

# **WHERE “DRINK WAS DEEP AND PLAY WAS HIGH”: THE HISTORY OF THE INDIAN QUEEN TAVERN AND 616–622 CAROLINE STREET, FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA (PART I)**

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Note: This is Part I of a two-part series on the Marriott hotel dig. This article was published in Volume 5 (2006) of *Fredericksburg History and Biography*, the journal of the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust (CVBT). Dovetail deeply appreciates their permission to post this article on our webpage. For additional information on the incredible work done by the CVBT, please visit their webpage at <http://www.cvbt.org/>. To purchase a copy of Volume 5 of the Journal, see <http://www.cvbt.org/product-page/cvbt-journal-v5-2006>. Additional information on the Marriott excavation project can also be found in the full project report on file at Dovetail Cultural Resource Group, Fredericksburg, Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

It began small. “Do you think there is anything under that pavement?” The question referred to a modest parking lot owned by the City of Fredericksburg at the corner of Caroline and Charlotte streets. The City, about to embark on the final leg of negotiations to sell the lot, was curious about the potential for archaeological deposits in this area. In Fredericksburg, the prehistoric and historic occupations are so vast that the answer to the question above is invariably “yes.”

At this lot, though, the extent of the findings far exceeded a mere yes. The discovery of centuries of historic remains and hundreds of thousands of artifacts led to a reinterpretation of this area through time and, more importantly, highlighted the importance of below-ground resources to the historic fabric of the community.

This article is Part I of a two-part series on the history and investigations at four lots in downtown Fredericksburg. This first part will include the background of the project, the history of the lots, and the outcome of preliminary archaeology completed at the site. The results of the large-scale excavations and the importance of the project to the city’s preservation initiatives will be presented in Part II.

## The Small Lot with a Big History

The small parking lot at the corner of Caroline and Charlotte streets had been there for decades, used by tourists visiting the downtown area and by city staff who work in the surrounding buildings. By early 2006, though, the City of Fredericksburg entered final negotiations to sell the parking lot and adjacent land for a new hotel. The new construction would cover the parking area and necessitate the demolition of the building at 616 Caroline Street that currently houses municipal police records (Figure 1).

Although the City does not have a formal archaeological ordinance as part of its Historic Preservation Guidelines, city officials quickly realized the potential for archaeological remains to be uncovered during future construction. This area was among the first lots to be sold at the founding of Fredericksburg in 1728, and it has been continually occupied for almost 300 years. In conjunction with the hotel developers (the Inns of Fredericksburg LLC), the City contracted with Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) in February 2006 to investigate the history of the lot and identify the potential for intact archaeological remains below the paved surface.



Figure 1: Project Location Map.

Dovetail initiated a multidisciplinary study of the parcel including in-depth archival research and a Phase I archaeological survey of the parking lot. The Phase I study was designed to determine if the soils under the pavement had physical integrity or if the area had been significantly disturbed when the parking lot was created in 1967. The two threads—archival research and archaeological investigation—quickly became entwined as the importance of this lot and the magnitude of the results emerged through recovered documents and physical remains. The following section places the archival research on the lots at 616–622 Caroline Street within the context of the story of Fredericksburg, for the histories of each entity rely on the past of the other to create a cohesive whole.

## **The History of Lot 35 and the City of Fredericksburg**

As Fredericksburg historian Robert Howison wrote: “I feel bound, as is the manner of all veracious historians, to begin at the beginning. But where the beginning is, or ought to be, may be a serious question.”<sup>2</sup> The history of the area currently known as 616–622 Caroline Street is as long and distinguished as the history of Fredericksburg. Native Americans occupied most of what is today the downtown area for thousands of years before European contact, and remains of their lives, in the form of projectile points and pottery, are regularly found along the banks of the Rappahannock River. It is the period after European contact, however, that is far more visible on the existing landscape.

While some sources state that Europeans had explored the area around Fredericksburg as early as 1570,<sup>3</sup> it was John Smith who left the first written record of his visit.<sup>4</sup> In his *Generall Historie of Virginia*, originally published in 1624, Smith described his 1608 explorations along both the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers looking for trading opportunities and other resources.<sup>5</sup> From 1608 to the 1650s, however, European settlement in the area around Fredericksburg was rare. It was not until 1655 that the first land patent in the area was given to Margaret Brent for 1,000 acres just west of present-day Fredericksburg.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Leaseland and Fredericksburgh Town*

The future townsite of Fredericksburg, including the proposed hotel site, was granted to John Buckner and Thomas Royston in 1671. Though they never lived on this 2,000-acre property, they immediately leased the land to William and Sukey Livingston, which is how the area became known as The Leaseland from the 1670s through the 1720s.<sup>7</sup> The community remained a small river enclave through the first two decades of the eighteenth century. The main community wharf was located near what is today the termination of Wolfe Street, approximately two blocks southeast of the corner of Caroline and Charlotte streets.

The largest town in the general area was Germanna, located about 30 miles west, on the Rapidan River. Most roads bringing goods and people from the populous Chesapeake area to Germanna ran directly through the Leaseland, including the Germanna Road, or what is today Route 3.<sup>8</sup> In 1720, the Leaseland became part of newly established Spotsylvania County with Germanna as the county seat. The county court at Germanna

ran smoothly for the first few years, but several key officials and planters of Spotsylvania County repeatedly petitioned the House of Burgesses to move the county seat to a more convenient location. In 1728, the House finally addressed the issue and decided that a town should be formally created at the Leaseland. The town was to incorporate 50 acres on the Rappahannock River and was to be renamed Fredericksburgh Town.<sup>9</sup> The hotel site was part of the original 50 acres and designated Lot 35 (Figure 2).

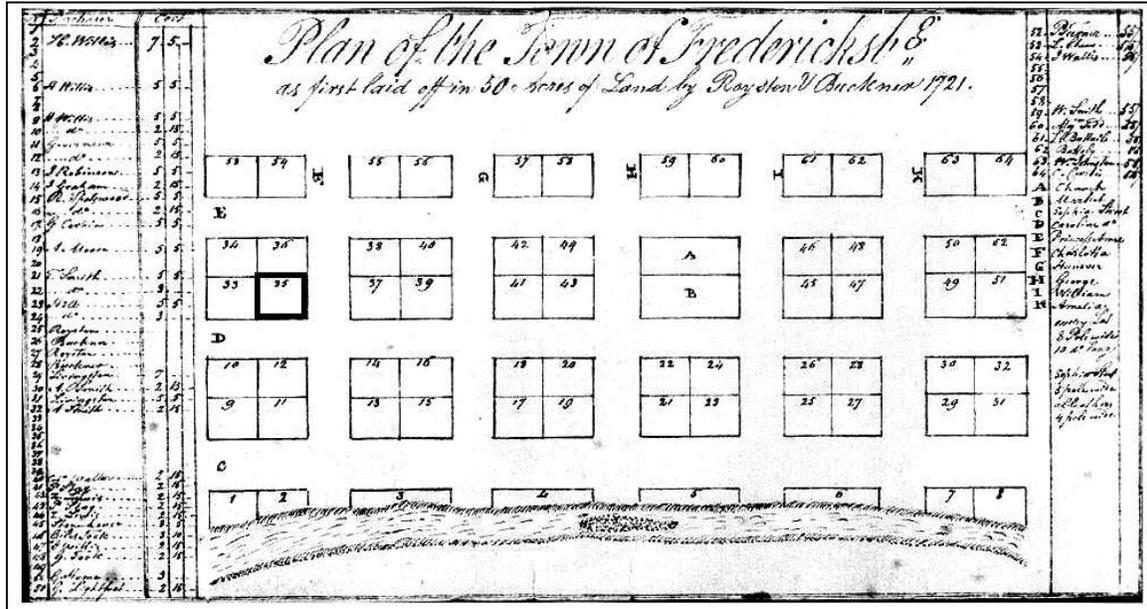


Figure 2: The Original 50 Acres of Fredericksburg Showing Lot 35 in bold.<sup>10</sup>

