

# CAMP COKER CREEK

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## INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENCE AND SPATIAL CONFIGURATION OF A CONFEDERATE ENCAMPMENT WITHIN THE MULTICOMPONENT 40MR708 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

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Honors Thesis  
Curriculum in Archaeology  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Camp Coker Creek:  
Investigation of the Presence and Spatial Configuration of a Confederate Encampment  
within the Multicomponent 40MR708 Archaeological Site

(Under the direction of Dr. Brett H. Riggs)

Ongoing historical and archaeological research has revealed the site 40MR708, colloquially Fort Armistead, in Coker Creek, Monroe County Tennessee to be a spatiotemporally vast and complex example of human occupation. Up until 2011, three major occupational periods had been identified; an archaic Native American lithic reduction site, a stock stand (Meroney's Stand), and an Indian Removal period military base identified as Camp/Fort Armistead (1832-1838).

Recent investigations into the northeastern portion of the site revealed the presence of another component that was structurally distinct yet spatially aware of the fort. Excavations and preliminary analysis suggested a military use that postdated Fort Armistead. The subsequent research task was to then identify this most recent occupation of 40MR708, and determine how and to what extent it was spatiotemporally and structurally related to the other components, particularly Fort Armistead. The Unicoi Path/Turnpike proved to be the major structural element connecting all of the components

spatially and temporally. It transects the area, and was one of the major roads of communication, travel and trade, regardless of time period.

The context of the latest component was identified as Camp Coker Creek the transient headquarters and camp for parts of The 69<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment, Thomas' Confederate Legion of Cherokee Indians and Mountaineers. Particularly, companies in William C. Walker's Battalion made intermittent use of the property from 1862 to 1863. Investigations concentrated on analysis of varied thicknesses of window glass fragments found throughout the site, and were bolstered by scarce primary/secondary sources, site features, ceramic analysis, and examination of other small finds, such as munitions, personal items, military accoutrements, and buttons.

*Dedicated to my parents.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my adviser Dr. Brett H. Riggs for his tireless patience, assistance, and keen guidance. I would also like to thank Dr. Vincas P. Steponaitis and Dr. Stephen Davis for their understanding and persistent willingness to help. I greatly appreciate the unending support that you all have given me during my tenure at this university.

In addition, this project was supported by the Honors Undergraduate Research Fund, administered by the Honors Carolina office.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The multicomponent 40MR708 site is located in the southeastern Tennessee town of Coker Creek, Monroe County. The town is roughly 12.56 square miles in area, and lies between the heads of Conasauga Creek to the north and Coker Creek to the south (see Figure 1 below). Historically, as documentary sources indicate, Coker Creek has been known by many names including Co-Co Creek, Cocoa Creek and Coqua Creek. The resurgence of the property into the historical and archaeological community centered on the now confirmed 1832-1838 Indian Removal period federal military base of Fort

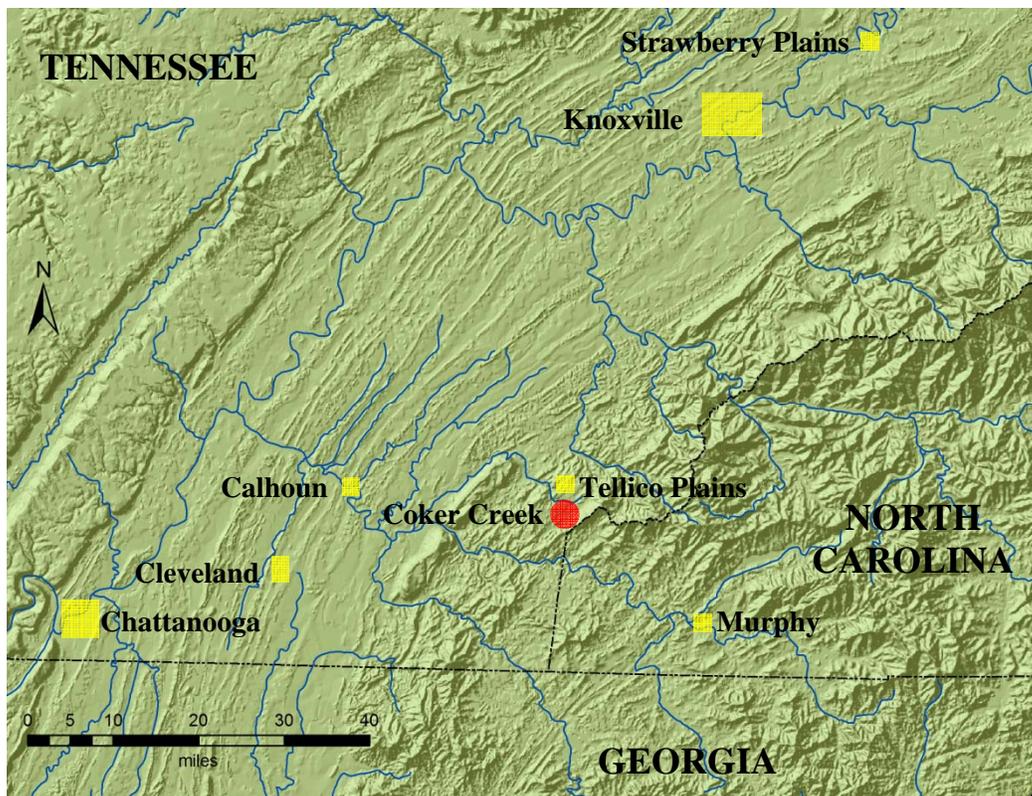


Figure 1. Map depicting location of Coker Creek, Monroe County, Tennessee within its regional setting. Key reference points are also shown.

Armistead (Riggs 2011: 1). After the structures and renown dissipated into history, an oral tradition was maintained among locals concerning the fort's existence and location. Although the particulars, such as the name, were temporarily lost to history, this specific hilltop continued to be known as the location of "the stockade where they kept the Indians when they moved them out of the country," (Riggs 2011: 3). First brought to the attention of archaeologist Dr. Brett H. Riggs by Kenneth and Cathleen Dalton in 1990, the local property owners at the time, the site is now under U.S. Forest Service control. Formal archaeological investigations commenced in March of 2008 and continue on an annual basis. These investigations have demonstrated an exceptional degree of site preservation, contextual integrity (the site surface has never been plowed, a true archaeological rarity), and documented content that represents occupations from the Archaic period, as well as domestic and military components from the 1830s and mid-nineteenth century (see Figure 2 timeline below).

### **Study Goals**

The purpose of this study is to temporally and contextually identify the newly discovered occupational component that postdates Fort Armistead, consisting primarily of a camp with four rows of hearths in the northeastern portion of 40MR708. Furthermore, attention is given as to how this new component relates spatially to Fort Armistead, structural aspects of which were surely present at the time of the camp's very conscious construction. Thinking that the site was primarily Fort Armistead, the idea had not occurred that there could have been another major military occupation, and thus documentary research did not look in contexts past the Indian Removal period.

# TIMELINE OF OCCUPATIONS FOR SITE 40 MR 708

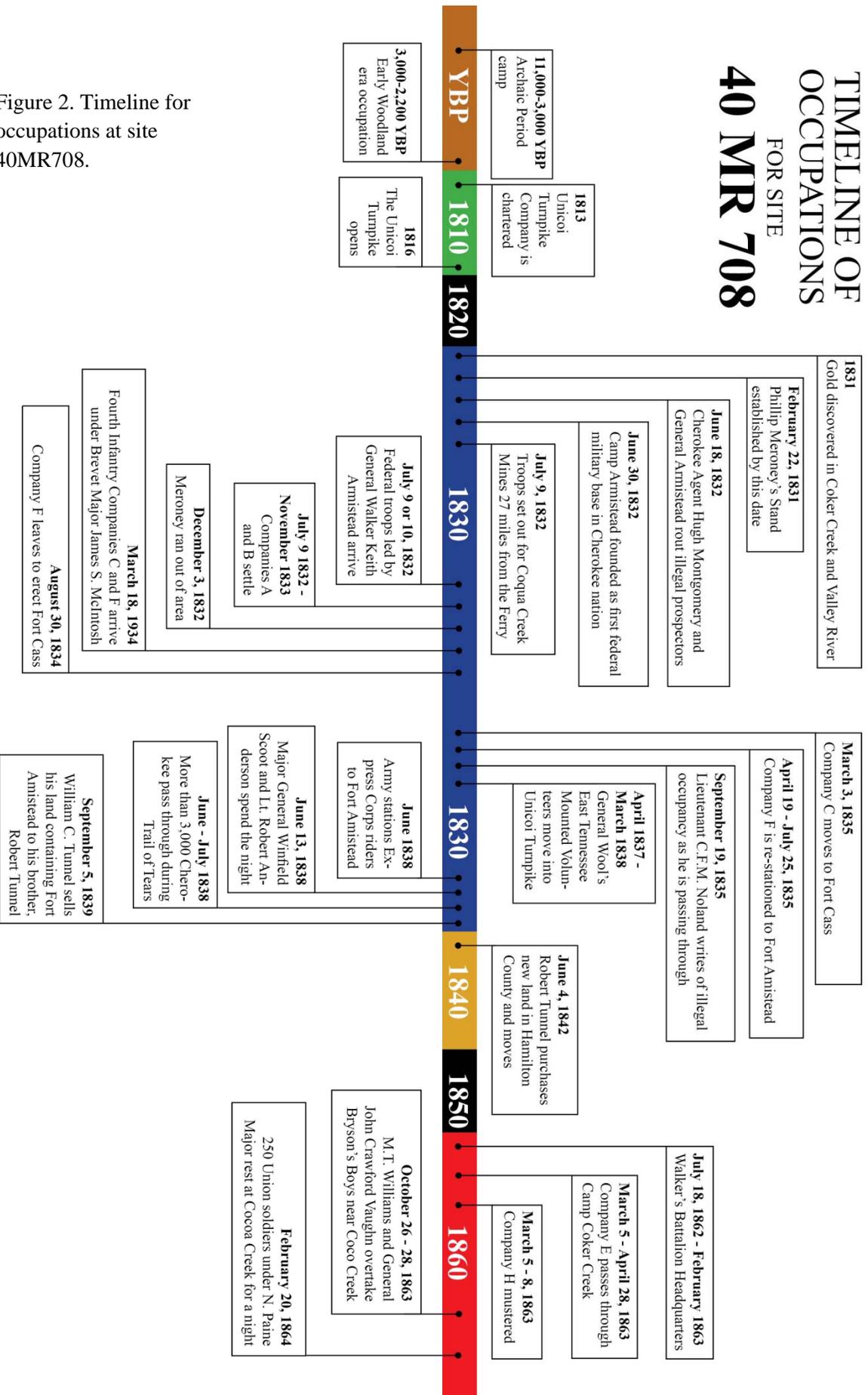


Figure 2. Timeline for occupations at site 40MR708.

After the detection of a later component, early documentary investigation sure enough found the resurgence of Coker Creek in the time of the Civil War (1861-1865), as the place of a military encampment referred to as Camp Coker Creek. The endeavor was then to figure out the role that Coker Creek played in the War Between the States, and to connect, if proper to do so, the archaeological camp remains at 40MR708 with the Camp Coker Creek location mentioned in the primary documents. In addition to these tasks, the effort was made to flush out any other existing written information about the other components of the site, so as to get a better sense of the location's overall timeline and related sequence of events.

From an archaeological standpoint, the undertaking was to outline the primary occupational boundaries of each component, and designate to which occupation the various features and structures of the site belong to. Moreover, to strengthen the position that the encampment ruins and the historical Camp Coker Creek are indeed one and the same, as technically it is not yet denoted anywhere in the primary texts that Camp Coker Creek was located on the site of the former Fort Armistead.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **Prehistoric Native American Component**

The prehistoric component of the hilltop upon which the Fort Armistead and Camp Coker Creek tract is located has never been actively sought out. The artifacts which have been found in association with this occupation come entirely by way of Fort Armistead related investigations, and have yet to be properly and thoroughly analyzed. As such, the true spatiotemporal nature of the occupation is unknown, and only relatively general inferences can be made.

The site was first occupied and used during the Archaic period (11,000 - 3,000 YBP), as indicated by temporally diagnostic tools found during excavation of Feature 1 (the powder magazine) and Test Unit 2. These include an Early Archaic Kirk corner notched projectile point/knife (PPK), a Middle Archaic Guilford PPK, and two Late Archaic Otarre PPK's (Riggs 2010: 23). In the excavation of Feature 8, particularly at the base of Test Units 12 and 13, an Archaic Period feature was recognized. A circular pit with ample quartz debitage protruding from the surface. Although it was not excavated, it does suggest the presence of more intact features throughout the site with exceptionally well preserved contexts.

The function of the site, based on the narrow range of uncovered evidence, is as always a product of both what has and has not been found. The hilltop and surrounding

area is a rich source of quartz and quartzite, a somewhat unpredictable yet nonetheless popular raw material for lithic tools. In addition, the prolific amount of recovered quartz and quartzite tools, pre-forms, cores, debitage and shatter, juxtaposed with the complete lack of residential site artifacts, suggests the location's possible use as a minor quarry camp. This could have been the site where natives mined raw material, created preforms for easy transportation, or even manufactured final form tools for personal use and most likely trade, judging by the scale of the operation. The site's presence on the Unicoi path, a main travel and trade route even in the Archaic Period, also lends to the idea of manufacturing tools for trade.

During the Archaic period, a more stable climate allowed for a broader range of natural resources, and populations in Eastern Tennessee flourished. This population pattern coincides well with the quite large assemblage of lithic material recovered. In addition to quartz lithic material, chert shatter, debitage, a scraper, and a projectile point were also recovered. Since the closest source of raw chert material is in present day Tellico Plains, roughly five miles away, such artifacts suggest that the site may have had additional uses, as it makes little sense for natives to transport raw chert and work on it such a distance away. Given the relatively small breadth of investigations into this component, the full spatial, functional, and temporal scale of the area remains to be researched.

### **The Unicoi Turnpike and Meroney's Stock Stand**

Perhaps the most enduring and unifying feature of the 40MR708 location is its situation on the Unicoi Turnpike. Also known as the Unicoi Path, Overhill Trading Path,

and Tellico Path, this route of trade and travel predates written history and is known to be thousands of years old. Till the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the path was one of the sole navigable passes over the Unaka or Great Smokey Mountain range, and prior to the arrival of colonists, Cherokee made heavy usage of it to trade and communicate with their brethren in the Overhill Cherokee towns in Eastern Tennessee. It is tragically ironic that they should return to it once more in the role of emigrants out of their own homes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regardless, as the principal route in the area it attracted a lot of attention, and it was only a matter of time before it became commercialized.

In 1813, American and Cherokee entrepreneurs chartered the Unicoi Turnpike Company to widen and formalize this trail into a wagon accessible road that connected the Little Tennessee River to the Taccoa River in Georgia (Riggs 2008: 115). A deal was struck with the Cherokee land owners, and The Unicoi Turnpike as it became known, was opened in 1816. The trade route once again flourished as it connected Tennessee farmers and traders to southern markets and vice versa. Therefore, the 40MR708 hilltop has seen sporadic activity and use for more than a thousand years. At least until the Cherokee were removed in the late 1830s, and private companies as well as the government had free reign to build roads all over the land, thus diminishing the importance of the Unicoi Turnpike.

Official chartered stock stands were established, while others sprung up privately, every fifteen miles or so, the manageable distance of travel on the Turnpike in a single day. These stock stands were resting places often featuring inns, supply stores, taverns, and stock pens for drovers as they moved their herds along the route. One such stand was known as Meroney's Stand, started by Philip D. Meroney in partnership with Joseph S.

Milligan, sometime by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 1831 (Stephens 1836). The stock stand is believed to have been set up on the 40MR708 tract, and principal evidence for this connection comes from a claim for spoliation of property, the record of which has been recorded in the Journal of the House of Representatives and is as follows:

*“Mr. Luke Lea presented a memorial of Joseph S. Milligan and Philip D. Meroney, praying compensation for damages sustained, in the year 1832, in consequence of the troops of the United States taking possession of their property, situated upon Unacoy road, in the Cherokee nation; which memorial was referred to the Committee of Claims,”* (United States House of Representatives 1836).

Such a claim was necessitated by the fact that when Federal troops under General Walker Keith Armistead arrived on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July they made controlled use of and soon entirely commandeered the stock stand (Montgomery 1832: 1).

This claim, as well as the multiple ensuing documents provides useful information about the context and extent of Meroney’s Stand. First and foremost, it geographically connects the locations of Meroney’s Stand and Camp/Fort Armistead. Testimony filed with Leonard Wood, Siting Justice of the Peace for Blount County, supporting the claim states “the officers having taken possession of one of Meroney’s houses, the largest and best house he had and occupied for their dining quarters,” which fortifies the Camp’s location as singular with the stand’s. In a note from Samuel M. Johnston, Justice of the Peace in Monroe County in 1836, describing a testimony from Erby Boyd, he writes “Gen. Armistead established in the Cherokee Nation, and in that part lying in Tennessee, a post called “Camp Armistead” on the Unacoy Turnpike road, and close to where Phillip D. Meroney had a stand,” (Johnston 1836). On top of this,

another testimony from Arthur H. McCauley, Treasurer of the Unicoi Turnpike Company, taken on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1836 by Justice of Peace Henry Stephens, states “Cherokees granting to the Unicoy Company the exclusive privilege of trading on the Unicoy Road, which likewise authorizes him (Meroney) to trade at a place called Coker Creek in that under this permission the said Meroney erected a house,” (Stephens 1836). The above two statements really limit the location of where the component of Meroney’s Stand could have geographically been located. Specifically, to Coker Creek, Tennessee, a contemporarily 12.56 square mile town in area, and along the Unicoi Turnpike. Further, as the location of Camp/Fort Armistead is now generally accepted, its connection with Meroney’s Stand firmly places this component at the site of 40MR708.

