

1995

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Recommended Citation

Beaudry, Mary C. (1995) "Scratching the Surface: Seven Seasons at the Spencer-Pierce-Little Farm, Newbury, Massachusetts," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 24 24, Article 4.
<https://doi.org/10.22191/neha/vol24/iss1/4> Available at: <http://orb.binghamton.edu/neha/vol24/iss1/4>

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Cover Page Footnote

Many thanks to The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and its staff for sponsoring and supporting the archaeology at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, especially to Jane Nylander, President; Myron Stachiw, Director of Research Services; Elisabeth C. Byers, formerly Administrator of Environmental Properties; and Tracey A. Fortier, Regional Administrator for Newbury. I am especially grateful to all of the volunteers from the Newbury area and elsewhere, the most loyal of whom has been James A. Newton, the most entertaining and indefatigable of whom has been Carl L. Crossman. Thanks also to the many students from Boston University and elsewhere who have worked on the project as students or volunteers, especially Ellen P. Berkland and Brendan McDermott, who made the field drawing for Figure 10. Special thanks to Sara F. Mascia, who served as my assistant on the project from 1986-1993; to David B. Landon for field assistance and faunal analysis; to Sally Pendleton and Maureen Smyth for ethnobotanical analyses; to Gerald K. Kelso for pollen analysis; to Timothy J. Scarlett for field assistance, petrographic analysis, and for drafting the plan of the Scullery area that appears as Figure 9; to Carolyn White for field assistance and for supervising volunteers in the lab; to David E. Clayton for the EDM survey and GIS maps (one of which appears as Figure 5); to Michael Hamilton for photography; to Stephan H. Claesson for field assistance and for making the field drawing that appears as Figure 11; and to Sally Pendleton, Karen Bescherer Metheny, and Alison Dwyer for field assistance. Robert E. Schultz produced the finished drawings for Figures 1, 8, 10 and 11. The project is truly a team effort, with a large and changing team; if I've failed to mention anyone here, they have my thanks nonetheless. The interpretations are my own, but come not so much out of my head as out of many discussions with and suggestions from students and colleagues, including the constructive reviews of two valued colleagues, Lu Ann De Cunzo and Julia A. King. I accept full responsibility for my interpretations, not wanting to refer to them as conclusions, however; I hope that the discussions will continue.

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE: SEVEN SEASONS AT THE SPENCER-PEIRCE-LITTLE FARM, NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

Mary C. Beaudry

Results of excavations conducted between 1986 and 1994 at the Spencer-Peirce-Little farm, Newbury, Massachusetts, are summarized and evaluated in light of the research questions that have guided the project to date. Under continuous occupation and cultivation from 1635 to the present, the site has the potential to contribute to many topics of interest to historical archaeologists working in New England and elsewhere, including questions about ideological and practical aspects of landscape and land use; changing agricultural practice and the effects of agricultural reform; farm tenancy; the archaeology of the household and homelot; relationships between urban and rural contexts in early America; and a host of other issues.

L'Auteur résume et évalue les résultats des fouilles effectuées en 1986-1994 à Newbury (Massachusetts), à la lumière des questions de recherche qui ont guidé les travaux jusqu'ici. Occupé et cultivé sans interruption de 1635 jusqu'à aujourd'hui, le site est susceptible de fournir un apport aux nombreuses questions d'intérêt pour les archéologues historiques qui exercent leur activité en Nouvelle-Angleterre et ailleurs, y compris des questions concernant les aspects idéologiques et pratiques du paysage et de l'utilisation du sol, l'évolution de la pratique agricole et les effets de la réforme agricole, l'occupation de la ferme, l'archéologie du ménage et du terrain de la maison, les relations entre les contextes urbain et rural dans les débuts des États-Unis et une foule d'autres questions.

Introduction

After nearly a decade of intermittent excavation, the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm (FIG. 1) continues to offer up evidence of its long and complex history. This article presents an overview of the archaeological work conducted to date; excavations, however, are still in progress. The project has the potential to contribute to our understanding of many aspects of life in early New England, and prospects for future excavation and analyses of previously excavated data and materials are manifold. In this article, results and prospects are sketched in the broadest outlines.

From the outset, one of the chief aims of archaeological study of the property has been to provide both a chronological and an ethnographic framework for understanding and interpreting changing human-land relationships from the early 17th century to the present. The overarching theme of land use is intentionally broad, because it permits an approach that is open to a wide range of issues. The Spencer-Peirce-Little site has the

potential to contribute to important historical issues: notably, the transplantation of English regional culture into the New World and resulting transformations and adaptations to a new environment and to different peoples; the growth of a merchant aristocracy in 17th- and 18th-century New England and its rural expression through the establishment of "country seats" or estates; and the effects of agricultural reform on the practice of farming and the spatial layout of farmsteads. The site further provides an excellent case study for pursuing ways of linking historically- and anthropologically-derived models of households to site formation and site structure, thereby shedding light on the roles of both women and men as active agents in the constitution and reproduction of family and family identity.

The research framework is contextual and interpretive. Context is here defined as historical and cultural as well as archaeological and environmental, hence documentary analysis as well as archaeological methods have been aimed at recovering data at once highly partic-

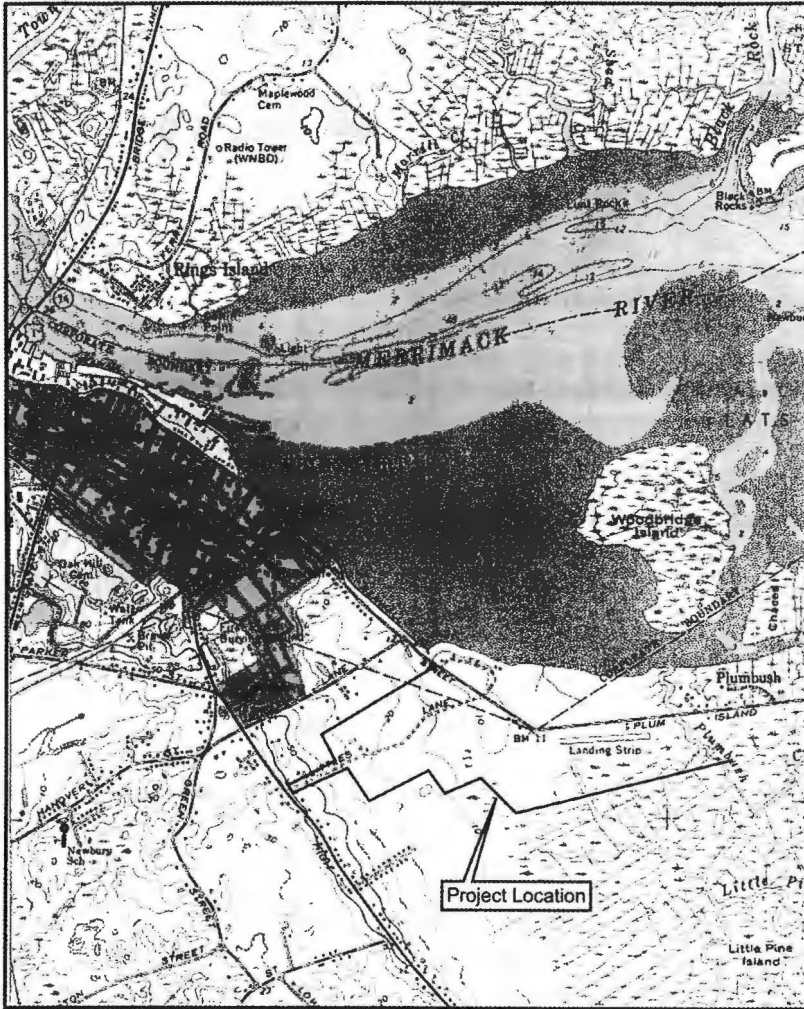


Figure 1. Location of the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, Newbury, Massachusetts.

ularistic and site-specific as well as more general in scope. The site, its environs, and its occupants' relations with the outside world of kin, neighbors, and community are considered. The research framework applied here bears affinities with contextual archaeology as described by Hodder (1991) and acknowledges Hodder's significant contribution in introducing a "post-processual" form of contextual archaeology. It originated, however, from a much older lineage within anthropological archaeology, incorporating a reformulation of the conjunctive approach stressed by Taylor (1948; see also Deetz 1988; Yentsch 1992:

38-40) with concern for environmental factors as outlined by Butzer (1982; see also Beaudry and Mrozowski 1989). The aim is to blend the best of available approaches by defining context in the broadest sense possible.

Historical Background

The Spencer-Peirce-Little farm, ca. 230 acres in size, is what remains of a 400-acre parcel granted to John Spencer in 1635 in payment for his role as a founder of the town of Newbury. The parcel has been a working farm since that time, although the crops grown and



Figure 2. The Spencer-Peirce-Little House as it appeared ca. 1890. (Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.)

Table 1. Chronology of ownership and occupation of the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm.

1635–1649	John Spencer worked/occupied by tenants?	Grant
1649–1651	John Spencer (nephew) worked/occupied by tenants	Inheritance
1651–1677	Daniel Peirce, Sr. and Anne Milward Peirce	Purchase
1677–1704	Daniel Peirce, Jr. and Elizabeth Milward Peirce	Inheritance
1705–1711	Benjamin and Lydia Frost Peirce	Inheritance
1711–1713	Estate in Probate	
1713–1764	Charles Peirce, Sr. and Sarah Frost Peirce	Inheritance
1764–1772	Charles Peirce, Jr. and wife	Inheritance
1772–1778	Estate in Probate	
1778	William Peirce and Daniel Peirce	Inheritance
1778–1786	Nathaniel and Mary Lee Tracy	Purchase
1786–1791	Thomas Russell (leased to Patrick Tracy, occupied by Nathaniel Tracy & family)	Purchase
1791–1797	Nathaniel and Mary Lee Tracy	Exchange
1797–1813	Offin and Sarah Tappan Boardman	Purchase
1813–1827	John Pettingel (used as a summer residence)	Purchase
1827–1861	Heirs of John Pettingel (occupied by tenants; leased to Edward H. Little from 1850s)	Inheritance
1861–1877	Edward Henry and Catherine Adams Little	Purchase
1877–1922	Edward Francis and Daniel Noyes Little	Inheritance
1922–1986	Amelia W. and Agnes L. Little	Inheritance
1986–Present	Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities	Deed of Gift

livestock raised there have varied considerably. One of the current farmers who leases fields from the present owners (The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, hereafter SPNEA), raises flowers for his dried-flower business, which he operates out of a restored 18th-century barn. At the core of fallow and cultivated fields, salt marsh, and woodland sits the Spencer-Peirce-Little house, built ca. 1690 of local stone with brick detailing (FIG. 2). Its attached wood-frame tenant farmer's house, surviving outbuildings,¹ and expansive open fields forestalling the encroachment of 20th-century suburbia convey an impression of the site's rural, agrarian past. For many visitors, this vista evokes a

sense of permanency, of an unchanging landscape surviving nearly intact into the modern world. The illusion that the past lives in the present is strong and abiding, but it is an impression contradicted by the archaeological evidence. Increasingly, scholars have been led to conclude that change, variety, and instability are as characteristic of rural landscapes as they are of cities (e.g., Worrell 1993; Garrison 1996; Worrell, Stachiw, and Simmons 1996).

