

**THE HISTORIC OCCANEECHI:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF CULTURE CHANGE**

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF 1984 INVESTIGATIONS

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Introduction

Important information on an extinct American Indian tribe is emerging from archaeological research at the Fredricks site in Orange County, North Carolina (Figure 1). Fieldwork conducted during the summers of 1983 and 1984 by the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina has identified this site as Occaneechi Town, where survivors of the once-powerful Occaneechi tribe resided between 1680 and 1720, during the final years of the group's existence. In 1984, with funds provided by the National Geographic Society and the University of North Carolina, excavations were greatly expanded over those of 1983 to expose portions of the habitation area and an associated cemetery. Systematic auger testing was also conducted in parts of the site not yet excavated to determine village boundaries and densities of structures and features.

The 1984 excavations revealed approximately 90 feet of the posthole pattern for a palisade surrounding the village, and postholes and pits for other possible structures within the palisade. The most interesting features were the wall

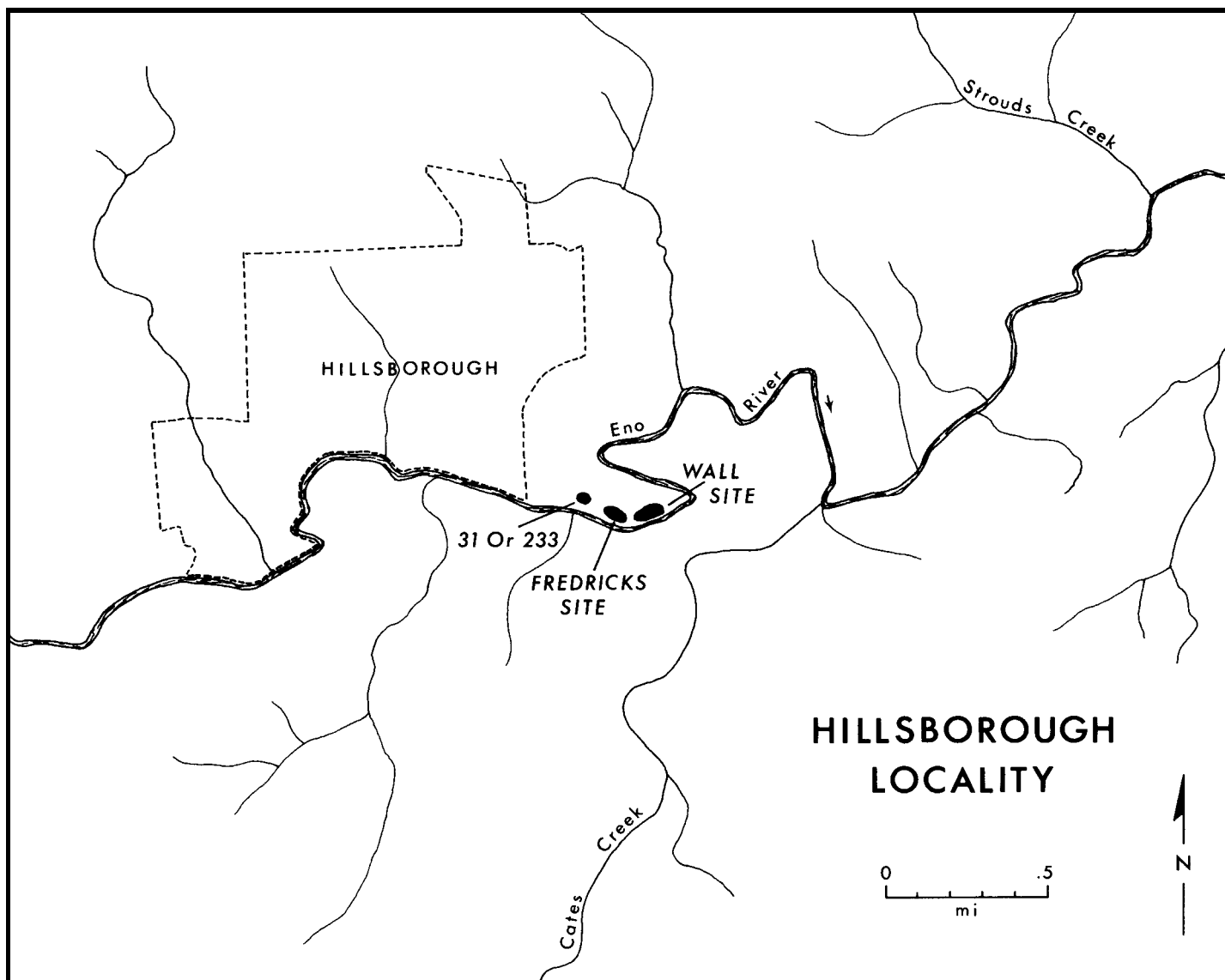


Figure 1. Hillsborough locality showing the Wall and Fredricks sites.

pattern and an interior rock-filled pit of a small "sweat house", a type of structure frequently mentioned in early documents but seldom found by archaeologists. In a cemetery located immediately outside the palisade on the northeast side of the village, six burials were carefully exposed and recovered, bringing the total number of excavated graves to ten. An extensive and well-preserved assemblage of material remains, including items of both Indian and European manufacture, were found in the burials and habitation features. Excellent samples of botanical and faunal remains also were recovered.

Systematic auger testing at 2.5-ft intervals was conducted over approximately one-fourth of the site, in areas northwest, west, and southeast of the completed excavations. This technique was substituted for proposed small-scale test excavations after it was determined that every major feature exposed in the 1983 and 1984 excavations would have been located by auger tests at 2.5-ft intervals. Soil cores obtained from the tests allow accurate evaluations of fill matrix and depth of buried features. A map of positive tests obtained in the 1984 season indicates other areas of dense village remains west and south of the completed excavations. These data will be invaluable in planning future excavations.

Historical Background

When European explorers first entered the North Carolina Piedmont, they found it occupied by several small Indian tribes sharing a common culture and a similar language. These Siouan tribes also shared a mixed subsistence of hunting, gathering, and agriculture, and a social system regulated by ties of kinship and reciprocity.

As the colonial frontier was pushed farther into the Piedmont and as Indian and European interaction was intensified, the Occaneechi tribe became prominent among the Siouan groups. The Occaneechi controlled much of the deer-skin trade, and their language became the lingua franca of the Piedmont. Their pivotal role in the fur trade came about partly because one of their villages, on an island in the Roanoke River, was astride the Great Trading Path from Virginia to Georgia.

The island village of the Occaneechi was visited by John Lederer in 1670 (Talbot 1672). After the Occaneechis "barbarously murdered" six Cherokees who were attempting to establish trade relations with the Virginia colonists, Lederer, fearing for his life, cut short his visit. James Needham and Gabriel Arthur, who traveled through the same territory in 1673, observed that the Occaneechis controlled

the colonial trade, which endowed them with an importance that far exceeded their numbers (Alvord and Bidgood 1912). They seem to have maintained and reinforced their role in the trade network through warfare and intimidation. Thus, the Occaneechi tribe earned a fierce and pugnacious reputation, which eventually led to an eruption of armed hostilities with Nathaniel Bacon's militia in 1676.

After pursuing a group of Susquehanna Indians into Occaneechi territory, Bacon convinced the Occaneechi to join forces with his militia to defeat the Susquehanna. After that victory was accomplished, however, Bacon turned on his former allies and killed many of them, including a chief (Billings 1975:267-269).

After the battle with Bacon, the Occaneechis were so reduced in numbers that they could no longer defend their island stronghold on the Roanoke. The survivors abandoned their home territory, retreated southward, and re-established a village on the Eno River, near present-day Hillsborough, North Carolina (Figure 2). In 1701, English surveyor John Lawson visited the relocated Occaneechi Town where he observed that there were "no Indians having greater Plenty of Provisions than these" (Lawson 1709:55-56).

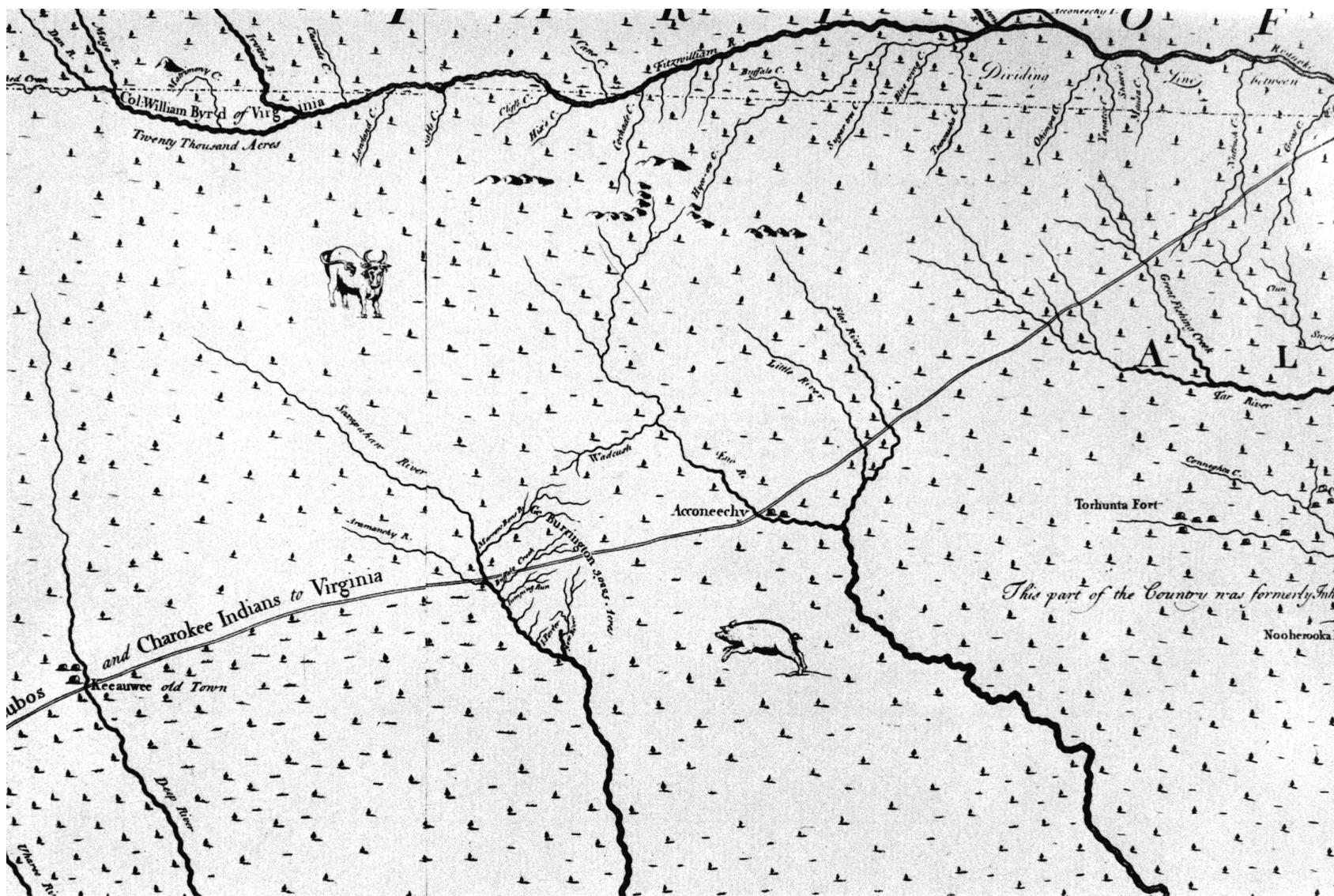


Figure 2. Edward Moseley's 1733 map locating "Acconeechy" on Enoree River.