The documents and testimonies also note that Meroney stayed on site with the troops at least until December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1832, before he and his family were completely run off, as one witness judged by “when Meroney’s furniture was put out of doors,” by the troops, (McGhee 1836). As for the stock stand itself, the sources indicate that the Milligan and Meroney stand had at least two buildings, served as an inn, and certainly as a tavern judging by Meroney’s ample stores of whisky, (Wood 1836). It was also regarded by some “as one of the best stands then on the road (Unicoi),” (Johnston 1836).

### **Camp Armistead**

In 1831, gold was discovered around the hills of Coker Creek, Valley River, and in the many streams of the area (see Figure 3), setting in motion the events that would lead to the founding of Camp Armistead, (Troost 1837: 22). Immediately, the region was swarmed with prospectors hoping to strike it rich, however, since it was on Cherokee

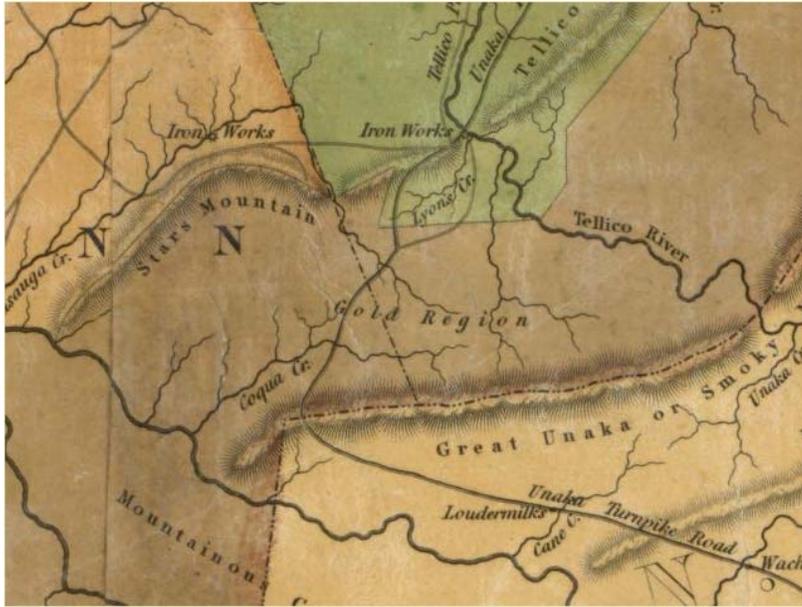


Figure 3. Excerpt from an 1832 map of the state of Tennessee. It depicts the Unicoi Turnpike Road, Coqua Creek, and the area of the town lying within the gold region, (Rhea 1832).

Nation lands, their actions were illegal. These intruders, as they were referred to, could not legally mine let alone settle on Cherokee owned lands. The states of Tennessee and North Carolina set out to protect Cherokee rights, but in reality the governors of Tennessee and North Carolina simply wanted the gold for their respective states (Riggs 2010: 1). Grievances to then President Andrew Jackson and Lewis Cass the Secretary of War, particularly by U.S. Cherokee Agent Hugh Montgomery, prompted Federal military action.

Lewis Cass sent General Walker Keith Armistead to be accompanied by Agent Hugh Montgomery, along with three companies of men. A letter written on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 1832 from Montgomery to Cass, detailed the daily itinerary of the expedition. General Armistead arrived at the Cherokee Agency headquarters in Calhoun, Tennessee on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1832, and along with Montgomery the two men set out on the 17<sup>th</sup> for the gold mines in Valley River. On the 18<sup>th</sup> they routed the “large number of persons dying for gold,” from the Coqua Creek Gold Mines, (Montgomery 1832: 1). On the 30<sup>th</sup> of

June, 1832 the two men met up with the body of the troops, which happens to coincidentally match the date that the Camp Armistead army post was officially founded, at least on paper, (Prucha 1964: 57).

The mission continued in such a similar fashion, until early July when “on the 9<sup>th</sup> the troops let out for Coqua Creek Mines 27 miles from the Ferry, where it was the intention of General Armistead to station them. This last movement was especially requested by me,” (Montgomery 1832: 2). Montgomery believed that their work would be undone if there was not a permanent military presence in the land, as the gold diggers would move right back in. He chose Coqua Creek for the same reason as all the other components at 40MR708 did, access to the developed and prevalent Unicoi Turnpike road, in this case for troop movement as well as delivery of provisions. This, in combination with the fact that Coker Creek was a “high, healthy, well watered place,” made it a perfect strategic choice for a military garrison, (Montgomery 1832: 2). Camp Armistead became the first federal military base in the Cherokee Nation, (Prucha 1964: 57).

General Armistead initially posted Companies A and B of the Second Regiment of Artillery commanded by Captain Francis S. Belton, and after running Philip Meroney off his stand, the troops settled into their new home where they remained from July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1832 through November of 1833. Camp Armistead was then vacated as Companies A and B were moved to Fort Mitchell in Alabama, (H.R. Doc. No. 2, 22<sup>nd</sup> congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session: 74.). In their stead, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Companies C and F under Brevet Major James S. McIntosh arrived on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1834, (Powell 1871: 28). Within a little over five months, Company F was ordered away on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1834 to Calhoun Tennessee,

where they erected Fort Cass (Powell 1871: 29). Company C remained alone for the second half of its roughly one year stay at Camp Armistead, until March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1835, when it too joined Company F at Fort Cass (Prucha 1964: 57). Almost two months passed with Camp Armistead unoccupied, when on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1835 Company F was re-stationed at the post, now known as Fort Armistead, till July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1835, (Powell 1871: 29).

### **Fort Armistead**

When Company F of the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry clears out of Fort Armistead on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1835, the fort enters one of its many periods of abandonment. Still, even then the presence of the Unicoi Turnpike road ensures that there is continuous albeit erratic usage and activity at the site. This is evidenced on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1835 by Lieutenant C.F.M. Noland, part of a Federal delegation travelling the Turnpike from Fort Cass, when he writes “Camp Armistead...is entirely in the occupancy of the Gold Diggers, who have over run the country,” (Noland 1835: 17). It seems that Hugh Montgomery’s premonition came to pass, without a permanent military presence in Coker Creek.

From the signing of the Treaty of New Echota on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1835 up until April of 1837, the fort saw sporadic use for military purposes, often only in passing by way of the Unicoi road. In the summer of 1836, on orders to suppress Native American uprisings in the Valley River region of North Carolina, which turned out to be untrue rumors, General John Ellis Wool and his force of East Tennessee Mounted Volunteers passed through Fort Armistead on route from Fort Cass. Shortly after in the fall of the same year, as the Cherokee Removal was picking up steam, General Wool advocated setting up an additional military base to aid in the removal effort. Although he supported

the re-occupation of Fort Armistead, the headquarters was constructed anew at the head of Valley River, named Camp Huntington and in October of 1837 became known as Fort Butler (Wool 1836: 50-51). Alas, the fort would have to stand idle for a while longer.

Intermittent occupation ceased in April 1827, when General Wool's East Tennessee Mounted Volunteers moved up the Unicoi Turnpike from Camp Huntington to Fort Armistead. For about eleven months, till March 1838, General Wool's men used the fort as a basecamp in their search for Creek Indians who were hiding to escape forced emigration brought about by the Second Creek War and the subsequent Creek Indian Removal, (Haveman 2009). It is precisely during this time span of occupation, that the currently sole found map depicting Fort Armistead was created, (see Figure 4 on the subsequent page).

After this occupation, Fort Armistead once again falls out of continuous and official use, and Federal records make little mention of any activity concerning the area, until 1838. To facilitate effective communication between the army bases along the Unicoi Turnpike, particularly Forts Butler and Cass, and thus aid in the expulsion of Cherokee, the army stationed Express Corps riders at what they then referred to as "Old Fort Armistead" in June of 1838 (Hetzl 1838). This route of Cherokee deportation would eventually come to be known as the infamous Trail of Tears.

Records and historical documentation are currently still patchy in the final years of the fort's usage for Indian Removal. However, notably, Major General Winfield Scott, one of the primary officers in charge of Cherokee Removal, and Lieutenant Robert Anderson spent the night at Fort Armistead June 13<sup>th</sup> into the 14<sup>th</sup> of 1838, as they

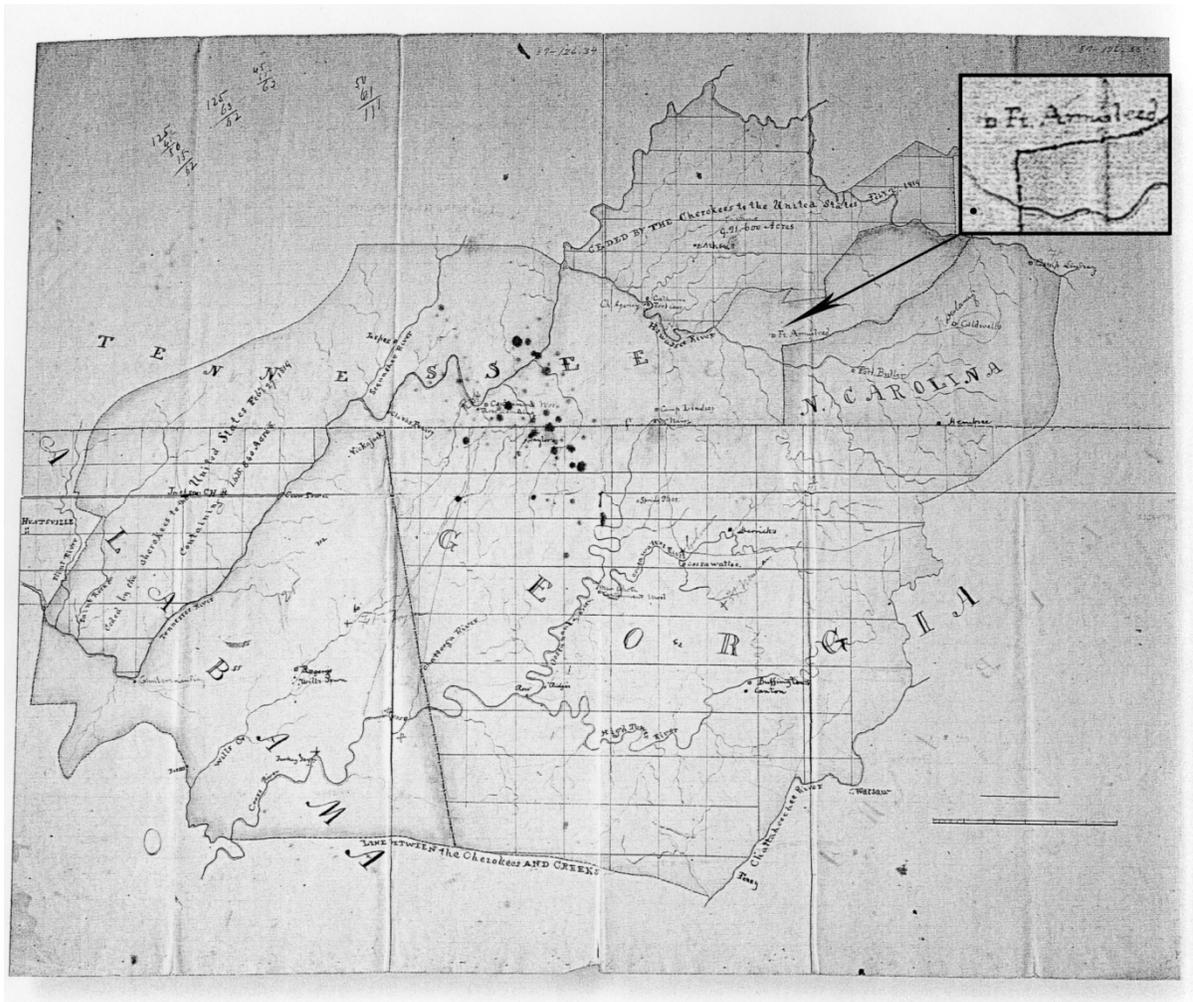


Figure 4. 1837 Map of the Cherokee Nation, showing the location of Fort Armistead, and other prominent military posts such as Forts Butler and Cass. Original in the archives of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Cherokee, North Carolina.

travelled to Fort Cass from Fort Butler (Phelps 1838). Such an event suggests that the fort was secure and decently livable, a condition possible through the presence of stationed troops. So, even though to date no specific documentation has been found demarcating Fort Armistead as a way station in the Trail of Tears, it makes logical sense it would be so, for the very same reason why Meroney's Stand stood where it did. The distance from Fort Butler to Fort Cass along the Turnpike road is 80 miles, and the Cherokee deportees as well as the officers would have needed rest and resupply stops (see Figure 5 next pg.).



After the majority of Cherokee were deported, the fort began to fade into the recesses of memory and history, as it lay inactive through August, and saw only increasingly brief sparks of activity. One such case was the use of the fort as an intermittent base for military outings into the region's mountains to capture Cherokee that evaded initial removal efforts, or managed to escape somewhere along the Trail of Tears, (Larned 1838). After this, the location of 40MR708 witnesses a more civilian occupation, at least for a time.

### **Robert Tunnell's Post Office**

After the conclusion of the Cherokee removal, the land that included old Fort Armistead passed into Robert Tunnell's ownership. Sometime before August 30<sup>th</sup> of 1839, a deed was executed granting land to individuals Noble J., James W., and William C. Tunnell in equal thirds. On the aforementioned date lawful action was carried out for "1/3 part and a moiety cast upon said Noble J. and myself (William C.) by the death of James W. Tunnell," which must have occurred sometime on or before the 30<sup>th</sup>, (Boyer 1970: 115). Soon after these events, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September of the same year, William C. Tunnell sold his recently granted third to his brother, Robert Tunnell. It is possible and more than reasonable that this third included the Fort Armistead tract, since the initial owner of the property was Robert Tunnell, in the same year of 1839 as the sale by his brother.

Robert Tunnell was neither stranger to this land, nor the structures that it may still have held at the time. Postal records of Monroe County indicate that Robert Tunnell was postmaster of Coker Creek post office from 1831 to 1839, and as was common practice,

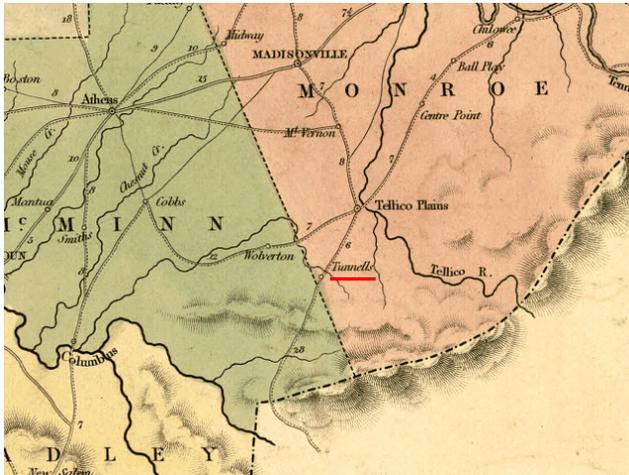


Figure 6. Excerpt from an 1839 map of Kentucky & Tennessee exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, etc., and depicting the location of Tunnell's post office on the Unicoi Turnpike in between Conasauga and Coker Creeks, (Burr 1839).

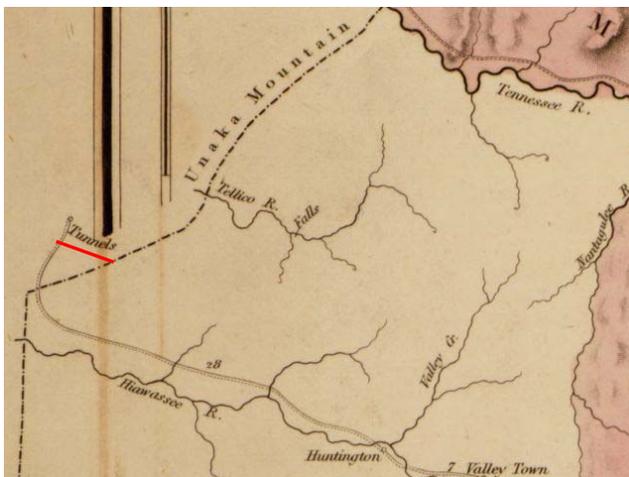


Figure 7. Excerpt from 1839 map of North and South Carolina. (Burr 1839).

the office was named Tunnell's, after him. Further corroborating his role as postmaster are Figures 6 and 7, maps published in 1839 by David H. Burr, who at the time was geographer to the House of Representatives, and used to be a topographer to the Post Office,

adding greatly to his credibility in placing Tunnell's post on the maps.

