

## MOUNT ATLAS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Mt. Atlas is a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places lists historic buildings, archeological sites, objects, and structures that are significant to the history or prehistory of the United States. The house at Mt. Atlas was constructed around 1795. The property originally included numerous outbuildings, such as a kitchen, carriage house, and meat house. The Kitchen was demolished around 1910. Although no cemetery is believed to be present on the property, the single grave of Charles B. Carter is located east of the house.

Prince William County, Virginia, plans to move and renovate the house at Mount Atlas. Prior to its removal, archeological investigations will be conducted to collect information about the property and outbuildings. The excavation will ensure that important information is not lost when the structure is moved off the property. The purposes of the cultural resources investigation are to:

- Learn about the history of land ownership and land use through archival research;
- Locate and identify archeological remains in the survey area;
- Estimate the size and boundaries of the site;
- Recover information about the history and use of the property through archeological excavation;
- Document and assess the historic standing structures on the site;
- Involve the public in the excavation process; and
- Report on the findings.

The Cultural Resources Investigation includes seven components. Volunteers may participate in one or more of the tasks, depending on their interest and availability. These tasks include: historic background research; field shovel test pit survey to identify important deposits; field test unit excavation to collect important information; artifact processing and analysis after the excavation is complete; preparation of public information materials; documentation of historic standing structures; and report writing so that the collected information can be made available to researchers and the public. A schedule of when the tasks will be completed, and a preliminary description of and guidelines for each task are included in this packet.

## MOUNT ATLAS SCHEDULE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The following task schedule includes the dates for the initial background research, archeological fieldwork, and architectural documentation for the Prince William County sponsored archeological excavation of the Mt. Atlas site. The contact person for each task is included in parentheses; the contact information is at the bottom of the page.

The tasks that will be done after the fieldwork has been completed are not listed in the schedule. These tasks include artifact washing, cataloging, and labeling, preparation of and presentation of public information materials, and report production. It will be easier to schedule these tasks once the fieldwork is complete and once we have an idea of who will participate in the post-fieldwork tasks.

DATE	TASK	TIME
June 3, 2000 (H. Crowl)	Field training (STPs), grid set up, walkover survey, and shovel test pit survey	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
June 10, 2000 (B.Fischler and E.Gold)	Field review, and shovel test pit survey OR Archival research training and initial archival work	8:30 am – 5:00 pm (contact E.G. for research time)
June 17, 2000 (H. Crowl)	Field training (units), unit set up, and unit excavation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
June 24, 2000 (B. Fischler)	Field review, Unit excavation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
July 1, 2000 (H. Crowl)	Unit excavation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
July 8, 2000 (H.Crowl and E.Gold)	Unit excavation and Historic Architecture training and documentation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
July 15, 2000 (K.Mock or H.Crowl)	Unit excavation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm
July 22, 2000 (H. Crowl)	Unit excavation	8:30 am – 5:00 pm

URS/Dames & Moore  
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 Bethesda, MD 20814  
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Prince William County Planning Commission  
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## TASK 1. HISTORIC BACKGROUND RESEARCH

This task may include the following activities:

- Reviewing existing National Register and HABS documentation of Mount Atlas filed in the Library of Congress;
- Reviewing the deeds and historic records at the Prince William County Courthouse to provide information on the historic residence and its occupants;
- Developing a chain of title for the property;
- Preparing a historic context for the site using cartographic and textual sources; and
- Collecting information on known and potential cemeteries in the project area.

URS/Dames & Moore will conduct an introduction to the research process on Saturday, June 10, 2000. Anyone interested in learning about the research process or researching a particular topic related to Mount Atlas should contact **Elaine Gold** at URS/Dames & Moore (Phone #: 301-652-2215 x226).

## TASK 2: SHOVEL TEST PIT IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

The first step in the archeological field investigation is to identify which areas of the property contain important artifact yard deposits or the remains of historic outbuildings and which areas do not contain important resources. The important areas identified will be the focus for the test unit excavation. The shovel test pit survey will be conducted on June 3, 2000 and June 10, 2000.

