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# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR RURAL PLAINS

RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK

TREATMENT









*Rural Plains was a beautiful place when the federals got there, all of the place was fenced in & cross fences. Dwelling House & out houses in fine condition, nice fence around the yard."*

Walter M. Shelton

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR RURAL PLAINS RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK TREATMENT

ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS

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FRAMEWORK FOR TREATMENT

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TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND TASKS

Prepared by:  
John W. Hammond, Historical Landscape Architect  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
National Park Service, Boston, Massachusetts, 2016

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This report builds on the work completed in the *Cultural Landscape Report, Part 1, Totopotomoy Creek Unit, Richmond National Battlefield*, completed in 2010 by Dutton and Associates, LLC. That volume included the site history, existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation of the Rural Plains landscape.





## FOREWORD

The Battle of Totopotomoy Creek was fought across a lived-in landscape and the Union forces gathering on the Shelton family farm during May of 1864 found themselves within a setting typical of the medium-sized farms and plantations quilting Richmond's outskirts. This place had been both home and livelihood to a single family and their slaves for more than a century before the war. When the battle commenced Union commanders established artillery positions amidst the family's peach trees, gardens, picket fences and broad shade trees that took less than four days to destroy. Most of the Shelton family never left during the course of the fighting and when the soldiers moved on, the family began reconstructing their lives and home.

The National Park Service now manages the "Rural Plains" landscape to achieve the preservation of the battlefield landscape and to convey to visitors the significance of General Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign through the preservation and interpretation of tangible evidence. Following recent examination and scholarship, the site is beginning to divulge some secrets, and future archeological investigations are expected to help contribute to a clearer understanding of how the landscape has evolved to the present day. Prepared by John W. Hammond of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation with assistance from park staff and in consultation with the Northeast Region's Archeology Program, the following report synthesizes recent research and offers new insights into the historic layout of the landscape. The treatment recommendations appearing in the report are intended to help guide the efforts of current and future stewards of this complex landscape.

David R. Ruth, Superintendent  
Richmond National Battlefield Park





## INTRODUCTION

At Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield, Union and Confederate forces squared off in May, 1864 across the muddy bottomland of the creek, exchanging rifle and artillery fire for four days before moving south to Cold Harbor. The core area of the battlefield was centered on the plantation known as Rural Plains, the home of the Shelton family for nearly three centuries.

Although more than two thousand men were killed or wounded in the fighting, the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek was a relatively minor engagement within General Grant's Overland Campaign, sandwiched between the more significant battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg.<sup>1</sup> Yet, no more significant an event would happen to the Shelton family than the violence and terror that visited their farm that spring. Edwin Shelton, owner at the time of the battle, had expanded the plantation as the Southern economy boomed in the mid-nineteenth century to encompass more than eight hundred acres of farmland, orchards, woodlots, pasture, and gardens. By 1864, Rural Plains was a prosperous and productive farm, generating respectable harvests of wheat, corn, oats, wool, peas and beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, hay, and market produce. In addition to the Shelton family, Rural Plains was home to thirty-one slaves living in quarters located behind the main house and across Studley Road near an overseer's dwelling.

For weeks, the family had heard the rumble of bombardments as the war moved closer. By the end of May, the fighting was at their doorstep as the two armies repositioned themselves for the next test. As long columns of cavalry wound past their brick house to and from the fighting at Haw's Shop, and Confederate forces dug in on the south bank of Totopotomoy Creek a mere eight hundred yards from their home, it became clear that the family was in peril. On May 29, Federal troops arrived at Rural Plains and readied themselves for the coming fight.

The morning of May 30 dawned with the roar of artillery as Union batteries opened fire on the Confederate positions. The responding shots from Confederate guns exploded all around the Shelton house, many crashing through the roof and walls. With Edwin Shelton behind Confederate lines seeking protection for his family, Edwin's wife Sarah, four of their children, and grandchildren sought shelter in the basement of the house. From there they witnessed the savagery of war and the destruction of their farm. Many years later, Walter Shelton, fifteen at

the time of the battle, recalled,

It was terrible on that second day. Shells were striking the house, bricks were falling from the chimneys. The house caught fire three times and General Hancock sent couriers up to put the fire out. One shell went through a cedar chest of bedding before it exploded. The roar of the guns was deafening; we could hardly breathe for the smoke. . . A guard marching along that side of the house had one leg shot off by a cannonball. The two parlors above us were used by the surgeons for amputations, and the yard in front of the house was crowded with ambulances coming and going with the wounded.<sup>2</sup>

The shells that shattered the walls of the house also shattered a way of life that had sustained the family for over a century. During their brief stay at Rural Plains, the Union troops dug long trenches and connected pits across the fields and gardens, dismantled buildings and fences, and cut down orchard trees to fortify their defenses. When they left, they took with them grain, cows, chickens, and horses. The Shelton family emerged from their basement to find a devastated landscape, splintered, scorched, and deeply scarred.

Some of those scars remain visible more than 150 years after the battle. Patched fractures in the brick walls of the Shelton House and slowly weathering trenches and breastworks snake across the landscape. Also present are the more subtle traces of daily life that three centuries of farming has etched into the landscape. Farm lanes and drives that carried horses, wagons, tractors, and farm workers to and from the fields still connect the landscape. Edges of fields that were plowed spring after spring are still marked by hedgerows and berms. Yet more traces of life at Rural Plains lie just beneath the surface of the ground in archeological resources yet to be recovered and understood.

Today, there is an opportunity at Rural Plains to convey the multi-layered story of a war that progressed across a landscape populated with families, farms, businesses, and industry. The battle landscapes of trenches and craters, prospect and cover, violence and desperation, were overlaid on domestic landscapes of farm fields, family gardens, homes, and livelihoods. Rural Plains represents such a landscape where the violence of war collided with everyday life, leaving devastation in its wake. The events of late May, 1864, placed within the context of the long continuum of domestic and agricultural use, tell the story of the impact of war on the land and on the people whose livelihoods depended on it.

The treatment recommendations in this Cultural Landscape Report are intended to foster a clearer understanding of the landscape's long history, and to reveal how processes both violent and gradual can leave an indelible imprint on the land, so that the visitor can understand not only the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek itself and its role in the larger conflict of the Civil War, but also its relationship to a farm and a family that endured through it all.



## PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODS

The National Park Service uses cultural landscape reports as the primary document guiding landscape preservation and also as the primary tool for guiding long-term management. Cultural landscape reports provide treatment guidance within the context of the site's history and significance, extant features and historic character, and current planning objectives and management goals. Treatment guidelines and recommendations developed in the cultural landscape report are grounded in research, inventory documentation, and analysis and evaluation of the landscape characteristics and features that contribute to the site's historic character.

The methodology used in this report follows *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (1998). Methodology includes primary and secondary historical research to develop a narrative site history; surveys of existing documentation, including historic photographs, plan drawings, and narrative descriptions, to determine historic site conditions; and documentation of existing conditions through direct site observations, photography, and surveys of current and recent site plans and aerial photographs.

This volume, the *Cultural Landscape Report for Rural Plains, Part 2*, includes a framework and recommendations for the treatment of the Rural Plains cultural landscape. It also includes an analysis of historic landscape conditions based on archeology and three-dimensional modeling tools to help inform treatment recommendations. This volume follows the *Cultural Landscape Report, Part 1, Totopotomoy Creek Unit, Richmond National Battlefield*, completed in 2010 by Dutton and Associates, LLC. That volume included the site history, existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation of the Rural Plains landscape.

## PROJECT SETTING AND STUDY AREA

Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is located at 7273 Studley Road in Mechanicsville, Virginia, approximately nine miles northeast of Richmond. It is part of Richmond National Battlefield Park, a unit of the National Park System, comprised of eleven Civil War battlefields and engagement sites and related resources around Virginia's capital city. These sites are variously associated with the events of the Civil War, including the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, 1864 Overland Campaign, naval operations along the James River, and the 1864-65 Richmond-Petersburg Campaign (ABPP VA-057).<sup>3</sup> The May 29-31, 1864 Battle of Totopotomoy Creek occurred as part of General Ulysses S. Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign, and immediately preceded the May 31-June 12, 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor that ended the campaign. Several other units of Richmond National Battlefield Park are in close proximity to the Totopotomoy Creek Unit, including

Figure 1. The study area of this report coincides with the Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains park unit boundary, shown here in red. The park unit comprises 124.4 acres and is bounded by Studley Road on the north, Totopotomoy Creek on the west and south, and the Rural Pointe residential development on the east. (OCLP)



Cold Harbor, Beaver Dam Creek, Chickahominy Bluff, and Gaines' Mill.

Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is located within eastern Hanover County, a predominantly rural and agricultural region that also includes several thickly settled towns and communities and industrial complexes. The county seat of Hanover is located seven miles to the northwest. Access to the Totopotomoy Creek Unit is via Studley Road (State Route 606) between Shady Grove Road (State Route 640) and Rural Point Road (State Route 643). Nearby are arterials that lead to Richmond and Interstate 295, an urban bypass that extends north of Richmond and connects with Interstates 64 and 95.

The 124.4-acre Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains occupies an upland knoll overlooking Totopotomoy Creek. Atop the knoll is the Shelton House, an architecturally significant dwelling built between 1724 and 1726. Other cultural features of the property include Union earthworks associated with the May 1864 Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, a late nineteenth or early twentieth-century

agricultural outbuilding, access and farm roads, agricultural fields, remnants of a Shelton family burial ground, and ornamental trees and shrubs associated with a twentieth-century ornamental nursery operation. The site is bounded by Studley Road on the north, Totopotomoy Creek on the west and south, and the Shelton Pointe residential subdivision on the east. To the south, the Bell Creek community occupies a knoll overlooking the creek. The adjacent Wysor property to the south includes an easement protecting surviving Confederate earthworks opposite the Union line on the Shelton property. Land north of Studley Road was formerly part of the Rural Plains property.

Hanover County and the City of Richmond are part of a transition zone between the Tidewater region of Virginia and the Piedmont Plateau region of Virginia, where the coastal plain gradually begins to undulate forming foothills of Virginia's Piedmont. Totopotomoy Creek is located in the eastern, coastal plain portion of the area. The terraced landscape in this area surrounds rivers, marshes, and other tributaries of the York River and the Chesapeake Bay.

In the Tidewater Region of Virginia (an alluvial terrace), land is relatively flat except for ravines and escarpments along tributaries and rivers. Totopotomoy Creek, located along the western and southern boundaries of Rural Plains, is part of the Pamunkey River watershed and drains an area of over 25 square miles. The watershed is primarily forested, although nearly one-third remains in agricultural production. Residential development extends over more than ten percent of the watershed. A small area remains in wetlands.

The area around Rural Plains has been predominantly agricultural through most of the twentieth century. During the late twentieth century, the growth of Richmond led to increased suburban residential development in Hanover County. The county's population grew 36 percent between 1990 and 2000 to 86,320, and over the next seven years grew to an estimated 100,721. The majority of this growth was in the form of small-lot residential subdivisions, including the Shelton Pointe neighborhood, constructed in c.1998 adjoining the Rural Plains property to the east. Despite this development, the area remains largely rural. Hanover County supports farms that produce, "small grains, corn, soybeans, hogs, and beef cattle. A few farms raise sheep, poultry, or dairy cattle. Much of the county is wooded. Wood products are important to the economy of the county."<sup>4</sup>

#### **EXISTING DOCUMENTATION AND CONSULTED SOURCES**

As is often the case with Civil War battles, the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek is well documented through military records, and much of what is known about the Rural Plains landscape prior to the twentieth century comes from these sources. These include official Army records and correspondence, as well as soldiers'

journals and recollections, maps, and drawings of the battlefield. Since the war, much scholarly research has been conducted on Grant's Overland Campaign of 1864, and although Totopotomoy Creek generally receives limited discussion as an episode of the larger campaign, many of these sources describe the general events of the battle as well as the larger context of the campaign.

Beyond the military records, there is sparse historical documentation of the Shelton family and of Rural Plains prior to the 1930s. Most of the civic records predating 1865, including deeds, wills, and court records, were destroyed in a fire in April of that year. Descriptions of the property that do exist are generally vague or incomplete, particularly as they pertain to the composition and layout of the landscape. Despite limited documentation, enough is known, or can be inferred, to describe the character of the landscape during the historic period.

Developing a detailed history of Rural Plains is complicated by the fact that many historical details contained in by early secondary sources originated in anecdotes and family history. Several accounts, such as the marriage of Patrick Henry and Sarah Shelton taking place at Rural Plains, lack supporting documentation, while others, such as the suggestion that the house was originally constructed around 1670, have been demonstrated through archeological and architectural investigation to be incorrect.

Following acquisition of the property by the National Park Service in 2006, several studies were undertaken to establish baseline data on the house, landscape, and archeological resources. The authors and researchers that prepared these reports conducted extensive research on the history of Rural Plains and the Shelton Family, consulting primary and secondary sources, including war records, diaries, civic records, historic maps, photographs, and aerial photographs. In addition to these reports, several primary sources were reexamined directly in the preparation of this report, including maps, photographs, drawings, military records, and battleground drawings.

#### **Cultural Resources Documentation**

The analysis and treatment recommendations in this report build upon the findings of previously published reports. These include the *Cultural Landscape Report, Part 1, Totopotomoy Creek Unit, Richmond National Battlefield* by Dutton and Associates, LLC (2010); *The Shelton House at Rural Plains Historic Structure Report*, by Barbara A. Yocum (2012); *Rural Plains/Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield Cultural Landscape Study* by Tonia W. Horton and Lauren F. Noe (2009); the *Archeological Overview and Assessment/Archeological Identification Study of The Shelton House Precinct* by Dutton and Associates (2010); and the Cultural Landscapes Inventory documentation for Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural

Plains (2015). These reports contain detailed histories of the family, house, and landscape of Rural Plains.

### **Historic Photographs**

No photographs have been located depicting Rural Plains or the Shelton House before the 1920s. Beginning in the late 1920s and into the 1930s, as interest in historic preservation increased, Rural Plains was documented through a number of efforts that included photography. The photographs almost exclusively focus on the exterior of the house, although some details of the landscape can be discerned by examining the background of the photos.

The earliest identified photographs of the house were taken around 1928 for a *New York Times* article about Rural Plains published in August of that year.<sup>5</sup> One photo shows the east façade of the house, with what appear to be small spruce or fir trees flanking the front porch and the boughs of shade trees overhanging the top of the image. A second photo shows the interior of the parlor. Photographs of the house from the 1930s include four photos taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston for the Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South in 1935, three photos taken by T. T. Waterman for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936, and three photos taken by J. Archer Evans for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Virginia Historical Inventory, also taken in 1936. A number of photos document the east façade of the house from about the 1950s onward.

### **Aerial Photographs**

Aerial photographs of Rural Plains have been located dating back to the 1930s, the oldest dated December 24, 1936. This aerial, which depicts the period at Rural Plains shortly after the establishment of the nursery, shows the general spatial organization of the property, including structures, circulation, tree cover, and field arrangement. While the photograph lacks sufficient detail to determine many of the specifics of the landscape composition, the patterns evident in the photo allow differentiation between major uses, such as plowed fields, nursery stock fields, and forest cover. Other aerial photographs from the 1950s and 1960s show the development of the property through time during the twentieth century, revealing an overall stability in the organization of the farm and a general maturation of nursery and hedgerow vegetation. The landscape is also recorded in recent aerial imagery, including high-resolution imagery from 2013 that shows existing conditions in detail.

### **Historic Maps**

Although several historic maps show the vicinity of Rural Plains, most do not provide enough detail to be useful in developing a landscape history. Two maps developed at the time of the Civil War, both showing the battlefields of the Over-



land Campaign, are exceptions. Both maps, drawn under the orders of Bvt. Col. James C. Duane and Bvt. Brig. Gen. Nathan Michler respectively, clearly indicate the Shelton House and the major roads and geographic features around it, including topography, hydrology, and field and forest cover. While some marks on the maps may be interpreted as outbuildings, such as an overseer's house on the north side of the road, the maps are not a complete record of all of the buildings present at the time, nor of the locations or precise arrangement of vegetation, gardens, orchards, or other landscape features.

### First-Hand Accounts

Several important details about the events of the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek and of the appearance of the landscape at that time are recorded in journals and logs of the officers and soldiers that took part in the battle. Sources include Captain Augustus C. Brown of Company H, 4th New York Heavy Artillery, who published his journal entries in a volume titled *Diary of a Line Officer*; the diary of Lieutenant Robert S. Robertson of the 93rd New York Infantry, serving in the First Division Brigade under Colonel Nelson A. Miles; Major W.G. Mitchell, Aide de Camp to General Hancock; and Francis A. Walker, who served as Lieutenant Colonel under General Hancock in 1864.

Additional details are contained in the recollections of Walter Shelton, who as a teen-aged boy sheltered in the basement of the house with his mother and sisters during the battle. Some of his recollections were published in the 1928 *New York Times* article, while others were discovered in a handwritten transcription found in the house after its transfer to the National Park Service. These recollections

contained events of the battle, as well as descriptions of the landscape.

**Figure 2.** Alfred Waud recording the scene at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. (Library of Congress)



### Alfred Waud Drawings

Born in England, Alfred R. Waud studied art at the Government School of Design in London before emigrating to the United States in 1850. In 1861 he began working for *Harper's Weekly* covering the Army of the Potomac's campaigns in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Waud was embedded with the army, traveling from battle to battle making hand drawings of what he saw. These drawings were sent by courier back to the magazine to be published along with descriptions of the battles to give the public timely updates on the progress of the war. Waud witnessed every battle of the Army of the Potomac from the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861 to Petersburg in 1865, often making quick sketches during the heat of the battle.



Figures 3 and 4. Two drawings completed by Alfred Waud during the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek in May 1864. Top: view of the Shelton House and its surroundings. Bottom (detail), view of the battlefield from the vantage of the upstairs window of the Shelton House looking west toward Totopotomoy Creek. (Library of Congress)

Alfred Waud was present at the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek and made two drawings of Rural Plains. One was a perspective of the battlefield drawn from the upstairs window of the Shelton House looking west toward Totopotomoy Creek. This drawing depicts Union troops in a field of wheat or corn facing the Confederate Lines, which are just visible in the background of the drawing. No structures or other built features are visible.

The second drawing was an unpublished depiction of the Shelton House and its surroundings. In addition to the house itself, the drawing shows a paled fence in the foreground, a cluster of smaller buildings to the west of the house, another structure and what appears to be a birdhouse on the east, as well as several large



shade trees around the house. The drawing may also depict a number of features that are difficult to identify conclusively, including arched gates, a cold frame, and a section of paled fence that has been removed and is leaning against the intact fence.

### ARCHEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICAL INVESTIGATION

The first archeological testing at Rural Plains was conducted in 1993 in conjunction with the installation of the high-voltage electrical transmission lines along the north bank of Totopotomoy Creek. This work identified two sites that were added to the archeological listing. The two sites, located in the northwest corner of the property near the creek, were described as temporally unidentified prehistoric sites, and neither site was considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Figure 5. Map of the Shelton House area showing the limits of the Archeological Overview and Assessment by Dutton and Associates in 2009. (OCLP)**

An archeological investigation was conducted by Dovetail Associates in 2009 in conjunction with the construction of the existing visitor parking lot. Sixty-six shovel test pits were excavated to locate potential archeological resources in the



area of the parking lot, and a 1-meter-square test unit was placed to determine if the existing driveway dates to the historic period. The shovel test pits located resources likely associated with a nineteenth-century structure of unknown, but probably agricultural, function. The study also concluded that the existing driveway alignment at the point of the test unit is not historic.

### **Archeology Overview and Assessment**

More extensive testing was conducted in 2008 and 2009 for the preparation of the Archeological Overview and Assessment, published in 2010 by Dutton and Associates. This work, constituting Phase I of a two-phase project, was focused around the house and domestic core with the goal of locating a number of features present at the time of the battle, including outbuildings and slave quarters, earthworks, fences, and the central walkway leading to the front of the house. Fifty-two shovel test pits were excavated along with twenty-two larger test units. The excavation work was supplemented by geophysical testing in an area southwest of the house conducted by Bruce Bevin of the firm Geosight with the objective of locating a portion of former earthworks. The geophysical survey found a series of anomalies, including the likely location of a large outbuilding in the southwestern portion of the area under geophysical survey and a linear feature in the northeastern section.

### *Earthworks*

The primary objective of the geophysical investigation was determining the location of Union Earthworks southwest of the house. The investigators used ground-penetrating radar (GPR) and electromagnetic conductivity instrument to search

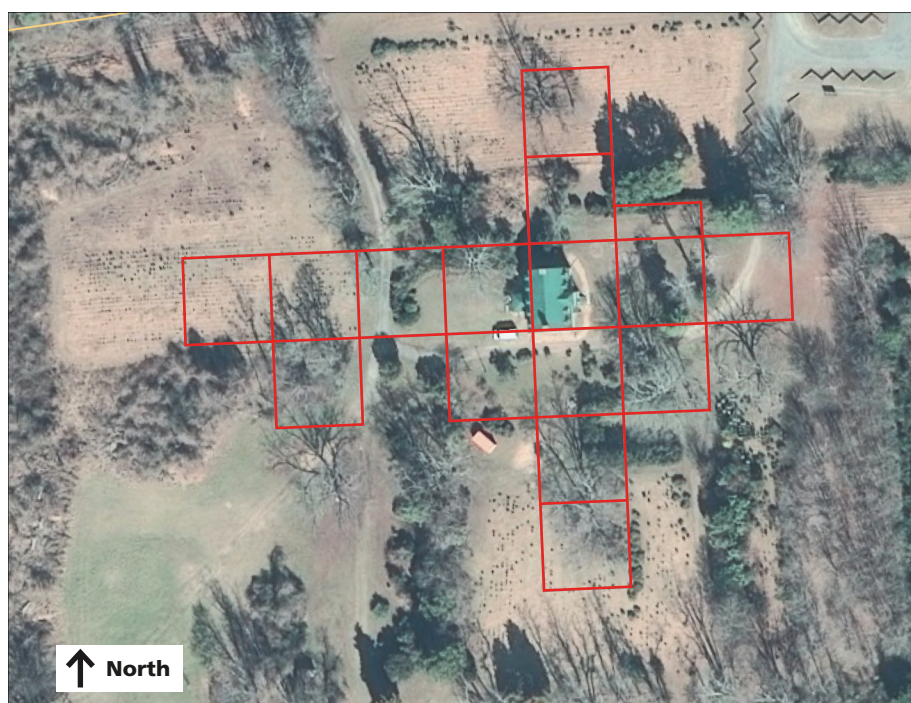


Figure 6. Map of the Shelton House area showing the 20-meter grids covered by the geophysical investigations in 2015. (OCLP)

for anomalies. Ground-penetrating radar detected a number of subsurface disturbances consistent with filled areas, trenches, or borrow pits. A linear feature in the general alignment and possible location of the Union earthworks was detected along the eastern edge of the investigated area, possibly indicating a filled trench or borrow pit for earthworks parapets. These features, however, are located in an area that was heavily used throughout the historic period and contained at least two structures as recently as the 1930s. The anomalies may indicate features and disturbances unrelated to the former earthworks. Excavations in the area of the potential earthworks anomalies did not find any Civil War-era features.

### *Outbuildings*

Dutton and Associates established a grid of 52 shovel test pits in the area west of the Shelton House with the objective of locating former outbuildings, including the slave quarters and other structures mentioned in contemporary accounts and depicted in the Alfred Waud sketch. Based on the findings of these shovel test pits, ten 1-meter test units were excavated in the area. A total of 1,566 artifacts were recovered within the area, including domestic and architectural refuse dating primarily to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and extended into the twentieth century. Subsurface features consisted of possible living surfaces, post holes, linear features, a rectangular feature, an irregular feature, possible refuse pits, and a circular feature. Dutton mapped the density of brick and non-brick artifacts and superimposed them over subsurface features to suggest possible locations of former structures. While the density and distribution of the architectural and domestic artifacts are consistent with the former presence of domestic structures, more investigation is needed to confirm that these were the slave quarters and outbuildings present at the time of the battle.

### *Fence Lines*

Five test units were excavated to the southeast of the Shelton House in an attempt to identify features associated with historic fence lines. Two of the five units contained a single posthole feature each that is consistent with a fence post. These post hole features are approximately eight feet apart and in a line parallel to the south façade of the house, reinforcing the possibility that they represent the location of a former fence. A proportionally large number of kitchen artifacts were uncovered in the five test units, indicating that the area was likely either the site of a domestic structure or the location of a refuse dump. The archeological data did not provide a conclusive date for the post holes, and it could not be determined if the post hole features indicate a fence that was present at the time of the battle.

### *Circulation*

Three test units were excavated in the east (front) yard of the house, arranged in a line with the center line of the house, in an attempt to locate the central walkway to the house. The excavations revealed the surface of a walkway with materials of a



twentieth-century origin. The surface was not excavated to determine if it covered layers of walkway surface that date to earlier periods, nor was the width of the walkway determined.