After Lawson's visit, conditions worsened for the Occaneechi, as well as for the other Siouan tribes, and by 1722, disease, warfare, and rum had virtually destroyed aboriginal societies in the Piedmont. Remnants of once autonomous groups either huddled together around Fort Christanna in Virginia or moved to join their cousins, the Catawba, in South Carolina. By 1730, except for a few isolated Indian families, the North Carolina Piedmont lay mostly vacant, awaiting the arrival of hordes of colonists from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Archaeological Background

Archaeologists first became interested in studying the remains of the Piedmont Siouans in the 1930s, when village sites thought to be associated with the Keyauwee, Sara, Saponi, and Occaneechi were subjected to excavations of varying intensity (Coe 1937; Lewis 1951). Though broad in scope, these early efforts were not focused by a structured research design. At most sites, only small areas were tested, and collections were gathered primarily with an eye toward identifying pottery types of the different tribes. As part of this early research, extensive excavations were carried out between 1938 and 1941 at the Wall site on the Eno River

near Hillsborough (Figures 3 and 4). This site was thought to represent the Occaneechi village visited by Lawson in 1701.

The next archaeological research in the Siouan area was brought about in the 1940s by plans to inundate Kerr Reservoir on the Roanoke River in North Carolina and Virginia (Miller 1962). Under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Salvage Program, extensive excavations were conducted at the Clarksville site on the east bank of the river opposite "Occaneechi Island", and on the island itself at the Tollifero site (Figure 3). These two sites contained information on the prehistoric Siouan inhabitants of the area, but no evidence was found of the 1670 Occaneechi village visited by Lederer, Needham and Arthur, and Bacon.

In 1972, the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina began excavations at the Upper Saratown site on the Dan River in Stokes County, North Carolina (Figure 3). These investigations, which lasted for ten consecutive field seasons, exposed a group of circular houses with associated storage pits and burials, and a sequence of village palisades (Ward 1980; Wilson 1983). Most of the burials were accompanied by nonutilitarian European trade items. Ethnohistoric records and the

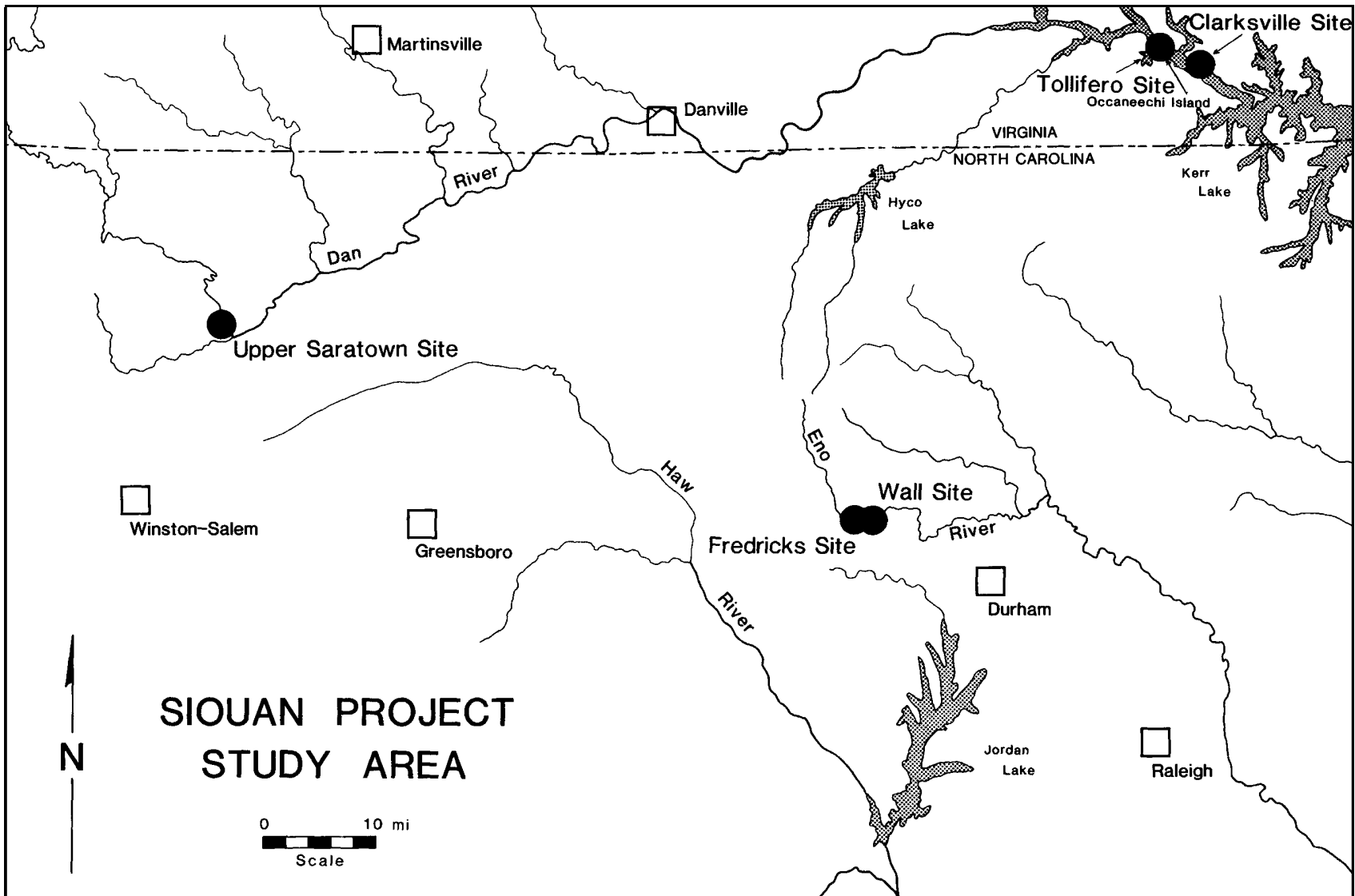


Figure 3. Investigated sites within the Siouan Project area.



Figure 4. Initial excavations at the Wall site in 1938.



Figure 5. Areal view of 1983 test excavation at the Fredricks site showing rectangular burial pits.

recovered trade materials suggested that this site was occupied during the late 1600s by the Sara, one of the Piedmont Siouan tribes.

When combined, these efforts seem substantial. Each project, however, was developed as an end in itself and was not guided by an overall set of research objectives. Accordingly, archaeological coverage of the Siouan area is uneven. For example, the upper Dan River valley has been extensively investigated, whereas the Haw and Eno drainages, to the east, have received relatively little attention. Surveys have been opportunistic rather than systematic, and a few larger sites have been tested and excavated at the virtual exclusion of many smaller ones. With all of their shortcomings, these previous investigations do provide a foundation for future studies of Piedmont Siouan culture.

Although the need to approach Siouan archaeology with a set of specific goals, operationalized by an overall research strategy, has been obvious, such a course of study was not formulated until the winter and spring of 1983. At this time, staff from the Research Laboratories of Anthropology defined a research design which included a set of questions focused on Siouan culture change and the archaeological correlates of this change. These questions were derived from both the ethnohistoric and archaeological records.

In broad terms, the current research questions are centered on changes in Siouan culture brought about by contact and interaction with English colonists. To this end, one of the primary goals is to locate and identify towns occupied by the various tribes at specific temporal intervals from the late prehistoric through the late historic periods. Once sites representing all (or most) intervals have been located in each drainage area, it will be possible to address more specific questions concerning how the different Siouan groups adapted to increasing exposure to European materials, ideas, and institutions.

Initial archaeological investigations of the Siouan Project have focused on the Dan, Eno, and Haw River drainages, heartland of the Piedmont Siouans during the Historic period. Extant ethnohistoric and archaeological information suggest considerable cultural diversity among the groups in these three river systems, reflecting possible differences in ethnicity, microenvironmental adaptation, and intensity of interaction with the English. Although the Siouan tribes abandoned, moved, and formed new villages during the Historic period, by 1675 the locations of their settlements were more or less stabilized within the confines of these three drainages. The Sara, Tutelo, and Saponi occupied the territory drained by the Dan and its tributaries; the Eno basin was the homeland of the Eno,

Shakori, and Occaneechi; and the Haw River area was occupied by the Sissipahaw and others.

Almost no ethnohistoric information exists on the specific locations of villages for these Siouan tribes with the exception of the Occaneechi. Based upon descriptions from Lawson's (1709) journal, as well as the survival of "Occaneechi" as a placename, a strong case can be built for locating Occaneechi Town immediately southeast of Hillsborough in 1701 (Rights 1957; Lefler 1967). Although the location at the Wall site was approximately correct based on the above information, a cursory re-examination of the 1938-1941 excavation data (Coe 1952) immediately called to question identification of the site as the 1701 village of the Occaneechi. Euroamerican artifacts from the Wall site either dated too late or had been found in questionable contexts. Additional field investigations were needed to clarify the temporal placement of the Wall site and to critically evaluate its identification as Occaneechi Town.

Therefore, in the summer of 1983, after a hiatus of 42 years, excavations were resumed at the Wall site. Initially, sections of the old excavations were isolated and a grid system re-established. A portion of the rich midden surrounding the village was excavated and subjected to fine-scale recovery techniques. In addition, three burials

were removed and half of a circular house pattern was exposed. The few European artifacts recovered were from the disturbed plowzone, and most of them dated to the latter half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Three radiocarbon samples yielded an average corrected date of A.D. 1545 \pm 80 years. These data, in conjunction with a review of the earlier investigations, led to the irrefutable conclusion that the Wall site was too old to be historic Occaneechi Town.

During 1983, other village sites were found in the vicinity of the Wall site. At one of these, the Fredricks site, numerous European artifacts, along with aboriginal remains, were found on the surface. Test excavations were undertaken at this site late in the field season, while work was still in progress at the Wall site. These initial tests revealed five sharp-cornered rectangular pits and a line of small postholes (Figure 5). Both the posthole pattern and the pits were neatly arranged in a NW-SE direction. Four of the pits were excavated and three contained human skeletal remains that were accompanied by grave goods. The fourth pit, although identical in shape to the other three, appeared to represent a burial but contained no bones or grave goods. The fifth pit was only partially exposed and was not excavated until 1984. Two of the burials were the remains of children

between eight and ten years old at death. Included with these burials were European trade items such as knives, scissors, and a variety of glass beads. Aboriginal artifacts included shell gorgets, shell beads, and a ceramic vessel. One adult male burial contained a wealth of European artifacts, including an intact rum bottle, scissors, knives, a pewter pipe and buttons, a pair of ember tongs, and an iron ax head.

