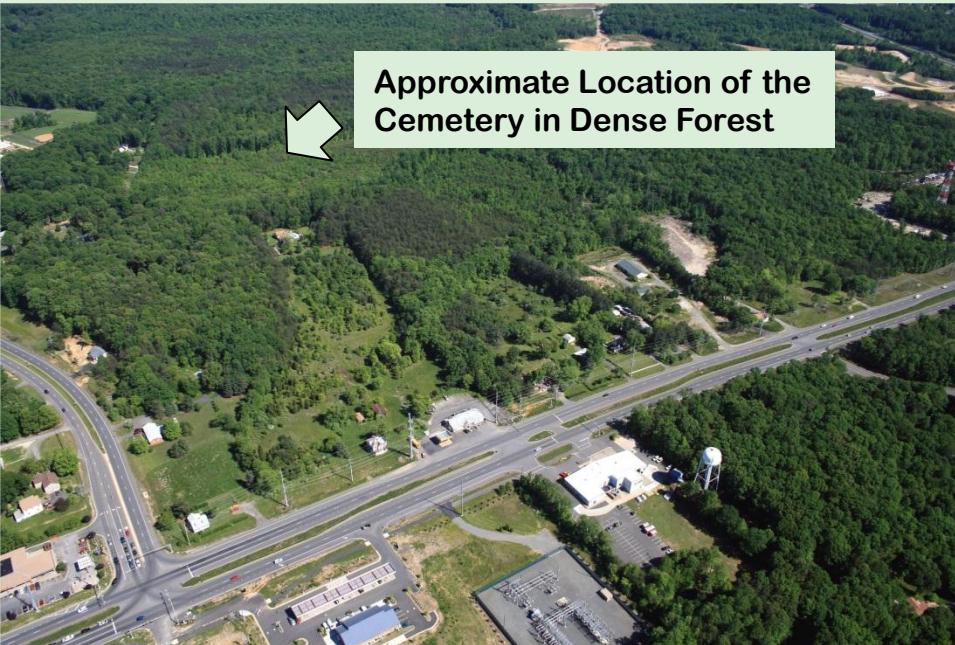


# A CEMETERY ON THE PROPOSED PWCS 12TH HIGH SCHOOL SITE: OVERVIEW OF ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND RECOVERY



Overview of Dense Forest near  
Location of Cemetery

- The cemetery was not found during the initial Phase I archeological investigation due to extremely dense vegetation.
- The cemetery was treated as a late discovery by DHR and the lead federal agency (US Army COE) following its identification by PWCS in July 2013.
- DHR advised PWCS to apply for the archeological permit to recover remains from the cemetery.

**Thunderbird Archeology**

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# CEMETERY DELINEATION

## Cemetery Site after Delineation



- PWCS immediately upon discovery authorized archeological documentation of the cemetery and delineation of its boundaries.
- Archeological delineation ensured that all possible burials were identified.

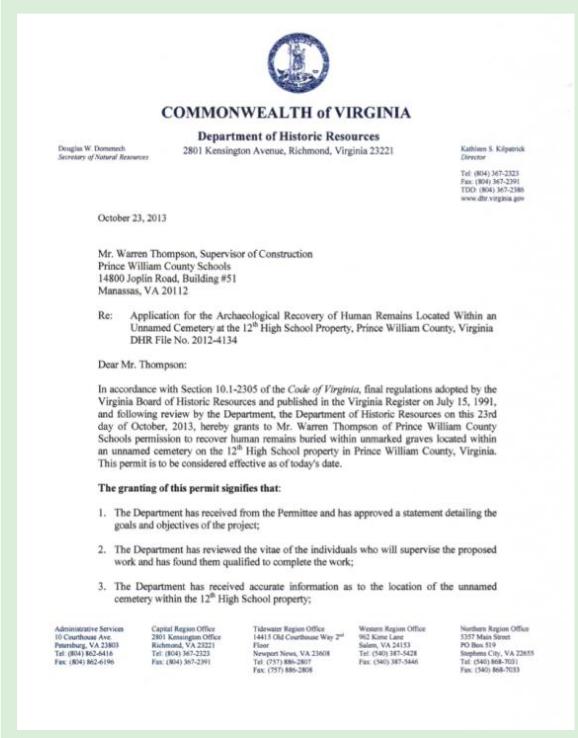


## Fieldstone Grave Markers

- Surface evidence of the cemetery consisted of only depressions and field stone markers with no inscriptions.
- Based on surface evidence and local historic context, the graves could have dated from circa 1720-1940.

# PERMIT FOR ARCHEOLOGICAL RECOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, human remains can be legally removed from a cemetery or burial place and relocated to another cemetery by obtaining an order from the city or county circuit court (see §57-36, §57-38.1, §57-38.2, and §57-39) or by obtaining a permit from the Department of Historic Resources (§10.1-2305).



- Recovery of remains at the cemetery proceeded under a permit issued by DHR on October 23, 2013 following coordination with County Archaeologist, Prince William County Historical Commission, public notice, and public comment period.
- Archeological recovery has provided, and will provide, much better information about the historic cemetery and the people interred therein than removal of the remains by a funeral director under a court order.

# ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH



## Overview of Cemetery Site after Recovery

- Recovery excavations were carried out by Thunderbird Archeology between November 11, 2013 and November 22, 2013. Eleven (11) burials were identified and all human remains, coffin wood fragments, coffin hardware, grave goods, and organic soil were removed from each.
- Minimal human remains were found and these were in very degraded condition. Analysis of remains is ongoing at Towson University. It is anticipated that no suitable DNA samples will be available.
- Analysis of artifacts is ongoing. Based on manufacture dates of coffin hardware and grave goods, all burials post-date 1850; one burial post-dates 1860, six burials post-date 1865; one burial post-dates 1870, and two burials post-date 1880. As outdated coffin hardware was frequently used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, establishment of terminal dates for each burial is problematic.

# PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- Thunderbird Archeology conducted extensive and intensive archival research on behalf of PWCS in attempt to date the cemetery and identify legitimate descendants; however, no definitive archival evidence linking the cemetery to any family or group has been found to date. Inability to date the cemetery based on surface evidence made it impossible to conclusively associate the cemetery with any group or family prior to excavation.
- The William Lynn family ownership of the property in the 1840s-1890s was discovered by RELIC and Thunderbird staff only during excavations due to complexity of property ownership history and lack of detailed property descriptions in relevant deeds.
- Archeological evidence, based on the expense of coffin hardware and grave goods, indicates that most or all of the burials are of a middling Euro-American family rather than enslaved African Americans.
- Archeological evidence for the date of the interments along with the archival evidence of land ownership, and other contextual data (e.g. census records, genealogical data and Cordelia Lynn's 1899 obituary) have provided very strong but circumstantial evidence that the cemetery may include the burials of William Lynn (deceased circa 1862), Cordelia Lynn (deceased 1899), and members of their family.
- Research continues regarding the possibility that the burials are of as yet unidentified tenants who may have resided on the land between circa. 1874 and 1899, based on archival records.