

## **The Future of Whitemarsh**

**"Countless archaeological sites have been destroyed in Virginia by natural causes, such as erosion, and cultural impacts, like construction, forever erasing important links to the past. Such is not the case at Whitemarsh—at least so far."**

**Alain Outlaw  
2011 Report on Whitemarsh**

# What is Whitemarsh?

---

- It was and in some regards still is the home of:
- A member of the House of Burgesses from 1657/58 to 1673;
- An Adjutant General of Virginia in 1666;
- A seat-holder on the Council of State to Charles II, from 1673 to his death;
- A Colonel of Isle of Wight's Militia from 1673 to his death;
- A Deputy Vice Admiral of Virginia in 1683;
- A Co-Acting Governor of Virginia in 1684 and 1685 for Governor Howard;

# What is Whitemarsh? (Continued)

---

- A sole Commander of nine Virginia county's militia for Indian defense;
- An owner of over 14,000 acres in Isle of Wight County;
- An owner of a 21 room brick mansion on Whitmarsh Plantation;
- A principal benefactor of Old Brick Church in Newport Parish;
- Husband to Hester Pitt Bridger and father to seven children; and
- My 7th Great Grand Father stretching 9 generations back before me,

This man is General Joseph Bridger

# What is Whitemarsh? (Continued)

---

- Today, what we refer to as Whitemarsh or Whitemarsh Farm is:
- A 106.49 acres tract of land that houses;
- A 19th century farmhouse;
- A wagon or farm equipment or car shed;
- A dilapidated barn; and
- 52 acres of farmland; 49 acres of woodland; and 5 acres of swamp.

# What is Whitemarsh? (Continued)

---

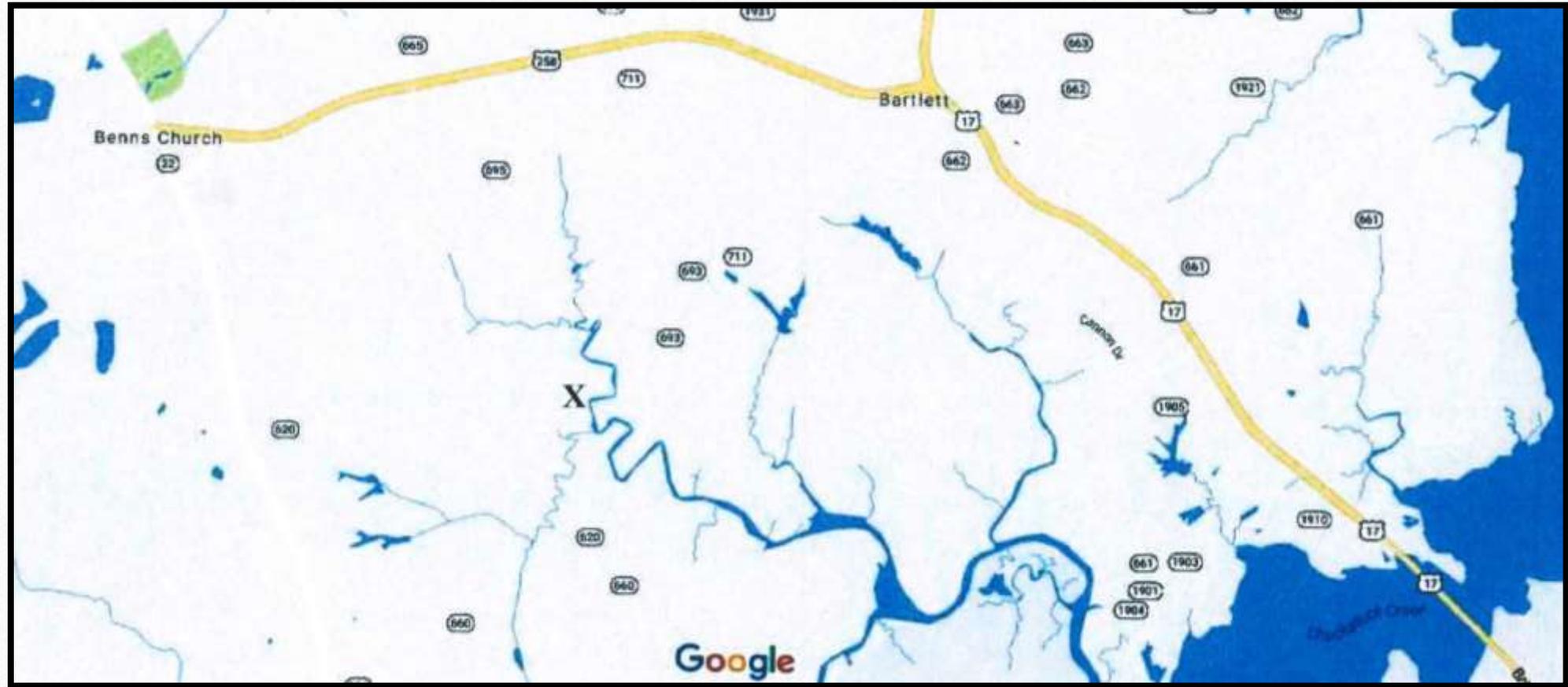
- It is also the last parcel of land from Joseph Bridger's original 1,700 acres Whitemarsh Plantation, that still bears the name "Whitemarsh," because it is also where Bridger built his 21 room brick mansion, and where a family cemetery is still located including somewhere around 75 to 80% of the good General.
- It's quite amazing when you think about it. The man died in 1686. After roughly 209 years 20% of him leaves Whitemarsh and heads to Old Brick Church or St. Luke's as it is called today. After another nearly 100 years that same 20% is off again to Washington, D.C., where it does a stint at the Smithsonian just to return right back here after a couple of years for some much needed R&R.