Most of the trade artifacts from the Fredricks site were found to date to the late 1600s or very early 1700s, the appropriate period for Occaneechi Town. The site seemed to be well preserved, with no evidence of disturbance other than shallow plowing. From these observations, it was obvious that more intensive work was needed at the Fredricks site. Hence, plans were immediately begun for a project in 1984 that would combine a major excavation and testing program at the Fredricks site, along with continued work at the neighboring Wall site (Figures 6 and 7).

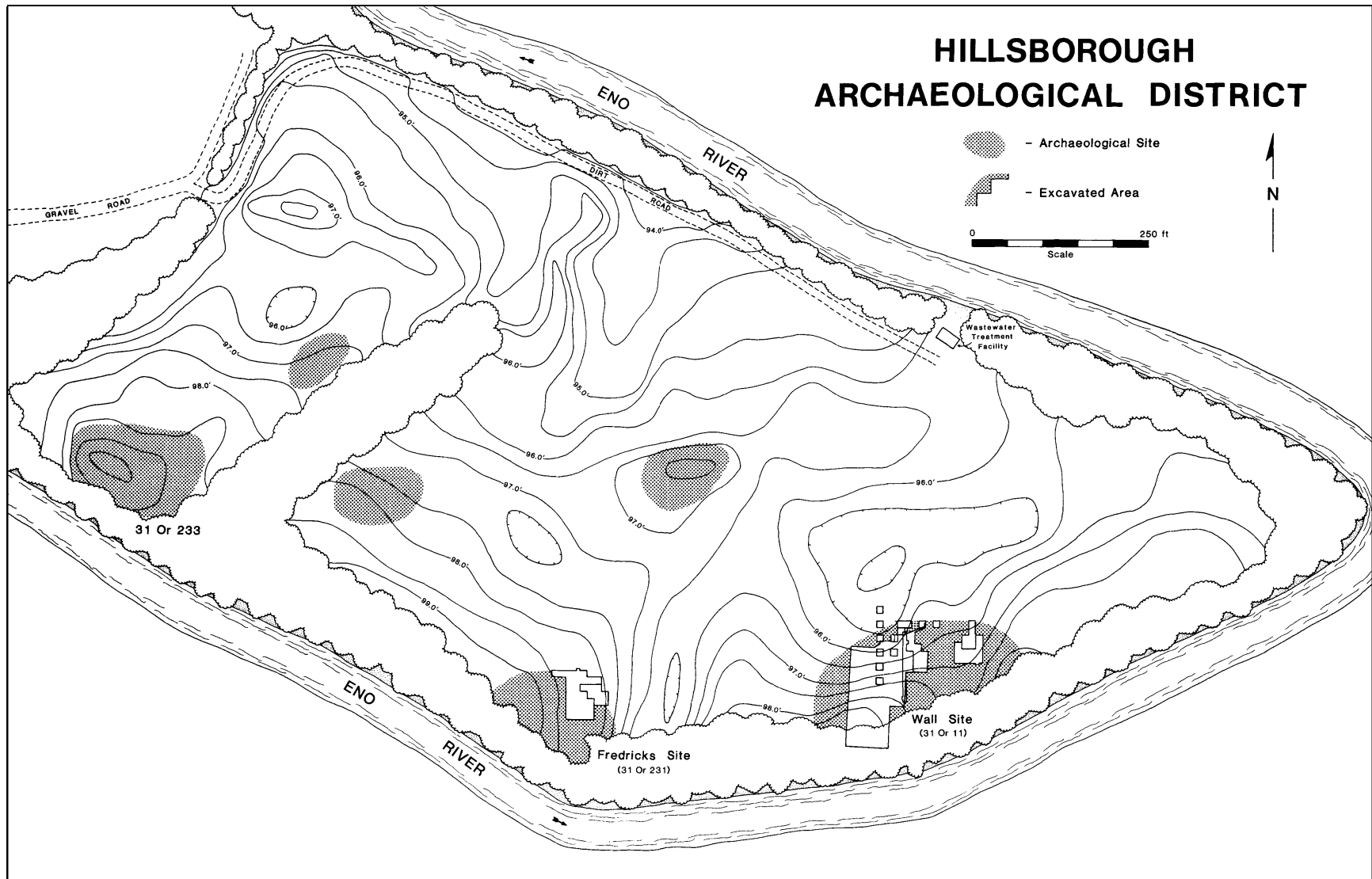


Figure 6. Hillsborough archaeological district.



Figure 7. High-level aerial view of 1984 excavations at the Wall site (foreground) and Fredricks site (background).



Figure 8. Removing plowzone at the Fredricks site.

1984 Fieldwork

Introduction

The 1984 archaeological investigations at the Fredricks site, sponsored by a grant from the National Geographic Society, were undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which consisted of extensive excavation adjacent to the 1983 excavation block, was begun on May 22 and completed on July 14. The purpose of these excavations was to obtain additional data on mortuary behavior from the previously discovered cemetery area of the site and to begin sampling adjacent domestic areas. The second phase consisted of systematic subsurface testing of unexcavated portions of the site and was undertaken between February 24 and October 17, as weather and time permitted. This latter phase of fieldwork provided data for delimiting probable settlement boundaries, and for making a preliminary assessment of internal site structure.

Site Stratigraphy

Evidence for human occupation at the Fredricks site is contained within two distinct soil layers. The uppermost layer, the plowzone, is a light brown clay loam which ranges from 0.5 ft to 0.9 ft in thickness. Artifacts within this zone derive from the upper portions of pits and postholes which have been truncated by plowing, and from refuse that was discarded on the original surface of the village.

Artifacts recovered from the plowzone include fragments of aboriginal pottery, chipped-stone tools and waste flakes, fire-cracked rock, daub, brick fragments, historic pottery, and minor amounts of charcoal and animal bone. These latter materials are underrepresented in the plowzone because of their fragility. Although no intact midden was observed during excavations, the presence of darkly stained soil at the base of plowzone in the northwesternmost excavation units is suggestive of a plowed-out midden.

The plowzone is immediately underlain by a yellow clay subsoil of undetermined depth. Evidence of human occupation within this zone is limited to intrusive pits, postholes, and other features. These features are clearly evident at the top of subsoil following the removal of the plowzone, and occur as dark brown-to-black stains.

Excavation Procedures

Site preparation prior to excavation consisted of bush-hogging the work area (ca. 100x150 ft in dimension), establishing a site grid and reference point for taking elevations, and the construction of facilities for storing equipment and processing archaeological soils, including a shed and sluices for waterscreening. All plowzone excavation was undertaken in 10x10-ft units, with soil being dry screened through 1/2-inch wire mesh using hand sifters (Figure 8). A

20-litre soil sample from the plowzone of each unit was waterscreened through 1/16-inch mesh to assess small-scale artifact content. An area composed of 27 contiguous 10x10-ft units was opened in 1984.

Following the removal of plowzone, the bottom of each excavation unit was carefully trowelled in order to identify and record pits and postholes (Figure 9). The trowelled surface was documented by black-and-white and color photographs and by maps at a scale of 1 in = 2 ft. The drawings of each excavation unit subsequently were combined to produce an overall plot of the excavations. Photographic documentation was also kept for all procedures and general progress of work. Horizontal and vertical control was maintained through reference to the site grid and by using a transit and rod to determine elevations. In addition to these excavations, six 10x10-ft units excavated in 1983 were re-exposed. Once accomplished, the entire excavation area was cleaned and photographed (Figure 10).

The 1983 and 1984 excavations at the Fredricks site have exposed numerous archaeological features, including 10 human burials, 5 pits, a sweat house, an alignment of postholes forming a 90-ft segment of the village palisade, and approximately 800 additional postholes (Figure 11). Postholes were systematically recorded but were not excavated. Feature



Figure 9. Trowelling at top of subsoil to expose archaeological features.



Figure 10. Overview of the 1984 excavation at the Fredricks site showing palisade and village cemetery.

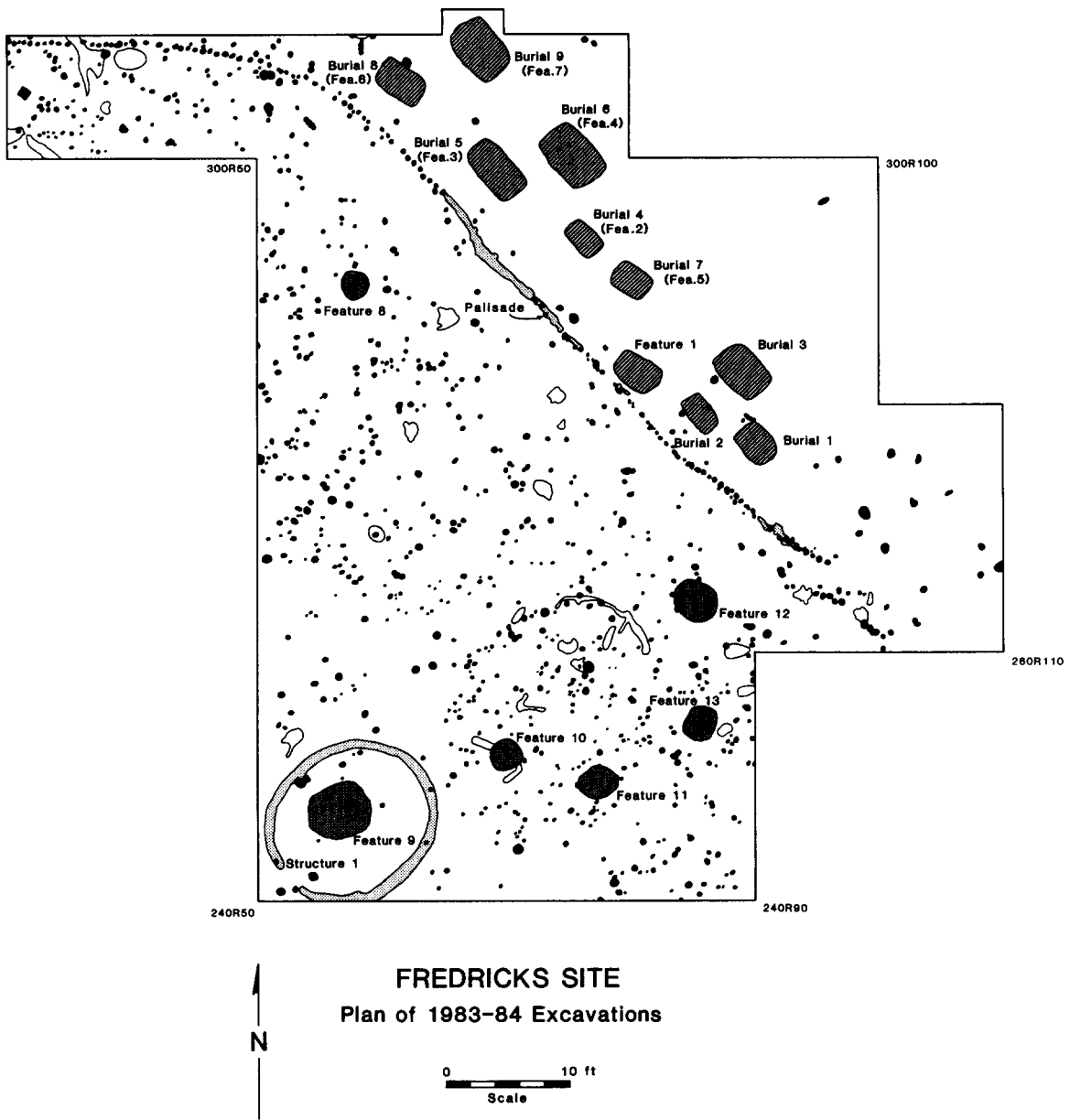


Figure 11. Excavation plan of the Fredricks site, 1983-1984.

excavation, including the excavation of burials and the sweat house, was accomplished using trowels, grapefruit knives, brushes, and other small tools. Sunscreens, constructed of wooden frames and bedsheets, were erected during excavation to minimize the damage to feature contents by the heat of the summer sun. Feature fill was removed in natural zones, when evident, and all fill was waterscreened through sluice boxes having a sequence of 1/2-inch, 1/4-inch, and 1/16-inch wire mesh. This technique permitted the recovery of minute artifacts, including shell and glass beads, lead shot, small animal bones, and carbonized plant remains. Standard 10-litre soil samples from each zone of each feature were simultaneously processed by flotation to retrieve very small, extremely fragile carbonized seeds that might be lost in waterscreening. Elevations were taken following the removal of each soil zone in order to establish precise provenience for zone contents and to permit the calculation of soil volume estimates.

