

HISTORIC HILL CEMETERY – DOES IT CONTAIN REMAINS OF GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE’S CANTONMENT AT LEGION VILLE?

By
Patrick Riley¹ and William J. Johnson²

Abstract

The Hill Cemetery located in the Borough of Baden, Pennsylvania is a one-acre “family” cemetery founded by Jonathan Hill in 1819. Several older graves, possibly including two military officers of the Legion of the United States dating from 1793, may also be present in the cemetery. In November of 1792, when Major General Anthony Wayne built the cantonment he named Legion Ville, he surrounded his fortification by four outer redoubts numbered 1-4. Based on a contemporary sketch, Redoubt #4 was located in a position overlooking the Ohio River on the extreme northwest corner of the camp, possibly in the area of the cemetery. In 1938, George C. Hill was asked to write a short narrative of the cemetery for the centennial of Baden and wrote “the most interesting thing about the Hill Cemetery is that General Wayne built a blockhouse in one corner of the cemetery when camped at Legion Ville, the foundation of which was well known but has long since been covered.” The ground surface at the Hill Cemetery does not provide any indication as to whether a portion of Legion Ville could be present. Given the impracticality of finding remnants of the fortifications with random excavations, the area of the cemetery was first screened with a program of geophysics.

The geophysical field investigation was conducted from July 16-August 1, 2001 by D’Appolonia geophysicist Bill Johnson. Several geophysical techniques including time-domain electromagnetics for deep metal detection, magnetic gradiometry, and ground penetrating radar (GPR) were applied at the cemetery. For the most part with few exceptions, the grave markers do correspond to burials, but there appear to be more than 50 unmarked graves. Building foundations do appear to be present in the southern portion of the cemetery. The extreme southwestern corner of the cemetery might contain the partial remains of Redoubt #4, but a complete structure does not appear to be present and the location may have been disturbed by railroad tracks and erosion from an adjacent ravine. The data do indicate the presence of a series of small structures that have the appearance of being barracks or stables. The data also indicate the presence of at least 20 locations that are likely to be fire hearths or pits. The geophysical results provide an effective blueprint for archaeological excavations. A limited archaeological investigation will be conducted in the future to verify whether these subsurface features are associated with the Legion Ville site.

Historical Background

The Hill family cemetery is passed every day by thousands of motorists driving along Ohio River Boulevard (Route 65) as they pass through Baden Pennsylvania. Unless the drivers stop at the Sheetz station at the intersection of Logan’s Lane they probably won’t even notice the ceme-

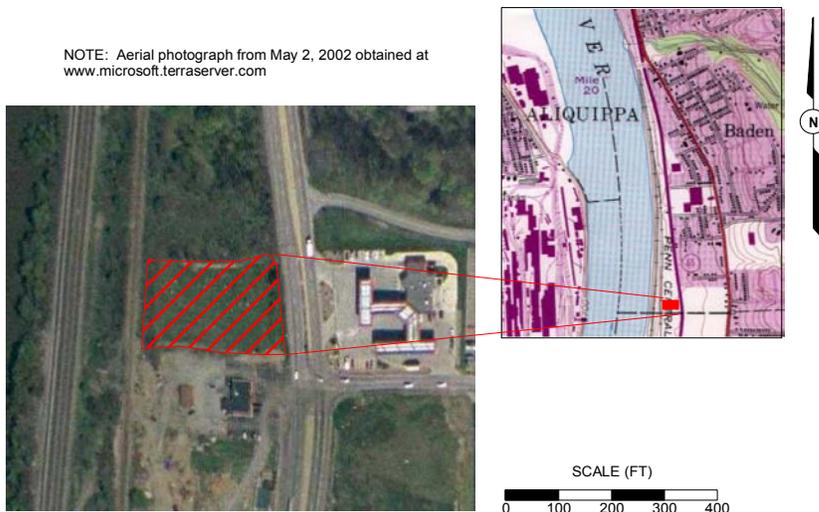
¹ Legionville Historical Society – (724) 266-1795 www.legionville.com

² D’Appolonia – (412) 856-9440 wjjohnson@dappolonia.com

tery across the street. Looking around the area, much of the landscape has been disturbed by man's activities and it is not obvious that this plot of ground holds a special place in history. The cemetery is a short distance north of Logstown, one of the most important Native American settlements along the Ohio River.

