Figure 1. Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved/History Behind the Scenes
Figure 2 Mary Anna Randolph Custis. Portrait of Enslaved Girl, 1830/ The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

ARCOLA

QUARTERS FOR THE ENSLAVED

INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN
Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Arcola, Loudoun County, Virginia

VOLUME 1 - REVISED REPORT
MAY 9, 2022

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Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE) Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) is to determine what interpretive services and techniques will best communicate the most important stories, values, meanings and ideas of the site to the visiting public while preserving and utilizing the extant historic structures and site features. One purpose of the IMP process for the AQE is to create a mission statement, interpretive themes, and goals and objectives to drive the development of the site. Collectively, they form the infrastructure that defines the reasons the site exists and has historical significance. This report has six chapters:

Chapter 1 looks at the evolution of the site, in three sections entitled: Slavery in Virginia: A Commentary; Overview/Slavery in Loudoun County, Virginia; and A History of the Lewis Farm Property. In addition, it assesses the site’s resources and potential audiences.

Chapter 2 develops an interpretive infrastructure for AQE that explains the site’s mission and the development of interpretive themes, goals, and objectives. Chapter 3 presents an interpretive concept to serve as a foundation for future site development and interpretive programming. Chapter 4 provides recommendations for growing interpretation at AQE in the areas of visitor experience, physical resources/cultural landscape, collections, exhibition spaces, other interpretive tools, public programs, and research recommendations. Chapter 5 focuses on establishing the interpretation of both sides of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE) building, the earlier side in 1830 and the later side in 1850. It includes furnishings and historical clothing plans, and the research that supports each. Chapter 6 offers projected costs and recommends resources for facilities development and interpretive elements.

Most of the information we have about the men, women, and children enslaved by the various members of the Lewis family is genealogical, due to the very diligent and focused work of Arlean Hill and other descendants of enslaved individuals owned by the Lewis family. This means we know something of the individuals and family groups who lived at Arcola and at the other Lewis family properties, but we know little about their work routines, relationships with the Lewis’s, and their day-to-day lives. Legal documents, such as wills, estate division documents, estate sale records, and executors’ accounts, give some information about the Lewis families, their enslaved workforce, and their material culture. To compensate for the lack of Lewis family letters, diaries, account books and other financial records that would provide insights into the lives of the enslaved, this report turned to oral histories, known as slave narratives, to build a portrait of the lives of those enslaved at the Lewis Farm.
Members of the Lewis family, including its patriarch Vincent Lewis, immigrated to Virginia from Northumberland County, England in the early 18th century. In 1746, Vincent Lewis of Fairfax County purchased 800 of those acres from Anthony Russell (Fairfax County Deed Book A-293, Fairfax County Deed Book B-147). In 1757 the Virginia House of Burgesses divided Fairfax County so that when, in 1786, Vincent gave 222 acres to his son, James, the property was now part of Loudoun County (Loudoun County Deed Book P-45). It was on those 222 acres that James built his house and constructed what is a rare surviving example of an early 19th-century stone quarters for the enslaved building. It is a one-story, side-gable-roofed stone building that consists of two adjoining sets of two rooms each that were erected and joined in two separate building episodes (c. 1813 and c. 1845).

When Vincent died in 1796, he left the remainder of the original 800-acre parcel, 338 acres, as well as his house, to his youngest son Charles Lewis (Loudoun County Will Book E-287). The final disposition of his enslaved workforce is unclear, although these men, women and children may have also been left to Charles. At the time of his death in 1843, Charles Lewis owned three farms in the county that totaled over 1,000 acres, as well as thirty-one enslaved men, women and children. His entire estate, including enslaved individuals, was divided among the children of his deceased brother James, with the stipulation that it could be sold.

Martha Lewis and her sister, Susan, were already substantial landowners, since they had inherited their father James' portion of the Vincent Lewis estate, including his house and 23 enslaved people, in 1827. The James Lewis farm, where the standing Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE) are located, was adjacent to Charles Lewis' farm. Martha and Susan were James' two remaining unmarried daughters, living at home in the 1820 census. In subsequent census records of 1830, 1840, and 1850, Martha was listed in the household of her older sister Susan, and they apparently remained living in the house their father had left them.

In 1883, ten years after Martha’s death, the property was sold out of the family and was owned by a succession of private families until it was sold to the Hazout Corporation in 1979 and then to Buchanan Partners in 2002, both of which intended to develop the land commercially.

This IMP proposes that future historic interpretation at the AQE operate with the following mission:

To preserve Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved for future generations and to educate the public about the rich African American heritage in Loudoun County, Virginia.
This mission statement falls under the outcome-based community services and stewardship aspects of the PRCS Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide outstanding recreational and leisure activities, outcome-focused community services and stewardship of our natural resources to promote quality of life for Loudoun’s residents and visitors.