### *Dixon's Store in the Eighteenth Century*

The county seat of Spotsylvania officially moved to Fredericksburg on October 1, 1732 for the convenience of all inhabitants and county officials. A courthouse was begun in town, as well as a church, prison, and other governmental and commercial structures.<sup>11</sup> The town wharfs also provided the first public river docks in the area. Numerous warehouses and other businesses developed around the Fredericksburg waterfront in the mid-eighteenth century to accommodate new commerce. On July 1, 1735, Hancock Lee purchased Lots 35 and 36 from trustees representing the Town of Fredericksburg.<sup>12</sup> Lee owned many lots in the original 50 acres, so it is likely he rented Lots 35 and 36 as opposed to occupying them himself. Because their location was so close to the main wharf and along the main thoroughfare, the lots were probably in use within a decade of the original purchase.

Throughout the 1730s and 1740s, Fredericksburg grew slowly as new businesses developed to support the courthouse and business crowds. As a testament to the developing tone of town use, it appears that there were almost an equal number of taverns/ordinaries and warehouses in the 1740s.<sup>13</sup> The growth trend continued in the 1750s, as the first land addition was made to the original 50 acre town, to accommodate the influx of new inhabitants and businesses. Occupation slowly moved from the center

near the wharves northward along Caroline Street. The Fielding Lewis Store, built in 1749, anchored the northern segment of town and offered goods on the main road out of town and on the way to William Thornton's mills on the north side of the community.<sup>14</sup> The store, still standing, is considered to be one of the oldest retail buildings in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

In the southern section of town, within the original 50 acres, Hancock Lee continued to own Lots 35 and 36 until May 1, 1750, when he sold both lots to Anthony Strother.<sup>16</sup> Sometime in the late 1740s or early 1750s, Roger Dixon opened a store on the current project parcel near the corner of Caroline and Charlotte streets. Dixon never owned this lot, and information on the configuration of his store is extremely limited. One of the only direct references to Dixon's occupation of this lot is in a 1760 land deed. On November 3, 1760, Anthony Strother sold Lots 35 and 36 to William Lewis, and the corresponding Deed of Sale mentions that Roger Dixon kept his store on the premise.<sup>17</sup>

Although Dixon never owned the lot, his name and business became directly associated with the activity in this area during the 1750s and 1760s, as Dixon's Store was one of the largest and most prosperous in town. According to ads placed in the *Virginia Gazette*,<sup>18</sup> Dixon's Store sold goods ranging from stationary to sugar and corsets to coffins. The most advertised product, however, was Madeira wine, sold by the pipe (126 gallons), hogshead (63 gallons), or quarter cask (about 15 gallons). On June 15, 1769, Dixon placed an ad for Madeira wine in the *Gazette* that proved to be more of a statement on the upcoming cessation of selling alcohol than it did an advertisement for his products:

Those Gentlemen who have been used to drink such wines, and can afford it, will doubtless think it prudent to lay in a good stock before the first of September, when the laudable associating prohibition is to take place. It has not other duty nay to pay, but that of gratifying the palates of generous freemen, to gladden their hearts, and make them of a cheerful countenance, until that period arrives when they are to be changed in to sullen slaves; such a metamorphosis as will be in supportable to this once *free* and happy country.<sup>19</sup>

Dixon's store remained in operation through the 1760s with advertisements for his goods appearing in newspapers until June 1769.<sup>20</sup> William Lewis sold the property in 1772, which was the same year that Roger Dixon died. Jacob Whitely acquired the property and all improvements.<sup>21</sup>

By December of that year, Whitely had opened a tavern on the site.<sup>22</sup> Whitely began a hostelry and timplery tradition that would exist on this corner for the next 50 years. Records do not indicate if he constructed a new building or if he used an existing Dixon-era building for the tavern. Travelers from up and down the East Coast stayed at the tavern, including people who came by land and by sea. For example, James McClanahan from South Carolina put an ad in the *Virginia Gazette* when he left personal property at the tavern in April 1773: "I left at Jacob Whiteley's [sic], in Fredericksburg, in the Month

of December 1771, my Saddle Bags, in which were sundry Clothes, and many Papers of Consequence...<sup>23</sup>

Whitely only operated his tavern for two years. In November 1774, he advertised the property for rent in the *Virginia Gazette*, listing the property as “a very convenient Tavern, with Stables, Kitchen Bake-House, &c. belonging to the Subscriber, in Fredericksburg, convenient to the lower Warehouses...”.<sup>24</sup> Operation of the tavern was taken over by William Herndon, who would be involved with the tavern for the next 40 years. Herndon named the tavern the Indian Queen. Over the years, because of its longevity, it was also referred to as the Old Indian and later the Indian Queen Hotel.

### *The American Revolution and the Indian Queen*

By the eve of the American Revolution, Fredericksburg had grown into a successful shipping port town. However, inhabitants of Spotsylvania County again voiced their dissatisfaction about the location of the county seat. For many living on the western side of the county, travel into Fredericksburg was an arduous journey. In 1778, the county seat of Spotsylvania was moved from Fredericksburg to a site on the Po River near the center of the county.

Regardless, the activity surrounding the wharves and the growing town population sustained Fredericksburg through the loss of the courthouse traffic. The town was incorporated in 1781, and the diversity of the population was reflected in the new businesses and organizations that developed in the 1780s. This includes the establishment of the area’s first newspapers in 1787, *The Virginia Herald* and *Fredericksburg and Falmouth Advertiser*, published by Timothy Green.<sup>25</sup>

The Indian Queen Tavern continued to grow in size and popularity throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It became the most popular meeting place for visitors and residents alike, catering to some of the most well-known families of the era, including the Washingtons, the Lees, and the Monroes. Other accounts link Thomas Jefferson, George Wythe, and George Mason with meetings at the Indian Queen. Since the tavern was on the postal route between Philadelphia and Williamsburg within a prosperous port town, numerous dignitaries and statesmen frequented the hotel. As told by General Dabney Herndon Maury in 1894, George Washington was a repeat visitor to the Indian Queen.<sup>26</sup> When Washington was in Fredericksburg, “a dinner party was usually given to him on his arrival at the old Indian Queen Tavern, where, tradition tells us, drink was deep and play was high.” Maury goes on to say: “Washington often dined at the Indian Queen Tavern, at which he was present. A British officer sang a comical song,— a very improper song, but funny as it was improper,—at which Washington laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, and called upon the singer to repeat it.”<sup>27</sup>

Other accounts of Revolutionary-period tavern activities are listed in the 1930s Spotsylvania Works Progress Administration (WPA) files, including the fact that the statute of religious liberty that became the basis for the Declaration of Independence was considered, adopted, and written at the Indian Queen. The document committee

comprised Thomas Jefferson, George Wythe, Archibald Cary, George Mason, and Ludwell Lee.<sup>28</sup> Another statesman who reportedly visited the Indian Queen was John Randolph of Roanoke Plantation in Charlotte County. According to tradition, Randolph stopped at the Indian Queen to spend the night. Upon hearing that the famous orator was staying in town, several of Fredericksburg's more prominent citizens went to the tavern to socialize with Randolph. As recounted in the WPA report: "In a very gruff, ungracious way, he [Randolph] replied to the committee that waited on him: 'I don't drink with strangers and if I can't rest here one night without being disturbed by a mob, I will drive to the Sycamores.' The Sycamores was a hotel twelve miles from Fredericksburg on the Bowling Green Road."<sup>29</sup>