John Spencer (1604–1648) was the first owner of the property (TAB. 1). Spencer's use of his allotment of upland established the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm as a commercial venture from its inception. Spencer was granted up to 10 times the amount of common land for grazing allotted to many other town residents. Spencer returned to England in 1637 or 1638, consigning oversight of his Newbury

¹These include a 19th-century carriage house and the above-mentioned 18th-century barn.

lands to his nephew (also John Spencer), and died in London a bachelor. He left behind a number of articles as well as livestock. Mentioned in his will drawn up in 1637 were "11 coves, 3 Heyfors, 4 oxen, 1 steere, 4 cove calves, 1 bull, 7 steere calves, 1 mare, 3 mare colts, besides a swine and poultry, corne, cloathes, apparell, Household stuffe" at Newbury (Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, MA [hereafter RFQCEC] I: 55–57). All of these were at Spencer's homelot in the original Newbury town settlement at the mouth of the Parker River. No mention is made in his will of goods or housing at his 400-acre farm lot a few miles north of the Parker River; the property was rented, probably to Thomas Coleman, who is mentioned as "having taken a farme" as early as 1645 (Currier 1896: 30). In 1651, when Spencer's nephew and heir, John Spencer, conveyed 300 acres of his inheritance to his uncle Daniel Peirce, Sr., the deed provided that "the yearely rents during the time that Thomas Coleman hath in the farm yet to come, which is two years, being reserved & excepted unto the use of the said John Spencer" (RFQCEC I: 285), indicating that Coleman was still a tenant on the land. Thus Spencer-Peirce-Little was from the beginning a farm operating for profit as well as subsistence that depended on tenant farmers for much of its productivity.

Daniel Peirce, Sr. purchased Spencer's property along with "all housing, barnes, cow-houses, orchard, garden and fences" (Salem Registry of Deeds, Ipswich Series, Book 1: 96). Peirce acquired a working farm of considerable extent with numerous valuable improvements; in the bargain, he acquired at least one tenant farmer who was supposed to pay rent to the former owner. Peirce continued to use the farm to raise livestock, although he spent 1665–1670 in New Jersey. Daniel Peirce, Jr. managed his father's Newbury town property while he was in New Jersey and took over the operation of the farm.

Daniel Peirce, Sr. was the first owner of the farm who was married and who had a family of any size (Peirce 1880; Hoyt 1875). The dwelling (FIG. 2) that survives on the property presumably was built by Daniel Peirce, Jr.,²

who inherited the farm at his father's death in 1677. The provisions of the will indicate that Peirce, Sr. intended to entail the estate to his male heirs; it further insured that Daniel's mother Anne "shall enjoy her former libertyes in the house during her life" and affirmed that Daniel, Sr. and his wife resided at the farm rather than in town. Daniel Peirce, Sr.'s inventory mentioned the farm, now ca. 230 acres in size, a malt house with 20 acres of upland and 33 acres of meadow along with the "furniture" for the maltings, 3 horses, 40 head of cattle, 160 sheep, 18 pigs, a wide variety of dairying utensils and other farm vehicles and equipment, and "Negros" valued at £60³ (Essex County Registry of Probate, Docket No. 21151).

Daniel Peirce, Jr. maintained two residences, a house at the farm as well as a house in town ("Newbury Port"), referred to as "new" in 1681 when a hurricane blew off its roof, causing the chimneys to collapse (Currier 1896: 670). He apparently continued to raise livestock on the farm and to grow barley for the maltings established at Newbury's water-side by his father as well as to rent land to tenant farmers in exchange for a portion of their crop (RFQCEC III: 130–132). Daniel, Jr. died in 1704 after adding considerably to the estate his father had left him. Although he carefully entailed his estate solely to his male heirs, directing emphatically in his will that "the Farme of my Honoured Father (deceased) bought of Mr John Spen[cer]" be kept intact; like his father, he made special provisions for his wife (he had married his stepsister Elizabeth Milward in 1660; they had five sons and five daughters). His instructions for Elizabeth's welfare are fairly detailed and reveal that she was expected to share the "stone house" with their oldest surviving son, Benjamin Peirce (b. 1668), who was principal heir and executor of his father's estate (Will of Daniel Peirce, Jr., August 12, 1701, Essex County Registry of Probate, Docket No. 21153).

Benjamin Peirce died in 1711 at age 42, having enjoyed his inheritance for only seven years. His death must have been unexpected, for he left no will. His wife Lydia was

² See below for a discussion of the archaeological evidence.

³ The value listed for the presumed slaves suggests they were two or three in number.

appointed executrix. Benjamin's debts were settled in 1716, and final division of his real estate did not take place until 1722 (it may have been in dispute among his sons and widow). His holdings were inventoried in 1713 as part of the settlement of his estate; the items listed include "utensils for husbandry" as well as a "flock off Cattell" and "Sheep young and old," various household goods, clothing, books, and "One Negroe Man Slave" valued at £30 (Essex County Registry of Probate, Docket No. 21142).

Benjamin and Lydia's son Charles Peirce, Sr. inherited the farm and lived on it until his death in 1764. In 1718 he married Sarah Frost of Kittery, Maine; Sarah and Charles had three children, Charles (b. 1719), Benjamin (b. 1723, d. 1765), and William (b. 1731). Charles, Sr.'s highly detailed estate inventory reveals much about the lifestyle of the occupants of the house as well as details concerning the operation of the farm. Charles, Sr. had an elaborate and colorful wardrobe; he also possessed law books and journals, more than 45 other books, about 70 pamphlets, personal arms and other weaponry, a silver watch, pewter, plate, fine furniture, and an array of household goods (including "Best" and "Course" earthenware). Further, there were numerous kitchen and dairying utensils, linens, and 2 "Lint wheels" listed in his inventory (Inventory of the Estate of Charles Peirce, esq., July 24, 1764, Essex County Registry of Probate, Docket No. 21149; see also Peirce 1880). The presence of 21 pounds of flax explains their purpose. A wide variety of carpentry and farm tools, including sheep shears, 21 pounds of wool, and 13 sheep with 11 lambs, salt hay in the barn, etc., are evidence of a productive and well-equipped farm.

Charles Peirce, Jr., who inherited at his father's death in 1764, took over a profitable working farm; he was referred to as a "Gentleman" by the men who compiled his estate inventory. After his death in 1772, his brother William undertook to settle the estates of both Charles, Sr. and Charles, Jr., the former estate having never been fully settled. In 1777, a series of indentures were filed that had the effect of docking the entail on the Peirce estate. William and Daniel Peirce apparently had no intention of living on the farm but were

instead interested in profiting from their anticipated inheritance. In 1778 the property was divided between these two, each receiving one-half of the house and one-half of the land. Daniel promptly sold his half to Nathaniel Tracy, and Tracy acquired the other half later the same year from William's widow Eunice.⁴

Over the ensuing 50 years, the property served as a country residence for wealthy Newburyport merchants, who found in the house and grounds a setting equivalent to the country seats many of their contemporaries were building (Grady 1992: 7–8; see also Thornton 1989). That the setting was not altogether perfect is reflected in architectural changes to the house proper as well as to changes to the landscape that we have learned of through archaeological investigation.

Nathaniel Tracy, son of Newburyport's most prominent merchant, Patrick Tracy, was himself a highly successful merchant in partnership with his brother and his brother-in-law Jonathan Jackson (Lee 1906; Labaree 1962: 10–11). Tracy married Mary Lee, daughter of Jeremiah Lee of Marblehead, considered "the great beauty of her day" (Lee 1906: 63). Of the Tracys' 11 children born during their marriage of 21 years, nine were living in 1796 and may have been part of the household during the Tracy tenure at the farm. Tracy was a privateer during the American Revolution. He amassed a vast fortune and lived in a lavish and grand scale until he went bankrupt in 1786 after an especially ambitious business deal went sour (Currier 1896: 37–38). Many late 18th-century travelers and diarists, Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams among them, recorded their visits to Tracy and his wife living in retirement at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. Tracy remodeled the house's interior in late Georgian fashion and rebuilt the chimney; much of the Georgian trim survives in place. It is likely he undertook these changes before he suffered his great financial losses, though it is also possible that he received assistance from his father in remodeling the house when

⁴ Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 135: 256–258; Division: Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 135: 259–261 and "Plan of Division of Land," Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 136: 67; Tracy purchase: Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 136: 91, 92, 121, 123, 181, 249.

he and his family were compelled to make it their sole residence (Currier 1896: 553; Grady 1992: 30–35; Labaree 1962: 10–11).

Tracy died in 1796, and the following year his widow Mary Lee Tracy sold “the farm whereon I now live” to Offin Boardman for \$12,800 (Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 162: 144). Offin Boardman was an individual of local prominence who was responsible for early 19th-century alterations to the Spencer-Peirce-Little House (i.e., construction of the west wood addition and the attached tenant farmhouse to the rear; see Grady 1992: 35–38). His principal residence was near his wharves in Newburyport (cf. Faulkner et al. 1978: 125, figure 8.1) until he moved to the farm in 1797. Boardman owned the house and property until his death in 1811, at which time they were sold by his executors to John Pettingel (Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 200: 236).

Boardman’s moveable estate was sold at auction after his death (Salem Registry of Probate 1813). At this time a detailed survey of the farm was made in two parts: an overall plan of the property’s metes and bounds; and a detailed plot plan of what is labeled as the “Homestead” (FIG. 3). The plan of the homestead identified buildings as well as landscape areas (FIG. 4); in addition, the plot plan of the property as a whole indicates a variety of fields, wood lots, and marshes.

Pettingel and his wife used the house as a summer residence until John’s death in 1827; his heirs, however, never lived on the farm but retained it as an investment, renting it out to a series of tenants (Grady 1992: 40–43). Eventually, in 1861, the property was purchased from Pettingel’s heirs by one of its long-term tenants, Edward H. Little (the conveyance was accomplished through a series of four deeds: Essex Registry of Deeds, Book 268: 240; 631: 111, 112; 634: 7). Little family papers include detailed records of crops grown at the farm between 1830 and 1850 as well as a wealth of detail concerning management and use of the property after it came into the hands of the Little family (SPNEA Archives). Edward H. Little died intestate in 1877, and his sons, Edward Francis and Daniel Noyes Little, inherited the farm, which remained in the hands of their descendants until 1986, at which time it

became the property of SPNEA. Ed Francis, as he was called, initiated a business of importing draft horses from Iowa by train; this was the final development in commercial husbandry in the farm’s long history of stock raising.

From the middle of this century until June, 1986, the Spencer-Peirce-Little House was occupied by female Little descendants—Eliza, Margaret, Agnes, and Amelia Little. These unmarried women lived quietly and frugally, traveling occasionally. They kept highly detailed records of their expenses and made modest efforts to maintain the house and grounds (Grady 1992: 44–45). We can only speculate as to whether they did so little to change the property during their tenure through innate Yankee frugality or because they possessed a keen sense of its historical importance, but it is clear that the last lineal descendants of the Little family recognized the significance of their home. In 1971, Agnes and Amelia Little deeded the Spencer-Peirce-Little property to SPNEA, retaining a life interest. Amelia died in June, 1986, at which time SPNEA took control of the property. The Society promptly initiated a long-term project aimed at opening the site as a museum after extensive research into the property and its occupants as well as conservation and architectural study of the house proper furnished the basis for a comprehensive and sensitive interpretation of the site.

Research Framework

The archaeological investigation of the property has aimed at recovering details of changing agricultural practices at a working farm, for, no matter what image the property had for its owners and for local residents, its fields, orchards, and gardens were productive and profitable. A number of these issues presented themselves for study: field management systems; notions of agricultural efficiency and innovation; and market orientation (cf. Vickers 1990, 1994). The social and ideological uses of the house and lands are related to these issues, however, and have also been addressed in the investigation.

