



November 24, 2015

Cynthia E. Johnson
Historic Preservation Officer
Planning & Design Services
Develop Louisville
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Louisville, KY 40202-4313

RECEIVED
APR 28 2016
PLANNING & DESIGN SERVICES

Subject: Limited Archaeological Survey at the Silas Yeager Homestead, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Corn Island Archaeology LLC, in concert with the Falls of the Ohio Archaeological Society (FOAS), is pleased to offer this technical proposal to provide cultural resources relative to a threatened archaeological site. Corn Island/FOAS hereby offer to provide a limited archaeological investigation of the developed portion of the Silas Yeager Homestead Site in northeastern Jefferson County, Kentucky. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site is planned for residential development as part of a Conservation neighborhood. Multiple historic structures are present at the heart of the property to be developed, as well as one historic cemetery. The buildings include a stone house, a frame addition, a stone root cellar, other more modern outbuildings, and a wooden barn with a stone foundation. Also, there is a standing chimney that once was flanked by two log cabin pens (Figures 1-10). The stone root cellar dates to 1806, and the cabins may also date to this time period. The stone house may be a decade or two later. The cemetery contains rough-hewn stones with no markings, and a commercial stone that depicts the name of the deceased. Stone markers lie beyond the current rough fencing, and the cemetery boundaries are poorly defined. There are reports of three demolished slave cabins and a second cemetery on the property, the locations of which are unknown.

The proposed archaeological investigation is not required to satisfy any federal or state-level compliance requirements as it is privately-owned and there is no public funding or permitting involved. However, the planned study will be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* located at 48 F.R. 44716, as well as specifications and guidelines regarding NHPA compliance developed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) seated in the Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) in Frankfort. The investigation will be conducted by personnel who meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for professional archaeologists. In addition, Corn Island's archaeological project managers are all Registered Professional Archaeologists (RPA) and abide by the RPA code of ethics.

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Submitted by
Wayne Hamel at 4/28/16 CDET

The Silas Yager House

Located on Aiken Road, the Yager House is among the most interesting nineteenth century stone houses existing in Jefferson County. According to the National Register listing, it is a one-and-a-half-story stone house with a frame ell at the rear. The four-bay facade has two front doors and a portico with a front gable and plain Tuscan columns span the central bays. The two front doors are a unique feature in this area and perhaps reflect the German origins of the builder. Two front doors are often found on houses in areas of Pennsylvania where Germans settled. The house has two interior stone chimneys at each gable end of the main block. Behind the house, there is a one-story, v-notched, saddlebag log outbuilding.

Silas Yager first acquired land on Floyds Fork in the Aiken Road area in 1830. He continued to buy land for the next 25 years, and much of his land traces back to tracts owned early by the Forsythes. The stone house may have been built by Silas Benjamin Yager about 1830-32. However, the stone cellar, which is of similar construction, bears a date over the arch that reads 1806. The log house is almost certainly older than the stone house, dating from the early 1800's and was possibly built by David Forsythe or one of his sons, James or David, Jr. The Forsythes owned a portion of the property as early as 1806.



Figure 1. Yager House from front.