In a more recent historical context, what makes the Hill cemetery of special interest is the role that the property might have played immediately after the Revolutionary War.

In the early morning hours of November 4, 1791 General Arthur St. Clair and an army of around 1400 men camped on the Bank of the Wabash River in what is now Fort Recovery, Ohio. As the men were being awakened by the drums of reveille, they were slowly being enveloped by an unseen enemy.



Location of Hill Cemetery

In the early hours just before daylight, when the world is still gray, Chief Little Turtle of the Miami Tribe and his warriors attacked. In the ensuing pitched battle the United States Army lost 692 men killed and 250 wounded, an aggregate casualty rate of 942. This battle would become and still stands as the most brilliant victory of the Native Americans against the US military. Although lost in history, St. Clair's Defeat or the Battle of the Wabash produced four times as many casualties as the better known and much lamented Battle of the Little Bighorn.

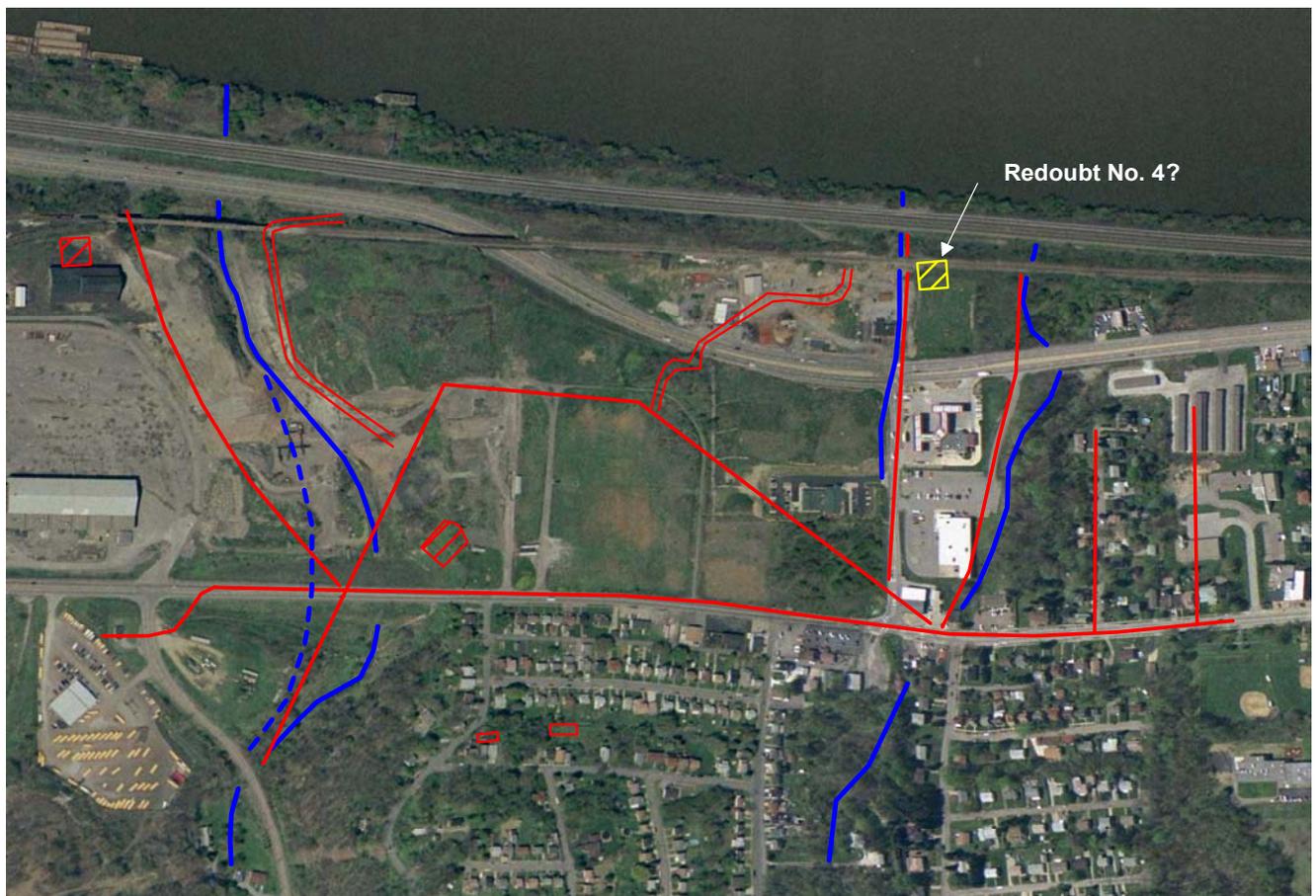
When news reached the nation's capitol in Philadelphia, it sent tremors through the government. The ramifications of the battle were enormous. How could the nation, only 15 years old at the time, explain to its people that it could not even defend them against a race often referred to as "savages." How would this disastrous defeat play on the world stage? Would England, still garrisoned in five forts well inside the defined limits of the United States set by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, use the native peoples to block westward expansion? Would England attack the United States in her weakest hours and regain the original thirteen colonies? President Washington and Secretary of War, Henry Knox soon came to the conclusion that the chief reason for the defeat was poor training, lack of logistical support, poor leadership and lack of support for the army in Congress. What the United States realized is that it needed a standing army of professional soldiers, a subject of some controversy as armies had repeatedly overthrown governments in European history.

