ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTENSIVE EXCAVATION
Hassanamesit Woods Property
The Sarah Boston Farmstead, Grafton, Massachusetts

Submitted to:
The Hassanamesit Woods Management Committee
The Town of Grafton, MA
The Nipmuc Nation

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Cultural Resource Management Study No. 26
September 2008

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This final report summarizes the results of archaeological investigations conducted at the Sarah Boston farmstead during the summers of 2006 and 2007. These excavations were carried out in conjunction with the Hassanamesit Woods Management Committee, a collaborative effort between the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Town of Grafton, Massachusetts, and the Nipmuc Tribal Nation. Designed to provide educational and interpretive information concerning the Nipmuc history of the 203 acre parcel known today as Hassanamesit Woods and cognizant of the fact that the researchers are interpreting the Nipmuc people's past, the archaeological investigations sought to recover information concerning the lives and history of four historically documented households headed by a succession of Nipmuc women between 1728 and 1860. Previous archaeological and archival research (Bonner and Kiniry 2003, Gary 2005) confirmed that the 203 acre parcel purchased by the Town of Grafton in 2003 included the 1728 farmstead of Peter Muckamaug, so named for the husband of Sarah Robins, the daughter of 17th-century Nipmuc Sachem Petavit, also known as Robin. Petavit led the Nipmuc community of Hassanamesit, the second of John Eliot's seven "Christian Indian" communities established during the second half of the 17th century. Members of seven families of the Hassanamisco Band of the Nipmuc received parcels as part of the redistribution of Hassanamesit Lands by the English in 1728. One of these was given to Sarah Robins, however given English legal custom the parcel was named for her Narragansett husband Muckamaug.

As the documentary and archaeological results summarized in this report will demonstrate, there are rich material remains of at least two of the four documented households that we believe lived in what is today Hassanamesit Woods. The investigations conducted during the spring and summer of 2006 involved two phases of excavation. The first was supported by funds supplied by the Town of Grafton and

administered by the Hassanamesit Woods Committee. The second phase involved an archaeological field school supported by the University of Massachusetts Boston. Combined, these excavations unearthed 17, 2 × 2 meter excavation units, or a total of 68 square meters of site area. All of these units were located within the historic boundaries of the Sarah Boston farmstead in the area where previous investigations had identified the largest concentration of historic period material culture (Gary 2005:38-45). During the summer of 2007, 17 additional 2 × 2 meter excavation units were completed in the same site area doubling the area investigated to 136 square meters.

The large-scale, open area excavation employed during the 2006 and 2007 investigations unearthed the remains of what we believe to be the foundation and yard area of the Sarah Boston farmstead. These excavations were aided by a GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) survey of the homestead conducted in June of 2007 by John Steinberg of the Fiske Center. His results (discussed in Chapters 3 and 4) successfully located the remains of a cellar hole and foundation that we believe was either built or substantially renovated by Sarah Phillips during the late 18th century. This is based on several lines of evidence that will be discussed in the following chapters; however, here we would like to note two. First, the material culture recovered during the excavations consistently dated to period 1750 to 1830. Second, a metal tag etched with the letters "A.Ellis" was recovered from the area of the foundation. We believe this tag was made by the blacksmith Amos Ellis who supplied hardware to Sarah Phillips when the house was being renovated and possibly expanded in the early years of the 19th century. Recovered artifacts also demonstrate a much longer Native American occupation on the site spanning some 4,000 years. Additional documentary research carried out as part of the project, combined with that conducted by Oakfield Research (Tritsch 2006), has revealed a rich historical context that chronicles the entangled cultural and legal history of Hassanamesit and the four Nipmuc women who lived on the property.

Previous Archaeology

The archaeological investigations carried out in 2006 and 2007 built upon previous research carried out in 2003 and 2005. This work consisted of an archaeological reconnaissance carried out by Jennifer Bonner and Elizabeth Kinery (2003) and a phase

one, intensive survey with accompanying documentary research conducted in 2005 (Gary 2005). Combined, this research confirmed that portions of the 203 acre Robinson Parcel that the Town of Grafton purchased in 2003 did indeed contain significant cultural resources that included a record of Native American habitation of at least 4,000 years and possibly as long as 8,000 years. In particular it confirmed that at least one documented, Native household was contained within the bounds of the property, that of Peter Muckamaug and Sarah Robins. The 2005 report details the archaeological findings of the phase one survey, which consisted of a total of 107 test pits, 81 (75%) of which contained material culture (Gary 2005). Only small scatters of prehistoric material were encountered, while dense concentrations of historic material were recovered from this initial survey (Gary 2005). The findings of the 2003 season of survey will not be summarized in detail here; however, these findings are relevant to this progress report in that (following the recommendations of the 2005 report) the test units that yielded the highest density of artifacts served as the basis for the 2006 excavations.

The archaeological testing carried out in 2005 confirmed the presence of Native materials dating between 4,000 and 8,000 years old and a denser concentration dating to the period between 1750 and 1840. The highest concentrations of material culture were recovered from the Peter Muckamaug and John Eliot Church Parcels. This area coincides with the mapped location of an "Indian House" on historic maps. Material from this area is consistent with the documentary evidence of a late 18th- to mid-19th-century farmstead occupation by Sarah Boston (Gary 2005, Tritsch 2006). The 2006 field season concentrated on intensive excavations of the area adjacent to the test units with the highest concentration of artifacts, with the hope that further testing would identify and delineate sub-surface features related to the Sarah Boston farmstead, which documentary research has dated to 1795-1837, and any preceding or subsequent households.

Methods and Approach

The overall approach employed in our investigations of Hassanamesit Woods is consistent with that used by most historical archaeologists working in the world today (e.g. Hall and Silliman 2006; Hicks and Beaudry 2006). This entails combining a comprehensive, yet critical treatment of all documentary sources with a richly,

interdisciplinary archaeology that examines both the cultural and biological dimensions of past societies (Mrozowski 2006). In the specific case of Hassanamesit Woods it also involves making the present the starting point of our investigations, specifically the educational and interpretive needs of the Nipmuc Tribal Nation and the Town of Grafton. The rich collection of documentary sources that aided our investigations included primary and secondary sources as well as oral tradition and folklore. Our approach to these documentary sources is a critical one that seeks to understand the context in which these documents were produced as well as the biases inherent in what they purport to describe (see Chapter 2). Many of the documents that were central to our interpretations of the archaeological remains were generated as part of a legal system designed to record the governmental oversight of the Nipmuc peoples living on lands that were formerly part of the 17th-century community of Hassanamesit. As such, these documents provide information concerning both the activities in which the Nipmuc were involved, such as land sales and purchases, as well as the system of control these records were designed to document. Other sources, such as the writing of the Grafton History Club, provide important insights into the way the Nipmuc were perceived by their Anglo-American neighbors. The images conveyed in such writings are an important point of comparison with the portrait of Nipmuc life that emerges from the results of the archaeological investigations.

The field strategy employed during the 2006 and 2007 excavations is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three of the report. Of note here is that the large open area excavation strategy used during our investigations was designed to provide the spatial coverage necessary to explore household-level space. In this sense it stands in contrast to the type of testing strategy employed during the intensive survey of the property carried out in 2005. That strategy was designed to discover cultural resources rather than investigate them. The strategy employed during the summers of 2006 and 2007 took the opposite approach, examining in detail the social space linked to a specific set of households. In 2007 this strategy was also aided by the use of several remote sensing techniques, the most successful being Ground Penetrating Radar. This overall strategy of large scale, open area excavations aided by GPR proved successful as the results

presented in Chapter Four will outline; however, it was not designed to discover new areas outside that chosen for more intensive investigation.

The 2006 and 2007 Investigations

The investigations at Hassanamesit Woods were carried out under archaeological permit #2853 issued by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. They consisted of block area investigations of the Peter Muckamaug Parcel, which we are now more appropriately calling the Sarah Robins Parcel, as well as extensive, additional documentary research. Dr. Stephen Mrozowski and Dr. David Landon of the Fiske Center served as principle investigators for the project. Jack Gary, Heather Law, and Guido Pezzarossi served as Project Archaeologists. Heather Law was chiefly responsible for additional documentary research. All of the material culture recovered during the course of our investigations was processed at the laboratories of the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Items that required conservation have also been processed and are currently being curated at UMass.

There are several groups and individuals who have helped to make this project possible. We would like to thank the Tribal Council of the Nipmuc Nation for its support of the project and in particular Rae Gould, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. We would also like to thank all of the members of the Hassanamesit Woods Management Committee, especially Edward Hazzard, Jennifer Thomas, Eric Johnson and Jean Johnson who also volunteered her time in the field. A special thanks also goes to Harry Greene who volunteered on the site over the past two years and Mairead Helmes who volunteered in 2006. Most importantly we would to thank the Selectman of the Town of Grafton and the people of Grafton for their support in making this project a reality.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: FOUR GENERATIONS OF NIPMUC HISTORY

Hassanamesit Woods is now a tract of land set aside for hiking trails and outdoor education; however, it was once part of a large 10,000 acre area of land inhabited by the Hassanamisco band of Nipmuc. In 1654, "Hassanamesit" or "land of the small stones" (Doughton 1997) became the third of several praying towns founded by John Eliot to propagate the gospel. Beginning in 1646, John Eliot's "praying towns" were set up in outlier communities to preach Christianity and establish "proper" English style congregations where Natives were expected to abide by English land practices and gender roles and to accept their place in the colonial social order (O'Brien 1997:27). The establishment of "praying Indian towns" under the General Courts act of 1652 paved the way for Indians to be brought into the "civility" of the English system via religious conversion, cultural indoctrination and general control and surveillance (Mandell 1991).

As it was, women were at the center of Native daily life. The roles of women encompassed not only child rearing and the majority of food staple production, and Native women held key economic roles as sachems, shamans, and traders. Perhaps most importantly however, women were the spiritual connection between the people and the earth (Richmond and Den Ouden 2003:183). Because the women of Native society were so important, the missionaries' first step towards destabilizing the community was to reduce their status (Richmond and Den Ouden 2003:183). They did so by imposing European restrictions on daily life. For example, Native women were to be trained in "domestic" skills such as weaving and spinning. Their original roles as agriculturalists and leaders were suppressed, leaving the men to do the women's jobs (Richmond and Den Ouden 2003:184). This role reversal was meant to set the community back on its heels and leave them vulnerable to the social and cultural change the missionaries had planned.

Along with the breakdown of gender identities within a Native community, the missionaries also sought to isolate Native converts from their normal socio-economic networks (Tinker 2003). Eliot tried to enforce the rejection of Native lifeways, which meant, for the converts in the praying towns, total isolation from relatives in the home village. John Eliot also took the isolation tactic one step further by separating the group from the colonial towns (Tinker 2003). The praying town actually acted as a buffer between the more hostile Indian groups and the English settlers (Tinker 2003:27). By the mid 17th century, Eliot's seven praying towns served to increase the security of the colony and extend colonial English Law into the western interior (Kawashima 1969:44)

The success of these praying towns was variable, and Eliot's influence upon the people of such villages is still being researched. For example, when reporting on Hassanamesit, Daniel Gookin reports in 1674, "they have a meeting house for worship of God after the English fashion of building, and two or three other houses after the same mode; but they fancy not greatly to live in them" (Doughton 1997). This quote shows that while historic documentation may claim a simple story of successful conversion, everyday life for those at Hassanamesit may have remained more traditionally Nipmuc than they were willing to show to their English guardians.

Hassanamesit and Natick were the only praying towns reported to have had churches; they served as centers for instruction for teachers who would later go to other villages. At that time Hassanamesit was 4 miles square, consisting of about 8000 acres. Because of its westerly position relative to other praying towns, Hassanamesit was considered a gateway to the frontier and acted as a buffer, protecting the English from Native forces to the west (Tritsch 2006). During King Philip's War, Hassanamesit, like other praying villages, was targeted by both English and Native factions. Shortly after hostilities reached a head in the summer of 1675, several leading figures from Hassanamesit including Joseph and Sampson, sons of Hassanamesit leader Petavit, retreated to Marlborough for English protection (Doughton 1997). During that time lawmakers at Boston decided that all Native sympathizers with the English should be confined to Natick, Punquapog, Nashobah, Wamesit and Hassanamesit (Doughton 1997). Only two months later, the English sacked Hassanamesit and burned the crops while leaving other non-praying villages alone (Doughton 1997). Perhaps 200 villagers were

eventually taken from Hassanamesit by King Philip's troops over the summer and fall of 1675; others at Hassanamesit were evacuated to Deer Island by the English where they would face harsh winter conditions with little shelter or food (Doughton 1997). Those possibly left in the area faced death if they were caught traveling the countryside (Doughton 1997).

In the period after King Philip's War in New England (the late 17th century), the Massachusetts Bay Colony made it a priority to secure the colony against powerful Native groups that had rebelled (Kawashima 1969). The lasting impact of the war caused the tightening of policies concerning Native people and sought to isolate them within reservations in order to exercise increased surveillance and control over them (Kawashima 1969, Massachusetts Archives [hereafter M.A.] Series 230, Vol. 31:11). Although Hassanamesit persisted as a praying town on paper, it was supposedly emptied, along with all other praying villages except Natick. Archaeological and documentary research concerning another of the seven original "Praying Indian" communities, Magunkaquog, has demonstrated that it was not abandoned after King Philip's War. Hassanamesit is viewed as having been a larger and more cohesive community than Magunkaquog so it is not surprising that it survived the vagaries of the conflict (Mrozowski, Herbster, Brown and Priddy 2005). This does not mean that they were free to move as they wished. Many former Hassanamesit residents were confined to the settlement at Natick (Doughton 1997:12) and not permitted to move about the countryside, although they continued to claim rights to their former home.

The Native self-governance that characterized early Native plantations effectively came to an end with the 1694 act for the "Better Rule and Government of the Indians" that targeted the "flaw" of allowing Native people to rule themselves (Kawashima 1969). It assigned groups of three English settlers "guardianship" over Native plantations to "inspect and care" for the Native people (Kawashima 1969). Coupled with the 1702 law that prohibited Native people from selling their land without the consent of the General Court (Mandell 1991), the paternal guardian system was fully established. The newly appointed guardians were tasked with moral policing, such as keeping liquor from being sold or consumed by Native people, as well as with a host of other civil and judicial responsibilities (Kawashima 1969).

Although little documentation exists for Hassanamesit during this period, it is clear that as early as 1698, Hassanamisco families, including that of James the Printer, began returning to Hassanamesit (Doughton 1997). Residual hostilities kept many English from continuing their settlement of the frontier in the wake of King Philip's War (Tritsch 2006); however not all settlers were deterred. Within months of the passing of the 1702 law described above, the General Court began to receive petitions by white settlers to purchase, occupy and found a town within the lands of the Hassanamesit reservation (M.A. Series 230, Vol. 113). By the mid 1720s the General Court had declined several petitions to lease or buy Native lands within the plantation (M.A. Series 230, Vol. 113) however despite restrictions, 500 acres of the original 8,000 were sold to English settlers between 1654 and 1727. By 1724, those at Hassanamesit had been encroached upon to the extent that they filed a complaint with the General Court against the English settlers who were "boxing" all their timber (a process which involved cutting a large hole in the base of the tree to collect sap), effectively ruining the trees for timber harvest (Tritsch 2006). It seems that by the mid 1720s the land at Hassanamesit had come into high demand. As interest began to rise, the Court sent scouts to reassess the land at Hassanamesit. With favorable findings and recommendations for an English town, the Native people found themselves increasingly more entangled with colonial forces.

In 1727 the people of Hassanamesit were approached by the colony to sell their land. In return for the sale of their 7,500 acre property, the colony of Massachusetts established a Trusteeship under the purview of the General Court like those described in the 1694 legislation above, consisting of three men to oversee the affairs of the Hassanamisco Indians (M.A. Series 228, Vol. 113 :679). The court set aside 1,200 acres for the private ownership of seven known Hassanamesit families, all of whom could be traced back to leaders amongst Eliot's praying town community. These families were expected to embrace English styles of land ownership in severalty and "improve" their parcels in such a way that was satisfactory to the Trustees by clearing, fencing, or altering the natural landscape. One hundred acres were also set aside for the general use and improvement of the entire Native group. The proceeds from the sale of the remainder of the land, totaling 2500 pounds, were to remain in the hands of these Trustees, with the

understanding that the yearly interest of the total sum would be divided and allocated out to the seven Native families. The remaining 6,200 acres of Hassanamesit land were divided between 40 English families who settled in the area.

Legally, or at least in theory, the responsibility of the Guardians and the General Court was to secure Native land in the face of white encroachment (Kawashima 1969:50); however, the Court's arrangements, coupled with the readily available trust fund and an unfortunate economic climate, proved to be an unfortunate situation for the Hassanamisco people. Firstly, legislation stipulated the parceling out of land to male heads of household. This practice ran contrary to Hassanamesit and Nipmuc tradition and greatly reduced the amount of land to which the Hassanamesit families were entitled. By Doughton's (1997) accounts, Nipmuc women probably outnumbered Nipmuc men during this period by two to one (Tritsch 2006). Secondly, the General Court's instructions gave the Trustees a right to invest monies earned from land sales (Mandell 1996). Over time, this right would lead to corruption, embezzlement, faulty investments, and the eventual disappearance of much of the original fund (Mandell 1998). Furthermore, the rural economy of the mid 18th century caused the depletion of land value along with the increase in the price of consumer goods (DOI 2001). These conditions proved to be the undoing of several family inheritances throughout the years.

However, Native residents were not completely without recourse. It is interesting to note that although these trustees had much control over the lives of the Native people, the Nipmuc were able to engage the colonial legislation on their own by lodging complaints against the Guardians with the General Court (Kawashima 1969:47). These complaints were seriously considered at least part of the time, as some petitions resulted in the dismissal of Guardians and the appointment of replacements at Hassanamesit and elsewhere (Kawashima 1969:47, DOI 2001). It is not impractical to consider these complaints as dialectically hindering and enabling Native people, as they may have allowed for "better" Guardians to be appointed, but may have also precipitated the desire to exercise further suppression of the upstart and vocal Native dissenters.

One of the original seven parcels to be set aside for Hassanamisco families was the Peter Muckamaug and Sarah Robins property, the focus of our archaeological investigations over the past three years. The name used to identify the parcel in English

documents and maps reflects the male centered legal system that produced them. The Native reality was different. Land was passed down through the female line in Nipmuc society and that actuality is borne out by a history of female headed households on the property. Their story is one of accommodation, resistance and cultural continuity.

Sarah Robins

It was one such prominent Nipmuc family that first inhabited the "Muckamaug Parcel." Sarah Robins, the matriarch of the property, is thought to have been the daughter or granddaughter of one of the leaders in the praying village, the Sachem Petavit (whose alias was "Robin") (Gookin 1674:191, Earle Papers 1:1). In the first allotments of Hassanamesit property in 1728, Sarah Robins' entitlement was postponed to a later date due to her absence (Earle Papers, 1:2). She and her husband, Peter, who may have been Narragansett (Mandell 2004) or a Nipmuc from Natick, probably lived in or near Providence, Rhode Island during the late 17th-century hostilities in New England (Mandell 2004). Although it is unclear where they met, we do know that Sarah and Peter had a son, George, in 1714 (Records of Grafton, MA 1743-1948, Vital Records). They also had a daughter (birth date unknown) whose name was also Sarah. It is not clear whether they had been dividing their time between Hassanamesit, Providence and elsewhere, or if they had stayed in one place for the duration of King Philip's War and aftermath.

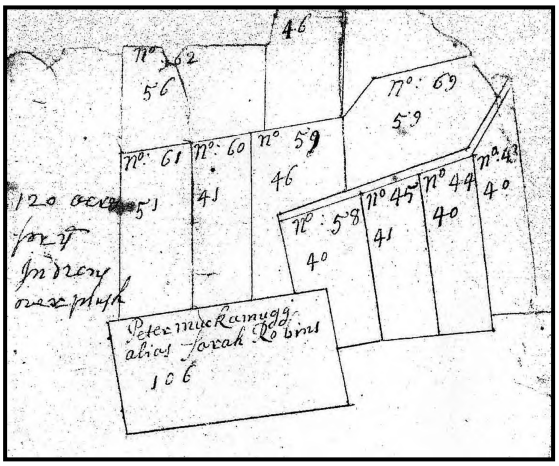

Figure 1: Mid 18th-century historic map of Muckamaug and other parcels.

When Peter and Sarah returned to Hassanamesit in 1729 to claim their plot of land (Earle Papers 1:2) they did not bring either of their children along with them. It seems that Sarah was apprenticed in Providence at the time (Mandell 1998), and little is known of George's history. Because of her position in the community, Sarah Robins and Peter were allotted about one hundred acres to "improve" on the eastern slope of Keith Hill. A

19th-century map shows the "Muckamaug right of way" connecting their property to the main route to Mendon over the crest of Keith Hill (19th-century survey map of Keith Hill with deed research, Author undetermined).

Upon Sarah Robins' return to Hassanamesit, colonial records show that she and her husband Peter became active members of the Native community. When Moses Printer (a Native neighbor at Hassanamesit) passed away in 1729, his children were orphaned. Although the older children were let out to the trustees as apprentices, Sarah and Peter agreed to look after one of his younger children (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1). Also in 1729, John Hazelton of Sutton agreed to lease two meadows that belonged to Sarah and Peter. He paid the Trustees, "for the use of the said Peter and his Squaw Twenty Shillings per Annum for four years" (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1) under the terms that the Trustees would make allowances should Peter care to "improve any part of the grass for his own use" (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1). This agreement, like many others made at the same time with other Native proprietors at Hassanamesit, included the installation of a "good four rail fence" which, at the end of the four-year term, would be left in good condition for the future use of the owner. Interestingly, the same John Hazelton proposed a similar deal with Christian Misco for the use of her meadow and orchard yard. He proposed to fence the area, care for the apple trees, and yield to Misco's right to any apples, "as she shall have occasion to use for her own eating" (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1). He also agreed with the Trustees to apprentice Moses Printer's daughter Elizabeth until her 18th birthday. In return for her care, Hazelton agreed, "to teach [Elizabeth] to Read English and to Learn her the Catechism" (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1).