### **Geophysical Investigations**

In order to inform the research questions and locations of excavations in Phase II of the archeological investigations at Rural Plains, the Northeast Regional Archeology Program, in collaboration with Richmond National Battlefield Park and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, conducted extensive geophysical investigations in 2015 in the areas around the Shelton House. The project covered 1.5 acres of area around the house and involved the use of ground-penetrating radar, a gradiometer, a resistivity meter, and a conductivity meter.

Data was collected within fifteen 20 x 20-meter grids that extended west, south, east, and north of the house. Gradiometry and resistivity were measured in all fifteen grids, while ground penetrating radar was used in thirteen grids, and conductivity was measured in only seven grids due to time and technical constraints. The data gathered for the project was processed by appropriate software, producing imagery of anomalies indicative of potential subsurface features. The anomalies may indicate buried features and artifacts, but they may be caused by tree roots, buried stumps, or natural variations in the soil structure. The anomalies detected in 2015 will be used to locate shovel test pits and test units in Phase II of the archeological investigations.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **SUMMARY OF SITE HISTORY**

The Shelton Family owned and lived on the property known as Rural Plains for nearly 300 years beginning in the 1720s until the property was acquired by the National Park Service in 2006. Domestic and agricultural use of the property during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries resulted in a pastoral landscape of open fields, orchards, woodlots, hedgerows, fences, roads and pathways, waterways, and domestic features. Although various aspects of the property have evolved throughout this period to reflect changing agricultural practices, crops, and products, the overall character of the place has remained relatively constant.

The Civil War introduced abrupt and sweeping changes to the landscape of the Shelton property. The Battle of Totopotomoy Creek saw the presence of Union soldiers on the Sheltons' land and included the construction of earthen fortifica-

tions extending to the south, southwest, and west of the Shelton House. These fortifications provided cover for Union infantry and artillery, which engaged their Confederate counterparts on the opposite side of Totopotomoy Creek. During the course of the battle, the Shelton House was used as a Union signal station, drawing fire from the Confederate artillery. Its basement hallway was used as a field headquarters by Union General Winfield S. Hancock, and Shelton family members sought refuge there from the artillery bombardment. Despite being struck by more than fifty artillery shells, the house survived the battle, as did its occupants.

Diminished in size since the antebellum years, the Shelton property continued to be used for agricultural purposes following the Civil War. Consistent with regional trends, crop production shrank significantly during this time, as did the amount of livestock raised and the overall value of the farm itself. The property was mortgaged several times, and the farm continued to struggle until its acquisition by Walter Shelton's son, William in 1903. Around this time the land began to be used for truck farming, with its produce transported to markets in Richmond. About 1927 William R. Shelton Sr. (by this time he had a son, William R. Shelton Jr.) started the Rural Plains Nursery during the height of the Colonial Revival movement. The Shelton nursery was in contact with Arthur Shurcliff, restoration landscape architect for Colonial Williamsburg, and Virginia landscape architect Charles Gillette, both of whom were significant forces in the Colonial Revival movement. Focusing on the cultivation of English boxwoods, the Rural Plains Nursery would ultimately produce over 120 ornamental plant species. With the passing of William Shelton, Sr. in 1958, the house and property was devised to his children William R. Shelton, Jr. and Mary Winn Shelton. William Jr. continued to operate the Rural Plains Nursery throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

Beginning in the 1920s, local groups were eager to commemorate the events of the Civil War in and around Richmond. Two roadside markers were erected along Route 606 near Rural Plains. A cast iron Battlefield Markers Association marker, or "Freeman Marker" as they came to be known, was installed in a stone base in 1925, and an Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities marker was placed in 1932. The house was documented in a 1936 Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory, and by 1975 had been listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The property was sold to the Totopotomoy Battlefield at Rural Plains Foundation in 2000, subject to a life estate retained by William Shelton, Jr. In 2006, the 124-acre property was conveyed by the foundation to the National Park Service for the creation of the Totopotomoy Creek Unit of the Richmond National Battlefield Park. The conveyance document was prepared incorporating the life estate for Mr. Shelton, but he passed away in 2006 just prior to the transfer.

Richmond National Battlefield Park has since initiated a variety of efforts intended to stabilize and preserve the buildings and landscapes of the Totopotomoy Creek Unit, including rehabilitative projects on the Shelton House, archeological surveys on select portions of the property, a nursery stock inventory and assessment, a Historic Structures Report, a Cultural Landscape Survey, and a Cultural Landscape Report. These initial efforts provide the foundation of future projects to preserve, protect, and interpret the Totopotomoy Creek Unit of the Richmond National Battlefield Park.

### **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is a contributing site of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, which comprises 11 discontinuous administrative units encompassing 15 sites and a total of approximately 3,629 acres in and around the cities of Richmond and Mechanicsville, Virginia, within Henrico, Hanover, and Chesterfield counties. The park is associated with Union attempts to capture the Confederate capital city during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign and 1864 Overland Campaign under Major General George McClellan and Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, respectively. The majority of the contributing resources within the park are associated with battle events that occurred on the fields and wooded areas around Richmond. Most of the battlefields, particularly Cold Harbor, contain visible remnants of field fortifications that reflect military tactics at the time of the Civil War. The park also contains portions of lines of permanent fortifications that ringed the city and protected it from Union capture until the end of the war.

Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is significant under National Register Criteria A, C, and D. The site is nationally significant under Criterion A in the area of Military History as the site of the May 29-31, 1864 Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, in which Union forces attempted to find a way across Totopotomoy Creek, which was defended by entrenched Confederate forces on its south side. The site is also nationally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commemoration for its association with the Civil War battlefield memorialization and preservation movement, which led to two commemorative markers being placed on or adjacent to the Rural Plains property. Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture for its long history of continuous agricultural use, spanning colonial, antebellum, and reconstruction periods, and continuing into the twentieth century. The Shelton House is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of early Georgian architecture in middle Virginia. Finally, Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains is significant under Criterion D in the area of Archeology for its continuing potential to yield valuable information in all of its

areas of significance.

The period of significance for Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains begins in 1725, the approximate date of construction of the Shelton House, and ends in 1932, when the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities erected a commemorative sign on the north boundary of the property. The overall period of significance for the site comprises several overlapping periods related to the various areas of significance. For its association with the Civil War and the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, the period of significance extends from 1862, when the property was first impacted by military activity, to the end of the Overland Campaign in 1864. The 2012 Historic Structure Report for the Shelton House establishes the period of significance for the architecture of the house as 1725 to 1864. The period of significance for the agricultural significance extends from 1725 to 1927, when the primary production of Rural Plains transitioned from food crops to ornamental vegetation for the nursery operation. The period of significance for commemoration covers the years from 1925, when the Freeman Marker #51 was installed, and 1932, when the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities marker was installed.

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains represents an integral component of General Ulysses S. Grant's attempts to breach the Confederate defenses and move on to Richmond. Here, Union troops attempted to cross Totopotomoy Creek, which was strongly defended by Confederate forces entrenched on the west side.

The historic character of the Rural Plains landscape is reflected in the remaining landscape characteristics and features: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Contributing features include the Shelton House and corn crib; the Entrance Drive, Pear Lane, Farm Lanes, and the trace of the former alignment of Studley Road; large shade trees and ornamental vegetation around the Shelton House; Federal earthworks, agricultural berms and ditches, and banks along Pear Lane; and cemetery headstones and commemorative markers. These landscape patterns and their surviving features continue to convey the significance of the landscape as a battlefield and as a physical record of eighteenth and nineteenth-century architecture and agricultural practices.

The significance of Rural Plains as the site of the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek is conveyed through the extant Shelton House, which appears much as it did at the time of the battle. The house was used as headquarters for General Winfield

Hancock and as a Union signal station, suffering significant damage from Confederate shells as members of the Shelton family sheltered in its basement. The spatial relationships between the house, Studley Road, Totopotomoy Creek, the extant open fields, and the landscape's topographical land forms help foster an understanding of the events of the battle and the challenges faced by the Union Army as it tried to cross the creek. The significance of the battle is further conveyed through the visible remains of the Union earthworks, which at the time of the battle cut across the property from Studley Road to Totopotomoy Creek south of the house. Of the approximately 3,000 lineal feet of earthworks dug by the Union troops within the current property boundary, about half remain discernible today. More sections of earthworks may be revealed through additional vegetation clearing.

The architectural significance of the Shelton House as an early eighteenth century brick dwelling is evident in the preserved architectural details, materials, and siting, including the Flemish bond bricks with glazed headers. Built in 1725, the house underwent periodic renovations during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, but alterations generally preserved the basic form and structure of the house. Today the Shelton House retains a high degree of integrity for the year 1864, exhibiting an exterior appearance consistent with what was depicted at the time of the battle.

The historic layout and operation of the Rural Plains plantation is evident in the existing landscape characteristics, particularly the spatial organization, circulation, and topography. Historic field arrangement is revealed today in existing agricultural and nursery stock fields, as well as the hedgerows, berms, ditches, and farm lanes that continue to organize the landscape. Even in areas that have reverted to forest, topographical features and variations in forest vegetation mark the former field extents. Pear Lane is likely a vestige of an early circulation system that provided field access and accommodated mobility through the plantation.

Notable changes since the historic period have altered the character of the landscape. The Shelton House was once the nucleus of a complex of more than a dozen structures that provided living quarters, specialized facilities, and storage for the operation of the farm. The loss of historic buildings, including slave quarters, domestic outbuildings, barns, sheds, and other farming structures, has diminished the ability of the landscape to convey its historic spatial organization and the agricultural and domestic operation of the plantation. The establishment of the Rural Plains Nursery in 1927 and the conversion of many of the agricultural fields to ornamental plant production altered the character of the landscape. The reduction in the total area under agricultural cultivation has caused many of the former fields to revert to forest, reducing distant views and diminishing the former feeling of openness that characterized the landscape during the historic period.

Despite these changes, the Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains landscape retains sufficient characteristics and historic features to convey its significance. The landscape retains the integrity aspects of Location, Design, and Association, clearly exhibiting important spatial relationships between the house, creek, circulation system, topographical features, and Federal earthworks necessary to convey the site's significance. The aspects of Materials and Workmanship are exhibited in the Shelton House, as well as the topographical features that convey historic agricultural practices; however these aspects are diminished by the loss of many of the structures, small-scale features, and agricultural fields that were present during the historic period. The aspect of Feeling has been diminished by the loss of historic views and open areas and the presence of ornamental nursery stock fields. Although the setting remains largely rural, it is diminished by the predominance of forested land and the development of suburban neighborhoods in proximity to the park unit.

### **SUMMARY OF TREATMENT**

The primary objectives of treatment at Rural Plains is to convey the historic spatial relationships of the landscape, enhance the historic character of the domestic core, and facilitate an understanding of the events of the battle, layout of the battlefield, and the proximity of the fighting to the house and family. Treatment will emphasize the distinction between the domestic core and the agricultural landscape beyond through selective vegetation removal and establishment of expanded agricultural fields or open meadows. The domestic character and the spatial and functional relationships of the house and surrounding domestic core will be conveyed through the installation of interpretive structures, cultivation of domestic vegetation, and reestablishment of historic circulation patterns. Treatment guidelines and tasks are organized by landscape characteristics: spatial organization, vegetation, topography, circulation, and buildings and structures.

### **Spatial Organization**

The reestablishment of important spatial relationships at Rural Plains is accomplished through the removal of select vegetation near the domestic core to restore a more open character and offer distant views to the south and west. Vegetation to be removed includes hedgerows, nursery stock fields, boxwood fields, and forested areas west and south of the domestic core. Vegetation removal will be focused on areas providing the greatest benefit to historic character, either by connecting spaces that are already open or by restoring important views in the direction of the battle. Select vegetation around the house, including some hedges, ornamental, and naturalized vegetation, will be removed to help foster an understanding of the arrangement and character of the domestic core and to support ongoing archeological work.

**Vegetation**

Management of the vegetation at Rural Plains is intended to emphasize the distinction of character between the domestic core and the agricultural landscape and to create an overall character of domesticity amid a working landscape. This will be accomplished primarily through the careful management of turf, meadow, and agricultural areas, the cultivation of shade trees and ornamental vegetation within the domestic core, and the establishment of an orchard.

**Topography**

Extant remnants of the Union earthworks will be made more visible by removing forest vegetation along the portion closest to the house and installing a cover of tall grass. This action will help convey the layout of the battlefield and emphasize the close proximity of the fighting to the house and its occupants. The earthworks further from the house will be preserved under a protective cover of native forest.

**Circulation**

Historic circulation patterns will be restored by reestablishing the northern loop driveway along its historic alignment and removing the southern loop driveway. Overall circulation through the property will be accommodated by an expanded pedestrian trail system and farm/service lanes that will provide access to earthworks, the cemetery, Totopotomoy Creek, and agricultural fields. Visitor access will be improved through the establishment of an accessible route from the parking lot to the Shelton House.

**Buildings and Structures**

The organization and character of the domestic core of Rural Plains will be conveyed through the installation of interpretive structures based on elements visible in the Waud drawing and spatial analysis of the landscape composition. Structures include paled fences around the house and cemetery and interpretive outbuildings that may provide park storage or other functions.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 The American Battlefield Protection program designates the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek (VA-057), including Hawes Shop, Crumps Creek, and Bethesda Church, as Class B (having a direct and decisive influence on their campaign, but less than a direct impact on the course of the war) with inconclusive results. The battlefield has a preservation Priority IV.1 (poor integrity). National Park Service, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, 1993.
- 2 William H. Shelton, "A Mansion Rich in Virginia's History," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 August 1928: 74.
- 3 *Civil War Advisory Commission Report*.
- 4 Robert Hodges, Glenn Richardson, J. Paul Sutton, James E. Belshan, Thomas W. Simpson, W. Scott Barnes, and James E. Keys, Jr., "Soil Survey of Hanover County, Virginia" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), 1.
- 5 Shelton, 74.



## ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS

The *Cultural Landscape Report, Part 1: Totopotomoy Creek Unit, Richmond National Battlefield Park*, completed by Dutton and Associates, LLC in 2010, included an analysis and evaluation of the significance and integrity of the Rural Plains landscape, comparing historic and existing conditions of the relevant landscape characteristics. The comparative analysis provides an understanding of to what extent the property and its resources currently reflect their character and appearance during the period of significance. While the analysis and evaluation in Part 1 describes the general appearance and overall patterns of the Rural Plains landscape during the historic period, it was not sufficiently detailed to inform treatment recommendations. This chapter builds upon the analysis of Part 1 to provide additional analysis intended to address specific questions about the historic conditions of the landscape. These questions focus on the overall organization of the landscape, the arrangement and character of vegetation present during the historic period, and the location historic features such as the fence, outbuildings, and earthworks.

The limited documentary evidence outlined in the previous section provides an incomplete picture of historic conditions at Rural Plains. While sources like soldiers' accounts and the Alfred Waud drawings indicate the presence of certain features in the landscape, they generally lack sufficient detail to determine information like location, arrangement, size, and materials. The sparse documentation presents a challenge in generating a comprehensive program of treatment options. Efforts are currently underway to supplement the documentary evidence through archeological investigation. New information obtained through archeology can be combined with landscape analysis utilizing a variety of methods to generate a more complete representation of historic conditions at Rural Plains over time.

Primary sources examined in the following analysis include the drawing of the Shelton House by Alfred Waud and the 1936 aerial photograph of the property. The Waud drawing is the only document providing visual evidence of the layout and character of the house and its immediate surroundings at the time of the battle. Information about the spatial organization of the domestic core can be derived by analyzing the spatial relationships of the features depicted by Waud. The 1936 aerial photograph shows the layout of the plantation as a whole in the early twentieth century, but it also reveals larger patterns of organization, circula-

tion, and land use that are often persistent and difficult to change. It is likely that the spatial relationships evident in the 1936 aerial photograph reflect broad organizational patterns present at the time of the battle.

The following narrative details the available information about the landscape and how it was synthesized to develop graphic period plans and narrative descriptions of Rural Plains in 1864, the time of the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, and 1927, when the operation of the farm transitioned to a commercial nursery. The analysis includes descriptions of the overall character of the landscape, followed by questions related to spatial organization, vegetation, and buildings and structures.

## **OVERALL CHARACTER**

### *1864*

By the 1860s, Rural Plains was a prosperous plantation, comprising more than eight hundred acres of land stretching out on both sides of Studley Road. The Shelton homestead stood out prominently in the broad, open landscape, a handsome brick house nestled among tall shade trees, surrounded by a cluster of buildings. Fences crossed the landscape; an orderly fence of whitewashed palings defined the house yard, while rough rail fences snaked along the road and confined the livestock. Along the steep ravines and twisting bottomland of Totopotomoy Creek, dense thickets and woodlands fringed the plantation.

While the Shelton House was an impressive home at the time of its construction, by the standards of the mid-nineteenth century the house, while comfortable, was not particularly remarkable for its size or grandeur. Rural Plains appears to have lacked much of the formality and ornamentation exhibited at many of the larger plantation estates of the time, and no contemporary descriptions mention formal gardens or grand symmetrical design elements of the Georgian style. That is not to say that the domestic area lacked all ornamentation. Walter Shelton described the place as beautiful, mentioning the paled fence and arched gates. Farm houses of the period typically featured roses, flowering shrubs and vines, cutting gardens, and other ornamental vegetation, as well as decorative features such as fences, gates, benches, and birdhouses. What appears to be a birdhouse is visible in the foreground of the Alfred Waud sketch of the house.

Behind the house was a cluster of outbuildings, including a kitchen and quarters for the domestic slaves. The area between these buildings and the house would have been primarily a utilitarian space, and many domestic chores would have been performed out of doors in this area, including food preparation, cooking, washing, and mending. The area would have subsequently shown the character of intensive use, with worn, hard-packed ground and numerous domestic items such as tools, buckets, firewood, and stools placed about. Some slaves kept their



**Figure 7. Conceptual rendering of Rural Plains based on the 1864 drawing by Alfred Waud. The overall character of Rural Plains at the time of the battle was agricultural and domestic, with utilitarian structures and landscape features. The house was surrounded by large shade trees and featured informal ornamental vegetation. (OCLP)**

own vegetable plots and chickens, which would have presumably been close to the quarters.<sup>1</sup> An outbuilding of unknown function, perhaps associated with the family's kitchen garden, also appears in the right-foreground of the Waud drawing.

Beyond the domestic core, the landscape exhibited an agricultural character. While lacking ornamentation, vegetation would have exhibited the cultivation and care inherent in a working landscape. Outside of the wooded areas, brush and overgrown vegetation would have been minimal, and the geometric patterns of fields and orchards would have been prominent. The landscape would have shown the patterns of continuous use, with worn farm lanes and footpaths, close-cropped grass in the pastures and paddocks, and taller grass and weeds along fences, structures, and other boundaries.

### 1927

Over the almost seventy year span between 1864 and 1927, Rural Plains underwent dramatic changes in its scale and operation. The large-scale agriculture supported by slave labor gave way to work sustained by hired hands, small-scale truck farming, and finally a commercial nursery operation. Visually, however, the core of the Rural Plains farm retained much of the character it exhibited in the nineteenth century, with open fields, practical domestic and agricultural structures, and few modern intrusions.

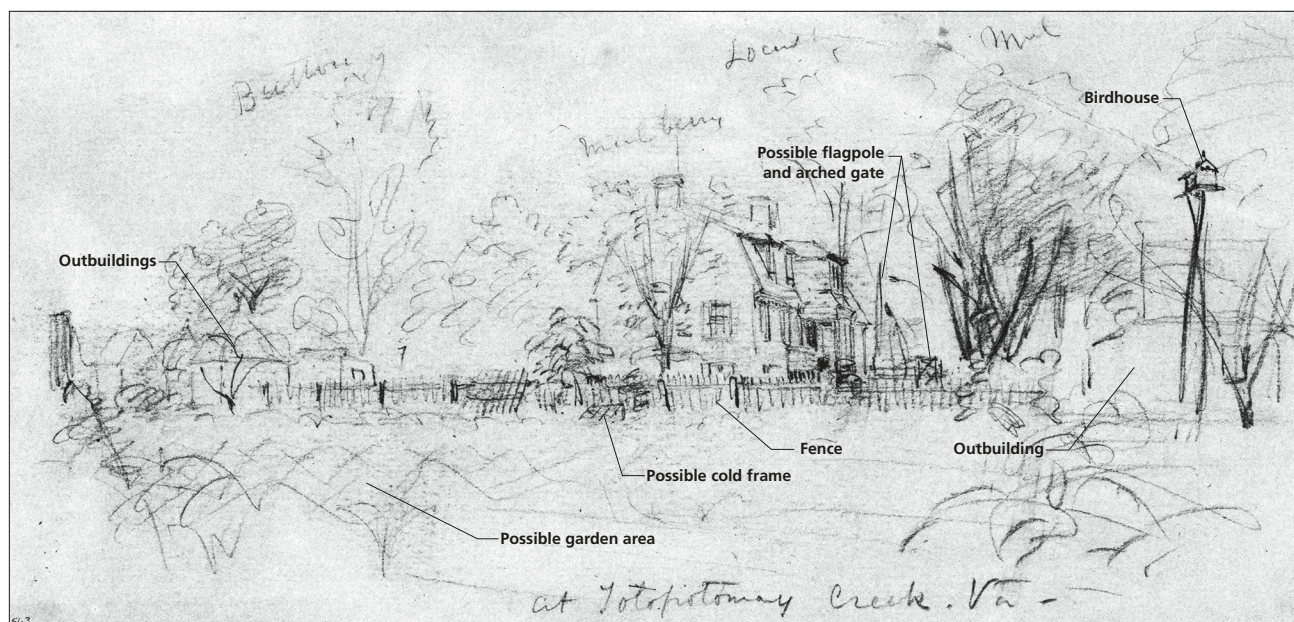
In the 1920s, the overall activity in the farm landscape and in the domestic core would have been much less than it had been in the mid nineteenth century. With less than half the acreage than had been farmed in the mid-nineteenth century, there would have been fewer farm workers helping the Sheltons cultivate their land, and these workers lived off-site, leaving the farm each night. The domes-





**Figures 8 and 9. Although photographs from the 1930s show an overall tidy character exhibited by plantings around the house (top), age and disrepair are evident in the house and landscape (bottom). (Top and Bottom: Library of Congress)**

tic core would have been almost exclusively used by the family, with few if any domestic workers helping the family with daily chores. Nonetheless, the domestic core would have exhibited the characteristic mix of utilitarian functionality with domestic ornamental touches.



**Figure 10.** The second drawing by Alfred Waud depicts the Shelton House and its immediate surroundings as they appeared at the time of the battle. In addition to the house, the drawing includes a paled fence, several outbuildings, and what appears to be a birdhouse. Other marks on the drawing may be difficult to identify, but may depict a cold frame, a trellis or arched gate, and possibly a flagpole. (Library of Congress, annotated by OCLP)

By the 1920s, the house, outbuildings, and landscape features would have exhibited a character of age, with weathered materials, worn surfaces, and incremental patches and repairs. Photographs from the 1920s and 1930s show an informal but overall tidy character to the landscape around the house.

#### *Post-1927*

In the late 1920s, the establishment of the Rural Plains Nursery significantly altered the character of the landscape. Many of the areas closer to the house, including areas formerly used for agricultural fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards, were employed in the cultivation of nursery stock. The rows and fields of shrubs and small trees that surrounded the house created a starkly different character from what had been there before. This was compounded by the growth of hedgerows and the further encroachment of forested areas on former agricultural fields. This change in character increased over the years as the nursery stock fields and hedgerows matured, creating a sense of enclosure through much of the landscape.

## **SPATIAL ORGANIZATION**

Throughout the historic period, the landscape of Rural Plains was organized by the house and domestic core, which included the yard, garden, and domestic structures, and the larger agricultural landscape beyond, which included agricultural fields, orchards, and uncultivated forested areas and wetlands. The domestic core was characterized by smaller spaces enclosed by fences, clustered features, shade trees, and ornamental vegetation, while the agricultural landscape was dominated by broad, open fields and distant tree lines. The following discussion



addresses these two organizing zones in turn.

### **Domestic Core**

#### **1864**

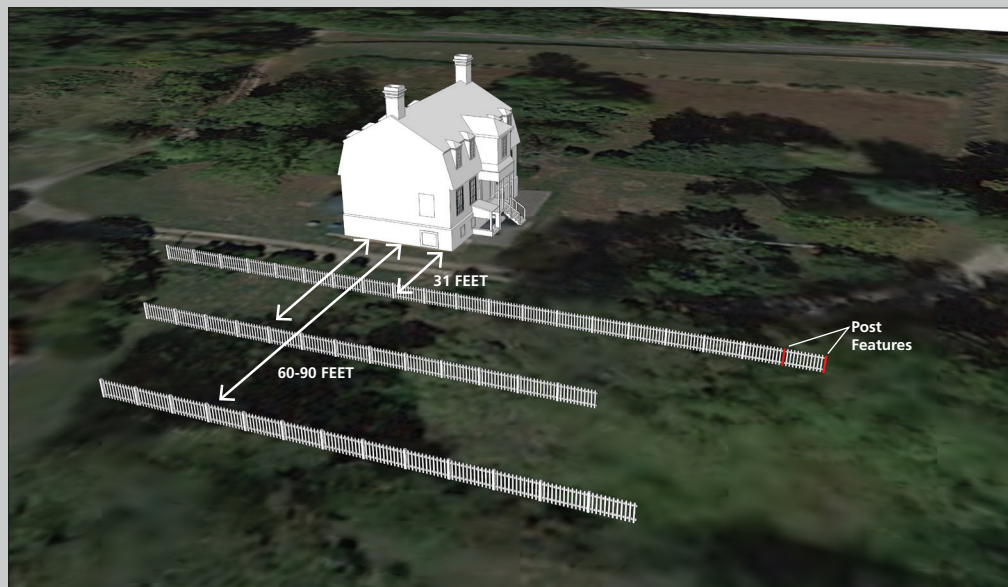
Details of the spatial organization of Rural Plains before the 1930s are poorly understood. Civil-War-period maps lack detail, indicating only the approximate location of the house, fields, and woodlands. The best sources for information about the layout of the plantation at the time of the battle are the soldiers' descriptions and the 1864 sketches by Alfred Waud. The drawing of the house and surrounding areas appears to show the house in its present configuration, with a row or cluster of buildings to the west. Another structure is visible on the right side of the sketch, appearing to indicate that it was located east or southeast of the house; however the sketch lacks sufficient detail to determine the exact layout of the house and its outbuildings.