Archaeological survey and excavation at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm have proceeded

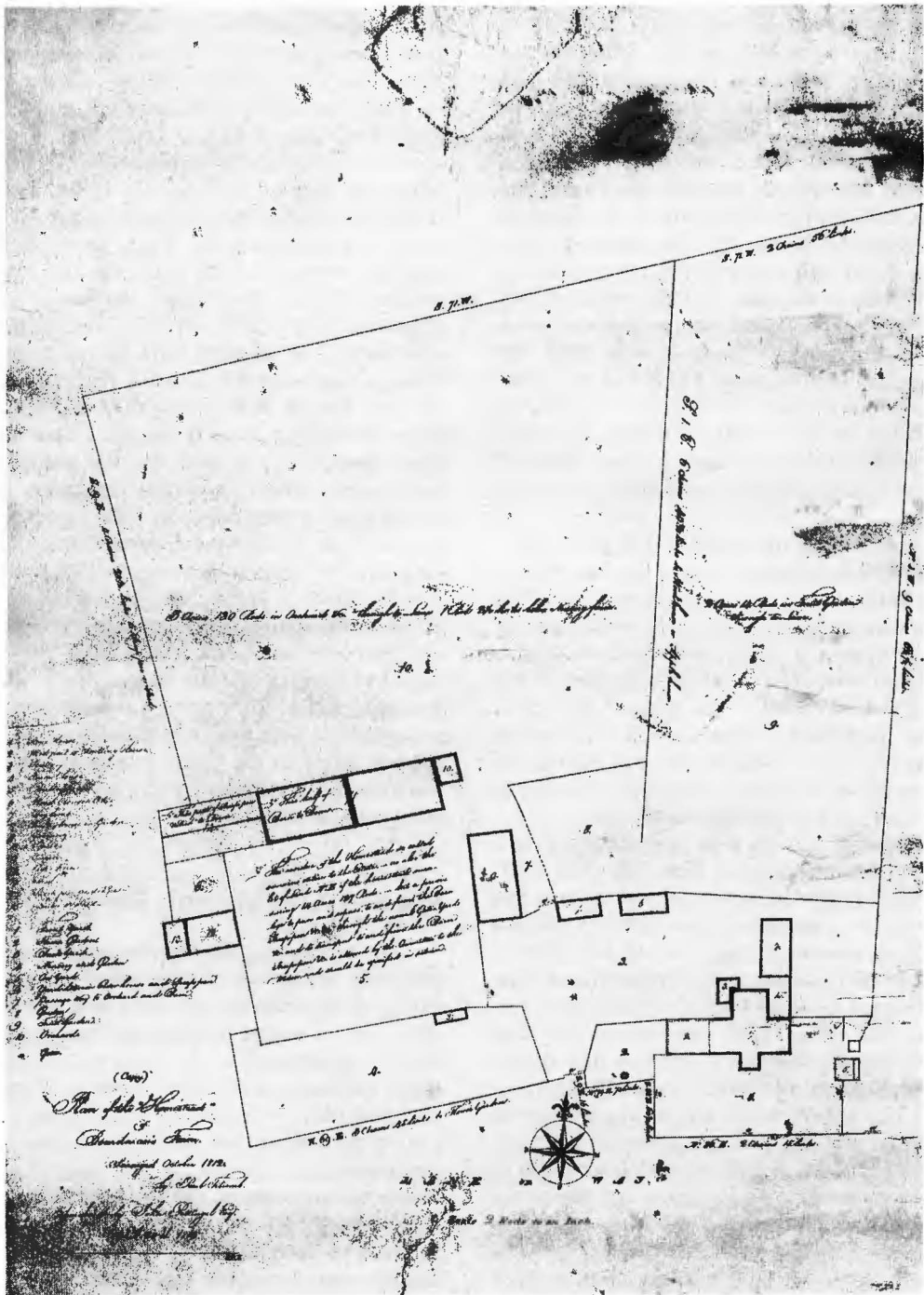


Figure 3. Plan of the "Homestead" of Boardman's Farm, Surveyed October 1812 by Paul Titcomb. (Courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.)

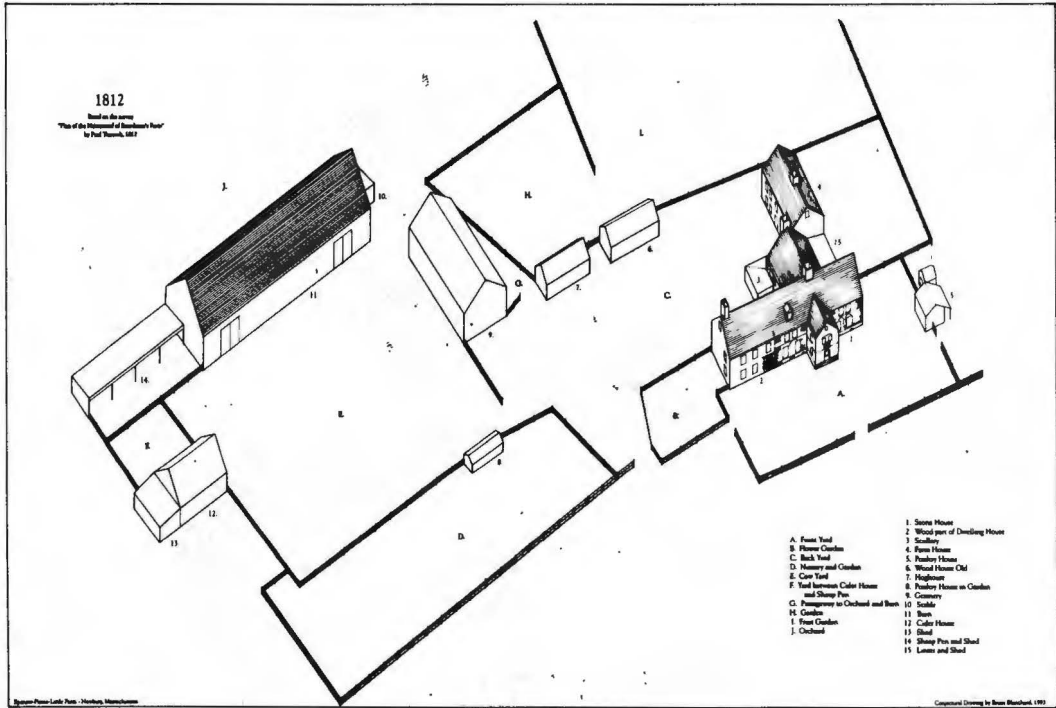


Figure 4. The layout of the Boardman Farm in 1812. (Conjectural drawing by Bruce Blanchard. Courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.)

in tandem with archival research, collection of oral histories about the property, and restoration of the house, all of which began in 1986 (FIG. 5). Our work has concentrated on the immediate environs of the house so that we can guide SPNEA in developing a sensitive and accurate landscaping plan for presenting the house. This has been a priority both because restoration work necessarily involves a certain amount of earth-moving, which means archaeology must come first, and because the question of how to interpret the house and houselot took precedence for SPNEA over how to address the broader interpretation of the agricultural landscape. Interpreting the farm landscape as a whole is becoming more important now that the work on the house is complete and it is open to the public as a museum.

The study of land use over time at Spencer-Peirce-Little began with intensive, prosopographically-oriented documentary research as well as an extensive foray into secondary

sources pertaining to agricultural practices, etc. The same "life history" approach was applied to the archaeological record through detailed analysis of site formation processes. Architectural analysis of the surviving domicile is providing yet another dimension in the interpretation of the site, one which links archaeological site formation processes with architectural change as a way of gaining insight into the successive households that occupied the site (cf. Simmons, Stachiw, and Worrell 1993).

An 1812 survey of the Spencer-Peirce-Little property (FIG. 3) was prompted by a shift in ownership and occupation of the farm; this survey consisted of an overall plat of the farm, its boundaries, abutters, and field divisions, and a detailed plan of the homestead or farmyard immediately surrounding the house. The fact that two surveys were seen as necessary is highly revealing, for it reflects the conceptualization of the homelot or toft as an integral yet independently-operating component of the

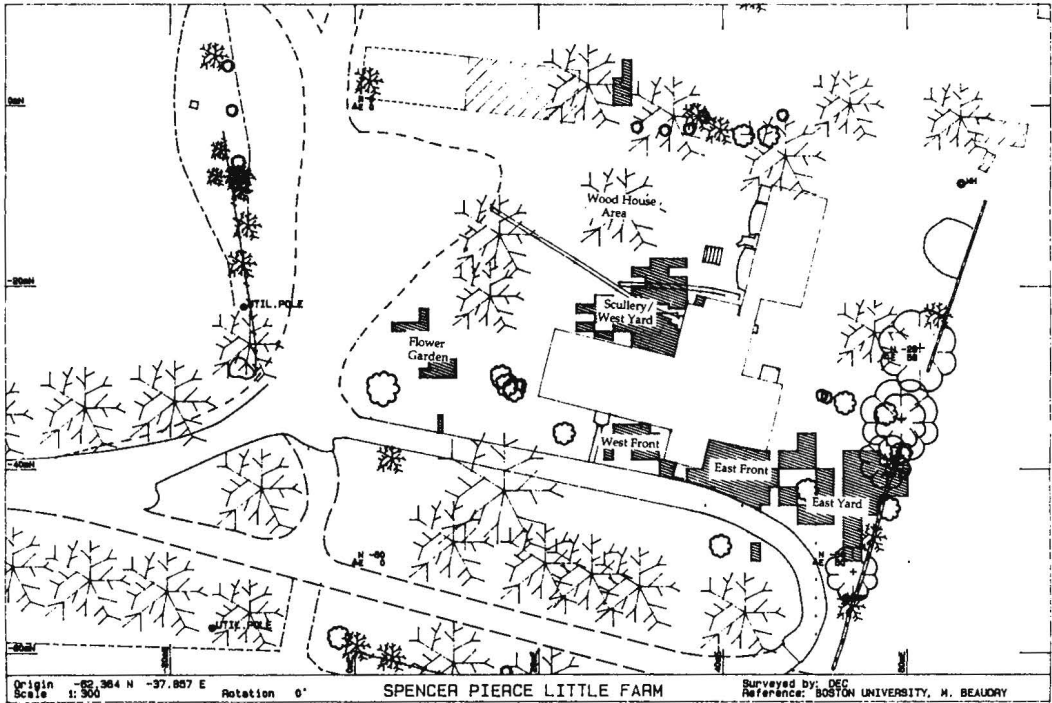


Figure 5. Plan of the Spencer-Peirce-Little farmyard showing excavated areas, 1986-1993.

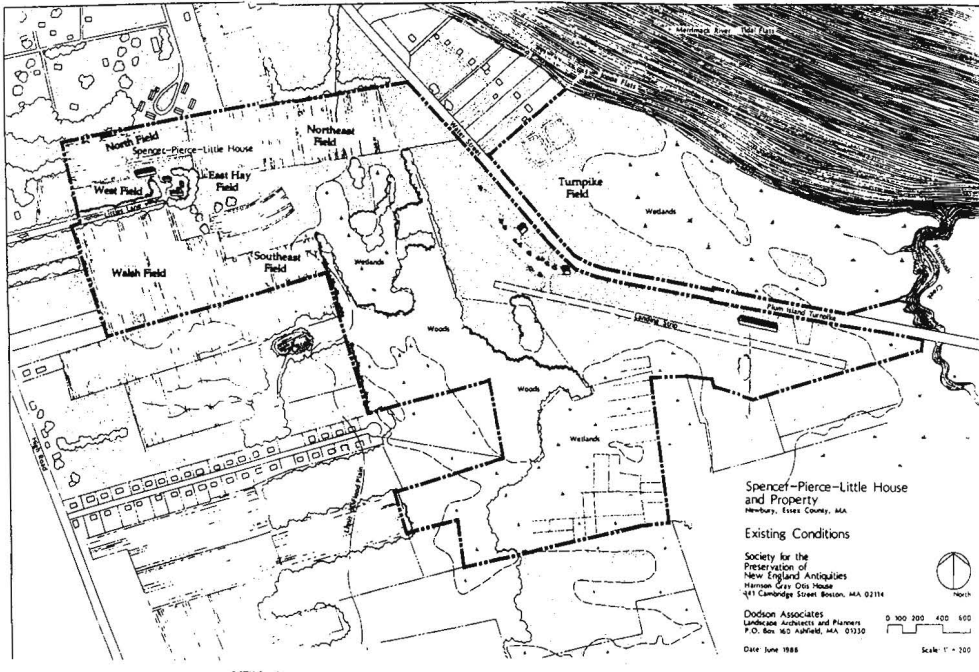


Figure 6. Area designations at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm.

larger entity, the croft or farmstead. This perception of the two as separate yet interdependent portions of a whole was not a 19th-century notion; rather, it was deeply imbedded in English rural culture and was transferred to America by farmers who emigrated to New England (Russell 1982: 41, 46–48).⁵

Because the 1812 survey represents so graphically how the farm was perceived by its owners and occupants, it provided an appropriate research framework for a long-term archaeological investigation of the property. Indeed, analysis and interpretation of this document served as the starting point for developing the research design, and excavation and survey areas have been designated by the labels they were given on the 1812 survey (FIG. 6). The research went forward on two different yet closely related levels: that of the entire property or farm as a whole; and that of the farmyard or homestead. The two scales of investigation require different approaches and can be brought to bear on different but related research questions. Below, a research design for each level of investigation is presented, issues that can be addressed are discussed, and methods of investigation are outlined. This framework is flexible and has been adapted according to the changing goals and findings of the overall Spencer-Peirce-Little project.