Special care was taken with human burials to ensure that all bones and associated artifacts were kept in place during excavation. The primary objective during burial excavation was to preserve the integrity of contextual relationships among human remains and burial furniture while removing the fill dirt.

Upon completion, all features were extensively documented by black-and-white and color photography, and by drawings in profile and plan at a scale of 1 in 2 ft. Also, extensive notes were kept by all excavators in both field journals and on standardized feature and burial data forms.

In instances where burial remains (e.g., bones, bead clusters, and corroded metal artifacts) were too fragile to permit thorough cleaning and full documentation in situ, the surrounding soil was cut away to form a 4-in high pedestal beneath the remains. This pedestal was then wrapped with a band of fine fiberglass screen and covered with a layer of Bondo to prevent the pedestal from disintegrating when removed from the ground. This procedure allowed the removal intact of all fragile remains to the conservation laboratory where they could be cleaned, documented, and preserved (Figure 30).

Auger Testing

Immediately prior to the 1984 field season, limited testing was undertaken with a 1-in diameter Oakfield soil-sampling tool to ascertain the location of additional archaeological features in areas adjacent to the 1983 excavations. Auger cores were obtained at approximately 2.5-ft intervals. All positive tests (i.e., those that

encountered something other than subsoil at the base of plowzone were flagged and mapped. During the 1984 excavations, it quickly became apparent that this technique was very reliable in locating the full range of features present at the site. In fact, all of the features excavated in 1984 were initially identified by augering. Given these results, it was decided to use this technique, in place of the 5x5-ft test excavations originally proposed, to obtain data on the internal structure and boundaries of the site. Compared to small test excavations, augering has the advantage of being areally comprehensive, highly reliable, and relatively inexpensive. The only disadvantage of the technique is that it rarely allows the recovery of artifacts.

Approximately 10,000 ft² of the suspected site area was tested with a soil auger, excluding the 1983-1984 excavation area. Holes were placed 2.5 ft apart and were located precisely on the site grid. In all, over 1500 auger tests were made, 120 of which were positive tests (41 probable pit features, and 79 very shallow pits or postholes). Each positive test was mapped and described according to depth, soil color, and fill content. Results of the 1984 auger testing program are illustrated in Figure 12. Figure 12 also superimposes the sampling grid over the 1983-1984 excavation

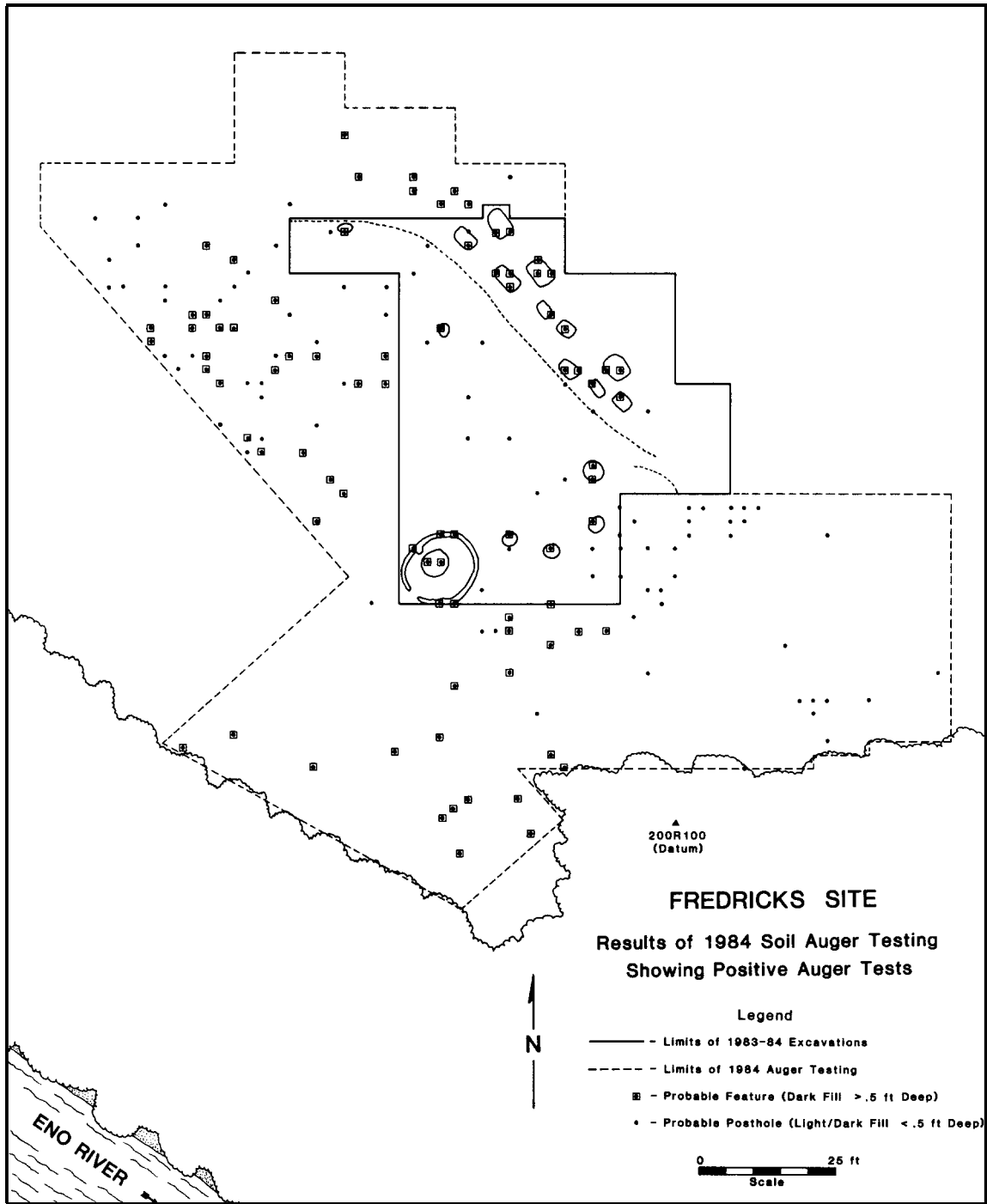


Figure 12. Map showing the results of soil auger testing at the Fredricks site.

area to show how this area would have appeared through systematic augering. All features and burials would have been detected; however, most postholes, including those forming the palisade, would have gone undetected.

Augering of the unexcavated portion of the site indicates the presence of 5-7 additional burial pits within the cemetery, as well as dense clusters of features to the west and south of the present excavation. These clusters probably reflect areas of intense domestic activity. It is also clear that the cemetery does not extend southeast of the palisade entrance.

Cultural Remains

A preliminary description of archaeological features and a brief summary of some of the artifacts from the excavations are presented below (Tables 1-2). Because the features (Feature 1 and Burials 1-3) excavated during 1983 are integral to understanding the significance of the 1984 fieldwork, they are also described.

Burials

Clearly the most significant class of features excavated at the Fredricks site to date are 10 burial pits within a cemetery located adjacent to the village palisade (Figure 11). Nine of these contained both human remains and burial furniture

Table 1. Feature/Burial Summary for the
Fredricks Site, 1983-1984

Fea./Bur. Number	Date Excavated	Type	Center Location	Dimensions (ft)		
				L	W	D
Bu. 1	1983	Burial	276.8R90.3	3.55	2.55	2.35
Bu. 2	1983	Burial	279.3R85.8	3.10	2.60	2.10
Bu. 3	1983	Burial	282.7R89.1	4.40	3.20	3.00
Fea. 1	1983	Burial?	282.7R80.7	3.90	2.90	2.80
Fea. 2/Bu. 4	1984	Burial (Bundle)	293.5R76.5	3.15	2.20	2.11
Fea. 3/Bu. 5	1984	Burial	299.2R69.5	5.02	2.82	2.10
Fea. 4/Bu. 6	1984	Burial	300.6R75.7	5.60	3.95	2.25
Fea. 5/Bu. 7	1984	Burial	290.0R80.4	3.35	2.30	1.35
Fea. 6/Bu. 8	1984	Burial	306.5R61.7	3.95	2.45	2.49
Fea. 7/Bu. 9	1984	Burial	308.7R68.2	5.10	3.51	2.30
Fea. 8	1984	Tree Stump	290.0R58.0	2.40	2.20	2.27
Fea. 9	1984	Fire Pit	247.4R56.6	5.00	4.70	2.85
Fea. 10	1984	Storage Pit	251.6R70.0	2.60	2.30	3.10
Fea. 11	1984	Pit	249.5R77.4	3.00	2.40	1.53
Fea. 12	1984	Pit	264.0R85.5	3.40	3.20	1.14
Fea. 13	1984	Pit	254.0R85.7	2.80	2.40	1.47

Table 2. Preliminary Inventory of Artifacts
Recovered at the Fredricks Site, 1984

Category	Primary Excavation	Secondary Excavation	Total
Chipped Stone Tools	251	37	288
Ground Stone Tools	12	4	16
Historic Artifacts	366	877	1243
Clay Pipe Fragments	46	56	102
Potsherds	7491	1072	8563
Animal Bone	71.5g	6165.4g	6236.9g
Ethno-Botanical Remains	0.1g	449.6g	449.7g
Flakes	427	554	981
Brick	209	7	216
Daub	1660.1g	4372.0g	6032.1g

of native and European manufacture; a tenth feature (Feature 1) contained neither bones nor artifacts but is still interpreted as a burial because of pit location, configuration, and alignment. All pits are rectangular in plan and are aligned parallel to the outside of the palisade.

Each burial is summarized below. Preliminary assessment of age is based on dental development, eruption, and attrition, and endocranial suture closure for adults. Sex determination is based on cranial and innominate morphology.

