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The Archaeology of Merryspring Nature Center: The Asa Hosmer Farm (ME 073.014) and The Lt. Benjamin Burton Militia Encampment (ME 073.015), Part 2

Harbour Mitchell III

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The Archaeology of Merryspring Nature Center:

The Asa Hosmer Farm (ME 073.014) and The Lt. Benjamin Burton Militia Encampment (ME 073-015)

Part 2



Harbour Mitchell, III
November, 2020

This Report

In light of the overall amount of information gathered in two years of testing, and in an effort to make it as reader-friendly as possible, this report is comprised of five parts, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, each being a separate volume. Each part represents a stand-alone section of the whole, with its own Table of Contents, Table of Figures, and Introduction.

Part 1 includes: Executive Summary; Acknowledgements; Table of Contents; Table of Figures; Introduction; Geographical and Geological Context; Historic Background; Historic Ownership of Lot 71; and Regional Archaeological Context.

Part 2 includes: Executive Summary; Table of Contents; Table of Figure; Introduction; Archaeological Rationale, Context, and Protocol .

Part 3 includes: Executive Summary; Table of Contents; Table of Figures; Introduction; Soil Stratigraphy; Archaeological Stratigraphy; Features; Cultural Materials.

Part 4 includes: Executive Summary; Table of Contents; Table of Figures; Introduction; Cultural Material Spatial Distribution; Conclusions; and References Cited.

Part 5 includes: Executive Summary; Table of Contents; Table of Figures; and Appendices A-D.

In its content, this report is primarily a descriptive effort – the what, where, and when of two years of archaeological testing. That said, given 1) an “umbilical” relationship between ME 073.015, ME 073.014, and the long forgotten trans-regional Warren Road, and 2) an identical relationship between the Warren Road and ME 373,016 and ME 373.017, and all of their temporal interconnectedness, it is near impossible to avoid introducing some interpretation, at least as it relates to site location and relationships. The author does, however, endeavor to avoid unfettered speculation.

Executive Summary

On April 16, 2018, the author began archaeological testing in an open hay field at Merryspring Nature Center, Camden, Maine (Figure 1). A sub-rectangular depression, located in the field's northeast corner, suggested the presence of a possible filled cellar. The first shovel test pit, located immediately north of, and adjacent to the depression, recovered 18th c. ceramics, confirming the author's suspicions of an occupation.

The author, recognizing the site as, if not unique, then extremely rare within the micro-region known as mid-coast Maine (i.e., Waldoboro to Stockton Springs), undertook additional testing. Transects and shovel test pit (STP) locations were established, and testing continued from April to October, 2018. Expanded testing included a much broader site area, encompassing agricultural field, field edge tree line, and egress to the site's only immediately available potable water, the spring after which Merryspring Nature Center is named. Testing resumed in April, 2019, and continued through October, 2019. Over the course of 2018's and 2019's field seasons, the author excavated no less than 100, 50cm² shovel test pits, and approximately 25, 1m² units (Figure 2).

Archaeological testing reveals spatially extensive archaeological deposits associated with two early historic period sites. The sites, located approximately 50m distant from one another, are: ME 073.015, the fourth quarter 18th c. Lt. Benjamin Burton Revolutionary War camp, named after the historically identified officer in charge of an 18th c. militia encampment believed to be located there; and ME 073.014, the 19th c. Asa Hosmer Farm, named after the farm's first occupant, c. 1803.

ME 073.015

Minimally, ME 073.015 (aka, the Burton Revolutionary War Camp) includes: a late 18th c., likely earthfast structure, estimated to be at least 24' x 30'. The structure is represented by: a very large, 4.5m x 5.5m (15' x 18') apparently unlined earthen cellar; and remnants of a 2.5 x 2.5m (8'x8') loose stone chimney base. Occupation is represented by: a spatially extensive midden, involving at least 200-300m² of A_p and sub-A_p soils; and, immediately south of the structure, a .75 acre agricultural field containing limited, but ubiquitous, temporally contemporary cultural materials, primarily ceramics.

Testing reveals the ME 073.015 to be both spatially extensive and materially diverse. Chinese export porcelain, English soft paste porcelain, wheel engraved stemware, punchbowls (creamware glazed, China Glaze, and Fazackerly deft), engine turned refined white earthenwares and refined redwares, and Whieldonware are combined with numerous other examples of fourth quarter 18th c. material culture.

