipped out of here soon?

Q. I cannot tell, but you won't stay here very much longer. There is something else I want to ask you. Do you have any good friends or a good comrade in Germany? You see it could happen that you could become sick one of these days and in the event that your family does not live at its old address any more, we could write to your friend and have him contact your family.

A. Of course, I have friends there, but most of them are seamen, too, and I don't even know if they are still at home. They are being drafted just like, me and, as a rule, a seamen is never at home. He spends most of his time on the sea.

Q. Well, I just thought I'd like to help you that way.

A. Thank you.[21]

After each session, the Interrogating Officer would write a report offering an estimate of the prisoner's personality and presumed veracity, and summarizing the potentially important information gathered from the discussion. This report was then forwarded to the Chief Interrogating Officer, who sent the material on to the Army and Navy Evaluation Sections, where it was dispersed accordingly within MIS and ONI. In addition to the formal questioning of POWs, the interrogators at Fort Hunt also made use of microphone monitoring devices hidden in the ceilings of the prisoners' rooms. Hoping to obtain significant information from conversations between fellow inmates, monitors listened in on headphones daily between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm, unless special circumstances required longer monitoring. Direct transcriptions were then made from the taped conversations, translated into English, and forwarded through the same channels as the formal interrogations. In numerous instances, however, prisoners either discovered the hidden bugs, or otherwise deduced that they were being recorded. Most responded by keeping their conversations to a minimum, though a few wags "entertained" the monitors with explicit conversations, and even mock interrogations.[22]

As questioning procedures were refined and perfected throughout the war, the length of the POW's stay at Fort Hunt diminished considerably. During the first 3 months of operation, POWs remained for an average of 29 days. By the last year of the war, few were at Fort Hunt longer than a week. When their interrogation period was over, POWs were sent on to permanent detention camps across the United States, including those large facilities in Crossville, Tennessee, and Papago Park, Arizona. Despite the boredom and uncertainty of prison life, most prisoners found the conditions at Fort Hunt to be relatively benevolent. The food was good, questioning sessions were generally relaxed and informal, and they had access to ample reading material, most notably the *New York Times*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, which the prisoners believed to be the most objective in their war reporting. Discipline, of course, was strict, but not punitive. Prisoners were expected to obey orders promptly, and were forbidden to

---

[21] Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence Division, Captured Personnel and Materials Branch, Enemy POW Interrogation File (MIS-Y), 1943-45, Reports, U-Boats, Ships, and other Naval Material, Box 730, NA RG 165.

[22] MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165; Moore, *Faustball Tunnel*, 41-44.

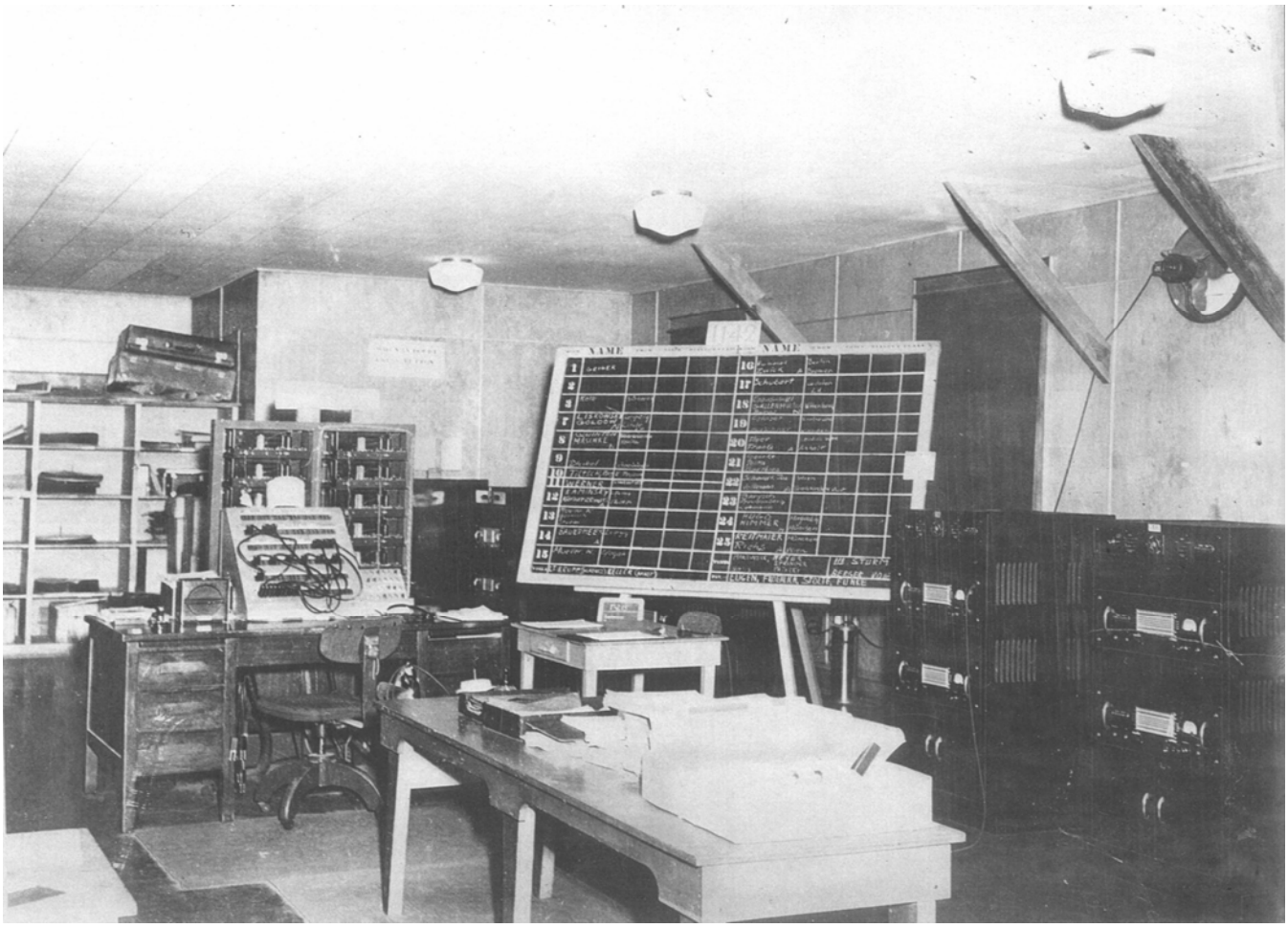


Figure 35. Chief Monitor Control Board, Enclosure A, Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II. Each interrogator's POW assignment is listed in the standing chart (National Archives, G-2 (MIS-Y), CPM Branch Box 360, RG165.




Figure 36. Interior of the Administration Building, Enclosure A, Fort Hunt Detailed Interrogation Center, World War II (National Archives, G-2 (MIS-Y), CPM Branch, Box 360, RG 165).

speak to other POWs in the latrine or through open windows. No gambling or betting was permitted, nor was writing on or smearing windows. Enlisted prisoners were responsible for the cleanliness of their rooms. Any infraction of these rules would result in a prisoner losing his "buying privileges" in the prisoner canteen, though such opportunities were admittedly restricted anyway. The most serious complaint concerning camp conditions was offered by Jürgen Quaet-Faslem, captain of the U-595. A confirmed Nazi, Quaet-Faslem arrived at Fort Hunt in December 1942. Almost immediately he lodged a complaint with Swiss monitoring authorities that he was not being allowed the proper exercise opportunities stipulated by the Geneva Convention. Under pressure from the State Department, the Secretary of War argued that the weather conditions at the time of his stay had limited outdoor activity. Nonetheless, by May 1943, the Army had revised its procedures at both Joint Interrogation Centers to address the concerns about prisoner exercise.[23]

Of the 3,451 POWs who passed through Fort Hunt between 1942 and 1945, only one ever attempted to escape. Kapitänleutnant Werner Henke, the 35-year-old commander of the U-515, was captured by the U.S. Navy on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1944. One of Germany's most successful naval officers, Henke was already well-known to Allied intelligence. But, despite his fearsome reputation, he did not fit the stereotype of the ruthless U-Boat commander. "He was impetuous, ill-disciplined, hot-headed, and outgoing," writes his biographer; "a daredevil and ladies' man; a U-Boat commander with an extensive collection of American jazz and Cole Porter phonograph records. His indiscretions almost resulted in his discharge from the navy before he became one of its most decorated heroes. . . . He was indeed a "lone wolf." What Henke feared the most, however, was being turned over to the British. Earlier in the war he had sunk an unarmed British transport, the *Ceramic*. Claiming that he had ordered the survivors machine-gunned in the water, British propagandists declared in a radio broadcast that, if captured, Henke would be tried as a war criminal. When he arrived at Fort Hunt on May 3, 1944, his captors already had learned of his weakness, and they wasted no time in exploiting it. Midway through one interrogation session, a civilian ONI employee disguised as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer burst into the room and demanded Henke's extradition to Canada. In reality, the British had no definite plans to try the U-Boat captain; but when he learned that he would, in fact, be sent north, Henke assumed that this was an automatic death sentence.[24]

On June 15, 1944, the day before he was to leave Fort Hunt, Henke took his usual exercise at 6:00 pm in the prisoner's yard of Enclosure A. Just before the session ended at 7:00 pm, Henke suddenly vaulted the inner 10-foot fence, and dashed to the main wire. He was halfway up the second fence when a burst of gunfire rang out from a nearby guard tower. Henke was killed instantly.[25]

The importance of the interrogation operations at Fort Hunt during the Second World War is difficult to measure but, without question, the information gathered from the thousands of POWs who passed through the camp between 1942 and 1945 was

---

23 MIS-Y, Interrogation Center, Box 360, NA RG 165; Moore, *Faustball Tunnel*, 49.

24 Timothy P. Mulligan, *Lone Wolf: The Life and Death of U-Boat Ace Werner Henke.* (Westport, Connecticut, 1993).

25 Mulligan, *Lone Wolf*, 1-2.

invaluable to the Allied war effort. Both Army and Navy intelligence branches derived critical information concerning enemy military operations, weapons technology, and the effectiveness of the Allied bombing campaign on domestic war production, infrastructure, and morale. And, while American interrogation experts painstakingly worked to beat Hitler with microphones and tape recorders, a small group of men at Fort Hunt were secretly waging war on Germany from within.