The army that was created is still talked about in certain circles with awe and admiration. The leader of this new army, Major General Anthony Wayne is immortalized as one of the nation's greatest generals. General Wayne began recruitment of his army that was to be known as the Legion of the United States in the small City of Pittsburgh. By October 1792 Wayne had enough men to justify a move from the city, since the military outnumbered the citizens by a three to one ratio. General Wayne found a high bluff on the east bank of the Ohio River where he notes, "na-

whiskey still on Crow's Island and had been illegally selling whiskey to the soldiers. When General Wayne was apprised of this, he had several 2 3/4 inch howitzers moved to Redoubt #4 where they subsequently had target practice at "Hill's Distillery." A huge Sycamore tree on the island bore the scars from the howitzer shells for many years afterward. That is the last we hear of Jonathan Hill until 1819.

When Wayne left Legion Ville for the campaign in the west he left the site intact. The buildings were left standing, the redoubts and blockhouses left to nature. The sturdy log cabin that was General Wayne's Headquarters is discussed in great deal by the members of the Harmony Society, the next owners of the Legion Ville site in 1824. Jonathan Hill's whereabouts from 1793-1819 are at this time unknown. Perhaps he headed west with the campaign always meaning to eventually return to "his island" someday. On June 6, 1819 Jonathan Hill purchased from the widow Leetitia Buchanan two-hundred and one acres of land in the county of Beaver. This land included the island known as Hill's or Crow's Island. Leetitia Buchanan was the widow of Dr. George Buchanan and the daughter of Thomas McKean who was given Tract Number 22 in Depreciation Lands District 2 for his service in the American Revolution. It is unknown as to the exact date of Jonathan Hill's death, but in his last will and testament registered on October 17, 1836, he stated the following, "I do give and bequeath unto my son Enos Hill ninety acres of land, strict measure of the tract I now live on, the said 90 acres adjoining lands of the Harmony Society and bounded agreeable to survey made by Henry Davis the 11th day of April, A.D. 1832. The said Enos is to cause to be laid out at least one acre of ground where the burying place now is, and cause a part of the same to be enclosed with a proper fence within one year from the date hereof, for a family burying ground to be held by him and his heirs in trust forever, for that purpose and no other." As can be seen from his testimony, the land already had graves in it. In an article about Legion Ville in the Sewickley Herald dated July 4, 1915, it shows a photo labeled "two officers of General Wayne's army." The photo shows a high bluff and the river in the background. This cannot be in the location of the known military cemetery which is far from the river. Perhaps the officers were buried in a separate location. Local lore also notes that two soldiers that served in the American Revolution are buried in the Hill Cemetery. The Centennial History of Baden states that the oldest grave is dated 1811, several years before Jonathan Hill purchased the property.

