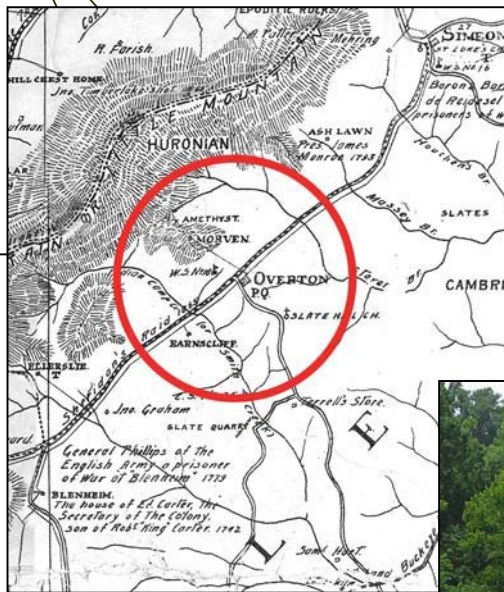


Archaeological Landscapes at Morven

Status Report - 2009



Future Plans – 2010

Introduction

The Morven Archaeological Survey Team (MAST) was formed in Spring 2009 as an investigatory arm of the multidisciplinary Morven Project and shares with it the overarching goal of identifying and developing ways to utilize the 3000-acre Morven property within a web of interlocking and interacting research, educational, and outreach endeavors. The Morven Project currently envisions the property as a series of landscape “layers” each of which, for study purposes, is defined by one or more specific core attributes (i.e. hydrology, vegetation, land use, etc.) but which also hold the potential to inform and contribute to the understanding of other study layers. MAST’s specific focus is upon the archaeological record of Morven, which in simplest terms consists of that landscape layer comprised of the accumulated, enduring, material remnants of human occupation and use through both the long arc of Native American prehistory as well as the Euro-Afro-American historical period. Much as the Morven Project conceptually models the landscape as a series of processes operative at different “layers” and spatial scales, the archaeological record also can be reduced analytically into a sequence of layers defined, at least initially, in chronological terms. Documentation of the archaeological record then allows investigation of such individual layers as, for example, the Late Woodland (AD 1000 – 1600), Contact Era (AD 1600 – 1730), or Late Colonial-Early National Period (AD 1730 – 1830) landscapes. Given the lack of prior archaeological research on the Morven property, initial understandings of the local archaeological landscape must necessarily be broad and tentative. Preliminary documentary research into the property’s history coupled with understandings derived from the broader region however suggest that Morven’s archaeological record holds the potential to address various specific research interests which in turn may prove relevant to and inform other property-wide investigations being carried out within the Morven Project.

In May 2009, MAST participants delineated a 250-acre study area along the southern side of the property that would serve as an initial “window” upon Morven’s archaeological record and the potential of this landscape to provide educational and training opportunities to University students while also addressing a range of research questions pertinent to the prehistoric and historical archaeology of Virginia’s central Piedmont. With resources generously provided by Funds for Excellence, in June 2009 MAST initiated an ambitious program of systematic Phase I archaeological survey within the study area. By the end of July 2009, through the combined efforts of a University-based field school, faculty and students from Washington and Lee University, staff from the Archaeology Department at nearby Monticello, and the work of a private archaeological consulting firm, Phase I survey had been completed across approximately 60% (150 acres) of the MAST study area. Field methods employed by the survey team dictated that the remaining 40% of the study area, all of which supports dense woodland, be returned to during the “leaf off” winter-early spring months. This hiatus in fieldwork allows time for a preliminary evaluation and interpretation of results and integration of these findings within a fuller historical context provided by a growing corpus of documentary sources, and the consideration of future avenues of field research open to MAST. This document reviews existing understanding of the early historical Morven landscape as developed from documentary sources, reviews the findings and potential significance of MAST fieldwork to date, and proposes objectives and methods for a second season of archaeological research at Morven that will build on and expand upon these promising, initial results.

Historical Context

The 250-acre MAST study area was selected for its potential to address a range of archaeological research interests spanning the divide between the region's late prehistoric, contact era, and early historical periods. Present-day Morven is located towards the northern end of a 10,000-acre land grant made in 1730 to John Carter, Secretary of the Virginia Colony. By the later 18th century, this property had come to be known as Blenheim and was the seat of Carter's son, Edward, to whom the massive holding had passed upon the father's death. During the Revolutionary War, at least one first hand account reported that Edward Carter "*possesses a most affluent fortune, and has a variety of seats surpassing Blenheim, which he suffers to go to ruin*" (Thomas Anbury, cited in Woods 1901, p.35). The same source further claimed that Carter owned some 1500 slaves on his different plantations and that at the time Blenheim was "*crowded with negroes, sent to clear a spot of ground a few miles off.*" Shortly before his death in 1792, Edward Carter leased an 83-acre parcel located within present-day Morven to tenants Joseph and Lucy Price "for and during the Term of their Lives" (ACDB 10:271). The same day, Carter executed similar life estates to William and Elizabeth McGee and to Littleberry Sullivan (ACDB 10:275) in the northernmost portion of his property that would a few years later be sold to James Monroe and renamed Highlands. Carter's objectives in placing tenants for life on different parts of Blenheim are unclear, however that he did so is possibly evidence that he already was treating his massive Blenheim property as a series of adjoining plantations. Upon Carter's death, Blenheim was divided among a large number of heirs, with the northeastern portion encompassing present-day Morven and Ash Lawn passing to his son, William Champe Carter, through Edward's widow, Sarah "Sally" Champe Carter. William Champe Carter fairly rapidly liquidated this inheritance, selling in 1793 the northernmost 1000 acres of the property to James Monroe and, several years later in 1796, a 1334-acre tract immediately to the south called Indian Camp to William Short in 1796. Thomas Jefferson was intimately involved in negotiating both transactions.

