

BRAWNER FARMHOUSE  
(Bachelor's Hall  
Douglas Hall)  
Manassas National Battlefield Park  
Lee Highway/Route 29  
Manassas vicinity  
Prince William County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1372

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### BRAWNER FARM HOUSE

(Bachelor's Hall)

(Douglas Hall)

HABS No. VA-1372

- Location:** Lee Highway, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Manassas vicinity, Prince William County, Virginia.
- Significance:** The site played a significant role in the Civil War. The house stands on the site of the "Battle of Brawner Farm," Second Battle of Manassas, August 28, 1862.
- Description:** The 2 ½ story, wood frame, "L" shaped house is clad in lapped horizontal pine siding. The cross-gabled roof is covered with a standing seam, hand crimped, metal roof. The majority of the windows are 2/2. The foundation is constructed of Triassic sandstone.
- History:** The ownership of the property begins with George Tennille. Between 1789 and 1820 he purchased the property that would become known as the Brawner Farm. In 1840 he passed away, leaving that portion of his estate to his nephew George Douglas. In 1855, George Douglas died leaving his wife Augusta and his infant son Pendleton behind. Augusta and her son moved shortly thereafter and by 1857 the farm was rented to tenant farmer John Brawner. Although Brawner never owned the property, it is named after him as he was living there during the Second Battle of Manassas. The Brawners returned to house after the battle. The amount of damage done to the structure is unknown, but it likely sustained damage as it stood in the middle of the Confederate and Union firing lines, and John Brawner states in his Civil War claim that "balls were passing through the house." After the Brawners left, the property continued to be rented to tenant farmers. In 1895, Pendleton Douglas sold the property to William Davis. In 1904, William Davis remodeled the structure to the current "L" shaped building that stands on the battlefield today.

The theory believed is that the house that stood at the time of the battle was severely damaged during the firefight. Sometime after the War, the house was consolidated and rebuilt using portions of the original foundation. The rebuilt structure was 1½ stories with a gable roof.

There is no historical evidence to prove when or if the house was rebuilt. What is evident is that the extant house was built in at least two phases. While the exact date of construction is unknown, the first floor of the north block exhibits multiple signs of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction. The braced timber frame is constructed of hewn sills and posts. The studs and floor joists are hewn and pit sawn. All of the framing members are connected with mortise and tenon joinery. Hand

split lath as well as hand-planed trim can be found in the interior. Also, a large sampling of hand wrought nails were found.

The second floor of the north block and the south wing were constructed in the same manner. Both utilized balloon framing. This method of construction is consistent with the 1904 remodel by William Davis. At that time, 2/2 windows were installed throughout and the exterior was clad in horizontal lap siding, giving the structure a uniform appearance. In the interior, similar machine made moldings were used throughout, but were slightly more formal in the south wing.

**Sources:** Historic Structure Report 2002 Addendum, Historic Preservation Training Center, National Park Service, Frederick, MD.

**Historian:** Sharon Feeney, Intern, Historic Preservation Training Center, 2002.