### *From Tobacco to Flour and Antebellum Growth*

The period from the 1780s through the 1820s was marked by a dramatic increase in the shipping and milling industry in Fredericksburg and the nearby town of Falmouth. Whereas early shipping primarily concentrated on tobacco, by the end of the eighteenth century, soils in the area were completely depleted. Farmers turned to new crops to sustain the family plantations, primarily wheat. Grain mills and merchants' warehouses were erected along the Rappahannock River. The Fredericksburg Canal carried the water necessary to propel the mills' waterwheels. The warehouses held flour, tobacco, and later cotton awaiting shipment as well as imported consumer and other goods, and farmers, haulers, and watermen took use of the town's inns and taverns. Falmouth and Fredericksburg's exports in flour, which had reached their highest point in 1816 at 160,000 barrels, had been reported at 126,000 barrels in 1831. The export quantity ranked third in the state of Virginia, only behind Richmond and Alexandria.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout this time, the town of Fredericksburg continued to grow. Population of the urban area rose after the American Revolution as new industries and thus employment developed in town. In 1790, William Herndon made two large additions to the tavern. First, he constructed a separate billiards building to the west of the main tavern to house a new billiards table,<sup>31</sup> an activity that was rapidly becoming en vogue with the Virginia elite. Second, he enlarged the brick stables to accommodate up to 40 horses and built a granary and carriage house adjoining the new facility. According to Herndon, "those gentlemen who will be so kind as to favor [me] with their custom may rely on the strictest attention being paid their horses, which will be taken in upon the same terms as they area taken at the Fredericksburg Livery Stables".<sup>32</sup>

By the 1790s, the tavern had officially become the most important meeting spot in town. Numerous ads in the *Virginia Herald* list the Indian Queen, or Old Indian, as the meeting spot for various civic and social groups in town. This activity included the Fredericksburg Jockey Club,<sup>33</sup> of which William Herndon was a member. The tavern had grown so greatly during this period that William Herndon took out a Mutual Assurance Policy on the property in 1796 (Figure 3). At that time, the tavern complex included a main section, which was a two-story timber frame building measuring 44 x 22 feet, and six one-story timber frame additions. The additions included a kitchen and the billiards room, which were both located along Charlotte Street. These insurance policies and newspaper ads are

the only records we have on the appearance of the Indian Queen. No period drawings, sketches, or narratives exist that describe the tavern façade or its general look.

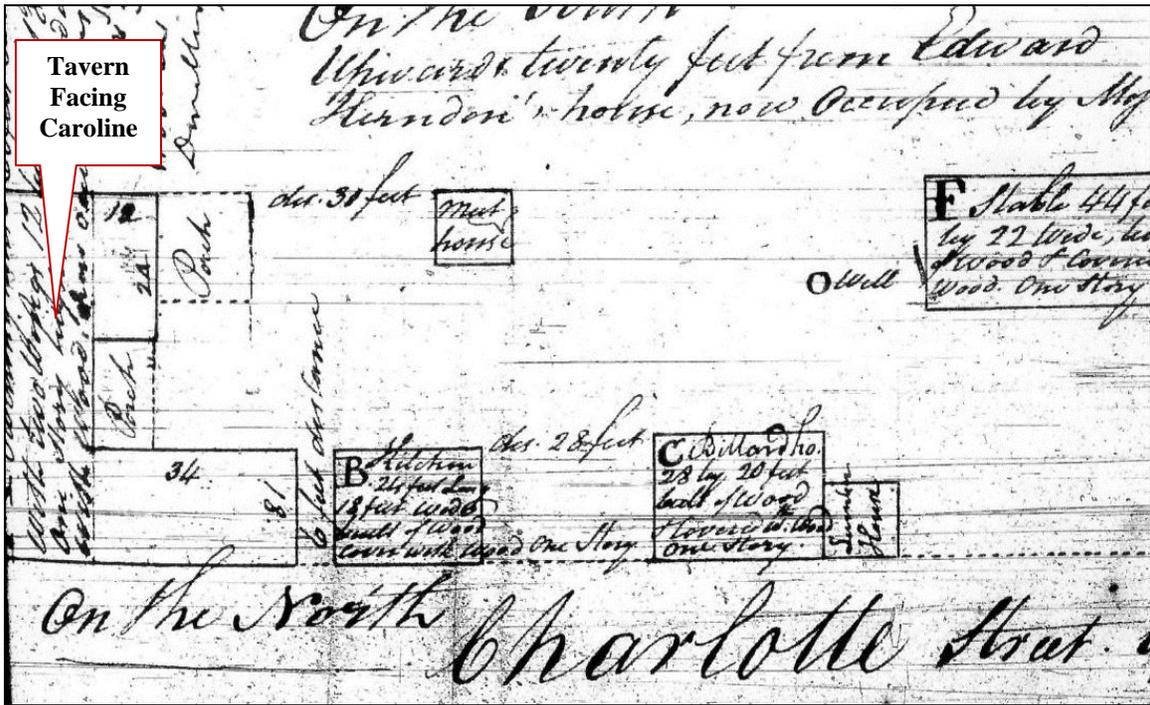


Figure 3: 1796 Mutual Insurance Policy taken out by William Herndon on the Indian Queen.<sup>34</sup>

The insurance policy taken out by Herndon in 1795 would quickly prove to be a good idea. In 1799, a fire swept through this area of downtown, leaving entire blocks in ruins. The devastated area included the block directly to the north across Caroline Street (the location of the Visitor’s Center parking lot) and the block to the east where the Chimney’s is located. Miraculously, the Indian Queen was not damaged. Herndon prudently renewed his policy, however, from 1795 through the 1830s.

In January 1804, William Herndon announced that he had formed a partnership with Mr. Thomas Powell to run the tavern.<sup>35</sup> The partnership, however, was obviously not as fruitful as hoped. In September 1805, Herndon put an ad in the *Virginia Herald* acknowledging that the quality of the tavern and associated services had declined during the Powell period: “I beg leave to acquaint my friends and the public that I have returned to that well known stand, (the Old Indian) fifteen years previously in my occupancy, and again offer my services to the public, with the fullest affordance that every due and possible attention will be given to promote the happiness of all who may do me the honour of your company.”<sup>36</sup>

With the dramatic increase in the local population and the new improvement to the tavern, the Indian Queen prospered. What started out as a single building during the Whitely era had transformed into a bustling complex by the 1810s. The tavern had its own kitchen, billiards hall, meat house, stable, carriage house, granary, and all other facilities needed to run a large-scale hotel/tavern. In addition to growing in size, the

Indian Queen diversified its offerings during this time as well. Newspaper ads discuss the numerous public events that occurred at the tavern, including dances and galas, art displays, music and theatrical showings, and even a traveling wax museum exhibit. The Indian Queen claimed to have the best restaurant in town, where sea turtle soup was a most notable and delicious dish (Figure 4). In 1808, for example, William Herndon advertised that a 102-pound turtle would be cooked and served in the Indian Queen dining room. "Gentlemen who are fond of the dish are respectfully solicited to favour [me] with their company."<sup>37</sup> By the 1810s, the Indian Queen had cemented itself into the social fabric of Fredericksburg, as the largest and most popular retreat during one of the most prosperous periods in the town's history.

