

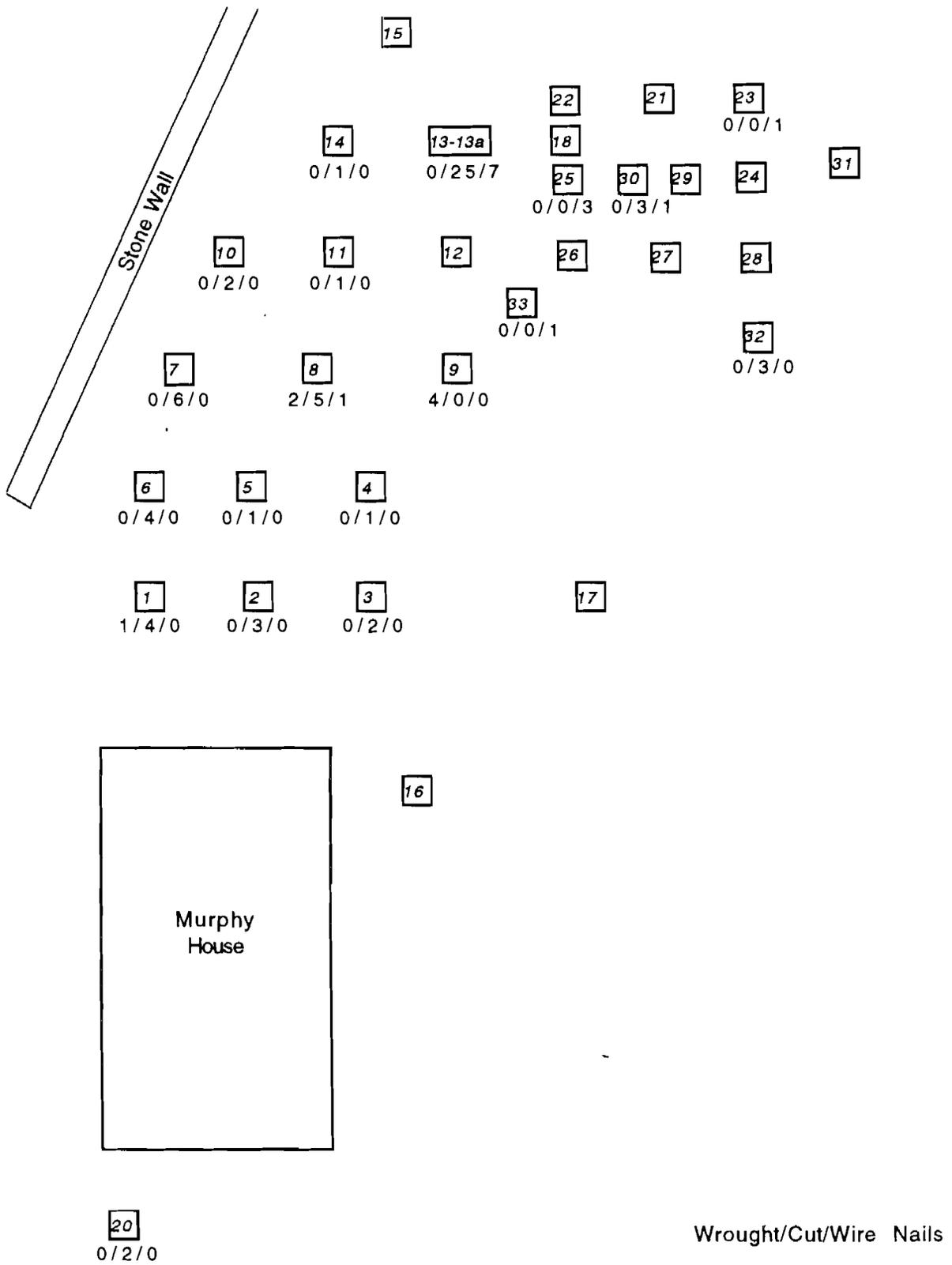
## DISCUSSION

Documentary records indicate that the Murphy House (and associated barn) had been constructed by 1849 by George Murphy, who then sold the property to his father, William, in 1851. William Murphy occupied the house until his death in 1870. An architectural analysis suggests that the house, originally a two and a half story side gabled stone dwelling built in the Greek Revival style, possessed a one story frame kitchen built off the rear of the house. A frame two and a half story rear wing was added to the house, apparently replacing the kitchen wing, and it would certainly appear that this was when the basement was dug out for the wing and back porch addition.

