

Metal detecting survey of 10370 Sheehan Road

Summary

Between 30 May and 2 July 2020 a metal detecting survey was conducted at 10370 Sheehan Road encompassing 50 hours of field work. This report documents the extraordinary large number of historically significant artifacts found in the 3 areas detected (20+ versus the normal 2-4 found per local property). It also provides historians some additional insight to the property.

All historically significant artifacts will be offered to the Washington Township Trustees (the property owner) then to Centerville-Washington History. If these organizations accept the offer, the smaller artifacts will be donated in 12" x 18" x 2" display cases (similar to Figure 1 except just for this property) along with a short educational description for each artifact. Artifacts too large for a display case will also be offered to the organizations. Artifacts not accepted by either organization will be preserved then sealed in a plastic container and buried on the property with its location noted for future recovery.



Figure 1. Educational display case

Prior research

Pages 164-165 in the Centerville-Washington History publication "A Sense of Place" entitled "The Abner Garard House" provide a historical description of the property¹. Highlights include:

- Abner Garard probably built the stone house on the knoll prior to his death in 1819.
- In addition to supplying equipment for the Woodbourne mills, he served as an associate judge for Montgomery County.
- Per his estate, Abner had acquired considerably material wealth. He also had accounts with a Dayton clothier, a hatmaker, shoes, and dry goods.
- Richard Stephens acquired the farm at an auction in 1823.
- Initially Abner's widow Martha kept the stone house and 72 acres north of Social Row Road, but agreed to trade it to Richard Stephens for 50 acres he owned.
- Richard's daughter Phebe married Owen Hatfield and they built the present home probably in the late 1860s. She remained on the farm until 1885.
- By the 1890s Joseph Newman owned the farm, but the house was sold for the benefit of his creditors.
- In 1893 Mary Pine acquired the house and farm where she lived until her death in 1924.
- Charles and John A. Rabold purchased the farm in 1924.
- In the 1930s they repurposed stone from the (crumbling) ruin to build the springhouse.

Examining the property on the 1857, 1869, and 1895 Montgomery County maps (Figure 2)², the location of the present home near Sheehan Road is consistent with dwelling appearing on the later 2 maps and the description in "A Sense of Place". The dwelling shown on the 1857 map is further east than the present home, and because the elevation rises in this area, it was believed that this was the site of the stone house Abner Garard built on the knoll³. This dwelling was scaled to a present day aerial photograph of the property and the location (39.591717, -84.179565) appears as a yellow star in Figure 3. Armed with this information, permission to metal detect was received from the Washington Township Trustees, and the field survey commenced on 30 May 2020.



Figure 2. The blue arrows on Montgomery County maps showing residences

The approximate location of the dwelling on the 1857 map was found by measuring the distance from Sheehan Rd. to Route 48 then scaling it to Google Earth. The 5,581 feet = 3.9046". Thus the home is 655' east of the Sheehan/Social Row intersection and 398' north (yellow star). A few personal artifacts (i.e. 1835 large cent & flat button) found in the area along with an abundance of nails indicates there was a dwelling in the area.

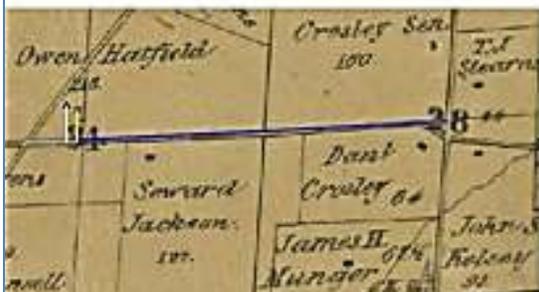


Figure 3. Transferring the location of the mystery dwelling from the 1857 map to aerial photography

Area 1: The present home

Upon arriving on the property, metal detecting was done near the present home and springhouse. Although a horse shoe, some wheat pennies and square nails were found, no artifacts were deemed historically significant. On subsequent visits to Area 1 I changed settings and coils on my metal detector several times with no further success around the house and springhouse. Extending the search area to the higher elevation east of the barn, the most notable finds included a tip of a fork or spoon handle (Figure 4) and a 1938 Mercury dime.



Figure 4. Tip of a fork or spoon handle

Area 2: Dwelling shown on the 1857 map

Using a handheld GPS device I navigated to coordinates of the dwelling shown on the 1857 map and measured off a search area, shown as points 1 and 3, 5, 7, 9, respectively on Figure 5. For reference, the distance separating points 3 & 5 is 70 feet.