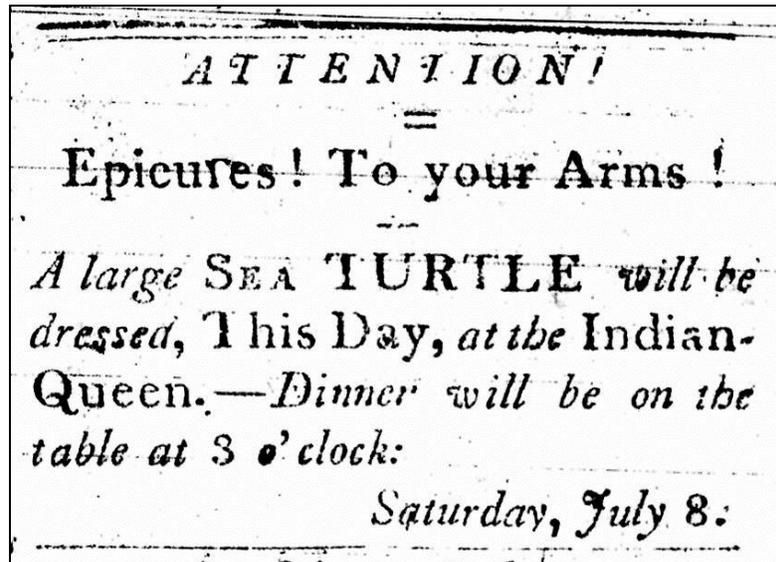


Figure 4: Advertisement for Sea Turtle at the Indian Queen.<sup>38</sup>

### *The Antebellum Years and the Demise of the Queen*

Although flour export decreased after 1820, Fredericksburg continued to prosper as a port town. In 1821, John Gray purchased the Indian Queen Tavern and surrounding property from William Herndon.<sup>39</sup> Gray saw continued success and expansion of the tavern, resulting in a two-story, wood building that spanned nearly all of Lot 35 fronting Caroline Street. In 1822, Fredericksburg was officially made a postal center for distribution of all United States mail to five states, and the depot for the mail coach was the Indian Queen Tavern. The coach arrived at midnight and departed by 10:00 every morning.<sup>40</sup>

In July 1824, John Gray advertised the sale or rental of the Indian Queen. As listed in the newspaper:

The house is a very large and convenient one, has lately been thoroughly repaired and newly painted, and the lot is in a neat and handsome condition. There is upon the premises a Brick Stable, inferior to none in the state; it is upwards of one hundred feet in length, and so constructed as

to be remarked for its convenience, to which is attached a spacious Carriage House and Granary, both of brick. I will sell or rent with the house, Forty Reds, with the necessary clothing—together with most of the other Furniture, now in the use of the subscriber. This property is too well known to require a further description.<sup>41</sup>

In 1825, John T. Rawlins became the operator of the tavern, a position he held until 1827. The tavern continued to host major events, including a military ball “in commemoration of the Birth of Washington” on March 2, 1825<sup>42</sup> and the Fredericksburg Assembly Ball, held on January 19, 1827.<sup>43</sup> In 1828, John Gray was still looking for a permanent operator to rent the tavern and replace John Rawlins. Once again, Gray noted in his rental ad that “the stand is too well known to require a word in its favor,” which attests to the recognition of this establishment throughout the area.<sup>44</sup> A Mr. Finn filled the operator’s position and hosted an “exhibition of fancy glass work” in the Indian Queen ballroom in April 1829.<sup>45</sup> The Finn era was also short lived, however, as George Whiting became the new owner of the tavern in November 1830.<sup>46</sup> Whiting remained the occupier and operator of the tavern until April 1832.

On April 25, 1832 the entire tavern building burned to the ground. This fire consumed the timber frame main building that faced Caroline Street, the kitchen, and all additions and porches connected to the tavern on the east side of the lot. As recounted in the *Virginia Herald*:

No exertions, however, could save the spacious building, which was composed entirely of wood, from total destruction. The furniture only was wrestled from the flames. The wind, fortunately, was light, and in that direction most favorable to the preservation of the adjoining buildings which, although most seriously threatened, were prevented from taking fire...How the fire originated is unknown—it was first discovered in the ceiling of an upper story, near the roof.<sup>47</sup>

There were at least five large-scale fires in Fredericksburg over a 25-year period (1799, 1807, 1816, 1822, and 1823). These fires seemed to surround the Indian Queen, including the 1799 fire that destroyed the blocks to the north and east of the tavern. Following these catastrophes, the town was rebuilt, each time with better building materials. “By the mid 1820s, the combination of repeated fire, subdivision of downtown lots, and a concern for fire created a tightly packed core in Fredericksburg with virtually no eighteenth century fabric left, except at the periphery.”<sup>48</sup> After the Indian Queen itself became a casualty of fire in 1832, vestiges of the eighteenth century had been removed from Lot 35.

The only buildings that survived the fire were the brick stable, the granary, and the carriage house located on the western half of the lot, near the corner of Charlotte and Princess Anne Streets. In July 1832, the Indian Queen lot was put up for auction. “There is on it a brick Stable, about 100 feet long, with other convenient Out Houses.—This property has been well known as a Tavern Stand for upwards of fifty years, and offers a good opportunity to Capitalists for making a profitable investment.”<sup>49</sup> A second

newspaper ad was issued in November 1833, listing for rent: “the Stable, Carriage House, and Feed Room—also, the small dwelling on the lot.”<sup>50</sup>

By 1835, Fredericksburg had a population of over 3,000 people, including whites, free blacks, and slaves. There were five churches, over a dozen schools, two taverns, and numerous other businesses such as taverns and merchants.<sup>51</sup>

In 1836, the newly chartered Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad Company purchased Lots 35 and 36 from Edwin Porter.<sup>52</sup> The lot contained the stables and other outbuildings, as well as the parcel on Caroline Street that was once the tavern. Two years later, the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad Company sold both lots to William Bowen. The corresponding deed mentions that the Indian Queen or Old Indian Tavern once stood on the premise; interestingly, the deed also has a covenant restricting the erection of any stable, smith shop or other building that will operate a nuisance to those in vicinity of said lot if fronting Caroline Street.<sup>53</sup>

William Bowen was the owner of the property when Lot 35 was divided into four distinct parcels in 1839. At this time, they were numbered 824–827 Main Street; today, they are known as 616, 618, 620, and 622 Caroline Street [the lots are referred to by their current numbers for the remainder of this article]. Four connected buildings were constructed on Caroline Street (Figure 5). As had become typical for most urban areas, the lots were long and narrow to allow for all parcels to have frontage on the main street and a long back yard area for subsidiary outbuildings, gardens, privies, and later utilities. The interior three lots, 616–620 Caroline Street, were domestic residences. The corner lot at 622 Caroline Street, however, housed a commercial enterprise with residential space above.



Figure 5: 1920s Photograph of the 600 Block of Caroline Street; The Corner Building Housed Cassidy’s Drug Store.<sup>54</sup>

In 1839, John Pritchard purchased 622 Caroline Street from William Bowen and constructed a two-story brick building with a recessed corner entry at Caroline and Charlotte Street.<sup>55</sup> He and a business partner opened Prichard & Thornton's Coach Factory in 1841, where patrons could buy newly constructed carriages as well as have carriages repaired. According to ads placed in the *Fredericksburg News*: "The largest and most splendid assortment of Carriages ever offered for sale in this Market, may now be seen at PRITCHARD & THORNTON'S *Coach Factory*, on Main Street. We are also constantly manufacturing Carriages of every description."<sup>56</sup> Mutual Assurance Policy sketches taken out by Pritchard from 1841 through the 1850s show that the building at the corner grew with the business. The original building, measuring 32 x 40 feet, housed the carriage shop and sales room; a 17 x 32 foot addition was made in the late 1840s for use as a coach makers shop.

