

A Partnership to Discover History

Archaeological Excavations at the Acme-Shaw Turpentine Still

OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA



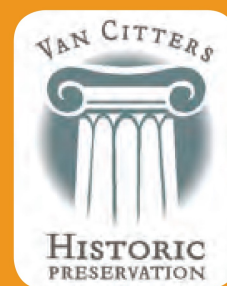


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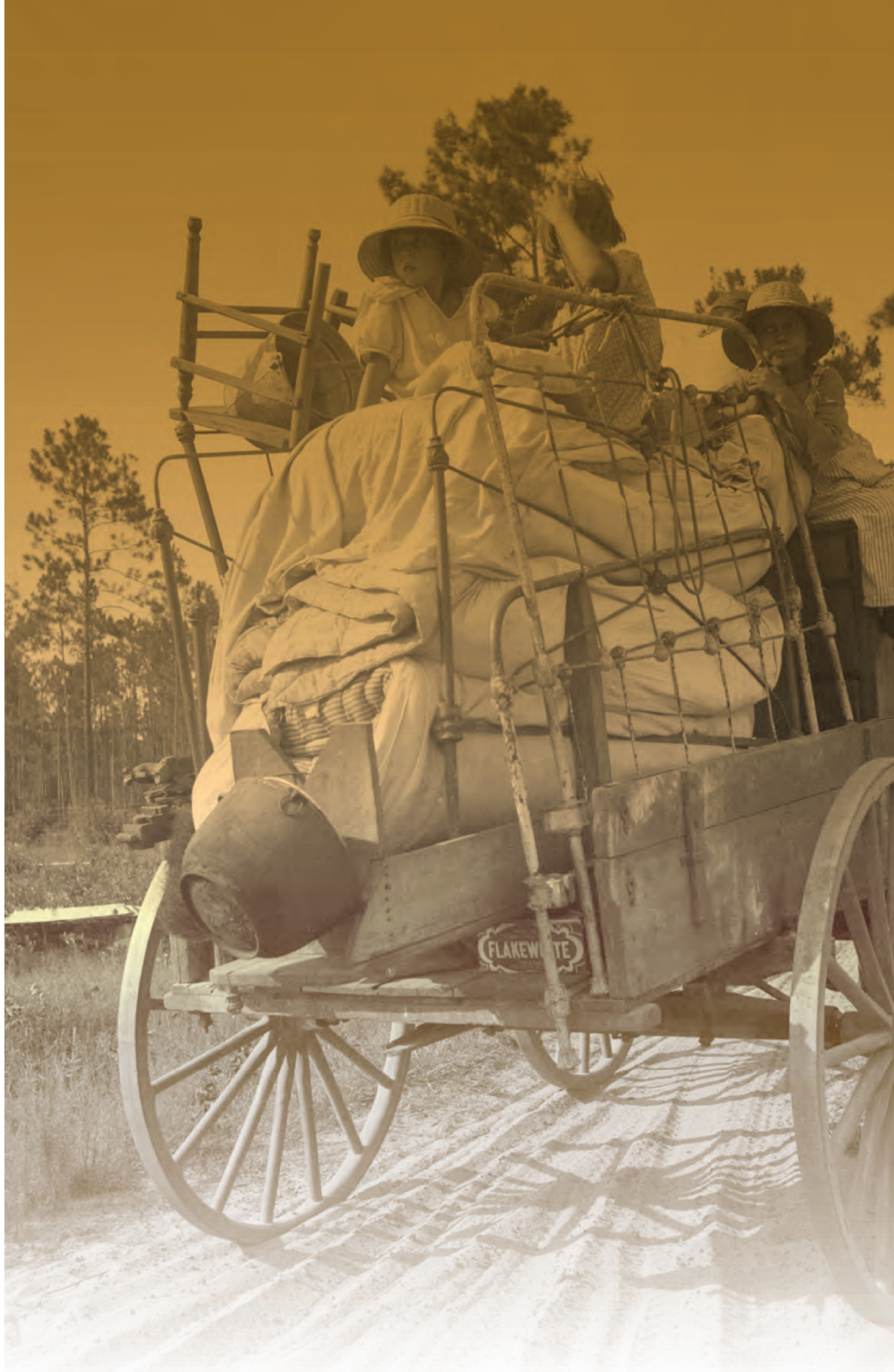
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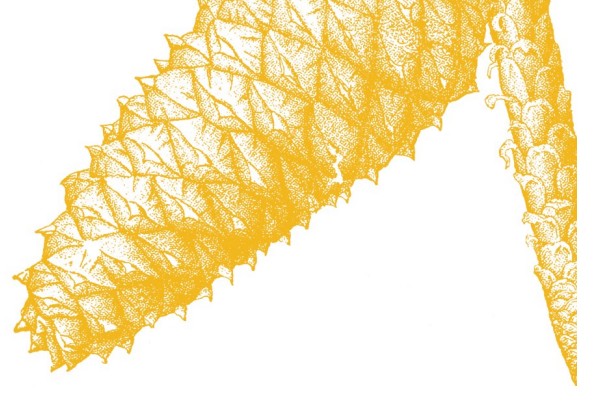
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INTRODUCTION



Some 100 years ago, the long-leaf pine forests on Florida's Panhandle were the site of numerous distilling camps that helped supply the U.S. Navy with much-needed resin products such as turpentine. Over time, as the turpentine industry took a downturn, the companies and their workers left the forest, the camp buildings were dismantled and hauled away, and eventually the War Department took control of the land to test weapons. Since abandoning the forest in the mid-1930s, the remnants of these simple structures and the artifacts of human occupation left behind by the workers have been covered by forest duff and sometimes disturbed by road-building and other modern development. Memories of these significant small industries, such as the Acme-Shaw Turpentine Still, were fast becoming lost among the miscellany of history.

In 2009, the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority developed a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan that called for, in part, the construction of a new connector road that will approach the Mid-Bay Bridge from the north. Since then, the MBBA has worked cooperatively with Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), the Florida Department of Transportation, county government, and local communities to design an enhanced transportation corridor to improve the lives of the people living in the northwest panhandle of Florida. This development plan, highlighted by a proposed two-lane, limited access road that will traverse land under the control of Eglin AFB, has brought about a partnership that resulted in historical research into an almost forgotten aspect of local history: the business of "turpentineing."

(Facing Page) Moving Day in the Turpentine Pine Forest Country. North Florida. Courtesy of The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, No. LC-USF34-009430-E.

National Historic Preservation Act

As a federal agency, Eglin AFB, under the Department of Defense (DoD), is responsible for the management of all significant cultural and historical resources located under their jurisdiction. Activities carried out on the base are subject to the various federal historic preservation laws, most notably in this case, the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as DoD and Air Force policies and regulations concerning such resources. As part of this act, projects that disturb the land surface, such as road construction, must include archaeological and historical surveys before construction is begun to determine if the proposed project will adversely affect any important historical or archaeological resources. It was during such a survey in 1993 that the extensive remains of the Acme-Shaw turpentine camp were discovered amidst the dense understory of the forest. During subsequent discussions between the MBBA and Eglin AFB, it was agreed that before the major construction project could take place, archaeologists would conduct an intensive large-scale excavation project to find out as much as possible before that portion of the old camp within the right-of-way was destroyed by road construction. Using an excavation plan developed in consultation with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, or SHPO, Prentice Thomas and Associates, Inc., under contract with HDR, Inc. conducted archaeological investigations at the Acme-Shaw Turpentine Still site during the summer and fall of 2010. This pamphlet gives a brief outline of those excavations and the history of the site, and demonstrates how the partnering of MBBA and Eglin AFB has enhanced our knowledge of the rich history of Okaloosa County.



Naval Stores Industry History in the United States and the Florida Panhandle

Originally, the term naval stores referred to everything that was used to build the large wooden ships of Europe’s navies. Over time, the term evolved to refer primarily to the resinous products that were harvested from pine trees—tar, rosin (the name for solidified pine tree resin or gum), pitch, and turpentine. Tar, pitch, and rosin were used for sealing the hulls of ships, caulking seams, protecting ropes, and otherwise “weatherproofing” enormous wooden sea vessels, while turpentine was used primarily as a solvent, which could be used to thin paints or produce varnish. By the eighteenth century, the naval stores industry was a profitable and politically powerful enterprise. By the time North America had been colonized, European powers, especially Great Britain, had already depleted their own pine tree resources and had turned to the colonies to supply naval stores. As the Revolutionary War heated up, the British began to focus their naval stores collection farther south, which moved the industry from the war in the northern colonies to the primarily Tory-inhabited Florida—where the Spanish had previously developed a small naval stores industry.

