

**Status Update**  
**Fort Ward Documentary Study and Archeological Investigation**  
**Fort Ward Historical Park**  
**Alexandria, Virginia**

**December 8, 2010**

For the past few weeks archeologists from The Ottery Group have been conducting archeological field investigations at Fort Ward. Investigations are focused on the maintenance yard area, including a small area adjacent to the Oakland Cemetery, and in the location of the Short's family home lot, just north of the cemetery. Investigations are focused on locating evidence of unmarked graveshafts and on the identification of historical features associated with former buildings and other landuse activities, including a search for artifacts or other archeological evidence dating to military activities during the Civil War. Fieldwork has involved a combination of field methods including hand-excavated shovel test pits, excavation units, mechanically-excavated trenches, and metal detecting.

To date, these methods have proven successful in confirming that unmarked graves do exist in the adjacent grassy area on the south side of the Oakland Cemetery. We have located 7 unmarked graves in this grassy area, and have confirmed that the headstone for Mrs. Fitzhugh is directly associated with a burial, and that the headstone marking Clara Adams' grave is, in fact, marking two burials, likely those of Mrs. Adam's and presumably her husband who, was laid to rest roughly 2 feet north of Clara's grave.

In addition to confirming the presence of 10 graves, with more expected as fieldwork continues, the archeological work has revealed historic archeological features associated with the Young's property on the south end of the maintenance yard, and also with the school/church that was located on the western edge of the maintenance yard.

Metal detecting has also yielded evidence of Civil War-era military activities. A small quantity of isolated artifacts, such as Minnie balls, and a "US" cartridge box label have been recovered.

Work will continue through next week and will include excavations in the Jackson Cemetery to identify numerous unmarked graves believed to exist there, and a search for evidence of the Short's family home. Field methods in these areas will include hand excavations in the Jackson Cemetery, and hand and mechanical excavations in the Short's lot.

In general, we are excited about the developing results of this investigation and remain confident that this initial archeological investigation is providing strong evidence of the rich history that exists at Fort Ward. Further work at the site during this, and future investigations, will undoubtedly be useful in telling part of the story of both the domestic and military history of the Fort.