The distribution of artifacts over the backyard suggests that perhaps soil from around the old kitchen area was spread across the backyard, perhaps at the time that the house underwent renovation and the new basement was dug out. While it was an appealing thought to suggest that the fill observed in many of the test units perhaps originated at this time, the artifact analysis tends to belie this suggestion. Modern materials such as plastics as well as glass dating from after the period of renovation (suggested as having been completed by 1860; the majority of the window glass is lime soda windowpane fragments, dating to post 1864) occur in the fill levels of those units closest to the house (test unit 1 produced a sherd of ironstone with a maker's mark characteristic of the late nineteenth century and test unit 3 yielded a fragment of a plastic comb from the fill horizon).

No significant concentrations of artifacts appeared to be present. Overall, test unit 7 produced the greatest quantity of cultural materials (232), followed by test units 9 (194), 1 (125), 13 and 13a combined (237), and the surface collection of 171 artifacts (Figure 16). These are distributed sporadically about the house, and do not cluster in any discernible pattern. The artifacts tend to be small in size as is characteristic of fragile artifacts that have been broken by plowing, tilling or other disturbance. This, combined with a lack of undisturbed contexts, limits interpretation exercises, such as minimum vessel counts, that might be carried out on artifacts from a more undisturbed context.

A Mean Ceramic Date of 1855.63 was obtained for the site, following Miller's 1992 revision of South's (1977) types. This date obviously does not represent the midpoint of the occupation of the site, nor even of the midpoint of the Murphy occupation of the site. If the majority of the ceramics retrieved at the site came from the William Murphy occupation, one might surmise that he moved into his retirement home with just about everything he needed, kitchen-wise, and did not purchase much during his occupation of the house. It was this date that initially suggested that the majority of the artifacts recovered came from early in the Murphy occupation, prior to the renovation of the rear wing of the house. If