The IMP develops a main interpretive theme (African-American Heritage in Loudoun County, Virginia) and three interpretive subthemes that, together with their individual interpretive storylines and components, form its interpretive infrastructure. The three interpretive themes, (Family and Community, Architecture and Preservation, and Plantation Operations) are each fleshed out through individual storylines and components that suggest more specific content for interpretive elements and programs. For example, the storylines for the Family and Community theme are:

- Religion
- Domestic Life
- Family and Community
- Work
- Consumer Economy

In addition, this IMP offers interpretive goals that provide parameters for further interpretive development and interpretive objectives, which are statements of desired visitor experiences. It provides recommendations for fulfilling these interpretive goals, suggested implementation IMPs for physical resources, public programs, and furnishings. Program formats for adults, youth and school groups include a menu of “Arcola à la Carte” programs, which are a series of heritage and community programs along with daily self-guided tours. The built environment of AQE will function as a backdrop for both dynamic living history programs and static museum displays to form a varied visitor experience.
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B. Slave Narratives: Weevils in the Wheat Database
C. Slave Narratives: The North-Side View of Slavery Database
D. Bubble Diagram: Visitor Center Spaces: Functions/Relationships
E. History and Social Science Standards of Learning / Virginia Studies (2015)
F. History and Social Science Standards of Learning / US History to 1865 (2015)
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N. 1850 Furnishing Plan/ Image Source List
O. Reproduction Suppliers List/ AQE Furnishings Plan
P. Reproduction Suppliers List/ Historical Clothing
Q. Database/ Individuals Enslaved by the Lewis Family
Introduction

The Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE), located in the Arcola area of Loudoun County, Virginia, is owned by the County of Loudoun and managed by the Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (LCPRCS). It is an undeveloped historic site, located on the former Lewis Farm\(^2\) site. The property was owned by the locally-prominent Lewis Family for over 200 years and populated by family members and enslaved individuals. There are two structures on the site: an architecturally-significant nineteenth-century stone quarters for the enslaved and a 1930s American Foursquare farmhouse, built on what is probably the foundation of the original Lewis family residence. Like all of its kindred institutions, it has two separate and distinct components that make up its history: its historical past and its present status. To align these two components so that AQE can develop as an historic site, evolve its interpretation, create appealing interpretive and educational programs for future visitors, and establish its visibility locally, regionally and state-wide, LCPRCS contracted with History Behind the Scenes (HBTS), a consulting firm, to develop this Interpretive Master Plan (IMP).

The goal of the IMP is to develop a plan to bring history to life at AQE. To do this, the IMP offers an interpretive infrastructure; a plan for the development of the historic site; and a preservation plan for the stone quarters for the enslaved.

As part of the IMP process, consultants researched Lewis family-related records at the Library of Virginia in Richmond and other primary source materials; conducted an audience/market evaluation; assessed Loudoun County archaeological collections; reviewed physical resources through AQE site visits; and consulted with preservation architects as well as material culture and historic clothing specialists. They met with the Friends of the Arcola Slave Quarters (FOASQ), LCPRCS staff, and community stakeholders. Unfortunately, HBTS found no private Lewis family papers and records to review. The circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented further in-person research at the Library of Virginia, including the records of the Little River Turnpike, which might have records of enslaved men from AQE who might have been hired by the turnpike company. Newly-digitized Loudoun County records and further online research reveal that Lewis family members moved to Kentucky in the mid-19th century. It is entirely possible that Lewis family records can be found there, and more research in Kentucky repositories is recommended.

\(^2\) Lewis Farm is the historic name for the property that is now AQE. It appears in numerous public records. This IMP will use the Lewis Farm name when referring to the site in an historic context and AQE when discussing the current AQE.
The Covid-19 pandemic forced an extended shutdown of many living history museums and historic sites across the United States in the spring of 2020. Most of these sites quickly developed new online resources, including virtual public programming, virtual school programs and redesigned websites, to maintain their visitor base. The revised Arcola IMP reflects these changes with an updated bibliography, graphics, and revised texts in many areas of the report. This profound change living history site operations came about rapidly and will influence the way Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved operates in the future.

This IMP is informed by the following:
- Lewis family public records, including wills, estate accounts, estate inventories; chancery court cases;
- the HBTS Access database developed from Lewis family wills, estate accounts, estate inventories;
- Archives, Friends of the Arcola Slave Quarters Project (FOASQ);
- Enslaved and descendent genealogies developed by Arlean Hill;
- National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Arcola Slave Quarters;
- Archaeological Surveys Arcola and Goupda Properties;
- Slave Narratives from the 1930s Work Progress Administration (WPA) and the 1850s abolitionist compilation, The North-Side View of Slavery;
- Primary sources such as period newspapers, visual images of enslaved life, and diaries and private papers from those not members of the Lewis family; and
- “Teaching Hard History,” a curriculum for teaching the history of slavery from the Southern Poverty Law Center, which became the launchpad for developing school programs for the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved.

It includes an Introduction, Executive Summary, six chapters and sixteen appendices. Chapter titles include:
- Chapter 1 – Assessment of Current Resources and Audience;
- Chapter 2 – Establishing an Interpretive Infrastructure;
- Chapter 3 – The Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved Interpretive Concept;
- Chapter 4 – Growing Interpretation at Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved;
- Chapter 5 – Interpreting the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved; and
- Chapter 6 – AQE/ Proposed Project Budget.

The IMP utilizes acronyms throughout. The table below lists those that appear most frequently.
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<th>Acronym</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved</td>
<td>AQE</td>
<td>Loudoun Parks Recreation &amp; Community Services</td>
<td>LPRCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Arcola Slave Quarters</td>
<td>FOASQ</td>
<td>Loudon County Public Schools</td>
<td>LCPS or LPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>History Behind the Scenes</td>
<td>HBTS</td>
<td>Standards of Learning</td>
<td>SOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Master Plan</td>
<td>IMP</td>
<td></td>
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