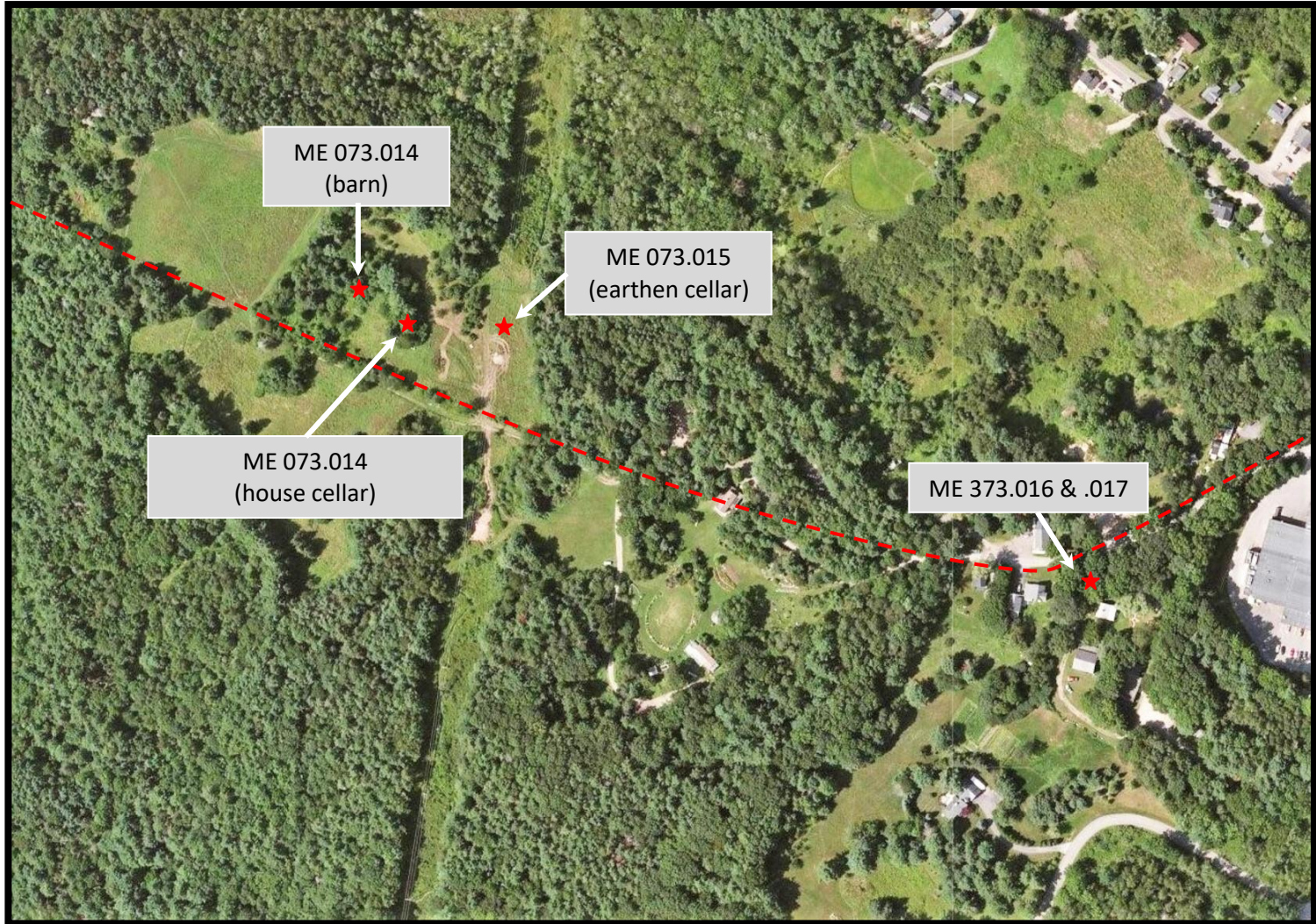


Figure 1: Merryspring Nature Center, ME 073.015 and .014, and ME373.016 and .017
(red dashed line is Warren Road [aka, 17674 Fort-to-Fort Road])

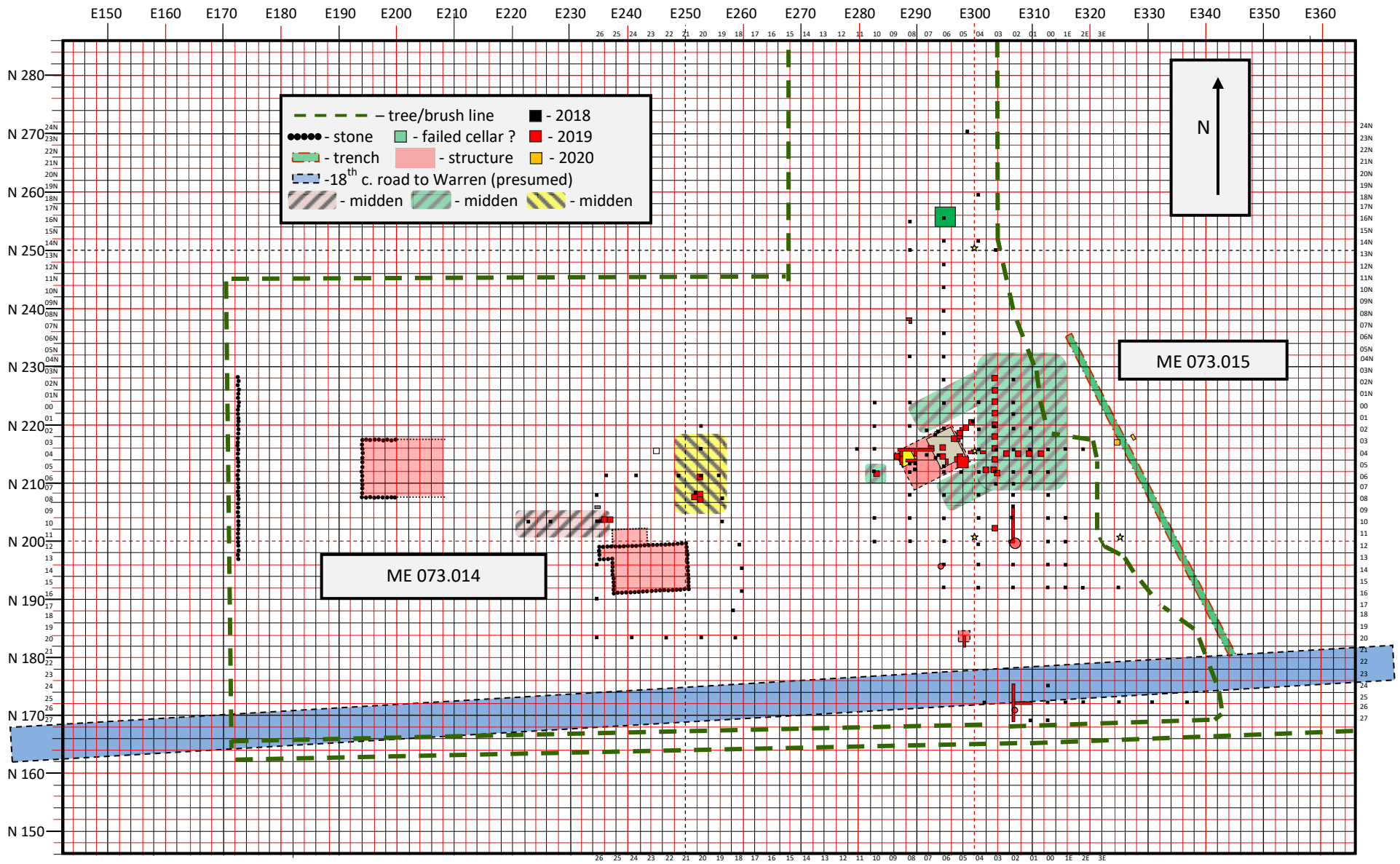


Figure 2: 2018, 2019, and 2020 archaeological testing at Merryspring Nature Center
 (blue line is Warren Road [aka, 1764 Fort-to-Fort Road])

The whole strongly suggests the site's initial occupation was not a frontier residence; it is likely the initial occupation was not an effort at frontier settlement by a simple settler-farmer (homesteader) and his family. Indeed, historical data suggest late 18th c. coastal and interior mid-Maine was not only grossly underdeveloped economically, but predominantly populated by under-educated or totally uneducated settlers/subsistence farmers, that is, families whose circumstances included permanent destitution and, in some cases, near, if not outright starvation (Taylor 1990).