While the British had capitalized on the Florida forests to support their naval stores needs during the war, the early industry was primarily centered in the Carolinas’ piney woods where longleaf pines (the best source of resin) abounded. By the early nineteenth century, the naval stores industry in the young United States of America had become a well-developed industry and was flourishing. As the industry grew, however, the forest resources of the Carolinas were increasingly depleted. The process of harvesting resin caused



Brunswick GA Rosin Yards 1890

damage to the trees, and combined with settlement and fire suppression—longleaf pines require fire for their seeds to germinate—the forests suffered, longleaf pines died off, and the pines were replaced with other trees such as oaks. By the end of the Civil War, the depletion of pine trees in the Carolinas pushed the booming naval stores industry southward into Georgia and Florida.

During the post-Civil War period the naval stores industry in Florida quickly grew and by 1900, Florida produced almost 32 percent of naval stores in the United States and was first among the states in production between 1905 and 1923. In part, this pick-up in the industry was due to the increasing value of turpentine, which until then had been viewed primarily as a by-product of rosin. In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, in addition to naval stores, turpentine was used in various pharmaceuticals such as soaps, topical treatments for wounds, and oil for muscle aches. Increasing uses for turpentine



**Range of the Turpentine Belt,
US Forest Service, 1921**

and for other naval stores products in construction and manufacturing brought the naval stores industry in Florida, Georgia, and southern Mississippi new life, and soon the area came to be known as the “Turpentine Belt.” However, naval stores production began to decline when exports to Europe were suspended during World War I, the loss of first growth stands and changes in the industry that occurred during the 1930s and 1940s, and the development of steel ships, which did not require the use of naval stores to remain seaworthy. By the 1940s only a few small producers remained to provide turpentine for solvents, resin for other industrial purposes, and the pharmaceutical industry.

Laborer’s Quarters Choctawhatchee National Forest, 1927.

A Typical Turpentine Camp

Every turpentine operation required two elements: a cheap labor force and the facilities required to turn the sticky gum of the pine tree



into profitable commodities. During the height of the industry the typical turpentine camp consisted of a still, cooperage, commissary, and housing—the larger camps would sometimes include a church and school. The turpentine workers and managers lived at the camp, although the conditions in which they lived varied dramatically. While the housing was located separate from the turpentine still and cooperage, the workers, the majority of whom were black, typically lived in wood shanties in a camp fairly close to the still. These were small, humble buildings, often described by old-timers as one-room wooden structures, about 12 by 15 feet, with a cooking area in the back, some with brick chimneys. Unlike the worker’s dwellings, wagonriders, woodsriders, managers, and owners typically lived in larger homes farther away from the still with amenities such as glass windows, architectural flourishes, and perhaps even, indoor plumbing.

**Woodsriders and Laborers
Choctawhatchee
National Forest, 1928**



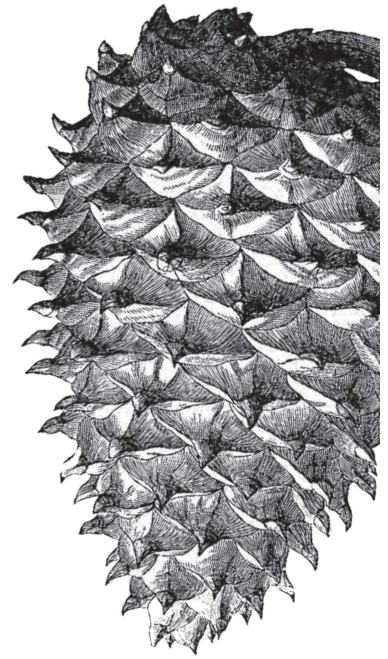
Each day, before dawn broke, a turpentine worker would depart from his shanty for the section of forest for which he was responsible—these work areas were called “drifts.” Before 1900, “boxing” was the means by which gum was harvested from trees. From November to March workers would chop a cavity (8 to 15 inches wide and 3 to 4 inches deep) into the base of the tree itself leaving a “box” where the tree’s sap or resin could accumulate. Once the box was created the worker would “corner” it by created two deep gashes to start the gum flow into the box. An expert cutter could produce up to 500 boxes per week. In order to keep the gum flowing, a “chipper” would cut two 1 inch deep gashes into the tree, directly above the box, which angled to the center so resin would slowly ooze into the box. Each chipper was responsible to keep resin flowing and completed 1,200 to 1,500 gashes per week—4 to 6 new gashes or chippings were required to fill a box. Generally the last chipping would take place in October and the chippings resulted in a pattern on the trunk of the tree that the workers called a “cat face.” Newly boxed trees and warm weather allowed for the highest quantity and quality of resin—fresh cuts produced a light resin, while the older cuts produced a more viscous orange resin—

Cutting a Box with Boxing Axe



the lighter resin were higher quality. The types of resin were fired differently once they reached the still.

After the gum collected in the box, it would be picked up by a method referred to as “dipping.” Each box would yield from 4 to 7 dippings per season (younger trees provided more resin and needed more dippings). The dippers were part of a dip-squad of 4-6 workers (some crews included women and boys) and a squad foreman. The dippers would use a flat dip iron that they would push to the bottom on one side of the box, bring to the opposite side, and remove the gum in one stroke. They would have two buckets that were wider at the base than top (to keep from tipping) and once one bucket was filled they would take it to a collection barrel on the squad’s wagon. The wagoner would then turn the bucket upside-down on a metal flange to let the resin drip into the barrel. Meanwhile the dipper was moving to other boxes to fill the second bucket and then repeat the process. Most harvesters were responsible for about 2,000 boxes per day which translated into 4 to 7 barrels of raw material for that day. The dipping process would continue from early spring through November (about a month after the last chipping).



A Dipper Hands a Dip Bucket to the Wagoner to be Emptied into the Dip Barrel on the Wagon.



Chipping a High Face



Herty Cup System

After the last dipping, the chipped cat faces would continue to ooze gum, which was denser than that which collected in the boxes or cups because the oils would evaporate as the gum collected on the surface of the scars; nevertheless this dried gum could be distilled for rosin and turpentine. From December to January, when the work was slow, turpentine workers would remove the hardened gum, which was called "scrape" into a moveable box that could hold up to 150 pounds of scrape. When that box was full, the scrape would be transferred from the box, pounded into barrels, and then hauled to the still. Other off-season work included clearing undergrowth, collecting timber for barrels, and towards the end of the off-season, starting new boxes.

In 1901 Dr. Charles H. Herty tested the first cup system, which resulted in less damage to the trees than a box, provided more resin and significantly more turpentine, and resulted in a much higher quality resin (5 times higher) than was produced during the 19th century. Although turpentine workers were skeptical, the cup system eventually replaced the box and by 1910 it was the prevalent method to collect naval stores raw material. To install a cup, a "V" was cut into the base of the tree with a specialized tool called a "hack." Metal gutters were placed into each side of the angled cuts and were used to funnel the resin into a cup that was hooked onto the tree with a nail. As with boxes, chippers would continue to gash the tree in a cat face to keep the tree sap flowing. However, once cups were



Stiller Listening to Kettle

used, dip irons were no longer required, as the gum could be poured directly from the cup to a bucket or the barrel on the wagon.

Once the barrels on a wagon were filled, they would immediately be taken to the still because a time lag could result in the evaporation of oils and a loss of quality. Most still structures were two stories with a furnace on the ground floor encompassing the kettle still that extended to the platform above. Most kettles could hold 10-20 barrels of harvested resin, which were rolled or lifted to a platform above the kettle so the resin could be poured in. A fire was then lit, a condensing tube connected, and the resin was slowly heated. It was important for the stiller to use a gradual temperature rise, because a quick rise in temperature or too much heat could affect the quality of the resulting rosin and turpentine. During the process 6-8 gallons of turpentine would be created by the condensing tube and at the end of the process rosin would be drained at the bottom of the kettle and left to cool. While the resin cooked, there was a constant risk of boiling over which made distilling the pine resin into turpentine and rosin an arduous and complicated task. To further complicate matters, it was completed without thermometers or gauges—the stiller relied primarily on sound. By listening carefully to the kettle the stiller would know when the batch, or “charge,” was done.



