

SURVEY AND MAPPING OF THE FRED GRAVES SITE:  
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING A RURAL NON-PLANTATION-  
BASED SOUTHERN COMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

Joel King: Survey and Mapping of the Fred Graves Place:  
Laying the Groundwork for Understanding a Rural Non-Plantation-Based Southern Community  
(Under the Direction of R.P. Stephen Davis, Jr.)

This thesis is an investigation of the Fred Graves site, an abandoned nineteenth century farmstead in Alamance County, North Carolina. A standing dwelling, and other structures that are interpreted to be related to agricultural and commercial pursuits, are all that physically remain of a once thriving family's base of operations. Abandoned since 1928, the farmstead has become overgrown with trees and is unknown by most people outside the descendant community. Archival research was used to discover what activities took place at the farmstead as well as gain insight into the lives of a community's past population. In addition to archival research, an archaeological survey was conducted to document structural remains and to enable mapping of the site. Archival evidence depicts this site as the scene of distilling, leather tanning, blacksmithing, agricultural production, and the center of several community events. Archaeological survey reveals structural remains that could represent the infrastructure needed to support and house those activities. Mapping presents a picture of how one family utilized the landscape at their disposal. Information acquired from this project will hopefully become the basis for a more in depth examination of a past community's adaptation to cultural, societal, and technological changes over time.

## Acknowledgments

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I also would like to thank the Stinking Quarter community. This includes James Coble for sharing his knowledge of local history and for giving access to his land for research. The Graves family has been kind enough to allow me to pry into their family history and put it on “Front Street”. This thesis has no subject without them. Lastly, I wish to thank my wife Shannon, whose own history is deeply rooted in the Stinking Quarter area. She supported the decision to leave my career and pursue a dream. Thanks for holding on.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The focus of this thesis is a collection of structures and structure ruins located in west-central Alamance County, North Carolina, in an area known as Coble Township. The Fred Graves site, located on a tract of land owned by James Coble, is the locus of these structures and ruins. The site consists of standing structures including a dwelling and general store as well as a collapsed barn. Several stone foundations and non-stone structures are also present that may represent agricultural and commercial enterprises. There has been no maintenance performed at the site since 1928. By that time, the majority of the structures had long since fallen out of use. The structures and ruins represent a nineteenth-century farmstead that is completely unused today.

The area encompassing the site is referred to as the Fred Graves Place by members of the descendant community with knowledge of ownership histories of the area. The author is familiar with members of the Graves family, and they provided initial information about the area. Land ownership is important to many people living in Coble Township, and sections of land are frequently referred to using the name of a current or past owner followed by the designation “place”. Other examples in this area include Shoffner Place, E.M. Holt Place, etc. Using a name designation system already in practice allowed discussions with informants to flow more easily.

This project began as nothing more than an interest in local history. Years ago the author was introduced to an abandoned home that dated to the nineteenth century. As years passed, many visits to the home were undertaken albeit only as walking excursions for pleasure. Many

stories were collected about the home, its people, and the surrounding area. Once the opportunity presented itself, work commenced to document whatever could be gathered from oral traditions of the area. It quickly became apparent that this nineteenth-century rural farmstead had been forgotten by all but a few members of the descendant community. The site is situated on a heavily wooded tract of land, off the beaten path and hidden from public view.

At the time the project began there was little factual evidence for what occurred at the site or who lived there. The author was told that Fred Graves had lived in the house at the site but no other information was easily accessible. While one might argue that enough information is readily available about rural life in North Carolina in the 1800s, and that this particular site is not historically significant, the author hardly thinks we have sufficient information since many families are unaccounted for in the historical record. Every family had its own set of circumstances that led it to prosper or suffer downfalls. Persons who never rose to a certain level of fame, prominence, or wealth are not as well remembered as others. These everyday people deserve our attention if for no other reason than they can tell us much about the struggles and evolution of rural, non-plantation-based, southern communities of the past. Without knowledge of how these communities operated and how their residents interacted, we lack comparative evidence to understand how society became what it is today.

The structures and foundations that still exist at the Fred Graves site will not remain forever. It is crucial that archaeological work take place at this site to document its material remains before they are lost to decay or land development. Material remains are often all that are left to decipher the inner workings of past societies. Survey and mapping of this site are, in effect, the beginning stages of “rescuing from anonymity the average people of the past” (Glassie 1977, in Beaudry and Hicks 2006).

## Site Selection

Among other reasons, the Fred Graves site was selected for study due to the surrounding community's interest in the history of the site. Many members of the community are descendants of those who formerly occupied the site. The history of the site begins with the surname Graves. As the Graves lineage progressed, the family tree branched out to cover a large swath of the local community. Therefore, the number of people claiming a relationship to the site is fairly large. Indeed, there was some dismay by the community that much of the information the author obtained would not be presented in this paper. The information was certainly informative, entertaining, and valuable. Its value, however, is placed in the context of a possible future project and is not germane to the purpose of this paper.

The site was also selected due to a fascination with what happened at the site and why it ceased to have value. There are a sufficient number of structures and foundations at the site which alone would indicate a certain level of activity in the past. The author was intrigued and wished to uncover a piece of the past to reveal what questions might be able to be answered here.

The proximity of the site to where the author lives should also be noted. The site is less than 2 km from the author's residence and is accessed from a private drive used by the author. This short distance allowed for frequent visits. The property owner was also gracious enough to grant "carte blanche" authority to the author with reference to the site. Considering all of the above, the site more or less selected the author rather than the other way around.

## Methods

To begin investigating the Fred Graves site, oral histories were obtained from those most closely associated with it. This included descendants as well as the current owner of the property. The property owner, James Coble, is somewhat of a local historian for the community where the site is located. He allowed unfettered access to his property for the purpose of this research. Oral history provided a base from which to begin to understand the history of the site as well as what emotional ties existed. Understanding the feelings of the descendant community was vital to ensure their continued support of my research. They were kept up to date during each phase of the project, and their suggestions were always taken into consideration.

Archival research began on the heels of gathering oral traditions. This involved examining land deeds, personal letters of correspondence, estate sales, wills, deeds of trust, newspaper articles, and family bibles.

Mapping of the site was undertaken to locate the visible features in relation to each other and to the landscape itself. Because of this, no systematic pedestrian survey to recover artifacts was undertaken, as the scope of the project did not allow for locating and mapping every possible surface artifact. That could be a goal for a later project. Furthermore, portions of the study area are heavily overgrown with vegetation or covered by fallen trees. A systematic pedestrian survey would not have been able to fully cover the area. In place of this, James Coble led a walk through the area, pointing out any features he was aware existed. Following that, the writer walked as much of the area as possible, recording any additional features that were observed.

Mapping began by placing reference points throughout the site. These points were used to measure and locate each feature in relation to one other. The positions of the reference points were determined using a Topcon GR-3 geopositioning instrument. The features, including structures, stone foundations, and visible pits, were then mapped by triangulation from the reference points using steel measuring tapes. Vegetation and available time made use of a total station impractical. Visibility obstructions caused by vegetation necessitated the use of numerous reference points. The features were drawn on a CAD map and georeferenced using orthophotos derived from digital 3D modeling. The features were then overlaid onto a contour map to show their correct locations on the landscape. Digital 3-D models were constructed using photogrammetry so that the reader would be able to see accurate representations of some of the features where 2-D photos were insufficient in detail.

### Organization

This thesis is organized in a manner to guide the reader in a logical manner through the project. Chapter 2 provides a regional context of the area surrounding the research site, followed by information of a more localized context. A description of the site and its setting is also provided in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents information obtained from oral histories. Archival information is then used to give the reader a picture of what occurred at the site during the nineteenth-century and an understanding of the people who lived there. This chapter also confronts the gaps that are often left by oral traditions and historical texts. Chapter 4 provides a description of the remaining structures and features at the site. A limited number of artifacts that were collected during the fieldwork are discussed along with the features they were associated with. The last chapter summarizes and interprets the results of the survey. Recommendations

are offered for what future research might add to our archaeological understanding of the site and its inhabitants.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **SETTING**

The Fred Graves site is located in the north-central area of North Carolina known as the piedmont. This area was no stranger to travelers as it was home to a section of the Great Trading Path. Trading paths were the primary entrance routes for settlers to central North Carolina, as there is a lack of navigable waters leading here due to the fall line. Overland entry also did not deter the many settlers who traveled south from Pennsylvania into North Carolina via the Great Wagon Road. Many of the thousands that utilized this route were German immigrants seeking opportunities for their families (Breen 1997:25). The Great Trading Path was also a popular route south used by early settlers from eastern Virginia. Those using this route would have passed through, or very near, the Stinking Quarter Creek area in Alamance County. By 1820 the population of North Carolina was 638,829 (United States Department of Commerce, Census Bureau [USDC, CB] 1990). Today, the population is estimated to be over 10,000,000 (USDC, CB 2017).

#### **Local Context.**

The Fred Graves site is located within the western section of Alamance County south of Burlington. The area was commonly referred to in the past as the Stinking Quarter area due to a local creek of the same name. This area was hailed as beautiful country and full of resources

(Greensboro Patriot [GP] 1857). The Stinking Quarter area itself was an early home for entrepreneurs. As early as 1763 licenses were granted for commercial operations along the creek (Briggs and Vacca 2002). The majority of land along Stinking Quarter Creek during that time was available via land grants purchased through Henry McCulloch. McCulloch facilitated the land grants on authority of Lord Granville. It was during McCulloch's time that the Graves family began acquiring large tracts of land. German immigrants, including the Graves family, began to be the primary settlers along the Stinking Quarter. Shortly after their arrival they began forming their churches. One such church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, was built on land donated by John (Johann) Graves (Whitaker 1949:32). At its founding it was called Graves Church. The members of St. Paul's claim a founding date of 1770. This section of the Stinking Quarter was located within Orange County until part of the county containing the creek was separated to become Alamance County in 1849 (Troxler and Vincent 1999:77). By 1856 the locomotive had come to Alamance County (Whitaker 1949:107). The area just north that would become Burlington was called Company Shops as it held service shops for the railroad. Burlington went on to become the largest municipality in the county but nearby Graham won the county seat. Following the Civil War in 1868, townships were created. The Stinking Quarter area became part of Coble Township. The township's name is probably due to the large Coble contingent that settled in the area during the late 1700s. The township system is still used to distinguish voting precincts.

The United States Post Office services this area under Burlington postal codes since there are no incorporated towns in Coble Township. Apparently Stinking Quarter was deemed too strange a name for a post office. When a new post office was added to the area, Stinking Quarter and Pole Cat lost out to Hartshorn (Semi-Weekly Standard [SWS] 1852). The Hartshorn office

was located on present-day Kimesville Road. Stinking Quarter Creek must have flowed more rapidly in the past than today. There are numerous newspaper accounts from the nineteenth-century discussing flood damage to the bridge over Stinking Quarter Creek as well as orders for repairs. In several instances, individual residents were tasked by county officers to repair the bridge (Alamance Gleaner [AG] 1875).

The Fred Graves site lies just west of Friendship Patterson Mill Road and south of the south fork of Stinking Quarter Creek. The site is far enough away and uphill from the creek that it would not have dealt with flooding issues (Figure 1). Today, the Fred Graves site is not accessible from any county or state maintained roads. However, a previous roadway that traveled through the site can still be seen, and LIDAR imaging shows the road once connected with Friendship Patterson Mill Road. Today, sections of this older road are only used to access hay fields and for hunting. A private road, Jacobs Trail, can be used to access the site indirectly. Jacobs Trail terminates near the older roadbed and one can travel a short distance off-road to reach the site.

Members of the Graves family were among the majority of the population in North Carolina that lived in rural areas. In 1820, 98% of the population of North Carolina resided in rural areas (USCD, CB 1990). That number remained virtually unchanged throughout the years of the Graves' occupation at the site. By the time of the site's abandonment, that figure had dropped to 74.5% (USDC, CB 1990). Statewide trends indicate a gradual movement towards city life rather than rural settings, and it appears Coble Township followed that trend. Providing food for the growing population would have begun to be done by larger farming operations as smaller scale farmers moved on to other jobs. The heydays for Fred Graves Place were primarily during the 1860s-1880s according to newspapers and other accounts. Over the years, fewer

people lived in rural locations. As evidenced by property records, rural Coble Township began to be inhabited by fewer families who owned greater amounts of land. As luxury goods were increasingly introduced, the wealthy could afford them. The rural farmer who used to barter and trade at the general store may have found himself in a strange world. Without cash, but wanting to be a part of his culture and community, he may have purchased goods on credit. What he could not pay for this week, he likely would not be able to pay the next either. This type of lending would have eventually caught up with him. In the case of Fred Graves, debt was passed on to his children. Even with loan extensions, it may have been difficult to overcome the common interest rate of 8% being charged by neighbors at the time. As patriarchs died, lands fell out of the hands of farming families and into those who had currency. The long history of prominence enjoyed by the Graves family in Stinking Quarter, seems to have eroded beyond recovery following Fred's death.

#### Site Location

The site is within an area encased by five current roads. None of these state-maintained roads intersect the property at the site. Jacobs Trail, a private drive, turns north off of Friendship Rock Creek Road and comes closest to reaching the site. Jacobs Trail terminates where it intersects with an older roadbed. That roadbed formerly traveled to the site. It is no longer passable and other paths have been cut to allow access to the Fred Graves site. Figure 2 shows the site location as it was represented in 1893. By that time, Fred Graves had long since died and his widow would die the following year. The area today is almost completely overgrown with trees, but some members of the community are old enough to remember that the northwest corner of the property was an open field. Even an attempt to locate the site through satellite imagery revealed only a glimmer of a metal roof.

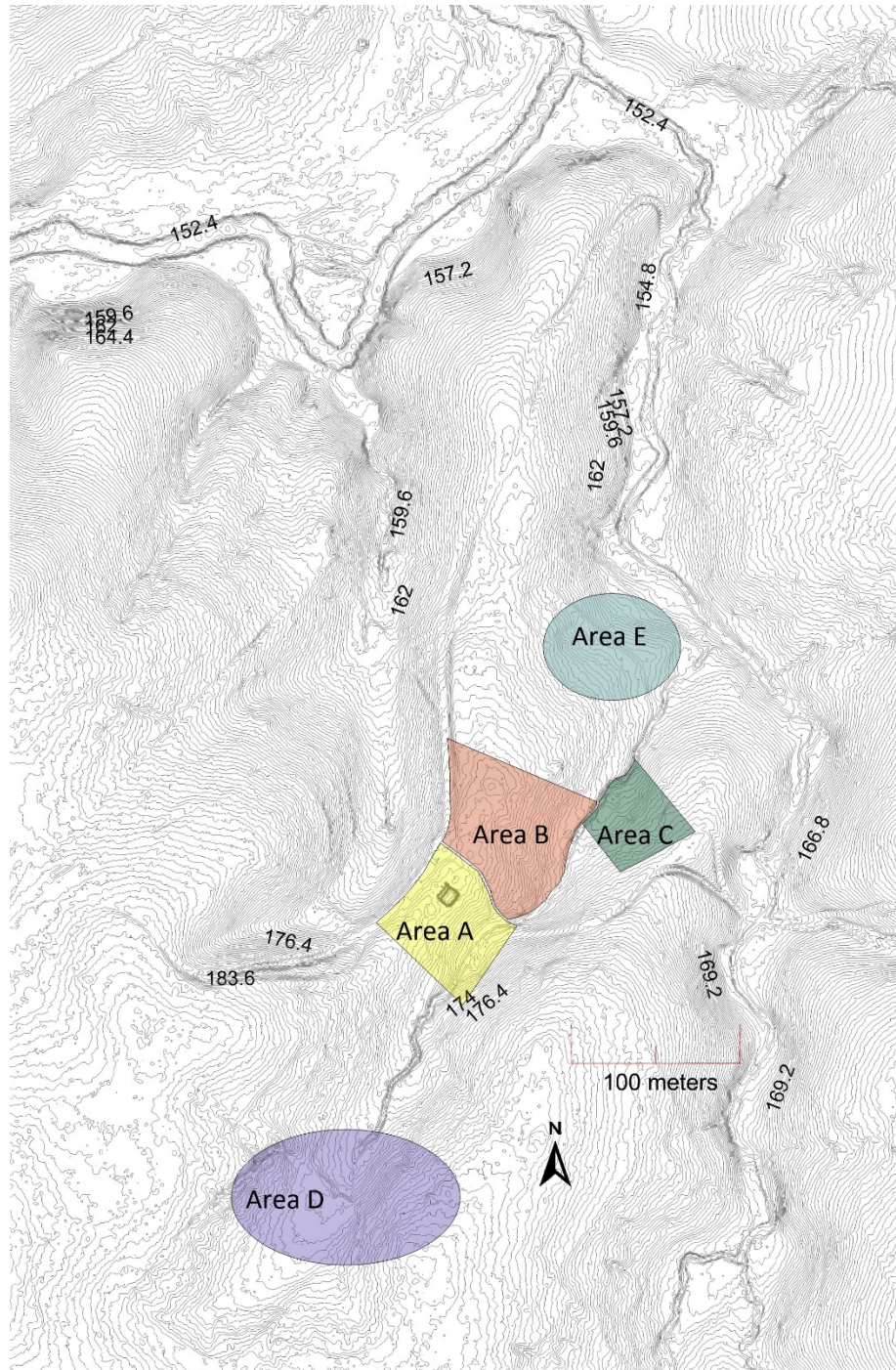


Figure 1. Contour map created from LiDAR data. Contour intervals are 30 cm. Fred Graves site is indicated by Areas, A, B, C, D, and E. Stinking Quarter Creek is at the top.