Figure 6 is a map of Kentucky and Tennessee showing the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, etc., published July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1839, effectively extending Tunnell's tenure as postmaster to at least that date. Figure 7, published on the same date, is a map of North and South Carolina. It shows the Unicoi Turnpike as it leads

into Tennessee, and the last stop included is Tunnel's. Both figures are out of Burr's American Atlas, created under the direction of the Post Master General. As such, they are reputed to be quite reliable, despite the omission of an 'L' in Tunnell's name in the North Carolina/South Carolina map. All maps place the location of Tunnell's postal office on the Unicoi Turnpike Road, roughly between the heads of Conasauga and Coker Creeks,

near the location of the Fort Armistead site. However, the precise location of Tunnell's post office is undocumented.

Once Tunnell's purchases the Armistead tract it is unclear whether he moves the location of the office and continues operations, or ceases to be postmaster altogether, as the purchase and tenure years both land on 1839. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, post offices typically sprung up in the locations of vacated forts, as at Forts Butler, Hembree, Delaney, Lindsey and Montgomery in North Carolina. Therefore, the use of the Fort Armistead property for a post office would certainly have been consistent in keeping with an established pattern, particularly after 1838.

The name of the subsequent post office after Tunnell's tenure is simply Coker Creek. Records show that the date of operation is 1841 to the present, which leaves uncertainty about the status of the postal office in Coker Creek from the end of Tunnell's tenure in 1839 to the year 1841. Tunnell may have continued as postmaster till 1841 and there is merely an inconsistency in the record keeping. Such a notion is potentially supported by a schematic map hand drawn by Johnson Rogers (see Figure 8) around April of 1841, (Rogers 1841). The map, used in

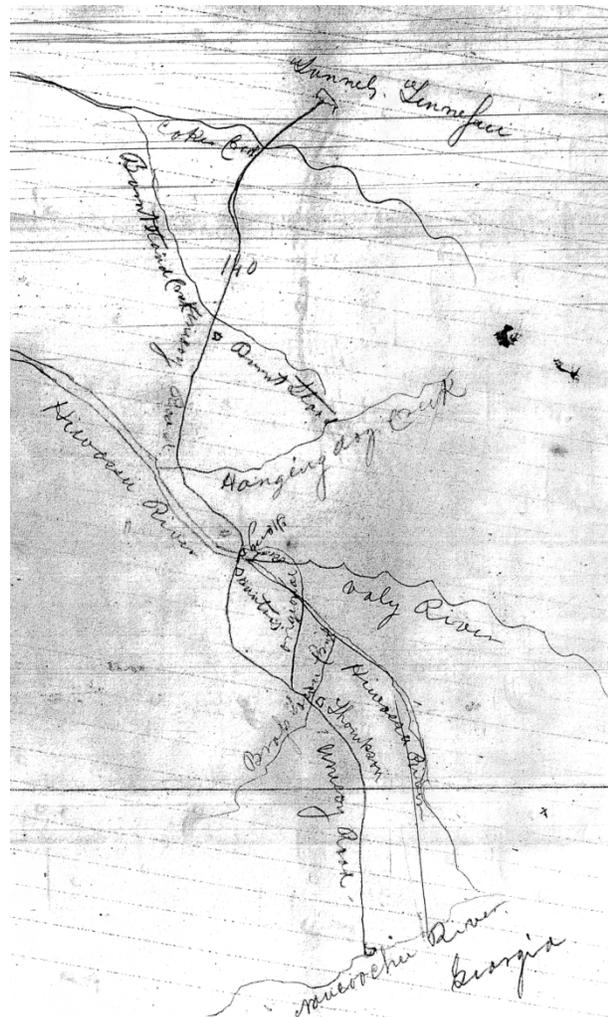


Figure 8. Hand drawn map by Johnson Rogers of part of the Unicoi Turnpike and stock stands.

defense of the value of a claim for carried out improvements to the land, depicts the Unicoi Turnpike and various stock stands along the route. From the south, it starts at Nacooche River in Georgia and terminates at a stop entitled Tunnels, Tennessee, just north of Coker Creek (the stream). This map suggests that Tunnell could have still been running the post office, or a stock stand from his new property on Unicoi road (Riggs 2011: 3).

On June 4, 1842 Robert Tunnell purchased more Ocoee District land in Hamilton County, east of the Tennessee River, southwest of Georgetown, and north of Snow Hill (McClure 1991: 101). Tunnell presumably moved his residence there, leaving the Fort Armistead property to slip into obscurity.

### **Camp Coker Creek**

Until the most recent major field season in the summer of 2011, investigators believed that after the Cherokee Removal and tenancy of Robert Tunnell, 40MR708 witnessed no other major occupations, outside of what came by use of the Turnpike and other transecting roads. However, closer exploration of the northeastern sector of the site revealed a series of 29 hearths aligned in four rows. Testing of four of these features recovered a handful of artifacts that clearly postdate the 1830s fort and stand components, and an additional mid-nineteenth century occupation was indicated.

Identification of this later occupation first involved review of primary and secondary documentary and literary sources. This review identified sparse accounts of a second substantial military presence in Coker Creek during the American Civil War.

Coker Creek and the surrounding region were a primary theater where the Civil War (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1861 – June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1865) played out as a local civil war. Tennessee is geographically split into three main regions; West and Middle by the Tennessee River and Middle and East by the Cumberland Plateau. Historically, these three often acted as though independent and when it came time to vote on secession on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1861, Middle and West voted seven to one to leave and East Tennessee voted more than two to one to stay in the Union, (Crow 1982: 17). After Tennessee joined the Confederacy, this division of values and allegiance continued throughout the war. In few places was relative-against-relative and neighbor-versus-neighbor conflict as hard felt and hard fought as in Eastern Tennessee. Pro-Unionist sentiment was particularly strong in the mountain regions of East Tennessee. People lashed out against the Confederacy, disrupting their operations, and helping Union forces so that the Confederacy almost lost this important region, considered a gateway to the heart of the South, (Crow 1982: 22).

William Holland Thomas, an influential North Carolina businessman and state senator, saw the true threat of this situation and advocated action, only to have his ideas fall on deaf ears. He then took it upon himself to raise two companies, the start of what would become Thomas' Confederate Legion of Cherokee Indians and Mountaineers (Crow 1982: 22-24). He was a longtime friend, agent, and political advocate of the roughly two thousand remaining Cherokee in western North Carolina, and raised two companies of Cherokee men, pledging to help the cause. By September 27<sup>th</sup> of 1862, Thomas recruited a full regiment (see Figure 9 on the subsequent page), the 69<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment, which consisted of an infantry regiment, cavalry battalion, and an artillery battery (added April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1862). The commanding officers were, respectively, Lt.

Col. James R. Love, Lt. Col. William C. Walker, and Captain J. Levi. These units were mustered from both western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, where they primarily served throughout much of the war.

The first task of the regiment was to stifle anti-Confederate sentiment in the mountains along the state line. To pursue these operations,

Walker's Confederate battalion

established a base of operations at Coker Creek, near Unionist strongholds, in 1862 (Brown & Coffey 2008: 42). According to the original muster roll document for field and staff of Walker's Battalion, "Battalion Headquarters was at Coker Creek, Tennessee at last muster," before it was transferred to Strawberry Plains, Tennessee on March 6<sup>th</sup> of 1863, (Stringfield 1862). From this sole surviving muster roll for field and staff of the battalion, it is unclear when this "last muster" actually occurred, but this terminus can be inferred from other accounts of Confederate activity at Coker Creek.

Five companies, all from Walker's Battalion, were associated with Coker Creek and the camp that was located there, (Stringfield 1862). These companies were:

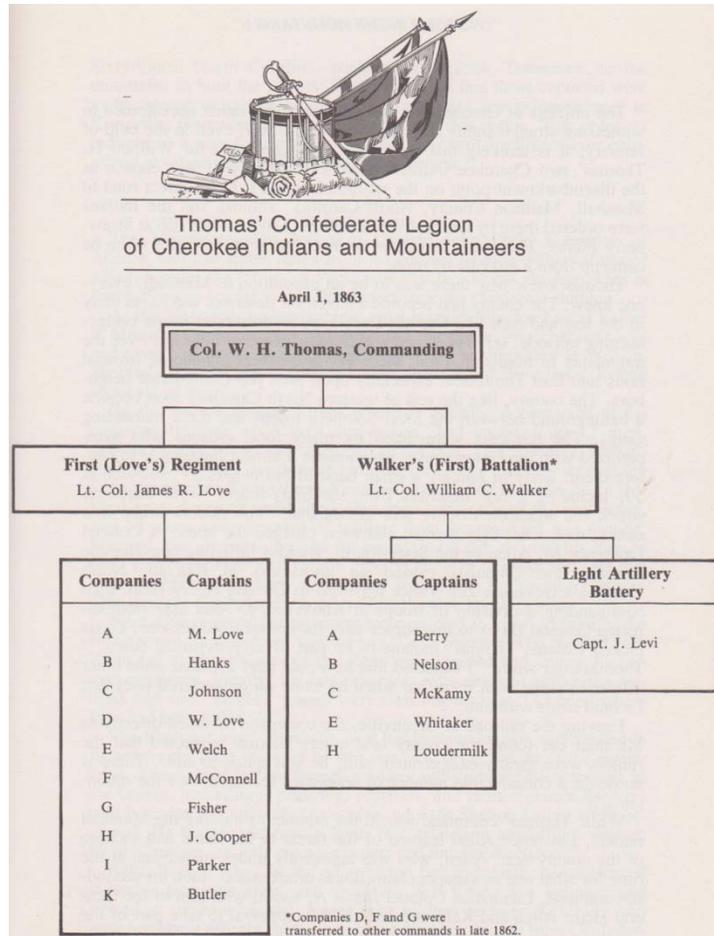


Figure 9. Organizational chart for Thomas' Legion.

### Company A

The first company (A) of Walker's Battalion was mustered in by William W. Stringfield in Beaverdam, Cherokee County on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862. C.C. Berry was elected captain of the 70 men and Company A was stationed the same day at Camp Coker Creek till August 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year (Crow 1982: 10). The company's whereabouts in the months of September and October are uncertain, but as no muster rolls exist saying otherwise, they are presumed to have continued their station at Coker Creek (Brown & Coffey 2008: 34). After their occupancy through November and December of 1862, it seems Company A, now a force of about 149 men, did not return to Camp Coker Creek again.

### Company B

Company B was actually mustered at Camp Coker Creek on July 19<sup>th</sup> of 1862 in the presence of recently arrived Company A, by William C. Walker himself. Walker was named Captain of the 82 man troop at first, but once elected Lieutenant Colonel of the whole battalion on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1862, William B. Nelson took over. After mustering in, Company B was stationed for about six months at Camp Coker Creek through February of 1863, where they grew to roughly 151 men strong and surely set up the necessities for winter quarters. Although their stay appears to be continuous, there are a total of four muster rolls associated with it, showing their stationing as:

- Camp Coker Creek, Tennessee in July 19 – August 31, 1862,
- Camp Coker Creek, Tennessee in July 19 – October 31, 1862,
- Coker Creek, Tennessee in November and December 1862,
- Coco Creek, Monroe County, Tennessee in January and February of 1863.

The role of Walker's Battalion at Coker Creek and the surrounding communities is documented by Major Stringfield's record of events on the last Camp Coker Creek muster roll:

*"The Company has been stationed on the N.C. + Tenn. Border to apprehend conscripts + deserters + to suppress disloyalty of E. Tenn. Tories. They constantly have some men out on scouting expeditions + have rendered considerable service in this particular. The Company is now about full + in good condition + would be of valuable service in the field.*

*W.W. Stringfield Major*

*+ Mustering and Inspecting Officer"*

(Stringfield 1862)

### Company E

The presence of Company E at Coker Creek is documented but the exact extent of occupation is unclear. This company, which initially consisted of 40 men under Captain Stephen Whitaker, was stationed through February of 1863 at Valley River, North Carolina (Camp Valletown). The record of events for this "January – February 1863" muster roll states that "the company is soon to be moved to Coker Creek, Monroe County, Tennessee and near the North Carolina line." The following roll indicates that the company was stationed at Zollicoffer, Tennessee for the duration of March and April. However, the subsequent two rolls claim that Company E arrived at Coker Creek from Camp Valletown on March 5<sup>th</sup>, and did not arrive at Zollicoffer till April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1863. Hence, it is unclear if Company E actually stayed at Camp Coker Creek from March 5<sup>th</sup> to April 28<sup>th</sup>, or if it simply passed through Coker Creek on its way to Zollicoffer.

### Company H

On the same day that Company E arrived at Camp Coker Creek (March 5, 1863), Company H was mustered and inspected there. Captain Garner N. Loudermilk, promoted from the ranks of Company B, organized an initial total of 90 men. The soldiers stayed at Coker Creek until re-stationing at Zollicoffer for the duration of March 11<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> of 1863.

### Company D Walker's Battalion / Company I Love's Regiment

This company's relation to the Camp Coker Creek site is indirect at best. Two soldiers, Private Robert Ely and Private James Harris both enlisted into the Confederate Army at Coco Creek on July 18<sup>th</sup> of 1862. This is the date that Company A reached Camp Coker Creek, and a day before William C. Walker mustered Company B there. Although the privates enlisted on that day, they were mustered into Company D at Valletown only on July 24<sup>th</sup>. When the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a whole was mustered in at Knoxville on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1862, Company D was transferred to Love's Regiment and became Company I.

### Walker's Battalion Headquarters

The enlisting officer for the two men above was Walker, meaning that he was personally there on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, 1862, alongside the recently arrived William W. Stringfield. It would thus make sense that Coker Creek served as the original battalion headquarters starting in July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862, judging from the ample mustering and recruiting activities carried out there. Likewise, the "last muster" date referred to in the field and staff muster roll, when "Battalion Headquarters was at Coker Creek, Tennessee," is the

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1862 muster of Company H. It could also be a later date, but after Companies A, B and H, no other companies are known to have mustered at Camp Coker Creek. Battalion headquarters were removed to Strawberry Plains, Tennessee a day later, on March 6<sup>th</sup>. These potential dates of July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862 through March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1863 of Coker Creek's tenure as Battalion Headquarters perfectly match up with the dates of company movements. As Company B left Camp Coker Creek at the end of February (Company A had already departed), Company E arrived there as Company H was mustered on March 5<sup>th</sup> of 1863. This indicates the planned and organized manner of military movements, adds credibility to the dates and sources, and explains why the physical encampment was not overly large.

Coker Creek became a true hotbed of Civil War activity. By October of 1863, the eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina mountains were ablaze with irregular warfare. Of particular note were the increasingly bold and numerous Union and Unionist bushwacker raids into Confederate controlled territories (Crow 1982: 51). On October 26<sup>th</sup>, M.T. Williams spotted such a gang of bushwhackers passing his house, led by Captain Goldman Bryson. He immediately alerted General John Crawford Vaughn, in Monroe County at the time, and the two men accompanied by a troop of soldiers set to chase (Lenoir 1916: 403-404). M.T. Williams scouted ahead and reported that the "bushwhackers had struck the Old Turnpike road at Coco Creek and gone on in the direction of N.C." The band rested at then deserted [Camp?] Coker Creek, though for only part of the night, before they continued the pursuit. On the 27<sup>th</sup> they overtook the Union raiders, called Bryson's Boys, but their commander, Goldman Bryson escaped in

the ensuing skirmish. Lieutenant Campbell H. Taylor with a squad of Cherokee from Walker's Battalion Company B joined the hunt on the 28<sup>th</sup>, (Taylor 1863: 325). The same day Taylor and company caught and killed Bryson at his home on Coker Creek, (Lenoir 1916: 403-404).

### **Union Activity in Coker Creek**

Coker Creek also witnessed some brief Union presence during the Civil War. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1863, General Sherman ordered two Union regiments under the command of Colonel Eli Long, to give pursuit of a Confederate 300 wagon supply train. The Union troops started in Maryville, Tennessee and set out for Murphy, North Carolina, crossing the Little Tennessee River at Tomotley Ford (known to soldiers at the time as Motley's Ford), passing through Tellico Plains, over the Unaka and Long Ridge mountain ranges, and arriving December 9<sup>th</sup> (Long 1864: 562). Long reported that they encountered no enemy resistance along the way, and that the road from Maryville to Murphy was good. He states that "after leaving Tellico Plains the route lies through a mountainous country, but the road over the mountains is well engineered and practicable for wagons." This describes the revamped Hiwassee Turnpike or Madisonville-Murphy Road, which runs along contemporary TN highway 68, roughly 300 meters west of 40MR708. This road supplanted the Unicoi Turnpike which by 1850 was essentially defunct and had been described as one of the worst roads in the country. On the 11<sup>th</sup> instant the troops made their way back to Tellico Plains along the same route, passing through or near Camp Coker Creek and old Fort Armistead. As indicated by Confederate muster roll and movement information, no Confederate forces were near the area, just as Col. Long

reported. This is consistent with the general trend of the Confederacy losing hold in eastern Tennessee in late 1863, and instead moving to set up defenses in western North Carolina.

On February 12<sup>th</sup> of 1864, Colonel O.H. La Grange sent scouts from Tomotley Ford that went through Tellico Plains and Coker Creek; they arrived in Cherokee County, North Carolina to witness six Confederate companies on furlough, (La Grange 1864: 404). The scouts reported that “the road good to Tellico Plains, thence mountainous.” This is descriptive of the main road through the area, and Camp Coker Creek was placed on a loop off of this road. That loop happened to be the old Unicoi Turnpike. In addition their route was “not blockaded; no body of troops near this place,” which is consistent with the movements of Confederate forces at the time.

