A Report Prepared for:

Cultural Resources Program
Tennessee Valley Authority
Norris, Tennessee

A Documentary Survey of a
One Block Parcel in Downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee:
Chestnut to Fort, Twelfth to Thirteenth Streets

Prepared By:

R. Bruce Council, M.A.
Research Associate

The Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
615 McCallie Avenue
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403

Principal Investigator: Nicholas Honerkamp, Ph.D.
Director, Institute of Archaeology

October 1997
Introduction

At the request of the Cultural Resources Program of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, has prepared this brief documentary survey of a one-block parcel in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee. The purpose of the research is to define potential targets for detailed historical research and archaeological testing within a parcel owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The project area, bounded by Chestnut Street on the east, Fort Street on the west, West Twelfth Street on the north, and West Thirteenth Street on the south, is the proposed site of an expansion of the Chattanooga Trade and Convention Center immediately to the north. This block is currently occupied by the office building and parking lots of the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association (TVPPA).

This document does not represent an exhaustive historical treatment of the block and its residential, commercial and industrial tenants, but rather is a brief survey of historic land uses as gleaned from readily accessible documents. The principal sources examined consisted of city plat books which illustrated the character and precise location of improvements on the property. The objective of the research is to provide data pertinent to an assessment of the archaeological research potential of the property. Consequently, there is a temporal bias in the periods researched, with very recent uses of the property receiving less attention. The research specifically aims at estimating sub-surface survivals of archaeological features or deposits that would contribute to an organized body of information about past urban adaptations or historic technologies. No field investigation was undertaken as part of this project.

Documentary Overview

Following the Cherokee Removal, completed in 1838, surveyors laid out the system of streets that comprised the urban core of Chattanooga. Set down with an alignment based on the river frontage at Ross's Landing, the core of the settlement was bounded on the south by Ninth Street, now designated Martin Luther King Boulevard. South of this line early settlement developed without regard to the later street system. As the city expanded to the east and south in the 1840s and 50s, the original street pattern was altered somewhat to conform to the baseline grid of the Ocoee District, thus creating a series of triangular blocks where the old and new grids intersected (Council 1989). The new grid system was imposed south of Ninth Street / M. L. King Boulevard and thus includes the project area. At the northeast corner of the project area, (Chestnut and West Twelfth streets), the old and new street grids met.

The earliest reliable map of urban Chattanooga was produced by the U.S. Coast Survey during the Civil War (Dorr 1863; Figure 1). This topographic map shows the town as it stood in the fall of 1863, and illustrates, in addition to civilian improvements, the major military fortifications and related features constructed by Federal and Confederate troops prior to the battles of Chattanooga in November 1863. The map was drawn prior to the building boom in 1864-5 during which the town was transformed into a marshaling
yard for the Federal advance on Atlanta. The contour lines document an ante-bellum topography in urban Chattanooga now buried under considerable amounts of fill.

The Dorr map shows a row of structures along the north side of the block, along the West Twelfth Street frontage. The detail on the map is somewhat murky, but at least four structures are present, all set back from the street a short distance. A related map, somewhat cleaner in its rendering, but with slightly less detail than the Dorr map, is "Map of the Battle-field of Chattanooga," compiled in 1864 and evidently using the Dorr map as a basis (O.R. Atlas, Plate 49, Map 1). The 1864 version is identical to the Dorr map, depicting a row of houses or other structures along Twelfth Street.

As drawn on the Dorr map, Carter Street is shown with clear margins, but the right of way of Twelfth Street is drawn as dashed, indicating that the road was not improved. Moreover, in the Dorr map, Twelfth is drawn somewhat south of its current position. The data suggest that Twelfth Street was resurveyed after the Civil War, moving this thoroughfare to the north. Chestnut Street is also drawn with dashed margins, indicating the road was not improved.

The project area is in the vicinity of a number of important military features. A major Federal fortification, Fort Lytle, is immediately to the southwest, and the outer line of the Federal defensive trenchworks would have crossed Carter around Fourteenth Street. Also on the map, a military hospital is shown on the high ground to the west. The proximity of the project area to the defensive trenchworks suggests that soldiers' field bivouacs may have been present in the vicinity. Civil War photographs of Chattanooga compiled in Hoobler (1986) do not include images of structures known to be in the project area.