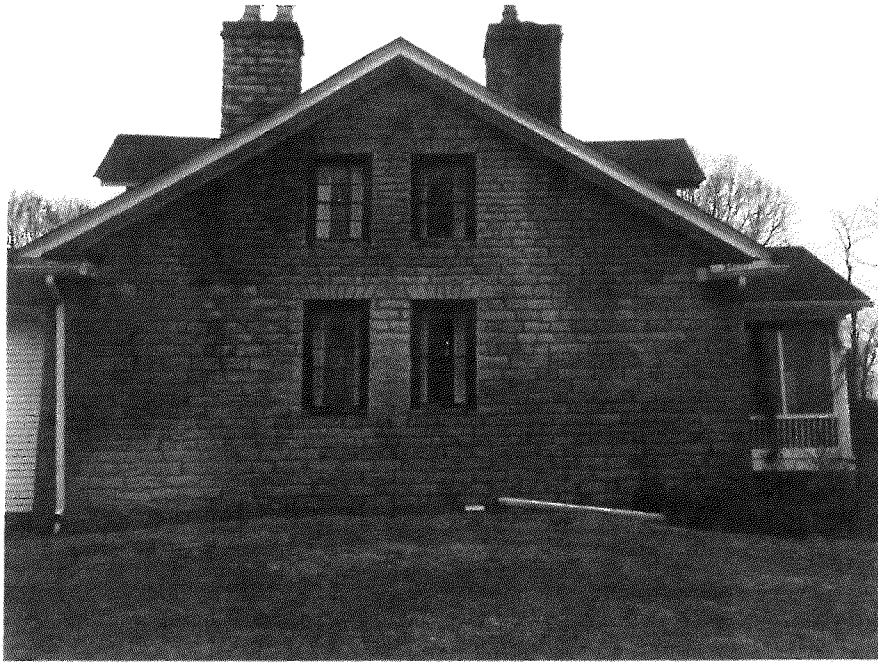


Figure 2. Yager House from side.



Figure 3. Attached frame section of the house.



Figure 4. Original double pen log cabin with central chimney.



Figure 5. Chimney today.



Figure 6. Stone cellar with front stair.



Figure 7. Interior of cellar.



Figure 8. Arch of cellar dated 1806.



Figure 9. Barn with stone foundation.



Figure 10. Cemetery overlooking Floyd's Fork.



Figure 11. Unmarked stones.

BACKGROUND

In 2012, Corn Island Archaeology LLC conducted extensive archaeological investigations at the Yager/Ward Farmstead (site 15JF781) located on a rolling ridge overlooking a tributary to Floyd's Fork in eastern Jefferson County. The subject area, at the end of Bush Farm Road off of Old Henry Road, is now in residential development and the site has been completely destroyed except for the family Yager-Ward Cemetery. The archaeological investigation exposed the remnants of three destroyed structures, and post molds that may have possibly marked the location of a barn or other outbuilding. Archival research has discovered that the property was originally owned by Benjamin Yager from 1826 to his death in 1857. Benjamin Yager was father to Silas Yager. Both Benjamin and Silas owned slaves and may have shared the labor.. The Silas Yager Site is roughly 1.3 miles to the east on Aiken Road overlooking Floyd's Fork. The proximity of the two sites is depicted on an 1858 map (Figure 11).

Examination of over 14,000 artifacts from the Benjamin Yager Site indicates the three structural remains were residential. The chronological framework for the site was formed through examination of archival records and artifact analysis. Information was sought on the timing of buildings occupations—whether or not they were extant and in use simultaneously or sequentially over time. Structure 3 was documented as the earliest with primary use between 1825 and 1850. This building may have been abandoned by the time of occupation of the remaining two buildings, as it sits slightly askew to others. The remaining two buildings are close in age, but, of the two, Structure 1 was slightly earlier and occupied between 1854 and 1920 while Structure 2 appears to have been occupied predominantly between 1859 and 1900 (Figure 12).

As part of the research for the Benjamin Yager project, Corn Island had an opportunity to visit the property along Aiken Road that was the home of Silas Yager. The property was privately owned at the time, and a family member allowed us access into the house and around the farm. It was believed that an examination of the Silas Yager property would provide insights into interpreting the three structures at the Benjamin Yager Site. In fact, there were close parallels between the larger structure at the Benjamin Yager Site and the standing stone house at the Silas Yager property, leading to the belief that they were built in a similar manner and floorplan with similar materials, although the Benjamin Yager house may have been built several decades later.