This tradition of caretaking, whether of land, or of people, has a long history at Hassanamesit and indeed throughout Colonial New England. It reflects the colonial belief that the Native people could not take care of themselves or their land in a "proper" way. This will be discussed below in more detail; however, at this time it is of interest to note the language that was used to record these various transactions. In the records kept of these proposals by the Trustees, the deals described above were "Consented to and Concluded on between the Trustees and the Several Patrons before named respectively" (Earle Papers: Octavo Vol. 1). This wording is problematic because the word "patron"

has many definitions. A "patron," by definition, can be a "proprietor," a "customer," or simply a "supporter of a cause." It could mean that the *Native proprietors* (the "patrons") had consented to the agreement, or it could mean the *English caretakers* (the "patrons") had made the agreement with the Trustees, or it could mean that all parties involved (the "patrons") had agreed. Because the wording is so ambiguous, and because there are no records of any contracts or leases being signed by any of the parties involved, it may be impossible to ever know if the Muckamaugs and the other Native landowners ever consented to the use of their land.

Sarah Robins and her husband Peter lived on their parcel together until Peter's death in 1740 (M.A. Series 228, Vol 31:294). At some point after Peter's death, probably around 1744, young Sarah returned from Providence to help care for her elderly mother (Mandell 1998). Sarah Robins continued however to collect her interest independently, appearing on several accounts of the Trustees with her mark as "Sarah Muckamaug." By 1746 Sarah Robins had met and married Thomas English. Very little is known about English; it is unclear where Sarah met her new husband. From then until her death in 1748/9 she appeared frequently on the books as "Sarah Robins alias English."

Before she died, Sarah Robins and her fellow community members once again petitioned the General Court in Boston in 1744. To the dissatisfaction of the Native Propietors, it seems that the Trustees were asking the Indians to travel to the Trustees to get their money. The petitioners asked with deference for new Trustees, claiming, "that one of the Honorable Trustees (in the affair of our money) is Dishonest from said Trust and the other two are desirous to be dismissed" (M.A. Series 228, Vol 31:476). They begged further that the new Trustees be, "nearor to us" so that they "may come at [their] money without such Great expence of Time and Travel" (M.A. Series 228, Vol 31:476). Finally they informed the General Court that they had not received their interest money "all most two years last past by which means [they] have ben great sufferers" (M.A. Series 228, Vol 31:476). For elderly community members like Sarah Robins, it seems likely that a long journey to collect her income would have been taxing and even detrimental to her health. This collective act by the Hassanamesit community shows solidarity among its members as well as a continued working knowledge of colonial law

and their recourse within the system. The resolve was later passed by the General Court and new Trustees were appointed (M.A. Series 228, Vol. 31:476).

By the time of this petition in 1748, four out of the seven petitioners were women. This statistic speaks to the continuing trend of absence of Native men.

Sarah Muckamaug

Sarah and Peter's daughter, Sarah Muckamaug, had a decidedly different life from her parents. As a young adult in Providence in the early to mid 18th century, Sarah had little contact with her parents, and certainly, being indentured at a young age, probably had little chance to return to Hassanamesit for visits. We know that she worked for the prominent Brown family as a servant. We also know that she had several children with an African American man named Aaron Whipple. Whipple belonged to Colonel Joseph Whipple of Providence as his slave (Mandell 1998). They were reportedly married in the home of William Page around 1728; however, town records show no such marriage in Providence. Although their marriage was disputed, it is clear that the two had several children. It is recorded that Sarah's daughters Rhoda and Abigail and her son Abraham were indentured to the Brown family as well (Earle Papers 1:4). The two also had a son, Joseph, born in Providence, with the help of a midwife named Hallelujah Olney (Earle Papers 1:4). Sarah and Aaron reportedly had their differences and parted as a result of her return to Hassanamesit. It is recorded that Sarah left Providence, possibly with her baby Joseph, to return to her mother.

Along her route to Hassanamesit, she stopped at the Wilkinson Farm in Smithfield, Rhode Island where Mary Wilkinson attested that she asked to build a "hut" which she then lived in "for some time" (Earle Papers 1:4). It seems that although Aaron visited Sarah at the Wilkinson's farm, he did not live there with her (Earle Papers 1:4). Israel Wilkinson remembered Aaron Whipple visiting Sarah and "having some difference with her" and Mary also understood that Aaron had come and quarreled with Sarah, whereupon Sarah had come to Mrs. Wilkinson, "complaining of his abuse to her"(Earle Papers 1:4). Mary Wilkinson further recalled a time when she came upon a very upset Sarah. Crying, Sarah confided in Mrs. Wilkinson that Aaron, "refused to live with me

any more neither would he help to maintain the children" (Earle Papers 1:4). Mrs. Wilkinson remembered that Sarah had said "He promised to do well by me…but he would not" (Earle Papers 1:4). Sarah went on to tell Mary Wilkinson that Aaron "further sayeth that he had got another Squaw he lov'd better" (Earle Papers 1:4).

This record of Aaron Whipple and Sarah Muckamaug's relationship provides a rare glimpse into the life of this young Indian woman. It speaks to her independence and fortitude, as well as her connection to her family and Native traditions. Despite her geographical distance from Hassanamesit, Sarah Muckamaug knew how to build a semi-temporary shelter. She also demonstrated knowledge of her familial obligations. Perhaps her mother had written her and asked her to return home to claim her land rights, perhaps she felt an obligation to care for her mother in her old age, or maybe she needed to return home for her own well-being and support. Regardless of her reasons for returning home, it is important to note that without the foresight of Sarah Muckamaug, Sarah Robins' land may have been swallowed up by other surrounding parcels and the family legacy may have been forever lost.

Sarah Muckamaug and perhaps baby Joseph returned to Hassanamesit around 1741 (Mandell 1998). It is not known whether she lived with her mother, or had somewhere else to stay; however, within three years of her return to Hassanamesit, Sarah Muckamaug had met and had one child with African-American Fortune Burnee (Mandell 1998:97). In the family tradition, Sarah Muckamaug named this child Sarah. With this name would come the responsibility to uphold the family land. Sarah, thusly named for her power of inheritance, exemplifies Nipmuc matrilineal "willing" of land proprietorship and the powerful connection between these Native women's identities and their land. In considering Sarah Muckamaug's choice of names for her other daughters, it is interesting to note that it was not her first-born girl, but her last, the only child born on the family land, who received the honored name.

In 1749 Sarah Robins died and left her daughter the family property. That same year, Sarah Muckamaug petitioned the General Court for herself and her husband, asking for permission to sell some family land that was "distant and remote from the homestead," a "full three miles" (M.A Series 228, Vol. 31:694). She hoped to fetch 200 pounds for the sale, with which she and Fortune wanted to build "a house on the

homestead" and maybe even buy "a cow or two"(M.A. Series 228, Vol. 31:694). The petition was accepted and the land was sold in two pieces one year later. Hezekiah Ward bought 46 acres of Sarah's land and Abraham Temple bought 30 acres. A portion of the money Hezekiah Ward paid the Trustees for the land was then given back to him for building a new house for Sarah and Fortune, and for buying a gown for Sarah (M.A. Series 228, Vol. 32:247).

The circumstances surrounding Sarah Muckamaug's death in 1751 illustrate a common problem among Native landholders in the 18th century. As Native people across New England began owning land privately, in the English style, land was also becoming scarce. English settlers began targeting Indian proprietors in an effort to acquire their land. Strategies included threatening, trickery, crop sabotage, and perhaps most often, placing Native people in situations where they became financially indebted (O'Brien 1997). There were several ways in which the English would indebt the Indians to them including, but certainly not limited to, imposing fines and providing services for Native people. Often English neighbors would promise to educate or provide medical care for Native people and expect repayment. The popularity of "caretaking" especially for medical expenses rose dramatically during the mid 18th century (O'Brien 1997). In this period, epidemics and disease plagued New England's communities. Payment for funeral expenses also made up the pleas of many English petitions. When those in debt could not pay, all assets were liquidated, often resulting in the loss of large amounts of land (O'Brien 1997). These occurrences went unchecked during the colonial period and were responsible for the loss of countless Native properties.

In the case of Sarah Muckamaug, Hezekiah Ward, the same neighbor who had just purchased 46 acres of Sarah's land and helped build her house, took care of Sarah in her last sickness. She was placed in his care by the Selectmen of the Town of Grafton, despite the fact that she had her own house and her husband to care for her. At this point in our research it is not clear why she was relocated by the town. Upon Sarah's death, Ward and the town asked the state for re-imbursement for her care knowing full well that protocol stipulated the further liquidation of Sarah's assets to repay her debt (O'Brien 1997:174). With no other way in which to repay him, Fortune Burnee was forced to sell

more of the family's lands to pay for his wife's "long sickness" (M.A. 32:592) and her burial.

Sarah Burnee and Joseph Aaron

At the time of Sarah Muckamaug's death in 1751, young Sarah, then aged 7, was too young to claim her inheritance. It seems that if Joseph had returned to Hassanamesit with Sarah Muckamaug, it was at this time that he was sent back to Providence to make his own way as a servant (Earle Papers 1:4). This being the case, it would be 17 years before young Sarah would again see her older half-brother.

After her mother's death, Sarah Burnee was in the care of her father Fortune Burnee and a network of Native community members. Documentation tells of Sarah's father Fortune Burnee accepting payment for interest on the land in the name of his daughter. Sarah Burnee apparently grew up in her late mother's new house as the sole inheritor of the remainder of the property (Mandell 1998:81). Six years after Sarah Muckamaug's death, Fortune Burnee married another woman from the Hassanamesit community, Abigail Printer. For several years, Fortune Burnee collected interest for his late wife Sarah, his present wife Abigail, and his daughter Sarah. Finally in 1765 at the age of 21, Sarah Burnee declared her independent status and sole ownership of what remained of her family's land (Mandell 1998:81, Earle Papers 1:3).

After serving as an apprentice in Providence since the age of 12 or 13 (Earle Papers 1:4), Sarah's half brother Joseph Aaron arrived in Grafton from Providence in 1768. With presumed childhood ties to his Hassanamisco community and family, Joseph was welcomed back and the siblings lived together on the Muckamaug farm (Mandell 1998:82). One year after Joseph's arrival, Sarah married, appearing as "Sarah Prince" in the accounts of the Trustees (Earle Papers 1:3). Sarah and her new husband, "Prince Dam," an African American man from Woodstock, Connecticut, had been married in Smithfield, Rhode Island by justice of the peace, Stephen Arnold (Earle Papers 1:4).

Shortly after the arrival of Joseph and Prince Dam, relations in Sarah's household began to sour. In 1771 Aaron attempted to divide the 154 acre property, claiming (in keeping with the Anglo-American values with which he had been raised by his master)

that his working of the land entitled him to ownership (Earle Papers 1:4). The Trustees and the General Court then initiated an investigation into Aaron's claims as Sarah Muckamaug's son. Depositions were taken from several members of the Providence community attesting to Joseph Aaron's relationship to Sarah Muckamaug and Muckamaug's relations with Aaron Whipple. It was eventually decided that Joseph was in fact Sarah Muckamaug's son. It seems that this ruling threatened to sever Sarah's property. Prince Dam then initiated a further investigation into the legitimacy of Joseph Aaron's birth. Several depositions requested by Prince Dam attest that Sarah Muckamaug and Aaron Whipple were in fact never married; however, another document claims the two were married in the home of William and Mary Page (Earle Papers 1:4). The General Court eventually approved the equal division of the family parcel between Joseph Aaron and Sarah Burnee.

This division of land seems to have favored Sarah however, leaving her the house, "the olde Barne" and several of the rye and wheat fields that Joseph had worked during his stay with Sarah (Earle Papers 1:4). The court ordered that Joseph deliver to Sarah one quarter of the rye each year after it had been, "Thrashed and cleaned up" (Earle Papers 1:5), and further ordered that Joseph "move oute of the House in three monthes" from June 4th, 1771 (Earle Papers 1:5).

Being very upset by the division, Joseph Aaron enlisted the help of his former "master," David Daniels. Interestingly, Daniels and neighbor Hezekiah Ward co-signed a document protesting the "unfair" division of lands. Together they claimed, "the Committee [had] overlooked the directions given in the affair" (Earle Papers 1:4). They claimed that Sarah had been given the house and "by far the best part of the present profits," while, "Joseph (who being the Eldest and the Son too)" had never benefited from the income of the estate and was being denied the fruits of his recent labor on the land (Earle Papers 1:4). Their argument revolved around the fact that because Joseph "had been at the sole cost of raising whatever grew there" he was entitled to claim the better portion of the land (Earle Papers 1:4).

This is a very interesting example of colonial tension in which the colonized appropriate the laws of the colonizer to further their own personal gain. It also sets up a very interesting point of departure in which Native men and Native women are set against

each other and new concepts of cultural practice are injected into the situation. The lawsuit that ensued because of Joseph and Sarah's differences left a trail of complaints and testimonies that attest to the struggle between Joseph and Sarah's contradicting ideas of land rights and entitlement. This struggle represents a clash between Anglo-American values of ownership and power and those practiced among community members at Hassanamesit.

On June 3rd of 1771, Timothy Paine suggested the two siblings work out their differences and make the best of the land while they had it. It seems the depositions had revealed two more children, those of Sarah Muckamaug's deceased daughter Abigail, who were entitled to their portions of the land as well, should they request it (Earle Papers 1:4). The very next day Joseph and Sarah signed the deeds agreeing to the initial arrangement. After that day they appeared separately in the accounts of the Trustees, each collecting their own share of the family's interest. Joseph Aaron went on to serve in the Revolutionary War, possibly in the Navy (Forbes 1889, Earle Papers 1:5, Earle Papers 1:4) and returned to Grafton where he became a trusted and respected man in the Native Community. In an unfortunate turn of events, Joseph and his wife Deborah could not maintain the land they had inherited, nor had they any children who could inherit the property. By the time of Joseph's death in 1808, his portion of the family parcel had been completely sold, reducing the family landholdings by half (Earle Papers 1:5).

The Revolutionary War period marked a time of general discontentment at Hassanamisco. In 1776, acting on a petition from the Native community, the General Court found that absentee Trustee Artemus Ward had lately been employed in the "Continental Service" while the other two entrusted Guardians had "neglected to relieve these Indians" (Earle Papers 1:1). As such, new Guardians were then appointed. In 1785, the community at Hassanamesit was again unhappy with the service entrusted to their supposed Guardians. Together, Sarah Burnee, her father Fortune Burnee, and Sarah's half brother Joseph Aaron, along with three other Native community members petitioned the General Court in Boston for a review of the accounts of the Trustees (Earle Papers 1:5). They claimed that over the past six or seven years they had "not received one quarter part of [their] interest so due to [them]" (Earle Papers 1:5). A general review of the books was ordered on their behalf; however, there is no indication that the records

were ever actually presented at Court (Earle Papers 1:1). In 1788 the matter was re-opened, and the Court found that "said Trustees have done as well in all respects by the said Indians as the nature of the matter would admit of" (Earle Papers 1:1). Although that investigation was inconclusive, John Milton Earle later reported in his findings that by 1841 over 1,300 dollars of the trust fund had been lost, stolen, or otherwise misspent during the years in which the Trustees were responsible for the Hassanamisco trust fund (Earle Report 1861:96).

Sarah's first marriage to Prince Dam produced no children and it is not clear what became of Prince Dam. In 1786 Sarah Burnee remarried, this time to a man named Boston Phillips. Boston Phillips was a legend in some local lore as being "a real full blooded Indian" claiming descent from "the Great King Philip" (Tritsch 2006). Other accounts describe Boston Phillips as a former slave (Forbes 1889:177); however neither of these claims is further supported by archival research to this date. Sarah and Boston had two children, Ben and Sarah, before Phillips died in 1798 (Mandell 1998). This Sarah would come to be called "Sarah Boston." It is not clear when the children were born. If they were born during Sarah's ten year marriage, Sarah would have been in her early 40s (Tritsch 2006). It is quite possible that Sarah and Boston had been together for some time before their marriage.

In November of 1795, Sarah and Boston built or substantially repaired the house in which they were living. Receipts detail 180 feet of pine boards, 219 feet of clapboards, nails, hinges, spikes and other services rendered (M.A.C. Guardians of the Indians, Accounts and Correspondences 47). Unfortunately, Fortune Burnee's death in 1796 and Boston Phillips' death in 1798 put Sarah in a difficult economic situation. Of note is the fact that Boston Phillips was not forced into the care of neighbors as Sarah Muckamaug had been. Instead, Sarah was made to shoulder the financial burden of her husband's death unaided. With two young children to care for and only her interest money as income, Sarah Burnee was forced to sell more of her land in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to cover her debt. In 1797 Sarah petitioned to sell 20 acres in the southwest of the property to pay for repairs to her house and the support of her children (Earle Papers 1:5). As a result, she sold a portion of land the next year to Nathaniel Batcheller and another bit of her meadow to Silas Fay (Earle Papers, Octavo Volume 1).

As was customary, she did not receive that money; rather the Trustees took the money, paid her debt, and gave her one year's interest on the sale, keeping the rest in trust. The land sold for $286; however, Sarah only collected around $4.20 per year thereafter as a result of the sale (Earle Papers 1:3). Sarah continued to count on her English neighbors to help repair her house, lend her money, or buy everyday household needs. Whenever the Trustees ran out of money with which to reimburse her expenditures, Sarah would sell more of her land. Although this trend seemed to have little relief for Sarah, it abated slightly with the maturation of her children, Sarah and Ben.

Sarah and Ben Boston

The remaining parcel of the family's original property passed to Sarah "Boston" Philips. "Sarah Boston," as she was apparently locally known, is renowned in local histories as the "last of the Nipmucs" and the "last descendant of King Philip," presumably because of her father's ancestry. She was the last matriarch of her family's plot on Keith Hill. Her history is unique in that her presence in the official archive is perhaps the weakest. In the Victorian memoirs, however, her presence and recollections of her are remarkable. It seems that Sarah made quite an impression on the town of Grafton, so much so that stories about her survived several generations to be written in the Victorian era and later. Local and published documents alike describe Sarah, retelling anecdotes, and describing her house, her physique, even her cooking. While these documents are invaluable for the project, the context in which these various histories were written must be taken into consideration. Just as *this* history will someday be considered a product of its day, so must earlier recollections of Sarah Boston be viewed in the same manner.

With that said, Sarah's personality comes into sharp relief when the body of memories is examined as a whole. Sarah Boston was a free spirit and in some cases a staunch resistor to the colonial values and restrictions imposed upon her. She stood out to her contemporaries and continues to be remarkable today.

As children, Sarah and her brother Ben lived with her mother, Sarah Burnee Phillips, in their newly renovated home on Keith Hill. Local histories recall Sarah in her

youth swimming competently in "the deeper part of Misco Brook" (Tritsch 2006). Several accounts also mention that Sarah learned to practice herbal medicine from her mother. Her brother was known for his fishing abilities (Tritsch 2006). It is possible that as Sarah and her brother became older, they were able to help their mother with debt and everyday expenses. Sarah was known locally to sell baskets throughout the region, help farmers with their work, and even tell fortunes to young people (Forbes 1889). As Sarah matured, it seems that she gained quite a large stature, possibly reaching 6 feet and weighing nearly 300 pounds (Warren 1922:10). This may be an exaggeration. Laura Thatcher Ulrich (2001) makes a point worth quoting at length with regard to the reputations of women who walked the countryside, selling their wares:

> Stories about Indian basket makers describe women who defied white notions of appropriate gender behavior. They were towering figures, outsized in manner if not in body, and impossible to ignore. Molly Hatchet was six feet tall. Lydia Francis carried a large butcher's knife under her shawl and always traveled with 'a big brindle dog, as ugly as his mistress.' Tuggie Bannocks, who 'was as much Negro as Indian and was reputed to be a witch,' had a 'full set of double teeth all the way round, and an absolute refusal ever to sit on a chair, sofa, stool, or anything that was intended to be sat upon.' In white eyes, these women often possessed male attributes." (Ulrich 2001: 355)

Sarah Boston was no exception to this phenomenon; she was described in local accounts as being "gigantic," wearing men's clothing and being capable of "men's work" (Forbes 1889). Her ability to maintain a seasonally mobile lifestyle in order to sustain herself was unique among women of the time, as traveling was considered to be men's business.

Although it is recorded that Sarah sometimes took her pay in hard cider, her labors obviously helped relieve the family's burden in other ways as well. One anecdote in the local histories tells of Sarah calling in a favor from Mr. Batcheller, the local storeowner, and her neighbor. In repayment for helping to quickly unload a cart of hay before an impending storm, Sarah not only took a helping of cider, she helped herself to a bolt of cloth at the store, calling behind her to Mr. Batcheller, "you remember that load of

hay?" (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:28). This story is noteworthy because it shows that although Sarah may not have been working for money, at times she was able to negotiate within the local market, and bend accepted gender roles to acquire what she needed. In this way she was able to avoid selling even more of her family's property.

Sometime in Sarah and Ben's early adulthood, after the death of their mother, Ben and Sarah split the family land once again, leaving Sarah the house and setting apart a separate parcel for Ben to "improve" (Earle Papers 1:5). Sometime thereafter, Ben's whereabouts became somewhat of a mystery. Legend tells that Ben "thought he killed Bets Hendricks when he knocked her down, so he ran away" (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:7). The story goes, however, that Bets Hendricks and Ben Boston were both drunk at the time, and she had "lain for dead till she recovered consciousness and then was as well as ever" (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:7). Unfortunately, it seems that Ben never returned to Hassanamesit while the land was still owned by the family. A fund was left for him when the last of the land was sold, should he ever return (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:7).