The Farmyard

As the focus of agricultural and stock-raising activities for the farm as a whole, the farmyard was the center of a variety of activities designed to turn livestock and produce into viable commodities for sale as well as for domestic consumption. The 1812 plan of the farmyard emphasizes its dual function: as the core of agriculturally-based production for the farm and as the arena of domestic activity (see FIG. 3). The farmyard is a tight cluster of service buildings, open spaces, and fenced-in pens and gardens surrounded by fields and pastures. The main house, then as now, looked

out over farm fields and was level with them; its builder did not wish it to face the river or to raise it above the fields on an eminence, natural or otherwise. The approach to the house down a long lane, now tree-lined, afforded a vista of expansive fields; the house itself comes into view only when the visitor is almost upon it. Everything about the house and the way it is situated, about the farmyard and its layout, still speaks of its unmistakable link to an agrarian way of life.

Yet one would be mistaken to conclude that there is or was little here that is reflective of the occupants' material and social lives. Archaeological testing has shown that ample evidence of deliberate manipulation of the landscape exists. The 1812 plan also shows what appears to be a formal garden to the west of the house as well as a fruit garden, nursery garden, and possible vegetable garden. The formal garden and the treatment of the front of the house may be interpreted as forms of social display. It is most intriguing, however, to note that despite occupation of the house in the 18th century by well-to-do and stylish gentlemen (and their families), apart from changes to the fenestration, including replacement of leaded casements in the stone house with sash windows some time around 1780, presumably by Nathaniel Tracy, little of the exterior of the house or the layout of the farmyard reflects Georgian tastes that were so prevalent during that century. Boardman's modifications were more dramatic in one sense, because they involved additions to the house: a wood-framed, end-chimney, Federal-style wing containing a parlor below and bedroom above; and another wood-framed structure labeled as "Tenant House" on the 1812 plan (architectural evidence suggests this structure was originally a story-and-a-half service building, possibly a brewhouse, dairy, or stables). It is important to note, however, that Boardman's renovations were additive rather than subtractive, leaving the stone house virtually untouched.

In addition to providing information about agricultural and husbandry-related activities, the study of the Spencer-Peirce-Little farmyard is viewed as archaeology geared to understanding changing land use (e.g., landscaping via grading and filling, gardening, fence align-

⁵ For English field systems, see Rackham 1986: 153–180; for discussions of early New England farmyards and landscapes, see St. George 1986, 1990; Stilgoe 1982: 46–51; Beaudry 1986.

ments, paths and walkways, outbuilding construction, use, and demolition, refuse disposal, etc.), and recurrent domestic activities (e.g., butchering and food preparation, laundering, waste and water management, etc.) in terms of the archaeological signature of the household. This required constructing a firm, detailed documentary chronology of the residential makeup of the household, including whenever possible women, children, servants, slaves, in-laws, tenants, and boarders (Beaudry 1984).

The Farm

The investigation of the farm or property as a whole is a large-scale endeavor geared toward two goals. The first of these, to prepare a comprehensive inventory of the prehistoric and historical cultural resources (i.e., archaeological sites and features as well as relict landscapes) within the present Spencer-Peirce-Little property boundaries, is an on-going process. Techniques for survey of the Spencer-Peirce-Little property have involved the following: literature search; interviews with local informants and study of their collections, when possible; systematic field walking and surface collection (see below); and geophysical prospecting.

We have attempted to understand the ways in which the conceptualization of the property as a working farm and as a family homestead interacted and shifted over time. Many of the research questions involve tenancy and its physical manifestations. To what extent, for example, did tenancy involve residence on the property by a tenant and his family? Both residential tenancy and simple rights in tillage are indicated in the documents, and the former is made manifest in the existence of the tenant house connected to the main residence. Tenancy may also have had effects on field divisions and types of crops grown. Examining the issue of tenancy through archaeological evidence is problematic. One way in which it can be addressed is through the model of the "agricultural ladder." Edward H. Little climbed to the top of the agricultural ladder when he purchased the property in 1861 after 10 years as a tenant. Little's move up the agricultural ladder affected

the archaeological record at the household and farmstead level, especially the immediate landscape of the homelot, in a sweeping and dramatic manner (Mascia 1994a, 1994b, 1996).

The problems involved in the archaeological investigation of an agricultural landscape center around ways of investigating what are essentially open spaces—fields, pastures, and so forth. To some extent documents help, especially maps that show field divisions; but such documents are rare. The methods for examining field patterns in large measure begin with the present landscape and look back in time with the aid of a battery of analytical techniques that have proved useful to archaeologists investigating landscapes at a variety of scales (Miller and Gleason 1994). Some are part of the standard archaeological repertoire; others have been developed or used successfully only recently by researchers on projects such as the one at Morven in Princeton, New Jersey (e.g., Yentsch et al. 1987; Goodwin et al. 1995) or through trial and error in recent collaborative efforts at the Boott Mills boarding-houses and Kirk Street Agents' House in Lowell (Beaudry and Mrozowski 1987a, 1987b; Fisher and Kelso 1987; Beaudry 1989c) and in Boston, Massachusetts (Kelso and Beaudry 1990).

The first stage in recording the existing landscape was to complete a topographical map, entering the survey as a layer of information in a GIS data base. Recent soil maps of the area (e.g., Fuller and Hotz 1981) have been used to plot the relative fertility, drainage properties, and other characteristics of soils on the property. Techniques of archaeological fieldwork were informed by these preparatory stages. For example, preliminary, informal walkovers resulted in the observation of a section of a hedge-and-ditch arrangement that presumably served as either a field or property boundary.

Delineating field boundaries is an initial step in examining field management systems, but how were fields used over time? There are a number of interesting techniques that we hope will shed light on these issues. In terms of animal husbandry, we know that different species require different sorts of pasturage—

sheep, for instance, need more room and closer supervision than do cattle or swine (cf. Russell 1982)—so it is possible that field size and location may provide some evidence of herding practices. Both dairy cattle and beef cattle require pasturage, and grazing cattle leave their mark on the landscape, as work by Fisher and Fisher attests. Their use of opal phytolith analysis demonstrated the effects of grazing domesticates on the biotic community of the grasslands of Capitol Reef National Park, Utah (Fisher and Fisher 1988). This sort of evidence, along with soil studies conducted to detect erosional patterns, soil chemistry, etc., may provide a means of distinguishing fields used for grazing from fields under regular tillage.

Zooarchaeological analysis potentially could shed light on issues of herding and commercial livestock raising. Bowen (1994) notes that kill-off patterns are indicative of animal husbandry practices, but animal bone as the end product of commercial herding is more likely to show up where meat has been butchered, marketed, and consumed rather than where the animals were raised.⁶ There is, however, mention in colonial documents of stock raisers who butchered their own livestock and barreled the meat prior to shipping it to market (Friedman 1973: 194–195), and it is possible that in such cases evidence of on-site processing might survive in the archaeological record. It seems unlikely, however, that many stockmen undertook to process animals intended to be shipped as preserved meat, and if they did, they may have sold off any by-products of butchery—hides for tanning, bones to be ground into bone meal, etc.⁷ So if

cattle and swine were raised chiefly to be sold as meat on the hoof, the faunal remains probably will not reflect this. One might infer this sort of activity on the basis of evidence of cooperage, but, given the high demand for cooper's products as containers for goods of all sorts, the inference would be shaky without supporting data. On the other hand, if the Spencers and Peirces in the 17th and 18th centuries raised dairy cattle, as did the Littles in the 19th century, we could expect to find considerable zooarchaeological evidence of this, both in the form of artifacts associated with dairying and in the form of cow bones reflecting late kill-off patterns.

Provident agricultural practice requires a shifting pattern of field use, so what we are after may be particularly difficult to recover if formation processes involved in alternating cultivation and grazing destroy or hopelessly muddle evidence of previous formation processes. Such may be the case in any attempt to recover evidence of scientific manuring, a practice that gained some currency by the early 19th century.⁸

As will be seen below, the most intensive efforts at the site have thus far been expended on investigations at the level of the homelot rather than at the larger scale of the farm as a whole. Even so, the analysis of excavated material is still in a preliminary stage. Addressing many of the broad themes outlined above remains more of a goal than an accomplishment. What follows is largely descriptive and far from fully digested, but, it is hoped, useful for comparative purposes and as a synthesis of work to date.

Archaeology to Date

The first archaeological work at the site took place in the fall of 1986; our test excavations focused on the houselot as well as on the west wood addition to the house—along its foundation and within its crawl space. The

⁶In 18th-century Newburyport, for instance, a clutch of "butchers' shambles" lined a portion of the waterfront (see Labaree 1962: 34–35), presumably ready to receive cattle or swine driven to them on the hoof. The resulting waste was no doubt tossed into the river (in fact, in 1642, Boston butchers were *ordered* to throw their waste products into the mill creek so it would be swept out to sea; see Friedman 1973: 195). See Bowen 1996 for her most recent evaluation of the potential for zooarchaeological analysis to contribute to our understanding of commercial sheep husbandry in New England.

⁷At least one 18th-century site, Peyton-Randolph in Williamsburg, Virginia (Edwards 1986), has produced evidence of what Bowen (1985) terms "non-dietary" use of bone—as drainage for an asparagus bed.

⁸For example, the 1853 report of the Commissioner of Patents for Agriculture discusses the relative merits of fertilizers made from guano, bone dust, turners' shavings, lime, superphosphate, gypsum, salt, ashes, stable and barnyard manure, clover, straw, swamp and pond muck, and sawdust (House of Representatives 1854).

limited work turned up evidence of stratified deposits in the yard surrounding the house as well as of features, some that were shown on the 1812 plan of the property (FIG. 3), such as the scullery, and some that were not, such as a stone paving or drip apron in front of the house (Beaudry 1987).

In 1987, the field season consisted of a three-week archaeology workshop sponsored by the Boston University Center for Archaeological Studies; the six-week 1989 season was a field school sponsored by Boston University Summer Term, as were subsequent field schools in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993. Several units in the cellar of the house were excavated in the winter of 1988 and summer of 1989 with funding from SPNEA (Beaudry 1988, 1989b). Since its inception, the archaeological program has relied upon the 1812 Titcomb plan as both a guide to excavation and a source of "folk" terms for the different areas of the homelot. Our designations serve as descriptors for what other archaeologists might term "operations" or large, non-contiguous excavation areas at a single site. Excavation areas hence were designated as Flower Garden, Wood House, East Yard, East Front, West Front, and Scullery/West Yard, respectively (FIGS. 5, 6). "East Front" is the yard area to the east of the porch entry, between the driveway and the house. "West Front" is the corresponding area west of the porch entry, up to the stone walk leading to the door of the west wood addition. The Scullery/West Yard area is in the rear of the stone house, west of the kitchen ell. Findings in each area are summarized below.