Garner Still



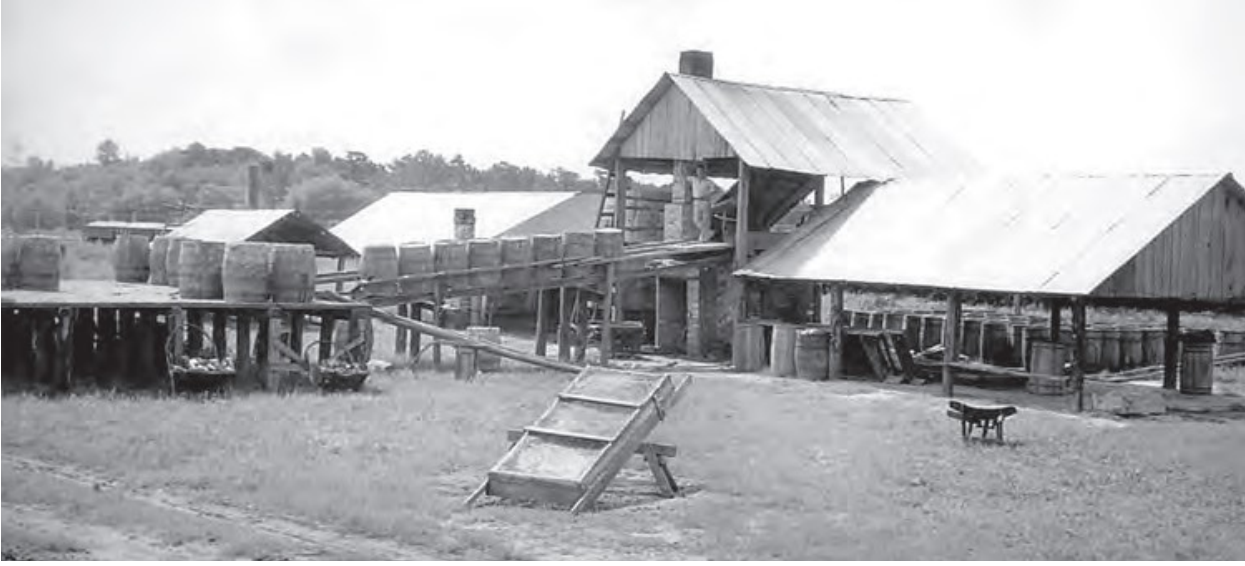
Small Capacity Still, Sampson County

The process took 2 to 2 1/2 hours and at peak dipping three batches could be stilled per day; each batch typically consisted of 75 percent rosin and 25 percent turpentine. The turpentine was collected through the condensing tube, which funneled the steam from the kettle into a copper coil, known as a “worm,” which ran through a large wooden cooling tank filled with water and located adjacent to the kettle. As the steam travelled through the worm, it cooled, condensed into liquid, and was then released from the cooling tank into a series of barrels. The resulting liquid was a mixture of water and turpentine, but because the water was heavier, the two liquids were easy to separate. The turpentine floated atop the water and was siphoned off the top of one barrel into the next, and finally funneled into its storage barrel.

At the end of the distilling, hot liquid rosin remained in the kettle. The rosin was drained from the kettle through means of a valve and a short pipe. Because it was full of impurities such as wood chips and other solid matter, the rosin was drained through a series of strainers and into a trough. The rosin was then allowed to cool in a trough. From there, a worker ladled the cooled rosin into barrels where it solidified. Barrels of rosin were shipped by boat or wagon and stored in large yards, like the one



Pensacola Rosin Yards 1920s



Still in Northwest Florida, 1920s

in Pensacola, where they awaited transport to their final destinations for use in the 19th century as naval stores and in the 20th century for construction and manufacturing. Such construction uses included red rosin paper for roofing, adhesives, varnishes, soldering flux and manufacturing uses include nail polish, creating lenses, soap, and paper sizing. Rosin is also used by musicians (to rosin their bows), dancers (on shoes to reduce slippage), and athletes (to increase traction or grip).

The barrels used to, separate store and ship turpentine and rosin were made in cooperages, which were typically located adjacent to stills and were accompanied by small sawmills. The construction of the 40-gallon barrels for turpentine and rosin varied greatly. The turpentine

Cooper's Shed, Cooper Driving Hoops



barrels were made very precisely with white oak, tightly looped with strong iron, coated with glue on the interior and varnish on the exterior to keep the liquid contents safe. However, the rosin barrels were constructed cheaply of pine with 6 light iron hoops, which was sufficient to hold the solidified rosin. While only 2 turpentine barrels could be made per day, up to 10 rosin barrels could be constructed during the same time period.



Scoping Up the Resin from Settling Vat.
Courtesy of The Library of Congress.

Acme/Shaw Turpentine Still and Camp

The Choctawhatchee Bay area provided a perfect blend of environmental conditions for turpentine operations. The sandy soil was not well-suited to agriculture, but the vast longleaf and slash pine forest was its own valuable resource. The area, located on the bay provided easy transport by water, with major shipping operations located in nearby Pensacola and, after 1883, by train on the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad. By 1887, timbering and turpentine extraction were the foundations of the local economy.

Among the turpentine operations in and around what is now Eglin AFB was the site of what became known as the “Acme-Shaw” turpentine still. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the quarter section upon which this site is located was divided up and passed through many hands, including three major turpentine operators: the Union Naval Stores Company (later called Union Land and Timber), the Acme Turpentine Co. (later called Acme Florida Turpentine Co.), and an intriguing character named L. L. Shaw, who at various times either outright owned the turpentine company or directed its operations as the president of Deerland Turpentine Co.

The historical record is sparse, but we can glean some information about the Acme-Shaw site from deeds, tax rolls, historic maps, mortgage records, and oral histories. From these sources, we know that the site operated from about 1905-1934. In 1906, the operations consisted of a 20-barrel turpentine still, two larger houses, eleven worker shanties, a barn, a cooper’s shop and tools, and a commissary and stores. By 1911, the still site had grown considerably, with triple the number of shanties, double the dwelling houses, and the still itself had increased to a 25-barrel still. Census records indicate there were at least 30 workers at the still by the 1920s. Interviews with local residents whose



Turpentine Trees in Northern Florida.
Courtesy of The Library of Congress.

grandparents worked at the still remember the “big house” where the overseer lived, a church, numerous workers’ quarters, a commissary, and a cooperage.

During its height, the still was known as Shaw’s Still, named after Lloyd L. Shaw. Between 1914 and 1934, Shaw played a major role in the operation of the still. Shaw was in his early forties when he first became involved with the still, and was married with two daughters and three sons. His 20 years successfully operating the Shaw still, along with at least one other still he owned in Baker, are testaments to Shaw’s success in the turpentine venture.

Shaw met a tragic and dramatic death in an incident that made headlines in the *Okaloosa Messenger* on January 11, 1934.

L.L. SHAW, A.B., AND ROBT. MORRIS ARE DEAD
THREE ARE KILLED
AS GUN BATTLE RAGES IN BAKER STORE

The paper reported a gun battle in which “Death-dealing bullets whizzed through the air in a heart-rending, nerve-paralyzing manner...” Apparently in a dispute over a property line fence, W. A. Baker encountered Shaw at a store in the nearby town of Baker and opened fire on him and his son Leroy. The elder Shaw was fatally shot, while Leroy, though wounded, managed to stumble from the business, retrieved his own shotgun, returned to the store and fired blindly, killing the innocent shop owner A. B. Morris and his son Robert. For reasons not made clear, Baker was not prosecuted for the shooting death of Lloyd Shaw as it was ruled justifiable homicide for reasons that are not made clear in the reports. To this day, rumors persist that Leroy did not die of his wounds, but instead fled the region to avoid prosecution. The death of L. L. Shaw signaled the end of the turpentine business at the Shaw still. The site remained in the hands of the Shaw family until 1942, when the land was quit claimed to the Valparaiso State

Bank for \$1.00. In the 1940s, the land on which the site was located was acquired by the War Department as they expanded military training and testing in the area during World War II. The land eventually became a part of Eglin AFB which maintains ownership of the property today.