Sarah took good care of the homestead. She was known for her exceptional garden, which she took great care in maintaining (Forbes 1889:179). She also owned a handsome cherry tree that grew right by her house. One summer she became fed up with the local boys who would raid the tree. It is said that Sarah chopped down the tree to spite the troublemakers. Perhaps she did not like the idea of the children trespassing. Perhaps she was concerned that the tree would make her land even more attractive to her neighbors. Nevertheless, Sarah cut the tree in its prime, claiming that it shaded the house to the extent that, "she couldn't read her bible" (Forbes 1889:179). In spite of this anecdote, Sarah was also known for her hospitality. An elderly community member recalled a day when he and his mother had visited Sarah's house for tea. They had "hoe cake and pickerel, cooked by the open fire place, and nothing ever tasted better" (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:6). Another local memory describes Sarah's house in substantial detail, accompanied by the following sketch:

> Low and little, black and old and faced Kittville. The East door above at the end of front. In the middle of the room on the opposite side as one entered was the big chimney with all the things around it, no cupboard, cooking utensils, stools, no chairs. Small loft accessible by ladder. Indians just slept around. Set the table

in the middle. Windows faced out toward the valley, and were little. When the door was shut it was quite dark." (Fiske #11, [n.d.]:6)

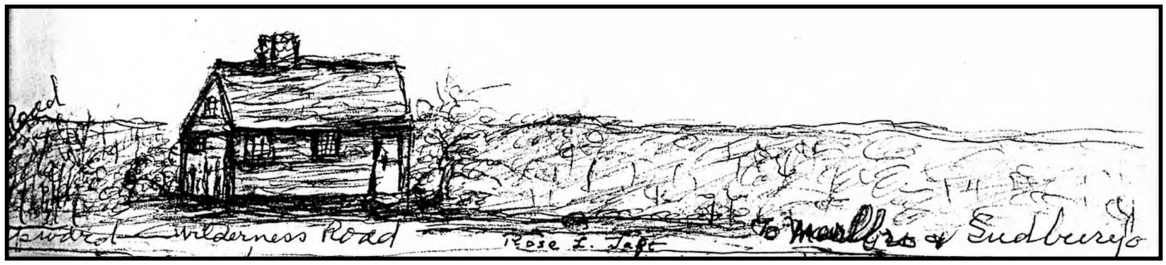

Figure 2: Sketch of Sarah Boston's house from Fiske local history (Fiske #11, [n.d.]:6).

Although this description of Sarah's house deserves careful scrutiny, especially in the archaeological record, the orientation and layout could prove to be helpful for future excavations of the house foundation.

It seems that Sarah Boston petitioned to sell portions of her land three times over the course of her life. It was only after she began to have children that she began having more difficulty supporting herself. Her two boys, Stephen and Joseph, were born in 1815 and 1813 respectively, her daughter, Sarah Mary was born in 1818 (Tritsch 2006). The first time, in 1815, she needed to repair the house (Earle Papers 1:5). The second time, in 1816, the sale was for the repayment of her debts incurred "for her support" (Earle Papers 1:5), and the third petition, filed in 1821, was co-written by an Otis Newman. It asked permission to sell an unspecified amount of land for "their support" (Earle Papers 1:5). Otis Newman is also in the accounts of the trustees as a Native Land proprietor; however, it is unclear how the two are connected. Perhaps Otis is the father of Stephen, Joseph and/or Sarah Mary. It does not seem as though the two were married, at least not formally. Not much is known of Sarah Boston's children. Her daughter Sarah Mary was sent to work in Worcester at an early age, she married Gilbert Walker, a well known man of Worcester who owned a barber shop (Fiske #11 [n.d.]:7).

From time to time Sarah Boston's name appears in the account books, collecting her dues, appealing for sundry items or medical expenses. At the time of Sarah Boston's death in 1837, her family's original 106-acre plot had been whittled down over the years to less than 20 acres. Stephen collected compensation for caring for her in her last sickness (Earle Papers 1:1). By the time of her death in 1837 she had accumulated a

large amount of debt which was passed down to her daughter along with the remaining parcel of land. Sarah Mary held onto the land for almost twenty years after her mother's death, but in 1850 she petitioned through the trustees to sell the final twenty acres of land to pay her own debts and those left by her mother (Earle Papers 1:5).

After Sarah Boston, two more generations of Sarahs manifested this persistent matrilineal naming tradition, although the land rights that came with the name were lost. The female control of this Nipmuc land into the 1850s is certainly worthy of note, however the result is sadly familiar. Sarah Mary sold what remained of the land held by her family in 1854, ending the female Nipmuc control and occupation of the parcel. Interestingly, the documentation relating to Sarah Mary and her daughter, Sarah Ellen dries up at this point, as the colonial scrutiny abated once no more land was held. Having been displaced from the original land parcel meted out in 1728, Sarah's line disappears from the Grafton, Worcester and greater Massachusetts records.

CHAPTER THREE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD METHODS

The field strategy employed during the 2006 archaeological field work at Hassanamesit Woods was predicated on the results of two previous phases of research on the 203 acre parcel formerly known as the Robinson property. The first of these consisted of an archaeological reconnaissance with accompanying documentary research (Bonner and Kiniry 2003). The second involved a phase one survey that was designed to identify areas of significant cultural resources on the property, but in particular the remains of the 17th century Nipmuc community of Hassanamissico (Gary 2005). The 2005 report details the archaeological findings of the survey which involved the excavation of a total of 107, 50 x 50 centimeter test pits, 81 (75%) of which contained material culture, the majority of which dated to period circa 1750-1880 (Gary 2005). Only small scatters of prehistoric material were encountered, while dense concentrations of historic material were recovered from an area that documentary and cartographic sources suggested could be the farmstead of Sarah Boston (Gary 2005, Tritsch 2006). This interpretation was further buttressed by landscape features including a stone-lined well, but most notably stone walls that appear to be associated with and bound the area of the highest concentration of material culture

The 2006 field season was itself divided into two phases. The first of these was carried out during May of 2006 by a team of staff and graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Massachusetts' Fiske Center for Archaeological Research. This group established the grid system that was to be used in the project and laid out a series of 2 x 2 meter excavation units within a system of 10 meter square blocks. This group also commenced excavations during the month of May. In June of 2006 the second phase of the excavations began as part of an archaeological field school offered by the University of Massachusetts Boston. The 2007 field season consisted of a field school and continued the sampling strategy and excavations begun over the 2006 season.

All phases of excavations concentrated on the area of the site that had contained dense areas of material culture (Fig. 3) with the hope that further testing would identify and delineate sub-surface features related to the Sarah Boston farmstead, which documentary research has dated to 1795-1837, as well as any preceding or subsequent occupations. The 2006 excavations commenced with the laying out of a 100 square meter grid over the area containing the highest artifact concentration and thought to be the core domestic area of the farmstead. This larger grid was then subdivided into 10 meter square blocks, which were assigned an identifying letter. The division of these blocks and their subsequent excavation proceeded sequentially; thus the blocks A, B, and C were divided out and excavated before blocks D, E, and F, G and H. Each of the 10 square meter blocks were further subdivided into 2 × 2 meter excavation units, which were identified by numbers, assigned to them in increasing order from top left to bottom right (Fig. 4). The larger 10 meter square units were then sampled using these smaller 2 square meter units. The choice of 2 × 2 meter units was predicated on our desire to expose subsurface features and architectural remains such as foundations as well as making it easier to trace patterns of depositional activity (such as chimney falls, disturbed foundations and activity areas such as yards). Furthermore, the 2 meter square unit represents a manageable excavation unit for two excavators to complete in reasonable time (1-2 weeks, depending on depth) due to the brief field season undertaken at Grafton of a little over a month.

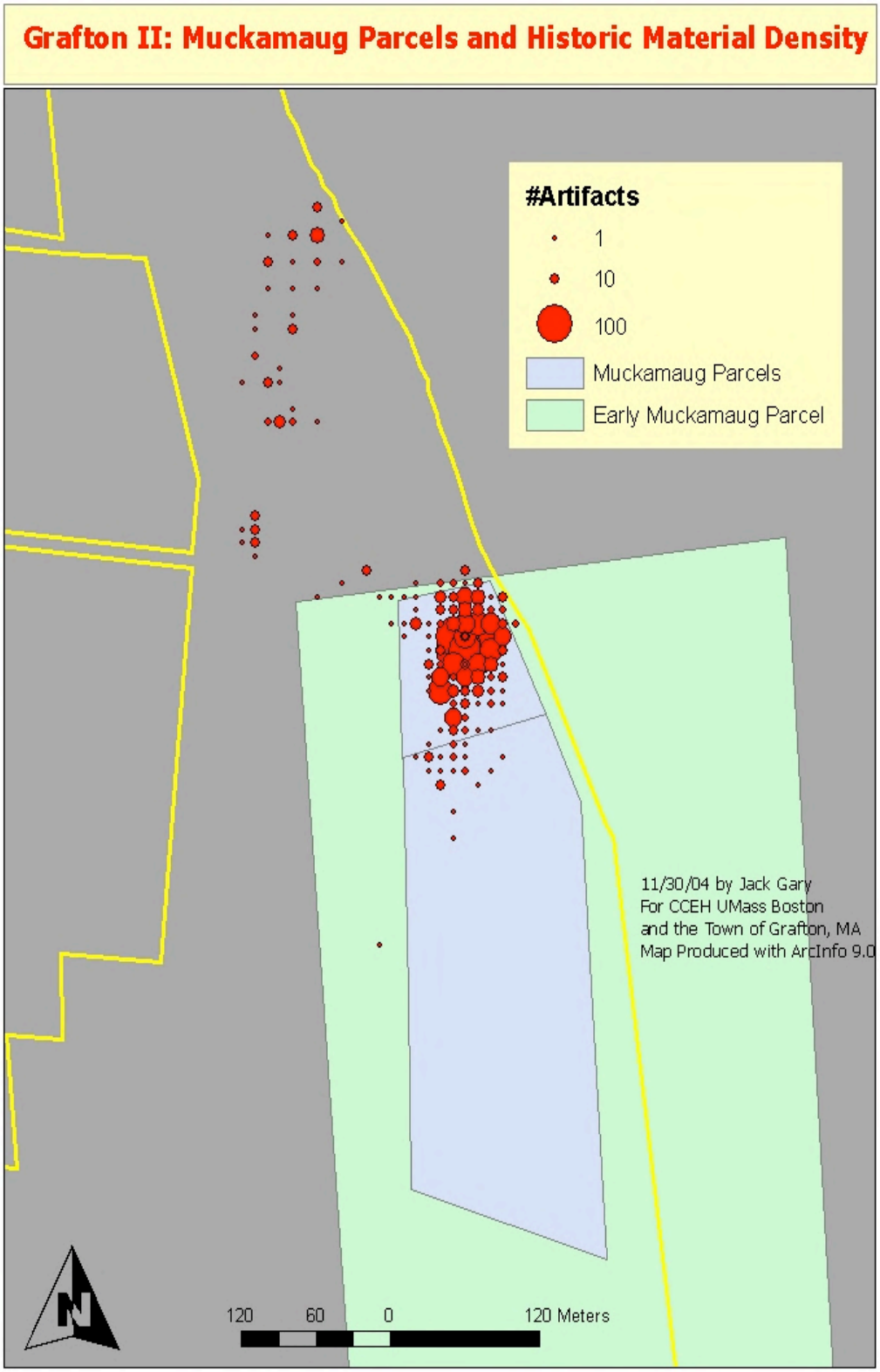

Figure 3: Map of areas of heaviest artifact density.

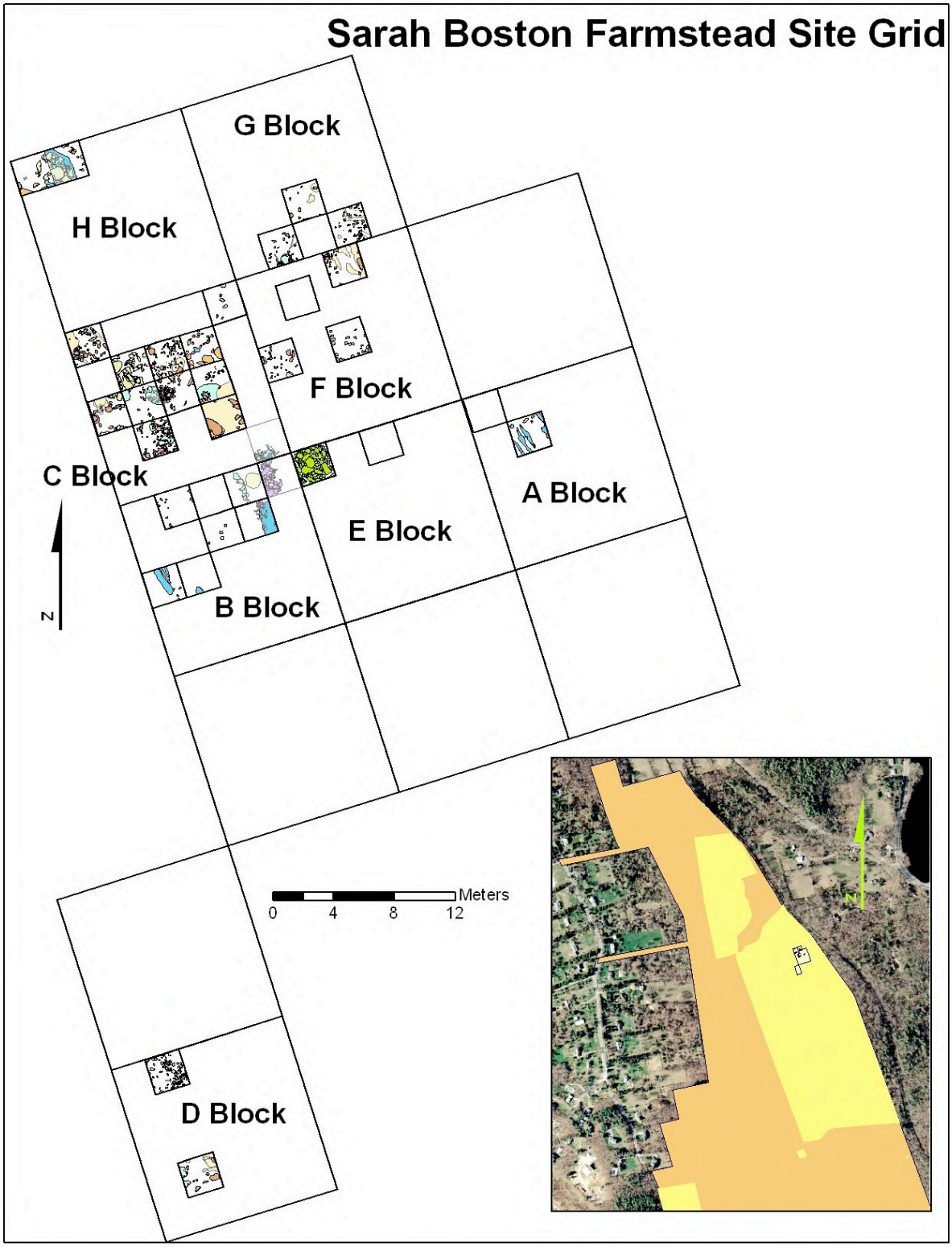

Figure 4: The site GIS showing the entire grid and all excavated units within the larger 10 × 10 meter blocks.

The units were excavated stratigraphically, with each stratum excavated using 10 cm arbitrary levels. The benefit of stratigraphic excavation lies in the ability to follow the stratum as they have been deposited over time, thus allowing for greater control in distinguishing individual depositional events and accurately recording their chronological sequence. The purpose of excavating the individual strata in 10 cm arbitrary levels is that it allows for tighter control of the provenience of artifacts within each stratum. For example, within any one stratum there may exist subtle substrata that are difficult to detect in the field. By excavating this stratum in 10 cm arbitrary levels, greater control is achieved and thus compensates for subtle variations in soil composition or depositional events present within the stratum. Moreover, when analyzing and interpreting material recovered from a stratum, arbitrary levels allow for greater control of the provenience of artifacts within the stratum, enabling the archaeologists to detect subtle patterns of artifact depositional and concentration that may be missed if arbitrary levels are not used (Mrozowski, Hayes, Trigg, Gary, Landon and Piechota 2007).

In order to identify and keep track of the stratum and levels (and record the provenience of the artifacts they contain) within the units, each 10 cm level excavated is assigned a unique context number that distinguishes it from the other stratums and layers. New context numbers were also assigned to changes in strata and not solely arbitrary ones. For example, if in the course of excavating Stratum A, Arbitrary Level 3, one encounters an underlying stratum B, the context number currently assigned to Level 3 is closed, and a new context number was assigned for Stratum B, Arbitrary Level 3. Thus stratigraphic control is maintained, while continuing the arbitrary level method that (as discussed above) allows for tighter provenience control.

Excavation proceeded until encountering sterile subsoil, which is characterized by a lack of material culture and/or features and is usually composed of glacially derived subsoils. Features were excavated in a similar manner, except that upon identification of a feature (such as a trash pit, post hole, etc) within a unit, new context numbers were assigned to the feature and it was excavated separately from the larger unit. The normal protocol used to excavate features was to bisect each feature removing half in arbitrary,

five centimeter levels. The unexcavated portion of each feature was then removed completely as a flotation sample. A feature profile was drawn of each feature prior to its removal.

Remote Sensing with Ground Penetrating Radar

A small scale Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was undertaken at the midpoint of the 2007 field season by Dr. John Steinberg of the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research. The GPR work was not meant to proceed in an extensive fashion across the site, but rather was designed to aid the identification of subsurface features, such as the supposed Sarah Boston cellar hole, which was the focus of the archaeological sampling undertaken over the 2006-2007 field seasons. The the GPR survey initially focused on areas identified during excavation as having relatively high artifact densities, such as the areas around B, C and F blocks. However, other areas of the site that had been cleared but not yet sampled were also tested with the GPR in order to pare down the potential locations for subsequent excavation units. Finally, once an anomaly interpreted as being consistent with a large cellar hole like feature was encountered by the GPR under a planted apple tree from the early 20th century orchard operation, nearby orchard-era apple trees were also tested with the GPR in order to eliminate the possibility that the anomaly detected was somehow related to the planting preparations for the orchard trees.

Documentation of Excavations, Artifact Curation and Conservation

Overall documentation of the excavations was an ongoing process that took many forms. This process began by assigning context numbers, as discussed above, that allowed for control of provenience. The excavation was further documented through excavation forms, on which the excavator recorded standard information about the unit being excavated. This information included the context numbers assigned to individual units, types of artifacts encountered, number of arbitrary levels excavated in one unit, unit depth, depth of different strata, soil composition descriptions, features encountered within

the unit and other information deemed important for later interpretations. In addition, scale plans and soil profiles were recorded for all excavation units upon their completion.

Digital photographs were recorded throughout the excavation process to complement the drawn excavation unit plans and to further record characteristics of the excavated units. In most units, additional plan maps were drawn as necessary, such as when encountering large concentrations of rocks, noteworthy stratigraphic changes, intact artifacts or other characteristics requiring extra documentation. Features were handled separately, but were also mapped and photographed. At the conclusion of both the 2006 and 2007 seasons all drawn unit and feature plans were digitized into a GIS using arcGIS v9.2, which has served to generate the excavation plan images used throughout this report.

As part of the mapping of the units, soil descriptions were recorded for every distinct stratum, feature and other anomalous "lens" of soil that differed from the surrounding strata. Using a Munsell color chart, the soil was assigned a color and a description of its composition. Soil samples were collected from all features unearthed during the excavation. These soil samples were removed to the Fiske Center for later processing via flotation and subsequent botanical analysis. In addition, soil samples were sometimes collected specifically for pollen analysis.

The final layer of documentation on the site consisted of student and crew excavation journals that contained daily entrees by the excavators detailing their daily activities, what they found and how they interpreted their findings. These journals provide an outlet for personal opinions, explanations and interpretations of the ongoing project by the people doing the excavation. The insight provided by journals such as these help to fill in some of the gaps that will arise when interpreting the material culture from the site, as they provide "on-the-ground" information of what was seen and done by the excavators. These are an essential part of the "archaeological process" (Hodder 1999) and have a long tradition within the discipline.

Through the course of the excavation artifacts were collected and carefully bagged according to the context in which they were found. Information regarding the block, unit stratum and level was recorded directly on the bags allowing for the continued control of the provenience of the materials. These artifacts were taken back daily to the

Fiske Center at UMass-Boston for processing. For the most part, the processing of the artifacts consisted of washing and drying the artifacts, followed by a preliminary sorting of the material into distinct categories, such as glass, ceramics, metals, faunal material, or lithic artifacts. Graduate and undergraduate students from the field school undertook some of the preliminary analyses of the artifacts recovered. This analysis was performed at the Fiske Center utilizing the Center's reference library and comparative collection of historic material culture that aided in the identification and analysis of the Sarah Boston Site artifacts. The results and methodology of these specific material culture analyses are covered in detail in Chapter Four.

Conservation was also undertaken as part of the artifact processing. The main focus of conservation was the iron artifacts, as these artifacts are the most prone to continued degradation which will impede later analysis. Tom Wells (1998:89) has discussed the need to clean iron nails of oxides, for example, in order to expose diagnostic features that can provide information concerning architectural style, construction type and allow for the dating of some of the architectural construction episodes on the site. This recommendation is easily extended to the other classes of iron artifacts that are difficult to analyze unless they are subject to cleaning and conservation.

Iron conservation at the Fiske Center is overseen by the resident conservator Dennis Piechota and consists of removal of iron oxide concretions with pliers and wire brush scrubbing. This exposes the bare metal of the artifact, which is then treated with four applications of a tannic acid solution that "tans" the iron artifact, stopping the process of oxidation. The final step of this time-consuming process (which is 95% effective) is dipping the iron artifacts in molten wax, a finishing step that seals the iron artifact completely, insuring that the oxidation process is completely stopped.