By 1795 at least, as evidenced in correspondence associated with Jefferson's negotiations with William Champe Carter and his mother, the tract that Jefferson would purchase on Short's behalf was known as Indian Camp or "the Indian camp" and contained at least some cleared land along the stream known variously as Indian Branch, Indian Camp Branch, or Camping Branch that ran along its southern boundary with Blenheim-proper. Historic Indian Camp, the core of the modern Morven estate, was centered on an expanse of high ground and was bounded to both the north and south by the courses of streams that originate in the property's mountainous western side and flow southeast to join Buck Island Creek, a major tributary of the Rivanna River. The property's specific association with Native Americans during second half of the 18th century remains unclear, however the name suggests that at least small groups of local Monacan Indians may have occupied locations within the stream valley into the historic era. The stream forming the northern border of Indian Camp is known today as Ed Jones Creek for an eponymous former Morven slave who owned property along its banks following Emancipation (Sam Towler, pers. comm., August 20, 2009). In the late 18th century, the stream forming Indian Camp's northern border was called Dick's Branch, the origins of which are more obscure.¹

¹ The 1793 deed conveying the Highland tract from William Champe Carter to James Monroe (ACDB 11:163) describes this stream as "a run on the eastern side of Duke's plantation." Duke's may be a corrupted form of Dick's, which in turn may have been an early name for the Indian Camp tract. In his will, Edward Carter left his son, William Champe Carter, various properties including "Dick's plantation" and "Wheeler's plantation" "together

In addition to holding the potential to house archaeological remains of prehistoric and possibly Contact-era Native American settlements, the 250-acre MAST study area along the south side of the Morven property promised to provide an opportunity to investigate the material remains of Euro-American tenant farmers, a little studied group that played an important role in the settlement of the Virginia Piedmont. As evidenced by the 1791 lease made by Edward Carter to Joseph and Lucy Price, such tenants occupied the Indian Camp/Morven property from at least the last decade of the 18th century. Later documents provide evidence of at least another eight tenant farmers, some of whom clearly were resident on the property prior to 1813 when Short sold Indian Camp.

At the onset of the 2009 MAST survey season, two historic plats of William Short's Indian Camp were known, although the relationship between these two documents was not well understood. The first of these plats, reproduced here as **Figure 1**, was included in a lengthy letter from Thomas Jefferson to Short dated April 13, 1800 that is now held by the Swem Library at the College of William and Mary. This plat, which contains the notation that it was surveyed for William Short on April 18, 1795 by Robert W. Lewis, outlines what apparently were four lease-holds within Indian Camp associated with individuals named Price, Lively, Haden, and Terril [Terrell], this last occupying land formerly leased to Cornelius.² Each tract in this plat also contains notations regarding the terms and annual rents of the leases. Contained within the accompanying letter is a three-page balance sheet recording Jefferson's financial dealings on behalf of Short, and here appear entries of rents paid by Price, Lively, and Haden for 1796, 1797, and 1798 and by [William] Cornelius for 1796. Elsewhere in the letter, Jefferson presents his thoughts regarding the management of Indian Camp and specifically the potential of farming the property through tenants. He presents a detailed system of crop rotation that should be followed by the Indian Camp tenants to ensure that "*the lands will be getting better instead of worse,*" and also includes for Short a sample lease agreement in which these conditions are clearly set forth. Jefferson also presented to Short his belief that "*In order to place your Indian camp under proper leases it is absolutely necessary to survey the several fields,*" apparently to provide fuller documentation both of the leaseholds as well as the basis for tracking the required system of crop rotation. Although Jefferson had attempted to execute the necessary survey, it had not yet been completed. Consequently, the boundaries of the leaseholds depicted on the letter's accompanying plat, identified by Jefferson as a copy of the original survey made prior to Short's purchase, can only be considered approximate.

The second plat available at the onset of the 2009 survey season, recently discovered in the collections of the Huntington Library and reproduced here as **Figure 2**, has yet to be precisely dated but clearly must be the end result of the more detailed survey called for by Jefferson in his April 1800 letter. The external boundaries of Short's 1,334-acre Indian Camp are depicted identically on the two plats and both also draw attention to a point near the center of the

with the rents, slaves, and profits thereof" however it is not clear that these were part of the original Carter land grant.

² The plat is remarkably similar to a far more schematic diagram of Indian Camp's terrain and leaseholds that Jefferson included in an earlier letter to Short just prior to the latter's purchase of the property (Christopher Owens, pers. comm. 2009). This 1795 letter clearly reveals that not only Price's leasehold, but also those of Lively, Haden, and Cornelius predated Short's ownership.

