

Abstract

The Army is tasked with managing the cultural resources on its lands. For installations that contain large numbers of historic farmsteads, meeting these requirements through traditional archeological approaches entails large investments of personnel time and organization capital. Through a previous project, Fort Leonard Wood and ERDC-CERL cultural resource management personnel developed a methodology for efficiently identifying the best examples of historic farmstead sites and also, those sites that are least likely to be deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This project tested the applicability of the Fort Leonard Wood methodology to another region of the country. The Southeastern United States provided a temporal depth different from the earlier Ozark regional application. A historic context and determination of the "typical" farmsteads of the Southeast were developed. The Eligibility Prescreening Form created by ERDC-CERL researchers was modified to reflect the archeological patterns of the Southeast and then applied to test sites at Fort Bragg. The results of the fieldwork showed this approach is applicable to the Southeastern region, and it can be used to quickly identify basic information about historic farmstead sites that can expedite determinations of eligibility to the NRHP.

Background

Military acquisition of vast amounts of land for new installations naturally included inhabited lands. Most of this habitation was in the form of individual farmsteads. As a result, installations across the country contain numerous historic archeological sites that are the remains of these farmsteads. The occupants of all these sites once belonged to communities connected by kinship and social institutions, and they were displaced by the founding of multiple military installations. The impact of these farmsteads on the landscape remains visible on installation rangelands and buffer zones, although the occupants are long gone. Installation land managers must now determine how best to manage these former homesteads, consistent with federal legal requirements. Key among these is the legal requirement to evaluate sites more than 50 years old for eligibility to be listed on the NRHP. The lack of guidance for evaluation methods and the sheer numbers of these farmstead sites makes the evaluation process laborious and very expensive.

Objective

A methodology for a standardized approach to NRHP eligibility of historic farmstead archaeological sites on military installations was developed by ERDC-CERL in 2005 for Fort Leonard Wood. This 2012 DoD Legacy Program project provides the next step through the application of the methodology on a regional scale in a different part of the United States. This project investigated the potential of collecting these farmsteads in a large, regional, cultural landscape group by determining spatial and physical similarities and differences between the farmstead sites.



US Army Corps of Engineers®

Field research conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Our sincere thanks go to the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources staff for their essential assistance.

Images from (other than ERDC-CERL):

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission

Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Manager

<http://www.farmbuildingguide.org/cribbarns.html>

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Point of Contact

Dr. Susan Enscore
US Army Engineer Research and Development Center
Construction Engineering Research Laboratory
Champaign, IL 61826
susan.i.enscore@usace.army.mil

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Regional Analysis of Historic Farmstead Archeological Site Characteristics on DoD Installations

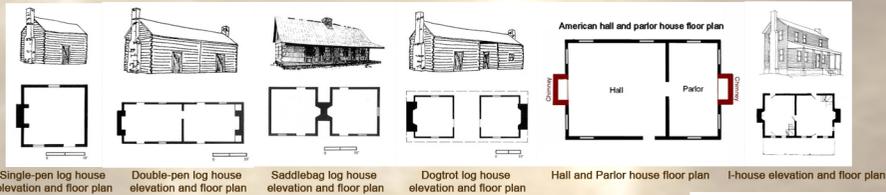


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Approach

The 2005 methodology was applied to a three-state region in the Southeast. A historic context was developed to determine a “typical” farmstead. A weighted Eligibility Prescreening Form was modified to reflect archeological patterns of the Southeast and then applied to test sites at Fort Bragg to determine which sites were likely typical, and therefore not likely to provide additional information. The results were then compared to previously completed Phase II evaluations of the Fort Bragg sites to measure the methodology’s effectiveness.

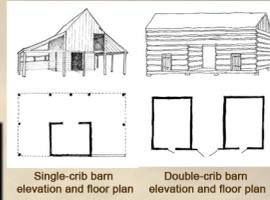
The historic context provided information on common types of farmstead residences and outbuildings, fencing, and layout for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The typical farmstead included a house constructed from one of the following architectural designs: single-pen, double-pen, saddlebag, dogtrot, hall-and-parlor, or I-house. A modest farmhouse would typically begin as a single-pen structure but often expand into a double-pen, saddlebag, or dogtrot as material or financial resources allowed. Hall-and-parlor houses and I-houses were often constructed when higher financial resources were present. The main house structure was most often built facing a trail or road that would connect the farm to neighboring farmsteads or formal settlements. In addition to the house, outbuildings were common support facilities on the farmstead. The most common outbuildings were barns, pens, and wells. These structures were most often constructed on land behind the farmhouse. Fences were also typically constructed on farmsteads to secure outbuildings, family gardens, and crops.