In Enos Hill's last will and testament dated April 7, 1887 he writes, "As to the grave yard, now called Hilldale Cemetery, I do give and bequeath the same to my son George C. Hill reserving and excepting all such lots as I may have disposed in my lifetime, and one lot nine feet by twenty (9X20) to each of my daughters." George Cochran Hill died on June 6, 1896. His last will and testament dated June 3, 1896 states, "I will and bequeath to my son Enos Hill the plot of ground situated in the Borough of Baden, State of Pennsylvania, known as the Hill Grave Yard, willed to me by my father Enos Hill. My son Enos to have full control of said plot of ground to keep it in order and good repair, to direct who shall and shall not bury in said ground." Enos Hill dies in 1963 and the grave yard is passed on to George M. Hill and Reed and Arlene Teets. The cemetery eventually falls into a state of disrepair, the last burial being Nettie Hill in 1935. The Borough of Baden and the Baden American Legion have maintained this historical cemetery for the past 40 years.



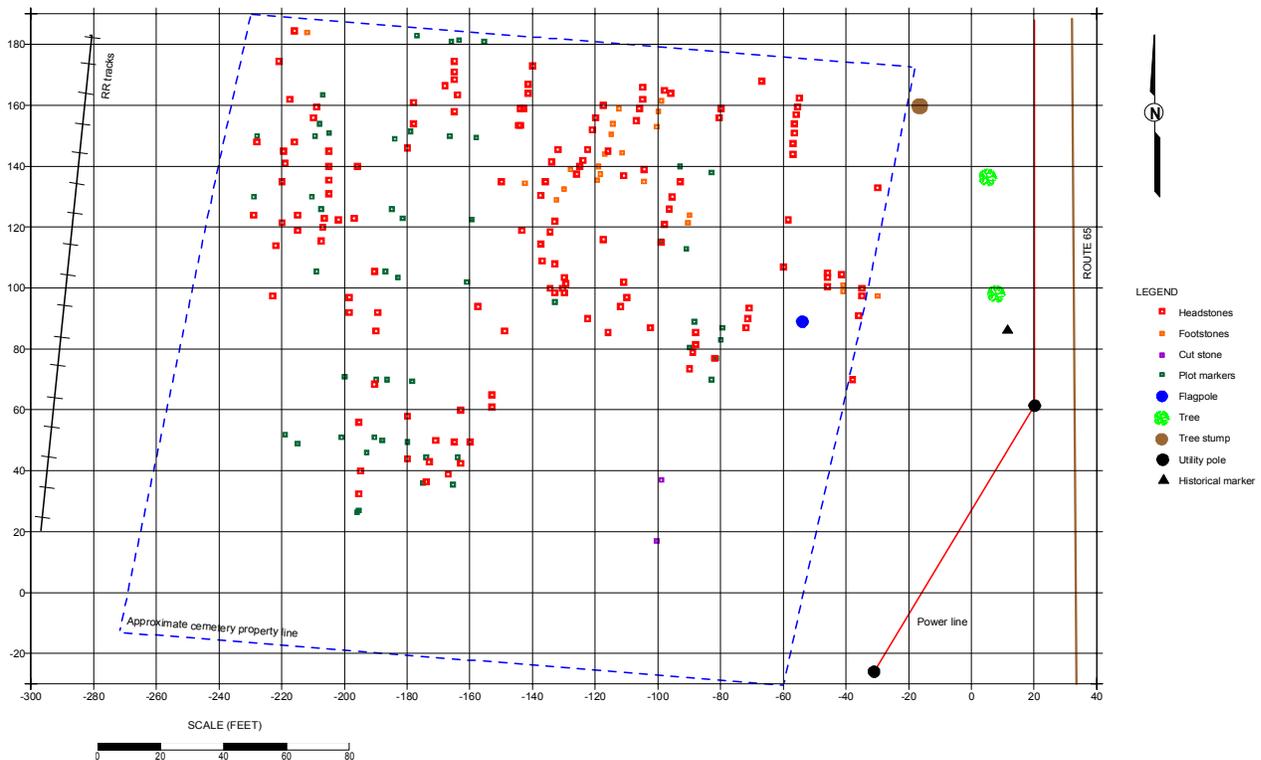
Best estimate for actual position of Legion Ville structures from historic reports