Immediately northeast of the project area was the freight depot of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, situated at the southwest corner of the Union Railyards occupied by the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, the Western and Atlantic Railroad, and the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. This area was the focus of a great deal of activity by the United States Military Railroad (USMR) during the Civil War (Council and Honerkamp 1984). Detailed plans of military constructions in the town exist, but an overall plan of location for the structures in the southern part of town is missing from the documentation. USMR structures may have been built in the project area in 1864-65, but at present there is no available documentation to support this speculation.

After the Civil War, the city of Chattanooga grew south and east, extending its grid of streets into the lands surrounding the project area. The ridge of land west of Carter Street was especially favorable as a residential area, being well drained. An 1871 aerial view of the city, produced by A. Ruger, illustrates homes and orchards (?) in the project area (Ruger 1871). The structures depicted are clearly residential, but their arrangement on the block does not correspond with the detail on the Dorr map of 1863.

With the exception of the lot to the west, the surrounding lots are also developed as apparently residential areas (Figure 2). Vacant lands to the north of the project area, in the large triangular plot bounded by Carter, Chestnut and Twelfth Street (and coming to an acute point at Ninth or M. L. King Boulevard) were the property of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, and are known from anecdotal data to have served as circus grounds (Council and Honerkamp 1984: 34).
Figure 1. Detail from "Chattanooga and Its Approaches, showing the Union and Rebel works before and during the Battles of 23rd, 24th and 25th November 1863 . . . surveyed under direction of Brig. Gen. W. F. Smith," (Dorr 1863). The project area is cross-hatched.
Figure 2. Detail from A. Ruger's "Birds Eye View of the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee," (1871). At this date, the project area, bounded by Boyce (Chestnut), Fort, Cravens (12th) and Hooke (13th), is occupied by residential structures fronting on Twelfth and Chestnut streets.
Twelfth Street was named Cravens Street in honor of ante-bellum ironmaster and industrial entrepreneur Robert Cravens. Thirteenth was named Hooke in recognition of Judge R. M. Hooke, an ante-bellum resident of the general neighborhood. Fort Street was named for prominent local businessmen, Tomlinson Fort. At the northeast corner of the project area, the old and new street grid system met, resulting in a name change in Chestnut Street as it turned slightly west of south at the Twelfth Street intersection. At Twelfth Street, Chestnut Street (extending south from the river) became Boyce Street, named for the famous South Carolinian entrepreneur and local investor, Ker Boyce. While Twelfth (Cravens), Thirteenth (Hooke), Chestnut (Boyce) and Fort streets had been graded and improved by the early 1870s, these were significant avenues only to the neighborhood. Carter Street was the only important route west of Market Street that ran south from the central business district between Seventh and Eighth streets. This route was paved c. 1890, while the other streets in the area remained unpaved.

The Sanborn fire insurance plat book of 1885 does not present a detailed plan of the block, but notes indicate the presence of nine frame dwellings on the property (Sanborn Map and Publishing Company 1885). These structures are depicted on an aerial view of the city produced in 1886 by Norris Wellge and Company (Figure 3). In this bird's eye view of the town, the project area is cluttered with mostly residential structures, many of two-stories height. The structure at the southeast corner of the block appears to have an elevated store-front facade on Chestnut Street; later documents indicate this was a grocery.

Sanborn maps from 1889 (Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd. 1889: Sheet 19) document the presence of two boarding houses, four dwelling houses, and two groceries, with attendant outbuildings and stables. An alleyway twelve feet wide roughly bisected the block into north and south halves, and another alleyway, also of twelve-foot width, divided the southern half of the block into east and west halves. These alleyways created access to stables in the rear lot areas for horse and wagon. At the northwest corner of the project area is a one-story framed stable building that is not clearly associated with a structure elsewhere on the block; it may be associated with a wagon factory diagonally across the street to the northwest. There is a two-story frame dwelling at 212 Fort; a boarding house at 216 Fort; and another boarding house at 226 Fort. On the opposite side of the block there is a two-story brick grocery at 1 Boyce, a two-story frame dwelling at 11 Boyce; a two-story frame dwelling at 15 Boyce; a two-story frame dwelling at 19 Boyce; a one-story frame feed business at 23 Boyce, and a one-story frame grocery at 25 Boyce. Small, one-story detached structures at the center of the block may include one or more privies. In 1889, the block was serviced by a street railway running down Fort Street, and on three sides of the block water mains were present in the street. The neighborhood was mixed residential and commercial.

