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## Vincent House: A Proposal for Archaeological Testing and Salvage Operations at the Vinson Family House, Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

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A PROPOSAL FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING  
AND SALVAGE OPERATIONS AT THE VINSON  
FAMILY HOUSE, EDGARTOWN, MARTHA'S  
VINEYARD, MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted to Anne Baker .

A.W. Baker Restorations, Inc.

Westport, Mass.

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Submitted by Myron O. Stachiw

518 Snuff Mill Rd.

Saunderstown, R.I.

02874

401-295-5513

July 8, 1977

## INTRODUCTION

A request for archaeological assistance on a restoration and relocation project of an historic house on Martha's Vineyard was conveyed to me by Anne Baker of A.W. Baker Restorations, Inc. of Westport, Mass. This outfit was contracted by the Edgartown Historical Society to restore and relocate the Vinson (Vincent) family house, situated on the northern side of the Edgartown Great Pond off Meeting House Way. The site was consequently visited by Marley Brown III, formerly a professor of anthropology and historical archaeology at Brown University, Providence, R.I., on June 18, 1977, and by myself (Myron Stachiw) on July 3, 1977.

The site was judged significant in its isolation, integrity, and potential for recovery of information about 17th through 20th century lifeways. A plan of excavation and analysis has been drawn up for the proposed work.

## Reasons For Project

The restoration and relocation of the Vinson family house into Edgartown will require a number of operations which will cause permanent and irreversible damage to the archaeological record and integrity of the site. As related by Anne Baker, an area all around the house to a distance of 25-30 feet from the exterior of the structure will be removed by a

bulldozer in the final preparations for relocation of the structure. It is necessary that archaeological investigations be conducted at this time in the significant area immediately surrounding the structure to assist in dating the structure, possibly locating and interpreting any earlier structure on the site, and in relating the archaeological record to the physical characteristics of the house.

#### Significance of the Site

The archaeological significance of this site can presently be termed only as "potentially great". From preliminary visits to the site and research by Anne Baker and myself of information concerning the house and early settlement in Charles Edward Banks' three volume HISTORY OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS., it appears that the site represents an intact and unaltered example of a mid 17th through 20th century farmstead, dating to 1656 and the early division of town lands to the proprietors.

Such a site, easily eligible for the National Register of Historic Sites, holds great potential, first for the study of cultural processes and adaptation on a local level, and second for comparative studies of similar cultural processes on a regional and national level. A study such as that undertaken in 1972-74 on the Mott Farm, Portsmouth, R.I. (a 17th century farmstead that remained relatively intact until it was removed due to industrial development) by Anne Baker, Marley Brown, and other members of the Brown



University Department of Anthropology would be very valuable for the interpretation of the Vinson family, the house and site, and the history of Edgartown and Martha's Vineyard. In the Mott Farm study, attempts were made to correlate changes in the architectural features of the house with changes in the lifeways of the inhabitants as reflected in the documentary and archaeological records.

Potential areas of study at the Vinson house include a similar study of the changes in wealth, status, age, and occupation of the inhabitants and the changes in the house over time. According to Anne Baker, at least three periods of rebuilding and remodeling are evident in the house. Other topics of study include settlement pattern, land use, property division and inheritance. A dietary study through recovered faunal material would be particularly significant as a result of the unique geographic location of the site on a coastal island and near the Great Pond. Any changes in the economic base of the inhabitants of the island and site should be reflected in the faunal and artifactual archaeological record. An abrupt halt to whaling operations during the Revolutionary War was one such shift in the economic base that might be reflected in the material record. Also, a study of the material culture recovered from the site would greatly enhance the knowledge of early life on Martha's Vineyard as well as provide site related artifacts for any interpretive exhibits in the house museum. Such an expanded and thorough study is well beyond the currently proposed scope of work, but is highly

recommended as a future undertaking and logical step in the total presentation and interpretation of early life at the Vinson family house and on Martha's Vineyard.

#### Scope of Work

Archaeological testing and excavations will be undertaken at the site by five persons over a period of four successive weekends in the month of July 1977, beginning on July 9. A total of eight days or forty (40) man/woman days will be expended in archaeological testing and excavation. Most members of the crew are on the staff of the Public Archaeology Laboratory and/or possess experience in New England historical archaeology. Included in the proposal is the vitae of Myron Stachiw, project supervisor. Marley Brown will serve as an archaeological consultant, visiting the site for two days at various stages of excavation. His advice and experience from the Mott Farm study will be to the advantage of the project.

The testing program will begin with a quick walk-over survey of the property, with hopes of identifying areas of former activity or dumping. These will be recorded in a general site plan and description.