Burial 1 contained the remains of a sub-adult, 4-5 years old at death (Figure 13). Artifacts accompanying this burial consisted of a "bundle" containing a latten spoon, 2 bone-handled iron knives, 2 pairs of iron scissors, 7 lead buttons, and numerous glass beads; several small glass beads and 10 black glass buttons strung around the neck; unidentifiable iron fragments, lead shot, and cut shell beads; and 2 engraved shell gorgets (Figures 28 d-e; 33 a-c).

Burial 2 contained the remains of a sub-adult, 7-8 years old at death (Figure 14). Associated artifacts were a "bundle" thought to represent a beaded bag containing a jews harp, lead shot, 3 lead buttons, miscellaneous iron fragments, and several glass beads; a check-stamped clay pot of native manufacture; 2 bone-handled iron knives; a pewter porringer; and numerous cut shell beads scattered around the body (Figure 27a).



Figure 13. Burial 1.



Figure 14. Burial 2.

Burial 3 contained the remains of an adult male, approximately 30-35 years old at death (Figure 15). Artifacts accompanying this burial were a smoking kit composed of a white metal pipe, an ember tender, and flint; a possible fabric-wrapped "bundle" (with preserved fragments of cloth) containing 2 pairs of scissors, 2 wooden-handled iron knives, a brass buckle with part of the leather strap preserved, a glass bottle fragment, lead shot, several unidentifiable iron fragments, and a clump of Vermillion; a glass wine bottle; a gun lock spring; an iron axe; and numerous glass beads (Figures 31 a; 32 c; 33 f).

Feature 1 probably was the grave of a new-born. Although no human remains or associated artifacts were recovered, its use as a burial facility is highly probable given the size, shape, and depth of the pit and its placement within the cemetery.

Burial 4 (Feature 2) contained the remains of an adult male, 20-25 years old at death (Figure 17). The skeletal remains were disarticulated and placed in a bundle within the pit. This bundle also contained some probable infant cranial fragments. Evidence of a violent death is suggested by cut marks on the skull which appear to have resulted from scalping (Figure 18). Associated artifacts consisted of a cluster of 11 tubular shell beads, a glass wine bottle, and a pewter porringer (Figure 31 b).



Figure 15. Burial 3.

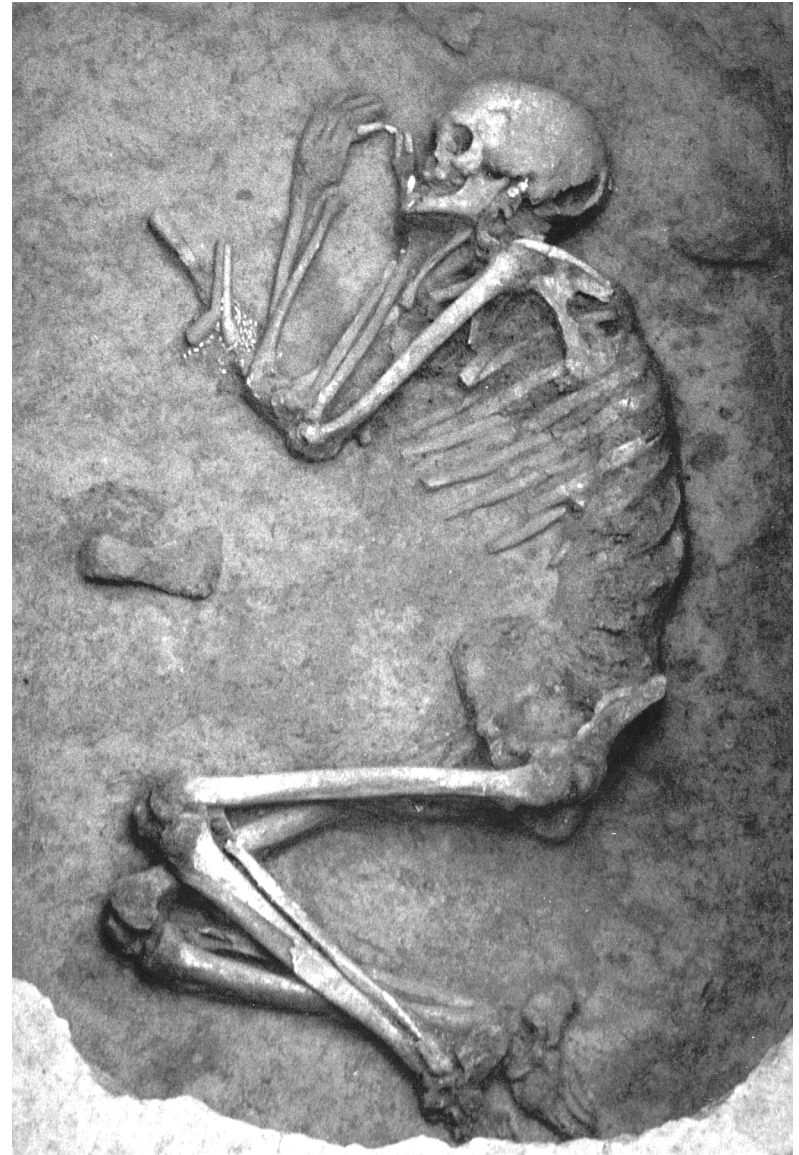


Figure 16. Burial 5.

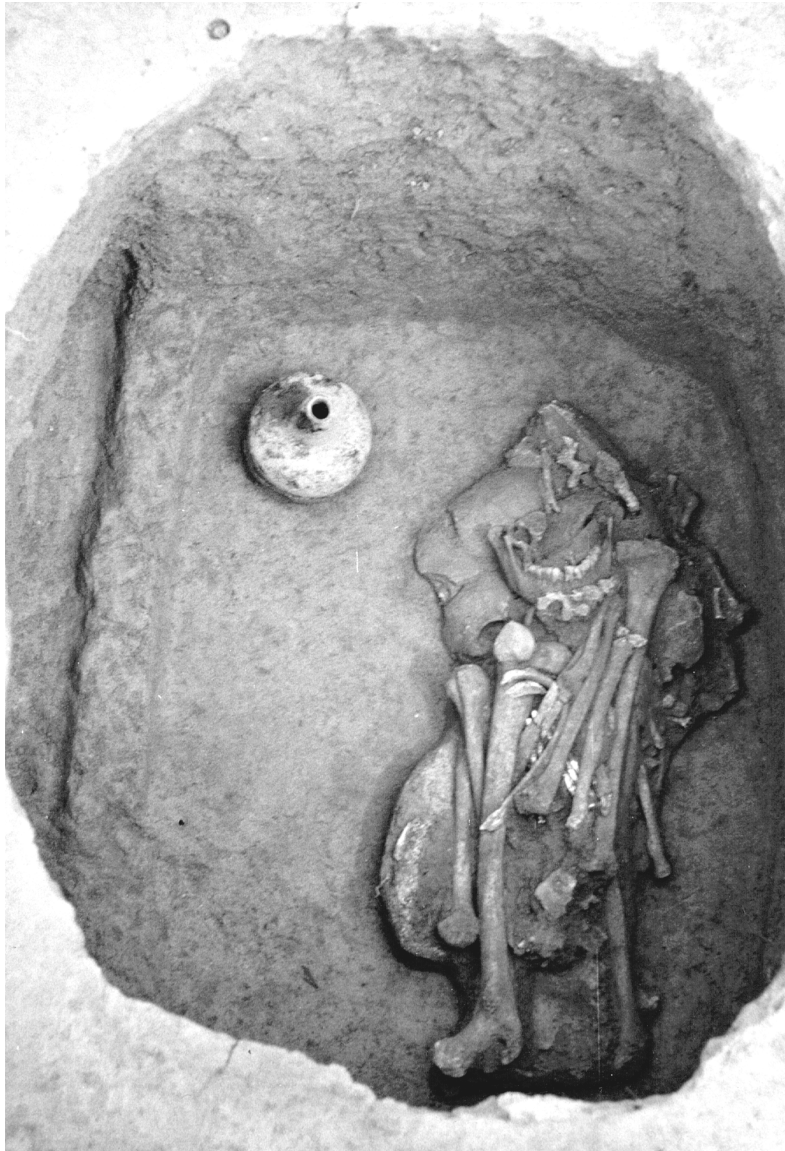


Figure 17. Burial 4.

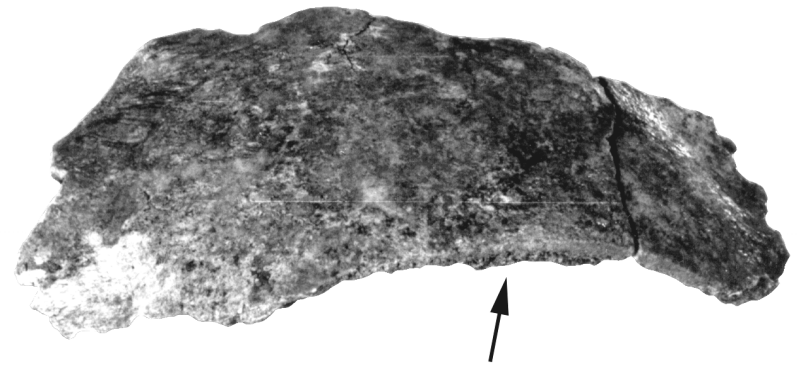


Figure 18. Cranial fragment from Burial 4 showing evidence for scalping (arrow indicates cut mark).

Burial 5 (Feature 3) contained an adult male over 45 years old at death (Figure 16). Associated artifacts were 2 kaolin trade pipes and a bone-handled iron knife within a pouch decorated with wampum shell beads and a bird claw; and an iron axe (Figures 30 b; 32 d).

Burial 6 (Feature 4) contained the remains of an adult male, approximately 25-30 years old at death (Figure 19). Included with this burial were a check-stamped clay pot of native manufacture, 1 pair of scissors, a leather-covered copper wire bracelet, a dog-lock musket, a pewter smoking pipe, an iron hoe, and several shell beads (Figures 27 c; 29 b; 30 c; 33 e).

Burial 7 (Feature 5) contained a sub-adult, 1-2 years old at death. The skeletal remains were poorly preserved. Associated artifacts consisted of over 20 cast-brass bells with preserved leather around both legs, and preserved fragments of wood or matting beneath the body (Figure 30 a).

Burial 8 (Feature 6) contained the remains of a sub-adult, 4-5 years old at death (Figure 20). Accompanying this burial were a copper kettle; a brass buckle with a portion of a leather strap attached; and a split-cane basket containing a check-stamped clay pot of native manufacture, a silver-lated latten spoon, a bone-handled knife, and a brass buckle. Beneath the spoon, a portion of the plaited (twilled) basket was well preserved (Figures 27 b; 29 a; 31 c; 33 d).



Figure 19. Burial 6.



Figure 20. Burial 8.

Burial 9 (Feature 7) contained the remains of an adult (sex undetermined), approximately 40-45 years old at death (Figure 21). Artifacts accompanying this burial included an iron hoe and a bone-handled iron knife (Figure 32 a). Violence, possibly associated with death, is indicated by a single lead shot flattened against the left fibula (lower leg) (Figure 22).