Examination of the G. M. Hopkins 1889 plat book of Chattanooga reveals no new additional information on the block, except that the northern end is divided into a series of fourteen numbered lots on either side of the north-south alleyway. This subdivision is identified as J. S. Billop's subdivision. These lots were narrow -- 21.28' along Fort and Boyce / Chestnut -- and long -- 119'. The Hopkins plat book does not indicate the presence of sewers in the neighborhood of the project area, suggesting that the residents still relied on privies at that date.
Figure 3. Detail from Norris, Wellge and Co.'s "Chattanooga, Seat of Hamilton County, Tennessee" (1886). The arrow points to the project block. This view faces southwest.
Figure 4. Detail from Sheet 19, Sanborn-Perris Map Company Ltd. fire insurance maps of Chattanooga, Tennessee (1889). Facing north. Best available copy from microfilm.
The 1901 Sanborn plat of the block demonstrates little change in the project area but includes the narrow lot lines in the northern part of the block (Figure 5). An alleyway subdivided much of the northern portion of the block into east and west halves. In addition to minor changes in outbuildings, only two substantive alterations had been made to the block. The boarding house at 216 Fort Street had been demolished, but two small outbuildings remained as stables. The boarding house at 226 Fort had been rebuilt to front on Hooke (West Thirteenth), and renumbered 125 Hooke. An additional one story dwelling had been erected next door at 123 Hooke. The brick building at the northeast corner of the block, formerly a grocery, is identified as the Sanders Shirt Factory. By this date, there are still possible privies located at the rear of several lots, particularly along the alleyways.

The G. M. Hopkins real estate plat book of 1904 indicates the addition of two frame residential structures on the northern end of the Boyce/Chestnut street frontage of the block. Twelve-foot wide alleyways ran north-south, and east-west, dividing the block into quarters in cruciform fashion. Also by this date, sewer mains are present in Fort, Twelfth and Chestnut streets. A spur tract of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway ran down Fort Street, and tracks of the Chattanooga Electric Railway, an inter-urban line, ran down Chestnut. With its mixture of small commercial enterprises and houses, the neighborhood is a transition from the residential areas to the west and the industrial grounds to the east.

In 1914, the neighborhood still had changed little (G. M. Hopkins 1914). The major new addition to the block was a brick building at the southwest corner of the block, stretching along Fort Street and with an wing extending along West Thirteenth to the alleyway dividing block into east and west halves. On this plat, the lower half of the block is identified as Lyle's subdivision.

Sanborn fire insurance sheets from 1917 (Sanborn Map Company 1917) illustrate that significant changes had occurred in the project area through the addition of two commercial and industrial businesses (Figure 6). At the southwest corner of the block was the A. Fassnacht & Son Wagon Works, occupying a two-story plant with frontages on Fort and West Thirteenth. In the middle of the Fort Street frontage was the Coca-Cola Bottling Company occupying a two-story facility that adjoined a one-story wholesale meat operation to the north. At the northern end of the west half of the block was a large private stable.