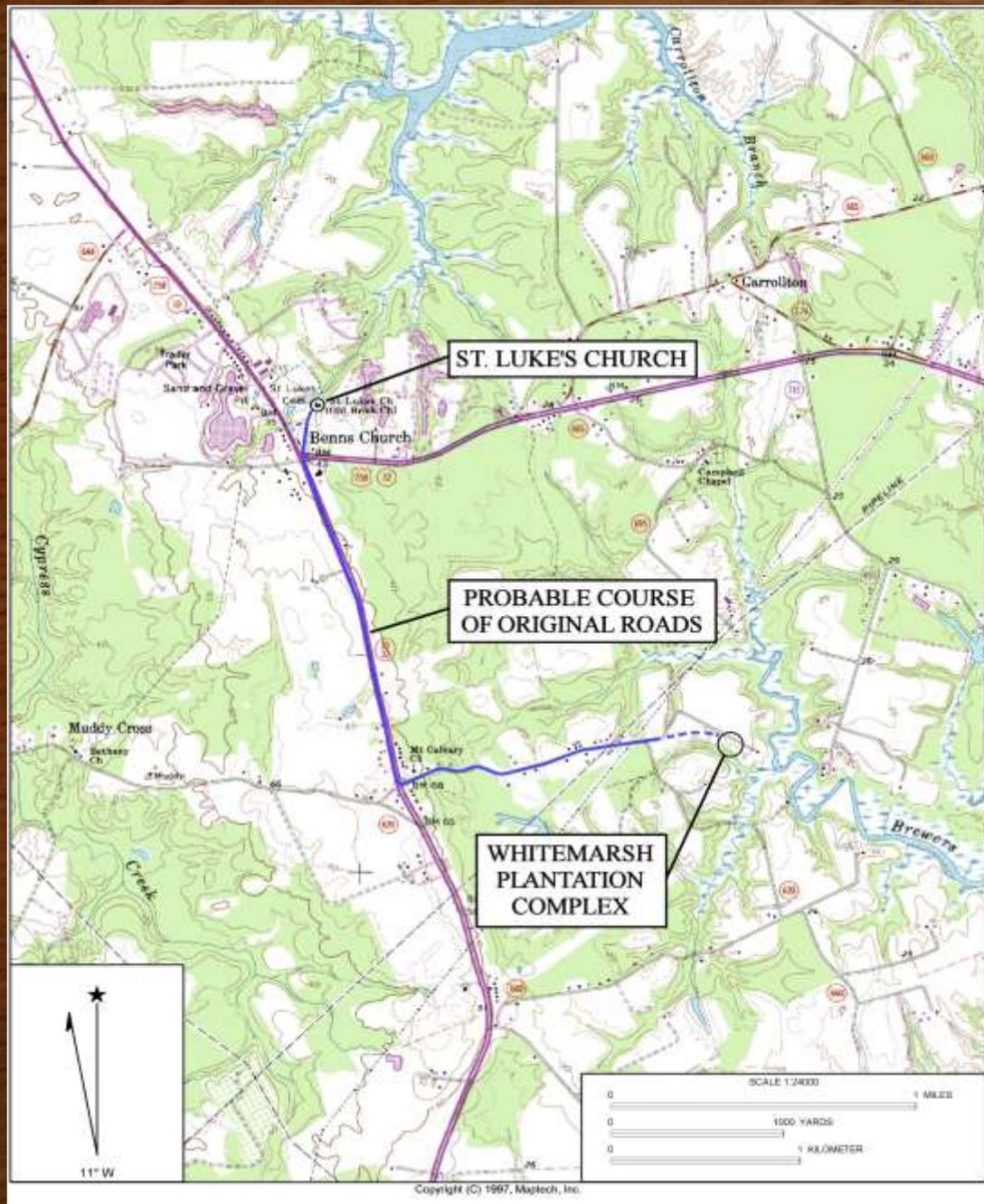
## What is Whitemarsh? (Continued)

---

- **The other 80% never calls, never writes. As a matter of fact, until just a few years ago, we didn't have a clue as to where that 80% was.**
- **But, that has all changed and we are going to try and do something about it.**

# Where is Whitemarsh?





Whitemarsh environs,  
showing the relationship  
with St. Luke's Church.