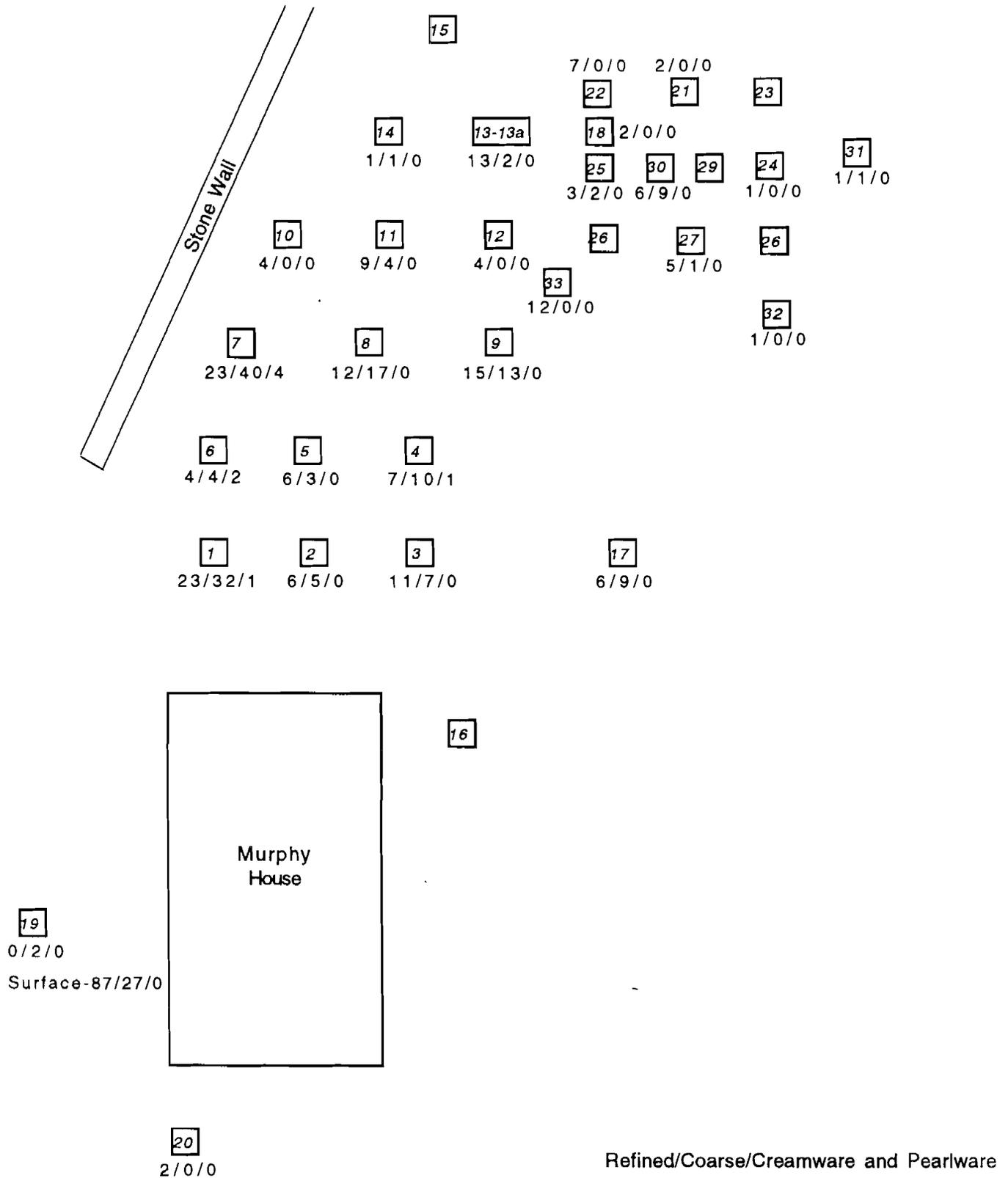


**FIGURE 17**  
**Distribution of identifiable nails**

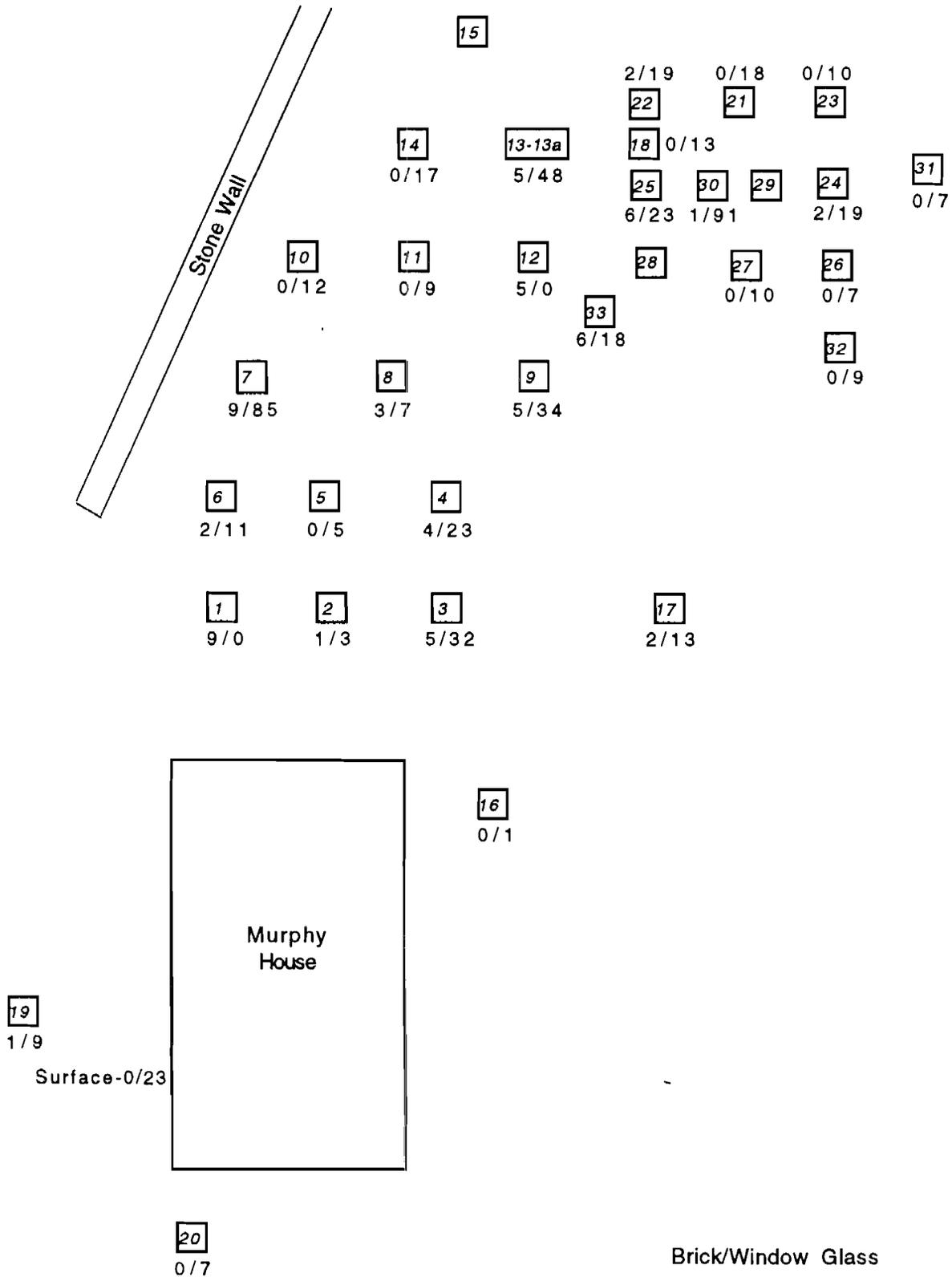
there had been a lean-to kitchen that was removed, one might expect to find some debris around the back of the house that would have been shifted when the cellar was dug out under the new rear wing. Debris might well have continued to accumulate in the backyard. Although the majority of the artifacts recovered may well have been discarded during the Murphy occupation, a mélange of materials dating to various points in time after the Murphy house became a tenant house were represented in the inventory.

The majority of the identifiable artifacts may be categorized as architectural in terms of artifact function. Of the nine hundred and seventy-one artifacts which could be put in the this category, three hundred and fourteen were nails (this includes wrought, cut and wire nails, as well as unidentifiable nails; their distribution is illustrated in Figure 17) and five hundred and seventy were window glass fragments (Figure 18), of which all but three were lime soda windowpane fragments dating to post 1864. The architectural category also included seventy brick fragments, two mortar fragments, six plaster fragments, three pieces of concrete (adjacent to the concrete pad) and two fragments of window putty. Two cut spikes, a wrought hinge, a window screen fragment and a galvanized sink strainer were also recovered. The window glass appears to occur more frequently in the vicinity of the Phase II structure, as do the wire nails and most of the cut nails.