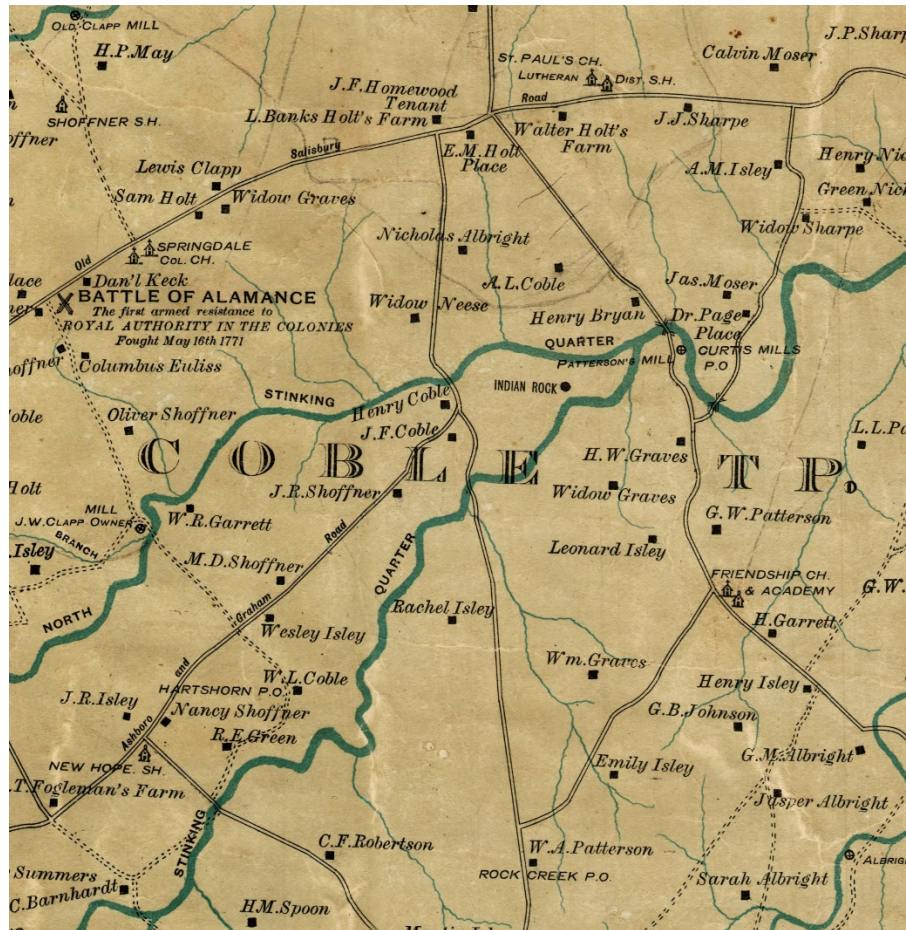


Figure 2. Coble Township. Fred Graves site listed as “Widow Graves.” (Source: William Spoon’s 1893 map).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ORAL AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

Before beginning any fieldwork or archival research, available information about the Graves site was sought from the community. The site has always been referred to as the “Fred Graves Place” by members of the Graves family. A brief introduction here to the Graves lineage should assist the reader with the rest of the oral and archival information. Figure 3 is a genealogical chart, created by the author, that includes members of the Graves family relevant to the research in this paper. Aside from information in the chart, all other information in this section was obtained from family members and is presented in its unverified form as received by the author.

#### **Descendant Community**

The Graves family claims descent from Johann Graff, an immigrant from the German Palatinate. He is thought to have arrived in America sometime in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Roy Stockwell, in his book on the Graves family, places Johann Graves’ arrival in America as 1730 (Stockwell 1954). Among other children, he had a son, Jacob, born while the family lived in Pennsylvania. Jacob moved with his father to North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century, probably traveling down the Great Wagon Road. At some point while living in North Carolina, Johann changed the spelling of his name to John Graves. John Graves was said to have accumulated a substantial amount of property along Stinking Quarter Creek in what was then Orange County. John also is the member of the Graves family thought to have donated land to assist in the founding of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.

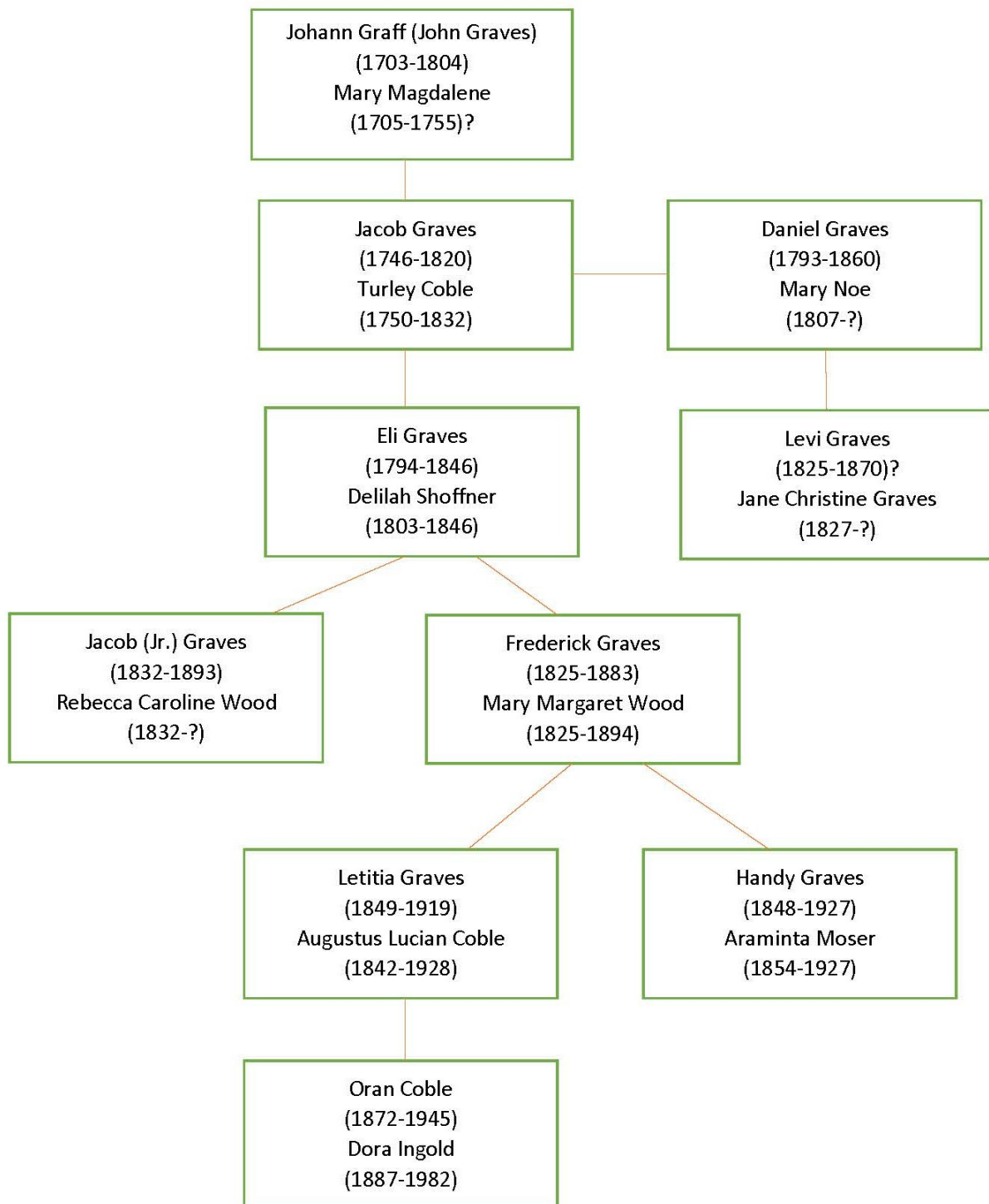


Figure 3 Graves family genealogical chart.

John's son Jacob was less well known to the family. What was known is that Jacob also had several children. Among them was a son, Eli. Family lore has it that Eli was last seen fleeing from a group of Native Americans in the vicinity of the Fred Graves site sometime in the eighteenth century. Eli was thought to have had two sons, Jacob and Frederick. To avoid confusion, throughout this paper, the elder Jacob will be referred to as Jacob and the younger as Jacob Jr. According to Von Graves, descended from Jacob Jr., and James Coble, Frederick Graves lived in the house still visible at the site, and Jacob Jr. lived in a house that is located at the end of Jacobs Trail. This house is also still standing but badly deteriorated. No information could be obtained as to the whereabouts of the houses of John, Jacob, or Eli.

Family members were unaware of how Fred came into possession of the land upon which he lived or who previously occupied the land. The land was transferred to Augustus Coble near the end of the nineteenth century (James Coble, personal communication 2017). The family was under the impression that the property was not willingly transferred. Their oral traditions include stories that reflect somewhat of a "land grab" by Augustus Coble. The loss of the land to Augustus has always been an interesting subject for the family, as Augustus was married to Fred Graves' daughter Letitia. Augustus's great-great grandson, James Coble, now owns the property. This relationship makes James a descendant of Fred's as well.

The Coble family's oral traditions offer an explanation for the land transfer. According to James Coble, Fred's son Handy Graves controlled the land after the death of Fred and his wife Mary. For reasons not known, Handy owed money to Augustus. The debt was never paid and Augustus took ownership of the land by default. James Coble said that Augustus' son Oran Coble was the next person to occupy the dwelling at the Fred Graves site (personal communication 2017). James was told that upon Augustus's death in 1928, Oran moved his

family out of the house and that the house has been vacant ever since (personal communication 2017). The Graves family had no information about possible activities at the site other than farming during the Graves occupation period. James Coble offered information passed down to him that placed blacksmithing, leather tanning, and running a general store at the site.

### Historical Texts

The purpose of archival research was not to prove or disprove all of the above information. Nor was it to fully explore and cement the Graves family tree. Research was conducted to determine who occupied the Fred Graves site and what activities took place there. A further goal was to use archival evidence to assist in determining the possible functions of any visible structures and foundations at the site. It was anticipated that the archival research might help indicate what material remains could be expected at the site.

### Land Ownership

Since no family or community member could offer insight into who owned the property before Fred, the research started with the patriarch of the Graves family, John. Records for several parcels of land previously owned by John Graves were located at the Orange County Register of Deeds office (OCD). None of those parcels contained any portion of the Fred Graves site or any portion of the 28.32-hectare tract that contains the site. John's son Jacob appears to have been the first non-native person to own the land on which the site sits based on Orange County land grant records (Mark Chilton, personal communication 2017). Prior to Fred Graves it appears that his father Eli Graves (Jacob's son) owned the land. A deed shows that Fred purchased this tract of land from his father's estate (Alamance County Courthouse,

Graham, North Carolina [ACC] 1849: Deed Book [DB] 1:464). Both Eli and his wife, Delilah, died in 1846. Jacob Jr. is also shown by deed to have purchased a tract of his father's land that adjoined Fred's land (ACC, 1849:DB 3:218). Levi Graves, Fred's first cousin, purchased a third portion of Eli's estate (ACC, 1847:DB 1:713).

Once it was discovered what land Eli Graves had owned, the question of where he lived became of interest. Deeds showed the portion that Levi purchased as having belonged to Eli for only a few months prior to his death. Eli Graves purchased that tract of land from the estate of his father-in-law, Frederic Shoffner, in 1846 (Orange County Courthouse, Hillsborough, North Carolina [OCC] 1846: Deed Book [DB] 32:208). This third tract of land would seem unlikely as the location for Eli's home place. He and his wife Delilah had been married since 1820 and Fred was born in 1822. This third tract was purchased in 1846, the same year as his death. That left Fred's and Jacob Jr.'s land as the most likely possibilities for the location of Eli's residence. Fred's deed lists his purchase as one half of his father's plantation. Jacob Jr.'s deed reflects the same description. This information did not help narrow down the half of the property where Eli may have lived. Access to the Jacob Jr. tract was not available during this project. Therefore, the presence or absence of structures other than the existing dwelling could not be determined. Thankfully, James Coble, the current property owner, recently provided an original survey plat from 1847 that may answer this question (Figure 3.4). The author of the drawing is unknown; however, the plat is described as having been completed for Fred to establish the boundaries for his half of his father's estate. The description lists Fred's portion as the "part upon which the buildings sit." It is assumed that Eli likely lived near his buildings rather than far away on another section of his property.

At this point, the above reference to Fred's purchase of "one half of his father's plantation" should be addressed. This project was in part intended to lay the groundwork for understanding a non-plantation-based farmstead. The use of the term plantation in the deeds could be misleading. Ownership of slaves would have been the norm for a plantation owner in piedmont North Carolina in the mid-1800s. It would have been almost certainly necessary for Eli, had he owned a plantation, since he had only two sons. There is evidence he also had a daughter, but she remains nameless. The only record of Eli's ownership of slaves occurred in the year of his death. That year he purchased one female slave, Anna, and her daughter from his father-in-law's estate (North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources [NCDCCR], Raleigh, North Carolina, North Carolina State Archives [NCSA] 1846). A check of census records indicated that Eli never owned slaves or, at the very least, they never appeared in census records. Neighbors on the same census sheet recorded that slaves were owned, so it is reasonable to assume the lack of any assigned to Eli means there were none. Eli's father-in-law owned several slaves and referred to his own property as a plantation (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). Eli's purchase of the Shoffner plantation could be the reason for the use of the term plantation in later deeds. Immediately after Eli's death, Fred petitioned the court to be allowed to sell Anna and her daughter (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). The petition was granted and there is no evidence to indicate Fred ever owned slaves after that sale.

Tracing ownership of the site beyond Eli proved more difficult. A deed was not located for Eli's purchase of the land described above. Eli received land from his father's estate, but there is not a description of the shape nor size of that tract. The land Eli received from Jacob's estate is only described as being part of a 206-acre tract (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1820). Because of this lack of information, land owned by Jacob needed to be researched. Jacob acquired several tracts

of land from his father John, but this does not appear to be one of them based on deed descriptions. Consequently, Graves ownership of the site most likely began with Jacob. The fact that Jacob had the ability to purchase the 206-acre tract of land mentioned above is a bit surprising given his political affiliations around the time of the creation of the United States.