# Why is Whitemarsh so important?

---

- This parcel of land, once so valuable for its fertile soil and proximity to navigable waterways, is no longer so valuable for these purposes. This land is now far more valuable for its historical purposes and for what is in it and on it, than the use of it.
- In Bridger's Will and Inventory performed in 1686, the Inventory describes the contents of 21 separate rooms in his home. And, according to Bill Carrell's, The Landed and Personal Estate of Gen. Joseph Bridger, these 21 rooms were all housed in a completely brick structure. This home would have rivaled any in Virginia at the time.

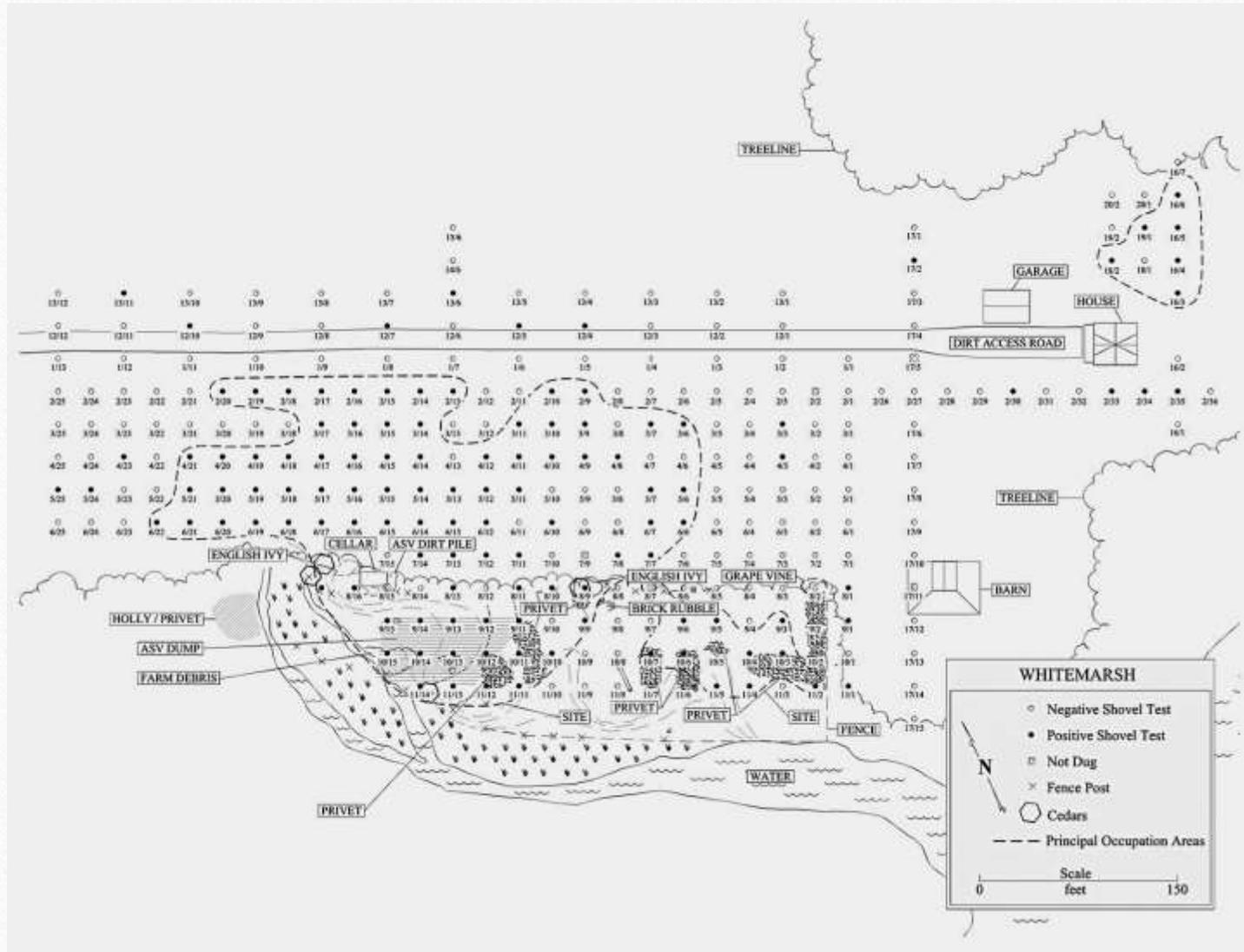
## Why is Whitemarsh so important? (Continued)

---

- **And the ruins of this fantastic home are still there, just waiting to be fully excavated.**
- **The Proof:** In 2007 the Bridger Family Association contemplated a partial survey of the grounds of Whitemarsh that would most likely hold artifacts related to the original farm and residence. In 2010 this project was undertaken by the Wheatland Foundation and Alain and Merry Outlaw.

Shovel testing search area at Whitemarsh. East is at the top and west is at the bottom in this view.





Area shovel tested at Whitemarsh. Selected natural and cultural features also are depicted.