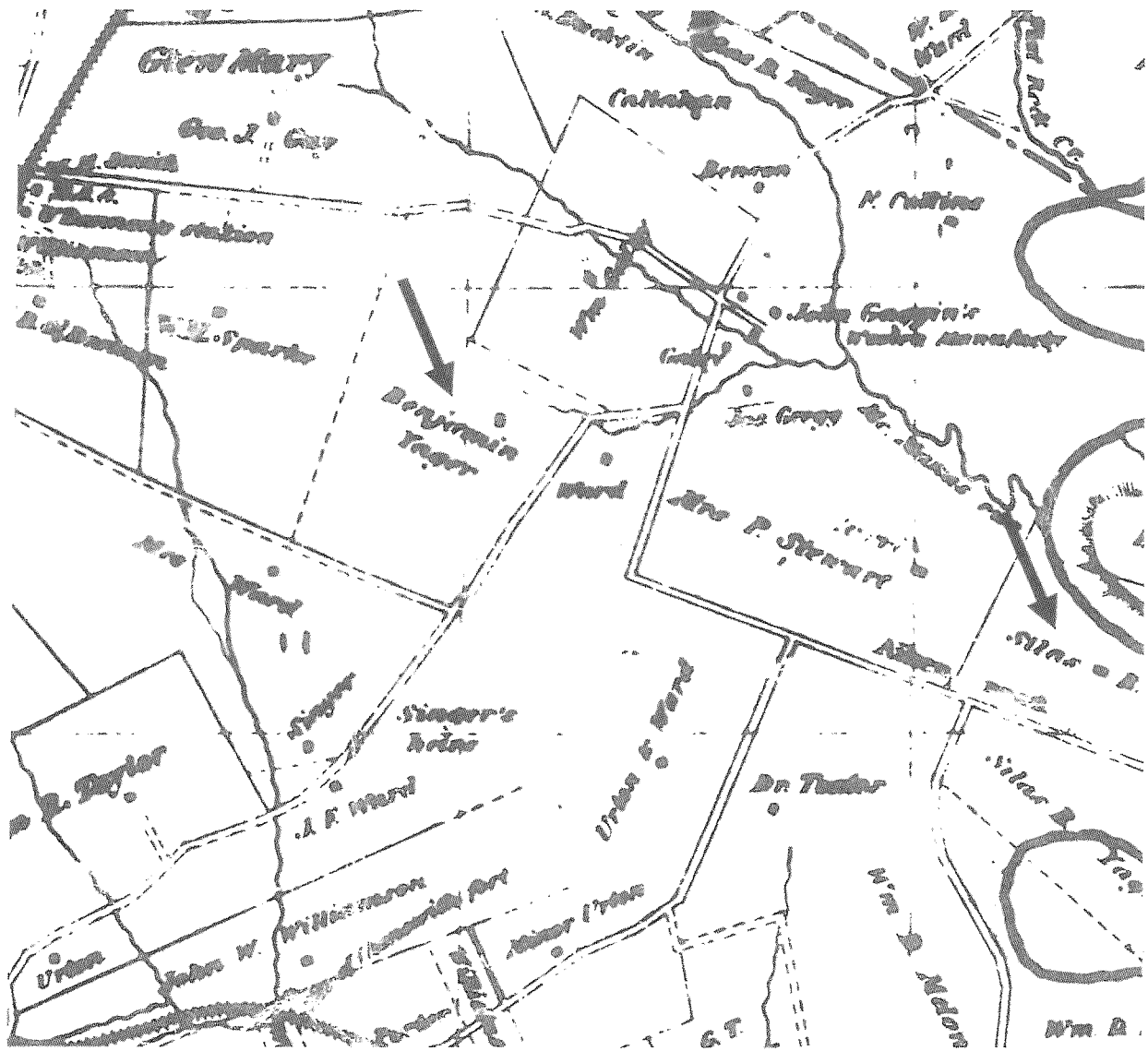


Figure 21. 1858 Bergman Map.