During the site's occupation, c. 1775[±] - 1802, money was not a common reality for most in mid-Maine. "In August, 1788, Norridgewock's seventy-nine taxpayers collectively possessed a mere seven dollars in coin..." (Taylor 1990:66). "...in the early 1790's there was so little money in this country [mid-Maine] that dollars were shewn about among the farmers as curiosities.' " (Taylor 1990:66, citing Allis 1954). And, "in very long stretches of completely settled coast there is no specie... there all transactions are in the form of barter." (Taylor 1990:66, citing Talleyrand - no date)

Additionally, a great percentage of the region's settlers, whether arriving earlier or later in mid-Maine, lived in log homes, or hovels, with little or no resources to supply immediate, let alone longer term needs. So called "framed houses" (lumber constructed) were the rare exception. In 1792, in Jefferson, Maine, only twenty miles west of Camden, a mere 18% of taxpayers owned a framed house, and only 43% owned a barn. By 1801, those percentages had grown to only - 46% and 51%, respectively (Taylor 1990:258, Table 6).

Thus, a significantly large, albeit possibly earthfast, 18th c. structure with glass windows, nails, brick, an overly large cellar, and clear evidence of a broad subsistence economy and developed circumstances (e.g., tea sets and punch bowls) exists in stark contrast to the broader regional expectation.

Beyond the immediate structure and associated midden, ME 073.015 includes a broad distribution of cultural materials throughout the hay field immediately south of the structure. This distribution of cultural materials, principally small ceramic sherds, is interpreted as reflecting agricultural practice associated with one or more later, 18th c. occupations, specifically the spreading of pig manure. The agricultural field also includes a large pit feature containing sheep remains, and both 18th c. European and presumed Native American content.

Further, the physical extent of the site, overall, is not limited to the area of the structure, its midden, and adjacent field to the south. Limited testing reveals cultural materials,

specifically ceramics, at least 60m north of, and well down the steep valley slope leading north, away from the site's main structure - the current, and presumably historic path to the flowing spring located north of the site. Additionally, visual inspection of the small stream emanating from the spring identifies the presence of Euro-American, early 19th c., if not late 18th c. ceramics within its gravel bed. Clearly the preceding two centuries of historic use of the landform includes an inferred use/dependence upon this water source, indeed, the landform's only surficial water source of any kind.

As noted above, a non-European component is also suggested at the ME 973.015. A contemporary Native American presence is strongly suggested by the recovery of: shattered rhyolite cobble fragments; possible red clay beads; and large, hammered, folded and rolled, 18th c. flat buttons (interpreted as possible ornamentation).

Given the limited scope of testing, a full understanding of this 18th c. Native American presence is not available. However, a similar presumed Native American assemblage at ME 373.017 (Mitchell 2016a, 2016b, 2017), located approximately 1/5th mile east of ME 073.015, strongly suggests the Native American presence at both is likely more than incidental, or coincidental.

In 1779, Continental land and naval forces, including 290 Massachusetts Militia and Native American Penobscot warriors from a base in modern Glen Cove (Rockport), attempted to evict British forces from Castine, a town along the Penobscot River, north of Camden. The effort proved disastrously unsuccessful, resulting in a complete rout of Continental forces. Many of the retreating soldiers, and presumably Penobscots, fled south, seeking refuge at homes and farms in Camden (all of present-day Camden and Rockport).

As Camden remained the "front line" between British and Continental forces for the remainder of the Revolutionary War, it is reasonable that a Continental force remained in Camden for some period of time, in order to protect against, or at least warn others farther south, of any British advance. The historic record indicates such a force was stationed at "Camden Harbor" by at least 1780 - Lt. Benjamin Burton and a small force (Robinson 1907). The presence of a second, spatially and temporally contemporary Revolutionary War period site (ME 373.017) along what was historically referred to as the "Warren Road" is suggestive of a strategic military intent.

The Warren Road, as it is referred to in 19th c. documents (e.g., deeds), was likely the only 18th c. overland route from the deep water anchorages of today's Camden and Rockport, to the Continental headquarters in Warren (present-day Thomaston). Recent

archaeological survey by the author located a remnant of the Warren Road approximately ¼ mile west of ME 073.015 (Mitchell 2019a). Not only does the Warren Road follow a route through Merryspring Nature Center, and past ME 373.017 and its Revolutionary War period site, but evidence indicates it was a pre-19thc. *engineered* roadway (Mitchell 2019a).

Had the British chosen to pursue the retreating Continental forces in 1779, or initiated an offensive at a later date, Camden and Rockport harbors would have been strategically critical to such an effort. And 18th c. Warren, being only 11 miles south, was vulnerable to an unobserved and rapid overland approach by British forces, via the Warren Road. Had Warren fallen to British forces, all of northern Massachusetts (i.e., Maine) could have become British territory. It is, therefore, reasonable that some form of combined Continental Militia and Penobscot warrior force maintained semi-permanent, contemporary encampments at both ME 373.017 and ME 073.015.

Further, a spatial extension of the Revolutionary War period component at ME 073.015 is inferred from recovery of fourth quarter 18th c. materials within ME 073.014's middens (e.g., an opaque glass trade bead, lithic debitage, large 18th c, flat buttons, and case bottle fragments). This apparent spatially remote component, contemporary with, but 50m distant from the 1770's occupation at ME 073.015, appears to have been present on, or adjacent to the landform on which the Hosmer farm's cellar is located. An immediate spatial overlap of 18th and 19th c. components there appears to have led to incorporation of earlier, 18th c. cultural materials into the later, 19th c. middens (18th c. cultural materials are also found secondarily deposited within the 19th c. Thorndike-Conway House midden (e.g., glass trade beads).

Identification and separation of these two components will be an important aspect of any future investigative agenda at ME 073.014; some aspects of a possible fourth quarter, 18th c., ME 073.015 component *may remain extant beneath the Hosmer cellar's backdirt*.

ME 073.014

ME 073.014 is principally represented by a roughly 30' x 33' loose (i.e., non-mortared) stone-lined cellar located, as noted above, approximately 50m west-southwest of ME 073.015. ME 073.014's total spatial limits are not, as yet, fully defined. However, visual inspection identifies a site area potentially encompassing thousands of square meters - a main farmhouse (cellar), two middens, at least one outbuilding foundation 30m northwest of the cellar, stone walls, and extensive agricultural fields with possible additional archaeological deposits.