Jacob Graves appears to have been a loyalist during the American Revolution. He appears on a list of wounded in a British hospital in Wilmington, North Carolina, following a battle described as Pyle's Defeat in 1781 (Bright and Dunaway 2011). Sometime after that battle, Jacob must have rejoined the British forces. Some event occurred that placed him in custody of either militia or American forces. He was paroled and allowed to return home. A local militia colonel, upon hearing of Jacob's return to the Stinking Quarter area, went to find Jacob for reasons unknown. During the colonel's encounter with Jacob, Jacob retrieved a weapon and shot the colonel, but did not mortally wound him. Jacob was arrested and convicted of the offense in the Hillsborough Court. He was given a sentence of death and his lands were confiscated and sold (OCC, DB 4:271). After many petitions asking for leniency, he was pardoned and returned home (Clark 1901). He was able to purchase more land, and a purchase in 1800 is of importance here.

That year, Jacob purchased 206 acres from the University of North Carolina's Board of Trustees (OCC, DB 9:109). The description of that tract was used by the elected Orange County Register of Deeds, Mark Chilton, to place it into its correct context on a map of the county displaying the locations of original land grants (Figure 4). In Chilton's drawing, Jacob's 206-acre purchase is outlined in red. Mr. Chilton has been reviewing initial land grants for Orange County, and Figure 4 represents a portion of his efforts. The stream in the drawing represents Stinking Quarter Creek. There is a section of land at the confluence of the two branches of the

Stinking Quarter that is unassigned in Figure 4. Mr. Chilton said this parcel of land could not be matched to a specific owner based on historic deed descriptions. He also said it was possible that this unclaimed tract of land was part of Jacob Graves' property, and that inaccuracies on the part of past surveyors might be responsible for the misalignment. This is a plausible explanation. In his will, Jacob describes his saw mill as being located where the two forks meet (NCDCR, NCSA, 1820). In that will, Jacob states his intentions for his son, Daniel Graves, to receive land near the mill. Jacob stipulates that Daniel's portion encompass both forks of the creek, but not to include the mill tract at the fork (NCDCR, NCSA, 1820). These descriptions would account for the unclaimed tract just above the fork.

Once Daniel Graves is considered, the tract assigned by Chilton to Jacob Graves becomes clearer. The author created a plat map of the property purchased by Jacob Jr. and Fred from their father Jacob's estate (Figure 5). Their property fits perfectly into the western end of Mr. Chilton's drawing of Jacob's 1800 purchase of 206 acres. The section of the 206-acre tract not reflected in the author's drawing was probably a section granted to Eli's brother Daniel from Jacob (NCDCR, NCSA 1820). Using plat descriptions from deeds recorded in 1849, the eastern boundary of Fred Graves' land is marked by Daniel Graves' property line. It is likely that this is the portion Daniel received as a division of Jacob's estate. The 1847 plat map provided by James Coble shows the same size and shape of property as the one created by the author (Figure 6).

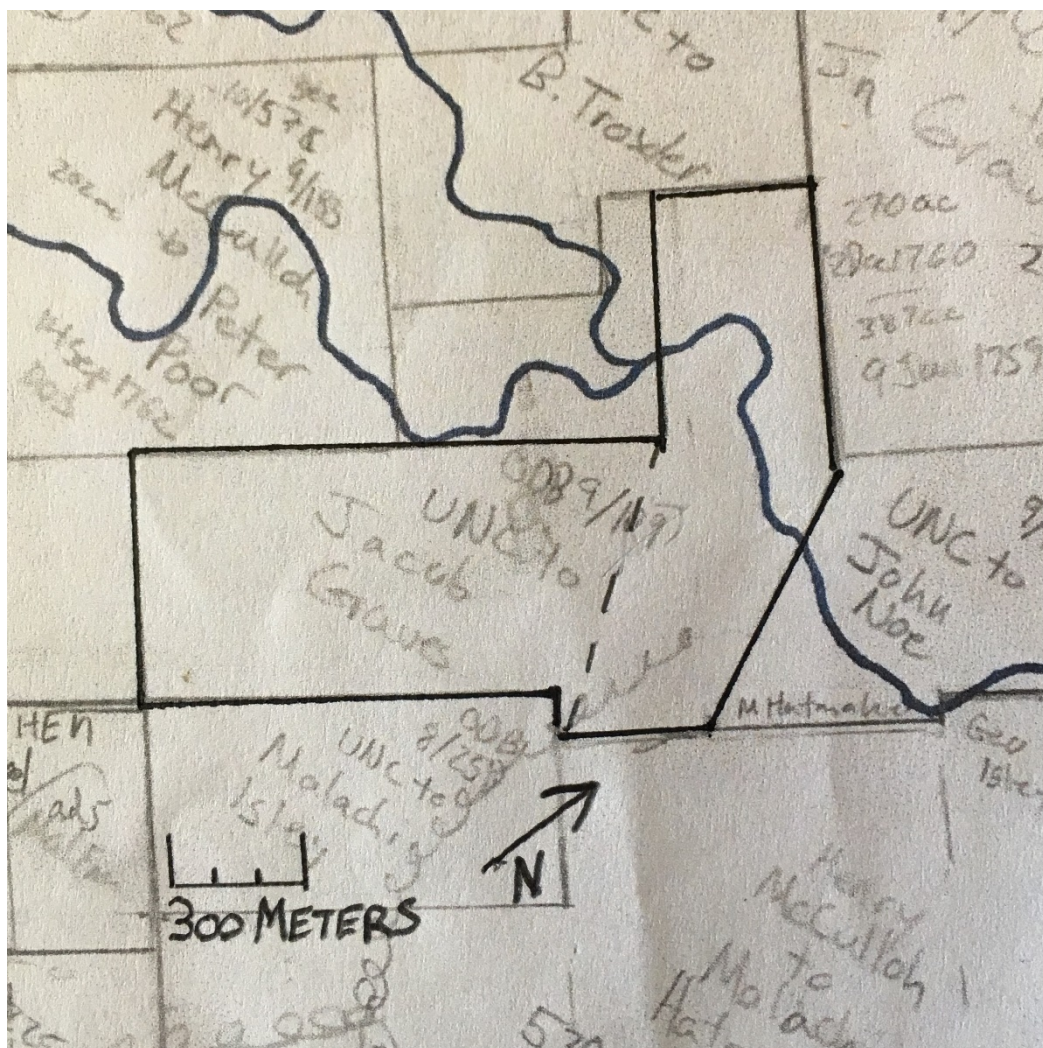


Figure 4. Mark Chilton's drawing of Jacob's 206 acre purchase in 1800.

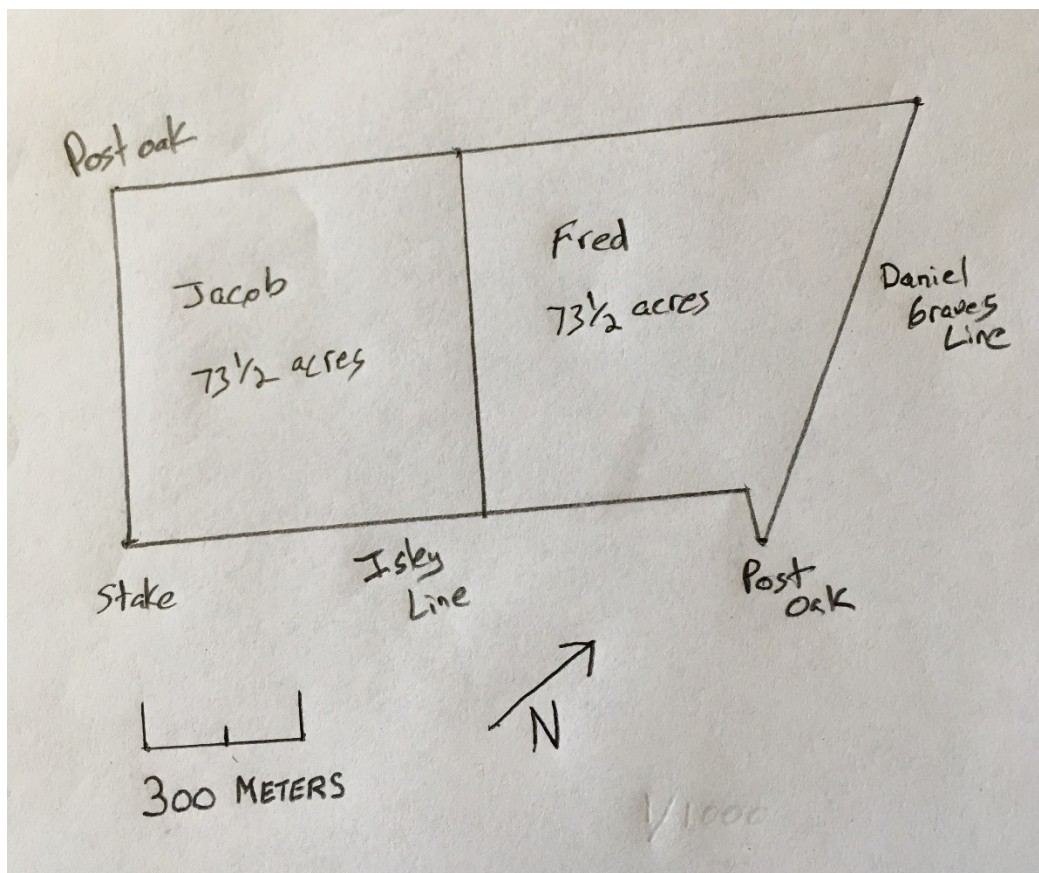


Figure 5. Author's drawing of land purchased by Fred and Jacob from Eli's estate.

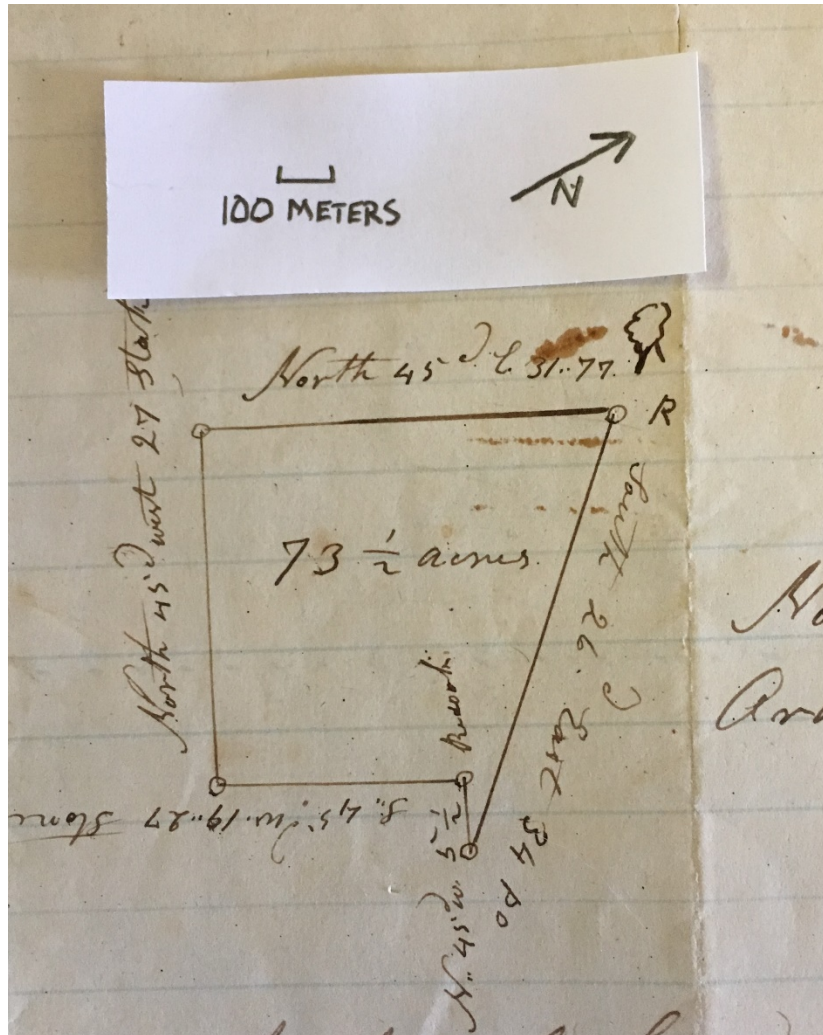


Figure 6. Survey of land purchased by Fred from Eli's estate (unknown author).

The deeds for these sections caused some confusion. Deeds were recorded in Alamance County for Fred's portion and Jacob Jr.'s portion in 1849, three years after Eli's death (ACC, DB 1:464, 3:217, 3:218). The separate tract purchased by Eli Graves's nephew, Levi Graves, was recorded in Alamance County in 1847, within one year of Eli's death (ACC, DB 1:713). Alamance County was not created until 1849, yet Levi's 1847 deed appears in the Alamance County deed books. In all deeds for these purchases, the buyers are listed as living in Orange

County and the land is described as being within Orange County. The area Levi purchased was not a part of the original 206-acre tract so it was considered a separate situation. It was thought that either the date was mistakenly listed as 1847 on the deed, or that no deed was sought prior to the creation of Alamance County and was backdated to reflect the actual transfer date once filed. Mark Chilton said it was not uncommon for relatives to forgo seeking a recorded deed until such time as it benefited them (personal communication 2017). It may be the case that the creation of a new county spurred the desire to accurately record land holdings, to avoid confusion with tax matters. However, Fred Graves requested a plat map be constructed of his portion of land in 1847. This would imply he desired to have his land recorded, but no deed is recorded prior to 1849. James Coble has found a copy of a deed that is almost identical to one recorded in 1849 (Land deeded to Frederick Graves, Coble Papers, Personal Collection, 1847). This deed from Mr. Coble is the same as the one recorded in an Alamance County Deed Book except for the date (ACC, DB 1:464). The recorded deed shows a date of March 1, 1849 (ACC, DB 1:464). The deed provided by James Coble shows the same date, but a previous date of February 1847 has been marked through and replaced with the 1849 date (Coble Papers, Personal Collection, 1847). At this time, no explanation is offered for these discrepancies. Investigating these land transfers and their varied dates would be an interesting research project.

#### Industries Represented at the Site

Research also was undertaken to determine what industries might be represented at the Fred Graves site. Determining what activities took place could help inform the purpose of any visible features at the site. The first possible industry to be examined was the property owner James Coble's claim of a tanning operation at the site. The property owner suggested one of the features matched descriptions of nineteenth-century tanneries. The physical remains at the site

will be discussed later. In a ledger from W.A. Patterson's Store, located a short distance away (see Figure 2), evidence of tanning was found. On March 7, 1875, hides were sent to Fred Graves for tanning (W.A. Patterson Store Ledger, Record of Sales and Purchases, 1875, Southern Historical Collection [SHC], UNC Chapel Hill Wilson Library [UNCCHWL], Chapel Hill, North Carolina). Those hides were returned December 7, 1875 (SHC 1875). This indicated the occurrence of tanning at the site, but a question then arose: when did the tanning industry begin here? Was tanning in progress before being undertaken by Fred? Archival evidence cannot say for sure, but does suggest as much. Fred purchased "1 lot of hooks" and a "curry comb" from Eli's estate sale (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). Hooks were tools commonly used by tanners to stretch hides while drying. A curry comb was used to brush a horse's hair, but it was also used by a currier in the dressing of recently tanned hides. Documents from the estate sale also listed 9 ¼ pounds of sole leather and shoemaker's tools as part of the inventory (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). Since Eli possessed these tools, he may have been the original tanner at the site.