The next largest group, that of the eight hundred and thirty kitchen related artifacts, is composed primarily of ceramics (Figure 19 shows the distribution of ceramics across the site). Ceramics tend to decrease in frequency as the distance from the house increases, although bottle fragments tend to be distributed over the site in variable quantities. Of the four hundred and forty-nine ceramic sherds, two were creamware (1762-1820) and six were pearlware (1780-1830). The dates of origin of these obviously predate the suggested construction date of the house, and probably represent "heirlooms" brought into the home during either the George Murphy or the William Murphy occupation--although one of the later tenants could well have brought the vessels in as well. Decorated and undecorated whiteware (152) and ironstone (100) predominate in the serving vessel category; flat items such as plates and saucers and hollow vessels such as bowls and cups are represented in the artifact assemblage. Porcelain (8) and refined redware (4) are sparsely represented. Redware (one hundred and sixty-five sherds) and stoneware (twelve sherds) fragments represent the cooking and storage aspect of kitchen activities, along with the variety of bottles and containers represented (three hundred and thirty-three fragments; see Figure 20)). Seven of the container glass fragments were modern and dated to the second half of the 20th century or later. A foil wrapper and a plastic straw can also be placed into the kitchen group.



**FIGURE 19**  
**Distribution of ceramics**



**FIGURE 18**  
**Distribution of brick and window glass**

A single button can be placed into the clothing group. Personal group items include three mirror fragments, a penny (1910) and a plastic hair comb. A single reed stem pipe fragment constitutes the tobacco pipe group.

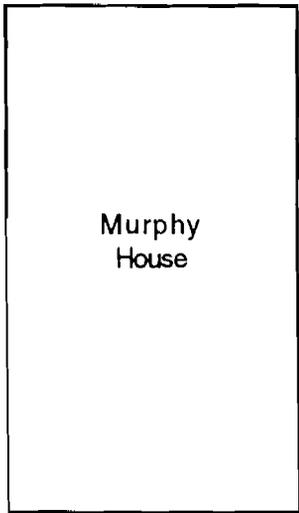
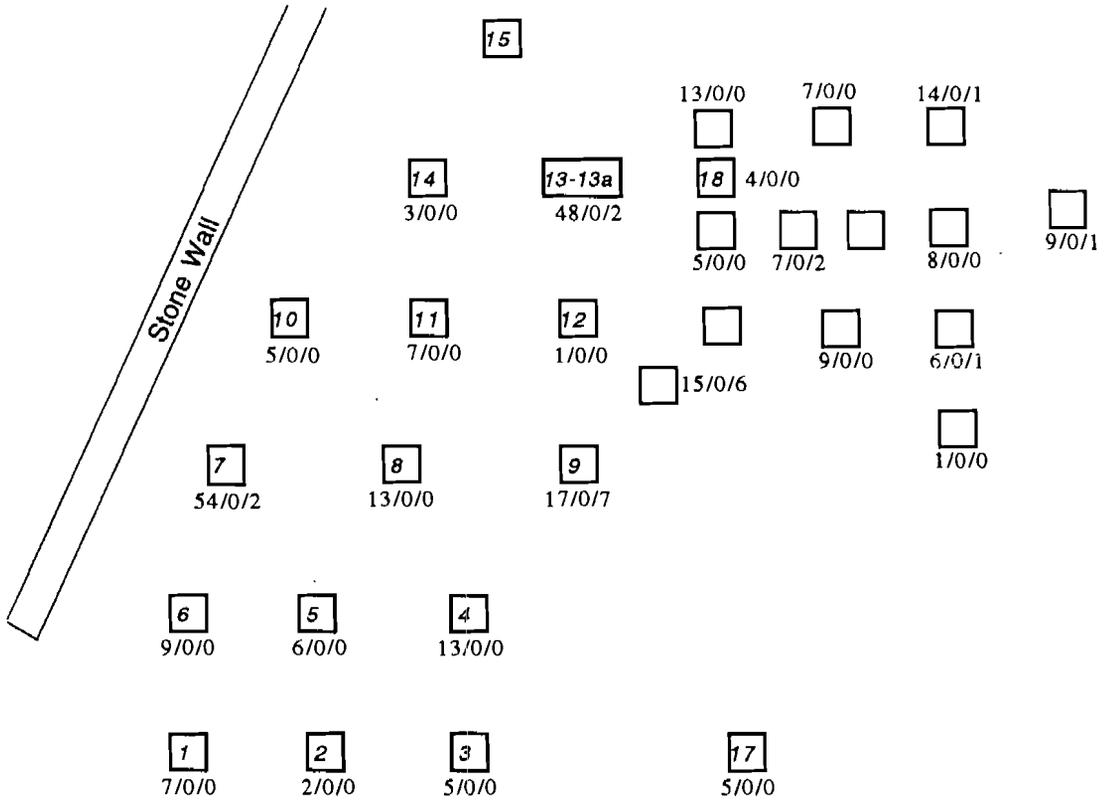
The activities group included eighteen miscellaneous hardware fragments such as screws, bolt, ferrous metal rings, etc., two plastic flower markers, a carbon battery post electrode and a brass wheel. Eighteen terra cotta flower pot fragments were also considered part of this group, rather than being classed with the rest of the ceramics, as it was felt that they were not really kitchen related but represented more of a leisure activity.