Important resources may be indicated by the presence of **artifacts**, which are small items that people made, used, or ate (in the case of animal bones), or **features**, which are larger, more stationary items, such as a brick wall or a dark stain in the ground left by a fire pit or historic trash deposit.

Because Mount Atlas dates to the Late nineteenth century (or late 1800s) we would expect to find artifacts from the late-nineteenth century. These artifacts might include broken glass, broken ceramics, rusted nails and other metal, pieces of brick, oyster shell, animal bone, buttons, gun flints, marbles, etc. However, it is possible that we may also find broken pieces of quartz or other rocks that would indicate that prehistoric Native Americans also occupied the site.

### DIGGING A SHOVEL TEST PIT (STP)

- (1) Locate an STP in the field. STPs will be marked with an orange flag with a number on it. STPs will be spaced either 25 or 50 feet apart. Write the number of the STP on a form, along with your initials and the date.

STP#: 1  
Date: 6/3/00  
Initials: HC

- (2) Dig a round hole approximately 1½ feet in diameter, placing the excavated dirt into the screen. The hole should have straight walls and a roughly flat bottom so that it resembles a cylinder, rather than a cone that narrows towards the bottom. Dig the STP to the depth of sterile subsoil (usually 1 to 2 feet). If you are unsure if you have reached subsoil, ask the field supervisor. If you are still finding artifacts, you are not in subsoil.



- (3) If you encounter what may be a brick or stone wall, stop digging and do not remove the bricks or stones; let the supervisor look at the hole. Also, if you find deep, dark soils, alert the field supervisor.



- (4) Shake or push the soil through the screen. Make sure that you break up all clumps of dirt. Collect the artifacts from the screen and place them in a ziplock bag.



- (5) Label the outside of the artifact bag with a permanent marker (sharpie). Write the following information on the artifact bag: "Mount Atlas", the STP number, your initials, the date, and, if possible, whether you think the artifact came from the top, middle, or near the bottom of the test pit.

- (6) Record the STP in pencil. You may want the field supervisor or another experienced archeologist to assist you with this step until you are comfortable with what you are seeing. Use a trowel to scrape the wall of the STP. Count how many layers of different colored soil (strata) that you see. The strata should be labeled with letters, with "A" being the layer closest to the surface. Write the soil layers (A, B, C) in the "Level" column on the STP form. Measure the depth of the bottom of each layer from the ground surface and record the depths in the "Depth" column.



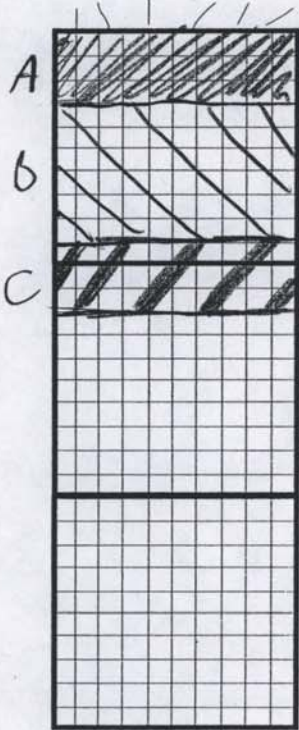
The field supervisor will have Munsell books to help you record the soil color. The Munsell notation should include the page (10YR), the row and column (4/3), and the color name indicated in the book (brown). Describe the soil texture as clayey, silty, sandy, or loamy (a mix of clay, silt and sand). List the artifacts found, if any, in the artifact column. If no artifacts were found, write "none" in the column. Record any comments or impressions that you have in the comments section. You may sketch the layers that you observe on the STP-shaped graph on the form. A completed form is attached to this packet.

- (7) Bring the completed STP form and artifacts to the field supervisor. Once they have approved the form, backfill the STP and move to the next orange flag.

# Mount Atlas, Haymarket, Prince William County, Virginia

URS/DAMES & MOORE

STP#: 1  
 Date: 6/3/2000  
 Initials: HE



feet

LEVEL	DEPTH	MUNSELL SOIL COLOR	SOIL TEXTURE	ARTIFACTS
A	0.3	10YR 3/2 Very DK Grayish Brown	loam	3 glass 1 marble 2 ceramic
B	0.9	10YR 4/4 Dark Yellowish Brown	Silty	
C	1.2	7.5 YR 5/6 Strong Br	clayey	None

subsoil

COMMENTS: (such as whether soil is compact or loose, vegetation in surrounding area, topography, etc.)

