

Liberia Plantation House Manassas Virginia

Liberia Plantation was built in 1825 by Harriet and William Weir for a large plantation growing vegetables and grains and raising livestock. Following Virginia's secession from the Union in 1861, the nearby railroad junction became important for military mobilization and Liberia house became first headquarters for Confederate General Beauregard, then later for Union General McDowell, even hosting Lincoln during the Presidential tour. Following the war, the family were not able to keep up the house and make repairs to the damaged structure and it passed through a number of hands before being given to the City of Manassas.

The house is significant for its role during the military conflict and is one of few from the pre-war period to survive intact. The structure is red brick with interior brick partition walls finished with plaster on the first and second floors.



Beginning in 2008, a phased restoration was undertaken by the City of Manassas, which included a comprehensive paint analysis by Richbrook Conservation of both the interior and exterior in order to understand the paint chronology as well as to target the finish treatments in place during the era of significance as established to be the military occupation. The study found that very little had been disturbed, allowing for



presentation of paint color strigraphies on the wood trim, and an inventory of the layers of wallpaper on primary walls of the formal rooms.

Based on the paint study, a subsequent phase of work was commissioned, involving the removal, documentation and archiving of those wallpapers post-dating the era of significance.

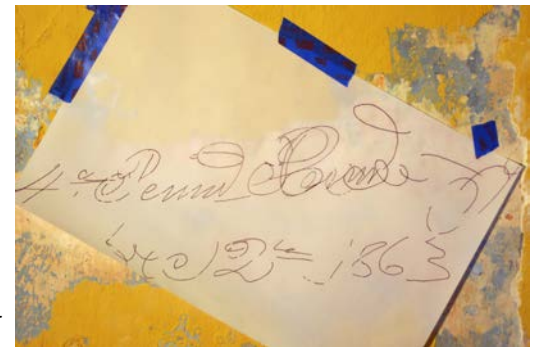


In the course of removals, previously obscured areas of plaster wall were uncovered and conditions surveyed. While most retained coats of paint below the plaster, areas of paint failure and loss revealed evidence of



the graffiti'd signatures left behind by the soldiers from both sides as they passed through the house during the battles of the Civil War.

Where revealed, these areas were documented and in some cases full name and regiment information was discernible, allowing the Manassas Museum to supplement their archival histories as well as track down descendants.



For now, the walls in Liberia Plantation have been preserved to await future conservation efforts to fully reveal the historic graffiti, and formal rooms simply papered to await future re-interpretation efforts.

Owner/Client: City of Manassas Museum System
Team: Richbrook Conservation;
Christopher Mills Conservation Services