All of the artifacts recovered from the site are curated at the Fiske Center and will remain there until such time as the Town of Grafton or the Nipmuc Nation is given custody by the State Archaeologist. Under the custody permit, communities or tribal nations can obtain control of collections as long as they provide the proper security and conservation requirements set out by the Secretary of State's Office, The Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Office of the State Archaeologist.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARCHAEOLGICAL RESULTS

Archaeological Results and Spatial Analysis

At the conclusion of the 2006 and 2007 field seasons, 34 two by two meter excavation units within the 100 square meter grid (see Fig. 4 above) had been completed. The 2006 project began in May, with a six person field crew conducting the intensive excavations centered around the high artifact concentration area delineated by the initial phase I survey undertaken in 2005 (Gary 2005). The field crew worked for the entire month of May 2006 (weather permitting) and prepared the area slated to be excavated by removing undergrowth, brush and poison ivy. In addition, the field crew also established the site grid using wooden stakes to mark "known" points on the grid that had been orthorectified with the aid of GPS receivers and the laser TRANSIT and which were later digitized and served as anchor points to georeference the excavations to aerial photography with the aid of arcGIS.

The rest of the time, the field crew began excavations of the parcel. At the beginning of June 2006, the field school students joined the field crew in excavations, and continued work until the first week of July. It is within this time that the bulk of the work was accomplished in the field. During the month of June, the field school students were also active in the lab, as the majority of the artifacts recovered over the course of excavations were inventoried by the end of the field season. The 2007 field season did not have the benefit of employing a full time crew, and as a result all of the excavations conducted between June 2007 and the first week of July 2007 were done exclusively under the auspices of the UMass-Boston field school directed by Dr. Stephen Mrozowski in conjunction with the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research.

Over the course of the excavation, blocks A through H were sampled to varying degrees. Some blocks (such as C, B and F) were more fully excavated because these areas contained the densest artifact concentrations and number of subsurface features. As a result it was assumed that these blocks most likely contained the remains of the habitation and refuse disposal areas associated with the Sarah Boston household. As excavation progressed, high density secondary and/or tertiary deposits were encountered across the northern part of the site, specifically the area around F-Block unit F3.5. These areas containing artifacts in moderate to poor states of preservation have been interpreted as being a refuse deposition area for the Nipmuc homestead that was located on site. Blocks B and C have yielded the best evidence of remains that we believe are linked to this late 18th and early 19th-century occupation of the property. At the end of the 2007 field season a total 12 units were excavated within C-Block and 7 within B-Block.

B-Block did not yield many artifacts or subsurface features during the 2006 season, and as a result became less of a priority. By the midpoint of the 2007 season, however, the discovery of a deep cellar hole within B4, B5, B9, C25 and E1 refocused the investigation on B-Block. This feature's spatial extent and depth were more accurately determined with the aid of a GPR unit operated by Dr. John Steinberg of the Fiske Center. This added information buttressed the interpretation that the large subsurface feature (designated F37) in B-Block, was in fact the filled cellar hole of the Sarah Boston homestead (see below).

The C-Block (Fig. 5) and B-Block areas of the site yielded the largest number of intact sub-surface features and as a result of this concentration of features, were the target of 12 excavation units, making them the most heavily tested blocks on site. The majority of units excavated within C-Block contained large rocks, some of which may have been part of the foundation of outbuildings associated with the main house, such as the "old barn."

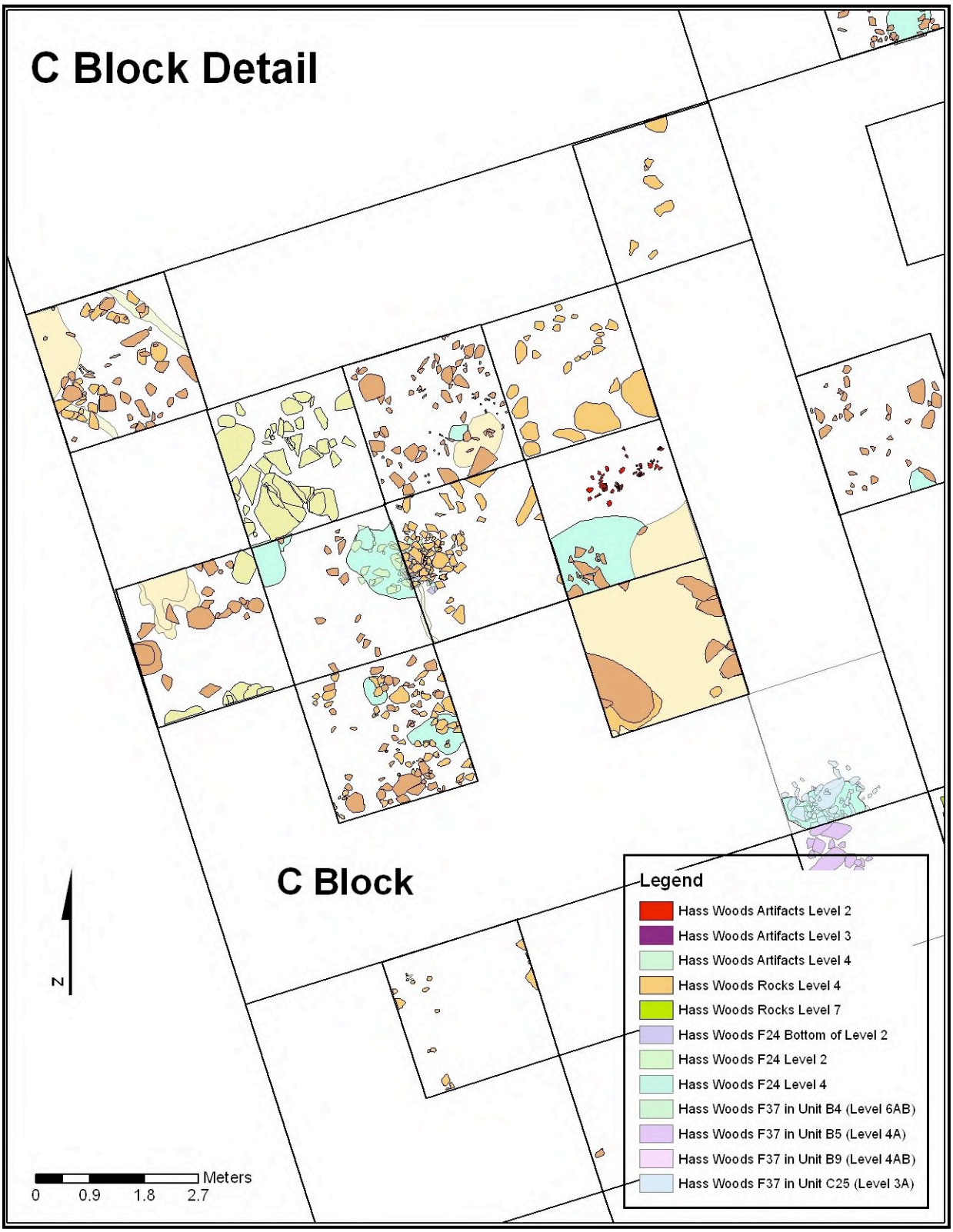

Figure 5: Excavation Block C. Note details within units that show rocks, features and soil stains recorded during excavations. Units proceed from in increasing order from C1 in the upper left hand corner to unit C25 in the lower right hand corner.

Unit C7 contains a high percentage of flat, angular stones that may have been part of a foundation. These flat rocks appear to have been purposely selected or quarried for these characteristics that make them suitable for a foundation. They are not in situ and appear to have been collapsed, and perhaps later disturbed by the orchard plowing operation of the 20th century. An alternative possibility is that the stone represents bedrock that has been fractured by frost heaving and later disturbance, however we consider this unlikely. The stratigraphy of the northeast profile of unit C7 showed a buried A strata under a mottled A\B interface that displayed mottling and swirling consistent with an episode of water-borne filling. Embedded within this buried A, or fill layer were more possible foundation stones. This buried stratum appeared to gradually fade away into the N/NE portion of C-Block, and was interpreted as being the edge of a larger fill episode likely associated with the remains of the Sarah Boston homestead. However, excavation of unit C1, to the Northwest of C7 have yielded rather meager results, as little soil development was encountered and a paucity of material culture within said unit has instead suggested that the area of intensive habitation activities was likely to the south and to the west of C7.

Near the end of the 2006 field season, unit C13 yielded perhaps the most exciting discovery of the season. Within this unit a feature was discovered that has been interpreted as a potential hearth or earth oven (Figs. 6 & 7). The feature, designated F24, consisted of a half-circle of cobbles and angular stones, collapsed in on itself. Only half of the feature was exposed, and the feature itself was not cleared of the collapsed rock and fully excavated. This was the first task of the 2007 field season, to excavate unit C12 and excavate F24 afterwards as a whole (see below).

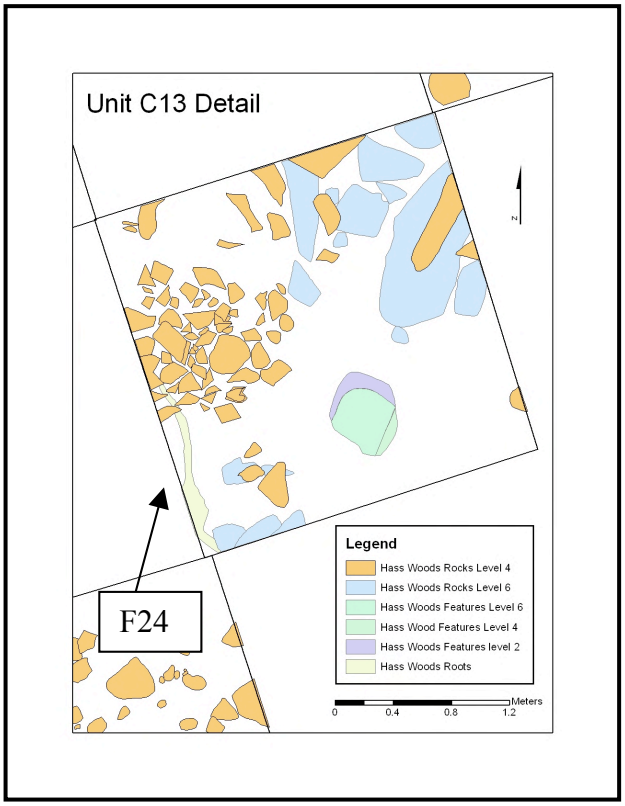

Figure 6: Detail of possible hearth within unit C13; Note the extent to which it was excavated at the conclusion of the 2006 season.

The placement of F24 was interpreted as potentially an outdoor hearth or oven, a feature characteristic of native homesteads in the colonial era (Mrozowski et. al. 2005). Even though the house itself may have been of the "English" style, the presence of an outdoor food preparation area would suggest the persistence of native architectural/spatial traditions.

Unit C17 displayed a prominent stone scatter within its boundaries, some of which appears to fall in line with some of the possible foundation stones from unit C13 and may be associated with F2. In addition, C17 contained a large organic stain on its eastern boundary that was designated feature F26. This feature is cut by the eastern boundary of C17/C18, and thus will require further investigation in the coming field season with the excavation of its adjacent unit C18. Taken in concert, C17 and C13 are important units on the Sarah Boston site, as F24 and F26 hint at a hearth structure and adjacent activity area, while C7 has contained structural features associated with this possible hearth.

Figure 7: The possible hearth within Unit C13, during excavation.

Summary of 2006 Excavation Results and Interpretations

At the end of the 2006 season, C-Block displayed the largest concentration of stone scatter of any area investigated (Fig. 6). This area called for further excavation for a variety of reasons. For one, this scatter could represent the remains of a structure that may have been disturbed over time by orchard activity, erosion or other taphonomic processes. Every unit excavated within C-Block during the 2006 season contained large concentrations of stone that could potentially be associated with a single structure and/or

depositional episode. C7, C11, C13 and C17 are all linked by similar stone scatters that appear to be associated with one another as potential structural remains. Furthermore, the presence of F24 and F26, as well as a smaller F27 within C11 and F25 within C13 spoke to the possibility of the entire C-Block area (and some of B-Block due to a large rust-colored soil stain within B2), as potentially being the site of an activity area outside or around the structure, something akin to a yard. The scatter of ceramics and other artifacts found in association with the possible structural remains in C-Block also lend support to the idea that portions of B, C and F blocks represent a yard area used for disposing of trash and other debris, while the dense artifact concentration in F-Block appears to have been indicative of midden directly adjacent to the main house building on site. Indeed the staggering number and variety of artifacts that were recovered in F-Block suggested that the deposits encountered reflected intensive depositional activity during the habitation of the site. As a result, it was decided that during the 2007 season, excavation should focus on the areas north of F-Block as the gradually increasing concentrations of artifacts as one moves to the north appeared to hold promise identifying a less disturbed area of the site that may have held the cellar hole of the house. In addition, C-Block was earmarked for more intensive examination, in order to link the areas of high artifact concentrations in F-Block to the area of the site that had yielded intact subsurface features.

Summary of 2007 Excavation Results and Interpretations

Building on the results of the excavations from the 2006 season summarized above, a concerted effort was made to further sample and expose C-Block as well as the area north of unit F3.5 that appeared to show great promise as a midden associated with the habitation of the site. However, a discouraging drop in artifact density to the north of F-Block, coupled with the discovery of a large primary deposition area in unit C14 and the identification of a small portion of a potentially large feature in unit C25 forced us to revise our previous interpretations concerning the potential location of a dwelling and the spatial organization of the site as a whole. As a result of the drop in cultural material to the north, the focus was shifted to the area to the west and south of F-Block, contained

primarily within B-Block, C-Block and a portion of E-Block. It was at this point that the GPR survey was undertaken. Almost immediately, the remote sensing of B-Block discovered a large anomaly approximately 1-1.5 meters deep (Fig. 8). This potential feature was detected by the GPR as a striking abscess in the subsoil that has been filled in (John Steinberg, personal communication 2007). In addition, this anomaly appeared to be filled with large "reflectors" that delineated the extent of the abscess in the soil. These large reflectors, which in this case were rocks, were present on the bottom of the anomaly and smaller reflectors were detected closer to the surface. After further testing, this anomaly was found to be the filled cellar hole of the Sarah Burnee Phillips/ Sarah Boston Phillips house. The exposed feature was designated F37 and is currently located directly beneath a large apple tree growing between units B4 and B5. F37 ranged from being approximately three meters by four meters in dimension and between 1-1.5 meters deep. Unit C25 had been excavated prior to the remote sensing and had been found to contain the edge of a large depression filled with rocks. The later GPR testing further supported the contention that unit C25 lay at the boundary of a larger subsurface feature that potentially represented the remains of the foundation and filled cellar hole.

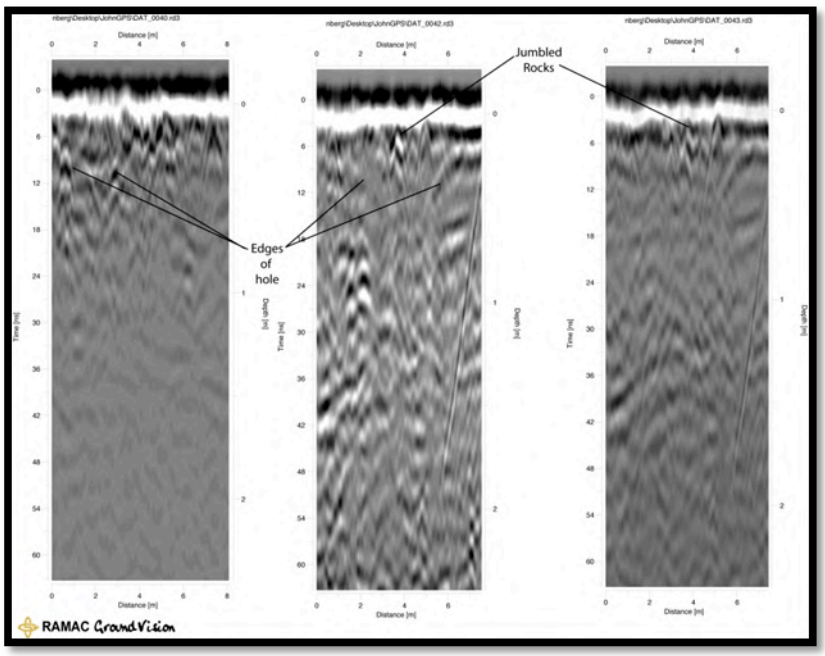

Figure 8: Results of the GPR remote sensing performed on units B4 and B5. The leader lines on the left point out the signature of the edges of the cellar hole. The leader lines on the right identify the mass of reflectors, in this case rocks, that make up the top of F37. Image and interpretations by Dr. John Steinberg.

Time constraints curtailed the complete exposing and excavation of the cellar hole, and thus efforts were made to identify the limits of the depression. Units B4, B5,

B9 and E1 (see Fig. 10 for detail plan map showing location of exposed cellar feature boundaries) were all excavated as part of an attempt to delineate the extent of F37, and all contained at least a portion of F37 which was represented by a dark organic fill with generally heavy artifact concentrations. In addition, compared to other excavation units and features previously encountered on the site, F37 represented the deepest cultural deposits anywhere on the site (74 cm down in B5 and upwards of 84 cm down in E1) and contained large numbers of architectural remains (large pieces of brick, nails, and iron hardware). The sizes of the artifacts recovered from inside the cellar hole were noticeably larger with a primary depositional episode spared the tertiary disturbance of plowing.

As the excavations on the perimeter of F37 progressed, the startling discovery of a small lead tag served to further support our interpretation of F37 as being the filled cellar hole. The provenance for this artifact places it within unit B4 at level 5AB. The eastern-most portion of unit B4 contained what appears to be the western boundary of F37, and it is within the rock laden F37 fill that intrudes into unit B4 that the tag was found. This small lead tag displayed the impressed letters "A.ELLIS" which appears to be shorthand for Amos Ellis, the blacksmith known to have contributed hinges, spikes and other iron fittings for Sarah Phillips and Sarah Boston's house (Fig. 9). Specific and repeated reference is made in the documentary sources to the work Amos Ellis contributed to the Phillips/Boston house and the subsequent payment owed him for his work (MAC Accounts and Correspondence of the Trustees of the Indians:47).

Figure 9: Detail of the A.ELLIS tag recovered in unit B4.

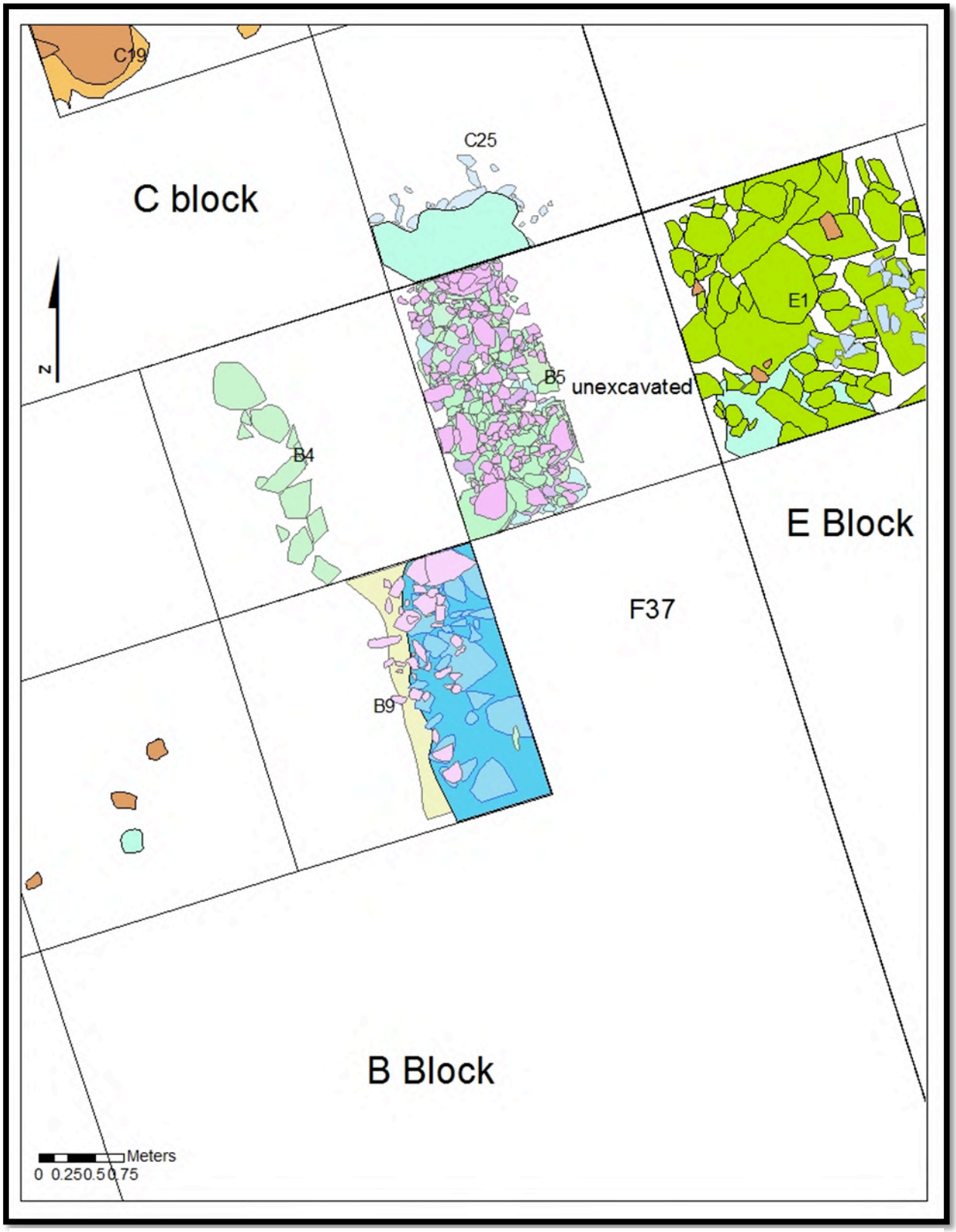

Figure 10: Site plan centered on the units containing F37, which has been interpreted as the cellar hole of the Sarah Boston/Phillips house.