The Second World War was revolutionary in the way it was fought, with highly mobile, mechanized armies, massive aerial bombardment of military and civilian targets, rapid communication, and critical technological innovations such as radar and jet propulsion. And, as the face of warfare changed, so did the role of the prisoner of war. Before World War II, those combatants unfortunate enough to be captured by the enemy were considered to have no further military function. But when Hitler's invasion of Poland precipitated another European war, Great Britain began to reevaluate the potential use of the POW. During the First World War, they noted, 107,000 British prisoners had escaped from German camps with no organized assistance. However, a similar mass exodus would be difficult under the Nazi regime. Hitler had personally ordered all POW camps to be situated in distant eastern Europe; and, even if a prisoner did manage to escape, he would have to make his way through a closely-monitored police state. If they were to gain their freedom, POWs could no longer be left to their own devices.[26]

In late 1939, the British created MI-9 to address the new situation faced by POWs. An inter-service department of the Prisoner of War Branch staffed by representatives of the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force, MI-9 was charged with developing escape devices and letter codes to aid British servicemen—primarily air crews shot down over Europe—in the process of "escape and evasion." More importantly, this new organization instilled in Britain's fighting men the will to escape. Understanding that every escape attempt tied up valuable German manpower and resources, and shook civilian morale, MI-9 stressed that it was now a POW's duty to resist his captor in every possible way. POWs now had their own unique war to fight, along the "barbed wire front."[27]

By the time the United States entered the war in December 1941, MI-9 had already perfected their methods of assisting POWs. Select aircrewmen were trained in secret letter codes that they used to communicate with MI-9 when captured, and by now British intelligence was in daily contact with POWs across Europe. Under the guise of fictitious humanitarian organizations, MI-9 was also busy smuggling packages into POW camps containing such useful items as extra-sharp gigili saws, maps, compasses, forged passports and currency. By early 1942, MI-9 had helped roughly 750 Allied prisoners to escape from German camps.[28]

Like it or not, the United States military had much to learn from the British about POWs. When Major General Carl Spaatz arrived in London to make arrangements for bringing the Army Eighth Air Force to England, he was astounded by the work of MI-9. Without delay, he recommended that the War Department detail an American officer to

---

[26] Lloyd R. Shoemaker, *The Escape Factory: The Story of MIS-X, the Super-Secret U.S. Agency Behind World War II's Greatest Escapes.* (New York, 1990), pp. 7-8.

[27] Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 8-10.

[28] Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 8-9.

serve as a liaison with the British to study their techniques. They chose the 42-year-old Captain Robley E. Winfrey, a former professor of civil engineering at Iowa State University. In March 1942, British Air Vice-Marshall Charles Medhurst came to the United States to discuss the work of MI-9 with Chief of Staff George C. Marshall and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. In October, the War Department informed MIS Chief Colonel Catesby Ap Jones that Fort Hunt would become home to another POW department known as MIS-X. Unlike MIS-Y, the new MIS-X program would be kept ultra-secret. Only top War Department officials and the President would know of its existence; even Fort Hunt's post commander would not be certain what was going on within his own camp. The new branch would be comprised of five subsections: interrogation, correspondence, POW locations, training and briefing, and technical. Their assigned tasks were to:

a. Indoctrinate Air Force [A-2 and ground force S-2] intelligence officers who will in turn instruct air crews in the various Theaters of Operation on evasion of capture when forced down or captured in enemy territory.

b. Instructions on escape—including the instilling of escape psychology in combat airmen and communicating plans for escape to American prisoners of war by means of codes.

c. Instructions in proper conduct after capture and to inform intelligence officers of the rights of prisoners of war under international law.

d. To secure military information from American or Allied escaped prisoners on their return to Allied territory.

e. To obtain by means of codes from prisoners of war still in captivity information concerning locations of prisoners, conditions of imprisonment, opportunities for escape, reasons for failure in attempts to escape, and other pertinent intelligence.

f. To assist in the preparation and distribution of escape kits, and emergency kits containing maps, money, and other necessities to be furnished air crews on missions and to incorporate new ideas and improvements in such equipment.

g. Plan and carry on correspondence with prisoners of war by means of codes which will be taught to key personnel of this organization.

h. To maintain close liaison with the British MI-9 branch, which is conducting similar operations.[29]

[29] Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 10-13.

With these ambitious goals laid out, the first task of the new MIS-X chief Colonel Edward Johnston was to assemble the personnel required for these sensitive operations. After several months working with MI-9 in England, Captain Winfrey was the natural choice to head up MIS-X activities at Fort Hunt. Officers could be obtained without much difficulty, but MIS-X needed technicians and craftsmen with special skills. All Army units along the East Coast were asked to provide the names of men with experience in cabinetmaking, radio operation, electronics, and printing.[30] After five months of background checks and administrative procedures, Winfrey had his specialized team. Meanwhile, Colonel Jones was preparing Fort Hunt to receive the MIS-X men. The "nerve center" of the secret program would be the old post hospital, which had recently housed the 2nd Signal Service Company detachment. Renovations to the building, now known by the code name "Creamery," were completed in November 1942. Here Winfrey set up the Correspondence Section, and began teaching a handpicked group of officers the codes that would be used to communicate with POWs. When they had mastered the technique, these "briefers" were then dispersed throughout the country and abroad to train American airmen to became "Code Users," or "CUs."

By special agreement with the Director of Censorship, the clerks at the censorship department's Manhattan sorting office scanned all incoming POW mail for the names of known CUs. When one appeared, it was flown by military air shuttle to Bolling Field in Maryland, where it was picked up by an MIS-X officer. Back at the Creamery, one of 14 cryptoanalysts of the Correspondence Section would decode the message, and pass it along through the chain of command. The decoders would then compose return messages to the POW on civilian stationary, posing as family members or girlfriends. This secret correspondence continued undiscovered throughout the entire war, and by this means MIS-X was in regular contact with virtually every German POW camp.[31]

With the Correspondence Section operational, Colonel Jones ordered the construction of a building to house the Technical Section. When completed in December 1942, this building—known as the "Warehouse"—consisted of a center section flanked by two wings measuring 75 feet by 25 feet. Security was tight, and access to the building was through a single door. In addition to Winfrey's small 15-foot-square, unheated office, the Warehouse included a large technicians' wing, where supplies were received and the Technical Section staff designed and built escape and evasion materials. The floor of the technicians' wing was reinforced in one section to support the weight of a printing press used to counterfeit German *Reichmarks*. A smaller room measuring 25 by 50 feet, known as the "Shop," was located off the rear of this wing. It included a table along the entire length of one wall, six freestanding workstations, and another table in the rear for counting currency. Across from the Shop were solid-core double doors with security locks that led to the technical wing's loading dock. The opposite wing of the Warehouse, also 75 feet long by 25 feet wide, contained the briefing room, with chairs and a blackboard. Two guards lived in the Warehouse, in a 10-foot-square cubicle with attached bathroom and shower. The remainder of the MIS-X men bunked and messed with the rest of the camp's personnel.[32]

---

30 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 15-19.
31 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 20-22.
32 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 23-24.

In February 1943, three officers and nine men of the Technical Section began operations in the Warehouse. According to the Geneva Convention, POWs were entitled to receive parcels from family members and humanitarian organizations. Employing the same techniques that had proven so effective for MI-9, MIS-X established two fictitious relief organizations, the "War Prisoner's Benefit Foundation" and "Servicemen's Relief," as a cover for smuggling escape and evasion materials into the camps. They deliberately chose not to use Red Cross packages as vehicles for these goods, for fear of compromising the critical aid work of that organization. Since the Germans would almost certainly scrutinize the packages, it was essential that the Technical Section devise ways to hide escape aids within seemingly mundane items. After much trial and error, the craftsmen became expert at hiding compasses and tissue-paper maps in the handles of shaving brushes, shoe brushes, and Ping-Pong paddles. Checkerboards were steamed apart, and maps, documents, and currency inserted. Shoe heels could easily contain other materials.[33]

But even with the best equipment, there was a limit to what Fort Hunt's technicians could produce on their own. Once again, the Americans looked to the British for inspiration. By now, MI-9 was having considerable success getting commercial manufacturers to do their work for them. Following suit, MIS-X contacted various American companies, who—sworn to secrecy—agreed to make their products with hidden materials. The F.W. Sickle Electronics Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts, manufactured a specially designed miniature radio transmitter, 48 of which were then secreted in baseballs by the Goldsmith Baseball Company of Cincinnati. The U.S. Playing Card Company, also of Cincinnati, inserted map segments within special peel-away cards. Boston's Gillette Razor Company magnetized their double-edged blades so that when balanced on a stick or string the "G" in Gillette pointed north. The Army's supplier of uniform buttons, the Scoville Company of Waterbury, Connecticut, agreed to hide small compasses within five million buttons, with the threaded screw reversed to fool suspicious inspectors. And, when the R. J. Reynolds Company donated hundreds of cartons of cigarettes, the MIS-X technicians used the packs to hide crystal radio receivers. Though they never knew the purpose or destination of these special items, the majority of these patriotic companies never charged the government for their services.[34]

By 1944, the MIS-X operatives at Fort Hunt were sending between 80 and 120 parcels each day to German POW camps. Though the size of shipments varied, the procedure remained consistent. Making sure to use distinctive packaging materials to differentiate between the two invented relief organizations, the MIS-X technicians would assemble a number of packages. Some would be "straight," containing only legitimate, unaltered items. The rest would be "loaded" with hidden escape and evasion aids. Since the Correspondence Section was now in communication with most camps, a coded letter would warn the POWs in advance that a "loaded" shipment was en route, and would include instructions on how to find the hidden goods. The Postmaster General also made an unprecedented exception, allowing the MIS-X relief packages to be specially postmarked and put into the regular mail stream unimpeded. Occasionally an emergency situation would require special procedures: perhaps a groups of POWs planned to exploit an impending transfer or other opportunity to make an escape attempt, and needed a