The members of the Legion Ville Historical Society had strong suspicions that Redoubt #4 was located in the Hill Cemetery. Documentary evidence of this was found in a 1938 article on the old Hill Cemetery written by George M. Hill. Mr. Hill writes, “the most interesting thing about the Hill Cemetery is that General Wayne built a blockhouse in one corner of the cemetery when camped at Legion Ville, the foundation of which was well known but has long since been covered.”

Field Investigation

To help solve the mysteries of the Hill Cemetery, a field investigation was initiated in July – August 2001. The field work had several goals. The cemetery had never been surveyed to identify the individuals buried and map the headstones. The first step was to prepare a good map of the cemetery. A geophysical survey was also conducted with two goals. The Municipality of Baden wanted to know if there were any unmarked graves or any with inaccurate tombstone placement in the cemetery. Due to several factors, including vandalism, many tombstones had been knocked over and several appeared to be missing or mislocated. The scope of the geophysical investigation was also to delineate buildings and related structures associated with Legion Ville, in particular to determine if Redoubt No. 4 was present in the area of the cemetery. In terms of

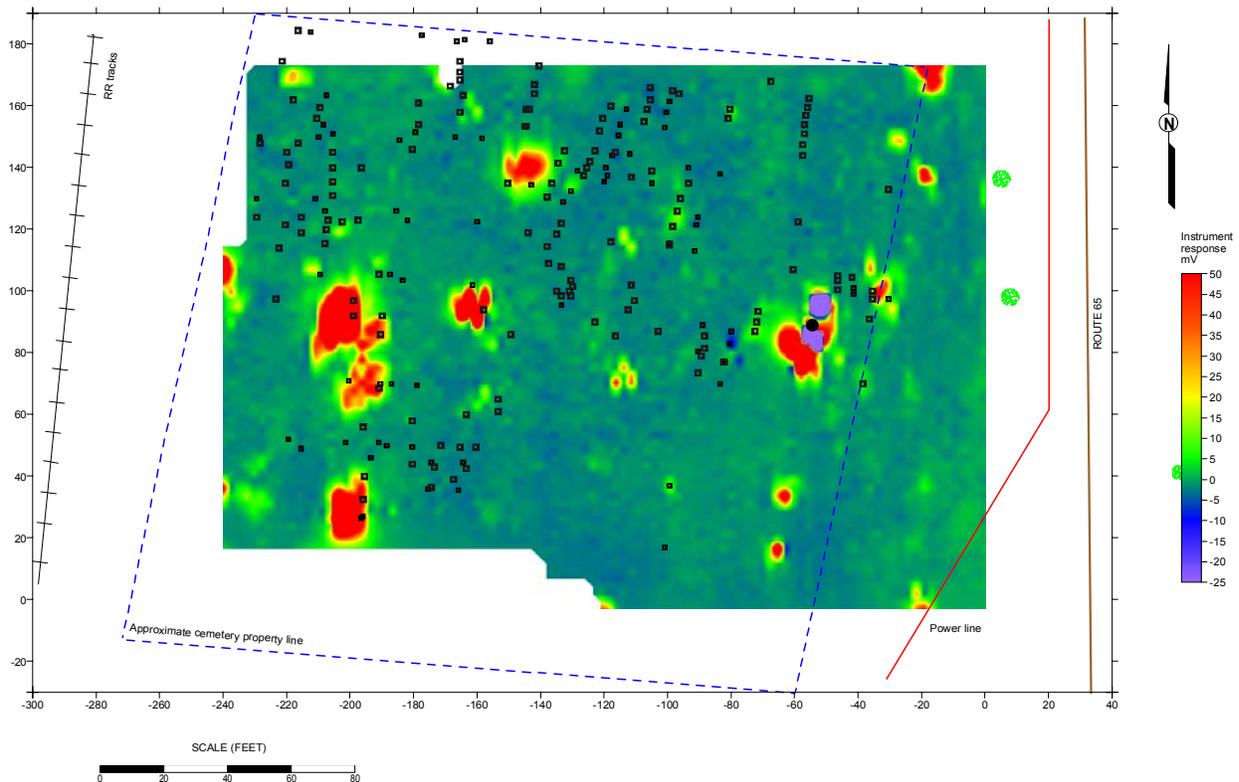
interpreting the geophysical data, another factor to be considered was that the site is near Logstown and the cemetery site could also have been the location of prehistoric occupation.



Map of the Hill Cemetery prepared as part of this survey

Several geophysical techniques were applied at the Hill cemetery, including a Geonics EM61 time-domain electromagnetic system for deep metal detection, magnetic gradiometry, and ground penetrating radar (GPR) were applied at the cemetery. The deep metal detection survey is not generally considered to