Figure 11: Photographs of the limits of F37 that were encountered. The photograph on the left is view to north, and the unit directly to the south is unit B9. To the north of B9 is B4, of which only half was excavated due to the location of the apple tree between B4 and B5. Note the depth of F37 in B5 (photo below) and the amount of rock and depth of excavation to the east of B5 in unit E1.

While the Amos Ellis tag serves to more than adequately connect the documentary evidence to the archaeological remains, it is by no means the only strand of evidence that links the archaeological site to the documentary record and to Sarah Boston and her family. As will be discussed below, the anachronistic lead caming and casement fragments from casement windows recovered during the 2006 season in the vicinity of the cellar and the lead tag form separate, but complimentary, lines of evidence that supports the interpretation that the structural and occupational remains at Hassanamesit Woods are in fact connected to Sarah Phillips' and Sarah Boston's lifetime.

The further identification of architectural and cultural features that were encountered across the site allowed for a more thorough discussion of the spatial layout of the farmstead and further flesh out the landscape characteristics of the site. With the discovery of F37, the focal point of the habitation site became centered on the area adjacent to units B4 and B5. The orientation of F37 (based on the preliminary delineation of the boundaries of the feature) appears to locate the foundation and cellar of the house as being roughly oriented N-S along the long axis of the structure. To the north-northwest of F37 lies F24, which was partially excavated in 2006 and completed in 2007. The feature was composed of an almost complete circle of cobbles and more angular stones that were either collapsed in on each other or purposely piled up and flanked on the NW and the SE by F25 and F31 which appear to be large postholes (Fig. 12).

The complete excavation of F24, which had begun in 2006, yielded surprisingly little material culture; however, the almost exclusive presence of burned (calcined) bone and what appear to be charred botanical remains hint at the possibility that F24 served as a cooking area or a receptacle for charred material. Further bolstering this interpretation is the stratigraphic profile of the feature, which shows a darker organic fill on top, between and below the first few layers of cobbles and angular stones that were encountered. This fill overlays a culturally created abscess in the sub-soil partially lined with rocks and exhibits signs of heating evidenced by reddening of the soil. The further examination of this feature reinforces our previous interpretation of F24 as an exterior hearth or oven potentially associated with food preparation, which is "characteristic of

Native homesteads in the colonial era" (Mrozowski et. al 2005). Further support for this interpretation is pending the analysis of pollen and botanical samples recovered from F24.

Directly to the east of F24 the most intact primary deposit on the site was encountered within unit C14. On the southern boundary of this unit, a layer of cobbles arranged in one continuous surface over approximately a quarter of C14 was encountered. At the northern termination of this "cobbled surface" a heavy concentration of artifacts in an excellent state of preservation was unearthed. The large portions of ceramic vessels recovered, as well as the frequency of cross-mended pieces in this deposit only add weight to the interpretation of this concentration as a primary deposit. Furthermore, the spatial proximity of this deposit to the cellar hole (F37) suggests that the area encompassed by C14 represents an undisturbed sheet midden that at one time would have been adjacent to the structure or possibly beneath an ell of the house. The latter interpretation is supported by a similar discovery of a midden found beneath the ell of the late 18th century house in Norton, Massachusetts (Stephen Mrozowski, personal communication 2008).

Figure 12: Units C12 and C13, with the completely exposed F24 in the middle. Note F25 and F31 flanking F24, with F25 in the lower left corner of the photograph.

F-Block, as mentioned in the preceding section, has yielded the greatest density of artifacts anywhere on the site, particularly in units F2/7 and F3.5. Their proximity and position slightly down slope from the intact midden in unit C14 suggest that the elevated artifact density in F-Block may represent a disturbed portion of a larger sheet midden. The nature of the taphonomic process' causing the disturbance could include "wash" episodes that dispersed the midden material down slope from C14 into F2/7 and F3.5. Alternatively, F2/7 and F3.5 could also be the remains of an entirely separate depositional area for household trash, which was likely utilized subsequent to the use of the midden in C14 (Fig. 13). Groover (2003) has traced out patterns in the changes of a household's garbage deposition choices, specifically as they pertain to the selection of areas for use as a midden and the variable proximity of such areas to the main habitation area. He argues that within the context of 18th and 19th century rural sites, as the time of habitation at a location increases so does the distance of the midden deposits from the central habitation area (Groover 2003).

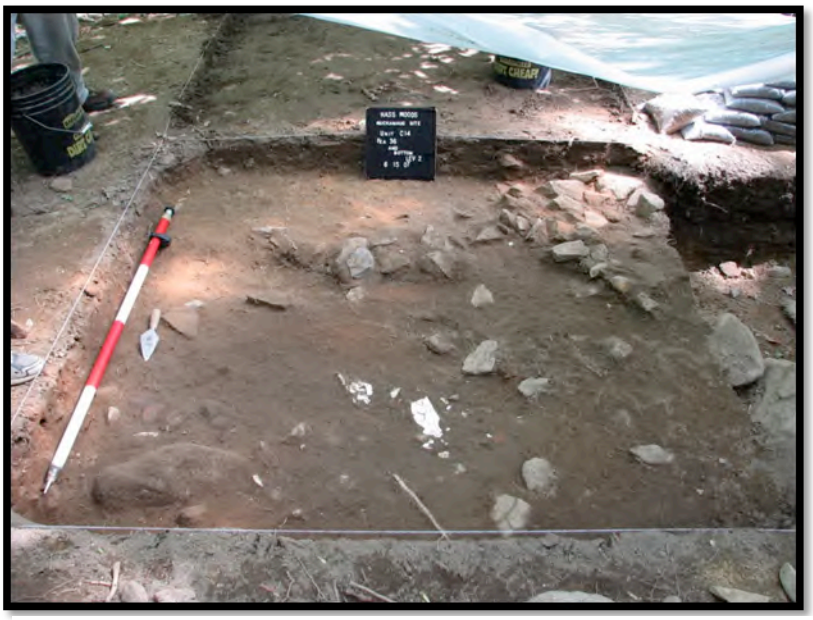

Figure 13: The unit C14 sheet midden. Note the tankard portion in the center of the photo and a fragment of the cobbled surface in the upper right of the photograph.

In the case of the Sarah Boston Farmstead, the receipts for the building or repairing of the house in 1797, the archaeology and the dates rendered from the artifacts speak to the likelihood that the area currently being excavated represents at minimum two household cycles: that of Sarah Burnee Phillips and her daughter Sarah Boston. As such, due consideration must be given to identifying multiple midden areas across that site that would coincide with the temporal progression of the household, as argued by Groover (2003). The presence of heavy concentrations both in C-Block and in F-Block will

require further field and laboratory analysis to more precisely determine the temporal relationship between the two depositional episodes.

Two units were excavated within H-Block, which is located to the northwest of B and C-Block. Units H1 and H2 yielded very little material culture, as only 524 artifacts were recovered from both units, in comparison to the 7561 artifacts recovered from unit C14. However, units H1 and H2 uncovered a large feature of approximately 2 x 1.5 meters in dimension, which was designated F33 (see Figures 14 & 15). In a testament to the excavation method employed, excavating stratigraphically allowed the identification of the culturally derived abscess in the subsoil, which has been interpreted as a quarry site, to be uncovered. This large hole dug into the B-stratum exposed bedrock, and the feature fill of F33 contained what can be described as debitage and/or shatter from quarrying activities. These quarrying waste fragments were predominantly of very large size, some of which were approximately a half meter in length. Most were recovered immediately overlying the exposed bedrock, as though they had been deposited into the hole just prior to being filled as the feature fill overlay the bedrock and the debitage. The stratigraphy for this unit shows that one major fill episode took place after the quarrying was completed and showed a substantial amount of mixing of both A and B horizon soils consistent with "backfilling" the quarry hole.

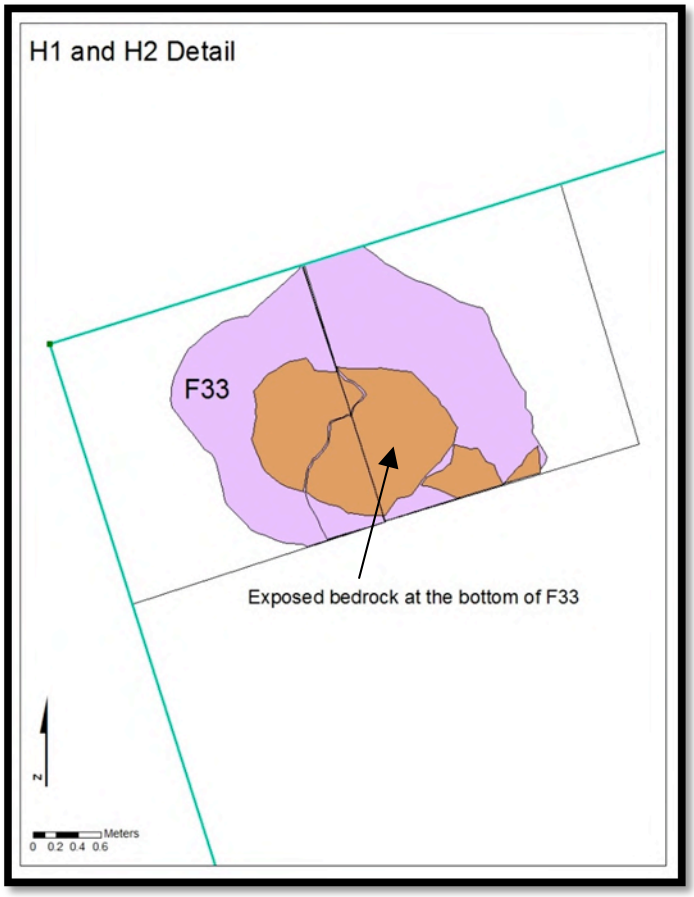

Figure 14: Plan of excavation units H1 and H2, with the full excavated extent of F33 shown in blue. In the middle of F33 the exposed bedrock, which appears to have been the source for quarrying stone, is depicted in orange.

Figure 15: Plan photograph of units H1 and H2 (view to east) after excavation of F33. Note the extent of the hole that was dug into the subsoil in an attempt to expose bedrock, presumably for quarrying purposes. F33 contained some historic material culture and mottled subsoil consistent with a single fill episode.

This fill contained a small number of artifacts contemporaneous with the other material recovered on site (1780-1830), and thus may be indicative of a small scale quarrying episode meant to acquire building materials for the repair/construction of the house foundation. Given the date of the fill, it appears that the quarrying episode took place while the site was already occupied.

In summary, the archaeological explorations of the Sarah Boston Farmstead site have resulted in our formulating several inferences concerning the temporal limits, spatial organization and architectural character of the house and land inhabited by Sarah Phillips and Sarah Boston. Perhaps the most important find of the excavations was the discovery of the cellar hole of the house. This has always been one of the primary goals of the project, as once the location of the house was determined, it would be possible to begin identifying other components of the Nipmuc habitation. Although the exposure and excavation of F37 has not been completed, other aspects of the excavation have served to highlight some facets of the Nipmuc habitation. For one, the discovery of quarrying within H-Block holds much potential for providing information on Nipmuc building practices that may have included traditional Native stone working techniques. This assumes of course that it was the Nipmuc inhabitants who quarried out the stone. Given the documentary evidence of local Euro-American workers being hired to build the house, the quarrying may been their work.

In addition, the sheet midden identified within C14 coupled with other areas of midden discovered on site have provided a sense of the spatial utilization of the site area. In this sense, it seems that areas NE of the house were used for refuse disposal (C14 and F3.5, F2/7). The area to the north and northeast of the cellar appears to have served as a yard area, including a cobble surface encountered in unit C14 and a potential hearth or food preparation feature represented by F24. Finally, the archaeology, specifically the recovery of the Amos Ellis tag and the casement window fragments, has served to conclusively link the documentation and local history associated with the Nipmuc inhabitants to the material remains located within the Hassanamesit Woods parcel. While these finds add texture and strengthen the interpretations made from the archaeology, they also serve the dual purpose of precisely identifying the temporal range of the household in question. The mention of architectural artifacts within receipts attributed to

between 1797-1802 has served to confirm that the bulk of the archaeological evidence is associated with a specific household cycle and sets the stage for subsequent work at the Sarah Boston farmstead site to investigate issues relating to diachronic changes in consumption of material culture, architectural elements and spatial practices. However, it is obvious that there remain large gaps in our knowledge concerning questions surrounding the consumption and use of material culture by the Nipmuc inhabitants, and these can only be addressed through the analysis of the artifacts recovered from this site. These questions are addressed below with particular emphasis being placed on the spatial distribution of material culture and what it suggests about activities across the site, the architectural character of the structures on site, consumption strategies related to ceramics acquisition and the possibility that some items were being curated as heirlooms, as well as questions concerning foodways practices, smoking, entertaining and dress.

Architectural Materials

Analysis of the architectural artifacts recovered on site bears witness to the fact that F37 is in fact the cellar hole of a structure, as both blocks C and B contained the greatest concentrations of architectural material on site (Fig. 16). Architectural material included nails, window glass, brick, lead caming and other material readily identifiable as belonging to a structure. The distribution of architectural material serves as a good indicator of the presence of a structure, and the high densities in which they are found in blocks C and B support interpretations based on stratigraphy and stone scatter. The other blocks yielded

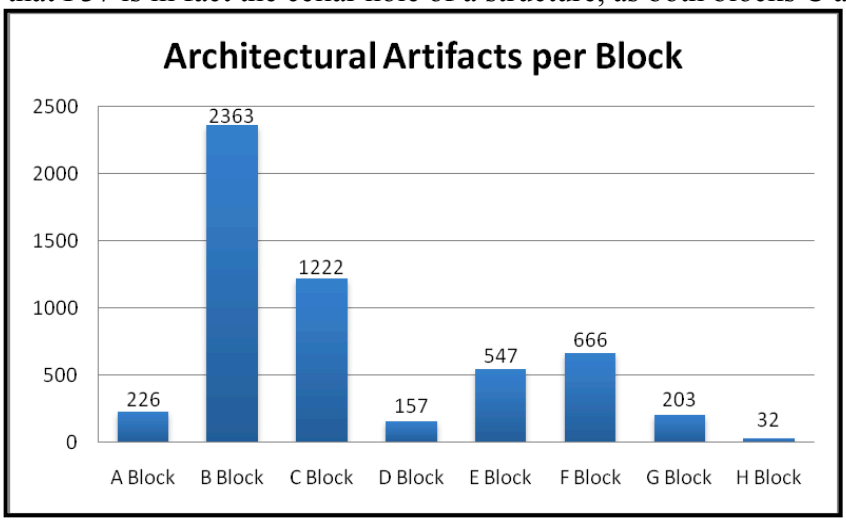

Figure 16: The number of architectural artifacts per block.

noticeably less material, although blocks E and F also contained substantial concentrations of architectural debris.

Architectural material recovered from D-Block was substantially less than that recovered from units near F37, and the bulk of the material recovered from D-Block came from a single unit; D2. Unit D2 also exhibited interesting stratigraphy in the form of an organic rich, wet soil containing faunal remains (Fig. 17). On site, this unit was interpreted as perhaps being an activity area adjacent to an outbuilding associated with foundation remains unearthed in blocks C and B. A similar interpretation was offered in the 2005 site report (Gary 2005). At that time Gary (2005) postulated this upland region of the site near D-Block may have represented a dairying area based on the material assemblage collected during initial testing (mainly red bodied earthenware milk pan fragments). Unit D17 contained the lowest concentration of architectural material; however, this may also reflect the fact that the area was disturbed by later activity. This is evidenced by mottling, including the presence of a layer of sandy silt overlaying the A stratum, present in the North profile of the unit. Little material was recovered from this unit, but the material discovered shared similar patterning to that of D2 and was consistent with the outbuilding hypothesis offered above.

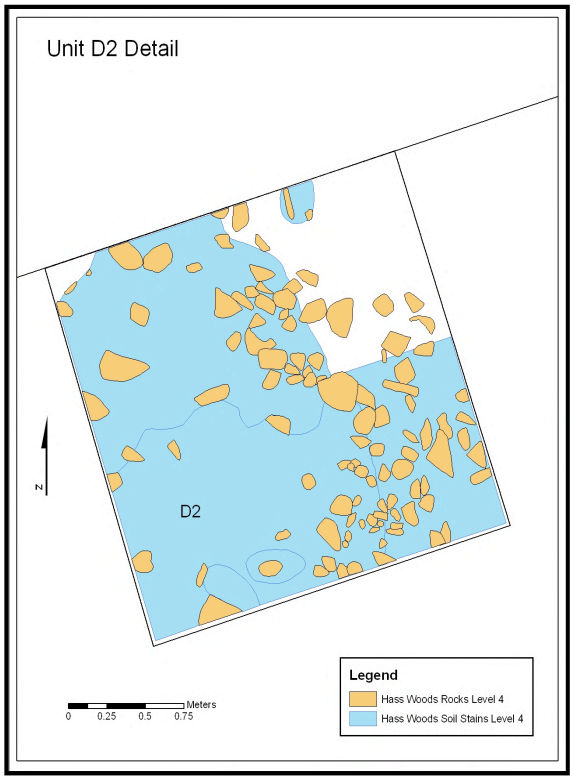

Figure 17: Detail of Unit D2 showing rock concentrations and wet, organic soil stains.

E-Block similarly produced little in the way of architectural materials, although the presence of rodent holes and apparent bioturbation within the unit hint at its disturbed nature. This may also reflect the limited excavation that took place in both E and D-blocks. A more refined analysis of the architectural material, beyond simple counts is

needed to further bolster any interpretation, and such an analysis was carried out on the nails recovered.

The analysis of the nails recovered over the 2006 season was undertaken by Jessica Bowes, a graduate student in the Historical Archaeology Program at UMass-Boston (Fig. 18). Her analysis consisted of an in-depth examination of the nails in order to discern nail type, nail usage and possible date of manufacture. As of the writing of this report, the nails from the 2007 field season were undergoing conservation and were unavailable for analysis. Prior to any analysis it was important to conserve the iron nails using the method described in Chapter 3. As Wells (1998:79) states, it is crucial to any analysis that the oxides covering the nails be cleaned away so as to expose the diagnostic features of the nails that can inform on their manner of production and, thus, date of production as well as bring to light the type and use of the nail. The value of this kind of conservation and analysis became readily apparent.

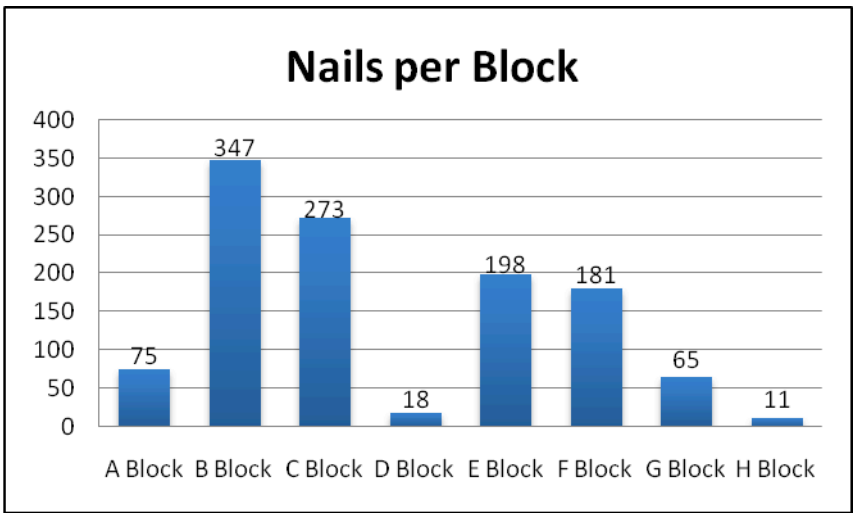

Figure 18: Nails recovered per excavation block.

In analyzing the nails from the Sarah Boston site, the first step was to sort the conserved nails into separate categories based on mode of manufacture, either hand wrought, machine cut or wire nails. Identifying the method of manufacture is important in dating the nails and thus aids in dating the structure they are presumed to have been used to construct. Within these categories, the nails were further subdivided by their head types, a step that allows us to identity what the nails have been used for. In this case, the most telling nail head type was that of the machine cut L-shaped head or "brads" that were commonly used in flooring (Noël Hume 1969:252-254). The results of this analysis show that close to 70% (precisely 69%) of the nails recovered from the Sarah Boston farmstead were hand wrought, generally considered the earliest type of nail manufactured (Noël Hume 1969:252-254, see below). The rest of the nail assemblage consisted of machine cut nails which date later in time than the wrought iron nails. No wire nails were recovered during excavations. Wire nails post-date the 1850s and are essentially the types of nails utilized today. Dating a site by its nail assemblage is problematic, as hand wrought nails continued to be used after the development of machine cut and wire nails (Sutton and Arkush 1996). However, Sutton and Arkush (1996:164) have suggested that looking at the percentages of nail types in the assemblage can illuminate likely date ranges for a structure. Based on their research (Sutton and Arkush 1996:164), they have determined that sites in which wrought nails dominate the assemblage can be loosely dated to a pre-1830 context. Unfortunately, nail chronologies do not get much more precise than this. This analysis provides some supporting evidence that corroborates the documentary sources that place the building of the house in the late 1790s and date its last occupation in the 1830s, ending with the death of Sarah Boston. In terms of site wide distribution,

Figure 19: A variety of recovered nail types. The "brads" used in flooring are represented by the first and fifth nail, from left to right.

blocks B, C and to a lesser degree E, clearly contained the most nails recovered, again dovetailing with the interpretation that F37 is the cellar hole of a structure (Fig. 13). The elevated number of nails in Block F is interesting because it might indicate the presence of an outbuilding or part of the structure associated with the cellar hole.

Adding to this evidence is the clustering of identifiable machine cut nails with an L-shaped head or "brads" (see Figure 19 above) that were customarily used for floor boards (Noël Hume 1969:252-254). From analysis of the 2006 material, Blocks A, B, C and D contained a total of 10 of these brads while F-Block by itself yielded 28 of this nail type. Sampling issues aside, the intense concentration within F-Block provides further evidence of structural remains on the site.