Blacksmithing was another activity purported by the current property owner. Mr. Coble's uncle told him a blacksmith shop previously existed at the site. No one else could offer further information as to the presence or location of a blacksmith shop. The only evidence for blacksmithing at the site is again attributed to the estate sale. Fred purchased "1 lot of smith tools" from the estate (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). Aside from livestock and wagons, the lot of smith tools was the most expensive item sold. Fred may have been engaged in blacksmithing if he had need for such expensive tools. Otherwise, it seems unreasonable to make such an expensive purchase. Coal would have been useful to a blacksmith and coal was also purchased from Eli's estate (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). One entry from the estate sale was "iron fer." This may have been a reference to ferrous iron, which was also used by blacksmiths. The actual

intended meaning of “iron fer” could not be determined. This now begs the question again, was Eli the original occupant? If Eli possessed these items, perhaps he already had a blacksmith shop at the site and Fred simply continued the endeavor. Sadly, archival evidence was not located to concretely answer this question.

Distilling was certainly a profession of Fred Graves. James Coble was able to locate family documents that demonstrated this activity. Augustus Coble wrote letters to his superiors at the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requesting to be assigned as a gauger and storekeeper to the Fred Graves distillery (A. Coble to W. Wheeler, Coble Papers, Personal Collection, 1880). Another letter from an IRS superior to Augustus Coble asked that the stamp book from the Fred Graves Distillery be sent to him (W. Wheeler to A. Coble, Coble Papers, Personal Collection, 1880). In 1880, the *Alamance Gleaner* published a list of grain distillers for the 5<sup>th</sup> District of the United States, and Fred Graves was included on that list (AG 1880). The estate sale records almost certainly place Eli as distilling prior to Fred. Among the items sold were a still tub and worm, 54 gallons of brandy, 16 gallons of peach, a gauging rod, and several hogsheads (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). A worm is a section of copper pipe coiled into a spiral several times and placed into a tub. This mechanism is part of the cooling process used in distilling. Hogsheads were frequently used to store brandy and other liquors.

The estate sale records also provided information about other activities at the site. Oats, corn, rye, wheat, straw, flax, cattle, horses, sheep, and other farm products were sold (NCDCCR, NCSA, 1846). Some members of the descendant community remembered being told of orchards at the site. This is at least probably during Fred’s time if not during Eli’s. The ledger from Patterson’s store contained entries indicating that Fred’s children sold apples and peaches to the store (SHC 1875). While none of these products are surprising given the rural nature of the

community during the nineteenth century, it does give insight into how diverse the farm operation must have been.

### Other Site Activities

The above activities were not the only ones that occurred at the Fred Graves site. Newspaper accounts report numerous community events at the site. Candidates for North Carolina senate met at the Fred Graves place to debate prior to elections (*Alamance Gleaner* [AG] 1876, 1878, 1882, 1884). During several years, those very elections were also held at the site. Fred's place was also the location of a governor's address to the public (AG 1892). The sheriff of the county collected taxes from the community here as well, and Fred himself served as a magistrate and an election registrar (AG 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1887, 1893, 1895). Fred also served on committees for bridge repair as well as a committee to locate a new school in Coble Township (AG 1875, 1876).

The archival records describe a vibrant part of the community during parts of the nineteenth century. Historical evidence also presents Fred as an active member of that community. It would be worth researching the reasons why this site ceased to be an important part of Coble Township. Based on historical documents, the site was used by the community from the 1870s until 1900. In 1900, the polling location for Coble Township was moved from the Fred Graves place to a nearby location (AG 1900). In fact, even though Fred died in 1883, the polling place was still described as the Fred Graves Place. This was after many years of occupation at the site by Oran Coble.

Roadways are sometimes redirected to accommodate vehicular traffic, better bridges, and new commercial enterprises. Small blacksmith shops gradually became obsolete with the advent

of automobiles. Tanning became cheaper when leather was mass produced in a factory. Perhaps Fred's wife Mary was unable to maintain the infrastructure after Fred's death, and tanning, blacksmithing, and distilling operations ceased with his death. Maybe Oran Coble had no interest in these pursuits. Any of these could have contributed to the demise of the site. This project will not answer these questions, but maybe it will be the catalyst for future discoveries.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PHYSICAL REMAINS**

The general layout of the site can be seen in Figure 7. From an overall perspective, the site has been split into five areas labeled A, B, C, D, and E. The Fred Graves site stretches north-south 330 meters (1083 feet) and east-west 209 meters (686 feet). This equates to an area 6.9 hectares (17 acres) in size. For reference, Fred Graves' deeded tract of land around the site was 29.7 hectares (73.5 acres).

The site is located east of a roadbed, which runs north-south in front of Structures 1 and 2. Another roadbed travels east, cutting through the site, and crosses the small stream that flows south to north toward Stinking Quarter Creek. Area A is south of the road and includes Structures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. North of the road, within Area B, are Structures 6, 7, 8, and 9. Areas A and B are somewhat clustered together between the north-south roadbed and the stream. East of the stream and just north of Areas A and B lies Area C. This area includes Structures 11 and 12 as well as a group of seven pits designated as Structure 10. Southwest of Area A, and south of all other structures, is Area D. Area D includes only Structure 13. Area E is at the northernmost edge of the Fred Graves site and consists of a single feature, Structure 14.

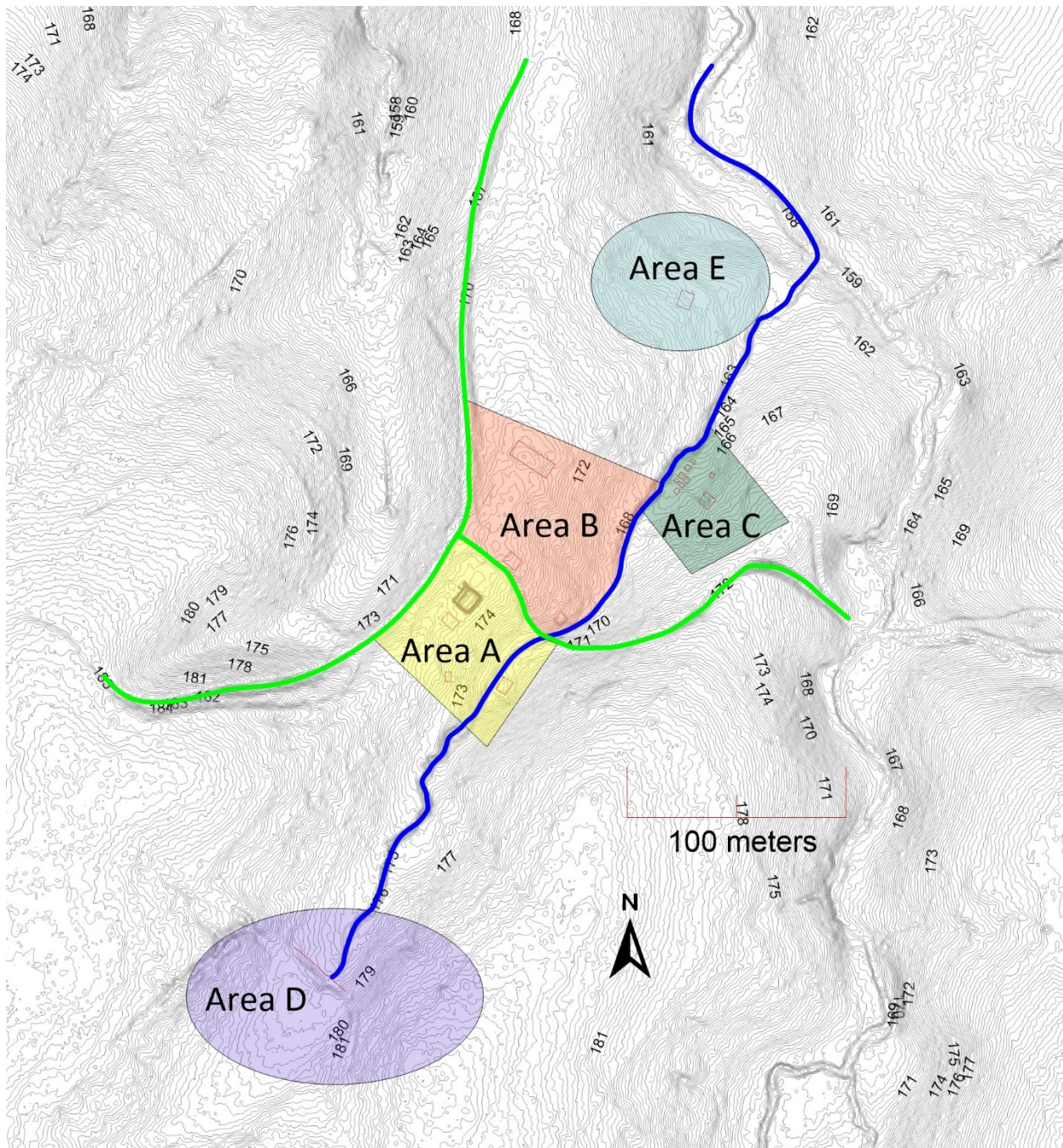


Figure 7. Contour map created from LiDAR data. Contour intervals are 20 cm. Roadbeds in green. Stream in blue.

No road names could be found to associate with either roadbed at the Fred Graves site. However, the path of the road on the northwest edge of the site follows a similar path to the Great Trading path. Maps created during this time cannot be used to precisely determine spatial relationships but they can give a general idea of these relationships. Even so, a description by Douglas L. Rights of the Great Trading path indicates it passed over a ridge at the confluence of the Alamance Creek and Stinking Quarter Creek (Rights 1931). The Fred Graves site is relatively close to the ridge described and is likely to have been in close proximity to the Great Trading Path. The visible road, running in a fairly north-south direction, follows a path of least resistance. The site acts as a connector between higher points in the area. The route of the road avoids gullies and the problems associated with up-and-down travel that gullies present. The road width varies between 9.84 feet and 8.2 feet (3 meters and 2.5 meters). LiDAR imaging shows its northern route eventually fording a stream and continuing onward. The southern route is not as visible from LiDAR imaging and has been disturbed by logging and farming operations.

Living members of the Graves family have been told the old Fayetteville road crossed their property and was located southwest of the site (Von Graves, personal communication 2017). The author visited the area of the road proposed by the family and found evidence for it. On older maps, this was called the Cross Creek road. Cross Creek was the name used at the time for what would become the city of Fayetteville. The roadbed is approximately seven meters wide where it was found near the intersection of Boyd Wright and Friendship Rock Creek roads. The road became increasingly less visible as it was followed northwest. It progresses from following established hedgerows, which had been largely untouched by twentieth-century property owners, to entering pastures that have been subjected to plowing through the years. However, it appears this road followed the same path as the current Boyd Wright Road and

travels north towards NC Highway 62. NC Highway 62 runs through the area where a colonial battlefield is located. Alamance Battleground was the site of a battle between the British army and local inhabitants in 1771. Based on the path of the road in front of the site and the path of the Fayetteville Road as indicated on maps, these two roads may have intersected. The importance of this information is that it places the site within close proximity to the major travel routes of two early roads, and near an important precursor event leading up to the War for Independence.

North of the site is the present-day Friendship Patterson Mill Road. This road is no doubt named for two locations along its route. Friendship Methodist Church, previously Friendship Academy, and the now-destroyed Patterson's Mill are on this road. This road was used during the time of the Graves occupation of the site and Fred Graves' son Handy was listed as overseer of the road in 1880 (AG 1880).

### Area A

Area A encompasses an area approximately .29 hectare (or about .71 acre) and is bounded by a stream to the east, a roadbed to the west, and a roadbed to the north (Figure 8). This is the largest area of the surveyed site and contained the most structures. The land within Area A slopes downhill from the roadbed towards the creek. The ground is thickly covered with the non-native plant periwinkle, which thins the further one gets from Structure 1. All structures are west of the stream with the exception of Structure 5. Structure 5 is just across the stream.

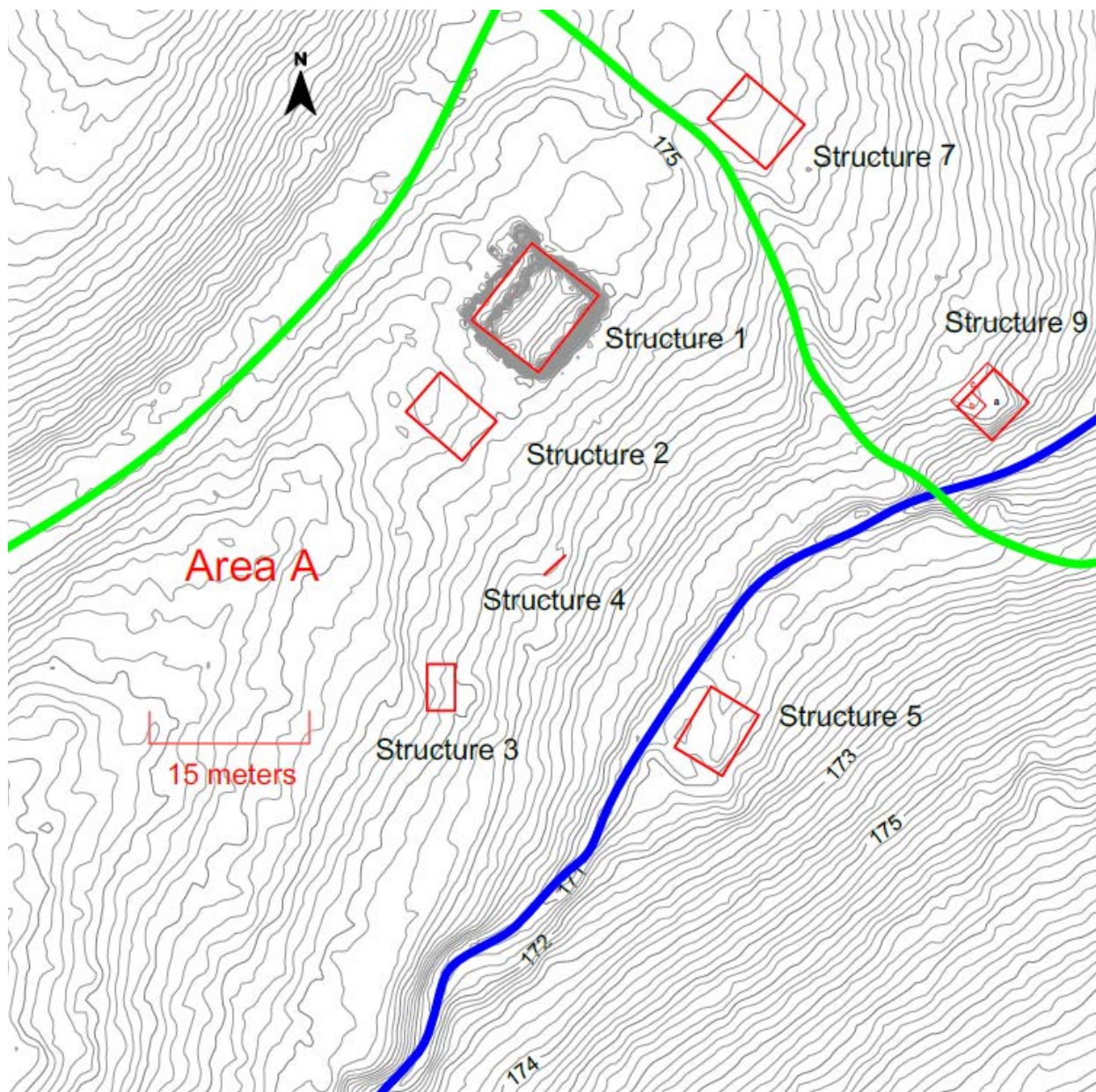


Figure 8. Contour map of Area A. Structures in red, roadbeds in green, and stream in blue. Contour intervals 20 cm.