In a letter to Colonel O.H. La Grange, N. Paine, Major of the First Wisconsin Cavalry, details an expedition he and 250 men undertook starting on February 17<sup>th</sup> of 1864. They travelled from Tomotley Ford on the Little Tennessee River to Murphy, N.C. and were tasked with exploring the surrounding vicinity along the route, in hopes of routing rebels, (Paine 1864: 405). The troop split into various detachments in an effort to divide and conquer but eventually rendezvoused at Murphy on February 19<sup>th</sup>, where they proceeded to march 14 miles toward Tennessee. The following evening, February 20<sup>th</sup>, after marching for 18 miles, the Union force came to rest at Cocoa Creek where they camped for the night, (Paine 1864: 1). Presumably the location was chosen due to its proximity to their road of use in combination with the fact that the site may still have had useable facilities left over from Camp Coker Creek or even Fort Armistead. The

following day the men reached Tellico Plains, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant arrived at headquarters in Tomotley Ford.

No further Civil War activity in the Fort Armistead/Camp Coker Creek area is documented. After the war, the 40MR708 property passed into the hands of the Lenderman family, then through a succession of owners through the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the property was acquired by the U.S. Forest Service in 2006.

## CHAPTER 3

### Archaeology of 40MR708

Although minor archaeological reconnaissances of 40MR708 were conducted during the 1990s, sustained archaeological investigations did not occur until 2008, when University of North Carolina archaeologists began an on-going program of site evaluation for the U.S. Forest Service. Initial investigations included extensive, systematic metal detection survey and mapping. The results of this survey, illustrated in Figure 10, indicate a cohesive and coherent site structure, with the distributions of metal

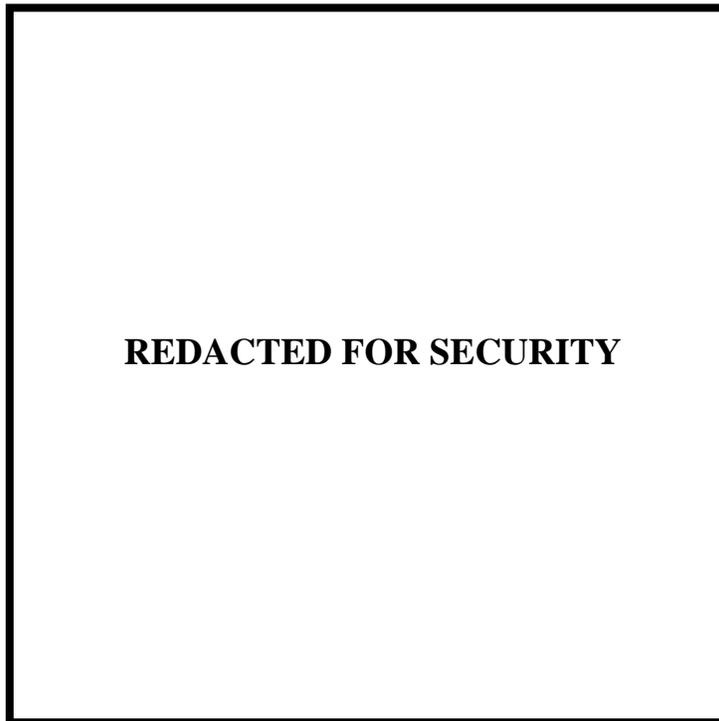


Figure 10. Contour map of site 40MR708 indicating distribution of metal artifacts (red markers) identified by the systematic metal detection survey.

artifacts closely correlated to architectural ruins and other features apparent at the site surface. Test excavations have targeted a number of features apparent as surface anomalies and recovered associated materials that allow assignment of features to particular occupation episodes

Survey and testing has facilitated reconstruction of

the basic fort layout and allowed identification of contexts not directly associated with the fort occupation (refer to Figure 11 below and the upcoming feature descriptions).

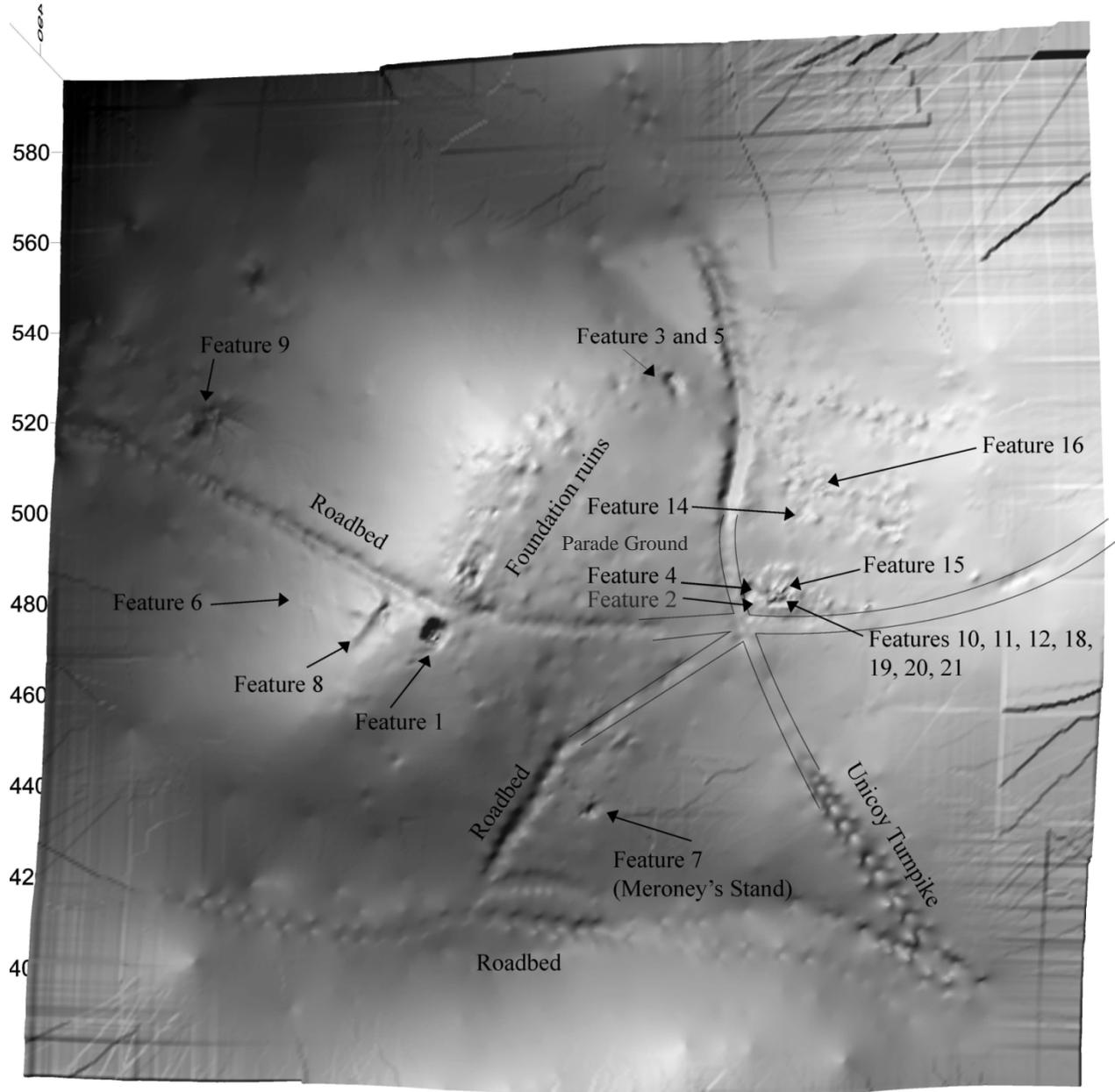


Figure 11. 3-Dimensional elevation map showing the spatial layout of 40MR708 and associated features.

Because the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed bisects the site into eastern and western sectors, it is used as reference for the following discussion. Directly to the west of this roadbed is Fort Armistead's parade ground. The designation of the area as a parade ground stems from the fact that it is even and flat, most likely by way of landscaping efforts judging by the hilly and rough terrain surrounding it. In addition, from what can be seen at the surface, it is completely void of any structural features, and metal detection hits are very low in comparison to the rest of the site. The parade ground abuts a row of buildings, demarcated by superficially exposed foundations and ruins, on its western edge. This row of structures, the probable central component of the fort proper, holds a dominating position on the highest point of the hilltop. This arrangement is comparable to that illustrated in an 1837 sketch of Fort Butler (Figure 12), which is located 18.75 miles southeast of Fort Armistead (in present-day Murphy, North Carolina). Directly to the



Figure 12. 1837 sketch of Fort Butler, (U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers 1837).

west of the row of structure ruins is a fairly steep slope that descends to the creek bed at the base of the hill. East of the Unicoi road are two archeological configurations of note. The first is Feature 10, a low mound of redeposited soil that covers substantial stone foundations of a structure aligned with the main fort. The second complex of features, and those most relevant to this study, is four aligned rows of stone piles (constituting 29 piles) north of the capped foundations and east of the Turnpike, with the southernmost row running over and intruding the fill mound. Prior to the excavation of these stone piles in 2011, they were inferred to be foundation piers for another building row or even a connecting series of buildings, such as a barracks (Riggs 2011: 4). The rectangular row orientation of associated metal artifacts, fairly consistent spacing intervals of the piles, and the approximate alignment of the rows to the main fort grid, albeit perpendicular, all support this original hypothesis. Testing of four of these stone piles in 2011 revealed that they are all hearths, which were initially thought to be used by soldiers posted at Fort Armistead. However, the temporally diagnostic artifacts recovered from the tested hearths indicated a post 1830s occupation and the presence of another, previously unknown, component of site 40MR708.

Excavations conducted since March 2008 have opened a total of 70 one-meter square units and a total of 21 archaeological features (See Figure 13). Many more of such surface features have been observed, but they have not yet been assigned a discrete feature designation pending test confirmation. Brief feature descriptions are as follows:

Feature 1 is a powder magazine pit that measures 3.5m by 3.5m at 2.1m deep. The lower portion of the pit wall retains stacked dry-stone walls of hammer dressed schist slabs.

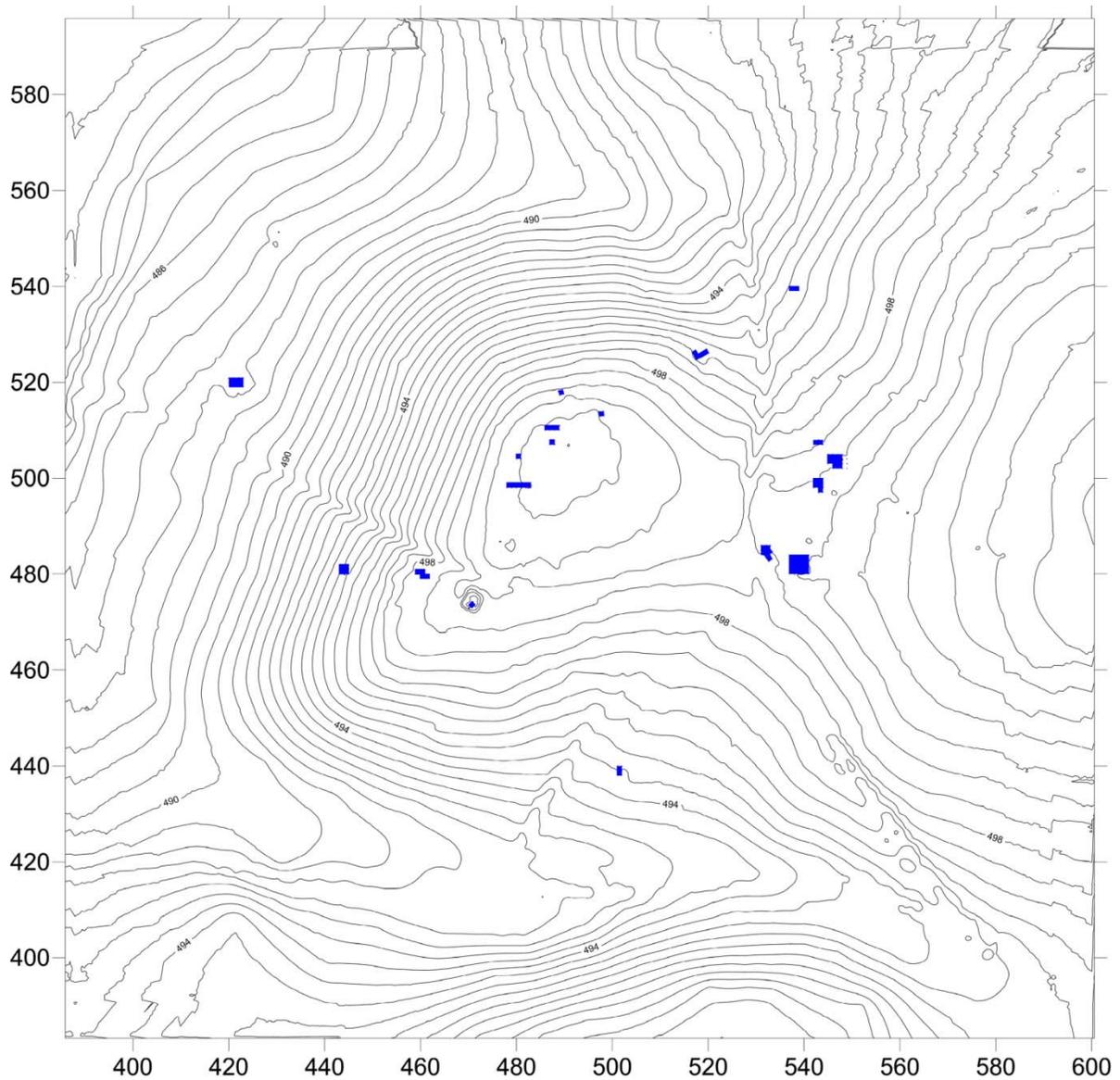


Figure 13. Contour map of site 40MR708 indicating in blue, the locations of excavated units to date.

Under the schist lining was a prepared sand floor with wooden board fragments, atop a level base cut into clay and soft bedrock. This floor context yielded lamp glass fragments, nails, pearlware sherds and military buttons, all of which date to an 1830s period construction and use. Further, the magazine pit is spatially aligned on the same grid as the main structures of Fort Armistead to the north of it, solidifying its position as part of this complex.

Feature 2 was originally interpreted as a hearth-front pit cellar associated with the base of a chimney and intact hearth deposits (Feature 4) just to the east of the Unicoi roadbed.

However, testing in 2011

demonstrated that Feature 4 (Figure 14) is a hearth that is oriented away from Feature 2, and spatial relationship of these contexts appears incidental. Feature 2 apparently predates Feature 4, but probably postdated the Fort Armistead occupation.



Figure 14. The excavated Feature 4 hearth.

Features 3 & 5 designate a depression in the ground with an associated spoil pile, and are interpreted as a fort latrine area. Dense clusters of metal artifacts surround the depression, and excavation of the pit itself produced artifacts congruent with an 1830s construction and use. However, it is slightly off kilter from the alignment of Fort Armistead, and actually aligns more closely to the later rows of hearth features east of the turnpike roadbed.

Feature 6 is a shallow but dense sheet midden of hearth debris dumped on the southwestern hill slope of the site. Once again the contents were associated with the

1830s military component, and contained calcined bones, container glass, cut nails, and buttons.

Feature 7 is a large open cellar pit situated on the southern slope of the site. Artifacts recovered from around and within this depression are associated with an 1830s civilian/domestic occupation, rather than the military use of Fort Armistead. This feature lays just to the west of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed and east of a smaller road which branches off the turnpike. It is interpreted as the cellar of Philip D. Meroney's stock stand, a domestic occupation that immediately predates Fort Armistead. This possible stand location is a naturally strategic area, down slope from the hilltop of the fort proper, so as to avoid wind, and in a good position to take advantage of winter sun. The topmost levels of excavation of this feature also produced some military related artifacts, such as federal buttons, which is consistent with the military commandeering of Meroney's stand in 1832.

Feature 8 is a large berm made of spoil from the original excavation of the adjacent magazine pit (Feature 1) just southeast. The spoil was used as landscaping over the slope northwest of the magazine pit to create more even and flat ground. This feature had 1830s material on top and directly beneath the spoil dirt, but the dirt itself contained only Archaic period lithic materials.

Feature 9 designates a subsurface pit complex located at the western base of the slope leading away from the fort proper. The full extent of the pit's dimensions and purpose are

still unclear, although evidence points to the area's potential role as a blacksmith shop during the 1830s occupations. The area's proximity to water, multiple excavated corroded iron fragments, and a large iron bar and piece of slag (both found in the creek bottom), all support the abovementioned hypothesis. Excavation and metal detection survey revealed an ample amount of metal in and around the feature, and recovered artifacts included sizeable slag, high concentrations of cut nails, charcoal, faunal remains, daub, and somewhat more diagnostic pink/red sponge decorated sherds.

Feature 10 designates an entire complex of deposits and constructions located immediately east of the turnpike roadbed. The earliest element is a dug rectangular trench with large flat fieldstone foundations for a structure that had at some point burned and been subsequently razed before the whole area was filled and capped. Feature 10 technically refers to this builder's trench, the stone foundation, liberal stone dressing debris and the yellow brown fill of the trench. It has been tied to the Fort Armistead occupation since the foundation aligns perfectly with the grid upon which the rest of the fort was built. Other features were identified progressing stratigraphically upward, and are as follows (refer to Figure 15 on the next page):

Feature 12 was a distinct and confined area of burned soil and artifacts associated with a zone on and among the foundation stones, characteristic of a burning episode (Esarey 2011: 2). Visible on the western side of the laid foundation in Figure 15.