be a primary technique for identifying archaeological features in historical cemeteries, but in this case it was felt that there could have been metal with some aspects of the burials and from Legion Ville that could have interfered with the interpretation of the other techniques. In particular, the metal detection was conducted to facilitate the interpretation of the magnetic data to distinguish which anomalies were due to metal and which could be interpreted in terms of a different cultural origin.

The survey was initiated with the time-domain metal detector. This determined a baseline from which the magnetic data could be interpreted. Magnetic data acquired with a Scintrex Smartmag cesium vapor gradiometer were interpreted in terms of subtle soil changes, such as associated with buried roads, graves, building foundations, or fire hearths. Finally ground penetrating radar (GPR) was conducted using a RAMAC system to identify graves based on images from the coffins or on the basis of disturbances to soil horizons. The GPR data also provided supplementary information regarding structures and building foundations.



Distribution of metal at the Hill Cemetery from EM-61 measurements

The interpretation of the geophysical data sets proved to be a challenging process. The site has a complex history of occupation probably beginning in prehistoric times and including the post-Revolutionary War period and the subsequent development of the Hill Cemetery. Each occupation left an imprint on subsurface conditions reflected in the geophysical results.

The magnetic survey proved best to locate subtle changes in the ground that could relate to the presence of buried structures. The metal detection survey proved critical in being able to distinguish magnetic effects between metal and features of interest. The GPR surveying was the best technique for identifying soil disturbances associated with grave shafts.