### Structure 1 (Primary Dwelling)

Structure 1 is adjacent to the roadbed and is thought to be the dwelling associated with Fred Graves. It is a wood-framed, two-story construction 30 feet by 26 feet (9.1 meters by 7.9 meters) with a gable roof. The front of the house faces northwest towards the roadbed. There is

a covered porch at the front entryway and the porch roof is supported by four Doric-styled columns. As can be seen from Figure 9 and Figure 10, the building is in good shape considering it has been abandoned for 90 years. The only upkeep known to have been done to the building since 1928 is the addition of new metal on the roof. The current property owner made this renovation in hopes of preserving the home. The southeast corner of the roof is failing and there is evidence of ongoing water damage to that area. Aside from this water damage, the rest of the building appears structurally sound.



*Figure 9. Structure 1 view to the south.*



*Figure 10. Structure 1 view to the west.*

Brick chimneys stand at each gable end of the house to the north and south. The Graves family has always attributed the construction date for the home to an inscription of “1867” on the north chimney. Upon closer inspection, the southern chimney also bears an inscription, but this one reads “1857.” Both chimneys show signs of joint repointing, indicating repair at some time in the not-too-distant past. The chimneys share similar features such as exterior width, individual brick dimensions, and color and texture of brick. Both are primarily laid in stretcher bond. The southern chimney contains three courses of interspersed header bond while the

northern chimney contains only one. Both sit atop stone-and-mortar foundations. The height of the stone foundation on the north side is almost double that of the south side. This is despite that the foundation height for the home is identical for the north and south exterior walls. This could indicate one of the chimneys was a later addition or possibly rebuilt.

The fireplaces within the dwelling differ in size and construction and the mantels are shown in Figures 11 and 12. The fireplace attached to the southern chimney has a firebox opening that is 3.1 feet wide by 2.9 feet tall (0.94 meters by 0.88 meters). The mantel surrounding this fireplace is 5.57 feet wide by 5.74 feet tall (1.67 meters by 1.74 meters). The mantel for this fireplace is ornate and was assembled from several pieces of finely worked wood. The fireplace on the north end of the home is a little smaller. The north firebox has an opening 3 feet wide by 2.7 feet tall (0.91 meters by 0.82 meters). The mantel is 5.57 feet wide by 5.57 feet tall (1.67 meters by 1.67 meters). The north mantel lacks the detailed woodworking present in the south mantel. Nails used to attach the north mantel are visible while care seems to have been taken with the south mantel to locate nails less conspicuously. A local craftsman and descendant of Jacob Graves, Justin V. Graves, was consulted as to the differences in construction of the two mantels. Justin Graves (personal communication, 2018) suggested that the detail present in the construction of the southern mantel may be an indication of that room's use as a more formal area of the house, while the northern room was more of a family space. He cautioned that when items such as mantels are constructed by the homeowner, rather than a paid craftsman, construction techniques may simply reflect materials and time available to the maker at the time of construction.

The stairs are in good condition and can still be used to access the upper floors. The stairs are accessed through a door from the southern room. The stairwell is L-shaped at the

bottom, creating a storage area under the rising stairs in the northern room. This area was framed in, creating the only built-in storage area in the house. The location of the stairwell allowed the southern rooms to maintain a geometric appearance at the expense of the northern rooms. The location of this storage area lends credence to Justin Graves' interpretation that the first-floor southern room was more formal in use than its northern counterpart.



*Figure 11. Northern fireplace of Structure 1.*



*Figure 12. Southern fireplace of Structure 1.*

The house is built of both hand-hewn and sawn lumber. The support beams around the bottom, top, and corners are all hand hewn as are some of the supports within the walls. The wall supports and floor joists are attached to one another using peg construction. The rest of the wood elements of the home are fastened with square head, machine cut nails. The only place wire nails are found are in the context of apparent repairs and additions such as the hanging corner cupboard in one of the lower rooms. The siding boards, interior paneling, porch floor boards, interior floor boards, and ceiling panels are all made of sawn lumber. The interior and exterior doors are all two paneled. The locks on all doors are mounted on the exterior of the doors, but interior to the house, unlike more modern locks that were installed within the actual wood frame of the door.

The front of the house is accessed from the porch and has a double-door entry seen in Figure 13. The doors are separate and not part of the same framing. Many explanations exist in the present community for this type of construction. One such suggestion is superstition, this meaning that to enter and exit through the same door was bad luck, necessitating the need for a second door. Another suggestion is that this mode of construction was a popular method employed by the Pennsylvania Dutch (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission). Adding to the above suggestion is a more practical thought. During the early nineteenth-century, the use of an entrance hallway in Pennsylvania Dutch construction began to be abandoned (Kauffman 1954). According to Kauffman, the construction of a second entrance door was used to lessen foot traffic through each room (1954). In addition to the previous explanations, the addition of the second door may have been aesthetic in nature. If a single interior wall was placed in the middle of the house, as at the Fred Graves site, the front door would need to be placed somewhere other than the center of the home to avoid weakening the one interior support

wall. Putting a door to the left or right of that wall would create an aesthetical imbalance. Therefore, a second door might be installed to even out the appearance.



*Figure 13. Structure 1 view to the southeast.*

There are two other means of egress besides the front entry doors. The southern room on the first floor contains both added means of egress. One door opens to the south side of the home and another exterior door opens to the east, or rear, side of the house. Both sets of rooms are separated by interior doors placed into the wall that divides the home into two equal halves. Unlike most modern homes, these interior doors were also equipped with key locks just as the four exterior doors were. The wall in the southern room has a hole cut into the chimney flue.

This was more than likely done to allow for a woodstove to be installed. The same type hole is found in the room directly above this room. Neither of the northern rooms have any modification to the flue.

A unique feature of this dwelling is the presence of a possible cellar underneath the lower southern room. From the southwest side of the home, there is a large opening between columns of the stone foundation that can be seen in Figure 14. A circular depression 15 feet (4.57 meters) in diameter, shown in Figure 15, is centered almost below the room. The depression has never been observed free of water. The depth is unknown but is at least 4 feet (1.21 meters) deep based on an attempt to find its depth. The edges of the pit are extremely sharp and no evidence of erosion has been observed over the last 12 years. The ground under the northern room is hard packed and without water. These two sides of the home are separated by wood beams under the home.



*Figure 14. Structure 1 view to the northeast. Close-up of southern foundation corner.*



*Figure 15. Structure 1 view underneath the southern room.*

A substantial stone foundation of some sort extends below, and out towards the center of the house from the base of the chimney. The foundation forms a square. It does not appear to be related to structural support, but that determination would be better made by a structural engineer. There are pieces of U-shaped, small-diameter iron bars pushed into some of the wood beams under the home. They might have been used to hang objects under the house. This may have been a cellar. The water under the home is present year round, suggesting it would be an unsuitable location for a cellar; however, it is unknown what its condition would have been long ago. There is evidence of repair to the floor directly above the depression. Several narrow strips of wood replaced much wider strips in the center of the room running the entire length from

interior door to hearth. It was first thought that this may have been the result of damage from cinders near the hearth. Since the newer strips cover the length of the room this now seems less likely.

### Structure 2 (Possible Early Dwelling and Later Kitchen)

Structure 2 has the same orientation as the dwelling and is located 20 feet south of it. The structure is indicated by a rectangular stone foundation and stone chimney ruins in Figure 16. Only one course of stones is left of the main foundation which measured 16.1 feet by 22.8 feet. The chimney was on the northwest side of the structure nearest the road. The chimney ruins are almost 4 feet in height and close to 7 feet wide. The stones used in the chimney's construction vary in size but are as large as 0.8 feet by 3.6 feet by 1.5 feet. Many of these would have required substantial effort to place. A line of stones is shown crossing the interior of the house near its midpoint. Depending on the original function of this structure, these rocks could be part of a filled-in cellar pit or a partition to divide the structure into two separate rooms.

Structure 2 may have served as a kitchen for the dwelling. It would not be uncommon for cooking to take place in an area outside of the home. The risk of fire and excessive heat produced by cooking would make it preferable to have the kitchen removed from the home. Having a separate kitchen may also have been the result of Structure 2 being the initial dwelling. Some families built a smaller, "starter" homes to use while a more permanent structure was built. This structure is very close to the dwelling and one of its exterior doors.

Figure 16 shows the outline of the foundation stones. The remnants of the chimney are at the top of the photo. The line of stones indicating a filled in cellar pit or room partition can be

seen in this view near the midpoint of the photo. Figure 17 is an oblique view of Structure 2 with chimney ruins in the foreground. Figure 18 is a photo of the chimney ruins.



*Figure 16. Structure 2 vertical view. Northwest (chimney ruins) at top. Image from 3D model.*



*Figure 17. Structure 2 oblique view to the southeast. Chimney ruins in foreground. Image from 3D model.*



*Figure 18. Structure 2 chimney ruins view to the southeast.*

Figure 19 (below) shows Structures 1 and 2. This view is offered to give the reader an understanding of the proximity of these two structures to each other. This ties into the possibility that they were used during some portion of the same time period.



*Figure 19. Structures 1 and 2 view to the northeast showing proximity to one another.*

If indeed a woodstove was installed in the lower southern room, the kitchen may have been abandoned which could explain its destruction. Surface artifacts imply this structure was abandoned while the dwelling was still in use. There are many early twentieth-century objects within the foundation of Structure 2, lying on the surface. Their ubiquity within the foundation gives the appearance that occupants of the home may have opened the side door of the dwelling and thrown their refuse into the adjacent foundation.

Since the function of Structure 2 cannot be ascertained, it is equally possible that it was a dwelling at some point. This may have been Eli Graves' home place. Fred's plat description

indicated his portion of Eli's land contained the buildings. This description may have included Structure 2 as one of those buildings. Eli's family numbered five at the most, based on historical documents. A house the size of Structure 2 may have been spacious enough for a family that size. Fred married in 1845 and his parents died in 1846. His first child was not born until 1846. He may have inherited the home and begun raising his family there while building the dwelling. None of this is proven and still leaves the question, when was the dwelling built? By 1850 Fred's family numbered five, and by 1860 there were seven in the household. A larger home may have not been absolutely necessary, but would have certainly made domestic life more comfortable around that time.

### Structure 3 (Possible Distillery)

Southeast of the two previous structures is Structure 3. This structure is indicated by a rectangular alignment of stones shown in Figure 20 and Figure 21. The north, west, and east sides of the foundation are visible. The foundation on the south side is missing. The south side, based on the endpoints of the east and west foundations, terminated at a small but sharp rise in ground elevation. The north foundation wall is approximately 3.1 inches (8 centimeters) above ground level and may have included a walkway of laid stones.

It is possible this was the site of the distillery mentioned in correspondence from Augustus Coble as well as printed in the *Alamance Gleaner* (E. Coble to W. Wheeler, Coble Papers, personal collection, 1883) (AG 1880). While most pictures of rural stills represent them as small outdoor operations, those are normally representations of illicit stills. The still at the Fred Graves site was sanctioned by the government and may have warranted more substantial construction.



*Figure 20. Structure 3 oblique view to the south.*



*Figure 21. Structure 3 oblique view to the northwest. Image from 3D model.*

#### Structure 4 (Possible Privy or Refuse Dump)

Just north of Structure 3 is a short line of stones 6.5 feet (2 meters) in length. The alignment appears to have been manmade rather than naturally occurring. The stones are laid end-to-end and form a straight line. They may not have been noticed if not for a random shovel test dug before the stones were visible. The author conducted two shovel tests to see how deep the topsoil was before reaching the red clay subsoil. The test near the dwelling struck clay at 5.9 inches (15 centimeters). When a test was performed at Structure 4, a small portion of a soapstone bowl, a fragment of lead glazed earthenware, and pieces of charred brick were recovered. These were found somewhere between surface level and 9.8 inches (25 centimeters) below surface. Black crumbly topsoil occupied the first 9.8 inches (25 centimeters) here. After that depth, red clay was reached. This discrepancy in subsoil depth was curious. Following this shovel test, leaf blowing revealed the line of laid stones shown in Figure 22. No other foundation or corner stones could be located in association with Structure 4.



*Figure 22. Structure 4 view to the northeast.*

The fragment of a soapstone bowl would be expected to be interpreted as an artifact from a much earlier occupation period. Excavation at this feature may reveal it to be a section of the property used as a refuse dump. Since no privy has been located at the site, Structure 4 may be a possible location for the privy. However, if the site was abandoned in 1928, and the privy filled in at that time, more recent artifacts would be expected. With so many modern artifacts lying about the surface elsewhere, it would seem appropriate to find them near the surface at a privy fill. If this feature was a privy, it could have been an older privy with a later one located somewhere else on the site.

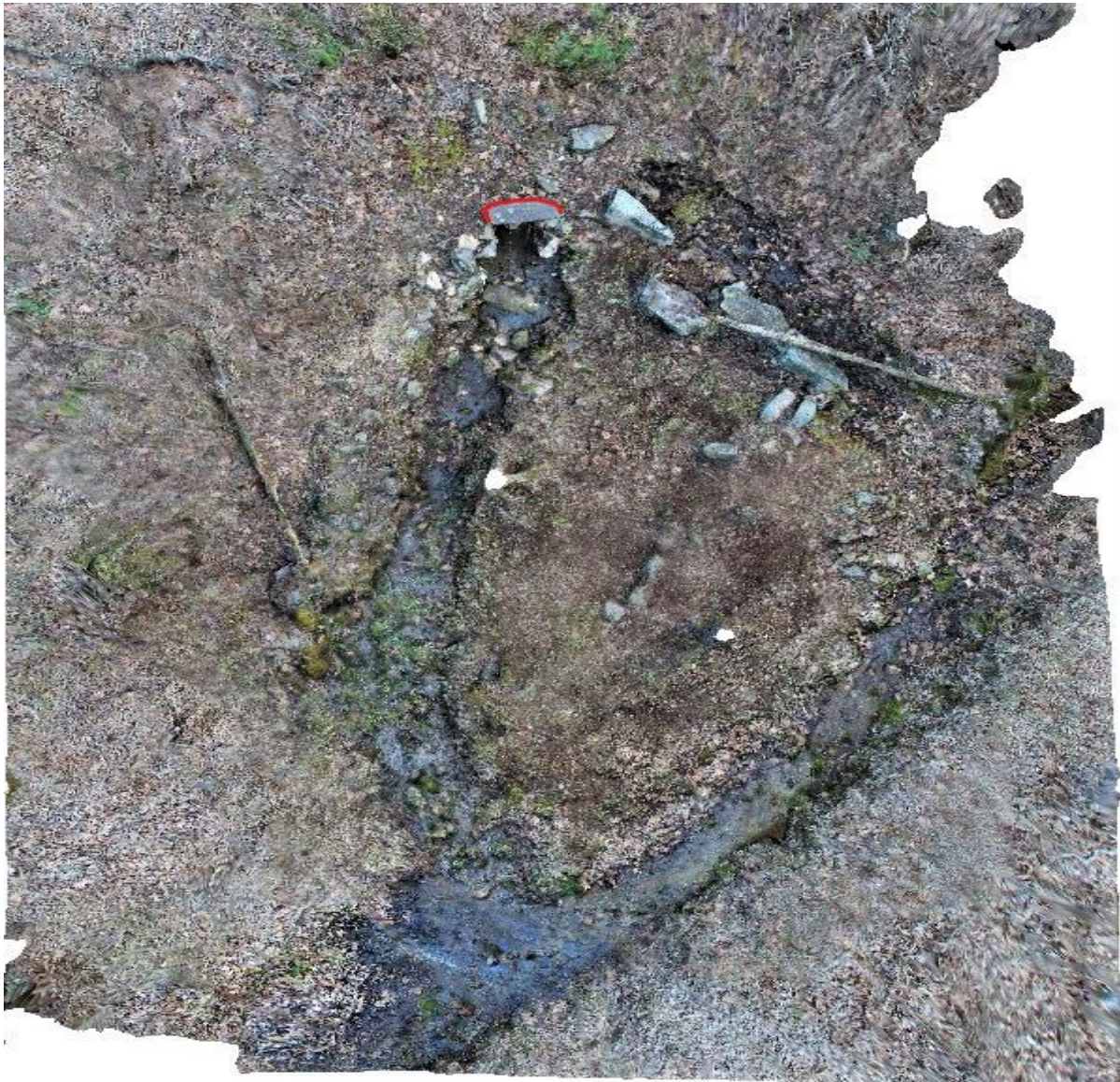
### Structure 5 (Spring House)

East of all the other previously discussed structures and features, across the stream, is Structure 5. This is a spring that would have provided fresh water at the site. The spring box, seen in Figure 23, does not look as if it has been altered since its last use. None of its stones appear out of place and it retains its square appearance. It provides only a trickle of water now and is filled with sediment, tree limbs, and years of leaf accumulation. Initially, all that could be seen in this area was the box itself.