Asa Hosmer arrived in Camden, c. 1785. Being both an early resident, and Camden's first school teacher, Homer's farm has local, if not regional significance. In addition, the value of an essentially undisturbed, first quarter, pre-War of 1812, War of 1812, and early Maine statehood, 19th c. farm site cannot be understated. Few, if any, such sites remain in the mid-coast Maine region. And likely none exist in such an undisturbed condition.

While limited to a small percentage of overall testing, data suggest initial construction of the Hosmer farm dates to between 1800 and 1810. It is possible that Elisha Gibbs, ME 073.015's last resident, having entered into a four year contractual lease/purchase agreement with the parcel's owner in 1799, began construction of the farmhouse, only to lose possession of it in 1801, due to unfortunate circumstances. In 1803, Asa Hosmer became the parcel's owner, and the farmhouse is likely either taken ownership of, completed, or built by Hosmer at that time.

ME 073.014 includes two spatially separate, but related household middens. The middens lie adjacent to the farm cellar's northwest and northeast corners. Ceramics from within the middens, being the best temporal indicator, suggest the farm's occupation begins at or immediately after the turn of the 18th/19th centuries. Early polychrome pearlware glazed ceramics (possibly associated with occupation of ME 073.015) and early forms of blue shell edged pearlware glazed ceramics identify the approximate onset of occupation. Broad brush, cobalt blue floral decorated pearlware (c.1815-1830) identifies the terminal limit of occupation. No ceramics post-dating embossed shell edged pearlware, or broad brushed cobalt blue pearlware are present in the current sample; no whiteware is present.

While the significant volume of cultural materials present in both middens might suggest the farm to have been relatively prosperous, several indicators combine to suggest sustainability, but not prosperity:

- ✚ the paucity of high cost ceramics (e.g., Chinese export porcelain);
- ✚ the limited amount and diversity of otherwise available pearlware glazed ceramics (e.g., late polychrome decoration);
- ✚ the overwhelming dominance of creamware glazed ceramics;
- ✚ the extraordinary amount of utilitarian redware;

- ✚ and a noteworthy combination of low diversity within the faunal sample (e.g., no fish or bird) and low quality mammalian subsistence remains (e.g., pig's feet).

The above also suggests the Asa Hosmer farm was not what is commonly referred to as a self-sustaining farm, one which supplies its own internal needs. The appearance of (presumably) purchased (or bartered) butchered mammal parts (e.g., calf tail vertebrae, and pigs feet), and the high volume of utilitarian redwares, suggests the possibility of a dairy farm, perhaps supplying the micro-region with milk and other dairy products, while sustaining itself on food and other products purchase with the proceeds. This possibility also hints at growing post-Revolutionary War, micro-regional, economic specialization.

Ship building, a developing lime industry, and other economic and logistical "drivers" might have encouraged specialization (and possibly social stratification) within the immediate micro-regional population. Butchers, ship wrights, dairy farmers, mill workers, fishermen, carpenters, common laborers, blacksmiths, stone masons, quarrymen, and other non-agricultural, potentially *year-round* vocations would be required in an economically diverse and prospering, post-Revolutionary War Camden. Such a circumstance might explain the stark contrast between the archaeological evidence and the general state of hardship within mid-Maine (see above).

In light of the above, then, the farm's apparent sudden demise, while not understood, is all the more curious. Some circumstance caused the farm's complete abandonment by the mid to late 1820's, *with no ensuing reoccupation*! Disease may have played a role.

Pyle identifies cholera began moving into Maine's central seaboard in the 1820's, arriving in Bangor by late 1832.

"During December 1832, a chest of clothing that had belonged to a sailor, who had died of cholera at a Baltic port, arrived at his home in a small village near Bangor, Me. The chest was opened, the clothing was distributed to his friends, and all who received the garments were taken with cholera and died." (1969)

Alternatively, economic hardship may have played a role in the farm's abandonment. Even if the Hosmer farm were economically viable at one time, the second decade of the 19thc. was unforgiving. Climactic instability caused shortages on farms and across the region. Additionally, the English, and the War of 1812, brought commerce and trade to a near standstill. As one Camden resident, William Parkman, put it, regarding the agricultural hardships:

"As to the times they are very hard. The district of Maine is going [to] wreck as fast as ever a country did. Farms can be purchased for less than half of what they could have been 5 or 6 years ago. A great many is moving away to Ohio." (Taylor 1990:239).

Yet another Camden resident, Alibeus Partridge, spoke to the English dominance of the bays in 1813.

"The times are exceedingly dark... hundreds and hundreds have neither bread nor potatoes to eat... [shipping] is almost cut off. The British take and carry off[f] and burn numbers of [ships] so that... the southern trade is so stopt that no provisions is brought from thence to help the difficulty." (Taylor 1990:239).

The above notwithstanding, the author believes another factor may have adversely impacted the large farm, making it less and less sustainable - lack of adequate on-site water supply. By the mid to late 1820's, and based on visual identification only, the farm had grown spatially to include at least one outbuilding, and extensive fields. The presence of an addition to the home, in a possible new kitchen on the rear of the house, suggests internal growth of the farm. Ever increasing demand on a limited water resource (the single spring) by a growing farm and household may have destabilized what was, at a smaller scale, previously economically viable.

By the 1830's, soon after the farm's abandonment, the 18th c. parcel on which both archaeological sites are located (Lot 71 of the Twenty Associates, c.1768) was divided longitudinally (east to west) by contractual agreement. While the portion north of the Warren Road, including both archaeological sites, was spared, the entire area south of the Warren Road was commercially leased for \$50 to "blow lime" (i.e., quarry lime). The line of demarcation between the lot's two halves is presumed to have been the then abandoned Warren Road, which, in earlier times, bisected the lot precisely as the lime contract identifies its subdivision. However, a western bypass of the Warren Road, identified in an 1811 survey map, suggests either its infrastructural inefficiency or obsolescence, or both, by that time.

Beyond a lack of economic sustainability, the "explosive" nature of a commercial lime operation in one's front yard would no doubt have contributed to abandonment and lack of reoccupation of the farm, for at least the duration of quarrying (c. 1830's and 1840's).

Analogous circumstances are seen in the late 20th and early 21st centuries – enormous pressure to exploit a natural resource on the same landform as a farm - gravel. Regionally, the financially lucrative 20th c. endeavor of gravel excavation has led to many, once prosperous 19th and 20th c. farms becoming little more than “the old homestead”, and a few outbuildings, with the balance of once lush fields and pastures now little more than large holes in the ground.