[33] Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 29-31.
[34] Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 104-113.

delivery of equipment in short order. In such cases, MIS-X would stuff unmarked parcels with undisguised escape items such as guns, civilian clothing, radios, wire-cutters, and counterfeit money. Though this was a risky procedure, these "Super-Dupers"—or "Dynamites" to the British—occasionally passed undetected through German inspection and into the hands of the POWs. If discovered, however, they were not associated with the dummy MIS-X relief organizations, so did not jeopardize their normal operations.[35]

Ultimately, the MIS-X smuggling program became a victim of its own success. By late 1944, POWs were sending coded letters back to Fort Hunt asking them to stop shipment of escape items: they simply had no more room in their quarters to hide more materials. By this time, escape had become an increasingly dangerous proposition. After D-Day, Hitler issued his infamous Kommando Order, which created "Death Zones" throughout Europe in areas around munitions, armament, and experimental plants. Any POW captured in these zones was subject to summary execution. Both MI-9 and MIS-X responded by informing prisoners that they were no longer expected to attempt escape, though they might continue resistance efforts at their own discretion. Late in the war, as Germany's infrastructure and transportation network crumbled, mail shipments to POW camps also became increasingly sporadic, and packages sent by MIS-X did not always reach their intended destination.[36]

For these reasons, in March 1945 the MIS-X program began to wind down its correspondence and technical operations. The European war was clearly reaching its conclusion, and MIS-X was ordered to prepare to debrief the thousands of American POWs expected to return shortly to the United States. But the end of MIS-X came sooner than expected. Germany surrendered to the Allies on May 8, 1945, and immediately MIS-X was ordered to cease operations. Throughout the summer, Pentagon officials debriefed the program's participants. Japan surrendered on August 14th, and on August 20th, the War Department ordered all MIS-X records at Fort Hunt destroyed. For the next 36 hours, the men burned records non-stop, all but obliterating the history of one of the most secret, and successful, military intelligence operations in American history.[37]

During World War II, 95,532 United States servicemen fell into enemy hands. Of these, 737 managed to escape and return to their commands. Most did so with the help of MIS-X. Through their correspondence with the POW camps, MIS-X also collected critical intelligence from behind German lines, and had an immeasurable effect on the morale of the prisoners. A closely guarded secret during and after the war, none but a handful of men who served with MIS-X had any idea how Fort Hunt had helped to fight fascism.[38]

---

35 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 30-31, 119-20.
36 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 116, 137, 200-01.
37 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 202-04.
38 Shoemaker, *Escape Factory*, 216.

# CHAPTER 7:
# FORT HUNT AS PUBLIC SPACE
# 1946 - 2000

With the end of World War II, Fort Hunt's brief resurgence as a military installation drew to a close. The MIS-X program had been shut down and its records destroyed, while the process of repatriating Axis prisoners of war in the United States began in earnest. Under the terms of the special use permit granted by the Department of the Interior in May 1942, the War Department was to turn over the Fort Hunt property within one year of the war's end. In June 1946, the Secretary of the Interior began to inquire about the status of the transfer; but the Army was not quite ready to abandon the installation, and requested use of 30 acres of the installation for another year to continue intelligence operations. By October 1946, however, all intelligence personnel had moved to Mitchell Field, New York, leaving only a small detachment to guard the post. The War Department declared Fort Hunt surplus on November 15, 1946, and the last troops left within a week.[1]

Until the final transfer of the land back to the National Park Service (NPS) could be accomplished, Fort Hunt came under the jurisdiction of the Military District of Washington, which maintained a small security and fire-fighting detachment on the post. In late 1946 and early 1947, the Army Corps of Engineers began the process of removing dozens of temporary wartime buildings. When the NPS finally reoccupied the property in January 1948, only a handful of buildings and structures remained, including one former NCO's quarters (Bldg. #118), one double-set officer's quarters (#101), the old post hospital (#128), the stables (#114), the NPS museum laboratory and storehouse (#15 and # 105), a utility buildings (#123), the pump house (#125), the battery commander's station (#47), water tower (#126), and the four artillery batteries. From January through September 1948, the Museums Division of the NPS maintained a laboratory at Fort Hunt, constructing exhibits for the museums at the Manassas National Battlefield Park and the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. In June of that year, the Military District of Washington relinquished control over Fort Hunt, turning over security to the U.S. Park Police.[2]

As was the case in the 1920s when the Army first abandoned the post, Fort Hunt in the late 1940s and early 1950s was a tempting *tabula rasa*, inviting numerous proposals for future use. This part of northern Virginia was becoming heavily suburbanized in the postwar years, and green space was increasingly at a premium. As such, most plans focused on recreational uses of the area. Golf courses, swimming pools,

---

1 Files AG 322, AG 370, AG 601.52, Central Decimal Files, Office of the Adjutant General, NA RG 407.

2 File 12-48, Central Classified Files, 1937-1953, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, NA RG 48; National Park Service Central Classified Files, 1933-1949, George Washington Memorial Parkway, NA RG 79.

and picnic grounds proved the most popular features in these visions of future development. The most imaginative—if outlandish—plan was offered by the Club Prenso National, which would have turned Fort Hunt into "El Rancho Grande," complete with rodeo arena, horse corral, food and beer stations, and bleacher seating for 2,000 spectators.[3]

No entity coveted Fort Hunt in the postwar years as much as the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia had no state parks in the region at that time, and was eager to establish a recreation area of its own near the capital. In 1952, the General Assembly of Virginia passed House Joint Resolution No. 78, authorizing the Department of Conservation and Development to study the possibility of acquiring Fort Hunt from the National Park Service. In the ensuing months, the department's acting director, Raymond V. Long, gathered information about the site and investigated the possibility of a transfer. He subsequently presented his findings to the Governor and General Assembly in September 1953.[4]

Long reported that recreational facilities at the site included a large field (the former "parade ground") with baseball diamonds, horseshoe, tennis, volleyball, and badminton courts. The parade ground could accommodate picnic groups of 100 to 5,000, while a dozen "picnic groves," serving from 10 to 150 visitors, were equipped with picnic fireplaces, tables, benches, and drinking fountains. Meanwhile, a "club-house" provided comfort station facilities and drinking fountains for all picnickers.[5] The park was already popular with area residents, he noted; Boy Scout "camporee" groups frequently stayed overnight at the park, while the Fairfax County Council of Girl Scouts held day camp sessions at the picnic area each July. In short, Long concluded, the location and facilities of the park were ideal. The only problem was that the National Park Service absolutely refused to consider handing over the land to Virginia.[6]

On July 23, 1953, Virginia Delegates J. Maynard Magruder and Edwin Lynch invited National Park Service Assistant Superintendent Frank T. Gartside to meet at the park to discuss a potential transfer of the land. Gartside wrote back the following day. He would be happy to meet with the state representatives, he said, but "strongly advised against the trouble and expense of making the trip in the interests of securing Fort Hunt as a State Park, advising further and emphatically that the answer of the National Park Service to any request on the part of the State for acquisition of the park would be "No."" In case the Virginians did not get the message, Superintendent Edward J. Kelly followed up with a lengthy letter, outlining the Park Service's position on the issue. "It would be helpful for you to know," he advised,

> that this area is in almost constant use throughout the summer months with recreational activities of many kinds. A portion of this area is used throughout the summer months as a day camp for Girl Scouts in the

---

3 "Layout for Rodeo and Barbecue," June 13, 1953, Map File No. 117.6-110, National Capital Region, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

4 Commonwealth of Virginia, *Report to the Governor and General Assembly* (Richmond, 1953), p. 4.

5 In 1953, Fort Hunt still included 14 former post buildings and the four concrete artillery batteries. Virginia, *Report to the Governor and General Assembly*, pp. 6-7.

6 Virginia, *Report to the Governor and General Assembly*, 5.

> Alexandria area. Several times yearly it is used as a camping ground for large troops of Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, and similar groups who come to visit the Nation's Capital. It is also the only area administered by the National Capital Parks of sufficient size to accommodate community gatherings, such as the Board of Trade, Press Club, church assemblies, and other groups numbering into the thousands. The Fort Hunt area is used many times throughout the summer months for such purposes.
>
> In addition to the present current uses, it has been set aside and planned as a golf course to serve the residents in Alexandria and nearby Virginia. A program of demolition has been all but completed and the principal structure remaining on this area has been set aside as a club house for the golf course just referred to.
>
> From the above it will be clear that we consider the Fort Hunt area as an essential part of the Federal parks serving the Washington metropolitan area. We would be happy to meet with you and with the Hon. Edward W. Lynch and J. Maynard Magruder to discuss the suggestion presented in your letter of July 23, but I cannot encourage you to hope that we would look with favor on the proposal to transfer this area to the State of Virginia.[7]

The National Park Service position was clear. The disappointed Virginia officials cancelled their visit to Fort Hunt, and the feasibility study was concluded. After Long presented his report to the Governor and General Assembly, Virginia unceremoniously shelved its bid for the land.[8]

Given the intensive public use of Fort Hunt Park, the NPS recognized by the early 1960s that additional facilities would be required to meet the needs of visitors. Plans for a new "picnic pavilion and comfort station" were finalized in June 1963. When completed, the picnic pavilion became the dominant feature of Fort Hunt Park's built environment. Encompassing nearly 8,000 square feet of usable space, the facility included an office and lobby, comfort station, and sheltered picnic area with fireplaces, a stage, and dressing rooms. In terms of design and materials, the building was reminiscent of CCC camp and park architecture, with stone foundation walls and chimneys, exposed trusses, and wood siding. What NPS planners did not consider, however, was the effect its construction would have on Fort Hunt's archaeological resources: the pavilion stands almost exactly on the site of the old post hospital, the secret "Creamery" of World War II days (see Chapter 6, Figure 30).[9]

Fort Hunt's vanishing historic resources would soon demand greater attention. With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966, federal agencies were now required to assess the impact of their undertakings on historic