Faunal and floral remains included twenty-one bone fragments, forty-two clam and oyster shell fragments (Figure 21) and two peach pit halves. With the exception of the peach pits, generally poor preservation and small size precluded analysis.

Other artifacts were could not easily be placed in one of the previous groups include a plastic cigarette filter, six plastic fragments, a styrofoam fragment, a lead sheet fragment, a zinc fragment, a mica fragment, twenty-two unidentified glass fragments, and sixty-two unidentified ferrous metal fragments. Three lamp chimney fragments and ten sheet glass fragments were also recovered, as was a sherd of porcelain with a molded decoration that appears to have come from a figurine. Over one thousand and forty-eight pieces of coal, cinder and slag were counted (Figure 22); this figure excludes the slag matrix layer in test unit 9. These materials most likely represent stove-cleaning activities.

The results of this exercise in functional analysis reflect the discard of a domestic site; the range of artifacts recovered is dominated by architectural materials and kitchen related materials. Little has been recovered that reflects much in the way of diet, dress, etc., and the lack of discrete components precludes discussion of any one period of occupation.

The ceramics, unfortunately not retrieved from features but rather from various disturbed contexts throughout the site, have not been assessed in terms of ceramic index values for this report; such an exercise would be of little value for a site occupied for as long as the Murphy House has been. The ceramics, although perhaps primarily reflecting the purchasing choices of the Murphys (this seems to be reflected in the MCD), may well represent some or all of the tenants who succeeded them. Each family living in the house could be expected to have contributed to the archeological record, although perhaps to different degrees. The lack of discrete deposits precludes an analysis of ceramic consumption patterns. In addition, the degree of off-site trash disposal is unknown, but certainly must be considered; it may be that the later occupations are significantly under-represented.