The Shelton House was mentioned in several soldiers' accounts of the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, being described as a "large brick house" located on the ridge above the creek. The presence of outbuildings to the rear of the Shelton House was also noted in the account of Augustus C. Brown, who described a "semi-circle of negro quarters" of frame and log construction located between the Shelton House and the Union Earthworks to its west (Brown 1906: 58). The area in and around this cluster would have been heavily used for domestic and utility functions, resulting in a surface of compacted earth and little vegetation.

Other details contained in Lt. Robertson's account include reference to a garden containing strawberries, surrounded by a palmed fence. The Union skirmish line, which was presumably oriented perpendicular to Studley Road and traveling from east to west toward the creek, had to remove palings from the fence to pass through. This scenario is consistent with a fence that is perpendicular and relatively close to the road, such as a fence surrounding the Shelton House yard. The existence of this fence is supported by the Alfred Waud sketch as well as the recollections of Walter Shelton; however the extent and exact location of the fence remain unclear.

Walter Shelton added more detail to the layout and features of Rural Plains at the time of the battle. In the early twentieth century, he recorded his recollections on a paper that was later found among the Shelton family papers in the house. According to Shelton, "Rural Plains was a beautiful place when the federals got there, all of the place was fenced in & cross fences. Dwelling House & out houses in fine condition nice fence around the yard." In a *New York Times* article published in 1928, Shelton said that after the battle, "all the beautiful palings and arched gates that enclosed the front yard were gone."



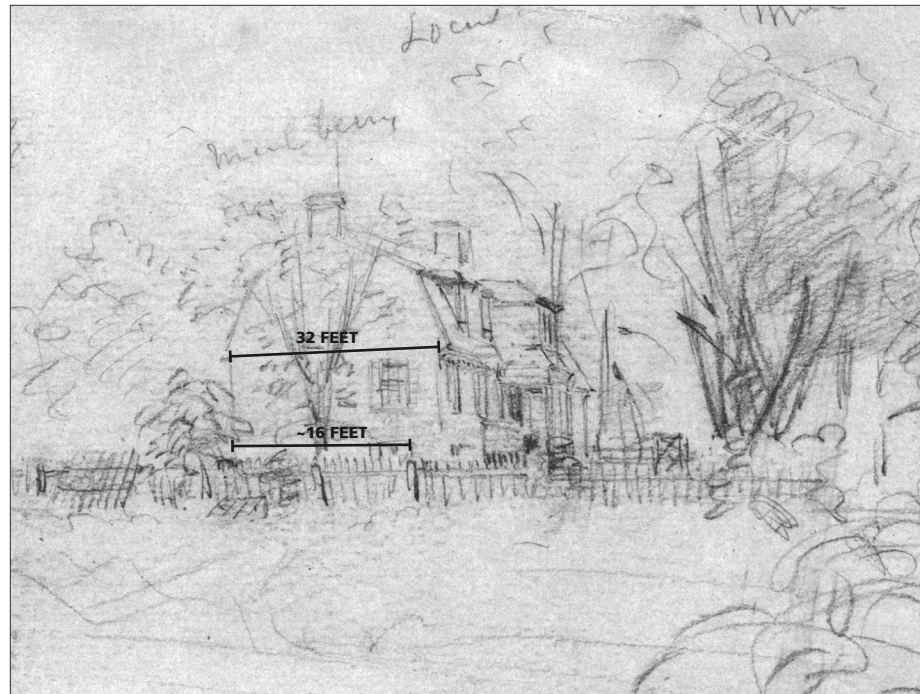


### 3-D analysis of fence line

Three-dimensional rendering programs may be used to analyze two-dimensional images like the Waud sketch. The process involves matching the perspective view of a three-dimensional model to the perspective of the image and placing the model components to match what is seen in the image.

The Shelton House was modeled using measured dimensions in the Historic Structures Report. The fence was modeled assuming eight-foot-long sections and four-foot-high posts and palings. The top image shows the three-dimensional model superimposed over the Waud sketch with perspective matched as closely as possible. The bottom image shows the range of locations of the visible fence line that match the perspective of the sketch. If the fence is placed any closer than 60 feet to the house, it would appear too small and the posts would be depicted too close together to match the Waud sketch. Similarly, if the fence is placed any further from the house than 90 feet, it will appear too large to match the sketch. The post features indicated in red are placed at the location of post features identified in archeological excavation in 2010. A fence in this location would be located 31 feet south of the house, a distance not likely represented in the Waud sketch. (Top: Library of Congress; Bottom: Google; both 3-D modeling with SketchupPro 2015)

**Figure 11.** Information about the location of the fence can be deduced by analyzing the perspective of the Waud drawing. In this detail of the drawing, the width of the house (32 feet) and the approximate length of two sections of fence (16 feet) are labeled. (Library of Congress)

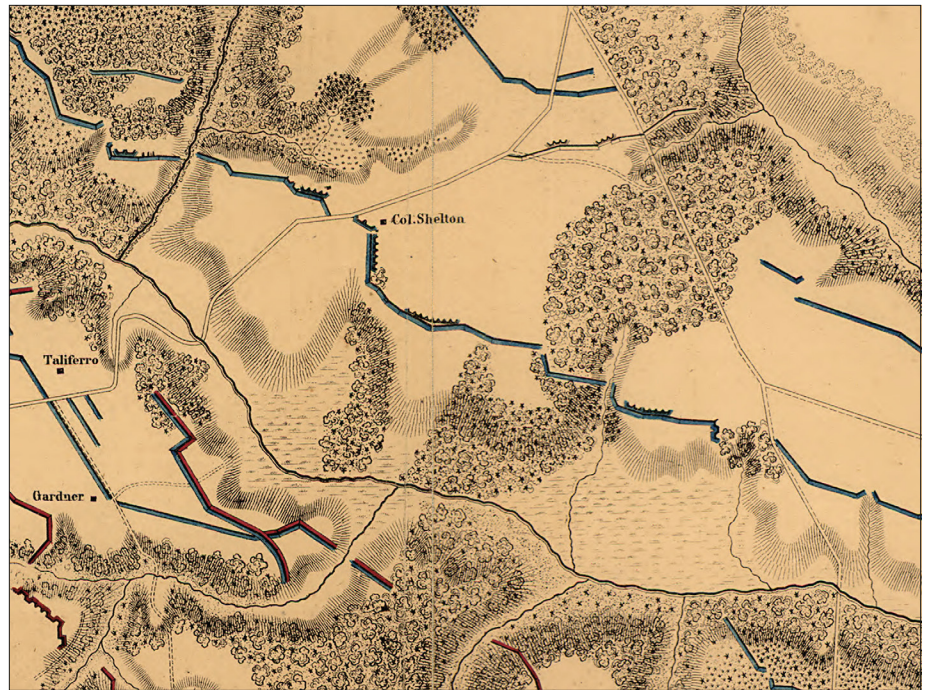


The 1864 Waud sketch clearly depicts a paler fence extending along the south side of the Shelton House. Although the sketch appears to have been drawn quickly, with many elements being rendered as loose gestural strokes, Alfred Waud was a trained artist with an eye for detail, who adhered to the principles of perspective and proportion in his drawings. The Shelton House, in particular, was rendered quite accurately with respect to perspective and architectural detail. If it is assumed that the other elements in the drawing, although lacking in detail, are depicted with similar accuracy regarding proportion and perspective, some information about the location and size may be derived from the sketch.

About eleven sections of fence, composed of palings mounted between posts, are visible in the drawing. If each of these sections is estimated at approximately six to eight feet long and three to four feet high, the entire length of depicted fence is between 66 and 88 feet long. Preliminary archeological investigations by Dutton and Associates revealed features consistent with post holes in a line about thirty-three feet south of the house, suggesting that this may have been the location of a fence. However, analysis of the sketch using three-dimensional modeling software suggests that the depicted fence was further south than the post holes discovered by Dutton. At the scale and perspective of the sketch, the fence line would have been located approximately sixty to ninety feet south of the house. (See sidebar for 3-D analysis of fence location.)

The location of the garden is not documented, although it would have been a convenient distance from the house. Because the slave quarters and other outbuildings were located west of the house at a distance of approximately 100 feet, the likely location of the garden was south of the house, where there would have been





Figures 12 and 13. The overall forest and field configuration at Rural Plains at the time of the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek was recorded in the two maps drawn following the battle. The two maps (Duane, top, and Michler, bottom) depict a landscape that was predominantly open with wooded areas limited to the steeper terrain. (Top and Bottom: Library of Congress)

more room for growing kitchen vegetables and fruit. In the 1936 aerial photo, a rectangular area of approximately 1/3 acre visible just south of the house is consistent in both size and location with a garden supplying a variety of fruits and vegetables for the household. The northern edge of this area is located about one hundred feet south of the house, consistent with the location of the paled fence visible in the Waud sketch. This rectangular area is the most likely location of the primary kitchen garden in 1864.

**1927**

Knowledge of landscape spatial organization in 1927 is derived from the 1936 aerial photo and from photographs of the house taken in the 1920s and 1930s. By then, the house sat roughly in the center of a domestic core of a little less than an acre. The primary driveway loop passed along the north side of the house, while a secondary driveway entered the domestic core from the east and passed along the south side of the house. It is unknown if the secondary driveway continued on to complete a loop as well, or if it terminated in the back yard of the house. The back (west) yard of the house appears to be partially, and possibly fully, enclosed by hedges. At least four, and possibly five, structures were located within the domestic core, clustered west and south of the house. A rail fence is visible in historic photos extending southward from the southeast corner of the house.

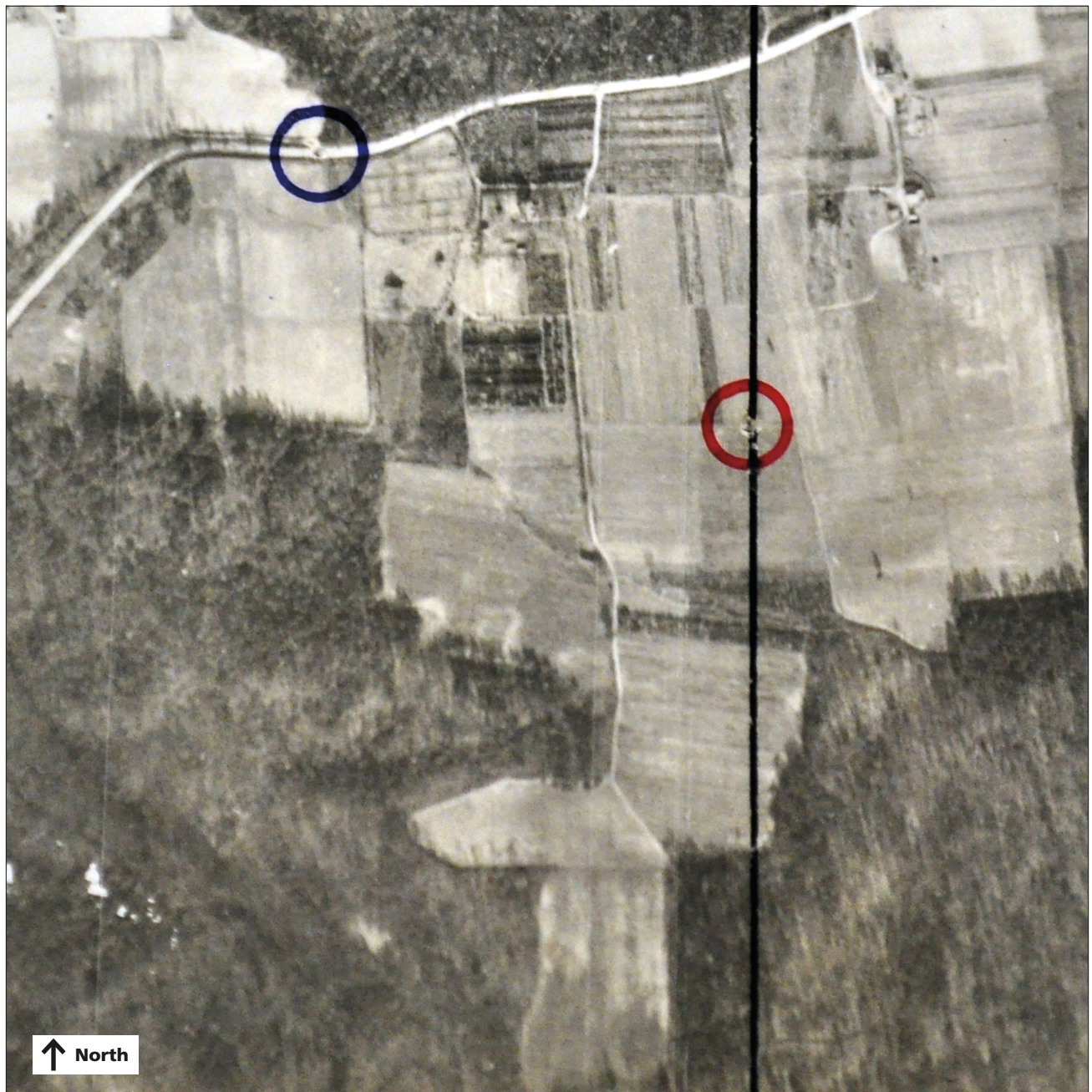
***Post-1927***

Many of the areas closest to the house were converted to nursery stock production in the late 1920s. This included a boxwood field in an area south of the house that had likely been a vegetable garden through much of the plantation's history. The edges of what had been the domestic core continued to be defined by hedge-rows and nursery stock fields, but the distinction between the domestic core and the agricultural landscape beyond was diminished. Meanwhile, ornamental plantings increased around the house, including boxwood hedges along the north, west, and south of the house. At some point during the second half of the twentieth century, the northern driveway loop was abandoned and the southern loop became the primary circulation through the site.

**Agricultural Landscape****1864**

Lieutenant Robert S. Robertson was one of the first Union soldiers to arrive at the Shelton House on May 29, 1864. He described the house as “a large brick house on the left of the road with a large wheatfield on the left and rear of it and a level ploughed field extending about half a mile toward the Cold Harbor Road.” There is some uncertainty as to what is meant by “the left and rear” of the house, as Robertson elsewhere in his description indicates the east façade as the rear of the house, presumably because it faced away from the battle. The “ploughed field extending about half a mile toward Cold Harbor Road” almost certainly refers to land stretching east of the house along Studley Road between the house and what was then called Polly Hundley Corner (Rural Point Road). It is likely that the wheat fields stretched out on other two sides of the house, to the west and south. Robertson indicated that the Confederate forces on the west side of Totopotomoy Creek were clearly visible from the upstairs window of the house, indicating that the land between the house and the creek was predominantly free of forest cover.<sup>2</sup>





**Figure 14.** Aerial image of Rural Plains taken in 1936 showing buildings, circulation, agricultural fields, nursery stock fields, and forest. The red and blue circles appear on the original print of the photo. (Virginia Department of Transportation)

The overall configuration of fields and forest cover at Rural Plains and the surrounding area was recorded in the two Civil War maps depicting the Overland Campaign battlefields by Bvt. Col. James C. Duane and Bvt. Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Michler in 1865 and 1867 respectively. The maps vary somewhat on the details recorded, but they agree on the location of the house and road, the layout of the earthworks, and the patterns of forest cover. According to these maps the Shelton farm was largely open, with fields lining both sides of Studley Road from Polly Hundley's Corner to Totopotomoy Creek. Forest cover was confined to the steep slopes and ravines, with wetlands indicated in the creek bottom. The Duane map indicates a small patch of forest just south of the Shelton House, something not shown on the Michler map. The Michler map, on the other hand, shows a double

row of trees at the Shelton House, although it is not known whether this indicated an allée of trees, a circulation feature, orchard, or was simply a symbolic representation of the shade trees around the house.

### *1927*

The size of the Rural Plains acreage diminished in the years following the Civil War from over 800 acres in 1864 to 126 acres by the beginning of the twentieth century. By 1927, many of the former fields had reverted to forest, and only about 55 acres remained in active cultivation. Views of Totopotomoy Creek were obscured by forest growing east of the house and by the broad areas of forest that covered the southern portion of the property. Despite the increase in forest cover, the overall character of the farm would have remained open, with fields stretching out in all directions from the house providing expansive distant views.

### *Post-1927*

As the twentieth century progressed, agricultural production at Rural Plains continued to diminish, and more agricultural area was abandoned to be reclaimed by forest. Nursery stock fields and hedgerows matured into stands of dense naturalized vegetation, separating the remaining agricultural fields and further reducing views. Today, agricultural land comprises only about 25 acres of the landscape divided into six discrete fields. The sectioning of the agricultural landscape into smaller fields separated by dense tree growth diminishes its ability to read as a distinct organizing area.

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

The long history of agriculture at Rural Plains left its mark in the topography of the landscape. Modification of the land form at Rural Plains likely commenced at the time it was first settled. Areas would have been leveled for structures and roads cut and filled. Agricultural fields were laid out on the most level areas, but these areas too would have been modified over time with repeated plowing and the construction of drainage ditches and berms around their perimeter. While forests replenish soil mass as vegetation dies and decomposes into organic matter, the vegetative mass in agricultural fields is removed during each harvest. Over time, this results in a slightly lower elevation in the fields than in adjacent forested areas. This process is compounded by erosion, as the bare soil of fields is blown away by winds or washed away by rains, collecting along the edges of the fields in berms.

Although many of the farm lanes and drives changed over time, it is believed that Pear Lane dates to a time early in the development of Rural Plains. The continual use of the lane caused it to become depressed in elevation with respect to adjacent

land, likely through a combination of erosion from water and traffic and from intentional grading. Similar to the agricultural fields, the lane developed banks along its margins.

### **Earthworks**

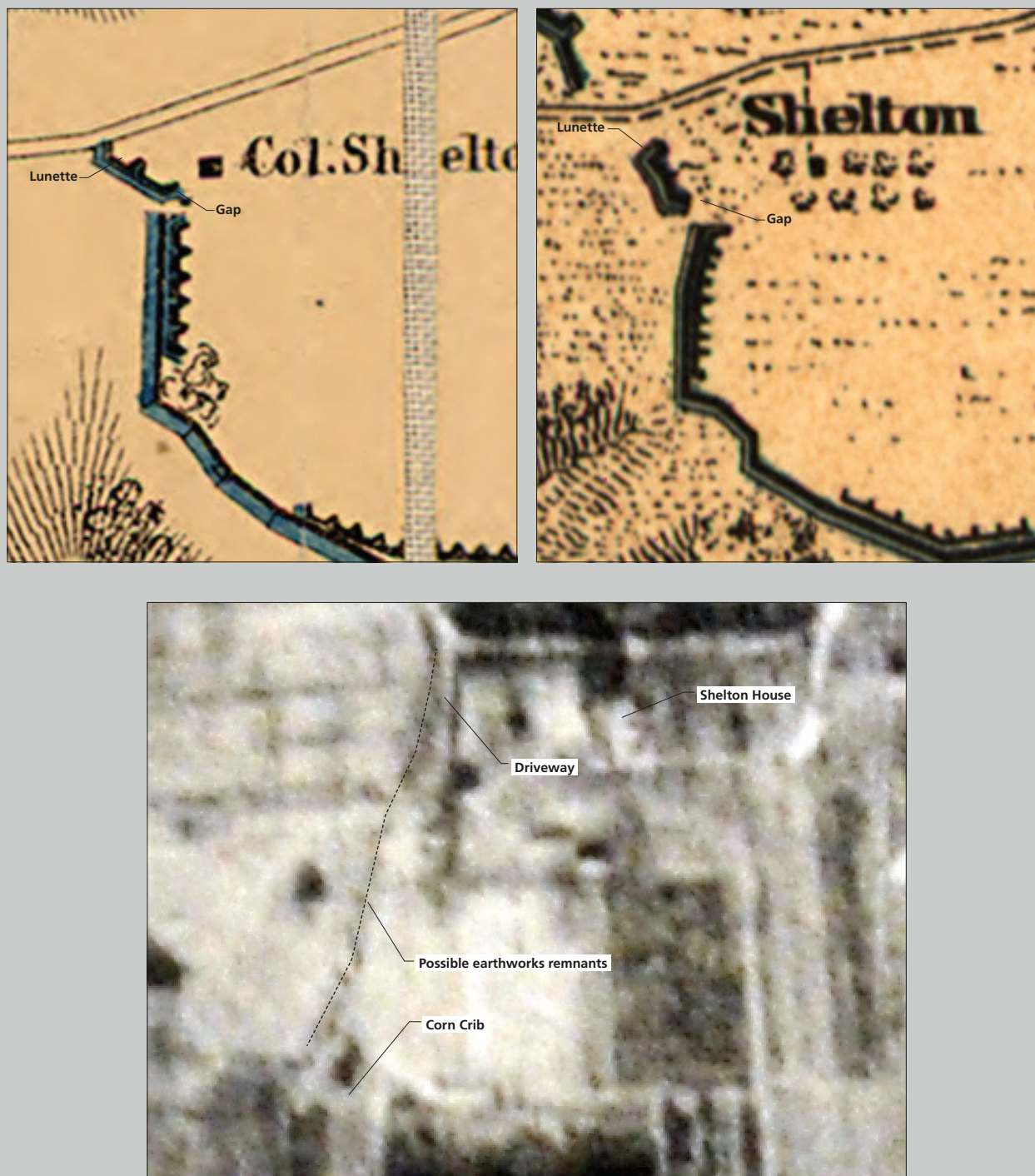
#### **1864:**

The earthworks that were constructed across Rural Plains in 1864 are relatively well documented. Union soldiers began digging long trenches shortly after arriving on the evening of May 29 and worked through the night. The primary line of fortifications extended from Studley Road south and southeast, with epaulements for guns placed just west of the house and on the southern slopes of the property. A second line of connected rifle pits was located on the lower slopes on the southern portion of the property, south of the main fortifications. In addition to raising earthen breastworks in front of the trenches, the soldiers incorporated a variety of objects, tools, fences, pieces of buildings, and trees to protect them from enemy fire. Walter Shelton recalled that “There was a line of fortification extending through the place, all fences gone, some of the out houses pulled down and put in the fortification. They used the fences, houses, the fruit trees, plows, cultivators & all kind of farm implements in building the fortification.”<sup>3</sup>

The general alignment and arrangement of the fortifications was recorded on both the Duane and Michler maps, although these maps are not to scale. A better record of the precise location of the earthworks is the 1936 aerial, in which the long diagonal scar across the land is visible. In this photo, a line of earthworks is visible across the southern portion of the property, running westward through a narrow wooded band before turning northwest across a field. From that point the earthworks turned north, but the alignment at that point is obscured in the photo by vegetation. Portions of these earthworks remain visible in the landscape today, particularly the southeastern-most segment.

The location of the earthworks that were closest to the Shelton House is not as well understood. In the 1936 aerial photo, a dark line can be seen about 115 feet west of the house, near the western edge of the existing driveway. This dark line is visually consistent with the other confirmed sections of earthworks in the photo; however the alignment visible in the photo is not consistent with the two Civil War-era maps. While the maps disagree with each other slightly with regard to the alignment of the earthworks, they both show a small gap in the earthworks just south of a lunette gun placement just west of the house. The Michler map places this lunette a little more west than the Duane map, but in both maps the lunette faces generally southwest. By contrast, the dark line in the aerial photo is oriented west-northwest. Resolving the location of the earthworks in this area is essential to determining the loca-





#### Earthworks locations

Both of the Civil War-era maps (Duane, top left, and Michler, top right) show a small gap in the earthworks southwest of the house and a lunette of gun placements facing southwest. The 1936 aerial photo (bottom) shows a dark line that is visually consistent with other earthworks visible in the photo. If this line does depict earthworks remnants, however, their alignment is further east and oriented west-northwest direction, inconsistent with the lunettes depicted in the maps. (Top: Library of Congress; Bottom: Virginia Department of Transportation)

tion of the outbuildings, because the outbuildings were known to have been located east of the earthworks (see Buildings and Structures section below).

### *1927*

Following the battle in 1864, the earthworks that the Union soldiers constructed were abandoned as long trenches that stretched across fields and forest. In the fields and in areas around the house, the earthworks were likely filled and leveled soon after the battle. Repairing the earthworks was labor-intensive, however, and where they traversed land that was not under cultivation, they were left to weather naturally.