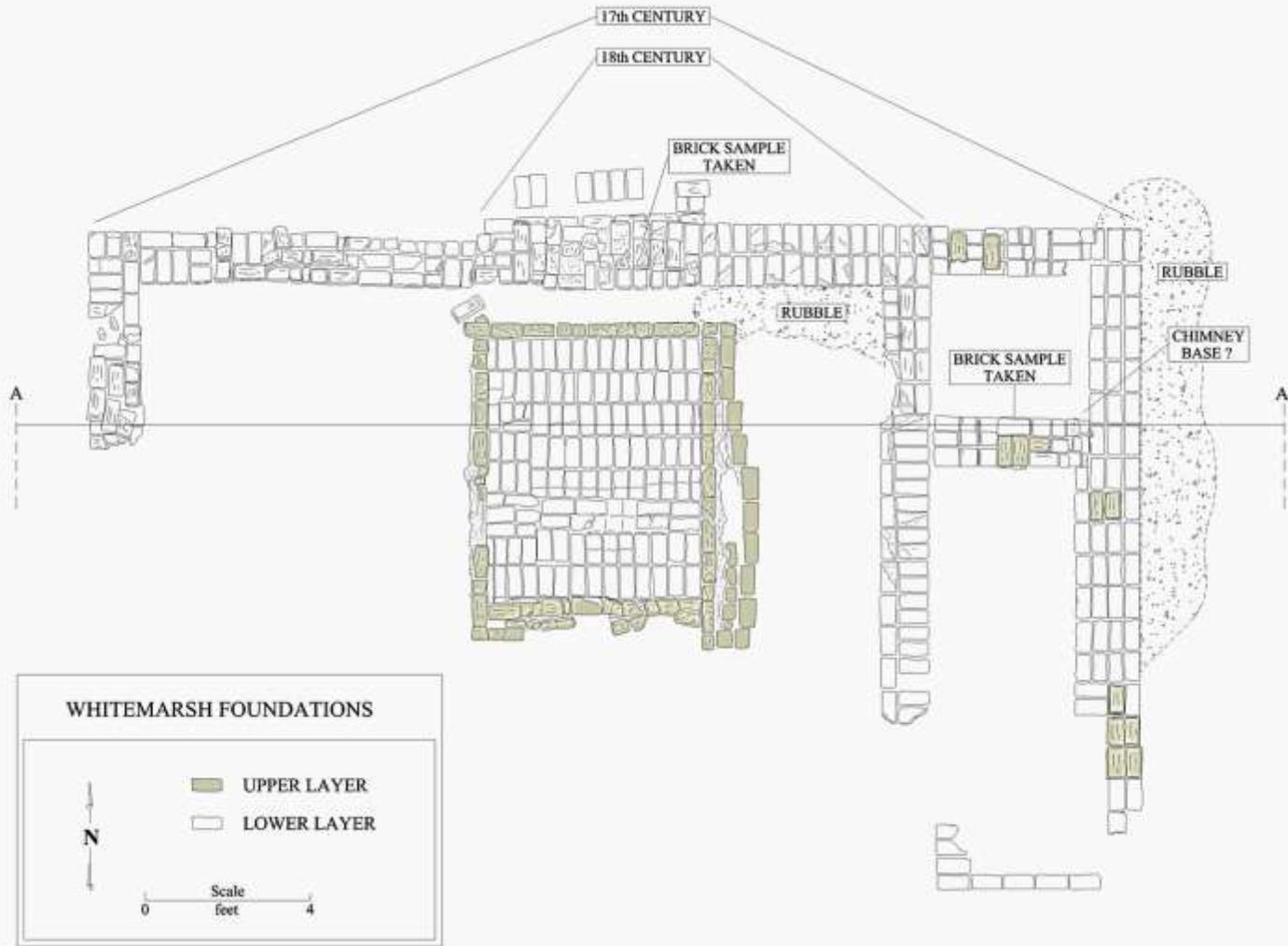
Ruin  
following  
the  
removal of  
vegetation  
and debris.



View of brick ruin (right) superimposed on an earlier brick foundation (left). Note large tree stump between the two. View looking southwest.



Detail view of northeast corner of ruin, looking west. A layer of soil (bottom right) separates this building from the one below.



Foundation  
 plan of the  
 ruins complex.

**At the landinge**

about 800 paveinge tyle at 01-00-00

**In the Kitchen**

1 greate Copper kete weight 61 lbs. ) 101 lbs. at 9d 02-15-09

1 small Copper kete 40 )