Uncovering the Acme-Shaw Turpentine Camp

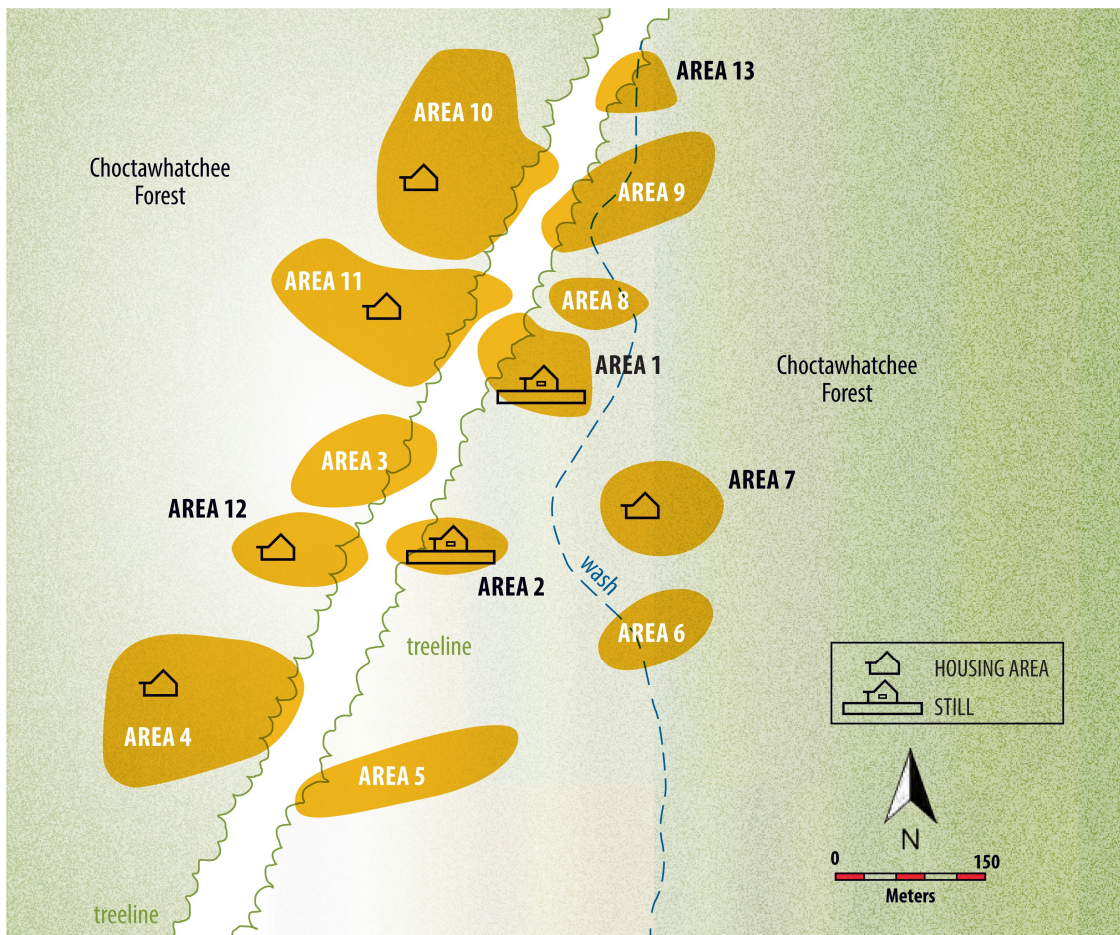
After the death of L. L. Shaw, the Acme-Shaw turpentine camp was abandoned. Company equipment was either sold or moved off the site, the shanties and other camp buildings were dismantled (either by the company or local residents), and the once-prosperous operation was generally forgotten. In 1940, the War Department acquired the land that encompassed the Choctawhatchee National Forest and fenced off its boundaries and soon the open longleaf pine forest was overgrown with a thick understory of live oak, sand pine, assorted grasses, and shrubs that further concealed the site. Archaeologists re-discovered the site during their cultural resources surveys in 1993, but there were few clues on the ground surface as to what activities had taken place there some 70 years earlier. The archaeologist would embark on an historic archaeological study of the site to learn about the people and their activities at the Acme-Shaw turpentine camp.

Historic archaeology uses a combination of written records and material remains to study past societies and their activities. Although written records—what we normally think of as “history”—are valuable tools to understanding our past, they do not tell the whole story of how humans behaved during a particular time period in a particular place. The books and archival records often fail to relate the history of the “common man,” especially in early industrial or frontier America. Historic archaeologists look at the material remains left behind by human behavior to try and fill in the blanks that the written histories leave out. By studying these material remains we can get a more complete picture

of the types of buildings people constructed, what kind of daily activities they engaged in, the types of products they made or bought, the work they did, and the tools they used. In short, historic archaeologists “attempt to discover the fabric of common everyday life in the past and seek to understand the broader historical development of their own and other societies.”

In 2009, the archaeological team went into the field to delineate the boundaries of the site. As the archaeologists began to more thoroughly investigate the area, the full extent of this large turpentine complex came to light. They used written records about this camp and about turpentine camps in general to help them determine the most fruitful places to investigate. They used a number of archaeological field techniques, such as digging small

Map of Acme-Shaw Site, Showing Artifact Scatters and Brick Concentrations within Areas 1 through 12




excavation units and using ground-penetrating radar to “see” below the surface in order to discover both the extent and depth of the site. The archaeologists discovered over two dozen concentrations of artifacts and bricks spread over a 157-acre area. These were the remains of the turpentine still complex, company housing, other structures, and the ubiquitous trash that litters most places that humans inhabit.

With this information in hand, the archaeologists were now ready to focus on that part of the site that was going to be disturbed by the construction of the new highway corridor (this area represented approximately 10 percent of the total site area). To design their investigation, the archaeologists first needed to develop research questions, i.e., determine what they wanted to learn about the site. The goals of the investigation at the Acme-Shaw Turpentine Still site were three-fold and were based on information about the material remains collected at other still sites. First, the archaeological team wanted a better

**View of Block 4 Excavations at Acme-Shaw Site.
Crew Working in the Background, Facing Northeast**





understanding of the functional and spatial patterning in this part of the site. In other words, they were interested in how people were using the land - what kinds of dwellings were being built and for what purpose? They also wanted to know where activities were taking place, where domestic dwellings were located, the placement of the still, and where did they dispose of their trash? Second, the team was curious as to whether or not the site's material remains could be differentiated on the basis of who was there. Was there a difference in dwelling type, size, or adornment due to the status of people who lived there? Was there a difference in the personal items used by the site's inhabitants based on their status, race, or gender? And, third, the team posed a commonly asked question among archaeologists and historians: when was the site occupied and did activities at the camp shift locations throughout the years of its operation?

With these research questions in mind, and using information from written records and previous investigation of the site, archaeologists were able to develop a plan or research design to investigate the site and hopefully answer their research questions. This phase of the project would include a more intensive large-scale excavation program that would target specific areas of the workers' quarters and still operations in the northernmost part of the site. Unfortunately, large-scale excavation at an archaeological site is very expensive and, therefore, rarely is a site completely excavated by hand-digging. In the case of the Acme-Shaw site, a sample of the site area within the right-of-way would be the focus of intensive excavation activity. Despite this geographical limitation, the large-scale excavation effort represents the most intensive and extensive investigation of a naval stores industrial complex in northwest Florida.

The heavy underbrush and downed trees were cleared from the site to allow a better look at the ground surface and to do more in-field analysis of the site's features (i.e., house remains, artifact scatters, etc.). The increased ground