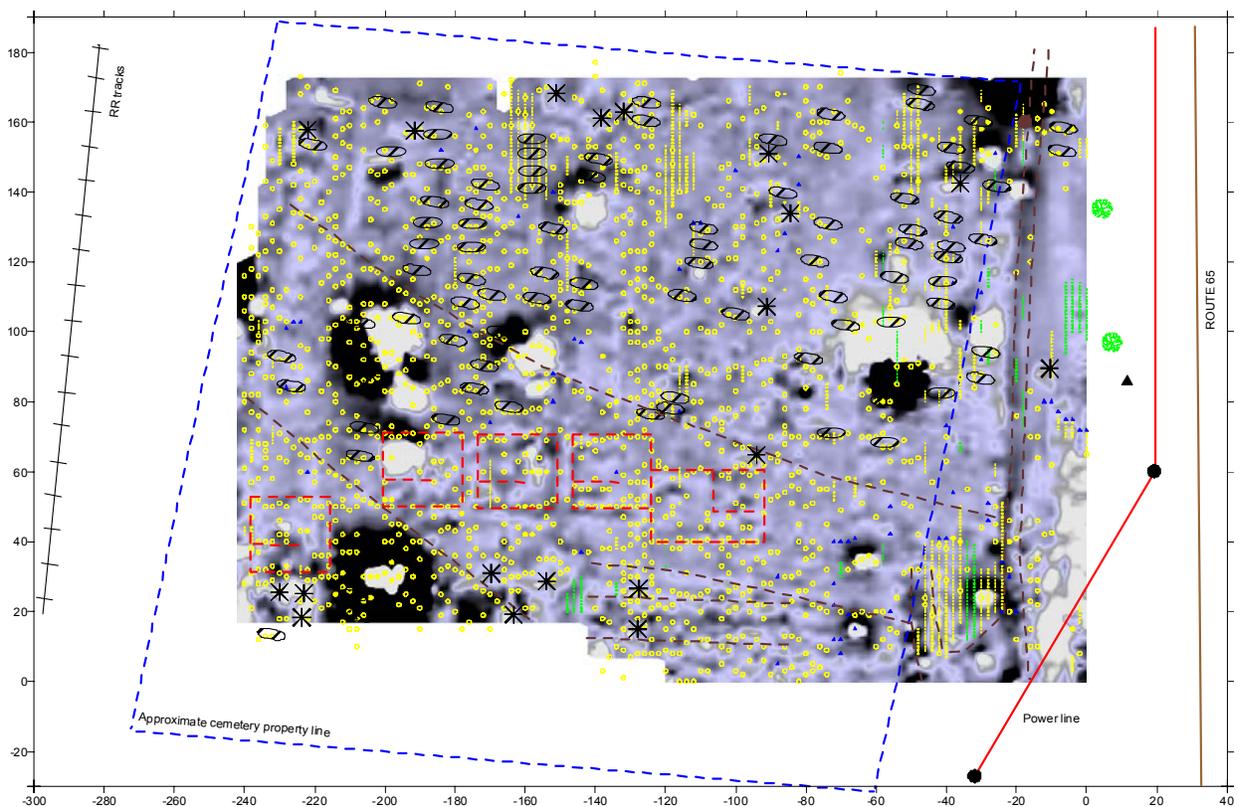
Interpretation of the geophysical data was categorized into probable features:

- *Possible prehistoric features* - Features that could be related to prehistoric occupation are fire hearths. Hot fires cause soil to become magnetic and are normally marked by magnetic highs. The interpretation is not entirely straightforward, however, as small amounts of metal could also produce similar magnetic anomalies. To be able to identify features that could be fire hearths, the magnetic results were compared with the distribution of metal from the EM-61 readings.
- *Possible Revolutionary War structures* - Prior to the survey, available information suggested that the cemetery could be the location of Redoubt No. 4. This part of the Legion Ville Camp was expected to be comprised of a blockhouse, probably with stone foundations, sur-