As it relates to the limited testing of the fourth quarter 18th, and first quarter 19th century archaeological record at Merryspring Nature Center, the following is clear:

- ✚ A very significant fourth quarter 18th c. component is present in ME 073.015, and includes: an earthen cellar; chimney base; and extensive, though historically disturbed, midden deposits.
- ✚ The site includes a Revolutionary War temporal component, with evidence of a coincident Native American presence.
- ✚ A temporal, and possibly immediate relationship exists between some portion of the 18th c. component at Merryspring Nature Center and that of the Thorndike-Conway House (ME 373.017), a few hundred meters to the east. This relationship is believed related to Revolutionary War use of the two properties as semi-permanent, though possibly seasonal encampments/outposts by Continental forces, likely including Penobscot warriors.
- ✚ ME 073.015 includes extensive, likely terminal 18th c. agricultural activity. This is inferred via the presence of considerable, though broadly distributed terminal 18th c. ceramics thinly, but evenly distributed across an extensive area of field south of the structure itself. This activity is presumed related to spreading of (most likely) pig manure.
- ✚ First quarter, 19th c. occupation is present at ME 073.014, and includes: the farmhouse’s loose stone lined cellar; one outbuilding foundation; and two undisturbed household middens.
- ✚ ME 073.014 also includes a possible fourth quarter 18th c., probable Revolutionary War period component, identified through contemporary cultural materials (e.g., large 18th c. silver washed flat button, case bottle fragments, and glass trade bead).

- ✚ ME 073.014 maintains evidence of extensive agricultural activity, identified by at least one outbuilding foundation west of the farm's cellar, stone field walls, and well developed pastures across the land form.
- ✚ And lastly, the 1830s and '40s saw significant amounts of limestone quarrying on the parcel. There is certainly an important archaeological reality associated with this activity. Although untested, there are numerous quarries and, presumably, buildings and archaeological deposits associated with this activity. While no effort is currently underway to define this reality, it represents a near pristine opportunity to archaeologically explore the burgeoning, pre-industrial age lime industry and technology in mid-coast Maine.

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Introduction

Part 2 of this report articulates the “why” of the testing effort, as well as the context and manner in which it was undertaken.

The initial circumstances which led to the undertaking of this effort were serendipitous, a simple walk in the park, quite literally. The presence of so much, and such intact archaeology were unknown at the time. How and why the confluence of such circumstances came to be is a question for philosophers and mystics. Once understood, however, the author was unwilling to “walk away” and allow time and regionally rampant development to forget and destroy such an irreplaceable part of our heritage. The author’s decades of experience in the field of contract and independent archaeological exploration and research had to be brought to bear.

Alone at first, and later with volunteers, the author faced the challenge of where and where not to test, how much to test, and when to stop testing. So large an undertaking needs both a framework and boundaries. Limitations of time, skill, experience, and resources notwithstanding, the author submits that such was accomplished (for better or worse), and the net results speak for themselves.

Archaeological Rationale, Context, and Protocols

Rationale for Archaeological Testing

It is the author's personal investigative agenda to find, temporally and spatially explore, and report previously unknown historic archaeological sites within the mid-coast Maine region.

Notwithstanding a possible early French presence on the tidal St. George River (Wright 2000), and the 17th c. French fort, Fort Pentagoet (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987) in Castine, initial European settlement of the mid-coast Maine region occurred in 1720 (Easton 1865). An initial blockhouse and trading post were constructed in what is now Thomaston, Maine, (Easton 1865) and evolved into a much larger fortification by the 1740's. In 1754, the final version of Fort St. Georges maintained walls 16" thick, twenty feet high and 100' on at least one side, and included a 200' covered "way" to the shore (Eaton 1885). Although gone by the late 1770's, both Fort St. Georges (Thomaston) and Fort Pownall (Stockton Springs), were instrumental in facilitating significant broad regional development during the fifty year period between 1720 to the late 1770's.

Yet, for all the mid-coast's early to mid 18th c. development, little to no evidence of it is known archaeologically. As a result of regional development during the last 200 years, most archaeological sites dating to the 18th and very early 19th centuries are presumed destroyed; the importance of even one such site is enormous. So, the presence of four distinct early occupations in Camden (two sites at both the Camden-Rockport Hist. Soc. and two sites at Merryspring Nature Center), all within a few hundred yards of each other, is not only unheard of, but invaluable (two 3rd quarter 18th c. occupations, and two 1st quarter 19thc. occupations).

Given Camden's rate of change and growth over the last century generally, and his personal knowledge of at least the last five decades of that change and growth, the author understood immediately how tenuous the existence of these sites were. In mid-coast Maine (or anywhere in coastal Maine, for that matter), archaeological sites being located on non-profit properties is no assurance of survival. Development of coastal lands takes place whether non-profit or otherwise. And the potential for loss of these irreplaceable sites was clear. Given severely limited to completely non-existent regional resources for investigative efforts, and the capacity to do such work professionally himself, gratis, the author took it upon himself to test these sites. Hence, the impetus and driving rationale for archaeological testing at both the Thorndike-Conway House (Mitchell 2016, 2017) and Merryspring Nature Center (Mitchell 2018).

Merryspring Nature Center - Five Separate Archaeological Contexts: Lt. Benjamin Burton Militia Encampment; Asa Hosmer Farm; Cultivated Field; the Spring; Lime Quarries - Overview

Merryspring Nature Center contains five, temporally and/or spatially separate historic archaeological sites/contexts - two residential sites, one agricultural context, one pre-industrial age quarrying complex, and one natural resource related context - a spring.

The Lt. Benjamin Burton Militia Encampment Site, named after the presumed encampment's commander, is the oldest site currently known on the Merryspring Nature Center property, c. 1775[±] -1802. The Asa Hosmer Farm, named after the farm's first known occupant, dates from 1803 to approximately 1825.

As a result of the agricultural practices involving both the 18th and 19th centuries, a large, half acre field is considered a third, blended archaeological context.

The fourth archaeological context at Merryspring relates to limestone quarrying. This context is most easily identified by the numerous open quarries scattered across Merryspring's southern half. However, there are, no doubt, other aspects to this early 19th c., pre-steam powered, commercial effort (e.g., tool sheds).

And, fifth, the spring. The Merryspring Nature Center property includes only one potable water source, a spring. The spring appears to have supplied water to all who either occupied or visited the property throughout the historic period. Ceramic evidence within the streambed emanating from the spring supports at least 19th -20th c. use.