The Coach Factory remained in business into the 1850s. In 1857, James Gray purchased the property from Pritchard.<sup>57</sup> A Mutual Assurance Policy taken out by Gray in the same year indicates that he operated a carpenter's shop out of what was then known as 622 Main Street. Gray owned and operated this shop at this location into the 1860s. By then, Fredericksburg included 730 households and numerous businesses. The entire population would soon become directly embroiled in one of the most monumental events in Fredericksburg history, the Civil War.

### *The Civil War*

Numerous major Civil War battles occurred within and around Fredericksburg. Because the battle history of the war has been the topic of numerous articles in this journal and in other books and monographs, the following paragraphs will only involve the social and cultural history of the war as it is applicable to the project area.

At the outbreak of the war, the project area was divided into four lots: a carpenter's shop at the corner and three residential lots to the south. By this time, the residential buildings all had rear additions including extra rooms and porches, and the house lots behind the dwellings included several outbuildings and landscape alterations. A one-story shed was located behind 620 Caroline Street, and a small one-story "dwelling" was behind 618 Caroline. All four lots were bounded on the west by a brick wall that divided the residential and commercial lots along Caroline Street from the new foundry complex built on the old Indian Queen stable site along Princess Anne Street. These buildings and the foundry were captured on the Bird's Eye View of Fredericksburg updated after the First Battle of Fredericksburg in the winter of 1862 (Figure 6).

When Fredericksburg became a battleground and subsequent encampment for thousands of soldiers during the winter of 1862–1863, the commercial building on the corner was occupied by James Gray, 618 and 620 Caroline were owned by Peter Goolrick who likely rented the buildings to tenants, and 616 Caroline was owned by Louisa Cudlipp. While ownership of the residential lots remained amazingly static during and after the war, the carpenter's shop was closed in August 1863. James Gray died sometime during the first

two years of the war, although details on his death have not been found. His heirs sold the shop to John and Fannie Scott,<sup>58</sup> who opened up a grocery at the corner. Opening a business during such a tumultuous time was a difficult and risky process, especially considering the fiscal and social hindrances that all Fredericksburg residences faced at this time. The Scotts, however, managed to not only open a grocery at 622 Caroline, but to keep it in operation for the next 20 years.

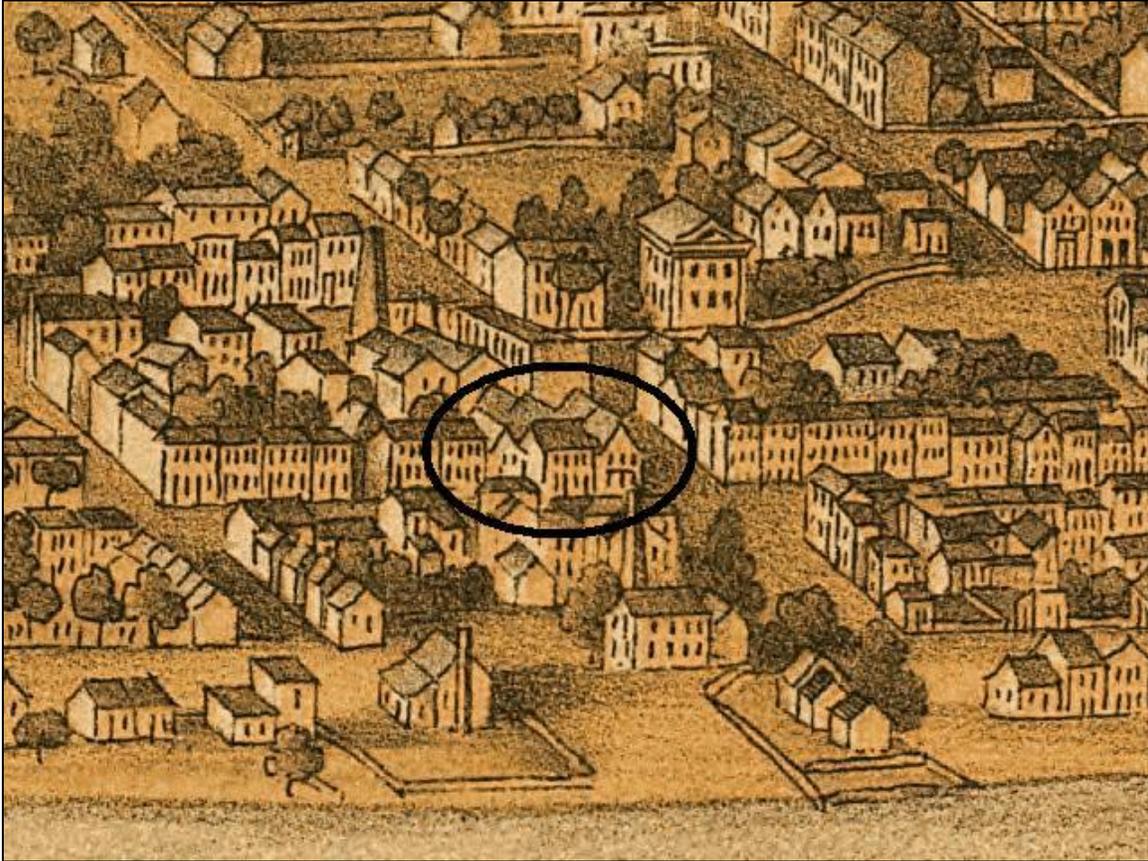


Figure 6: A Section of the 1862 Bird's Eye View of Fredericksburg Showing the Project Area.<sup>59</sup>

### *After the War and into the Twentieth Century*

The Civil War decimated the physical and cultural fabric of the Fredericksburg area. Despite the destruction, area inhabitants remained in town and were determined to rebuild their lives and their homes. In addition to those who lived there before the war, the population of Fredericksburg grew greatly in the years just after the war. Emancipated slaves moved into town looking for employment, and white farmers looked to the area factories and commercial businesses for jobs since their farms had been destroyed by Federal and Confederate troops. The town grew so rapidly and so large that the Virginia Assembly made Fredericksburg a city in 1879.<sup>60</sup>

The daily operation of Fredericksburg changed during these decades as well, from one reliant solely on the waterways to a rail-focused community. New roads were built to and

from Fredericksburg for area farmers and merchants to deliver and receive goods on the railroad. Development sprawled from the commercial center to encompass new neighborhoods to the north and south of town. I took out reference to Darbytown. There is some question as to where that name came from.

During this time, the business located at the corner of Caroline Street and Charlotte Street known as 622 Caroline Street underwent changes. In 1886, the property was owned by M. Ellen Scott, a relative of John and Fannie Scott. The building was a two-story brick structure with a two-story frame addition that continued to serve as a grocery. There was also a two-story frame dwelling located on the premise, likely the home of the Scotts. The residences at 616–620 Caroline Street changed little after the war. Sanborn Insurance Maps for this area show that the size and massing of all three buildings remained the same from 1886 through 1912 (Figure 7).