---

7 Virginia, *Report to the Governor and General Assembly*, 7.

8 Virginia, *Report to the Governor and General Assembly*.

9 Preliminary Plans for Picnic Pavilion, June 20, 1963. National Park Service Design and Construction, National Capital Region Map #117.6.272.

properties. Since that time, legal requirements and shifting cultural attitudes concerning historic preservation have had a significant effect on how the National Park Service has managed the Fort Hunt property. In October 1979, the National Capital Region of the NPS nominated Fort Hunt to the National Register of Historic Places. Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)—then the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission—concurred, and the property was listed in the Register on March 26, 1980. The National Register boundaries encompassed the existing park, which then included 157.4 acres; significant contributing elements included the four artillery batteries, the battery commander's station, one single non-commissioned officer's quarters, and the Quartermaster Stable.[10]

Within a few months, the Regional Director of the National Capital Region, NPS, recommended the removal of the ca. 1900 Quartermaster Stable, then serving as a park maintenance facility. The building was located outside the park boundary fence in an adjoining residential neighborhood, and area residents had voiced concern over its deteriorated condition and "nuisance potential." The NPS considered the possibility of preserving the stable, but the projected $60,000 repair cost proved prohibitive. Similarly, the suggestion of moving the unstable building to a different location within the park was rejected as "contrary to good preservation practice." Under the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, the NPS consulted with the Virginia SHPO, which determined that the proposed undertaking would have an adverse effect on a contributing element of the National Register site. In order to mitigate the adverse effect, the NPS, the Virginia SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) outlining the procedures to be followed prior to the demolition of the building. The MOA stipulated that the NPS would make a permanent record of the stable for submission to the National Architectural and Engineering Record, while the Virginia SHPO or designee was invited to select architectural elements from the property for curation or use in other projects. The MOA was ratified by all parties in November 1980, and the stable was subsequently dismantled.[11]

Since the late 1970s, the NPS has conducted three limited archaeological investigations at Fort Hunt Park. In 1978, Park Service archaeologists performed testing at the proposed site of the park maintenance facility and maintenance facility access road, but found no evidence of either prehistoric or historic occupation. Prior to the construction of a parking lot between the main entrance road, maintenance facility, and park loop road in August 1985, archaeologists excavated 22 shovel test pits within the proposed area of disturbance. Testing yielded only a handful of prehistoric artifacts, primarily quartz and quartzite lithic debitage, which appeared to have been introduced with gravel along the main entrance road. All historic artifacts dated to the later twentieth century, and consisted entirely of "casual surface litter."[12]

The most recent, and productive, archaeological testing at Fort Hunt was conducted in October 1991 and February 1992 by Matthew Virta of the Denver Service

---

10 National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, Fort Hunt File (VDHR #29-103), Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

11 Fort Hunt File (VDHR #29-103), Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

12 Paul Inashima, *Archaeological Survey Report: An Archaeological Investigation of Selected Construction Locales Along the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.* (Denver Service Center-Eastern Applied Archaeology Center, National Park Service), 1985.

Center-Eastern Applied Archaeology Center (DSC-EEA). This investigation focused on six areas in the path of a proposed sewer line connection. The first area was in the vicinity of the old post hospital site (known as the "Creamery" during World War II), near the existing picnic pavilion. Two features were identified in this area, including a V-shaped cement drainage trough and a burned fence post. The second area, approximately 50 feet west of the picnic pavilion, yielded no significant artifacts or features. The third area was situated approximately 250 feet northwest of the pavilion, and 50 feet north of an existing gravel service road. Only modern detritus, including a "Friends of the Kennedy Center" button, was noted. The fourth area was located approximately 120 feet south of the pavilion. Shovel tests here revealed disturbed stratigraphy and numerous chunks of loose rock and concrete, likely representing the demolition of Army buildings. The fifth area investigated was located approximately 170 feet south-southeast of the picnic pavilion, in the vicinity of a World War II building (T-129: "School & Office"). No evidence of the building was identified, however. The final area examined was situated approximately 250 feet southeast of the pavilion, and 25 feet east of the park loop road. Limited excavations revealed a 4.5-foot-square concrete "collar," with evidence of a hinged "trap-door" opening. Virta concluded that this feature might represent a utilities vault or manhole entrance.[13]

As a result of these investigations, Virta recommended that the contractor relocate the sewer line to the west of the picnic pavilion to avoid known structural remains and features. During the course of the sewer construction project two additional in situ architectural features were noted, and were subsequently investigated by Virta in February 1992. The first feature was identified along the north side of the current gravel service road, and consisted of subsurface brick paving capped with asphalt, and formed into a U-shaped channel. As it was located adjacent to an early fort road, Virta concluded that this feature was part of the original road gutter. The second feature was located east of the park loop road and southeast of the picnic pavilion, and appeared to be the remnants of another brick drainage channel. Neither feature was significantly disturbed by the utility trenching project.[14]

Using digital mapping of Fort Hunt Park provided by the National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Inc. (CRI) has projected historic map data from the eighteenth through mid-twentieth centuries onto the modern park landscape (see Figure 5). These map projections were made as precisely as possible using AutoCAD Release 14; however, given the relative inaccuracies of the historic maps used, all building and feature locations should be considered approximate. Of the dozens of buildings that once stood on the property, only a handful remain, including one single-set non-commissioned officer's quarters, the four former coast artillery batteries, and the battery commander's station. However, the material manifestation of earlier occupations on the property may be discerned in the archaeological record.

The earliest and potentially most significant historic-period archaeological site that may be located within current park boundaries is the tenant farm indicated on Washington's 1766 map of his newly acquired Clifton's Neck tract. Documentary

---

13 Matthew Virta, *Management Report: Archaeological Test Excavations in Advance of the New Sewer Line Connection at Fort Hunt Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway* (Denver Service Center-Applied Archaeology Center, National Park Service, 1992), 1-5.

14 Virta, *Archaeological Test Excavations*, 6-7.

evidence suggests that Jane Hester and her sons may have occupied this farm as early as 1741. A map projection indicates that the two depicted structures and orchard were situated in the south-central portion of Fort Hunt Park, approximately 1,000 feet southwest of Battery Mount Vernon (see Chapter 1, Figure 3). This area appears to have been largely undisturbed by later development, so this site conceivably might be identified through archaeological testing. If discovered and excavated, this site would open an intriguing window on a period of the property's history for which little documentary evidence remains.

Given their style of construction, it is unlikely that many of the buildings associated with Fort Hunt's active military occupation have left significant subsurface remains. With few exceptions, the post buildings dating to the Coast Artillery era were of frame construction, and built on brick piers. Evidence of these brick footings may indicate the locations of these buildings, if they have not been disturbed by later improvements, such as roads, parking lots or—in the case of the former post hospital—the main picnic pavilion. Similarly, the many new structures that appeared at Fort Hunt during the 1930s and 1940s were generally of temporary, "pre-fabricated" form, and would have left little imprint at ground level when they were removed. As the National Park Service excavations of the early 1990s revealed, the historical post features most likely to be evident in the archaeological record are former road traces and utilities (primarily water and sewer lines), the arteries of a once active military community that has, for the most part, vanished from the landscape.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Manuscript Sources:**


Fairfax County Court Records.

Deeds, Wills, Leases, Land and Personal Property Tax Records, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Fairfax, Virginia, and microfilm copies at the Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Prince William County Court Records.

Deeds, Wills, Leases, Land and Personal Property Tax Records, Prince William County Circuit Court, Manassas, Virginia, and microfilm copies at the Library of Virginia, Richmond.

National Archives, Washington D.C. and College Park, Maryland (NA).

Record Group 35. Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Record Group 48. Records of the Department of the Interior.

Record Group 64. Records of the National Archives.

Record Group 77. Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

Record Group 79. Records of the National Park Service.

Record Group 92. Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General.

Record Group 94. Records of the Office of the Adjutant General (Military Secretary's Office), 1890-1917.

Record Group 165. Records of the War Department General Staff.

Record Group 407. Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1917-1939.

Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916: Fort Hunt, Virginia, 1899-1913. Microcopy 617, Rolls 499-500.

United States Bureau of the Census. Fairfax County Population, Agricultural, and Slave Schedules, 1820-1880.

**Published Sources:**


Abbott, W.W. (ed.). *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series* (10 vols.); *Revolutionary War Series* (4 vols.); *Presidential Series* (7 vols.). The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1983-1998.

Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. *Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947.* U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, 1980.

*Alexandria Gazette*, "Price Fixed by Commission," 1 April 1903.

Barber, James G. *Alexandria in the Civil War*. H. E. Howard, Inc., Lynchburg, Virginia, 1988.

Brent, Chester Horton. *The Descendants of Coll$^{o}$ Giles Brent, Cap$^{t}$ George Brent, and Robert Brent,$^{Gent.}$, Immigrants to Maryland and Virginia*. Tuttle Publishing Company, Rutland, Vermont, 1946.

Brighton, Ray. *The Checkered Career of Tobias Lear*. Portsmouth Marine Society, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1985.

Carter, Edward C. II (ed.). *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 2 vols. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977.

Civilian Conservation Corps. *Happy Days* (newspaper). Published weekly, 1934-1942.

Congressional Information Service, Inc. *CIS Index to Presidential Orders & Proclamations, Part I: April 30, 1789 to March 4, 1921, George Washington to Woodrow Wilson*. Washington, D.C., 1987.

Daily Evening Star (Washington, D.C.). "Restricting Passes to Soldiers." 28 June 1898.

Daniels, Roger. *The Bonus March: An Episode of the Great Depression.* Greenwood Publishing Corporation, Westport, Connecticut, 1971.

Davis, Timothy. *Highways in Harmony: George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C.* U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1994.

Decatur, Stephen, Jr. *Private Affairs of George Washington, From the Records and Accounts of Tobias Lear, Esquire, his Secretary.* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1933.

Dent, Richard J., Jr. *Chesapeake Prehistory: Old Traditions, New Directions*. Plenum Press, New York, 1995.

Doran, Michael F. *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia, 1634-1895.* Iberian Publishing Company, Athens, Georgia, 1987.

EDAW, Inc. *Cultural Landscape Report, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway*, vol. 1: *History*. Alexandria, Virginia, 1989.