Documentary research has yielded two documents relevant to the construction and chronology of the main structure on the Sarah Boston parcel. They were dated receipts for materials and labor done to the house of Sarah Phillips, the mother of Sarah Boston. The first of these documents, dated to 1795, details boards, nails, hinges and labor costs for the construction of the house. This work may have been repairs made to an earlier or temporary structure, or in fact the erecting of the dwelling that was to house this Nipmuc family for the following decades. In 1802, repairs were made to this structure, and a similar itemized receipt was made out for the labor and materials. Of interest is the presence in this later receipt of materials for roofing and flooring work, which is absent from the original construction. Tritsch (2006) has argued that the original 1795 house was a dark "dirt floored shack," expedient in its construction. While it is difficult to ascertain the condition of the original house (flooring and roofing may have not needed repairs, or simply were not desired by the Nipmuc inhabitants), that the later receipt mentions the acquisition of over 300 feet of floorboards allows us to confidently assume that the 1802 reconstruction and repairs laid down a hardwood floor in the Phillips household and/or in outbuildings associated with the household. Thus, it seems safe to conclude that the

Figure 20: Window casement fragment.

presence of flooring nails indicates the likely location of either the main structure or an outbuilding that incorporated wood floors, a fact that stands in stark opposition to the claims made in the local histories cited by Tritsch (2006). The high incidence of brads identified in the 2006 nail assemblage from F-Block had originally suggested that this could have been the location of the dwelling; however, the discovery of the cellar hole in B-Block requires a new interpretation. The two most obvious possibilities are that another structure, perhaps the barn, was located in this area, or that structural remains linked to the house were deposited in this area after the property was sold in the 1850s.

Architectural material beyond nails has also provided additional evidence concerning the character of the structure. As mentioned previously, the analysis identified lead window caming fragments and an iron casement fragment from casement windows popular in the early 18th century windows (Fig. 20). These materials were recovered along the northern sector of the site, exclusively in blocks B and F where architectural material distributions have been dense. These window remains are diagnostic of a very specific style of window known as "cross windows" or casement windows that were fairly popular in the 17th century and very briefly in the early 18th century (Noël Hume 1969:233; McAlester 1984:48; Fig. 21). Casement windows consist of small diamond, rectangle, or square shaped glass mounted in lead caming within a wooden or metal frame (Louw and Crayford 1999:175). For the most part these window types were imported from England already assembled, as a 1701 merchant in Boston who imported them claimed that local craftsmen were not able, and did not know how to construct casement windows (Cummings 1983:48; Montgomery 1965:92). The

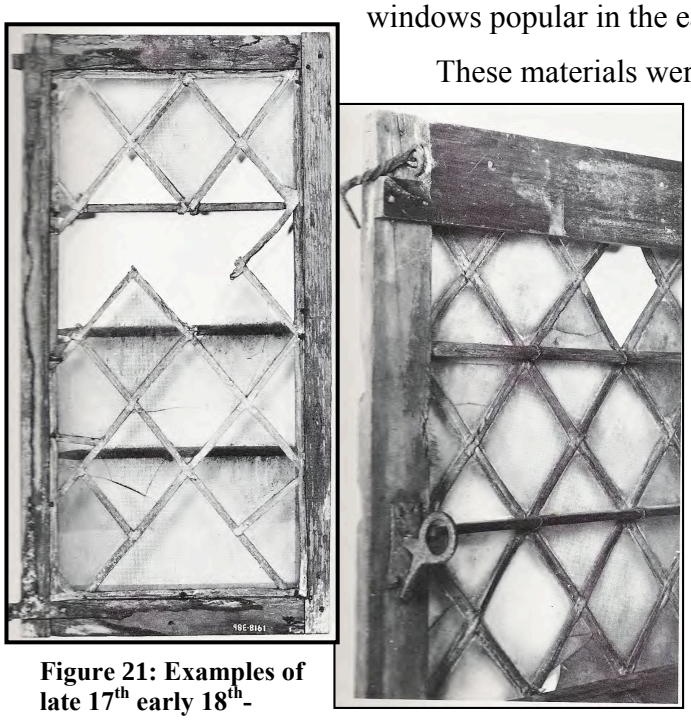

Figure 21: Examples of late 17th early 18th-century casement windows from eastern Massachusetts (Cummings 1979:147).

production dates and period of popularity for these window types pre-date virtually all of the other material culture recovered from the Sarah Boston site and therefore beg the question of just how their presence should be interpreted. There is little documentary evidence to support such an earlier occupation on site. Therefore it is unclear whether the evidence of windows that would have been popular during the 17th century could be linked to a structure that was part of the remains of the praying town or whether it merely represents the use of an earlier window style in a later structure. Either instance would seem to confirm the use of older style windows in the dwelling that was home to Sarah Boston and her family.

One piece of archaeological evidence that would counter the idea that the earlier window types were part of an earlier structure already present on the property is the context in which the window remains were recovered. All the casement window remains were recovered within stratum A, either in level 2 or 3, and in all instances were recovered in association with later pearlwares and creamwares which post-date the mid 18th century, well past the peak date of popularity of casement windows (McAlester 1984:48, Noël Hume 1969:233). Therefore the most likely scenario that is well supported by the archaeology is that these anachronistic casement windows at the Sarah Boston Farmstead site reflect the practice of recycling architectural materials by the Nipmuc residents of Hassanamesit Woods and perhaps the Grafton townspeople.

It is plausible that these casement windows had been salvaged from elsewhere in Grafton, presumably from an earlier structure, and then sold to Sarah Phillips and installed in her house during the 1802 repairs. This recycling of materials raises several questions pertaining to the experience of the Nipmuc in the colonial world. Were these casement windows specifically requested by Sarah Phillips? Was it a matter of taste or some affinity for a window type used in the house she grew up in? Perhaps frugality was the deciding factor, as these old-fashioned windows were available to be purchased at a discount? Or were the Grafton Trustees supplementing their income by repairing the houses of native people with discarded and recycled materials? We expect to explore these types of questions more thoroughly with continued documentary and archaeological analysis.

Material Culture Analysis

Analysis of the other classes of artifacts at the Sarah Boston site has also proven informative. This material has been central in dating the occupation of the site. It has also

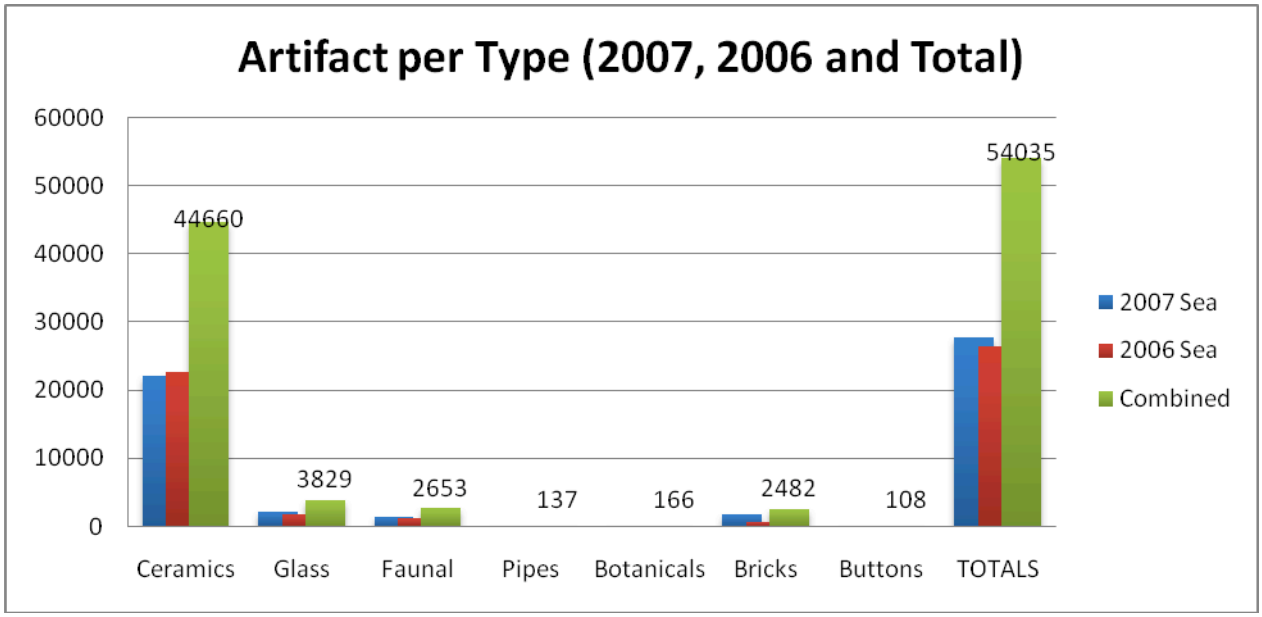

Figure 22: The number of artifacts per artifact type from the 2007 (blue), 2006 (red), and combined (green) field seasons.

provided an important avenue for developing a more nuanced interpretation of the Nipmuc experience and their cultural persistence within a maelstrom of change. As is often the case on historic sites, much of the material culture was linked directly to foodways of the household. The bulk of the material remains recovered from the site are ceramics. These come in many forms and vary according to composition, type, function and decoration.

Ceramics

By themselves ceramics constitute the most ubiquitous artifact type on the site, totaling upwards of 44,660 individual sherds. These sherds vary in size from less than a

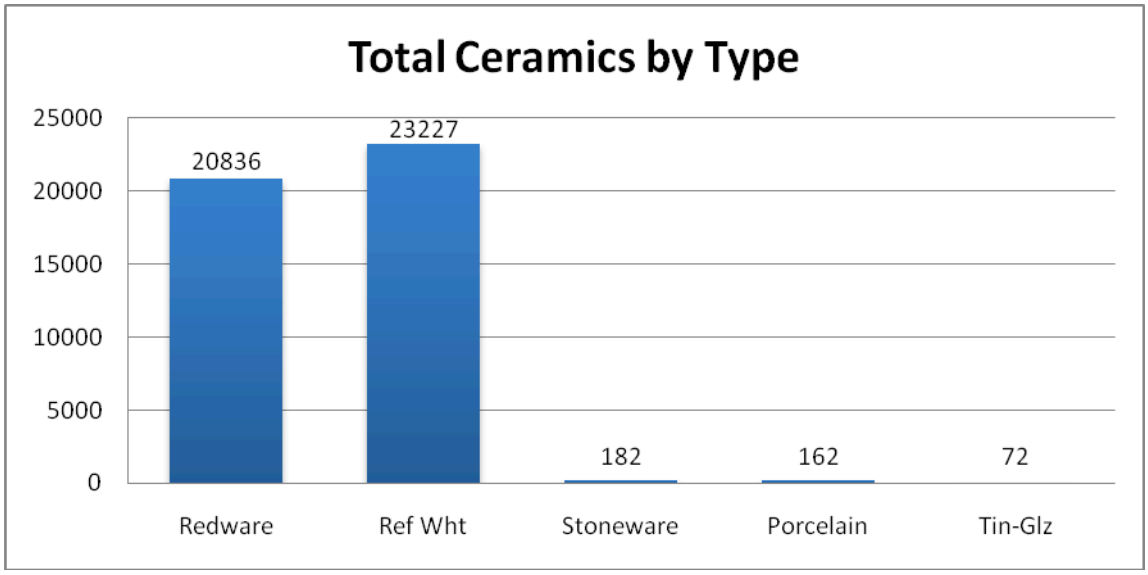

Figure 23: Total ceramics by type.

centimeter square to greater than 6 cm square and represent a diverse assemblage. The variation in vessel form, decoration and ware type is impressive, and the ongoing analysis has begun to yield interesting, albeit preliminary, results. Initial processing of the ceramics has consisted of labeling all the sherds with their context number in order to later refit as many complete or partial vessels as possible without losing the provenience information for each individual sherd. After labeling, the ceramics were finely sorted into distinct ware types (Fig. 23), which were further subdivided by their decorations, vessel form, vessel portion and other diagnostic characteristics. To date, ware types such as porcelain, stoneware, and tin-glazed earthenwares have been processed, analyzed and refitted. However, these wares make up only 1% of the ceramics assemblage, as the majority of sherds recovered fall into the categories of red-bodied earthenwares (redware) and refined white earthenwares (pearlware, creamware, etc.). The earthenware analysis is currently in progress; however, as one might imagine with the volume of sherds in this assemblage there is still much work to do. The following section offer summaries of the completed and in progress analyses performed on the distinct ceramics types.

Refined White Earthenwares

This category of ceramics is the most diverse of any artifact type on the site. A total of 23,227 refined white earthenware sherds were recovered during the 2006-2007 field seasons (Figs. 24 & 25). On site, they were the most ubiquitous artifact, appearing in varying concentrations in every excavation unit on the site. The assemblage consists of pearlwares and creamwares of myriad decorative styles all of which tightly date to the period between 1770-1830 (Noël Hume 1969; Miller 1991). No whiteware or ironstone has been recovered that would indicate an occupation extending beyond the early-mid 19th century. The fact that 1830-1840 has been determined to be an end date for the ceramic assemblage dovetails with the documentary evidence that tells of the death of Sarah Boston in 1837 as being the end of the occupation of the site. It remained in Nipmuc ownership through her daughter Sarah Boston Walker until the 1850s; however, she did not live on the tract as she had instead made her home in Worcester. Based on this documentary information we would expect the archaeology to unearth evidence of an occupation ending sometime within the 1830-1840 period. Preliminary analysis of these refined white earthenwares has indeed lived up to this expectation.

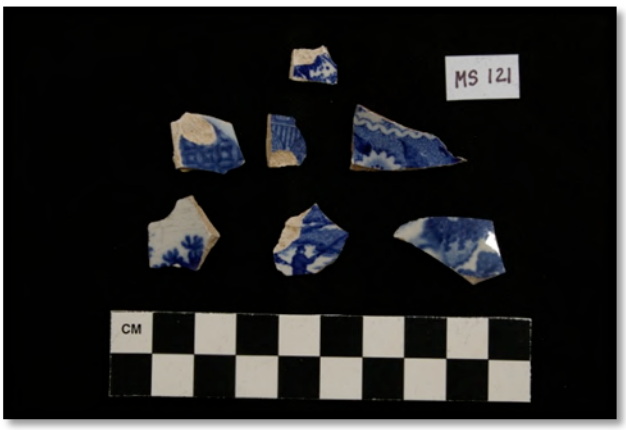

Figure 24: A collection of pearlware sherds in blue transfer printed designs.

Figure 25: A collection of pearlware sherds decorated in blue hand painted designs.

Red Bodied Earthenwares

This ceramic type is just as prevalent on the Sarah Boston site as the refined white earthenwares. A total of 20,836 of these sherds was recovered, making it the second most prevalent ceramic ware type on the site. The variability of decorative styles is, however, only a fraction of that observed in the refined white earthenwares. The majority of these sherds fall into one of four categories: unglazed redware, clear or brown lead glazed redware, black lead/manganese glaze redware and indeterminate/unglazed pieces. Decorative variation is similarly lacking compared to other ware categories. There is much variability in the redware vessel forms; however, this facet of the analysis must be verified through the reconstruction of vessels, a step yet to be completed.

Figure 26: Black-glazed redware sherds recovered during excavation.

Redwares were fairly evenly distributed across the site, being found in all layers stratigraphically and in all excavation units (Fig. 26). However D-Block, on the SW part of the site showed an interesting distribution of redwares when compared to other types of wares. For the most part, all the units on site yielded roughly equal amounts of redware and refined white earthenware. D-Block exhibited few ceramics when compared to other blocks; however, the ceramics recovered from the two units excavated were almost exclusively redware sherds. Between the two units, D2 and D17, 437 redware sherds were recovered compared to only 32 refined white earthenware sherds. These figures reinforce the 2005 survey report (Gary 2005) that suggested that the area around D-Block may have been in the vicinity of an outbuilding dedicated to dairying or raising animals. The historical usage of redwares in dairying activities played a crucial part in the interpretation made by Gary (2005) for the area around D-Block, as he observed a

similar concentration of redwares to other ceramic types in the 2005 survey as is observed in the material from the 2006 excavation. The high redware percentage of D-Block coupled with the fact that 51 faunal remains were recovered between the two units, which is comparable to the number of faunal remains per unit seen near or around the suspected house structure near B, C and F blocks, suggests that D-Block may indeed represent a functionally distinct area of the site devoted to dairying or other activities. Such interpretations allow us insight into the functionally delineated spatial layout of the site, and we can thus begin to flesh out more of the site's character.

Stoneware

The ceramic assemblage from the Sarah Boston site also includes stoneware, but they represent only a fraction of the ceramics recovered. A total of 182 stoneware sherds were recovered, and to date only the ceramics from the 2006 season have been fully catalogued and analyzed in the lab. Stoneware is made from clay sources with a higher amount of silica than is normally used for earthenwares (Maryland Conservation Lab 2002). This silica rich clay is able to withstand high kiln temperatures in excess of 1200 degrees Celsius, which results in a non-porous ceramic paste that is more durable than earthenwares and is suitable for storing liquid or semi-liquid foodstuffs (Maryland Conservation Lab 2002, Yentsch 1990:33). Indeed aside from white salt-glazed stoneware (Fig. 27) which saw much use as tea and table service wares (Noël Hume 1969:115), stoneware vessels were for the most part restricted to "the storage of semi-liquid foodstuffs or the consumption of traditional beverages" (Yentsch 1990:33).

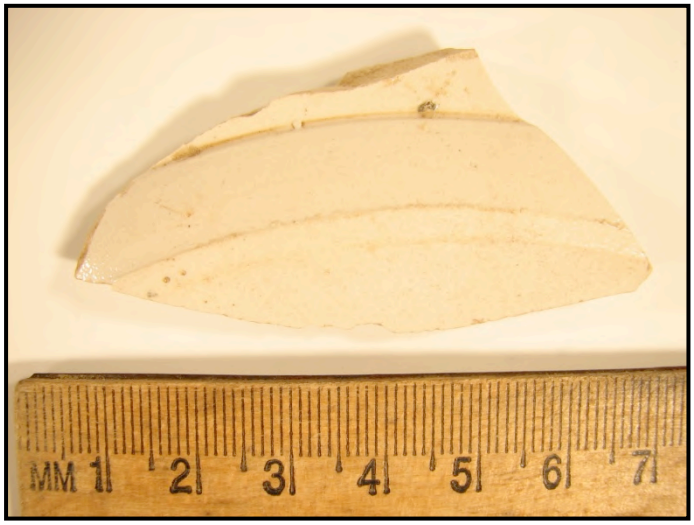

Figure 27: White salt-glazed stoneware flatware vessel with mold decorated rim.

The production of stoneware began in Germany during the early part of the 15th century and was widespread in Europe by 1700 (Rhodes 1959:26-27). No German stoneware was recovered at the Sarah Boston site; however English stoneware, which was being produced as early as 1671, was found. The most common stoneware encountered at the Sarah Boston site was white salt-glazed stoneware, distinguished by its white-firing clay and orange-peel like texture of the glaze applied to the wares. This stoneware was being produced in Devonshire, England by 1720, saw a short lived popularity as tableware, as by 1762 the introduction of inexpensive creamware earthenware began decimating the white-salt glaze market over the last quarter of the 18th century (Rhodes 1959, Noël Hume 1969, Miller 1980, 1984 and Myers 1984). Of the 78 sherds recovered during the 2006 season, 28 were white salt-glazed sherds. These 28 sherds represent a minimum of three vessels each exhibiting diagnostic decoration. These three consisted of a press molded plate (Fig. 27), a scratch blue decorated hollowware vessel and a blue hand painted hollowware vessel. Of the remaining stoneware sherds a minimum 8 hollow vessels were identified, one each of Nottingham, Jackfield, Fulham, English Brown, Astbury, American Gray, American Brown and local buff bodied (Fig. 28). Among these, the hollow Nottingham and Jackfield vessels were likely finer table or tea wares such as plates, cups or mugs. The remaining stoneware sherds (Fulham, English Brown, Astbury, American Gray, American Brown and local Buff body) were most likely utilitarian storage or preparation vessels such as jugs, jars or pans. Aside from the white salt-glazed stoneware, the next most numerous stoneware sherds recovered were from the

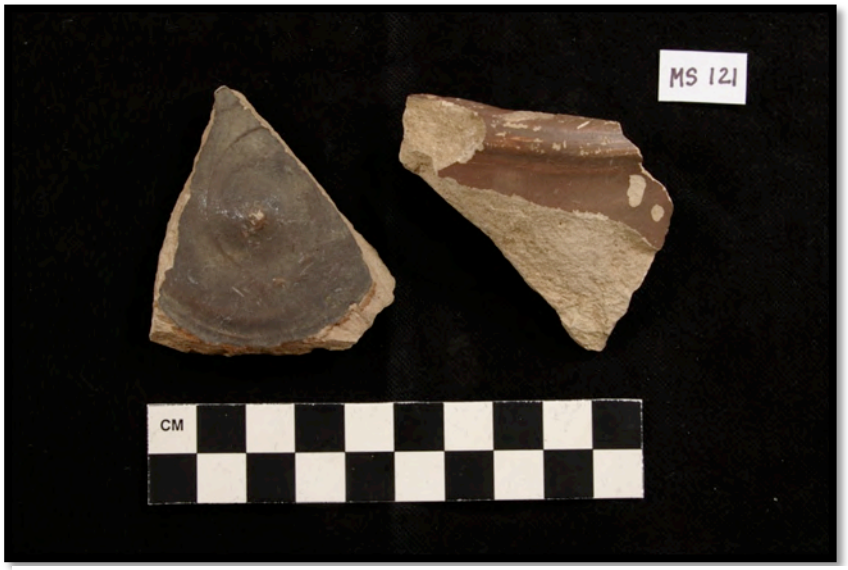

Figure 28: Detail of domestic "buff bodied" stoneware rim and base sherds.

local buff bodied variety. This coarse ware was probably produced locally in the southern New England region during the late 18th and early 19th century, and served almost exclusively as utilitarian storage vessels.