Boyce Street had been renamed Chestnut, and the house numbering reflected the extension of numbers from the north. The two-story store at the northeast corner of the block remained as a liquor warehouse (1211 Chestnut), and to the south, three new structures had been built: an auto repair shop (1203 Chestnut) and two small dwellings (1205 and 1207 Chestnut). Each of these structures had small detached buildings on the alleyway at the rear of the property. These units are likely detached water closets. Three dwellings and two stores shown on the 1901 plats still remained along the lower portion of the block, but now the stores at 1221 and 1225 Chestnut housed junk.
Figure 5. Detail from Sheet 17, Sanborn-Perris Map Company Ltd. fire insurance maps of Chattanooga, Tennessee (1901). Facing north. Best available copy from microfilm.
Figure 6. Detail from Sheet 56, Sanborn Map Company "Fire Insurance Maps of Chattanooga, Tennessee," (1917). Best available copy from microfilm.
The Chattanooga city directory for 1915 identifies several vacant buildings on the block (1201 Chestnut, 1211 Chestnut, and 1221 Chestnut), and suggests that the few remaining residents on the block were white (G. M. Connelly & Co. 1915). The Chadwick plat book of Chattanooga (1928) shows little detail of the structures occupying the project area, being drawn for real estate purposes rather than fire insurance evaluations. On the northern half of the Fort Street frontage, lots were owned by J. F. Johnston, the Cudahy Packing Company, and the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. The southwest quarter of the block was largely occupied by the automobile works of A. Fassnacht and Sons. On the Chestnut Street frontage, narrow lots were owned by Dora Rawlings, M. E. Turley, Sarah P. Turnam, J. S. Billops and S. K. Johnson. On the southeast quarter of the block, two residences were present and a gas station was situated at the corner with West Thirteenth.

Sanborn fire insurance maps of 1951 and 1955 (Sanborn Map Co. 1951, 1955) illustrate essentially the same detail, with some differences in tenancy (Figures 7 and 8). A trucking company operated a freight depot in a one-story building at the northern end of Fort, and the Cudahy Packing Company had expanded to incorporate the former Coca-Cola Bottling plant to the south. The new canned foods plant included structures at 1208, 1210, 1212, and 1214-16 Fort Street. A. Fassnacht and Sons operated the automobile body works that subsumed the southwestern quarter of the block and extended into the eastern portion of the block. Several small structures fronted on the upper portion of Chestnut Street, at 1201, 1203, 1205 and 1207 Chestnut. On either side of the alley dividing the Chestnut Street frontage into north and south halves were two private garages.

Chattanooga flood control sheet 1-3, drawn in 1969, documents that most of the structures present in 1955 were still in existence at that time (TVA 1969). The city directory for 1970 lists a handful of tenants using the block for offices, retail operations and auto repairs (the Fassnacht shops). By 1980, several of the buildings were vacant, and the block was eventually acquired by the Tennessee Valley Authority. By 1988, the majority of the block was occupied by private parking concessions (Rothberger Directory Company, 1970, 1980, 1988).

By 1988, most of the standing architecture on the block had been demolished, and an office facility was constructed to house the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association, which represents most of the regional distributors of TVA-generated electricity. The one-story facility occupies only a small area of the block, and the majority of the landscaped block is occupied by parking lots.
Figure 7. Detail from Sheet 56, "Insurance Maps of Chattanooga, Tennessee," Volume 1 (Sanborn Map Company 1951). Facing north. Best available copy from microfilm.
Figure 8. Detail from Sheet 56, "Insurance Maps of Chattanooga, Tennessee," Volume 1 (Sanborn Map Company 1955). Facing north. Best available copy from microfilm.
Archaeological Research Potential

Determination of the archaeological research potential of the project area is made solely on the basis of the documented improvements to the property as evidenced in the series of plat books of Chattanooga. No field investigation has been undertaken. Estimation of the archaeological potential of the block must take into account demolition and grading activities, modern or in the past, that would have removed or otherwise disorganized the archaeological record on the block. With the likelihood that shallow deposits (sheet refuse deposits) would have been removed or disturbed prior to construction of the TVPPA facility, our interest is thus narrowly focused on archaeological features that possessed some depth below surface. Sub-surface features of interest would include wells, privies, cisterns and other constructions resting, in part, below grade.