Additionally, four of the five archaeological sites or contexts are spatially separate from one another. While ME 073.015 involves the same open field as ME 073.014, the sites themselves are separated from one another by 50m. The commercial limestone quarrying, and likely all related archaeological contexts, are all located south of Merryspring's east/west midline (i.e., the original Warren Road), the result of an 1830's deeded requirement. In contrast, all other archaeological contexts (e.g., ME 073.015) are located entirely north of the same line. And, the spring, after which Merryspring Nature Center is named, is located over 50m north of the next closest archaeological context, ME 073.015. The agricultural context, being the broad field within which both sites are located, is the only exception to the physical separation of these archaeological contexts.

ME 073.015: the Lt. Benjamin Burton Militia Encampment

Initial Discovery

In April, 2018, the author, along with Brett Willard, Merryspring's Program Director, toured the park. The author, having identified his awareness of a presumed late 19th c. stone-lined cellar, was invited by Mr. Willard to join him in a tour of the park. Had it not been for that fortuitous invitation for a private tour, the author might never have identified ME 073.015.

During the tour, the author noted a roughly sub-rectangular depression of some size in the park's eastern-most field. After identifying the desire to place several shovel test pits alongside the depression, the author continued on the tour, guided by Mr. Willard. Subsequent permission to test along the depression led to the recovery of ceramics which clearly identified the latter half of the 18th c., and one of the earliest historic occupations within Camden, Maine.

Sub-Surface Context: Soil Structure and Chemical Horizons

As a general rule, testing in the area immediately adjacent to the encampment cellar resulted in consistent sub-surface structural and chemical soil stratigraphy. Most STP's extended to approximately 30cm below surface (cmbs), revealing well developed sod from 0-5⁺cmbs, a relatively thick, light brown to light olive-brown A_p (plow zone) from 5-25cmbs, and a slightly olive yellow-brown to olive-orange B horizon below 25cmbs.

Although perhaps too broad a generalization, the soil in the area of ME 073.015's cellar can be characterized as likely plowed and amended (i.e., incorporating midden), Presumpscot-like sediment, immediately overlying un-amended Presumpscot-like sediment.

From the ground surface down, soil composition in the cellar area included: sandy silt with sod; light brown to olive brown, fine, slightly "sticky", dense, sandy silt loam (A_p); and compact, fine, light yellow-brown to olive yellow-brown, fine sandy silt (B/C horizon). With the exception of a minor component of very fine gravel, the soil is gravel free, and no internal lensing is present.

The un-lined encampment cellar was originally excavated in the 18th c. to a depth of 1.5m (approximately 5') below current surface in this overlying, compact, self-supporting matrix. Once testing extended towards, and included the area involving the Asa Hosmer cellar, it became clear - the entire area's soil is essentially a thick, surficially undulating layer of compact, reworked Presumpscot-like sediment, overlying an elevated limestone

formation. The author speculates this matrix reflects post-glacial, but pre-emergent coastal circumstances.

ME 073.014: Asa Hosmer Farm

Initial Discovery

As no one knew it existed, ME 073.015 was a very real, and totally unexpected discovery. However, the author and others knew of the existence of the open, stone-lined cellar at Merryspring Nature Center. So, discovery is not the correct term for what transpired there, via testing. Rather, archaeological testing of the cellar area, and its middens, facilitated *an understanding* of what the Asa Hosmer cellar represented; ME 073.014 was “seen” for what it was, a previously unidentified, very early, post-Revolutionary War, pre-War of 1812 farmhouse belonging to one of Camden’s earliest post-Revolutionary War settlers.

As previously noted, Merryspring’s Program Director, Brett Willard, offered the author a guided tour of the nature center’s property in April, 2018, including the opportunity to stop and look at a stone-lined cellar. Believing it to be of mid to late 19thc. origin, little attention was paid to the site at that time. However, once testing began, the site was understood immediately to be not only much older than previously suspected, but in extraordinary condition (see “Site Conditions and Context” below).

Sub-Surface Context: Soil Structure and Chemical Horizons

Unlike the soil column in the area of the encampment site, the area surrounding ME 073.014 has a slightly different sub-surface soil and chemical stratigraphic profile. Initial testing around the farm’s cellar involved a series of 50cm² STP’s placed around the cellar on 3m or 5m intervals, and parallel to its sides. STP’s along the cellar’s eastern and northern margins are upwards of 6-8m distant from the cellar’s margins due to the presence of cellar backdirt slopes or raised areas (the southern margin is identified as the front of the house). STP’s paralleling the cellar’s western and southern margins are closer, only about 3m’s distant from the cellar’s margin.

STP’s along the cellar’s eastern and southern margins extend to approximately 30cm below surface (cmbs), revealing well developed sod from 0-5⁺ cmbs, a relatively thick, light brown to brown A_p (plow zone) from 5-25cmbs, and an orange-yellow to yellow-tan B/C horizon below 25cmbs. However, STP’s along the cellar’s western and northern margins differ from their eastern and southern counterparts.

Along the cellar's western margin, STP's begin with little or no sod, being overgrown with light, but dense woody growth and small trees. From 0-25⁺cmbs, these STP's are composed of brown, fine sandy silt loam with fine to course gravel, overlying a relatively orange to yellow-orange B horizon. The exception to this rule is in the cellar's extreme northwest corner, where dark brown, silty midden soil and midden are encountered immediately upon beginning to excavate. This cultural stratum extends to approximately 25cmbs, and is underlain by a natural appearing, strong orange B horizon. STP's along the cellar's northern margin are similar to those along its western margin, in that they possess little or no sod, and extend only to approximately 25cmbs. 0-20⁺cmbs is brown fine sandy silt with fine to medium gravel. 25⁺cmbs is typically light yellow-brown fine sandy silt with fine, or fine to medium gravel.

As with the cellar's extreme northwest corner, the cellar's extreme northeast corner is also midden. There, STP's and large, 1m² excavation units identify the soil column from 0-25[±]cmbs as dark to very dark brown, fine sandy silt, with fine to course gravel and cobbles/rock and brick (Stratum I). Generally, Stratum I is underlain by a similar soil, minus the cobbles, rock, and brick (Stratum II). Stratum II is underlain by light olive-yellow to olive yellow-brown, fine sandy silt with some fine gravel.

Testing several meters farther north, away from the midden, identifies the soil column as well developed sod from 0-5cmbs, brown fine sandy silt loam (A_p), with some fine gravel from 5-25cmbs, and light yellow-brown sandy silt with some fine gravel below 25cmbs. A very high volume of cultural material, especially ceramics, is present throughout the A_p (i.e., midden infused).