Large portions of the Union earthworks, including segments that are no longer extant, are clearly visible in the 1936 aerial. The most visible sections are those extending through the forest in the southern portion of the property. A 500-foot section extends through a narrow band of trees that appear to be planted in rows. It is possible that this section was intentionally preserved by dividing the field it crossed and planting trees around the earthworks. Sections within agricultural fields appear fainter, and there is no indication in the field patterns that ploughing activities were being modified by the presence of the earthworks. This suggests that the earthworks were filled in sufficiently for ploughs and other equipment to pass over them.

### *Post-1927*

As cultivation patterns changed and forested areas increased at Rural Plains, the topographical features etched by the farming practices remained, in many instances under forest cover. Ongoing cultivation of agricultural fields and nursery fields, circulation patterns, and other uses continued to reinforce many topographic patterns.

Portions of the earthworks that crossed agricultural fields were diminished by years of plowing. Although these earthworks are still clearly visible in the 1936 aerial photograph, but by the 1950s their presence is only indicated in aerial photographs by a faintly lighter line across the field.

## **VEGETATION**

Vegetation is generally mentioned sparingly in historical accounts; however notable references include the wheat fields and strawberries mentioned by Robertson, the orchards and plum trees mentioned by Shelton, and the fact that the large trees around the house were heavily damaged by shelling.<sup>4</sup> The Waud sketch features some of these large trees, with labels including mulberry, locust, and button (sycamore).

### **Shade Trees**

#### **1864**

It is known that the Shelton House has been surrounded by large shade trees since before the Civil War. These trees would have defined the domestic core of the property, creating a character significantly different from that of the surrounding agricultural landscape. Large trees present at the time of the battle are mentioned in descriptions by Walter Shelton and by Union soldiers, who noted the damage that the trees suffered during the bombardment. Large trees labeled button (sycamore), mulberry, and locust appear immediately around the house on the Waud sketch.

It is likely that many of these trees were damaged beyond recovery during the battle, and it is unknown which, if any, survived into the twentieth century. In 2007, several trees were cored during the dendroecological investigation on the Shelton House. Of these trees, conclusive results were obtained for only two trees, the American elm southeast of the house (154 years old in 2007) and the holly tree east of the house (127 years old in 2007). Indeterminate results for other trees leave open the possibility that more of the extant trees were present during the battle. Although the large sycamore tree in the front yard of the house could not be dated due to its hollow trunk, the Shelton family apparently referred to it as the “cannonball tree,” claiming it was damaged in the battle and survived. A number of large stumps remain around the house, indicating the former locations of trees.

#### **1927**

Photographs of the house in the 1920s and 1930s show several mature shade trees around the house, including what appear to be locusts and possibly oaks. The 1936 Virginia Historical Inventory described “the house. . .surrounded by a grove of beautiful locust, aspen [likely poplar, and sycamore trees].”<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 15.** Photo taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936 shows the character of the vegetation around the Shelton House. (NPS/HABS)



### *Post-1927*

As the shade trees began to reach advanced age through the twentieth century, many of them died or were removed. A former groundskeeper at Rural Plains indicated that William Shelton Jr. removed a number of large locust trees from around the house during the second half of the twentieth century. Several locust stumps, which generally persist for many years, are still present in the landscape today, indicating former locations of trees. Two circular daylily beds in the east yard of the house mark the locations of two of the trees visible in several of the historic photographs.

### **Ornamental Vegetation**

#### *1864*

Although there is little mention of shrubs, flowers, and other ornamental vegetation in historical accounts, Rural Plains likely featured such vegetation throughout the domestic area. A report filed for the Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory in 1936 stated, “The grounds at one time boasted some of the most beautiful boxwood in the state, but the ravages of war and scale [insects] destroyed all but two, which yet stand, one on either side of the old walk in front of the house.”<sup>6</sup> This suggests that boxwoods were a significant element of the landscape prior to the Civil War. A photo of the Shelton House taken in the 1930s shows two large boxwoods in the front yard that may have been the ones referred to in the 1936 report. Other vegetation would likely have included flowering shrubs, roses, climbing vines, and herbaceous plants. The Waud sketch of the house depicts small trees and shrubs, as well as general marks that may have indicated small-scale vegetation.

#### *1927*

In the early twentieth century, the presence of ornamental vegetation increased throughout the landscape, particularly in the areas immediately around the house and to its south. Photographs of the house taken in the 1920s and 1930s show numerous boxwoods planted around the house, as well as conifers, rhododendrons, nandina, and other shrubs and flowering plants. Small clipped boxwoods about a foot tall lined the front of the house and the driveway south of the house. Two large boxwoods, possibly those mentioned in the 1936 WPA report that bordered the front walk, can be seen in one of the photographs in front of the house, and the large boxwood hedge behind the house is visible in another photo from the 1930s. It is not known how much of this ornamental vegetation was present around the house before the establishment of the nursery, but it is likely that such vegetation was planted at Rural Plains in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in response to the growing popularity of the colonial revival style of residential landscape design.

Figure 16. Cropped image of the Shelton House taken in 1935 showing what appear to be two large boxwood plants in front of the house. The photo is taken from the vantage of the rear of the house looking toward the front yard. Analysis of the photo with 3-D modeling software suggests that the boxwoods are located along the central front walk of the house. The large boxwood to the right is extant today. (Library of Congress)



#### *Post-1927*

As the plantation transitioned to nursery production, William Shelton focused on boxwoods as the featured species. The rise of the colonial revival style of residential landscape design in the early twentieth century fueled the popularity of boxwoods, and Mr. Shelton dedicated several acres of his farm to their cultivation. Boxwood fields consisted of long rows of small boxwood plants to be used either as cutting sources for propagation, or for transplanting to sell at the nursery. Eventually, these fields would collectively hold thousands of individual boxwoods. In addition to the production fields, boxwoods were planted around the house, either as individual specimens or in hedges.

In addition to boxwoods, the Rural Plains Nursery grew ornamental vegetation of a wide variety of species. The catalog for the Rural Plains Nursery noted “Collectors and Growers of Rosebays, Hardy Broadleaf Evergreens, Conifers, Ornamental Trees and Shrubs, Peonies, and Bulbs.” Specific plants indicated for sale in the catalog include abelia, several azaleas, boxwood, cotoneaster, hawthorn, euonymus, holly, mountain laurel, leucothoe, privet, mahonia, nandina, Andromeda, rhododendron, arborvitae, cedars, cypress, junipers, spruce, pines, cypress, yew, arborvitae, hemlock, barberry, deutzia, forsythia, rose of Sharon, and hydrangea among others.

Aerial photographs taken in the 1930s suggest that several of the fields closest to the house had been converted to horticultural production. Darker values in these fields indicate either vegetation with darker foliage or taller plants that are casting dark shadows. These fields correspond to fields that currently hold boxwoods or other nursery stock. The total area dedicated to nursery production appears to

be between seven and ten acres. These fields were arranged in rows of plants of the same species, with few if any of the trees exceeding ten feet tall. These were planted in rows and blocks of single species or as hedgerows along the edges of fields that continued to be used for agricultural production.

### **Hedgerows**

*1864*

It does not appear that the agricultural landscape of Rural Plains was divided with hedgerows prior to the twentieth century. Military records and soldiers' accounts would likely have mentioned them had they been present at the time of the battle, due to their importance in battlefield tactics.

*1927*

The 1936 aerial photograph depicts a landscape that is still primarily open; however dark lines along the edges of fields indicate the beginnings of hedgerows. The vegetation along these edges do not appear to be large enough to have been established long, and it is likely that the hedgerows became established sometime in the early twentieth century. It is not known whether these hedgerows were intentionally planted or if they originated from self-seeded vegetation, although it is likely that hedgerows developed through a combination of both processes. Some, such as those composed primarily of cultivated species, may have been planted along the edges of nursery stock beds to define spaces or to protect the stock from winds. Other hedgerows likely arose along the edges of agricultural fields where vegetation was left to grow unchecked.



Figure 17. The beginnings of hedgerows are visible in the 1936 aerial photo as dark lines along field edges (red arrows). Other hedgerows present in the landscape today developed from the edges of nursery stock fields (yellow arrow). (Virginia Department of Transportation)

*Post-1927*

As the level of cultivation and maintenance of the Rural Plains agricultural landscape declined during the twentieth century, hedgerows grew into dense thickets of trees, vines, shrubs, and woody debris. By the 1950s, full hedgerows are clearly visible in aerial photographs.

**Orchards***1864*

Orchards would have been part of the Rural Plains landscape from the time it was first settled through the beginning of the century. In early periods, apple, pear, and peach orchards were kept for the production of cider and for livestock feed. These were irregular stands of fruit trees raised from seed, demonstrating a wide genetic variety but rarely palatable. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, however, horticultural advancements in America led to the availability of cultivated apple varieties with predictable characteristics. Farmers began planting grafted fruit varieties in more geometric arrangements, selling the fruit in commercial markets.<sup>7</sup>

Walter Shelton described four orchards on the farm, two apple and two peach. “Four fine orchards. One Apple orchard just a cross the main road and another across the swamp that leads to the ice pond. Just to the left of the back of the garden was a fin[e] peach orchard. Higher up in the field was another fine peach orchard.” The orchard across the main road was likely associated with an overseer’s house located there, but the locations of the other three orchards are difficult to divine due to the ambiguous descriptions. A peach orchard was certainly located near the house, however the location “to the left of the back of the garden” depends on the location of the garden and how Shelton conceived of its orientation. Shelton said at least two of the orchards were cut down by Union troops and the trees used as part of the fortifications.<sup>8</sup>

Although there do not appear to be orchards present in the 1930s based on review of the 1936 aerial photograph, information about possible locations and extents of orchards may be derived from the arrangement of fields and nursery beds in the photo. While the fields further from the house exhibit the larger size and irregular shapes indicative of agricultural fields that followed the natural features of the land, the smaller, rectangular shaped spaces closer to the house were likely used as gardens, paddocks, utility spaces, and orchards. Based on analysis of the garden location discussed in the Spatial Organization section above, the two most likely locations of the peach orchard mentioned by Walter Shelton are directly south or southwest of the garden. These locations are indicated in Figure 18.

According to a former groundskeeper, Pear Lane was so called because it passed between two orchards, a pear orchard on one side and an apple orchard on the





**Figure 18.** Aerial photograph from 1936 showing the likely locations of the garden and orchards at Rural Plains. (Virginia Department of Transportation, annotated by OCLP)

other. It is unknown to which time period he was referring, but these orchards are not apparent in aerial photos from the 1930s.

### *1927*

The evolution of orchards at Rural Plains between the events of the Civil War and the operation of the nursery is poorly understood. Between the damage from shelling and the removal by soldiers for use in the fortifications, the orchards were surely devastated following the battle. Some fruit trees may have survived, however, and the Sheltons may have planted new orchards through the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

### *Post-1927*

There is no record of orchards surviving intact after the establishment of the Rural Plains Nursery. Some of the dark vegetation visible in the 1936 aerial photo may indicate fruit orchards, but it is more likely that these are all rows of nursery stock vegetation. There are no areas in the photo that indicate a regular grid arrangement characteristic of fruit orchards. Today, extant pear trees along Pear Lane may be the remnants of pear orchards in this area of the property.

## BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The primary building at Rural Plains is the Shelton House, constructed around 1725, which persisted with few major alterations through the entire historic period. During the long period, numerous buildings and structures were present in the landscape at various times to support agricultural and domestic functions. These included barns, tobacco barns, corn cribs, smokehouses, ice houses, dairies, and other agricultural buildings, as well as slave quarters, kitchens, privies, and other domestic structures. The utilitarian construction and materials of these outbuildings and the evolving need for their function meant that they tended to be impermanent features of the landscape.

### 1864

In 1864, the Shelton farm contained a number of buildings in addition to the Shelton House, including an overseer's house, slave quarters, and various domestic and farm outbuildings. From the outside, the Shelton House appeared much as it does today, with the exception of the rear addition installed in the 1940s.<sup>9</sup>

Behind (west of) the house was a cluster of buildings containing at least a kitchen and slave quarters. These structures were described in part by Lieutenant Augustus C. Brown, who participated in the construction of the earthworks in the Shelton yard: "Immediately in the rear of my company as it was at work on the breast-works, stood a fine large brick or stone house with a slate roof, known as the Shelton House. . . . Between our works and the house, which stood with its rear towards us, was a semi-circle of negro quarters, and in front of these little frame and log houses the artillerymen had backed up their caissons and ammunition wagons to conceal them as much as possible from the enemy."<sup>10</sup> In his *New York Times* interview, Walter Shelton also described an "out-kitchen under the plum trees, a hundred feet back of the house."<sup>11</sup> This cluster of buildings is visible west

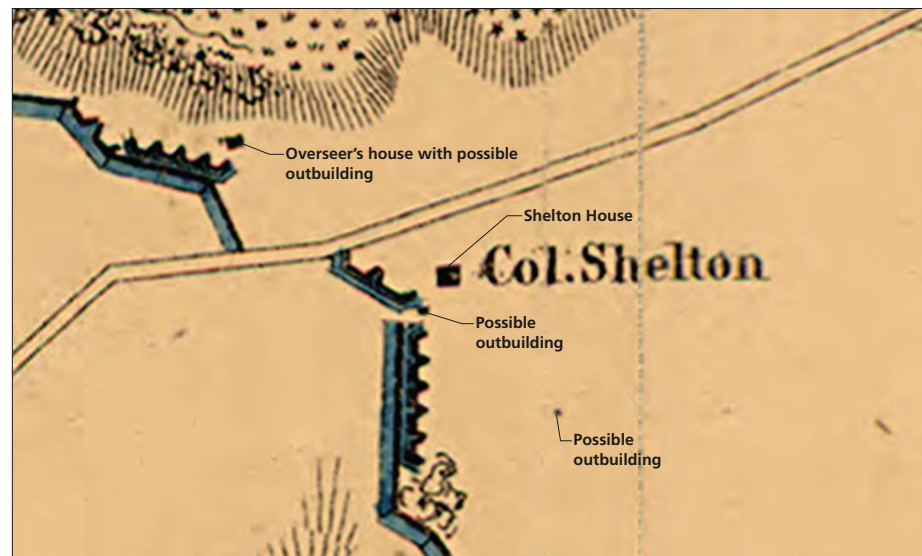


Figure 19. Detail of the Duane map showing possible indications of buildings and structures at Rural Plains. The overseer's house was mentioned in Edwin Shelton's will in 1874. (Library of Congress, Annotated by OCLP)



of the house in the Waud sketch, in addition to an outbuilding that appears in the foreground of the drawing. Based on the perspective of the drawing, this last building was likely located southeast of the house near what may have been the kitchen garden.

Beyond these scant details, little is known about the outbuildings associated with the Shelton House. The Waud sketch is not sufficiently detailed to determine the number, type, or organization of the buildings. Determining the location of the earthwork segment that passed west of the house is critical in determining the distance separating the outbuildings from the house, since it is known that the buildings were between the house and earthworks. If the earthworks were located

Figure 20. Detail of the 1936 aerial photograph with arrows indicating the locations of seven buildings in addition to the Shelton House. (Library of Congress, Annotated by OCLP)



Figure 21. Detail of the HABS photograph showing two outbuildings located south and west of the Shelton House. Also visible in the photo is a fence post. (NPS/HABS)



along the western edge of the current drive, as suggested by the 1936 aerial photo, the outbuilding cluster would have been closer to the house, approximately at the western extent of the existing boxwood hedge. However, both the Duane and Michler maps suggest that the artillery battery that extended behind the house was further west within the existing boxwood field, allowing the outbuildings to be located west of the current drive.

Archeological evidence of domestic use was discovered in the boxwood field behind the Shelton House in 2009. The team found numerous domestic and architectural artifacts, including ceramics, bricks, and charcoal, as well as subsurface features consistent with post holes and possible living surfaces. The location of these artifacts is consistent with period descriptions of the outbuildings, and are consistent with three-dimensional analysis of the Waud drawing. However, there are other possible locations of the outbuildings that would be consistent with these sources as well. (See the sidebar for 3-D analysis of outbuilding location.)

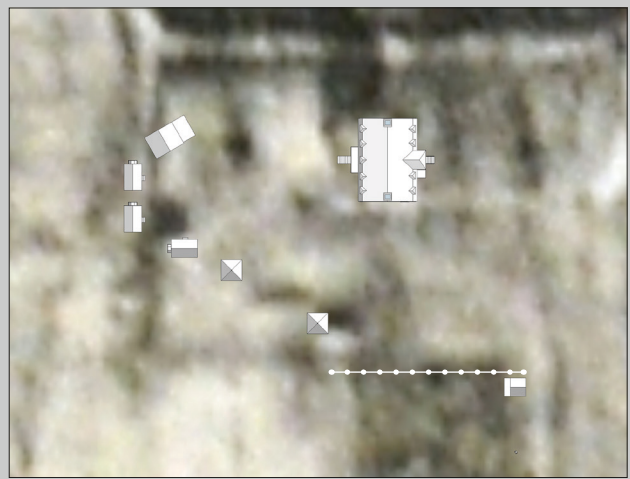
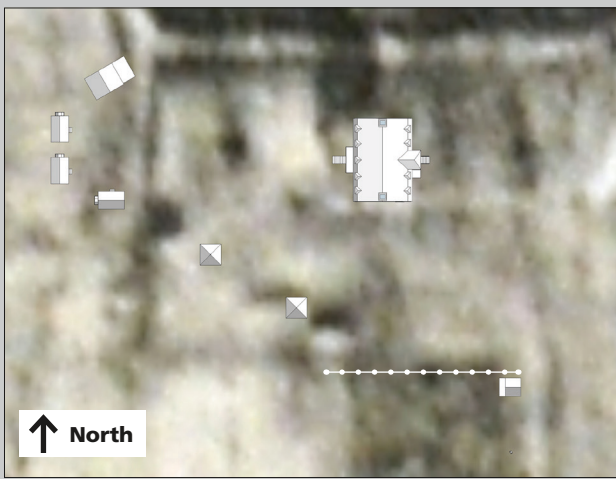
Edwin Shelton's will in 1874, in addition to his 359 acres with the house, included a thirty-acre parcel on the north side of the road with "the house built by me as and for an overseers house, the houses formerly occupied by my slaves, and the orchard."<sup>12</sup> The slave quarters mentioned are in addition to those west of the house and likely housed field workers. The 1860 census noted thirty-one slaves living in eight quarters on the Shelton estate, although there is no information about how these eight structures were distributed in the landscape.

The Duane map appears to indicate a number of buildings in addition to the Shelton House, although not enough structures to be a complete accounting of quarters and outbuildings. Marks on the map include a rectangle likely representing the overseer's house on the north side of Studley Road, as well as a small mark that could indicate an outbuilding, and two small marks south of the house.

### **1927**

In 1927, the Shelton House appeared from the outside much as it had in 1864. No major additions or alteration had occurred in the intervening years, although historic photos suggest that the house was in a state of disrepair, with missing window panes and weathered surfaces. Cracks and other damage to the brick work, presumably sustained in the battle, are evident in the photographs.

The 1936 aerial photograph shows eight to ten outbuildings located around the house. Notable structures include a barn, located about 365 feet southwest of the house, and a structure in the current location of the corn crib. At least four, and possibly more, structures are clustered within 100 feet of the house. At least one, and possibly two, of these structures located southeast of the house is visible in a 1936 HABS photograph, and other outbuildings are depicted clustered southwest of the house in a painting believed to have been completed in the 1920s. It is



#### Location of outbuildings

Information about the location of the outbuildings west of the Shelton Houses may be derived through 3-D analysis of the 1864 Alfred Waud sketch. In a process similar to the fence analysis described previously, the outbuildings were modeled in three dimensions using Sketchup and placed such that the perspective, size, and arrangement matched the Waud sketch as closely as possible. The image at top shows the perspective view of the Sketchup model based on the Waud sketch. The bottom two images show possible arrangements and locations of outbuildings that match the drawing's perspective, superimposed on the 1936 aerial photo to show the locations of the house, drives, and possible earthworks trace. The first image (bottom left) shows the outbuildings further west and north, consistent with earthworks locations further west as depicted in the Duane and Michler maps (see discussion of earthworks above). The second image (bottom right) shows the outbuildings closer to the house, as would be necessary if the dark line in the aerial photo corresponds to the location of the earthworks. (Top: OCLP; Bottom: Library of Congress/OCLP)



Figure 22. Watercolor of the Shelton House, believed to have been painted by one of the Shelton family members in the early twentieth century, shows a rail fence and gate, central walkway, and outbuildings behind the house. The painting also illustrates the character of ornamental vegetation around the house, including climbing vines on the porch and herbaceous vegetation bordering the central walkway. (RICH Archives)



unknown whether any of the structures present in 1936 were extant from the time of the battle.

The outbuildings in the 1936 aerial are clustered similarly to how they are described in 1864, primarily west and south of the house. Although many, if not all, of these buildings were probably constructed after the Civil War, it is possible that they were built in the same location as previous buildings, or at least in the same general area.

#### *Post-1927*

Several outbuildings remain clearly visible in aerial photographs from the 1950s, including the barn, corn crib, and unidentified buildings near the house. All of these structures were eventually removed, with the exception of the corn crib and the Shelton House.



**ENDNOTES**

1. William H. Shelton, "A Mansion Rich in Virginia's History," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 August 1928: 74.
2. Barbara A. Yocum, *The Shelton House at Rural Plains Historic Structure Report* (National Park Service, 2012), 35.
3. Walter M. Shelton, Shelton Family Papers, RICH Archives.
4. Yocum, 35; Shelton Family Papers; *New York Times Magazine*, 74.
5. "J. Archer Evans, "Historical Inventory, Rural Plains," (Works Progress Administration of Virginia, 1936).
6. Evans.
7. Susan Dolan, *Fruitful Legacy: A Historic Context of Orchards in the United States, with Technical Information for Registering Orchards in the National Register of Historic Places* (National Park Service, 2009).
8. *New York Times Magazine*; Walter Shelton, Shelton family papers, RICH archives.
9. Yocum, 52.
10. Yocum, 42.
11. *New York Times Magazine*.
12. Yocum, 46.





Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

1864 Period Plan



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees/Forest		Road
	Orchard		Farm Lane
	Grass/Open Ground		Fence
	Garden		5-Foot Contours
	Earthworks		Building

NOTES

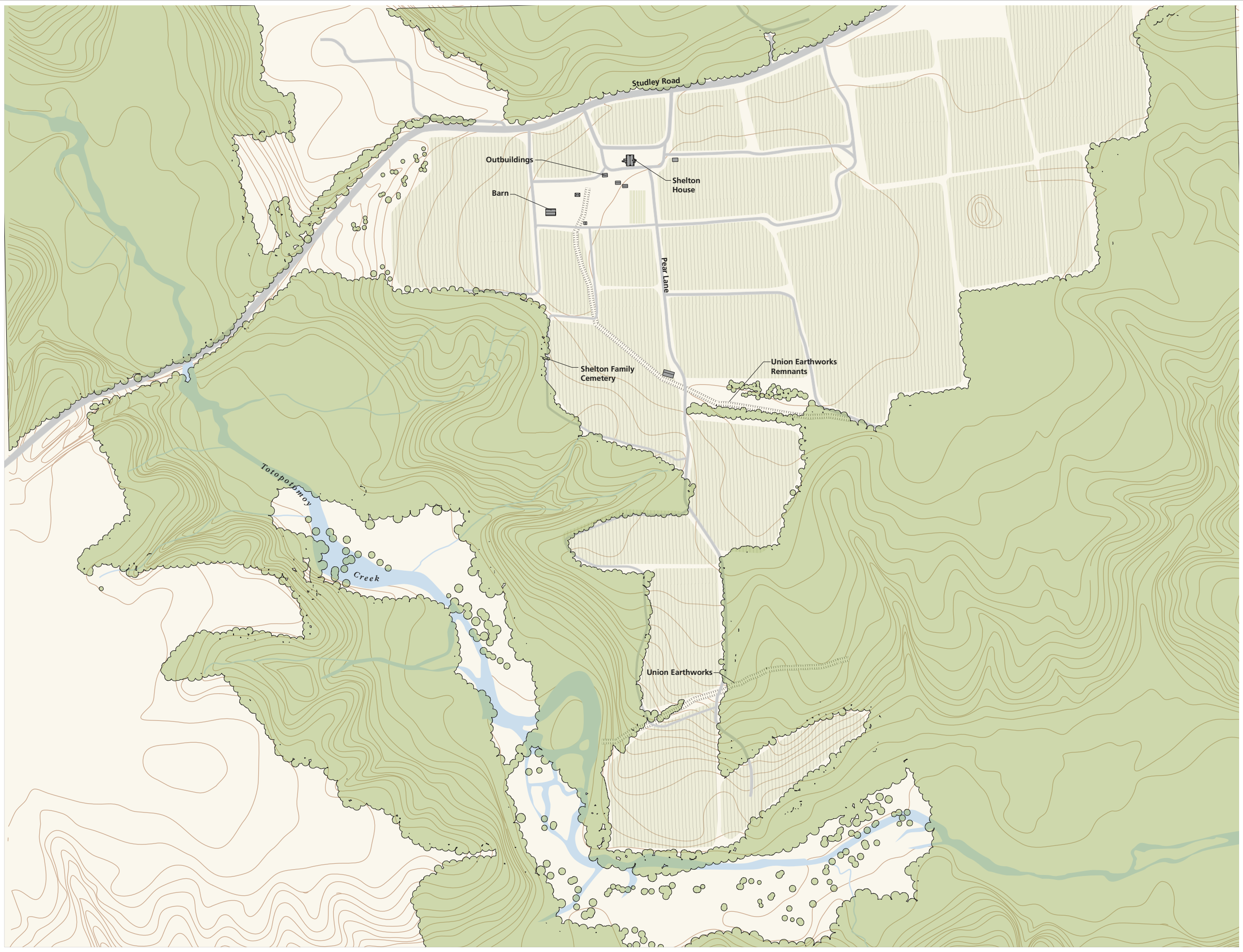
1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 400 800 FEET







Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

1927 Period Plan



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees/Forest		Road
	Agricultural Fields		Farm Lane
	Garden		5-Foot Contours
	Earthworks		Building
	Grass/Open Ground		

NOTES

1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 400 800 FEET









Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

Existing Conditions  
Overview



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

- 1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
- 2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
- 3. 2013 Orthophoto
- 4. 2015 LiDAR
- 5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees/Forest		Road/Parking Lot
	Shrubs/Hedges		Pedestrian Trail/ Farm Lane
	Grass/Open Ground		Earthwork Remnant
	Agricultural Field		Fence
	Boxwood Field		NPS Park Unit Boundary
	Building		5-Foot Contours

NOTES

- 1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 400 800 FEET

DRAWING 3







Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

Existing Conditions Detail



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees		Building
	Shrubs/Hedges		Gravel Road/ Parking Lot
	Grass/Open Ground		Pedestrian Trail/ Farm Lane
	Boxwood Field		Fence
	2-Foot Contours		

NOTES

1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 50 100 FEET







## FRAMEWORK FOR TREATMENT

As defined by the National Park Service, the purpose of a landscape treatment plan is to set forth guidelines for preserving and enhancing historic landscape characteristics and features within the context of contemporary park uses.<sup>1</sup> Treatment describes the future appearance of the landscape at the planning level with preliminary design recommendations. It does not provide construction level details necessary for implementation, nor does it address routine maintenance.