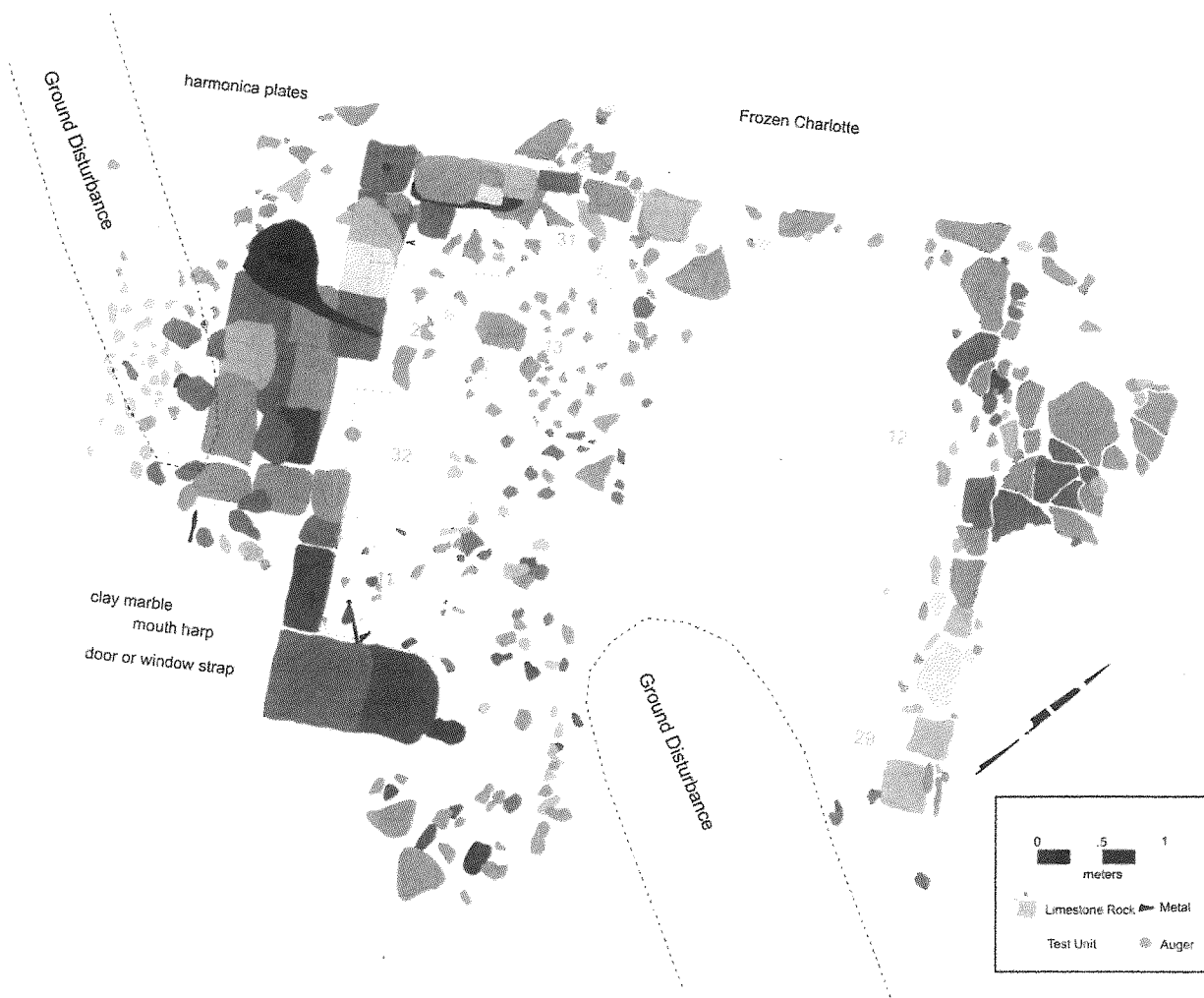


Figure 13. Floorplan of Structure 2.

Statement of Significance

The Silas Yager House site is an important local historic resource. Rural cabins, residences, and farmsteads dating to the early portion of the nineteenth century have not been sufficiently investigated in Jefferson County through archaeology. Of those that have been excavated and studied, few occurred on sites with environmental and economic settings directly comparable to that of the Yager/Ward Site. Several early domestic sites, such as those documented at the Shippingport Site (15JF702) along the Ohio River near current day Louisville and others in nearby Portland - were in urban settings, and reflect the ethnic and national diversity of early Louisville and nearby communities. The Conrad-Seaton House in Jeffersontown is currently the focus of a long-term multi-year research project, but to date emphasis has been placed on the associated redware pottery that operated there from 1803 through 1837. A relatively small assemblage has been recovered that deals with the domestic aspects of this early residence, which was located on the main street of a small town some twelve miles south of Louisville. Of the rural sites, several have been the focus of multiple excavations over the years. These sites, of which Locust Grove and Farmington are examples, were large upper class plantations of the

“landed gentry” who were often early settlers that had been awarded extensive military land grants.