Urban Chattanooga has never been systematically surveyed for prehistoric sites, and site potential can only be estimated. Commentaries from the early historic period note that much of the land south of town was low-lying and at least seasonally marshy (see Wiltse n.d.). Chattanooga Flood Control Sheet 1-3 puts the elevation of the project area at around 669'-671' ASL as of the late 1960s (TVA 1969). In the flood of March 1867, locomotives in the nearby Union Railyards were largely submerged by ponding flood water (Council and Honerkamp 1984: 29). The project area would have been under eight to ten feet of water in the flood of 1867, and was also under several feet of water during the flood of 1875. Higher ground to the west of Carter Street drained into the project, perhaps creating marshy conditions on the tract before the 20th century and machine-assisted filling operations. These data suggest that the project area is unlikely to contain substantial, permanent prehistoric settlements.

Despite documentary evidence of historic Cherokee occupation in the vicinity of Ross's Landing prior to the Removal, archaeological remains from this period remain elusive. Ante-bellum historic components are documented in the block: maps drawn in 1863 and 1864 show several structures in the project area, situated along the Twelfth Street right-of-way. The character of these structures, and the identity of any occupants or businesses, is unknown.

Battlefield maps of the Civil War do not indicate military features within the project area. However, the block is within several hundred feet of key military positions occupied by Federal troops during the siege of Chattanooga in the fall of 1863. Remains of soldiers' bivouacs could conceivably be present. Fugitive campsite structures may not have survived clearing and grading operations associated with the TVPPA building and site preparation, but deeper features, such as latrines, may have. The site was also contiguous to the Union Railyards, and the United States Military railroads may have constructed temporary facilities on the site. These possible features, however, are pure speculation.

Views and early plat books document numerous residential and commercial improvements on the block through the latter half of the nineteenth century. Accompanying these residential units and businesses such as groceries would potentially be such features as wells, cisterns and privies. City utilities reached the project area slowly; piped water was present around the block by 1889, and by 1904, the block was served by sewers. The dates at which individual householders would have tied into these urban utilities is unknown.

Sub-surface features associated with domestic habitations constructed prior to 1917 may be present below grade, and may useful in the reconstruction of residential adaptations to urban environments in the late-nineteenth century as explored by the Institute at other southern towns such as Charleston (Honerkamp, Council and Will 1982) and Savannah.
(Honerkamp, Council and Fairbanks 1983). In such settings, the transition from individual household-level to municipal-level adaptations can be observed (Honerkamp and Council 1984). For example, the shift from individual wells to city water lines, and from privies to central sewerage systems, mark the change in scale of the response to sanitation needs as occupation density increases in the urban setting. In the project area, more detailed documentary research (such as lot by lot chain of title reconstruction) would be needed to isolate the location of features that could then be targeted for sub-surface exploration. Frequently, such improvements are neither discussed nor platted, however, in land deeds.

As Chattanooga grew and the need for municipal water supplies and sanitation increased with the population density, water and sanitary mains were slowly extended throughout the city. City plat maps do not depict wells, and there is little anecdotal information about urban water supplies at the household level. Sanborn plats document the presence of water pipes in the streets on three sides of the block by 1889. Presumably after this date, occupants of the block would have accessed this supply, obviating the necessity for cisterns and wells. Sanitary mains were in place around the block by 1904, and local ordinances dictated tie-ins where mains were present in contiguous streets. Any surviving privies in detached sheds may have been plumbed retro-actively into the sewerage system and converted into water closets. Still, as late as 1918, there were an estimated 500 privies of the "Kentucky" variety in the city. These brick-vaulted facilities were periodically cleaned out by horse-drawn scavenger carts and later by gas-powered sanitation trucks (CHCBL, Local History Section, Clipping File "Sewage," Folder 1).

Structurally-discrete features such as wells, cisterns and privies, being deep structures, tend to survive all but the most intense clearing operations. Their archaeological value is as time capsules that contain temporally-discrete deposits of material culture. Consequently, they are valuable urban historic archaeological resources. Any examination of historic urban Chattanooga would be a baseline study, since there is currently no archaeological data base for these types of residential and light commercial sites.