This chapter describes the planning and policy framework within which the landscape treatment guidelines and tasks in this report have been developed. The chapter begins with an overview of applicable regulations and policies, park enabling legislation, and current park planning. Based on this framework, a landscape treatment philosophy is articulated to guide treatment of the Rural Plains landscape, including a primary treatment approach and treatment reference date.

## ENABLING LEGISLATION, MISSION, AND POLICIES

Richmond National Battlefield Park was established by Congress on March 2, 1936 “to set [the lands] apart as a public park for the benefit and inspiration of the people,” and “to protect the Civil War battlefield resources associated with the struggle for the capital of the Confederacy and to interpret these resources so as to foster an understanding of their larger significance.”<sup>2</sup> The park was officially accepted by the National Park Service on July 14, 1944. It has since continued to grow and evolve to its present size of 2,879.42 acres.

As a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the treatment of Rural Plains is also subject to the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The law and its subsequent guidance documents clearly stipulate how historic resources are identified, documented, evaluated, and managed. According to the law, the park assumes the responsibility for the preservation of the historic properties within its jurisdiction. At Rural Plains, the resources include the Shelton House, along with the other contributing structures, features, vegetation, and landscape patterns described in the Cultural Landscapes Inventory documentation in 2015. The park must take into consideration the historic value of these resources when undertaking any actions that may affect the resources and comply

with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Treatment of Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains landscape is guided broadly by the mission of the National Park Service, defined in the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”<sup>3</sup> The application of this mission to cultural landscapes is articulated in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, which in turn is interpreted within a hierarchy of National Park Service management regulations and policies.

Additional guidance is contained within *National Park Service Management Policies* (2006), *Director's Order #28, Cultural Resource Management*, and *National Park Service Resources Management Guidelines (NPS-28)*. *NPS-28* provides guidance on management of a number of issues related to cultural landscape preservation, including biotic systems, which are defined as plant and animal communities associated with human settlement and use. *NPS-28* directs management of specimen vegetation such as trees, hedges, and orchards to ensure health and vigor and, if appropriate, provide for propagation of the next generation, especially for rare plants or those unavailable in commerce. For natural systems, *NPS-28* calls for managing landscape patterns to allow for natural dynamics. Exotic plant species, which are often found in cultural landscape, should be monitored and controlled to avoid spreading and disrupting adjacent natural plant communities. In addition to biotic systems, *NPS-28* states that historic circulation features are to be rehabilitated to accommodate health and safety codes in ways that minimize impacts to historic character.

### **Park Planning**

The National Park Service expresses its priorities and goals for the management of its resources through its planning documents, including General Management Plans, Master Plans, Development Plans, and Foundation Documents. These planning documents articulate the park's purpose and fundamental resources establish long-term goals and strategies, and provide opportunities for public review and input. These documents provide umbrella guidance under which treatment recommendations of the Cultural Landscape Report are developed.

A General Management Plan was completed for Richmond National Battlefield Park in 1996, which focused on the issues of park unit configuration, visitor orientation and access, visitor services, resources management, and administration. Reaffirming the purpose of the park to manage and interpret the Civil War

battlefields associated with Union attempts to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond, the plan emphasized the conceptual connection of the disparate battle sites and their contribution to the larger contextual story. In addition to interpretation of the primary military significance, the plan sought to illuminate the broader political, social, and economic factors that caused Richmond to be of crucial importance to both sides. The outlined interpretive themes included non-military themes of everyday civilian life in and around Richmond, and how the events of the war impacted agriculture, industry, and social life. “The beleaguered citizenry of Richmond suffered greatly, and a flood of refugees compounded the misery. Heavy industry and the foundries struggled to keep the Confederate army supplied with the munitions of war. The civilian government strove to cope with a deteriorating situation, as the entire social, political, and economic fabric of the community experienced radical change.”<sup>4</sup> The plan also emphasized “the war’s impact on the civilian population, including refugees, slaves, and free blacks.”<sup>5</sup>

At the time the General Management Plan was completed in 1996, Rural Plains had not yet been acquired by the Richmond National Battlefield Park, but the plan did identify the property as an important future addition to the park for its “importance in understanding General Grant’s strategic intent in the Overland Campaign.” The plan also recognized that the property offered opportunities to interpret the non-military themes related to the impacts of the war on civilian life.

In 2016, at the time of the writing of this report, a draft of the park’s foundation documents is under development. The draft document articulates the park’s purpose as follows:

Richmond National Battlefield Park preserves, protects, interprets, and commemorates Richmond Civil War battlefield landscapes, struggles for the capital of the Confederacy associated with the 1862 Seven Days’ Battles, the 1864 Overland Campaign, and the 1864–65 Richmond and Petersburg Campaigns, including the American military, social, and political history as exemplified by the New Market Heights Battlefield.

As part of the connected system of Richmond battlefields, Rural Plains is directly associated with the primary significance of the park. Furthermore, the site contains resources and uses from each of the identified fundamental resources and values categories identified in the draft document—battlefield landscapes, partner and community connections, battlefield and plantation archeology, historic structures, sense of place and setting, and museum collections—plus other important resources and values of commemorative monuments and markers, natural communities, and appropriate recreation.

The draft foundation document identifies interpretive themes that define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about the park’s significance, purpose, resources, and values. Rural Plains has the potential to convey the themes of the battles for Richmond and civilians at war.

## TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY

For successful management of cultural landscapes, it is critical to understand the historic character of the landscape and clearly articulate an overarching philosophy to guide decision making.

Rural Plains was the site of the 1864 Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, part of a string of battles known as the Overland Campaign, in which Union troops tried repeatedly to find a way through Confederate defenses. Rural Plains was also home to seven generations of the Shelton Family, who built the farm from an eighteenth century homestead to a substantial antebellum plantation, through the upheaval of reconstruction, and into the twentieth century.

Today, the Rural Plains landscape exhibits the physical traces of nearly three centuries of activity. The Shelton House, a significant example of eighteenth-century rural Virginia architecture, still bears the scars of the Confederate shells, and remnants of Union earthworks still cross the land. Historic circulation, vegetation, field patterns, and topographical features reveal agricultural land-use as well as day-to-day domestic life. These traces have been obscured by non-historic vegetation, forest encroachment, loss of features, and general weathering and age. Although intrusions of the modern world, including traffic along Studley Road and the residential development of Rural Pointe located east of the Rural Plains property, diminish the rural setting, these are largely screened from the site.

Treatment of the Rural Plains landscape will preserve the physical traces that convey the historic character and spatial relationships that endured from the 1860s through the 1920s. The landscape will be managed to enhance the character of domesticity amid a working agricultural landscape, while facilitating an understanding of the events of the battle, layout of the battlefield, and the proximity of the fighting to the house and family. The challenge presented by the incomplete documentation of the landscape conditions at the time of the battle precludes a treatment approach that aims to replicate the historic scene in a literal way. Within this context, treatment will offer recommendations to strengthen visitors' understanding of the significance of Rural Plains by evoking the site's historic character, conveying important spatial relationships, and interpreting the site's compelling stories.

Landscape treatment will include efforts to reestablish historic spatial relationships, increase the open character of the landscape, and provide broad views from areas around the house through the targeted removal of non-historic vegetation. Select areas of hedgerows, nursery stock vegetation, and forest will be cleared and converted to meadow vegetation or cultivated agricultural fields for greater consistency with historic conditions. Clearing will be undertaken prioritizing those areas providing the greatest benefit to historic character, either by connecting spaces



that are already open or by restoring important views in the direction of the battle. Clearing recommendations will be mindful of natural systems, erodible soils, and overall expense in initial clearing and long-term maintenance, seeking to maximize benefits and minimize impacts. Vegetation will be retained where it provides screening from roads and surrounding modern development in an effort to retain the site's rural character.

Treatment will enhance the domestic character of the area immediately around the house and restore the important spatial distinction between the domestic core and the working agricultural landscape. This will be accomplished through the management of vegetation and installation of interpretive elements, including structures and fences, that will help visitors understand the character and function of Rural Plains as a nineteenth-century plantation. Existing shade trees will be preserved and new shade trees planted to reestablish conditions described in period accounts and depicted in the Alfred Waud sketch. Non-historic ornamental vegetation may be retained where it contributes to a domestic character and does not interfere with treatment or other management objectives, and new ornamental plantings may be added within the domestic core. The best available knowledge, including archival materials, archeological findings, and information about comparable properties, will be used to represent general landscape conditions at the time of the battle. Interpretive features, including representative outbuildings and fences, will be utilized to convey the character and layout of the domestic core.

Treatment will also address critical resource protection, park operation, and visitor use needs. Important historic resources, including the Shelton House and Union earthworks, will be preserved and protected from natural and human impacts. Recommendations will offer solutions for visitor and service circulation, including an accessible route to the Shelton House, a unit-wide network of hiking trails, and lanes for service vehicles and farm access.

#### **Primary Treatment: Rehabilitation**

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards on the preservation of cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, revised in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the 12 July 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). The standards define four primary treatment approaches according to preservation goals: *preservation*, *restoration*, *rehabilitation*, and *reconstruction*. Preservation standards require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including the landscape's historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time. Rehabilitation standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape's historic character. Res-

toration standards allow for the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from later periods. Reconstruction standards establish a framework for re-creating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.

The incomplete documentation of the historic landscape prior to the twentieth century presents a significant challenge to treatment approaches intended to restore or recreate historic conditions. Within this context of limited documentation and the objectives outlined in the treatment philosophy, the treatment approach of Rehabilitation is recommended at Rural Plains to reinstate important historic relationships and enhance the historic character, while offering the opportunity to interpret missing elements of the plantation landscape, provide universal access to the Shelton House, improve visitor services, and facilitate ongoing maintenance and safety needs. Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see sidebar), treatment may include actions to preserve historic features, repair or replace deteriorated materials, reinstate missing features, or add interpretive elements to help convey the site's historic associations.

#### **Treatment Reference Period: 1864–1927**

Identification of a treatment reference date or period provides an objective benchmark for managing historic landscape character. The treatment reference date corresponds to a time during the historic period when the landscape reached the height of its development or a time when the property best illustrated its significance and interpretive themes. In rehabilitation, the identification of a treatment reference date does not limit the addition of features to accommodate visitor use or other park objectives, nor does it compel the removal of non-historic features. Rather, it provides a reference point on which to base treatment tasks as well as future management decisions.

At Rural Plains, the overall period of significance extends from 1725, when the Shelton House was constructed, until 1932, when the Association for the preservation of Virginia Antiquities erected a commemorative sign on the north boundary of the property. The treatment reference period is a smaller subset of the period of significance, extending from 1864 to 1927. This range incorporates the period of the site's primary significance as a Civil War battlefield and allows for interpretation of multiple aspects of the site's history, including the long continuous use of the land for agriculture. During this period, the overall arrangement and character of the Rural Plains landscape was stable, with few significant changes to the landscape conditions.

The end date of 1927 corresponds to the year the operation of the Rural Plains nursery was initiated and the character of the landscape began to change more

substantially. With the exception of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities marker installed at Rural Plains in 1932, landscape features that post-date 1927 are not related to the site's significance and are non-contributing resources.

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, rehabilitation treatment actions must conform to the following standards:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1998), 81.
2. *Richmond National Battlefield Park General Management Plan: Environmental Impact Statement* (National Park Service, 1996), 4.
3. An Act to Establish the National Park Service, and for other purposes (National Park Service Organic Act, August 25, 1916), 39 Stat. 535.
4. General Management Plan, 26.
5. Ibid, 134.





## TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND TASKS

This chapter provides treatment tasks to accomplish the rehabilitation of the Rural Plains cultural landscape. The following treatment tasks are organized by landscape characteristic, and within each characteristic the tasks are enumerated by a task code to assist in referencing and mapping of the tasks. The landscape characteristics include spatial organization (SO), vegetation (VG), topography (TP), circulation (CR), and buildings and structures (BS).

### SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

One of the key aspects of the spatial organization of Rural Plains during the historic period was the distinction between the domestic core and the agricultural landscape. The domestic core was characterized by towering shade trees, ornamental vegetation, kitchen gardens, domestic and utilitarian structures, and small-scale features that defined an approximately two-acre core within a wide, open landscape of fields and farm lanes with few trees or other vegetation. Today, that contrast has been diminished by the great reduction in agricultural area, encroachment of forests, and the presence of ornamental vegetation throughout the landscape.

The following tasks predominantly involve the removal of existing vegetation to restore important aspects of the historic spatial organization, enhance the open, agricultural character, and reestablish westward views from the house and domestic core. Vegetation tasks that address objectives other than those related to spatial organization are discussed below under the landscape characteristic of Vegetation.

A significant component of the treatment of Rural Plains involves the removal of vegetation to restore aspects of the historic spatial organization, restore views, and enhance the agricultural character of the landscape. Much of this vegetation removal involves clearing hedgerows or forested areas and converting them to meadow vegetation, a challenging and resource-intensive process. The greatest expense of resources will be in the clearing and preparation of the areas for planting with meadow species, which will involve removal of stumps, roots, and downed woody debris, as well as leveling the meadow seedbed so that it can be maintained with mowing. Once converted, however, the meadow areas should be

stable and self-perpetuating, requiring minimal maintenance input.

Appropriate techniques should be employed to remove vegetation based on individual circumstances of the vegetation to be removed. Shrubs, hedges, and small trees that are to be removed within the domestic core should be flush-cut by hand to accommodate mowing without ground disturbance. Larger stumps may be ground to just below ground level with a stump grinder or hand dug to remove the stump and root ball. These areas should be filled with topsoil and seeded with turf grass.

Larger vegetated areas outside of the domestic core may be cut by hand with a chainsaw or removed using equipment such as a forestry mulcher. Many of these areas will require traditional grubbing techniques to remove all stumps, debris, and root masses, including, for the largest trees, digging with heavy machinery. All debris and wood chips should be removed from the site. Following removal of vegetation, the area may need to be plowed and/or harrowed to level the land and prepare it for planting with meadow seed.

Clearing operations such as these have significant potential to disturb any archeological resources located in the areas. Appropriate archeological compliance should be undertaken before and throughout operations that involve ground disturbance. This activity will also disturb any historic topographic features, such as ditches and berms. The areas that are designated for clearing and conversion to meadow have been chosen in part because they do not appear to contain significant historic topographic features. The primary exception are the earthworks remnants. Earthworks should be carefully mapped and marked prior to operations, and all vegetation removal on or near the earthworks should be done with manual methods that do not involve ground disturbance. Heavy equipment should be restricted from operating on or near any earthworks remnants.

**SO-1: Remove boxwood hedge west of the house.**

The back (west) yard of the Shelton House was historically used as a utility or service area. It is known that several outbuildings, including slave quarters, a detached summer kitchen, smokehouse, and other domestic structures, were located behind the house at the time of the Civil War, but their locations have not yet been determined. The area between the outbuildings and the house would have been a busy area used for preparing and cooking food, washing clothes, mending household items, and other domestic activities. Because of this activity, this area may hold a wealth of archeological resources, including the remnants of some of the former buildings.

The L-shaped boxwood hedge behind (west of) the Shelton House has become overgrown and occupies a significant portion of the west yard. The hedge

Figure 23. (SO-1: Remove boxwood hedge behind the house.) View looking north showing the boxwood hedge behind the Shelton House. The entire boxwood hedge from the northwest corner of the house (not visible) to the western terminus of the hedge should be removed. The black walnut and magnolia trees growing in or near the hedge should be retained. (OCLP)



Figure 24. (SO-1) View looking west showing the boxwood hedge to be removed. The camellia and aucuba at the western terminus of the hedge should be removed. The sycamore stump in the foreground of the photo should be allowed to sprout and grown as a replacement shade tree. (OCLP)



obscures the historic spatial organization and interferes with the ability to understand the historic service-oriented role of the this area. The hedge also obscures views of the surrounding landscape from the rear of the house and views of the house from the west. Furthermore, the presence of the large hedge interferes with the ability to conduct archeological investigation in the area. In order to rectify these issues, the hedge should be removed.

#### *Considerations:*

- Remove the boxwood hedge from the northwest corner of the house to its terminus directly west of the house. The camellia and aucuba shrubs at the western terminus of the hedge have become integrated with the hedge and should be removed along with the hedge. Retain the existing trees in



**Figure 25. (SO-1) Vegetation along the north side of the boxwood hedge, including magnolia tree and boxwood shrubs, may be retained. (OCLP)**



and around the hedge, including the black walnut tree, magnolia tree, and the sycamore stump that is currently sprouting at the edge of the hedge. Retain the large boxwoods on the north side of the hedge that are not part of the hedge.

- Shrubs should be flush-cut to accommodate mowing and an appropriate herbicide applied to the cut stumps to prevent resprouting.
- The area exposed as a result of the removal should be prepared and seeded with turf grass.

#### **SO-2: Remove boxwood hedge southeast of the house.**

The rectangular boxwood hedge southeast of the house, informally referred to as the “boxwood room,” is related to the Rural Plains Nursery operation. It is believed to have been installed sometime during the twentieth century, possibly as a demonstration garden for nursery customers. While it is not known what this area was used for prior to the nursery operation, it was likely a part of a kitchen garden during the 1864 battle. Today the overgrown hedge obscures important views in the landscape and creates a strong sense of enclosure that was not present during the historic period. The hedge also interferes with the ability to conduct archeological investigation in the area. In order to rectify these issues, the hedge should be removed.

#### ***Considerations:***

- Remove the entire rectangular boxwood hedge southeast of the house.
- Shrubs should be flush-cut to accommodate mowing and an appropriate herbicide applied to the cut stumps to prevent resprouting.



Figure 26. (SO-2: Remove boxwood hedge southeast of house.)  
View looking north showing the rectangular boxwood hedge and foreground boxwoods to be removed. (OCLP)



Figure 27. (SO-2) Conceptual rendering showing the character of the area south of the Shelton House with the boxwood hedge and boxwoods removed. (OCLP)



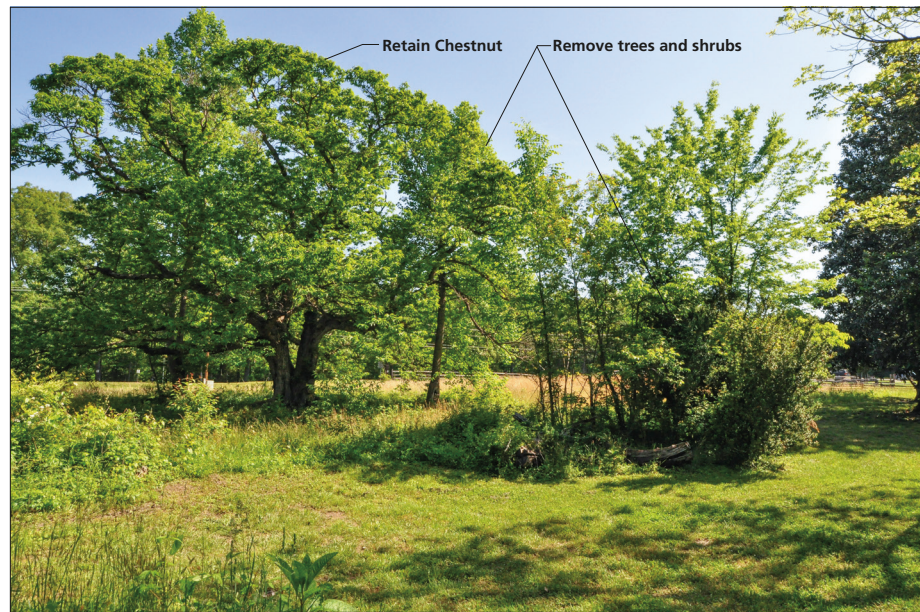
- The area exposed as a result of the removal should be prepared and seeded with turf grass.

### **SO-3: Remove select vegetation north of house.**

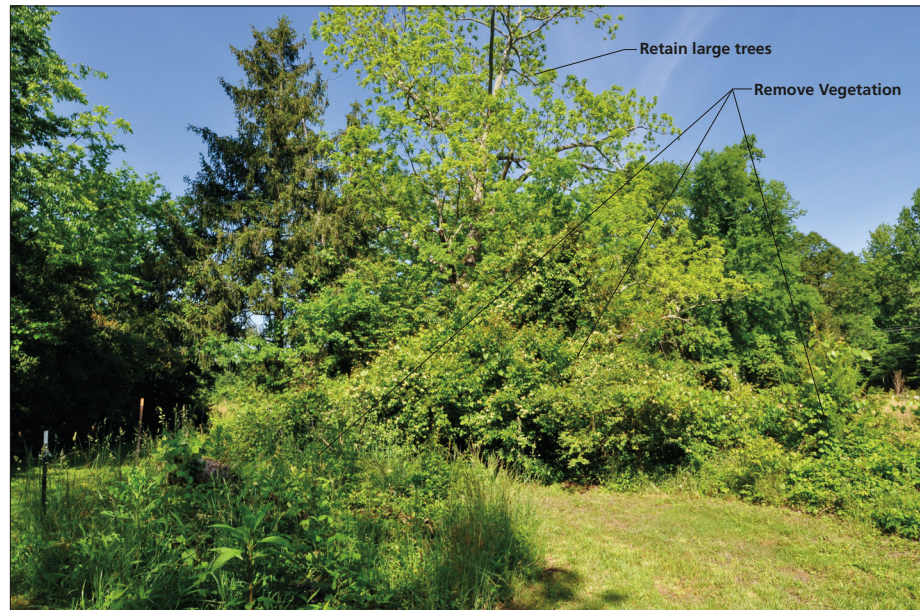
The Chinese chestnut tree north of the Shelton House, planted in 1915 to commemorate the marriage of William Shelton and Maud Elizabeth Greenlee, represents an important link to the Shelton family history and a notable landmark visible from Studley Road. The tree is visible in the 1936 aerial photograph, and in the 1953 aerial photograph the tree is clearly alone in the field with no other tall vegetation.



**Figure 28. (SO-3: Remove select vegetation north of house.)** Vegetation north of the Shelton house should be removed, including two tulip poplar trees growing near the Chinese chestnut, as well as the brush in the foreground of the photo. The Chinese chestnut should be retained. (OCLP)



**Figure 29. (SO-3) Vegetation** northeast of the Shelton House, pictured here, should be removed. Large trees, including the spruces and black walnut tree, should be retained. (OCLP)



Today, much of the vegetation growing around the chestnut tree and in the area between the tree and the house reduces the visual impact of the chestnut and diminishes the presence of the house. Vegetation, including the two tulip poplar trees growing near the chestnut and other shrubs and small trees growing on the north side of the historic driveway trace, should be removed. Refer to Figures 28 to 31 for vegetation removal.

***Considerations:***

- The two existing tulip poplar trees, as well as any other shrubs or small trees growing around the Chinese chestnut should be cut as close to the ground as possible and the stumps left to decompose naturally.
- Tree and shrub stumps should be treated with herbicide to prevent



**Figure 30. (SO-3) Diagram showing vegetation to be removed and retained north of the house. (OCLP)**

resprouting.