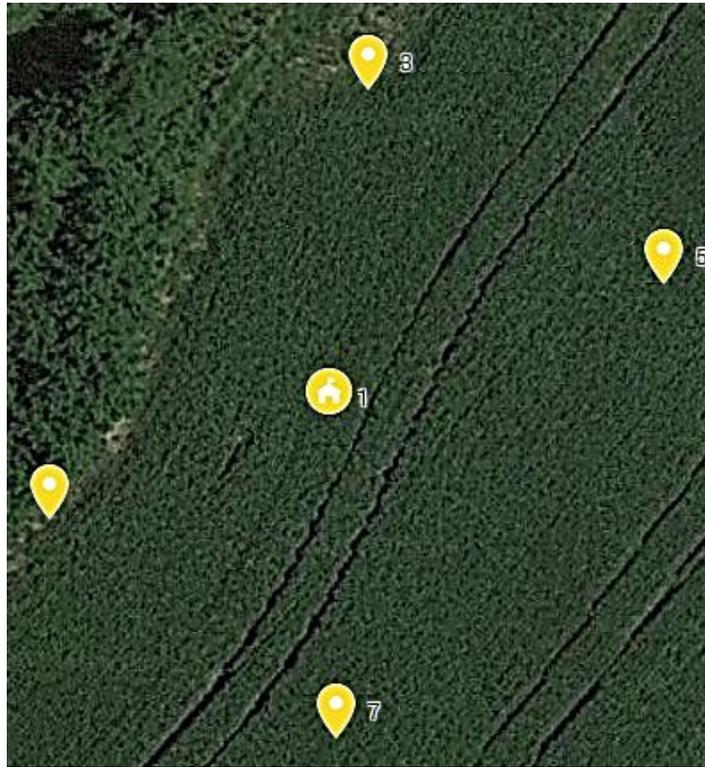


Figure 5. Approximate location of dwelling (1) and search area (3, 5, 7, 9)

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1. Dwelling per 1857 map	39.591717°	-84.179565°
3. NW	39.591893°	-84.179535°
5. NE	39.591780°	-84.179313°
7. SE	39.591517°	-84.179559°
9. SW	39.591644°	-84.179775°

Table 1. Coordinates for Area 2

With the search area established, a surface search was made for anything indicating human activity (pottery sherds, etc.). The presence of corn stubble from the previous growing season made this task difficult. Nothing was found – but there were more rocks along the edge of the field than some nearby areas.

The metal detecting survey performed on 5/30 resulted in the discovery of the 1835 Large Cent shown in Figure 6. Having found large cents on other Washington Township properties, this one is in better condition than most with the date and the word LIBERTY clearly visible on the obverse. This is

especially notable considering how many years the field has been farmed and how much fertilizer has come in contact with this copper coin. I consider the large cent a personal artifact and not something farmers would typically carry into the field, especially in the first half of the 19th century when these coins were in circulation and money was scarce. In fact, even when I farmed in the 1970s and 80s, I didn't carry money into the hay or tobacco fields. Thus within the first hour of detecting Area 2 I believed I had found the first evidence that a dwelling did in fact exist in this area at one time.



Figure 6. 1835 Large Cent

The second personal artifact found in Area 2 that could be attributed to a farming lifestyle was a Barlow knife (Figure 7). The Barlow knife was developed in Sheffield England in about 1670 and had become a favorite in the U.S. by the 18th century – even being carried by George Washington and mentioned in *“The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”*⁴. With the blade(s) rusted shut the name of the manufacturer is lost to history. Judging from the amount of surface rust this knife may date to the 19th century. A more precise estimate will require additional analysis.



Figure 7. A badly corroded Barlow knife found in Area 2

The amount of nails dug in Area 2 was overwhelming. After digging approximately 100 – I stopped. Other non-nail artifacts found on 5/30, including an iron hook and chain link, could be attributed to either an early dwelling or farming.

On 1 June a riding stirrup was found in Area 2 (Figure 8). Although it is badly mangled from years of plowing and disking, one can still make out the characteristics when comparing to the stirrup shown in

Figure 9⁵. Accord to “Stirrup Travel chest lock mechanism from Walnut Grove Plantation, an old stirrup, and a wrought iron spoon?”, this style of stirrup has been found on Revolutionary War and Civil War battlefields with little change in design⁶. Therefore determining its age is difficult. However, being a riding stirrup versus draft horse tack again indicates there could’ve been a dwelling or barn in Area 2.