Flower Garden

The area labeled as "Flower Garden" on the 1812 plan of the property was intensively investigated in 1989 under the direction of Sally Pendleton (FIG. 7). Additional testing was done in 1992 before utility lines were placed underground (Beaudry 1992b) and on a more intensive scale in 1994 prior to installation of a drain and dry well (FIG. 8; Beaudry 1995). The soil strata included an upper A horizon of topsoils deposited in the mid-to-late 19th (L2) and 20th centuries (L1); these overlay several strata of highly mixed and interbedded layers of B- and C-horizon glacial soils abundant in cob-



Figure 7. Anita Schoen and James Newton discuss the 1989 excavations in progress in the "Flower Garden" area with Sally Pendleton (r). (Photograph by Michael Hamilton.)

bles and gravel. These strata lay directly upon a sterile C horizon—not the usual B horizon that serves as the sterile substratum elsewhere at the site. The stratum directly overlying undisturbed C-horizon soils contained brick (large brickbat fragments as well as chips and crumbs) as well as waterworn cobbles, jagged glacially-deposited stones and gravel that lined the "garden." Historical ceramics ranged from 17th-century sgraffito to ca. 1795 pearlware, the latter providing a possible terminus post quem for deposition of these strata. Mixed into these historic-period deposits were a few badly eroded fragments of prehistoric pottery.

The 1989 excavations located at least one post hole attributed to the Boardman-era fence enclosing the so-called Flower Garden, as well as what seems to be the northern extent of the puzzling deposit of tilled and/or redeposited cobble-filled matrix that occurs roughly, but not precisely, within the area that would have been enclosed by this fence. The deposits in the enclosed area did not conform to what we expected to find in a garden (e.g., prepared beds and walkways in a formal layout, the

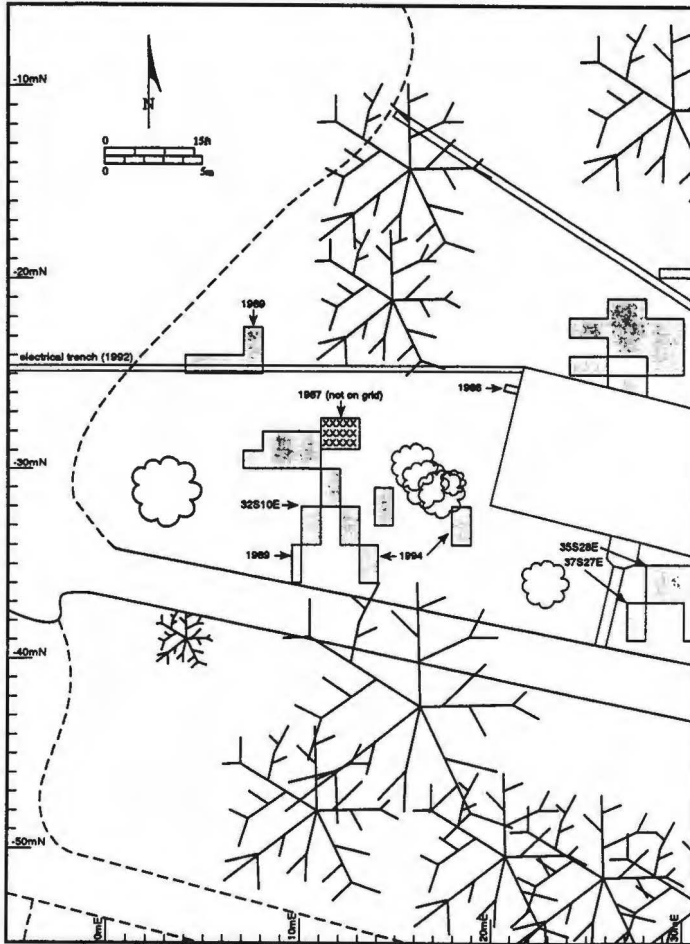


Figure 8. Detail of "Flower Garden" area, showing excavation units, 1986–1994.

beds characterized by organically enriched soils and demarcated by special treatment such as stake-holes left by stakes supporting boards for raised beds, brick edgings, etc.; see Yentsch and Kratzer 1994). The small numbers and highly fragmented and eroded nature of the artifacts suggested that the strata were disturbed or redeposited by humans, not by natural means. The artifacts may have found their way into the strata accidentally, as the soil was moved from place to place on its way to fill in this area, but it seems far more likely they were introduced deliberately.

Often soil preparation for a garden involved addition of materials that are

intended to retain moisture rather than speed its passage through the garden soils, and different plants require quite different soil regimes. Bulbs, for instance, can grow quite happily in what would constitute inhospitable media for other plants. In the late 18th century, gardeners experimented with many new plants imported through trade with China and other parts of Asia, from South Africa and South America and other far-flung parts of the globe. Bulbs and tubers were among these exotic imports; such plants would have had very different soil requirements than plants native to New England or imports from England and Europe (Yentsch 1995). Adding mate-

rials to the matrix keeps the plants' roots from suffocating by providing access to air so they do not become waterlogged. What is more, burrowing creatures such as moles, voles, and the like love to eat bulbs of lilies and tulips; they do not, however, like sharp objects such as ceramic and glass fragments that impede their progress through the soil. Hence addition of quantities of broken brick, ceramics, glass, and stones serves the triple purpose of aerating a dense soil, promoting drainage, and discouraging burrowing animals from feasting on exotic and expensive bulbs of the sort that became popular among the late 18th-century elite (Carol Krawczyk, personal communication, 1994; Anne Yentsch, personal communication, 1994).

There are analogs in the archaeological record. The Jackson-era Rachel's Garden at The Hermitage in Tennessee contained strata not very different from those of the so-called Flower Garden at Spencer-Peirce-Little. Brick fragments rather than cobbles were the predominant inclusions in the soil of Rachel's Garden—brick was fairly prevalent in our deposits as well—but Rachel's Garden did have a formal layout of beds and walkways that the archaeologists were able to delineate quite readily (McKee 1996).

Linking the strata comprising the "garden" deposits to a specific occupation or individual is somewhat tricky because dating is based on fragmentary and battered artifacts and a mixture of ceramic types from prehistoric to post-colonial, but the absence of 19th-century ceramics and presence of square cut nails with hand-finished heads suggests that the "garden" deposits were created 1790–1800 (Miller 1993). Offin Boardman was an investor in a woolen mill in nearby Byfield where an ancillary industry involving the manufacture of machine-cut nails was begun by Jacob Perkins in 1795 (Bathe and Bathe 1943: 14), and the presence of such nails in the garden strata makes it unlikely they were deposited before that date. This does not rule out Tracy completely, but does make it unlikely it was he who was responsible for these deposits. The fact that the "garden" strata do not extend beneath the west wood addition to the stone house, which was built by Offin Boardman in 1797 or shortly thereafter, means that it is rea-

sonable to attribute these deposits to the Boardman period of ownership rather than to Tracy.

Wood House

Excavations in the wood house area, conducted in 1989 under the direction of David B. Landon, revealed possible foundation remains of an insubstantial outbuilding, but these overlie strata containing early to mid-19th-century artifacts. The archaeological evidence is consistent with the pictorial record from maps and photographs that indicate that a succession of structures—sheds, stables, carriage house, etc.—existed here, but limited archaeological excavation gave only a truncated glimpse of this complex sequence of structures (see Mascia 1994b for a detailed discussion of the archaeological evidence). Recently SPNEA has undertaken a comprehensive study of the evolution of the farmyard as part of the planning process for reconstructing a range of outbuildings to house an educational center, public restrooms, and an apartment for a resident overseer. Archaeological investigations, beginning with a seven-week field season in 1996, will precede the construction, affording the opportunity for an in-depth examination of this area.

Kitchen

In November and December, 1989, we excavated beneath the floor of the kitchen ell in advance of restoration work in this room. The work was funded through a grant to SPNEA from the Getty Conservation Trust. The crawl space proved rich in artifacts, most of them deposited through rodent activity. A sealed feature of considerable depth, a filled-in stairwell, was found along the north edge of the central chimney stack. This original entry into the cellar had been blocked up and filled in when the central chimney stack of the house was rebuilt ca. 1780, most likely under the direction of Nathaniel Tracy (see Beaudry 1992a, Beaudry n.d.). The brick chimney base formed one side of the stairwell; the other side was faced with stone. Wooden steps had been seated into a ramp sealed over with clay. The deposit within the filled stairway was formed

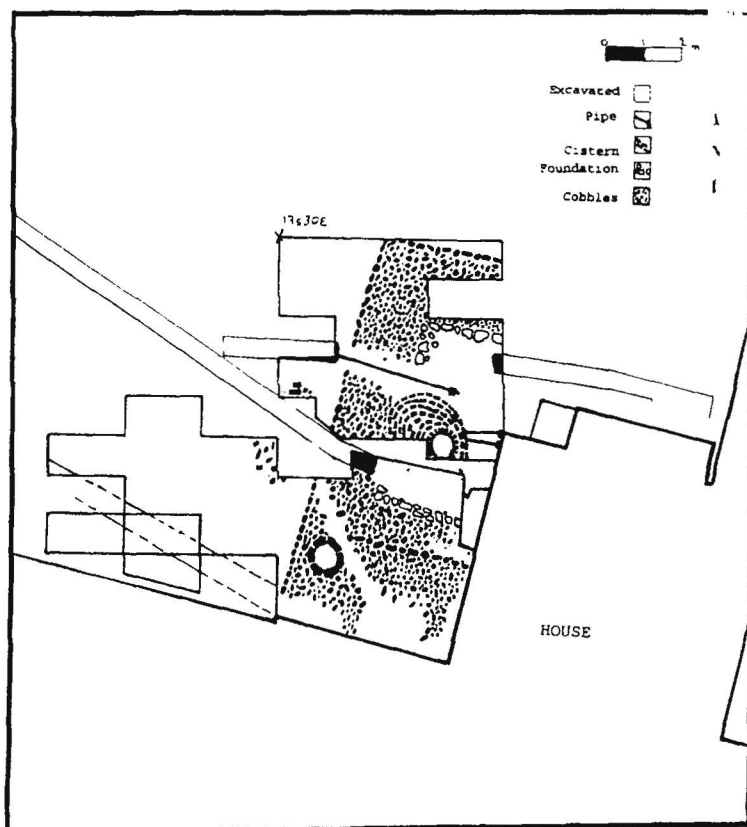


Figure 9. Plan of Scullery area showing remains of 18th-century scullery, cobble apron and dry well, and 19th-century cistern.

chiefly through disposal of architectural debris generated from remodeling the chimney and its fireplaces, but large quantities of kitchen refuse were tossed in along with the bricks, mortar, stone, wood, plaster, and so forth (Beaudry 1992a). This included a prodigious amount of animal bone (Landon 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1996) as well as ceramics, half of a small grindstone, cutlery, wine bottle glass (Scarlett 1992), and charred seeds (Pendleton 1990).

Kitchen Dooryard: Scullery/West Yard Area

The 1986 test excavations located what we interpreted as part of the foundation of the former scullery; in 1990 limited work in the kitchen dooryard area uncovered a portion of the scullery foundation, parts of a cobble paving around the scullery, and a mid-19th-century cistern within and partially displacing

the scullery foundation. The 1991 field season focused on the Scullery/West Yard; these excavations extended the previous work and defined the extent of the cobble paving as well as of the scullery foundation (FIG. 9). The cobbles formed a ca. 1.5 m-wide apron around the scullery, which had been a frame structure set upon a crude, dry-laid stone foundation. At the southwest corner of the former scullery we found a circular stone-lined feature filled with cobbles apparently deposited purposely to promote drainage; this is interpreted as a dry well or French drain. A similar feature, constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century, was encountered in 1991 at the Turner House (House of Seven Gables) in Salem, Massachusetts (Goodwin 1993: 243; 1994: 18; see also Waring 1867: fig. 10).