Generally then, and with the exception of those areas where midden is present, the soil column around the Asa Hosmer cellar takes two forms: sod over a thickened silt loam (A_p) to about 25cmbs (south and east); and essentially sodless, over a thinner, "natural" "A" horizon comprised of sandy silt, to about 20cmbs, over a relatively dense, sandy silt and a B horizon (west and north). And, topographically, the entire site is located either on or immediately north (i.e., downlope) from an elevated knoll comprised generally of silty sands and fine gravel, and into which the Hosmer cellar was initially excavated.

Site Conditions and Context

ME 073.015

Over the preceding 250 years, ME 073.015 has undergone considerable change and, presumably, disturbance. Based on the archaeological recoveries, the structure was intact and lived in residentially until approximately the turn of the 18th/19th centuries. Soon after about 1803, the home appears to have been abandoned, and the cellar filled.

The current surface conditions include a relatively level landform, gently sloping to the north and east. Based on testing to date, the landform is similar to what would have been present at the time of occupation. A wide ditch/trench is present just inside the tree line to the east, some 20m from the earthen cellar, and may have existed throughout much of the occupation there. A single 1m² test unit in the trench's margin suggests the trench may be an illusion, the topographic product of pushing soil from the west, toward a low area, and inadvertently forming a raised margin. Why or when this was accomplished is unknown. But, cultural materials were homogenously present within the soil column immediately adjacent to, and west of the "trench", suggesting an historic origin.

With the exception of a significant electrical power line running north/south through the site, and the above cautionary note (i.e., the trench), no surficial indication of significant ground disturbance is present. Additionally, the presence of significant rock and large boulders only a few centimeters below surface (i.e., remnant chimney base) suggests plowing may not have occurred universally across the site.

ME 073.014

Aside from the fact that the house and sill are no longer present, ME 073.014 appears to be otherwise undisturbed. Indeed, testing reveals the occupations' middens to be immediately at or just below ground surface. One midden, located adjacent to the structures northeast corner, is so undisturbed that elements of the midden there (e.g., leftover foundation stone) are seen protruding through the surface!

Likewise, aspects of the site's other midden, adjacent to the structure's northwest corner, can also be observed at the surface (e.g., waste brick). While no privies or other associated sub-surface elements are currently identified, archaeologically, they are, no doubt, still there and in extraordinary condition as well.

The farm's barn foundation, approximately 30m west of the farmhouse, is completely exposed, and also appears undisturbed.

Methodology

2018 and 2019 Testing Grids

Given the unknown nature of the depression noted in the field at the time, initial 2018 testing at the Burton Encampment took the form of a single, 50cm² shovel test pit (STP) randomly placed alongside the depression. This first STP was not numbered, or in any way designated, as it was simply a random exploratory shovel test pit. At that point, the goal was simply to put in a test pit to see if any cultural material was present. The author had absolutely no expectation of the archaeological reality he would encounter. As a result, the author did not establish a grid of any kind at that time, eventually leading to complications later on.

After STP 1 revealed the presence of 18th c. cultural materials, the author bounded STP 1 with two additional STP's, one on either side of the first (i.e., east and west), on an arbitrary 3m interval. This set the stage for a complicated, numeric organization along what would become Transect 1 (TR 1); STP 1 was now located *between* STP's 2 and 3. Further compounding the issue was the clear need to extend Transect 1 both east and west, *after STP's 1, 2, and 3 were completed.*

Beginning at Transect 1's eastern-most end, now extended 10m east with three additional STP's on 3m intervals, STP's were renumbered STP 1-STP 6. This changed the initial three STP's designation from 1, 2, and 3, to 4, 5, and 6. Additional shovel test pits to the west continued this organization, with STP's 7 and 8, but still at 3m interval.

In retrospect, the author should have stopped at that point, and established a grid with compass coordinates. However, being blindsided by even the presence of such archaeology, and not understanding the nature or the scope of it, a second transect was laid out 2m north of the first. With additional 18th c. cultural materials recovered in the first (and only) STP on the second transect, the author decided to establish a metric grid over the area. However, he continued with a transect-based, rather than a compass-based grid organization. This was a critical, though not un-recoverable error, leading to considerable, but not uncorrectable proveniencing related issues in 2018.

Using TR 1's eastern limit as the eastern terminal edge of all transects (i.e., a north/south axis), and assuming the site might be limited the author established several more transects on 2m intervals, both north and south of the first. The site was not limited, and additional transects were laid out. To that point, transects received numeric designations (e., TR 1, TR 2, etc...), and a similar issue as with the initial STP's arose with transects. That is, TR 1, was now south of TR 2, but north of TR 3. So, transects were renumbered to allow TR 1 to be farthest north, followed by TR 2, TR 3, etc... to the

south. However, testing soon revealed the spatial extent of the site continued to increase. As a result, STP's needed to be placed even farther east and north of testing's then current limits.

Still not appreciating the need to establish an all encompassing compass-based grid, the author continued with a transect-based organization. Thus, east of STP 1, STP's were designated STP 0, then STP 1E (east), STP 2E, STP 3E, etc... And transects north of TR 1 became TR 0, followed by TR 1N, TR 2N, TR 3N, etc... This practice continued throughout the 2018 field season, with STP's laid out on transects at 3m intervals, and transects 2m apart.

Initially, placement of STP's along a given transect utilized the STP's southeast corner. This changed, however, when a northeast, metric grid was overlaid onto the site area. But, as 2018's transects were initially laid out on an east/west compass bearing, and spaced an even number of meters apart, north to south, all 2018 STP's and larger excavation units easily conformed to the 2019 metric grid, which utilized the original transects as east/west axes within the new grid. Thus, were a 2018 STP expanded into a larger unit in 2019, a northeast grid coordinate could easily be applied.

In 2019, the author developed a compass-based (northeast quadrant), 1m grid system capable of encompassing both sites (10,000m², minimally) and all 2018 testing; N200 E300 was located due south and due east of ME 073.015 and ME 073.014, respectively. A 10" galvanized steel spike was placed at that grid location, immediately adjacent to and west of the power line pole located there.