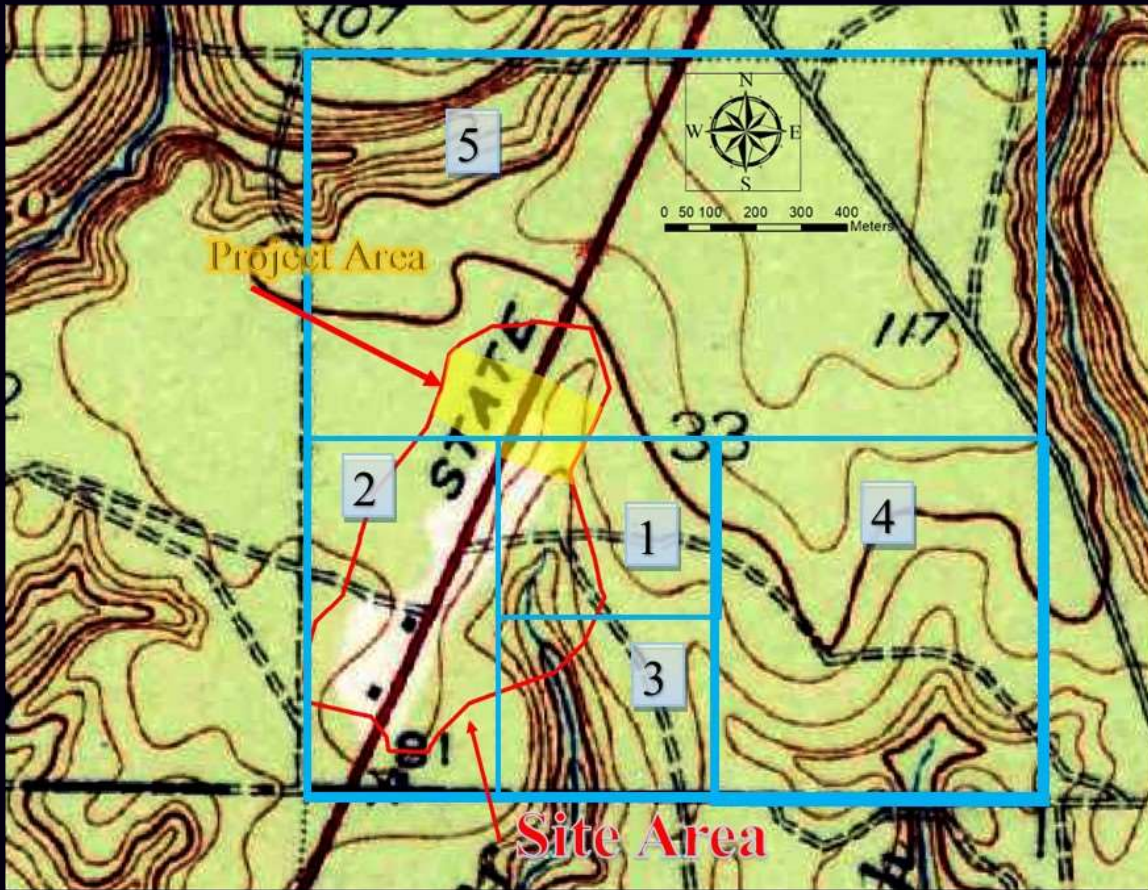
visibility also enabled them to create a more complete and detailed map of the site. The archaeologists used a number of methods to learn more about the place. These techniques included excavation of small test areas, use of metal detectors to find concentrations of metal artifacts, and use of ground-penetrating radar to sweep across portions of the site where they thought house foundations or other subsurface features might be located. They also used a backhoe fitted with a special plate over the bucket teeth to carefully scrape the ground looking for evidence of features just below the surface. This was a very effective technique that uncovered a lot of information about trash disposal, dwelling orientation, and wagon roads. Finally, archaeologists got out their trowels, whiskbrooms, and soil screens to begin the meticulous process of hand excavating the areas they hoped would yield the most information to address the research questions.

Results of the Archaeological Investigations

By combining the historical research and the material remains left behind at the Acme-Shaw site, archaeologists were able to put together a picture of what

Photograph of Field Excavation, 2011





Location of Land Parcels Discussed in Text and Location of Site Area and Project Corridor. The Background Map is a Portion of the 1972 Niceville Quadrangle.

the site might have looked like. They were also able to draw some conclusions about how people used the land, the specific activities in which they were engaged, and who these people were.

WHAT DID ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND?

Archaeologists recovered over 39,000 artifacts within the project area. In order to make sense of this enormous number of artifacts, the team grouped items together according to function, with thirteen categories created. The largest

group of artifacts—almost 40 percent—was composed of “architectural” items such as bricks, mortar, roofing materials, and windowpane fragments. Architectural items helped archaeologists determine what kinds of structures were located in each area of the site. Another group, “activities,” included items that represented activities such as laundry, carpentry, metalworking, or entertainment, and addressed questions about what people did at the camp and where those activities took place. The artifact categories of “furnishings,” “kitchen,” “health,” “personal,” and “indulgence” told researchers something about who was living in the various areas of the Acme-Shaw still camp. The remaining categories of artifacts unearthed presented evidence of “firearms”, in particular spent ammunition of various types; “hardware”, which included parts and fasteners typical of machinery; “industrial” items primarily related to naval stores activities; and “transportation” items such as auto parts or horse and wagon equipment. The final two categories included “dross” or slag, and fragments of “unidentified” ceramic, metal, and glass.

Among the furnishings were metal stove and sewing machine parts, oil and kerosene lamp pieces, bed parts, a chest key, a trunk latch, and other decorative elements of furniture. Archaeologists uncovered an unprecedented number and variety of kitchen items including decorated ceramic dinnerware, glassware, utilitarian containers, food storage and condiment containers, utensils, and iron cookware. Health related items that were discovered included fragments from medicinal bottles, vials, and ointment jars—for many of which researchers could identify patent names such as Groves Tasteless Chill Tonic, Sloan’s Liniment, Fletcher’s Castoria, Vaseline, and Vick’s VapoRub. Researchers unearthed all manner of personal items from clothing fragments, to coins, cosmetics, grooming items, jewelry, and toys.

(Facing Page) Selected Furnishings Artifacts from the Acme-Shaw Site: a. Chest Key; b. Brass Escutcheon Plate; Selected Health Related Artifacts, c. Vaseline Brand Salve Jar; d. Vicks Vapor-Rub; e. Dropper; f. Thermometer Piece; g. Cylinder Shaped Vial; h. Funnel Shaped Vial



Selected Activity Artifacts from the Acme-Shaw Site: a. Paper Scissor; b. Phonograph Record; c. Thimble; d. Monopoly Game Piece; e. Pencil Head



Although many of the objects and fragments found were utilitarian items, artifacts that indicated leisure activities were also found. For example, numerous phonograph and gramophone record fragments were uncovered, most of which date to before the 1930s. A reed from an unknown musical instrument, pencils, sewing equipment, and paper scissors were also found. One of the most unique leisure items recovered was a cast pewter battleship Monopoly game piece, which the team dated to the late 1930s. Also numerous at the site were indulgence items. These included items such as tobacco cans and fragments from bottles of soda. Soda was not the only beverage consumed at the Acme-Shaw site. Archaeologists also found many pieces of alcohol bottles, mostly from the pre-prohibition era (before 1920), and a wide variety, too—beer, whiskey, wine, and champagne bottle fragments were identified, as were liquor flasks and shot glasses.

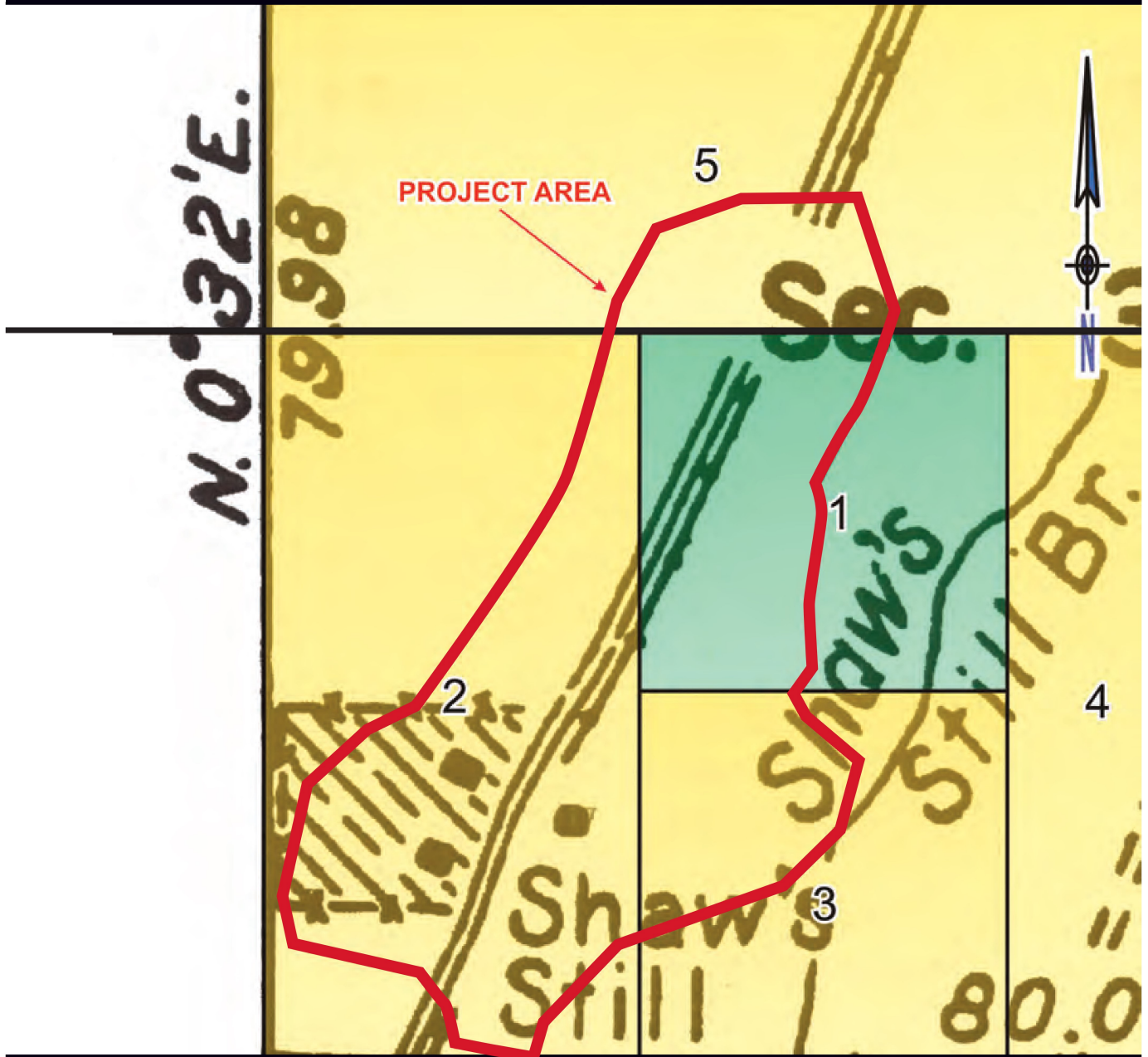
WHAT DOES IT ALL TELL US?