Figure 8. A badly mangled riding stirrup found in Area 2



Figure 9. A style of stirrup that has been found on Revolutionary War and Civil War battlefields

Returning to detect on 6 June I found the field had been disked making the task much easier. The search area was expanded to the north and east (Figure 10). While the number of nails and artifacts dug began to decrease, a flat disk button was found (Figure 11). Although part of the shank is missing, the appearance of solder where it once was indicates the button had an Omega style shank dating to after 1800 (Figure 12)⁷. The presence of a crown and the word “GILT” at the 12 and 6 o-clock positions, respectively, indicate that the button was manufactured in Britain and was at one time gold-plated. Because the crown and word “GILT” are raised the button probably dates to 1800-1815. FYI: during this period the U.S. imported many buttons from Britain as button manufacturing in the U.S. could not keep up with demand⁸.

Finding a third personal item, once gold plated no less, is something one would expect to find in/near a dwelling – not a farm field. Given the button overlaps Abner Garard's time on the property and his career as a business man and associate judge, suggests the button belonged to him⁹. While the button could also have belonged to Richard Stephens – that appears less likely.



Figure 10. Area 2 expanded to the north and east (30' separates points 1 & 2)



Figure 11. British-made flat disk button (note the crown at the 12 o'clock position)

Omega	Copper Alloy	Copper Alloy; occasionally iron	after -1800	Hinks 1986: 60; Hughes and Lester 1981: 221	1-piece buttons. Shank is shaped like the Greek letter Omega and soldered onto the back of flat disc buttons. Similar to Alpha shanks, but Omega shanks have feet.	
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Figure 12. Description of an Omega shank

Metal detecting on 8 and 11 June in an expanded area resulted in only a few nails and farm-related artifacts – but no personal items. Performing another surface search on 12 June led to the discovery of 4 pieces of flint (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Four pieces of flint found in Area 2

The concentration of personal and non-farm implement artifacts (Figure 14) along with the large number of nails provides some evidence that a dwelling once stood in Area 2 as depicted on the 1857 Montgomery County map.

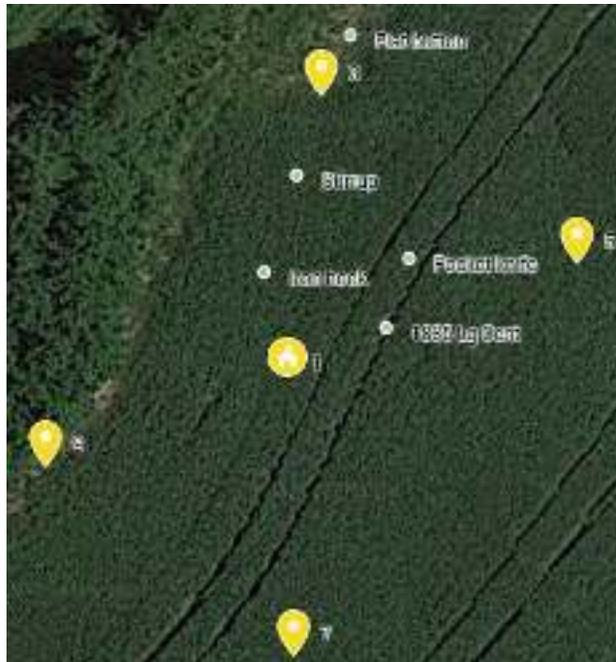


Figure 14. Map of historically significant artifacts found in Area 2 (30' separates points 1 & 2)

Artifact	Latitude	Longitude
1835 Large Cent	39.5917366°	-84.1794795°
Flat disk button	39.5919330°	-84.1795100°
Pocket knife	39.5917830°	-84.1794594°
Stirrup	39.5918390°	-84.1795570°
Iron hook	39.5917737°	-84.1795855°

Table 2. Coordinates for historically significant artifacts in Area 2

Area 3: Remnants of the stone house

By a stroke of good luck I discovered that a local resident, Mrs. Pauline (nee Rabold) Silver, lived at 10370 Sheehan from age 6 in 1924 to her high school graduation in 1936. She agreed to meet with me to talk about her recollections and to see some of the historically significant artifacts I found on the property.

According to Pauline, by 1924, the stone house was in ruin and had no doors, windows, or second floor. She also recalls there was a beautiful staircase leading to what would be a second floor. By the late 1930s, stone was brought down from the ruin to build the springhouse. Even more stone was taken by Pauline's uncle to build a cistern on his farm. In the early 1940s, Pauline and her husband hauled some of the stone to their home in Dayton to build a retaining wall.