- All debris should be removed to facilitate periodic mowing of cleared areas.
- Retain larger trees, including large black walnuts, magnolias, spruces, and elms.

#### **SO-4: Remove select vegetation west, south, and southwest of the house.**

The encroachment of forest cover creates the sense of enclosure that was not present in the historic period and obscures important historic views through the landscape. Decreasing the total forested area by clearing trees and converting the area to fields will help reestablish the open agricultural character and restore the views that are essential to the landscape's historic character.

In order to enhance the open agricultural character of Rural Plains and restore important views from the Shelton House, and to emphasize the contrast between the domestic core and the working landscape, portions of the area currently covered in forest and hedgerow vegetation should be cleared and returned to open fields. This includes hedgerows and other vegetation that has grown up





Figure 31. (SO-4: Remove vegetation west, south, and southwest of the house.) Diagram showing vegetation to be removed and retained south and west of the house. (OCLP)



southwest of the house, the nursery stock growing south of the house, and vegetation around the corn crib. A small grouping of vegetation should be retained near the corn crib (see Figure 33). Included in this task is clearing vegetation on and around the Union earthworks south of the house (see Task TP-1). Refer to Drawings 5–7 for the recommended areas to be converted from forest to field.

*Considerations:*

- Clear all vegetation within the designated areas and remove all stumps, roots, and woody debris.
- Prepare the soil for seeding and apply a suitable mix of meadow vegetation seed.

Figure 32. (SO-4) View looking south showing the existing vegetation around the corn crib. (OCLP)



Figure 33. (SO-4) Photo-simulation showing the view around the corn crib following the removal of vegetation. (OCLP)



**Figure 34. (SO-5: Remove boxwoods in field.) View looking northeast showing boxwood field #5 south of the Shelton House. Boxwoods should be removed and the field maintained with annual mowing. (OCLP)**



- Maintain cleared areas as meadow with annual mowing.
- Cleared areas may alternatively be converted to agricultural fields.

**SO-5: Remove boxwoods in fields.**

The presence of the boxwood nursery stock presents a number of challenges to successful management and interpretation of the cultural landscape. The poor condition of most of the individual shrubs and the large number of missing shrubs detract from the visual qualities of the landscape, and their presence in the fields hampers maintenance activities as well as future archeological investigation. To enhance the agricultural character of the landscape, convey historic spatial relationships, and facilitate maintenance of the fields, the boxwood shrubs growing in rows in the fields should be removed.

***Considerations:***

- Shrubs may be flush cut or dug for transplanting or selling.
- Stumps should be cut at a level that accommodates periodic mowing.
- Cleared areas may alternatively be converted to agricultural fields.



## VEGETATION

Treatment of vegetation at Rural Plains will emphasize the contrast of character between the domestic core and the working agricultural landscape. Efforts should try to balance the cultivation consistent with a working landscape, while avoiding an overly manicured garden appearance. The domestic core should exhibit the highest level of apparent care, and the level of ornamental cultivation should be reduced outside of this area.

### **VG-1: Manage turf by zone system.**

Turf management practices today differ significantly from how lawns were managed historically, as have expectations of the appearance of turf grass. During the nineteenth century, grass was either cut by hand or kept short by grazing animals. Turf was composed of a wide variety of grass and forb species, and its height and appearance was not uniform. Today, a short, uniform, weed-free lawn is indicative of a well-kept landscape, while taller grass may be perceived as a sign of neglect. Management of the turf grass at Rural Plains must balance the well-kept appearance expected of a national park with the historic character that typified nineteenth-century domestic and agricultural landscapes. To achieve this balance, the following turf management strategy identifies three historically appropriate management zones—short lawn, rough-cut lawn, and meadow—and outlines best maintenance practices for each. The turf management zones are indicated in Figure 35.

#### *Zone 1: Short Lawn*

Zone 1 comprises the areas immediately around the Shelton House, including the east yard, west yard, and area south of the house. This area will receive frequent foot traffic and will be subject to closer visitor interaction than other areas of the property. These areas should receive the highest level of maintenance. Lawn in Zone 1 should be composed of a diversity of appropriate grass species, and while the presence of broad-leaf weeds is acceptable, weed coverage should not exceed thirty percent coverage. Turf should be kept short with regular mowing, maintained to a maximum height of four inches.

#### *Zone 2: Rough-Cut Turf*

Outside of the immediate area of the house, but within the domestic core, turf will experience significantly less foot traffic, with visitor circulation largely confined to lanes and trails. Turf areas will primarily serve as green space, providing visual differentiation between the domestic core and the agricultural landscape beyond. Zone 2 turf will also be featured in visitor service areas, such as the parking lot and comfort station. Zone 2 turf should be maintained at a greater height than Zone 1, with a rough, rustic appearance. Turf should be composed of the same diverse mix of grass species as Zone 1, but higher weed content is acceptable in Zone 2. Turf



Figure 35. (VG-1: Manage turf by zone system.) Diagram showing the three zones of turf management at Rural Plains. (OCLP)

should be mowed less frequently than Zone 1 at a height of between five and eight inches.

### *Zone 3: Meadow*

Beyond the domestic core, fields should be maintained as meadows to suggest the character of agricultural fields, with tall grass and wild flowers. Meadow areas should be allowed to reach full seed height, with mowing twice a year to suppress woody vegetation. Alternatively, some of these areas could be utilized for agricultural production. All areas outside of the domestic core that are not forest or agricultural fields should be maintained as meadow.

### **Seed Selection and Over-Seeding**

Grass at Rural Plains should be maintained with a broad diversity of grass types that reflect the character lawn typical of nineteenth century domestic landscape. Unlike modern lawns, nineteenth-century lawns were composed of a diverse mix of grass types. The species mix should be designed to thrive in a wide variety of conditions, providing vigorous green growth from early spring through late fall. A diverse blend of species will not only enhance the historic character of Rural



**Figure 36. (VG-1) Zone 1 lawn should exhibit a well-kept appearance with short length and minimal weeds. (OCLP)**



**Figure 37. (VG-1) Zone 2 turf should exhibit a rough and rustic appearance, with longer length and more tolerance for broad-leaf weeds. (OCLP)**



**Figure 38. (VG-1) Zone 3 should be maintained with meadow vegetation with mowing once or twice a year to suppress invasive weeds and woody vegetation. (OCLP)**



Plains, but it will improve the lawn's resilience to adverse environmental conditions, including drought, weeds, pests, and diseases. To maintain an appropriate character, it is recommended that Zones 1 and 2 should be over-seeded every two years, with the seed mix adjusted as needed to respond to turf performance and changing conditions.

Zone 3 should be seeded with a blend of native meadow grasses and wild flowers. Species should be selected to produce a stable, self-perpetuating community of meadow vegetation with homogenous vegetative growth of between two and three feet at its peak height. Species may also be selected to enhance wildlife habitat or to provide seasonal flowering interest.

### **Mowing**

One of the most critical and labor-intensive aspects of landscape maintenance is mowing. Appropriate mowing practices are essential to maintain both the appearance and health of turf grass. However, mowing puts significant stress on plants. It is therefore recommended that when mowing in Zones 1 and 2, no more than one third of the total leaf length should be removed in any one mowing. When more is removed, the resulting turf is weakened and may become susceptible to weed, pest, or disease damage.

Mowing frequency will depend on specific environmental conditions, such as soils, light, and water. Generally, however, Zone 1 should be mowed every seven to ten days to a height of three and a half to four inches to present a well-kept appearance. Zone 2 should be mowed every seven to fourteen days to a height of five to eight inches. Mowing frequency should be reduced during periods of heat or drought when grass grows more slowly or becomes dormant. Mowing equipment may include standard riding or walk-behind mowers and weed trimmers; however, care should be taken with any equipment to prevent damage to cultural resources.

In Zone 3, mowing practices and frequency should be designed to encourage desired native grass and wildflower species and suppress non-native weeds and woody vegetation. It is generally recommended that meadows be mowed in early spring, and again in late summer if needed, but the schedule should be fine-tuned in consultation with natural resource specialists and meadow establishment experts to achieve desired results.

### **Soil Health**

For healthy, vigorous lawn it is essential to cultivate healthy soil. Soil with the proper structure, organic and mineral content, and biotic activity will provide grass with the needed water, air, and nutrients to promote growth. Common deficiencies in soil health include compaction, insufficient nutrients, lack of organic



matter, and improper pH. Sub-optimal conditions should be corrected through mechanical means or with soil amendments to support healthy, resilient lawns.

Organic soil amendments, such as compost, compost tea, and mulched grass clippings, offer natural approaches to improving soil fertility. Organic fertilizers break down more slowly, releasing nutrients at a rate that better facilitates absorption in the soil and minimizing the environmental impacts of excess nutrient runoff. Compost may be applied to lawns in an even, quarter-inch layer once or twice a year as needed. Mulching lawn mowers cut grass clippings and fallen leaves into small pieces that are then deposited back into the lawn where they compost in place to increase soil organic content. Organically derived commercial fertilizers may be used if needed to correct specific nutrient deficiencies or pH imbalances. Lawns should only be fertilized when necessary to increase turf thickness or to out-compete weed growth. Soil testing should be undertaken regularly to monitor soil conditions and identify deficiencies.

Lawns should be aerated as needed to reduce compaction and provide proper moisture content and void structure in the soil. Mechanical plug aerators remove small plugs of sod, leaving finger-sized voids that increase aeration and reduce compaction. Aeration should precede top-dressing with compost or over-seeding.

**VG-2: Preserve shade trees.**

Large, mature shade trees growing near the Shelton House created a distinct character in the domestic core, establishing an important contrast with the working agricultural landscape beyond. Many of the existing trees date to the historic period, and some, such as the large sycamore east of the house, may date to the time of the battle. Existing shade trees around the house should be preserved.

**Figure 39. (VG-2: Preserve shade trees.)** Preserve the large sycamore tree in the front yard of the Shelton House. Although the age of the tree has not been determined, anecdotal evidence suggests that the tree may have been present at the time of the battle. The sycamore should be preserved for as long as is practicable. (OCLP)



*Considerations:*

- Shade trees should receive periodic assessments by a certified arborist to monitor their health, detect potential issues, and undertake any necessary corrective actions. Actions may include pruning the canopy, aerating the soil around roots, adding mulch or compost, and treatment of pests and diseases.
- Hazardous conditions should be corrected, including removing dead, diseased, or weak limbs. Dead trees that are a hazard to life and property should be removed.
- Singular specimen trees, such as the hollow sycamore east of the house and the large Chinese chestnut tree north of the house, are strongly identified with the character of the Rural Plains landscape, giving it a tangible sense of age. These large, old trees should receive careful attention and efforts to ensure their continued presence in the landscape.

**VG-3: Plant new shade trees.**

Although several large shade trees remain around the house, many trees have been lost since the historic period and the overall presence of shade trees within the domestic core is diminished. New shade trees should be planted to increase the overall shade around the house and to ensure their continued presence in the future.

Figure 40. (VG-3: Plant new shade trees.) Diagram showing the suggested locations of new shade tree plantings. (OCLP)

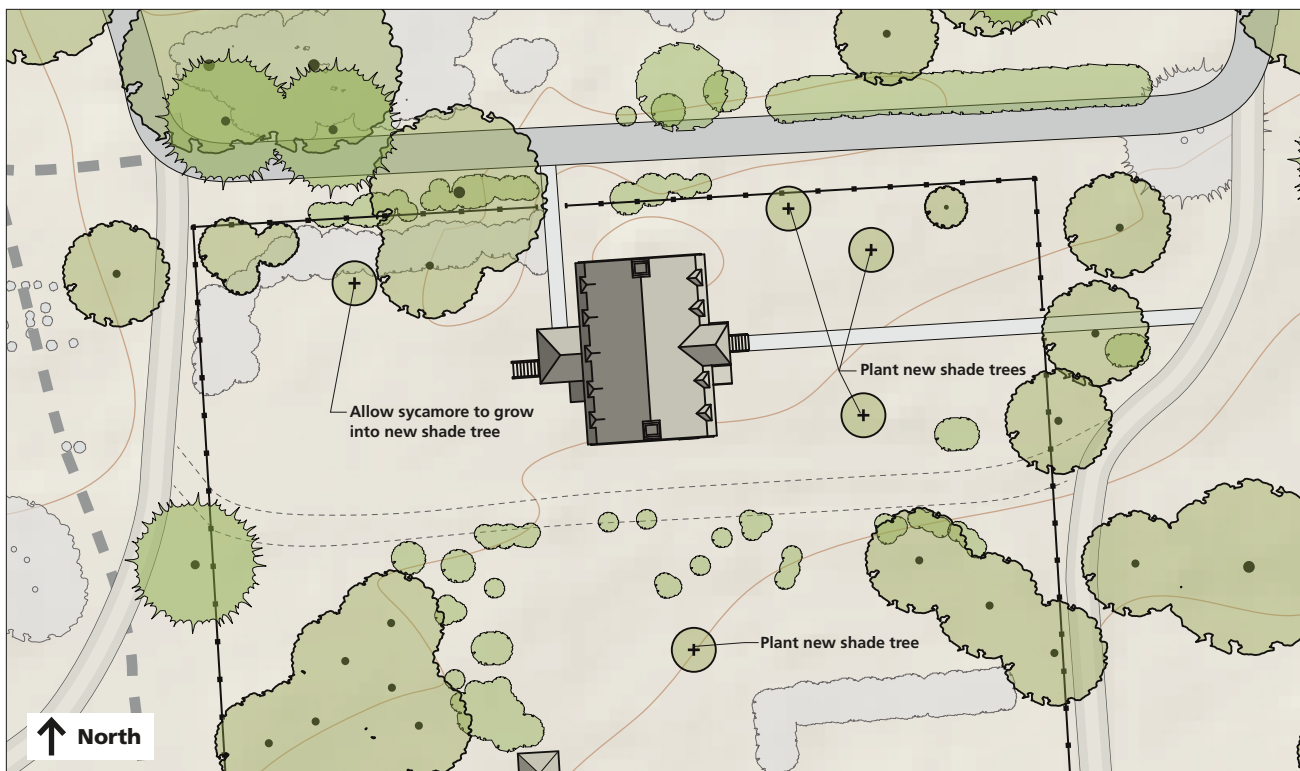




Figure 41. (VG-3) Photosimulation showing the locations of two new shade trees in the east yard of the Shelton House. (OCLP)



Figure 42. (VG-3) Photosimulation showing the location of a new shade tree next to the former elm tree (removed since photo). (OCLP)



Figure 43. (VG-3) The sprouting sycamore stump in the back yard should be trained to a single leader, protected, and encouraged to grow into a new shade tree. (OCLP)





*Consideration:*

- Species should be selected for their characteristics as large shade trees, and for their appropriateness for the climate and site conditions of Rural Plains. Preference should be given to species present in the landscape today or documented as present in the past. Recommended species include black locust, black walnut, sycamore, elm (Dutch elm disease resistant varieties), and oak.
- Suggested locations for new trees are provided in Figures 40 to 43.

**VG-4: Preserve pear trees along Pear Lane.**

Several large pear trees grow along Pear Lane south of the Shelton House. While the origin of these trees is uncertain, they are old enough to be present during the historic period, and anecdotal evidence suggests they may be remnants of former pear orchards. These pear trees should be preserved.

*Considerations:*

- Pear trees should receive regular assessments by an arborist to monitor their health, detect potential issues, and undertake any necessary corrective actions. Actions may include pruning the canopy, aerating the soil around roots, adding mulch or compost, and treatment of pests and diseases.
- Vines and other vegetation growing on or directly around the trees should be removed.
- Hazardous conditions should be corrected, including removing dead, diseased, or weak limbs. Dead trees that are a hazard to life and property should be removed.



**Figure 44. (VG-4: Preserve pear trees along Pear Lane.)** Several large pear trees grow along Pear Lane south of the Shelton House. These trees, possible remnants of a historic pear orchard, should be preserved. (OCLP)

Figure 45. (VG-5: Remove understory vegetation within hedgerows.) View looking north showing one of the hedgerows at Rural Plains (left side of photo). Vines, shrubs, and woody debris should be removed from hedgerows. (OCLP)



**VG-5: Remove understory vegetation within hedgerows.**

Although hedgerows were not likely present during the historic period, their presence today serves as a record of historic spatial organization and land use. Hedgerows also serve to screen adjacent development and enhance the historic feeling of the landscape.

Some of the hedgerows have been recommended for removal (see Task SO-4). In these cases, benefits of restoring an open character and battlefield views outweigh the motivations for retaining the hedgerows. Areas of hedgerow removal are concentrated west and southwest of the house, where views toward the battlefront are essential. South and east of the house, however, hedgerows should be retained and preserved.

Today, climbing vines are impacting the health of the trees in the hedgerows, and a surplus of woody debris creates a tangled and messy character that is incompatible with the desired character of the working agricultural landscape. These hedgerows should be cleaned up and maintained free of vines and excess brush.

**Considerations:**

- Remove all large woody debris and dead vegetation from within hedgerows.
- Remove climbing vines growing within hedgerows.
- Treat persistent vegetation by painting cut stumps with herbicide to prevent resprouting.





**Figure 46. (VG-6: Establish ornamental vegetation in domestic core.) Conceptual rendering showing the appropriate placement of ornamental vegetation in the domestic core. See also Figures 63 and 65. (OCLP)**

**VG-6: Establish ornamental vegetation in domestic core.**

During the historic period, in addition to vegetables and herbs grown in the kitchen garden, the family would have grown a variety of flowering perennials, annuals, vines, roses, and shrubs within the domestic core. These plants would have been informally placed in the landscape, concentrated around structures, along circulation routes, and along the perimeter of functional spaces. This vegetation would have created a strong domestic character around the house and contrasted it sharply with the agricultural landscape beyond the domestic core. Since the historic period, the number of ornamental herbaceous plants around the house has diminished in favor of boxwoods and other trees and shrubs.

In order to enhance the historic character of the domestic core, ornamental herbaceous plantings, vines, and roses should be established in select areas around the house. Areas to be planted include the edges of the central walkway, along fences, around gates and arbors, and along the foundations of interpretive structures. Species and varieties should be selected from those available and typically planted regionally at the time of the 1864 battle. Some appropriate species are listed in Appendix A.

**VG-7: Reduce the size and foliar mass of mature boxwoods.**

Several of the mature boxwoods at Rural Plains are overgrown, their large size impacting the ability of the site to convey its historic spatial organization and in



some cases interfering with functional aspects like circulation. The hedge along the north side of the east yard will need to be reduced before the northern loop drive can be reestablished (see Task CR-1). Likewise, the large boxwood in front of the house will need to be reduced to reestablish the central walkway (see Task CR-3). Other boxwoods should also be pruned to increase vigor and reduce the overall mass of the shrubs.

Care must be taken with boxwoods of this age and maturity to ensure the plants will respond favorably to pruning. A phased approach over several years should be employed to reduce stress and ensure survival of the boxwoods. In the first year, no more than one third of the foliage from the top fifty percent of the crown should be removed. Branches should be removed evenly throughout the crown, allowing light to reach the lower branches of the plants. Following pruning, the boxwoods should be monitored to ensure that latent buds along the larger branches begin to grow. If the plants respond with a flush of new growth, the pruning may be repeated in subsequent years, removing no more than a third of the remaining foliage at any one time, until the desired height of the boxwood is reached. If at any time the plants become stressed or do not respond with new growth in latent buds, attempts to reduce the crown of the plants should be curtailed and the boxwoods maintained at their current size. All pruning should be done in consultation with an arborist, horticulturist, or boxwood expert.



Figure 47. (VG-8: Establish representative orchard.) Diagram showing location of representative fruit orchard. (OCLP)

**VG-8: Establish representative orchard.**

Orchards were an essential component of the Rural Plain collection at the time of the 1864 battle, providing an important source of fruit for family consumption, cider production, market produce, and animal fodder. Visually, they were conspicuous features amid the open agricultural fields, and their uniformity and geometric forms contributed a distinctive character to the landscape. Walter Shelton indicated that the plantation had several orchards at the time of the battle, including apple orchards and a peach orchard “to the left of the back of the garden.” Beyond these scant details, no information about the size, location, arrangement, form, or variety of the orchards and their trees has been located. However, based on information outlined in the Analysis of Historic Landscape Conditions chapter of this report, two likely locations of the peach orchard have been identified, indicated in Figure 18.

Despite the incomplete information about former orchards, a representative orchard could be planted at Rural Plains to provide visitors with a sense of how the landscape was used historically by the Shelton family and the important role orchards played in early American agriculture. The recommended area of the representative orchard is the area south of the Shelton House as indicated on Drawing 47. Fruit trees should be planted in a square grid pattern spaced 25–30 feet apart, oriented parallel to the south façade of the house. The orchard may be established with peach trees, as it was during the historic period, but using alternative fruit such as apple would also be appropriate. Apple trees would convey the desired character of the fruit orchard while providing maintenance benefits and a better chance of success.

**Figure 48. (VG-9: Remove vegetation within cemetery.)**  
View looking west showing the Rural Plains cemetery. Vegetation growing within the bounds of the cemetery should be removed. (OCLP)





**VG-9: Remove woody vegetation within the cemetery.**

Several small trees are growing in and near the cemetery. These trees obscure the spatial organization of the cemetery and have the potential of disturbing buried archeological resources with their roots. Trees and other woody vegetation should be removed from within the perimeter of the cemetery.

*Considerations:*

- Archeological investigations should be undertaken to determine the historic extents of the cemetery. In the absence of additional information about the cemetery extents, trees and shrub vegetation should be cleared five feet to the left, right, and behind the existing headstones, and fifteen feet in front.
- Flush-cut trees, avoiding ground disturbance, and remove all downed debris from the site.
- Monitor the cemetery and prevent the regrowth of vegetation.

Figure 49. View looking south showing berms that line Pear Lane. Topographic features, including agricultural berms and ditches throughout Rural Plains should be preserved. (OCLP)

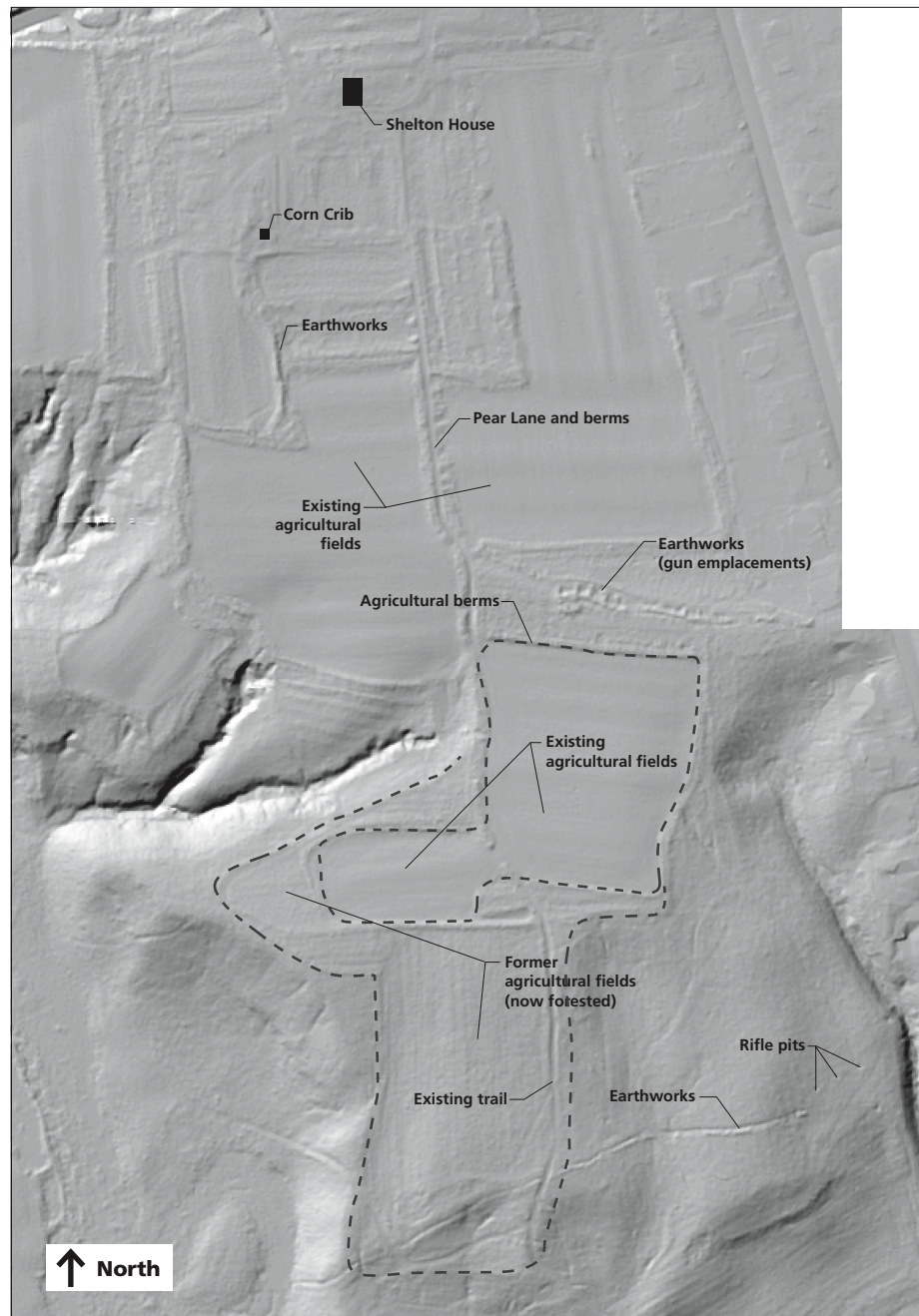
**TOPOGRAPHY**

In 2015, aerial LiDAR topographic data was collected covering the study area at Rural Plains, generating topographic values at a resolution of less than one vertical foot. The images produced by the project have revealed topographic patterns of topography that are difficult to discern with the eye, including present and former agricultural fields, berms and ditches, furrows and other signs of cultivation, military earthworks, and circulation features. In many cases the subtle topographical patterns are all that are left of historic features that have been lost or obscured by vegetation. These patterns convey valuable information about historic events, practices, and spatial organization that would be otherwise intangible.