Important information about Occaneechi mortuary behavior has also been obtained from the burial pit fill overlying the actual interments. In addition to pit location, configuration, and alignment, burial pits excavated at the Fredricks site during 1983-84 were similar in that all contained deposits of rich food remains. Since domestic refuse is generally sparse within the cemetery area of the site, as evidenced by a scarcity of artifacts in the plowzone, these deposits do not appear to be slumped midden. Instead, these remains quite possibly represent evidence of ritual feasting, a practice well documented for seventeenth-century Indian groups in northeast North America.

Pits

Pits other than burials all were located inside the village palisade and all but one were facilities originally dug by the village inhabitants (Feature 8 was determined to be a natural stump hole upon completion of excavation). The



Figure 21. Burial 9.



Figure 22. Close-up of lower left leg of Burial 9 showing evidence of gunshot wound (arrow indicates flattened lead shot).

contemporaneity of these pits with the cemetery is confirmed by the fact that all of them contained historic artifacts and native pottery similar to those associated with the burials. These features also contained abundant food remains and other cultural residue (Figure 28 a-c). All except Feature 9 appear to be associated with domestic activity at the site.

Feature 9 is particularly important since it represents a fire pit associated with Structure 1, and contained evidence of both functional and ritualistic behavior involved with the use of that structure as a sweat house (Figures 23 and 24). Charred organic residues on the floor of this pit were unusually well preserved and included bark (pine?) which lined the pit bottom and clusters of maize kernels lying within the remains of woven containers (probably baskets). Overlying these residues were a rich layer of ashy fill and numerous large, fire-cracked rocks. The feature fill also contained a horse (Equus caballus) molar. Analyses of the remains from this feature are still underway.

Structures

Structure 1, an oval wall trench probably representing a sweat house, was the only well defined structure identified during 1984 (Figures 25 and 26). This structure measured 13 ft (SW-NE) by 11 ft (NW-SE) and had a 2 ft wide entrance



Figure 23. Profile view of Feature 9 showing zones of pitfill.



Figure 24. Bottom of Feature 9, with fire-cracked rock and charred plant remains in place.



Figure 25. Structure 1 and Feature 9 prior to excavation.

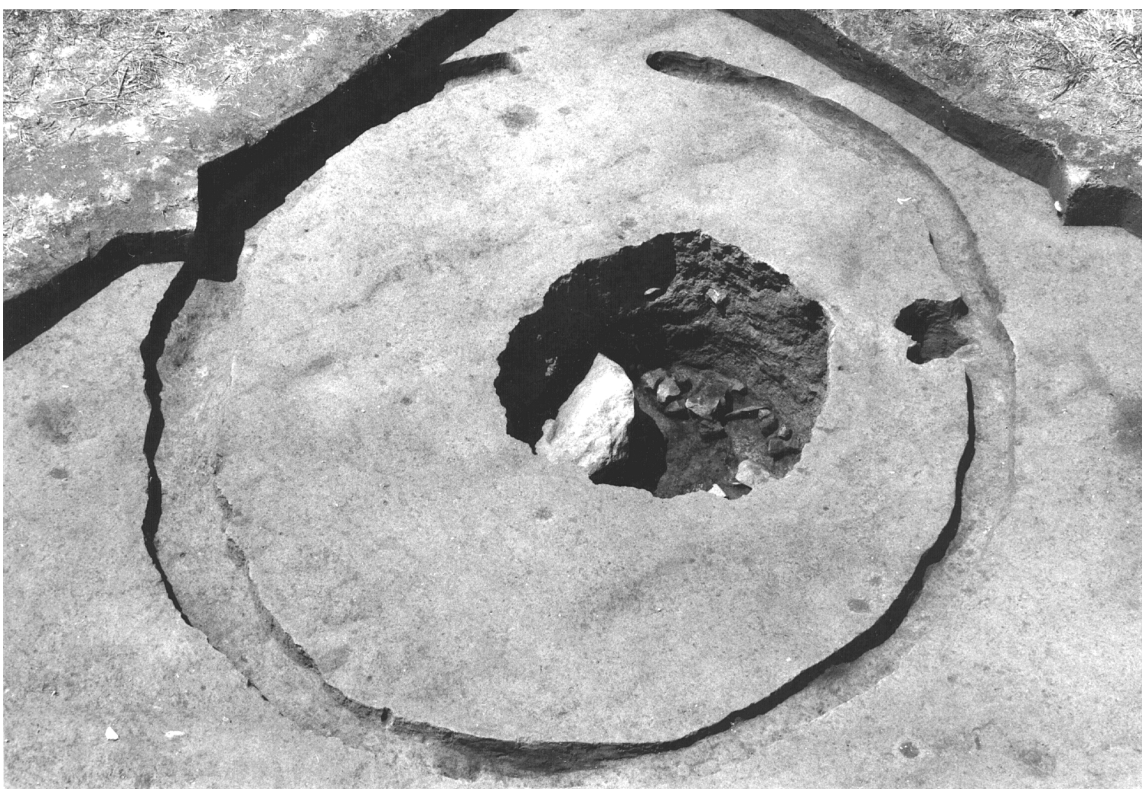


Figure 26. Structure 1 and Feature 9, excavated.

at the southwest end. The trench itself was .6-1.0 ft wide and less than 1.0 ft deep. According to early ethnographic accounts, such structures functioned similarly to modern saunas and played a key role in ritual purification, cleansing, and healing.

Other less substantial structures (probably outbuildings, corn cribs, etc.) are represented by a dense zone of postholes just inside the palisade (Figure 11); however, posthole patterns are not clearly discernible. This lack of distinct patterning is partially a product of plowing, which has eradicated all but the lowermost portions of the postholes. More clearly visible posthole alignments may exist just west of the 1984 excavations where village deposits seem to be better preserved.

The village palisade, first identified in 1983, was more extensively exposed in 1984 (Figures 10 and 11). This linear feature consists of small, closely-spaced postholes and segments of a narrow wall trench. A single entrance has been identified just southeast of the cemetery. To date, a 90-ft section of the palisade has been uncovered and mapped and is comprised of at least 130 postholes. Although these postholes were not excavated, augering indicates that they penetrate less than 1.0 ft into subsoil.

Preliminary Findings

Analyses of both the field data from the Fredricks site and of period documents are well underway. Although incomplete, this work has already yielded some important results. The preliminary findings are especially important when viewed in a larger context which allows comparison of the Fredricks site with older and contemporary Piedmont sites.

Students of Southeastern Indians have always suspected that the Piedmont tribes, smaller and less complexly developed than their neighbors in the interior, such as the Catawba and the Cherokee, were rapidly reduced by disease and warfare during the contact period. Contemporary writings also indicate that as this reduction in population reached critical proportions, some previously autonomous groups banded together into common settlements to attempt to maintain previous levels of economic production and for protection against European encroachment and raids by enemy tribes.

Beyond these general, and probably correct, impressions, important questions still remain about how much the populations were actually reduced; how the previously separate groups integrated their lifestyles within the later, more cosmopolitan communities; what kinds of changes in social organization and economy accompanied the population losses;



a

b



C

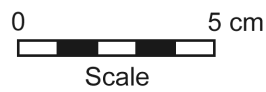


Figure 27. Aboriginal clay vessels.

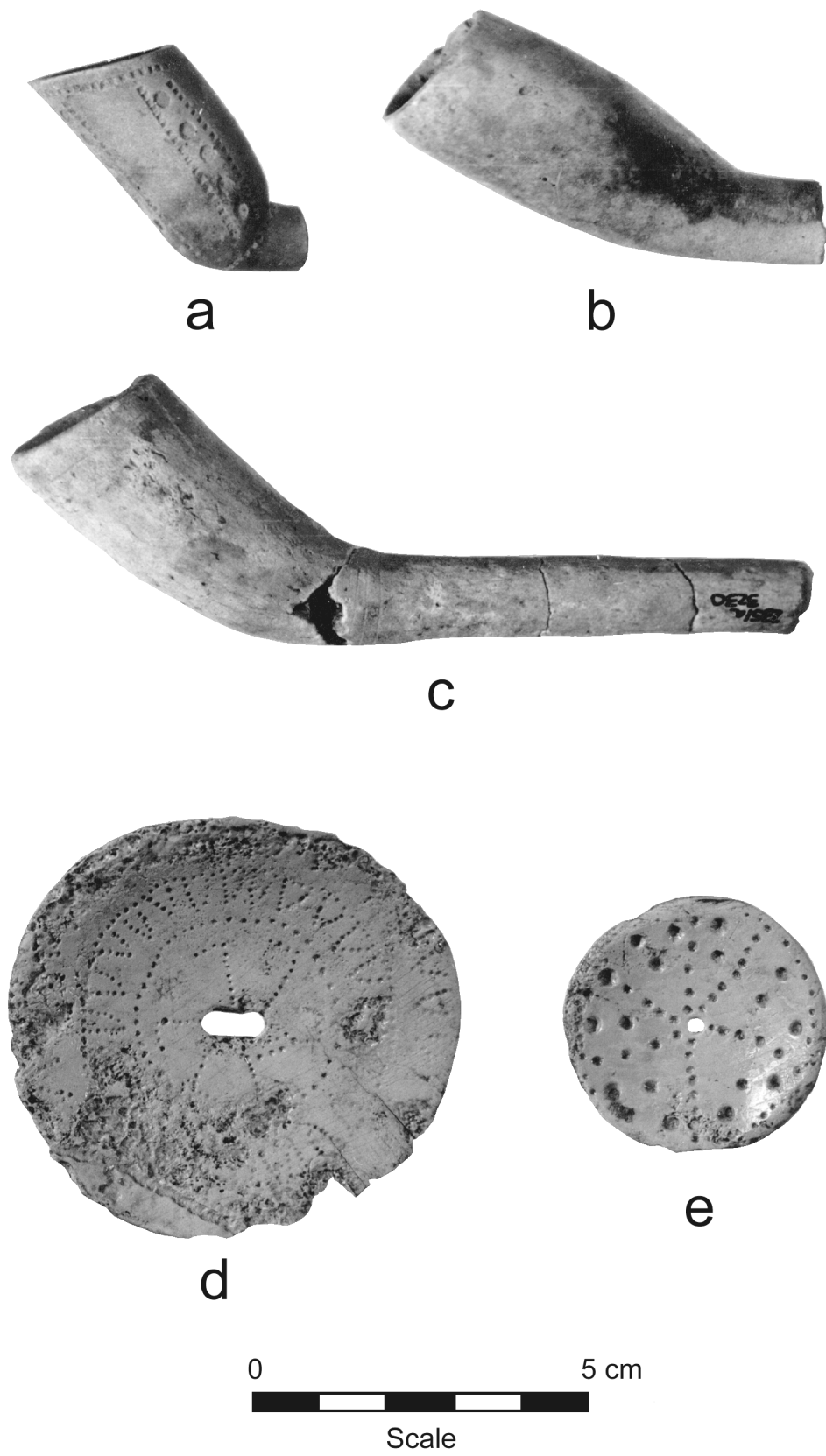
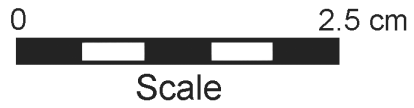
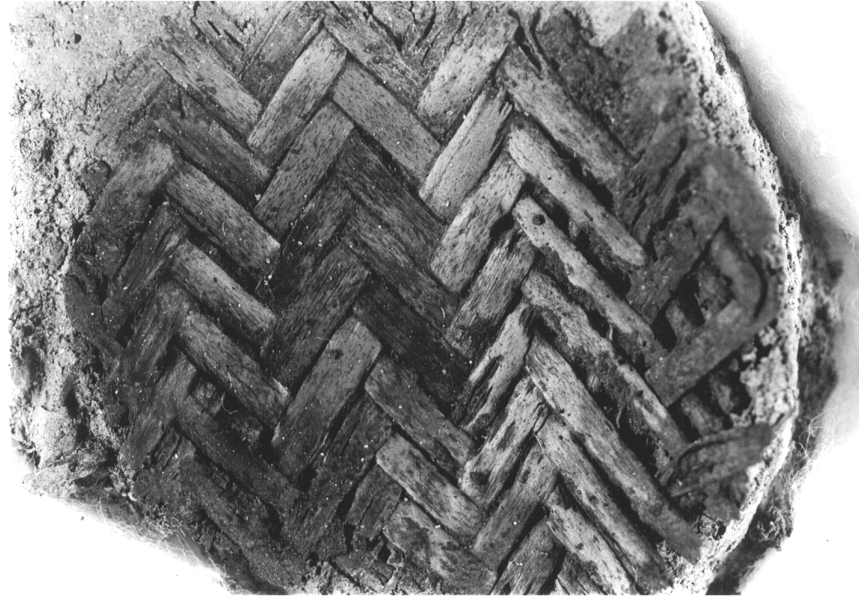
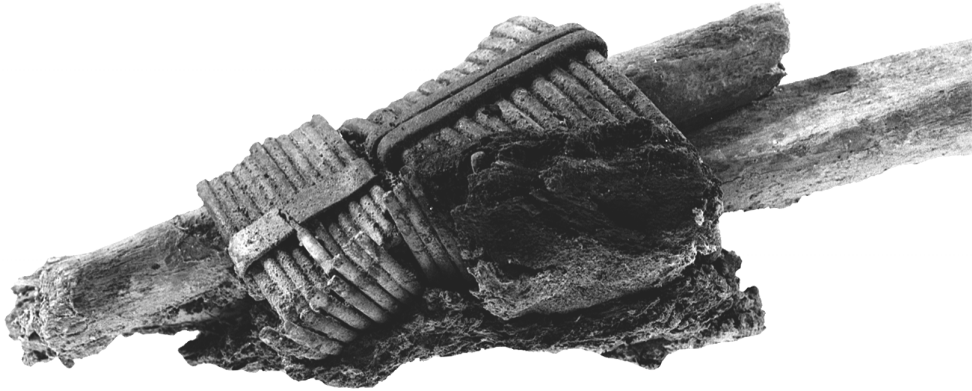