A unit within the scullery foundation provided evidence that it may have had a wood

floor supported on posts; one post hole was excavated. It contained the stalk of a trifold spoon and ceramic fragments dating to the 1720s as well as a felsite pre-form for a Native American stone tool. Another feature beneath the scullery deposits was likely a scaffolding posthole; the strata above had slumped into the cut as the fill of the hole subsided after the post was withdrawn. The cut's fill produced a fragment of a gadrooned stem of a large goblet similar to one recovered from the late 17th-century site of Clay Bank in Gloucester County, VA (Noël Hume 1966: 17). Deposits above the lower fill levels in the scullery produced materials dating throughout the 18th and into the 19th century; those above the foundations and atop the cobble paving dated after 1850. Most of the interior of the scullery now contains the large brick cistern installed in the middle of the 19th century.

Excavation in the work yard outside the kitchen/scullery produced midden deposits containing a great deal of animal bone in relatively good condition as well as ample evidence of various landscaping episodes. Directly above subsoil was a stratum of glacial sand apparently deposited on top of the B horizon during excavation of the cellar. Lying directly on the sand were several discrete piles of construction rubble that had been spread out before having a generous fill laid over them. Above this was a thick stratum of gravel deposited in the late 18th century (from this layer came a Spanish silver trade dollar bearing the date 1778). The gravel appears to have been laid down about the time Nathaniel Tracy renovated the house in the 1780s. The graveled yard surface stretched away from the cobble apron of the scullery for an undetermined distance. Above the gravel layer were the strata of loamy landscape fill with lenses of coal ash, etc., dating to the 19th (L2) and 20th centuries (L1)—these same strata extend around the entire perimeter of the house.

The present interpretation is that the scullery was constructed ca. 1720 and that it existed until it was dismantled by Edward Henry Little in the 1860s (see Mascia 1994b). The area around the scullery was an active, open work yard that for a time at least consisted of both cobbled and graveled surfaces.

By the early 19th century the rear yard of the main house was bounded by new additions to the main house: a wood addition to the west, built by Offin Boardman, and a large wood-frame tenant farmer's house stretching to the north. The scullery seems to have been demolished in the 1860s and the foundation cavity as well as the adjacent cobble apron and dry well were filled in and covered over. A portion of the buried remains of the scullery was destroyed when a cistern to collect roof run-off was installed in the 1860s. (It is in fact quite possible that the scullery was torn down to make way for the cistern.) The cistern installation pit was backfilled and the area was grassed over (this is evident in photographs dating from the 1880s on). When the cistern was abandoned, its cast-iron downspout was simply broken off at grade level and the subterranean elements of the cistern remained untouched.

We returned in 1992 to complete investigations of the kitchen dooryard by exposing the remainder of the cobble paving and by completely excavating other features. These included the dry well, which proved to be fairly shallow. The cobble surface slopes toward this circular receptacle, suggesting that the cobbles formed a drain field channeling run-off to the dry well. The dry well was clearly contemporary with and integral to the cobble surface, which, it turned out, directly abuts the scullery foundation as well as the stone house foundation, at least in areas where it has not been disrupted by subsequent utility installations.

The coal chute, which appears in late 19th- and early 20th-century photographs of this area, is another feature that was fully excavated. The coal chute appears to have been in use from ca. 1880–1940; the fill of the feature contained numerous glass bottle fragments, which will constitute a very good terminus post quem once they have been analyzed. The cobble paving around the coal chute had been extensively disturbed, providing us with an opportunity to assess deposits below the cobbles without destroying any of this feature ourselves. The stratigraphic sequence closely matched that found in the East Front, described below.

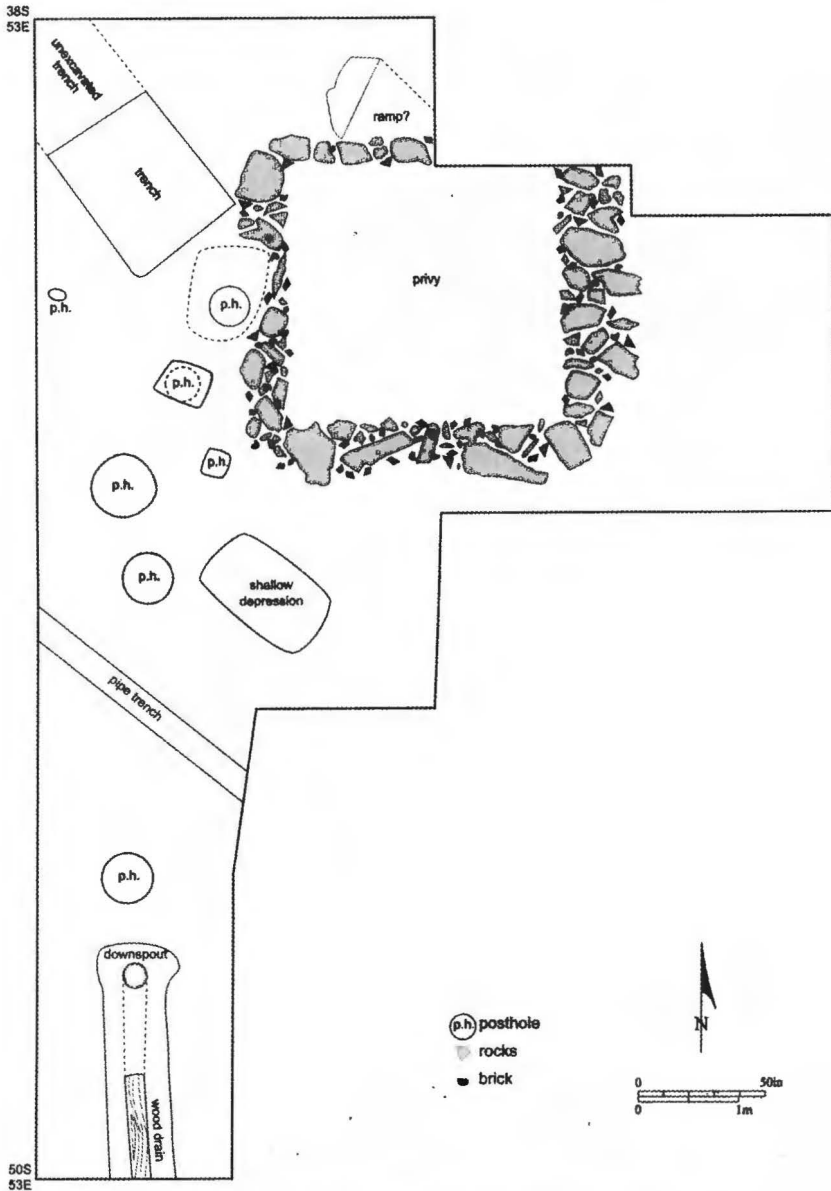


Figure 10. Plan of the East Yard area at the end of the 1990 excavations.

East Yard

A six-week field season in 1990 continued excavations in the East Yard that began with the 1986 testing program and continued in 1987 and 1989 (FIG. 10). The fieldstone foundation in the East Yard proved to be the upper portion of a deep, stone-lined privy, with a footprint of ca. 10 ft x 10 ft (3 m x 3 m). Based on the artifacts found in its fill and installation

trench, this was built early in the 19th century, used at least until the 1840s, and filled and capped in the 1860s (see Mascia 1994b). At least three distinct fill episodes have been delineated: a massive deposit of ceramics and glass, probably a "crocking" or drainage layer, in the early 19th century that we can link to the Boardman occupation of the site (based on the initial "B" etched on some of the glass-

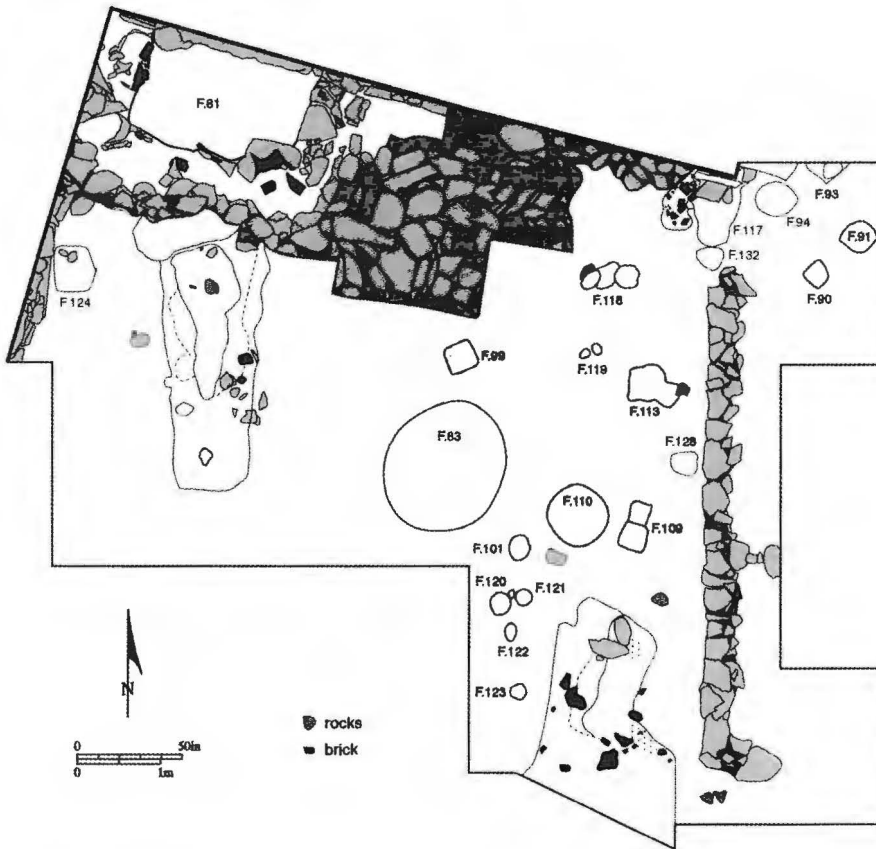


Figure 11. Plan of the East Front area at the close of the 1992 field season.

ware); another layer containing material dating to the late 1830s (presumably linked to the Pettingel ownership and the trusteeship of Pettingel's heirs); and the filling and capping of the privy that seems to have been part of Edward Henry Little's sweeping changes to the house and houselot during the 1860s. An analysis of the macrofossils from the privy has been completed (Smyth 1994) and a study of the artifacts from this feature is in progress; a detailed discussion of this feature appears in a forthcoming article (Beaudry n.d.). The privy is documented by the 1812 survey so there is little room for doubt it was constructed during the Boardman occupation; the manufacture dates for most of the diagnostic artifact types

in the crocking deposit fall into the 1800–1810 range (some items are earlier, none are later).

