

# Archeologists Begin Digging at Old Slave Quarters

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Two archeologists from the Virginia Research Center for Archeology are winding up a two-day dig at the old Ben Lomond slave quarters on Sudley Manor Drive today, having unearthed a number of artifacts which they will clean and analyze in preparation for issuing a report in about 30 days.

Kim Snyder, one of two archeologists from the VRCA Thunderbird regional office in Front Royal, said three trenches have been dug on the property owned by Westover Baptist Church. One trench, three feet wide by 25 feet long, was dug Thursday at a site thought to be a trash pit behind the former slave quarters. The location of this trench was pinpointed by another archeologist, Terry Kline, who conducted a one-day dig April 20 and then had to conclude his investigation early because of personal reasons.

Snyder said trash pits are good digging sites because they often produce artifacts, bones and things related to the diet of the former inhabitants.

Such has been the case with this particular trench in Prince William Coun-

ty, according to the archeologist. Many fragments of historic ceramics, glass, nails, some bones (a part of a groundhog jaw and several chickens) as well as an old fence post have been unearthed.

Today, the archeologists are digging two additional trenches in the road right of way, each three feet wide by 10

feet long. At press time, Snyder reported they are digging in an area which was formerly cultivated in part as a kitchen garden. She said the team hopes to be able to put another trench at the rear or front of the historic structure before the digging activities conclude later today.

The earth is being removed with or-

dinary shovels and then is sifted through a three-eighths inch mesh screen. The progression is by natural earth layers, according to Snyder, although she noted that some of the earth has been disturbed since the slave quarters were inhabited.

Besides the two archeologists, Frances Jones, an architectural

historian associated with the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission, and volunteers are helping with the dig. Snyder said seven volunteers participated Thursday. Four were assisting today.

According to the archeologist, all of the items unearthed will be taken to the regional laboratory for cleaning and

analysis. Then a report and recommendations will be issued, probably within about 30 days. One recommendation could be that further digging be conducted to find out more about the site.

Snyder characterized the material unearthed thus far as "no complete vessels" but a "fairly large amount" of material. She suggested something that may be viewable by the public may be able to be constructed from the fragments after all the findings are analyzed.

The earlier dig in April turned up some of the same types of material found yesterday, Snyder said. According to the report, there was salt glazed stoneware, pearl ware, white ware, yellow ware and a white clay pipe bowl fragment. These were uncovered in a trench measuring 80 centimeters wide by one meter long, she said. That reported recommended the dig be continued to locate features behind and to the side of the structure, she said.

Snyder said the dig this week was a "courtesy survey" being made at the request of the church and probably the county.