plat accompanying April 13, letter from TJ to WS

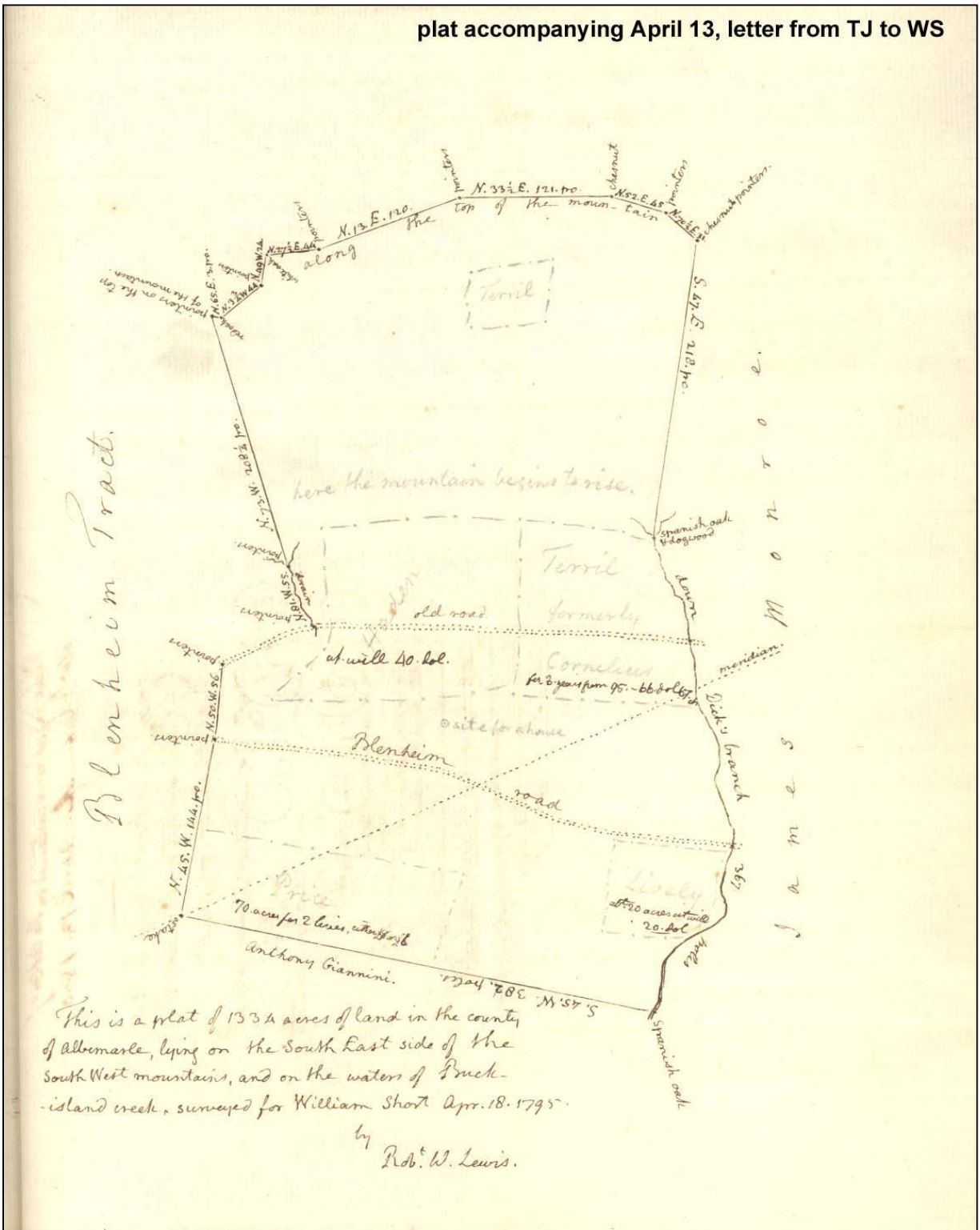
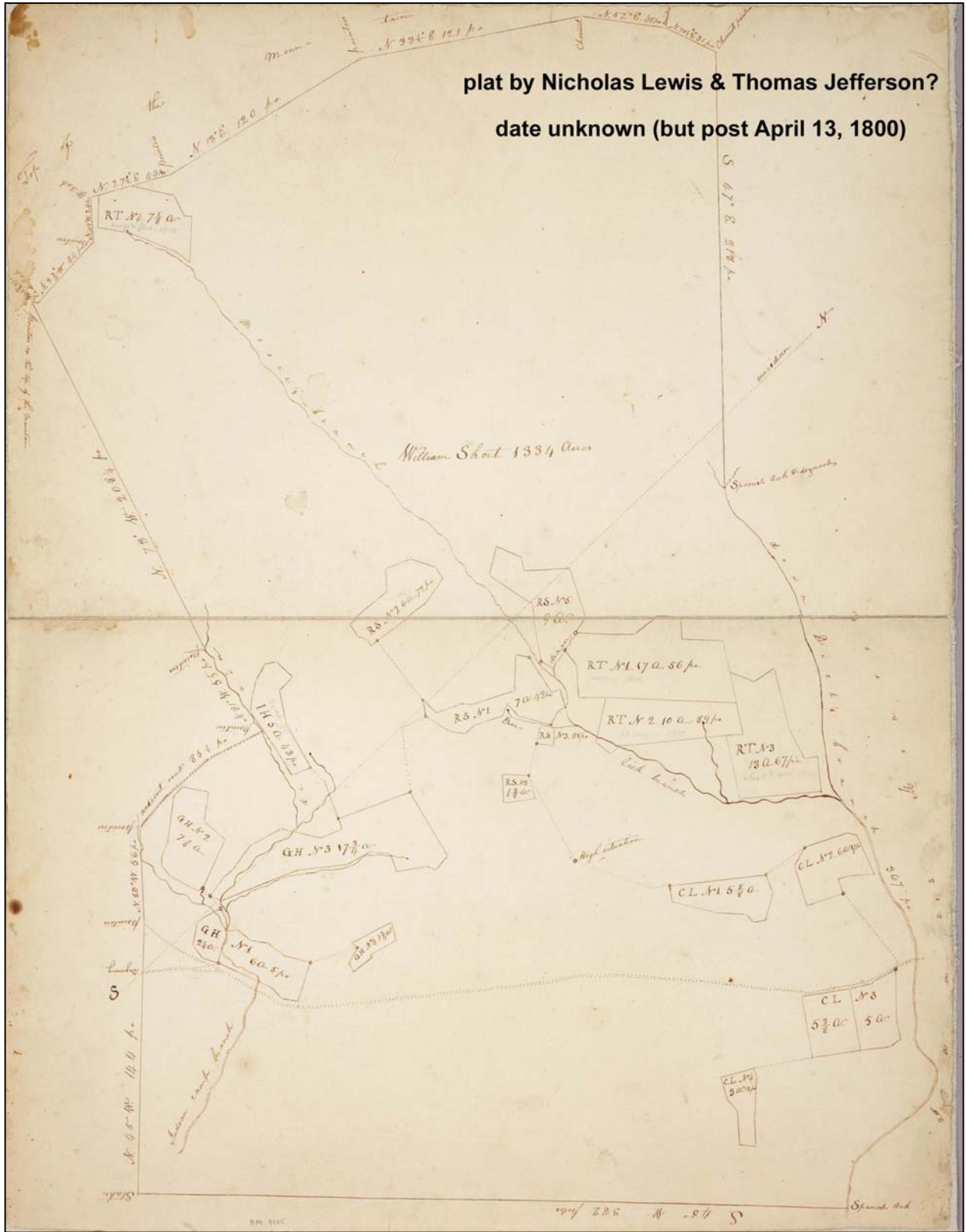