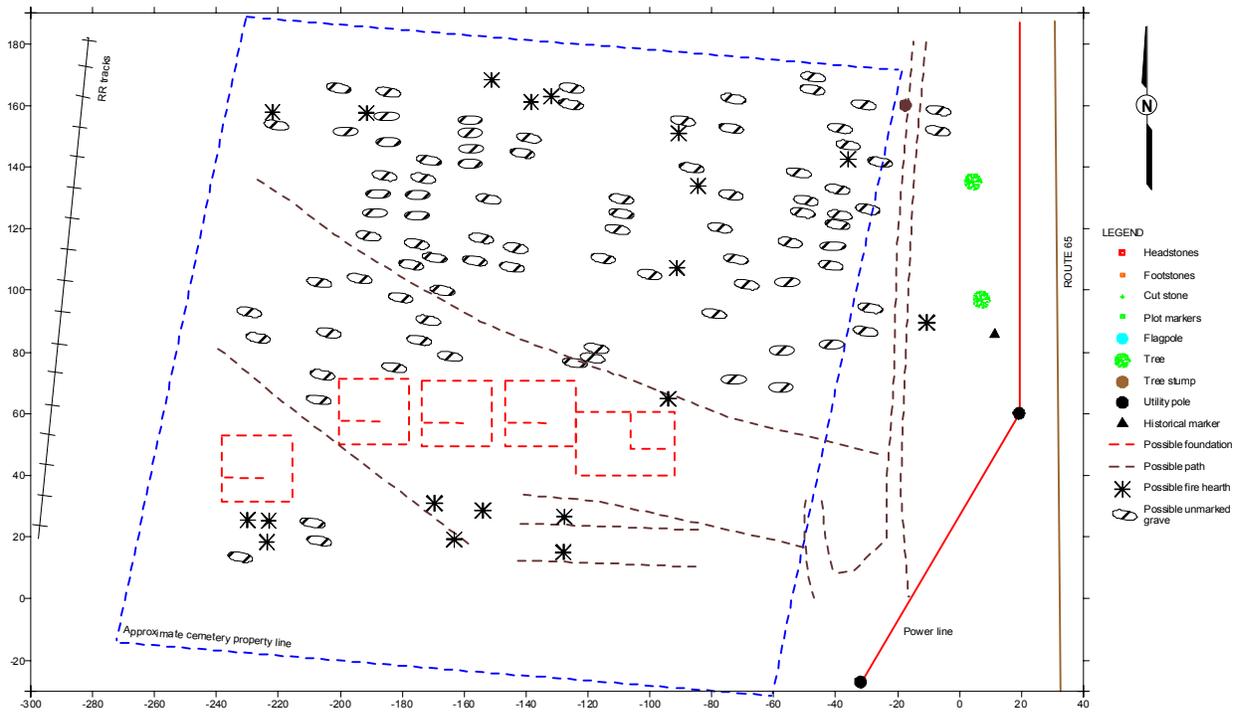
rounded by a deep trench. This type of structure was not encountered. Nevertheless, the data do define what appear to be building foundations, best depicted by the magnetic gradient data. The overall pattern of the apparent structures is not one of a redoubt, but could be associated with barracks or stables. The distribution of shallow metal suggests that one of the structures could have been a forge. It should be noted that the southwest corner of the cemetery is highly disturbed and interpretation of this area was difficult. A portion of Redoubt No. 4 could be present in this area.

- *Roads and pathways* - A N-S trending road is present at the eastern edge of the property that is unrelated to modern Route 65. Other, more subtle alignments of magnetic anomalies and GPR reflections define the presence of other roadways or pathways crossing the cemetery diagonally.
- *Graves* - Over 50 locations of ground disturbance that have the appearance of graves not associated with headstones are present across the site. In many cases there is evidence of the presence of graves at the ground surface, but in other cases there is no surficial evidence. Generally speaking, where a headstone is present there appears to be an associated grave.

An archaeological investigation to verify the geophysical interpretation is pending.



Magnetic gradient and specific GPR anomalies at the Hill Historical Cemetery



Interpretation of the Hill Historical Cemetery from multiple geophysical techniques