

## The Hollow February 2009

### Report on House & Site Cleaning and Minor Grade Improvement Around John Marshall's Boyhood Home

by Architectural Historian/Local Project Manager Cheryl Hanback Shepherd

Since the stabilization and preservation work on the 1763-64 frame dwelling has progressed toward planned installation of hand-made windows enclosing the house in 2009, our team decided to first remove years of litter and putrid wildlife dung and nests. Thus, APVA carpenters Mike Adams and Karl Newago returned in January to vacuum inside and sift for artifacts.



Top-right, Karl vacuums between the floor joists in the garret while Mike, at left, displays a discovered window muntin in his right hand and part of an early wood shingle in his left.

The cleaning yielded few other exciting artifacts beyond a broken clay pipe stem, several clay and glass marbles, a small-sized barrel lid and side piece, and an unused Virginia Stage Lines, Inc. ticket. While the ticket initially brought images of nineteenth-century stage coach travel, research provided that the VSL was a bus transit company formed in the early twentieth century. The author is in the process of cleaning, cataloging, and researching these artifacts and will contain them with those our work has revealed until a display area becomes a reality. The University of Mary Washington archaeologists have their cataloged artifacts in the archaeological lab on campus in Fredericksburg, also pending a call for display. Their collection includes one circa 1840 clay pipe portion found by the author between garret floor joists during stabilization.

#### Dwelling Site Cleanup and Minor Grading

The early-twentieth-century pole chicken house in front of the meat house ruin in the northeast back corner of the boyhood home's yard finally fell to the ground during a storm last November. Inasmuch as this building post-dated Thomas and John Marshall's 1763-73 period of significance for The Hollow and possessed no architectural value, we let the non-contributing resource continue its demise. The large walnut tree with invasive roots behind the gable roof had grown inside the remaining stone foundation of the meat house, along with smaller trees and brush. Hence, we included removing these intrusions during the site cleanup.



Facing northwest across the back yard on February 17th, the view at right, exhibits the cleaned-up northeast corner with the undisturbed stones of the meat house foundation. Because the walnut tree grew into large stones, Joe and Jason Ashby could not cut it to the ground at this time. This corner will receive brush killer throughout the growing seasons to prevent re-growth.



The camera faces south across the meat house ruin and toward the dwelling in the view below. The foundation is less defined than when the author documented it with measurements and photographs a few years ago for the record.



Below, Miguel holds an estimated 54-calibre lead round shot or musket ball that he uncovered from the pile of clay and ashes removed to the rear yard from the first-floor firebox during the chimney dismantling. This is not the first time that the stonemason with Edward Ashby Masonry has become an archaeologist during the stabilization and preservation work.



This ball does not appear to have been shot, and since it came out of the house, we cannot certainly say whether it was left there by a soldier, found at The Hollow, or picked up by a tenant somewhere off site. Considerable hostility occurred in Markham during the war, ruining the railroad and Edward Carrington Marshall's Rosebank on the southern perimeter of his father's boyhood home tract.



At left, Miguel and Joe Ashby add some soil to create a positive grade around the northwest back corner of the dwelling. First, the Ashby brothers conceived a dry-laid stone back drop outside the cellar window to underpin the new earth.



At right, the improved setting now complements the progressing stabilization and preservation of John Marshall's eighteenth-century boyhood home.