Figure 1: Plat of William Short's Indian Camp that accompanied Thomas Jefferson's April 13, 1800 to William Short, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.



plat by Nicholas Lewis & Thomas Jefferson?
 date unknown (but post April 13, 1800)

Figure 2: Plat of William Short's Indian Camp produced after April 13, 1800, probably by Thomas Jefferson and Nicholas Lewis, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

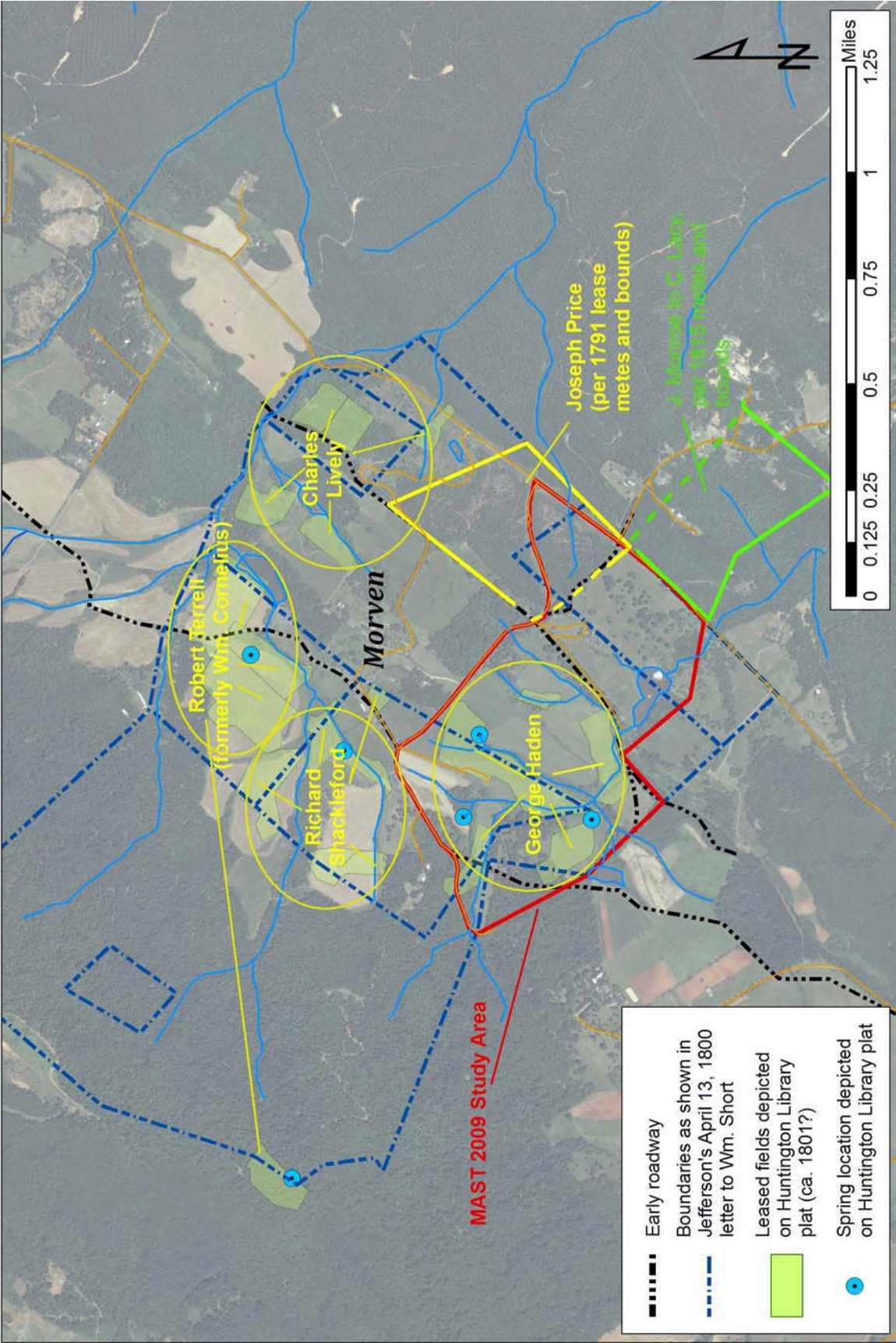


Figure 3: Map of Morven estate showing boundaries, leaseholds, and fields depicted on plats of historic Indian Camp.