Based on discussions with Pauline and her nephew, the stone house was not located in the field (Area 2), but was closer to the present home. They told me to look for a massive drainage stone. Returning to the property the drainage stone and foundation of the stone house were found in the wooded area just south of the barn (Figure 15). The word massive to describe the drainage stone is an

understatement; with it measuring about 5.5' long, 2.5' wide and 9 inches tall. It is large enough that it can clearly be seen on an aerial photograph taken in 2000 (see blue arrow on Figure 16).



Figure 15. Drainage stone found near the stone house foundation



Figure 16. Aerial photograph taken in 2000 showing the massive drainage stone (blue arrow)

Fast forward to 2020 and Area 3 is overrun with honeysuckle, grape vines, and piles of stone and decaying firewood (Figure 17). Initial efforts concentrated on metal detecting around the piles, but eventually time was spent clearing the honeysuckle and grape vines, to expose more areas to metal detect.



Figure 17. Viewing the southwest corner of the stone house foundation from the west

The most historically significant artifact found in Area 3 was a complete General Service button manufactured by Scovill & Company shown in Figure 18. While the backmark of this button has a raised mark in a depressed channel which generally dates it to the 1830s to 1850s, the name in the groove indicates it was manufactured between 1850 and 1865¹⁰. Researching the FamilySearch, National Park Service, and Fold3 websites for property residents who could have served in the military between 1830 and 1865 (Stephens, Hatfield) resulted in 1 match^{11, 12, 13}. Per the Veterans Administration Master Index Card (Figure 19), William Perry Hatfield the son of Owen, served with Company I, 131st Regiment, Ohio Infantry during the Civil War. He enlisted on 2 May 1864 and was discharged on 25 August of the same year. A photo of him in Figure 20 shows him wearing his uniform. *Imagine if this button was once sewed to that very coat; the stories it could tell!*

According to the 1860 and 1870 U.S. Census ^{14,15}, William was living at 10370 Sheehan Road with his parents and siblings. Given this, it is reasonable to assume he returned home after completing his military service in 1864. William remained in Centerville for the remainder of his life. He first married Mary Elizabeth Kelsey in 1876¹⁶, died in 1938¹⁷, and is buried in the Centerville Cemetery¹⁸.

While this button could have been purchased after the war by a resident other than William or lost by a visitor, given that William spent more time on the property while the stone house occupied (until the present home was built in the late 1860s), he remains the most likely source. Thus I propose donating an educational display case with the button, his photo and description, to Centerville-Washington History.



Figure 18. General Service button found near the stone house foundation

HATFIELD WILLIAM PERRY		Y ^c 2518585
Pvt I 131 Ohio Inf		K
Centerville Ohio		A
No	Died 1/19/38	T
Born 4-26-45		R
Enl 5-2-64	Dis 8-25-64	Ct.
		I
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION Form 7000-Rev. Sept. 1961		SC 1 077 519
MASTER INDEX CARD		15-700 13

Figure 19. Veterans Administration Master Index Card for William Perry Hatfield



Figure 20. William Perry Hatfield wearing his Civil War military uniform

Found in the same hole as the General Service button was a flat disk button with a backmark "Super Fine Strong" (Figure 21). About 1 foot away was a tiny generic pewter button (Figure 22). Finding 3 buttons that date to the Civil War or before within 1 foot of each other is rare and indicates that a resident once kept a button collection (probably to use on other garments).



Figure 21. Flat disk button with a backmark "Super Fine Strong"



Figure 22. Tiny generic pewter button

The button appearing in Figure 23 takes the prize for the oldest personal artifact found on the property thus far. The shank cast in boss design dates the button from about 1760 to about 1800¹⁹. Compare the wings of metal around the shank to the diagram of the button in Figure 24. The complete absence

of a backmark could be an indication that the reverse side of the button was spun which is another characteristic of this style of button. Furthermore the button appears to be made of Tombac.



Figure 23. Plain button with shank cast in boss

Shank cast in boss	Pewter, Copper Alloy, or Tombac	Iron or Copper Alloy	1760-1800	Hinks 1988:53	1-piece, flat disc buttons. These buttons are usually cast with a spun back. The shank is set into a blob or cylinder of metal. Note the "wings" of metal around the shank.	
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Figure 24. Description of button with a shank cast in boss

A fourth flat disk button was found just inside of the southwest corner of the foundation with a backmark of "Extra Rich Imperial" (Figure 25). Examining the indented backmark and what remains of the shank of this and the "Super Fine Strong" flat disk button indicates that both were probably manufactured sometime between 1810 and 1840.