The form and function of the stoneware can provide information concerning the chronological sequence and spatial arrangement of the site. In this case, almost 80% of the stoneware recovered over the 2006 season came from the first three arbitrary levels of excavation, and the contrast between the strata (A and B) is significant, implying that these ceramics were deposited almost exclusively in the context attributed to Sarah Phillips and her daughter Sarah Boston, and not in an earlier occupation, which as we have already discussed in the architectural material section, does not appear to exist at the Sarah Boston Site. The horizontal patterns of stonewares across the site appear to correspond with other materials and stratigraphy that suggest the location of the main structure and a possible outbuilding. Stoneware is for the most part evenly distributed across the site, with the exception of three units: A1, A7 and F3.5. Both F and A blocks contain the highest concentrations of stoneware sherds. The presence of both utilitarian stoneware sherds (local buff bodied, American Grey, American Brown) and the more refined table and tea service wares (Jackfield, white salt-glazed and Nottingham) suggests that the northeast area of the site in the vicinity of F and A blocks may represent a depositional area for both the main structure and for the work areas surrounding it.

Thus, we are again left with the indication that the area encompassed by F-Block, that was excavated during the 2006-2007 field seasons may in fact represent a yard occupying the space between the main structure and outbuildings used for food storage and preparation. Supporting the contention offered up by the spatial distribution of the 2006 stoneware assemblage is the observed location of the cellar hole, and the apparent landscaping represented by the cobbled surface in unit C14, which lies directly to the SW of the midden in F-Block, where the majority of the stoneware sherds were recovered. This work area and associated midden in C14, F3.5 and F2/7, coupled with the increased amount of architectural material recovered in F-Block hint at the potential yard area represented by F-Block as being bounded by the main structure and an outbuilding or other associated structure.

An interesting issue arose when dating the stoneware sherds. The mean ceramic date that was calculated for this ware category yielded a date of 1769.7. This is somewhat problematic given their spatial and stratigraphic association with later materials. Possible explanations included the following: perhaps the rural location of the Grafton region in the 18th-19th century produced a time-lag effect due to the fact that rural markets were routinely flooded with out-of-date goods by ceramics manufacturers attempting to sell off stocks of overproduced wares (as argued by Adams 2003). Another interpretation is that this time lag of wares is the product of curation of stoneware vessels by the occupants of the Muckamaug parcel. Adams (2003) also argues for this as an explanation for older ceramic appearing in later contexts, especially if the older wares in question are few in number, an indication of their minority presence and thus "special" place as prized heirlooms within the material assemblage of the site. As we have seen with the casement windows above, recycling or curation of architectural materials was not unheard of at the site. The stoneware also reflects a similar, albeit distinct practice of heirlooming or curating ceramic vessels. As we shall see in the following section, other ceramic vessels were potentially being curated by the site's occupants, either Sarah Phillips and/or her daughter Sarah Boston.

Tin-Glazed Earthenwares

The 2006 Sarah Boston site ceramic assemblage also yielded a total of 72 tin-glazed ceramic sherds, most of which are small fragments missing their glaze (Fig. 29). Tin-glazed ceramics are characterized by a porous, soft body that is un-tempered and are usually glazed with a thick clear lead glaze that has had tin-oxide added to it, thus creating the diagnostic opaque and white surface (Maryland Conservation Lab 2002). This glaze is very brittle and easily separates from the soft body of these earthenwares. Thus, collecting sherds with the glaze intact is not a common occurrence, and indeed from the Sarah Boston site only 6 of the 72 tin-glazed earthenware sherds had any glaze remaining. These earthenwares are a common find in early North American sites as peak production for the more widely produced English tin-glazed ceramics took place within 1720-1740, a date arrived at by using Miller's (2000:11) production dates and figures

presented by Barker and Majewski (2006:209). After this peak period in the early-mid 18th century, tin-glaze ceramic production and consumption began a decline that was "rapid and terminal" (Barker 2001:76), such that by 1790 the tin-glaze industry was effectively out of business (Hunter and Miller 2001:138). This late production of tin-glazed ceramics was mainly directed at local English markets in Britain (Barker and Majewski 2006:217) as the sturdier and more economical refined earthenwares introduced in the 1760s had replaced tin-glazed ceramics in the global markets. With the reduced production of tin-glazed ceramics in the last quarter of the 18th century, questions arise concerning how much of this material was making its way onto rural sites during this period. Instead we believe these wares are more likely heirloom pieces. The material assemblage at the Sarah Boston site clearly demonstrates that the inhabitants had abundant access to the newer creamwares and pearlwares during the period of this site's occupation between 1795-1830. Thus the appearance of these out-of-date tin-glaze ceramics suggest they were being curated, an assertion supported by the results of the analysis of these sherds discussed below.

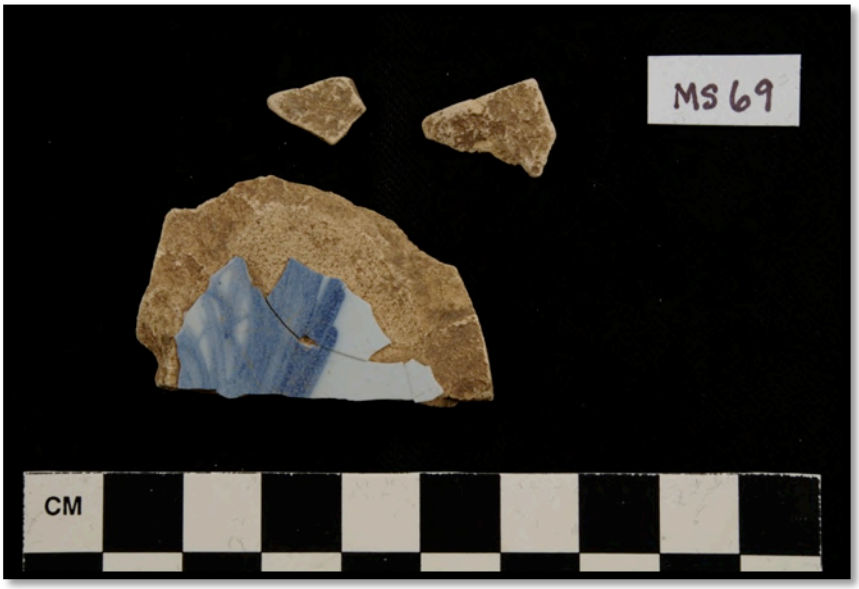

Figure 29: Tin-glazed sherd with brittle glaze and blue hand painted decoration.

Of the 72 tin-glazed sherds from only the 2006 assemblage, 66 were fragments missing their glaze making them difficult to more precisely date past the 1620-1790 time period that Miller (2000) gives for the production of English tin-glazed ceramics. Of the 6 others that retained some glaze, 3 were undecorated and thus had no diagnostic

characteristics aside from corroborating their country of origin as England, a conclusion based on analysis of the sherds' paste. However, the 3 remaining fragments had both glaze and decorations that allowed more precise dating. Based on these three sherds, it was possible to verify at least three distinct vessels within the tin-glazed assemblage. The decorations present were pink sponging dating to 1708-1786 (a median date of 1747) and blue on white painting. One fragment with a blue-on-white vase and floral motif was difficult to identify (Fig. 30); however, comparisons with similar motifs shown by Britton (1987) and Archer and Morgan (1977) suggest a production date for similar motifs was identified as being 1750-1770, or possibly as narrow as 1742-1760. The final sherd was simply an English blue-on-white piece with no diagnostic decorations, thus making dating of the piece virtually impossible (Fig. 29). These early dates again suggest the possibility that these tin-glazed sherds came from an earlier occupation; however, their stratigraphic association with the later pearlwares and creamwares makes this unlikely. As with the stoneware, the spatial distribution of these refined wares is concentrated in F-Block, and C-Block, further supporting the argument that the primary refuse deposition area associated with the main structure (where such delicate curated goods would likely have been stored) is located to the northeast of the cellar hole in units B4 and B5, near the sheet midden in C14 and the midden in F2/7 and F3.5.

Figure 30: Detail of tin-glazed sherd decorated with handpainted blue-on-white vase and floral motif.

Thus we are again faced with the possibility that older materials are being curated and passed down as heirlooms by the Nipmuc family that occupied this tract of land in the 18th and 19th century. That they are doing so with "European" material culture is testament to the manner in which this Nipmuc family had incorporated this non-native

material culture into their traditions. When taken in concert with the landholding tradition active within this community, this practice of passing down of heirlooms appears only more plausible. The documentary sources have shown that Sarah Burnee Phillips inherited the house her mother had built along with the surrounding land, when she came of age in 1768. Presumably this house contained the materials that her mother had accumulated before her death in 1751, a time in which the popularity and accessibility of tin-glaze ceramics was still high. It is argued that some of these materials, specifically the tin-glaze ceramics, stonewares and porcelains still to be discussed, have been found at the site of the 1795 house of Sarah Burnee Phillips and Sarah Boston that is the focus of this project.

Porcelain

The results of the analysis of the 2006 porcelain assemblage from the site are strikingly similar to those discussed above for both stoneware and tin-glazed ceramics. Similarly, porcelain is found at lower frequencies than most other ceramics on site, yielding a total of only 80 sherds, a characteristic that Adams (2003) has identified as being potentially diagnostic of the value or esteem in which certain objects were held. The analysis of these sherds proved difficult as the majority of the sherds recovered were of small size or were lacking any diagnostic features such that identification beyond basic differences was impossible. Of the 2006 assemblage, 11 sherds were more precisely identified: 8 are Chinese Nanking porcelain which was produced from 1770-1795 for export to America and 3 are Chinese export porcelain from Canton, produced between 1800-1830 (Figs. 31 & 32). Together, all of the porcelain yielded a mean ceramics date of 1737, a date skewed by the long production dates for general porcelain (1660-1800) that were assigned to the

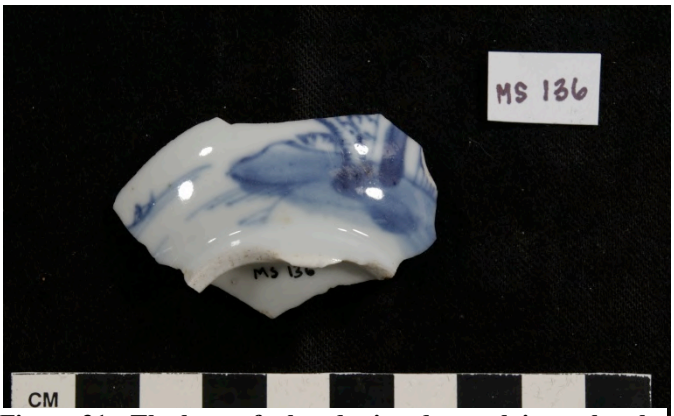

Figure 31: The base of a handpainted porcelain tea bowl.

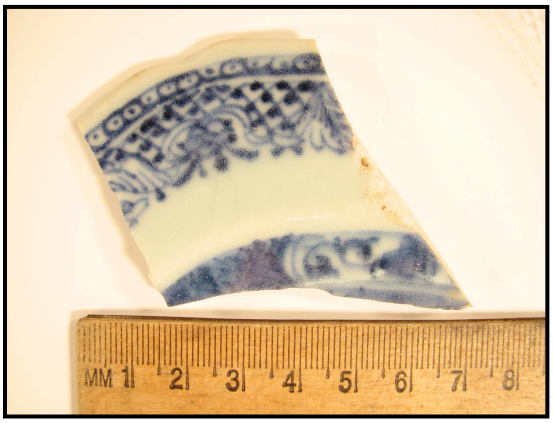

Figure 32: Nanking Porcelain sherd with blue hand painted decoration.

undecorated sherds with no diagnostic characteristics. Nevertheless, the 11 sherds that yielded more precise dates are supportive of the presence of the Sarah Burnee/Sarah Boston house on the property circa 1790-1830. It is possible that the Nanking porcelain recovered was also curated, as its earlier production dates, coupled with the precedent set by both the stoneware and tin-glaze assemblages would tend to support this conclusion.

Despite the small sized sherds of the 2006 porcelain assemblage, it was possible to identify the vessel forms and associated function of the tablewares recovered. Of the 80 sherds recovered a minimum of 11 vessels were identified based on the presence of 11 distinct foot rings (Fig. 33). All of these foot rings are consistent with the size and form of tea wares and other fine tablewares. However the porcelain recovered is not of high-quality and is in some cases rather coarsely decorated. Nevertheless, their presence on site, coupled with other refined stonewares used for serving tea and other foodstuffs, hints at the practice of entertaining by this Nipmuc family. The practice of entertaining, the forms it took, and the role it played in the experience of the Nipmuc in the changing world they were a part of bears further exploration. A facet of the role entertaining played within the community is explored through a different class of artifacts recovered: glass tableware and glass bottles.

Figure 33: Porcelain teaware footring.

Complete Analysis of the 2006 Ceramic Assemblage

As a whole, the ceramic assemblage recovered during the 2006 excavations exhibited a variety of vessel forms and decorative treatments. The analysis of the assemblage illuminates the sizable investment that was made by the Nipmuc inhabitants of the site in purchasing decorated ceramics. A minimum of 8% (or 1921) sherds were decorated in some fashion, and over 51% of the minimum vessels counted showed some form of decoration (Pezzarossi 2008). Much of the assemblage was comprised of tablewares and drinking vessels suggesting their use in food consumption and entertaining. In addition, the variability of vessel forms identified speaks powerfully to the household's use of colonial ceramic vessels as facilitators of social exchanges within the colonial world they inhabited by favoring the purchase of more expensive decorated wares likely utilized in entertaining.

The variability of vessel forms present in the assemblage has been interpreted (after Mrozowski 2000) as being indicative of an elevated degree of dining formality that would necessitate various specialized vessel forms (see also Wall 2000). Furthermore, of the 2006 assemblage, more flatware sherds were identified than hollowware sherds, an observation that serves to further support the interpretation of elevated dining formality being practiced by the Nipmuc inhabitants, as greater amounts of flatwares have been historically interpreted as being indicative of consumption of portioned or segmented meals, usually prepared from more expensive cuts of meat (Shackel 1993:5; Groover 2003:238). Interestingly enough, large serving vessels were predominantly hollowwares, suggesting that a degree of hybridizing of formal segmented dining practices and more communal foodways. In addition, Yentsch (1990) and Groover (2003:238) have argued that semi-liquid or liquid food preparations such as soups, stews, and pottages have been historically linked to traditional Native American and African food preparations. Thus the large number of serving bowls in the assemblage has been interpreted as evidence that the Nipmuc inhabitants continued to practice traditional meal preparations. Their use could have also encouraged communality through their serving as the central focus of the table setting in large serving bowls, all the while lying side by side with segmented meals

likely pre-served on flatware tablewares, typical of more formal dining practices (Pezzarossi 2008).

2006-2007 Glass Assemblage

The glass assemblage from the Sarah Boston site has been divided into separate categories, based mainly on whether it is flat window glass or curved tableware and bottle glass. The window glass, which numbers 1798 fragments, has been included in the above discussion and interpretation of architectural remains. The remaining curved glass totaled 1992 pieces, of which 46% were tablewares (such as tumblers, stemware, and decanters) and 50% were the remains of glass bottles (Fig. 34). The remaining 4% represented lamp glass fragments. The glass bottles were analyzed, cataloged, and reconstructed, and found to represent a myriad of bottle forms with identifiable functions. The bottle forms present included whiskey flasks, wine bottles, medicine bottles, a small perfume bottle base and other general use glass vessels. When analyzing bottle glass it is necessary to keep in mind that during the period we are examining (1790-1840) the shortage of bottles produced and the high cost of bottle manufacture demanded a high rate of bottle reuse (Busch 1987:77). Thus identification of specific bottle forms is important in recognizing what sorts of goods the inhabitants had access to, but there is no way to account for what these bottles may have been used (and reused) for after their original contents had been consumed.

Figure 34: Detail of bottle glass lip fragments from bottles of varying sizes and shapes.

Glass tableware recovered from the site was predominantly clear, except for a few blue pieces, and fits with the late 18th early 19th century context in which the majority of glass tableware vessels were made of colorless lead or "flint" glass (Hooper 2006). A variety of vessel forms were identified such as tumblers, candlesticks (Fig. 35), decanters, and stemware (Fig. 36). Of the 915 total tableware fragments, 100 (11%) were decorated in some way, be it copper wheel engraving, incising, blown molding or press molding. Of the decorative motifs present on the recovered artifacts, pattern molding was the most common, as 33% of all the decorated glass tableware had this type of decoration. This is not surprising, considering that pattern molding represented one of the more popular and inexpensive decoration methods before the invention and widespread availability of pressed glasswares in the late 1820's (Jones and Sullivan 1985).

Figure 35: One of the few pressed glassware pieces found on the Sarah Boston Site.

Distribution across the site of bottle glass mirrored the distribution of other artifacts; unit C-14 contained 147 bottle glass fragments which was more than double the amount of the second most abundant unit (E-1). Both of these units are directly adjacent to the cellar area; however, high concentrations of bottle glass were also recovered in the F and G-Block areas, as well as moderate concentrations in the general C and A-block areas surrounding the house. Glass tableware followed a similar distribution pattern; however the tableware distribution was more marked in C-14 midden and the F and G-Block disposal area with relatively fewer tablewares in the C and A yard areas. The absence of tablewares in the general yard area surrounding the house can be attributed to the fact that tableware use was probably confined to the house, thus limiting breakage and scatter in the yard area and concentrating it in the house and refuse areas, whereas bottle use was probably more prolific in and around the house creating a more general scatter of bottle glass artifacts.

Figure 36: A stem fragment from a trumpet shaped wine glass.

Notable elements of the glass assemblage include the presence of at least 15-20 colorless tumbler bases, of which 36% are worked using lithic technology to form cutting implements (Fig. 37). The sheer number of tumblers on the site is significant alone, given the fact that tableware was very costly, especially prior to pressed glass technology and the beginning of the American glassware industry in the 1820s (Ketchum 1975). In fact, 90% of the tumblers found at the Sarah Boston Farmstead were hand blown, indicating they were likely imported from Europe before 1820 and purchased at a relatively high price in comparison to their American-made pressed counterparts. The number of glass tumblers on the Sarah Boston Site seems to speak to the great importance of social gathering at the farmstead (Law 2008).

Figure 37: Flaking present on the vertical edge of this decanter base evidences a working knowledge of lithic technology.

The preference for glass tumblers rather than less expensive ceramic or wooden vessels can be explained when the reuse of the bases is examined. Because she could reuse broken glass as raw material to make tools, Sarah Boston may have justified the higher cost of the glass tumblers (Law 2008). The practice of flaking glass into cutting tools (Fig. 37) becomes even more interesting when the abundance of metal knives on site is considered. A total of ten knives have been recovered, which implies that although Sarah had ample access to English tools, she sometimes preferred her flaked creations. This observation speaks powerfully to Sarah's resistance to colonial pressures directed at

Native people to assimilate the dominant colonial cultural forms at the expense of traditional Native ones. Sarah's engagement of European material culture and its modification and reuse through Native practices highlights a facet of the Nipmuc navigation of the colonial world and brings into sharp relief a physical manifestation of maintaining cultural continuity within a changing world (Law 2008).

Smoking Pipes

An analysis of the smoking pipe stem fragments (Fig. 38) recovered from the Sarah Boston site was completed; however, the small size of the assemblage impeded the interpretive value of this artifact type. As many of the other artifact types, only the 2006 material has been analyzed to date. A total of 28 stem fragments were recovered over the 2006 season. Bore diameter measurements of pipe stems were taken for use in determining the likely date of production of the pipe assemblage (see discussion of this analytical procedure in Noël Hume 1969:298-300). Using these data retrieved from the bore diameter measurements, a problematic date of 1761 for the production date of the pipes was computed. This 1761 date is an outlier when considered against the entirety of the other material culture from the Sarah Boston site. Furthermore, as Noël Hume (1969:298-300) postulates, an insufficient sample size of pipe stems may in fact lead to a skewing of dates calculated via pipe bore diameter analysis. This analytical tool may be better employed once a larger pipe stem assemblage from the Sarah Boston site has been recovered.

Figure 38: A sample of the pipe stem fragments from the Sarah Boston Site.

A preliminary analysis of the smoking pipe bowls (Fig. 39) has yielded further support for the date assigned to the Sarah Boston site. Based on a visual comparison of pipe bowl motifs from the artifacts recovered with Noël Hume's (1969:303) table of pipe bowl styles (and their associated time range), the pipe bowls from the Sarah Boston site appear to tightly fit within the 1780-1820 time range. This date range is in harmony with

the other materials recovered, and serves to further support our conclusions as to the date of occupation of the Sarah Boston site.

Figure 39: Detail of a smoking pipe bowl. The interior is visibly charred from use, while the exterior is mold decorated.

Objects of Personal Adornment

The Sarah Boston Site yielded a variety of objects of personal adornment. The majority of these consisted of different types of buttons and some buckle fragments. The button assemblage from both 2006 and 2007 seasons consisted of 108 buttons of varying styles, production dates and materials (Fig. 40). The majority of the buttons (41) were made of copper alloy, a common material for button construction in the 18th and 19th century. The minority portion of the buttons was made from pewter (4) and the remaining 2 were identified as being iron buttons. Both copper alloy and pewter buttons were fashionable in the latter part of the 18th century; however, pewter buttons were on the whole more inexpensive to produce than those made of copper alloys (White 2005). Many of the copper alloy buttons were either stamped or engraved with slogans touting the quality of the button (Fig. 41). These types of slogans are dateable by the phrases used, and the examples from the Sarah Boston site appear to coincide with English buttons produced between 1812-1820 (Noël Hume 1969, White 2005). Furthermore, the shanks at the rear portion of the buttons proved to be quite informative for dating the buttons. Using Olsen (1963, 1964), the two most numerous shank types (cast with the button and brass loop) identified were datable to the period

Figure 40: A portion of the button assemblage from the Sarah Boston Site.

Figure 41: Copper button detail showing stamped slogans on back.