property, labeled “site for a house” in the first instance and “high situation” in the second, where Morven would later be built. The numerous, heavily annotated, small parcels shown on the Huntington plat are individual fields associated with specific tenants who are identified by their initials. In the case of tenant RT (Robert Terrell), the Huntington plat further records the crops planted in each field in 1800, suggesting that this document was executed in late 1800 or the following year. Why no fields assigned to Joseph Price are depicted on this map is unclear.

Geo-registration of digital copies of these early plats (**Figure 3**) allows the various leaseholds, fields, and other geographical details such as roads and springs to be located with some accuracy within the present-day landscape. While the presence and locations of specific leaseholds on William Short’s Indian Camp is incontrovertible, the actual residency of any of these various lessees on the property, and hence the potential for an associated archaeological record, is more difficult to demonstrate through the documentary record. Nevertheless, various sources strongly suggest that at least some of the known tenants lived on their Indian Camp leaseholds. Deeds recording three-year leases of 100-acre parcels to both Richard Shackelford and Charles Lively in both cases identify the leaseholds as “*the Lot or parcel of land on which the said [lessee] at present resides on,*” however these agreements both date to 1811 during the last years of William Short’s ownership of Indian Camp (ACDB 17:403, 404). Earlier court records concerning the construction and maintenance of roads in Albemarle County provide evidence that both Lively and Shackelford and various other of Short’s tenants probably lived on their Indian Camp leaseholds.

In 1794, an Albemarle County court order concerning the maintenance of “the road from Carter’s Road to the Fluvanna Line” names in sequence those tasked with maintaining the road as “*Joseph Price, Anthony Giannini, Robert Burrus, William Meeks, Richard Meeks, Richard Shackelford, Walter Burrus, Peter Burrus, Joshua Burrus, Robert Burrus jr, John Haden, Joseph McGehee, Benjamin Lively, Benjamin Lively jr, Joseph Lively,³ Shadrach Lively, Joel Burley, Charles McGehee, William Chisholm, and Valentine Woods’ hands at his upper plantation*” (ACOB 1793-95, p. 237, cited in Pawlett 2004:38). The road in question clearly is modern-day Route 620 or “Rolling Road” while Carter’s Road was apparently an alternate name for either the “old” or “ancient road” or the Blenheim Road” depicted on the two plats illustrated in **Figures 1** and **2**. Metes and bounds of Price’s 1791 lease agreement with Edward Carter (ACDB 10:271) clearly places this parcel along the eastern boundary of the Indian Camp property (“Carter’s Old Line”) and adjoining to the east the property belonging to the Italian immigrant Anthony/Antonio Giannini. This deed further identifies the boundary of Price’s leasehold as following a road that runs roughly northwest to “the Main road,” then turning northeast along this road for a set distance before turning south to meet Carter’s Old Line and returning to the beginning. Digital platting of these leasehold boundaries as presented in **Figure 3** clearly places Joseph Price on the eastern side of the intersection of Carter’s Road/Blenheim Road and the “road to the Fluvanna Line” which later was also called the Brimmer or Bremo Road.

³ Benjamin Lively, Sr. and Joseph Lively were uncles of the Indian Camp tenant Charles Lively while Shadrach is thought to have been a son of Charles Lively. The Lively’s listed here appear to have been resident on or near a 380-acre land grant along Buck Island Creek made in 1748 to Charles’ grandfather, Mark Lively, an Englishman who had arrived in the Virginia colony as an indentured servant during the first quarter of the 18th century. Charles Lively would come to acquire at least a portion of this family property in 1802 in addition to neighboring parcels. Charles Lively’s aunt, Elizabeth Lively, was married to William McGee and shared with him a life estate as tenants the portion of Edward Carter’s Blenheim estate sold to James Monroe.

Preliminary deed research indicates that the sequence of names provided in the 1794 road order reads as a list of late 18th-century heads-of-household and/or landowners as they were arrayed from west (Carter's Road) to east (Fluvanna County line) along the road.