Figure 25. Flat disk button with a backmark “Extra Rich Imperial”

Other personal artifacts include a piece of a harmonica reed, an iron buckle, and a pocket watch part – which are common finds at a property inhabited in the 19th century (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Harmonica reed piece (left), an iron buckle (middle), and a pocket watch part (right)

Area 3 also produced some interesting (and large) farming/utilitarian artifacts. Including a pair of brass horse haim knobs (Figure 27), a “Dayton” style ax head (Figure 28), a chain with a unique clip (Figure 29), a door latch - found next to drainage stone (Figure 30), a large spike (Figure 31), and a pair of

handles (Figure 32) just to mention a few. Depending on which (if any) organization wants these artifacts will determine the extent to which they are cleaned and preserved. If the Washington Township Trustees want them, the iron artifacts will be cleaned with a brass brush and if necessary by electrolysis before coating with White Rain or rust neutralizing black paint. Artifacts donated to Centerville Washington History will remain in as close to dug condition as possible.



Figure 27. A pair of brass horse haim knobs (left); horse haims (right)



Figure 28. A "Dayton" style ax head



Figure 29. a chain with a unique clip



Figure 30. A door latch - found next to drainage stone



Figure 31. Large spike



Figure 32. A pair of handles

The map of the 4 corners (i.e. NW) of the stone house and historically significant artifacts found in Area 3 shown in Figure 33 was a second attempt at making a readable map. The first map was created using Google mymaps with GPS coordinates suspected to be too inaccurate due to the foliage canopy. Thus a return trip was made on 2 July to measure distances and bearings – which were then plotted on Google Earth. Unlike Google mymaps, Google Earth allows for rotating the map and enlarging the icon labels, to enhance readability. In addition 3 more artifacts were found north of the fence including: 1) 1848 Large Cent; 2) iron buckle; and 3) brass double hook. The 1848 Large Cent was minted while Richard Stephens owned the property. Although the 1848 Large Cent is still being cleaned, the obverse is in worse condition than the 1835 Large Cent found in Area 2, while the reverse is better. Coordinates for each foundation corner and artifact are provided in Table 3.