The Silas Yager Site is among a handful of extant or relatively undisturbed rural middle class sites in Jefferson County that predate 1850 or date to about that time period. Only three such sites have been investigated archaeologically in the county. These include the Benjamin Silas Site and two recently investigated sites at the Riverport Authority Phase V property along the old Salt River Road (now Dixie Highway). The three sites have yielded incredible artifact assemblages and buried features that offer a window into middle class lifeways during the early 1800s in this part of the state. Very few of these sites are thought to remain.

The Silas Yager Site warrants further on-site exploration due to several factors.

1. A walkover of the site by Corn Island Archaeology revealed the presence of intact cultural features. These include the cellar, a cistern/well, and cabin foundation. Other features undoubtedly exist, and may include privy vaults. These features present the opportunity to recover and examine a wealth of artifacts associated with the early occupation of the site. The nearby Benjamin Yager Site demonstrated the archaeological wealth that such features can yield.
2. It is known that Silas Yager owned 15 slaves. These individuals lived in three cabins, according to research. The locations of these cabins are not known, and therefore an archaeological survey is warranted to determine if the buried remains of these cabins can be found.
3. While there is a cemetery on the site, it is not known where the 15 enslaved individuals are buried. They are likely interred in unmarked graves on the property. At a minimum, a pedestrian survey should be done to identify, if possible, above-ground indicators of burials.
4. The small cemetery located on the property does not appear to be the slave cemetery as it includes one large marked commercial headstone. The interred does not appear to be one of the Yagers who lived in the house, and in fact has a different surname. Nor does the graveyard contain the remains of the Yager family. Additional research is needed to attempt to identify the interred. Small unmarked upright stones identify locations of the graves. The cemetery requires delineation. It was observed by Corn Island that fieldstones marking graves lay outside the poorly constructed fence enclosing two sides of the cemetery.
5. It also bears mentioning that as the property is undeveloped farmland, there is the potential for prehistoric sites to be present as well. Artifacts have been reported from the property. At a minimum, a records check should be done to see if there are any recorded prehistoric sites on the property.
6. The property contains architecturally significant structures in good condition. These buildings should be preserved and photodocumented. The stone house and cellar are certainly architecturally important structures, and the frame additions may be as well. The barn, which may be destroyed, may also be a good example of early agricultural buildings and should also be photodocumented inside and out.
7. It is commendable that several of the buildings will be preserved. However, it is equally important that the ground immediately surrounding these buildings be protected as they undoubtedly contain associated buried archaeological deposits. Landscaping, the construction of driveways or parking areas, sidewalks, etc. will all have an adverse effect on any near-surface archaeological deposits that are present.

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF WORK

While it is recognized that it is not possible to save every historic resource. A relatively small percentage of sites actually warrant preservation or data recovery. This site, however, appears to be one of them. It would be truly a loss if some level of archaeology and cultural historical documentation did not occur at this site. It is likewise acknowledged that archaeology can be expensive. Since the conduct of professional archeology is not mandated in this case to satisfy any legal or regulatory requirements, the following suggestions are offered.

- First, a group of trained volunteer avocationalists can be used to conduct limited fieldwork and labwork. The Falls of the Ohio Archaeological Society (FOAS) is an award-winning local 502 (c) 3 organization dedicated to Public Education and Awareness in Archaeology. The group has been in existence for fourteen years and has a demonstrated history of contributing significantly to the archaeology of the Falls area. FOAS has agreed to contribute their time, under the direction of the professional archaeologists of Corn Island.
- Second, this could be a situation suitable for a public education event in which the general population is invited to participate and experience archaeology. Interested neighbors, historical groups, and students might welcome an opportunity to become actively involved with the process of recovering important historic data.
- If the number and nature of recovered artifact assemblage warrants it, grant opportunities will be pursued to ensure professional and thorough analysis and reporting once the fieldwork is completed. Corn Island will wash, label, and appropriately store the artifacts pending a search for funding to address the artifacts.
- At a minimum, it is hoped that a 60-90 day period be implemented in the binding agreements in which archaeologists might conduct some limited examination and testing at the site.