Archaeologists uncovered, measured, analyzed, and documented thousands of artifacts unearthed during their excavations, but what did it all mean? Based on the types of artifacts the researchers found, the concentration of these artifacts in specific areas, and the locations of these concentrations in relation to one another, the research team was able to piece together a picture of who lived in this area of the Acme-Shaw still and how they used this space.

The area within the right-of-way of the proposed road, where archaeologists focused their attention, is bisected by a State Highway. During the early twentieth century, this road existed but was unpaved, and it appears that the road itself may have partially determined what activities took place on either side of it. On the west side of the State Highway, archaeologists discovered a small residential area. Here, the team uncovered vehicle trails, the remains of five houses, a garden plot, one shed, other possible structures or areas of activity, a privy, and disposal areas and trash pits.

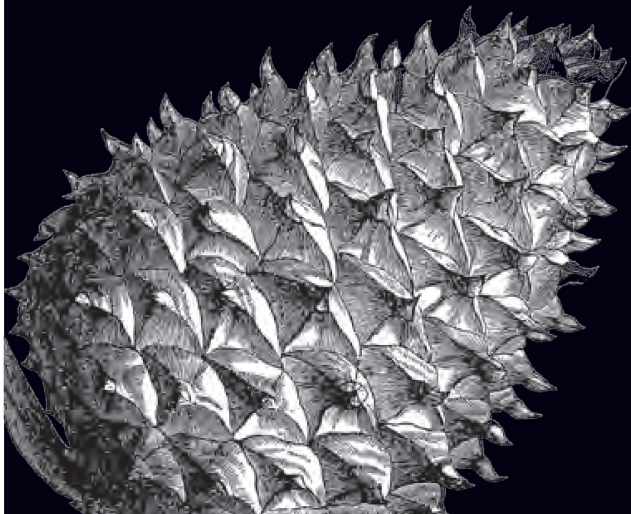
Although only visible through excavation, pairs of ruts provided the clues for archaeologists to reconstruct the major vehicle routes through this small residential area. Based on the size of the ruts, and the distance between them, it is likely that these routes were first created by wagons and possibly reinforced later in the 1920s by automobiles.

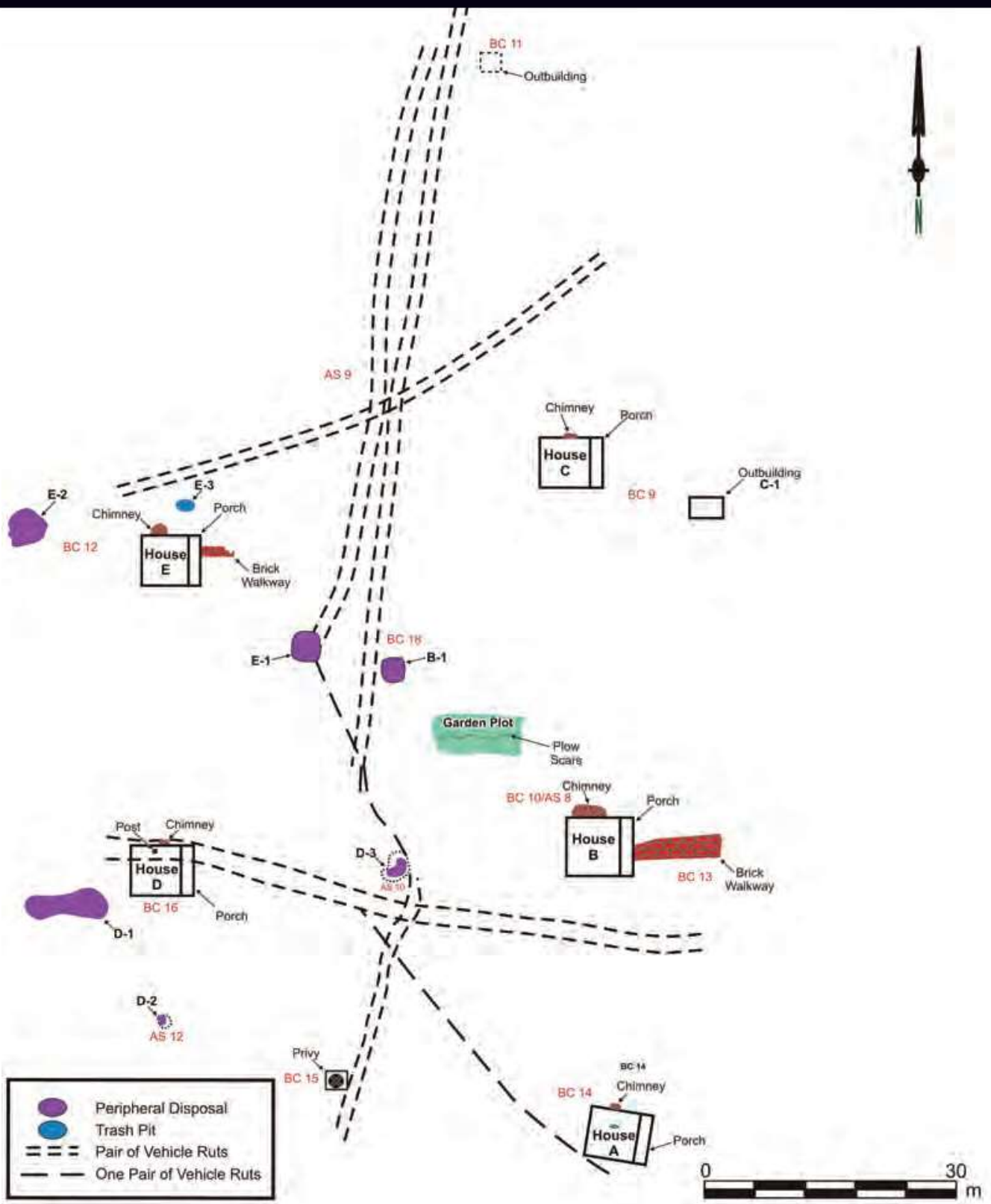
Perhaps the most telling finds in this area west of the State Highway, were the remains of the five houses and the artifacts found in and near the former homes. It is through analysis of the artifacts found here that archaeologists were able to learn more about who lived in these homes—in particular, their status, race, and gender. From the time the structural remains in this area were first identified in 1993, researchers had assumed the structures were workers' quarters, probably occupied by African American turpentine workers and their families. Closer examination of the artifacts located within each of these



(Above) Portion of a General Land Office (GLO) Map, Showing in 1908 Union Land and Timber Company Ownership in Yellow and Acme Turpentine Company in Green. Note the GLO Map is from 1932 and Structures Reflected on it were not Present in 1908.