In general, the topography at Rural Plains should be considered an essential quality of the historic landscape, and efforts should be made to prevent damage, disturbance, or alterations to the contours of the land. Ground disturbance should be carefully considered when evaluating project alternatives, with preference given to alternatives that involve minimal regrading, filling, or removal of material. When topographic alterations are needed, the application of imported fill material to the undisturbed surface is



**Figure 50.** Hillshade image generated from remote LiDAR data at Rural Plains, showing topographic features. The image reveals extant features that may not be readily visible to the eye, such as former agricultural fields that are now reforested, subtle elevation changes between fields and adjacent land, traces of former circulation features, and the full extent of extant earthworks. The LiDAR data illustrates the breadth of historical information recorded in the topography of Rural Plains. (Digital Aerial Solutions/OCLP)



preferable to the excavation of existing soil. When soil disturbance is unavoidable, such as with utility repairs, archeological excavation, or other repairs and improvements to site facilities, care should be taken to record and restore initial conditions with respect to the ground contours.

Topographic features are often inconspicuous in the landscape, and many people, including park staff, visitors, and other users, may not be aware of their presence and importance. Routine activities, such as maintenance activities, vehicular movement, agricultural use, and visitor use can cause inadvertent damage to topographic features. Policies and practices should be adopted that prevent such damage and ensure the preservation of earthworks, berms, and other features.

Park staff should be trained to identify potential features in the field and avoid activities that might damage them, such as the use of equipment on or over features.

Aside from policies that aim to prevent human impacts to topographic features, vegetation provides the primary protection from natural impacts such as erosion. Plant and tree roots stabilize soil, and vegetative cover and leaf litter slow wind and water to reduce the loss of material. Improperly managed vegetation, however, has the potential to damage resources, as when trees are uprooted or large branches fall. To ensure resource protection, desired vegetation cover should be specified, and management procedures developed to achieve and maintain desired conditions.

### **Earthworks**

The earthworks that were constructed by Union soldiers at Rural Plains are among the primary cultural resources associated with the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek. These fortifications provided cover for Union infantry and artillery during the 1864 Battle of Totopotomoy Creek. The continued presence of the earthworks in the landscape conveys important information about the events of the battle and provides a tangible connection to the soldiers' experience.

The National Park Service has extensive experience in the preservation of earthworks and has developed standard protocols for protecting earthen structures from erosion, damage from trees, and impacts from visitor use. The general approach involves maintaining a protective vegetative cover on the earthworks and directing visitor access and activities to prevent impacts. The preferred vegetation cover generally falls into two categories: forest cover and grass. Each type of vegetation cover offers benefits and drawbacks with regards to resource protection, maintenance, interpretation, safety, and visitor accessibility.

A dense forest cover with a multi-aged, multi-layered structure, consisting of a closed canopy, midstory, shrubs, and ground cover vegetation, and forest litter, provides the best protection against natural erosion. Forest cover deflects and slows precipitation, and the dense network of underground roots holds soil in place. Although well-established forest cover is stable and requires little maintenance, conditions must be monitored to identify and mitigate ongoing impacts and potentially hazardous conditions.

While forest cover is a low-maintenance, effective method of preserving the structure of earthworks, it does not adequately address issues of interpretation and visitor access. The reduced visibility of earthworks in deep forest cover obscures the form of earthworks, blocks important views and sightlines, and hinders a visitor's understanding of the scale and context of the larger earthworks system.

Constricted circulation and reduced views encourage visitors to create social trails over and along the top of earthworks, causing damage and increasing erosion.

A second option for management of earthworks is removal of forest cover and conversion to tall grass. Like forest cover, a dense, properly maintained tall grass cover stabilizes earthworks, with the added benefits of increased visibility, accessibility, and visitor safety. Earthworks under grass cover are not in danger from falling trees and limbs, and properly designed circulation and wayside information can decrease impacts from visitor traffic.

These benefits come at a cost. Earthworks covered in forest must be converted to tall grass, a process that involves the removal of all existing vegetation and ground litter, testing and preparation of soil, and the establishment of grass cover. Grass species selection must be made carefully to ensure vigorous growth, desired character, and reasonable maintenance, while avoiding the unintended spread of invasive species. Following conversion, grass cover must be carefully maintained to ensure adequate density, root depth, and ground coverage, while managing the growth of vines and woody plants.

Vegetative cover types that are generally unsuitable for earthworks preservation include cleared or thinned forest, turf grass, rough grass (infrequently mown turf species), vines, and horticultural ground covers.

With these factors in mind, the following management options are recommended for the earthworks at Rural Plains.

**TP-1: Convert portions of the earthworks to tall grass cover.**

The earthworks at Rural Plains at the time of the battle were predominantly located in open agricultural fields, providing optimal vantage for observing and attacking the Confederate forces. Today, this context is altered by the presence of forest cover on most of the extant earthworks sections. Clearing the forest cover and establishing tall grass on and around the earthworks will help reveal the form of the earthworks, reestablish important visual relationships, and increase the overall open character of the Rural Plains landscape.

The priority portion of earthworks to convert to tall grass cover is approximately 200 feet of extant earthworks visible in a north-south line, beginning about 215 feet south of the corn crib. Vegetation recommended for clearing in Task SO-4 includes vegetation covering this portion of earthworks. Clearing this vegetation will make the earthworks clearly visible in the landscape and restore views westward in the direction of the creek and the battlefield. This segment of earthworks is the closest and most accessible from the house and is clearly defined topographically, providing the best opportunity for interpretation for visitors. This section of earthworks should be cleared of vegetation and replanted in grass species.



The second section of earthworks that could be converted to tall grass cover is the section of artillery emplacements approximately 1,000 feet south of the Shelton House. This section, some of the best preserved earthworks at Rural Plains, is currently under a cover of forest vegetation. Should the park decide to convert this section to tall grass cover, the forest vegetation should be cleared completely between the two fields to the north and south to create a continuous open area.

*Considerations:*

- Remove all existing vegetation with a combination of hand cutting, brush mower, and the application of an appropriate herbicide. Grind stumps four inches below grade and remove all debris.
- Select a tall-grass species or mix of species suited to soil and site conditions.
- Grass should be established and maintained according to best management practices, including guidance of the park's Earthworks Management

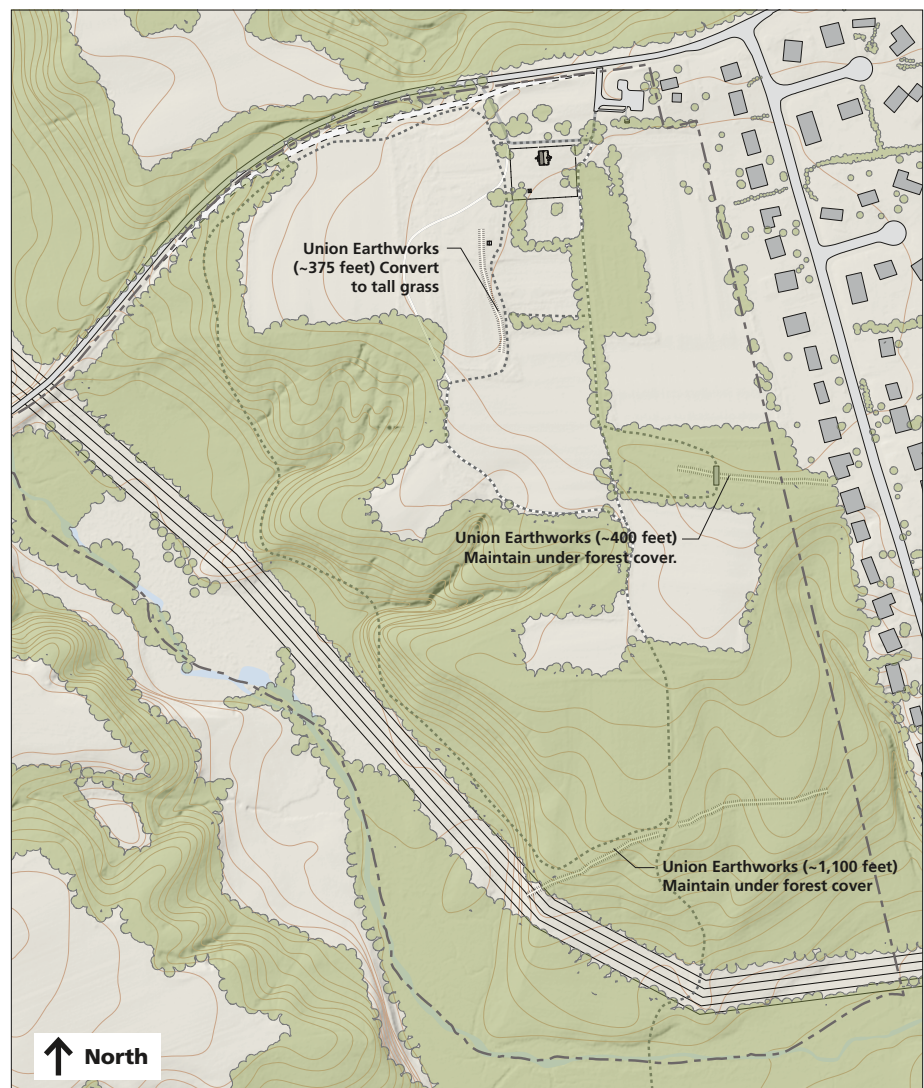


Figure 51. (TP-1: Convert a portion of the earthworks to tall grass cover) Diagram showing the extant earthworks at Rural Plains. (OCLP)

ment Plan.

- A strip of rough-cut turf grass, as described in Task VG-1, should be maintained on the east and west edges of the earthworks to define them visually.
- Management of tall grass should be monitored carefully and adjusted as needed to ensure long term success.

**TP-2: Indicate missing earthworks alignment with mowing patterns.**

Substantial portions of the earthworks that once extended along the west and southwest side of the house are no longer visible in the site's topography. These portions were likely filled and leveled soon after the Civil War to reclaim functional areas close to the house. The locations of some of these portions are known with high confidence based on historic maps and aerial photographs, while other portions have yet to be located. To support interpretation of the historic landscape, the identified alignments of earthworks should be indicated through mowing patterns.

The tall grass established on the earthworks in Task TP-1 should be extended from the northern terminus of the visible earthworks for a distance of about 230 feet, following the line of the existing hedgerow and extending along the west side of the corn crib. A strip of rough-cut turf grass as described in Task VG-1 should be maintained on either side of the tall grass to define the feature visually.

**Considerations:**

- Refer to Task TP-1 considerations for establishment and maintenance of tall grass.

Figure 52. (TP-2: Indicate missing earthworks with mowing patterns.) View of Marching Bear Mounds at Efigy Mounds National Monument, illustrating the method of marking features with vegetation. (NPS)





- Refer to Task VG-1 considerations for maintenance of rough-cut turf grass.

**TP-3: Maintain earthworks under a cover of native forest.**

The majority of the earthworks at Rural Plains are stable under the present cover of forest. In order to preserve the structure of the earthworks and protect them from erosion and other impacts, any earthworks not converted to tall grass cover should be maintained under forest cover. Existing vegetation should be managed to perpetuate a multi-aged, multi-layered natural forest structure. Hazardous trees growing on or near the earthworks should be removed, and other potential impacts should be identified and corrected. Larger trees growing in proximity to the earthworks that do not pose a hazard should be retained to ensure adequate forest density and a closed overhead canopy. Social trails should be renaturalized using leaf litter and ground cover to obscure the trails and shrubs and woody debris as barriers to circulation. Invasive vegetation should be controlled, and native forest vegetation naturally occurring in the area should be encouraged.

*Considerations:*

- Mark and remove only those individual trees that are deemed hazardous to the safety of the visitor and/or the preservation of the earthworks.
- Flush-cut stumps and treat with an appropriate herbicide to prevent sprouting.
- Develop a long-term vegetation management plan that describes and maps existing vegetation, specifies management policies and objectives, and implements a monitoring program to evaluate the impacts of the vegetation management plan and to identify and monitor potentially haz-



Figure 53. (TP-3: Maintain earthworks under a cover of native forest.) View of earthworks in the forest in the southern portion of Rural Plains. Large trees growing in or near earthworks have the potential to damage the resources and should be monitored. (OCLP)



ardous trees.

## CIRCULATION

Although the historic circulation of Rural Plains prior to the twentieth century is poorly understood, the aerial photo from 1936 clearly shows the primary circulation features present at that time. These include the northern loop drive that provided access to the property from Studley Road, Pear Lane, and a network of secondary farm lanes along the perimeter of agricultural fields. The circulation tasks that follow provide guidance for reestablishing the primary circulation patterns as they were at the end of the period of significance, and for increasing visitor access to the site and its resources.

**Figure 54. (CR-1: Reestablish northern entrance loop drive.)** View of the alignment of the northern loop drive trace. The northern loop drive should be reestablished on its historic alignment. Existing vegetation should be trimmed back or removed to accommodate the drive. (OCLP)



**Figure 55. (CR-1)** View looking west showing the driveway trace that runs along the north side of the Shelton House. The cedar trees and junipers in the foreground should be removed to accommodate the drive. (OCLP)



**CR-1: Reestablish northern entrance loop drive.**

As late as the 1930s, the primary entrance loop drive passed along the north side of the Shelton House. This loop drive is clearly visible in the 1936 aerial photo, and is considerably wider and more defined than the southern loop drive. Today the trace of the northern loop drive is evident in the level topography and lack of vegetation. To better represent the spatial organization of the landscape during the historic period, the northern entrance drive should be reestablished.

**Considerations:**

- Entrance drive should be reestablished with imported base and surface materials in a manner that requires minimal disturbance of existing soil matrix.
- Drive should be surfaced with crushed stone or stabilized soil/aggregate mix. Drive should not be paved with asphalt.
- Drive should be no more than ten feet wide and follow the existing drive trace.
- Drive should be incorporated into the accessible route from the visitor parking lot to the Shelton House.
- The two cedar trees and juniper bed at the east end of the drive trace should be removed to accommodate construction. Portions of the boxwood hedge along the north side of the front yard may need to be cut back to accommodate the drive.

**CR-2: Remove existing southern loop drive.**

Historic aerial photographs suggest that the southern drive functioned as a sec-

Figure 56. (CR-2: Remove existing southern loop drive.) View of the Shelton House and the southern loop driveway. To restore historic circulation, the southern loop driveway should be removed. (OCLP)





ondary driveway that may have terminated in the back yard or at a garage south of the house. With the reestablishment of the northern loop drive, the southern drive will become redundant and incompatible with the desired character of the domestic core. Furthermore, vehicular traffic on the southern loop drive has the potential to cause structural damage to the Shelton House. To remedy these issues, in conjunction with the reestablishment the northern loop drive, the southern loop drive should be removed and converted to turf grass.

**Considerations:**

- Remove surface gravel and loosen base material. Cover with four inches of topsoil and seed with turf grass.
- Any excavations should be preceded with archeological testing and compliance.

**CR-3: Reestablish central walkway.**

Multiple sources indicate that the Shelton House once featured a central walkway approaching the east façade of the house. A watercolor painting of the Shelton House, possibly painted by Maude Shelton in the early twentieth century, shows a straight central walkway leading to the front door, and a Works Progress Administration of Virginia report from 1936 mentions a front walkway as well, although the walkway is not clearly visible in historic photos. Archeological investigations in 2009 revealed a twentieth-century gravel surface four inches below existing grade. Archeological investigations did not proceed below this surface layer, and it is likely that it overlays the historic walkway materials.

To reestablish historic circulation and spatial organization and to facilitate pedestrian access to the house, the central walkway should be reconstructed. Archeo-

Figure 57. (CR-3 Reestablish central walkway.) View looking west showing the historic location of the central walkway. It is believed that the boxwood in the center of the photograph is one of two that once flanked the walkway. See also figure 46. (OCLP)





logical investigations should be used to determine the historic width and surface material.

**Considerations:**

- Construct a central walkway from the existing drive to the front steps of the Shelton House. Utilize dimensions and materials as determined during the course of archeological investigations.
- The large boxwood in front of the house should be retained and accommodated by the walkway design. The walkway will likely have to be notched around the boxwood. Precautions should be taken to ensure protection of the trunk and roots of the boxwood during and after construction of the walkway.

**CR-4: Establish accessible route to Shelton House.**

Currently, the Shelton House is not accessible for visitors with limited mobility. Current access is via the driveway loop south of the house, which features an uneven surface of loose stone aggregate. From the driveway a visitor must cross the turf grass of the west or east yard to the steps of the house. A universally accessible route should be established from the visitor parking lot to the house.

Several options involving either a ramp or lift would accomplish this. The preferred option would balance the objectives of accessibility with the need to preserve the essential qualities of the cultural landscape. Such an option would involve minimal ground disturbance, preserve all contributing features, and be visually unobtrusive.



Figure 58. (CR-4: Establish accessible route to the Shelton House. Diagram showing the alignment of the central walkway and the accessible route to the rear of the Shelton House. (OCLP)

*Considerations:*

- A new accessible route should be established that follows the trace of the former entrance drive along the north side of the Shelton House.

**CR-5: Establish unit-wide circulation system.**

In addition to the entrance drive loop, the circulation at Rural Plains currently consists of Pear Lane and other farm lanes and a marked pedestrian trail, which includes segments following existing farm lanes. The pedestrian trail system provides access to the corn crib, earthworks remnants, cemetery, and Totopotomoy Creek at the southern end of the property. From the creek, the trail crosses a footbridge and leaves the park, providing access to Confederate earthworks on private property south of the park property.

An expanded pedestrian trail section will provide visitor access to the Freeman Marker and other portions of the property currently inaccessible to visitors. A potential route, shown on Drawings 5 and 6, provides access to the site's primary historic, natural, and interpretive resources and creates multiple loops to provide options for shorter or longer distances. The route utilizes a combination of existing farm lanes and foot trails, as well as new trail segments.

*Considerations:*

- Alignment of new trail segments should be sensitive to existing topography so that construction will require minimal grading.
- Trail surface should consist primarily of compacted earth, or if necessary for erosion or other reasons, of crushed stone or stabilized aggregate surface. Trail should not be paved.
- Interpretive and way-finding signs should be placed to provide visitors information about resources and to aid in navigation of the property.

**CR-6: Construct boardwalk and footbridge over earthworks.**

The earthworks south of the Shelton House are being impacted by foot traffic and social trails on the structures. The current trail that brings visitors to the earthworks ends in a dead end, requiring visitors to back-track. This encourages people to continue on and over the earthworks, causing damage. To discourage foot traffic on the earthworks and to prevent further damage, a timber boardwalk and footbridge over the earthworks could provide pedestrian access over the earthworks and back to the main trail as depicted in Figure 60.

Figure 59. (CR-6: Construct a boardwalk and footbridge over earthworks.) The current circulation route terminates in a dead end, encouraging social trails over the earthworks. (OCLP)



Figure 60. (CR-6) Photo-simulation illustrating a boardwalk and footbridge over the earthworks that will protect the earthworks from pedestrian traffic and provide a continuous circulation loop. (OCLP)



*Considerations:*

- Although construction of a footbridge over the earthworks will require ground disturbance in archeologically sensitive area, the overall impacts to the resources will be reduced by restricting foot traffic.
- Footbridge should be designed to require a minimum number of post holes in the earthworks themselves.



## BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

### **BS-1: Preserve corn crib.**

The corn crib is a contributing structure, the last of the agricultural outbuildings that once dotted the landscape. Its construction date is unknown, but it is presumed to date to the late nineteenth century, providing one of the few direct connections to the Rural Plains landscape prior to the establishment of the nursery. Today, the structure is in fair condition, with obvious signs of deterioration in both the structure and the finishes. Steps should be taken to stabilize the structure and correct any deficiencies that may lead to further damage.

The apparent age of the corn crib evident in the weathered wood and rusted metal strongly conveys the sense of time and is itself an essential component of the landscape's historic character. While the structure of the corn crib should be stabilized, the overall aged character should not be altered through extensive preservation or restoration efforts. Stabilization measures should be inconspicuous from the exterior of the structure, and any replacement of historic material should be limited to what is necessary.

#### *Considerations:*

- Inspect structure regularly to identify and correct any structural issues that may lead to further damage.
- Replacement materials should be compatible with the weathered character of the structure. Select materials that will age quickly and become inconspicuous in the overall structure.
- Remove large trees around the corn crib to prevent damage from dropped limbs or downed trees.



Figure 61. (BS-1: Preserve corn crib.) View looking south showing the corn crib. Any repairs or replacement of materials on the corn crib should preserve the weathered appearance of the structure. (OCLP)

**BS-2: Construct paled fence around house.**

The paled fence that surrounded the Shelton House was one of the most prominent features of the domestic core at the time of the 1864 battle. Descriptions of the fence are found in the first-hand accounts by Union Soldiers and by Walter Shelton, and the fence features prominently in the sketch of the Shelton House by Alfred Waud.

Although the size and layout of the fence is not known, an approximation may be made based on the historic descriptions and analysis of the Waud sketch. A portion of the fence could be constructed to support interpretive objectives, creating a visual indication of the spatial organization of the Rural Plains domestic core. See the sidebar and discussion in the Analysis of Historic Landscape Conditions chapter of this report for analysis of fence location. Archeological investigations may provide additional information about historic fence locations.

***Considerations:***

- Construct a paled fence consisting of posts, horizontal rails, and vertical palings. The fence should be approximately three feet high with posts set approximately eight feet apart. Palings should be approximately one inch by four inches wide, spaced four inches apart.

**Figure 62. (BS-2) Conceptual rendering showing the location of the paled fence. (OCLP)**

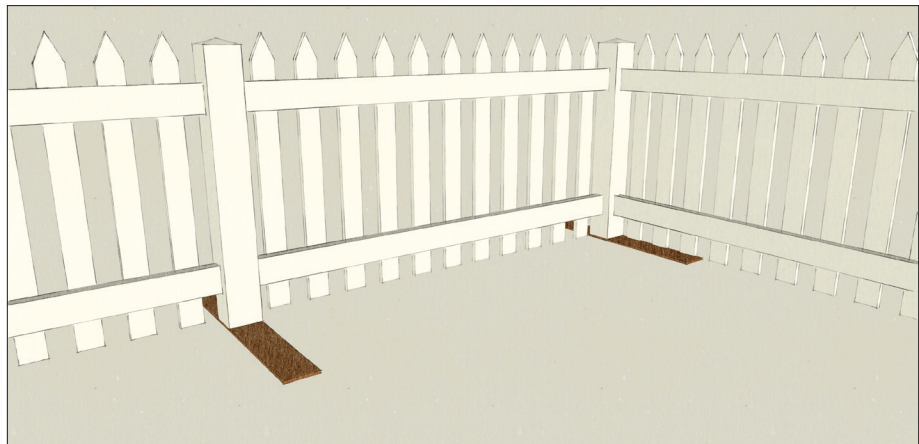




Figure 63. (BS-2: Construct pales fence around house.) Photo-simulation of new fence and arched gate around the Shelton House. See also Figure 46. (OCLP)



Figure 64. (BS-2) Example of a method of constructing the pales fence using steel feet that minimizes ground disturbance. Weathering steel plates should be bolted to the fence posts to provide support without digging post holes. (OCLP)



- Corner posts and end posts at gate locations should include diagonal bracing.
- Fence may be constructed to minimize ground disturbance by mounting posts to steel plate feet as depicted in Figure 64. Corner and end posts, as well as every fifth post along a straight run of fence, should be mounted in the ground for structural stability.

### **BS-3: Install interpretive outbuildings.**

The loss of the agricultural and domestic outbuildings at Rural Plains is a significant impact to the historic character of the landscape. Although the outbuildings were removed and replaced over time as needs evolved and the condition of the structures declined, outbuildings were a constant presence in the landscape at least into the 1950s. Installing representative structures typical of those used regionally as exhibits in the landscape will help convey their important role in a working landscape and enhance the landscape's rural character.



**Figure 65. (BS-3: Install interpretive outbuildings) Conceptual rendering showing an example of an interpretive outbuilding that may be used as on-site storage. (OCLP)**



There are significant challenges associated with reconstructing the outbuildings at Rural Plains, including limited information about the number of outbuildings and their location and design. Future archeology and other sources may answer some of these questions. However to support interpretation, representative structures of a temporary nature may be installed in the landscape to help convey the historic character without representing an accurate historical scene.