Figure 28. Aboriginal clay pipes (a-c) and shell gorgets (d-e).



a



b

Figure 29. Split cane basket fragment (a) and brass wire bracelets (b).

what role was played by the deerskin trade in the change process; what aspects of culture were affected first; what aspects changed the most; and how changes in one component of culture affected other components. And, finally, was the change process in one geographical area the same as in other areas?

Information important to answering several of these questions is beginning to come to light in the present research. Excavations to date indicate that Occaneechi Town may have been smaller and more tightly clustered than earlier settlements in the area. At least part of the village was fortified, and the bank of the Eno River formed its south boundary. With a relatively small area of the settlement excavated and auger tested, it appears that there was a central plaza surrounded by dwellings, sweat houses, and sheds, which were, in turn, surrounded by a palisade whose entrance faced northeast. Other houses associated with the village may be located outside the confines of the palisade in now-wooded areas along the river, as well as in other areas that have not yet been tested.

At least some of Occaneechi's inhabitants, upon death, were interred in a cemetery that lay just outside the palisade near its entrance. This use of a cemetery outside the village contrasts strikingly with the Siouan's prehistoric pattern, which was characterized by interment of family members in the

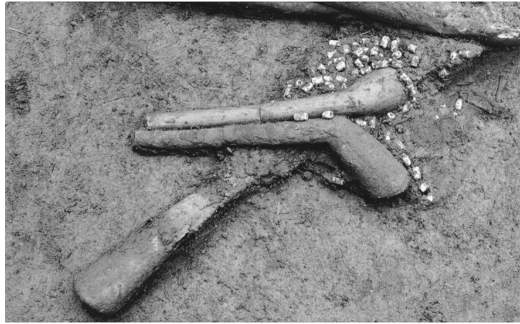
floors of their houses or near the outside of the houses, always within the village. Auger testing to the northwest of and in line with the exposed burials indicates that there will be about six additional graves in this cluster. Since it is very probably that more than sixteen people died during the occupation of the village, other clusters may be found on the site.

The planned layout of the present cemetery, along with a narrow range of dates on associated trade artifacts, suggests a relatively brief episode of mortuary activity. This observation, together with preliminary findings from the skeletal remains which indicate violence--scalping and a gunshot wound--and the presence of a disproportionate number of young to middle-aged males, seems to point to death through warfare for some of the individuals. If this preliminary interpretation is confirmed, the Occaneechi research will have produced a rare glimpse of the intense pan-Eastern warfare pattern so frequently described in early documents. When all of the osteological, bioanthropological, and artifact studies have been completed on these burial remains, and comparisons have been made with contemporary descriptions and with information from other sites, it will be possible to make some specific statements about technology, distribution of wealth, ceremonialism, and the importance of the European trade system in Occaneechi society.



0 5 cm
Scale

a



0 5 cm
Scale

b



0 5 cm
Scale

c

Figure 30. European trade items from burials as found in situ and following cleaning: cast brass bells (a); kaolin pipes (b); and firing mechanism from musket (c).

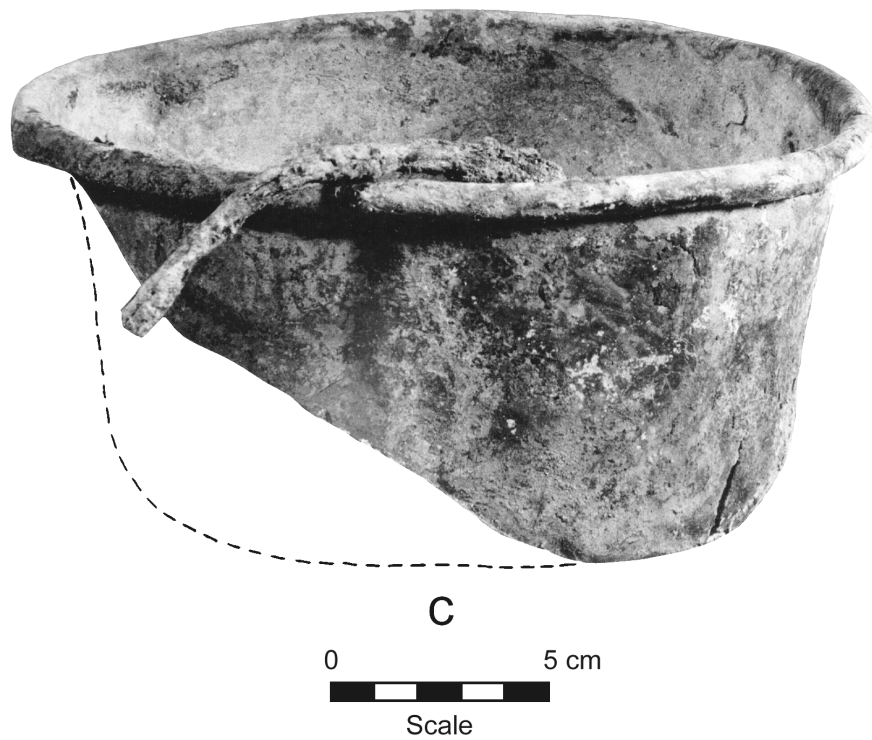
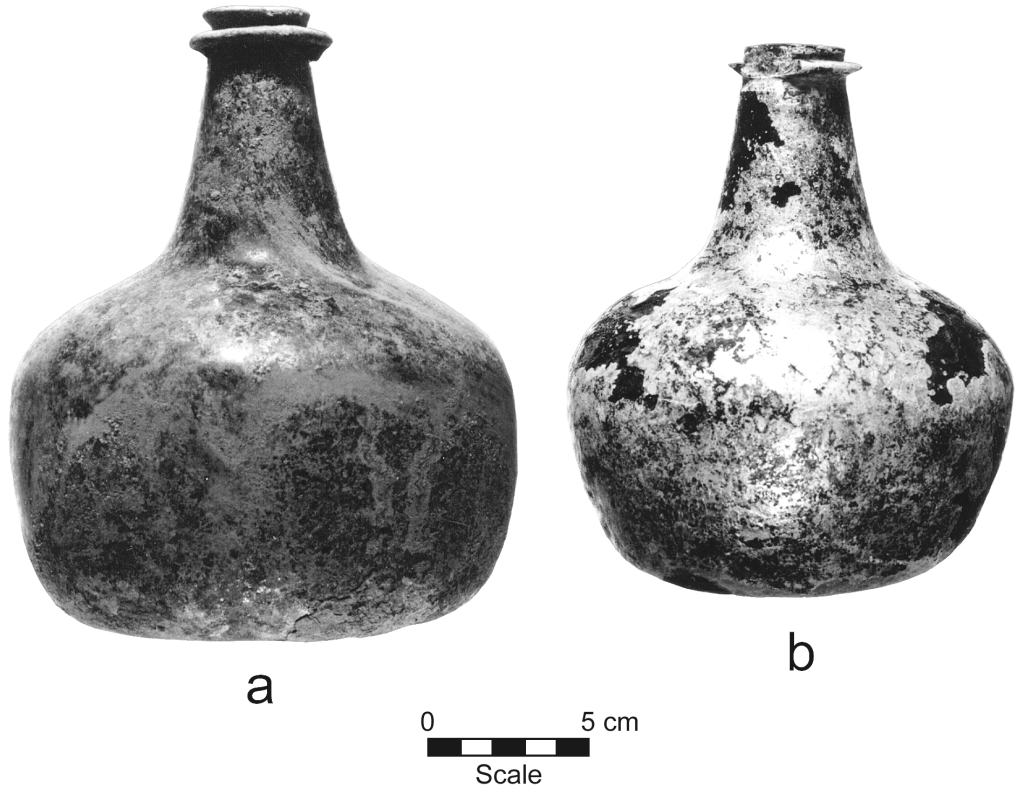
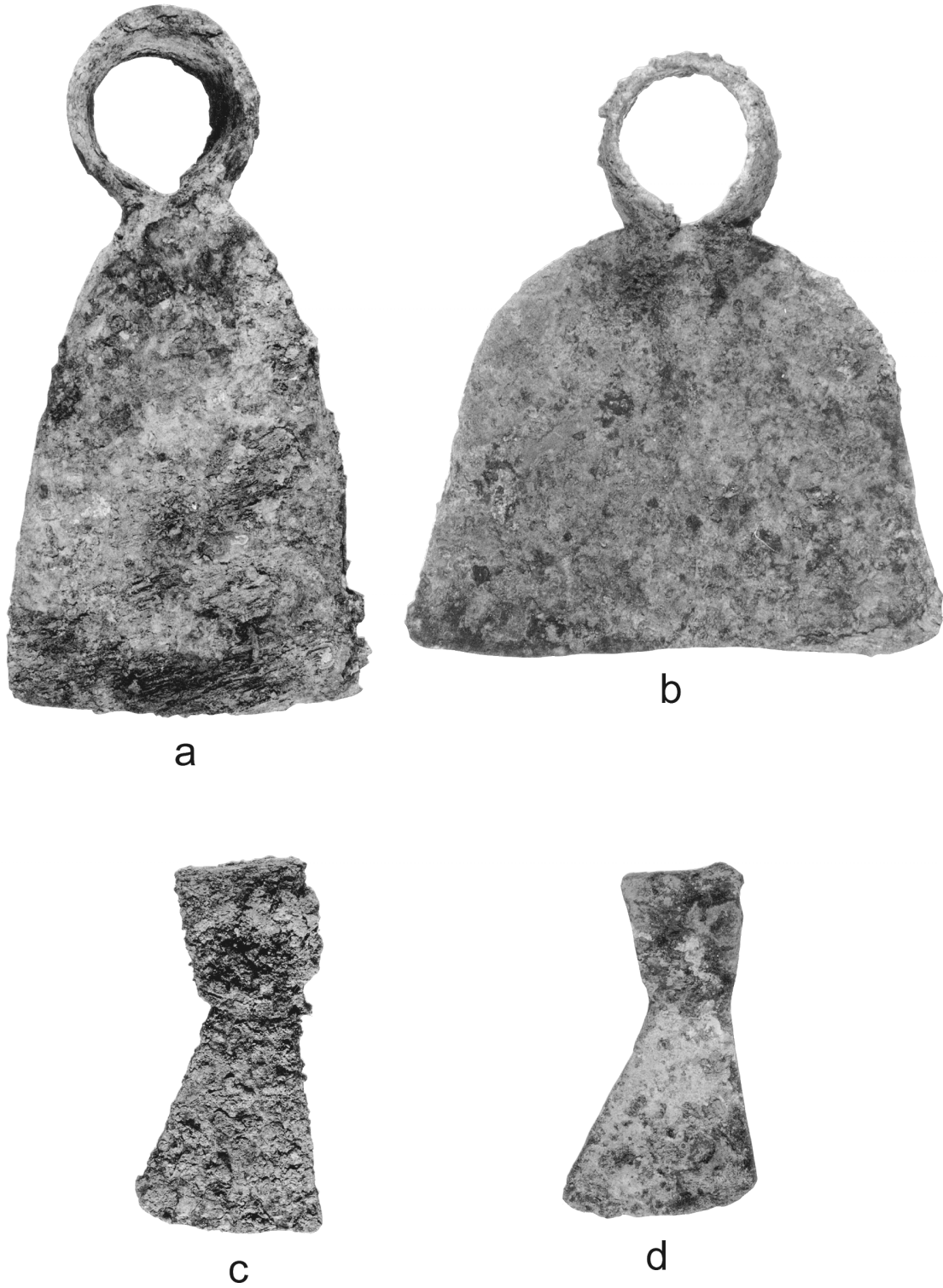