(Facing Page) Reconstruction of Houses and Activity Loci on West Side of the State Highway







View of Turpentine Workers Cabins at a Camp in Valdosta, Georgia circa 1930s. Library of Congress Image LC-USF34-017643-C.



Photograph of J. J. Faircloth in a Carriage Being Pulled by a Horse. Note thin wheels similar to what may have made the ruts at the Acme-Shaw site.

houses, however, led the archaeological team to question that assumption and draw a new conclusion about the people who lived here.

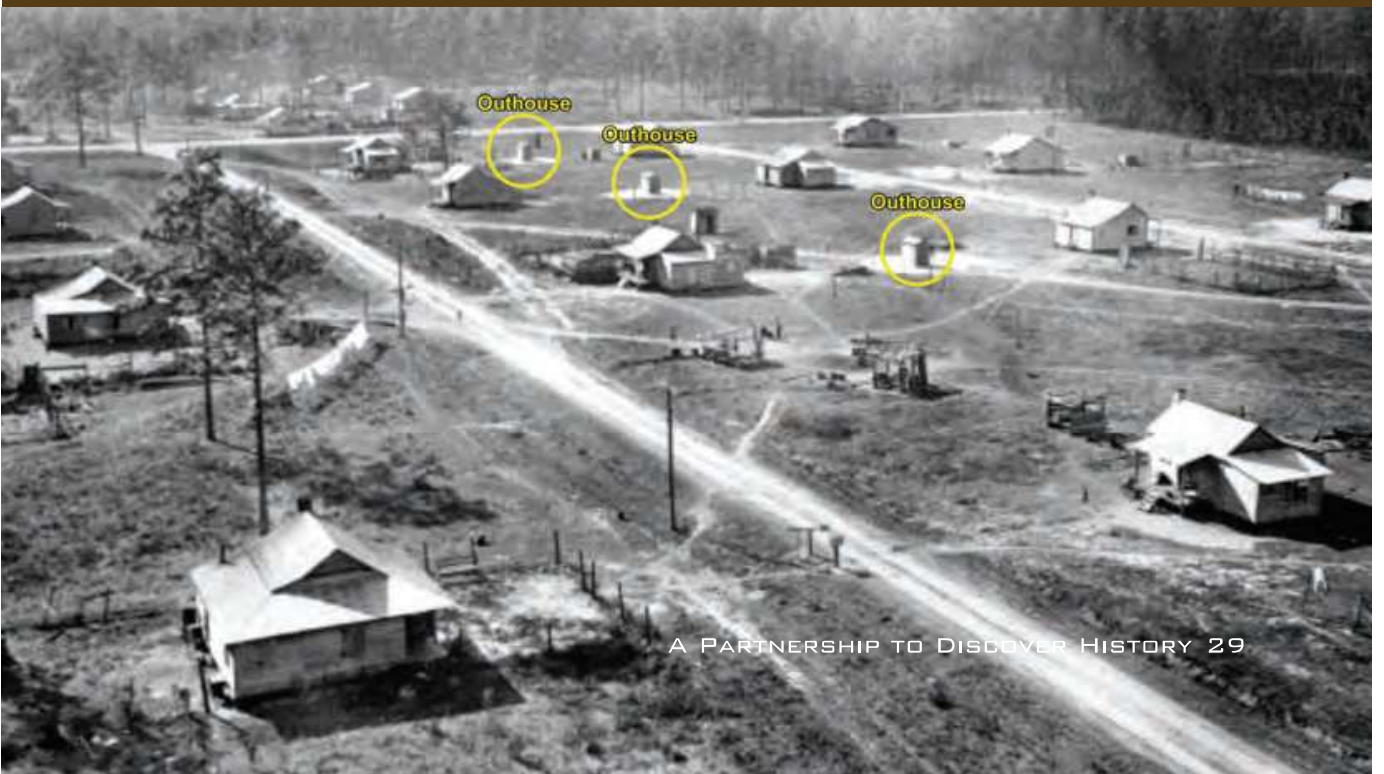
The five houses were almost identical and roughly the same in size—about 18 feet square. Each was a wood-frame structure with a front porch and a chimney, a typical design for houses in turpentine camps of the region. The houses were lit with oil lamps and heated by cast iron, wood-burning stoves. The five houses were served by one privy, or outhouse. Although only a scatter of bricks was left to indicate a foundation for the outhouse, archaeologists discovered a thin layer of lime at the base of the circular privy pit. Lime was a common treatment for privies in the early twentieth century, as it helped to break down acidic content and keep down odors. Oral histories and previous research of the region's turpentine industry note that the privy facilities were typically located “out back” of houses, and were for communal use. Through their analysis of the numerous artifacts found in this housing area, researchers were able to estimate that this residential area was occupied between 1905 and 1925.

Researchers found a plethora of evidence to indicate that families occupied most of these houses. But these were not families of turpentine workers; rather, people of a higher socio-economic status lived here, perhaps those



(Above) Photograph of Woods Rider's Home, Circa 1930s. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/132325>

(Below) Birds-Eye View of Turpentine Community, Showing Shared Outhouses between Houses. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/11046>



responsible for the management of the still or of the lower-paid workers. How did archaeologists draw these conclusions? Items found at the houses such as decorative vase fragments, imported Japanese porcelain, brass knobs, a gold-plated decorative clip, jewelry, and other like artifacts revealed the people who lived here owned goods that would not likely have been accessible or affordable to the average African American turpentine worker. At each house, archaeologists uncovered items that would have typically belonged to an adult male. Tools, a money clip, a gold-plated cuff button, a brass pocket watch, suspender parts, work clothes buttons, and evidence of firearms tell the story of the men who lived there. Likewise, the women who occupied these spaces left behind the traces of their everyday lives in pieces of women's clothing and lingerie, jewelry, cosmetics, and sewing tools. Evidence of the presence of children included a miniature tea set, fragments of porcelain dolls, and marbles. At two of the homes, the researchers found pencils or ink wells and pens, which indicated that the residents of these homes were literate.

Selected Activity Tools from the Acme-Shaw Site: a-d. Files of Various Sizes; e. Wrench



Selected Brooch from the Acme-Shaw Site



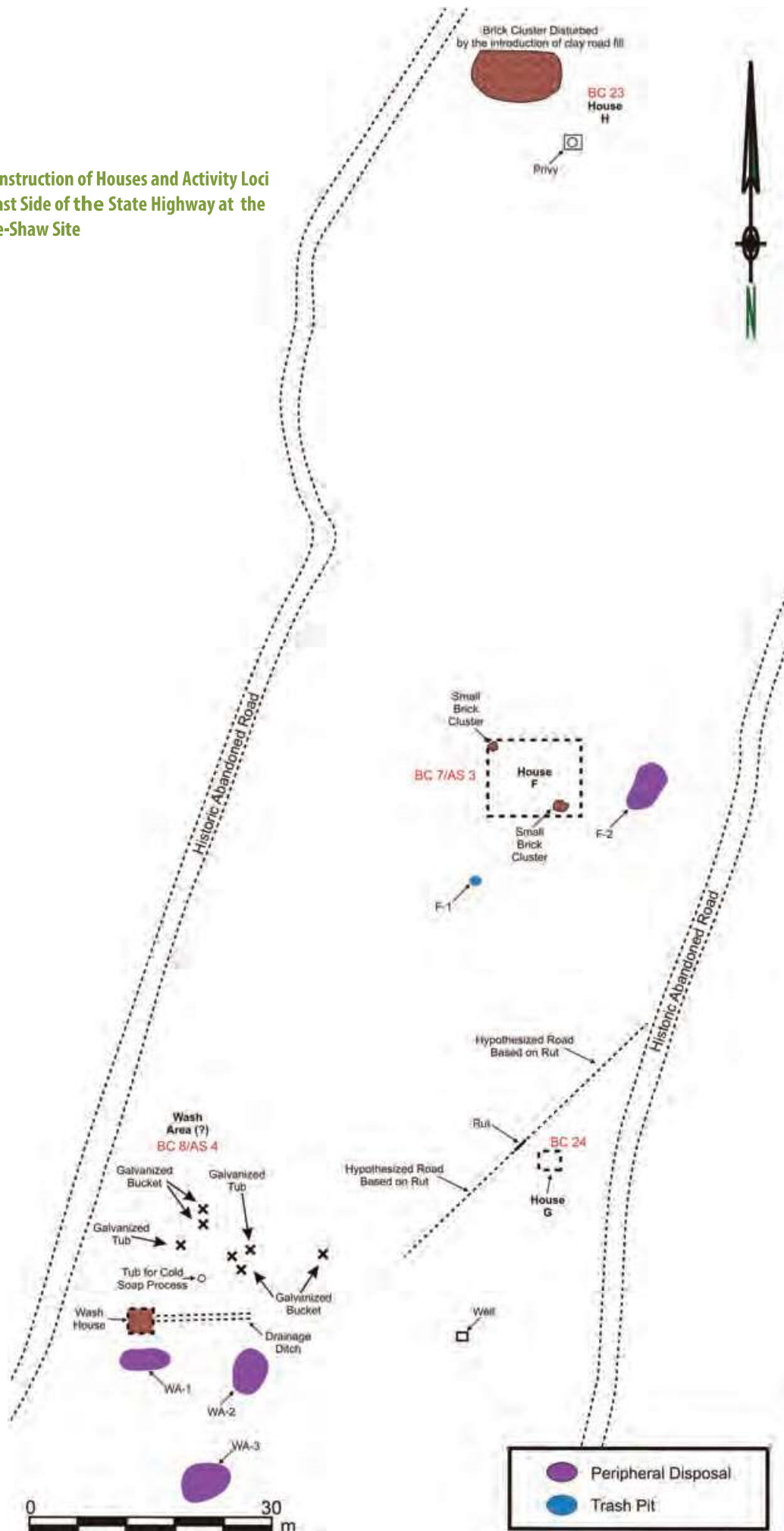
The residents of the Acme-Shaw still homes also left behind clues as to how they spent their leisure time. At nearly all the houses, fragments of 78 rpm records were uncovered. Also prevalent in this area was a large variety of alcohol and whiskey bottles. At least one resident, living at House D, likely owned a car. Numerous auto parts belonging to an early Ford, and a license plate dating to 1924 were discovered. To