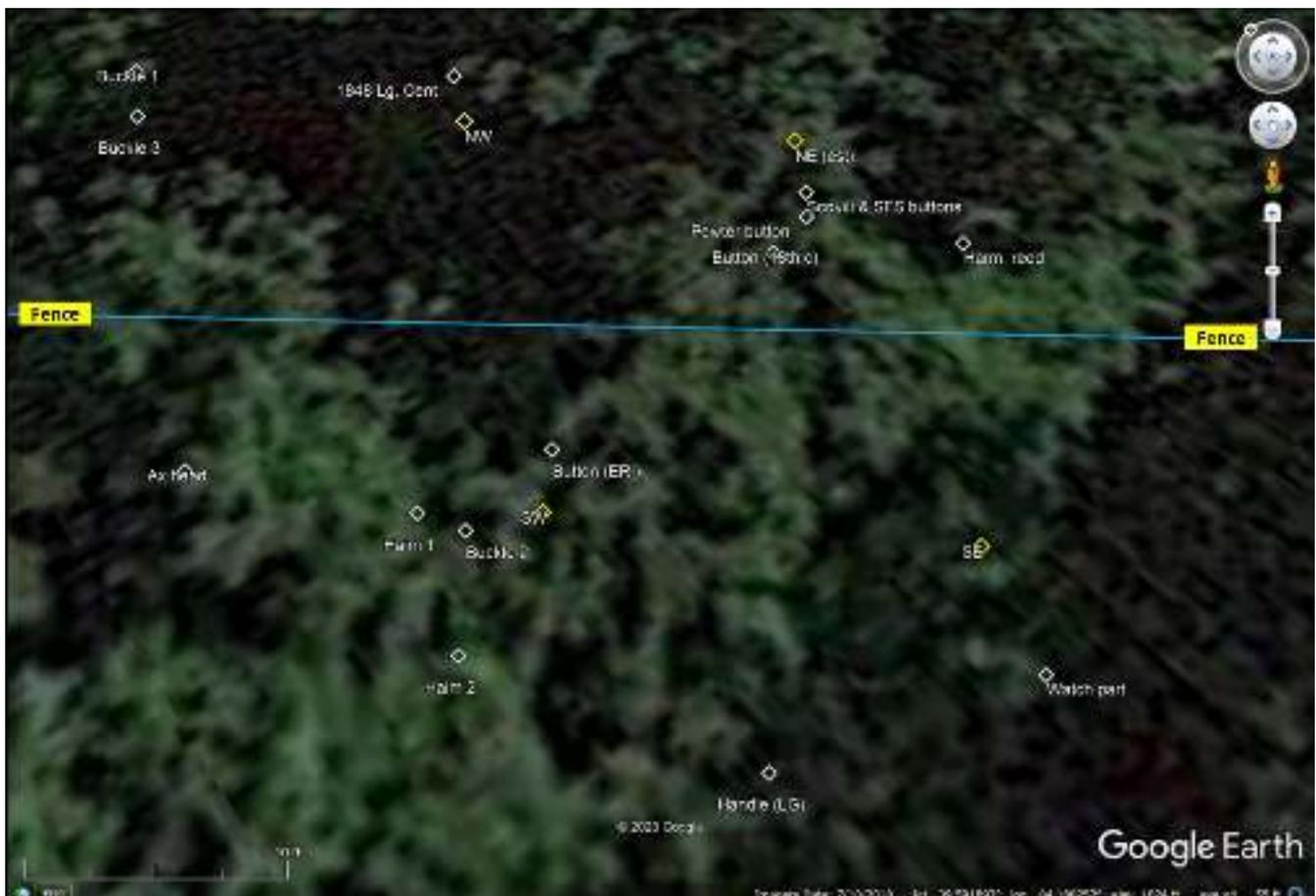


Figure 33. Map of historically significant artifacts found in Area 3 (note the 10' scale)

Artifact	Latitude	Longitude
SW	39.591894°	-84.180275°
SE	39.591855°	-84.180224°
Buckle 3	39.591997°	-84.180284°
NW	39.591962°	-84.180231°
Scovill & SFS buttons	39.591915°	-84.180190°

Button (18 th c)	39.591908°	-84.180206°
Harm. reed	39.591892°	-84.180176°
Ax head	39.591928°	-84.180316°
Haim 1	39.591904°	-84.180291°
Button (ERI)	39.591901°	-84.180266°
Buckle 2	39.591898°	-84.180286°
Haim 2	39.591884°	-84.180299°
Handle (large)	39.591851°	-84.180275°
Watch part	39.591839°	-84.180233°
1848 Large Cent	39.591973°	-84.180224°
NE (est)	39.591924°	-84.180181°
Buckle 1	39.592008°	-84.180277°
Pewter button	39.591911°	-84.180195°

Table 3. Coordinates for historically significant artifacts in Area 3

Action item #1: Request to continue metal detecting

Each time I return to the property to metal detect, at least 1 more artifact of historical significance is found. In view of this and the fact that due to the COVID-19 pandemic fewer owners than usual will grant permission to detect on their property, I request to continue metal detecting at 10370 Sheehan Road throughout the summer.

Action item #2: Was the dwelling on the 1857 map an earlier structure?

Having been told that the location of the stone house was not in the field, what then was the origin of the personal artifacts along with the large number of nails concentrated in Area 2? The leading theory is as follows: According to "A Sense of Place" some pioneers, including Dr. John Hole, Brigadier General Edmund Munger and Henry Stansel, erected log cabins upon arriving in Washington Township. Sometime thereafter each erected their larger more permanent homes. The personal artifacts suggest that Abner Garard or an earlier settler, may have built a log cabin at this location. Additional property record research and field survey are necessary to prove/disprove this theory. That effort, if untaken, is postponed until the Montgomery County Archives re-open to the public and the soybeans are harvested.

Other theories exist including a former outhouse or barn. These appear unlikely, because why would a resident of the stone house walk approximately 200' up a hill when there were ample places closer by the house to erect these structures?

Another theory is shown in Figure 34 by overlaying the location of Area 2 on an aerial photograph taken in 1938²⁰. If the farm roads present in 1938 (that straddle Area 2), existed a century earlier, then perhaps the personal artifacts and riding stirrup were lost by travelers. However, this theory does not explain the high concentration of nails in Area 2. Because the farm roads were at a lower elevation than Area 2, if plowing and disking did cause the nails to re-locate rather than sink, they would not move uphill to Area 2 (actually it would be vice-versa due to gravity). Given this logic this theory is also unlikely.



Figure 34. Location of former farm roads in 1938 relative to Area 2

Sources

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