1 brasse kete 50 lb. at 6d p lb. 01-05-00

2 great andirons weight 105 lbs. at 3½ d p lb. 01-10-07

2 pott racks at 00-07-00

2 Iron potts 80 lbs.: 1 pott [&] 4 pott hooks w. 57 lbs.  
in all 137 lbs. 00-17-01

2 ould dryeing pans 32 lbs. 1½d p lb. 00-04-00

3 spitts 18 lbs. at 3½d p lb. 00-05-03

2 bell metle skilletts 14 lbs. at 16d p lb. 00-18-08

## Pewter

13 platters 114 lb.	)	
16 platters 68	)	
20 platters	)	
& 3 py plates 113	) at 7½d p lb.	13-09-04
plate trenchers: 76	)	
porringeres	)	
other pewter 43	)	
2 lardge Candlesticks at		00-06-00
2 Chaffin dishes[,] 2 brasse ladles [&] 1 skillett	)	
2 fish plates[,] 2 tyne slyees [&] 2 aple roasters	)	00-10-00
1 tyne pott lyd[,] brasse skinner [&] 1 flesh forke	)	
11 milk pans: 3 Earthin butter poots		
1 Earthin pan [&] 1 small pott		00-04-00
1 small brasse spice mortar & Iron pestle-		
2 ould tubs and one meale tray and		
one brasse Candlesticke		00-05-00
1 ould boate at		00-15-00

**In the cellar**

12 ould Caske 2 wth remnants of syder in	)	
them: one with vinegar: & 2 wth beare for ye	)	01-00-00
use of the family the rest Empty[;] 4 dozn	)	
of round glasse bottles & 2 Chests	)	
a pcell of ould Iron wth 3 skillet frames		
one beinge broken		00-16-00
1 Caske of brandy Cont: 25 gall or there about		03-15-00
1 Cart and ould wheles: 2 yokes [&] 1 Chaine		01-05-00
1 ould worne out mault mill		00-15-00



Floor tile parallel from elsewhere and fragment of similar tile from Whitemarsh. Top: 6.2" x 6.2" upper surface; 1.0" thick; apple green glaze; Alain C. Outlaw and Merry A. Outlaw Collection. Bottom: beveled inward toward lower surface; 1.1" thick; apple green glaze; Isle of Wight Museum Collection (Whitemarsh).

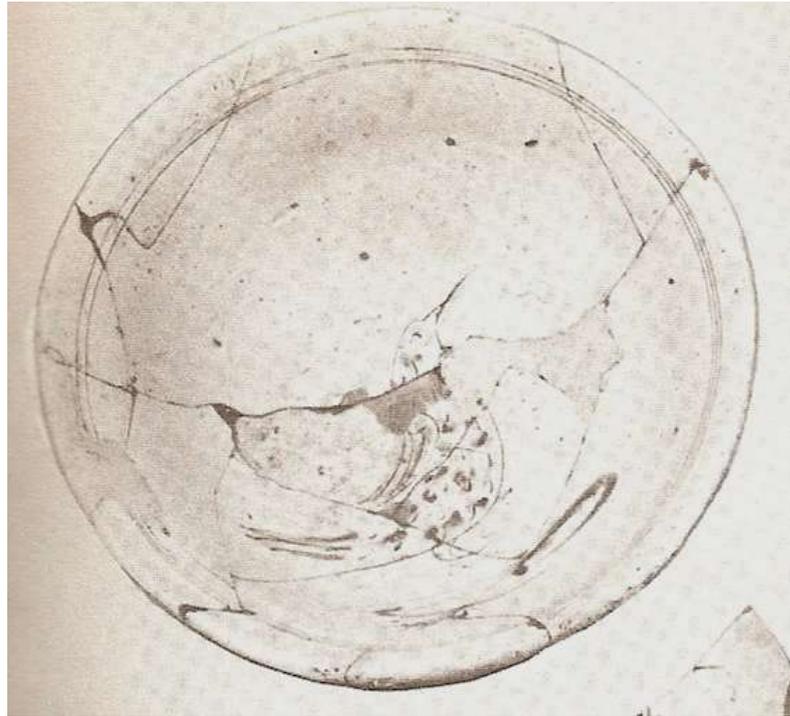
- During the same 2010 project, Wheatland Foundation cataloged Whitemarsh artifacts from the Isle of Wight Museum in Smithfield that had been excavated in 1997 and 1998 by avocational members of the Kicotan Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia and given to both Mrs. Helen Ferguson, the owner of Whitemarsh, and to the Isle of Wight Museum.
- The Proof: The artifacts given to the museum were curated and cross-matched with the artifacts found during the Wheatland survey.
- Following Mrs. Ferguson's passing in August of 2014, her personal collection of Whitemarsh artifacts were given to her son, who subsequently gave the artifacts to Historic St. Luke's Restoration to be held in its permanent collection. These artifacts were also curated and cross-matched with the artifacts from the previous two excavations.



Assortment of artifacts from the Isle of Wight Museum Collection. Left to right: tin enameled earthenware; glass bottle neck; large mammal bone; and brass skillet.



Northern Italian bowl fragment (top) found on the surface north of ruin during recent clearing. Several examples were found at Jamestown in the 1950s (center) and were reproduced in the twenty-first century (bottom).





Wine bottle  
necks.

Example on  
left is of the  
earliest shape,  
c. 1650, while  
the one on  
the right dates  
from c. 1690.





Above: Glass wine bottle seal (.8" across) with the initials "SB" for Samuel Bridger, father, or Samuell (sic) Bridger, son, of Joseph Bridger. Collections of the Isle of Wight Museum (Test Hole #1).