Figure 15. Aerial photograph of 4X4 meter excavation block over Feature 10 foundation ruins.

Feature 21 was a more mottled and less distinct lens of burned soil, associated with Feature 12 and lying directly on the foundation stones, as seen along the southern wall of the excavation block.

Feature 15 is rectangular, stone-lined, hearth box cut into the side of the fill mound that caps the razed Feature 10 foundations, and is associated with the re-occupation of the Fort Armistead property sometime after 1838. See Figure 16.



Figure 16.  
Feature 15, a hearth belonging to the proposed Camp Coker Creek occupation.

Feature 18 is a potential occupational floor, just north of and associated with Feature 15, demarcated by a sill log along the northern edge of the firebox (Esarey 2011: 3).

Feature 11 is a small pit from one of three intrusive digging episodes into the fill mound, all of which seem to postdate the Feature 15 hearth structure, if only by a small period of time. This feature contained compact hearth deposits at its base, and

was subsequently filled to the top with a dark, soft fill containing both burned and unburned faunal remains. Artifacts included nails, glass, buttons, and elbow pipe fragments.

Feature 20 closely resembles Feature 11, except that this digging and fill episode did not contain the compact hearth debris at its base. Artifacts included nails, glass, and elbow pipe fragments.

Feature 19 is another pit, similar to the abovementioned Feature 20, except this fill did not contain any pipe fragments.

This sequence of features (10, 12, 21, 15, 18, 11, 20, and 19) was noted from the surface level by a roughly 25 cm high mound of earthen fill, as well as a dense presence of subsurface metal artifacts.

Features 14 & 16 – Both of these features are hearths/fireboxes, elements of the complex of 29 such structures located on the east side of the turnpike. The rows and associated hearths are part of the proposed Camp



Figure 17. Feature 14, an excavated hearth/firebox.

Coker Creek component of the site. See Figures 17 above and 18 on the subsequent page.



Figure 18. In progress excavations of Feature 16.

### **Statement of Problem**

Surface investigations at 40MR708 identified multiple architectural ruins and other features in a linear arrangement oriented N62°E. Cultural materials recovered in association with these features and structures are indicative of a military occupation dating to the 1830s. These remains, which are consistent with early 19<sup>th</sup> century military garrisons, are identified as representing the Fort Armistead occupation of the site.

Another structure, represented by stone foundations at the base of Feature 10, is located roughly 50 meters east of the main fort row. The structure foundations are also oriented N62°E and material associations designate their contemporaneity with Fort Armistead. These structures and their spatial relationships with one another indicate planning and structural discipline in the placement of fort buildings. Surface reconnaissance also

identified 29 piles of field stone, many of which are slightly raised, arranged in four rows. These are oriented approximately N103°E and deviate 14° from the dominant alignment of Fort Armistead. Testing of four such stone piles revealed that they are the crumbled remains of hearths, and materials recovered within and around them suggest the presence of an occupation that postdates Fort Armistead. The quantity and spatial arrangement of the hearths, as well as the associated artifacts, support a hypothesis of military association. Review of documentary evidence indicates that Camp Coker Creek, a major Civil War era Confederate encampment, was located in the vicinity of the former Fort Armistead.

The following analyses of site location, spatial layout and artifact distributions, intends to evaluate and support the likelihood that the location of Camp Coker Creek is congruent with that of Fort Armistead and Meroney's Stand. Further, the degree to which these components are spatially discrete or intermixed is also addressed. First, analysis of the layout of the rows of hearth features and comparison to similar, documented arrangements in historical and archaeological sources will address the hypothesis that this standard and planned collection of hearths represents a military encampment. Second, analysis will also focus on six temporally diagnostic artifact categories, including window glass, munitions, uniform/civilian buttons, military accoutrements, ceramic vessel sherds, and personal items. The diagnostic nature of the finds will be used to identify the occupational time periods of associated groups, and the distribution of these items will help delineate the spatial extent of each component, particularly noting areas of overlap.

## **Site Structure of 40MR708**

First on the list of support for these claims is the overall structure of the hearth features, and their spatial interrelations. The similarity in site structure between the northeastern portion of 40MR708 and other documented and researched Civil War encampment sites is undeniable. Based on investigations to date, features associated with the putative Camp Coker Creek seem to all be situated east of the Unicoy Turnpike road and northwest of a road that was recorded in March 2012, the most recent field investigation. The latter road connects over the parade ground to the roadbed leading past the Fort Armistead row of buildings down the western slope to the creek bed. The group of features is bounded by these two roadbeds on all sides except north, suggesting that the roads pre-date the features' construction. As previously mentioned, these collapsed stone piles were thought to be barracks foundation ruins until 2011 investigations excavated four piles and revealed them to be hearths/fireboxes. There are a total of 29 hearths arranged in four rows of seven with one hearth removed eastward from the others and placed alongside the road to the southeast of the encampment and heading northeast (marked in green) (See Figure 19 on subsequent page). The hearths are highlighted in red, and the two blue markers denote rock tumbles, most likely from collapsed chimney structures. For ease of discussion, the southernmost east-west row of hearths will be referred to as 1N the subsequent one north is 2N, the next one up 3N, and the northernmost 4N. The spacing between the rows and columns and the overall encampment's alignment on a roughly cardinal grid is highly reminiscent of the style and structure of documented Civil War military camps (See Figures 20 and 21 on the next page), (Geier 2006: 199-200).

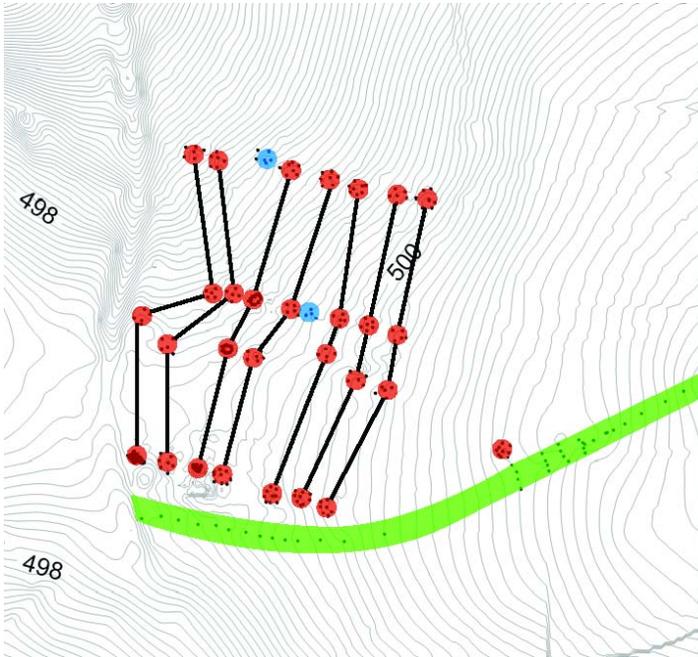


Figure 19. Enlarged portion of the northeastern sector of 40MR708, indicating the rows of hearths in red, chimney falls in blue, and a road that predates and bounds the encampment in green.

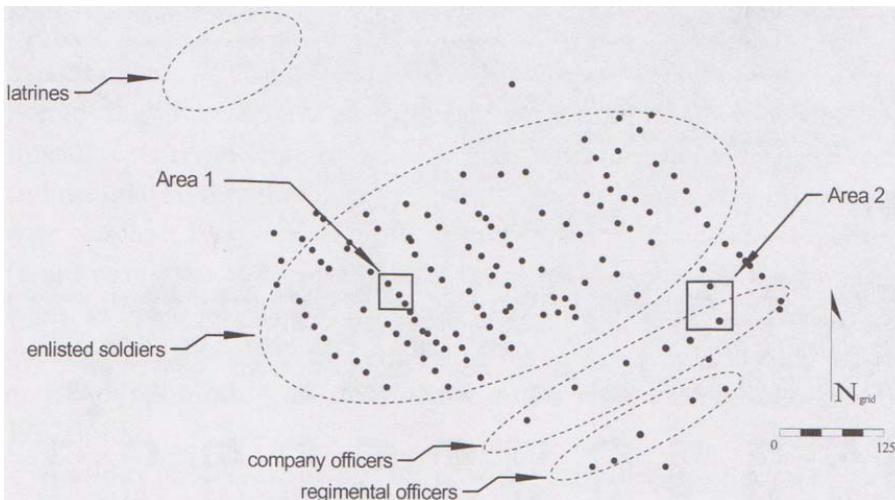
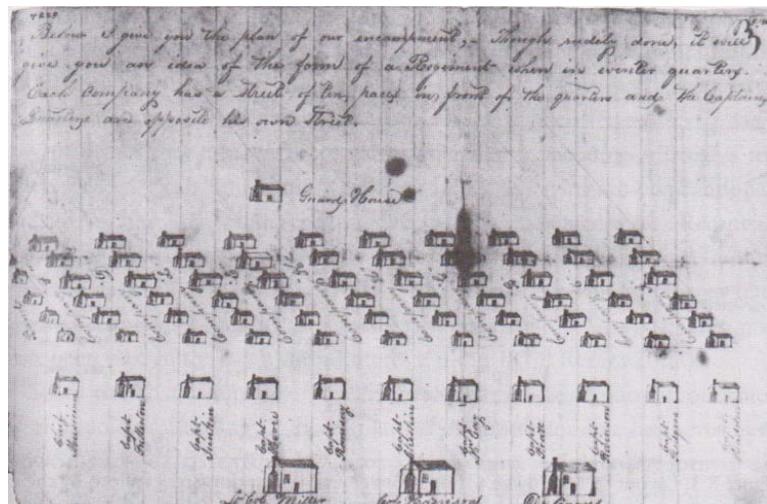


Figure 20. Excavation interpretations for the Civil War era McGowan Camp in Montpelier, Virginia. Individual dots are hearths, and/or structural remains that are otherwise associated with living quarters.

Figure 21. 1862 sketch of a Confederate Civil War camp in South Carolina, depicting rows and spacing reminiscent of the 40MR708 hearths.



Regardless of Union or Confederate affiliation, military camps had a standardized ideal dating to the organizational work of Frederick W.A. Von Steuben after the Revolutionary War (Geier 2006: 32). However, one consistency in Civil War camp structure was a tendency to vary this theoretical ideal, as dictated by location, discipline, and overall conditions. Nevertheless, the predominant unifying aspect that remains in all but the rarest camps of a long-term nature is the construction of soldiers' quarters in parallel rows (Geier 2006: 68). Such an alignment is present at 40MR708. Characteristic of this layout is the grouped spacing, visible as well at Camp Coker Creek. Rows 4N – 3N and 2N – 1N are equally spaced, respectively, while 3N – 2N are spaced about half that distance apart. The seven columns are also aligned on an approximate north-south line, but as is evident from Figure 19, this linear relationship falters as the columns progress westward. The three eastern most columns are quite well aligned, and the next two to the west are roughly so, while the last two in each row are fairly erratic in their placement.

However, this incongruent alignment is a product of the fairly uneven terrain upon which the encampment is positioned, which actually speaks to the spatial relationship between the Camp Coker Creek and Fort Armistead components. It suggests that when the Confederate forces (most likely Companies A and B of Walker's Battalion) arrived, they found some of the structures and features of Fort Armistead still intact. Although the buildings were most likely in ruins, the flat parade ground was certainly still there. Thus, their decision to set up camp on rough and broken ground instead of the already level and mostly clear parade ground implies that they wanted to keep this space unoccupied and make further use of it. More than likely, the various companies that were stationed at Camp Coker Creek used the plot for drills, formation practice, and other

military training. Additionally, sloped terrain was often favored to facilitate effective drainage of rainwater away from the sleeping quarters, (Geier 2006: 200).

The placement of one hearth farther to the east, away from all the others, is a curious and as yet unexplained aspect of this camp, but its position helps in identifying the temporal sequence of area features. The fact that it is found practically up against a roadbed (in green in Figure 19) immediately to its southeast, suggests the road pre-dates the encampment. It is much more likely that the structure was placed there as a sort of “look out” as opposed to the road construction taking an unnatural curve to avoid it. Also, based on other documented encampment constructions, the lone hearth could be the remains of more elaborate officers’ quarters, commonly removed from the main force lodgings. However, the infrequency of metal hits around this hearth is inconsistent with such a notion and beckons further archaeological investigation.

Civil War encampments usually had one or more latrines and trash dumps aligned on the same layout grid, about 150 yards away. No such contexts or deposits have yet been identified. However, as is evident in Figure 22 on the following page, there is a relatively dense scatter of metal artifacts throughout the entire encampment. Close examination also reveals that almost every hearth structure has an adjacent denser area of metal artifacts. This suggests that the hearths were used for a substantial period of time to accumulate such deposits; and that each hearth had a somewhat more permanent constructed superstructure connected with it. The spacing between the rows and columns of hearths, speaks to the size of superstructure that each of these features was part of, though not so much to the potential type. Allotment for streets between the rows, which facilitate movement throughout the camp, leaves a restrained amount of room in which a

log and/or canvas structure could have been erected. The moderate frequency of recovered nails, associated metal hits, and relatively large size of hearths, suggests a wood and canvas structure housing roughly six men. Although structures of permanence and comfort were a rarity in the Civil War, particularly for Confederates, military bases that were witness



Figure 22. Contour map of northeastern quadrant of site 40MR708, indicating metal detecting survey distribution laid over positions of encampment hearth rows.

to recruitment, mustering and training, as Camp Coker Creek was, often featured such structures, (Geier 2006: 43). The rough estimate of six or so soldiers per hearth (a total of 174) is more than consistent with the roughly 80 – 150 men that would have been encamped for winter quarters.

As with the preceding components, the Unicoy Turnpike Road and its direct connection to the Madisonville-Murphy Road is a primary factor in Camp Coker Creek's probable placement at the location of the former Fort Armistead. Proximity to a wide, well-developed road is crucial for any military force. Troops need to be quickly and easily moved, over a route that is not unnecessarily strenuous. Further, the transport of provisions to and from the site needs to be efficient and often swift. The 40MR708 site lies on a hilltop, a uniformly strategic spot from a military standpoint, as it is always an

advantage to have the higher ground when defending an area. The location is also well watered, lying near a creek and having two natural springheads situated towards the base of the western slope. The logical reasons why Fort Armistead was placed on this hilltop resonate equally in the decision to locate Camp Coker Creek at this same location.

The spatial organization of multiple hearths documented in the northeastern quadrant of 40MR708 is consistent with documented arrangements of winter quarters in Civil War era encampments. Further, the size of this component (29 hearths) is consistent with the needs for one company of 80-150 soldiers—precisely the historically documented scale of winter encampments at Camp Coker Creek. It is noteworthy that no other military occupations of this scale are documented for the Coker Creek area. Furthermore, placement of such an encampment at a convenient and defensible strategic location (as indicated by the presence of the former Fort Armistead) is also consistent with logical and standard military practice. Thus, the hypothesis that the arrangement of 29 hearths represents a military occupation is likely. Analysis of recovered associated artifacts will support the aforementioned hypothesis, by assessing the possible chronology of this component, to see if it at least spans the 1862-'63 occupation of the camp, further strengthening the case for placing Camp Coker Creek at 40MR708.

### **Window Glass Thickness Analysis**

Investigations at 40MR708 have recovered of a rather large amount of flat glass, which in 19<sup>th</sup> century military contexts is generally attributable to window pane glass. This artifact type has been found throughout much of the site, and almost all units and features contain at least one piece. The relative abundance of window pane glass, and its

susceptibility to relative dating by measurement of thickness renders this artifact class particularly useful for defining temporal components at 40MR708 and identifying spatial patterns in each component's use of the site. Because the Fort Armistead occupation and the hypothesized Camp Coker Creek occupation are separated by nearly three decades, with only sparse intervening domestic occupation, analysis of associated window glass should yield both temporal and spatial definition of the major components.

In the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, window glass manufacturing techniques switched from spinning molten glass into sheets and making crown glass, to cylinder glass made by cutting hollow tubes of glass along the side. This latter method produced larger panes that were of a highly uniform thickness throughout, (Weiland 2009: 1). The basis for this dating method is that throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>, window glass made by the cylinder method gradually became thicker, (Davis 1949). Spurred by demand for larger and thus thicker panes, as well as improved methods, the increase in thickness is fairly uniform over time, until machine standardization in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century fixed pane thickness around 3 mm (Moir 1987).

Because the gradual change in window glass thickness is somewhat uniform, measurement of archaeological window pane thickness, as compared to developed standards, provides a method for determining approximate spans of site occupation in 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts. Although window glass analysis is not the most popular or thoroughly researched dating method, developed techniques are useful for determining relative dates for initial construction episodes. The main stipulation is that there are often broad regional differences in window glass thickness, as not all manufacturers changed production thicknesses concurrently, and most methods are thus regionally specific. Of

the eight most common and verified methods, Randall W. Moir's (1982) and Christopher M. Schoen's (1990), were used in the following analysis, picked primarily based on region of application. Moir's method for the South and Northeast U.S., and Schoen's method for the U.S. Plains are the most relevant to the 40MR708 site. While the dates they produced were less than precise in terms of year (as compared to documented spans of occupation at 40MR708), they were still very useful in recognizing modal distributions related to the various components at 40MR708 that utilized windows in their construction. Although the calculated date ranges deviate from the actual years of occupation, as the formulas are regionally calibrated, the intervals between the years and modes are still accurate and useable. Even though both methods produced very similar outcomes, the Moir method will be referred to from here on out, as its results better approximate the known range of site occupation, most likely due to the more relevant region of application.