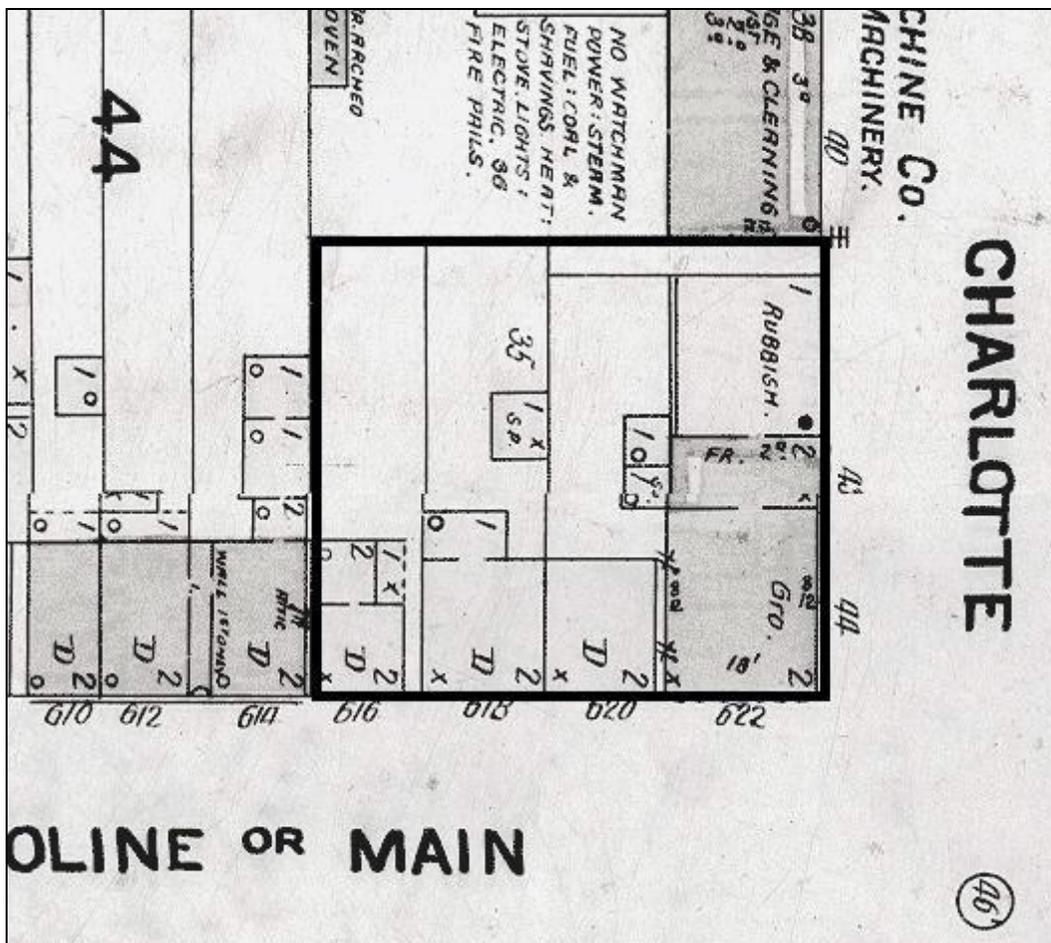


Figure 7: 1907 Sanborn Insurance Map of the Project Area.<sup>61</sup>

The property at 622 remained a grocery until 1908, when Dr. F. T. Cassidy purchased the property at auction.<sup>62</sup> Ferris Town Cassidy had been born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1879. He originally wanted to be a pharmacist and graduated from the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) School of Pharmacy in 1899. Interestingly, Cassidy was too young

to enter the pharmacy field at his graduation, so he attended MCV's medical school, graduating as a MD in 1905.<sup>63</sup> He moved to Fredericksburg shortly after graduation, and may have rented the building at 622 Main Street as early as 1906. He did not formally purchase the building, however, until 1908.

Upon his purchase, Dr. Cassidy opened a small medical office and created Cassidy's Drug Store on the main floor. According to City Directories from 1910, 1921, and 1938, Cassidy and his wife Gabrielle also lived at 622 Main Street, likely above the pharmacy. An ad in the Fredericksburg *Daily Star* placed by Dr. Cassidy stated that he was moving his store to another location on Main Street because the shop at 622 was too small. Although the drug store would be moving, he planned to maintain his medical office and residence at the corner of Main/Caroline and Charlotte streets.<sup>64</sup> Subsequent ads for Cassidy's placed in 1919 and 1922, however, continue to list the drug store at 622 Main Street.<sup>65</sup>

In 1912, Fredericksburg government underwent its first large-scale change in over a century, as it switched from a selectman based system to a city manager plan. The new city manager was an integral participant in helping Fredericksburg incorporate the automobile into city planning, an invention that changed the entire pattern of town occupation. The automobile allowed for area residents to live farther out of town and drive to work within the city. In fact, one of the first garages was built on the proposed hotel site along Charlotte Street. Between 1907 and 1912, Dr. Cassidy built a two-story garage behind his drug store and home on Caroline Street. He also quickly realized the need for automotive goods, as he expanded his drug business to include various car-related items. In a 1922 ad, Cassidy not only states, "We are more than pill peddlers or retailers of patented articles and candles", but half of the large ad is dedicated to listing Cassidy's as one of the main distributors of Columbia Auto Tires in Fredericksburg.<sup>66</sup>

The area surrounding Cassidy's, and the City of Fredericksburg in general, continued to change. New neighborhoods developed in the first half of the twentieth century, many of which incorporated the Colonial Revival style—a direct nod to Fredericksburg historic past.<sup>67</sup> By the Great Depression, the population of the general region included tens of thousands, many of whom were employed by large factories located south of town. These industries included the Sylvania Company and the G&H Clothing Plant. Dr. Cassidy died on May 13, 1945, but the pharmacy continued to operate under the direction of his wife Gay and their children Miriam, Virginia and Charles.<sup>68</sup> It remained Cassidy's Drug Store until the family sold it in 1965.

In 1967, the City of Fredericksburg purchased the four parcels located on what had been Lot 35. At that time, 618 and 620 Caroline Street were owned by James and Ruby McGhee, and 622 was owned by Arthur and Grace Cox.<sup>69</sup> The Drug Store and the residential dwellings and outbuildings at 618–620 Caroline Street were demolished to make way for a new parking lot. The dwelling at 616 Caroline Street was also destroyed, but a new one-story, cinderblock building took its place and this configuration remains today.

## Testing the Parking Lot: What's Under that Pavement?

The archival research completed on the project area revealed that the lot had an extensive and extremely varied history. From Dixon's Store in the mid-eighteenth century through Cassidy's Pharmacy in the twentieth century, the lot had been used for commercial and residential purposes for hundreds of years prior to the creation of the city parking lot. But how much of the below-ground remains had been destroyed when the parking lot was created?

### *Where's the 'Good Stuff'? Sampling the Project Area*

To answer this question, Dovetail, in consultation with the City, decided to excavate seven backhoe trenches (BHTs) across the lot. The goal of this work was to examine the physical integrity of the subsurface deposits without removing all of the pavement. This approach would give the archaeologists a window into what information the soils could provide.

A large component of the information obtained during the archival research included maps and plats. The block layout indicated that the best chance for subsurface preservation would be within the western half of the parking lot. All eighteenth-century businesses on the lot faced Caroline Street, but when the carriage shop and nearby dwellings were built in the mid-nineteenth century, they were constructed directly over the main hotel site. Any traces of eighteenth-century occupation along Caroline Street, therefore, were likely destroyed during construction in the mid-nineteenth century. The probability of encountering intact deposits, especially eighteenth and early nineteenth century remains, appeared to be higher within the central and western portions of the lot. These areas were in large part left as open yards with small outbuildings and limited landscaping, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Dovetail placed historic plats over modern maps of the project area to decide the exact location of each trench (Figure 8). A pavement cutter was brought on site to remove the pavement from 5 x 15 foot areas. A backhoe with a smooth-edged bucket was then used to slowly scrape away the soils to expose the deposits beneath. Although all of the earth removed from the area was not screened through ¼-inch mesh, the soils were hand-sifted to recover a representative sample of artifacts from each trench.