Proposed Field/Lab Effort

The fieldwork, as described below, requires some preliminary discussion. Typically, the first phase of an archaeological survey involves some form of discovery methodology to identify the locations of artifact concentration and features. Pedestrian survey and shovel probing are common techniques. In the case of the central or core of the residential complex of the Yager Homestead Site, the discovery phase is not a critical issue because the structures are still standing, the locations of the structural footprints (the cabin) are obvious, and other features (cellar; cistern/well) are visible on the ground surface. Since historic artifact disposal patterns are well documented, the locations of artifact concentrations and features can be easily surmised. Therefore, the conduct of a shovel probe survey will not add substantially to the level of information that is currently available.

However, a simple pedestrian survey of the remainder of the property, without shovel probing, might be appropriate to identify the locations of cultural remains away from the core of the residential center. This non-invasive survey could reveal, for instance, the locations of standing field stones or ground surface depressions that could reflect slave burials or other topographic anomalies that could be associated with cabin pads.

It is suggested here that the best means of obtaining meaningful data from an archaeological investigation of the site would not be a shovel probe survey but rather involve the hand-excavation of 1-x-1-meter square test units in key locations. It is suggested, based on Corn Island's experience at the Benjamin Yager/Ward Site, that the effort be focused on the footprint of the double log pen cabin with the standing central chimney. Excavation of test units at this location would be directed at discovering and capturing data relevant to pit cellars. These data would be directly comparable to that recovered from the Benjamin Yager Site as well as two similar sites in the southwestern portion of the county, and provide an invaluable contribute to ongoing research.

Specifically, then, the offered services entail the following tasks:

- A routine background records search at the OSA to identify comparative recorded local/regional archaeological sites and prior archaeological investigations at or near the site of the proposed project;
- A review of archival documentation to obtain information relevant to the families that may have occupied the site over time. This could include deed searches, chain of title, genealogical investigations, probate records, and more.
- Pedestrian reconnaissance;
- Limited shovel probing;
- 1-x-1-meter test unit excavation;
- Artifact analyses;
- Recordation of the archaeological site with the OSA; and
- The preparation of a professional technical report of findings per the standards of the Secretary of the Interior, and the KHC/SHPO; and

Ground Surface Inspection

Visual inspection of the ground surface will be done in a systematic manner with crew walking transects spaced no more than 20 meters apart. The survey will seek to identify above-ground evidence of archaeological features such as structural foundations, refuse dumps, wells and cisterns, gravestones, quarry pits, depressions, and earthen and stone mounds. Alterations in topography could indicate the locations of former structures; patterned depressions or field rock could mark the locations of grave sites.

Limited Shovel Probing

In selected areas – such as around the extant house and root cellar – limited shovel probing will be conducted. This is to confirm the presence and distribution of artifact-bearing midden within the central core of the residential portion of the site. Each shovel test probe (STP) will measure approximately 30 centimeters in diameter, was excavated to a minimum depth of 30 centimeters below surface, or until distinct subsoil or bedrock was exposed. The soil from each STP will be screened through quarter-inch-mesh hardware cloth. The wall of each STP will be examined for artifacts as well as soil color and texture changes that might indicate buried, intact cultural deposits. When the inspection is complete, the hole will be filled, tamped, and the sod replaced. The cultural materials from each positive STP will be placed in bags marked with the field site number and the appropriate STP designation and site boundaries and features delineated, mapped, and recorded.

Test Unit Excavation

Up to eight hand-excavated test units may be excavated, depending on time and available crew. The test units will be placed to maximize the recovery of data from the demolished cabin site behind the rear of the extant house (Figure 12 and Figure 13). In particular, evidence of pit cellars will be sought in relation to the standing chimney.