Every window glass dating method has its own strictures and exclusions. Moir's formula is:

$$\text{Date of site construction} = 84.22 (\text{thickness in mm}) + 1712.$$

In addition, Moir recommends 15 to 20 pieces of glass for viable results, a sample size that was difficult to derive from most contexts at 40MR708. Many units, zones, and features had but one piece of glass, and on average any given context yielded about five pieces. Such small samples allow individual glass fragments to weight the relative age of a context. In all 254 pieces of window glass were measured to the nearest 0.01 of a millimeter, using SWISS SPI 6'' Dial Calipers. Eighty of these pieces were recovered

from features, 92 others were recovered from the mixed fill contexts of the 4X4 meter excavation block over Feature 10.

The calculated dates and frequencies of the 254 pieces are illustrated by the Figures 23 and 24 histogram plots, with yearly intervals of 5 and 3 respectively. A few key trends are immediately evident. First, there are two fairly distinct thickness modes, each representing a major construction event corresponding to the Fort Armistead and Camp Coker Creek components (respectively). The high frequency bars in blue represent Camp/Fort Armistead. These pieces of glass measured in between 1.2 and 1.5 millimeters and as is reflected in the diagrams, were the most numerous found on site. This fits well with the scale and span of the Fort Armistead component, as it was by far the most extensive and long lasting one, at just over six years. The red bars represent the thicker glass of the hypothesized Camp Coker Creek occupation, with pane thicknesses

### Histogram of Window Glass Dates Derived by the Moir Method in Association with their Frequencies of Occurrence

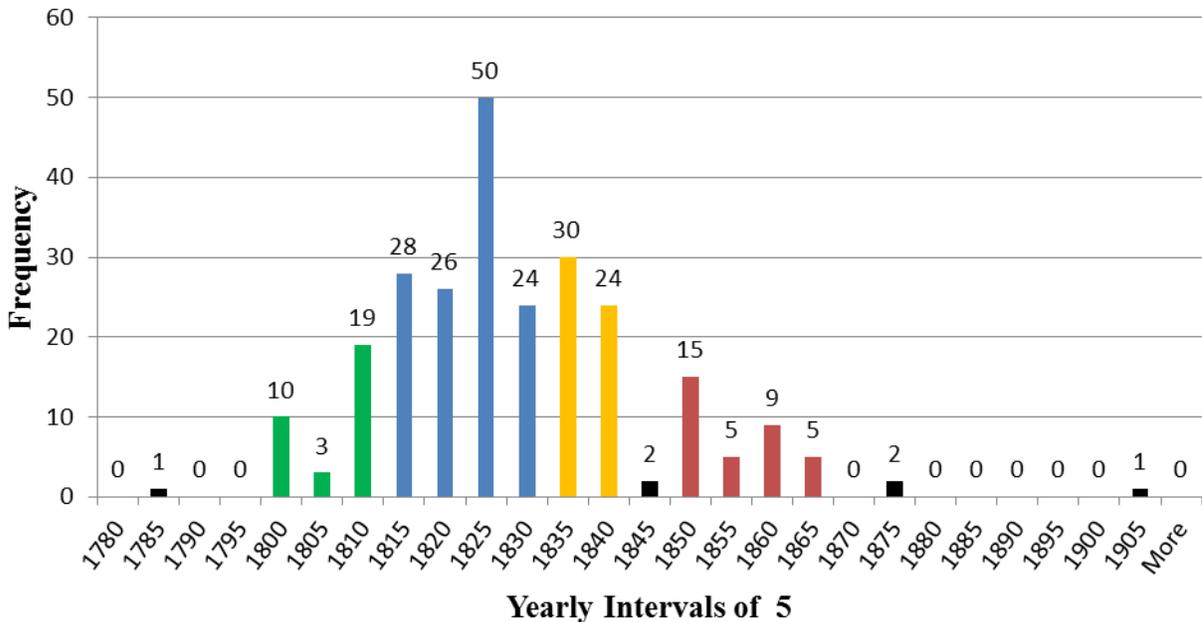


Figure 23

## Histogram of Window Glass Dates Derived by the Moir Method in Association with their Frequencies of Occurrence

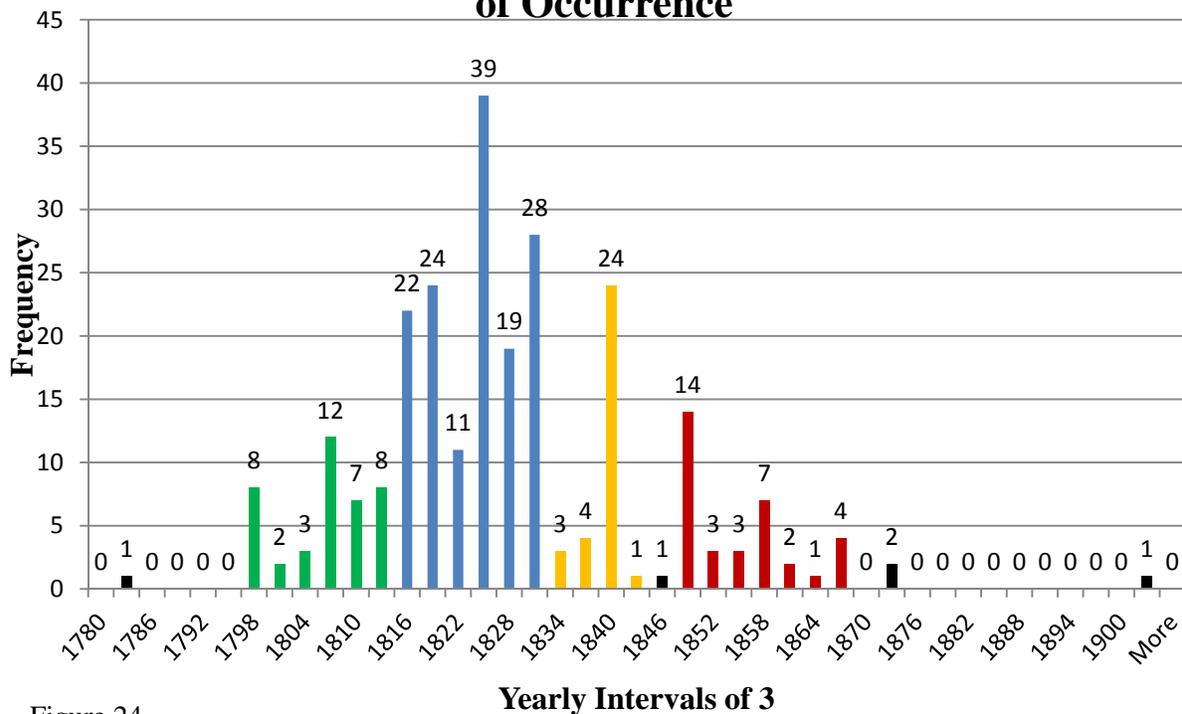


Figure 24

measuring in the range of 1.7 to 2 millimeters. The incident years within this modal distribution are not nearly as frequent, which makes sense considering this occupation’s relatively short duration of about seven consecutive months. The encampment was an ephemeral presence, with only limited need of window panes for more permanent or substantial structures. However, Camp Coker Creek was also Walker’s Battalion Headquarters for those same seven months, and the presence of field staff and officers may have necessitated construction of more elaborate military residences.

As is evident from both charts, the primary modes, marked in blue and red, are roughly 30 years apart, consistent with the 1832 and 1862 construction episodes of Camp Armistead and Camp Coker Creek respectively. There is of course some spread on either

side of both modes, which is explained by two factors. First, window pane was generally never made to order, but rather made in advance and held dormant until its use was necessitated and it was thus sold. So a construction event occurring in 1832 may be utilizing window pane prepared in 1830 or even before. Second, both Moir's and Schoen's methods are calibrated to specific regional applications. Although their use in this context is informative, their results are somewhat skewed and create broader distributions than expectations for the documented occupation at 40MR708.

There appear to be other relatively quick spikes in the presence of certain thicknesses, perhaps attributable to the other short term components at 40MR708. The area on the left hand side of the chart, in the middle of which are the blue bars relating to Armistead, spans more than the roughly six years of occupation. Apart from regional calibration based spread and repairs, these residual mini-modes could very well be representing the construction events associated with Meroney's stand and whatever Robert Tunnell may have done on the property. Bars marked in green represent glass at a thickness of .80 to 1.19 millimeters, the thinnest group of pane glass found on site, and naturally related to the earliest occupation, Meroney's stand. Even if we are mistaken in our placement of Meroney's Stand at Feature 7, the glass analysis indicates that there is some kind of earlier component that predates Camp Armistead, at 40MR708.

The orange bars (1.51mm to 1.65mm thickness) may represent Robert Tunnell's endeavors on the property. This range may still also be related to Fort Armistead, but it is highly unlikely for the frequency of pane glass to have risen drastically at the absolute end of the fort occupation. Major repair events would not have been initiated right before the fort was finally abandoned. Another trend of note is the relatively high frequencies of

various glass pane thicknesses found within and fairly continuously throughout the blue histogram bars associated with Camp/Fort Armistead. This trend suggests recycling and repair of windows occurred relatively regularly throughout the occupational span of this component at 40MR708.

The black bars at either end of the charts represent temporal abnormalities or outliers. These, along with the one separating orange and red, could be the result of flat panel container glass that was measured, despite stringent and exhaustive screening for such materials. Alternatively, these frequencies may represent some other transient incidents on the property.

As anticipated, the glass analysis tends to split the 40MR708 site on an east-west basis at the Unicoi Turnpike road, with thinner glass pane found west of the roadbed, and thicker panes found east of the road (with a few explainable anomalies). The first finding of note is the continuous yearly sequence of flat glass found within unit 438R502, a one meter square exploratory excavation into Feature 7, the proposed location of one of Philip D. Meroney’s buildings. This sequence is represented in Table 1 below.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Moir Date</b>	<b>Schoen Date</b>	<b>Thicknesses(mm)</b>	<b>Counts (Pieces)</b>
7	1803	1798	1.07	1
6	1807	1801	.97 / 1.05 / 1.19	3
5	1817	1809	1.21 / 1.28	2
4	1820	1812	1 – 1.57	12
3	-	-	-	0
2	1839	1826	1.3 / 1.6	3
1	-	-	-	0

It seems that initial construction and use of Meroney’s building is represented by glass pane fragments in levels 5-7. Although Level 5 has glass in the Camp/Fort Armistead

range of thickness, it is only two pieces. The Level 4 sample (12 pieces) is a much more conclusive representation of the Fort Armistead occupation. This evidence indicates that, Moir's calculated date of 1820 is around the time the Federal forces commandeered the stand (1832 in actuality), and started using their own glass when the necessity arose. Level 2 evidences the continued use of Meroney's buildings after his departure, with replacement panes occurring in the high end of the appropriate thickness range. Further, this sequence provides a good basis for the relationship between the various thicknesses of glass, which can be extrapolated to other areas of the 40MR708 site.

The 254 piece sample size of window glass leaves much to be desired in terms of precision for age estimation. However, the broad spatial distribution of the different window glass thicknesses across the site allows for consistent and meaningful interpretation of two major 19<sup>th</sup> components and two or more minor components at 40MR708. As mentioned, the predominant spatial trend is the separation on a north-south axis along the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed. The western portion of the site contains the main row of Fort Armistead structures, parade ground, powder magazine, and various dump sites, which are all structures and features that have been assigned to the 1830s through the recovery of associated diagnostic artifacts. The thickest (i.e., latest) pieces of glass found in this western zone measure 1.6mm, while the thinnest is .8 mm. Except for three fragments, all window pane pieces west of the Unicoi road fall within the .8 – 1.55mm range. Two 1.8 mm pieces were found during excavation of level 1 of Feature 8, the berm created from Feature 1's spoil; later, Civil War aged material could have been deposited at the surface of this context. The same is true of the other piece that measures 1.6 mm, which was recovered from Test Unit 5, Level 1, just northwest of the Features 3/5 privy.

This is not unlikely since windows have the tendency to break into many shards that are easy to track and spread around. Notwithstanding these three obvious outliers, the glass analysis based mean date outputs for units and features based on Moir's method, range from 1805 to 1839. The mean date derived from measurement of all the glass pieces found in this western zone is 1822, 30 years before from the other major glass thickness mode defined at the site, the one corresponding to Camp Coker Creek (See Figures 23 and 24 again). This mean and range also fit nicely into the thickness to date sequence established by Feature 7 (See Table 1). The latest date of the range defined for Feature 7 glass is 1839, and the mean of all Feature 7 glass pieces combined is slightly earlier at 1818. This appears appropriate as Meroney's Stand was established at least slightly prior to Camp Armistead.

Window pane glass from the east side of the turnpike appears much more mixed, with widely ranging dates derived from the glass thicknesses. The range of years spans 1813 to 1882. The mean for the east side of the turnpike is 1830. Both the range and mean are noticeably higher than on the western side. Thicker pieces in the 1.56 – 1.95 mm range (with one at 2.25 mm) reflect the presence of a later occupational component on the eastern side of the Unicoi road- constituent with the proposed location of Camp Coker Creek.

This intermixing of various thicknesses, even amongst the hearth rows, is most likely the result of Confederate troops plundering the Fort Armistead ruins and recycling whatever construction materials they could find, including panes of window glass. This is most apparent in Feature 15, which is cut into the fill overlaying Fort Armistead related foundations. This hearth/firebox, which seems to have been made entirely of robbed

foundational stones, included numerous fragments of window glass. In fact, the excavation block unit opened up over the foundations at the base of Feature 10, (including Features 10, 12, 21, 15, 18, 11, 20, and 19) was the source of 120 window glass fragments of the total 254 found. This block represents on small scale a metaphor for the entirety of the 40MR708 site. It contains a Fort Armistead structure that fell into ruin, juxtaposed by a Civil War era hearth, Feature 15. 40MR708 is predominated by the Fort Armistead component, which is juxtaposed at one corner by the hypothesized Camp Coker Creek occupation in the northeast. A histogram (Figure 25) of thicknesses of all the flat glass pieces found in the Feature 10 block reflects the site as a whole. This smaller scale histogram reveals a markedly bimodal thickness distribution. Glass from Features 15 and 11, two contexts that clearly postdate Fort Armistead, constitute the main part of the later mode. Descriptive statistics are also similar to what is found through combination of the eastern and western portions of 40MR708. The range for the Feature

### Histogram of Window Glass Dates and their Frequencies for the Feature 10 Excavation Block.

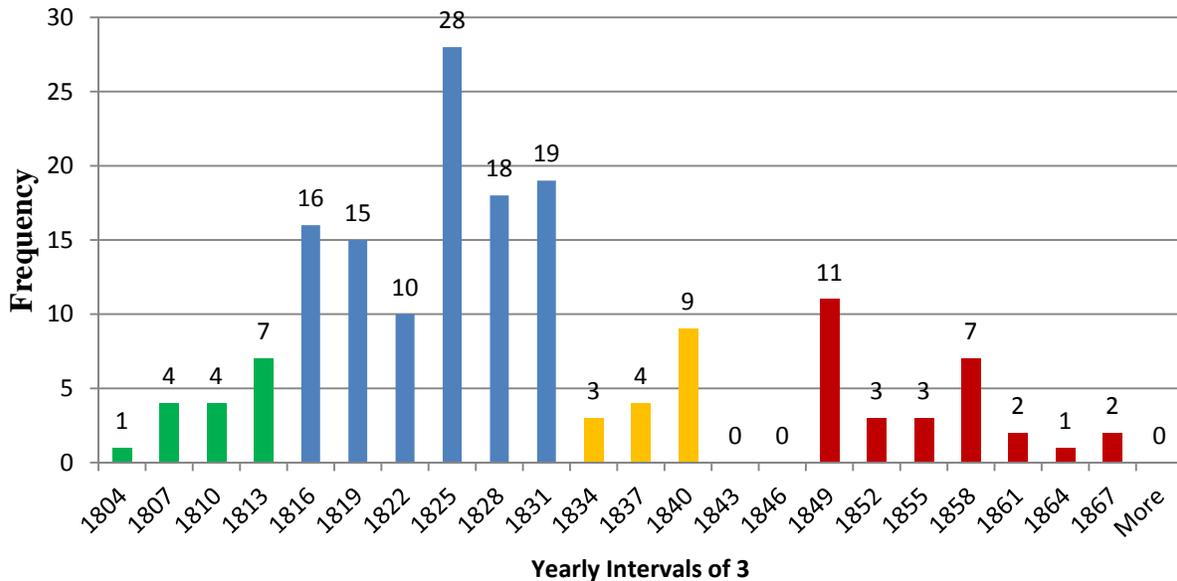


Figure 25

10 block is 1799 to 1864, with a mean of 1828. This evidence supports the premise that the later 19<sup>th</sup> century component, hypothesized as representing Camp Coker Creek is largely restricted to the east of the Unicoi Turnpike.

While these patterns present rather compelling evidence for a later (post Fort Armistead) component associated with the rock piles on the eastern side of the turnpike, they are best evaluated, as Moir himself states, by analysis of other diagnostic artifacts.