Endicott, William C. et al. *Report of the Board on Fortifications or Other Defenses Appointed by the President of the United States Under the Provisions of the Act of Congress Approved March 3, 1885*. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1886.

Feest, Christian F., "Nanticoke and Neighboring Tribes," in Bruce G. Trigger (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15: *Northeast*, pp. 240-52. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1978.

Fitzpatrick, John C. (ed.). *The Writings of George Washington, From the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, 39 vols. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1931-1944.

Flexner, James Thomas. *Washington: The Indispensable Man.* Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1974.

Gardner, William M. "Early and Middle Woodland in the Middle Atlantic: An Overview," in Roger W. Moeller (ed.), *Practicing Environmental Archaeology: Methods and Interpretations*, American Indian Archaeological Institute, *Occasional Paper* No. 3: 53-86.

Grashof, Bethany C. *A Study of U.S. Army Family Housing Standardized Plans, 1866-1940*. 6 vols. Center for Architectural Conservation, College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, 1986.

Haile, Edward Wright (ed.), *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Account of the Virginia Colony, The First Decade, 1607-1617*. RoundHouse, Champlain, Virginia, 1998.

*Happy Days*. "Anthony Eden Oh's and Ah's While Learning of American CCC in Virginia Camp," Saturday, December 17, 1938. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

_____. "King and Queen Get Chummy With Men at CCC Inspection," Saturday, June 10, 1939. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Hening, William Waller (ed.). *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. 13 vols. Franklin Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1819-1824.

Hill, Frank Ernest. *The School in the Camps: The Educational Program of the Civilian Conservation Corps*. American Association for Adult Education, New York, 1935.

Hirschfeld, Fritz. *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Missouri, 1997.

Inashima, Paul. *Archaeological Survey Report: An Archaeological Investigation of Selected Construction Locales Along the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway*. Denver Service Center-Eastern Applied Archaeology Center, National Park Service, 1985.

Jackson, Donald (ed.). *The Diaries of George Washington*, 6 vols. The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1976-1979.

Ketchum, Richard M. *The World of George Washington*. American Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1974.

Kulikoff, Allan. *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1986.

Lisio, Donald J. *The President and Protest: Hoover, Conspiracy, and the Bonus Riot*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1974.

Mackall, B. F. *Portions of Alexandria and Fairfax Counties, Virginia, Showing the Routes Surveyed for a National Road from Washington, D.C., to Mount Vernon, Virginia*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1890. Fairfax County Regional Library, Fairfax, Virginia.

Martin, Lawrence (ed.). *The George Washington Atlas*. United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Washington, D.C., 1932.

Mitchell, Beth (ed.). *Beginning at a White Oak . . .Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County, Virginia*. McGregor and Werner, Fairfax, Virginia, 1977.

Moore, John Hammond. *The Faustball Tunnel: German POWs in American and Their Great Escape*. Random House, New York, 1978.

_____. "The Fort Hunt Saga: Guns, Bonus Marchers, U-Boats, and Picnics." *Northern Virginia Heritage*, February 1980, pp. 3-6, 20.

Muir, Dorothy Troth. *Potomac Interlude: The Story of Woodlawn Mansion and the Mount Vernon Neighborhood*. Mount Vernon Print Shop, Mount Vernon, Virginia, originally published 1943, reprinted 1979.

_____. *Mount Vernon: The Civil War Years*. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Mount Vernon, Virginia, 1993.

Mulligan, Timothy P. *Lone Wolf: The Life and Death of U-Boat Ace Werner Henke*. Praeger Publishers, Westport, Connecticut, 1993.

National Archives. *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States for the Year Ending June 30, 1947.* United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1948.

Navy Department. *Final Report on the Interrogation of Survivors from U-210 Sunk by H.M.C.S. Assiniboine, August 6, 1942.* Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Serial No. 4, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1942.

Nelson, Robert T. "Fort Hunt, Virginia: An Historical Sketch." National Capital Region, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1964.

Netherton, Nan, Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, and Patrick Reed. *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History*. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Fairfax, Virginia, 1978.

*The New York Times.* "Roosevelt Aides Praise Camp," May 14, 1933, p. 29.

_____. "Bonus Camp Viewed by Mrs. Roosevelt," May 17, 1933, p. 10.

_____. "Bonus March Leaders Deny Split in Ranks," May 12, 1934, p. 1,

_____. "Bonus Colony Increased 100; Split Denied," May 13, 1934, p. 1 (2nd section).

Nugent, Nell Marion (ed.). *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants*, Vol. 1: 1623-1666. Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia, 1992.

Nugent, Nell Marion (ed.). *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants,* vol. II (1666-1695). Virginia State Library, Richmond, 1977.

Paige, John C. *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History*. National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 1985.

Pharo, Eugene. "George Keenly Interested in CCC Cuisine," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1939, p. 5.

Potter, Stephen R. *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1993.

Prussing, Eugene E. *The Estate of George Washington, Deceased.* Little, Brown, and Co., Boston, 1927.

Roosevelt, Eleanor. *This I Remember*. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949.

Salmond, John A. *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study*. Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1967.

Sculp, Neele. *A Map of General Washington's Farm of Mount Vernon from a Drawing Transmitted by the General.* London, 1801. Library of Congress, G3882.M7 1793.W34.

Shoemaker, Lloyd. *The Escape Factory: The Story of MIS-X, the Super-Secret U.S. Agency Behind World War II's Greatest Escapes*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990.

Sifakis, Stewart. *Who Was Who in the Civil War*. Facts on File Publications, New York, 1988.

Sparacio, Ruth and Sam Sparacio. *Deed and Will Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1699-1709.* Published by the authors, McLean, Virginia, 1987.

_____. *Order Book Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1692-93.* Published by the authors, McLean, Virginia, 1988.

_____. *Deed and Will Abstracts of Stafford County, Virginia, 1689-93.* Published by the authors, McLean, Virginia, 1989.

Sprouse, Edith M. (ed.). *Fairfax County in 1860: A Collective Biography*. 6 vols. Published by the author, 1996.

Stephenson, Richard W. (ed.). *The Cartography of Northern Virginia*. History and Archaeology Section, Office of Comprehensive Planning, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1981.

United States, *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December, 1889, to March, 1891, and Recent Treaties, Conventions, and Executive Proclamations*, vol. XXVI. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1891.

_____. *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December, 1927, to March, 1929,* vol. XLV, part 1. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1929.

_____. *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December, 1929, to March, 1931,* vol. XLVI, part 1. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1931.

_____. *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917-19), Zone of the Interior*. Vol. 3 (parts 1-2). United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1949.

Commonwealth of Virginia
1953 *Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia in Compliance with House Joint Resolution No. 78*. Department of Conservation and Development, House Document No. 25, Division of Purchase and Printing, Richmond, Virginia.

Virta, Matthew. *Management Report: Archaeological Test Excavations in Advance of the New Sewer Line Connection at Fort Hunt Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway*, Denver Service Center-Eastern Applied Archaeology Center, National Park Service, 1992.

War Department, Engineer Bureau.
*Extract of Military Map of Northeast Virginia Showing Forts and Roads*, 1865. Fairfax County Regional Library, Fairfax, Virginia.

*The Washington Post*. "Eden, at Washington's Tomb, Finds Peace After Busy Day," Wednesday, December 14, 1938.

_____. "George Keenly Interested in CCC Cuisine." Saturday, June 10, 1939.

Wayland, John W. *The Washingtons and Their Homes*. McClure Printing Company, Staunton, Virginia, 1944.

Winslow, Colonel Eben Eveleth. *Notes on Seacoast Fortification Construction*. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1920.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## EARLY LAND PATENTS, LEASES, AND WILLS 1653 - 1768

**Original Land Patents of Giles Brent** (Source: Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 279, 315, 398).

MR. GILES BRENT, Junr., 800 acs. being on the S. side of Potomeck Riv. opposite against the Indian Town of Puscattaway. 11 Sept. 1653. Trans of 16 pers.
MR. GILES BRENT, son of Capt. Giles Brent, 1,000 acres Westmoreland Co., 6 Sept. 1654. On S. side of Petomeck River, in the freshes, beg. at the Ricohockian Stand & N.E. near the mouth of Hunting Creek. Trans. of 20 pers: Capt. Robert Felgate, his son Erasmus twice, his wife Sibilla, 3 Negroes: Tony, Bass & Maria; Thomas Hall, Willm. Burford, Richard Wells, Henry Morgan, Fra. Sharpe, Grace Head, Mary Hayes Wm. Hillard, Thomas Bassett, Robert Tyler, Edward Fenner, Mary Peay, Fra. Hansworth.
GYLES BRENT, Jr., son of Gyles Brent, Esqr., 1800 acs. Westmoreland Co., 3 Nov. 1662. 1000 acs. beg. at the Richahockian stands, extending to near the mouth of Hunting Cr. & E.S.E. along Petomake Riv. 800 acs. on S. side sd. river opposite against the Indian Towne of Pascataway. Renewal of patents dated 6 Sept. 1654 & 11 Sept. 1653.

**William Clifton's Leases to John Sheridine and Jane Hester, 14 August 1741** (Source: Prince William County Deed Book E: 419-23).