Hand-excavated test units will generally be in the form of 1-x-1-meter squares. However, the Field Director has the option to configure the units as needed to fully expose features or other potentially cultural anomalies. The purpose of the test units will be to obtain detailed information on the stratigraphy; obtain information on artifact density; collect a representative assemblage of artifacts; and to determine the presence of potential midden(s) and/or cultural features.

- The excavation of the 1-x-1-meter units will be performed in a series of arbitrary 10-centimeter levels within natural and/or cultural strata. The excavations will extend into culturally sterile subsoil. The arbitrary 10-centimeter layers may be altered at the Field Director's discretion to accommodate noticeable changes in soil color and/or texture that might signal changes in the natural or cultural stratigraphy. Soil will be screened through ¼ in mesh hardware cloth and all artifacts recovered will be placed in bags labeled with the appropriate provenience information.
- If features are encountered within the test units, 100 percent of the feature within the test unit will be excavated.
- Detailed notes for each excavation level will be recorded and a representative wall of each unit will be documented by a detailed profile drawing and photography.
- Each unit will be backfilled when excavation is complete and the unit has been fully documented.
- The location of each unit will be mapped in relation to the datum at the site using GPS technology.

Cultural Feature Sampling, Excavation, and Documentation

Cultural features encountered during the excavations will be exposed and documented in planview through detailed drawings and photography. If features are intersected within a test unit, 100 percent of the exposed feature within the test unit will be excavated. The Field Director may opt to extend that unit to expose and excavate the entire feature. Features exposed during mechanical stripping of the site will be excavated and documented, with the exception of human burials, if any are encountered. Feature excavation will proceed as follows.

- Each cultural feature will be recorded in planview and mapped in relation to the site datum.
- Features will be bisected and the cultural fill will be screened through ¼ in mesh hardware cloth. Artifacts recovered will be placed in a bag labeled with the appropriate provenience information.
- The profile of the remaining half will be documented by detailed drawings and photography.
- After this documentation is complete, a maximum of 10-liters (L) may be removed from the remaining half of each feature – as considered appropriate.
- The remaining feature fill will be excavated and screened through ¼ in mesh hardware cloth. Special care will be taken to excavate individual fill zones if present.



Figure 12. Proposed test units at the Silas Yager Site.



Figure 13. 2002 aerial image showing the footprint of the recently demolished cabin.

DELIVERABLES

The results of these investigations will be reported in a professional technical report of findings per the standards of the Secretary of the Interior, the KHC KY SHPO and the Kentucky Office of State Archaeology (KY OSA). Corn Island will prepare a summary report of findings and submit a digital copy and two (2) hard copies to the City. No time frame is offered for the completion of the report because the work will be done on a *pro bono* basis by volunteers and professionals on their own time, after hours. However, every effort will be made to provide a summary report within a year.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

The ability of FOAS/Corn Island to provide the services outlined above and to adhere to the work outlined above is contingent upon the following key understandings.

- Access to the property, including landowner permissions, will be coordinated with the City.
- All recovered artifacts will be held at the offices of Corn Island Archaeology until they are analyzed and a suitable repository or use is found for them. Corn Island will make every effort to find a suitable curation facility for the recovered assemblage and ensure that it is disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- If desired, Corn Island/FOAS will prepare a small interpretive display of the artifacts that can be shared with the public.
- While eight test units are proposed, the exact number of excavations will depend upon timing, the weather, and the number of volunteers that can be engaged in the process.

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- The preparation of a summary report of findings is subject to the availability of volunteers and professionals. This work will be done primarily outside of regular office hours, and could take a year to complete, depending upon the field findings.
 - No human burials are expected to be encountered. However, if discovered, human remains will be addressed according to Indiana state laws. The Jefferson County Coroner, the City, and the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office will be contacted immediately. All work will cease within the area containing human remains.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal, or wish to discuss the proposal in more detail, please feel free to contact me by phone at (502) 614-8828 or (502) 592-2355 (mobile) or by email at abader@ciarch.com.

Sincerely,



Anne T. Bader, RPA
Principal