Below: Glass wine bottle seal (enlarged) bearing seal with the initials "HB" for Hester Pitt Bridger, wife of Joseph Bridger. Ferguson Collection.



Above: Glass wine bottle seal (enlarged) bearing seal with three crabs from the Bridger Family coat-of-arms. Helen Ferguson Collection.



Decorative  
copper alloy  
eschcheon  
(enlarged)  
beating an  
embossed  
griffin  
(outlined at  
bottom),  
Helen  
Ferguson  
Collection.

- Neither the shovel testing by Wheatland or either of the excavations had turned up any evidence of a cemetery or the possible whereabouts of General Bridger's gravesite. Dr. Owsley had told the Bridger Family Association that if they were ever to discover the location of the missing 80% and recover those remains, the Smithsonian would be most willing to reunite the remains with copies of the bones they had already studied and if possible do a facial reconstruction of the General.
- Then fate or luck or whatever walked in the door. While rereading some letters from my very elderly and infirmed cousin Wilfred Ivanhoe Hodsden, IV, my wife Barbara had come across a letter written in 2007 where Wilfred stated that "His father had actually been attending school at Benn's Church in 1895, age 10, when he saw Mr. Blackwell and the log wagon carrying Bridger's ledger stone to St. Luke's. When asked, during a visit home in the late fifties if his father could show him the site where Bridger had been buried, his father took Wilfred and two others out to the farm and showed them the location of the gravesite."
- This discovery led to Barbara and me driving to Cape May, New Jersey in September 2010 to meet with Wilfred and interview him in his nursing home.
- The Proof: In December 2010 Wheatland conducted a limited investigation of the area pinpointed by Wilfred.

- Using a trenching machine, "the first trench revealed two soil stains suspected to be grave shafts based upon their axes, their width, and their fill." Subsequent excavation revealed the remains were of two males. Buttons and clothing found with the remains dated to the c. 1750 - 1800 period.
- And while these two graves were not those of General Bridger and Ann Randall, who was buried along side of Bridger and likewise removed to St. Luke's in 1895, the graves had given us the general site of the family cemetery. Further, the two discovered remains were dated to a time that the Bridger family was still in possession of the property.







**My wife Barbara with my cousin Wilfred Ivanhoe Hodsdon, IV in his nursing home in September 2010. Although very hard of seeing, Wilfred pinpointed the location of two gravesites on 3 different views of the property. He nailed it!**

**Wilfred passed away on October 28, 2010**

# A Plan

---

- As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Ferguson passed away in 2014 and the Executor, William Barlow, was obligated to sell the farm. What we needed was A Plan.
- Could we buy it? Nope, needed almost a million.
- Could we rent it or just use it for a couple of years? Nope, the Executor was charged with selling the property ASAP.
- Could we buy part of it? Which part? Don't know. So we went back to Wheatland's shovel test. How about 4.25 acres? Don't know, let me check. Sorry, the county says it has to be a minimum of 10 acres. OK then, can we buy 10 acres including the 4.25 acres that we really need? Sounds good to me, let's do it. Fantastic! Now, where the heck are we going to get the money?
- Boom! Whitemarsh LLC is born. Eight members of the Bridger Family Association agree to step up and put up the money to buy the 10 acres and then sit on it until a full archeological survey can be performed, about two and a half to three years.
- Super! By the way, how much does a full archaeological survey cost? "Mmmm," says Alain, "\$250,000 ought to handle it." Swell! Now where the heck are we going to get that money?

# A Plan (Continued)

---

- Well about that same time, Historic St. Luke's Restoration was about to embark on a Major Gifts Initiative to tackle a number of capital improvements and to supplement its endowment. The idea was floated that if Historic St. Luke's was able to raise the money to fund an archeological survey, then it should certainly deserve to own, forevermore, any and all of the artifacts that come out of the survey.
- The Board agreed, realizing that this might well be the only opportunity it might ever have to secure the artifacts from the property owned by St. Luke's great benefactor.
- Dana Dickens agreed to Chair this ambitious project that not only will assist Historic St. Luke's Restoration in meeting its 'Mission' goals of Preserving, Protecting and Providing for the future of iconic St. Luke's Church, the Oldest Church in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but will initiate a compelling study of one of Virginia's earliest and most important personages. Like other great Virginians it is time for the full story of one of Isle of Wight's and Smithfield's favorite sons to be told.
- We have A Plan!





SITE MAP  
SCALE 1"=100'

LIMITS OF WETLANDS WAS DELINEATED BY ELLEN FERGUSON,  
DIGITAL RESOURCE MGMT. LLC ON 6/12/2016.

THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF  
A TITLE SEARCH. THEREFORE, THIS SURVEY IS SUBJECT TO ANY  
EFFECTS OF RECORD, LAND TRANSACTIONS AND OTHER  
INDEPENDENT FACTS WHICH A TITLE SEARCH WOULD REVEAL.