Two of the commercial/industrial tenants of the block are locally and nationally significant. Andrew Fassnacht opened a wagon manufactory on Market Street in 1874, subsequently moving to a Carter Street shop. In 1917, A. Fassnacht and Sons opened a wagon works in the project area at 111-115 W. 13th Street. The large two-story, L-shaped brick plant manufactured horse-drawn carriages and wagons, but also had moved into the business of repairing automobiles. Fassnacht and Sons continued in business into the automobile age, and finally abandoned the West Thirteenth Street plant in 1978, moving the operation to a plant in St. Elmo (CHCBL, Local History Section, Clipping File, "Chattanooga Industries"). This company spanned the transition period from horse-drawn vehicles to gas-driven automobiles, and was celebrated locally for its longevity and adaptability.

The Coca-Cola Bottling Company operated a facility on the Fort Street frontage of the block. Chattanooga was the site of the first Coca-Cola bottling franchise in the world. Bottling first took place in a small facility at 23 Market Square (now Patten Parkway) from 1899 to 1903, then moved to a larger plant at 1107-1109 Chestnut Street, (just north of the project area). In 1908, the bottling operation moved to a plant in the project area, at 1214-1216 Fort Street. The Chattanooga bottling franchise remained at this location until 1931, when the operation moved to a greatly enlarged and modernized facility on Broad Street near the river (CHCBL, Local History Section, Clipping File "Chattanooga Industries, Coca-Cola Bottling Company," Folder 1).
In terms of businesses that would have produced distinctive products (and by-products) that may illustrate commercial horizons or have produced artifacts that may be useful as archaeological tools, both the Coca-Cola Bottling Company and the Fassnacht and Sons operations produced artifacts that may be considered significant at the local and national levels, respectively, as examples of products of industry and commerce. Since both operations occupied the site in the early 1900s, however, there may be no on-site archaeological record of characteristic artifacts of these operations; urban sanitation at these sites, i.e. trash collection, may have prevented the accumulation of substantial deposits of refuse that would reflect these businesses. Moreover, these deposits would have been subject to degradation during clearing associated with the TVPPA building construction.

Recommendations

The block bounded by Fort, Chestnut, West Twelfth and West Thirteenth streets may contain discrete archaeological features and deposits associated with urban life in Chattanooga in the last half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While superficial deposits of cultural material may have been significantly degraded by modern clearing and construction, deep, abandoned features such as wells, cisterns and privies may contain artifact collections documenting urban adaptations. Specific targets for subsurface testing may be extracted from detailed Sanborn fire insurance plats such as those published in 1889, 1901 and 1917, and displayed within. In addition to mapped features in rear-lot areas (privies), mid-lot range features (wells, cisterns) might be intercepted in a testing program employing machine-assisted excavation. Accompanying a program of fieldwork on the block would be more detailed documentary research to identify the inhabitants of individual lots.
References Cited

Manuscript Collections

CHCBL [Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library] Local History Section, Clipping files, various topics.

Published Sources

Chadwick, E. W.

Connelly, G. M., and Company

Council, R. Bruce

Council, R. Bruce, and Nicholas Honerkamp

Dorr, F. W.
1863 "Chattanooga and Its Approaches, showing the Union and Rebel works before and during the Battles of 23rd, 24th and 25th November 1863 . . . surveyed under direction of Brig. Gen. W. F. Smith." Map on file, Mapping Services Division, Tennessee Valley Authority, Chattanooga.

Honerkamp, Nicholas, and R. Bruce Council

Honerkamp, Nicholas, R. Bruce Council and Charles H. Fairbanks

Honerkamp, Nicholas, R. Bruce Council and M. Elizabeth Will
1982 An Archaeological Assessment of the Charleston Convention Center Site, Charleston, South Carolina. A report prepared for the Archaeological Services Branch - Atlanta, National Park Service.

Hoobler, James A.
Hopkins Company, G. M.

Norris, Wellge and Company

O.R. [Official Records]

Rothberger Directory Company

Ruger, A.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company

Sanborn Map Company

Sanborn-Perris Map Company Limited
TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority]
1969 "Chattanooga Flood Control Sheet 1-3," Mapping Services Division, Tennessee Valley Authority, Chattanooga.

Wiltse, Henry M.
n.d. History of Chattanooga. Typewritten manuscript. 2 volumes. On file, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library. [c. 1916]