***Considerations:***

- Construct one or more structures representative of the collection of outbuildings present at Rural Plains at the time of the 1864 battle.
- The structures should be of an appropriate size and style as would have been found regionally in the mid-nineteenth century, using the Waud sketch, contemporary descriptions, and the existing corn crib as guides for construction. In addition to existing documentation of the outbuildings at Rural Plains, examples of structures typically found at comparable plantations in central Virginia during the period should be used as models.
- Structures should be of a temporary nature such that they can be moved or removed easily and so that they do not disturb potential archeological resources. Structures may be constructed on treated timber skids so that they can be dragged by equipment for portability.

**BS-4: Construct a paled fence around the cemetery.**

Although it is not known whether the family cemetery was enclosed with a fence during the historic period, marking cemetery boundaries with fencing was a common practice.

**Figure 66. (BS-4: Construct a paled fence around the cemetery.)**  
**Conceptual rendering showing**  
**an appropriate style of fence to**  
**be installed around the cemetery.**  
**(OCLP)**



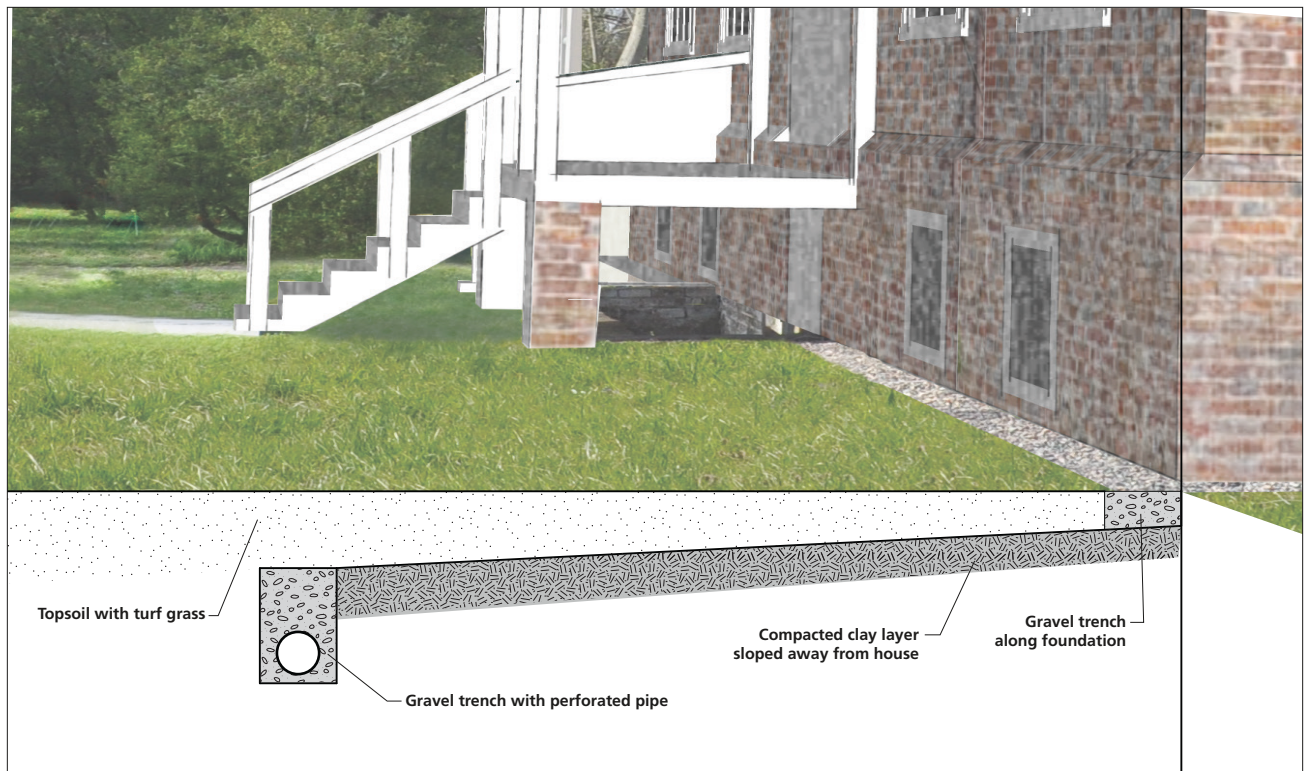
Installation of a fence around the cemetery at Rural Plains will help define its extents and protect its resources. The fence should be of smaller scale than what was present around the domestic core, between two and three feet high with approximately six-foot spacing between posts.

- Determine the historic extent of the cemetery using extant traces of fencing, posts, and other visible features. Geophysical and archeological investigation may also be used to determine if the extent of the cemetery was larger than what is currently represented by visible features.
- In the absence of any additional evidence regarding the historic extent of the cemetery, establish a boundary approximately five feet behind and on the left and right of existing markers, and fifteen feet in front of markers.

#### **BS-5: Improve drainage around Shelton House**

Improper drainage around the foundation of the Shelton House has led to damage to the house. Storm water that collects near the house may leak into the basement, damaging the foundation, wood, and brickwork. Measures undertaken to correct these issues have included an impervious membrane placed on the ground surface along the east foundation and covered with gravel, and black plastic drain pipes that convey water from the gutter downspouts away from the house. The approximately 470 square feet of gravel along the front of the house is highly conspicuous and is incompatible with the historic character of the house and landscape. Furthermore, the plastic drain pipes that extend for approximately ten feet along the ground from the corners of the house present a tripping hazard and an impediment to access. Drainage issues should be corrected in such a way as to remove safety hazards and restore turf cover around the house.





**Figure 67. (BS-5: Improve drainage around Shelton House.)** Diagram illustrating one option for an underground drainage system for the foundation of the Shelton House. (OCLP)

The drainage system options may include underground pipes, dry wells, or gravel-filled trenches designed to convey water away from the house foundation before allowing it to infiltrate into the soil. Options that do not involve ground disturbance may also be effective, including adding a small amount of fill material and grading the ground away from the house foundation. In either case, the transition from yard to house should appear natural, with continuous turf coverage and minimal exposed gravel, membranes, and drainage pipes.

#### *Considerations*

- Turf grass should be established around the house to create a continuous lawn up to the house foundation.
- A narrow (approx. 12") gravel band may be used immediately along the house foundation to keep soil and moisture away from the bricks.
- Window wells should be constructed around the basement windows if the grade is to be brought above their sills.
- All ground work should be preceded by archeological investigation and compliance.

#### **BS-6: Install comfort station.**

Currently, visitor restroom facilities are provided by a blue portable toilet located near the main entrance gate. The visual style of this facility, as well as its prominent placement near the front of the Shelton House, is incompatible with the historic



landscape. The portable toilet also provides an inferior visitor experience. The portable toilet should be replaced with a more permanent comfort station, located out of the view space of the house.

*Considerations:*

- The comfort station should be of simple design and constructed of an inconspicuous material. Suitable options include prefabricated comfort stations, which are typically available either as flush systems or vault toilets, or site-built with light wood framing using dimensional lumber.
- The comfort station should be placed on the north side of the hedgerow near the parking lot. This location is convenient for visitors and out of view of the Shelton House and Rural Plains landscape. Although this

Figure 68. (BS-6: Install comfort station.) Diagram showing the recommended location of a comfort station near the visitor parking lot. (OCLP)

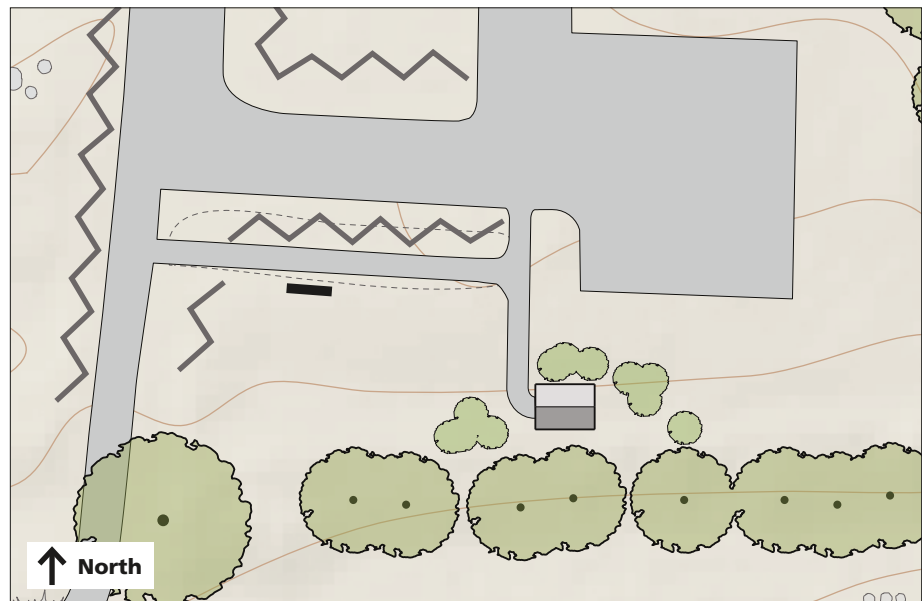


Figure 69. (BS-6) Conceptual rendering showing a comfort station installed near the visitor parking lot. (OCLP)



location will be visible from Studley Road, inconspicuous design and materials will mitigate its visual impact on the landscape.

- Shrubs, such as boxwoods transplanted from elsewhere on the property, may be used to soften the appearance of the structure; however a large hedge should not be used in an attempt to completely screen the comfort station.

#### **BS-7: Preserve cemetery markers.**

The stone markers are some of the few extant features known to have been present at the time of the 1864 battle. Over the years, the headstones have become stained and weathered, making the inscriptions difficult to read. The headstones and footstones should be preserved using best practices and protected from future damage.

#### *Considerations:*

- Clean and preserve the stones using appropriate methods for grave marker conservation.
- Reset stones in an upright position.
- Hand-trim grass around stones to prevent damage from string trimming.



Figure 70. (BS-7: Preserve cemetery markers.) Photograph of one of the headstones in the Rural Plains cemetery. Headstones should be preserved and set in an upright position. (OCLP)

**Figure 71. (BS-8: Relocate or remove storage container.) View looking north showing the storage container. The metal storage container is incompatible with the historic character of Rural Plains and should be relocated or removed. (OCLP)**



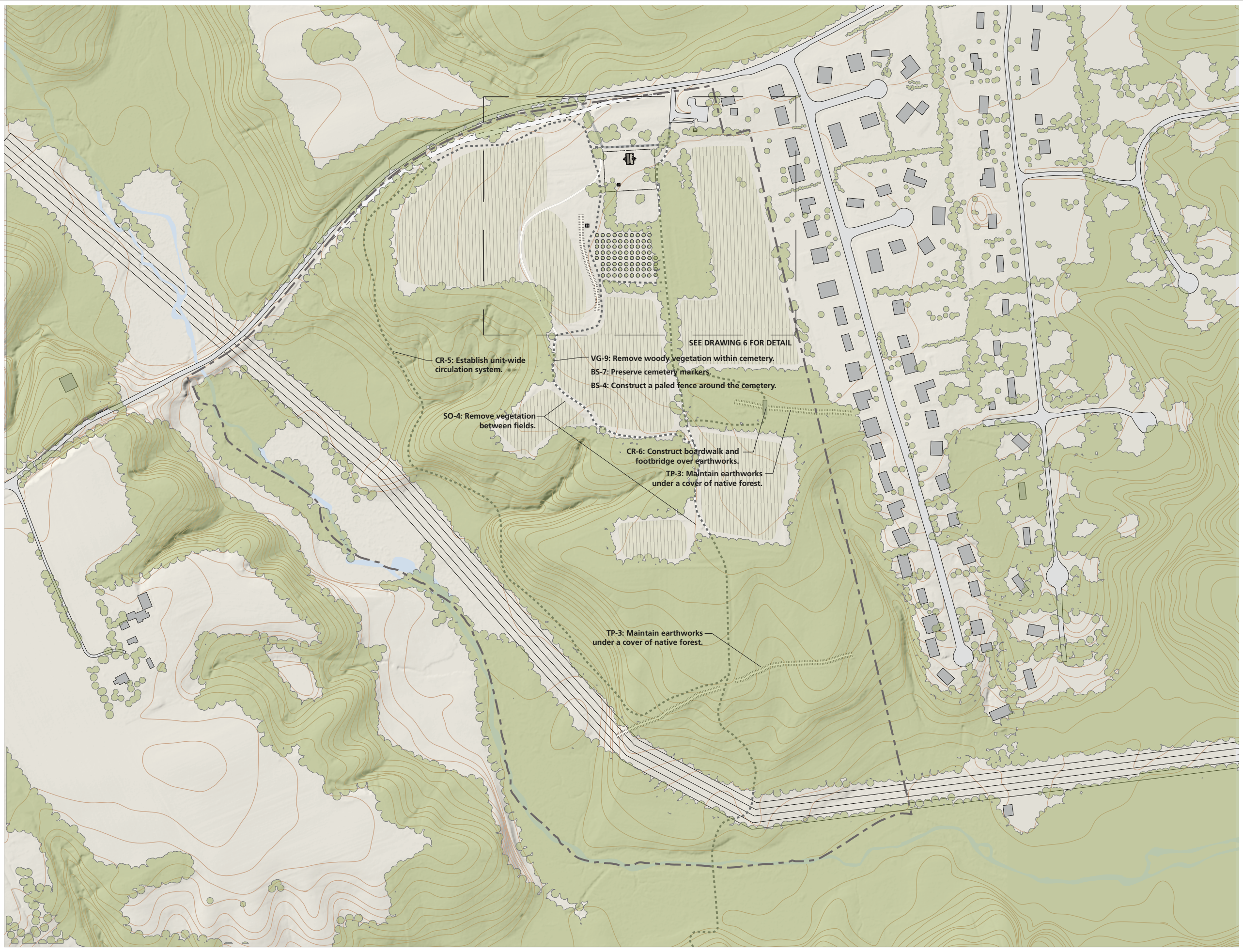
**BS-8: Relocate or remove storage container.**

The existing metal storage container located south of the Shelton House is incompatible in style and materials with the historic character of Rural Plains and interferes with the landscape's ability to convey its historic spatial relationships. The storage container should be relocated or removed.

*Considerations:*

- Move storage container to a location further from the Shelton House and screened from view by vegetation.
- Consider replacing the container with a storage option more compatible with the historic character of the landscape. Storage may be incorporated in outbuilding exhibits recommended in Task BS-3.





CR-5: Establish unit-wide circulation system.

VG-9: Remove woody vegetation within cemetery.  
BS-7: Preserve cemetery markers.  
BS-4: Construct a pale fence around the cemetery.

SEE DRAWING 6 FOR DETAIL

SO-4: Remove vegetation between fields.

CR-6: Construct boardwalk and footbridge over earthworks.  
TP-3: Maintain earthworks under a cover of native forest.

TP-3: Maintain earthworks under a cover of native forest.

# Cultural Landscape Report

## Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

## Treatment Plan Overview



**National Park Service**  
**Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation**  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

### SOURCES

1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

### DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

### LEGEND

Trees	Building
Agricultural Fields	Gravel Road/ Parking Lot
Grass/Open Ground	Pedestrian Trail/ Farm Lane
Pedestrian Trails	Park Boundary
Earthworks Remnants	5-Foot Contours

### NOTES

1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 400 800 FEET

**DRAWING 5**







Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

Treatment Plan Detail 1



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

1. 1936 Aerial Photograph
2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees		Vegetation for Removal
	Shrubs/Hedges		Building
	Zone 1 Short Lawn		Gravel Road/Parking Lot
	Zone 2 Rough-Cut Turf		Farm/Service Lane
	Zone 3 Meadow		Fence
	2-Foot Contours		

NOTES

1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 100 200 FEET







Cultural Landscape Report

Rural Plains

Richmond  
National Battlefield Park

Treatment Plan Detail 2



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

SOURCES

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2. 1953 Aerial Photograph
3. 2013 Orthophoto
4. 2015 LiDAR
5. Field Survey

DRAWN BY:

John Hammond, OCLP  
Adobe Illustrator CS6, 2015

LEGEND

	Trees		Building
	Shrubs/Hedges		Gravel Road/ Parking Lot
	Grass/Open Ground		Farm Lane
	Vegetation for Removal		Fence
	2-Foot Contours		Pedestrian Path

NOTES

1. All features depicted in approximate scale and location.



0 50 100 FEET





## APPENDIX A: TABLE OF TREATMENT TASKS

Task ID	Task	Page	Related Tasks
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SO-1	Remove boxwood hedge behind the house.	58	SO-3, VG-3
SO-2	Remove boxwood hedge southeast of the house.	60	
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SO-4	Remove vegetation west, south, and southwest of the house.	63	TP-1
SO-5	Remove boxwoods in fields.	66	VG-1
<b>Vegetation</b>			
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VG-2	Preserve shade trees.	71	
VG-3	Plant new shade trees.	72	
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VG-5	Remove understory vegetation within hedgerows.	75	
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<b>Circulation</b>			
CR-1	Reestablish northern entrance loop drive.	86	
CR-2	Remove existing southern loop drive.	87	
CR-3	Reestablish central walkway.	88	CR-4
CR-4	Establish accessible route to Shelton House.	89	CR-3
CR-5	Establish unit-wide circulation system.	90	
CR-6	Construct boardwalk and footbridge over earthworks.	90	
<b>Buildings and Structures</b>			
BS-1	Preserve corn crib.	92	
BS-2	Construct paled fence around house.	93	
BS-3	Install interpretive outbuildings.	94	
BS-4	Construct a paled fence around the cemetery.	95	
BS-5	Establish underground foundation drainage for Shelton House.	96	
BS-6	Install comfort station.	97	
BS-7	Preserve cemetery markers.	99	
BS-8	Relocate or remove storage container.	99	



## APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDED ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

Common Name	Botanical Name	Status	Garden Association
<b>Small Trees – Large Shrubs</b>			
Crape myrtle	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Introduced	Elgin Botanical
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Native	Byrd, Catesby
Fragrant sumac	<i>Rhus Canadensis</i>	Native	Bannister; Jefferson, et. Al
Fringe-tree	<i>Chionanthus virginica</i>	Native	Catesby; Clayton; Washington
Garden Fig	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Holly	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	Native	Catesby; Kalm
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Native	Catesby; Kalm
Shadbush	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Silver-bell tree	<i>Halesia Carolina</i>	Native	Clayton; Dr. Garden
Washington thorn	<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Native	Washington; Jefferson
<b>Shrubs</b>			
Cabbage (Moss) rose	<i>Rosa x centifolia</i>	Introduced	Skipwith
Carolina allspice	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	Native	Bartram, Washington, Jefferson
Chaste tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	Introduced	Clayton, Jefferson
Cherokee rose	<i>Rosa laevigata</i>	Introduced	Jefferson
Cherry laurel	<i>Laurocerasus caroliniana</i>	Native	Wide association
Coral honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Native	Byrd; Bartram; Jefferson
Coralberry	<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i>	Native	Bartram, Clayton
Cranberry bush	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Df. Flowering Almond	<i>Prunus glandulosa</i>	Introduced	Jefferson
Flame azalea	<i>Rhod. Calendulaceum</i>	Native	Bartram
Groundsel tree	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	Native	Bartram
Inkberry	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Native	Bartram; Dr. Garden
Mock orange	<i>Philadelphus coronaries</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Mountain laurel	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Native	Widely associated
Persian lilac	<i>Syringa persica</i>	Introduced	Skipwith
Pinkster azalea	<i>Rhod. Nudiflorum</i>	Native	Kalm; Jefferson
Red bay	<i>Persea pubescens</i>	Native	Bartram; Dr. Garden; Jefferson
Rose mallow	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Native	Jefferson; Skipwith
Snowball bush	<i>Viburnum opulis</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Swamp rose	<i>Rosa palustris</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Sweet bay	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Native	Bannister; Kalm; Jefferson
Sweet pepperbush	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson; Jefferson
Tree box	<i>Buxus sempervirens arborescens</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Tree peony	<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Wax myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Native	Beverley; Bartram
Wild hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Winterberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson



Common Name	Botanical Name	Status	Garden Association
<b>Vines</b>			
American wisteria	<i>Wisteria frutescens</i>	Native	Bartram, Skipwith
Carolina jessamine	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Native	Banister, Catesby, Jefferson
Clematis vine	<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Native	Walter
Cross-vine	<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	Native	Banister, Catesby; Walter
White jasmine	<i>Jasminum officinale</i>	Introduced	Washinton; Jefferson; et al
<b>Herbaceous Perennials</b>			
Bee balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Native	Kalm, Collinson; Bartram
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudebeckia hirta</i>	Native	Widely associated
Bluebells	<i>Metrensia virginica</i>	Native	Bartram, Collinson; Jefferson
Blue iris	<i>Iris pallida</i>	Introduced	Josselyn, Byrd, Jefferson
Blue monarda	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Native	Clayton, Walter
Blue phlox	<i>Phlox divaricate</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Calendula	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Introduced	Josselyn
Canterbury bells	<i>Campanula medium</i>	Introduced	Skipwith
Carnation	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	Introduced	Bartram, Collinson
China aster	<i>Callistephus chinensis</i>	Introduced	Bartram, Collinson
Christmas fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Native	
Cinnamon fern	<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	Native	
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia Canadensis</i>	Native	Tradescant, Josselyn, Jefferson
Coreopsis (Tickseed)	<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Native	Widely associated
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Introduced	Walter
Dutchman's breeches	<i>Dicentra cucullaria</i>	Native	Widely associated
English Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Galax	<i>Galax aphylla</i>	Native	Widely associated
Golden ragwort	<i>Packera aurea</i>	Native	Bannister, Clayton, Walter
Grass pinks	<i>Dianthus plumarius</i>	Introduced	Jefferson; Skipwith
Hens and Chicks	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	Introduced	
Hollyhock	<i>Althea rosea</i>	Introduced	Custis, Jefferson; et. al
Lady fern	<i>Athyrium asplenoides</i>	Native	
Lemon daylily	<i>Hemerocallis flava</i>	Introduced	Walter; Skipwith
Lily of the valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	Native	Bartram; Jefferson; et. al
Maidenhair fern	<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	Native	
Oriental poppy	<i>Papaver orientale</i>	Introduced	Bartram; Collinson; Jefferson
Peony	<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Stoke's aster	<i>Stokesia laevis</i>	Native	Widely associated
Summer phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Native	Bartram; Collinson
Sweet William	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	Introduced	ancient garden plant
Tawny daylily	<i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Trillium	<i>T. grandiflorum</i>	Native	Curtis
Turtlehead	<i>Chelone glabra</i>	Native	Clayton; Bartram
Veronica	<i>Veronica longifolia</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Violet	<i>Viola sororia</i>	Native	Jefferson; et. al
Wood Aster	<i>Aster divaricus</i>	Native	Widely associated
Wood geranium	<i>G. maculatum</i>	Native	
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Native	Wood; Kalm
Yellow flag iris	<i>Iris pseudoacorus</i>	Introduced	Jefferson; widely associated

Common Name	Botanical Name	Status	Garden Association
Yucca (Beargrass)	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	Native	Jefferson; Dr. Garden; et al
<b>Flowering Bulbs</b>			
Fall crocus	<i>Crocus speciosus</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Crocus	<i>Crocus vernus</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Daffodil	<i>Narcissus pseudo-narcissus</i>	Introduced	Bartram, Collinson
Squill	<i>Scilla hispanica</i>	Introduced	Collinson; Bartram
Autumn crocus	<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Introduced	
Jonquil	<i>Narcissus jonquilla</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
Grape hyacinth	<i>Muscari botryoides</i>	Introduced	Jefferson, Skipwith
Snowdrops	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Introduced	Skipwith; et. al.
Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Introduced	Bartram; Collinson
Siberian squill	<i>Scilla Siberica</i>	Introduced	Widely associated
<b>Annuals and Biennials</b>			
African marigold	<i>Tagetes erecta</i>	Introduced	Jefferson
Cockscomb	<i>Celosia agrentea cristata</i>	Introduced	Beverly, Jefferson
Foamflower	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Native	Widely associated
Four-o'clocks	<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i>	Introduced	Jefferson; and widely
French marigold	<i>Tagetes patula</i>	Introduced	Skipwith
Garden nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	Introduced	Randolph; Jefferson; et. al.
Pansy	<i>Viola tricolor hortensis</i>	Introduced	Widely associated.
English primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Introduced	Jefferson, Skipwith
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Introduced	Kalm; and widely
<b>Herbs</b>			
Basil	<i>Ocimum basilifcum</i>	Introduced	
Common Rue	<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Introduced	Lawson
Coriander	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Introduced	Lawson
Feverfew	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Introduced	
Garden Lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Introduced	Lawson
Garden Sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Introduced	Pieterze
Hyssop	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>	Introduced	Whitaker, et. al.
Lavender Cotton	<i>Santolini chamaecyparissus</i>	Introduced	Lawson
Parsley	<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Introduced	Whitaker
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Introduced	Pieterze
Thyme	<i>Thumus vulgaris</i>	Introduced	Lawson
Valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Introduced	Jefferson
Wormwood	<i>Artemisia absinthum</i>	Introduced	Lawson









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