THE PROPERTY SHOWN ON THIS PLAT APPEARS TO BE LOCATED  
IN ZONE "X & X\*" AS SHOWN ON THE FLOOD INSURANCE RATE  
MAP, COMMUNITY-PANEL NUMBER 5006 X & 5000 XMS  
X, DATED 12-22-2015.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS SUBDIVISION WAS MADE BY ME AT THE  
DIRECTION OF THE OWNER(S) AND THAT THIS SUBDIVISION IS ENTIRELY WITHIN  
THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND OWNED BY HELEN ANN FERGUSON, THE LAST  
INSTRUMENT OF TITLE BEING 2016-10-10-001, 2016-04-24, 2016-11-08 & 2016-11-08.  
I HEREBY CERTIFY TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND ORDINANCES OF  
THE COUNTY OF ISLE OF WIGHT, VIRGINIA, REGARDING THE PLATING OF  
SUBDIVISIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH,  
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND THIS 8TH DAY OF AUGUST A, 2016.

EDWARD C. "MAC" CANADA, III L.S.

HELEN ANN FERGUSON, C/O WILLIAM E. BARDON, HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT THE  
PROPERTY SHOWN ON THIS PLAT AND THAT THIS SUBDIVISION IS WITH THEIR  
FREE CONSENT AND ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR DESIRE:

WITNESSED BY HAND AND SEAL THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

C/O WILLIAM E. BARDON \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ TO-WIT

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME \_\_\_\_\_ A NOTARY

PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ STATE

OF \_\_\_\_\_

THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES \_\_\_\_\_

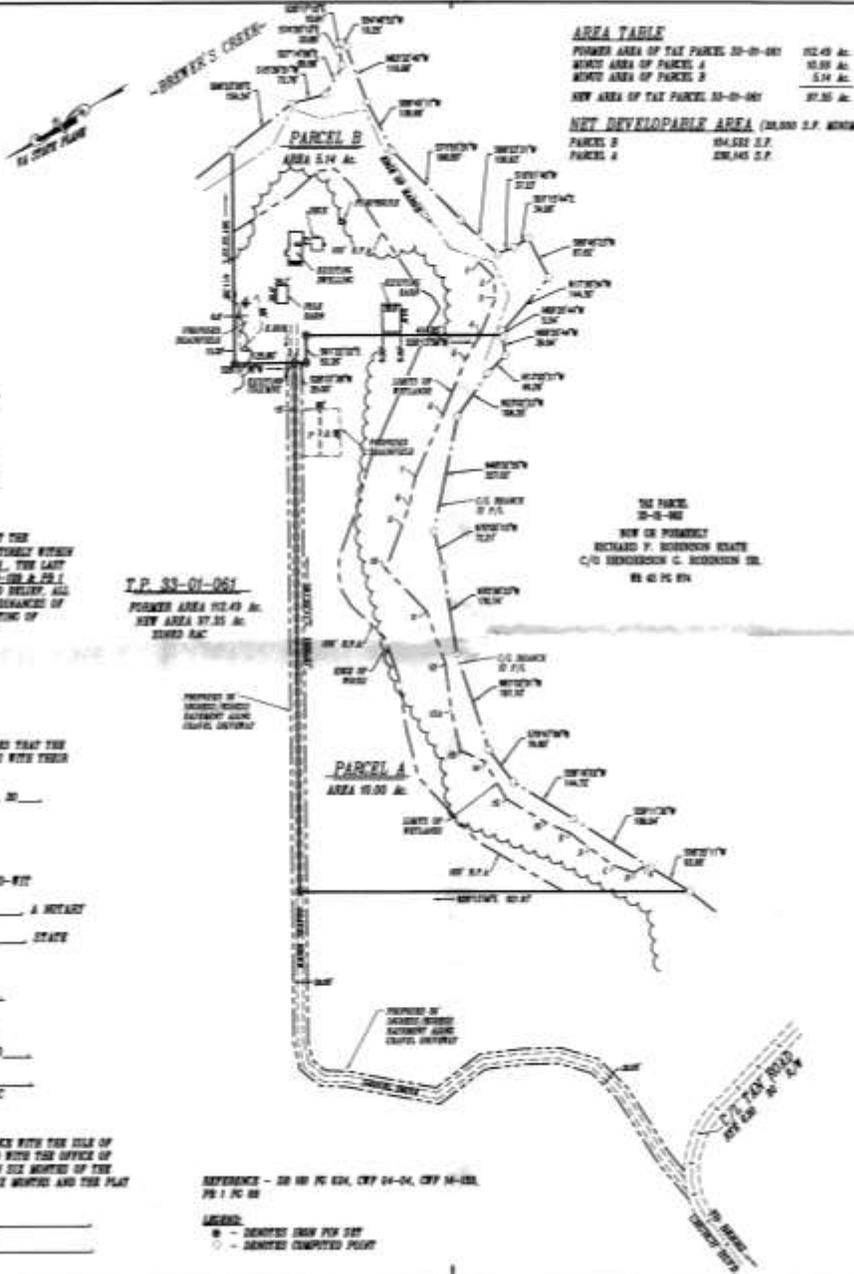
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

NOTARY REGISTRATION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ NOTARY PUBLIC

THIS SUBDIVISION PLAT HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TITLE OF  
WIGHT COUNTY SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE AND MUST BE RECORDED WITH THE OFFICE OF  
THE CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT OF ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE  
DATE OF APPROVAL. APPROVAL WILL BE DENIED FIVE (5) DAYS AFTER THE PLAT  
MUST BE RECORDED FOR APPROVAL.