### *Layers and Layers of History*

All seven trenches had similar upper stratigraphy: two layers of pavement over a 3–5 inch thick dark gravel deposit on top of orange-tan sand fill. The fill had been purposefully brought to the site in 1967 to level the lot. When the buildings on the site were destroyed to install the parking lot, the city just truncated all of the above-ground elements leaving the below-ground remains in place, including basements, foundations, landscaping, and alley walls. Just removing the upper portions, however, had left several deep features that needed to be filled in. Sand was brought in from the Rappahannock River to create a level parking surface. Luckily, the sand infilling preserved all of the architectural features

left under the surface during the demolition. Architectural remains of previous occupation were encountered in all seven trenches. Preservation proved to be excellent.

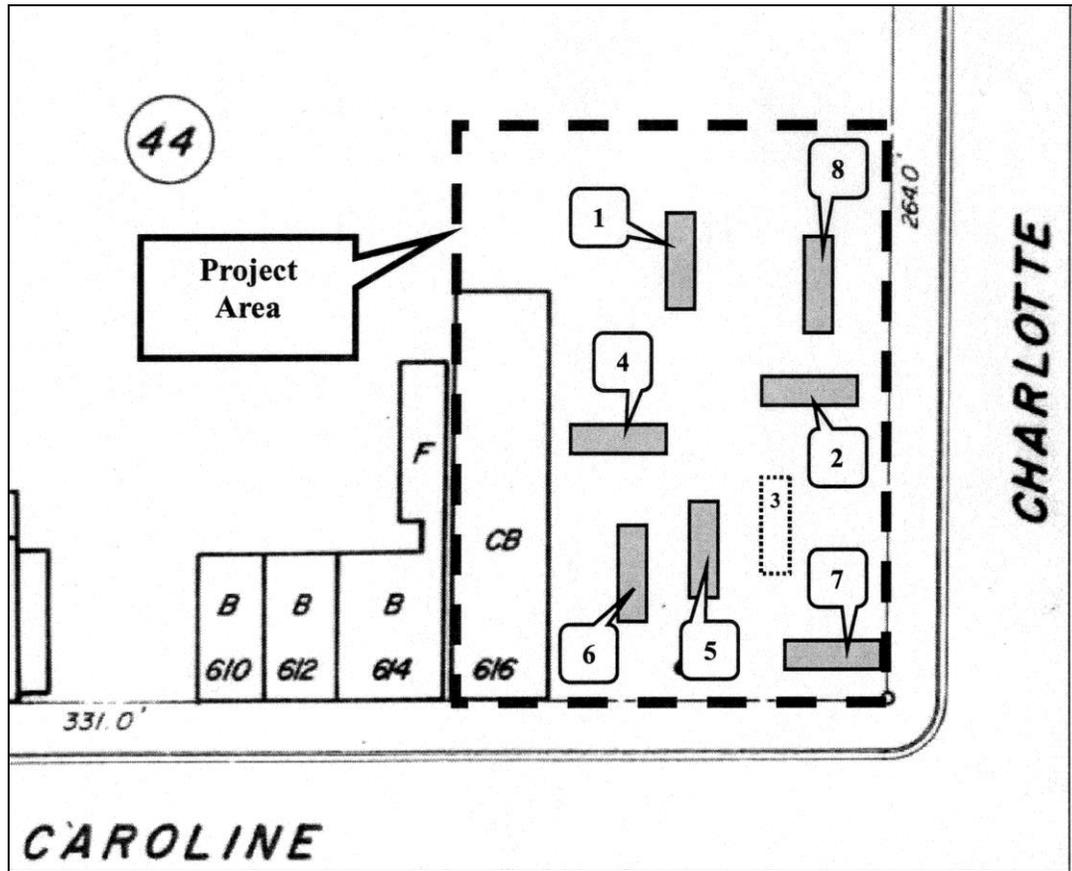


Figure 8: Location of Archaeological Backhoe Trenches at the Marriott Project Area (Trench 3 was not excavated).

Evidence of the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century occupation of Caroline Street was found in BHTs 5, 6, and 7. BHTs 5 and 6 both contained brick foundations and floor remains from the rear (western) elevations of the homes once located at 618 and 620 Caroline Street. BHT 7, placed at the corner of Charlotte and Caroline, contained almost 10 feet of orange-tan sand fill adjacent to the front wall of old 622 Caroline Street. The fill had been purposefully deposited into the store basement. Similarly along Charlotte Street, BHT 2 uncovered the rear foundation of 622 Caroline and portions of the alley behind the building (Figure 9). A section of what was likely the circa 1912 garage behind Cassidy's that faced Charlotte was located in BHT 8. One of the most striking features uncovered within the trenches were two segments of a mid-nineteenth century brick alley wall. The north-south brick wall bounded the rear (east side) of the Hope Iron Foundry that had been located along Princess Anne Street and the commercial and domestic lots along Caroline. Evidence of this wall was found in both BHT 8 and BHT 1. Another nineteenth century brick wall was found in BHT 4, although during the Phase I excavations it was not clear whether this feature was a boundary wall or part of a foundation.

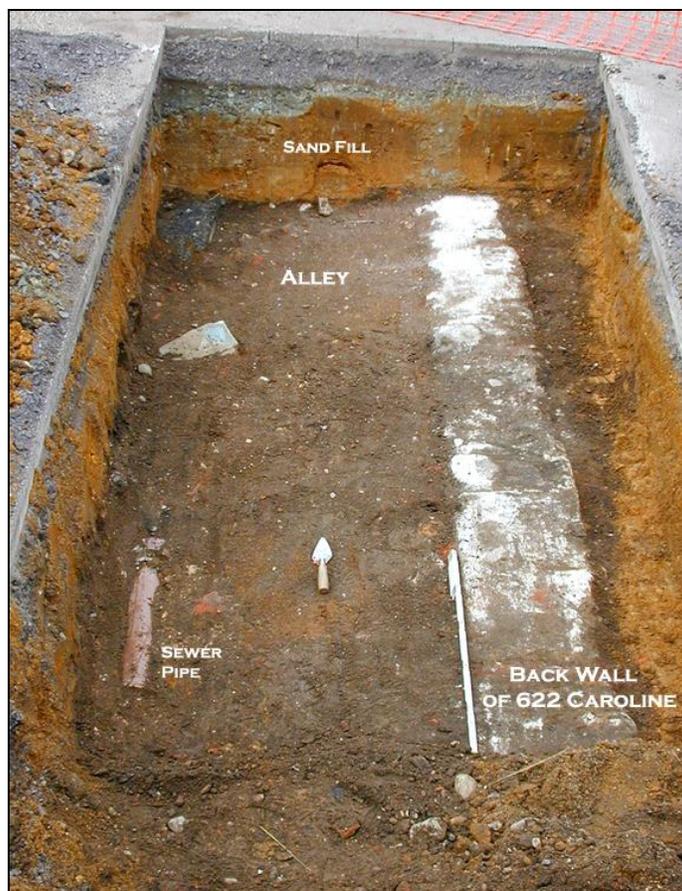


Figure 9: The Alley and Rear Wall of 622 Caroline Street Exposed in BHT 2.

Like many urban lots, the space was used and reused over its three centuries of historic occupation. The alley wall found in BHTs 1 and 8, for example, was built on top of an earlier brick floor (Figure 10). A test unit placed adjacent to the alley wall in BHT 1 uncovered a 3 x 3-foot section of the flooring. A few of the bricks were taken up to examine the stratigraphy below the brick floor, and artifacts were subsequently found up to 20 inches below this flooring. Thus, at least three different uses were found within this one area, all on top of each other. In BHT 4, a thick layer of fill had been brought in sometime during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Under this fill was very burned soil around a stone foundation or floor. The burning was either associated with the 1832 Indian Queen Hotel fire or with an isolated activity that required intense heat, such as a meat house or kitchen. Like BHT 1, a test unit placed within BHT 4 revealed that there are historic layers beneath the stone foundation, revealing repeated urban development.