*Figure 23. Structure 5 view to the south.*

Photogrammetry was used to create a 3D computer model of the spring box. When viewing the original model, not shown here, the remnants of a possible foundation around the box could be seen. Subsequent clearing of surface debris yielded a more complete picture and a second 3D model was created. This model, shown in Figure 24, revealed the clear presence of a line of stones potentially forming a wall foundation.



*Figure 24. Structure 5 vertical view. South at top. Spring box outlined in red. Image from 3D model.*

Such a foundation would be expected as a structure would be needed to keep the spring free from debris that might clog it. One might expect to find remnants of food storage items in this area. The bottom of a glass bottle that resembles a milk container, as well as a sherd of lead-glazed earthenware, was found in the water fed by the spring. The only artifacts found on the surface within the foundation were spent ammunition casings of modern munitions. The calibers included .223, 9mm, and 38 special. None of these calibers are commonly used in hunting and were probably the result of target practicing or the random discharge of weapons. Excavation may provide evidence to support this foundation as being an area of cold food storage. Figure 25 is a view of Structure 5 with the spring box located at the left rear of the photo.



*Figure 25. Structure 5 view to the south.*

## Area B

Area B is located on the highest elevation of the Fred Graves site along with Area A and is shown in Figure 26. This area also slopes downhill from the roadbed towards the creek. Area

B is shown in figure 26 and includes Structures 6, 7, 8, and 9. None of these structures appear to be related to domestic activities, unlike most of the structures found in Area A. This area is separated from Area A by a roadbed and separated from Area C by the stream.

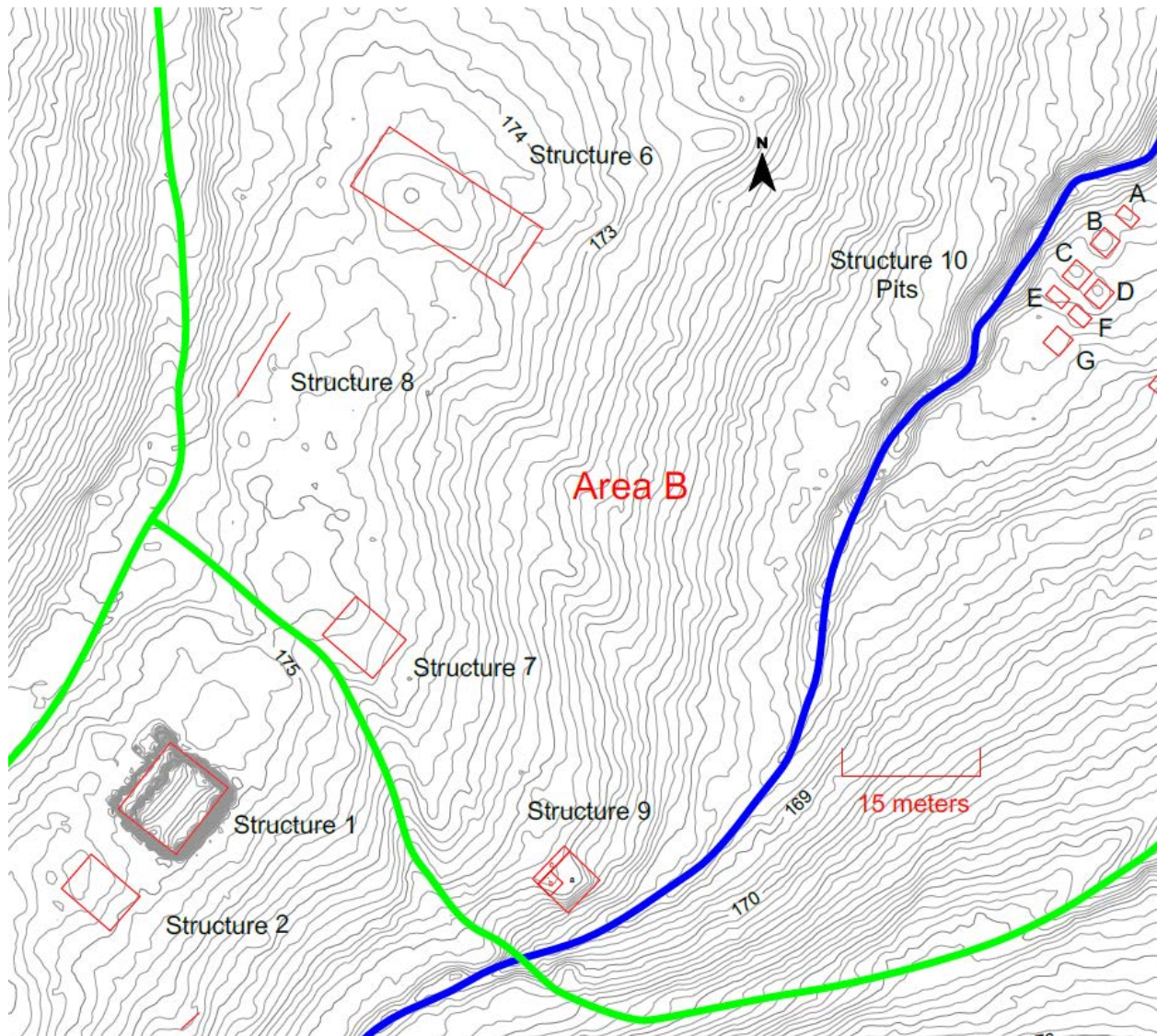


Figure 26. Contour map of Area B. Structures in red, roadbeds in green, and stream in blue. Intervals 20cm.

### Structure 6 (Barn)

Structure 6, shown in Figure 27, is the northernmost structure within Area B. It is the fallen remains of a cribbed-log barn. The corners of the barn were built using a notched log and stacking method. Other areas of the structure were built with peg-and-hole methods as well as machine-cut nails for fastening. Figure 28 shows the peg-and-hole method of construction, and was taken prior to the further collapse shown in Figure 27. As with the dwelling, wire nails were only found in what appeared to be repair work or added features. The property owner was able to recall its appearance before its destruction, and noted it had been enclosed on three sides by a lean-to. Foundation stones used to support the lean-to are visible on three sides of the barn. It appears the barn continued to be used until the mid-twentieth-century to store hay and other equipment. Older equipment is still present just outside the interior footprint of the structure but within the lean-to foundation stones. Those foundation stones encircle the barn on three sides.



*Figure 27. Structure 6 view to the north.*



*Figure 28. Structure 6. View to the north.*

### Structure 7 (General Store)

Structure 7, like Structure 6, sits north of the roadbed that splits Area A, from Area B. It is unique in that, like Structure 1, it is still standing. Structure 7 is shown in Figures 29 and 30 below. Its condition is much worse than the dwelling. The majority of its floor has been

removed and was repurposed according to James Coble. This structure is thought by the author to have been the building that housed known activities at the site such as voting, state senatorial debates, and tax collection. While there is no archaeological evidence to support this interpretation, this structure is the most likely choice of structures found at the site.



*Figure 29. Structure 7 view to the east. Photo taken from the roadbed that divides Area A and Area B.*

There is also oral history evidence of this structure having served as a general store. James Coble said that a ledger exists that reveals mercantile operations occurred here. He possessed the ledger and loaned it to a relative in Florida. He has been unable to have it returned. His recollection is that the ledger contained detailed information on goods sold at this

location that dated to the late nineteenth century. He further remembers being told the store was operated by a former enslaved couple, Dilly and Canada. The author located one of the names, Canada Coble, in the 1870 census for this area (DOC, USDC, 1870). The last name Coble would be expected since the property owner's ancestors who owned the enslaved couple were Cobles. The 1870 census was the first time names of African American residents were actually recorded. Prior to that year, only the number of African Americans in each household was recorded, and not names.



*Figure 30. Structure 7 view to the south.*

This structure is one story and is also of wood construction. As in the dwelling, the support beams are all hand hewn, and the siding and paneling are made of sawn lumber. The

floor and corner support beams were assembled using peg construction. The remainder of the building used machine-cut square nails. This structure may have had a cellar. There is an area below the level of the floor that extends 4.6 feet (1.4 meters) to the ground. It is admitted that this could be the result of erosion, but the variance in foundation height make the presence of a cellar likely. The northwestern end of the structure is 1.1 feet (34 centimeters) above ground. The rear southeastern end has a height of 2.88 feet (88 centimeters) which would allow for fairly easy access to goods stored there (Figure 31). The absence of the floor and cross beams may have removed evidence that would support the existence of a cellar.



*Figure 31. Structure 7 view to the north. Opening to possible cellar visible.*

There is a single chimney on the northwestern upslope end of the structure. It is similar in size and construction to the dwelling chimneys. However, its bricks are more red in color. They have deteriorated more than those from the dwelling, and they are softer in composition. There is one window on the northwest side of the building that flanks the chimney. One other window is located on the south side of the building, next to the only door into the building. This window and the door open directly onto the road that runs between the dwelling and this building. The location of the door would have allowed for ease of access to those travelling the road. The window may have allowed for the passing of purchased items onto waiting wagons. This window has an iron bar that secures a wooden closure against what was the glass window frame. The other two windows lack this type of securement.

Around the perimeter of Structure 7 are several shards of glass of various colors and thickness. Directly below, and outside, the northwest window were pieces of window glass on the ground. Within the structure itself were more shards of glass, as well as two complete glass bottles dating to the early twentieth-century. Also found on the surface inside the building were twentieth century leather shoe soles.

#### Structure 8 (Unknown Structure)

Structure 8 was not discovered until after the completion of field work. This feature is a line formed by three sets of stone piers located northwest of Structures 6 and 7 and parallel to the roadbed skirting the west side of site. The piers form a line 32 feet (9.7 meters) long parallel with the northwest roadbed. Two of the piers are shown in Figure 32 below. These stones are very close to the road and no sides or other corners were seen. Further evidence of this being a structure was the presence of a piece of hand-hewn lumber about 3.2 feet (1 meter) long, wedged beside one of the stones. This piece of lumber had square machine cut nails driven through it.

James Coble stated his uncle told him a corn crib used to stand in a location near this area, but on the opposite side of the road. While a determination of the function of these stones cannot be put forth, his recollection cannot be fully discounted. Corn was an item sold at Eli's estate sale (NCDCR, NCSA 1846). The placement of a corn crib so close to the road would have eased the labor involved in the sale of dried corn. The corn could have been channeled out of such a building directly into a waiting wagon on the road below. One severely rusted piece of what may be a farm implement was found directly adjacent to one of the sections of stacked stones. This piece of fabricated metal sticks out of two sides of a tree that has grown through it. The tree is approximately 60 centimeters in diameter, showing the metal had been placed out of use quite some time ago.



*Figure 32. Structure 8 (two of the piers) view to the northeast. Ruins of Structure 6 visible in background.*

### Structure 9 (Blacksmith Shop)

Structure 9 is located directly east of Structure 7 and is between it and the stream. This configuration can be seen in Figure 33. Structure 9 represents the ruins of a stone foundation. The northwest side of the foundation sits at ground level; the southeast side of the foundation is much higher due to its location on the slope towards the stream. It has an overall square shape that is 16 feet by 16 feet (4.87 meters by 4.87 meters). The property owner was told by his uncle that this was the site of a blacksmith's shop. No surface artifacts were recovered from this structure to support nor refute that interpretation. When looking at orthographic photos, features become visible that delineate this structure's overall square shape. In the west corner, a second smaller square is visible within the foundation (Figure 34).



*Figure 33. Structure 9 view to the northwest. Structure 7 visible background right.*



*Figure 34. Structure 9 vertical view northeast at top. Image from 3D model.*

This smaller section of stones could be the remnants of a furnace if this was a blacksmith's shop. At the left edge of the foundation in Figure 34, a narrow rectangle area of rocks appears distinct apart from the structure as a whole. The stones may indicate the presence of a small porch-like overhang attached to the main structure. Archival evidence was discussed that placed blacksmithing at the site, and this structure may have housed that activity. Soil

chemistry testing to determine the presence of slag would be useful to determine if this was in fact a blacksmith's shop. Figure 35 is a view of Structure 9 showing the foundation side closest to the stream.



*Figure 35 Structure 9 oblique view to the north. Image from 3D model.*

### Area C

Across the creek and downstream is Area C, which is believed to have been a tannery operation. This area includes a group of several pits designated as Structure 10, as well as stone foundations for Structures 11 and 12 all shown in Figure 36. The property owner suggested this was a tannery and had knowledge of rural tanning and the appearance of tanneries. It has already been discussed that hides were sent to Fred Graves for tanning. This is the most likely area to have housed that activity. The depressions are a series of seven rectangular pits laid out in a grid. The grid layout runs in a northeast-southwest direction parallel with the adjacent creek bank. While the creek forms a northwest border for Area C, a roadbed acts as a southeast border.

Between this roadbed and the pits are Structures 11 and 12. This road is a continuation of the road that runs between Structures 1 and 7.

