Archaeological Investigations at St. Francis Xavier Church in Newton (18 ST 16), St. Mary's County, Maryland.

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Archdiacese of Washington

Pogue (private contractor)

Archeological investigation was undertaken prior to restoration work on the two 18th century structures extant on the property in order to locate any archeological resources that might be disturbed during restoration activities. The results of the study were utilized in the development of a plan for restoration that lessened the disturbance to the identified cultural resources. Field work was undertaken for a 4 week period during the winter of 1981.

The Newton site (18ST16) has an occupation that spans the early 18th century to the mid-20th century. The results of archeological investigations has revealed that the substantial brick dwelling that pre-dated the extant Manor house was built after ca. 1720 and was demolished sometime between 1770-1790. Dendochronological analyses conducted on 13 samples of wood from the current house suggest that the wood was cut between 1787 and 1789. This corresponds to records that indicated large-scale buildings activities occurred on the site within that time frame. Artifact distributions at the site indicate that the entire area north of the manor house and between the manor and the church is an archeologically sensitive area. South of the manor, there are several 18th century features but the majority of the artifacts recovered from there date to the later occupation of the manor. Recommendations for treatment of the site include: no excavation of any kind should be taken without reference to the locations of recorded resources, any land moving excavations should be closely monitored by a professional archeologist, and any sub-surface utility lines should be placed in areas away from the north and south sides of the manor. With reference to the church, the cultural resources on the east side of the church should be avoided, and the west side of the structure appears to have the lowest potential for containing significant remains. Utilities, etc. should be placed on the west side of the church but archeological monitoring is still highly recommended.