This indenture made the fourteenth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred forty & one between William Clifton of the County of Prince William of one part & John Sheridon of the aforesaid county Planter of other part witnesseth that said William Clifton for the rents & covenants hereafter expressed hath granted to farm let unto the said John Sheridon a tract of land by estimation two hundred acres in the aforesaid county being the land where he the said John Sheridon now lives on & bounded beginning at the river side on the upper side of a Branch between the said John Sheridon and Jane Hester & running north to four Spanish oaks corner trees thence south east to the River on the lower side of a mirey branch near Timber Landing thence with the river to the first beginning of him the said John Sheridon John his son & Edward his son during the natural life of him the said John Sheridon John his son & Edward his son during which time if may be lawful for him to possess the said land he the said John Sheridon paying unto said William Clifton his heirs or assignees the annual rent of seven hundred & thirty pounds of tobacco qualified according to law to be paid yearly by the twenty fifth day of December & the said John Sheridon doth agree not to sell or dispose of any timber nor have a subtenant on the same during the lease neither shall he sell his lease without the consent of the said William Clifton & at decease of the said three lives shall yield up into the hands of said William Clifton provided always if the rent not be paid in twenty days space next after the same shall become due the said William Clifton to possess the said premises & the said William Clifton agree it may be lawful for the said John Sheridon to use any timber they can find on any of the land unleased belonging

to the said William Clifton the land hereafter only excepted all the land lying between the said William Clifton & a north course from four Spanish oaks corner trees of said John Sheridon's land to two Spanish oak saplings corner trees by the side of a branch that William Williams is bounded on finally said John Sheridon doth oblige himself to plant out one hundred apple trees cious on the said plantation & keep the same under good fence. In witness thereof the parties have set their hands & seals in presence of Robert Whitely, John Westbrooke, Gilbert Stimpson, William Clifton.

At a court held for Prince William County the 24th day of August 1741 William Clifton acknowledged this lease to John Sheridon to be his act and deed & it was thereupon admitted to record.

This indenture made the fourteenth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred forty & one between William Clifton of the County of Prince William gent of one part & Jane Hester of the aforesaid county of the other part witnesseth that said William Clifton for the rents & covenants herein after expressed hath demised to farm let unto the said Jane Hester a certain tract of land by estimation two hundred acres in the aforesaid county being the land where the said Jane Hester now lives on & bounded beginning at a white oak on the Potomac River side running thence up a valley north by east to a bounded red oak & two hickories thence east to a bounded red oak standing by a red oak & white oak sapling thence south to the river side on the lower side of a branch thence down the river to the beginning tree with the rights & appurtenances belonging to have and to hold the said land & premises to her the said Jane Hester her heirs and administrators during the natural life of the said Jane Hester John her son & Gustavus her son during which time it may be lawful for her the said Jane Hester to possess the said land paying therefore unto the said William Clifton his heirs or assigns the annual rent of eight hundred and thirty pounds of tobacco qualified according to law to be paid yearly by the twenty fifth day of December & the said Jane Hester doth agree not to sell or dispose of her lease to any without the consent of the said William Clifton & at the decease of the said lives shall yield up into the hands of said William Clifton provided always if it shall so happen the said rent be not paid twenty days space next after the same shall become due that it may be lawful for the said William Clifton into the messuage to enter & the goods there found bear away & keep until said rent is fully paid & the said William Clifton doth agree that it shall be lawful for the said Jane Hester to make use of any timber they can find on any of the land unleased belonging to the said William Clifton for the support of the plantation she lives on provided it not be found on her own part the land hereafter only excepted all land lying between said William Clifton & a north course running from four Spanish oaks corner trees of John Sheridine's land to a red oak & two Spanish oak saplings corner trees by the side of a branch that William Williams is bounded on finally said Jane Hester doth oblige her self in three years space after this present date to plant out one hundred apple trees cious on the said plantation & the same to keep under good fence & if any dies to plant one in its stead. In witness whereof the parties have set their hands & seals in presence of Robert Whitely, John Westbrook, Gilbert Simpson, William Clifton.

At a court held for Prince William County the 24th day of August 1741 William Clifton acknowledged this lease to Jane Hester to be his act & deed & it was admitted to record.

**Will of John Sheridine, 6 September 1767**
(Source: Fairfax County Will Book C-1: 29).

In the name of God, amen. I John Sheridon of Fairfax County being weak in body, but in perfect senses and memory do constitute & appoint this to be my last will and testament revoking and disannulling all other wills that shall by me be made if any such can be found.

Imprimis I give my soul to God who first gave it hoping for a joyful resurrection through the merits of Jesus Christ & my body to the earth to be decently interred at the discretion of my executors. Item. I give & bequeath to my loving wife Barberry Sheridon all my estate real and personal to her & her heirs forever except my wearing clothes, saddle & bridle which I give & bequeath to my loving father John Sheridon. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this sixth day of September 1767.

John Sheridin (Seal)

Witnesses,
Samuel Johnston, Samuel Fielder

At a court held for the County of Fairfax 16 May 1768. This will was presented in Court by Barbara Sheridon who made oath thereto & the same being proved by the oaths of the Witnesses is committed to record & the said Barbara having performed what the laws required certificate is granted her for obtaining letters of administration with the will annexed on our form.

**Appraisal of John Sheridine's Estate, 17 August 1768**
(Source: Fairfax County Will Book C-1: 40).

Pursuant to an order of Fairfax Court dated the 18th of May 1768 we the subscribers being first sworn did meet and appraise all the estate of John Sheridine deceased that was brought to our view, Vizt.

| | |
|---|---|
| To 1 Negro man £50, 1 ditto £35, 1 Negro girl £35 | £120.0.0 |
| To 2 sows & pigs ➘ 15/, 30 stoats ➘ 5/ | 9.0.0 |
| To 14 old hogs @ 10/, a young horse £10 | 17.0.0 |
| To 1 old mare 60/, 1 young horse colt £5 | 8.0.0 |
| To 11 old sheep @8/, 1 lamb 6/ | 4.14.0 |
| To 1 young steer 30/, 3 yearlings @15/ | 6.0.0 |
| To 1 Bull 30/, 2 young steers @ 30/, 2 yearlings @ 15/ | 6.0.0 |
| To 1 bed & furniture £7.10.0, 1 ditto £6.0.0 | 13.10.0 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| To 1 old bed 26/, 6 new chairs @2/6, 1 linen wheel 10/ | | 2.11.0 |
| To 1 wooling wheel 6/, 1 oval table 25/, 1 ditto 12/6 | | 1.13.6 |
| To 2 old chests @ 15/, 1 old gun 15/, a parcel of earthen ware & some glasses @18/4 | | 2.8.4 |
| To 10 lbs. yarn @ 2/, 52 lbs. spun cotton @4/, 4 lbs. picked cotton 8/ | | 2.11.0 |
| To 12 dozen pewter plates @ 1/, 2 dozen pewter spoons 1/6 | | 0.19.6 |
| To 1 desk £4.0.0 | | 4.0.0 |
| To 3 pewter dishes, 3 basins & some old spoons | | 0.10.0 |
| To a parcel of table knives & forks 7/6, some tin 1/3 | | 0.8.9 |
| To 1 man's saddle 20/, 3 pair yarn stockings @ 5/ | | 1.15.0 |
| To some wearing apparel | | 3.10.0 |
| To 32 yards broad cloth and trimming | | 4.10.0 |
| To 3 3 yards fine linen @ 4/6, 12 yards ditto @ 2/, 3 yards check @1/6 | | 2.3.12 |
| To 15 yards ? @ 1/ | | 0.15.0 |
| To cash | | 12.18.113 |
| To 3 razors & a pair of horse phleames (?) 20d, some books 6/ | | 0.7.8 |
| To 1 old ? 60/, 1 old plow, some hoes, axes, etc. 20/. | | 4.0.0 |
| To 38 lbs. wool in the dirt @ 1/, 42 lbs. ditto washed @ 1/6. | | 2.4.9 |
| To a parcel of old lumber, pots, pans, etc. | | 1.6.0 |
| To some old tubs 12/, 1 small gilt trunk & box 3/6. | | 0.15.6 |
| To 1 looking glass 5/, 1 cloth brush 1/, some table linen 10/. | | 0.16.0 |
| To 1 grid iron 1/, some new nails 25/. | | 1.6.0 |
| To 1 old chest 2/6, some tanned leather 20/, 1 copper kettle 2/6 | | 1.5.0 |
| To 1 raw hide 5/, fish barrel 2/6, candle stick 15 d | | 0.8.9 |
| To one orphan boy | | 10.0.0 |
| To one new mill bag 3/, 1 old ditto 1/6 | | 0.4.6 |
| To tobacco | 1,812 lbs | £241.7.3 |

Sampson Darrell, Thomas Triplett, Samuel Johnston

At a court contained and held for the county of Fairfax 17th August 1768. This inventory was returned and ordered to be recorded.

# APPENDIX B

## FAIRFAX COUNTY TITHABLES FOR THE RIVER FARM, 1761 - 1774

Tithes were taxes collected to support the Anglican parish vestry in Virginia until the American Revolution. Generally paid in tobacco, the tax was levied on all black and white men over 16 years of age, and later on black women as well. The lists were collected and compiled by a county justice in June, then submitted to the county court at its next session. (Source: Abbott (ed.), *Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, **v. 7**: 45, 68, 139, 313, 342, 377, 443, 516; **v. 8**: 238-39; **v. 9**: 55; **v. 10**: 137).

**1761**
Samuel Johnston, Jr., overseer.
Tom, Neptune, George, Betty, Cloe, Doll (6).

**1762**
Samuel Johnston, Jr., overseer.
Tom, Ben, George, Robin, Nat, Peg, Murria, Cloe, Flora, Doll (10).

**1764**
John Chewning, overseer.
Tom, Ben, Nat, George, Robin, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Flora, Doll (10).

**1765**
James Cleveland, overseer.
Tom, Nat, Ben, Cupid, Will, George, Schomberg, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Doll, Cloe, Nan, Daphne (14).

**1766**
James Cleveland, overseer.
Frederick, Ben, Cupid, Nat, Will, Neptune, Abram, Walley, Schomberg, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Doll, Cloe, Nan, Daphne, Judy, Molly, Jenny (19).

**1767**
James Cleveland, overseer.
Frederick, Ben, Nat, Will, Neptune, Abram, Walley, Schomberg, Ruth, Peg, Muria, Doll, Cloe, Nan, Daphne, Judy, Milly (17).

**1772**
James Cleveland, overseer.
Frederick, Essex, Ben, Nat, Will, Neptune, Abram, George, Schomberg, Dick, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Doll, Daphne, Cloe, Nan, Judah, Milly (19).

**1773**
Alexander Cleveland, overseer.
Frederick, Essex, Ben, Nat, Will, Neptune, Abram, George, Schomberg, Dick, Robin, Arlington, Ned, George, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Doll, Daphne, Cloe, Nan, Judy, Milly, Frank, Judy, Sue, Kitt, Hannah, Nell (29).