1770-1812, consistent with the dates assigned to the bulk of the artifacts recovered from the site.

Further analysis of the 2006 button assemblage revealed insights into the different kinds of buttons recovered. Measuring the diameter of the buttons allows for identification of button types to be made, such as coat buttons, waistcoat buttons, or breeches buttons. The Sarah Boston assemblage was made up of 13 coat buttons, 15 waistcoat buttons, 13 sleeve buttons and 2 trouser buttons. One button that stood out from the rest was a large, bulbous two-piece press button identified as a "bullet" button (Fig. 42). Three such buttons have been recovered from the site. This style of button was produced between 1812-1830 for uniforms for the Army General Staff, dragoons, surgeons and the militia, and was in use during the War of 1812 (Olsen 1963:552).

Figure 42: Two military buttons found on site including one of three "bullet" buttons, at right.

A question arose over what the presence of these buttons on the site implied. There are a number of possible interpretations for these buttons, one of which is that the occupants of the site included someone working as seamstress or other textile repairer as a way to generate or supplement income (see Mullins 2004). Of note is that Mullins (2004) has discovered a concentration of buttons and pins directly underneath the house floor of an African American household in Indianapolis. Mullins (2004) postulates that this artifact concentration is the result of buttons and pins falling through the seams in the flooring of the home while seamstress labors were being performed. At the Sarah Boston

farmstead site, nearly 38% of the buttons recovered came from F-Block. C and F blocks together comprised 62% of the buttons recovered on the entire site. This is an intriguing possibility given that architectural recovered in this area suggest that it could have been the location of an outbuilding. The discovery of a heavy concentration of "brad" flooring nails in F-Block, which suggests this area as the previous location of a structure with hardwood floors, as well as a dense scatter of buttons within this area leads us to the question of whether these buttons represent depositional activity similar to that observed by Mullins (2004). Thus the possibility exists that these buttons were being deposited as a result of seamstressing labors performed by the Sarah Boston household in a building associated with the main household; however consideration must also be given to the possibility that these buttons were being purposefully acquired by the Nipmuc residents for their own personal use. Further analysis of these buttons, completing the analysis of the buttons from the 2007 assemblage, comparisons with other sites, and further excavation will all help in sorting out the questions that remain concerning the buttons.

Faunal Material

Figure 43: A *Sus scrofa* or pig molar.

The analysis of faunal remains recovered from the Sarah Boston Farmstead site is another facet of the project currently in progress. What has been completed at this time is a cursory analysis of the animal dentition that was collected. In the 2006 season a total of 137 teeth and tooth fragments were recovered, and all have been analyzed. The teeth were sorted and identified into four categories: *Sus scrofa* (pig; Fig. 43), *Bos Taurus* (cattle), *Caprine* (goat/sheep) and indeterminate teeth. Over 41% of the recovered teeth were not able to be identified, due to poor preservation. Of the identifiable specimens, the largest percentages were pig (18% of the total) followed by cattle (15%) and caprine (10%). The other 16% were roughly identified into two categories: large mammal (7%) and medium mammal (9%). The majority of the teeth recovered were molars (74%), which is due to the more robust nature of these teeth that allows them to better weather the taphonomic processes than smaller dentition.

The dentition analysis yielded information regarding age of the animals at death and allowed for a preliminary minimum number of individuals (MNI) to be calculated for the site. To date this analysis has revealed that there were at minimum 4 *Bos Taurus* specimens on site, two of which were adults and two of which were immature individuals. The MNI calculated for *Sus scrofa* and *Caprine* yielded the same result: at least 2 individuals of each, all of which were likely adults. Thus we can conclude from this information that a minimum the remains of 4 cattle, 2 pigs and 2 goats or sheep were disposed of at the site sometime during its occupation in the late 18th and early 19th century. What remains to be explored is whether these remains are from animals

kept on the farm or purchased at market. Analysis of the rest of the faunal material (including the analysis of butchering marks on the bones) may hold answers to this question, but this has yet to be completed.

Finally, a site-wide distribution of the dentition was undertaken in order to discern whether any spatial patterning might indicate a location where animals were being slaughtered. The results of this analysis are consistent with the rest of the material culture recovered from the site. Unit F3.5 contained the highest quantity of total teeth (41 of 137), and the other three northernmost units contained elevated levels of teeth fragments, once more suggesting that exploring the area to the northeast of the area excavated in 2006 should be a priority in 2008. The presence of animal teeth in the area of F-Block and C-Block again raises issues concerning whether that area represents a part of the yard adjacent to the main structure that was used for the disposal of household refuse, including bottles, ceramics and other faunal remains. Keeping in mind that only the faunal dentition has been analyzed, claims that this area between C and F blocks is for refuse discard are tentative at best. Further analysis of faunal remains may illuminate butchering strategies as well as cuisine preferences and food preparation techniques practiced by the 18th and 19th century inhabitants of this tract of land.

Summary

The results of the excavations conducted at the Sarah Boston Farmstead during the summers of 2006 and 2007 have yielded a wealth of information concerning the Nipmuc inhabitants of the 1728 Peter Muckamaug Parcel. Based on the discoveries of stone concentrations, architectural debris, and other classes of datable material culture there seems little question that our assumption at the start of the investigations – that the site was that of a Native farmstead dating to the period 1790-1840 – has proven correct. Documentary evidence also seems to indicate that the bulk of the material culture recovered during the course of our investigations was owned, used and discarded by members of the Sarah Burnee Phillips and Sarah Boston households. The close articulation of these two independent bodies of information provide strong evidence that

the archaeological remains found in Hassanamesit Woods are indeed those of Nipmuc households headed by women who were well known to the town of Grafton.

The material culture found in association with the structural remains has also added to an emerging picture of the site's residents. The fact that the bulk of the material can be tightly dated lends support to the idea of a household living on the site between 1790 and 1840; however, earlier material suggests several additional interpretive avenues. The most notable are the earlier ceramics and what they suggest about the practice of curating materials from earlier households. This could take several forms, and all must be considered at this point. It could represent material from an earlier household that essentially occupied the same site. This would be linked to documentary and architectural evidence that notes earlier structures. It could also represent the purchase of older items and could therefore be interpreted as evidence of economizing behavior.

Still another possibility is that the presence of this earlier material also speaks to issues of social class, and this interpretation is supported to some degree by the presence of buttons possibly indicative of manual labor performed on site. Another scenario is that some combination of all of these behaviors helped to shape the consumption practices of the Nipmuc residents of the site.

Figure 44: The steatite bowl fragment.

It may be possible that the practice of curated heirlooms extends to much earlier materials recovered from the site, most notably the fragment of a steatite (soap stone) bowl (Fig. 44). Given that this was recovered in association with European manufactured goods consistent with those found over the site as a whole, it seems more than plausible that it too represents an iteming that was purposely curated by the site's inhabitants. Gary (2005) did note the presence of artifacts linked to a much earlier occupation of the site

(4,000-8,000 years old) and there is little doubt that the soap stone bowl fragment could be associated with one of these earlier periods. This has to be considered as the most likely possibility. Yet the probability exists that the artifact could have been found on the site, or brought to the site by one of its inhabitants and was being purposely curated because of its recognized links to earlier stages of Native American occupation of the landscape.

This and other possibilities need further consideration and evidence before they can be offered with much assurance. What does not need further support are the basic discoveries made in Hassanamesit Woods and the links between the artifacts and Nipmuc households of known individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When the excavations at Hassanamesit Woods started in May of 2006 most of us associated with the project felt confident that previous work on the property had successfully discovered the remains of a Native American farmstead occupied between 1790 and 1840. Nothing that we have found counters this interpretation. In fact the evidence overwhelmingly confirms the conclusions reached at the end of our initial survey of the property (Gary 2005). Of course nothing is a sure thing in archaeology and our assumptions concerning the presence of house remains and their documented association needed to be proven through field excavation. One of the most obvious conclusions that can be drawn from the excavations, accompanying documentary research, and preliminary analysis of the various classes of material culture recovered from the site is that the site we are excavating in Hassanamesit Woods is that of the Sarah Burnee Phillips/Sarah Boston Farmstead. We believe we have unearthed the foundation and cellar hole of a dwelling that could date to as early as the mid-18th century. That would make it the 1749 house built by Sarah Muckamaug-Burnee and Fortune Burnee. This hypothesis is based upon the presence of three types of refined stonewares, Jackfield, white salt-glazed and Nottingham stonewares, as well as tin-glazed, buff bodied earthenwares all of which date generally to middle of the 18th century. Support also comes from documentary sources that indicate that Sarah Burnee Phillips inherited the dwelling of her mother. If this is the case, then the earlier ceramics remained in use during the second half of the 18th century or were being purposely curated.

The preponderance of data recovered from the past two summers' investigations paints the picture of a late 18th and early 19th century household that has strong economic connections to the community at large and exhibits the trappings of an emerging middle class sensibility. Perhaps the most important implication of these findings is the contrasting image they present when compared to some of the characterizations provided

in 19th and early 20th century historical descriptions of individuals such as Sarah Boston. Allusions to her drinking for example are borne out by a glass assemblage that provides evidence of alcohol consumption on a par with that of most New England households at that time. Equally important, however, is ceramic evidence of gentile practices such as the taking of tea in Chinese porcelain tea cups. These sorts of contrasts are important to highlight for two reasons. First, they demonstrate one of the values of using the type of empirical research that archaeology represents to test written descriptions that come down to us as "history." Second, they help to construct a more textured, and in many instances, more nuanced picture of the past. A good example of this comes from the recent work carried out by Oakfield Research (2008) and in particular Electa Tritsch (2006), in which the preliminary results of the archaeological research are woven together with historical depictions gleaned from secondary sources to present a more complete picture.

Comparing the archaeological results with images presented in the writings of 19th or 20th century historians also provides a point of departure for statements concerning the transformation of the Sarah Burnee Phillips dwelling from "a dirt floored, unfinished, half-derelict shack" into a "respectable Anglo-American home" (Oakfield Research 2007:15). The results of the excavations and analysis clearly point to several periods of building and renovation, but they say nothing that supports the characterization of the previous dwelling as a "derelict shack," and therefore such a depiction must be approached with suspicion. The convergence of architectural and foodways related data unearthed on the site with information from primary documents concerning the purchase of floor boards lends support to the description of the Sarah Boston dwelling as being "respectable." We have little doubt that members of this Nipmuc household may well have aspired to be "respectable" in the sense that historian Woodruff Smith (2002) has articulated. Smith describes the long and in many respects revolutionary changes that took place between the 17th and the 19th centuries in the production and consumption of material goods. He links these changes to a sweeping new cultural sensibility that moves beyond the more narrowly defined pursuit of "gentility" (Bushman 1992; McCracken 1988; Martin 1994, 1996) toward a broader quest for respectability that Smith traces from the early 17th century well into the 19th century (Smith 2002:26-27).

Notions such as gentility or respectability often make use of the parlance of the period in question. From our perspective both of these terms are best understood as expressions of class and all that that encompasses (Bledstein and Johnstone 2001; McGuire 2003; Mrozowski 2006; Wurst and Fitts 1999; Wurst and McGuire 1999). Class was most certainly an issue in a town such as Grafton as it was throughout New England and the United States. Our goal is to try and understand what class meant to the Nipmuc and the role it played, along with other factors such as race and gender in shaping Nipmuc identity during the early 19th century. Fortunately the results of the archaeology have provided important evidence concerning the material lives of the residents of the site and these can be used to construct a general picture of what life was like for those who lived there. Our discussion will be broken down into thematic sections dealing with architecture and social space, foodways, and identity.

Architecture and Social Space

As noted above, we believe that we have successfully identified the foundation for the dwelling that probably was home to both Sarah Burnee Phillips and her daughter Sarah Boston. Given the presence of material culture dating to the mid-18th we believe that it is likely that a portion of an earlier structure was incorporated into the new house Sarah Burnee Phillips and Boston Phillips constructed in 1795. If this interpretation is correct then it would have been the house built in 1749 by Sarah Muckamaug-Burnee and her husband Fortune Burnee. Excavations carried out in 2007 successfully identified foundation remains and additional architectural evidence including nails, hinges and window parts. The "A.Ellis" tag recovered from the foundation area also confirms that the blacksmith Amos Ellis did manufacture items for use in the house we have uncovered.

The architectural items recovered over the past two summers do provide some details about just what the dwelling may have looked like. The best example of course is the remains of a window that is a much older style than would have been expected in a building constructed and substantially altered during the second half of the 18th century.

Given the steps taken to add flooring to the dwelling and the expenditure this represents, it seems somewhat questionable why older windows would have been purposely incorporated into the structure. The window remains could have been associated with the circa 1749 dwelling, or possibly even and earlier structure linked possibly to the household of Sarah Robbins and Peter Muckamaug. Still another possibility is that a section of an earlier building was added on to and that the earlier windows were in that portion of the dwelling that Sarah Boston would have lived in as a child.

In addition to these questions of who and when, the architectural data provide information about the use of space within and possibly outside of the structure. The discovery of the trash deposit (Feature 39) in unit C-14 suggests that this area immediately to the northwest of the foundation may have been a yard area where food preparation was being conducted. Support for this also comes from the large, earth oven-like feature (Feature 24) unearthed in units C17 and C18. The fact that the material culture from Feature 39 contained so many reconstructable ceramic and glass vessels indicates that it is a primary deposit. This stands in contrast to the dense midden-like remains found in G-Block. Although the units from this block produced a large and varied assemblage, few reconstructable vessels were recovered from this area.

At the close of the 2006 season the large clustering of nails in C-Block suggested to us that this could be the southeastern boundary of a building that would have extended into H-Block, but this did not prove to be the case. What it could represent is an area that was used to collect wood and other materials from the original house after it was no longer inhabited. Perhaps the house collapsed and fell in this direction; perhaps it was salvaged by someone in the late nineteenth century. One other possibility is that the nails are associated with the "Old Barn" noted in documentary sources and the foundation was later disturbed as part of the landscaping for the twentieth century orchard.

Our investigations in H-Block did not prove fruitless as they unearthed the large pit and quarried bedrock uncovered in Units H-1 and H-2. The excavation of arbitrary levels within stratigraphic layers proved particularly important in this area because it enabled us to discern the outline of the pit originally dug to expose or further expose the bedrock outcrop that was quarried for stone. The extensive residue of quarrying debitage

recovered from the pit provided further evidence of quarrying as well as the scars on the bedrock itself.

Material culture recovered from D-Block suggests it may signal the location of a possible building. The concentrations of red bodied earthenwares from this area when compared with other areas excavated on the site suggest that that D-Block might be the location of an out-building of some kind, most likely a dairy.

Foodways

Rather than refer solely to diet when considering the production and consumption of food, historical archaeologists have long employed the concept of foodways to incorporate all facets of eating. Most importantly, this approach acknowledges the myriad cultural practices that surround the conceptualization of food from its production, to its preparation, presentation, consumption and discard (Deetz 1977). Over time, historical archaeologists have developed this idea so that now foodways practices are viewed as expressions of class, ethnicity, and identity.

Many of the artifacts recovered from the Sarah Boston farmstead are related to the foodways practices of the site's inhabitants. Although the faunal results are limited and incomplete, they suggest that the household had a modest collection of animals. The evidence of four cows, two pigs, and two sheep or goats suggests that animal husbandry was not a commercial enterprise for the Nipmuc living in Hassanamesit Woods. What is more likely is that the animals served the needs of the household itself, possibly in the production of milk, or for consumption purposes only. Further analysis of the faunal remains recovered in 2006 and 2007 may alter or clarify this picture. One question we hope to pursue is what percentage of the diet is being made of up of wild plants and animals. Eighteenth-century Native American sites have rarely been identified and even fewer excavated, but those that have often have produced evidence that indicates that while European domesticated plants and animals were being more widely consumed, the bulk of the diet still relied heavily upon wild plants and animal species (McBride 2005:42-51). And even those domesticated plants that were adopted, such as apples and peaches, were similar enough to Native dietary mainstays such as nuts, that it suggests a

continuation of long standing traditions (McBride 2005:55). This contrasts with many Anglo-America sites that over time show a progressive reliance on the market for their domestic animal needs.

It is the material culture recovered from the site that speaks most directly to the question of foodways practices within the Sarah Boston household. Based on the analysis to date, it seems that in many respects the ceramics and glassware suggest a household very much like those of their Anglo-American neighbors. If there is a single conclusion that can be reached from the overall picture that emerges from the material culture, it is of a household that had access to the trappings of middle class life. In this sense we can see that the Nipmuc took steps to construct identities from a material world that was essentially the same as that of their Anglo-American neighbors. Given the growing power of mass production typified by items such as ceramics and glassware it should come as little surprise that the material world of the residents of Hassanamesit Woods was dominated by goods of European and English manufacture. Some of the red paste earthenwares and stonewares may have been locally produced, but these too were Anglo-American products.

One of the difficulties facing both the residents of Hassanamesit Woods and contemporary archaeologists is trying to discern those elements of the material world that might suggest Native American agency. In other words, what strategies did the members of Sarah Boston's household employ in their struggle for self-determination? There seems little doubt that the highly racialized climate in which they lived would have accentuated the distance that separated the Native and Anglo-American communities. The tenor and character of that climate are clearly visible in the writings of 19th and early 20th century histories that depict the Nipmuc as a dying people. If there is a single image that characterizes the perception of the Anglo-American community concerning Native peoples of Southern New England, it was that they were race of people headed toward eventual extinction (see Den Ouden 2005:29-30).

The image that emerges from the archaeology of Hassanamesit Woods is of a household holding its ground, partaking of the material trappings of middle class society, and continuing to maintain a strong level of independence in the face of dwindling resources and land. A concrete example of this may be the ceramics from the site that

contain both ample flatware and hollowware forms to both allow for formal dining and the consumption of stews that were more in-keeping with traditional Naïve American foodways. This is how we have chosen to interpret the architectural remains and foodways related material culture we have recovered, as evidence of resistance to an ever encroaching Anglo-American society through both mimicry and the persistence of Native cultural practices.

Nipmuc Identity

The descriptions of Sarah Boston as a larger than life figure who wore men's clothing and drank heavily is, to some degree, supported by the material culture recovered during our excavations. There is evidence of drinking and smoking as there most assuredly would have been in virtually every household in a community such as Grafton during the late 18th and early 19th century. There is evidence, however, that does point to cultural persistence and continuity. Although the material evidence of identity often takes subtle form (Loren and Beaudry 2006; Mrozowski 2000, 2006), there are materials that suggest an evolving Nipmuc identity that retained elements of traditional practices as well as new, hybrid realities. The traces of the emerging portrait suggests a household that used its ability to purchase material goods very much like those their Anglo-American neighbors possessed as a strategy to combat racial and class stereotypes. We are under no illusion that such a strategy would have crushed the racial and class barriers that would have punctuated the lives of people such as Sarah Boston, but we choose to interpret the presence of items such as cut glassware, Chinese porcelain and refined earthenwares as evidence of a strategy of resistance. Are we seeing mimicry such as that described by postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhaba who see it potentially as an example of civil disobedience (1985:163; see also Ashcroft 2001: 50-55; Parry 2004:55-72)?

From this postcolonial perspective, the dwelling constructed by Sarah Burnee Phillips and lived in by Sarah Boston would have represented a space of resistance in which new cultural practices could have been played out. At present we have little evidence of such practices with three possible exceptions. The first is the evidence of an

exterior hearth or oven, the second is evidence of flaked glass, and the third is the fragment of a soap stone bowl. The presence of an exterior hearth is similar to that found at Magunkaquog (Mrozowski et al 2005) and may represent a persistence of Nipmuc spatial practices. At Magunkaquog an exterior hearth was unearthed that was also used to heat quartz in order to aid in the extraction of crystals. It was the only evidence of a hearth recovered at the site. Given that Magunkaquog was also a Nipmuc community it is possible that the use of exterior hearths was part of a Native sensibility that continued to hold meaning well into the 19th century.

The presence of flaked glass on site is a second example of a possible hybrid cultural form. The use of European glass for the production of Native tools is a common practice on colonial sites (see Silliman 2003). In the case of Hassanamesit Woods there is evidence of both flaked bottle glass and glass tableware and small retouch flakes that suggest a rather refined knowledge of lithic technology. This too would have been a persistence of Native technology that indicates a coming together of cultural forms to create something quite different: glass tools.

The final piece of evidence that suggests the continuing importance of Native technology is the fragment of soap stone bowl. At present it is difficult to say with any assurance that this artifact represents a conscious effort on the part of the residents of Hassanamesit Woods to retain some connection to a deeper past. Yet at the same time it is difficult not to interpret this particular item in just such as manner. Based on the results of the intensive survey there is ample evidence of a long and continuous Native presence on the property (Gary 2005). However, the only example we have of such an item is the soap stone bowl fragment recovered in a context that was clearly historic. Therefore it is possible that the members of the Sarah Burnee Phillips and Sarah Boston households were well aware of what this item represented. If our interpretation is correct then we expect to find other such items in contexts that suggest they were being purposely curated. Discoveries like this remind us all of the deep attachment Native peoples have to both their lands and their traditions.

Recommendations

The combined archaeological and archival evidence suggests that Hassanamesit Woods contains extensive cultural resources that can contribute to the rediscovery of a rich and informative history. With this in mind, we offer the following recommendations for future research and conservation.

1) That work at Hassanamesit Woods continue in collaboration with the Town of Grafton and The Nipmuc Nation for at least one more season.

2) Fiske Center Staff will continue to work with the Town and Nipmuc Nation on plans for interpretive use of the property and enhanced web based capabilities. This will entail connecting links between the planned projects web site, that of the Fiske Center and the Nipmuc Nation.

3) Steps should be taken to protect the property. Once the results of the archaeological research are disseminated there will be increased possibility of destruction from those interested in plundering the site for personal gain.

4) In consultation with the Nipmuc Nation and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Town of Grafton should consider establishing a local ordinance making it a felony to disturb the property through sub-surface excavation.

5) The Town should consider further development of web aided interpretive and educational programs for the property. It has a rich history that needs to be both protected and used for the public good.

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