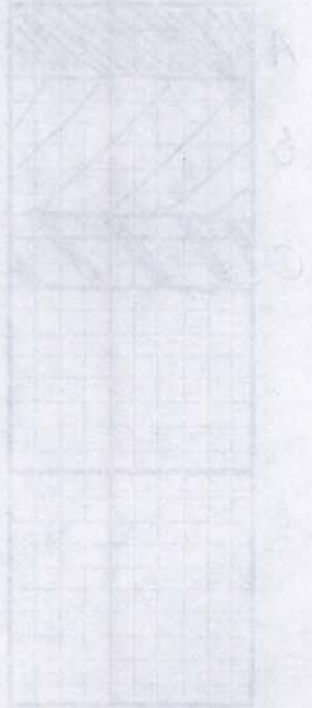
Artifacts came from either A or B. Artifacts increased w/depth.  
 STP is located in the yard, close to the back of the house.  
 Soil in the STP was dry and compact.  
 The "A" stratum contained a large amount of gravel - possible walkway?

Mount Atlas, Haymarket, Prince William County, Virginia

ORDWAY & MOORE

Sheet 1  
 Date: 5/2/2000  
 Scale: 1:5000

Soil Profile		Soil Description	
A	3	10K 3/2 Very dark brown clay	loam
B	1	10K 4/2 Dark yellowish brown clay	clay
C	1/2	25K 3/2 Stony Br	None



COMMENTS: (Include a brief description of the soil profile, its location, and any other relevant information.)  
 The A horizon is a very dark brown clay loam. The B horizon is a dark yellowish brown clay. The C horizon is a stony brown clay. The soil is a very dark brown clay loam. The soil is a dark yellowish brown clay. The soil is a stony brown clay.



## GLOSSARY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL TERMS

- Artifacts** material remains of a culture (for example, bottle glass, buttons, and ceramics)
- Bulb of Percussion** bulbous portion of flake, adjacent to the platform, resulting from percussion.
- Colonoware** any type of low-fired earthenware ceramics modeling European ceramic traditions and produced by either Native Americans or Africans. Currently, only found on archeological sites south of the Potomac river.
- Coastal Plain** relatively low-lying region bordering the Atlantic ocean and the Piedmont Region. The division between the Piedmont Region and the Coastal Plain is marked by the Fall Line.
- Core** inner-portion of a lithic in which flakes are removed from.
- Cortex** outer covering of a lithic caused by weathering.
- Creamware** thin, hard-fired, pale-yellow or cream-colored paste with a clear glaze. Manufactured from mid-18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initiated by Thomas Astbury and Thomas Whieldon and later perfected by Josiah Wedgwood.
- Debitage** lithic waste product from the manufacture of stone tools.
- Earthenware** any porous ceramic fired at a temperature of 700-900° F.
- Ecofact** plant and/or animal remains found in their natural state often utilized by man; used to gain insight about ancient diet and environment.
- Fire-Cracked Rock (FCR)** thermally altered rock as the result of being placed into a firepit or hearth.
- Feature** any soil disturbance or discoloration that reflects human activity, or an artifact too large to remove without destroying (for example, a foundation).

