

Archaeological Testing At the Nye Homestead 2012 Field Season

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A total of four 50 x 50 cm square units were excavated in 2012 at the Nye Homestead during the Autumn Gathering. The testing this year was focused on "prospecting" around the property in an attempt to locate areas of high artifact concentration. One unit was placed on the south side of the house (Unit 2012-1) one was placed on the north side (Unit 2012-2) and two were placed on the west side of the northern kitchen ell (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Locations of 2012 test pits

Unit 1-2012 was located 1-1.5 meters south of the south wall and 2.7 meters east of the southwest corner of the house, placing it to the west of the front door of the house. This unit encountered multiple fill layers to a depth of 40 cmbs. The fill layers were very rocky and gravelly. All of the

recovered artifacts dated to the 19th and twentieth centuries and included architecturally related items (one hand wrought nail, machine-cut nails [n=43], wire nails [n=12], brick [n=2], window glass [n=6], an iron door latch) and household items (redware [n=4] and a brass cap). All periods of occupation were mixed together from 0-30 cmbs with no temporal stratification.

Unit 2 was located at the northern side of the house one meter north and one meter east of the northwest corner. This unit also encountered fill layers to 20 cmbs. At 20 cmbs a rocky layer that was 10YR5/6 in color was encountered to 23 cmbs. Below this an intact B1 horizon was encountered to 30 cmbs and a B2 containing a heavy concentration of gravel and rock was encountered to 50 cmbs. Recovered artifacts dated from the late 17th to twentieth centuries and included architecturally related items (machine-cut nails [n=15], wire nails [n=3], and window glass [n=1]) and one domestic artifact (a late 17th to early 18th century pipe fragment from the 0-10 cm level; architecturally related items (brick [n=13] and machine cut nails [n=29]) and one domestic artifact (a piece of 19th century pearlware from the 10-20 cm level; and architecturally related items (hand wrought nail and brick [n=4]) and one domestic artifact (six pieces of 18th to early 19th century creamware) from the 20-30 cm level. The artifacts did seem to be stratigraphically separated in this unit, indicating less disturbance at the north side of the house versus the south.

Units 3 and 4 were excavated to the west of the northeastern kitchen ell of the house. These units encountered a sandy loam, very gravelly, A1 horizon to 20 cmbs followed by a very gravelly and rocky B1 horizon to 25 cmbs. A dense layer of rock was encountered at the A1-B1 transition. Unit 4 was placed adjacent to the south side of unit 3 to investigate the concentration of rocks encountered at the A1/ b1 juncture. The rocks were found to be endemic of the A1-B1 transition and were considered natural. Recovered artifacts dated from at least the 18th to twentieth centuries and included architecturally related items (machine-cut nails [n=4], wire nails [n=5], brick [n=17] and window glass [n=1]) and a higher occurrence of domestic artifact (creamware [n=3], pearlware [n=3], redware [n=10], whiteware [n=9], quahog, soft shell clam, and surf clam shell [n=2, 2, and 1], and table glass [one blue pressed fragment] from the 0-10 cm level; architecturally related items (brick [n=5], machine cut nails [n=9], and window glass [n=1]) and domestic artifact (creamware [n=2], pearlware [n=1], redware [n=1], tin-glazed ceramic [n=1], whiteware [n=4], shell (soft shell clam n=1], and calcined bone [n=3]) from the 10-20 cm level. The artifacts did seem to be stratigraphically separated in this unit, indicating less disturbance at the north side of the house versus the south. There was also a higher representation of domestic versus architecturally related artifacts in Units 3 and 4 versus the other units. This indicates that the refuse disposal area for the house appears to have consistently been to the northeast of the north side of the house.

Overall, it can be said that the south side of the house showed considerable mixing of artifacts, probably as a result of landscaping in the twentieth century and also showed the highest occurrence of architecturally related artifacts (94% of the 69 artifacts recovered from Unit 1). The area to the northwest of the north side of the house, the area tested by Unit 2, also showed a high occurrence of architecturally related artifacts (89% of the 74 artifacts recovered) but not as high as the south yard (or as low as the area to the east of this unit). It also showed intact stratigraphic leveling of artifacts with earlier material being deeper than the later material. Units 3 and 4 showed stratigraphic leveling and also the lowest occurrence of architecturally related artifacts (48.3% of the 87 artifacts recovered) and the highest occurrence of domestically related artifacts. The north yard of the house appears to have more potential for containing intact, stratigraphically separate deposits than the south yard. The eastern half of the north yard shows the greatest potential for containing domestic evidence, especially materials derived from the kitchen and table of the household.