Additional County road orders between 1795 and 1811, especially for the road along the east side of Carter's Mountain called "*the road from Carter's Bridge to Colle*" or "*from Carter's Bridge to Milton*" or "*the Blenheim Road*," name at various times and in various combinations Joseph Price, as well as William Cornelius, Charles Lively, Robert Terrell, Richard Shackelford, Curtis Johnson, William Gamble, and Richard Gamble. In 1802, a County order to reroute the northern end of the Blenheim Road "*Begining [sic] at or near Charles Livelys*" (ACOB 1801-1802:442, cited in Pawlett 2004:129) seems clear evidence that this tenant was resident on his Indian Camp leasehold. An 1810 order for work on the road "*from Carter's new bridge to Colly [sic]*" provides the fullest list of tenant farmers likely resident on the property. Here, the list of those to maintain the road begins in the south at either Redlands or Roundtop with "Mrs. Carter's hand's" followed by the hands of James Ross [who purchased Blenheim in 1806] and Stephen and Charles Lacy [the Lacy's owned land adjacent to Blenheim], and then "*Wm. Gamble's [hands] Richard Gamble's [hands], Anthony Geoniny [sic], Joseph Price, Charles Lively, Richard Shackelfords [hands], & James Monroe*" [at Highlands/Ash Lawn] (ACOB 1810-1811:250, cited in Pawlett 2004:181). Joseph Price, whose life estate conveyed with the property when Short sold Indian Camp to David Higginbotham in 1813 (ACDB 18:299), appears to have remained resident on the property for at least several more years as an 1815 deed recording the purchase of a parcel adjoining the southeastern side of Indian Camp/Morven described the property's boundaries as beginning at a tree "*at the mouth of Joseph Price's lane...on the north side of Brimmer [sic] road*" (ACDB 20:216). Platting of the full metes and bounds of this property (labeled "J. Monroe to C. Lacy" in **Figure 3**) reveals that this parcel lay immediately east of Indian Camp/Morven between Indian Camp Creek on the south and Bremono Road (Route 620/Rolling Road) to the north. "Price's lane" extended north from the Bremono Road from roughly the point at which the road crossed into the Morven property. Presumably the lane gave access to Price's residence, which possibly was sited near one of the springs associated with the headwaters of Lee Jones Creek (historic Dick's Branch) that arise on the eastern face of the Morven ridge.

MAST 2009 Interim Results

As mentioned, MAST completed systematic shovel testing across approximately 150 acres of the 250-acre study during the summer of 2009. Three sites (A, B, C, on **Figure 4**) containing Native American prehistoric artifacts and located along the course of Indian Camp Creek were identified. Site A yielded prehistoric lithic artifacts as well as fragments of prehistoric pottery indicating that the occupation dates broadly to the Woodland Period (1200 BC – AD 1600). A larger assemblage of artifacts and greater numbers of chronologically diagnostic materials are required to refine understanding of the nature and date of this site's occupation. Along the western side of Site A, prehistoric artifacts were recovered from a deeply buried (ca. 2 ft) stratum of dark, organic-rich sediments that may represent a buried relic surface. Overlying soils may date to the historic era and result of extensive soil erosion and redeposition associated with Euro-American forest clearing and agriculture. In addition to holding the potential to illuminate later prehistoric Native American settlement within the Morven estate, soil stratigraphy at Site A may help clarify important landscape transformations that occurred during the early historic period.