the northwest of House B, a garden plot was unearthed. Scars left behind from hand plows revealed to archaeologists that this was once a small garden. The thousands of artifacts and structural remains archeologists unearthed on the west side of the State Highway left them confident this was a residential area occupied by families of a higher socio-economic status than the typical turpentine worker.

The archaeologists thought investigations west of the State Highway might find the commissary. Although no definitive evidence was found, they believed the commissary was located somewhere near the still complex. Historians know well the types of goods that were sold at turpentine camp commissaries in the region. Common inventory for such company stores would have included seeds, animal feed, canned food, lamp fuel, lamps, medicine, tobacco, clothing, possibly alcohol, and tools. Little, however, is known about how a commissary manifests archaeologically, as very few have been fully excavated.

On the east side of the State Highway, however, archaeologists discovered the evidence of a different kind of use area. Here, researchers uncovered the remains of other structures, a water well, and a wash area. In addition, a single

Reconstruction of Houses and Activity Loci on East Side of the State Highway at the Acme-Shaw Site



house and privy were discovered north of the still complex. Unfortunately, researchers were not able to uncover as many artifacts here as they had on the west side. The conclusions they could draw about how and who used these spaces are less definitive than for the west side of the site, and there is less insight into the occupants.

The artifacts the research team found at Houses F and G included can and stove parts, pieces of cast iron that may be part of frying pans and other cookware, flat iron, sheet metal, buckets, pails, tubs, medicine containers, tableware, pencil parts, chimney lamp glass, stoneware jugs, clothing parts (mostly buttons and shoe parts), alcohol (mostly beer), and soda bottle fragments, among other objects. Scattered bricks also indicated to the archaeologists that a structure stood here, although its exact size and layout was indeterminable. From the maker's marks on the found objects, the researchers dated the use of this area from between 1905 and 1925, corresponding to the residential area across the road.

To the southwest of Houses F and G, the research team uncovered what it believed to be a former wash area. Here, they found a large quantity of galvanized tubs, buckets, and enamel pails littered about the surface and unearthed through excavation. The quantity of these types of artifacts was striking in contrast to other areas within the site. In addition, sections of bricks were found here arranged in an arc, which combined with a layer of charcoal, indicated to archaeologists that these areas were used to make fires to heat water (the bricks were likely used to support tubs over the fires). The arc may have also been used as a foundation to support laundry activities. A ditch ran perpendicular from this area to a dry swale, obviously for purposes of drainage. Some of the bricks found in this area may have been used as a foundation for a wash house or laundry shed.

As historian Pete Gerrell noted in his 1997 book *The Illustrated History of the Naval Stores (Turpentine) Industry*, typical turpentine camps in the region



Photograph of Commissary in Turpentine Camp in North Florida, circa 1900s. Note the Bars on the Windows. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/132263>

had a common drinking water well, which was shared by all and “with a washing shed nearby for washing clothes.” Here at the Acme-Shaw site, the archaeologists excavated just such a well only about 30 meters from the washing area. A sloped drainage ditch and a large buried tub, possibly used for cold soap processes, also added to the already strong evidence that this was a camp wash area.

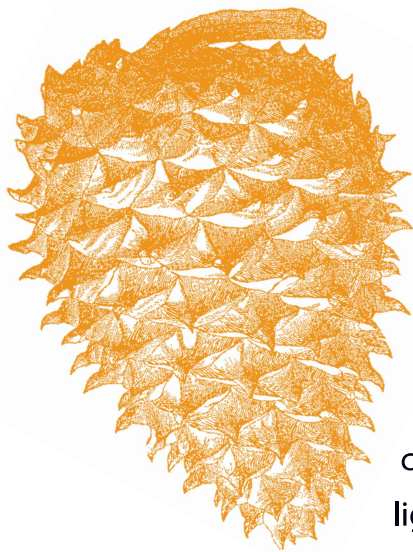
On the northern edge of the right-of-way area, and still on the east side of the State Highway, the researchers found another feature of the former Acme-Shaw still. Window pane glass fragments, brick, and mortar led archaeologists to the conclusion that a structure stood here, most likely a wood-frame house similar to those uncovered on the west side of the State Highway in the residential area. A nearby privy, along with the remains of a cast iron stove, sewing machine parts, tableware, clothing, and common household objects also supported the conclusion that this area was a home, though the question of who may

have lived here is still open. Men's clothing and tools indicate, at the very least, that an adult man lived here at some point. The artifacts recovered at this former house suggest it was occupied from 1905 to 1925, with the exception of one item: a Monopoly game piece that was not introduced until 1937. The researchers speculated that perhaps this house was originally constructed as part of improvements made at the turpentine camps in 1905, was occupied until around the mid-1920s, and then reoccupied after Shaw's death when the property was purchased by R. L. Givens. Oral histories indicate that some of the Acme-Shaw still's houses may have been occupied after Shaw died.

Although the focus of the intensive archaeological research for this project was within the right-of-way for the proposed road improvement, the research team did draw some conclusions based on archival research and archaeological investigation about what structures and activities took place in the rest of the Acme-Shaw



Still site. In general, the industrial activities of the turpentine still took place on the east side of the State Highway, and the residential areas were located on the west side of the road. It is very clear that the primary still activities were located in Areas 1 and 2. The remains in Area 1 include remnants of the 20-barrel still complex, including part of the brick distilling tank foundation, dross piles, a wood chip pile, bricks and brick piles, and barrel hoops. In Area 8 a structure of unknown use existed, it may have been the location of the commissary. Area 6 may have been a lower wash area, while a structure, possibly a house unrelated to the still, was located in Area 7. Another structure of unknown purpose was located in Area 5. On the west side of the State Highway there is evidence of more housing. Area 10, south of the right-of-way, and Area 11 may have been workers' housing. In Areas 12 and 4 are additional archaeological remains that indicate more housing. Taken together, these areas represent all the necessary components of a functioning early-twentieth-century turpentine camp.



Conclusion

The artifacts and information gathered as part of this project represent the most intensive and extensive investigation of a naval stores industrial complex in northwest Florida. The research conducted as part of this project sheds new and important light onto the housing complex in the right-of-way of the proposed road and west of the State Highway—namely that this area was likely where white management lived rather than African American workers as previously assumed. The findings of this project will help future archaeological studies of naval stores camps in the region, adding to the richness of this history and expanding our understanding of the organization

of these spaces, the people who lived here, and the work they conducted. Those portions of the Acme-Shaw site that lie outside the project area remain undisturbed and eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Eglin AFB continues to protect and preserve them as an important part of the region's heritage and history.

Diagram of a Still Operation