### **Munitions Analysis**

The next puzzle piece in corroborating the presence of a Civil War component at 40MR708 is consideration of other artifact types that are diagnostic of particular spans of occupation. Among these are two bullets and one brass cartridge recovered from the site,

which all clearly postdate the 1830s. The first is a .36 caliber conical slug (Figure 26), most commonly associated with the Colt revolver. The Model 1851 Navy Colt revolver (designed by Samuel Colt in 1850) was one of the first widely available guns to use a .36 caliber conical round. Manufacture of this gun continued until 1873, and it was the most popular .36 caliber pistol on both sides of the Civil



Figure 26. .36 caliber conical round.

War. These lead bullets actually measure just over .36 of an inch at .375, and were “jammed” in to ensure a tight seal in the revolving chamber, (Coggins 1962: 41). The unfired Colt round was found on the western side of the turnpike southeast of Meroney’s

stand and just north of the roadbed that runs east-west at the southern base of the 40MR708 hill.

The second slug was found just north of the Confederate encampment. It is a .44 caliber fired round (Figure 27). .36 And .44 were by far the most popular calibers for handguns during the Civil War, (Delano and Malen 1992: 51).

The most popular pistol at the time that utilized a .44 caliber round was the Colt Army Model

1860 Revolver (Coggins 1962: 41). The

superior and less expensive Remington New Model Army Revolver was the second most popular .44 caliber handgun, and the Union army adopted it over the Colt Army beginning November 1863 (McAulay 1996: 53). However, the documented occupational span for Camp Coker Creek does not suggest any company presence or otherwise major activity in the area well before November of 1863. It is thus much more likely that the recovered bullet is associated with a Colt Army Revolver.

The last diagnostic munition was a Spencer cartridge, found directly south of Meroney's stand, adjacent to the same roadbed that the .36 caliber slug was found at. Such ammunition is associated with the Spencer repeating rifle, the patent for which was filed and issued in 1860 (Westwood 2005: 73). Regarded as one the most important developments in repeating rifles, these guns were often taken off battlefields by Confederate soldiers, but lack of proper ammunition limited their use by Confederates (Coggins 1962: 35).

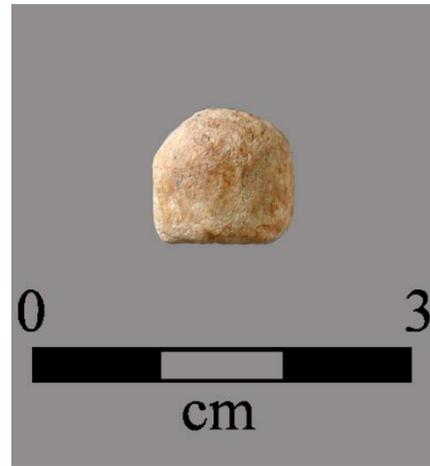


Figure 27. .44 caliber fired round.

All three of these rounds clearly postdate the Fort Armistead occupation, and are consistent with Civil War era military use of the site.

### Military Accoutrements

Most of the metal artifacts found on the 40MR708 site are nails, and many of the others are diagnostic of the 1830s occupation. However, one item of military accoutrement, recovered just south of Features 3 and 5 and adjacent to the western side of the Turnpike road, may reflect Civil War era activity. The item (Figure 28) is a flattened



brass throat collar for the proximal end of a bayonet scabbard. The collar is flattened, but the orifice was originally not too much wider than it is now. The scabbard itself was leather with a brass tip, and the leather portion was attached to the collar with two rivets, the holes for which can be seen on the left side

of the image. The other two holes are where the frog clip was attached, which allowed the scabbard to be clipped to hang at the soldier's hip in a bayonet frog on a leather hanger. Although the diagnostic frog clip has since fallen off; most likely the initial reason for disposal of this object, the throat collar still has characteristics of note.

Scabbard throat collars are generally diagnostic but they are also rare finds within archaeological records. As yet, no exact match has been identified in available databases,

but Figure 29 illustrates is a comparative example. This scabbard with throat collar held a U.S. Model 1855 saber bayonet, one of the most common bayonet types used in the Civil War (Pritchard 2003: 71). Although such collars were in use throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this style became more popular and prominent starting half way through the century (Brayley 2004: 150).



Figure 29. U.S. Model 1855 saber bayonet scabbard.

Another notable aspect of this find is the hand etched initials “LB” which are probably initials of the scabbard’s owner. These initials and the scabbard may have belonged to Leonard Brown, a Private in Company B Walker’s Battalion, who stayed at Camp Coker Creek for just under five months (Crow 1982: 205)—another possible indication of the coincidence of Camp Coker Creek at the site of Fort Armistead.

### **Personal Items**

One glass object, consisting of four fragments recovered from the hearth deposit context associated with the Feature 16 firebox, appears particularly indicative of the Civil War era. Though at first believed to be part of a lens for spectacles or a watch, the mended pieces told a different story. This glass (Figure 30 on the following page) appears to be the glass cover for a tintype photograph locket.

The ferrograph, colloquially referred to as the tintype, photographic process was first conceived by French photographer Adolphe Alexandre Martin in 1855. It was not until 1856 that Ohio native Hamilton Smith patented and popularized the process (Peres

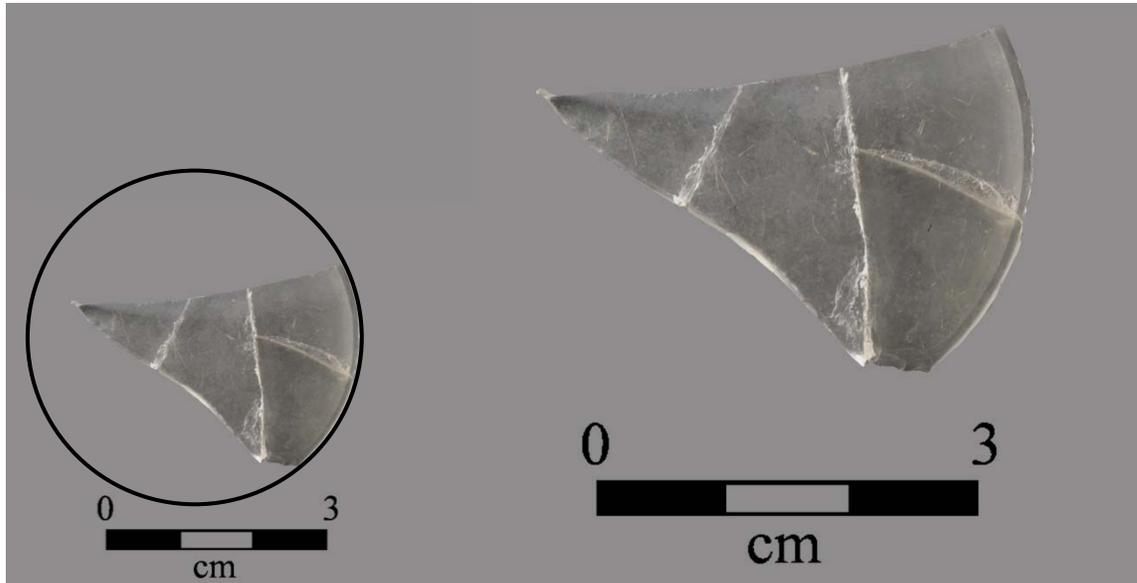


Figure 30. The recovered glass cover shard is depicted in a 1.75 inch diameter circle, which represents the shard's extrapolated diameter based on its curve. The image on the right is an enlarged version to show detail.



Figure 31. Civil War era locket with a tintype photograph of an unknown soldier in a Union uniform. The beveled edge of the glass cover is much like the one present on the recovered shard.



Figure 32. Civil War era locket with a tintype photograph of an unidentified girl. The diameter of the whole object is 1.9 inches which is represented by the blue ring. The red ring is the same 1.75 inch width as the extrapolated diameter of the recovered shard. It matches well with this locket's glass cover, with some metal showing on the interior of the ring due to crimping.

2007: 76). This was the first inexpensive method of photography, and photos would often sell for a penny or even less, making photography finally accessible to the common man. This was especially true during the Civil War, when soldiers wanted to send pictures of themselves home, but more importantly, keep photos of their loved ones with them, (Kinard 2003: 64). To accomplish the latter, tintypes were often set in two-fold lockets, with a protective glass cover placed over the images.

The diameter of the recovered glass cover was extrapolated from the edge curvature to be 1.75 inches, a fairly standard size for locket lenses in the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The tintype lockets illustrated in Figures 31 and 32 on the previous page, exhibit intact glass covers that are comparable to the cover from Feature 16. Both lockets, which are in the collections of the Library of Congress, are dated to be from 1860 to 1865, (Liljenquist 2010). The diameters of these locket cases are 4.6 cm or 1.81 inches, and 4.8 cm or about 1.9 inches. The inferred diameters of the locket glass covers approximate the 1.75 inches of the recovered piece. In addition, the edges of all three glass covers are beveled or ground, which allows for metal to be crimped along the edge, securing the glass and image underneath in place. The beveling can be seen protruding from under the metal crimp, similar to the cover shard found in Feature 16. The incidence of this highly diagnostic artifact within one of the hearths on the east side of the turnpike strongly supports the 1860s date for construction and use of the rows of hearth structures.

## Ceramic Analysis

A total of 86 ceramic vessel sherds have been collected from the 40MR708 site.

(Table 2):

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Number of Sherds:</b>	<b>Percent of Total:</b>
Feature 7 (Meroney's Stand)	34	39.5 %
Feature 9 (western pit complex)	11	12.8 %
Camp Coker Creek area	9	10.5 %
Confirmed 1830s Fort Armistead contexts (i.e. features, units, structures)	32	37.2 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Fifty-five of these pieces can be categorized as transitional pearlware/whiteware wares that exhibit characteristics of both ceramic categories. The date of manufacture and initial use generally assigned to such transitional ceramics is 1820 to 1830 (Brown and Bewick 1982: 19). This date range is consistent with the primary Meroney's Stand and Fort Armistead occupations, and most of these sherds are associated with 1830s contexts that are clearly associated with the fort or the stand. These contexts include Feature 7, the proposed location of a building belonging to Meroney's Stand, Feature 9, the possible blacksmith shop that may also be associated with Meroney, and all the Camp/Fort Armistead contexts west of the Unicoi Turnpike. Such transitional ceramics are further evidence for the association of these site structures and features with the 1830s components. Another 17 sherds could also be added to the transitional category, but these tended to exhibit traits that would place them closer to one category or the other. However, they could very well just be earlier or later in the evolution of pearlware into

whiteware. Common types and decorative themes among these 72 transitional sherds included:

(Table 3):

<b>Type and Decoration</b>	<b>Date of Manufacture</b> (Brown and Bewick 1982: 17-21)
Finger-painted annular wares with zones of marbled color	c. 1800 – 1820
Annular wares	c. 1795 – 1840
Shell edged wares	c. 1780 – 1860
Transfer printed in blue, black, and brown	c. 1787 – 1860+
Sponged wares	c. 1830 – 1871
Mochawares	c. 1795 – 1890
Hand-painted mono and polychromatic in blue and green	c. 1830 – 1900+

None of these ceramic types are particularly diagnostic of an 1860s component, but the nine sherds found in the presumed Camp Coker Creek area are interesting. Six of these sherds are blue transfer printed; one was a hand painted polychrome slip in a blue/black worm motif; one was brown/black redware with a clear lead and manganese glaze; and the last was also redware with a yellow green glaze. Two of the transfer printed sherds are from a paneled cup, but other than this the sherds are only diagnostic to a time span that encompasses all of the components of 40MR708. The same is true of the polychrome slip worm decoration which persists from around 1795 to 1890. Redware, America’s earliest pottery dates from 1725 through the present. The overall lack of ceramics specifically indicative of a Civil War component is not all that surprising. It is much more likely that soldiers took with them and used older plate and cup ware that was

more expendable, instead of using expensive ceramics that had just recently been manufactured.

Another pattern of note is that nearly 40% of the ceramic sherds were recovered from Feature 7, and the immediately surrounding area. This abundance and variety of ceramics may support the hypothesis that Feature 7 was a domestic context associated with Meroney's Stand. Surely a commercial stand that often entertained travelers and drovers had ample ceramic ware. In addition, once the Federal troops arrived and commandeered the stand in 1832, they used Meroney's home as their personal dining hall. The presence of a dining area definitely aided in introducing the plethora of ceramic artifacts, both in style and quantity, which have been found there. On the same note, ample pieces of various container glass and a fork have been recovered from this context.

Feature 9, at the base of the western slope of the 40MR708 hill, turned up an unexpected amount of ceramics. Investigators theorize that this feature is associated with a possible 1830s blacksmith shop. However, incidence here of roughly 13% of ceramic artifacts recovered from the whole site would suggest that this locale definitely had more than just a military or workshop occupation. Because the styles and types of ceramic found in Feature 9 match the ones recovered from Feature 7, it seems more likely that this feature was contemporaneous with Meroney's Stand and presumably a part of it.

### **Button Analysis**

Historic buttons from civilian and military clothing are particularly sensitive diagnostic artifacts for 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts. The frequency with which buttons were altered and manufactured often defines very finite and thus temporally specific lifetimes.

This is precisely the case for the Fort Armistead occupation, from which seven diagnostic military buttons were recovered. These small but significant artifacts aid in further verifying the time periods of creation and use of various on site features and structures.

Two one-piece convex artillery buttons identified as Tice type AY199D19 were found on site (Tice 1997: 117-118). Figure 33 below depicts the two buttons, their backs, and an exemplary image from Tice’s book that illustrates a similar button with a different backmark. The face features the standard federal eagle with shield on breast. Within each shield is the letter “A”, which identifies these buttons as originally belonging to artillerymen. Based on the style of the eagle and the star ring backmark, these buttons were produced from 1821 into the early 1830s. These buttons more than likely belonged to soldiers of Companies A and B of the Second Regiment of Artillery, present at Camp Armistead starting in 1832. The leftmost button illustrated in Figure 33 was found in the center of the parade ground, west of the Unicoi road and opposite the Camp Coker Creek

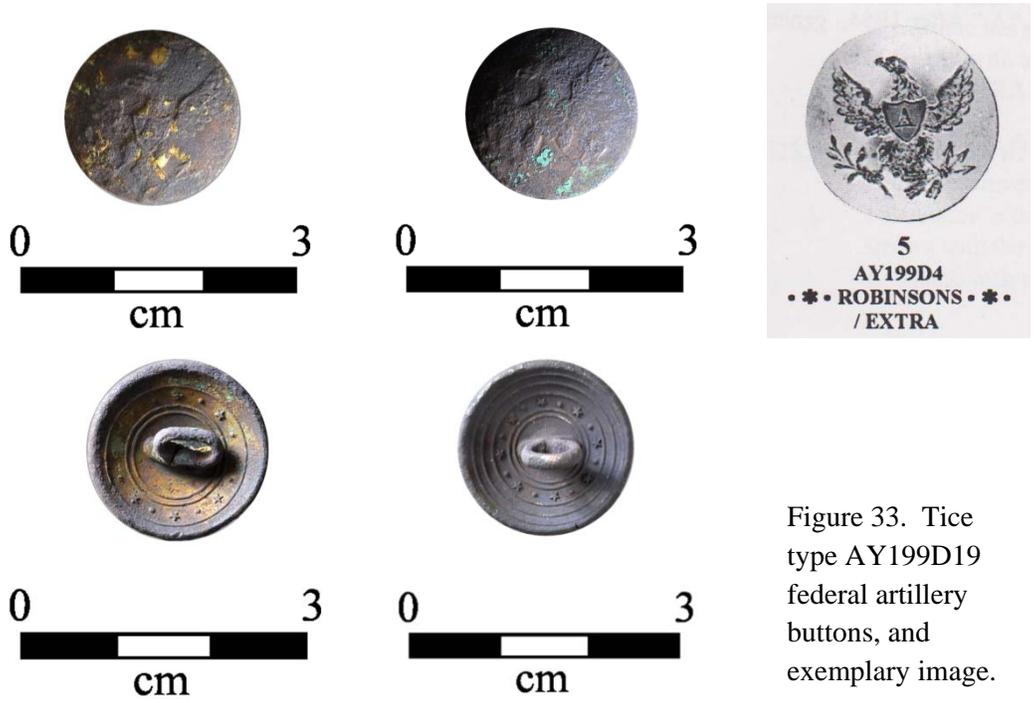


Figure 33. Tice type AY199D19 federal artillery buttons, and exemplary image.

hearth rows. The other button was recovered just north of Feature 7; both of these areas are within the bounds of the 1830s Fort Armistead component.

The button face pictured in Figure 34 is nearly identical to the ones discussed above but exhibits a slightly different back mark. Two stars in the ring are replaced by two “R’s”, a distinction which Tice classifies as a one-piece variant of the generally two-piece button type AY206A5. Buttons of this style were made from the late 1820’s through the early 1840’s (Tice 1997: 119). This button was recovered in Level 2 of the excavations conducted over Feature 7, another 1830s context, as implied by window glass and ceramic analyses. The presence of this military button in this context may reflect the military takeover of Meroney’s stand in 1832.

Figure 35 on the right shows a button found amongst the leaf litter on top of Feature 1, the powder magazine pit, a definite Fort Armistead structure. Tice classifies it as type AY199Ds4, a sleeve sized variant of the abovementioned buttons. It is also produced from 1821 to the early 1830s.