DATE OF APPROVAL \_\_\_\_\_ SUBDIVISION AGENT \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF APPROVAL \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR ENGINEER \_\_\_\_\_



AREA TABLE

FORMER AREA OF TAX PARCEL 20-01-061	112.43 Ac.
NET AREA OF PARCEL A	11.00 Ac.
NET AREA OF PARCEL B	5.14 Ac.
NEW AREA OF TAX PARCEL 20-01-061	97.30 Ac.

NET DEVELOPABLE AREA (DANLON S.P. WASHINGTON)

PARCEL A	104.552 S.P.
PARCEL B	104.145 S.P.

T.P. 23-01-051  
FORMER AREA 112.43 Ac.  
NEW AREA 97.30 Ac.  
SAVED 15 AC

THE PARCEL  
20-01-061  
NOW OR FORMERLY  
RICHARD F. BODENSON ESTATE  
C/O BODENSON C. BODENSON SR.  
Rt 40 PO BOX

- NOTES REQUIRED BY TITLE OF WIGHT COUNTY FOR PLAT APPROVAL:
- 1) THIS SUBDIVISION OF PROPERTY IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 2.2.4 OF THE TITLE OF WIGHT COUNTY SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE. COMPLIANCE IN ANY OTHER WAY REQUIRES COMPLIANCE WITH SAID ORDINANCE.
  - 2) WHERE SEPTIC TANKS ARE TO BE INSTALLED ON INDIVIDUAL LOTS, THERE SHALL BE AN APPROVAL OF A PRIMARY DRAINFIELD AND WHERE SEPTIC TANKS ARE TO BE INSTALLED ON INDIVIDUAL LOTS, THERE SHALL BE AN APPROVAL OF A PRIMARY DRAINFIELD AND A NON-ADJUTANT DRAINFIELD BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AT THE TIME APPLICATION IS MADE FOR A SEPTIC TANK PERMIT. BOTH DRAINFIELDS SHALL BE LOCATED ENTIRELY OUTSIDE OF THE RESIDENCE PROTECTION AREA. APPROVAL OF THIS PLAT DOES NOT INDICATE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL LOT IS SUITABLE FOR APPROVAL OF A PRIMARY AND NON-ADJUTANT DRAINFIELD. THIS PLAT APPROVAL IS CONTINGENT ON ALL NEW STRUCTURES BEING LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE RESIDENCE PROTECTION AREA AND THE 100 FOOT RESIDENCE PROTECTION AREA BUFFER. THE BUFFER AREA SHALL REMAIN VEGETATED AND UNDEVELOPED.
  - 3) NO DRINKING PERMIT OR BOTTLING PERMIT SHALL BE ISSUED FOR ANY LOT UNTIL A WELL OR WATER SOURCE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. (SECTION 2.2.4.2.1.)
  - 4) ALL ON-SITE SEPTIC SYSTEMS NOT REQUIRING A VIRGINIA POLLUTION DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (PDES) PERMIT SHALL BE PUMPED AT LEAST ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS.
- \* THE SURVEYOR ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY IN ASSURING THAT THE REGULATORY SET POINTS IN THE NOTES REQUIRED BY TITLE OF WIGHT COUNTY ARE UP-TO-DATE AND/OR CORRECTED.

SUBDIVISION PLAT  
PROPERTY OF  
HELEN ANN FERGUSON L/E  
LOCATED AT 2016 TAN ROAD  
NEWPORT MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT  
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
SCALE 1" = 100' AUGUST 8, 2016



1212 S. Church Street Smithfield, VA 23460  
PHONE: 753-257-2911  
JULIAN ST. BEE | JESSE GIBB-01-18

# The Future of Whitemarsh

---

The future of Whitemarsh is incredibly bright and here's why.

- Depending on what is found at Whitemarsh, Historic St. Luke's will consider combining the Whitemarsh artifacts with its current collection of artifacts into a museum type setting for public consumption.
- An appropriate and final resting place for any remains found during the archaeological survey will be provided in the form of a common grave in St. Luke's ancient cemetery. It is anticipated that a crypt built to house these remains will be constructed from actual bricks from the original Bridger home.
- A Reception and Programs facility may also be considered to augment the churches functions as well as providing events for our schools and our visitors to learn about the Church, the General and Whitemarsh.

# The Future of Whitemarsh (Continued)

---

- A Center for Genealogical Research could be considered, with the Bridger Family Association contributing its considerable compendium of genealogies to St. Luke's as its foundation.
- Another possibility would be to establish St. Luke's own Genealogical Society specifically aimed at including families with provable ties to the church and its history.

The story of Whitemarsh and the treasures it has preserved for future generations will continue to live on at Historic St. Luke's.