All 2019 testing utilized the northeast corner of any given 1m square as its coordinate (e.g., N215 E304). 2019 STP's also utilized this northeast coordinate protocol, but with the addition of their respective quad identity (i.e., 50cm quarter) – NW quad (quad 1 or Q1), NE quad (quad 2 or Q2), SW quad (quad 3 or Q3), and SE quad (quad 4 or Q4). This protocol overcame the difficulty previously encountered in 2018 when necessity demanded the movement of an STP or larger unit from a transect-based orientation due to an obstacle (e.g., tree). Additionally, the northeast grid was oriented in such a way as to incorporate all 2018 testing, making future reference to specific STP's or larger units consistent (e.g., TR 4, STP 2E became N216 E319, Q4).

Record Keeping *Journals*

A written record of all activity in the field documented 2018 and 2019's archaeological testing. All decisions relating to grid and organizational realities, all persons

volunteering on site, the weather, the dates and times in the field, the soil structure, excavation depth of all units (by levels), and even secondary thoughts and considerations, were all journaled. A total of four, 8.5" x 11", lined legal pads make up the 2018/2019 journal. A future project will include digitizing these journals.

Cultural Materials - Provenience

Once removed from the ground, great care was taken to maintain the provenience of all cultural materials. Individual, 2.5"x 2.5" provenience slips were filled out with all relevant information, including, but not limited to: site name, date, unit's grid coordinates, level of origin, and depth of level of origin, and cultural material type recovered. To avoid loss of, or damage to a paper provenience slip resulting from condensation and soil within a collection bag, each provenience slip was placed in a separate small, 3"x 3" zip-lock specimen bag and placed within the larger, cultural materials collection bag.

While individual specimens of note, or of a fragile nature, may have been bagged separately, the provenience protocol identified above was maintained.

Photography

The 2018 and 2019 testing effort included taking digital photographs of virtually all STP's or larger excavation units. Not all side walls of a given STP or larger unit were photographed. However, in virtually all cases, at least one representative wall was photographed.

STP's or larger units' excavation floors were also photographed, often by level. To ensure locational data is available for future reference, digital photographs of STP's or larger excavation units were intentionally taken in landscape view as well (i.e., with identifiable and long-term-available backgrounds).

Excavation Protocol

In 2018, excavation took the place as either 50cm² STP's, 50cm x 1m units, or 1m² units; while testing was primarily limited to STP's, several larger units were excavated - a single 1m² unit off the northeast corner of the Hosmer cellar, two 1m² in ME 073.015's cellar, and a 1m x 1.5m unit at the Hosmer cellar's northwest corner.

Utilizing a sharpened square edged spade, excavation of STP's generally included removal of the overlying sod to a depth generally not exceeding 5cm, followed by removal of the A_p as a single unit. Larger units, whether 1m² or 50cm x 1m, always utilized 10cm levels, as measured from ground surface, unless a new soil or chemical horizon was encountered. If such was the case, the excavator began the new

stratigraphic unit, regardless of depth below surface, with a new collection bag and provenience slip. Typically larger excavation units were excavated by hand with a trowel.

Relative to STP's, screening of excavated soil utilized a 1/4" mesh standing rocker screen. After completion, soil collected from an STP, having collected below the screen on a poly tarp, was reintroduced to the STP, compacted, and the sod replaced. All cultural materials recovered from the screen were placed in collection bags, along with a provenience slip (see above).

Relative to larger excavation units, screening of excavated soil utilized either a 1/4" standing rocker screen or a stationary 1/4" screen on sawhorses. As noted above, the protocol for all large excavation units included excavation in 10cm levels, as measured from ground surface. After completion, soil collected from an excavation unit, having collected below the screen/s on a poly tarp, was reintroduced to the unit, compacted, and the sod (if any) replaced. All cultural materials recovered from the screen were placed in collection bags, along with a provenience slip (see above).

Soils relating to a feature, or cultural stratigraphic unit (e.g., midden) received the same protocol as above, with the exception that their soil was screened separately from that of overlying, underlying, or surrounding non-feature/non-stratum soil. In such cases, provenience slips also included identification data relating to the feature or stratum (e.g., "Feature 1").

Feature Protocol

For the purposes of this report, features are those archaeological realities which, while quantifiable in-the-moment, cannot be removed from the ground, washed and dried, or considered further elsewhere (e.g., in a lab). A trash pit, for example, though quantifiable on site, in-the-moment, cannot be removed from the ground to be washed, dried, and analyzed further elsewhere. Therefore, a trash pit is considered a feature. However, while a trash pit is considered a feature, its content is not, being removable from the ground for additional processing and study.

This protocol also applies to tangible archaeological realities within the ground relating to structures. For example, a cellar may be considered a feature, though it is eminently more practical to call it a cellar. However, the cellar's stone lining is not, being a tangible reality which can, theoretically, be removed from the ground, washed and dried, and studied further elsewhere (regardless of how impractical that may be). A cellar's stone lining is, in fact, content within the feature. Likewise, a collection of rocks and boulders accumulated within a sub-surface excavation (pit), and designed to

support a chimney, *is not* considered a feature. Rather, it is given a name – chimney base. The sub-surface pit *within which the chimney base is seated*, however, *is* considered a feature. By the same token, while an earthfast structure may include vertical support posts seated in “post holes”, the posts, and the house they support, are not considered features. The post-holes are.

Such distinctions are necessarily important as they impact subsequent behavioral analyses (presumably the end goal of archaeology). For example, the individual who developed the chimney base first initiated excavation of the sub-surface pit in which the chimney base was to be seated. Then, and only then, did that individual place, in the excavated pit, the stones required to actually hold the chimney up. As the effort to build the chimney includes activity/behavior that cannot be analyzed later, such activity necessarily differs from that which can.

Giving a tangible material reality a feature number, as is so often done, may lead to unnecessary confusion. For example, “Feature 1” may be a shallow square pit, while “Feature 2” may be a brick hearth. Other than their similar designations (i.e., “Feature”), they have nothing in common (except perhaps when the hearth is in the pit). Although use of the term “feature” may be an effort to avoid labels which imply function, using the same term for both a pit and a hearth, with only a numeric discriminator, implicitly suggests commonality at some (unidentified) level.

With that in mind, then, only five cultural features are currently identified from 2018 and 2019’s testing efforts. The first two are ME 073.015’s earthen cellar and ME 073.014’s stone lined cellar. Although they differ in their specifics, neither cellar is given a feature designation as both can be characterized accurately as cellars. A third feature is a large, possibly 2m wide and 1m deep pit, designated “Feature 1” (N200 E307). Feature 2 is the excavated pit in which ME 073.015’s chimney base was developed (N213-216 E287-290). And Feature 3 is the excavated pit in which an unattributed probable chimney base was developed (N184 E299).