Figure 31. Glass wine bottles (a-b) and brass kettle (c).



0 5 cm
Scale

Figure 32. Iron hoes (a-b) and iron axes (c-d).

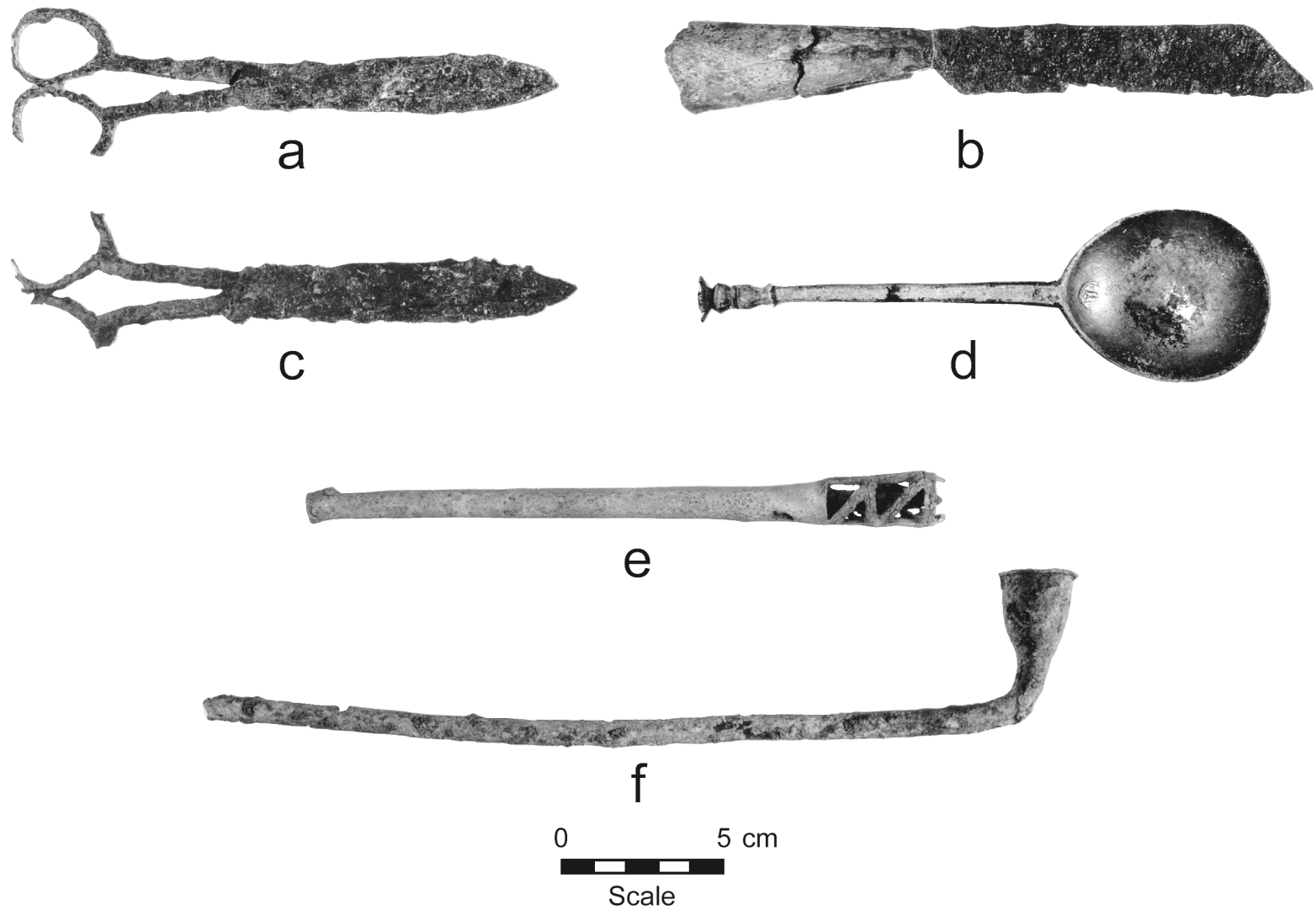


Figure 33. Small European trade items, including: iron scissors (a-c); iron knife (b); latten spoon (d); and pewter smoking pipes (e-f).

Another surprising discovery in the cemetery was the presence of dense, apparently purposely deposited food refuse in the tops of all of the burial pits. There are numerous descriptions in the ethnohistoric literature on Eastern Woodlands tribes of a practice called "death feasting." During this ceremony, certain material goods (especially trade items) were redistributed among surviving kinsmen, while other goods were deposited with the deceased. At the close of the observance, refuse from ritual meals was sometimes placed in and over the grave(s). The refuse deposits from the Occaneechi burials are presently being studied in detail by archaeologists, ethnobotanists, and zooarchaeologists.

Partly completed analyses of floral and faunal remains from a variety of contexts at the Fredricks site already indicate that, although the Occaneechis had adapted to a variety of European manufactured goods, they had remained traditional in their subsistence practices. Only one example each of pig and horse bone has been identified in the extensive faunal collections, and peach seems to represent the only European-introduced plant in the botanical samples. The Occaneechis, like their ancestors at the Wall site, cultivated native domesticates (principally maize), gathered wild nuts and seeds, and hunted, trapped, and collected wild animals. Among the animals, deer was the principal food. Although percentages of use of various

native plants and animals changed from the Prehistoric to the Historic period (and these changes are being studied and interpreted), the basic subsistence pattern seems to have remained relatively unaffected during the acculturation process.

A preliminary examination of the distributions of major artifact styles across the excavated portion of the site suggests that at least two different ceramic traditions were present at Occaneechi Town. For example, pottery from the cemetery area, represented both by sherds in burial pit refuse and by whole pots used as grave offerings, is predominately check stamped. Sherds from the domestic area south of the palisade, on the other hand, have a more diverse range of surface finishes, which includes a sizeable percentage of net impressing. Net-impressed pottery is thought to have been more characteristic of the central and western Piedmont Siouan tribes, whereas check stamping was more a northern and eastern Piedmont style. Decorative motifs on two shell gorgets from one of the graves are quite similar to those found on gorgets from the Tidewater area of Virginia. This diversity in style traditions may indicate that remnants of more than one Siouan group lived at Occaneechi Town. More of the village will have to be excavated, however, before such an interpretation can be finalized and the various stylistic expressions evaluated

in social-ethnic terms. The study of intrasite diversity, therefore, will be an important aspect of future work on this project.

As noted earlier, studies of documents from the contact period are being undertaken in conjunction with the archaeological analyses. Information from the documents is being used both to help explain patterns already perceived in the archaeological remains, and to aid in formulating hypotheses that can be tested by search for as yet unidentified relationships on intrasite and intersite levels. To facilitate the latter endeavor, a computerized system of data classification and quantification is being implemented in the analysis process.

In summary, the Fredricks site offers a unique "window" into a period of Southeastern history that is clouded in mystery and fraught with speculation. The site is unusually well preserved, having been disturbed only by shallow plowing. It has never been subjected to the "pothunting" that has affected so many other historic Indian sites in the area. Soil conditions, although not perfect, are amenable to the preservation of bone, and sometimes of other highly fragile materials such as basketry, matting, and leather. Perhaps most importantly, the Fredricks site is surrounded in close proximity by a group of well-preserved sites of earlier periods. This situation, as has already been proven by

comparative studies of remains from the Fredricks site with those from the Wall site, offers an ideal archaeological "laboratory" in which environmental variables can be held relatively constant. All in all, the Fredricks site complex represents one of the most significant discoveries in Southeastern archaeology in several decades, and it stands to contribute information that will help to rewrite the history of the contact period in the Piedmont South.

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