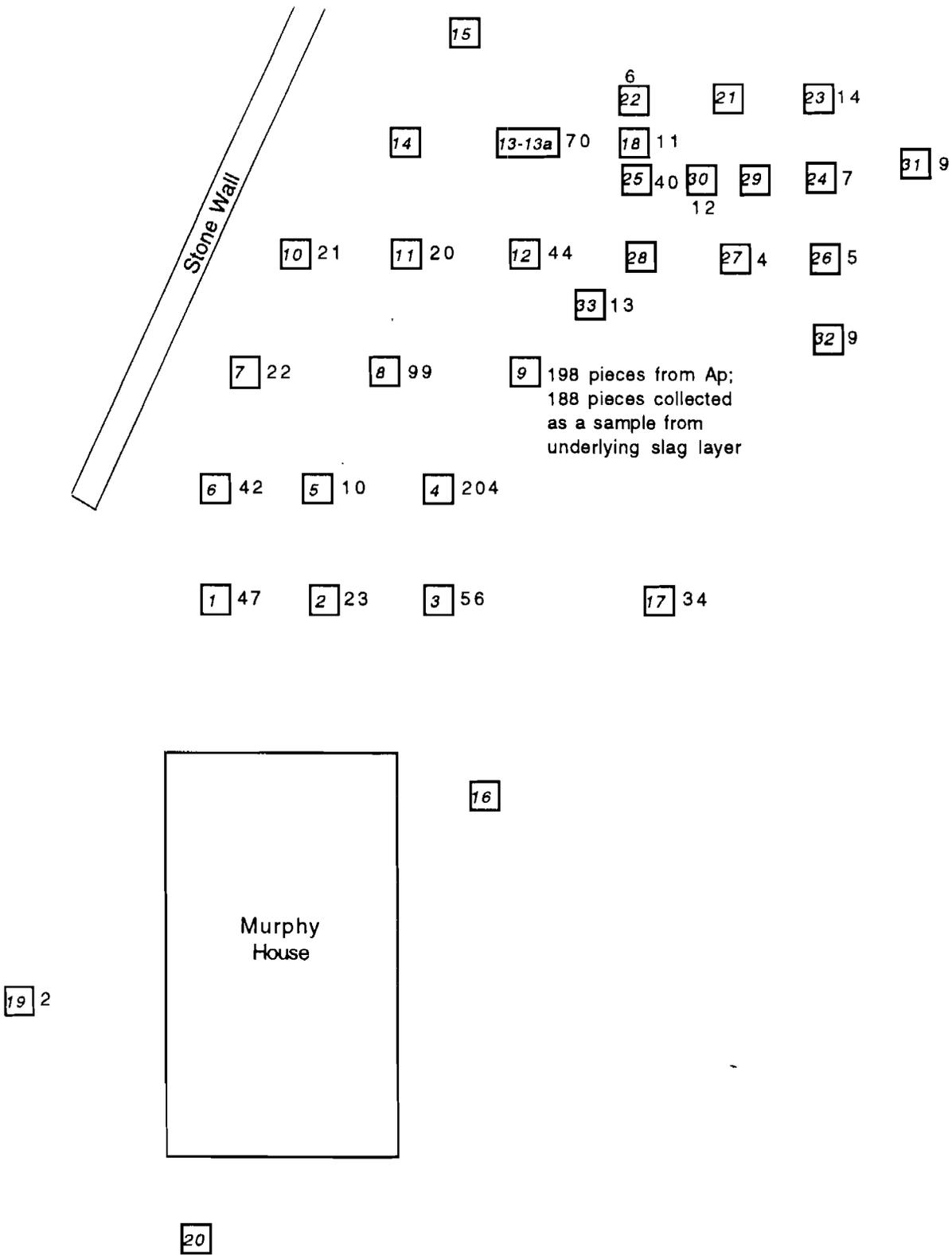


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Surface-23/3/2

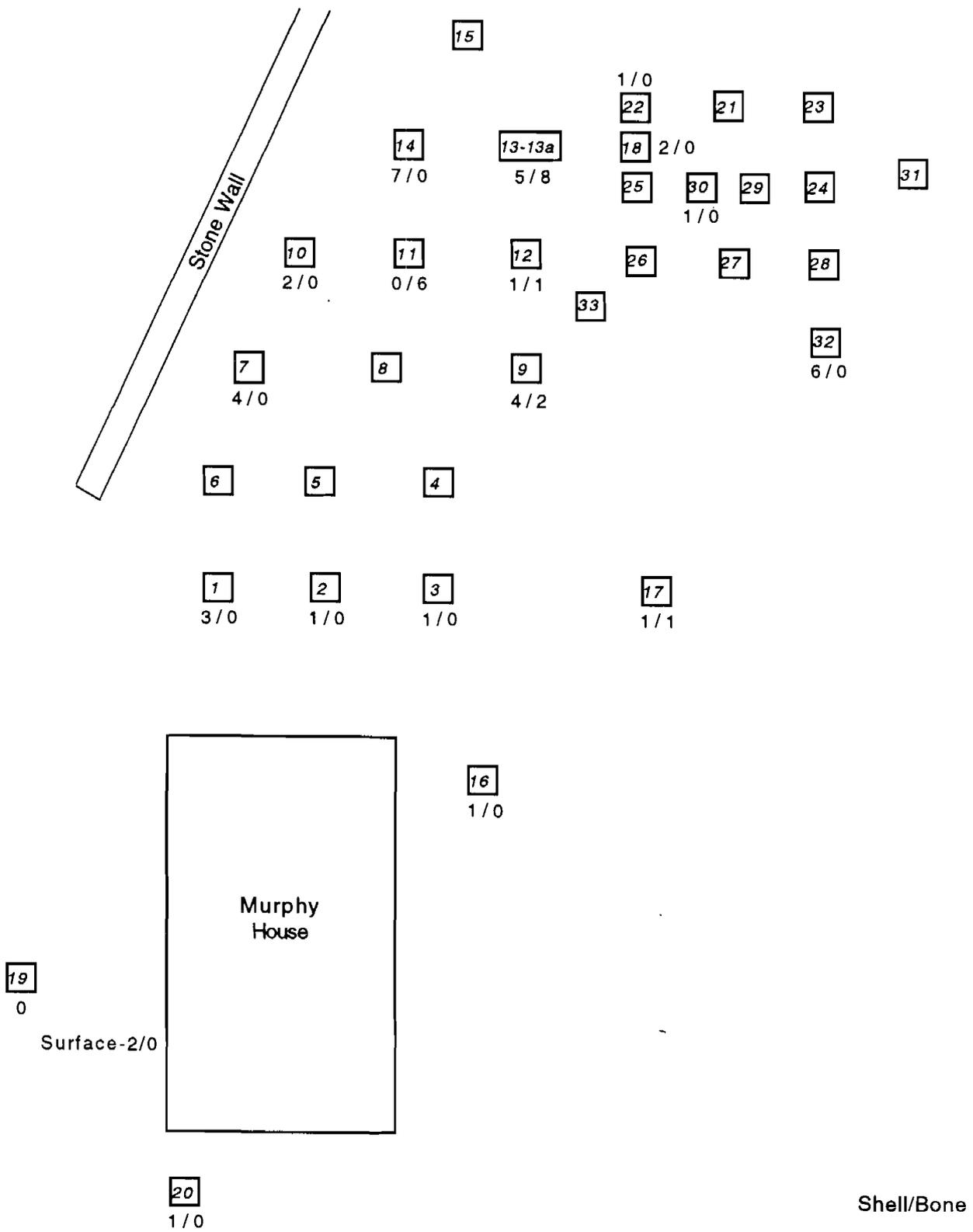
20  
4/0/0

Bottle and Container/Lamp/Modern

**FIGURE 20**  
**Distribution of glass**



**FIGURE 22**  
**Distribution of coal, clinkers and slag**



**FIGURE 21**  
**Distribution of shell and bone**

The small size of the current tract--a little over an acre of the original fifteen acres--has limited the scope of investigations significantly. Not only were no discrete trash dumping deposits located, no wells or privies were encountered in the testing. Evidence for one outbuilding was encountered, but this area of the tract was badly disturbed and the foundation remnants had been obliterated in half of the structure. The artifacts were the usual mix of late nineteenth and twentieth century materials, and failed to offer indications of possible activities that might have been related to the outbuilding.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Murphy House yard site is not eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as it lacks contextual integrity and it not likely to produce additional significant research information. The area around the residence has been heavily disturbed by twentieth century construction activities. All artifacts were recovered from the plowzone or from fill horizons, and no undisturbed intact cultural materials of any significance are present. The remains of the one outbuilding that was located had been significantly disturbed; the artifacts associated with this building gave no information as to the possible function of the building.

No additional archeological work is recommended for the Murphy House yard.