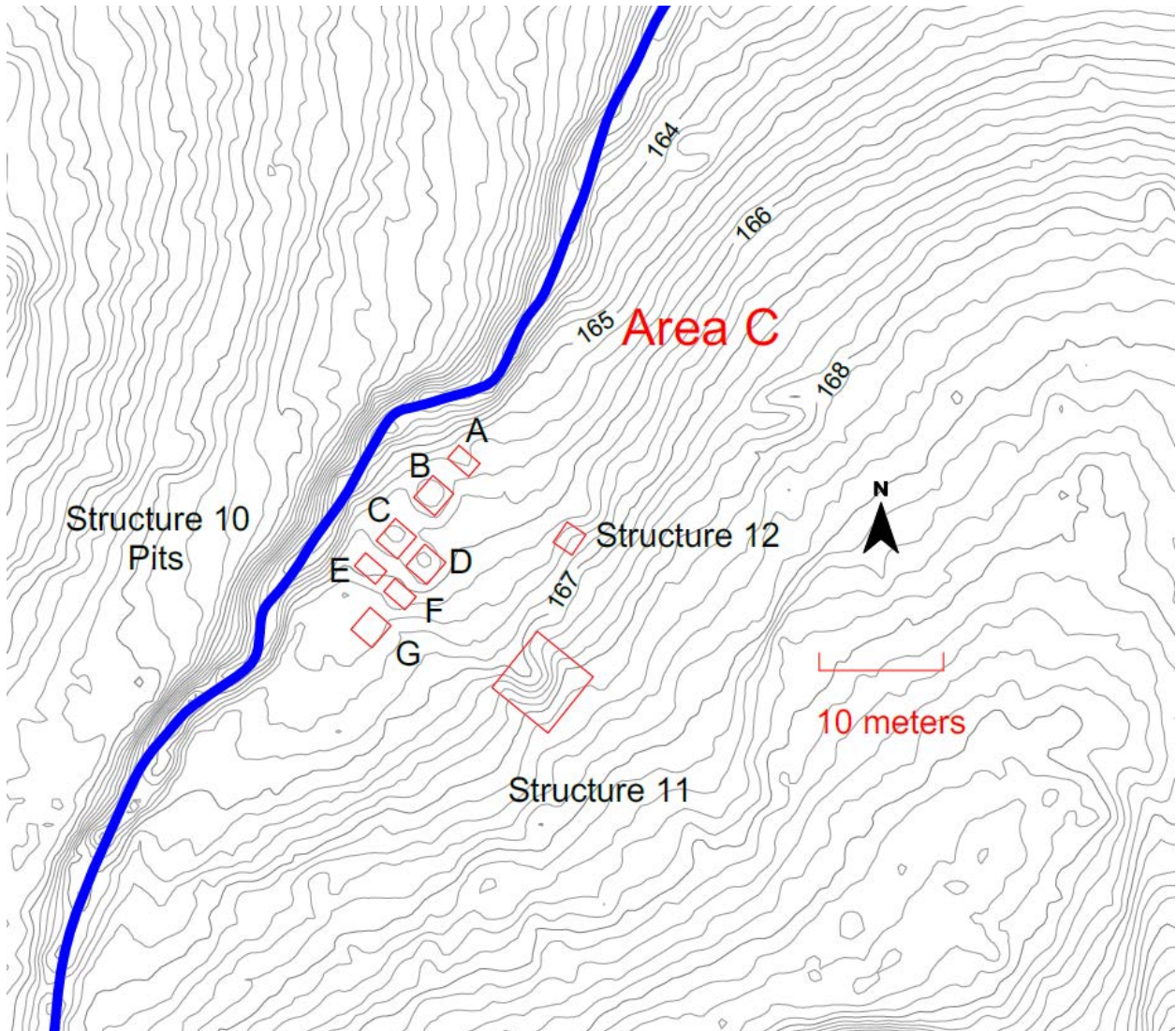
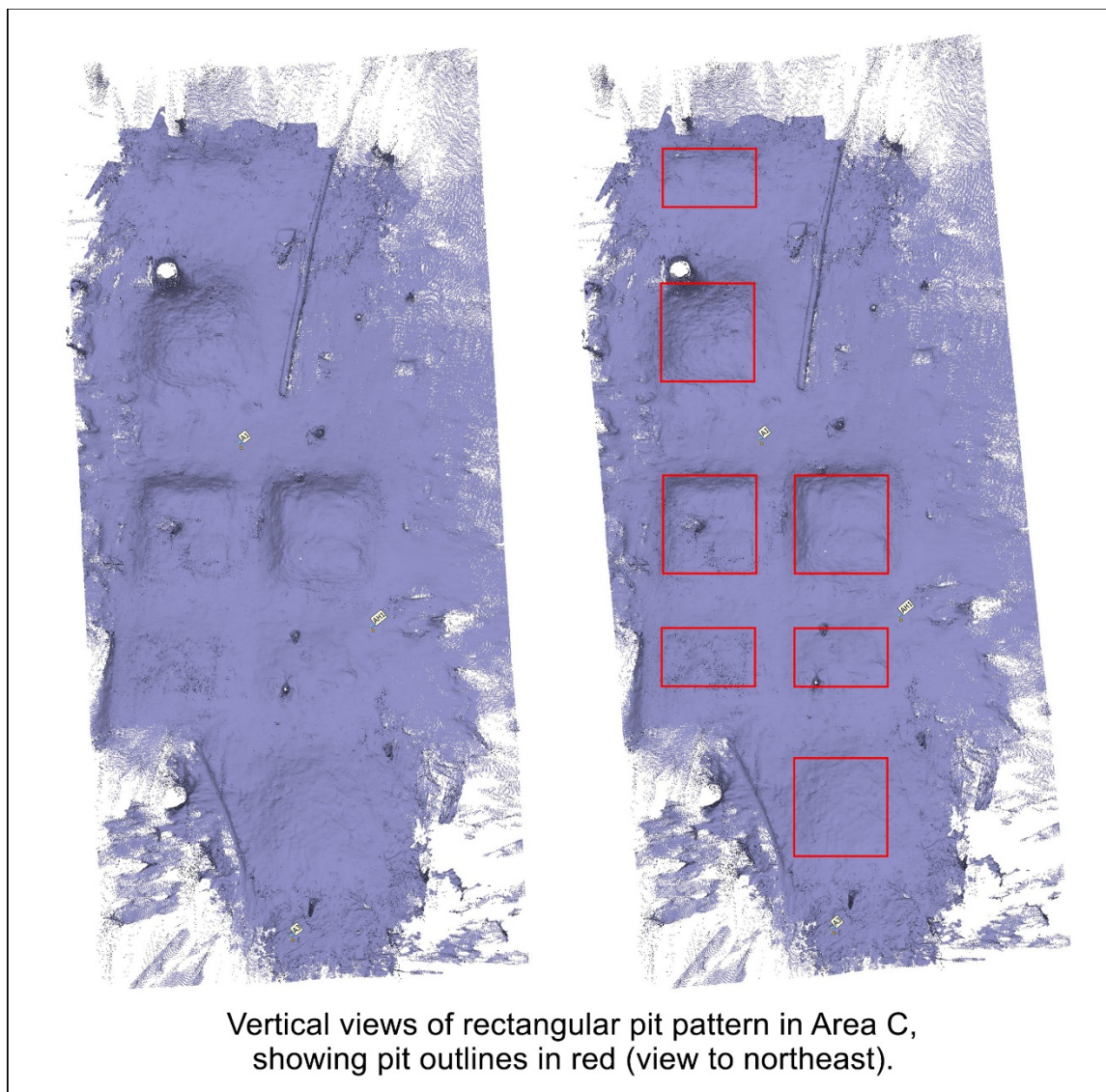


Figure 36. Contour map of Area C. Structures in red and stream in blue. Intervals 20cm.

### Structure 10, Pits A-G (Tannery Pits)

Pits A, E, and G measure 7.4 feet by 4.6 feet (2.25 meters by 1.4 meters). The remaining pits measure 7.4 feet by 7.7 feet (2.25 meters by 2.34 meters). Pits E, F, and G are the furthest south and are the shallowest. These three pits are all less than 1 foot (0.3 meter) deep. The other pits vary in depth from 1 foot (0.3 meter) to just over 2 feet (0.6 meter). Pits C and D have depths that are categorically different from the others. These two pits each have two separate depths within them. The depth variances in these individual pits takes on the appearance of a “step down.” No information could be found related to a tanning function that would require a split-depth pit. The reported pit depths may be less than their original depth due to sediment infill. Pit A, at the north end, opens up toward the creek and may have been used as a drainage pit to empty waste into the creek. Figure 37 (below) is an enhanced copy of a 3D model of the pit structures. The color and texture of the model has been removed in an effort to show the reader the outline and depth of the pits.



*Figure 37. Pits A-G in Structure 10.*

Their arrangement and similar size and shape match descriptions of nineteenth-century tannery operations (Welsh 1964:15). Such operations have been described as consisting of “several oblong boxes sunk in the ground...without cover...near a small stream” (Welsh 1964:15). The number of pits varied based on the volume of work. The pits held chemicals of

varying strength, and the hides were moved from one pit to the next depending on their phase in the tanning process.

The figures below are used to illustrate the depth of the pit structures. Figure 38 is an oblique view of the pits and Figure 39 is a profile interpretation of Figure 38. The reader should be able to see the depth distinctions of the pits better in Figure 39 than an above-ground photo allows.



*Figure 38. Oblique view of Structure 10 pits. View to the southeast. Image from 3D model.*



*Figure 39. Profile view of Structure 10 pits. View to the southeast. Image from 3D model.*

### Structure 11 (Possible Beam House)

A structure was needed to serve as a beam house for hanging and beaming hides (Welsh 1964:15). Structure 11 could represent a beam house used to hang hides for drying (Figures 40 and 41). Structure 11 is a section of foundation stones representing a building that was 19 feet by 19 feet (5.79 meters by 5.79 meters). It is cut into a hillside and lacks foundation stones on its northwest side, facing the pits. This side is opposite the hill and acts as a natural opening extending off the hill.



*Figure 40. Structure 11 oblique view to the west. Image from 3D model.*



*Figure 41. Structure 11 view to the west.*

#### Structure 12 (Chimney Foundation or Furnace)

Structure 11 has no evidence of a heat source, but nearby Structure 12 (shown in Figure 42) represents the ruins of a chimney. Only chimney ruins exist without a surrounding structure foundation. Structure 12 is 6 feet by 6.5 feet and is 22 feet north of Structure 11. These two structures could have been used in the tanning operation at the site.

There were very few surface artifacts located at Area C. Half of a charred brick was located beside Structure 10 and one brick was found within the foundation of Structure 12. An alkaline-glazed stoneware sherd was found beside Structure 11. The sherd found here was of the same type and glaze as sherds found in Area A. Figure 43 is a photo taken from the southeast edge of Structure 11 and gives a view of Area C.



*Figure 42. Structure 12 view to the north.*



*Figure 43. Area C view to the northwest. Photo taken from southeastern edge of Structure 11 looking downhill toward the stream. Structure 12 (chimney ruins) visible on right.*

Altogether, Area C occupies an area less than 4000 square feet (371.61 square meters). It is not uncommon to find middle-class homes of that size in rural Alamance County today. The fact that all of these structures are confined within such a small area lends credence to the interpretation that they were all related to a common function. This area probably would have been far enough removed from the domestic area to prevent smells associated with tanning from affecting the home. Further, this operation was downstream from the spring which would have avoided contamination of the freshwater supply. Chemical testing of soil within the pits could further prove these as being used in tanning. Evidence of lime or bark acid would allow for a more certain determination of a tanning operation at Area C. The need for an accessible water supply leads to a discussion of Area D.

#### Area D, Structure 13 (Dam)

Area D is located south of all other Areas of the Fred Graves site. From Figure 44 it is seen located at the origination of a trench that flows north toward the other structures and the tannery area.

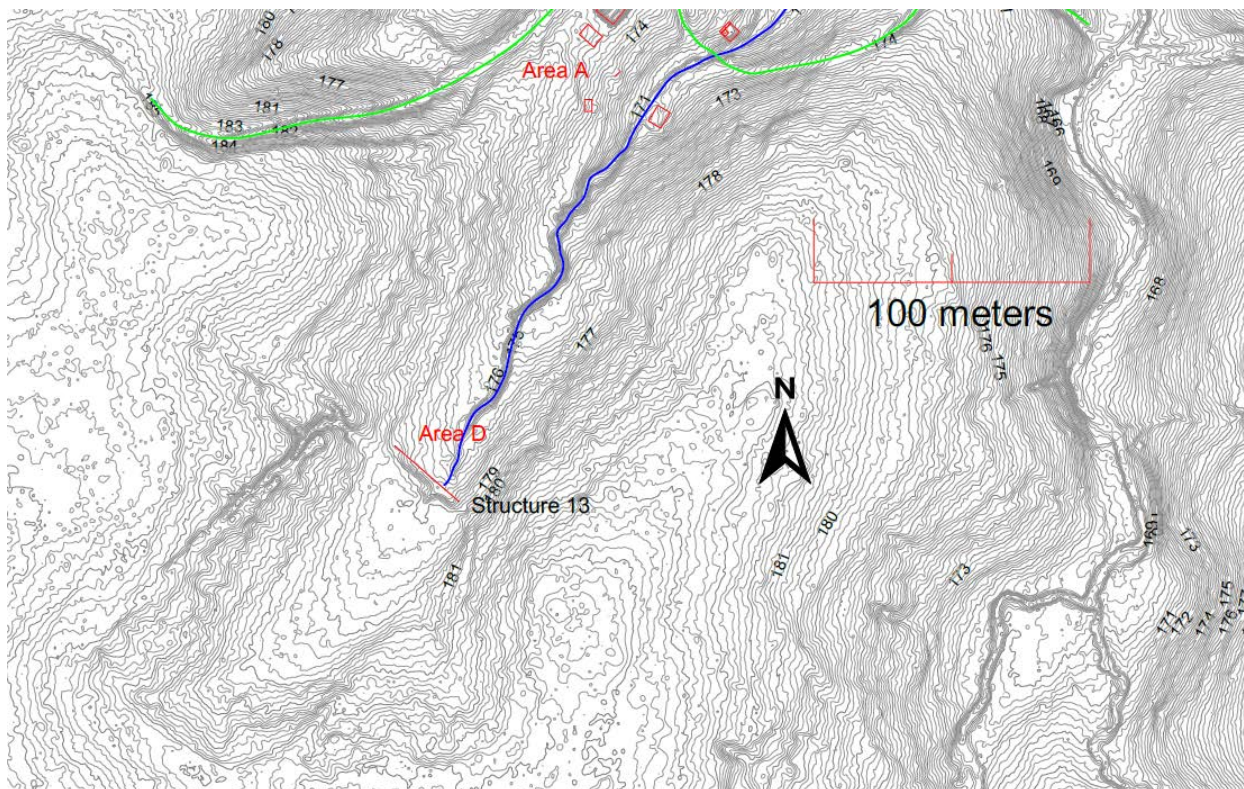


Figure 44. Contour map of Area D. Structures in red, roadbeds in green, and stream in blue. Intervals 20 cm.

Area D is marked by one feature. Structure 13 is a stone wall approximately 100 feet (30 meters) in length running northwest-southeast (Figures 45 and 46). From what is visible, the wall is 1.96 feet (60 centimeters) high and 1.96 feet (60 centimeters) wide. The true depth of the wall cannot be fully determined as it appears it may progress some distance into the earth. The wall sits at the edge of a substantial drop in surface elevation. Below the stone wall a small ravine, or entrenched creek bed, begins north of the wall. The ravine is deeper and wider than that of the path made by the spring downstream. However, this ravine is devoid of water except in cases of extreme precipitation. The size of the ravine would indicate past high volumes of water. Above Structure 13 is a flat expanse of ground. James Coble was told by his uncle of a past method that would have constructed such a wall. This method was used to allow sediment

from water runoff to collect against a low wall of stones. As the sediment accumulated, more rocks were stacked and the sediment rose and the wall was built higher to compensate for the sediment collection. This was supposed to have created a level field that would have then been arable.