<b>Flake</b>	lithic waste-product resulting from the manufacture of stone tools. Flakes are recognized by a platform, bulb of percussion and termination point.
<b>Hand-Wrought Nail</b>	hand-made nail with the characteristics of a rose-head, square body, and tear-drop shaped point. Produced upto the year 1815.
<b>Historic</b>	the time period after the appearance of written records. In the New World, this generally refers to the time period after the beginning of European settlement at approximately 1600 A.D.
<b>In Situ</b>	in an original context.
<b>Integrity</b>	not disturbed; maintaining the original design and location.
<b>Lithic</b>	any type of stone used during the manufacturing of a tool, eg. quartz, chert, jasper, obsidian, flint.
<b>Loam</b>	a loose soil composed of roughly equal parts silt, clay, and sand, especially a kind containing organic matter and of great fertility.
<b>Munsell Notation</b>	a standardized method for describing soil color based on three variables - Hue, Value, and Chroma. A Munsell Book contains pages of small colored chips for comparison to soil.
<b>Patina</b>	a thin layer of material breakdown caused by weathering or corrosion, usually found on non-ferrous metals and glass.
<b>Pearlware</b>	refined earthenware introduced by Josiah Wedgwood. Developed in the late 18 <sup>th</sup> century as a variation of creamware. Body has a higher flint content and the glaze has cobalt added. Last date of historic manufacture was in 1840.
<b>Piedmont Region</b>	an area of gently rolling to hilly land lying between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The division between the Piedmont Region and the Coastal Plain is marked by the Fall Line.
<b>Platform</b>	area of a lithic that was transformed by the use of a percussion object. Platforms are used to remove flakes from the core lithic.
<b>Plowzone</b>	in a plowed field, the upper layer of organic soil which is continually reworked by the plow. In the Middle Atlantic region this is about 8-12 inches.
<b>Porcelain</b>	any highly refined ceramic manufactured at a temperature above 1200° F. Originally produced in China and later copied by European artists.

<b>Post Hole</b>	an excavated hole in the ground into which a post is placed. In an archeological context is noticed by a darker color than the surrounding matrix.
<b>Post Mold</b>	an organic stain left by a decayed or decaying wooden post.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	the time period before the appearance of written records. In the New World, this generally refers to indigenous, Pre-European societies.
<b>Primary Flake</b>	cortical flake with a cortical platform, usually with at least 90% cortex.
<b>Proto-Historic</b>	time period marked with the contact between Europeans and the indigenous population, usually represented with indigenous populations adopting or adapting to European customs.
<b>Projectile Point</b>	strictly speaking, a stone tool worked on both faces attached to the head of an airborne item of weaponry, such as an arrow or a spear; frequently used indiscriminately when referring to any bifacially prepared lithic artifact.
<b>Provenience</b>	the three dimensional location of archeological data within the soil matrix at the time of discovery.
<b>Redware</b>	generic term applied to any earthenware ceramic made with red clay.
<b>Rhenish Stoneware</b>	any stoneware produced in the Rhineland starting in the 16 <sup>th</sup> century. Early forms were brown and gradually grey becomes the dominant stoneware.
<b>Secondary Flake</b>	usually cortical but with flakes removed from at least two sides.
<b>Sherd</b>	a piece of broken pottery or glass.
<b>Stoneware</b>	any non-porous ceramic fired at a temperature of 900-1200° F.
<b>STP</b>	shovel test pit; an approximately 1.5 foot diameter hole dug at consistent intervals and systematically recorded to determine what cultural remains are within a project area. A positive STP is one that contains artifacts; a negative STP does not contain artifacts.
<b>Stratigraphy</b>	soil layering; the characteristics of each individual stratum of soil in an archeological site and its relationship to others in the sequence is critical to understanding the temporal and spatial characteristics of the site.
<b>Strata</b>	various soil layers of human or geological origin.

- Tertiary Flake** non-cortical, usually represents final process in stone tool production.
- Tin-glaze** name for any porous ceramic with a opaque lead-based tin oxide-glaze, originating with the Moors in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and spread throughout Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. English tin-glaze or delftware manufacture dates from 1680 to 1775.
- Tool Kit** a collection of artifacts from a sealed context within a site interpreted as being designed for a specific function.
- TPQ** *terminus post quem*, the earliest date of manufacture of the most recent artifact found in a deposit.
- Topography** the physical features of a region.
- Westerwald** a type of Rhenish salt-glazed stoneware which has a grey body and decorated with incised cobalt blue floral and geometric reliefs. Dates from 1650 to 1775.
- White Earthenware** any highly produced ceramic made of a white colored earthenware and clear glaze. Manufactured from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- White Salt-glazed Stoneware** stoneware of an English origin with a finely produced white fabric. The salt glaze is added during the firing process which produces a pitted look to the ceramic. Ceramics are generally used for fine tablewares and replace delftware products. Produced between the years 1720 and 1775.