The two buttons illustrated (with comparative example) in Figure 36 on the next page, are noted by Alphaeus Homer Albert in his button book as general militia buttons classified as type GI68F (Albert 1977: 45). The backmark for both one-piece buttons

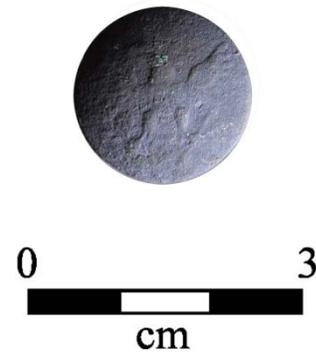


Figure 34. Artillery button, Tice type AY206A5.

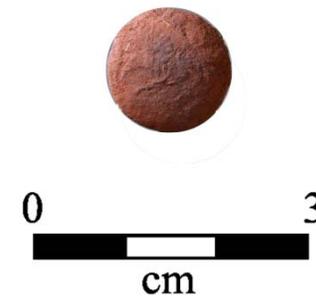


Figure 35. Artillery button, Tice type AY199Ds4.



Figure 36. General militia buttons classified by Albert as type GI68F. Exemplary image is from Tice.

reads ARMITAGE / PHILV, where the “A” in PHILA is upside down. The image on the face of both buttons is an eagle with drooped wings facing left with a large blank shield on its right side, all on a striped background. Based on these two characteristics, these buttons date to the 1820s. The leftmost button in Figure 36 was recovered from Level 1 of a unit placed in the center of the main building row of Fort Armistead. The second button was recovered half way down the western slope of the site, just south of the roadbed leading to the creek, and west of the Feature 8 berm. Both of these contexts are dated to the 1830s through ceramic, structural, and window glass analysis.

Civilian style buttons were also found on the 40MR708 site, one of which is indicative of the presence of a post-Fort Armistead occupation. Half of a four-hole Prosser button was recovered from the ashy burned deposits of the Feature 16 hearth. The Prosser manufacturing process was first patented in London by Richard Prosser on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1840. His brother, Thomas Prosser patented the idea in New Jersey on June 30<sup>th</sup>,

1841. However, it was not until 1848 that a Long Island company started manufacturing Prosser buttons with any regularity (Sprague 2002: 115). Prosser buttons were glass-like ceramic, and commonly had a seam around the edge, a smooth top side, and the back had the feel and look of an orange peel. This description matches the recovered piece exactly, and coupled with the integrity of the context, provides for a very diagnostic artifact. The incidence of this button within Feature 16 effectively proves that this and other similar hearths post-date the 1830s occupations.

Finally, Figure 37 illustrates a Civil War era button recovered from Feature 11 alongside an example of a comparable button from Tice. Tice classifies this form as type GEN215A50, a two-piece convex General Service



Figure 37. General Service Union Army button.

button that was made from 1854 to 1865 (Tice 1997: 142). General Service buttons of this and similar types are the majority of Union Army buttons found in Civil War camps and battlefields. Although the button is of a Union nature, connection with the Confederate Camp Coker Creek occupation is highly plausible. Poorly equipped Confederate troops made use of Union gear from captured supplies, battlefields and prisoners of war. This button comes from Feature 11, one of three seemingly contemporaneous pits that intrude the fill that covers the Fort Armistead era structure foundations (Feature 10). Additionally, eleven pieces of flat pane glass were recovered from Feature 11, and yield a mean date of 1849 according to the Moir method. This date is well situated within the later mode illustrated by the Figures 23 and 24 histograms – a

mode associated with the 1860s and indicating the Camp Coker Creek occupation. Regardless of the location and means by which the button was deposited, its sheer existence at the site indicates a post 1830s military presence at 40MR708.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Discussion**

The tasks undertaken by this research were threefold: First, to determine if the 40MR708 site contained another distinct component, represented primarily by the presence of hearth rows, or if these too belonged to Fort Armistead. Second, to figure out what cultural group the new component belonged to and the temporal extent of the occupation. Third, to determine the physical extent of the component and how it was spatially related to the rest of the site, particularly the other major component, Fort Armistead. Simply said, this study aimed to find out if there is another component on the site, figure out what is, and determine how it relates to the other major component.

Evidence separating the hearths from Fort Armistead, as a distinct component, was manifold. The most obvious indicator is that the four rows of hearths in the northeastern quadrant of the site are not aligned to the remainder of Fort Armistead, which exhibits a regular and precise grid orientation. The relative sequence of the hearths and the fort was established by excavation of Feature 15, a hearth that intrudes the fill mound over Feature 10 (fort oriented foundations). Therefore, it is inferred that the entire complex of hearths postdated at least this one Fort Armistead building. More temporal clues were recovered from the hearths themselves. Refer to Figure 38 on the subsequent page for distributions of diagnostic artifacts. One hearth (Feature 16) and its associated burnt deposits contained a Prosser button that has a terminus post quem of 1840 and did

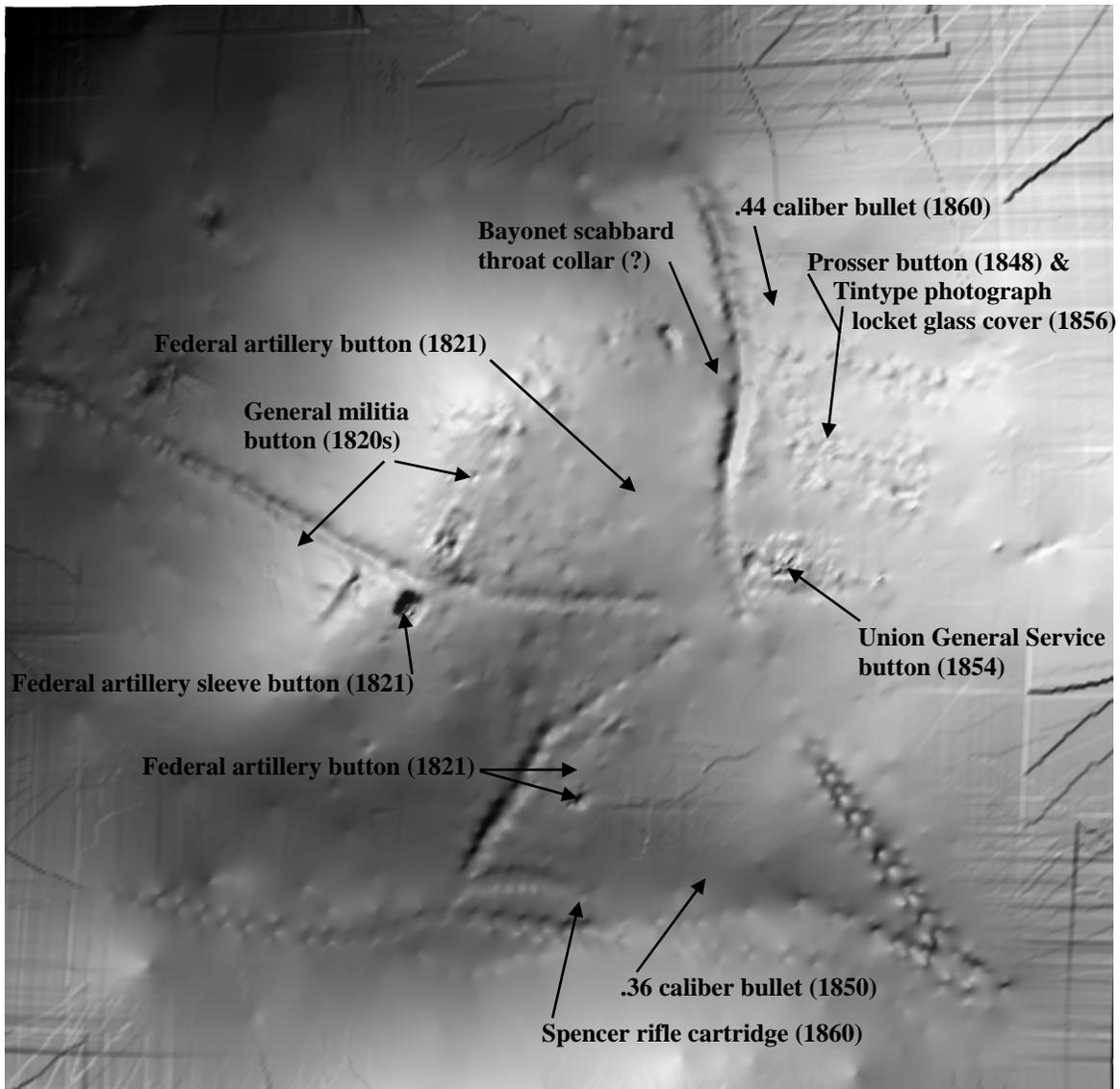


Figure 38. 3-Dimensional elevation map of site 40MR708 depicting locations and site relevant terminus post quem dates of diagnostic artifacts discussed.

not see sales in the United States till 1848. In the same hearth and its deposits, a glass cover for a tintype photograph locket was unearthed. The tintype photography process was created in 1855 and was not popularized in any degree till 1856—clear evidence of occupation that substantially postdates Fort Armistead.

Analysis of window glass thicknesses using the Moir method (1990) also demonstrated the presence of a component that postdates Fort Armistead. The results of

this analysis showed a much broader range of window pane thicknesses than one would expect to find from the documented 1832-1838 span of Fort Armistead. A second thickness mode (1.7 to 2+ mm) was recognized among window glass fragments; this mode corresponds to a period roughly 30 years after the 1832 inception of the Fort Armistead component. Other finds included three bullets that had terminus post quem dates of 1847, 1851, and 1860, all clearly postdating the fort. A military button was also found with corresponding dates of manufacture from 1854 to 1865.

Once it was clear that the 40MR708 site did indeed contain a component that postdated the Fort Armistead occupation, it was necessary to determine what cultural group it belonged to. The rows of hearths were comparable to documented military camps of the Civil War era (Geier 2006: 199-200). Artifact finds such as three Civil War era bullets and a post-1854 army button also suggested that the component was of a military nature. Historical documents and secondary sources showed that Coker Creek did not experience any major military actions or occupations from after the Indian Removal period until the Civil War. Further documentary research determined that a Confederate encampment, named Camp Coker Creek was active in the area between 1862 and 1863. This is consistent with the 30 year modal spacing shown by window glass analysis, which places the most recent occupation in the 1860s. Additionally, the aforementioned diagnostic artifacts are certainly among common recovered materials from Civil War camp sites.

The final step was to figure out the physical extent of Camp Coker Creek and how it was spatially interrelated with Fort Armistead – features of which were certainly still there when the Confederates arrived. Figure 39 illustrates the general areas of occupation

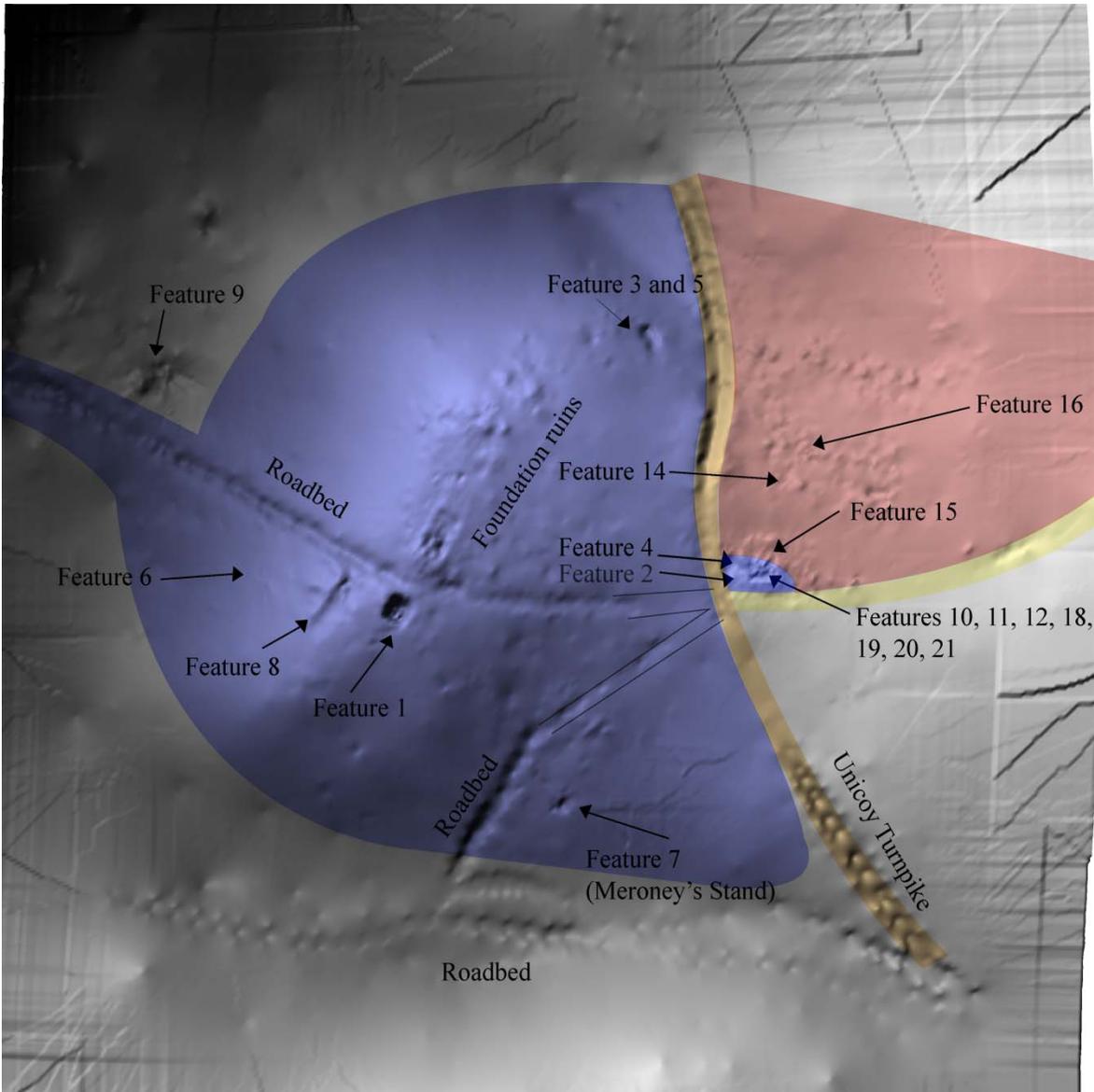


Figure 39. 3-Dimensional elevation map depicting spatial distribution of occupational zones for Fort Armistead in blue and Camp Coker Creek in red.

by each of the two components. Fort Armistead is marked in blue and Camp Coker Creek in red. The four rows of 29 hearths are assigned to Camp Coker Creek on the basis of associated window glass and other artifacts, and on the basis of the juxtaposition of Feature 15 on Feature 10. No such hearth features were identified west of the Unicoi Turnpike road (marked in orange), and this appears to have been the camp's western boundary. The road in yellow marks the southern and eastern periphery of the encampment; no hearths are outside this boundary, although one abuts against the west side of this road. The boundary to the north is unclear but metal artifacts quickly dissipate in frequency heading in that direction, and their distribution is used as a tentative boundary on the map.

The Unicoi Turnpike roadbed appears to be the principal boundary of separation between Fort Armistead and Camp Coker Creek. This is supported by three lines of evidence. First, no pieces of glass in the range of 1.7 to 2.0 mm (i.e., corresponding to the 1860s) were found west of the road. Glass pane pieces found in the blue zone exhibit a very finite range (1.2-1.5mm) of thicknesses. Second, apart from two bullets found in the hollow south of the probable Meroney's Stand, no artifacts strictly postdating the 1830s have been found in the demarcated blue zone. Third, artifacts found within the blue zone, such as military buttons, ceramics, and container glass are all diagnostic of an 1830s occupation.

Two other areas that are important to distinguish are the parade ground and Feature 10 on the eastern side of the Unicoi road. The parade ground, although created for the purposes of Fort Armistead, was probably used by the troops of Camp Coker Creek. If the Confederate force did not intend to make use of it for training, they probably

would have placed their encampment on this flat piece of ground, rather than on the somewhat inclined and rough terrain where the hearth rows are located. This is an area of likely overlap of the components. However, since only 1830s materials were recovered from the parade ground, it is delineated in blue. The second area of component overlap is the soil mound that covers the Feature 10 foundations. These foundations align perfectly with the Fort Armistead grid, and are coded in blue. However, the corner where the hearth was dug into the side of the fill mound (Feature 15), postdates the construction, razing, and fill episodes and is thus marked in red.

The roadbed that enters the site from the northeast and runs through the center of the site across the turnpike also structures the organization of the site. West of the Unicoi Turnpike, down the western slope to the creek, the road is aligned on grid with Fort Armistead. It is perpendicular with the main and largest row of fort buildings. As such it has been marked in blue. However, east of the Unicoi, the road breaks from the grid and veers off to the northeast, meaning that it most likely postdates Fort Armistead. As mentioned, one hearth structure is located adjacent to the road's left side. This suggests that the road was constructed prior to the hearth and therefore predates Camp Coker Creek. Consequently, it has been marked in yellow on the map.

These findings accurately delineate the spatial relationships of the two most major temporal components. This improves our understanding of the overall site structure of 40MR708, and is essential to the effective management of the site. Future archaeological investigations at the site should amplify the findings of this study and contribute to a fuller understanding of the site's multiple roles in U.S. Indian policy and the American Civil War.

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