**1774**
Alexander Cleveland and James Oram, overseers.
Frederick, Essex, Ben, Nat, Will, Neptune, Abram, George, Schomberg, Robin, George, Arlington, Ned, Harry, Bath, Scipio, Stafford, Ruth, Peg, Murria, Doll, Daphne, Cloe, Nan, Suckey, Judy, Milly, Frank, Judy, Sue, Nell, Kitt, Hannah (33).

## APPENDIX C

## SLAVES AT RIVER FARM, FEBRUARY 1786

In this list found in his diary, Washington divides his 52 River Farm slaves by sex and age. Names marked with an asterisk (*) denote "dower negroes," or slaves he inherited through his wife, Martha (Source: Jackson (ed.), *Diaries of George Washington*, v. 4: 279).

*Davy, overseer
*Molly, overseer's wife

**Laboring Men**: *Breechy, Nat, Ned, Essex, Bath, *Johny, Adam (dead), *Will, Robin, *Ben (10).

**Laboring Women**: Ruth, *Dolly, Peg, Daphne, Murra, *Agnus, Suck, Sucky, Judy-M, Judy-F, *Hannah, *Cornelia, *Lidia, *Esther, Cloe, *Fanny, *Alice (17).

**Children** (name, mother, age):
Will, Mill Judy's, 13
*Joe, Hannah's, 12
Ben, Peg's, 10
Penny, Peg's, 8
Joe, Daphne's, 8
Moses, Daphne's, 6
Lucy, Daphne's 4
Daphne, Daphne's, 1
*Ned, Lidia's, 7
*Peter, Lidia's, 5
*Phoebe, Lidia's, 3
Cynthia, Suckey's, 6
Daniel, Suckey's, 4
James, Ferry Doll's, 8
Bett, Neck Doll's, 7
Natt, Neck Doll's, 4
Dolly, Neck, Doll's, 3
Jack, Neck Doll's, 1
Rose, Suck-Bass, 12
Milly, House Sall's, 7
Billy, House Charlotte's, 4
Hukey, Agnus's, 1
Ambrose, Cornelia's, 1 month.

## APPENDIX D

## SLAVES AT RIVER FARM, JUNE 1799

Taken just before Washington died, this is the most detailed enumeration of the slaves who lived and worked on the River Farm (Source: Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, v. 37: 262-63).

| Name | Age | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| **George Washington's slaves** | | |
| Robin | 80 | nearly past labor |
| Nald | 55 | wife Doll (River Farm), dower |
| Ned | 56 | wife Hannah (River Farm), dower |
| Ben Carter | 22 | |
| Peg | 56 | husband Old Ben (River Farm), dower |
| Judy | 55 | husband Gunna |
| Cloe | 55 | no husband |
| Suckey | 50 | no husband |
| Suckey Bay | 46 | husband belongs to Adans |
| Sall | 30 | husband Postn. Joe, dower |
| Rose | 28 | no husband |
| Penny | 20 | husband Ben Hubd. |
| Lucy | 18 | husband Cyrus Postn., dower |
| Hannah | 12 | daughter to Daphne, dead |
| Daniel | 15 | son to Suckey, River Farm |
| Henry | 11 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Nancy | 11 | daughter to Bay Suke, River Farm |
| Elijah | 7 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Dennis | 5 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Gutridge | 3 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Polly | 1 | daughter to Sall, River Farm |
| Hagar | 6 | daughter to Rose, River Farm |
| Simon | 4 | son to Rose, River Farm |
| Tom | 2 | son to Rose, River Farm |
| Joe | 1 | son to Rose, River Farm |
| Nancy | 4 | daughter to Bay Suke, River Farm |
| Ruth (past labor) | 70 | husband Breechy, dower |

| Name | Age | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| **Dower slaves** | | |
| Ben | 70 | nearly done, Peg for wife |
| Breechy | 60 | not better, Ruth his wife |
| Johny | 39 | wife Esther, River Farm, dower |
| Richmond | 20 | no wife |
| Ned | 20 | |
| Henky | 17 | son to Agnes, River Farm |
| Jack | 22 | son to Agnes, River Farm |
| Esther | 40 | husband John, River Farm |
| Doll | 58 | husband Natt, River Farm, |
| Lydia | 50 | husband Smith George |
| Agnes | 36 | husband Sambo Carr |
| Alce | 26 | husband Lear's John |
| Fanny | 30 | husband Alexanders |
| Betty | 20 | husband Lear's Reuben |
| Doll | 16 | no husband, daughter to Doll |
| Cecelia | 14 | no husband, daughter to Agnes |
| Jack | 12 | son to Doll |
| Anderson | 11 | son to Agnes |
| Lydia | 11 | daughter to Lydia |
| Ralph | 9 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Charity | 2 | daughter to Sall, River Farm |
| Charles | 1 | son to Sall, River Farm |
| Davy | 6 | Cornelia's child, deceased, dower |
| Lewis | 4 | Cornelia's child, deceased, dower |
| Alce | 2 | Cornelia's child, deceased, dower |
| Suckey | 4 | daughter to Alce, River Farm |
| Jude | 1 | daughter to Alce, River Farm |
| Milley | 1 | daughter to Betty, River Farm |
| Peter | 9 | son to Doll |
| Hannah | old | Cooks, husband Ned, River Farm |

**George Washington's slaves**
workers 17
children: 9
past labor: 1
together 27

**Dower slaves**
workers: 19
children: 10
cook: 1
making 30

Altogether, at this Farm: 57.

# APPENDIX E

## WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RIVER FARM, 1799

Shortly before his death in 1799, George Washington produced the following detailed plan of operations for the River Farm through the year 1803 and beyond. This document provides significant insight into how River Farm was used during his lifetime, and how Washington envisioned its future (Source: Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of Washington*, 37: 463-472).

RIVER FARM
CROPS FOR, AND OPERATIONS THEREON, FOR THE YEAR 1800

Mount Vernon, December 10, 1799

Field No 1. Is now partly in Wheat. Part thereof is to be sown with Oats. Another part may be sown with Pease, broadcast. Part is in meadow, and will remain so. And the most broken, washed, and indifferent part, is to remain uncultivated; but to be harrowed and smoothed in the Spring, and the worst parts thereof (if practicable) to be covered with litter, straw, weeds, or kind of vegitable Rubbish to prevent them from running into gullies.

No 2. One fourth is to be in Corn, and to be sown with wheat; another fourth in Buckwheat and Pease, half of it in the one, and half of it in the other, sown in April; to be ploughed in as a green dressing; and by actual experiment, to ascertain which is best. The whole of this fourth is to be sown with Wheat also; another fourth part is to be naked fallow for wheat; and the other, and last quarter, to be appropriated for Pumpkins, Simlins, Turnips, Yateman Pease (in hills), and such other things of this kind as may be required; and to be sown likewise with Rye after they are taken off, for seed.

No 3 Is now in Wheat, to be harvested in the year 1800; the stubble of which, immediately after Harvest, is to be plowed in and sown thin with Rye; and such parts thereof as are low, or produces a luxurient growth of grain, is to have grass-seeds sprinkled over it. The whole for Sheep to run on, in the day, (but housed at night) during the winter and spring months. If it should be found expedient, part thereof in the spring might be reserved, for the purpose of Seed.

No 4 Will be in Corn, and is to be sown in the autumn of that year with wheat, to be harvested in 1801, and to be treated in all respects as has been directed for No. 3, the preceeding year. It is to be manured as much as the means will permit, with such aids as can be procured during the present Winter, and ensuing Spring.

Nos. 5,6,7 and 8. Are to remain as they are, but nothing suffered to run upon them; as ground will be allotted for the sole purpose of Pasturage, and invariably used as much.

Clover-Lots
No. 1 Counting from the Spring branch, is to be planted in Potatoes.
No 2 That part thereof which is now in Turnips, is to be sown with Oats and clover; the other part, being *now* in Clover, is to remain so until it comes into Potatoes, by rotation.
No 3 Is also in Clover at present, and is to remain so, as just mentioned, for No. 3.
No 4 Is partly in Clover, and partly in Timothy, and so to be, until its turn for Potatoes.

The rotation for these Lots
Invariable is to be, 1st. Potatoes, highly manured; 2d. Oats, and clover sown therewith; 3d. Clover; 4th. Clover. Then to begin again with Potatoes, and proceed as before. The present Clover lots must be Plastered.

All green Sward, rough ground, or that wch. is heavily covered with weeds, bottle brush grass, and such things as by being turned in will ferment, putrify, and ameliorate the Soil, should be plowed in, in Autumn, and at such times in Winter, as can be done while the ground is dry, and in condition for it.

Pasture-Grounds
The large lot adjoining the Negro houses and Orchd, is to have Oats sown on the Potatoe and Pumpkin ground; with which, and on the Rye also, in that lot and on the Mellon part, orchard-grass seeds are to be sown; and thereafter to be kept as a standing Calf pasture; and for Ewes (which may require extra: care) at yeaning, or after they have yeaned.
The other large lot, NorthEast of the Barn lane, is to be appropriated, *always*, as a Pasture for the Milch Cows; and probably working Oxen, during the Summer Season.
The Woodland, and the old field, commonly called Johnstons, are designed for *Common* Pasture, and to be so applied, *always*. To which, if it should be found inadequate to the stock of the Farm, Field No. 8, and the Woodland therein, may be added.

Meadows
Those already established, and in train, must continue; and the next to be added to them, is the Arm of the Creek which runs up to the Spring house, and forks; both prongs of which must be grubbed, and wrought upon at every convenient moment when the weather will permit, down to the line of the Ditch which encloses the lots for clover &ca.
And as the fields come into cultivation, or as labour can be spared from other work, and circumstances, will permit, the heads of all the Inlets in them must be reclaimed, and laid to grass, whether they be large, or small; forasmuch as nothing will run on, or can trespass upon, or injure the grass; no fencing being reqd.