The immediate area of disturbance will next be dealt with. The first phase of structural restoration of the house necessitates the excavation of a trench along the outer edge of the foundation for work on the sills. Around three sides of the house, a stone paving is found adjacent to the foundation.

Before any excavation is begun, these stones will be mapped and photographed in place and then removed and stored for replacement around the house on its new site. The area exposed by the removal of theis paving will then be tested for a builders' trench. This trench may contain artifacts discarded at the time of construction of the house and may assist in dating the present house. In conjunction with this initial testing, a five foot grid will be laid out over the affected area (25-30 feet from the house) and it will be tested for any subsurface disturbances or deposits of cultural material with 3/4 inch by 24 inch augers. It is hoped the results of this testing strategy will reveal subsurface features and indicate where further excavation should be carried out. Systematic recording of all finds will be made in drawings and photographs, both black and white and color.

All artifacts recovered will be cleaned, catalogued, and if possible, reconstructed, at the Brown University Public Archaeology Laboratory. Soil samples from the various pits will be analyzed with regard to phosphate, calcium, and organic content , and for pH. Forty (40) hours of laboratory time are proposed for the project.

In addition to the excavations and analysis of artifacts, two days are proposed for additional documentary research of Edgartown Town Records, Dukes County Records, or the Mass. Archives, as seen necessary by the project supervisor.

A report of the excavations and findings will be prepared within six weeks of the conclusion of fieldwork and will be

presented to the Edgartown Historical Society and to  
Anne Baker.

Budget

Total project cost (without contingency fund)	\$2390.40
with contingency fund	2940.90

Salaries:

Excavation: five(5) people will be employed  
for eight(8) days for eight(8) hours per day  
for a total or 320 hours at \$5.00/hour \$1600.00

Consultant: Marley Brown III will act as archaeological  
consultant for the project. \$50/day for 2 days  
100.00

Laboratory analysis: A member of the crew of the Public  
Archaeology Laboratory at Brown University will  
analyze all the material recovered from the excavations  
One person - 40 hours at \$5.00/hour 200.00

Documentary research: Additional documentary research of  
the Vinson family will have to be done to better  
understand the historical context of the site  
and its inhabitants. 2 days or 16 hours  
at \$5.00/hour 80.00

Report preparation: Compilation and presentation of data  
recovered as well as maps and photos will be  
included in the final report. In addition recommen-  
dations for further work and use of recovered data



and artifacts will be made.

24 hours at \$5.00/hour \$120.00

Salaries subtotal \$2100.00

Transportation:

Ferry: From Woods Hole to Vineyard Haven and back  
24 passages: 20 for the excavation crew,  
2 for the consultant, and 2 for further research  
on the island . 24 round trips at \$5.30/trip- 127.20

Taxi: Taxi service from the ferry landing  
to the site and back. 8 trips at \$9.00/trip 72.00

Transportation subtotal 199.20

Report Duplication:

3 copies of the final report will be prepared.

Estimated cost - 8.00

Laboratory Supplies:

Such items as glue, ink, chemicals for electrolysis,  
detergents, chemicals for soil analysis, etc. will  
be required for cleaning, cataloguing, and  
reconstructing the artifacts. Estimated cost - 10.00

Photographic Supplies:

Black and white photos and color slides will  
be taken of all phases of the excavations.  
Appropriate photos will be reproduced and included  
in the report.

4 rolls of 36 exposure Ektachrome 200  
\$4.85/roll 19.40

4 rolls of 36 exposure Plus X pan

\$1.95/roll \$7.80

Film Processing:

Ektachrome 200 - \$4.25/roll - 17.00

Plus X pan - 1.85/roll - 7.40

4 contact proof sheets 1.65/roll - 6.60

5"x7" enlargements for report

quantity needed unknown - estimated cost 15.00

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Photographic services

subtotal - \$73.20

Contingency fund:

A contingency fund for 2 days of work or 80 man hours is included in the project cost. This fund will be used only if absolutely necessary. For example, if a feature such as a trash pit or an earlier structure are located on the final day of work, the crew would return for 2 more days to either salvage the feature or make determinations as to period of use, content, and size of the feature. This fund totals \$400. in salaries, \$26.50 for ferry travel, and \$18.00 for taxi service at the rates stated above.

Total contingency fund- \$444.50.

Project cost without contingency - \$2390.40

Project cost with contingency - \$2834.90

Budget summary

Salaries . . . . .	\$2100.00
Transportation . . . . .	199.20
Report Duplication . . . . .	8.00
Laboratory Supplies. . . . .	10.00
Photographic Supplies. . . . .	73.20
Contingency fund . . . . .	444.50
	<hr/>
Total	\$2834.90

Any funds not used or needed will not be requested  
or will be returned at the conclusion of the project.