Hall and Parlor tenant house, North Carolina, circa 1900



Four-crib barn



Split-rail fence, 1938



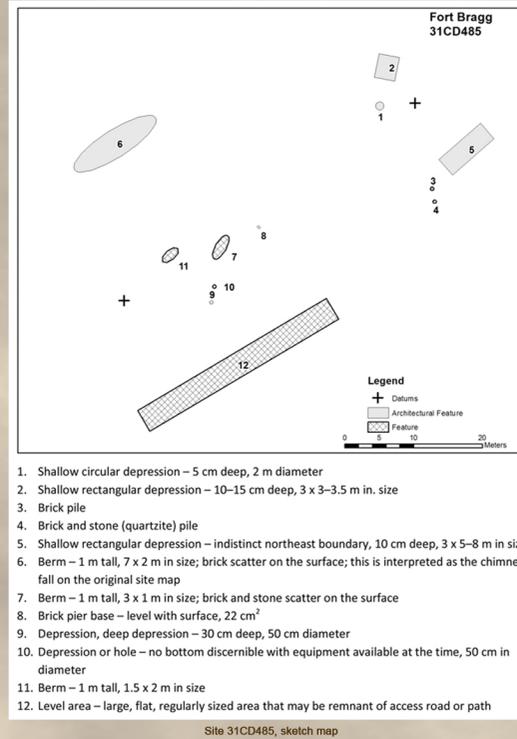
Picket fence



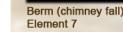
Snake fence

A checklist of questions (Eligibility Prescreening Form) was created to help indicate which sites require on-site investigation to effectively evaluate their National Register eligibility. Indications or “flags” of significance arise when there is variance between site features and the salient characteristics of the typical property. These questions are answered with information gathered from previous site surveys and existing local history documentation including maps, tax records, deeds, and other forms of archival material, possibly supplemented by oral histories. Significance flags can be assigned by analyzing information from the current archaeological inventory forms held by installation CRMs without incurring expensive on-site investigation. Where on-site study is warranted, significance flags can also help prioritize the sites for visits and further investigation.

Five sites at Fort Bragg were selected as test sites for the regional methodology. The majority of the sites contained mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth-century components. During this fieldwork, the aim was not to conduct a complete Phase I archeological survey, but rather to supplement the data from the original Phase I survey with data and insight derived through application of the Eligibility Prescreening Form.



Brick pier base in residential area of site, Element 8



Berm (chimney fall), Element 7



Results

Sufficient regional similarities were encountered to suggest that the demonstrated method is viable and can be extended to other regions. Farmstead activities, regardless of time or place, are closely tied to agricultural function and as a result, will have similarities with other farmstead sites. The kinds of secondary structures on the site and basic site patterning were also remarkably consistent. A relatively long settlement time horizon in the Southeast region resulted in marked temporal variation in farmstead components. Ideally, farmsteads should be evaluated against other sites of similar occupation period, and artifacts should be considered as a major identifier for specificity of time period.

The results obtained with the regional methodology at Fort Bragg focused on determinations of eligibility to the NRHP. ERDC-CERL determinations matched the existing (but unseen before testing) Phase II results for four of the five sites tested. As a result, it appears possible to carry out reliable determinations of eligibility on typical sites without the necessity of a full Phase II study.

Benefit

A method for grouping similar historic farmstead archeological sites in regional associations and creating a standardized approach for making determinations of eligibility can greatly reduce the cost of evaluating them individually. This effort provides the DoD with a valid and supportable methodology for rapidly identifying the many sites not requiring a full-scale evaluation, thus saving time and money in cultural resources stewardship. This approach also provides a comprehensive landscape perspective for evaluating new discoveries and making timely mitigation decisions for undertakings involving an installation’s historic archaeological resources.