Artifacts were found across the site and in all seven trenches. These artifacts date from the mid-eighteenth through the twentieth century and include domestic artifacts (ceramics, glass, butchered animal bone), architectural remains (brick, plaster, slate roofing, asbestos roofing, nails), and even personal items (pipe stems, buttons, marbles) (Figure 11). The artifacts represent 300 years of occupation on the lot. Moreover, because



In sum, artifacts from three centuries of Fredericksburg living were uncovered in the project area. Evidence included architectural remains such as foundations and floors, landscape features like walls, and an abundance of artifacts of all varieties. The preservation of the historic deposits was excellent and very unique for an east coast urban lot, especially one with such a long and complex history. Materials from all phases of occupation were noted during the work, including items from Dixon's Store, the Indian Queen Tavern, Pritchard and Thorton's Carriage Shop, and Cassidy's Pharmacy—four businesses that are an excellent representation of Fredericksburg's commercial heritage.

## **So Now What? City Council and Citizens Respond**

The archaeological work uncovered several intact features and a plethora of artifacts dating to the entire occupation range. Moreover, features were clearly seen to be built on top of features, showing the reuse of an urban lot through time. The retention of layered occupation is very rare within the archaeological record of not only Fredericksburg, but of Virginia and urban areas across the United States.

Due to the significance of the archaeological remains and their potential to yield important information about local, state, and national history, Dovetail recommended that the site receive additional archaeological investigations prior to development. The problem with this recommendation, though, was that the City does not have an archaeological ordinance to require the developers to sponsor such work. In addition, there was no clause in the original contract with the developer to support additional studies.

Because of the importance of this site, numerous groups came together to financially and intellectually support additional archaeology. Through the efforts of the Fredericksburg City Council, various local and state groups got together to fund additional research at the site. The work grew to include large-scale excavations and continued public outreach to describe the investigative process to city residents and visitors. The results of this work will be detailed in Part II of this article presented in the subsequent volume of this journal.

When the WPA documented Cassidy's Drug Store and the Indian Queen Tavern lot in the 1930s, the writer mused: "When we look at this modern little drug store and the big lot extending to Princess Anne Street on the west (where there is now an old foundry building and an handsome, modernistic garage and sales room), it is indeed hard to turn the pages of history back, and visualize as to just how this site looked one hundred and seventy seven years ago."<sup>70</sup> The work sponsored by the City and others allowed us to not only visualize the past, but make it tangible.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, Dovetail would like to thank all of the groups who financially contributed to the work at the Marriott site. This includes the City of Fredericksburg, the Inns of Fredericksburg LLC, the Sunshine Foundation, the Virginia Department of

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Reid Howison. *Fredericksburg: Past, Present, and Future* (Fredericksburg, Virginia: J. Willard Adams Press, 1898), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Alvey. *The Streets of Fredericksburg* (Fredericksburg, Virginia: Mary Washington College Foundation, Inc., 1978), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> James R. Mansfield. *A History of Early Spotsylvania*. Berryville, Virginia: Virginia Book Company, 1977), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> John Smith. *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*. Microfilm of original 1624 printing. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> Mansfield, 1977, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> Alvey, 1978, p.1; Mansfield, 1977, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Kerri S. Barile. *Archaeology, Architecture, and Alexander Spotswood: Redefining the Georgian Worldview at the Enchanted Castle, Germanna, Orange County, Virginia*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Anthropology. (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 2004); Ann B. Miller, compiler. *Historic Roads of Virginia: Orange County Road Orders, 1734–1749*. Virginia Highway and Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville: Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Howison 1898.

<sup>10</sup> Map on File, Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

<sup>11</sup> Mansfield, 1977, p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Spotsylvania County Deed Book (SCDB). Deed Book C, p. 140. Spotsylvania, Virginia: Spotsylvania County Circuit Court.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Willis and Paula Felder. *Handbook of Historic Fredericksburg, Virginia*. Fredericksburg, Virginia: Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, 1993), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI). *Field Lewis Store: The Oldest Retail Building in America?* <http://www.hffi.org/Subpage.asp?pageid=7&subpageid=17>. Accessed December 15, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> SCDB C, p. 477.

<sup>17</sup> SCDB E, p. 727.

<sup>18</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, April 25, 1766. Page 3, column 1.; *Virginia Gazette*, March 31, 1768, Page 3, column 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, June 15, 1769. Page 2, column 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> SCDB F, p. 519.

<sup>22</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, May 6, 1773. Page 2, column 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, November 3, 1774. Page 4, Column 2.

<sup>25</sup> Howison 1898.

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- <sup>28</sup> Works Progress Administration Inventory (WPA). Cassidy's Drug Store, formerly known as Indian Queen Tavern. Volume I, pp. 206–210. (Fredericksburg, Virginia: Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1937), p. 209.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 209.
- <sup>30</sup> John Janney Johnson. The Falmouth Canal and Its Mills: An Industrial History. *Journal of Fredericksburg History* 2, 1997, p. 31.
- <sup>31</sup> *Virginia Herald*. April 1, 1790. Page 3, column 4.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> *Virginia Herald*. June 28, 1798. Page 3, column 3.
- <sup>34</sup> MIP Reel 1, Volume 3, No. 18.
- <sup>35</sup> *Virginia Herald*. January 3, 1804. Page 3, column 2.
- <sup>36</sup> *Virginia Herald*. September 10, 1805. Page 2, column 4.
- <sup>37</sup> *Virginia Herald*. July 12, 1808. Page 3, column 3.
- <sup>38</sup> *Virginia Herald*. July 8, 1809. Page 3, column 4.
- <sup>39</sup> SCDB G, p. 274.
- <sup>40</sup> *Virginia Herald*. January 3, 1804. Page 3, column 2.
- <sup>41</sup> *Virginia Herald*. July 24, 1824. Page 3, column 4.
- <sup>42</sup> *Virginia Herald*. February 16, 1825. Page 3, column 5.
- <sup>43</sup> *Virginia Herald*. March 24, 1827. Page 3, column 5.
- <sup>44</sup> *Virginia Herald*. January 16, 1828. Page 3, column 5.
- <sup>45</sup> *Virginia Herald*. April 22, 1829. Page 3, column 3.
- <sup>46</sup> *Virginia Herald*. November 13, 1830. Page 3, column 2.
- <sup>47</sup> *Virginia Herald*. April 28, 1832. Page 3, column 1.
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- <sup>52</sup> SCDB K, p. 181.
- <sup>53</sup> SCDB L, p. 3.
- <sup>54</sup> Ronald Shibley. *Historic Fredericksburg: A Pictorial History*. (Norfolk, Virginia: The Donning Company/Publishers, Inc., 1976), p. 129.
- <sup>55</sup> SCDB L, p. 226.
- <sup>56</sup> *Fredericksburg News*. March 21, 1848. Page 3, column 1.
- <sup>57</sup> SCDB S, p. 260.
- <sup>58</sup> SCDB T, p. 471.
- <sup>59</sup> Map on file, Library of Congress. 1862.
- <sup>60</sup> Willis and Felder 1987.
- <sup>61</sup> Map on File, Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg, Virginia)
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<sup>68</sup> FDB L, p. 518.

<sup>69</sup> FDB 134, p. 43 and 529.

<sup>70</sup> WPA 1973, p. 209.