The East Yard area also contains the structure identified on the 1812 plan as "Poultry House." Excavations here in 1989 and 1990 proved it to be an ephemeral feature, its footprint revealed only by post holes indicating the former location of corner posts that served as its major structural elements. At its southwest corner was a drainage feature: a clay-lined subterranean downspout and deeply buried, clay-packed wood drain set in a ca. 40-cm wide trench. This feature served to direct roof run-off from the poultry house to an unidentified location to the south. Other features in the East Yard included a row of post

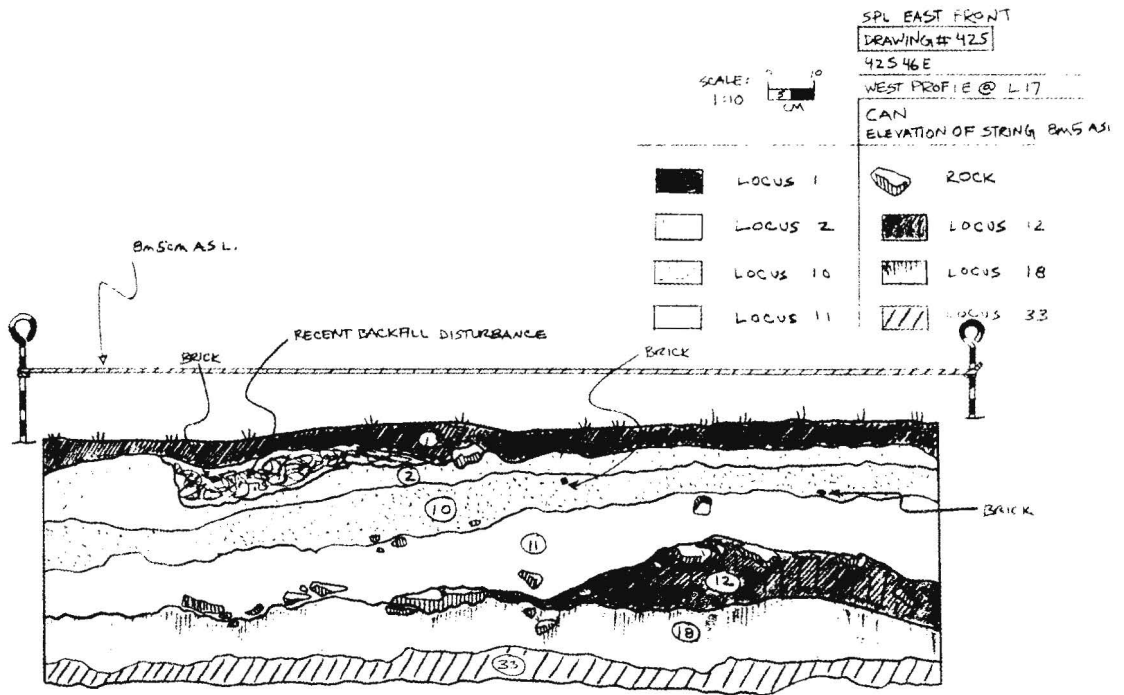


Figure 12. Profile of the west wall of unit 42S46E in the East Front Yard. Locus 18 is the sandy cellar excavate, Locus 33 the buried 17th-century plowzone. (Field drawing by Christian A. Newton.)

holes from a 19th-century fence line (the cedar posts were partially preserved in these), possibly part of Edward Henry Little's landscaping efforts, and a ca. 1-m wide trench that appeared at B horizon, running diagonally northwest from the privy towards the rear of the house, with next to nothing except corroded nails in its fill. The function of this trench remains a mystery, but it is possible that it is the asparagus bed Offin Boardman referred to when on April 8, 1808, he wrote in his diary that "This day J Thomas here & myself finished trimming trees & fixed the asparagus bed" (Dempsey 1993).

East Front

Excavations in the area designated as East Front, which we undertook in 1992 and 1993 (FIG. 11), were aimed at recovering information about landscaping over time, including historical grade levels, and, most important, evi-

dence of construction or builder's trenches that would help date the main range of the house or the original bulkhead entry. The East Front proved to be a very rich and complex area, but the basic stratigraphic sequence occurs all around the house (FIG. 12).

Most striking in this sequence is a thick layer of yellowish sand overlying a very dark brown, organically enriched stratum that in turn overlies the brownish-orange natural subsoil or B horizon. The B-horizon surface shows evidence of burning, indicating that, before this area was farmed, its early owners/occupants burned off the existing vegetation. The dark brown layer is an old zone of tilled soil; it is very rich in organic material and very homogeneous in appearance, and there are plow scars—parallel linear grooves—cutting into the B horizon and running east-west. The top of the dark brown layer represents the grade level when the house was first built. The sand layer was deposited over this earlier

zone when construction of the house began; it is the ejecta from the cellar excavation. The sand looks very much like the sand that constitutes the present floor of the east part of the cellar, with the minor difference that its yellow color is highly mottled with browns because the white and yellow glacial sands were mixed with other, darker, more organic soils, partly just through the process of being excavated and tossed up around the cellar hole, but chiefly through the extensive worm, ant, and root activity in the yard. The sand layer is thickest against the house, grading thinner as one moves outward. It seems logical that the prodigious quantities of cellar excavate were used to bank up the cellar hole so that it would not have to be dug any deeper than necessary.

Over time, the grade built up against the house as successive generations of owners applied fill to the yard, often to tidy up and re-landscape after major renovations to the house. The original, intended grade gave the house a striking appearance of verticality that has been lost with the rise in grade. The yellow, sandy excavate, after being smoothed out upon completion of the house, was used as a bedding surface for a paving of large boulders and cobbles, and it is the surviving remnants of this paving, which, it seems, once surrounded the entire bulkhead entry but now exist only on its east side, that clearly indicate the intended grade once the house was completed. Below the paving there was only the yellow sand and a thin layer of construction debris (i.e., brick crumbs and fragments, stone shims, occasional bits of mortar, nails, etc.).

In areas where the paving did not extend, we found a sequence of strata that reflected in capsule form the history of the house, at least in terms of its major renovations. The lowest level above the sandy cellar excavate was, as noted above, composed of construction debris. Above this was a sequence of organically enriched landscaping fills (the soil matrix was uniformly a brownish sandy silt, with variations in the sorts of inclusions), beginning with a stratum with late 17th-/early 18th-century artifacts (e.g., ceramics such as sgraffito, combed and dotted buff-bodied earthenware, sprigged and manganese decorated Westwald-type stoneware, etc.), overlain by a stratum with early to mid-18th-century materials

(e.g., ceramics such as white salt-glazed stoneware, Chinese blue and white porcelain, etc.), followed by a thick lens of brick crumbs, stone rubble, and so forth that was covered with a thick layer rich in late 18th/early 19th-century materials. We interpret the construction debris as a by-product of a mid- to late 18th-century reworking of the window openings and the layer above as a landscaping fill meant to cover up the resulting mess. This rubble layer contained some turned leads and a great deal of very old window glass, but it should be noted that we found window glass that looked very old (i.e., highly patinated and friable and almost black) in almost all levels, along with scraps of the turned leads. None of the turned leads have revealed a date or glazier's name when opened. Without full and careful analysis of all materials from the entire sequence of post-construction strata in the front yard, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions as to who (e.g., Tracy) was responsible for installing new window treatments, or whether only one change was made to the windows. The layer just below the present ground surface (L1) was laid down in the early 20th century after Edward Francis Little filled in the bulkhead, bringing the grade to pretty much where it is today.

We have only begun our analysis of materials from the East Front, and the present suggested sequence is based on preliminary assessments by China trade expert Carl Crossman (cf. Crossman 1991) and Beaudry from field observation of items as they were recovered. Detailed analysis will refine this sequence considerably. What can be said about this succession of fills is that they were very rich in artifacts, sometimes surprisingly so; this leads us to surmise that the soils used for landscaping purposes were mined from refuse heaps elsewhere on the site, or derived from privy clean-outs. Analysis of pollens in these soils has already begun; when funding becomes available, we will also have samples analyzed to see if the soils contain evidence of human parasites so that we can try to prove or disprove the privy clean-out theory. We suspected that at least some of the late 18th-/early 19th-century ceramics would crossmend with sherds recovered from the trash deposits around, if not within, the Boardman privy in

the East Yard; in 1993, this prediction came true when Crossman noticed that a sherd excavated in the East Front was the missing fragment from the base of one of two pearlware spill vases recovered from the lowest stratum in the privy (Locus 21) and currently on display in the house.

The East Front also produced an impressive array of features (see FIG. 11). These included the original bulkhead entry (Feature 81); planting holes (holes dug for trees, shrubs, or other plantings: Features 83, 90, 91, 101, 110, 113, 118–123, 128, 132); post holes (Features 93, 94, 99, 117, and 124), some of which were holes dug for the scaffolding used during construction of the house (Features 93, 117, and 124); a wall-like line of stones that served either as a retaining wall/revetment or as merely a landscaping feature (Feature 133); and a narrow roll-away ramp leading into the bulkhead entry (Feature 125).

The house's original bulkhead (Feature 81) opening was at the front, to the right of the porch entry; it is visible in Figure 2. It was abandoned and backfilled in the early 20th century when a new bulkhead was created back of the east wing of the stone house. The original bulkhead cavity was filled in with vast amounts of furnace scale, coal ash, and clinkers, along with vessel fragments from a late 19th-century, light blue transfer-printed and gilded dinner service of white improved earthenware (we have found pieces of this service in the kitchen crawl space, in the kitchen dooryard area, and elsewhere). Also in the fill were iron shoe lasts of varying sizes; these may be leftovers from the shoe-making operations carried out by tenant farmer Bartlett Currier's family. The fill material and the finds match those from excavations east of the kitchen ell, between the present bulkhead entry and the tenant house. It is perfectly logical that ejecta from the hole dug for the new bulkhead at the rear of the east wing would have been used to backfill the old bulkhead. The coal ash and clinkers otherwise do not appear in deposits in front of the house.

The ramp (Feature 125) served during construction of the house, presumably to wheel cellar excavate out in barrows or to drag it out on animal-drawn dredges, and to get foundation stones into the resulting hole by rolling or

transporting them down the ramp in some way. It was backfilled upon completion of the cellar and not disturbed subsequently, not even by the early 20th-century backfilling of the bulkhead opening. Artifacts found in the fill of the ramp hence provide evidence of the construction date of the house; they all date to the mid- to late 1680s. The datable finds include a belt buckle identical to one illustrated in Ivor Noël Hume's *Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* (1970: 85), which he dates to 1685; sherds of undecorated white as well as painted polychrome delftware dishes, and two copper alloy upholstery tacks. Also in the fill of this feature were two possible quill tips, the top of a case bottle, a complete and well-preserved iron stock lock, and several pristine examples of the decorative molded bricks used in the door and window finishes of the house.

West Front

We found a sequence of post-construction strata in the West Front area that was similar to that of the East Front during excavations there in 1992 and 1993. One difference in the finds was the higher frequency of smoking materials and sewing implements (pins, etc.), suggesting that, if such items were dropped here, rather than introduced in landscaping fill, this area may have been a favored spot for people to sit and enjoy a summer's evening. A high proportion of early and mid-18th-century artifacts occurred here in L3, but these consistently were mixed with later material, indicating that an early trash deposit was mined to provide fill to cover the debris from window renovations undertaken by Edward Henry Little in the third quarter of the 19th century. These windows were changed as part of the Little's remodeling of the parlor or living room; the Littles left the dining room windows to the east of the porch in their 18th-century state.

Field Survey

In 1989, field school students supervised by David B. Landon excavated 32 50-cm² test pits along the northern boundary of the pre-

sent property. The test units, excavated into a shallow plow zone overlying what was in most cases an undisturbed substratum, revealed a few post holes and ditch segments from earlier field boundaries but no evidence of prehistoric sites or of historical sites related to the operation of the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm (e.g., tenant housing, barns, etc.).

In 1992, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, we completed systematic surface collection in all of the cultivated fields (Beaudry 1994a). We were also able to do this in hayfields to the east and west of the house. The east hayfield, according to several informants, is where over 40 loads of debris from the barn were transported and dumped during its renovation in 1980. There is also a build-up of colluvium, or slope wash (John Gifford, personal communication, 1990), with the result that features are likely to be buried well below the present zone of tilled soil, which is very shallow in the hayfields and in Walsh's fields. Such a situation will have protected archaeological features, for the most part, but recent deep plowing of the other cultivated fields has likely spelled the end for this sort of felicitous protection.