Mud for Compost
The season is now too far advanced, and too cold to be engaged in a work that will expose the hands to wet: but, it is of such essential importance that it should be set about seriously, and with spirit next year, for the Summers Sun and Winters frost to prepare it for the Corn, and other crops of 1801, that all the hands of the farm, not indispensably engaged in the Crops, should, so soon as Corn planting is compleated in the spring, be uninterruptedly employed in raising Mud from the Pocosons, and even from the bed of

the Creek, into the Scow: And the Carts, so soon as the Manure for the Corn and the Potatoes in 1800 is carried out is to be incessantly drawing it to compost heaps in the field, which are to be manured by it. What numbers of hands can be set apart for this *all important work*, remains to be considered, and decided upon.

Penning Cattle, and folding Sheep

On the fields intended for Wheat, from the first of May, when the former should be turned out to Pasture, until the first of November, when they ought to be Housed, must be practiced *invariably*: and to do it with regularity and propriety, the Pen for the first, and the fold for the latter, should be proportioned to the number of each kind of Stock; and both these to as much ground as they will manure sufficiently, in the space of a Week, for Wheat; beyond which they are not to remain in a place, except on the poorest spots; and *even these* had better be aided by litter or something else than to depart from an established rule, of removing the Pens on a *certain* day in every week: For in this, as in everything else, system is essential to carry on business well, and with ease.

Feeding

The Work horses and Mules are always to be in their Stalls, and well littered and cleaned when they are out of Harness; and they are to plenteously fed with cut straw, and as much chopped Grain, Meal, or Bran with a little salt mixed therewith, as will keep them *always* in good condition for work; seeing also that they are watered, as regularly as they are fed. this is their winter feed: for spring, Summer, and autumn, it is expected that Soiling of them on green food, first with Rye, then with Lucern, and next with Clover, with very little grain, will enable them to perform their Work.

The Oxen, and other horned Cattle, are to be housed from the first of November, until the first of May; and to be fed as well as the means on the Farm will admit. The first (Oxen) must always be kept in good condition. Housed in the Stalls designed for them; and the Cows (so many of them as can find places) on the opposite side. The rest, with other Cattle, must be in the newly erected Sheds; and the whole carefully Watered every day. The Ice, in frozen weather, being broken, so as to admit them to clean Water.

With respect to the Sheep, they must receive the best protection that can be given them *this* Winter; against the next, I hope they will be better provided for.

And with regard to the Hogs, the plan must be, to raise a given number of *good ones*, instead of an indiscriminate number of *indifferent ones*, half of which die, or are stolen before the period arrives for putting them up as porkers. To accomplish this, a sufficient number of the best Sows should be appropriated to the purpose; and so many pigs raised from them as will ensure the quantity of Pork the Farm ought to furnish. Whether it will be most advisable to restrain these hogs from running at large, or not, can be decided with more precision after the result of those *now* in close pens are better known. The exact quantity of Corn used by those which are now in Pens should be ascertained, and regularly reported, in order to learn the result.

Stables and Farm Pens

These ought to be kept well littered, and the Stalls clean; as well for the comfort of the Creatures that are contained in them; as for the purpose of manure; but as straw canot be afforded for this purpose, *Leaves*, and such spoiled Straw or weeds as will not do for

food, must serve for the Stables; and the first, that is leaves, and Corn Stalks, is all that can be applied to the Pens. To do this work effectually, let the Cornstalks be cut down by a *few* careful people with *sharp* hoes, so low as never to be in the way of Scythes at harvest; and whenever the Wheat will admit Carts to run on it without injury, to bring them off, and stack them near the Farm Pens. In like manner let the People, with their blankets, go every evening, or as often as occasion may require, to the nearest wood and fill them with leaves for the purposes above mentioned; bottoming the beds with Corn Stalks, and covering them *thick* with leaves. A measure of this sort will be, if strictly attended to, and punctually performed, of great utility in every point of view. It will save food, Make the Cattle lay warm and comfortable, and produce much manure. The Hogs also in pens must be well bedded in leaves.

Fencing

As stock of no kind, according to this plan, will be suffered to run on the arable fields, or Clover lots (except Sheep, in the day, on the Rye field as has been mentioned before) partition fences between the fields until they can be raised of Quicks, must be dispens'd with. But it is of great importance that all the exterior of outer fences, should be substantially good; and those wch. divide the Common, or Woodland Pasture, from the fields and Clover Lots are to be very respectable.

To accomplish this desirable object in as short of time as possible, and the with smallest expence of timber, the Post and Rail fence which runs from the Negro quarters or rather from the corner of the lot enclosing them up to the division between fields No 7 and No 8 may be placed on the Bank (which must be raised higher) that runs from thence (where it was burnt) to the Creek. In like manner, the fence from the gate which opens into No 2, quite down to the River, along the Cedar hedge row, as also those Rails which are between No 1 and 2 and between No 2 and 3 may all be taken away and applied to the outer fences, and the fences of the lanes from the Barn into the Woodland Pasture, and from the former (the Barn) into No 5; for the fences of all these lanes must be *good*, as the Stock must have a free and uninterrupted passage along them, at all times, from the

Barn yard to the Woodland Pasture

One of the gates near the Fodder house, may be moved up to the range of the lane, by the gate, near that which leads into field No 2; and the other may be placed at the other end of the lane, by the Negro quarters: and so long as Mr. Mason's old field remains uninclosed the outer gate into Field No 8 wd. stand better in the Fence which runs from the division between fields No 7 and 8 to the Creek than where it now is.

All the feng. from the last mentioned place (between me and Mr. Mason ) until it joins Mr. Lears Farm, and thence with the line between him and me, until it comes to the River, will require to be substantially good; at its termination on the River, dependance must be placed in a Water fence; for, if made of common Rails , they would be carried off by boatmen for fire Wood. The fences seperating fields No 1 and No. 8 from the Woodland pasture must also be made good, to prevent depredations on the fields by my own stock.

CROPS, &CA FOR 1801

No 5 Is to be in Corn, and to be invariable in that article. It is to be planted (if drills are thought to be ineligable until the ground is much improved) in Rows 6 feet by 4, or 7 by 3 ½; the wide part open to the South. These hills are to be manured as highly as the means will admit; and the Corn planted every year in the middle of the Rows of the preceeding year; by doing which, and mixing the Manure and Earth by the Plow and other workings, the whole, in time, will be enrichned.

The washed and gullied parts of this field should be levelled, and as much improved as possible, or left uncultivated. Although it is more broken than some of the other fields, it has its advantages. 1st. it has several Inlets extending into it with easy assents therefrom; 2d. it is convenient to the mud in the bed of the Creek whensoever (by means of the Scow) resort is had thereto, and good landing places; and thirdly it is as near to the Barn as any other (when a bridge and causeway is made over the Spring branch). To these may be added, that it is more remote from Squirrels than any other.

No 6 and 7 Or such part thereof as is not so much washed and gullied as to render plowing ineligable, are to be fallowed for Wheat. One of which, if both cannot, is to have the stubble plowed in and sown with Rye; and then the low, and strong parts to have Timothy or Orchard grass-seeds, perhaps both, in different places, sprinkled over them for the purpose of raising Seed. On the Rye pasture the Sheep are to be fed in winter and Spring, and treated in all respects as directed in the case of No. 3 in 1800

IN THE YEARS 1802, 1803, AND SO ON

The Corn ground, remaining the same, two fields in following numbers, will be fallowed for Wheat; and treated in all respects, as mentioned above. And if Pumpkins, Simlins, Turnips, Pease, and such like growths are found beneficial to the land, or useful and profitable for Stock, ground may readily be found for them.

These are the great outlines of a Plan, and the operations of it, for the next year, and for years to come, for River Farm. The necessary arrangements, and all the preparatory measures for carrying it into effect, ought to be adopted without delay, and invariably pursued. Smaller matters may, and undoubtedly will, occur occasionally; but none, it is presumed, that can militate against it materially. To carry it into effect advantageously, it becomes the indispensable duty of him who is employed to overlook and conduct the operations, to take a prospective, and comprehensive view of the *whole* business which is laid before him, that the several parts thereof may be so ordered and arranged, as that one sort of work may follow another sort of in proper Succession, and without loss of labour, or of time; for nothing is a greater waste of the latter, and consequently of the former (time producing labour and labour money) than shifting from one thing to another before it is finished; as if chance, or the impulse of the moment, not judgmt. and foresight, directed the measure. It will be acknowledged that weather, and other circumstances may, at times,, interrupt a regular course of proceedings; but if a plan is well digested beforehand, they cannot interfere long, with a man who is acquainted with the nature of the business, and the Crops he is to attend to.

Every attentive, and discerning person, who has the *whole* business of the year laid before him, and is acquainted with the nature of the work, can be at no loss to lay it out to advantage. He will know that there are many things wch. can be accomplished in winter

as well as in summer; others, that Spring, Summer and Autumn *only* are fit for. In a word, to use the Wiseman's saying "that there is a time, and a season for all things" and that, unless they are embraced, nothing will thrive; or go on smoothly, There are many sorts of *Indoors* work which can be executed in Hail, rain, or Snow, as well as in sunshine; and if they are set about in fair weather (unless there be a necessity for it) there will be nothing to do in foul weather; the people therefore must be idle. The man of prudence and foresight, will always keep these things in view, and order his work accordingly; so as to suffer no waste of time, or idleness. The same observations apply with equal force to frozen ground; and grounds too wet to work in; or if worked, will be injured thereby.

These observations might be spun to a greater length, but they are sufficient to produce reflexion, and reflexion with Industry, and proper attention, will produce the end that is to be wished.

There is one thing however I cannot forbear to add, and in strong terms; it is, that whenever I order a thing to be done, it must be done; or a reason given at that *time*, or as soon as the impracticality is discovered, why it cannot; which will produce a countermand, or change. But it is not for the person receiving the order, to suspend or dispense with its execution; and after it has been supposed to have gone into effect, for me to be told that nothing has been done in it; that it will be done; or that it could not be done; either of these is unpleasant, and disagreeable to me, having been accustomed all my life to more regularity, and punctuality, and *know* that nothing but system and method is required to accomplish all reasonable requests.