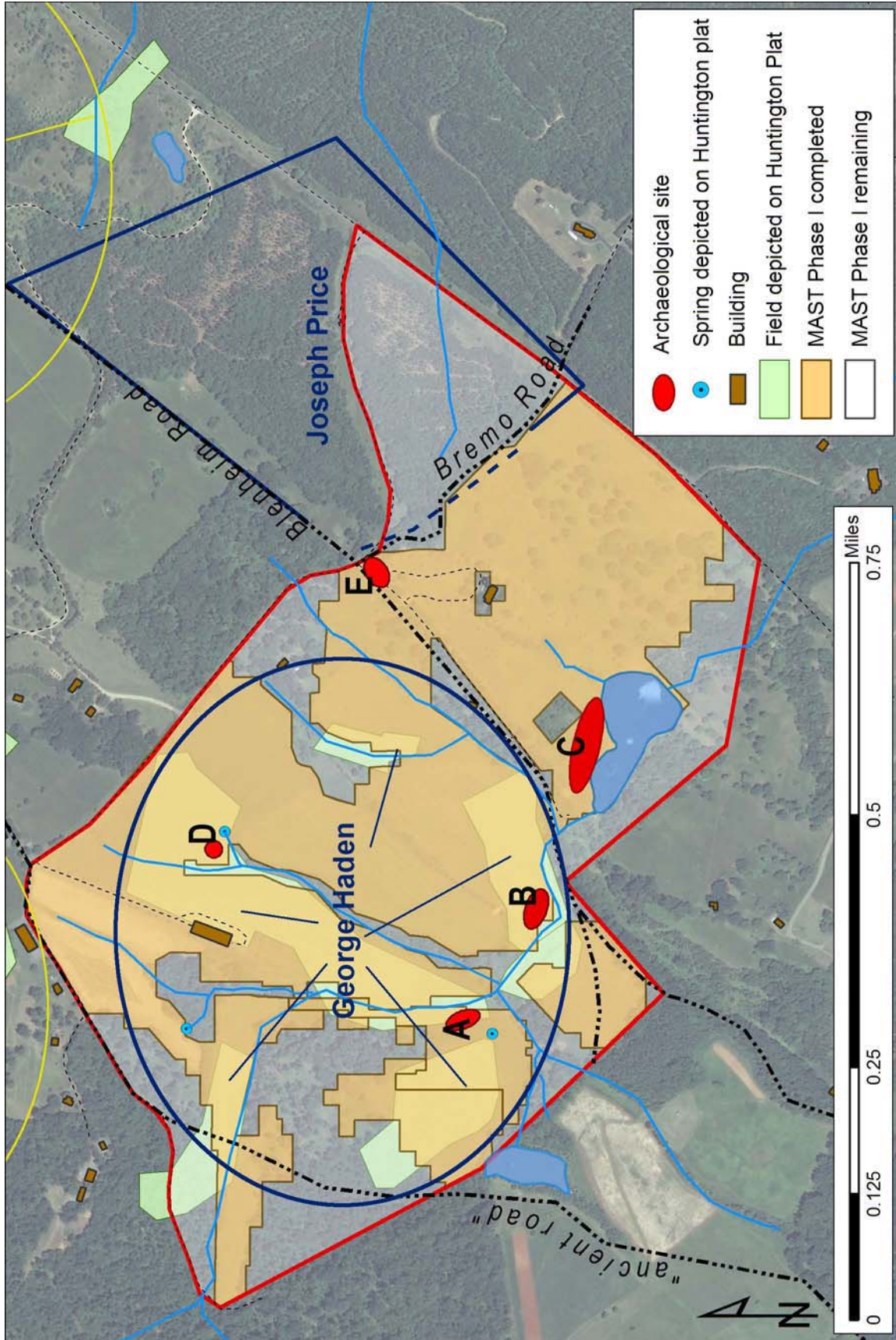


Figure 4: Map of MAST 2009 survey area showing portions completed and remaining and identified archaeological sites.

During winter 2009-2010, existing MAST resources will be reallocated to allow for the excavation of one or two opportunistically placed large units at Site A to more fully evaluate the site's research potential. Both Site B and Site C yielded only prehistoric lithic artifacts, and a single diagnostic projectile point recovered from Site B indicates occupation minimally during the Middle-Late Archaic Period (6500 – 1200 BC). Although deep soils are present at Site B, artifacts were encountered only within the uppermost one foot of the profile. Site C is characterized by shallow soils with all cultural material recovered from the plowzone. This is the most extensive of the three identified prehistoric sites, and probably was disturbed during construction of the adjacent pond during the 1990's.

Two archaeological sites dating to the historic era were also documented during MAST fieldwork in summer 2009. Site D was identified on low ground adjacent to a spring (shown on the Huntington plat) that gives rise to one of the eastern headwaters of Indian Camp Creek. Shovel testing across Site D at 20-ft intervals revealed a low-density concentration of artifacts, including ceramics, glass, and nails that suggest a domestic occupation. Diagnostic artifacts are most consistent with an early 19th century date, but occupation beginning in the late 18th century cannot at present be ruled out. As depicted in **Figure 4**, the date and location of Site D suggest that it may have been associated with George Haden's early 19th-century Indian Camp leasehold. Additional excavation at Site D is needed to more closely date this occupation and to determine whether subsurface architectural features are present, and in winter 2009-2010 reallocated MAST resources will be used towards this end. Residences associated with other leaseholds depicted on the Huntington plat may also have been associated with mapped springs (**Figure 3**, above), providing a model of late 18th-early 19th-century settlement at Morven that can be evaluated through future fieldwork on other parts of the property.

The second historic site (Site E) thus far identified within the MAST study area consists of a diffuse scatter of ceramics and glass dating to the late 19th-early 20th centuries. Site E was identified in the easternmost yard area of the Morven Guest House in the southwestern corner of the intersection of the historic Blenheim and Bremono Roads. Available evidence strongly suggests that Site E is associated with Overton, which was the site of a post office, store, and school by the first decade of the 20th century. Overton appears on historic maps as early as 1875 and while the crossroads location clearly was an important node in the local Reconstruction-era landscape it has thus far received little historical investigation.

The location of several additional historic sites, all probably dating to the 19th century, were identified during an on-site tour of Morven with Ollie Thacker, a long-time employee of the estate during both the Stone and Kluge ownerships. According to Mr. Thacker, early 20th-century construction of barn in a location just north of present-day Barn 3 exposed headstones and grave shafts belonging to a large slave cemetery presumably associated with antebellum Morven during the Higginbotham and Smith years. In addition to providing descriptions of the buildings present at Overton during the early 20th century, Mr. Thacker also identified the locations of two other probable 19th-century sites elsewhere on the Morven property. While additional remains associated with both the Antebellum and Reconstruction periods will, in all likelihood, be identified as archaeological research progresses, continuing MAST research will focus on the later prehistoric and early historic tenant farmer landscapes that have begun to emerge at Morven.

Proposed MAST Field Research, 2010 and Beyond

No conclusive evidence of Contact-era Native American settlement within the Indian Camp/Morven property has been recovered, however several prehistoric sites identified during along the relatively narrow valley of Indian Camp Creek indicate the stream held a long-standing attraction to the region's prehistoric inhabitants. At least one of these sites contains later prehistoric pottery and may prove to house relatively intact cultural deposits as well as soil stratigraphy associated with early historic era erosion and sedimentation. Further archaeological testing at this site (Site A) is planned for winter 2009-2010 to more fully evaluate its potential as the site of future, more extended research. For the early historic period, various strands of documentary evidence suggest that tenant farmers lived on leaseholds within the Indian Camp property during William Short's ownership from 1795 to 1813. Archaeological evidence of a domestic site (Site D) belonging to the period and located within the apparent bounds of the leasehold associated with George Haden, as depicted on the Huntington plat, ultimately may prove to be associated with one such tenant residence. Additional archaeological testing to further evaluate the research potential of this location is also planned for winter 2009-2010.

Although additional work remains to complete MAST's initial season of field research, extension of the program of Phase I shovel testing into other portions of the Morven property is recommended as a means of evaluating and amplifying models of prehistoric and historic settlement and land use that are emerging from this ongoing research. Expansion of the existing study area to the north and northeast across an additional 250 acres as depicted in **Figure 5** will carry identification-level Phase I survey into the headwaters of the Dick's Branch/Lee Jones Creek drainage and across the apparent late 18th-early 19th century Terrell-Cornelius and Shackelford leaseholds. Objectives of this work will be to locate potential residential sites associated with these early historic leaseholds as well as to compare the extent and nature of prehistoric settlement along the several streams traversing this part of the Morven estate with that documented in the 2009 study area.