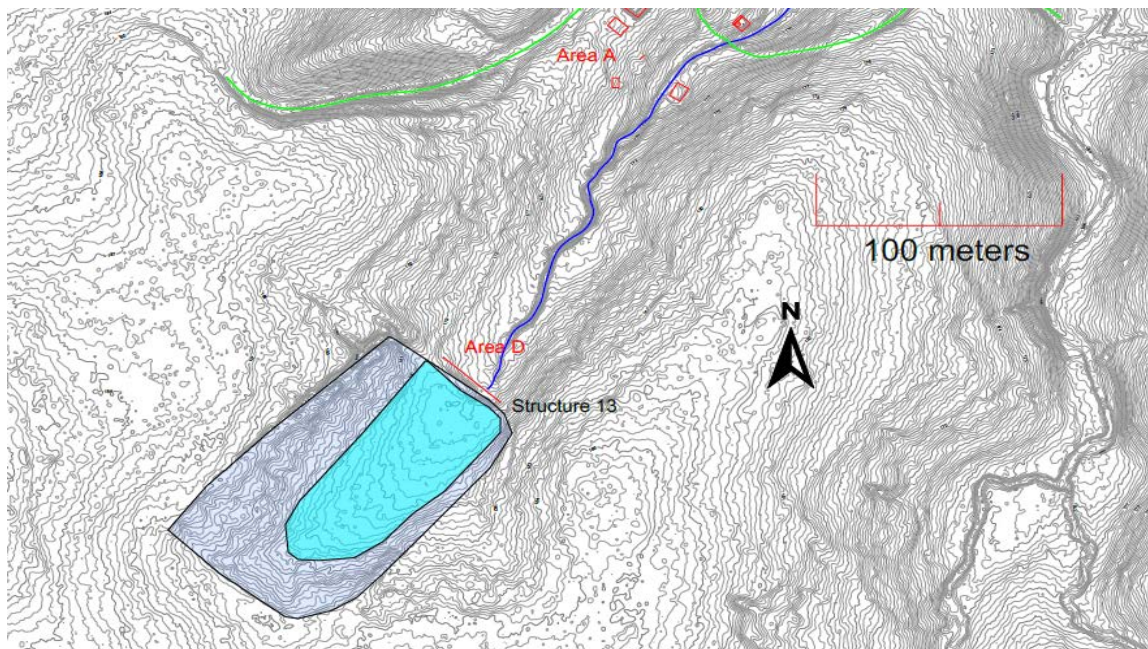


*Figure 45. Structure 13 view to the south.*



*Figure 46. Structure 13 view to the southeast.*

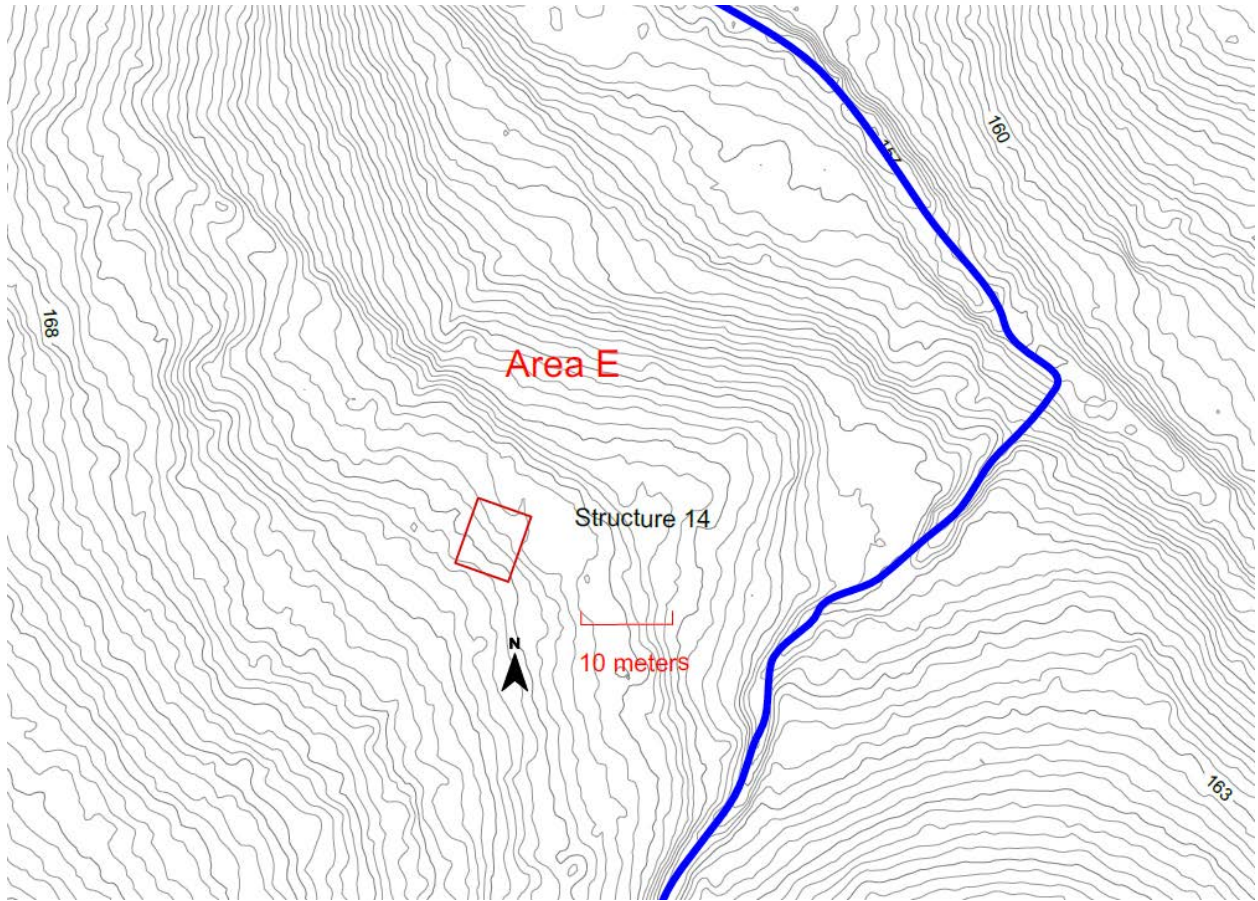
There is another theory for the creation of this wall. When observed on a contour map (Figure 47), this area has a striking resemblance to what might be a former pond. The center of the wall is open and does not appear to be the result of rocks falling from their constructed position. Other areas have fallen and rest just below their original placements. This open section looks like an area of water flow. The V-shaped form is outlined by laid stones. A section from the upper side of the wall looks like a channel possibly made to direct water flow. Below the wall is another line of stones that could have been used to channel water from above, toward the original path of water runoff. If tanning and distilling indeed took place at the site, those activities would have required a constant water supply. The spring may not have been able to supply a sufficient water source for commercial operations. In this case the wall, acting as a low dam, could have created a holding area of water that could be released as needed. Soil cores could be taken from the area above the wall to analyze sediments and determine if the dam hypothesis holds water.



*Figure 47. Contour map of Area D. Possible pond and valley sides colored. Intervals 20 cm.*

### Area E, Structure 14 (Possible Tobacco Barn)

The last structural feature to consider is located at the northernmost area of the site, Area E (Figure 48). Structure 14 is a rectangular depression with a line of stones forming somewhat of a foundation on the northern edge of the depression. This structure measures 24.7 feet by 20.2 feet (7.52 meters by 6.15 meters) (Figure 49). The property owner was aware of this structure and had been told, again by his uncle, that this had been a tobacco barn. No physical evidence can corroborate this assumption but it also cannot be ruled out. Information from the Patterson Store ledger has entries of purchases of tobacco from the Graves family, so it can be known they grew tobacco (SHC 1875). We just do not know where it was grown or cured. Again, chemical testing of the soil here may show evidence as to the nature of this structure's function.



*Figure 48. Contour map of Area E. Structure in red and stream in blue. Intervals 20 cm.*

Figure 48 shows only Area E with Structure 14 outlined in red. The depression seen starting from the bottom of the figure running northeast is the creek that runs through the Fred Graves site. In this figure, it can be seen as it connects with another creek and then turns northwest where it eventually intersects with Stinking Quarter Creek. There is a change in elevation seen branching off from the creek and traveling near Structure 14. This change in elevation mirrors a current property line divide.



*Figure 49. Structure 14 oblique view to the southwest. Image from 3D model.*

Unlike the other structures and features mapped, Structure 14 is not as accurately located on a map. Its reference points were located using a handheld GPS unit. The unit was accurate within five meters. The distance between the two reference points was altered to reflect the actual distance between the two points. Since the structure was located by using these two points, its location on the map is a close representation but not exact. The orientation of the structure is however, an accurate representation.

## Site Evaluation

The Fred Graves site is laid out in a way that seems to have exploited available water sources while keeping activities as close to the dwelling as possible. If we look at the overall picture of the site in Figure 50, spatial divisions can be seen. Area C is interpreted to have been the site of a tannery operation. This area is located downstream from the freshwater drinking supply. It is directly beside the stream which was necessary for tanning. When viewed on a map, this area is sequestered away from other activities.

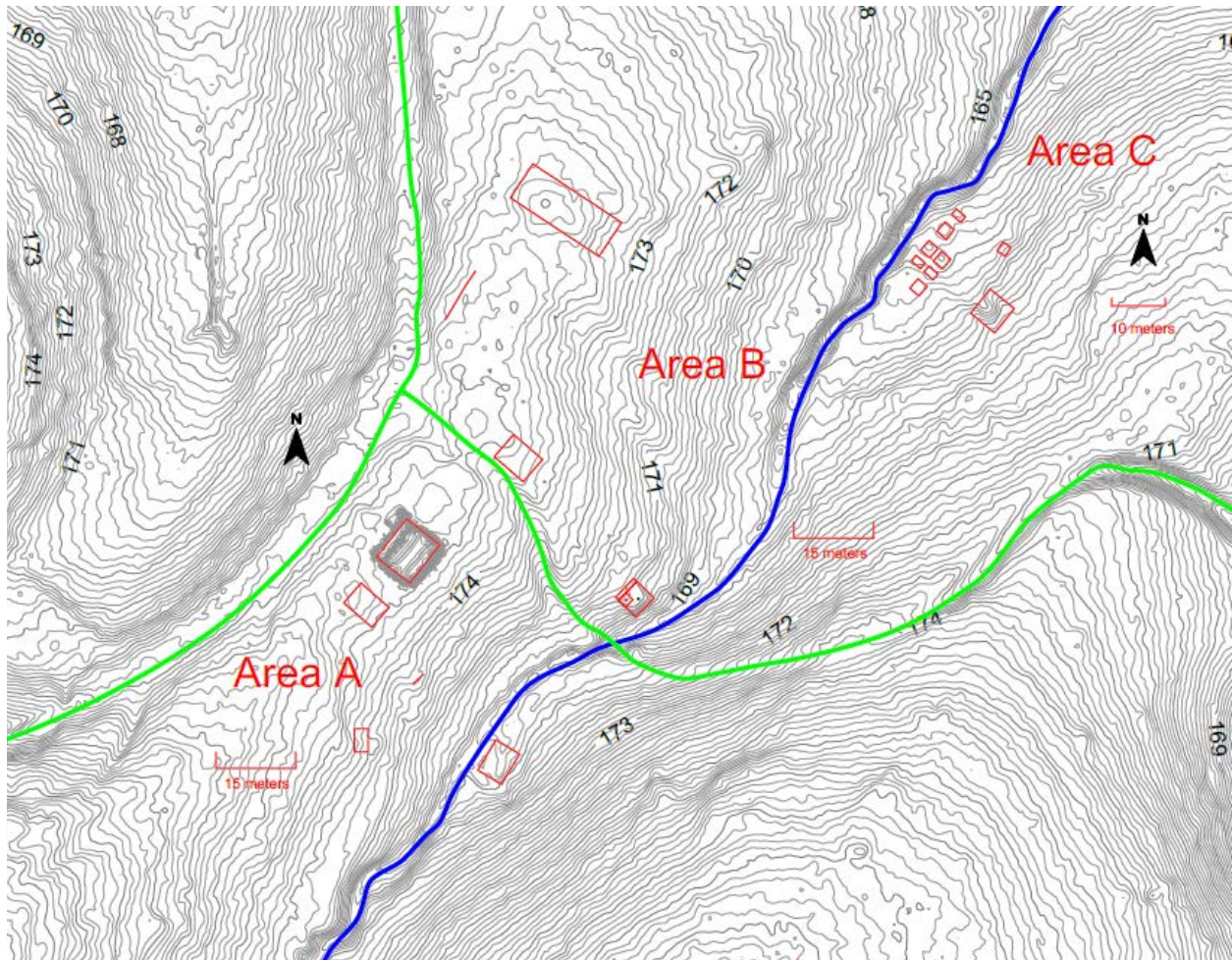


Figure 50. Contour map of Areas A, B, and C. Structures in red, roadbeds in green, and stream in blue. Intervals 20 cm.

Area A and Area B appear to be split based on function. Area A contains mostly domestic functions and Area B contains commercial or agricultural functions. Structures on the south side of the road appear to be related to domestic functions. The dwelling and potential kitchen are both on this side of the road. Structure 4, which may have been a privy or refuse pit, is also on the south side. On the other side of the road are Structures 6, 7, 8, and 9. All of these are known or interpreted to be agricultural or commercial in function. Areas D and E are outliers that are quite some distance from Areas A, B, and C. Another interesting point on the map is the orientation of most of the structures. All structures in Area B, C and E, as well as four of the five structures in Area A, face northwest. The arrangement may seem natural given the propensity to situate buildings to face an existing road. But, when we see that the structures in Area C also follow this northwest pattern, simply facing the road seems unlikely. The arrangement of the structures may have just been a desire for symmetry. We cannot know for sure with the information available.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusion**

This project was able to reveal much information about the lives of the Graves family and their use of the landscape. Community and political events occurred at the Fred Graves site. We may not know where exactly the events took place, but we can at least have a better idea of the locations and where to look in the future. The archival research provided here will hopefully shed light onto the lives of the forgotten who were bypassed by fame and fortune. We may not have the complete picture of landscape use at the Fred Graves site, but we at least have a much better one to use as we work forward. The orientation of buildings at the site, as well as the overall layout of the site, has shown a level of intentionality. The organization was not at all random after putting the pieces together. 3D modeling conducted from the site will hopefully ensure that regardless of structural decay, this site will continue to be of value to future researchers.

One important thing to remember when considering what more information this site could offer is the spatial extent of its use by the Graves Family. Fred's initial inheritance plot was listed as 73.5 acres and has since been modified due to more accurate measurement techniques to be 70 acres. The total site area, encompassing all features identified and described here, fit within 17 acres. That, coupled with the fact that no systematic survey was conducted, leaves great potential for archaeological investigation in the future. This site has the potential to yield information that could show how one family, through four generations, dealt with change within their local community and larger society. This can be seen through changes in style, type,

and value of artifacts that remain to be discovered. As stated, the full extent of their use of this landscape has not been determined. A more in-depth investigation would yield an even clearer picture of how a rural family exploited their environment. Determining initial dates of occupation and by whom would shed light into the family functionality of these past farmers and craftspeople. We could begin to see how we have changed in our relationships with each other as well as with our world.

Investigations at the Fred Graves site would do much more than reveal information about just one family. Findings here, could be used to expose what other people in the area were experiencing. The blacksmith shop, for example, would reveal more than just what items were being produced by one family. The items produced would have been dictated by the communities' needs and desires. If we find evidence of wagon repair occurring at this blacksmith shop, does the evidence indicate all wagons repaired were similar and likely belonged to fellow community members, or is there a variety that may indicate the roadbed was frequented by travelers from distant locations? The absence of some manufactured items at the shop may mean those items were not used by the community, or it may indicate that those items were imported into the community and purchased elsewhere. If they were being imported, was it because they were produced more cost efficiently in another locale or possibly made by a more skilled artisan? We may even be able to tell when this area gained access to more advanced agricultural equipment based on the presence or absence of specific machinery parts.

In addition to the blacksmith shop, the tannery could provide valuable information about the conditions of the people in and around Coble Township. The site may be able to tell us what types of leather goods were produced, and what types of animal hides were tanned. Different tanning methods are employed depending on the intended final use of the hides. It would be

interesting to know if shoes were still being produced locally during the nineteenth-century in this community. The tannery may have been a source of employment in the community. While it may be infinitely more difficult to determine, is it possible this was a communal tannery? Historical documents have provided evidence for commercial tanning, but that is limited to only two instances. There is a possibility that this tannery was used less for profit and more for community needs. Soil chemistry testing at this tannery could also be used when looking into the overall health of the community members who lived downstream in the Stinking Quarter area.

Continued research at the Fred Graves site would allow us to better understand how the community there handled social and economic changes. A change in artifact assemblage over time would give us insight into their changing purchase and use patterns. This information could be applied more broadly to understand not just one family, but the many families they interacted with. This would reflect on how we as a society react to the same pressure. Are we making choices based on human agency or are our decisions preordained based on our circumstances and surrounding environment? This project leaves much to be accomplished in a future project. The enthusiasm of the family and local community has opened the door to great potential in the area of public archaeology. Nothing could be better than uncovering the past while bringing the public into the light of their own forgotten past. As archaeologists, is it not our responsibility to facilitate the spread of this information?

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