For this survey, each field under cultivation was given an informal name based on its location vis à vis the house, name of tenant farmer leasing the field, crop type planted or to be planted, etc. Each field was gridded into a series of collection blocks 10 m x 15 m in size. The collection units or blocks were given designations by column and row (i.e., columns were assigned a letter of the alphabet, while rows were given Arabic number designations: A1, B1, etc.). A team of two archaeologists walked each grid unit side by side, making one pass longitudinally and a second pass across the width of the unit. Surface conditions were recorded for each unit in a field survey notebook, and special note was made of any readily apparent concentrations of materials. All surface items were collected and placed in specimen bags labeled according to field name and collection unit. The systematic walkover survey in the fields turned up mostly 19th-century artifacts, possibly field trash that accumulated when the fields were manured. The distribution density of sherds of 19th-century pottery is suggestive of an in-field/out-field

system of manuring, with greater manuring of the "home" versus more distant fields. One field proved of particular interest even without detailed analysis: the Turnpike Field, on the Merrimack River side of the Plum Island Turnpike, contained numerous shell middens of both prehistoric and historical date. Aboriginal pottery and stone tools were found in addition to the usual 19th-century "field trash."

Summary and Prospects

Throughout its history the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm operated as a mixed commercial agricultural enterprise, incorporating cultivation with animal husbandry. Livestock raised from the 17th century onwards included cows, pigs, sheep, and, later, horses. Initially, when the property belonged to the Spencers, cattle-raising predominated, but the Peirces concentrated more on sheep than cattle. The Peirces also produced grain crops such as barley for commercial use, and they profited from the sale, presumably chiefly to local brewers, of malt produced at their waterside maltings. The farm comprised tillage, pasture, salt marsh, and wood lots in addition to a core or homestead with a dwelling and numerous farm outbuildings. What we know about the layout of the homestead dates from the early 19th century and later (Stachiw and Grady 1995); as noted above, the archaeological evidence indicates that the farm layout depicted on the 1812 plan is largely a product of Offin Boardman's tenure at the farm.

From the very outset, much of the productive labor for the farm was obtained through tenancy (although enslaved Africans constituted part of the labor force in the 17th and 18th centuries); some of the tenants lived on the farm, while others rented rights in tillage only. The continuous presence of tenants on the farm—the widow of the last tenant farmer occupied the tenant farmhouse until the fall of 1994, and, as noted above, many of the fields are still under cultivation—is a critical aspect of the site's history.

What is also of considerable interest is the fact that the farm retained associations with wealth and gentility even after it passed into

the hands of a progressive farmer of frugal Yankee stock, E. H. Little. Perhaps the particular cachet the farm possessed and retains in local lore stems from the Peirces' treatment of the land. Daniel Peirce, Sr., in entailing his estate to descend to his eldest son and in manipulating its productivity through the services of tenants, endowed the property with qualities evocative of the manorial system of old England. Despite the fact that most of his contemporaries eschewed primogeniture in favor of partible inheritance, Peirce retained traditional ways. His son did the same; his house was built in a style going out of fashion in England, but it was certainly reminiscent of English manor houses, or at least of the homes of successful farmers. That the Peirces always maintained strong ties with the waterside indicates that while Newburyport was in fact the seat of economic, political, and social power (cf. Labaree 1962: *passim*), the farm, as an agricultural estate, was resonant of the time-honored gentility and deeply-rooted traditions of the landed class of English gentry (cf. Williamson 1995). When the property passed out of the Peirce family, it served as the country seat and summer home for a succession of powerful Newburyport merchants. Though always called a farm, locals perceived the property as an estate associated with members of the region's "gentry." The Little family, respectable and well-off but far from wealthy, was the beneficiary of these powerful associations, for references to the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm from 1830 onwards are to the "Mansion House," or the "manor-house," even though Amelia Little found this notion somewhat preposterous. In 1984, she responded to an interviewer's question "Did people think you had a lot of money being in this magnificent house?" with "Well, it wasn't called 'magnificent' in my childhood. We had cows and sold milk" (quoted in Grady 1992: 49). Her down-to-earth assessment may have contradicted local lore, but it is the perception of the house as a place where gentry lived that has survived to the present.

Archaeological research has shed light on many aspects of the site's history, as expected, but has offered some surprises as well. Several seasons of excavation have produced a vast amount of data, an embarrassment of riches,

as it were, and an analytical backlog of monumental proportions. As a result, attention is turning to processing and analyzing the artifactual evidence. Only after all of the excavated material is properly studied can the project goals be fully addressed. A comprehensive portrait of the use of the homelot has begun to come into focus; the house was built in an area that had been plowed in the early part of the 17th century and had also seen construction activity of some sort. To date, all of the features that pre-date the construction of the house are post holes; they are widely scattered, and they form no clear pattern. The ramp filled as the house was completed included in its fill an early 17th-century stocklock, a tantalizing clue that the post holes might be evidence of a structure other than a fence. Only further excavation will provide the answer.

There are many issues that can be addressed with the material in hand, however. Full analysis of the artifactual remains will permit us to develop a refined chronology for the various remodeling episodes that are manifested by strata containing architectural debris, each capped by a layer of landscaping fill mined from privies, trash piles, or manure heaps elsewhere on the property (White 1995, a statistical analysis of finds from the West Front area, represents a beginning). Hence these deposits, secondary or tertiary though they may be, are rich in artifacts that provide clues to the lives of the site's occupants. These broadcast layers are, in point of fact, the only deposits thus far encountered that contain remains from the early to mid-18th-century Peirce family occupation. Sealed features from this era have thus far eluded us. To date, the kitchen stairwell and Boardman privy are the most informative sealed deposits—and only in such sealed deposits have ethnobotanical remains been preserved well.

The archaeological signatures of the Boardman and Little occupations are the most pronounced to date, and, of the house's occupants, the Tracys, Boardmans, and Littles have left the most pronounced and accessible documentary traces. It has been possible to examine in detail the career trajectories of Tracy and Boardman through the archaeological record produced while these men and their families

lived at the farm (Beaudry n.d.) and to delineate Edward Henry Little's carefully planned changes to the property in keeping with the principles of progressive farming (Mascia 1994b).

There are several additional lines of interpretation that require attention. For the immediate future, excavations aim toward further delineation of the changing layout of the farmyard. An important goal is to go beyond what can be reconstructed from 19th-century maps and photographs in order to learn whether the Boardman-era farmyard was a relatively new arrangement of homelot, fences, barns, outbuildings, and fields or merely a continuation of a long-established pattern. The interplay between tradition and innovation is a fascinating aspect of the history of New England farming.

At the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, the situation is complicated by the seeming contradiction between the survival of the house as genealogical mnemonic, a link to the founders and early leaders of Newbury, and its continual operation as a profitable, working farm (Beaudry n.d.). A future avenue for analytical attention is the contrast between Tracy's and Boardman's active manipulation of the site's historical associations and Little's progressive tendencies that led him to eradicate much of the conservative, and presumably outdated, facilities of the farmyard and to wholly refashion the landscape of the homelot.

The landscape fill deposits are replete with domestic artifacts such as ceramics, glass, and clay pipes; they also have produced numerous artifacts related to needlework and sewing. Items such as thimbles, sewing scissors, lace bobbins, and so forth, speak directly to the lives and activities of women of the household. A full-scale study of this category of objects is in progress (see Beaudry 1994c).

Bringing the enslaved Africans who lived at the site in the 17th and 18th centuries into view is a far greater challenge. There are certainly references in the court records to African people (including a case in which Daniel Peirce's "Negro" is mentioned), usually revealing prejudicial and cruel treatment.⁹

⁹ Examples include in 1645 Daniell Rumble beating "his man hall," who died after receiving more than 50 blows—

What finds its way into the court cases is at the extreme end of the scale and bears little on what sort of living arrangements and conditions existed for enslaved Africans in Essex County. There may not be direct archaeological evidence of such lonely and isolated servitude, but knowledge of its existence should sharpen the archaeologist's wits and sensitivity to the possibility.

Eventually it will be useful and, one hopes, enlightening, to draw comparisons between the findings from the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm and other sites in the region. There is a wide range of sites in New England that offers tantalizing opportunities for comparison. Perhaps most apt are the materials from work by Alaric Faulkner and others on the Newburyport waterfront (Faulkner et al. 1978), where they found remains of Offin Boardman's in-town home (Boardman lived at Spencer-Peirce-Little 1797–1811, before that he lived in his Newburyport house on Boardman Wharf.); the Narbonne (Moran, Zimmer, and Yentsch 1982) and Turner (Goodwin 1993, 1994) houses in Salem, Massachusetts; sites at Strawberry Banke and Deer Street in Portsmouth, New Hampshire (Agnew 1985, 1988, 1989, 1993; Edwards, Pendery, and Agnew 1988; Pinello 1989, 1993; Wheeler 1993a, 1993b); the Wentworth estate in Wolfboro, New Hampshire (Starbuck 1990); the Rea-Proctor Farm in Danvers, Massachusetts (Beaudry 1994b); and various sites excavated by Old Sturbridge Village (Worrell 1993). Such comparisons are a long way off, however.

Long range plans for the Spencer-Peirce-Little project include a fuller investigation of the range of outbuildings along the northern

and a nail driven through his skull (RFQCEC I: 84); the 1681 case of "Rayments boy" who "had then an Iron about his neck which...did signifie that he had bien a Runaway" (RFQCEC VIII: 143); again in 1681 a complaint against "Toneye the Neagor servant of Samuell Johnson of Lynn" (RFQCEC VIII: 144); and in 1682 there is Benedict Pulsipher's petition that his son, convicted "of being with Steephen Crose's negro aboard Crose's sloop, stealing wine, sugar and biscuit," not be held accountable because "the said Negro did Intice my Child to committ that vileness, for he the said Negro...is very well known a wicked person...I understand he sinse...did much what the like evill That his Master sold him for lesse then he would or might have done had he been better" (RFQCEC VIII: 297–298).

perimeter of the farmyard, exploration of the rear yard of the tenant house, and a continuation of research into the changing use of the farm over time. The short-range goals are to continue the processing and analysis of finds made to date, and, most important, to report and interpret the results of the research. The overview presented here constitutes an initial effort to accomplish this goal.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and its staff for sponsoring and supporting the archaeology at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, especially to Jane Nylander, President; Myron Stachiw, Director of Research Services; Elisabeth C. Byers, formerly Administrator of Environmental Properties; and Tracey A. Fortier, Regional Administrator for Newbury. I am especially grateful to all of the volunteers from the Newbury area and elsewhere, the most loyal of whom has been James A. Newton, the most entertaining and indefatigable of whom has been Carl L. Crossman. Thanks also to the many students from Boston University and elsewhere who have worked on the project as students or volunteers, especially Ellen P. Berkland and Brendan McDermott, who made the field drawing for Figure 10. Special thanks to Sara F. Mascia, who served as my assistant on the project from 1986–1993; to David B. Landon for field assistance and faunal analysis; to Sally Pendleton and Maureen Smyth for ethnobotanical analyses; to Gerald K. Kelso for pollen analysis; to Timothy J. Scarlett for field assistance, petrographic analysis, and for drafting the plan of the Scullery area that appears as Figure 9; to Carolyn White for field assistance and for supervising volunteers in the lab; to David E. Clayton for the EDM survey and GIS maps (one of which appears as Figure 5); to Michael Hamilton for photography; to Stephan H. Claesson for field assistance and for making the field drawing that appears as Figure 11; and to Sally Pendleton, Karen Bescherer Metheny, and Alison Dwyer for field assistance. Robert E. Schultz produced the finished drawings for Figures 1, 8, 10 and 11. The project is truly a team effort,

with a large and changing team; if I've failed to mention anyone here, they have my thanks nonetheless. The interpretations are my own, but come not so much out of my head as out of many discussions with and suggestions from students and colleagues, including the constructive reviews of two valued colleagues, Lu Ann De Cunzo and Julia A. King. I accept full responsibility for my interpretations, not wanting to refer to them as conclusions, however; I hope that the discussions will continue.

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