As with the inaugural season of fieldwork, it is recommended that the 2010 study be spread across summer and winter study seasons. Because of difficulties imposed by on-going agricultural operations at Morven it is recommended that the 2010 summer field season begin in May and continue through the end of June. Wooded portions of the 2010 study area will, once again, be returned to during the ensuing winter months when they can be more efficiently and effectively accessed by field crews. More extensive Phase II level testing of specific sites identified in 2010 is also anticipated, and this work will also be conducted over the winter months so as to minimize potential impacts to agricultural crops. In light of the fairly extensive evidence of stream valley aggradation encountered in the 2009 study area, the follow-up field season will also introduce a geo-archaeological component that, through a directed program of coring and stratigraphic study, will begin to develop a clearer understanding and chronology of potential landscape transformations associated with historic farming practices. Owing to prior faculty commitments, University-based field schools will not be possible in 2010. Rivanna Archaeological Services will remain responsible for the organization and execution of the 2010 field season and will rely upon a staff that includes multiple undergraduate and graduate students. Artifact processing and cataloguing as well as preparation of an interim report will also be the responsibility of RAS. A budget for the proposed 2010 season is appended to this document.

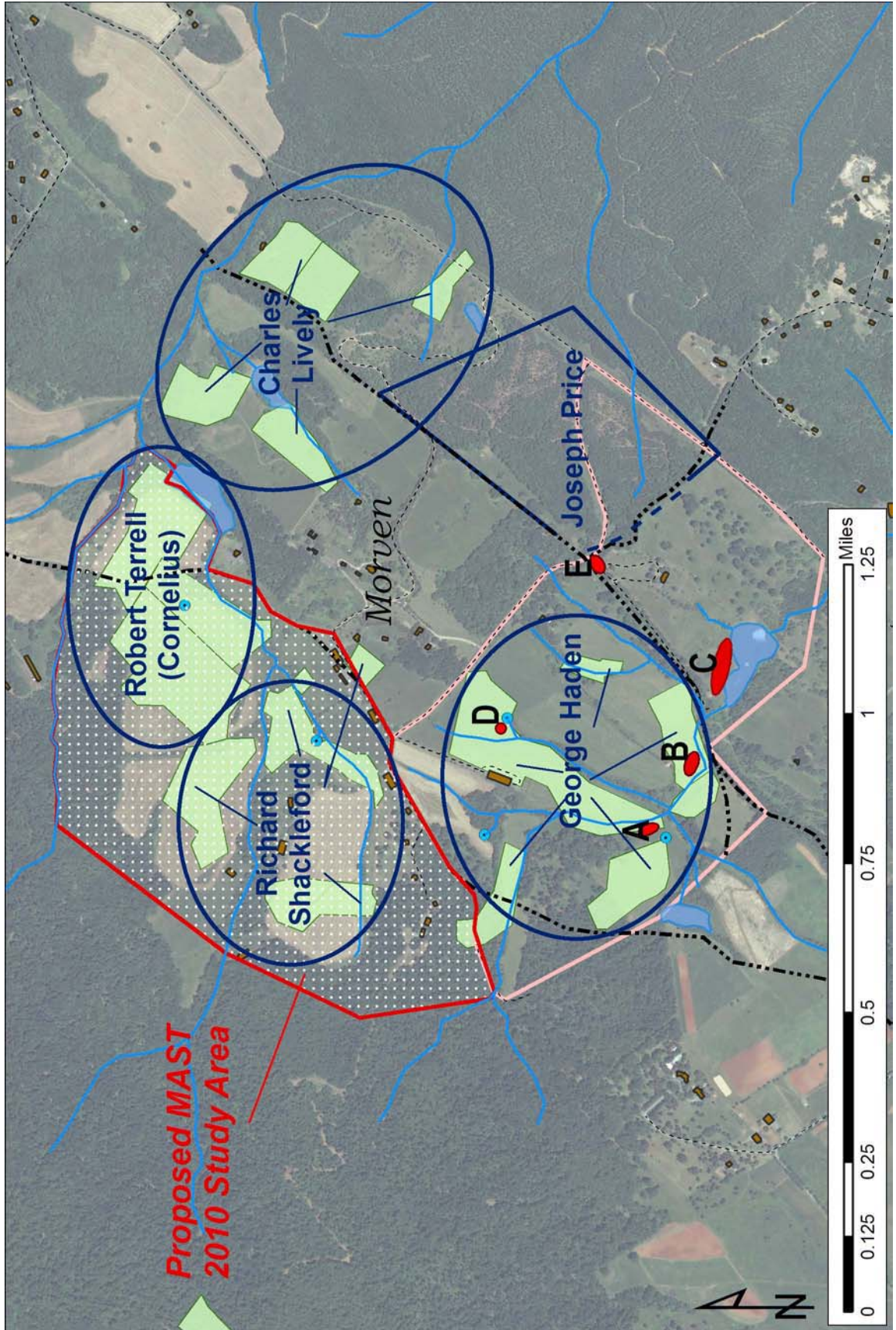


Figure 5: Map of Morven showing proposed 2010 MAST study area and tenant field depicted on the Huntington plat.

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